The Isneg, also Isnag or Apayao, live at the northwesterly end of northern Luzon, in the upper half of the Cordillera province of Apayao. The term "Isneg" derives from a combination of "is" meaning "recede" and "uneg" meaning "interior." Thus, it means "people who have gone into the interior." In Spanish missionary accounts, they, together with the Kalinga and other ethnic groups between the northern end of the Cagayan Valley and the northeastern part of the Ilocos, were referred to as "los Apayaos," an allusion to the river whose banks and nearby rugged terrain were inhabited by the people. They were also called "los Mandayas," a reference to an Isneg word meaning "upstream." The term "Apayao" has been used interchangeably with "Isneg," after the name of the geographical territory which these people have inhabited for ages. This is inaccurate, however, because the subprovince of Apayao is not exclusively peopled by the Isneg. There has been a large influx of Ilocano over the years. From Cagayan, the Itawes have entered and occupied the eastern regions. The Aeta inhabit the northern and northeastern parts of the province. And then there are the Kalinga, the other major group in the province.

The Isneg have always built their settlements on the small hills that lie along the large rivers of the province. This whole territory used to be two subprovinces, Kalinga and Apayao, when the whole of the Cordillera region was still a single political subdivision. The Kalinga group occupies the southern half of the consolidated province. With the capitol located in Tabuk, Kalinga, much of the economic and political activity in the province has been concentrated in this southern half. To the northwest of the province, occupying mostly parts of the mountainous eastern border of Ilocos Norte, live the Yapayao. Sharing the same territory with the Isneg are the Aggay, about whom little has been written.

In 1988, the Isneg were estimated to number around 45,000. Municipalities occupied by the Isneg include Pudtol, Kabugao, Kalanasan and Conner (Peralta 1988:1). Two major river systems, the Abulog and the Apayao, run through Isneg country, which until recent times has been described as a region of "dark tropical forests," and endowed with other natural resources. In one early account, the Isneg were described as of slender and graceful stature, with manners that were kindly, hospitable, and generous, possessed with the spirit of self-reliance and courage, and clearly artistic in their temperament.

History

The Isneg's ancestors are believed to have been the proto-Austronesians who came from South China thousands of years ago. Later, they came in contact with groups practicing jar burial, from whom they adopted the custom. They later also came into contact with Chinese traders plying the seas south of the Asian mainland. From the Chinese they bought the porcelain pieces and glass beads which now form part of the Isneg's priceless heirlooms.

The Isneg have been known to be a headtaking society since recorded history. The

colonial regime of the Spaniards sought to curb this practice and to fully Christianize the mountain people. The Spaniards were able to put up three missions in 1610, but these were abandoned in 1760.

A Christian mission was established in Capinatan in 1619. In 1631, Father Geronimo de Zamora resumed mission work among the Isneg upstream (among the Mandaya) and rebuilt the Capinatan church the following year. A short-lived uprising arose in 1639; the Commander of the Capinatan-Totol garrison abused an Isneg woman for which he and his soldiers were massacred. Juan Manzano (Magsanop), an Isneg, partly led the Ilocos Revolt of 1660-1661. The campaign to eradicate Christianity began with the murder of the missionary friars in Bacarra and Pata. The rebels drank wine out of the skullcap of Father Jose Arias of Bacarra in an old ritual. Then they destroyed Christian religious objects, and Manzano ordered a return to the native religion. The more faithful Isneg converts aided the local authorities in suppressing the rebellion. Manzano and his co-leaders were executed, their heads severed and displayed. In 1662, the Augustinians reached the Isneg up the Bulu River from Bagni, and freed them from taxes as a reward for their nonparticipation in the Manzano rebellion.

Father Pedro Jimenez erected two stone churches in Pudtol and Capinatan, Apayao prior to his Cagayan Valley assignment in 1677. He returned to Apayao in 1685 to reestablish peace pacts between feuding villages, namely, the Mandaya and the Christian converts in the colonized towns. Peace had been broken by Darisan, an Isneg from Kabugao, who killed a Spaniard and a Filipino in the guard post of the Capinatan garrison in Pudtol. Jimenez successfully restored the Capinatan-Totol mission. In 1688, the Archdiocese of Manila formally recognized his church in Nagsimbanan, Kabugao.

Governor General Valeriano Weyler exercised no real power in the two military camps he set up in Apayao and Cabagboan. The failure of the Spanish military occupation in Apayao could be attributed to several incidents of treachery. In 1888, Lieutenant Medina's expedition to the Kabugao area was welcomed by a feast given by Onsi, the local chief, which ended with the brutal killing of 17 unarmed Isneg including the host. The Isneg reportedly retaliated by killing a party of Ilocano traders. This could also be related to the Isneg attack on Dingras and Santa Maria, Ilocos Norte in the same year. Three years later, Father Julian Malumbres was sent to Apayao to resurrect the abandoned mission. Before this, the Apayao's commandant, Captain Enrique Julio, captured several prominent Isneg by inviting them to a feast in Guinobatan, Pamplona. One was killed, several wounded, and the rest imprisoned. Father Malumbres failed to reconcile with the Isneg who were misinformed that he had been the traitor. His two servants were killed, and Malumbres never returned to Apayao. The Isneg defeated the Spaniards in a decisive battle in 1895 (Scott 1975).

During the American regime, Blas Villamor was appointed commander of a Philippine Constabulary post at Tawit, and was charged with the responsibility of curbing the headtaking activities of the Isneg.

In 1908, Apayao was made a subprovince of the newly created Mountain Province, covering what is now the Cordillera region. The Isneg practice of headtaking came to an end in 1913, when the Constabulary subdued them in the Battle of Waga. From the period of the American occupation to the present time, the Isneg and their ancestral domain have remained largely isolated from and insulated against "modernizing" influences, with mixed results.

Economy

The Isneg's main staple is rice, which they have traditionally produced in abundance. This is raised through slash-and-burn agriculture. There has always been a surplus every year, except in rare instances of drought or pest infestation. In recent years, however, political instability in the region has brought about economic and physical dislocation. Apart from rice, other crops raised are corn, taro, sweet potato, sugarcane for making basi or sugarcane wine, bananas, yams, fruit orchards, and tobacco. Planting, weeding of the fields, harvesting and storing of rice, as well as the planting of yams and other tubers, are all preceded by appropriate rituals and ceremonies.

Despite their relative anonymity, the Isneg have preserved an elaborate economic culture centered around the concept of land ownership. According to Isneg traditional view, the ownership of land is absolute, governed by an unwritten law of property relations. This law is respected and recognized, enforced and defended by generations of Isneg. Life is materially associated with the land, the forests, and the rivers. The recognized owner of a piece of land has exclusive rights over its natural resources and its fruits. According to Isneg custom law, land is acquired and owned through: first-use (pioneer principle); actual possession and active occupation; and inheritance.

The land that an individual or clan can own through the first-use or pioneer principle are: the *bannuwag* (swidden); the *sarra* or *angnganupan* (forest and hunting grounds); and the *usat* or *angnigayan* (water and aquatic resources). Part of the land that can also be claimed for ownership is the land space called *nagbabalayan* (from *balay*, which means "house") where the owner or his family and clan have resided in the past, and which they have planted to coconut, palm, and fruit trees. Land acquired through possession and occupation include the swidden farm, residential land, and fishing grounds. All these categories of land can also be acquired through *tawid* (inheritance).**Political System**

Isneg society did not develop a form of village leadership strong enough to be recognized as an indigenous political authority by all Isneg communities in the region. A possible reason for this failure is the small size of villages or hamlets, and thus the small population of males that could be harnessed to form an army strong enough to bring other villages under its control. For ages, Isneg warriors engaged in small-scale ambuscades, and not in full-blown tribal war. The taking of a few heads during a raid was in retaliation for some previous wrong or misdeed, and not for the conquest of territory. Slavery was unknown, so there was no need to capture people.

The Isneg hamlet may have brave men called *mengal,* one of whom may later become *kamenglan,* the bravest of the brave—the ultimate goal of a human being. The mengal also acts as arbiter of disputes. In the settlement of cases, jars, beads, rice, and animals are used to pay fines or damages. The mengal truly enjoys enormous prestige, being a warrior of proven courage. In the past, the mengal wore a red scarf around his head. His arms and shoulders were tattooed, to signify that he had taken several enemy heads in battle. The leader usually provided the *sayam* for his people, a lavish feast during which he was expected to recount his martial exploits. The mengal is usually one who has reached a very mature age, and having been acknowledged as the village leader, he assumes his place among the Isneg council of veterans like himself (Casal 1986:56).

Social Organization and Customs

The Isneg woman traditionally gives birth in a kneeling position, using a mushroom as a talisman to ensure a successful delivery. The umbilical cord, cut with a bamboo sliver, is mixed with the rest of the afterbirth tied up with ginger and herbs, and buried in a coconut shell under the house (Casal 1986:76).

The formation of the Isneg family begins with the rites of courtship. The girl's parents allow this to take place in their house, in their presence. If the suitor has become acceptable to the girl's parents and to her, he may be allowed to sleep with her. This may last for several nights, and it is likely that a sexual relationship takes place, after which the boy's parents discuss the matter of engagement and marriage with the girl's parents. The main point of their discussion is the amount of the *tadug* (bride-price).

After the marriage ceremony, the newlyweds may choose to live with either set of parents. The man may be required to work for the family of the girl for a year or so. This usually happens when the tadug is high but the man is a desirable "acquisition."

Isneg society permits polygyny, but not polyandry. Either the common husband may have the wives live under the same roof or he may build separate dwellings for them. The common practice of division of labor based on physical strength and gender is evident. The man prepares the clearing for planting. He also engages in hunting, fishing, and the building of houses and boats. Where the metal plow has been introduced in recent times, plowing has been added to his schedule of activities. The woman plants, weeds, harvests rice, prepares the meals, maintains vegetable gardens, and rears children. In the old days, the man built high fences around the house yard to protect the family from enemies and headtaking groups. Since headtaking has ended, these fences are now built low.

In adherence to Isneg custom law governing ownership, husband and wife retain their rights to their own prenuptial properties, while assets acquired jointly by the couple become conjugal properties. These can also be lost or disposed of as damages or fines paid for crimes or offenses committed by any member of their family or clan.

Throughout the year, rituals play a central role in the social life of the Isneg. Their rituals are often very festive occasions. Everyone in the Isneg community prepares and looks forward to the feasts observed during the year, which are related to the most important events in the Isneg's life: marriage, illness, death, harvest, farewells, political negotiations, or honoring family members for achievements. On these festive occasions, men and women wear their distinctive costumes. The men wear loincloth or G-string with decorative beads and tassels, a long-sleeved jacket—usually green, the festive color of choice, or sometimes dark blue or red—and an embroidered headpiece. The women wear long-sleeved dark blue (sometimes red or orange) jackets, striped or plain navy blue skirt, and embroidered headpiece. Into these turbans they may tuck pompoms or flowers for accent.

An important special ritual is the *say-am,* which is performed before an assembly of people, for important social occasions, such as a successful headhunt (in the past), the removal of mourning clothes, and other events left to the discretion of wealthy families. The outlay in terms of food preparation is enormous, and can only be afforded by the rich. To these occasions, shamans and distinguished members of the hamlet such as the warriors, are invited. Only one shaman may officiate in the rituals. These occasions, undertaken between long intervals of time and in various places, have been the only group celebrations among the Isneg. These give a larger meaning to their life, unite them, and impart a sense of identity.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

The spiritual world of the Isneg is populated by more than 300 anito or spirits who assume various forms. There are no gods or hierarchical deities in the otherworld of the Isneg, only good or bad spirits.

The chief spirits are: Anlabban, who looks after the general welfare of the people and is recognized as the special protector of hunters; Bago, the spirit of the forest; and Sirinan, the river spirit. They may take the form of human beings, former mortals who mix with the living, reside in bathing places, and so on. They may be animals, with the features of a carabao, for example, and live in a cave under the water. They may be giants who live somewhere in the vicinity of Abbil. They may be spirits guarding the foot and center of the ladder going up the skyworld, seeing to it that mortals do not ascend this ladder. Most of these spirits, however, are the souls of mortals and exhibiting human traits when living as mortals. Some spirits can bring hardship into the life of the Isneg. One such spirit is Landusan, who is held responsible for some cases of extreme poverty. Those believed to be suffering from the machinations of this spirit are said to be *malandusan* (impoverished). But the Isneg are not entirely helpless against these scheming spirits. They can arm themselves with a potent amulet bequeathed to mortals by the benevolent spirits. This amulet is a small herb called *tagarut,* which grows in the forest but is hard to find.

At harvest time, a wide assortment of male and female spirits attend to the activities of the Isneg, performing either good or bad works which affect the lives of people. There are spirits who come to help the reapers in gathering the harvest. They are known as Abad, Aglalannawan, Anat, Binusilan, Dawiliyan, Dekat, Dumingiw, Imbanon, Gimbanonan, Ginalinan, Sibo, and a group of sky dwellers collectively known as the *llanit.* On the other hand, there are spirits who prefer to cause harm rather than help with the harvest. These are Alupundan, who causes the reapers' toes to get sore all over and swell; Arurin, who sees to it that the harvest is bad, if the Isneg farmers fail to give this female deity her share; Dagdagamiyan, a female spirit who causes sickness in children for playing in places where the harvest is being done; Darupaypay, who devours the palay stored in the hut before it is transferred to the granary; Ginuudan, who comes to measure the containers of palay, and causes it to dwindle; Sildado (from *soldado* or soldier), who resembles a horse, and kills children who play noisily outside the house; and Inargay, who kills people during harvest time. When *inapugan*, a ritual plant, is offered to Inargay, the following prayer is recited by the Isneg farmer: "Iapugko iyaw inargay ta dinaami patpatay" (I offer this betel to you, Inargay, so that you may not kill us) (Vanoverbergh 1941:337-339).

Between the living Isneg and this pantheon of spirits, the function of the shaman as intermediary is indispensable. The Isneg shaman is almost always a woman. She has to undergo a long training from early childhood. She intervenes for the recovery of afflicted persons, performing suitable rites and appealing to particular spirits. She also performs seances or propitiatory rituals, so often necessary to gain the favor or sympathy of these spirits. Her functions differ from that of the medicine man in other ethnic cultures, who uses parts of plants and trees in preparing a remedy for a sick person. The daughter of a priestess may become a *dororakit*, one who performs the role of shaman and magician, and who is entrusted with the making of amulets which ward off evil spells.

Many rituals are connected with the agricultural cycle: the daily life on the swidden, which includes clearing, planting, and harvesting. Nature provides signs and portents that signal the start of specific activities. There are rituals related to life in the swidden, to rice, and to the community as a whole.

Three signs indicate that clearing work on the swidden can begin—the red *bakakaw* herb comes out, the *tablan* (coral tree) is in bloom, and the leaves of the *basinalan* tree fall to the ground. This is around February to March. Then, the *lumba* tree begins to bear fruit, and it is a sign that the dry days have begun, time for burning the swidden. A good harvest is portended by the rising of a little whirlwind from the burned field. This, it is said, is the spirit Alipugpug. This wind fans the fire that moves across the burning field which never goes out of control, "because swidden culture has its own ecological wisdom." Before burning, the Isneg clear the swidden very carefully, taking care not to harm certain plants, such as the *amital* vine, which must not be uprooted, the *lapatulag* tree which is a protection against rats, or the *lubo* herb which must not be killed, lest a death befall the offender's family. The clearing burned, a few seeds of rice are cast into the wind, and a prayer is offered to the spirits. The farmer and his

family gather charred woods which has not been completely burned. This will be used for fuel, to be used during the harvest. Three days before rice is planted, the *agpaabay* ceremony is observed. A man and a woman scatter rice grains across the field to warn rats not to eat them. The woman returns in the afternoon to make an offering to the spirits of the field. She bores a hole into the ground and drops a few seeds into it. Then she covers the hole with *taxalitaw* vine leaves and the sapitan herb. This is to ensure that the crops will be healthy. For the whole night and all throughout the next day, she cannot hand out anything to anyone, and no one is allowed to enter her house. On the third day, other women take up the chore of planting. They carry dibble sticks with which they bore holes in the ground. Coconut shells full of seed are tied to their waists. It is taboo for children to make noises, because they would likely disturb the spirits: the *paxananay,* who watches over the planting, and the *bibiritan* which kills people when roused to anger. In September, the rice is ready for harvesting. It is then cooked with the fire of the stored charred wood from the burned clearing: thus, the cooking of the rice completes the ritual cycle of the swidden (Casal 1986:35-39).

There are several rituals performed in connection with the harvest of rice. These usually begin with the killing of a pig as an object of sacrifice, accompanied by communications with the spirits, performed in the form of prayers by the dorarakit or the *maganito* (shaman). Rice pudding is offered to Pilay, the spirit of the rice, who resides on the *paga,* a shelf above the Isneg hearth. This is the *pisi,* the ritual offering of food to the spirits. The old woman who performs this utters the following prayer: "Ne uwamo ilay ta ubatbattugammo ya an-ana-a, umaammo ka mabtugda peyan" (Here, this is yours, Pilay, so that you feed my children fully, and make sure that they are always satisfied) (Vanoverbergh 1941:340).

Another ritual is performed right in the fields where the harvest is going on. The amulets *inapugan, takkag* (a kind of fern), and herbs are tied to a stalk of palay, which are later placed in the granary before the other palay. Again, these are reserved for Pilay. In case a new granary is built, and the contents of the old granary transferred, the spirit's special share is also transferred to the new place. It is never consumed. An illness in the family during the time of harvest occasions a ritual called the *pupug*. The shaman catches a chicken and kills it inside the house of the affected family. The usual prayers to the guardian spirits of the fields are recited, after which the household members partake of the meat of the sacrificial animal.**Architecture and Community Planning**

Isneg architecture differs markedly from that of the other groups in the Cordillera. This difference lies mainly in the boatlike design of the Isneg house. Apayao in the northernmost part of Luzon is the only region in the Cordillera with a navigable river, and among the mountain people of the north, only the Isneg are natural boatpeople and boatbuilders. A typical Isneg house resembles the traditional Isneg boat in some ways. The boat, called *barana'y* or *bank'l,* is made up of three planks, a bottom plank which tapers at both ends, and two planks on both sides, carved and shaped in such a way as to fit alongside the bottom plank. The roof of the Isneg house suggests an inverted hull, and the floor joists when seen from the outside appear to have the shape of a boat.

The Isneg house is called *binuron*. It is regarded as the largest and among the most substantially constructed houses in the Cordilleras. The binuron is a multifamily, one-room rectangular dwelling supported by 15 wooden piles, with a clearance from the ground of about 1.2 meters. It measures about 8 meters long, 4 meters wide, and 5.5 meters from the ground to the roof ridge. The walls slant and taper downward. It has a gable roof, in contrast to most Cordillera dwellings which have pyramidal or conical roofs. A *tarakip*, an annexlike structure, is built at one end. It is as wide as the house itself, with a slightly higher floor, but a lower roof. Some houses feature a tarakip at both ends. The Isneg use wood for the posts, girders, joists, and walls, and thatch or bamboo for the roof. An interesting feature of the Isneg house is the way the bamboo roof is constructed. Lengths of bamboo tubes are split in two, and these are laid in alternating face-down-face-up arrangement, their sides interlocking together. Several rows are laid on top of one another like shingles. Thus they form a continuous wavelike link, and effectively keep out rainwater. Sometimes, a layer of thatch is laid on top of this bamboo arrangement for added protection.

Scott classifies the Isneg binuron as an example of the northern style of Cordillera architecture, because it is gabled, elevated, and elongated. Its floor and roof are entirely supported by two completely independent sets of posts. The floor itself has slightly raised platforms along the sides (Scott 1969: 187). This is the opposite of the southern house, the roof of which rests on the walls of the square cage constituting the house proper, and which in turn is supported by posts that reach no higher than the floor joists.

Although the Isneg house may seem small, there is ample space inside because it has no ceiling. One looks up to see the interior side of the bamboo roof. Because the walls slant outward towards the roof, the space inside also expands. Another interesting and practical feature of the binuron is its roll-up floor made from long reeds strung or woven together. These are laid on top of a floor frame made up of lateral and longitudinal supports. Once in a while, the reed floor is rolled up for washing in the nearby river. The walls of the house are but planks fitted together, all of which can be removed, so that the binuron can be converted into a platform (or stage) with a roof, to be used for rituals, ceremonies, and meetings. Windows are not structured frames cut out of the walls, but are part of the walls themselves. A number of wall planks are removed to provide the needed openings.

Another important architectural work in Isneg society is the rice granary. Building big granaries remains an important part of Isneg material culture since in the Cordillera communities, the granary shelters not only the annual harvest of grains, but also the benign spirits which are invoked to guard the treasure of food they contain. These granaries are provided adequate protection, mainly with rat guards, which are found on the upper part of the posts, and may be disc-shaped or rounded plate, knob- or pot-shaped, and cylindrical.

Rituals likewise accompany the building of houses in Apayao. From the initial act of looking for suitable wood in the forest, to the final completion of the binuron, the Isneg

act according to traditional beliefs. Some of the customs and practices that the Isneg follow are also faithfully observed in other Cordillera communities. This is how one account describes the practice (*Folk Architecture* 1989:24):

> When going to the forest to cut timber for a house, one observes the flight of a small red (or brown) bird, or listens to the sound it makes. The bird is called *i-chaw* or *i-do* in Ifugao, *labeg* in Kankanai, *idaw* in Bontoc and Kalinga, *idew* in Sagada, and *labag* in Apayao. If the bird flies across or opposite one's path, or if its call is a long and intermittent *pit…pit…pit…pit*, it bodes ill. One should turn back and wait for another day. If the bird flies in the same direction one is taking, and if its call is a short and continuous *pitpitpitpit*, it augurs well. Other unfavorable omens are a rainbow, the sneeze of a man or an animal, and a death in the village. Before cutting down a tree, a woodcutter kills a chicken, examines the bile sac. If it is good, his work begins, and if not, it is postponed…

Having built the house, an owner will now host the most important ritual in Isneg life, the say-am. First, a male dancer is selected for the dance performance. Then the female shaman offers betel nuts and throws rice grains to the spirits, in an act of propitiation, in case any kind of transgression has been committed at the place where the house has been built. The ceremony also serves to call the spirits to watch over the family. At a corner of the hearth inside the house, rice is planted and covered with ash. Offerings of homemade sweets to the spirits follow.**Visual Arts and Crafts**

Unlike other groups, the Isneg have no traditional or indigenous knowledge of cloth weaving or pottery making. Instead, they have procured articles of clothing, pots, and other materials from the lowland Ilocano traders, in exchange for their honey, beeswax, rope, baskets, and mats (Wilson 1967:10).

Nevertheless, Isneg women have been known to favor colorful garments as their traditional costume. These consist of both small and large *aken*, a wraparound piece of cloth. The small version is for everyday use, while the large one is for ceremonial occasions. They also wear the *badio*, a short-waisted, long-sleeved blouse which is either plain or heavily embroidered; a square head scarf; and sometimes a piece of cloth around 2 meters long, worn around the waist and which serves as a carrier for small articles. The usual colors for these articles of clothing are blue and its various shades often with narrow stripes in red and white.

Menfolk, on the other hand, have a traditional dress of dark-colored (often plain blue) G-string called *abag*. On special occasions, this is adorned with an *iput*, a lavishly colored tail attached to the back end, which generally consists of a thick tuft of long fringes. They wear an upper garment called *bado*, which has long sleeves and reaches down to the waist. The colors are usually grayish blue, although sometimes the Isneg also wear them in red and dark blue, occasionally black or purple. Isneg men also sport the *sipatal*, a breastpiece indicating one's social status (Reynolds and Grant 1973: 98-99; Vanoverbergh 1929:225).

The only decorative art that the Isneg have developed from earliest times is tattooing. There are names for the various types of tattoos. There are tattoos for men and tattoos for women. Isneg males tattoo their forearms down to the wrist and the middle part of the back of their hands. This basic type is called *hisi*, generally black in color, and of no particular design. The *andori* is the more ornate type, which appears on one or both arms, on the inside. It begins from the wrist and runs all the way to the biceps and the shoulders. The design is composed of mainly wedges, diamonds, and angular lines. The andori used to symbolize the status of an Isneg male who had killed any number of enemies. The more he killed, the longer the andori on his arms. This type is largely gone now, having been associated with the practice of headtaking. Another type is the *babalakay* (spider), which is tattooed in front of one or both of a man's thighs. This is either a cross-shaped figure with twiglike extensions at the ends, or several lines radiating from a small imaginary circle, suggesting an arachnid but also rather sunlike in appearance. The women decorate themselves with one of three types of tattooing. One is the andori, which the Isneg woman is allowed to have on her arms if her father has killed any number of enemies in battle. She may have the *balalakat* tattoo on her throat and on either or both of her thighs, sometimes also on her forearm. Or it may be the *tutungrat*, a series of broken lines at the back of her hands, sometimes accompanied by some dots or short, parallel straight lines tattooed at the back of her fingers (Vanoverbergh 1929:228-232).

While the Isneg do not produce much basketry, they fashion some articles of useful application, such as spearheads, tattooing instruments, axes (*aliwa* for the men and *iko* for the women), and protective rain gear. Of the last item, there are two kinds. One is the *killohong*, a round hat made from palm leaves, strips of rattan, or bamboo, or sometimes carved out of a dried gourd, with a head-fitting structure attached inside. Another is the *ananga*, a kind of raincoat made of palm leaves. This gear has a woven base which closes in around the neck, while the tops of the leaves extend all around the body like an open fan, leaving only the front of the body partially exposed to the rain.

Literary Arts

Isneg oral tradition is rich in folk riddles. Many of these are structurally simple but elegant: two lines with a few syllables and rhymes at the end, presenting an enigma that must be guessed. Like most folk riddles, those of the Isneg encompass practically every aspect of human experience: men, women, children, the human body, ailments and defects, actions, food and drink, dress and ornament, buildings and structures, furniture and implements, animals, plants, the natural environment, and natural phenomena.

Here are some examples of the rhyming riddles (Vanoverbergh 1976:37):

> *Apel Iggat*
> *Awan na di mamilgat.*
>
> The thigh of Iggat,
> where all scrape at. (Honey)

Bulinawan ka Gannad
Lipuliput amlad.

Black stone at Gannad,
surrounded by little fishes. (Mortar)

The rest of Vanoverbergh's collection of Isneg and Kankanay riddles gives only the English translations and explanations of the answers to riddles included under each of the general categories mentioned above. The following are examples: (1) "They are many following one another, and each one carries a nest." The answer is Aeta. The Aeta of the Apayao region, who inhabit the deep forest interior, go in single file when they travel and have wooly, kinky hair, that appear like "nests" on their heads; (2) "Someone is weeding all the time without any reason." The answer is a person rowing a boat, suggested by the motion of his hands as he/she propels himself/herself on the water; (3) "One *singit* post for the whole town." The answer is mayor. The singit is a short post, one of several, holding up the floor of the house; (4)"A basket full of pipes, one smells bad." The answer, too, is mayor. As Vanoverbergh put it: "The basket is the town full of people. The mayor smells bad, because the Isneg are not fond of the authorities established by the government. Clearly, a case of folk speech influenced by political acculturation; (5) "It dances on the floor and has no sound, it dances on the rock and resounds." The answer is a blacksmith's hammer; (6) "A very large *bunga* tree with only two branches." The answer is carabao, which has two horns; (7) "Half a bamboo, it can be seen from afar." The answer is rainbow; (8)"A small rooster going to America and coming back the same day." The answer is telephone or airplane; and (9) "We cannot say it except at the time of harvest." The answer is riddle (Vanoverbergh 1976:40-155; 1953:54, 64, 67).

The Isneg have stories and fables, some of them humorous, which explain events and phenomena, relationships between people and their surroundings, or which are simply meant to be humorous and entertaining.

There is a story about why birds steal people's grains. It is said that long, long ago, a man had no grains and he went hungry. Birds came and offered to give him seeds of rice and corn from a certain rock in a faraway place. The man was supposed to plant these, then share the harvest with the birds. He agreed, whereupon the birds fetched the seeds. The man planted the seeds, but reneged on his promise to share the harvest. Since that perfidy, rice birds have been attacking the rice plant and crows have been damaging the corn, as a punishment for the man who broke his promise.

Another tale is set in the proverbial "time of plenty" and relates why rice grains became so small people had to work hard to harvest them. It is said that once upon a time, food was plentiful. Also, people were kind, gentle, and not given to war. Then, rice grains were so big that one was enough to feed a person. Rice grew abundantly everywhere, and didn't have to be sown in the ground. It appeared and rolled around in innumerable quantity. A woman and her daughter began worrying. People had built their granaries small, and there were not enough to contain the never-ending rice. So

the two began building a bigger granary. While doing so, rice grains kept rolling in. The woman got mad, and she struck one of them. "Why do you come when you're not wanted? Can't you wait till the new granary is ready?" The grain shattered into a thousand tiny pieces. "All right," the pieces said, "we'll never come again. We'll stay on stalks until you want us. From this day on, you'll have to work hard to get us" (*Folk Architecture* 1989:42-43).

The Isneg explain the origin of things and natural phenomena in their stories. Two of these phenomena are the *sal-it* (lightning) and *addug* (thunder). One tale recounts that once upon a time there was a man who held the world in his hands. Once in a while, he would roll a cigar, then strike together his flint and steel, or iron and stone to produce a spark for his cigar. This spark is the bright, zigzagging streak of fire seen in the sky. When this fire alights on the people, it eats their brains, and when it alights on trees, it eats the weevils. Now the thunder, it is said, is the water that roars in the sky. It is actually found in the lowest part of the sky, among those huge knobbed stones known as clouds. When it rains, the water in the sky increases, and the big stones begin to roll. And that is the loud noise we hear (Eugenio 1989:29).

The story of the judge and the fly, which sounds like a variation on a familiar theme, is a good example of Isneg humor. The story narrates that once there was a man who had a cow. One evening, he untied the cow and brought her to graze on the *kappay* grass. The place was far from his house. Early the next morning, he went to see his cow, only to find her dead. On closer look, he saw a dead and squashed fly on the body of his cow. He reported the matter to the judge who ruled that henceforth flies could be killed anytime, anywhere. One day, the man went for a walk, passing by the house of the judge, who happened to be sitting on a bench in front of his house. On the forehead of the judge was a fly. He was mad at the sight of that fly, because it reminded him of his dead cow. Whereupon he looked around for a piece of kindling wood, and finding one, jumped in front of the judge and clubbed the fly. The fly died but the judge's head was severely injured. An investigation was made but because the judge had said no person could be imprisoned if he/she killed a fly, the man was not imprisoned (Vanoverbergh 1955).**Performing Arts**

Some Isneg possess skills in traditional oral arts, such as the *magpayaw* (shouters), the singers of the *oggayam*, and the debaters who joust with *anenas* (oral poetry). There are others held in esteem as musicians, such as those who display prowess in playing the difficult *gorabil*, a bamboo violin (Reynolds and Grant 1973:75).

Music plays an important part in social intercourse. Once a young man has decided on who he is going to court, he starts wooing with his *baling* (nose flute) or his *orbao* (jew's harp). Or he might sing to her a *dissodi* (courting song). On solemn occasions such as burial, feasting precedes the actual rites. The food is provided by the dead person's relatives. During this feast, gongs are beaten, and the community participates in dancing and the drinking of basi.

There are two general types of dance among the Isneg, the *taduk* and the *talip.* In both

dances, the girls and the boys have specific roles to play. Generally, only unmarried girls take part in dancing. Usually, the same three or four girls take turns, repeatedly. On the other hand, most of the boys and men, married as well as unmarried, are expected to join the circle. Those who display skill, especially in the fast-beat talip, win the applause of the crowd (Reynolds and Grant 1973:73).

There are other specialized dances for festive occasions. *Balengente* is a festival dance which starts with a brave warrior shouting and performing movements that dramatize his successful headtaking foray. The villagers follow him and join in the feasting as the warrior dances with the "head" of his enemy.

There are many variations of the courtship dance. In one version, a ceremonial blanket is flapped by the female like the wings of a bird in flight. The man's movements, on the other hand, resemble those of a fighting cock springing into the air. Another courtship dance, the *pingpingaw* (swallow), imitates the movements of this swift bird, again with the use of colorful blankets.

Turayan (flying bird) is a dance similar to the Bontoc version of the same name. In this, three dancers, two women and a man, imitate the movements of the turayan as it flies, glides, and swoops. The dancers move about with their arms outstretched, simulating birds in flight. • E. Maranan, with notes from E. A. Manuel/Reviewed by F. Hornedo.

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