A PERSON WHO has been murdered must be mihim'ung. For this, all the relatives gather near the corpse and amidst yelling and stamping of feet, implore the sun and the moon to avenge his death. They shout to the spirit of the dead person to make his murderer his constant companion so that even in work and in sleep, the murderer will not feel at peace. He will be haunted by the spirit of the dead and in the end may die a violent death—by suicide or be murdered himself.

No animal is used as a sacrifice during the burial rite. The dead is not even given a decent burial. More commonly known among non-Ifugao as a war dance, it is only so in appearance. The people who come for the him'ung are dressed rather weirdly as traditional warriors in g-strings and blankets, with the double-bladed hinalung or hanggap knives in open scabbards attached to their ginutto, shell ring belts about their waist and brandishing spears or beating these against shields or bangibang that they beat in unison.

They decorate themselves with red leaves of the dongla and those who have bango (a leather bag with the hair still on the skin, in the form of a backpack) put it on. They all hold their spears and shields as if they are going to battle enemies. Others make noise with a bamboo on a stick (munbangibangda). In a single line, they hop and skip, characteristic of Ifugao dance, to the rhythm of the beating of the bangibangs and shields. The lead warriors, often holding two spears, act out the theme of threat for the whole group.

When they finally go to bury the dead, they hold the corpse by the leg and drag him all the way to the grave. There, they just drop him roughly and cover him with earth. The corpse is usually unrecognizable after the rough treatment given, but they say that it is done to arouse his spirit to anger, and thus take revenge on his murderer. After some years, the family of the dead digs him out of his grave and is given a proper burial.

In the less violent dog’al, pagpag or patipat, the line of warriors seeks out nooks and crevices where evil spirits might dwell, winding around the pathways of the whole village, or the terrace dikes where rats that devastate their fields might be hiding.

Bogwa

TUWALI IFUGAO, IFUGAO PROVINCE, NORTHERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. This is the Ifugao ritual of honoring the dead. As every aspect of Ifugao life must be favorable to the gods, it is the mumbaki, the ritual specialist considered a central figure in Ifugao religion, who carries out the appropriate baki or ritual. He recites from memory, invokes and offers sacrifices to the deities and spirits for the one seeking blessing or atonement.
ONE OF THE IFUGAO rituals is the rite for the dead called *bogwa*. While both major sub-groups of the Ifugao – the Tiwali and the Ayangan – have their own version of the ritual, the practice is mainly attributed to the Tiwali. Except in extraordinary circumstances like a murder or an accident, the *mumbaki* will not invoke any of the deities but the *linaua* or the soul of the dead, rendering the *bogwa* a minor ritual. Its importance arises only when there is a sickness to be cured that is believed to have been caused by an offended soul.

*Bogwa* is usually performed one or two years after a death for varied reasons: a person keeps on dreaming of a family member or kin, to cure a sickness after ascertaining its cause through divination, to pay tribute or fulfill a *ipu* or dirge to recount the good deeds done by the person while still alive.

On certain days during the *bogwa*, offerings are made by the *mumbaki* while invoking the *linaua* of the dead person, his deceased father, mother or siblings through *munghukut*, the messengers, who are sent to inform the souls that they are being summoned on earth. On the last day of the *bogwa*, after the bones have been returned to its grave or once again kept in the house, the *mumbaki* performs the final rite called *kuliro*. It is meant to remove the food prohibitions observed by the family and their relatives during the *bogwa*.

The *bukahon* is the *bogwa* for those who have met unnatural death. It is held only once and the wake lasts for two and a half days. Only a *munghukut*, the *mumbaki* who specializes in the *bukahon* is allowed to invoke the soul of the deceased and the deity *Manahhaut*, the Deceiver, and perform the corresponding cursing ritual.

In contrast, the *bogwa* for ordinary deaths may last three to twelve days and may be repeated several times for the same person. The number of animals to be sacrificed and the death blanket that will be used to wrap the bones depend on the social status of the family. *Panyo* or taboos are strictly observed during the *bogwa* by the family, their relatives, the *mumbaki* and, in some cases, their neighbors. Only old men and women are entitled to this ritual; not children as they are deemed incapable of causing sickness because of their innocence and lack of malice.

The *bogwa* officially starts after the *punghukutan* or the day when the bones are brought out of the tomb, grave or house to be prepared for the wake. During the *punghukutan*, one or two *munghukut* prepare the bones by removing them from its original shroud to be cleaned, arranged and rewrapped in a new *uloh* or hand-woven blanket held together by a *manon* or g-string for the male and a *tolyo* or wrap-around skirt tied with a *baka* or belt for the female. The shroud is then placed on a table for public viewing. Before the day is over, an elderly relative or someone close to the deceased offers a baki or prayer followed with a *ipu* or dirge to recount the good deeds done by the person while still alive.

Although the people ascribe their fate and general well-being to their gods, the *bogwa* is an example of a ritual founded on a shared belief. It reaffirms the Ifugao’s fidelity to the souls of the dead person, his deceased father, mother or siblings through *munghukut*, the messengers, who are sent to inform the souls that they are being summoned on earth. On the last day of the *bogwa*, after the bones have been returned to its grave or once again kept in the house, the *mumbaki* performs the final rite called *kuliro*. It is meant to remove the food prohibitions observed by the family and their relatives during the *bogwa*.

The celebration of *bogwa* is not exclusive to one family. It involves an entire village as demonstrated in the meat-sharing system called *bodru*. A distinct practice in Ifugao ritual, the meat of the sacrificed animal is shared with the people who helped in the *bogwa*. It promotes reciprocity and strengthens relationships among kin and within the community.

Although the people ascribe their fate and general well-being to their gods, the *bogwa* is an example of a ritual founded on a shared belief. It reaffirms the Ifugao’s fidelity to long-established traditions which sustains the bond of the community while in the midst of modernity and change. If the *bogwa* is the microcosm of the Ifugao belief system, it is in constant transformation mainly to adapt to present social conditions. However, its function remains the same: to honor and remember the departed, maintain personal and community ties, and observe the rites handed down from generation to generation, making it an important element of intangible cultural heritage integral to the life of the Ifugao.

Kalanguya Agricultural Rituals

**Kalanguya Ifugao, Ifugao Province, Northern Luzon Island, Northern Philippines.** Although the Kalanguya is one of the sub-groups of the Ifugao, their particular culture is a mixture of the cultures of the other subgroups like the Tiwali and Ayangan. The amalgamation resulted in a richer character to their rituals. Their agricultural rite has variations reflecting this.

**In-owang** – This is performed during harvest time. The owner prepares rice from the previous harvest, one or two jars of rice wine (*tapoy*) and *ginola* (salted pork). The *ginola* may be roasted. The *mumbunong* (*ritual specialist*) recites prayers then sprays sand and rice wine on the surrounding fields. Then the harvesters eat. The *mumbunong* sits quietly. A piece of red cloth is attached to a pole and is placed conspicuously near. A fire is built and is tended well to keep smoking during the course of the harvest. Afterwards, a *padong* (reed with knotted leaves, a taboo sign) is placed on the two main entrances to the field.

When the harvest is taken home, two chickens are butchered before the grains are taken to the granary. This is to ensure that there will be an abundance of rice for the family’s consumption.

**Sibon** – Three weeks after *timmongaw* (transplanting), the owner of the rice field boils rice and beans as porridge then serves this with the cooked rice for lunch so that the field will maintain its water supply ideal for rice growth. Two hens are butchered and sacrificed for this. The wing feathers are plucked and placed in two reeds, which are planted at the entrance of the field.

**Kaingin** – The swiddeners perform the *timmongaw* in their cultivation plots. Two chickens are sacrificed and *tapoy* is offered. At the edge of the swidden, a blanket is spread and attached to two stands in the manner of a wall hanging. This rite is done to appease the *timmongaw* (mountain spirits) in case some property of the spirits have been disturbed. *Sibon* may also be performed after planting the swidden.

**The Generalized Stages** in some rituals in their agricultural cycles are as follows:

**Sibon** – Three weeks after *timmongaw* (transplanting), the owner of the rice field boils rice and beans as porridge then serves this with the cooked rice for lunch so that the field will maintain its water supply ideal for rice growth. Two hens are butchered and sacrificed for this. The wing feathers are plucked and placed in two reeds, which are planted at the entrance to the rice field to remind his *anumul* (ancestral spirits) that sacrifice has been offered. This is done to prevent worms, rats and other infestations.