**Oral Traditions and Expressions, Including Language**

**Apo ni Bolinayen - Story in Dulimaman**

ITNEG, ILOCOS NORTE, ILOCOS SUR, AND ABRA PROVINCES, NORTHWESTERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. The Inland-speaking Itneg share an epic known as Dulimaman which is composed of several stories that revolve around heroes and heroines who comprised the upper class in an idyllic Itneg society. This version of one of the stories titled Apo ni Bolinayen was chanted by Baket Kinay Infiel of Pag-pagong, Nueva Era, Ilocos Norte.

A WELL-LOVED story in the Dulimaman Itneg epic is Apo ni Bolinayen. Referred to as the Apo is Ayo, a noble lady while Bolinayen is the servant under the former's stewardship. The story focuses on the Apo:

> The Apo is being courted persistently by a man named Ligi but she thinks he is too noble and brave for her. Bidding goodbye only to her servant, Bolinayen, the Apo embarks on a trip to the north and reaches Paoay where she gets accommodated by a kind old woman.

The old woman earns her daily subsistence by working for others. With the help of the Apo, however, she gains surplus palay earnings.

In an effort to further assist her host, the Apo offers to weave cloths for the old woman to trade. The textiles woven by her proved popular items in the market.

Until one day, Ligi, the nobleman, in steadfast pursuit and search for his love, reaches the trading place in Paoay. At once his eyes are on the woven blankets being sold by the old woman. The varied designs – sinan agkab-kabayo, sinan tao, mata mata, imal-imalong, and many others – are to Ligi very familiar. He strongly senses and feels that the weaves are those of his fair lady, the Apo of Bolinayen.

Stealthily, Ligi follows the old woman to her home. There he calls and drops by for a drink then casually requests for a short rest inside. Very kind as always, the old woman lets Ligi in and even offers lunch to the stranger. Observing the preparations, Ligi expresses surprise why the old woman is cooking a meal for three when there are but two (he and the old woman) in the house. An exchange of question and answer follows. The more Ligi and the old woman talks, the more Ligi feels that his lady love is inside the house. Until the old woman feeling pity at the man, could not hold on to her secret anymore. The Apo of Bolinayen finally comes out of her room and conciliate with her ardent suitor.

Together the couple stays with the accommodating old woman in Paoay. Their life is comfortable as their uma (swidden) bears bountiful harvest. But the blissful abundance becomes the target of envy of the people of Paoay. The couple gets harassed by the people. And Ligi is put to jail in Laoag. Incensed by the unjustified incarceration of Ligi, the Apo of Bolinayen proceeds to Laoag. With bare hands, she fights the jail guards and frees Ligi.

Fleeing Ilocos, the couple go eastward. Further east they go toward their native place across the mountains.

The story of Apo ni Bolinayen in the Itneg epic establishes Paoay as a meeting place and as a market center. It is where people from various places converge mainly to trade. Contradictions arise between Paoay folks and outsiders who choose to stay put and cultivate uma in Paoay. Relations turn
source especially when the non-Paoay folks develop more prosperous and comfortable life than the native Paoayeños.

The mention of jail and jail guards in the story suggests the existence of state apparatus concentrated in Laoag.

Clearly established in the Itneg epic is the perseverance of the Itneg male to pursue a love. Ayo, the Apo of Bolinayen, depicts an Itneg female character that is deliberate but unassuming, sensitive and courageous, and an assiduous fighter against injustice. Over and above all these qualities, the Itneg woman is shown as a productive agriculturist and a versatile textile weaver especially in the pinilian design technique. The pinilian textiles are identified with the Itnegs. They gave away the presence of an Itneg woman – the Apo of Bolinayen herself – in Paoay and led to the eventual reunion with Ligi.

The non-utterance of the name of Ayo in the story depicts the heroine as an individual held in reverence by the society.

Textiles, especially the pinilian, find significance not only in the story of Apo ni Bolinayen but in the other songs of the Dulimaman.

The Inland-speaking Itneg towns of Langiden and Peñarrubia in Abra are versatile textile weavers of blankets with figurative designs done in pinilian or continuous supplementary weft design technique. Those in San Quintin are known weavers of binakul textiles with patterns in double-toned warp and weft basket weave technique.

KALINGA, KALINGA PROVINCE, NORTHERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. The Kalinga of Kalinga province, northern Luzon is known for this epic that is chanted by native mansaw-ay (chanters). It began after the 16th century when Western culture had already permeated the Philippines. Wealth is a motif. Fabulous compositions, impossible accounts of idealized battles, heroic achievements and magical performances are attributed to a prehistoric hero – Banna or Dudliya. The Ullalim among the Kalinga is not the epic itself, but the medium for epic stories and ballad rendition, i.e. the music for storytelling and ballad rendition.

Huddling in the cold night before a fire, covered by a typical Kalinga blanket, young people listen to the fabled stories of the Ullalim.