Hamboki’an

Kalanguya Ifugao, Ifugao Province, Northern Luzon Island, Northern Philippines. The Kalanguya, a third smaller Ifugao subgroup in Ifugao province, is actually culturally similar to the Ikalahan found in the mid-mountain oak forest of Nueva Vizcaya province. Like most ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines, they practice a meat-sharing system among kin groups.

The Kalanguya calls their meat distribution system hamboki’an – from boki, meat. This is equivalent to a circumscribed community defined by the extent of meat distribution during rituals. In the course of animal sacrifices, after the inspection of the bile sac, the blood is scooped out of the abdominal cavity for use in blood sausages. The carcass is laid out on a matting (grass or leaves) where it is butchered. The tail of the animal sacrifices, after the inspection of the carcass, is cut up into smaller pieces at the close of the butchering process, one portion is set aside for the parents of the various daughters-in-law. These are sent to their homes. Another special portion is set aside for the mumbunung (ritual specialist) who presided over the ritual.

Specific portions of the meat are set aside for meat distribution within the community. These portions are called bokboki and are cut up into small pieces at the close of the butchering process, one portion for each household in what is considered the community, whether or not there is a representative present.

Some meat are set aside for visitors. These portions (bulayo) are not cut up for individual households. They are taken back to the home communities of the visitors for distribution there. A clear distinction is made about the “in-group” of the community and the visitors because they receive different specified portions of the meat. Half of the neck is set aside for the in-law, or sons-in-law. These are sent to their homes. Another special portion is set aside for the mumbunung (ritual specialist) who presided over the ritual.

When an individual transfers communities, his first sponsor a manglong ritual in his home community and another in the new community. After these are concluded, he will be included in the meat-sharing system in the new community and removed from the previous one.

A TETEG RITUAL is observed two or three days after the celebration of a wedding. A part of this is a solemn ritual called ma-ingibra at nightfall. The couple seeks the services of a mumbunung (ritual specialist), to perform the teteg. The mumbunung calls on Kabunyan and the departed ancestors to give their blessings. One pig is sacrificed as an offering to Kabunyan as a necessary start of a marriage and to bring good fortune to the union.

Firstly, the mumbunung offers a cup of tapey (rice wine) with a prayer called peliti to establish communication with the kabunyan spirits and the ancestors for them to come down to bestow good favor. Then the mumbunung passes the cup of tapey to the bride and groom to share as a symbol of their union. After the drinking, a full-grown male pig (otik/molmol) is sacrificed. The head of the pig is covered with a blanket, while the mumbunung sits by the pig chanting a prayer offering the pig to the kabunyan, to the celestials and spirits of the forebears.

After the prayer, the pig is killed the traditional way with a stake through the heart. It is singed, washed and placed on a matting of reeds on the floor of the house. Laid on its back, the hind legs are cut followed by the forelegs. A central incision is made exposing the internal organs. The liver is then examined together with the bile, and passed on to the mumbunung. If the omen is good, blessings are given and the couple is said to have a propitious life and will be capable of performing the rites of the pedit.

The meat of the pig is sliced, cooked and placed in a basin during the offering prayer. Blankets, clothing, beads and coins are placed in a winnower with a cup of tapey side by side with other offerings. The mumbunung repeats his previous prayer. A portion is set aside from every part of the pig for the couple who takes their meal inside the house. Part of the internal organs is set aside for the mumbunung. The people are then served food. The couple refrains from activities outside the house and keeps the embers burning in the fire through the second night of the teteg.

After a year or two, the teteg is followed by the bulo (three) ritual where three pigs are sacrificed to start the pedit rites proper. Three pigs are leg-tied in front of the house of the host. The expenses for the ritual are shared by the couple’s parents. Neighbors participate by preparing tapey, camote, rice, gabi and firewood.

The pedit proper commences with the pounding of kintuma (rice variety), for tapey. The rice is cooked by older women. The rice is placed in winnowers, mixed with yeast...