Mortuary Ritual Among The Ibaluy

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This essay focuses on the funeral rites of the Ibaluy, as observed primarily in a small upland settlement in western Benguet province, Philippines.[1] The Ibaluy, one of several ethnolinguistic groups known

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The description here is representative of practice in the northwestern section

as "Igorots,"[2] numbered about 55,000 in 1960. They inhabit the southernmost section of the Cordillera Central in northern Luzon, an area which they share with Kankanay- and Kalanguyya-speakers and with the mixed but predominantly Ilocano-speaking population of Baguio City.

Irrigated rice farming forms a major basis of subsistence in the region, with the swidden cultivation of root and tree crops being largely supplementary. Since the end of World War II, increasingly large numbers of Ibaluy have been employed in the gold and copper mines, in lumber mills and in vegetable truck gardens to the northeast and southeast of the city of Baguio, the main economic and cultural center of the area. In addition, a network of roads traversing most of the more heavily populated sectors of Benguet province has provided the main impetus to small-scale temperate vegetable and cattle farming.

1.0 Ibaluy society

The smallest unit having a territorial base in Ibaluy society is the household (*bubung*). Each household consists of a full or partial family, with the presence, in addition to a nuclear family, of an aged parent of either spouse being quite common and easily acceptable.

Household unity is exhibited in a variety of ways, but principally in the use of a common hearth and the ownership of a common granary. In the distribution of meat gifts (*buki*) during feasts sponsored by kinsmen, each household is counted as a single unit entitled to one gift bundle. In the organization of cooperative work groups, adult members of a household substitute for each other and each acts as a representative of the cooperating *bubung*. This grouping also acts as an individual in the offering of propitiatory sacrifices in ritual celebrations.

The family (*pamilya*, from the Spanish *familia*) has, in addition to

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of Benguet occupied by Ibaluy, and differs in some details from C. R. Moss' (1920) report on eastern Benguet and Leaño's (1958a, b) account of death rites in the Trinidad valley and environs.

Spellings of Ibaluy terms follow an orthography which reflects the following phonological distinctions: i, e, a, u, p, t, k, b, d, g, m, n, ng (velar nasal), sh (alveolar fricative), j (alveolar affricate), s, h, l, r, w, y and a glottal stop, designated by a raised comma, (’). In personal or place names where the first consonant is a glottal stop, this is omitted and the first vowel is capitalized.

2. In addition to this designation, other names for them in the literature and elsewhere are Nabaloi, Inibaldoi, Inabidoi, Benguets, Benguetano and Ygolotes.

attributes of a household, corporate characteristics which belong to no other entity in Ibaluy society. It has title to the ricefields and swiddens inherited or acquired by both spouses as long as the marriage relationship of its founders continues. Providing for the subsistence and well-being of its members is its main responsibility, and in the pursuit of this, the family acts as an independent economic unit.

Below the level of the ethnic group, the only discrete grouping, other than the household, in traditional Ibaluy society is the settlement. This is a named local group, composed of one or more clusters of households. The face-to-face relationship which more or less define the settlement's boundaries become intensified in informal work parties, all of which carrying varying strengths of reciprocal obligation. These arise primarily during peak periods in the agricultural cycle, in house-building and house-roofing feasts, and in the performance of offerings to which people other than members of the sponsoring household are invited.

Kinship ties, residence and age for the most part determine an individual's social relationships beyond the household, although the opportunities for travel beyond the kin group and community have increased tremendously for most Ibaluy adults under forty.

Kinship is, as in most Philippine societies, reckoned bilaterally. The term *ga'it* applies, at least theoretically, to all consanguines with whom an individual is able to trace genealogical ties. However, one's personal kindred effectively embraces only those relatives not more than two generations above or below one's own, and not more than two degrees distant in collaterality in each of these generations. In recent times, *ga'it* has come to include affines; and in fact, in its widest extension, the label refers to 'friend,' 'companion' or 'fellow Ibaluy.' *Ga'it* (in the more limited meanings of the term) functions primarily at crises in the life of the individual of which it is the center; and the most elaborate display of the workings of this occasional grouping of persons is to be seen in the conduct of funeral rites.

2.0 Religious behavior

Ibaluy religious behavior may be viewed in terms of interaction with superhuman beings of the following categories:

a) Beings in the upper world, *suta warad naykayang*, the most frequently cited names of which are Kabuniyan, Dumawid, Kabigat, Aggew ('sun'), Bulan ('moon') and Masiken. All of these are personal names (as opposed to object names) and are linguistically treated as

such; each name being preceded, in address, by the second person singular pronoun, *si'gam*. The Ibaluy conception of them as a group or as individuals is vague and undifferentiated. There is no value system attributed to them. While it is generally known that they are sources of power and wisdom, they exercise little direct control over human affairs, and are not regarded as malevolent. Apart from invocations and myth recitations which accompany a number of named rites, the only other occasions in which these deities are addressed are in oaths (*'ibayus*). A few people speak of Kabuniyan and Aggew as being identical, and regard him as a creator deity, a pattern very probably borrowed from Christian theology. These two names are used synonymously with Apu Shiyus, from the Ilocano (and ultimately the Spanish) "Dios."

'Guardian spirits,' called *katanungan*, also live in the upper world. Unlike the deities listed above however, the *katanungan* are each inherently connected with a human being. The belief is that one of these is born in the upper world each time a human child is born, and also dies when the corresponding human being dies. During the lifetime of an individual, his *katanungan* are said to be responsible for keeping him from falling off bridges and high cliffs and for warning him (by bringing about premonitions and a sense of danger) of the bad fortune that may befall him on a journey. Hardly anything more is known about these spirits, and they are never the object of sacrificial offerings.

b) Superhuman beings which reside in "the world around us." Of these, the *'amdag, 'ampasit, timungaw* and *pasang* are malevolent. The last three dwell in trees, rocks and river beds. They are liable to cause harm if "stepped on" or if any of their "houses" or "work animals" (the most common of which are centipedes, snakes, spiders and ants) are destroyed or killed by careless humans. Stomachaches, toothaches, headaches and swollen limbs are often attributed to the anger of these spirits; and, in addition, the *pasang* are said to prevent childbirth. The *'amdag* is described as "travelling with the wind," using the owl as a hunting "dog," and is capable of stealing and eating human souls. None of these are inherently associated with a human being.

Humans have supernatural counterparts in the form of the *kadkadwa* or *'adirung* (also the word for 'shadow'), which may be called the 'spirit of a living person;' and the *kedaring*, the 'spirit of a dead person.' One's *kadkadwa* is believed to be capable of leaving the body of a person while asleep or in a moment of great fright or tension; and it is in the course of being "away" that a soul may be stolen and taken to an *'amdag* home.

Kedaring, spirits of the dead, hover near their homes, although are also said to travel to Pulag, a high mountain peak in eastern Benguet, or even to the skyworld. Occasionally, they appear to humans in the form of 'ghosts,' (*banig, bangaw* or *'angel*), or in dreams.

The foregoing list is quite probably incomplete, but it provides the roll of superhuman beings which are the most prominent objects of religious rituals, or which would be most likely named by an Ibaluy adult. While most will agree on the general description, there is however little chance of coming up with a consistent theory concerning each category of supernaturals. While the local priest may be able to come up with a neat classification of the functions of various spirits and deities, this knowledge is by no means universal in the society. Moreover, there is little interest among most people in acquiring whatever spirit lore exists today.

Unlike other societies described in the literature, the Ibaluy do not live in continual fear and anxiety about the spirits around them. Obligations to supernaturals are fulfilled in the performance of offerings or in the perfunctory gestures (linguistic or otherwise) which an individual executes as expressions of his awareness of the need to honor the dead or to be respectful toward forest or water spirits. Once these needs have been attended to, the spirits are forgotten for a while, until some new crisis makes it necessary to call upon one of their kind again.

3.0 Religious rituals (*shilus*)

Religious rituals, the stereotyped sequences of behavior which are directed towards supernaturals, are for the Ibaluy divided into those which are performed specifically for the benefit of living persons (in which case they are called *shilus ni mabiday*) and those for the benefit of the dead (*shilus ni minatay*). A ritual ceremony contains at least one of a number of named rites, alternatively called *shilus, 'idaga* (from *daga* 'to make, to do') or *'ikesheng* (from *kesheng* 'to finish, to complete'), whose defining characteristics are a) the occurrence of an offering performance, in the course of which food or drink is presented to a spirit or deity; b) a beneficiary, in whose interest the rite is performed; and c) a sponsoring household, whose members are responsible for assembling the provisions for the rite.

The conceptual distinction between "life rituals" and "death rituals" is replicated symbolically in a number of ways. There are 'numbers for the living,' *bilang ni mabiday*, which consist of the set 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10,

11, 13, 15, 16, 18 . . . ; and 'numbers for the dead,' *bilang ni minatay*, which include all other numbers (i.e., 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 14, 17 . . .). If a *shilus ni mabiday* lasts more than one day, another performance of offerings may take place only on the 'third' day, counting the day when the first offerings were made as 'first.' In contrast, anything which involves a sacrifice whose beneficiary is a dead person may be offered only on the second, fourth or seventh, etc., day following the death, counting the day of death as the 'first' day.

Terminological distinctions and other symbolic divisions accompany other aspects or ritual. Gifts (of money, rice beer, sweet potatoes, etc.) toward the conduct of funeral rites are called *'upu*, and their counterpart in rituals for living persons is referred to as *sulpun*. The use of cane grass (*Miscanthus*) is, for instance, forbidden in death rituals, but is essential in all ceremonies in which a living person is the beneficiary.

4.0 Rituals for living persons (*shilus ni mabiday*)

All *shilus ni mabiday* are motivated by a desire to bring about an explicit change in some condition by enlisting the aid of a supernatural. There is a clearly stated effort to influence him, and especially to appease him, with an offering of a fowl or of an animal. Among the most common requests to supernaturals are to remove the source of illness (e.g., the *kemtad* rite, in which a discontented ancestor is presented with gifts of clothing, blankets, money, tobacco, rice beer and a pig); to prevent infestation of crops or to insure a good harvest (the *'ilaw* rite); to return a stolen human soul (the *'amdag* rite); to summon a lost and wandering soul (the *dawit* rite); to cure a headache or a swollen limb (the *'ampasit* rite); or to make childbirth possible (the *pasang* rite).

Whenever a living person is the beneficiary, a ceremony takes place upon the recommendation of a diviner, who is a specialist called upon to diagnose illnesses, to determine the cause of certain disasters (such as the failure of a crop, the loss of property or an accident), and to interpret dreams and omens. There are two kinds of such specialists: the *mambaknul*, who seeks signs in a bowl of fresh rice beer (or, if this is lacking, in half a glassful of store-bought gin); and the *mansi'buk*, who obtains information from a small piece of iron suspended from a foot-long piece of string. Either one of these practicioners may or may not be the same individual as the *mambunung*, the priest who officiates at ritual observances.

The term *kedut* ('to roast') labels a class of large religious feasts

which are today considered the most important of the *shilus ni mabiday.* While celebrated ostensibly to cure illness, *kedut* are the main ceremonies at which the spirits of a sponsor's dead parents are enabled to renew their ties with their former household and community, to "set foot in the house" (*peki'bit sha*) and to dance in their former houseyard, or in the houseyards of their married children. Older people speak of an even more expensive and elaborate feast cycle, the *peshit*, which involved the slaughter of as many as a dozen carabaos and cattle and the sacrifice of as many as ten large pigs over a three-day period. Until about four decades ago, the *peshit* was the principal context within which spirits of ancestors joined their descendants for a few days of feasting and gift giving.

Obligatorily, *kedut* involve an officiating priest, at least one sacrificial pig, rice beer, sweet potato, taro and rice offerings; gong and drum music, and the singing of a type of extemporaneous compositions called *ba'diw.* One or two cattle or carabaos usually need to be killed to provide generous meals and meat gifts for everyone who comes and for kinsmen in surounding communities.

The spirits to be invited are "called" (*'awit*) to the celebration by a kinsman sent to summon them from the places where they are buried. The same man guides them to the site of the feast with a torch of smoking rice straw. When they "arrive," the priest enjoins the spirits to witness the offerings (which will include, in addition to animals, a few pieces of new clothing, blankets, silver money, tobacco and rice beer); to dance to the gong and drum music; and, when meat from the newly butchered animals is cooked, to partake of a meal. In all such performances, the functions of the *mambunung* are to address the sacrifices to the spirits; to recite the myths which embody the origins of the rites; and to call upon the deities of the upper world to come down to feast and to impart their power.

In general, these feasts last at least a whole day, are attended by kinsmen from beyond the immediate settlement, and involve expenditures of time, food and money which require weeks and months of advance preparation. They are ordinarily held soon after the rice harvest, so that the needs of rice and rice beer are partially filled from the sponsoring household's granary. It is widely acknowledged that power and prestige, however generalized and far reaching these may be, accrue to the sponsor of these rituals, not only because his pleased *kedaring* will grant them to him, but also because the rest of one's community will honor him, consult him for his opinions and regard him a successful

man. The redistributive character of such feasts is a much discussed theme locally, for *kedut* are the chief means for establishing and enhancing one's public status. Needless to say, the financing of such ceremonies is within the reach of a very small segment of any Ibaluy community.

5.0 Rituals for dead persons (*shilus ni minatay*)

The traditional ritual pattern that is called into play at the death of a person is basically the same throughout Ibaluy communities in western Benguet. The major exception is the chanting of the *du'jeng* song as reported by Leaño (1958: 395) for the La Trinidad area. This song is not known in the Tuel, Tublay and Ambungdulan areas, where data for this paper were collected.

Ibaluy mortuary rites, generally called *shilus ni minatay* and more specifically referred to as *siling*, may be characterized as transition rites, effecting the passage from a human (*tu'u*) state to the *keda*ring state, i.e. life after death.

Existence in the world of the *kedaring* is described as being similar to that of living Ibaluy. Life in the other world also requires food, drink, clothing and companionship. When he is lacking in any of these necessities, a spirit may "ask" (*mangshew*) for it, communicating his desires either by causing a close kinsman to dream or, more frequently, to fall ill. Death of children are most often attributed to a lonely grandparent yearning for a child to play with.

Kedaring are the most frequent objects of the propitiatory rites sponsored by an Ibaluy household, not only because they constitute the major category of causers of illness, but also, and more positively so, because they have the power to bring about abundance and fertility to crops, animal herds and humans; and to maintain in their mortal kinsmen a state of good health, clearheadedness and purity (*diteng*).

Ritual obligations are owed by an individual only to the recent dead however, and specifically to close kin within the past three generations. This accounts for the fact that each household sponsors rituals for a set of spirits which overlaps but is not identical to the sets to which its children's families will make their offerings. In a major sense, one's dead ancestors within the last three generations (together with such beings as the *'ampasit, timungaw, pasang* and *'amdag*) are, in Geertz' (1966: 9) classification, "contemporaries," sharing with humans a community of time, and interacting with them through a "generalized set

of symbolically formulated assumptions about each other's typical mode of behavior."

The concern therefore, with according an adult member of one's household with the proper and also the most elaborate rites possible at his death is in large part to insure his comfort in the afterlife, and consequently to lessen the chances of his molesting his survivors with illness, poverty or untimely death.

5.1 Place and time

The rites described here are held in the house of the deceased person. Traditional Ibaluy housing involved a rectangular house (*baley*), measuring anywhere from 8 by 10 feet to 17 by 26 feet in floor area, and roofed with either *Imperata* grass (*gulun*) or *Miscanthus* grass (*sapsap*) thatch, or a mixture of both. Its floor, made of wooden planks, was raised about three to five feet above the ground. A box hearth occupied one of the corners of the house, often taking up as much as a fourth of the floor space. A drying and smoking platform was constructed directly over the hearth for storing food, rice in bundles and firewood.

Today many western Ibaluy homes include a second building which usually does not contain a hearth, and is used for sleeping and for entertaining guests. This is built next to the older house, which has come to serve as a place for cooking and eating meals, and is often joined to the latter by a roofed veranda. As galvanized iron roofing found its way into Ibaluy communities after World War II, it was the second, sleeping house (now called *baley*, and differentiated from the cooking house, called *'abung*) that was built with a tin roof if the family could afford it. Offering performances continue however to take place in the *'abung* or, if held outdoors, in front of the ladder leading up to this building. The sleeping house has not attained any important religious functions.

Funeral rites are performed over a period of time which at present varies from two to nine days following death. The length of this period, between the day the first offering is made and the day of the purification rites which end the *siling*, is almost always the result of a decision made informally by two or three old men from among the dead person's close kinsmen, unless the dead person had expressed a wish regarding this matter in his lifetime. One or a combination of any of the following factors determines the amount of time devoted to mortuary rituals: the age of the person; the circumstances surrounding death; the prestige in which the person was held in the community; and the money, land and

animal resources available to the deceased's family at the time of his death. In recent years, as more Ibaluy have left their home settlements to live in more distant areas, a new reason has arisen for the extension of these rites, because time has to be allowed for bringing at least all the immediate members of a dead man's family home for the funeral.

Children are buried on the day they die, or on the day after; and a chicken or a small pig may be killed and offered to its spirit. This absence of elaborate ritual implies the lack of status of children as 'persons' (*tu'u*). For a similar reason, young adults, and especially if unmarried, receive little in the way of ceremonial attention at death, and they are buried on the day after. Those who die in accidents or who commit suicide suffer an even worse fate: they receive no offerings at all, are not taken back into the house, and are attended at death only by immediate family and neighbors. The spirits of these are believed to wander aimlessly, and not to go where the rest of the *kedaring* go.

Death in old age is a different matter. It is the "way to die," according to many Ibaluy, after a person has worked his land, bred animals and has raised the descendants who will care for him in old age and accord him the proper rituals at his death. It is not uncommon for old persons to spend the last years of their lives tending the fires that cook the feed for a few pigs or, if they are capable, leading one or two carabaos or cattle to the pasture, in anticipation of the need for these animals at their own funerals.

An old person, no matter how poor he may be during his lifetime, becomes the object of at least seven-day long mortuary rites at his death. The choice of increasing the number of days beyond seven is based not only on specific knowledge of the ability of the family to finance the additional offerings, but also on the length of time devoted to the death rites of the deceased person's father, or of his spouse if he survives her. The ideal is for the length of the period of one's funerary rites to be greater than, if not equal to, that of his father. While nine-day ceremonies are most common at the present time, twelve-day rituals have been sponsored by three families in the region in the past five years. In 1958, a woman who belonged to a large wealthy family in western Benguet was according 17-day rites, and there continues to circulate the story of a rich Pungayan man whose funeral rites lasted 31 days. Such counts are, as alluded to earlier, strictly governed by rules regarding numbers associated with death.

5.2 Participation and interaction

5.21 The kindred. Attendance at mourning rituals, more than at any other recognized crisis in Ibaluy society, involves the widest range of members of the deceased person's kindred, in addition to all the households of his own and of neighboring hamlets. For many urban-dwelling Ibaluy, the context of the rites following the death of a close relative is an important occasion for renewing old ties and for reaffirming their membership in their home community. Most visitors who live in far-off communities stay one or two nights, making the rounds of relatives' homes. Few people, and only those acting as "directors," stay the full length of the rites, sleeping with the rest of the deceased's household or at a neighbor's.

5.22 "Directors." This is what I have chosen to call the old men who make the major decisions regarding the conduct of the ceremonies. They determine the number of days the rituals are to cover, the nature and spacing of offerings, the approximate amount of money and animals to be expended in the offerings, and the means of obtaining the provisions for these. They are fittingly described as "*mangimanihu*" (from the Spanish *maniejo*), 'those who supervise, guide or direct,' for in effect, it is they who are responsible for allocating time, resources and people for an effective performance.

This grouping is small and informal. Two or three old men, known for their knowledge of the details of offering performances, and for their skill in directing and instructing others in the preparation of offerings, are called upon by the dead person's household from among the latter's close collateral kin or classificatory fathers. There is no way of distinguishing them from the rest of the crowd in terms of either clothing or manner. They are seen constantly supervising work (butchering, cooking, cutting up meat), giving instructions and being consulted on the minutiae of ritual form. The group does not remain consistent in size, or in the extent of their responsibility in the performances. They consult freely with members of the surviving household, and with others skilled in the management of ritual but who, because of not being close kin, do not qualify for a director role except only occasionally.

5.23 The deceased person's household. The children of the dead person, if adult, are consulted on matters which are of ultimate economic concern to them, although they submit all matters of ritual to the "directors." They spend most of their time assisting in the preparation of offerings and of meals for the people who have come to attending the funeral.

The surviving spouse is prohibited from viewing the corpse after

the first offering is made, and remains in a room other than that in which the corpse is set up, or even in another house during the whole period of the mourning rites. If it is a one-room house, he may stay in the same room, but with his face turned away from the corpse at all times. He is not allowed to eat or handle any of the food offered to the spirit of the dead person, and does not set foot in the houseyard except to perform bodily functions. He and all the rest of the household are also prohibited from cleaning the house or the yard and from bathing at any time before the close of the ceremonies.

5.24 "Assistants." These compose all the different people who at one time or another perform the various tasks which make the offerings and meals possible: pounding rice, fetching water from the springs, slaughtering the animals, dressing and cooking these; making the trips to general stores or into the city to make purchases of provisions; digging the grave, making the coffin, cleaning the houseyard. They all receive instructions from directors on tasks intimately connected with ritual, but most of the chores that must be attended to keep the show going are known to the majority of adults and few instructions about these have to be received. Assistants are recruited from among the general audience, but consist for the most part of young men and women. The group of unmarried adults and of widows or widowers is a source of assistants for certain types of work associated with the handling of the corpse and of the death chair. These tasks carry with them temporary taboos on sexual intercourse, and are preferably not to be performed by married persons.

Much of the interaction that takes place in the front yard of a dead person's house is on the whole fluid but focused. While young people carry in firewood or water, women will be tending fires, preparing rice, sweet potatoes or taro for cooking, or performing the exclusively female task of cleaning out the internal organs of butchered animals. Small groups of men will be arranged around large pieces of meat piled in vats or arranged on grass matting on the ground, cutting meat into small pieces for cooking or for stringing them into bundles to be carried to households beyond the settlement. Groupings of women and women with infants will be seen conversing in various parts of the houseyard; and children will be running around the margins of the yard or sitting quietly with their mothers. The work schedule is broken only in the evenings, when women and children leave and young men and boys sit around pitch pine fires to play cards and checkers.

Inside the house, in the vicinity of the corpse, there is little sign

of fear or piety, and comments on the repulsive odor of the putrefied body are freely given and accompanied by raucous laughter. Older people, in varying states of inebriation, gather around the corpse, smoking tobacco or a local substitute of this, offering the dead person and each other rice beer, or exchanging sexy stories. The dead body is never left unattended, and the long sleepless nights give the designation "*situkal*" 'time of staying awake at night' to the period devoted to funeral rites. Once the show of grief of the first few hours after death is over, an Ibaluy funeral has the appearance of a large feast, lacking only the gongs, drums and dancing which are the highlights of feasts for living persons.

5.3 Provisions

The transition rites at the death of a person consist of offering performances whose symbolic goals are a) to equip the dead one with the necessary animals, clothing, money and accessories to begin life with other *kedaring*; and b) to enable other individuals to "send" gifts to kinsmen of their own who have died before.

'udupen tu 'that which he will take with him,' is the general designation for the fowls and animals which are procured and sacrificed to provision the spirit of the dead man. These provisions consist of at least a pair each, and always a male-female pair, of pigs, water buffalo, cattle, dogs and chickens. All these are chosen from among the property of the deceased, purchased with money belonging to him, or acquired by the sale of some of his property. A wealthy man is also entitled to a pair of horses at his death, and especially so if he rode them at all in his lifetime. Male-female pairs are said to be necessary to insure reproduction in the spirit world.

Since such animals are sacrificed for a beneficiary who is dead, the offerings involving them are classed as *shilus ni minatay*, and their occurrences are governed by the rules regarding numbers associated with death: 2, 4, 7, 9 . . . etc. Animals labelled as *'udupen tu* are not offered and butchered except on the second, fourth, seventh, ninth, etc., days following the death of a person, counting the day of death as the first day.

A second class of provisions, called *'pup*, may be presented to the dead man only on days which are part of the set of "days for the living:" the first, third, fifth, sixth and eighth days of a nine-day long vigil. These are described as gifts from living humans to their kinsmen in the *kedaring* world, and are "sent" in the care of the spirit of a newly-expired person. Such gifts may take any of the following forms: a jar of rice beer, a

bottle of gin or of sugar cane beer; rice, taro, sweet potatoes, chickens, any domesticated animal (dog, pig, cattle, carabao, horse); and more frequently today, money. The picture conjured up is that of a spirit arriving in the *kedaring* world, followed by the fowls and animals which would serve as the beginning of an otherworldly farm, and bearing gifts entrusted to him by kinsmen, friends and neighbors for a list of named individuals who had died before.

On another level, *'upu*, it is explained, are gifts (*semek sha*) to the household of the dead person. They are contributions to the food supply and to the finances which are necessary to be able to feed all the people who come to visit the recently dead person. In some communities, gift giving is so organized that one or two days during the rites are scheduled for the mass arrival and offering of contributions from specified neighboring settlements.

There is a large amount of reciprocity involved in *'upu*-giving. If A contributes *'upu* at B's death, any member of B's household is obligated to reciprocate in comparable form at the death of a member of A's household. Formerly, each contribution was signalled by the tying of a knot on a string kept near the corpse. This practice has been retained only in form; and today, one or two literate members of the household or among close kinsmen will write names and the nature of the gifts in a notebook set aside for this purpose. The receipt of an *'upu* gift is acknowledged by the dead person's household in the form of a meat share delivered to the house of the donor.

5.4 Routines

Within a few hours after the news of a death reaches the rest of a community, immediate neighbors, close kinsmen and especially contemporaries of the dead person begin to arrive at his house. One or two men go to the nearby forest to cut bamboo poles to use for a death chair (*saral*); another goes in search of *'alinew* tree bark to use for lashing the parts of the chair together. Women begin to bring bundles of rice down from the attic or from a granary, and pounding begins outside of the house. Others are sent to a general store in the vicinity to buy gin, sugar cane beer and carbonated beverages to supplement the rice beer which will be purchased from any household that might happen to have some in stock. Others prepare three-stone hearths in the front yard, and young men are sent to the springs to build up a water supply near the house.

A death chair is put together by a few old men. This is a crude

framework of upright poles built with a sitting platform about three feet above the floor, and is provided with a back and with arm rests. For an increasing number of families, the *saral* is given up for a wooden box-style coffin, especially if there is one that has been prepared in anticipation of this death.

In recent years, embalment according to modern medical practice has become available to many Ibaluy through rural health clinics, but when embalment is used, the corpse is always laid in a coffin for the funeral rites.

5.41 The corpse and its surrogates. When the death chair is ready, some water is brought into the house, and the corpse is bathed by a handful of men and women. Just as in other tasks having to do with the handling of a dead body, the surviving spouse is not allowed to participate in this. The body is then decked with a set of ordinary clothing and set up on the death chair, which will be situated in the cooking house, facing the doorway, and only a few feet away from the house hearth. The torso, mouth and forehead are lashed loosely to the back of the scaffold with strips of white cloth, and the arms to the arm rests. A fire is kept burning in the hearth for the whole duration of the rituals, partly to keep insects away from the slowly decaying body, but primarily to remind the straying spirit of the dead man of the location of his former home. A layer of soil is arranged under the seat to absorb the fluids that will start to exude from the cadaver a few days later. Pieces of tobacco or of a local smoking leaf (*pedped*) and some matches are placed beside the death chair, together with some small items from among the dead person's last possessions. A thin rope is strung across the corner nearest the *saral* to hold the blankets and the clothing which the deceased will wear at the burial. It is only after the corpse has been made ready for viewing in such a manner that the series of offering performances which form the core of the activities of the next nine days may commence.

Early in the morning of the fourth day, the corpse is carried outside to the front by members of the immediate family (except the surviving spouse) and close kinsmen. There it is "peeled" (*kupsitan*) by stripping the decayed skin off the body. The skin is buried in a spot under the house, not far from the future grave. As many people as are able to join without disrupting the whole activity participate in the "peeling," for the body fluid (*shedeng*) of a dead person is believed to be a source of good fortune and fertility. The ease with which the skin is removed is said to indicate the satisfaction with which the spirit has enjoyed the

conduct of the funeral so far, and the willingness with which he will share his prosperity and the prospects of old age with his children. Then the bloated and putrid body is rubbed with pounded guava leaves (an astringent deodorant), and returned to the *saral* without any clothing.

Burial takes place on the fourth or on the seventh day, and always in the early evening. Omens such as the hoot of an owl or the calls of particular kinds of birds, or a sneeze from the audience could delay burial for a few hours; and so would lightning or an earthquake. The corpse is unstrapped from the chair, told of its impending burial, and dressed in a newly purchased set of clothing. If the dead one is a woman, this will consist of the traditional Ibaluy women's outfit: a long-sleeved checked jacket called the *kambal* and a wrap-around skirt of red, black and white checks called *dibit*. If it is a male, he is furnished with a new pair of long pants (*kadsun*) and a white shirt (*baru*) unless he was one of the few Ibaluy who still wear a g-string. If, as is often the case, it is impossible to clothe the corpse properly because it has by now become too stiff and bloated, the new set of clothing is merely buried with the corpse.

With or without this clothing, the corpse is finally wrapped in one, two or three blankets of increasingly elaborate design and varying symbolic value. Only a very poor person or a child goes to the grave with only one blanket, and this will be the *kulebaw*, a plain white woven cotton fabric with black borders. Other blankets in use today are called *sapey* (a black fabric with white stripes, used mainly for women), *shindi* and *pinagpagan*. None of these are woven by the Ibaluy, but are obtained from the Ilocano of the west coast, or from Kankanay or Bontok to the north. The last two kinds of blankets are worn by more wealthy individuals, and a dead person is entitled to wear either one (or both) of them if he wore it in his lifetime, or if his dead father was buried with it. Forty or so years ago, the *'adashang*, a dark blue cotton blanket with tie-dyed designs was obtainable from the Isinay of Nueva Vizsaya, and was used as a death shroud by the wealthiest Ibaluy. The blankets, if more than one is used, are draped about the corpse in order of increasing economic and social value, so that the most expensive and most elaborately designed one is in view at the burial.

The body is then laid in a crude coffin, made from planks of wood, or by hewing out the core of part of a tree trunk. It is buried under the house of the dead person, in a grave which is oriented along an east-west axis. Women are buried with their heads pointing west, and men with their heads pointing east. The most common explanation for this

is that when the spirit of a woman rises, it should rise to face east, which is the direction associated with the cooking hearth, a major symbol of her role in the household. Spirits of males however, should rise to face west, which is the direction of the lowlands where all wealthy Ibaluy go to trade. No grave goods, other than the knotted string (*sikgut*) which will serve as his mnemonic for all the *'upu* given him, are buried with the body.

During the whole time the corpse is being prepared for burial and throughout the burial itself, entreaties from the audience are addressed to the dead one, to "go and leave us alone," and to "go and leave us your good fortune and your wealth." Names of individuals in the audience are not called out, lest the spirit take fancy to them and "take them along," causing the persons to fall ill soon after and to die. Whenever attention needs to be called to a person, or instructions to be given, the substitute name "*Budiwan*" (from *budiwan* 'to change') is used in place of the person's name. Cut branches of a spiny bush are waved above the corpse's head and above the coffin during these last few moments, to confound the spirit and prevent him from identifying people in the crowd.

After the last spadeful of soil is thrown upon the grave, the members of the household and all persons who actively participated in the burial wash their hands in a small trough of water in the front yard, in a brief cleansing rite. The rest of the people stand in a crowd watching, and although they remain more or less subdued and composed in the course of the burial, laughing and joking again resume after the coffin has been buried, and small groups soon form around smoky pitch pine fires in the yard.

The day following a burial, called *deben*, is a day of restricted activity. No work is allowed in the house of the deceased (except for the normal tasks involved in the preparation of meals), in the rest of the settlement or in other settlements and sites of agricultural work which might be visible from the dead person's house.

While seven days was the ideal for keeping a corpse upright in the *saral*, burial on the fourth day is the more usual practice today. People complain of no longer being able to remain insensitive to the obnoxious odor of a decomposing body for more than a few days; and besides, government health officers have been waging a campaign against the practice of displaying a corpse for long periods.

A compensatory device has been evolved such that, if interment of the physical body (*bakdang*) takes place on the fourth day, the fiction

is maintained that a *bakdang* continues to remain in the chair till the seventh day. To accomplish this, a surrogate object is strapped to the death chair, and this continues to be referred to as "*bagdang*" for three more days after the burial. This substitute usually takes the form of a small bundle of *Imperata* (*gulun*) leaves and a pebble. These are wrapped in a blanket or placed in a small woven bag, and are said to symbolize the hair and body of the dead person.

This second *bakdang* continues to be the object of offerings until the seventh day, when it is then buried in the same grave as that of the fourth day. On the eighth day, early in the morning, the woven bag, stone and grass are recovered from the ground under the house, strapped onto a new death chair (the old one having been dismantled and disposed of the night before), and given the new designation "*dagba*" 'basket.' In this form, it is said to contain only the spirit (*kedaring*) of the deceased, for now the *bakdang* has finally been interred. In this newly assumed shape, the *kedaring* continues to receive the offerings and entreaties of his kinsmen and neighbors for another day.

5.42 Offering performances. In the course of funeral rites, any adult may perform an offering. These take place in front of the death chair, and are brief and extemporaneous.

The most common and least elaborate form of offering performance is the libation (*peltik*). Here, a person holding a cup or bowl of some alcoholic beverage squats in front of the dead person or the death chair and, speaking in a low voice, invites the spirit to share a drink. Then he pours some of the liquor on the floor in front of him, takes a drink from the same cup, and completes the sequence by passing the cup to a person near him, who in turn drinks some of the beverage.

When the object presented to a spirit is something other than an alcoholic drink, the act of offering it is called *madmad* or *'ayag*. This may consist in a terse, perfunctory announcement to the dead person like, "Here is a pig for you to take along." This is sufficient to inform the spirit that one of his pigs is going to be killed to "accompany" him. While this statement is made, the pig involved is held at the foot of the ladder leading up to the house until the brief *madmad* performance is completed.

Invocations to a deceased person vary little from speaker to speaker. Each minimally includes a statement to identify the offering to the spirit, and another to invite him to receive it or to partake of it. Stylistic variations occur in elaborations made by the invoker to provide additional information regarding such things as the background or identity

of the donor (especially kinship status in relation to the dead person, or home settlement of the donor), the specific motivation behind the offering (e.g., an *'upu*-gift being described as "for the *kedaring* of the donor's father"), or petitions addressed to the dead man. Entreaties may be either positive or negative: "Do not cause us to be ill;" "Do not molest us, and leave us alone;" "Leave us your good fortune;" "Have pity on your children, and give them many years;" etc.

Offerings of uncooked rice, taro, sweet potatoes, alcoholic beverages or of money which are brought to the house of the dead man as *'upu*-donations are each addressed to the *kedaring* in front of the death chair, are always followed by a *peltik* in which the spirit and the donor share a cup of rice beer. The donor may or may not be the same person making the invocation, and more than one person may make an invocation at the same time. The following is a sample text from my field notes:

> [Basilio holds two bottles of rice beer in front of the corpse while Alushus and his wife, Kuyapi, sit next to him. Basilio, addressing the corpse: "Here is rice beer from Alushus and Kuyapi. I don't know the names of their parents and grandparents, but you do. You knew them in your lifetime. Do not leave us without sharing your wealth. Pity us."
>
> Then Basilio pours some rice beer on the floor in front of the *saral* and hands the rest of the drink to Alushus and then to Kuyapi.]

5.43 Preparation of food offerings. Animals are killed soon after they have been offered to the dead person, and by methods used at all other occasions: pigs by piercing through the heart with a sharpened stick (*'uwik*); dogs by cutting the jugular vein (*'ugu*); chickens by beating with a stick (*palpal*); and larger animals (cattle, carabaos and horses) by hitting the top of the skull with an axe (*wa'tek*). Except for chickens, all animals are dressed and cleaned on top of a thick matting (*'apay*) of grass or tree leaves: Miscanthus stalks for "life rituals" and tree branches and leaves for rites directly associated with a dead person. Hair is not shaved off, but singed; and the hide is left on to cook with the rest of the meat. None of the hooves or horns leave the yard during the ceremonies, for otherwise, animals would be "lame" and in such a state be unable to "accompany" the dead man's spirit to his destination. The meat is cut up into large pieces and divided into the portions that would be given away as gifts and those which go into the large vats to cook. Cooking consists of boiling the meat in a large quantity of water over pine wood fires on stone hearths. Anywhere from fifty to a hundred people are fed a meal each time a large animal is killed.

At the completion of cooking, smaller cuts of meat from various

parts of the sacrificed animal, in addition to entrails, blood sausages and the animal's jawbone are arranged on a winnowing tray. With taro, sweet potatoes, rice, soup, salt and hot green pepper, these are brought into the house and placed in front of the death chair. A person calls to the dead man's spirit and invites him to partake of the food, and almost immediately, a small group of people, composed of the household and including a few close kinsmen, cut up the food and eat it in front of the death chair.

5.44 The last day: purification and the assumption of the *kedaring* state.

On the day chosen to close the *siling*, the following sequence of ritual performances takes place within the space of about six to eight hours:

a) At dawn, the remaining pairs of animals, usually a pair of dogs and a pair of chickens, necessary to complete the spirit entourage are butchered and offered to the deceased.

b) The dead person is "provisioned" with the clothing, work tools and cooking utensils which he used during the last few years of his life. With a handful of rice seeds, a box of matches and some tobacco, all these objects are packed into a wicker basket (*shagi*) if the dead one is a male, or into a *kayabang*, the cone-shaped basket of bamboo used by women if it is a female who has died. These are placed in front of the death chair, and the *kedaring* is enjoined to take them with him.

c) The death chair is dismantled and discarded, and its parts thrown against the houseyard fence. The *dagba* is detached from the framework and is taken to the gravesite, where its contents are emptied into a small hole in the ground. The person who does this shakes the bag in the air, "to release the spirit," and while doing so, calls upon the spirit to leave his descendants in peace and good health.

d) The "cleaning up," *si'si*, begins. The bamboo platform built in the front yard is torn down; all the mattings of tree branches and leaves on which animals had been dressed are thrown to the edge of the yard. The hearths are destroyed and all fires are put out. The house floors are swept and washed, and the rocks of the hearths inside the house are replaced. On this day, for the first time since the death took place, members of the household and all kin who remained in the house for the duration of the funeral are allowed to go to the river to bathe, and there to "wash away the signs of mourning."

e) When they return from bathing, the *waksi* ('sprinkling') rite, by which the people are "made clean," is performed. A priest takes a few stalks of *sapsap* (*Miscanthus*), dips these in a trough full of water,

and with an invocation to the *kedaring* to depart, waves the grass stalks in the direction of the crowd of people three times while they squat on the ground in front of him. The people all face east, which is the direction traditionally associated with light and birth and arising; and they all rise as a group as soon as the priest completes the "sprinkling."

f) At about noon, the *kapi* rite takes place. This performance signals the ritual acknowledgement of the end of the transition rites and embodies what might be called the "incorporation" of the new *kedaring*. This sequence involves a sacrificial pig, which forms the first offering of the survivors of the deceased to the latter in his new status. The services of a priest are engaged, and for the first time since death occurred, a sheaf of *Miscanthus* is displayed on a pole in the front yard as a sign that this is one of the rites performed for the benefit of living persons. For the same reason, sheaves of the same plant are also thrown upon the section of the house roof facing the front yard.

The priest addresses the pig, which in the *kapi* rite is always a castrated boar (*mulmul*), to the spirits of the upper world and to the new *kedaring*. It is then butchered on a fresh pile of *Miscanthus* leaves, dressed and then cooked into a meal. Portions of the meat are taken into the "new" (now ritually clean) house, a new fire is built in the hearth, and the recently instituted spirit is invited to a feast with his bereaved household.

g) Outside, in the front yard, the *sabusab* rite is performed. A mixture called *kiniwal*, consisting of finely chopped fresh ginger, a few cupfuls of the grain residue of rice beer, and small pieces of cooked pig entrails, liver, fat and skin, is prepared on a winnowing tray. The priest, while holding the point of a long knife to a portion of the mixture, recites the *sabusab*, a prayer which many Ibaluy describe as a prayer "for inner peace and well being." It consists of a plea to the deities of the upper world to erase the possible consequences of ill feelings and enmity that may have been expressed by participants in the death rites that are now being completed. The *kiniwal* preparation is believed to specifically prevent the skin ailments that are said to result from the utterance of oaths and curses in the course of mourning rituals. Each person present in the house and houseyard takes a small amount of the mixture in the palm of his hand and eats it.

The *sabusab* rite ends the participation of the public in the death rituals, and the people, now free of the prohibitions and other commitments of a sacred undertaking, say their farewells and leave for their homes.

5.45 The year after

Upon assumption of his new role, the dead person ceases to be mentioned by name in his former house, lest he be reminded of his former existence and wish for the company of a kinsman. When a need to refer to him arises, euphemistic expressions such as "This one buried here," "This later person," "The one who has left me (from a surviving spouse)," or "The one who gave birth to me (from a child)" are used in place of his name. In many cases, death also becomes an occasion for the surviving spouse to change his name. For other people in the community, any mention of the name of the deceased must now be affixed by the clitic *-da*, which carries the meaning of remoteness in both time and place. In this manner, the dead person's status of "predecessor" is recognized and communicated.

Formerly, a surviving spouse was subjected to taboos of various types for a whole year following the death of a husband or wife. These included restrictions on sexual relations and remarriage, receiving money and engaging in business transactions, travelling beyond the settlement and working in rice fields and swiddens. It was also obligatory to keep fires burning (or at least to keep coals red and hot) for a year in the hearths of the deceased person's old home and also in the houses of his married children. The period for all these has been shortened considerably, and there are many cases of individual decisions to violate the taboos for practical reasons.

At the end of a year after his death, a *kedaring* qualifies for a new offering. At this rite, another one of the class called *kapi*, he is invited to his former home, is offered a pig sacrifice, some clothing, blankets and tobacco, and called to join his living and dead kinsmen in a large public dance to gong and drum music. This offering opens a series of ritual celebrations, called *kapi ni mabiday or pamisa* (from the Ilocano and ultimately the Spanish *misa* 'Mass'), performed by each of the married children at intervals of anywhere from one to every three years after the death of a parent. In all these, the object is to renew ties with one's dead parents, to furnish them with clothing and food lest they complain of being forgotten and, more than incidentally, to provide an occasion for feasting and for reciprocating with the rest of the community.

6.0 Conclusion

In this exposition, an attempt is made to place Ibaluy mortuary ritual in the framework of local religious behavior and social organiza-

tion, and to delineate the main features of funeral rites with respect to place and time, participation and interaction, provisions for offerings and the linguistic and nonlinguistic formulae which constitute ritual sequences.

A number of changes in the conduct of mortuary ritual, on both the level of belief and value and that of social interaction and choice, appear to be in progress. The effects of Christian missionary activity are persistent, although few and limited in scope. The increasingly common option in the last decade for nine-day long death rituals appears to derive in part from the practice, within Spanish-Filipino Catholicism, of holding a novena on the death of a person. In many households where some of the young people claim membership in the Roman Catholic Church, the rosary is recited daily for nine days in the house of the deceased, and black clothing has been introduced as proper mourning attire.

A dead man has come to be described as "*engkiriyus*" 'joining God' (from *shiyus*, Spanish *Dios*), and it is a sign of sophistication to be able to say that *kedaring* go to "heaven" (designated by another Ilocano loan word, *langit*). The ideas of hell and punishment after death have however not gained any acceptance locally.

It is also true that conversion to Christianity, together with the growing availability of medical assistance from national agencies has tended to undermine the role of supernaturals in the area of health and curing, such that the propitiatory and sacrificial nature of gift giving and feasting at funerals can be expected to receive less attention.

The economic aspects of ritual celebrations in general provide foci for revisions which find parallels in other spheres of Ibaluy life. In 1964, at the death rites for a seventy-year old childless woman, the gross expenses borne by the family (spouse and adopted child) amounted to P800 (US$1=P4). Funeral gifts in the form of money added up to a negligible amount. Other funerals over the two year period preceding cost anywhere from P500 to P1500 for seven- or nine-day ceremonies. In almost all cases, the financing of such activities could only be achieved by the sale or hypothecation of one or more holdings of irrigated rice land belonging to the deceased person, in addition to the loss of the few head of cattle and carabaos he owned at the time of his death.

Death differs from other crises in that, ordinarily, little preparation for the specific details of obtaining and ready provisions for a funeral are possible, or even allowed. As soon as death occurs, and during the first few days after, extended but subdued and informal "backstage"

conversations embody the speculations and wheeling and dealing that result in the decisions as to which rice fields are to be sold and to whom, whose carabao and cattle are to be bought with the sale money, or which general store will profit from the present activity. Wage earners, World War II pensioners and some urban-dwelling relatives who have available cash are known to take advantage of the urgency of the situation to lend money with interest or to acquire land by mortgage. In many cases, outright resentment is incurred by such individuals if they appear to be treating such as a sacred occasion as an arena for quick business transactions.

Meanwhile, the bereaved household, while acknowledging the importance and desirability of upholding the honor and prestige of a dead parent, must seek a happy medium between the demands for traditionally elaborate performances, and the equally pressing concern that there be some animals and land to pass on when the rites are over. The way in which such a compromise comes to be sought and effected in the future, while representing what certainly is an old conflict, would in large part reflect the access to a wider range of resources—natural and social—available in the rapidly changing Ibaluy economy. It is against this background that we must study Ibaluy ideas of life and death and the interpretation of these in religious ritual.

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