

Burial and Death Practices - Tadian

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Introduction

Knowing one's culture does not mean one does not succumb to change. It is a benchmark where one could start before moving out from the community, the province, the region, the country, and the world as whole. Before instituting change, however, in a society, the existing culture must first be assessed as to its acceptability, strengths and weakness, and areas where changes could be introduced.

One aspect where people have distinct cultural practices is on death. Accordingly, death is like a thief in the night that robs a person. No one is free or exempted from this. People of different nationalities or ethnic tribes cease living at the sting of death. To ensure good fortune and be freed from misfortune, the people have to observe certain practices. Cognizant of the observance of these practices are their impact to sustainable development.

The I-Tadians are the descendants of Kaldoongan according to Lakay Da-ay A-ayo, a native prelist in Tadian. The ancestor of the I-Tadians came from Yangyango, Namilingan, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur who first settled in Tabiyo before moving to Tadian. The I-Tadian are among the people of Mountain Province who adhere to their cultural practices. They are peace-loving, ambitious, and open to change. They are open to the modifications towards development. They have, however, a death practice which is unique. To date, the bereaved family is not burdened when it comes to the things needed in the performance of the death rituals. Conflicting beliefs however alarmed the people due to the deteriorating values of the I-Tadian especially the younger ones in the observance of these practices. It was also observed that for the last six years, every time a person dies, it is likely that two or three more deaths follow. From these observations, feedbacks from the old folks are:

"Anapen yo sa. Intoy aped na ikakkan? Isnan nallos ay katwe-e-tew-en et baken kaneg tosa". (Old folks from Tadian, you better find that out. That was not like before)

Ecclesiast 3:1-8 (Life Application Study Bible, 1997), states that there is time for everything and a season for every thing and a season for every activity under heaven. This explains why death occurs to an infant/child, or an adult.

To the I-Tadian, the death and burial practices and rituals vary according to the category of death. These deaths are categorized into the death of an infant/child, and adult, death due to murder or caused by an accident, and death due to suicide.

Death of an Infant/Child

The death of an infant/child does not require so much ritual however; certain ceremonies have to be observed. Once an infant dies the relatives are gathered specially the parents, the siblings, and the grandparents. According to Lakay Batat Laban, the dead infant has a specific shroud. The dead is dressed with his best clothing which the family can provide. During the wake, the corpse is held by an old folk.

The holding of the corpse by an old folk signifies that the infant does not anymore belong to the parents. In case of a child, he is laid down in the coffin during the wake. No dirges and elegies are chanted. The wake is only overnight for the corpse is interred immediately the following morning as soon as the sun rises.

In the performance of the rituals, specific animals have to be butchered. The folks of the dead butcher chickens: a *mamasang* (young pullet) and a *kawitan* (young rooster). The young pullet is butchered outside the house, while the young rooster is butchered inside the house of the bereaved. The ceremonies are simultaneously done. Only the old folks will partake of the meat of these sacrificial animals after a prayer to the Kabunyan has been said.

A prayer which had been shared to others signifies the sharing God's blessing. From these practices, the values of love, generosity and modeling are developed.

Before the corpse is buried early in the morning after the performance of the ritual, the infant is neatly wrapped in a blanket and then placed in woven utility basket made out of bamboo called *biki* (chicken coop) or a box if there is one according to Lakay Da-ay A-ayo. In the case of a child he/she will be made to rest in the coffin and then buried early in the morning.

After the burial, close relatives of the dead gather in the house especially during night time to console the bereaved. Mourning is only observed by the first degree relatives. They are the one to observe the rest day. There is no community holiday. With the introduction of Christianity, some bereaved families' request for evening prayers for the eternal repose of the soul of the dead. This has to be done because of the beliefs attached to it. In the case of the infant, the old folks believed that the infant was taken by his ancestors to serve as an errand girl/boy for them, or Kabunyan, the Supreme God, has taken him/her. Through this belief the people manifest spiritual growth in the presence of the divine providence.

The prayers said in the performance of the rituals are petitions for the ancestors to facilitate faster procreation for the bereaved to bear more children to take the place of what they have taken; and for abundant life or no more deaths in the family. It should be also observed that the coffin for the dead child be light due to the belief that he is young and cannot carry a heavy load in his journey towards his ancestors according to Baket Aleta.

Death of an Adult

The pronouncement of the death in Poblacion, Tadian according to the key informants requires the bereaved family and the people of the community to observe certain specified rituals. This is due to the belief that the spirit of the dead still mingles with the living, and may inflict a misfortune if certain rites and taboos are ignored.

When a member of the family dies, the old folk are gathered with the immediate members of the family to make plans. They put everything in order to prevent objects from falling and to provide pace for the people to stay during the wake. If the dead has no spouse, the nearest kin who can speak for the bereaved family is consulted on what to be done. It is also customary for men to go and get firewood, while the women pound palay (if there is), or winnow rice; while the designated purok collectors for the one chupa rice goes around the barangay and bring the collection to where the vigil is. This practice is called the *oo*. Another practice is for the tables for gambling which is open for all gamblers as well as neophytes. This is done for the "*tong*" – cash donation from the players.

As revealed by Ama Batat Laban, the death attire for the famous man like mansip-ok (native priest) consists of five pieces: the *sinulaman* (G-string), two blankets (*tinkem* and *kuwabaw*), *bedbed* (turban), and *egis* (small piece of cloth). It is believed that with this, no one will ask for something that may cause bad luck when he goes to the spirit world. For the female, a tapis and a *lamma* (blouse) would suffice.

Blankets determine whether the deceased is rich or poor. Blankets for the rich are the *pinagpagan* or *aladang*. It is to be noted, however, that the death attire or blanket must resembles those of their dead ancestors' for identification purposes in the spirit world. If the dead ancestors' attire or blanket is not copied, its family in the spiritual territory might reject the deceased.

After the dressing rite, the bonfire is set which signals the start of the *baya-o*, the *kadongyasan*, or the *day-eng*; the prayer for the dead and the singing of church songs. In the dirges or *baya-o*, the activities, attitudes, and behavior of the deceased are exposed. There are times when the bad habits are brought out, a confession, which may slight the bereaved family. In the case of a confession, which may slight the bereaved family. In the case of a dead young man, woman or child, *baya-o* is not allowed according to Lakay Oting.

In the *kadongyasan* or *day-eng*, the old folks usually ask to the dead to intercede for prosperity, peace, and for the dead to leave whatever good qualities and fortunes to his living relatives and the family he has left behind. For the childless relatives of the dead, the dead is requested to talk to their ancestors to let the childless couples bear children. The acknowledgement for the good deeds of the dead are said and apologies are made for the shortcomings done to the dead so that there will be no regrets for not having talk with her/him.

Death due to Murder.

If death is due to murder, the death ritual is taken care of by the old folks in the community. If the murder is done outside the community, important instructions are given by the old folks to those who are going needed in the performance of the *kinellep* ritual. These are rice wine salted meat, and chicken to be brought to the place where are they going to get the corpse.

The *kinellep* ritual is to be done before the corpse buried where old corpse is brought home. This ritual is performed with a prayer to put an end to this kind of bad luck and to drive away all evils associated with the incident, which may possibly be inflicted to these who brought home the corpse.

Supposedly, the corpse is buried where old folks met the cadaver after the performance of the necessary ceremony. He is not to be brought home because of the belief that it might bring bad luck to the community. However in the latest incident that took place (October, 1999), the corpse of the murdered person was brought home and watched for two nights before he was taken to the cemetery. The belief behind this according to the key informant is that, murdered person are brought home and accorded due respect if they have not caused any disgrace to the person outside or inside the community. The ceremony to be done during the burial of a murdered person outside or inside the community however does not vary. Before the coffin is closed the old folks placed inside the coffin a deadly weapon, such as a knife or any kind that can hurt or kill, with the petition that the death of the murdered person be avenged. It is to be noted that the ritual performed is in the accordance to how the death occurred.

After the burial, the old folks proceed to the house of the victim to perform the *legleg* and the *peg-as*. In the rituals, a chicken is butchered to stop or cleanse what had happened. Aside from the *legleg* the old folks perform also the *daw-es* in order to avenge the death of the murdered person.

Carrying home a dead person is not to be taken for granted according to Lakay Biasan. The *legleg* must be performed. In here the native priest (*mambunong*) leads those carrying corpse while saying the *legleg* prayer. If they cross a river, a creek or a bridge, a piece of meat is soaked by an elder then lifted and offered to appease the soul or spirit of the dead so that those carrying or bringing the dead home will not be harmed. Evil spirits on their way would protect them from harm.

Upon reaching home, the participants in carrying of the cadaver are forbidden to go home until the performances of the *daw-es*. They have to butcher a dog or a duck in order to be healthy and progressive or to have a bountiful harvest.

Three days after the burial of the murdered person, the bereaved family with the nearest kin and the native priest will butcher a hen in the kitchen. In this ritual, the parents and the first-degree cousins of the dead will wash their hands in a basin of water in the front yard. This signals the end of post burials rites for the murdered person so that the relatives can go work or travel.

Death caused by Accidents

For death caused by accidents, the same practices and rituals performed for a murdered person are to be performed except that there is no deadly weapon placed inside the coffin of the person who died of an accident. In the performance of the *daw-es*, the people involved in bringing home the dead with those who went to meet the party will not partake the food. Only the old men who performed the *daw-es* will partake the food. After the *daw-es* ceremony, the people involved may go home.

Although, the performance of the *daw-es* for a murdered person and for the death caused by accidents is almost similar, the prayers, however, vary if the death happened outside the community.

Death Due to Suicide

Deaths due to suicide are shunned by the I-Tadian. Hence, burials usually take place the following day. It is, however, normal that the prescribed practices and rituals be observed with the interment as in those observed in normal death according to their category, whether a child or an adult. Death of this kind usually happens among people who cannot face problems, frustrations, and other challenges. It was also observed in the past that suicide cases are often committed by children or minor age, by married people without children, and by unwed mothers.

Practices and Rituals During Wakes

During the wake of the person who committed suicide, the dead is criticized. His dead ancestors are blamed for allowing the suicide incidents to happen. Lamentations are apologies and appeals for forgiveness of any shortcoming done by the relatives of the old folks who attended the wake, hence the repeated pleading for the dead to end this kind of tragic death.

The vigil of a dead person in case of a normal death depends upon the members of the bereaved family. The corpse is watched till all the relatives are around before the burial is set. This is also true to the deaths caused by accidents. If the corpse is odorous, the coffin is sealed and a rubber tube is inserted to the coffin with one end thrust into the air so that those who will stay will not be offended. In the wake, some practices are also observed. Gambling is also allowed by the bereaved family to keep the people awake, and ease the family financial problem with the *tong* being collected. The members of the bereaved family may also sell liquor and cigarettes.

Another practice during the wake is the *kuko* ritual. This ritual is done by the living spouse of the deceased or if not living, the eldest child of the deceased. The ritual is the trimming of the nails of the dead. For every nail trimmed, petitions for more blessings and good fortune in all economic endeavors are meditated on by the one doing the ritual. It is noted, however, the trimmed nails from the dead should be kept so that the requests will be granted.

A night before the burial, the *inubaya* and the *panyew rituals* are performed. In the *panyew* ritual, a chicken is butchered during the night or at dawn, while the *inubaya* entails one sacrificial pig to be butchered between 7:00 to 9:00 in the morning or at dawn depending upon the time of the burial. This must be performed because of the belief that the animal to be butchered is the one to be pulled by the dead as his companion going to the spirit world. If they fail to sacrifice one pig or do this, it is likely that one of the members of the bereaved family will follow the dead

In the *inubaya* or *panyew*, the performer has to observe the position of the bile sac. According to Ama Da-ay A-ayo, a bile sac that is *sudek* (bile sac is hidden by the liver) foretells good luck for the family in times of disputes. When it is *simlit* (bile sac is partly covered by the liver but filled) the family will prosper in the economic endeavor. If the bile sac is *kopis* (empty but red in color) it is not good. It signifies hardship, bad luck, and misfortune. Hence, the need for the bereaved family to look for another sacrificial animal that has the *simlit* bile.

Another ritual which should not be overlooked during the burial is the *inesa*. This is the butchering of one female pig that has given birth to be served as food for the people.

According to the old men the head should be first the coffin is brought out for the interment. This is because of the belief that the dead should know where the door is. After the corpse has been interred in its resting place, the people who come for the interment will go back to the house for the *peg-as* and mandatory social obligation or donation to the bereaved family. According to the late Secoey Batolos, the *peg-as* is the ritual where they pray to Lumawig for cleansing so that all the bad luck will be cast away. Anyone who has attended the funeral must attend this to avoid the same fate met by the dead.

The *tegteg* is the ritual performed by sacrificing a chicken on the fifth day after the burial and another chicken on the seventh day. At night time the *walwalit* is done. This ritual ends the post burial rites after which the members of the bereaved family can resume their normal activities and for those from other places go home, although the mourning for the dead will still be observed by the first degree relatives.

From the foregoing discussions, it can be deduced that the death and burial practices observed by the I-tadian are worth perpetuating. The *bayanihan* spirit, the concern for the welfare of other people is still a dominant value possessed by the people. This is manifested by the social obligation each one contributes in times of death. The bereaved is never left alone to bear their burden. This implies that the I-Tadians are cooperative in developing their community. Why people rely on the positions of the bile sac or gall bladder of the sacrificial animal butchered remains a question.

Causes of Successive Deaths in the Community

The causes of why two or more deaths follow one death in the community of Tadian according to the key informants are the following: due to the modifications of the rituals, non-observance of some taboos, community curse, *ta madalikan* (until the number of deaths complete the number of stones, (which is three, to support a cooking pot), due to sickness, coincidence, the dead has to invite a companion or an errand boy or girl in his journey to the spirit world, and due to envy of the dead on the living or vice versa wherein the friend of the dead is afraid to be left behind so he has to follow.

The people based their beliefs on what was transmitted to them by old folks, the native priests and priestesses.

The Non-material and the Material culture of Early Bauko

Introduction

The non-material and material culture of Bauko Poblacion during the first half of the immediate past century was captured in this research report which was prepared in 1967. It does not claim to be comprehensive, but efforts have been made to include as much material as could be possibly gathered. This report does not only intend to have the contents documented for posterity, but also to assist or challenge other researchers to either augment or prove the authenticity of the results.

Materials for this research report were gathered mostly from interviews of people who had first – hand information about the non- material and material culture of Bauko Poblacion during the first half of the twentieth century. They had lived through the period. Included in the list of interviewees are Lakay Molang christened Jose Modseng, Fr. Morice Vanouverberg, Gabriel Castro, Mariano Bandoc, Anecito Dominguez, Pedro Bernardez, Lakay Ngateb, Gregorio Awisan, Baket Aggawaan Biloloc and many others who contributed pieces of information which enriched the results of the research work. This researcher already acknowledged and recognized their valuable contributions.

The first part of this short treatise covers the non- material culture of Bauko Poblacion during the first half of the twentieth century. It gives an account of the courtship which started in the *ebgan*. After the courtship followed the marriage, child birth, child rearing practices and finally the death or funeral rituals.

A description of the various deities, religious beliefs, rituals and/ or activities were also included. Religious institutions like the *canaos*, *begnas* and *pacde* were briefly discussed. A brief narration of the state of literacy of that period was also made.

The second part of the reports enumerates the material culture covered by the research conducted. It includes the description of the kinds of dwelling utensils used, water supply system and farming equipment and practices. The agricultural industry which is the main source of livelihood of the people was also briefly presented. This also includes the transportation system used in the enumeration of the domestic animals during that period.

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