

“Kankanay,” also “Kankanai,” “Kankana-i” or “Kankana-ey,” has no definite etymological derivation. It refers to the culture, the language, and the people who, together with a neighboring group called Ibaloy, comprise the Igorot of Benguet, the southernmost province of the Cordillera region. After the Ifugao and the Bontoc, the Kankanay are the third largest cultural community in the mountain provinces of northern Luzon. In 1988 their population was estimated at 125,000. The Kankanay language is related to the languages of the Ifugao and the Bontoc, two groups with which the Kankanay share geographical borders.

There are two Kankanay groups: the northern Kankanay, also called Lepanto Igorot, and the southern Kankanay. Most of the northern Kankanay are actually located not in Benguet but in the southwestern part of Mountain Province (Bontoc), and inhabit the municipalities of Besao, Sagada, Tadian, Bauko, and Sabangan. The southern Kankanay, on the other hand, are found in the municipalities of Mankayan, Bakun, Kibungan, Buguias, and the upper half of Kapangan in Benguet. “Benguet” is also a term used for the southern group of Kankanay, as well as for the other group of Benguet Igorot, the Ibaloy, who inhabit the lower half and the most urbanized parts of the province, which include the vegetable-growing valley of La Trinidad and the melting-pot city of Baguio.

In physical characteristics, there are hardly any differences between the northern and southern Kankanay. Both have brown skin, sometimes tattooed, large eyes, and prominent cheekbones. The two groups are culturally one, with similar institutions, beliefs, and practices.

The more ancient northern Kankanay were called “Lepanto” by the Spanish colonizers. This refers to an administration area whose boundaries have changed through successive colonial regimes, but was known as the missing center of the Cordillera.

The southern Kankanay appear to be an expansion of the northern Kankanay group. The settlements in the south seem to belong to the historic period, as evidenced by the small acreage built for rice-terrace culture.

## **History**

Both northern and southern Kankanay have always been rice-terracing agriculturists. The original 34 villages of the northern Kankanay, located on high slopes of the central Cordillera range, are concentrated near the Kayan-Bauko and Sumadel-Besao areas. These communities appear to have existed long before the coming of the Spaniards to the archipelago. Proof is the extensiveness of their rice terraces, which must have taken a considerable period to build. The fact that these terraces, and the names of the first communities, were noted in the records of the first Spanish expedition to the Cordilleras in 1665, is a confirmation of early Kankanay civilization.

Several reasons have been advanced for the division of the Kankanay into two. One reason is that the group that went up to the hills could not afford to have another group control the source of water, after they were driven away from the coastal belt (Keesing 1968:3). Another reason proposed is that the salutary climate of the Cordillera highlands, with its lush green vegetation and other natural riches, may have attracted the ancestors of the present mountain dwellers to go beyond the “malaria-ridden jungle belt” that stops at the 1,000-meter line of the mountains. The northern Kankanay occupy a region which averages 2,000 meters above sea level. They may have arrived at their present location due to the process of displacement; or they may have naturally gravitated to a terrain more to their liking or to one that is similar to southern China, which, according to one theory, was their ancestral homeland. The forebears of the northern Kankanay started building rice terraces near the villages.

At the same time, their contiguousness to the lowlands (the foothills and coastal plains of the Ilocos region lie across the boundary to the west) made them more susceptible than the Bontoc, Ifugao, and other mountain people to external influence, but less vulnerable than the Tinguian and the Ibaloy who were even nearer and more accessible to both the Spanish colonial forces and the Filipino lowlanders and settlers. The Spaniards had occupied the adjacent lowlands as early as 1572, but it was only after a hundred years that they were able to reach the territory of the northern Kankanay.

The Spaniards went up the Cordillera in search of the fabled gold. After three years, they left the area, unable to maintain their outposts, and for almost 150 years, the northern Kankanay were left unmolested, and what contact there was between the people of the highlands and the lowlands was through limited trade. The Spaniards came back in the first part of the 19th century and established a politico-military comandancia in the Lepanto district in 1852. The Kankanay put up some resistance. Headhunting was part of this mountain culture, a practice which the colonialists—first the Spaniards and later the Americans—sought to end.

Spanish control through the force of arms and proselytization eventually set in. Mankayan’s copper mines were opened to exploitation by a Spanish mining company. People in some districts were compelled by the Spanish authorities to grow coffee and tobacco for the colonial government. Missions and schools were put up in certain areas (Keesing 1968:4).

The homeland of the northern Kankanay saw access roads built to reach it from the Ilocos coastal region, and these new routes facilitated the influx of Spaniards, Filipino lowlanders, and Chinese traders. The opening of the western flank of the Cordillera set into motion the acculturative processes of Christianization, urbanization, political modernization, and integration of a highland agricultural society to a market economy.

The war between Spanish and American forces, and the subsequent war of independence by Filipino revolutionaries against the new colonial forces eventually involved the Igorot. While the Philippines was at war, age-old hostilities between the

Lepanto Igorot and the Bontoc— traditional rivals—were revived. Headtaking resurged for some time, until the American regime stopped it in 1902. Kankanay, Bontoc, Ifugao, and other Cordillera groups were integrated under the new politico-military dispensation. Christianity, military service, and education created a new Igorot identity for the Kankanay and the other Cordillera people, especially those who comprised the new educated elite.

## **Economy**

The Kankanay practice three types of agriculture: slash-and-burn, terracing for wet rice production, and horticulture. Close to their dwellings, the Kankanay may have little orchards which supply their fruit needs, as well as vegetable gardens and sweet potato patches. Sugarcane and tobacco are also cultivated for domestic consumption. The carabao-drawn plow is used in wider fields. Manual labor is employed in building and repairing the terraces, planting, weeding, and harvesting the rice fields.

Hunting and fishing are two other primary sources of food. Deer and wild boar are hunted with dogs and nets. The supply of meat is supplemented with chickens and pigs. Chickens are also sold for needed cash. The Kankanay, however, do not engage in raising poultry on a large scale. Aside from chickens and pigs, other domesticated animals are dogs, carabaos, goats, and cattle. The carabao, although the principal work animal, is occasionally slaughtered for expensive family and community feasts.

The Kankanay who live near streams or close to the water-filled rice terraces catch fish, which is not common fare in the mountains where the diet usually consists of rice, vegetables, and meat. Hand nets, poison, hook and line, or stream draining during the dry season are the methods used by the Kankanay in fishing (Llamzon 1978:65). Hunting and fishing have been severely affected because of the continuing denudation of the once vast timberlands of the Cordillera.

There are also part-time or seasonal occupations engaged in by carpenters who receive wages for work done. Pottery has been known for a long time, but recently, Kankanay potters have been losing their livelihood, or have seen it decline sharply as a result of the introduction of modern kitchenware from the lowlands. Other traditional crafts of the Kankanay include blacksmithing, basketry, and weaving. Rattan, which used to grow in abundance in forests surrounding Kankanay villages, is still available, and provides the Kankanay basket makers one of two primary materials (the other is bamboo) for executing intricate, creative, and meticulous designs on their baskets. Kankanay weaving, which still uses the backstrap loom, has produced cloth for household use and the domestic market. The usual Kankanay woven cloth is narrow, about 4.5 meters wide, and is as long as 2.1 meters. This is exported to other neighboring groups in exchange for cash, or for other items not produced in the Kankanay village (Llamzon 1978:66).

With the integration of Kankanay society into the cash economy, and with the

attraction of earning more cash income in urbanized places, a significant number of Kankanay, many of them in their teens, have sought to find employment in Baguio City and elsewhere. Some of them, in fact, have become lawyers, engineers, nurses, teachers, etc. Their earnings are spent for education, or sent home to buy metal tools, kitchenware, cloth, hats, sugar, salt, and other household needs.

## Political System

In the past, the *at-ato* was a focal point of communal unity. It was a meeting place where village elders gathered. It used to be located right in the middle of a settlement. The term is related to the Bontoc *ato*, designating the place where both the elders and the young boys gather to discuss. The Kankanay version was on a smaller scale, but its functions were possibly similar to those of the Bontoc *ato*. That headtaking, one of the major decision-making concerns in the council of elders, has entirely disappeared from Kankanay practice, may serve to explain the disappearance of the *at-ato*. The loss or abandonment of the *at-ato*, in turn, can explain in part the dispersed small settlements that are features of the cultural landscape. The institution of municipalities as political subunits of provincial governments has almost completely relegated the *at-ato* to history.

The *at-ato*, as it flourished in northern Kankanay society, was actually a subvillage grouping that mediated between the village unit and the house unit. *Dapay* was also a name used to refer to it. The Spaniards who exercised colonial control over local institutions, aware of the basic function of this “village section,” called it *tribunal* (Keesing 1968:9). The *at-ato* in the past was headed by a war leader, and it also had a priest. But the group itself was composed of the village menfolk, particularly the warriors who engaged in armed battles against other groups, and took heads as trophies. These heads were deposited in the *at-ato*, where the ceremonial *cañao* was also held after each successful engagement with the enemy.

There is no formal political leadership in Kankanay society, except that which is acknowledged by virtue of a Kankanay’s social class, knowledge of oral tradition, possession of healing powers, knowledge of agricultural rituals, and venerable wisdom which comes with age. Formal political leadership is a modern-day phenomenon, and it comes in the form of bureaucratic placement in the national-local government system.

The *kadangyan* or *baknang*, traditional Kankanay aristocracy, wields the biggest influence in their society, and during the colonial period were recruited as district *presidente* (president) or village *konsehal* (councilor), and upon retirement earned the title *kapitan* (captain). Being the local elite, they were the leading choice for filling up high positions in the colonial bureaucracy during the American occupation and in the government of the Philippine Republic.

The *manabig* (wise old men), “keepers of the lore and traditions,” are expected to

“define correct custom, interpret procedure in cañaos, remember significant matters from the past,” among other responsibilities. Since the manabig is called upon to solve personal and communal problems, he is accorded deep respect, and his services are compensated with meat, rice wine, or both (Keesing 1968:34).

The *manpudpud* (wise old women), on the other hand, specialize in curing illness. Mostly very old, they are said to have the gift of being able to talk to the spirits. They are consulted by families and individuals for the diagnosis and treatment of any kind of illness, for which they prescribe the proper cure and the appropriate cañao ceremonies. In a way, leadership is exercised by the manpudpud because they direct the actions of people, and mandate the proper social activities to be undertaken so that social harmony may be restored through the banishment of illness.

The *mamade* or *mamadur* (agricultural shamans) preside over the elaborate rice-harvest rituals. This leader, and each village had one, was keeper of the agricultural calendar and master of ceremonies in community and at-ato observances (Keesing 1968:35). The mamade could seek the counsel of the manabig whenever he wanted.

The *lakay* (respected elder) was a member of a group of leaders, collectively called *lalakay*, who formed the nucleus of the community councils. He supervised litigation, became witness to special negotiations such as property settlements, and assisted in the affairs of the village, the at-ato, and kin groupings (Keesing 1968:35). The word itself was borrowed from the Ilocano; the indigenous word for it is *manapat* or wise elder. The lalakay's word carried weight in community life, although not all elderly persons in a village could be acknowledged as a “respected elderly person.” In a village, there could be 10 such people, whose qualifications are advanced age, some amount of wealth, and past sponsorship of the *bayas* ceremony.

The at-ato, and the informal leadership of the above-mentioned elements of northern Kankanay society, have been transformed or muted by the assimilation of this group into a centralized national society. The transformation, nevertheless, has not completely wiped out these institutions. Thus, contemporary Kankanay leaders may still invoke the respect for the at-ato, and the social/spiritual elite who used to provide counsel in daily life.

### **Social Organization and Customs**

The basic social unit of the Kankanay is the family, which consists of husband and wife and their young children. Marriage is monogamous and is generally permanent when the couple has children. The family may also include older but unmarried children; aged parents who are too old to look after themselves or their own household or who have become widowed; and close relatives who cannot fend for themselves due to indigence or who have been left alone due to death or divorce. They are not expected to spend all their time in the house, however, because they may sleep

somewhere else “but come to the household for meals and participate in the [family’s] work, leisure and religious activities” (Keesing 1968:14).

The at-ato, the village meeting center, is a social institution meant for older boys and unmarried males in Kankanay society. They also use the at-ato as their sleeping quarter. Unmarried women, both adults and young girls who have reached the age of puberty, sleep in a designated dormitory. This sleeping place may be a house not being used by a regular household. Otherwise, it is a separate place built exclusively for this purpose. This house is called an ebgan. Independence from the household is the normal course of a young Kankanay boy or girl who has reached a certain age. Association or bonding with other adolescents prepares them for a new phase of relationships which will eventually lead to marriage.

Two main approaches to marriage are customary: parental arrangement, which is the old tradition, and courtship, which has increasingly gained favor among the new generation of Kankanay. In either case, parents of both parties participate in the process. The old tradition has not been inflexible. An individual’s choice of his or her marriage partner is not subject to disapproval from the parents, who recognize the right of a daughter or a son to make a choice. Even under the old system of parental arrangement, the Kankanay rarely enter into a parental agreement in which the children are still minors. Where such an agreement is enforced, it is mainly to preserve the wealth of the two families. But this parental arrangement can be set aside anytime by the children when they come of age (Llamzon 1978:66).

The girls who stay at the ebgan are visited by their suitors who live in their own dormitory. Like the young men and women of Bontoc and Ifugao society, sleeping together among the Kankanay of marrying age can only happen with the consent of the girl. After some time of getting acquainted, and even intimate with each other, the couple may decide to get married. The young man then informs the woman’s parents about their decision. Kankanay custom requires that he render service at the girl’s house for a week or a month. Should he merit the final approval of the girl’s parents through his conduct, and if the omens prove to be good, the wedding is set for solemnization at the girl’s house. There are intermediaries employed to make the nuptial arrangements, particularly in the wedding and ritual expenses which entail a number of animal offerings, such as carabaos, pigs, and chickens, a huge reserve of rice, and tapuy (rice wine). Bride-price, which used to be a primary consideration in Kankanay marriages, is no longer as important today. In the past, this consisted of animals, precious heirloom beads, blankets, woven cloth, rice, and other valuables, the quantity depending on the wealth of the boy’s family or the demands of the girl’s family (Llamzon 1978:66). The present practice is for both sides to contribute to the food to be consumed.

The newlyweds usually reside with the bride’s family while they are constructing their own house, or until such time that an unused house can be provided for them. They help out with work in the house, the yard, and the field as they prepare themselves for an independent life later. The parents may decide to allot a piece of

land for them to cultivate and to enable them to live on their own.

Mutual respect is observed by husband and wife, although decision making in most matters is patricentric. The man is expected to provide all the food needs of the family. He takes charge of clearing the land, but weeding and harvesting require their cooperative effort. House building is entirely man's work, but he gets assistance from kin or neighbors. The wife prepares the meals while the construction is in progress. In child delivery, the husband stays under the house, prepared for any eventuality, while his wife is being assisted upstairs in delivering their child.

In child rearing, the man participates almost equally with the woman, often carrying the child in a sling on his back while at work in the yard or in the field. When one of them dies, the surviving spouse either accommodates a married child with children in the household or joins a married offspring's family.

There is social stratification in Kankanay society. The *kadangyan* or *baknang* occupy the topmost rank as a hereditary "aristocracy" by virtue of their landholdings, capacity to conduct ritual activities, and other evidence of material wealth. At the bottom of the social scale are the *kodo* (the poor), who are individuals or families who do not own rice lands or other possessions of measurable value. They make do with whatever inferior food they can avail themselves of, or earn their keep by working for others. The *kodo* are often individuals who have descended from lineages which have been for generations impoverished and dependent on servitude for others. At the middle of these two extremes is an intermediate class of independent property holders called *komidwa* (second rank). Even within the *kadangyan* class, however, there are gradations of prestige and status, depending on the degree of relationship to the main "aristocratic lines" (Keesing 1968:29). The members of the two higher-ranked classes may not have their fortunes intact every time, as when they go into land mortgages, or when a series of unfavorable omens may require them to host prolonged, expensive ritual sacrifices.

In hosting their extravagant festivities, the Kankanay *kadangyan* are not only propitiating the spirits to keep them in health and in wealth, but also to give themselves an opportunity to share their blessings with the less-advantaged Kankanay in the community. Thus, in asking for more, they wish to be able to share more. A chant sung by the *kadangyan*, addressed to the Kankanay *kodo*, reflects this kind of attitude (Casal 1986: 60):

Work for us to become rich  
so while we live there will be  
the giving of meat,  
there will be gifts for you  
and the gods will have things given to them.  
Increase the flocks we feed  
so there may be celebrations  
of community feasts again!

Since marriages have always tended to take place within socially homogenous circles, class distinctions have been stabilized over time. However, contemporary Kankanay society, as elsewhere throughout the Cordillera region, has been undergoing processes of political, economic, social, and cultural change. These processes actually began with Spanish colonial exactions before the 20th century, as well as with the introduction of new diseases and epidemics which required frequent ritual propitiatory sacrifices which drained the old kadangyan's economic resources. Afterwards, the American colonial administration saw the rise of a new political and economic elite, with new sources of power and prestige, even as old ones were closed (Keesing 1968:29). War and headtaking, from which the elite drew prestige and status through their exploits, ceased to be normal activities a long time ago. Furthermore, a socioeconomic class that can be described as "newly rich" has entered the picture. They include the mixed-blood descendants of Ilocano and Chinese traders who traveled to the Cordilleras, set up their businesses (trading and vegetable farming), and intermarried. And finally, elite recruitment into the modern political system has been possible even among nontraditional elite classes, as a result of educational attainment, experience in electoral politics, and wealth acquired through business and professional practice.

As early as the 1930s, Keesing (1968) made a caustic observation on the changing nature of the traditional kadangyan:

These [modernizing] trends have gone considerably further among the Ibaloy and the coastal Kankanay and Amburayan peoples...such individuals have been in a position to monopolize the political and economic advantages provided in the new order; many of them have shed off their economic, social, and ritual responsibilities that made them formerly in a sense the servants as well as the leaders of their communities...

The kadangyan, nevertheless, have remained as leading figures in Kankanay society. The aristocratic lineage of the kadangyan is traced, through oral tradition, to the very figure of Lumawig, the culture-hero of many Igorot groups, "who accumulated wealth and introduced the type of *kanyaw* called *bayas* which validates a person's standing as kadangyan" (Keesing 1968:31). In the past, social homogeneity in the kadangyan class was made possible by marriages within the class and between kadangyan from different villages. There has been greater upward—as well as downward—mobility in Kankanay society. Some of those who have managed to retain their traditional upper-class standing in Kankanay society may still be practicing the duties of the classic kadangyan, although in altered forms. These duties include maintaining and enhancing the status of the family name by successful management of the inherited and acquired property, making the fields and the livestock productive, overseeing the work and securing the welfare of his dependents, conserving resources for the "supreme socioeconomic exercise of hosting a bayas feast, and passing on this entire heritage intact to the next generation of Kankanay" (Keesing 1968:32). **Religious Beliefs and Practices**

The supernatural world of the Kankanay is replete with male and female god figures,



as well as spirit-beings, who comprise a hierarchy of deities under one supreme entity called Kabunian, creator of all beings and living things in the world. Kabunian is mainly responsible for the welfare and general well-being of all those he created. He is also looked upon as the supreme master who taught humans everything they need to know for life, such as making fire, the cultivation of rice, and marriage rituals. Desirous of a peaceful and bountiful life, the Kankanay utter the words “Itunin sang kabunayen” (Thank you, Kabunian) at every fortuitous turn of events (Demetrio et al. 1991:14-15).

Next to Kabunian is a descending order of lesser gods and spirits. The male gods are Lumawig, Kabigat, Soyan, Okalan, and Balitok. The female gods are Moan, Daongen, Angtan, Bangan, Gatan, and Oboy. Their names are recited and invoked by the Kankanay in various rituals, so that they may intercede for people and facilitate the granting of favors needed or desired.

Part of Kankanay cosmology is the story of how the spirits dwelling on earth actually came from the descendants of two mortal beings, Lumawig and Bangan, who were the first creatures on earth. They were the survivors of a great deluge which occurred thousands of years ago, and which was caused by Kabunian, who commanded the waters of the seas to rise, until all the existing land was inundated. The only place untouched was a mountaintop where Lumawig and Bangan had sought refuge. After the flood subsided, Kabunian ordered the two to become husband and wife, so that the earth could be populated again. But Lumawig and Bangan refused, because they were brother and sister. They would only do so, they said, if the Supreme Being could make them laugh, and thus the two siblings were tricked into marrying each other. Lumawig and Bangan had four children in all. One was given the task of performing the *cañao*. This child's descendants became the Igorot. The second was assigned to weave cloth or *abel*, and became the ancestor of the Ilocano. The third was given the power of issuing commands, and his descendants became known as the “Merkanos.” The fourth child was destined to become a spirit who would inhabit stones and trees, and became the ancestor of the malevolent spirits whom we know today as the *tumungaw* or *mangmangkik*.

The *tumungaw* or *mangmangkik* cause various illnesses, and are also responsible for typhoons, epidemics, and other calamities. Four spirits are feared the most: *Insaking*, *Buduan*, *Kise-an*, and *Putitik*. They inhabit the big heart-shaped stone on the mountain of Tenglawan. When displeased, these spirits cause stomachaches in human beings. Other minor gods and the ailments they bring include the following: *liblibayan*, spirits who cause pains in the abdomen; *an-antipakao*, spirits who create reddish spots all over the body; *penten*, spirits who cause accidental death; *kakading*, souls of the dead who cause colds, headaches, or fever; *pinad-ing*, invisible spirits usually in human form who protect people from typhoons and epidemics. The *liblibayan* and *an-antipakao* spirits live in sitios where there are people, while the *penten* inhabit the rivers, springs, and other water bodies. These spirits react angrily whenever people trespass on their territory. The malevolent spirits are believed to be under the sway of a still more powerful and cruel being, known as Mantis Bilig—the god of death and

destruction. On the other side, there are benevolent spirits, called *kading* and *pinad-ing*, whose protection is sought against ills and misfortunes.

These deities and spirit-beings are invoked by the Kankanay in their rites and rituals related to life, livelihood, and death. Most, if not all, of the rites and rituals are performed by the *mambunong* who reads from the bile sac or liver of a sacrificial animal the sentiments or attitudes of the spirits toward the propitiating or transgressing human being.

There are also female mediums called *manggengey*. Both *mambunong* and *manggengey* inherit their religious position from parents who were themselves spiritual leaders. Another hereditary position is that of the *mamade* or *mamadur* (agricultural priest), who can be replaced if the rituals he performs fail to produce the good harvest prayed for by the community. Another religious position is that of the *balsun*, who may be called upon to perform rituals for a specific occasion or purpose, in which he is recognized to be most knowledgeable.

There is a great variety of rites and ceremonies practiced by the Kankanay. Several types of economic activities such as planting, harvesting, house building, or digging irrigation ditches call for the performance of these rites. A whole village, or a family financially capable of throwing a feast, takes responsibility for the holding of big and elaborate rites. For determining the cause of illness or divination of events, simpler rites are performed by an individual or by a family group.

One of the ritual ceremonies already mentioned is the *bayas*. This *cañao* or feast is the most important festival in northern Kankanay society, which is hosted by the *kadangyan*, and involves the slaughter of many animals. Only a person of means can afford the amount of food consumed. During the *bayas*, the *kadangyan* calls upon his ancestral spirits, and appeals for their continued support for his prosperity. Relatives, villagers, and visitors from other places are all invited to the *bayas* ritual. During times of plenty, the *bayas* would be celebrated at least every three or four years, but in recent years the interval has become longer.

The rites observed in connection with the agricultural cycle are deemed indispensable because the whole success of planting and harvesting, i.e., survival itself, may depend entirely on such observance.

*Manteneng* is a ritual which begins the planting phase. Here, the owner of the rice field plants the first two or three rice seedlings, and recites a prayer asking the spirits of the field to help the plant grow tall. Only after this will the other workers begin the planting of the rest of the seedlings.

*Legleg* is performed to improve the growth of the plants. This is done whenever the *bonabon* seedlings show telltale signs of withering. A chicken is killed, and is offered to the spirits of the field, trees, rocks, and other things in the surroundings believed to have been angered or displeased. Four or five long feathers of the chicken are pulled

out and stuck into the site where the bonabon are planted. If the seedlings do not show any sign of improvement, the ritual is repeated, this time with more sacrificial chickens.

The *an-anito* is similar to the legleg, except that it is performed to seek intercession for an ailing person.

Harvest entails a different set of rituals. On the first day, the rice fields are declared off-limits to strangers. Along trails, crossed bamboo sticks called puwat are laid out as a warning to passersby against intruding. The owner of the field cuts a handful of rice stalks, and recites a prayer asking for a bountiful crop. Then, the other reapers proceed to cut the rest of the harvest. Nobody is allowed to leave at anytime throughout the day, to prevent “loss of luck.”

The opening of a *baeg* (granary) by a family for rice pounding is an event with its own ritual. The head of the household declares an *abayas* (holiday) which lasts two days. The father opens the granary, and takes out as many bundles as required for the period of celebration.

The largest and most important of community celebrations among the Kankanay is the *pakde* or *begnas*. This is observed for a variety of purposes. When called to ensure an abundant rice harvest, it takes place sometime during May, a month before the actual harvest. It may also be observed when a person dies to ask for the protection and favors of the benevolent deities. The village elders may decide to hold the rites, after the observance of a *bagat* or big feast by a family to regain luck for the community. Or the occasion might be to celebrate a strange event, such as lightning striking a tree near a house or near a spot where people have assembled, which is interpreted as Kabunian himself speaking. A *pakde* or *begnas* serves to appease him. This usually takes place during the rainy season, when lightning is most frequent. The celebration is held for one day and one night with preparations of food and water, and tapuy. On the day of the feast, men with bolo and spears come out of their houses and proceed to the village borders, to put up barricades across all entrances. Others take up their spears and accompany the mambunong to a sacred spot where there is a wooden structure called *pakedlan*. On this a pig is butchered and offered to the guardian deities of the village. The *pakedlan* is usually built by the mambunong at one end of the village. It consists of a solitary wooden post about 1.3 meters in height, with large white stones laid on the ground surrounding it.

Simpler rites, mainly for the purpose of divining the causes of illness, are also observed. Disease is attributed to the workings of malevolent spirits or angered deities. These divinatory rites, performed by a *man-anap* (medicine man or woman) are of various types. In *baknao*, the diviner makes use of a coconut shell filled with water. The shell is covered, and a prayer is recited over it. The diviner removes the cover and tries to read in the water the name of the spirit or deity which has caused the disease. In *buyan*, a stone, a string, and a bracelet are used by the diviner, who ties one end of the string to the bracelet and the other end to the stone. While holding up

the stone, he/she calls out the names of various spirits. The spirit who causes the dangling stone to move is deemed the cause of the illness. In *sip-ok*, the diviner takes a bottle upside down, and puts *budbud* (yeast) on its bottom. Praying over it, he implores Kabunian to help reveal the cause of sickness and the type of sacrifice required in curing it. The diviners are called by the particular medium or method they use in the ritual: *mambaknao*, *man-buyan*, *mansip-ok*.

These divinatory rites are then followed by a sacrificial feast called *an-anito* or *mansenga*. Animals are butchered and offered to the spirits believed to be the causes of ailments.

### **Architecture and Community Planning**

Traditionally, the Kankanay village was set on the hump of a hill whose elevation afforded a natural defensive advantage against neighboring groups. Today, Kankanay villages are located near the headwaters of a stream or river, since irrigation water is needed for the rice terraces. A typical village of the northern Kankanay or Lepanto Igorot would have at least 700 inhabitants, occupying a cluster of some 150 houses. Slopes of hills or mountains are leveled to allow the houses to be built. Near this village is a sacred grove of trees which is used as a place for ritual sacrifices or performances. The village also includes the rice terraces whose walls serve as pathways, a nearby peak which serves as a “sacred mountain,” certain places on the outskirts where omen reading and other rituals may be observed, and burial places along the cliffs and slopes.

There are three main house types: the *binangiyan*, the *apa* or *inapa*, and the *allao*. The first type is generally for the prosperous members of the community, while the *apa* and the *allao* are for the less well-off. The *binangiyan*, which is similar to the Ifugao house, has a high, hipped roof with the ridge parallel to the front. Its roof drops down to about 1.5 meters from the ground, thus covering the house cage from view. The house itself rests upon a structure consisting of three joists on two girders on four posts. Close to the ground, there is a wooden platform stretching out to the eaves. This is made of several broad planks laid together above the ground, instead of stone blocks set on the earth. This space is used for weaving and cooking. Stone is used as pavement around the house. The interior consists of a sleeping area, kitchen (with a hearth in one corner), and storage space for utensils. The space formed by the roof and the walls become useful for storage.

The floor, which is about 1.5 meters above the ground, is not enclosed, enabling members of the household to do chores, such as weaving, making baskets, and splitting wood. There is an opening to one side, leading to a narrow passageway which is protected by a sliding door. A pigpen may be found in one of the end corners. The living room is upstairs, which is also the sleeping and dining area. The attic space formed by the high roof is used to store rice. There are no windows except a small opening in the roof serving as a smoke vent. The low eaves afford protection

against heavy rains. The house has only one entrance, the front door, the access to which is a slender detachable ladder. Vertical flutings decorate the door panels, while horizontal wavelike flutings are a feature of the beams and joists. There are no disc-shaped rat guards under the girders of the house.

The *apa* and the *allao*, which are dwellings for the less prosperous Kankanay, are built more simply than the *binangiyan*. Like the poor Ifugao's abode, the *apa* has walls which are perpendicular to the ground, with the four main posts standing directly in the corners. The material used for the floor is split bamboo and lengths of *runo*. Although the roof is conical, as in the *binangiyan*, it is lower and closer to the ground. The *allao*, on the other hand, has a rectangular floor. Its gable-shaped roof slopes down beyond the floor towards the ground and thus the simple structure has no need for walls.

Changes in Kankanay architecture were brought about by contact with the outside. Apart from the *binangiyan*, *apa*, and *allao*, there is the *inalteb*, which is not indigenous but rather similar to a house in the lowlands. It has a gable-shaped roof, short eaves, and one or two windows. There is also, increasingly, the modern bungalow type of mixed materials, as well as the *tinabla*, a combination of the *inalteb* and other modern designs.

The *binangiyan* is the durable example of a functional, all-purpose, practical indigenous dwelling, with plenty of living and storage space, sufficient protection against the rain, and insulation against the cold. For further warmth and comfort, the Kankanay family keeps a fire burning in an elevated hearth located on one side of the main interior.

## Visual Arts and Crafts

The ordinary everyday costume for the Kankanay male is the *wanes* (G-string). This is usually white with colored borders, or sometimes dark blue with red stripes and decorated ends. For the female it is the *bak-ut* or *getap* (wraparound skirt). Upper bodies are sometimes covered with the *galey* (a kind of blanket) as a protection against the cold. The blanket incorporates red and blue panels of varying widths, with figures of mortars, snakes, or some anthropomorphic figures. Children are given only the *galey* for covering until they are six or seven years old, when they start wearing their own *wanes* or *getap*. The women also wear a white blouse with short sleeves which are open in front but are buttoned up at the upper end. The *getap* is usually kept in place with a *bakget* (girdle), a piece of cloth about 7.5 to 10 centimeters wide, and tightly wound twice around the waist. The women weave all the clothing material used for the *wanes*, *getap*, *galey*, and *bakget*. The material usually comes in long, narrow pieces which are sewn together, the number of seams depending on the purpose for which it would be used. The color of this material is usually blue and white, with red, dark blue designs, and red and yellow stripes. A *badbad* (head cloth) made of either *abel* or *kuba* (bark) is worn by the men to cover their short hair. Occasionally, the Kankanay male decorates his head cloth with feathers, leaves,

and even carabao horns. Women like wearing necklaces adorned with various kinds of stones and beads. They take to wearing collars made of brass or matted rattan, as well as stone and seed bracelets, earrings of copper wire, and head decorations made of beads, beans, and grass. C-shaped earrings are still worn by both male and female Kankanay.

The other ornamentation known to the Kankanay is body tattooing. The tattoo art of central Benguet comes in exquisite patterns of curved and straight lines, with designs executed in indigo blue. The tattoo is pricked on the breasts and arms of men and women. The Kankanay use a small piece of wood they call *gisi*, to which are attached three iron points. The same method of tattooing employed by the Ibaloy is used by the Kankanay, which means adorning the arms from above the elbow down to the knuckles with elaborate, extensive tattoos made up of crisscross, horizontal, vertical, and curvilinear patterns. Among the menfolk, tattoos have become more and more scarce. It is the women who have kept up this customary adornment, often sporting the tattoo on their forearms.

Apart from cloth weaving with the backloom, the Kankanay also engage in the crafting of baskets out of rattan and bamboo, whose sizes and shapes vary according to use. They also produce wooden bowls, shields, and vases with covers which are usually carved with human or lizard figures on top, on the sides, or underneath.

## Literary Arts

The Kankanay have a rich collection of riddles which cover a wide range of topics, such as people, the human body, ailments, actions, food and drink, dress and adornment, buildings and structures, animals, plants, and natural phenomena. Most Kankanay riddles consist of two parts or statements, both with assonantal rhyme. Here are three examples:

*Wad-an esay lakey*  
*Mangguyguyud si uey.*

There is an old man  
Who's dragging rattan. (A rat)

*Pising ed Kamaligan*  
*adi kasabaligan.*

A taro at Kamaligan  
cannot be moistened by rain. (The eye)

*Tain Balteng*  
*adi kakkeng.*

Balting's excrement  
the nail cannot dent. (A stone)

The telling and retelling of the origin of human beings and spirit-beings, as well as of the natural world, form the colorful body of oral tradition handed down through generations of Kankanay. The myth of the origin of things, and the way by which the external world is perceived and treated, are tightly bound with the worship of the god Kabunian.

The Kankanay do not have long, protracted epics on the scale of the *Ifugao Hudhud* and the *Kalinga Ullalim*. What the Kankanay do have are the *sudsud*, short tales which are recounted in gatherings of adults, or when they are working in the fields during harvest time, doing work at home or around the house yard, or even when just relaxing in their leisure time. There are *sudsud* for children, told to them by elders for their amusement. Such stories would be less serious in tone and in subject than the stories told among adults. Some stories are actually songs, such as the *day-eng*, which are recited by men and women, old and young, rich and poor, alone or in groups, day or night, at work or at play, in praise of a hero or to rock a child to sleep. These are usually sung to a drawling, rather monotonous tune, using words which either have no meaning at all or whose meaning has been obscured by the passage of time, and yet are understood in their entirety because the themes are well known from past and continuous retelling (Vanoverbergh 1978:83).

The *day-eng* songs are what could be considered the equivalent of legends and fables. The themes of the *day-eng* would either be tragic, heroic, or comic. There are often human characters in these stories, just as there are animals given human attributes and undergoing the same gamut of experiences as their human counterparts. While the *sudsud* and the *day-eng* may be about some legendary heroes and characters in Kankanay folklore, they do not form a part of religious rites. Instead, another story form which recounts the adventures of spirits is narrated at public and private sacrificial rituals. These stories are called *kapia* (prayer).

In Kankanay tales, the most recurring characters are those of Gatan, Bangan, Lawigan, and Bugan. Gatan is a mythological hero who is always successful in his undertakings, and enjoys the protection of Kabunian. He has the magical power to work wonders, and exhibits truly suprahuman qualities common in mythic god-hero characters. It is said, for instance, that vegetation breaks into flames at Gatan's approach. Bangan is the female counterpart of Gatan, frequently depicted as opulent and powerful, possessing objects made entirely of gold, and physically so constituted that her delicateness "melts in the sun." She is sometimes described as riding a horse, or laid out on a hammock, or personifying the rainbow in the sweep of her beauty and grandeur. Lawigan is the most popular and persistent of the mythic names. Many tales give him a leading role, although sometimes he assumes a subordinate position as the son of the leading hero, or his younger brother, cousin, neighbor, and other alter egos. Bugan is often associated with Lawigan as his female counterpart, although she first appears in the cosmology as the sister-wife of Lumawig (probably the original name of Lawigan). From their union came the first people of the earth.

In Vanoverbergh's study of Kankanay tales, the following appear to be the main content of the stories: marriage and family life among the Kankanay, social customs and traditions, religious values, beliefs and practices, and tales of magic and imagination.

Here are two short tales recorded by Damiana Eugenio (1989: 291,318). The first tells of how the thunder and the lightning came to be:

Long ago, Lumawig came to the earth and married a girl. She had many sisters. They were jealous because he did not marry any of them. They put garlic under the bed of the couple. Lumawig smelled the garlic and he did not like the smell. He said to his wife: "I shall return to the sky. I shall take half of our child and leave you the other half." He divided the child into two parts, and took the head. The head was angry because it did not have its body, and it talked very loudly as it complained. Lumawig made it a body and gave it legs, and this head became the thunder. The half that Lumawig left behind could not talk, but Lumawig came back for it, made a head for it, and this creature later married the thunder, and it became the lightning.

The second tale speaks of the origin of the human race:

Long ago, the gods came to the earth, but there were no people. They said, "It would be good if there were people. We shall create a man and woman." They took some earth and made two people and let them stand. They plucked the feathers from a chicken and made the chicken jump. "We shall make them laugh so that they will be alive." Then one of the creatures laughed. It became a man. The other heard the first one laugh, and laughed also. It became a woman.

### **Performing Arts**

The musical instruments of the Kankanay are identical with those used by other Cordillera groups, such as the *gangsa* (flat brass gongs), *diwdiw-as* (pan pipe), *bunkaka* or *bilbil* (bamboo buzzer), *sulibaw* (hollow wooden drum, used also by the Ibaloy), *afiw* (bamboo  Jew's harp), and several flute types. The *gangsa* is played solo or in an ensemble, particularly by men performing a dance. The other instruments are played either to accompany songs or as a means of entertaining people.

Kankanay songs contain not only rhythm and rhyme but also poetic expressions and terms that are not used in ordinary speech (Vanoverbergh 1978:1). Aside from the *day-eng* which contain Kankanay fables and legends, there are *day-eng* sung at any time, which consist of dialogues between men and women, as well as *day-eng* cradle songs sung by Kankanay mothers as they put their babies to sleep.

The *daing* are songs which are performed during a solemn sacrifice. They consist of an exchange between a man and a woman, or between a group of men and a group of women. One side repeats the last part of its counterpart's words to begin their reply. The other side does the same thing, and so on, creating a dialogue in the form of a cycle. Two types of *daing* are the *dayyakus* which is used during the sacrificial rituals



performed by a headhunter; and the *ayugga*, whose tempo is much quicker than that of the ordinary daing.

The *daday* are songs which are sung at the outskirts of the village. The song is a dialogue between the women of the village and a girl, an outsider, who has come to marry a boy from the village. The song ends with the triumphant entry of the girl having been accepted by the women of the village.

“Swinging” songs are rather short, and are sung by men or women. Some swinging songs are in the form of a dialogue, or verbal and vocal contests, between a girl who sits upon a swing and a young man who stands nearby. If the girl loses her momentum in the dialogue, she also loses the contest and must accept the boy’s proposal. It is usual that the girl agrees to the contest because she already likes the boy, and Kankanay girls are conceded to be better practitioners of this musical art than the boys.

There are two kinds of mourning songs: *soso*, which are used on the occasion of a person’s death or burial, and the *dasay*, sung when a person is about to breath his last.

The *bindian* or *bendean* is a combined victory or war dance, and a festive dance in thanksgiving for good fortune, such as a bountiful harvest. The hand movements are poised downward, suggesting the people’s close affinity to the earth. The basic dance step consists of the stomping of the left foot. The instrumentalists beat their gangsa as they lead the dancers in varied formations. Among the southern Benguet Igorot, this festival is called *chungas*. The Lepanto Igorot perform this dance primarily during the harvest season.

*Tamong* is a dance meant to expedite the healing of the sick. *Tayaw* is another dance performed for the same purpose, accompanied by the offering of sacrificial pigs to Kabunian. Tapuy is served to the dancers who perform in big circles, shuffling, sliding, and hopping. The elders and other venerable members of the village display their priceless heirloom blankets during this occasion.

*Tarektek* (woodpecker) is a courtship dance which imitates the movements of the bird, with a blanket for a prop. To the rhythmic beat of the gangsa, two male dancers exhibit their prowess in dancing to attract the attention of the female dancer.

One male dancer uses the blanket, the other plays the gangsa, as they turn and twist around, coordinating their movements with the object of pursuit.

Aside from the mimetic dances, another form of protodrama are the rituals where the shaman assumes the role of a spirit or a god. The Kankanay perform a ritual to effect the return of a soul which has “wandered off” on account of sickness. There are two phases in this ritual, the *padpad* and the *paypay*. Padpad is the wrenching away of the soul of a sick person from the clutches of a spirit, while paypay is a search undertaken to look for the whereabouts of the wandering soul (Demetrio et al. 1991:143). In padpad, the female shaman enters into a trance, makes movements as if conversing and

bargaining with a spirit, and attempts to recover it for the patient. The sickness in the body of a person is usually related to an analogous sickness of a character in a myth. A specific god is consulted about the nature and cure of the particular sickness. In paypay, the shaman clutches a chicken under her arm, holds a winnowing basket in one hand and a stick in the other. Armed thus, she goes from place to place, even entering other people's houses, as she tries to look for the sick person's wayward soul. As the shaman goes about her search, she recites a prayer:

Paypay, let us go home to the village, it is a  
warm place to dwell in; confound this spirit's house  
where you are dwelling, our house in the village is  
better, it is a warm place to dwell in.

• E. Maranan/Reviewed by F. Hornedo

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