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## Death and After Death: Ivatan Beliefs and Practices

*Florentino H. Hornedo*



Within the last two hundred years since 1783, the natives of Batanes province, known as Ivatan, have in general become Christianized. But survivals of indigenous pre-Christianization beliefs and practices continue to be evident among them (see Hornedo 1980, 21-58 and 1988, 69; Mendoza-Recio 1973). This article, therefore, will attempt to present a sketch of Ivatan beliefs regarding death and after death from two sources: the reports of Spanish chroniclers at the Spanish contact, and data gathered from recent field work. The first source will be referred to as "aboriginal," and the second as, "recent data." The organization of the data will be around the three categories of cult, code, and creed, the first two are "practices," and the last is "beliefs."

### **The Aboriginal Sources**

Records of beliefs and practices aboriginal to the Batanes are scarce, but a few brief incidental descriptions from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century provide a glimpse of sickness and death-related beliefs and customs. One is from a report of Fr. Alonzo Amado, O.P. in 1720, a second from a report of a trader Joachin Melgarejo written in Binondo on 24 October 1778, a third from a letter of Fr. Bartholome Artiguez, O.P. written in Ivana, Batanes, on 12 May 1787, and a fourth from a report of Jose Maria Peñaranda in 1831.<sup>1</sup>

Fr. Alonzo Amado wrote:

No tienen idolos sino algunas vanas observancias. Y el hazer rogativas. Sacrificio al Diablo cuando estan enfermos. Y creen y confiesan la imortalidad del Alma. Y les dan a entender algunas aniteras que las

Almas de los Principales van a descansar al Cielo a donde creen que esta el Dador de todos; pero que las almas de los plebeyos se quedan en el aire porque no las dexan entrar. Creen que el demonio es el que les mata y assi cuando estan enfermos ponen machetes y palos aguzados a la cabecera del enfermo.

(They do not have idols but have some vain observances. They make supplicatory prayers. They sacrifice to the Devil when they are sick. And they believe and profess the immortality of the soul. Some *aniteras* teach them that the souls of the *Principales* go to rest in heaven where they believe the Giver of all things resides. But the souls of the ordinary people [after death] remain in the atmosphere because they are not allowed to enter. They believe that the devil kills them, so when they are sick they place cutlasses and sharpened sticks near the head of the sick person.)

Fr. Alonzo Amado's missionary efforts did not prosper, so Christianization of the Ivatan had to wait for some sixty-three years until June of 1783, when the Spanish flag was raised at what is now the Capital town of Basco, and a Spanish Governor and his military escort, and two Dominican missionaries were assigned there—Frs. Balthazar Calderon and Bartholome Artiguez.

Writing from the town of Ivana in 1787 after four years of pioneer mission work, Fr. Artiguez reported to his Superior in Manila:

En orden al culto sagrado . . . la Barbarie de estos Batanes aunque no venera Deidad ni numen alguno, Suprema Potestad, ni en el Cielo, ni en la tierra, ni tuvo consagrados Templos, ni Aras para sacrificios; con todo tienen sus Adivinos (que se llaman Sunquey) a quienes consultan, creen, obedecen, respetan y pagan sus predicciones; las que no son favorables procuran precaverse con Sacrificios y ofertas a los Anitos.

D[ic]hos Anitos creen ser las Almas de los Difuntos, las que si son de plebeyos, van vagueando por el ayre, por negarseles la entrada en el Cielo a donde solamente van los Principales a servir de estrellas. Creen asi mesmo todos tener cada uno dos Almas, la una a la derecha y la otra a la izquierda. Y por lo tanto ay algun enfermo que estava gravemente enfermo, creen haversele ya separado la una de las dos Almas; por lo qual le ofrecen cosas de comida y bebida para que buelva otra vez al cuerpo.

Las Almas de los Difuntos dicen ser los Anitos, quienes creen asi mesmo ser ellos quienes los mata y assi q[ua]ndo estan enfermos ponen machetes, lanzaz a la Cavecera del enfermo y hazen sacrificios y

rogativas para sanar. D[ic]hos Sacrificios ya porcunos ya cabrunos, hacenlos ya publicos y privados, segun lo pide la necesidad, o bien publico o privado. De aqui en mi juicio es de donde proviene ser esta gente tan vinosa, por no decir tan ebria: porque como quiera que acude toda la parentela y Amigos a qualquiera desgracia o fortuna que les suceda como enfermedad, muerte, parto, mejoría, en sus enfermedades, casamientos etc, todas y otras muchissimas mas son funciones que hacen mezcladas con sacrificios al Anito y borracheras, porque si es Principal quien haze la funcion, como el honor de estos dependa del poder, manifiestan este con matar muchos puercos y cabritos para dar de comer a todos los Caillanes, y estos corresponden cada uno de por si con un calabazo de un breveje que se hacen de caña dulce, el que se consumen y beven esta que se caen borrachos, apartando su racion de comida y bebida que ofrecen al Anito. Y lo mesmo que se ha dicho hacen los Principales en cualesquiera desgracia o en cualquiera bien o mal que les suceda, hazen todos los demas segun su posibilidad. En fin, no dan passo alguno que no sea mezclado o con Anitera o con Supersticion, vana observancia, etc. Si se huviera de escribir individualmente lo que para cada cosa hazen de Sacrificios al Diablo, era menester no hacer otra cosa que escribir en todo el año; y creere que aun nos quedavamos cortos.

(In the order of sacred cult . . . barbarians as the Batanes are, even if they do not venerate a Deity nor any divinity, Supreme Power in heaven or on earth, nor have any consecrated temples, nor altars for their sacrifices, they do have soothsayers (whom they call *sunquey*) whom they consult, believe, obey, respect, and pay for their predictions which, when unfavorable, they seek to prevent with sacrifices and offerings to the Anitos.

They believe that the anitos are the souls of the dead who, if those of ordinary people, go wandering in the atmosphere, because they are denied entrance into heaven where only the *principales* go and become stars. They also believe that everybody has two souls, one on the right and the other on the left. If anyone falls gravely ill, they believe he has been separated from one of the two souls, for which reason they offer [the soul] food and drink so that it would once more return to the body.

The souls of the dead, they say, are the anitos whom they believe kill them, and so when they get sick they place bolos and lances at the head of the sick, and offer sacrifices and prayers for recovery. The sacrificial offerings are sometimes pigs and sometimes goats. The rites may be done publicly or privately according to necessity, or public or private good. From this, in my opinion, comes this people's love for

wine, not to say drunkenness. Whenever a misfortune or happy event takes place, such as sickness, death, birth, recovery from sickness, marriage and so forth, in all these and many more, all relatives and friends come together for a social function in which sacrificial offering and drunkenness mix. If a chief throws the party, because his honor depends on his power manifested by the butchering of many pigs and goats to feed the whole village, the villagers contribute a gourdful each of a beverage brewed from sugarcane juice which they drink until they fall drunk. They set apart a portion of the food and drink and offer these to the anito. What the principales do everytime any fortune or misfortune comes to them, the others also do according to their own capabilities. In the end, nothing ever happens without involving an *anitera* or superstition, vain observance, etc. If I have to describe every detail of every event in which they sacrifice to the devil, it would take me a whole year to do it, and that may not even be enough.)

Melgarejo and Peñaranda were laymen, one a trader and the latter a bureaucrat.

Melgarejo wrote:

Vide un cadaver que llevaban a enterrar, y yo por ver su estilo me fui a una vista, y a poco que andubieron a la sementera de dicho difunto y pararon donde estaba un oyo mui grande y dentro un horno como de panaderia mui bien compuesto, y en la boca pusieron dicho Difunto y vino su Padre le empezo a tirar de las orejas diciendole, hijo mio como te vas, y dejas tus sementeras, el oro y tus Aritos, en el intermedio de estos alaridos estaban los que acompañaban, y el Padre embriagandose hasta que acabaron tinaja y media de Basi, y despues el cadaver le pusieron en su bajaque su tabaco y lo metieron dentro del horno y le taparon con su misma tierra, despues le pusieron sus Platos, su Banga, su Olla, su Remo y su Xano, y se despide el Padre, diciendole hijo mio ay te queda la sementera para que tomes lo que quieras, y tus Aperos de cocina. Todo esto presidio, y a los quince dias mataron un Cabrito y repartieron a todos los Parientes para que llevaron al muerto que iban a sacar. Su Padre a este acto no asiste. . . . y al bolver de retirada el Padre de dicho Difunto le pregunto . . . donde ira su hijo a parar, y levanto la mano, y con el dedo senalo al Cielo.

(I saw a body they were going to bury, and in order to see their custom I went to watch. After a short walk to the farm of the dead man, they stopped where there was a very big hole, in the center of which was a very well-made oven like one made for baking bread. At its opening they placed the dead, and his father came saying to him, "My

son, since you are dead, you leave behind your farms, the gold, and your earrings," meanwhile removing them from his [the deadman's] ears. In the midst of this howling those who had accompanied the father get themselves and the father drunk with a jar and a half of *basi*.<sup>2</sup> Then they insert into the dead man's loin cloth his cigar, and place him inside the oven, and cover him with earth. Then they place with him his plates, his earthen pot, his kettle, his oar, his *xano* (?). Then the father bids him good-bye saying to him, "My son, you stay here in the farm and [we leave you] your kitchen utensils so you can take with you what you want." After this when fifteen days have passed, they kill a goat and distribute it to all the relatives and whoever comes to get it, who bring it to dead man. This time, the father does not take part. . . . when the father of the dead man was alone I asked him . . . , "Where will your son go and stay?" And he raised his hand, and with a finger pointed to heaven.)

Peñaranda wrote:

Ellos conocian un Ser Supremo al que llamaban Mayo<sup>3</sup> pero no he podido averiguar que idea tenian de su poder, de su existencia, de su principio, etc. Tampoco lo que pensaban de la inmortalidad y destino del alma cuando se separaba del cuerpo aunque se creian en sus apariciones que les tenian mucho respeto acompañado de cierto terror, sobre todo a las de sus padres, dandoles como los igorotes el nombre de "Anitos," en que yo he creido ver las almas en pena de nuestra gente vulgar y les sacrificaban como ellos cochinitos u otros animales que despues se comian, y les destinaban una parte del baso que bebian en las fiestas que hacian bien fuera para ponerlos propicios en cualquiera enfermedad o afliccion o bien para darles gracias por algun beneficio.

(They acknowledge a Supreme Being whom they call Mayo, but I have not been able to verify what idea they have of his power, his existence, his essence, etc. Nor concerning what they think about the immortality and destiny of the soul after it separates from the body, although they believe in its apparitions which they regard with much awe accompanied with a certain terror, especially those of their parents, giving them, like the Igorotes, the name of "Anitos," in which I believe I see the suffering souls in the belief of our common people. To them they sacrifice, [like the Igorots]<sup>4</sup> small pigs or other animals which afterwards they eat, and they set aside a part of the drinks during the celebration to be offered for obtaining favors with regard to any sickness or affliction, or for giving thanks for some blessings.)

These reports are admittedly limited, and adding more limitation is Melgarejo and Peñaranda's frank admission of their inability to understand the native language. They had to get their information from interpreters who themselves may have had difficulty communicating in and translating to Spanish for the benefit of the trader Melgarejo and the visiting bureaucrat Peñaranda. Father Amado may not have been in Batanes more than a few months by the time he wrote, but Farther Artiguez had been there four years when he wrote the letter from which the above excerpt was taken. Later missionaries could have done better descriptions, but their letters repeatedly claim all the old beliefs were a thing of the past, so they did not bother to report them. The limited picture from the sources shows the aboriginal Ivatan practices and beliefs regarding death and after death as indicated in table 1.

The oven-like burial device described by Melgarejo may have been a burial jar known in Ivatan as *padapaday* specimens of which have been excavated in large numbers in recent time. The burial of cooking and eating utensils with the dead is also supported by recent archeology. But the claim of Peñaranda that Mayo was recognized as the Supreme Being is doubtful. Fr. Artiguez had said in 1787 he found no indication of belief in a supreme deity. He had been in Batanes for four years at the time he reported this. But Peñaranda who came over forty years later was there on an inspection tour for a brief while and admits inability to communicate effectively with the Ivatan. Oral tradition indicates that Mayo was not a god, but a mysterious fisherfolk hero said to have introduced unwittingly the *yuyus* which Ivatan fishermen use to catch the flying fish which they in turn use for baiting the large summertime fish called *arayu*. Metal hooks kill the *dibang* (flying fish) and *arayu* do not eat dead bait; the *yuyus* does not kill flying fish. The story about Mayo as folk hero rather than divinity was obtained from Silvestre Galano who lived in the hills of Basco, in 1975.

### Recent Data

The material in this section is taken from the data obtained from field research in connection with earlier studies on the "World and the Ways of the Ivatan Anitu," (1980), and "Medical Beliefs and Practices in a Traditional Society: the Isabtangs in Batanes Province," (1988). Additional field work for this article was undertaken in December 1991 and May 1992.

Table 1

| Creed   | Code   | Cult  |
|---|--|---|
| 1. There is a Supreme Being named "Mayo."   | (Unknown)  | (Unknown)   |
| 2. Man has an immortal soul that subsists after physical death when it is called Anito.                                       | Respect & fear the Anito.  | Offer sacrifices of food and drink to them.   |
| 3. Anito have power to give favors or harm.   | Do not offend them.  | Place cutlass and sharpened sticks at sick's bed. Offer them sacrifices; ask favors.  |
| 4. The soul consists of two souls, one on the left, another on the right and when one leaves the person gets sick.            | Bring back the vagrant soul to regain health.                                      | Offer food and and drink to the soul to attract it back to its body, so the sick get well.  |
| 5. The souls of the chiefs and rich go to heaven and become stars.  | (Give special respect to the chiefs even in life.)                                 | (Unknown.)  |
| 6. Souls of the common people cannot enter heaven, they wander in the air. Can haunt the living and cause sickness and death. | When they die, they must bring along essential needs for their new life as anitos. | Bewail their death; bury with them their tools and cooking utensils. Offer them food and drinks; serve food and drinks to funeral sympathizers. |

To simplify exposition the basic terminology related to the topic at hand is presented here followed by analysis.

### Terminology

#### General Terms

1. *Anitu*: The soul of the dead when it is regarded as manifesting itself to the living in some way such as by apparition or other sensible signs.

2. *Inawan*: the body. (Literally it means "that through which one breathes.")

3. *U Nadiman*: the dead.

4. *U Pahad*: the soul. The soul of the dead is referred to as *pahad* in general. Thus, when referring to "the souls in purgatory," the Ivatan says, "*Sira u pahapahad du purgatoryo.*" But when a soul appears in an apparition or any form of manifestation to the living, it is called *anitu*.

#### Before Death to the Moment of Death

1. *An mawara dana u oras na*. Literally, "when its hour comes," referring to death. But in the idiom it means "when the predestined hour of death has come." It is not merely "the inevitable hour" where inevitable may be taken as meaning "naturally inescapable." The Ivatan sense includes a fatally predestinated moment so that the inescapable is not only death itself but the pre-appointed time.

2. *Miyan du vuliulit nu tanuru*. "Found in the lines of the hand." The reference is to the lines in one's hands, believed to be the visible signs of one's destiny or fortune. Through such lines, one's fortune is believed to be readable. Moreover, this fate believed to be written on the lines in one's palms is inescapable. The hour of death is believed to be one of those predestinated in one's palm.

3. *Mapalmamaw*. Literally, "to forewarn." It refers to what is taken to be an apparition of or some recognizable sign associated with someone near death, which sign is believed to forebode certain death. This word is used with reference to the dying person. But with reference to the person who experiences the sign, the term is *nitatawan* (See below.)

4. *Miyan pa u nanayahen na*. "There is someone he is waiting for." This is said of a dying person, usually already unconscious and who by all expectations should already be dead, but still is not. This lengthy agony is taken to signify that the dying person is not ready to let go, because a loved one is expected to arrive soon. The belief is that some dying persons cannot die peacefully unless some loved one is present. In Ivatan traditional culture, absence from the death bed of a family member with no good reason is a sign of lack of love and loyalty. Presence is a sign of gratitude if the dying person is a parent or outstanding benefactor. It is usual that Ivatan notify close kin of any danger of death in the family. The expectation is

that everyone comes home before death takes place. When a close relative arrives at the bedside of the dying and death swiftly follows, they say, "*Iya dana u nanayahen naw.*" "He is the only one he was waiting for."

5. *Maychahedheran*. The state of a sick person close to death. Agonizing.

6. *Machipuhes*. The apparent physical struggle of the dying who are about to expire. The root word *puhes* means separation or "take away from." The literal sense of the term is "in a state of separating" meaning the moment of struggle at the point when the soul is breaking loose from the body.

7. *Maychutud u inawa na*. "His breath breaks off." The moment of death.

8. *Mangay dana*. Literally, "He is going." It means, "He is dying."

9. *Mapahesuhesus*. The person who reads or recites the prayers for the dying. He or she sits by the side of the dying, punctuating the prayers with the Holy Name of Jesus which the dying is expected to pronounce with devotion if he still can, or follow mentally if still conscious but unable to speak. Whenever a priest is available, the Last Sacraments—Reconciliation, Viaticum, and Extreme Unction are administered once the danger of death appears. Holy Water is sprinkled regularly around the death bed to ward off evil spirits.

10. *Nadiripinti*. Died suddenly or unexpectedly. From Spanish *de repente* (suddenly). It is associated with dying unprepared, which in turn means leaving unsettled affairs which cause the soul to have no peace in the other life. Persons who die this way are believed to become *mangmu* or *tumaganitu*.

11. *Nitatawwan*. To have seen an apparition of or experienced a sign pertaining to a person who is soon to die, such an apparition or sign being taken to be a warning sign announcing the coming death. The presupposition of this experience is that there is no natural way by which the person said to have been seen could be where he is reported to have been seen. (Cp. *Mapalmamaw* above.)

12. *Imbehilya*. A significant act done or event that happens to someone that forebodes his death. From Spanish *en vigilia* (on the vigil, on the eve of). Usually, people after someone's death try to recall any unusual action or event connected to the dead person, and if they recall one, they refer to it as the imbehilya. For example, a man reported that he looked in the mirror and could not see his reflection in it. It is an omen of death. It is an imbehilya. In a fiesta before the Japanese war, a gang of young men presented a very

successful and unforgettable comic performance. Most of them died in the war. People of the village of Savidug recall it as imbehilya.

### From Death to Burial

1. *Mangay du nadiman*. Literally, "Go to the dead." It means visiting the bereaved family while the dead lies in state.

2. *Maparahmet*. The wake for the dead. The root word is *rahmet* or *dahmet* (weight; heaviness). Idiomatically it means "joy" or "happiness." It means lessening the sorrow of the bereaved family; condole. The occasion is also called *padahmetan* or colloquially *panahmetan*. It refers to the wake for the dead. Before embalming came to Batanes, the burial took place the day after death. The funeral wake was the single night before the funeral day. In practice, this is a social event which is merry rather than funereal. As its name suggests, it is supposed to lighten the grief of the bereaved. It is a farewell affair for a townsman, so in the small villages, everyone can attend. It is held in the night since that is when people are all in the village.

During the early evening, the wake begins with prayers for the dead. Then food and drinks are served. As people become inebriated, the place becomes more noisy and festive. People group together to play cards or indulge in conversation or story-telling. Those playing cards or other parlor games punish losers by making them lead prayers for the dead each time a game ends. One of the more artistic pastimes on this occasion is the poetic jousting by means of the Ivatan folk lyric song *laji* (see Hornedo 1979, 186-511). A bard opens the joust by singing one song addressed specifically to someone in the room who is expected to respond in song, which in turn is addressed to someone else who in turn sings and passes it on. Failure to take up the challenge is to admit defeat and therefore to accept punishment. This punishment may take the form of producing additional stock of alcoholic drink for everybody. If the joust takes place between two singers, it is a contest of songs in their repertory. The one who runs out of songs first loses and is punished. This may go on all night, or until everyone is exhausted.

Expenses in food and drink during this occasion are considered *natay nu nadiman* (share of the dead man). Giving the dead man a share in the goods he leaves behind or from the benefice of loved ones is supposed to give the dead man more peace and contentment.

3. *Mapaw*. Literally "to be light" (that is, not heavy). Idiomatically it means to grieve, to be sorrowful, to be sad, to mourn.

4. *Mamuvun*. To bury the dead. From root word *vuvun* (grave).

5. *Sadag nu nadiman*. The bamboo or wooden poles used for carrying the dead to the cemetery before the advent of modern coffins. These poles were believed to become enchanted by contact with the dead, so in earlier times, these poles were set up in farms to frighten away potential intruders and thieves. Stealing produce from farms in which the *sadag nu nadiman* had been installed was believed to cause serious illness or death.

6. *Mirwa a maviay*. To become alive again; to resurrect. The term refers to two different things: "*kampirwa da anchuwa maviay nu nangadiman*" which is the "resurrection of the body [dead]" in the Creed, and the revival of two persons deemed dead but revived before burial. The Ivatan term does not distinguish between resurrection and revival. A person who regains consciousness after fainting is said to *mirwa a makaynaynawa* (able to breathe again). The cases of Flora Gabito and Alejandro Hidalgo are referred to as *minirwa a naviay* because they were both deemed dead. Flora was already wrapped for burial and brought to the cemetery, but burial was delayed because her grave was still being dug, and it was there at the cemetery that she is said to have come back to life.

#### After Burial to the End of the First Novena

1. *Nangay du chinuvuyan siya nu Diyos*. "Went where God sent him." The reference is to the spiritual destination God assigns to the soul of the departed according to his just deserts. In Catholic Batanes, it may be *hañit* (Heaven), *purgatoryo* (Purgatory), or *impyerno* (Hell). If an unbaptized infant, *limbo*. The belief is that the sentence of the soul remains suspended until burial at which moment the soul enters his eternal destiny, or temporary cleansing if Purgatory.

2. *Dasal du pahapahad*. Prayers for the souls of the departed. Specifically it refers to the *Novenario* or nine days of prayer for the eternal repose of the departed. This is held on nine consecutive evenings at the home of the bereaved family where a large assembly of people gathers after supper to pray the Rosary and the Novena for the dead. It begins on the evening of the day of burial. Although most of the people go home after the prayers, many often remain for conversation and parlor games as a continuation of the *padahmetan*. During the duration of the Novena, people are watchful for manifestations from the other life by the deceased. Manifestations are interpreted, and appropriate action taken.

3. *Mapatayaynep*. To appear to someone in a dream. When the deceased appears to anyone in a dream, the relatives are notified if there is a specific message. If no explicit message is given, the dream is described in detail and left to the family to interpret and act accordingly.

4. *Mapavuya*. To appear as an apparition. This is to be immediately reported to the family of the deceased. If there is a message, the message is given; if none, the circumstances of the apparition are interpreted.

5. *Mapakavus*. To end a task. In this case, it refers to the formal ending of the nine successive nights of prayer at which a feast is held. Abundant food and drinks are served on this occasion. Among the well-to-do, it may be a whole day affair of feasting. Among the poorer ones, it is held in the evening as part of the concluding prayers. All the people who have participated in the novena assemble as usual for the ninth night of prayer. But instead of leaving after supper, they may take supper at the banquet offered by the family. The purpose of this feast is to thank the participants in the prayers, and to offer the dead person his share of the goods he had left behind, or his due by way of family obligations in love and affection. It is believed that the dead who do not get their fair share may not find peace in the other life. As a rule, there is a second novena prayer. The end of this second round is usually less festive than the first, unless there is reason to make it more festive—such as an explicit or interpreted request from an apparition or manifestation of the dead.

6. *Mangmu*. On the part of the dead, to make frightful apparitions or manifestations.

7. *Tumaganitu*. A more extravagant form of *mangmu*. When, in addition to frightful apparitions, there are related frightful phenomena such as great noises or unusual terrifying occurrences, and this is in great number, the word is *tumaganitu*. This is usually interpreted as indication of eternal damnation. One such occurrence is reported in Sabatng. The dead man's apparition is said to have told them that prayers should stop since they were of no use in his case.

8. *Luto*. Mourning clothes (usually black). From Spanish *luto* (mourning; *de luto*—in mourning). *Luto* is full mourning clothes worn for a year for parents or spouses. For brothers or sisters, six months of full mourning (all black), and six months of *medya luto* of half-mourning which means only a part of the mourner's clothing may be black (e.g. the blouse, or the skirt only).

### After Completion of the First Novena

1. *Makey pa nu dasal*. "Wants more prayers." This is an interpretation the bereaved family may have regarding manifestations believed to come from the departed either through dreams, apparition messages, or omens. This usually means a second round of novena prayers for the dead.

2. *Makey pa nu sidung*. "He needs more help." The help is in the form of lightening the dead's sufferings in Purgatory. This may be in the form of prayers, Mass, or good works done for the departed's intentions. When the deceased is believed to need further spiritual suffrage, another round of novena prayers is undertaken.

3. *Manahes su natay na*. "Asks for his share." This is a message of the departed to the members of his family. It may come in the form of express message or interpreted meaning from an apparition or manifestation of the departed. After the *kapakavus* or last day of the first round of novena prayers, any apparition or manifestation may be interpreted as conveying an important message from the dead. If the apparition or manifested sign is bright, white, or happy, it is taken to mean the soul has attained peace and happiness. No need for further prayers, although a second round of prayers is not forbidden. Usually, a second round takes place. But if an apparition appears dark or gray or in any way not happy-looking, or manifestations and omens are frightful or sad, these are interpreted as signifying that the dead is not yet at peace. The reason may be need for further spiritual help in the form of prayers and spiritual offerings, or the food and drinks served the people who attended the first round of prayers were not satisfactory, and the dead is asking his relatives to treat those who offered him spiritual help by their prayers with greater generosity. When it is believed that the dead "wants more share," a second feast is given at the end of the second round of novena prayers. This second feast is expected to be more opulent than the first, otherwise the dead is expected to continue haunting the living.

4. *Mandidiew*. "Is in a state of suffering." When an apparition appears dark or gloomy, or when manifestations suggest lack of peace on the part of the departed, it is believed that the dead has not attained peace and happiness. Relatives and friends are expected to pray more, offer the Mass, or make another novena.

5. *Manngedngey*. "Listen secretly." On 2 November, Feast in commemoration of the Faithful Departed in the Catholic Church, the folk

believe that God releases souls in Purgatory and allows them to visit their relatives on earth and see whether they are remembering them by prayers and devotions offered for their deliverance from the sufferings in Purgatory. This privilege of the souls is believed to take place from midnight of 1 November, Feast of All Saints (known as *Fiesta de Todos los Santos*) and end at midnight of 2 November (*Día de los Difuntos*). Traditionally, the slow and mournful ringing of the church bells—known as *agoniyas*—goes continuously during this 24-hour stretch to remind the people to keep their dead in mind. While all this is going on, especially at night, the souls are said to visit their homes invisibly and spy on their relatives. They are said to be very happy when they find the living remembering and praying for them, but grieved when they are forgotten. So pious Ivatan advise that special devotions in favor of the departed should be undertaken during the whole day. This usually includes visit to the cemeteries and giving special blessings on the graves. The Catholic Church gave priests on this day the privilege of offering three Masses for the benefit of the faithful departed suffering in Purgatory. At midnight of 2 November, the souls return to their spiritual stations. Those who received deliverance from purgatory through the prayers and meritorious acts of the living applied to them are believed to go to heaven on this day; those who received some help have their period of purgation lessened; but those forgotten return to their suffering. This is why people are advised to pray for all the departed including those who have no one to remember them, especially those who have no relatives left behind to remember them.

### Analysis

The acculturation of the Ivatan to Catholic teachings concerning the human soul at death and after death is definite. But it is also clear that survivals of aboriginal beliefs and customs are still there. That the soul after death faces God's judgment and is sent to either an eternal (Heaven or Hell) or temporal (Purgatory) station, that souls in Purgatory benefit from the prayers and acts of religion by the faithful on earth, and having served out their purification period enter Heaven, are all Catholic belief. These were introduced under Spanish missionaries as is known both from History and from the fact that many of the terms are in Spanish or derived from Spanish. Even the apparition of souls of the dead is not inconsistent with Catholic

belief, provided that such apparition is presumed to be by the permission of God. But the belief in and custom of a need to offer the dead their share in material goods left behind has origins in the aboriginal tradition as shown in the reports at the Spanish contact in the eighteenth century. The food and drink at the *kapakavus* given to the participants in the novena prayers are reminiscent of the eating and drinking and the sacrifices of food and drink reported by the Spanish chroniclers. Even the general fear of the dead, especially their apparitions or supposed manifestations connected with *mangmu* and *tumaganitu* are carry-overs from pre-Christianization times. The question is whether there has been a truly radical change in the Ivatan worldview in connection with death and after death.

The recent Ivatan view of the nature and world of the soul at death and after death, gleaned from the foregoing lexicon of Ivatan creed, code and cult regarding the dead, indicates that the Ivatan believe that:

1. The soul is immortal; it can find everlasting happiness in Heaven with God, or eternal reprobation in Hell;
2. The person must set his life and affairs in order before death, or else he will find no peace in the other life;
3. If the soul has not set right all his earthly affairs before death, he will not find rest in the other life and will need the help of the living;
4. God judges the soul after death, and rewards it or punishes it according to its deserts. Those who cannot be damned because they are not too wicked, but cannot enter Heaven because they are not perfect, are given a period of purification and in this state undergo suffering. To deliver them from suffering, they need the prayers and pious remembrance from the living especially relatives. To let them know such a need for suffrage, they are allowed to appear or manifest their need to the living.
5. The souls watch over the living and can propose ways by which the living can help them through messages communicated through apparitions and other manifestations. They can request additional hospitalities for those who have prayed for them.
6. Damned souls can disturb the peace of the living by causing frightful manifestations, and there is nothing more the living can do for them, but they can be driven away by traditional exorcism.

7. Death is a person's passage from the physical world to the invisible world, but communication between the two worlds can continue through apparitions and other manifestations.
8. The dead can become alive again.

The data is presented in table 2. It makes no claims to being exhaustive, but it shows some basic patterns of belief, behavioral code, and ritual practices. The presence of Catholic Christian doctrine and practice is clear; but at the same time, the mixture of folk religion with official Catholic practice shows the presence of survivals of Ivatan aboriginal religion.

### Synthesis

A comparison of the substance of the aboriginal belief system and the acculturated Catholic Christian worldview shows variance in details and aspects of ritual, but the aboriginal *añitu* has remained as a key element of the Ivatan belief concerning the human soul and its destiny after death.

It is interesting, however, that the division of the souls in the other life aboriginally is according to social position during their natural life: the social upper class—the *principalia*—enter heaven and become stars; the common people—the *plebeyo*—are not admitted into heaven but remain in the atmosphere as wandering *añitu*, causing harm or doing good depending on their whims. There is no notion of Hell or Purgatory in their Catholic sense. It is difficult to infer an ethical system from the aboriginal worldview, but that is probably because of the incompleteness of its description.

In contrast, the recent Christianized view divides the souls of the departed between those in peace and those suffering from either damnation or purgation. The distinction is from the moral state at the time of death: sinner and saint. Sinners must either be damned eternally, or suffer temporarily. Both the damned and the temporary sufferers may appear as *añitu* to the living, and in so doing cause fright. The difference is that the temporary sufferers can be helped by prayers and acts of piety, or by the fulfillment of their specific requests for the settlement of unsettled earthly affairs they left behind. A clear addition of the Christian view is the Supreme Being before whose presence the souls of the good find their peace and happiness.

Table 2

| Creed  | Code  | Cult   |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Humans have souls which separate from their bodies at death and are immortal; they can communicate to the living.   | Be attentive to messages souls try to convey to the living and do as they say.  | Mass and Novena prayers for the peace of the departed; wear religious symbols such as crosses and medals, and talismans or garlic to ward off anitu.   |
| 2. When the soul of a departed appears, it is usually to indicate need for suffrage or make specific requests.   | Receive the messages and interpret the signs correctly.   | Masses and novena prayers or doing as the message from the dead indicates  |
| 3. The soul is judged by God after death; good preparation for death is needed.  | Sins must be forgiven; reconciliation with those one offended in life is needed; debts must be paid and restitution done  | Receive the last Sacraments; explicitly ask forgiveness and blessing from those one leaves behind; perform the ritual prayers for the dying whenever death appears imminent.   |
| 4. The souls of the good attain eternal peace and rest; those who have sins or unsettled affairs do not find peace and must be purified in Purgatory and have their living relatives settle their affairs. | Those departed who do not make apparitions and the like are in peace and need no further suffrage but those who show signs of need for suffrage must be helped. | For dead infants and children the <i>Trisagio</i> in praise of the Holy Trinity is sung; for those who suffer, the rites for the repose of the suffering souls are performed culminating in a feast of food and drinks for the participants. |
| 5. Failure to heed the requests of the departed brings misfortunes or punishment in the next life, and prolongs the sufferings of the departed.  | Heed requests of the departed as promptly as possible. Delay may increase the apparitions or make the anitu manifestations more frightful to the community.     | Erect crosses where the apparitions or manifestations take place; if possible draw white crosses with lime on the haunted places. When possible sprinkle the place with holy water.  |

Table 2 continued

| Creed  | Code  | Cult  |
|--|---|---|
| 6. Those who die violent deaths are likely to haunt the site of their violent end. | If blood traces are found on the site, cleanse or exorcise the place quickly. | Put combustible material at the site and burn the place clean and/or have it exorcized by a priest. |
| 7. The dead can live again.  | Do not bury the dead immediately.   |   |

But in both aboriginal and recent practice, the place of food and drink is significant. In the aboriginal practice, food and drink were not only served to sympathizers, but also offered as sacrifice to the souls. In recent practice, food and drink are served as an act of hospitality to sympathizers in the name of the dead, and no longer as sacrificial offering. This recent acculturation, of course, has not totally cancelled survivals of the aboriginal practice. While there is no instance of sacrificial offering to a recently dead person, there are still food and drink sacrifices to *añitu* of ancestors in farms with the purpose of procuring their protection and favor. This has been discussed at some length in "The World and the Ways of the Ivatan Anitu." (1980; 1992)

It must also be noted that the notion of the *diablo* is an acculturated concept from the Spanish period, but is not totally without antecedent in aboriginal times. The malevolent *añitu* was warded off from the sick by frightening it with bolos and sharpened sticks placed near the head of the sick person. Today, to ward off the evil spirit—the devils—who may tempt the sick and dying to sin, holy images such as the Crucifix, and sacramentals such as Holy Water or blessed palms, are used analogously. The Crucifix and other blessed religious symbols are installed near the sick person, and Holy Water is sprinkled periodically, and prayers recited. But in some cases, some people still place odoriferous substances, such as garlic, on the sick to ward off malevolent spirits, a fact indicative of the cultural mix.

The doctrine on the resurrection of the dead during the Last Judgment is professed as an act of religion, but the idea of coming back to life among Ivatan is more specifically about revival after apparent death rather than what the doctrine teaches.

## Notes

1. The letter of Fr. Alonzo Amado is in the compilation of documents on Batanes by Fr. Malumbres, O.P. at the Archivo de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario (henceforth APSR) at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila. The compilation is tagged "Documentos de Batanes" (henceforth DDB) in three volumes. The Amado letter referred to is in DDB vol. 2, pp. 174-79. The letter was written in 1720. Microfilm copy of this document is also at the Ateneo de Manila University Library, microform section, Cat. No. 4046. Joachin Melgarejo's letter written on 24 October 1778 is in DDB vol. 1, pp. 11-16. The cited section of the report is on pp. 15-16. Fr. Bartholome Artiguez, O.P., letter of 12 May 1787, is in DDB vol. 2, pp. 95-101, and the quoted section is on pp. 100-101. Jose Maria Peñaranda's report of 1831 is in DDB vol. 3-B, the quoted part being on p. 424.

2. *Basi* is an Ilocano word, the Ivatan term being *palek*. It is an alcoholic beverage prepared by brewing sugarcane juice in a native yeast called *yapu* grown in finely grated bark of the tree called in Ivatan *vatindaw* or *vachindaw*. It is still being produced today.

3. Mayo, said Silvestre Galano, an old fisherman living in the hill outskirts of Basco I interviewed in 1975, was a mysterious man who came to Batanes by boat and became a very successful fisherman. The people wanted to know his secret and tricked him by getting him drunk. Once drunk, they wrested from him his trade secret by getting from his loin cloth the bamboo or bone hook called *yuyus* for catching the *dibang* (flying fish). This hook is in use till today. It does not kill the flying fish easily enabling the *mataw* (fishermen in search of the *arayu* or dorado) to catch more since the *arayu* prefer live bait. Thus in Batanes oral tradition, Mayo is not a divinity but a folk hero. However, a cult to him in Valugan requires offering food and wine at the grove during the fishing season of Summer. This cult may have led Peñaranda to think of him as a divinity. Fr. Julio Gonzalez, O.P. taking after Peñaranda also reports Mayo as a divinity, which I think is incorrect.

4. In the nineteenth century, Igorrote was not specifically applied to peoples on the Cordillera region of North Luzon. As late as the 1860s, the Franciscan poet Fray Bernardino Melendreras who worked in the Bicol region was referring to the mountain dwellers of the Bicol—probably Dumagats—as "Igorrote." The word is to be construed as simply meaning peoples of the highlands. See Hornedo (1990, 531-32). The custom referred to must be general rather than specific.

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