

Lumsit, M. T. (1992). *Towards an indigenous political theory for the Kankanaeys of Kayan*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Baguio City: Baguio Colleges Foundation.

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## ABSTRACT

A philosophical analysis of the **Kankanaeys'** cultural practices and institutions shed light to their concept of the good and just life. This concept is manifested in their indigenous labor practices, land use and management, political institutions which include conflict resolution, and those religious practices which are relevant to land use and management, labor relations, and conflict resolutions,

The study covered the two barangays of Kayan considering that they have the same cultural practices. Data had been gathered using key informant interviews and participant observation. The practices and institutions were analyzed and interpreted within the realm of Aristotle's, Confucius', Rawls' philosophy and other relevant liberal philosophies.

## Major Findings

Kayan's socio-economic-political practices and institutions can be divided according to themes implicit in them. The promotion of familial harmony is fostered in the devolution of properties, corporate management of **lakun**, preference of relatives in the sale and mortgage of lands, practices of **gamal** and **saad** where male relatives are called for to assist in laying down the foundation of a kin's house.

Cooperation among the villagers is promoted in the observance of practices which are reciprocal in nature: the **agag** which is an informal organization of women during the planting and harvesting season; the free labor practice which accomplishes community-oriented projects that are short of funds or unfunded; the **ambon**, which is the community's means of reciprocating what a concerned person did in time of death in the community, and; the **oo** which is an obligatory contribution of one or two chupas depending on the age of the dead person.

The cooperation among villagers is further enhanced by: the corporate management of **payas** solidifying farmers who share the same irrigation canal and who assume the consequential responsibilities; the management of communal forests and pastures and the free usufruct of owned lands balancing socio-economic inequalities among the villagers.

On the political plane, the **batog** institution is maintained to serve the following functions: a.) where community meetings are held; b.) where rites are performed; c.) where the **simana** of the day are based for immediate dispatch, and; d.) where conflict-resolution at the **agom** level is conducted.

The concept of justice is reflected in their search for truth and the desire to maintain harmony with their fellowmen and nature. Instrumental in the realization of such are the local leaders who are chosen from the pool of the **amam-a**, who are looked up to for their wealth of information and adherence to the **kasigudan** which serves as the mean in both decision-making and conflict-resolution. They are also authoritative in the performance of rites to give nature its due of to harmonize the body and soul after an emotional settlement of disputes. The concept of social justice is reflected in the willful performance of their obligation.

## **Conclusions**

The focal point of the community's life patterns is the maintenance of harmony, solidarity and community consciousness. Familial harmony is promoted by practices which dictate kins' functions towards others. The institution of the **batog** imposes obligations which are reciprocal in nature to all the members. One's performance of his functions determines how the community responds to him in time of need. To maintain reciprocity, conflict-resolution is generally conciliatory. Where justice sought is inadequate, the **ab-abiik** or **daw-es** is performed for the party concerned the observance of which tempers the concerned not to revenge and leave to the unseen the task of completion the justice due. Where the good is aimed for the individual, be it in his work, family life, or the unforeseen future, the appropriate ritual is performed giving nature or the unseen spirits their due share.

Although socio-economic inequality is felt in the community, it is balanced by practices which promote socio-economic harmony. The area remains to be an open society. Cash economy had not fully entered to create rigid class distinction that will eventually result to Marxian concept of class conflict. However, the ill-effects of cash economy is beginning to be felt in others' negligence of their obligations.

## **Recommendations**

### **A. Theoretical**

1. This study concentrated on a descriptive-normative analysis of the indigenous politico-socio-economic practices of the community. And it fails to relate these practices to national policies. While little effort is exerted to relate the practices to national policies, it fails to give a full view of the conflict between national policies and indigenous practices. There is a need to uncover all related national policies and indigenous practices. There is a need to uncover all related national policies including their historical antecedents then relate these

to the community's indigenous practices to be able to have a proper perspective of the conflict and agreement of the to. This then can be of guide in determining how to reconcile the two, if possible, to satisfy the man-ili's concept of the good and just life.

2. The study focused on socio-economic activities and the concept of justice in general. It failed to delve into the agreement and conflict between the indigenous legal system and the judicial system enforced by the national government. A study focusing on such will give a comprehensive view on the Kankanaeys' concept of justice.

3. The study failed to give a critique on the cultural practices to appraise which of these are obstacles to development. This effort is left for another research as this study is limited to analysis and interpretation.

#### **B. Practical:**

1. Since this is a normative study of indigenous practices, little effort was made to present the problems which are setbacks to the community's self-sufficiency. As the study had only a sketchy mention of these problems, there is a need to conduct a study on these and determine the proper actions to be taken.

a. The watersheds of the community at Sagpatan, Puligan, and Bulala cannot supply all households. There is a need for alternative sources. Likewise, rice fields lack irrigation facilities which are contributory to low production.

b. Pest and animal disease control are dependent on the farmers who need proper education on the use of pesticides and assistance from the Department of Agriculture to offset the high cost of pesticides. Intensive agriculture may be developed but they need to be educated as to how to make the fields productive and guided as to what varieties of rice are suited to their soil.

2. The man-ili is being divided since the whole community was stigmatized by the military as New People's Army (NPA) sympathizers. Black propaganda or baseless allegations abound that even the non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations which try to be help to the community are

doubted as to their real objective. And what suffers most are the man-ili's agricultural activities, human relations, and community consciousness. A study focused on this problem is needed to free the community from the stigma, to evaluate the effects of militarization to social order and social change, and to evaluate the role of private organizations in community development and socio-cultural change.

3. To maintain the integrity of the aforementioned practices, the following are recommended as safeguards:

a. The existing civic organizations need to capitalize on the given moral resources in carrying out their objectives for the community;

b. A development ethnic for the area need to be based on the existing practices and institutions;

c. the content of social studies in elementary and high schools in the community should include a study of the local culture in order for the young to appreciate and protect those practices which are worthwhile preserving. As the understanding of the culture of other groups is necessary to promote national unity, it is basic that one has to understand his own;

d. The institution of the batong, although it is now centralized in both of the study sites, including the implied obligations among the members need to be preserved. The direct participation of the people in deciding matters that directly affect their lives is a very effective means in earning their full support to any community undertakings.