

What is it in Igorot Culture that should *be passed on* to the Next Generation: As Perceived

By Caridad Fiar-od

If culture is dynamic as affected by migration, education, religion, etc., one day the Igorot Culture shall have lost its identity unless this generation makes effort to pass some aspects of the Igorot culture to the next generation.

As such, foremost, the identifiable spirituality of the Igorots should be passed on. The spirituality of the Igorots manifested in different ways, in different places and different times in accordance with its applicability in terms of specific ethnic beliefs is what matters. Spirituality as practiced by the older generation of Igorots is acknowledging the Supernatural Being or Creator with or without performing a ritual at any time yet giving due respect to whatever religious affiliation he belongs to. The Creator is referred as God, the Almighty, the Powerful, the source of life, the Creator of all things termed in different local/ethnic names like Kabunian/Lumauig, Alawagan to the Isnags, Nintotongcho to the Bontocs, Adikaila to the Kankanaeys, Apo Dios, Manakabalin, Allah, etc. Being spiritual or believing in the value of spirituality, redounds to respect of land, bodies of water or the environment in general which is anchored on the belief that a spirit or spiritual deity present in every living creature controls its life per se. The belief in the presence of spirits by the power of a Supernatural Being is a manifestation that there is God.

Secondly, on matters of the Igorot as a social being, the next generation for identity should make effort to learn and understand Igorot rituals expressed in cultural dances, songs, chants, traditional choreography, literary arts, etc. with the proper instrument/gadgets, costumes as well as their meanings, origin, and what each color, design/icons symbolize or represent. The originality and uniqueness of every ethnic culture in the Igorot communities should further be learned and understood parallel to other cultures where they are immersed, before the original Igorot Culture gets lost. Being knowledgeable on all those mentioned above would avoid misinterpretation or negative impact and instead would lead to the voluntary appreciation of the Igorot culture.

Another identity of the Igorots which should be passed on to the next generation is whatever applicable indigenous knowledge and appropriate technologies relevant to making the most of whatever least resources for healthy living, or long life.

As a whole, the second generation before making the necessary innovation/adjustment, should understand first what it means to be an Igorot defined by culture, what it means to be a Christian Igorot defined by one's spiritual beliefs and unique traditions, and what it means to be a successful social being defined by one's ideology acceptable in a global society anywhere around the world.

By Marjorie Lev

"Inayan" is my favorite because it is a kind of discipline from your parents that goes on from generation to generation.

Every time a child starts to talk and understand what is good and bad like if they pinch, fight or bite other children, they always say, "Ene inayan na into no innikikan da abes ken sik-a!" The same as they grow older. If they lie or steal, inayan is always there. It is also a differentiation to know right from wrong.

In short, for me, it is the "Golden Rule" of the Igorots.

Finally, I am thinking a lot about how modern life changed most generations these days, how we have in many ways lost our way morally.

Secondly, the "BagBaga" it goes hand in hand with "Inayan." BagBaga is an advice not only from our elders, parents, but also from anybody who wants to share their knowledge, experience bad or good especially how they change their lives, how they became successful.

I have an uncle that every time we are gathered to my aunties' or my uncles' houses if he is around, he always tells us, "You know it is not only the professionals who are successful or make good in their lives, anybody as long as you have a goal and a determination to reach that goal you want, if there is a will there is a way. Look at me I'm not a professional but 'I made it'." This uncle I'm talking about was the late Bernan Capuyan from Ambasing.

By Lolit Hafner

My opinion in answer to the above question is related to my report before on bicultural marriage.

Since cultural practices are made meaningful with the use of own language, I believe teaching our younger generation to speak and understand our dialects is important. Inability to communicate in the vernacular will limit access to our Igorot culture since our literatures are mostly orally passed from generation to generation (rhymes, chants, legends, fables, songs and stories). Teaching them to speak in the dialect doesn't need to compete with their formal education. It can start from nursery level and would develop as they grow up hearing the pure language at home. This may be in form of bedtime stories on Igorot legends, fables, suitable stories of childhood experiences on how we lived back home in our communities or traditional practices. This can be followed by some written documentations or books about Igorot culture. Having knowledge of some backgrounds about our culture, they will be the ones asking more questions as they grow up or get exposed during their immersion in our ilis.

As I have previously written, knowing the language helps to access to the culture. It is therefore our responsibility to teach our children our language as one way of passing part of our Igorot culture we hold dear.

By Violeta Passerini

Some of the young generation were born in Igorotlandia and came here with their parents, who came to work, and some were born here through multicultural marriage. Those families who are lucky could go for a vacation yearly, once in two years or after five years, etc. These young generation are also lucky when they could stay in the "ili" and see how our elders live. And considering the taken vacation here in Europe, it's very short to stay at home.

The connection of this to the "What should we pass to the next generation" is just simple. While most of us write about our culture and tradition, I would also like to say that pictures are also nice to pass to our children.

The Igorot way of living changed through modern technology which reached our provinces. The hearth was replaced by Shellane that it's impossible to hung and make "kini-ing." The camote or "tugi" is now seldom cultivated. The reason is our parents are already old to do this manual work and the either the children are in the cities or abroad to seek for better living, or camotes are replaced by vegetables crops.

Through the "ahente" or museum collection our native art crafts are also disappearing. It's a pity that some of our parents don't know the value of these things.

When we have these pictures, we have also an evidence when one day our children confront us with the question "How did you live before in Bontoc, Ifugao, etc.? What's the use of these things? How do you use it? Do my grandparents still use them?" And when we show these pictures and our children ask questions, I'm sure it will be a nice moment to recall the past and tell them also about our culture.

The late Hon. Masferré documented the Igorots through his photography but I know. that there are still pictures which we possess since the '60s or '70s not taken by Masferré but from a friend or relatives.

This is already late for the 3rd ICBE documentation but when members of ICBE would help me to do this, then we could present the collection in the next consultation.

By Peter Agnaonao

I would like to answer this question by enumerating some of our Igorot values that are deeply rooted in our culture.

First, is the *Inayan* concept that emanates from our beliefs.

Second, is the *Ob-obbo*, which is one of the expression of solidarity.

Third, is the traditional governance of the *Ili* like the recognition of the wisdom of the council of elders, the practice of *tongtongan* in settling a conflict within the community, and the traditional practice of managing and conserving the natural resources.

From our humanities and arts, I think that our music, dances and artefacts are still worth passing.

Another thing that I would like to suggest that should continue to be passed is the concept of the *Dap-ay*. This could certainly take a new form like this ICBE, organisation of Cordillerans, BIBAK, IGO and other forms of Igorot associations that makes itself a venue to:

- 1) discuss issues affecting us and our Igorotland,
- 2) talk about problems and find solutions or remedies and
- 3) pass to the next generation, our Igorot culture.

By Yvonne Belen

During my childhood in Bontoc, I had experiences on several aspects of the Igorot culture. But I have taken most for granted. Now that I write on what have to be passed on, I want to share some I distinctly recall.

One is strict adherence to community tradition. I refer especially to *tengaw*, a day or days designated by village leaders as community holiday.

Since I consider myself a student of Igorot culture, I requested for information from Caridad Fair-od. She wrote:

Tengaw is a community or village holiday. On the day of a tengaw, no one is allowed to enter or go out the village the moment a signal is announced through village criers and with knotted plant symbols at strategic entry places. The purpose of tengaw is to avoid any spiritual disturbance that might be the cause or reason for any misfortune or the non-realization of the very purpose of the community ritual performed.

Tengaw is observed after a community ritual is performed. The tengaw could be after the following rituals with their common purposes: 1) Victory or loss over a tribal war, performed to acknowledge and thank Kabunyan and other spirits, 2) Kanyaw in celebration of harvest or the symbolical sowing of palay seeds, performed to acknowledge the Creator and to wish for abundance and prosperity, 3) Cleansing ritual after a bad omen was observed in the community, performed to pray for diversion of the bad to something good.

In the western municipalities of Mountain Province, they call it obaya not tengaw. The procedure and purposes are the same. The difference is that the western people or iAplai do not have ritual after a tribal war. Among the Bontocs and Sadangas, the most nairut is the tengaw after a tribal war.

I only realized the effects of *tengaw* the last time I went with my family to Bontoc. We were there in December 2002 and decided to go to Mainit to see the hot springs. But we were refused entry because the community had a *tengaw*.

We were already going up the village when the woman, at the first house we passed by, said, "You can't proceed. It's *tengaw* today. Didn't you see the plant with a knot?"

"Yes, I did." I replied.

But I didn't know the meaning of the knot in the plant.

"That means it's *tengaw*," she told us.

Disappointed, we returned to Bontoc. While we missed the hot springs, I admire and respect the village elders for their decision.

We had a similar experience when my family and I went to Alab. I wanted to show them my grandparent's house in Dongyuan, where I was born. We weren't allowed to go to that part of the village because they had a *tengaw*. Somebody died. So, I could only show the house where I was born, from my cousin's house at the mountain opposite Dongyuan.

While we were at my cousin's house, he brought out *etag* from the *luden*. *Etag* are pork slices, which are kept in the dried shell of a gourd called *luden*. We Igorots and Cordillerans have been practicing this method of food preservation for generations and I think it should be passed on. The meat is free of chemicals except table salt, which is used as the preservative.

Aside from food preservation, the Bontocs make *safeng*, a fermented food product. Among the Bontocs, they call it *safeng*; those from Sagada call it, *sabeng*. From the internet, I was able to get the recipe of Marya Tsullipas. The ingredients are spring water, sweet potatoes, cassava, fresh corn ears, broth from boiling rice (am), ripe frying bananas, cooked glutinous rice and small young squash (optional). These are placed in an earthen jar and sealed. After a week, the concoction is ready and the liquid can be drunk in a gulp or taken in sips. It is

used as vinegar when cooking fish, which the Bontocs call *khachiw*. Others mix the liquid from *safeng* with water and use the mixture to boil sweet potatoes.

I've tasted sweet potatoes boiled in this mixture and it has a different taste from those boiled in plain water. I must say the taste of *safeng* is acquired.

The women in the *ili* in Bontoc and Sagada still make *safeng* or *sabeng*, respectively, since the recipes may have been passed on by their mothers or grandmothers. They know its nutritional benefits. It is for this reason that I think the knowledge of making *safeng* should be passed on the next generation.

By Patrick A. Boungjick and Cristabel Olat-Boungjick

The Igorots are composed of different tribal groups who share some common attributes, but also have many distinct differences in traditions, dialects and practices. Luckily, Patrick and I belong to the same tribal group so we have a common culture hence, we combined our report. We are both pure Igorots by origin, but our childhood exposure was not sufficient or honestly, we did not take seriously the importance of our culture. Thus, sharing our thoughts on this query is based on our background, observations, experiences and exposure.

First, it is an honor to be called by our Igorot names "Layugan and Dono." We acquired our names through rituals, with chants and *pinikpikan* performed by our parents. We inherited our Igorot names from our great-grandparents and quite advantageous, for knowing the same names from others could be traced that she or he is our relative.

Secondly, it is quite essential teaching our children our very own dialect. No matter where we are, who we are, migrants or immigrants, our children should express themselves speaking our dialect. The communication problem will not be only affected but being Igorot as a whole. Our children should be aware that we have several dialects such as Kankanaey, Ibaloi, Ifugao, Itneg, Isneg, Kalinga.

The Igorot dances are by themselves beautiful, meaningful and unique. Encourage and teach the young generation to wear our costumes by involving them in any activity such as presenting our dances for any invitations, joining special occasions and attending seminars or consultations. Provide them the proper understanding of our various weaving designs and their meanings. Hence, our dances and costumes should be appreciated and preserved.

The second generation should be prioritized in such gatherings like seminars/ consultations sponsored by our organization, BIMAAK Europe or Igorot Global Organization.

What are the Core Values and Other Aspects of the Igorot Culture That We Want to Have?

By Judith Balangyao

What are they doing?.. Are they going mad talking to themselves or talking to no one?.. Why are they doing that?...and more what's and why's. These are the kind of questions I often asked myself every time I witness my parents, grandparents or any "alapos" doing some of the Igorot rituals or ceremonies especially on occasions like weddings, christening, burials or festivals, either sad or happy gatherings. Some of which I take as impractical or unnecessary and some I appreciate and would probably practice myself if I cross such situations... yes, I'm interested in understanding or learning more about these practices.

Igorot arts, crafts and costumes are also valuable to me. It really shows how the first Igorots are so creative to come up with all these to survive life with just very little thing they possess. Our costumes are so original too (especially men's) that really turn people's head back once they have an eye on them. These are stuff we could actually bring with us wherever we go around this globe. Having them handy makes it easier for us to explain/tell people about the place where we come from.

Most importantly is keeping the values and right conduct emphasised on us by our Igorot parents since birth. These include respect to parents and the elderly; and the importance of education.

Igorots may not be that showy in expressing their love (in my own opinion) but they're genuine inside them. I grew up in a multi-cultural society back home and even when I was still young, I already noticed the difference in children's behaviours depending really on everyone's upbringing. Igorot children would not probably kiss their mum when they meet in the street but would definitely offer a help when needed...even if this means carrying a sack full of "kamote" or "saba" with their school uniform. There is really nothing worse than showing disrespect to parents or the elderly. Another thing I appreciate so much is how Igorot parents (or most parents) stress the importance of education on their children. They take it as the only treasure they could pass on as an inheritance...remember the story about this Igorot father who sold all his cows and land just to send his son to college?? That's just an example...and mind you, it's not an experience of just one but many.

These are all significant for me as I live and would love to pass on to younger ones too if I will be given the chance.

What we want to share as Igorots to the next generation

By Henry Foken

1. Our dances

Most of all, our dances to identify us as Cordillereans. And I know that wherever we are, when we hear the sound of our gongs, we feel at home (if we are proud to be an Igorot, not trying to hide ourselves).

Some Igorots don't want because they don't know our dances. Or they don't understand our culture. So it's good to share these dances to our next generation.

And one more thing it seems we are one here in Europe, it is good do it here. So one day, when our next generation goes home, they will challenge some people in Cordillera. In my experience most of the next generation in the Cordillera doesn't know where they come from. Because most that they know now is Born again...

That's why, it's good to share these to the next generations.

2. Our Songs

I should say that our songs are mostly monotone. That's why most of the people don't hear so much or are not interested at all, especially if they don't know the language. In my experience again how to make it interesting to other people is, mixed like modern but not modern. For example: Sing the song with guitar or other instrument, plus in every paragraph there's a refrain. And mostly, the refrain or chorus is the place to tell what you mean in that song.

Another is, it is the artist who also makes it attractive. One sample which I composed is "Cordillera."