Ethnomedical documentation of selected Philippine ethnolinguistic groups: the Kankana-ey people of Buguias Central, Buguias, Benguet

A collaborative project of

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The traditional healers and other informants from Buguias Central

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study is an ethnomedical documentation of the Kankana-ey people of Buguias Central, Buguias, Benguet conducted in August 2000. It is aimed to document the plants and other natural products being used as medicinal agents by this cultural group, as well as their beliefs and practices on health, diseases and healing.

Data collection was carried out by participant observation and interview using a set of guide questions for traditional healers and community members. Twenty-seven informants were interviewed, including three traditional healers.

The study documented 34 plants used for 17 indications. Common indications included wounds, dysentery, diarrhea, stomachache and cough and cold.

INTRODUCTION

The use of medicinal plants has gained popularity these days. Many of the drugs currently in the market contain herbal components believed to cure diseases. Indeed, the practice of herbal medicine is not a very new field. The Chinese have a long tradition of using herbs and plants to cure ailments. In fact, much of the current knowledge and practice on herbal medicine is the result of thousand of years of use of these plants in lieu of the high priced commercial pharmaceuticals. Promotion of these medicinal plants is primarily due to their being bountiful in the whole country as well as in the presence of diverse ethnolinguistic groups having different medicinal plants used for their common ailments. Each ethnolinguistic group generally has a rich tradition of practices, including those, which refer to the healing of the sick. The threat of forest denudation, together with the influence of the lowland mainstream culture, may result in the loss of the healing traditions of our indigenous peoples.

Several studies have already been conducted to document the ethnopharmacological knowledge and healing practices of our people. Madulid and others reported 46 plants used by the Ati tribe in Nagpana, Barotac, Iloilo in Panay Island (Madulid et al, 1990). Another study by Sia and group documented the medicinal plants and healing practices of the Dumagat people of the provinces of Aurora, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and another study has been done to document the ethnopharmacological practices of the people in Davao.

0BJECTIVES

It is recognized that the Cordillera region has a rich biodiversity and the indigenous people have good knowledge on the traditional medicine the prototype of which is now threatened, thus this research aims to accomplish the following:

1. To document their beliefs and practices on health, disease and healing.
2. To document the plants and other natural products being used as medicinal agents by the Kankana-ey people of Buguias, Benguet.
3. To prepare culturally acceptable basic health education materials for the Kankana-ey.
4. To help in the advocacy to preserve the indigenous people's ancestral homelands, as well as the biodiversity of the ecosystem.

METHODOLOGY

SITE SELECTION

Benguet the area of study is home to 2 major ethnolinguistic groups – the Ibaloys and the Kankana-eys. The Kankana-eys who occupy northern Benguet and the fastnesses of northern highlands of the province was the ethnolinguistic group of interest in this study. The particular community was selected based on the following criteria: (1) has a reputation for indigenous healing practices as shown by the presence of traditional healers; (2) is found near the forest; (3) has preserved its traditions to a significant degree; (4) has no major peace and order problem and (5) is reasonably accessible by land transportation. Among the 13 municipalities, Buguias was chosen for the research.

GATHERING OF DATA

The researcher did the essential social preparation by coordinating with nongovernmental organizations and local contacts in the area. Likewise, the investigator integrated with the community during which time he gathered data by participant observation and by interview using a pre-tested interview guide. The main data consisted of the local name of the plant or other natural products, the medicinal use, the plant part used, the method of preparation and the direction for use. Methods of gathering and storing, where available, were also noted. Moreover, some traditional practices were also noted. The researcher also included an account of a funeral ceremony where he participated.

COLLECTION OF SPECIMEN VOUCHERS

Collection of specimen vouchers was done with Councilman Pacuyan and/or Mrs. Desenia Pacuyan, the local midwife. Two specimen vouchers for each plant were prepared and tagged according to the method of the UP Institute of Biology. Original copies were kept at the Complementary and Traditional Medicine Program National Institutes of Health, University of the Philippines Manila.

INFORMANTS

The major informants were selected based on their reputation of active practice of the traditional healing arts in the community. In addition, representative households from each sitio were interviewed as to what medicinal plants they continue to use for the common diseases. Twenty-seven (27) informants were identified and interviewed, including three (3) traditional healers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

BENGUET

Area description and topography

Benguet is a plateau, a mass of elevated land found in the southern most part of the Cordillera region. It is bounded on the south by Pangasinan, on the east by Ifugao and Nueva Viscaya, on the north by Mt Province (Bontoc), and on the west by La Union and Ilocos Sur. The province has a great potential for agriculture, on account of the location. The country's second highest mountain, Mt Pulag is in Benguet. One interesting fact about this province is the presence of hot springs, at least one in every municipality. Also, Benguet has dominion over palm and pine. A so-called pine belt extends from 3,000-7,000 feet above sea level.

Political division

The province of Benguet is comprised of the municipalities of Tuba, Sablan, Itogon, La Trinidad, Tublay, Atok, Bokod, Kabayan, Kapangan, Bakun, Kibungan, Mankayan and Buguias. The total land area of the province is 2, 556.2 sq. kilometers.

Climate

Benguet has two distinct seasons of equal duration, the wet and the dry. Because of the location the province is more influenced by the southwest than the northeast monsoon. June to late October or early November is the rainy season. The mountains of Pulag, Tabayoc, Calauritan and Polis of the Cordillera Central and the Sierra Madre range along the east coast of Luzon bar the northeast monsoon from dousing Benguet during the months of December, January and February.

BUGUIAS

Buguias is bounded on the north by Bauko, on the south by Atok and on the south by Kapangan. It has total land area of 16, 260 hectares and said to be the convergence point of the three ethnolinguistic groups, the Kankana-ey, the Ibaloi and the Kalanguya.

Natives called Buguias as the "Land of Magnificent Waterfalls". It is endowed with beautiful waterfalls, cascading rivers, fresh and hot springs and wide and fertile valleys. The town is always verdant the whole year round with various kinds of vegetables because of its favorable climate.

The Kankana-ey people

Moss in 1920 wrote about the two Kankana-ey groups; first, the Kankana-ey Igorot of northern Benguet and almost all the people living in Amburayan and southern Lepanto;

and second, the inhabitants of northern Lepanto. The two groups can be distinguished from each others based on settlements, the northern group is comparatively large and compact while the southern group is scattered. Another is based on the amount of authority exercised by the *baknang* or wealthy class, for northern group the *baknang* are comparatively unimportant, while for the southern Kankana-ey they are powerful as among the Ibaloi.

Tracing the origin of the Kankana-ey communities in Buguias, literature stated that from Ambanglo toward the northwest, migrating people moved into Awa, Sebang, then Palatang. Palatang settlers inter-married with the Banao people who came in from the northwest and the northeast. Due to population pressure after some years, this group moved from the east to the west into the valley of Bangan up to Sibongan, Posel and Abatan started the early Kankana-ey.

Early Kankana-ey society

In pre-Spanish Kankana-ey society, there were two identifiable classes of people, the *baknang* or the rich and the *abiteg*, or the poor. Unlike the other Kankana-ey communities who based their leadership on land or economic activities, Buguias developed clear class distinctions on the basis of animal ownership. This condition, however, was practiced only in the later part of the 1800s. But before this, it is believed that Buguias shared the description of a more or less egalitarian society as Mankayan.

Clothing and adornment

In early times, a male Kankana-ey wore a G-string, known to the natives as *wanes* when made of woven cloth and *koba* when made of bark. The men were known to grow their hair long as well as moustaches as noted by David Barrows. For the women, their native outfit was the *palingay* or *tapis*, which is a wrapped-around skirt held in place with the aid of a cloth belt. They also wore an upper short-sleeved blouse called *kaba*. For ornamentation, tattooing on the arms was practiced by both sexes, women also wore beads and men wore headbands or *bedbed* specifically aristocratic old men as symbol of prestige.

Pregnancy and birth

Even during the time when the culture and tradition of the southern Kankana-eys were still intact, special taboos during pregnancy and confinement were not practiced. Women were generally recommended not to eat sweet things during pregnancy. After giving birth, the mother was served with *abusang* or smoked pork then was not allowed to eat anything during the next three days. The first bath of the mother depended on the sex of the child, on the second day after the birth of a girl and on the third day for a baby boy. The father chose spring before or immediately after delivery. Two *pudung* protected the mother and protective signs were erected on either side of her to ward-off disease-carrying spirits. Southern Kankana-ey buried the placenta near the heart so that the child would not forget his parents too quickly and leave them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The area of study was Buguias Central of Buguias, Benguet. Buguias Central used to be the political and commercial center of the municipality of Buguias. The municipality hall and other government offices are now located in Abatan. Abatan, which was a flourishing market, is the jump off point to Lepanto (Benguet), Cervantes (Ilocos Sur), Bontoc and Sagada (Benguet) and

Tinoc (Ifugao). Buguias Central is 16 kilometers from Abatan and maybe reached by Tamaraw FX or jeepney from Abatan. It may also be reached by minibus from La Trinidad, the capital of Benguet. Buguias Central has about 500 households. Most of the houses are located north of Agno River. To the northeast is Mount Uleg-aki (snake-monkey), which is part of the mountain system bordering Benguet, Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya. There is a local movement to maintain Mt Uleg-aki as a reservation, wherein the village leaders wanted 11,000 hectares of the mountain to be reserved as watershed.

Most of the people in Buguias Central are Kankana-ey. It is claimed that the Kankana-ey people trace their roots in Buguias. Farming is the major source of livelihood in Buguias Central. The major cash crops include potato, Chinese pepper, carrot, celery, cabbage, pechay, and beans. Transportation of the crops is the major problem of the farmers. Buguias Central has an elementary school and a national high school. Most of the people profess to a certain religion, ie, Roman Catholicism, Jehova's Witness, Assembly of God, and Nazarene Church. It is also noted that many Kankana-ey traditional practices had been lost with the introduction of the Western-type religions in Buguias.

Electricity came to Buguias in 1998. Many households now enjoy television and videoke. Moreover, there is enough supply of water in the community, the main source of which is the natural spring coming from the mountains. There is one hot spring in Sitio Ampetang where the people get their early supply of water for drinking and bath. In the Poblacion, there is a salty hot spring, which the people usually use to bathe their pigs.

The study covered seven sitios of Buguias Central, namely: Ampetang, Kapangan, Poblacion, Naybo, Tokdo, Cayabyab and Tanggawan. Buguias Central was selected because it 1) has a reputation for indigenous healing practices, as shown, by the presence of traditional healers; 2) is situated near the forest; 3) is reputed to have preserved its traditions to a significant degree; 4) has no major peace and order problem; and 5) is reasonably accessible by land transportation.

From each sitio, the researcher, together with the guide, interviewed two to three families actively practicing the use of medicinal plants in their household. Plant specimens were also collected after the interviews since most of the plants they use were in the household area only.

A total of 34 plant specimens were recorded. However, not all of them have samples because these are found in the deep forest and was not readily available for the duration of the study.

PLANTS USED FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES, THEIR PREPARATIONS AND INDICATIONS

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Sepal* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Conjunctivitis/*butlig*	Dry leaves	Boil 7-8 leaves	Wash face/irrigate eyes until soreness disappears	Agustina Calion
Diarrhea/stomachache	Dried fruits/seeds	Boil in 2-3 cups water or eat as is	Drink juice or eat fruit	Marina Alatis, Marcelino Pulagis

Scientific name:

Local name(s): *Yerba buena*
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Arthritis/backache/ chest pains	Fresh buds	Boil 4-5 leaves for 5 minutes	Drink like water	Rominio Calimundag
Dysentery/stomachache	Young leaves	Boil leaves for 5 minutes (usually covered upon cooking)	Drink when cool	Marina Alatis
Ulcer	Young leaves	Boil 6 leaves in 5 cups of water for 3 minutes	Drink as needed	Lolin and Julian Cabading

Scientific name: *Ficus benjamina* Linn. var. *bracteata* Corner
Local name(s): *Balete*
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Skin cleansing	Dried bark 3-4 in x 1 in	Boil one piece for 5 minutes	Use as ordinary water	Agustina Calion

Scientific name: *Equisetum ramosissimum* Desf. ssp. *debile* (Roxb.) Hauke
Local name(s): *Puputud* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Cough	Leaves	Steep leaves in hot water	Drink 3x/day until the cough stops	FGD with mothers

Scientific name: *Selliguea taeniata* (SW.) Parris / *Crypsinus taeniatus* (SW.) Ching (Polypodiacea)
Local name(s): *Kapa-kapa* (Kankana-ey)
Other names(s): Three fingers

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Diarrhea/ stomachache	Fresh leaves	Boil 2 leaves in 5 cups of water	Drink until well	Beatrice Calimundag,

		for 10 minutes		David Lampa
Wound	Fresh leaves	Crush 1-3 leaves	Directly apply crushed leaves on wound	David Lampa
Newly extracted tooth	Fresh leaves	Crush 1-3 leaves	Place on wound of newly extracted tooth	David Lampa

Scientific name: *Lagerstroemia speciosa* (Linn.) Pers. (Lythraceae)
Local name(s): *Banaba* (Tagalog)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Backache	Leaves	Boil 3-4 leaves in 6 cups water for 10 minutes (5 leaves for a stronger preparation)	Drink 3x/day after meals	Rominio Calimundag

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Punawel* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Wounds	Leaves	Crush leaves and squeeze juice on wound	Use until crusting occurs approximately 3 days (do not wet)	Rominio Calimundag
Diarrhea/stomachache	Dried fruits/seeds	Boil in 2-3 cups water or eat as is	Drink juice or eat fruit	Marina Alatis

Scientific name: *Solanum nigrum* L. (Solanaceae)
Local name(s): *Amti* (Kankana-ey)
Other name (s): *Lubi-lubi*

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Anemia	Leaves	Use as seasoning in food (cook like onions)	Contraindicated for hypertensive patients	Rominio and /Beatrice Calimundag
Wound/ anti-hemorrhagic	Leaves	Crush enough leaves	Apply crushed leaves on wound until bleeding stops	Rominio and Beatrice Calimundag

Scientific name:
Local name(s): Eucalyptus
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Cough	Dried or fresh leaves	Boil enough leaves	Drink until well	Rominio Calimundag and FGD with mothers

Scientific name: *Cipadessa baccifera* (Roth.) MIQ (Meliaceae)
Local name(s): *Dael* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Cough	Leaves	Boil 5 leaves in 1 cup of water until $^1/_4$ cup is left	Drink until well	FGD with mothers
Diarrhea/ stomachache/ amoebic dysentery	Leaves	Boil 5 leaves in 2 cups of water until 1 cup is left	Drink 2-3x a day until well (Side effect: Over dosage may cause anemia)	FGD with mothers
Urinary tract infection	Leaves	Boil ample amount of dried leaves in 4 cups of water	Drink until well	David Lampa
Wound	Leaves	Boil dried	Use as wash	Bengala Bayas

		leaves	(considered antibiotic)	

Scientific name: *Psidium guajava* L. (Myrtaceae)
Local name(s): *Bayabas*
Other name(s): *Bayabas* (Tagalog), guava (English)

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Dysentery	Young leaves	Boil 4-5 leaves in 2 cups of water until 1 cup is left	Drink 3x a day until well (with blood-streaked stools, add more leaves and boil longer)	Marina Alatis
Wounds	Leaves	Boil enough leaves in 2-3 cups of water	Wash wound daily	David Lampa

Scientific name: *Desmodium velutinum* (Willd.)
Local name(s): *Kakaag* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Fresh wound	Leaves	Crush leaves and squeeze juice into leaves	Apply to wound 2-3x until well	Marina Alatis

Scientific name: *Ageratum conyzoides* L. (Asteraceae)
Local name(s): *Pulet* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Fresh wound	Leaves	Crush leaves and squeeze	Apply 2-3x until well	Marina Alatis

		juice on wound		

Scientific name: *Plantago major* L. (Plantaginaceae)
Local name(s): *Lanting* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Urinary tract infection	Whole plant	Boil in 4 cups of water	Drink until well	FGD of 3
Stomachache	Leaves	Boil 4-5 leaves in 5 cups of water for 3 minutes	Drink 3x a day until well	Julian Cabading
For healthy kidneys	Handful of leaves	Boil for 15 minutes in 10 cups of water	Drink before eating. Use brown sugar for sweetening	1 individual interview
Kidney stones	Leaves	Boil leaves	Drink	1 individual interview
Bladder problems	Leaves	Boil leaves	Drink	1 individual interview

Scientific name:
Local name(s): Cactus
Other name(s): Cactus (English)

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Burns	Succulent stem	Heat stem and cut lengthwise	Apply directly on wound overnight	Agustina Calion

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Talangtangen* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Hematoma	Bark	Heat bark for 2-3 minutes	Apply warm bark on hematoma and wrap with clean	Felino Alatis

			cloth for half day	

Scientific name: *Imperata cylindrica* L. (Beauv.) var. *major* (Nees) C.E. Hubb et Vaugh.(Poaceae)
Local name(s): *Gaon* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Fresh cuts/ wounds	Leaves	Crush leaves and squeeze sap	Apply crushed leaves directly on wound (apply once to clot blood)	FGD with mothers

Scientific name: *Ocimum basilicum* L. (Lamiaceae)
Local name(s): *Balanoy* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s): Lemon grass

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Fresh cuts/ wounds	Leaves	Crush leaves	Apply directly on wound	FGD with mothers

Scientific name: *Brugmansia suavolens* (Humb.) Et Bonpl.) Brecht et Prest (Solanaceae)
Local name(s):
Other name(s): Trumpet

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Fresh wounds	Young leaves	Crush leaves	Apply directly on wound	FGD with mothers

Scientific name: *Lantana camara* L. (Verbenaceae)
Local name(s): *Lantana* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Coughs and colds	Young leaves	Boil leaves in 4 cups of water	Drink 3x until well	FGD with mothers

		for 10 minutes		

Scientific name: *Salacia prinoides* (Willd.) D.C. (Hippocrateaceae)
Local name(s): *Opey* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s): *Matang-ulang*

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Tapeworm	Vine	Cut fresh vine and remove sap	Drink once	Bilango Salbino

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Annapat* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Cough	Leaves (looks like ferns)	Chew 1-2 leaves	Chew leaves but do not swallow	David Lampa

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Pil-it* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Muscle relaxant	Small young leaves	Boil 4 leaves in 1 cup of water	Drink when lukewarm	David Lampa

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Sisil-li* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Wound	Leaves	Mix with *kapa-kapa* and *om-om*	Apply on wound (used to dry or crust the wound)	David Lampa

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Annatil* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Toothache	Leaves	Boil leaves according to taste and quantity	Gargle 2-3x a day	David Lampa
Newly extracted tooth	Leaves	Crush leaves until some juice comes out	Apply crushed leaves on newly extracted tooth (used to prevent bleeding)	David Lampa

Scientific name: *Gaultheria leucocarpa* BLM. var. *leucocarpa*, *forma*, *cumingiana* (Vidal)
Local name(s): *Talugtog* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Coughs and colds	Fresh young leaves	Crush leaves	Drink like ordinary water until well	Johnny Lasaten

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Om-om* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Wound/ pain reliever	Leaves	Crush leaves	Apply directly on wound (usually	David Lampa

			mixed with *kapa-kapa* and *sisil-li*)	

Scientific name: *Agathis alba* (Lam.) Foxw. (Pinaceae)
Local name(s): *Baltik* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s): *Almaciga*

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Stomachache/ ulcer/ dysentery	Fresh leaves with stem	Boil 3-4 leaves in 4 cups of water	Drink until well	Johnny Lasaten

Scientific name: *Centella asiatica* (L.) Urb. (Apiaceae)
Local name(s): *Saksaklong* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
For children's cough	Stems with leaves	Boil 10 stems with leaves in 6 cups of water for 3 minutes	Drink until well (not too bitter; good for pediatric patients)	Johnny Lasaten

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Kalapkap* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
For fresh wounds	Stems with leaves	Crush stems with leaves	Apply directly on wound	Johnny Lasaten

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Kali-dos*
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
For newly extracted tooth	Leaves	Crush leaves	Apply on newly extracted tooth (anti-hemorrhagic)	Johnny Lasaten

Scientific name:
Local name(s): *Bisulak* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Skin diseases	Fresh leaves	Crush leaves	Apply directly on skin lesion every 2 days	Johnny Lasaten
Mummy preservation	Leaves	Boil enough leaves	Use as wash for the dead (antiseptic)	Romy Pacuyan

Scientific name: *Bidens pilosa* L. var. *pilosa* (Asteraceae)
Local name(s): *Anwad* (Kankana-ey)
Other name(s):

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Goiter	Fresh leaves	Boil 12-20 fresh leaves with 5 stems (succulent part) in 2 cups of water	Drink like water. Prepare amount which is good for 1 week only	Johnny Lasaten

Scientific name: *Cibotium cumingii* Kunze (Thyrsopteridaceae)
Local name(s): *Tibanglen* (Kankana-ey)
Other names: *Borado*r

Indication	Plant part(s) used	Preparation	Direction for use and remarks	Sources of information
Wounds	Buds	Crush	Apply directly on wound	Betinio Bisaya

TRADITIONAL HEALING PRACTICES

Many Kankana-ey customs and traditions are now seldom practiced. Councilman Pacuyan attributed this to the Western religions that prohibited such practices. Problems, including health

problems, are brought to the attention of the *mankutom*, *mansib-ok* and *mambunong*. The *mankutom* may be considered as the high priest. A person should be of great wisdom to be considered a *mankutom*. He is the one to be consulted first when somebody gets sick. The *mankutom* will then recommend a *mansib-ok*. The *mansib-ok* makes the "diagnosis". He does this by hanging a padlock or any other heavy object on a string. While the padlock is let hung, the *mansib-ok* utters names of persons and things. The name uttered at the precise moment that the padlock undulates is considered the cause of the disease. He "prescribes" offering of chicken or other animals in a ritual. The *mambunong* is then called to perform the ritual. During the ritual the *mambunong* recites a prayer verse. The prayer and offering (chicken, etc) may be addressed to certain spirits, eg, *caapuan* (spirit of dead forefathers), *asidintimungao* (fairies in the mountain or brook), and *nagalnad* (spirit in the river).

Another traditional healing method is the so-called *kaniling*. This is used most often to cure unknown allergies, for example when a child goes to a certain place and suddenly develops skin rashes all over his/her body. The sick person is clothed with black shirt before the ritual is performed. Usually, an old cloth is burnt near the sick person and then a prayer will be said by a *mambunong* or the parent of the child saying to the spirits to remove the bad skin and return the good skin of the sick person. According to many Kankana-eys, this is really effective especially when the cause of allergy is unknown.

FUNERAL PRACTICES

Aside from the usual medicinal practices of the Kankana-eys, the researcher decided to include the funeral practices since it is believed to be part of their cultural heritage, which is now being slowly encroached, by modernization and western influences.

The researcher was able to witness a funeral of a *mambunong*. The body of the dead person after he is declared dead is washed with boiled guava leaves. He is then dressed in his best clothes. In the past, no embalming was done on the dead people but for sanitary purposes, the Kankana-eys have already resorted to embalming nowadays. A hired embalmer injects formaldehyde during the 1st day.

The coffin is made of pine wood, only wooden pegs were used to put them together. According to Councilman Romeo Pacuyan, in the past, coffins are carved out of a pine log taken from the deep forest. The three is cut in half, a space carved out on one half where the person is to be placed, and the other half is used as cover. But because of continued forest denudation, the people resorted to pine lumber instead of whole logs for coffin. However, Mang Romy emphasized that no metal nails are used up to this day, because they believe that the dead person does not want to carry heavy metals to the other world. When the coffin is ready, the dead person is placed inside and his possessions (eg traditional clothings and money) are put on the top of the coffin.

During the seven days of vigil, several group of elder men chant or sing the day-eng, a traditional funeral song. The day-eng is a sort of an account of life of the dead person while he was still living. Moreover, the singer can also request the dead to bring good fortune to him/her now that

he is dead. There is a lead singer and the people will follow the one line of the chant after that person has spoken of the account or of his wish.

Each day for seven days, a pair of animal must be slaughtered, two large pigs, a cow or a carabao and a pig depending on the number of people on vigil. It is their tradition to feed everyone who is there present in the vigil. The burial must be not less than seven days and must be on an odd-numbered day from the day of death.

During the 5th day where the researcher has participated, a cow and a pig were slaughtered. Some village men cooked the meat while the women prepared the rice and the utensils. After the pork and beef had been cooked they chopped into smaller chunks. Councilman Pacuyan prayed over the food and then lunch was started. Approximately 75 people attended. At the start of the meal, aluminum plates were passed around; making sure that everyone has a plate. Then, each person was rationed with rice. A bowl made of coconut shell was then passed around for the soup. After this, each person was given a large steak of beef and some intestinal parts. Then some bile-colored soup was given to everyone. Salt was also passed around for flavoring. When a person could not consume his/her food, he/she could bring it home since everyone was given a plastic bag where the leftover food could be placed.

During the seventh day, the burial day, it was estimated that the whole village as well as the neighboring village would attend so the family prepared a carabao and I large pig, and further pair of pigs. Three to four sacks of rice and 2 sacks of sweet potatoes were cooked. Some native red rice, which was newly harvested, was pounded for the offering.

The Kankana-eys have a unique way of slaughtering the animals. They believe that the carabao and the large pig must be slaughtered at the same time. After that, another pair of pigs would also be slaughtered. Three men held the pig down on its side. Another man sharpened a wooden peg, which was used for butchering. Using a sharp knife, a person would drive the sharpened peg through the cut towards the heart of the pig. One or two jabs of the peg would be enough to kill the pig. The same ritual is done on the other pig. The tails were cut and given away to children.

While the pig was made unconscious, a bonfire was prepared. When ready, the dead pigs were placed directly on the fire to burn their bristles. The burnt bristles and the skin were then scraped off using a *palakol* or just a flat-tipped wood. The sides of the animal was burnt first, then the head and finally the butt. After the pigs had been cleansed of their bristles, they were then brought to the slaughtering area, which was the ground covered with cogon grass and banana leaves. Two men would simultaneously open up the pigs. The first two cuts were made on the groin area. Then a perpendicular cut was made on the belly. This exposed the guts, which were then brought out slowly. After this, another cut was made on the chest area, just above the earlier perpendicular cut. This would expose the liver. The liver with gall bladder would be cut out whole from the animal. These were then given to a *mambunong* for inspection. If he found something wrong with the liver and gall bladder, another pair of pigs would be slaughtered the day after the burial. However, when the *mambunong* found the liver and gall relatively healthy, then the burial was finished. The slaughter of the animal proceeded and they were cut into smaller pieces, and cooked in large kettle.

After the people had eaten their lunch, then the burial followed. The male relatives of the dead carried the coffin to the tomb, which was just a few meters away from the house. As the coffin was carried, the people clapped their hands to prevent anybody from sneezing, which is believed to be a sign of the dead inviting that person to his death. When a person accidentally sneezes during the burial, his ear will be pulled three times to prevent the "curse" from occurring. The tomb was not covered right away with cement because sometimes, two days after the burial, the coffin would be taken out again, and another celebration would be offered, after which the coffin is finally sealed inside the tomb.

There is no common cemetery for the Kankana-eys. Their deads are buried in their backyard. They have a belief that the remains of the person who recently died should be placed to the west of his predecessors so that the person will have someone to lean to in the after life. The Kankana-eys do not dig graves. Instead, they built concrete tombs because they believed that the dead person would still like to live with his family and not to be buried underground.

After the burial, a piece of log was burned continuously as a sign of the continued presence of the dead. Most of the men in the village stayed for gin drinking sessions, but other people stayed for the final ceremony which is a blessing given by the *mambunong*, called the peg-as. This ceremony involved the preparation of a banquet consisting of the leftover meat from the lunch, the *tapey* or the native wine, the native rice as well as a basin of water and some coconut leaves. A *mambunong* and *mansib-ok* would pray over the banquet. Then the *mambunong* would dip the coconut leaves into the water while praying over it, and then sprayed the leaves with water to the

people gathering around the banquet. This water is believed to bring blessings and fortune to those who attended it. Afterwards, the people present shared the banquet.

CONCLUSIONS

After the interviews and collection of plant specimens, it can be concluded that the Kankana-eys have a large number of medicinal plants used for common diseases such as wounds, cough and colds, diarrhea, stomachache and urinary tract infection. The people especially in the remote areas still depend on the plants found in their surroundings as well as in their forests for their pharmaceutical needs. Most of these plants, according to most community members and village elders, have been proven to be effective although no clinical trials have been made.

Although there are very few existing traditional healing practitioners, the Kankana-eys still rely on them whenever Western medicine cannot cure their illnesses. Most of these healers also make use of medicinal plants found in their surroundings, concocting teas and balms from these plants, and together with their believed supernatural incantations, makes up a rich healing tradition.

This study documented 34 plant specimens for at least 17 indications. How the Kankana-eys use these plants show the conditions or diseases very common to them, such as dysentery, diarrhea

and stomachache, coughs and colds, and wounds. It can be noticed also that the Kankana-eys do not have problems with malaria or mosquito-borne diseases because according to them, they have very few mosquitoes in their surroundings.

For the time that the researcher had immersed with the people, the Kankana-eys were relatively friendly people but at times suspicious of strangers coming to their place to do “research”. Some informants would say that there were foreigners in the past who would claim to be doing researches but in fact were looking for treasures/gold believed to be hidden by the Japanese during the war. Others would also gather their medicinal plants and then will sell these plants to big companies for commercial purposes. They believed that whenever a plant becomes commercialized, it loses its healing powers.

Much as the elders would like to these healing practices to continue, most of the younger generation would prefer to rely on commercial preparation of drugs than to use these medicinal plants to cure their illnesses. Moreover, with the continued development and industrialization, the forests are slowly denuded and are threatened to extinction.

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APPENDICES

I. INDEX OF PLANTS USED ACCORDING TO DISEASES

Anemia

Amti

Arthritis/back pains

Yerba buena
Banaba

Bladder problems

Lanting

Burns

Cactus

Conjunctivitis

Sepal

Coughs and colds

Talugtog
Saksaklong
Puputud
Eucalyptus
Dael
Lantana
Annapat

Diarrhea

Sepal
Kapa-kapa
Punawel
Dael

Dysentery

Yerba buena
Dael
Bayabas
Baltik

Fresh wound

Kapa-kapa
Punawel
Amti
Kakaag
Pulet
Gaon
Trumpet
Kalapkap
Tibanglen

Goiter

Anwad

Hematoma

Talangtangen

Kidney stones

Lanting

Muscle relaxant

Pil-it

Newly extracted tooth

Kapa-kapa
Annatil
Kali-dos

Skin cleansing

Balete

Skin diseases

Bisulak

Stomachache

Sepal
Yerba buena
Dael
Kapa-kapa
Punawel
Lanting
Baltik

Tapeworm

Opey

Toothache

Annatil

Ulcer

Yerba buena
Baltik

Urinary tract infection

Dael
Lanting

Wound infection

Dael
Bayabas
Sisil-li
Om-om

II. INDEX OF LOCAL NAMES

Trumpet
Yerba buena

III. LIST OF INFORMANTS

1. Camilo Atas – *mambunong*
2. Pacito Wile, 70 – village elder
3. Stafen Olsim, 64 – ex-mayor
4. Bilango Salbino, 67 – Mandak-ey
5. Bengala Bayas, 80 – *mambunong*
6. Romeo Pacuyan
7. Desenia Pacuyan – midwife
8. Estelita Sanchez – dentist
9. Agustina Calion, 35
10. Rominio Calimundag
11. Beatrice Calimundag
12. Marina Alatis
13. Felino Alatis
14. Eulysses Dayawen, 53
15. Minda Dayawen, 46
16. Julian Cabading, 58
17. Lolin Cabading, 45
18. Judith Saclet, 35
19. Manuel Og-oget – vice-mayor
20. Dapey Egsan
21. Linda Wile
22. Apiles Olsim – Brgy. Captain
23. Dunsay Montes – School Principal
24. David Lampa, 73
25. Johnny Lasaten
26. Marcelina Pulagis
27. Betinio Bisaya, 57 – *mambunong*