

The 5th ICBE Consultation

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In a Capsule

Yvonne Belen

The Igorot Cordillera BIMAAK Europe (ICBE) held its 5th Consultation on April 10-13, 2009 at the Haus Sonnenau in Vallendar, Germany. The theme was "Igorot Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance." Contact persons were: Severino "Rhino" Oblas, Jane Klee-Morgens, Norma Bayoya-Wellhausen, and Mario Guinyawan. There were 82 participants - first, second, and third generation Igorots. The organizations represented were: Igorot Organization Austria (Igorot-Austria), Cordillera Community in Belgium (Cordi Bel), BIBAK Ireland, BIBAK Switzerland, Igorot UK and Igorot Global Organization (IGO). Other Igorot participants came from Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, USA and the Philippines.

The Consultation's main features were:

1. Seminar-workshop on "Photographic Principles that lead to Super Pictures" by Claus Nabert;
2. Keynote address, "Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance" by Dr. Caridad B. Fiar-od, Liaison Officer for International Affairs, Mountain Province, Philippines;
3. Special presentation on "The Bulul in the Social Life of the Ifugao People" by Dr. Serafin Ngohayon, President, Ifugao State College of Agriculture and Forestry, Ifugao, Philippines;
4. Presentation of skits on the Igorot Cordillera rituals:
 - (a) Mountain Province Begnas ceremony by Igorot UK,
 - (b) Abra wedding by Igorots from Germany and The Netherlands,
 - (c) Kalinga housewarming by Igorot-Austria,
 - (d) Ifugao childbirth rituals by Cordi Bel,
 - (e) Apayao agricultural rituals by BIBAK Switzerland, and
 - (f) Benguet death rituals by BIBAK Ireland and Rhino Oblas;
5. Speech of H.E. Ambassador Delia Domingo-Albert, "German Scientific Work in the Cordilleras - a Continuing Challenge," which Mechthild Oblas read because the Ambassador was unable to attend;
6. Comments on the Ambassador's speech by Dr. Serafin Ngohayon;
7. Gala Cultural Night coordinated by Norma Bayoya-Wellhausen and Cristabel Bounggick; and
8. Sightseeing tour along the river Rhine with Rhino and Mechthild Oblas as guides.

ICBE published a magazine, "Cordillera Rituals as a Way of Life" as part of the Consultation's Proceedings. The contents are: Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance, Apayao Rituals: Their Features and Significance, Benguet: The *Peg-as* and *Paypay* Rituals by Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph.D.; Mountain Province BEGNAS Ceremony: Its Meaning and Significance by Pamela B. Fiar-od; Tingguian Abra Rituals by Philian Louise Weygan; Keeping the Kalinga Heritage Alive in Rituals by Maria Luz D. Fang-asan, Ph.D.; The Bulul in the Social Life of the Ifugao People by Serafin Ngohayon, Ph.D. & Emily Alberto; Ifugao Rituals: Their Features and Significance by Anastacia Lannaon, Ph.D., Nancy Ann Gonzales, Ph.D., Caridad B. Fiar-od.

The 6th ICBE Consultation will be held in 2011 in London, United Kingdom with Igorot UK as host.

Impressions

Ricardo Cuyob, Cordi-Bel

The Participants: What impressed me in the 5th ICBE consultation is the appearance of many new faces from all age levels, from very young ones to the elderly, who are very cooperative and enthusiastic. Besides, this is of course the “retrovailles” of familiar faces though some were not there. I noticed that newcomers outnumbered those who regularly participate in this consultation and even if I will include those who attended once or twice, I would say that the number of newcomers are far superior. The attendance too of the second and “third generation” is very impressive though they may be half-Igorots. Nevertheless, they must have felt their being Igorots. I hope this consultation has stirred an interest to continue attaching themselves to their roots.

The Venue: I found the venue perfectly suited to the kind of consultation we have. It has cost us a little bit more but it's worth it because we did the noisiest thing we could without worrying about neighbors around the vicinity complaining. Some of our children including us adults also enjoyed walking in the premises in the early morning and during the short break times.

The Consultation: The contents are good combinations. There is a little bit of theory, practice and a tour to get an idea about the area. Besides, what we see or observe during this visit is certainly enrichment on our part when speaking of knowing other peoples' culture. I have the impression that some of the scheduled program of the consultation seem to have been “bitin,” (hunging) mainly due to lack of time, but that feeling of “bitin” should serve as the driving force to look forward to the next ICBE consultation in 2011.

Josephine Tallayo Grosskurth (Germany)

The four-day event was short but fantastic, full of activities and interesting workshops. For example, knowing or learning more about the Bulul and a little review of some Igorot tradition is never a harm, especially to us living in Europe.

It is a very big thanks to Mrs. Emy Marcus from Frankfurt who sent me the invitation of this ICBE Consultation. We had wonderful days meeting lots of friends whom I only knew through Friendster. Well, I got more friends in Friendster whom I met in Vallendar like guys from Sweden, Switzerland, Ireland, some parts of Germany and other European countries. Anyhow, special thanks also to Manong Rhino Oblas and Manang Norma Wellhausen from Bonn who contacted me before the event.

I do hope to join the ICBE event in England because I promise myself not to miss this occasion. It is a hard job for the organizers and officers but we must not also forget that it is a lot of joy for each and every one of us.

Luti Hartong-Taguba (The Netherlands)

The ICBE Consultation gave me a feeling of going back to the 'ili': Faces with the typical features of people from the Cordillera, incomprehensible dialects being spoken yet some sounds vaguely familiar, music from the gongs and 'solibao' blending into a rhythmic cadence to which the girls and women can dance to. The sense of community was very tangible like in the 'ili' during gatherings. It was during the ICBE Consultation that my children were introduced to their ancestral roots.

My 11-year old son thought it was really 'cool' belonging to a clan, wearing a G-string and playing a gong. My 8-year old daughter thought the costumes and necklaces were very beautiful.

Dominga Webber (Igorot UK)

First of all, we wish to thank you and the rest of the team who made the ICBE Consultation in Vallendar a success. The fruit of your labor was reflected on how well the participants enjoyed themselves. I'm certain everyone has a lovely story to tell about the whole affair starting from the organizing committee to the site of venue and all the activities.

For me, I think the choice of venue was perfect. The place is beautiful and very clean. The gourmet was appetizing and plentiful. I think the staff who catered to our needs at Vallendar deserve a big applause for their effort to make us feel welcome and make sure our bellies were full.

The side trip to the Lorelei and the boat ride along the River Rhine was a nice surprise. Having seen the vast grape plantation along the river, I now understand why lots of British people frequently visit the place just to have a sip of that free wine tasting of the famous wine produced in the Rhine. The good weather complimented the merriment of the group during that day and a special thanks to Mecky (Mrs. Oblas) for her commentary and her rendition of the Loreley song.

On the plenary session the following day: the presentation by Prof. Caridad Fiar-od (guest speaker) of the research on rituals and traditions of the different Cordillera provinces broadened my knowledge and understanding of why and how rituals are performed, particularly the Bulul of the Ifugao which was highlighted by one of our guest speakers, Prof. Serafin Ngohayon.

Once again the ICBE consultation has brought us together as one big happy family, forging new friendship and renewing acquaintances, and integrating with other cultures and most of all, making us proud and be more united as Igorots. Mabuhay Igorots.

Julia Aronchay (BIBAK Ireland)

I am indeed very thankful that we attended the ICBE Consultation. I haven't been to one, aside from the Gala Night of the 4th ICBE Consultation held in 2007 in Ireland. I didn't realize I could gain so much. When the rest of BIBAK Ireland changed their minds in attending this affair, I decided not to join as well but just use this opportunity to travel to Germany. But the desire to meet other kailians around the globe surfaced, such that even if we were not yet satisfied with our tour in Germany, we headed to Vallendar. Should we not have done that, I know I will be sorry. There may be another ICBE Consultation, but each one is unique. Faces may be the same but the wrinkles, frowns and smiles drawn on them will definitely be different. The friends we've gained and the things we learned will always fill part of our treasures in life. Matago tago Cordillera!!!

Dr. Serafin L. Ngohayon (Philippines)

When I was on the plane to Germany, I was deeply contemplating on the significance of my travel vis-à-vis the institution I represent and the expenses I have to incur for the trip. I was then thinking that perhaps, it would be very hard to give justice to the rigors I and my institution endured and may endure for the trip to be realized. When I was on the plane back to the Philippines, I was convinced that the trip is not only justified but also, is a huge success.

My conviction was so strong such that on various occasions, I have shared how the trip shaped me, my thinking and resolve to do my share for the development of Cordillera and its people. In particular, I spoke proudly of our fellow IGOROTS in Europe who are solidly united in their expression of support for each other, who continue to breathe life into their cultural awareness and who share the same to their siblings by coming together as often as possible in brotherly/ sisterly sharing. I spoke fondly on how our brother Igorots in Europe made my first sojourn in Germany and Belgium touchingly possible and educationally remembering, 'twas a welcome and hospitality I will forever relish. Their lives shaped by several unique circumstances have made me realize how strong and flexible we Igorots are, strong in overcoming whatever obstacle and flexible in learning to survive, succeed and shine in various difficult situations. The trip made me prouder to be called an IFUGAO in a provincial standpoint and an IGOROT in a regional brotherhood.

As I express my deep gratitude to the wonderful IGOROT peoples of Europe, which space does not allow me to mention, please bear in mind my open invitation to all to partner with us in the academe and help mold the thinking, attitude and character of your fellow Igorots back home so that they will someday be as strong and successful as you.

Haggiyo IGOROTS in Europe, Haggiyo Igorots in the Philippines and Haggiyo Igorots of the World.

Bisitaon dakami hi ISCAF ta mon-ohohha takun uminum hi bayah!

Dr. Albert S. Bacdayan (USA)

Because the Igorots are now global, attending any one of their many conferences offers an opportunity for both international travel and heart-warming fellowship, like no other, with brothers and sisters of the Igorot Diaspora. The Fifth ICBE Consultation was just like that for Carolyn and me. We looked forward to it with anticipation as we traveled going in and looked back on it with fondness and satisfaction as we journeyed to places afterwards. All because ICBE 5 was an interesting, meaningful and memorable experience.

I was impressed by the enthusiasm and concern for each other and to be with each other that I saw at the conference. The enormous personal sacrifices by Rhino and Mecky Oblas, Jane Klee-Morgens and Dr. Yvonne Belen, to name a few, are expressive of this concern and enthusiasm in my view. This is what makes and sustains a sense of community and belongingness. Equally noteworthy, too, was the diversity of Igorots represented. It was wonderful to see Ifugaos, Kalingas including Tinguians and Benguets in addition to the Mountain Province all having fun and fellowship together. The presence and participation of Drs. Serafin Ngohayon and Caridad Fiar-od from the academe in Igorotlandia was special. Both offered informative discussions of their topics to the enrichment of all. I found Dr. Ngohayon's substantive presentation refreshing because it was new information. Very significant is the attendance of the young and their seeming eagerness to learn and participate. This is identity fixing or forming and identity affirming. I believe the experience paves their way to a sense of belonging, a much needed sense in mass society, and they will appreciate it more and more in time. To hope from the case of the young toddler who danced so marvelously and exquisitely, the attendance of the young could also be the occasion for the emergence of talent. The appreciation the entire community showed will hopefully give encouragement to her and her family to develop her obvious potential to its fullest. There may be an ICBE native in the world of dance in the horizon!

It would be remiss of me not to mention the thoughtful planning of the conference. The selection of the site could not have been better in terms of the conducive, peaceful ambience and services; the smiling and responsive nuns were a unique dimension. The bus ride and cruise along the Rhine were exquisite, offering images and feel good for a lifetime of remembrance. Those nicely manicured vineyards on a top to bottom run, the many castles that dotted the landscape and Loreley are images that, together, form a powerful and enthralling cultural landscape to recall.

Harking back to the tribal diversity noted earlier, I would like to conclude with the observation that if this means that the word "Igorot" is not an issue among the Igorots in Europe, they are a guiding light to us all, natives of the Cordillera mountains. More power to them. They understand correctly that "Igorot" means people of or from the mountains and it does not deny or cancel specific tribal identities such as, Ifugao, Kalinga or Apayao. In this sense, it is a uniting, not a dividing word. One can be a proud Igorot and a proud Ifugao, Kalinga, Ibaloi or what have you to an equal degree.

Thank you all very much, ICBE.

Rose Nabert (Canada)

It was a great conference. You really pulled together and I must say that numbers do not really mean anything if members from outside also help out. The Germany based Igorots, with help from you all, put out a great welcome and an organized program. The venue was perfect...very much like home. I will always remember their Good Friday service at the Pilgrim Church. It was so touching.

Of course it was also good to see everyone! These gatherings are storehouses of memories!

Again, thank you.

Jane Klee-Morgens (Germany)

The 5th ICBE Consultation has successfully served its purpose to the satisfaction of the participants and more to the benefit and pleasure of Igorots in Germany. The success was not a coincidence but was earned by all involved. Participants, guests and resource persons, members of the preparatory committee, and contact persons contributed their best and complemented each other's task during the consultation. The venue provided us the possibility to practice our socio-cultural and spiritual rituals, without restrictions.

We Igorots (1st, 2nd and 3rd generation; full or partially-blooded Igorot - iAplay, Ibaloy, Isneg, Kalanguya or Ifugao) in Europe, Canada, USA and the Philippines came to know each other better and learn more from one another. We found out that Cordillera people vary in their rituals however, all are directed to the welfare of life, land and nature. We were flexible and oriented with great respect to life, land and nature; we are culturally rich. We also proved that we Igorots are fast learners.

Non-Igorots came to learn about us and with respect, observed that the Igorots are Filipinos in heart and mind - warm-hearted, hardworking, simple and trustworthy.

The ICBE consultation was an alternative to a vacation or holiday and was an opportunity to quench our homesickness. It gave us moral support to understand our Igorot identity. This consultation challenged us Igorots, especially in Germany. It inspired us to think of forming an Igorot group.

Long live ICBE!

[Cordillera Rituals Final](#) (Link)

[Bulol in the Social Life of the Ifugaos](#) (Link)

German Scientific Work in the Cordilleras - a Continuing Challenge

Remarks on the occasion of the 5th Igorot Cordillera

BIMAAK Europe (ICBE) Consultation

10-13 April 2009, Vallendar, Germany

By: H.E. Ambassador Delia Domingo Albert

Introduction

I congratulate the organizers of the 5th Igorot Cordillera BIMAAK Europe for hosting this gala night. Although I would have preferred a "Grand Canao", I am sure this event promises to be a memorable one.

I'm afraid I will have to disappoint you tonight as I am in the Philippines while you are celebrating this evening. As a dedicated civil servant, I have to attend first to my duties as the Ambassador of the Philippines to the Federal Republic of Germany. As you listen to this speech, I am in the Philippines to accompany a German delegation who are looking into projects in the Philippines with special interest in microfinance and micro-insurance. As an Ambassador, I do my best to convince the German government and private sector to work with us in improving the lives of our people in the Philippines, especially those in need of development assistance. Later in the month, I will be in the poorest part of Mindanao, the Caraga area, which is going to receive assistance from the German government to improve the lives of the people in -the least developed area of Mindanao.

I hope you will forgive me for not being with you this evening. Diplomats are like missionaries - they have to be where they are needed most.

Moreover, I regret that I will not be able to speak on your theme, "Igorot Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance". Many of you present here tonight are experts on the subject and are much better qualified to speak on such an interesting topic. Instead, I will share with you an interesting aspect of Philippine-German relations relating to early German scientific work in the Cordilleras.

Early German contacts

a) German financier

In tracing early contacts between the Philippines and Germany, it is said that the expedition of Ferdinand Magellan in the 16th century was partly financed by a German banker named Jacob Fugger from Augsburg. Perhaps we can say that unknowingly, he became the first German investor in the Philippines. I understand that a museum in Augsburg has information on the role that the Fugger family played in financing expeditions to Asia which was a risky business then.

b) German naval movements

Later in the 19th century, there were movements of German naval ships in Asia, which some writers say could have changed Philippine history if those German vessels laid anchor in Philippine waters before the Americans did. But as world history tells us, the Germans were late in the race for colonies in Asia.

c) German scientists

Instead of colonialists, the early German travellers to the Philippines were scientists. The diaries and notes of the German scientists are contained in a book entitled, "German Travellers in the Cordillera 1860-1890" by William Henry Scott, an American scientist who described the Cordilleras as follows:

"The rugged mountain range which forms the geologic backbone of northern Luzon and divides its waters between the Cagayan river valley and the /locos coast is called the 'Gran Cordillera Central'.

The inhabitants of this region successfully resisted assimilation into the Spanish empire for three centuries and so preserved many aspects of older Philippine culture little modified by foreign influence."

Thanks to the steady resistance of the inhabitants of the Cordilleras, we can still witness today the manifestations of a thriving Cordillera culture. Your discussions during this conference attest to this.

Let me now cite some of the German scientists who went to the Philippines for reasons of scientific curiosity and who left personal accounts of their observations.

1. Dr. Carl Gottfried Semper was born in Altona, Hamburg on 06 July 1832 and was the son of a prosperous manufacturer. In 1861, he spent 8 months in the Cordilleras collecting butterflies, mollusks and other zoological specimens which were subsequently illustrated in his monumental work entitled, "Reisen in Archipel der Philippinen". He is known to be the first European to climb Mt. Data when he discovered a new species of butterfly in Mankayan and Benguet which he called "Vanessa benguetana" while collecting specimens.

I would like to invite you to do some research and look for copies of his notes which were published in Leipzig in 1868.

2. Dr. Adolf Bernard Meyer, Director of the Zoological Museum in Dresden, published an "Album von Philippinentypen" with 250 illustrations after visiting Abra, Benguet and Lepanto while traveling 2 years around the world in 1882. He sent his specimens to Dresden in the museum named after him.

I have seen the collection and would like to invite specialists in anthropology to assist in making a catalogue of this fascinating collection.

3. Dr. Schadenberg was a German chemist who lived in Vigan and Manila and traveled extensively in the Cordillera between 1886 and 1889 which enabled him to closely observe the inhabitants of all five areas of BIBAK country, namely, Benguet, Ifugao, Bontok, Apayao and Kalinga. He made the finest collection of ethnographic photographs of northern Luzon and studied the racial relationship between the Igorots and lowland Filipinos.

I understand his collection is mostly found in museums in Vienna as well as in The Netherlands.

In addition to these German scientists was an Austrian industrialist named von Drasche who made a geologic study of the Cordilleras in 1875 during a trip to Asia looking into volcanoes and volcanic formations.

Why scientists?

You may be curious to know why I choose to highlight the interest of some German scientists in the culture of the people of the Cordillera. It is my intention to get you curious and interested in following up their studies. I believe that this meeting should not just end in getting to know each other. I have deliberately identified specific scientific works so that you could make your own contribution in making the culture of the BIMAAC area better understood and appreciated not only for yourselves but to the community you have settled in.

I am particularly looking for scholars who could study further and continue research on what the German scientists discovered in the Cordilleras and who introduced them to the rest of the world.

I hope that someone or several of you could follow the trail opened by these scientists. The Embassy will be pleased to put those interested in contact with persons and institutions who will be of assistance.

Baguio Historical and Scientific Museum

For my part, I am working to give Baguio City a historical and geological museum that will show the rich resources not only of the region but of our country as a whole. Baguio as you know celebrates its centennial this year as a chartered city. The official seal of Baguio dated 1909 explains its history

as a settlement that grew into a metropolis due to the development of four gold mining communities. These mining communities are enshrined in the seal represented by four gold dots on the red ribbon of prosperity. I hope that you are all familiar with the official seal of the City of Baguio.

In addition to this geological setting we wish to draw attention to the people who contributed to the development of the city. We also aim to encourage, through the interactive facilities of computers, the study of sciences. Baguio today is an educational center for the young people of Northern Luzon. We hope that our Museum could inspire the young students to be scientifically curious. This would be our contribution to the development of a generation that will be innovative and creative. Today, nations are competing for the best way to develop both natural and human resources.

Germany itself developed into a strong economy by developing its natural resources which provided the basis for its industrialization. The development of the coal and other mines of the Ruhr Valley led to the development of the country as a whole - from its steel industries to its manufacturing and other downstream industries to the present high-technology products which it offers to the world making Germany the largest exporting country in the world, so far.

The Philippines is a mineral-rich country. With proper technology to implement a policy of responsible mining, I believe that we can turn the economy around by developing our resources. We have seen the example of Germany, a country that has invested in the scientific education of a people who developed its resources.

I believe that with hardwork, dedication and political will, we can improve the lives of our people by harnessing our natural resources to scientific use. We can start by continuing the scientific work started by the German scientists who worked on the Cordilleras.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you once again for getting together to share and learn about our cultural roots. I would like to request copies of your presentations which we could share with a wider audience.

Finally, I wish to invite you to participate in our efforts to look for the scientific papers prepared by German scientists and to continue the dedicated scientific work that paved the way for a better appreciation of our country and people.

May I also invite you to open the website of the Embassy at www.philippine-embassy.de to learn more about Philippine-German relations in general, and to the website of our modest but ambitious Baguio Historical Museum Foundation found at www.bhmm.com.ph.

Thank you.

Reaction to: “German Scientific Work in the Cordillera – A Continuing Challenge”

*Serafin L. Ngohayon, Ph.D.
President
Ifugao State College of Agriculture and Forestry
Nayon, Lamut
Ifugao, Philippines*

1. Greetings

2. Expression of Gratitude:

On behalf of the organizers of this 5th ICBE consultation, I wish to express our wholehearted appreciation to H. E. Delia D. Albert, Ambassador of the Philippines to Germany, for the immediate acceptance of our invitation for her to grace our humble gathering. It is just unfortunate that, as she said, duty calls and she has to act in more urgent commitment for our beloved country. For that, we shall not despair! Besides, the fact that she gave a written message, she really meant and longed to be with us. For that, we are truly grateful to our good Ambassador.

3. I fully agree with Ambassador Albert when she said that for Cordillera Region to fully develop and stand with its own, it must harness and maximize the use of its vast/rich natural resources. I agree with Ambassador Albert when she further said that we Cordillerans must learn from the German Experience and educate our people to become performing scientists. I share her belief that we need science to add value to our resources and we need scientists from the Cordillera to do that for us.

4. It is immensely inspiring to know and see a lot of Igorot people from the Cordillera doing well here in Europe. It is much more encouraging to see that you have shared your success to your families whom you have brought here from home or which you have formed in here with your partners.

5. Being in Europe, a continent known for its scientific breakthroughs that lead to economic prosperity, you have all the opportunity to educate your children to become scientists and perhaps Nobel Laureates for the benefit of the Cordillera Region and the whole Igorot race. Perhaps it's just a matter of time and we'll have that day that one of those astronauts who will land in the moon is a Cordilleran.

6. Having organized yourself into one active organization, we urge you to stay united, cohesive and active. Practice and teach the various Igorot rituals to your children to tame their aggressiveness and direct them to the place you came from. As one famous statesman once said, “Coming together is good; knowing each other is better, but working together is progress.”

Notes on Cordillera Rituals as a Way of Life

Yvonne Belen

Among the Igorots,
rituals affirm and re-affirm their connection to nature, and
are a means to strengthen their identity as an ethnic tribe rooted in the past.

--- Caridad B. Fiar-od, "Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance"

During the 4th Igorot Cordillera BIMAAK Europe (ICBE) Consultation held in May 2007 in Dublin, Ireland, Dr. Caridad B. Fiar-od, keynote speaker, made three recommendations. One of these was, "There should be continuing advocacy and promotion of the Igorot culture through conferences, symposia, and other forms." In a workshop where participants shared their experiences, Ricardo Cuyob of the Cordillera Community in Belgium (Cordi-Bel), asked, "How can we advocate and promote our Igorot culture when we don't even know what these are?" At the end of their session, the workshop participants decided to research on Cordillera people's rituals, specifically life and agricultural cycle. Upon their recommendation, the plenary agreed on the research.

In three previous ICBE Consultations held in 2002, 2003 and 2005, the participants gathered with a common goal - to preserve their culture. They listened, they talked, they sang, they prayed, they chanted, they played the gongs, they danced. Their ideas became a pool for the research.

Conduct of research

In Dublin, the participants agreed to divide the research among the ICBE network members. BIBAK Ireland would research on Benguet rituals, Cordi-Bel on Ifugao, Igorot-UK on the Mountain Province, Igorots in Germany and The Netherlands on Abra, BIBAK-Switzerland on Apayao, and Igorot Austria on Kalinga. They commissioned Dr. Caridad B. Fiar-od as the main researcher; she would also look for other researchers.

ICBE

From an initial gathering in 2002, Igorots in Europe formed a network in 2003 called ICBE. It is composed of organizations, namely Igorot Organization of Austria, Cordillera Community in Belgium, BIBAK Ireland, BIBAK-Switzerland, and Igorot-UK; and Igorot individuals in Germany, Luxembourg, and The Netherlands. They decided to hold a consultation biennially. And one of their objectives is to preserve their heritage, specifically their culture, as residents in Europe.

BIMAAK is an acronym for the six provinces of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), namely Benguet, Ifugao, Mountain Province, Abra, Apayao, and Kalinga. Another acronym commonly used is BIBAK, which stands for Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao, and Kalinga.

This article was published in the Souvenir Program of the 8th Igorot International Consultation held from August 5-8, 2010 at the Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada.

Magazine

In April 2009, ICBE published a 56-page magazine entitled, *Cordillera Rituals as a Way of Life*. The magazine forms part of the Proceedings of the 5th ICBE Consultation held in April 2009 in Vallendar, Germany.

The contents are:

- Foreword
- About ICBE
Yvonne Belen, M.D.
- Brief Profile of the Cordillera Region
Cordillera Almanac, Department of Interior and Local Government,
Cordillera Administrative Region
- Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance
Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph.D.
- Mountain Province Begnas Ceremony: Its Meaning and Significance
Pamela B. Fiar-od
- Tingguian Abra Rituals
Philian Louise Weygan
- Keeping the Kalinga Heritage Alive in Rituals
Maria Luz D. Fang-asan, Ph.D.
- Apayao Rituals: Their Features and Significance
Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph. D.
- The Bulul in the Social Life of the Ifugao People
Serafin L. Ngohayon, Ph.D. & Emily Alberto
- Ifugao Rituals: Their Features and Significance
Anastacia Lannaon, Ph.D., Nancy Ann Gonzales, Ph.D., Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph.D.
- Benguet: The Peg-as and Paypay Rituals
Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph.D.
- Script: Cordillera Rituals as a Way of Life
Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph.D.
- Acknowledgments

Overview of two researches

In Dr. Fiar-od's paper, "Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance," she says that among the Cordillera people, rituals are central to their lives. It is their means to convey messages to a Supreme Being, the creator, who could be *Adikaila* (Unseen), *Manakabalin* (Powerful), *Nintotongcho* (Someone in Heaven), *Mangus-usdong* (Overseer). The people perform rituals to show respect to a Supreme Being and to preserve the environment. They observe rituals when they tattoo or mummify. Some features are prayers, animal sacrifice, applicability to customary laws, exclusiveness and inclusiveness. Rituals include chanting, playing of gongs, dancing, drinking wine, and sharing food. Symbols, color, and sound add to the ritual's importance. Rice and chicken are symbols of plenty; spear and shield of protection; money of financial soundness. Clothes with bright color, which people wear, indicate a joyous occasion. And playing of gongs means an event is on-going. Finally, she mentions occasions outside the village setting where rituals could be used.

Dr. Serafin L. Ngohayon and Ms. Emily Alberto's research on "The *Bulul* in the Social Life of the Ifugao People" traces the *Bulul*'s origin, presents the Ifugao tribes that still practice the *Bulul* ritual, summarizes the Ifugao people's level of awareness of the ritual, shows people's beliefs on the *Bulul*'s importance, and determines the perceived effects of practicing or not practicing the *Bulul* rituals.

Life and agricultural cycle rituals

While the authors included other rituals in their research, I focused below on the life and agricultural cycle.

“Mountain Province Begnas Ceremony: Its Meaning and Significance” by Pamela B. Fiar-od.

The Applai tribe of the Mountain Province perform Begnas as a community ritual. The Council of Elders determine the purpose. The rituals comprise a preparatory phase, Begnas proper, and closing. The closing ritual signals the start of the agricultural cycle’s next event.

“Tinguian Abra Rituals” by Philian Louise Weygan

The *Maengs* celebrate a wedding depending on the couple’s means. It could be *tinipuy* or *kinaiw*, *eyapdo* or *danon*. In tinipuy or kinaiw, the bride and groom’s families arrange the wedding while in eyapdo, villages of both parties are involved. Danon is the most expensive because the woman’s family demand gifts such as land or house. The bride and groom’s families invite the village and other communities.

“Keeping the Kalinga Heritage Alive in Rituals” by Maria Luz D. Fang-asan, Ph.D.

In Lubuagan, Kalinga, the people have house blessing rituals - *lumok ji be-yoy* and *chomchomog*. When the house is ready to be occupied, they do the lumok ji be-yoy. And if the family is financially able, they continue with the chomchomog. The family slaughter a large pig and invite relatives and neighbors.

“Apayao Rituals: Their Features and Significance” by Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph. D.

The Isnags carry out rituals during the agricultural cycle. As stated by the author, these are done “before clearing the grassland for rice planting, before rice planting, before harvesting, before starting to eat the newly harvested crop, and for abundance before a festivity.”

“Ifugao Rituals: Their Features and Significance” by Anastacia Lannaon, Ph.D., Nancy Ann Gonzales, Ph.D., Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph.D.

The Ifugaos conduct rituals before and after the baby’s birth. Before birth, rituals include prayers, e.g., to ease labor pains, and animal sacrifice to hasten labor pains. After birth, rituals are mainly prayers - to thank God, welcome the baby, and indicate that gifts can already be given to the mother and baby.

“Benguet: The Peg-as and Paypay Rituals” by Caridad B. Fiar-od, Ph.D.

During the wake, the Ibalois go through a closing ritual called *peg-as*. It is composed of prayers, and splashing of water for cleansing. Before interment, they observe the *paypay* ritual. According to the author, the purpose is: “...to drive away the spirit of the living and those who worked there and might have been left in the graveyard.”

Conclusion

The magazine is a contribution towards self-discovery and identity. It highlights the values of community sharing and sacredness of life. It reveals the connection of life- in community and nature - to the past, present, and future. ICBE documented and published some Cordillera rituals. The challenge is for others to continue.

P R O G R A M

Gala Night

5th ICBE Consultation

EMCEES: Rose Bawing-Nabert & Cristabel Bounggick

Part I:

19:00-19:30	Assembly & Registration	Anne Winter & Norma Joachin
19:30	Philippine National Anthem	Valerie Lee
	German National Anthem	Cynthia Oblas
	Prayer	Marjorie Soaygan
19:45	Roll Call of Guests and Delegates by country	Lourdes Montero
20:00	Igorot Cultural Presentation Igorot Ritual	Prof. Caridad Fiar-od BIMAAK delegates
21:00	Introduction of the Guest Speaker	Mrs. Agnes Mendoza Urban
21:05	Speech	Her Excellency Delia Domingo-Albert Philippine Ambassador to Germany
21:25	Power point presentation on the ICBE Magazine and Acknowledgments	Dr. Yvonne Belen
	P I C T U R E T A K I N G !!!	
21:35	B R E A K	

Part II:

22:00	German Cultural Presentation - Germany c/o Norma B. Wellhausen	
22:20	Philippine Cultural Presentation – KAWAYAN - Philippine-Deutsch Interkulturelle Gruppe e.V. c/o Jane Klee-Morgens	
22:40	Closing Remarks	Mario Guinyawan

P I C T U R E T A K I N G

- SOCIALIZATION - Dance, Dance, Dance

Ushers:

*Mechthild Oblas
Valerie Lee
Philip Oblas
Jane Klee Morgens
Jenny Wijetunge
(other volunteers)*

*Lourdes Montero
Cynthia Oblas
Elizabeth Guinyawan
Marivonne Cuyob
Kathleen Tadawan*

*Susan Nana Atakora
Cristobal Agnaonao
Mario Guinyawan
Besa Thiesen
Elizabeth Ut-utan*

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all who have supported, contributed a lot of their time, efforts and resources to the success of this affair.

***Dakami nan nadagup ay IGOROT isna Europa, dakkal ay iyaman mi isnan inmaliyan yo ay
makiurnos ya makilagsak ken dakami .
MATAGO-TAGO TAKO AM-IN***

Cultural Night Coordinators: Norma Bayoya-Wellhausen & Cristabel Olat-Bounggick

Program

5th Igorot Cordillera BIMAAK Europe (ICBE) Consultation

10-13 April 2009 Jugendbildungsstätte Sonnenau
Haus der Schönstatt-Mädchenjugend
Vallendar, Germany

Theme: Igorot Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance

Friday, 10 April 2009		
In-charge: Igorots in Germany		
13.00 - 18.00	Arrival and Registration of Participants	Susan Kilakil (Cordi Bel), Annie Winter, Josephine Grusskurth (Germany)
15.00 - 17.00	Seminar-workshop: Photographic Principles that lead to Super Pictures	Claus Nabert (Canada)
18.00 - 19.00	Dinner	
19.30 - 19.50	Opening Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oggayam • Turnover Ritual • Welcome Remarks 	Master of Ceremonies: Mario Guinyawan (Germany) Peter Agnaonao (Cordillera Community of Belgium – Cordi Bel) Dave Aragonés (BIBAK Ireland) and Rhino Oblas (Germany) Rhino Oblas
19.50 - 20.05	Review of the 4 th ICBE Consultation	Dave Aragonés
20.05 - 20.20	Intermission	Igorots in Frankfurt c/o Mario Guinyawan
20.20 - 21.20	Introduction of participants by country	Delegates
21.20 - 21.35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on the Program • Presentation of ICBE Magazine: “Cordillera Rituals as a Way of Life” 	Dr. Yvonne Belen (The Netherlands)
21.35 - 21.45	House Rules	Jane Klee-Morgens
21.45 - 22.45	Socialization	Rhino Oblas, Jane Klee-Morgens, Mario Guinyawan

Saturday, 11 April 2009		
In-charge: Rhino and Mecki Oblas		
07.30 - 08.30	Breakfast	
09.00 - 18.00	Sightseeing Tour	Rhino and Mecki Oblas
18.00 - 19.00	Dinner	
20.00 - 21.00	Easter Service	BIBAK Ireland
21.00 - 22.30	Rehearsal for Gala Night	Dr. Caridad B. Fiar-od (Philippines) & Cristabel Bounggick

	(Igorot Austria)
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Sunday, 12 April 2009		
Moderators:		
Morning Session: BIBAK Ireland		
Afternoon Session: Igorot UK		
Gala Night: Norma Bayoya-Wellhausen & Cristabel Bounggick (In-Charge)		
07.30 - 08.30	Breakfast	
08.35 - 08:40	Invocation	The Rev. Cesar T. Taguba (The Netherlands)
08.40 - 08.55	Introduction of newcomers Presentation of ICBE Magazine: “Cordillera Rituals as a Way of Life”	Delegates Dr. Yvonne Belen
08.55 - 09.00	Introduction of Guest Speaker	Igorot UK
09.00 - 09.30	Cordillera Rituals: Their Features and Significance	Prof. Dr. Caridad B. Fiar-od, Liaison Officer for International Affairs, Mountain Province, Philippines
09:30 - 09.50	Open Forum	Moderator
09.50 - 10.10	Coffee/Tea Break	
10.10 - 10.40	Presentation of Research Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mountain Province BEGNAS Ceremony: Its Meaning and Significance Tingguian Abra Rituals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Igorot UK Germany & The Netherlands
10.40 - 11.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping the Kalinga Heritage Alive in Rituals Apayao Rituals: Their Features and Significance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Igorot Austria BIBAK Switzerland
10.10 - 11.25	Special Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bulul in the Social Life of the Ifugao People Serafin Ngohayon, Ph.D. & Mrs. Emily Alberto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Serafin Ngohayon
11.25 - 11.55	Presentation of Research Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ifugao Rituals: Their Features and Significance Benguet: The Peg-as and Paypay Rituals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cordi-Bel BIBAK Ireland
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch	
13.15 - 14.15	Plenary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cordillera Updates Open Forum 	Dr. Serafin Ngoyahon.
14:15 - 16:15	Workshop group discussion on topics of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second Generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIBAK Ireland

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cordillera Updates and Concerns • Integrating in the Host Country Resource Person: Mrs. Agnes Urban • Planning for the 6th ICBE Consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium & The Netherlands • Norma Bayoya-Wellhausen • Conchita Pooten (Igorot UK)
16:15 - 17:15	Plenary Session Workshop Group Discussion Reports	Group Reporters
17.15 - 17.35	Igorot Global Organization (IGO) Update	Dr. Caridad Fiar-od
17.45 - 18.45	Dinner	
19.00 - 23.30	Gala Night	In-charge: Norma Bayoya- Wellhausen & Cristabel Olat-Bounggick

Monday, 13 April 2009		
Moderator: Cordi Bel		
07.30 - 08.30	Breakfast	
08.45 - 09.00	Assembly/Community Singing	Henry Foken & Frederick Baldo (BIBAK Switzerland)
09.00 - 09.15	Financial Report	Susan Kilakil/Annie Winter/Josephine Grusskurth
09.15 - 09.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for 6th ICBE Consultation • Turn-over Ritual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conchita Pooten (Igorot UK) • Rhino Oblas and Conchita Pooten
09.30 - 09.45	Closing Remarks & Announcements	Rhino Oblas
09.45 - 10.00	Closing Chant	Dr. Albert Bacdayan (USA)
10.00 - 10.45	Evaluation	Participants
10.45 - 12.00	Closing Ritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mario Guinyawan • Jane Klee-Morgens • Rhino Oblas • Norma Bayoya- Wellhausen
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch	
13.30	Departure	