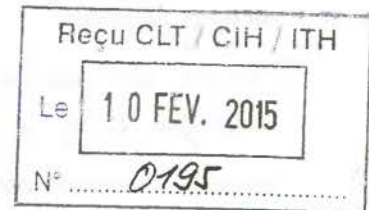


ORAL AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE  
National Commission for Culture and the Arts  
Intramuros, Metro-Manila

SUMMARY INVENTORY FORM  
No 254



1. Identification:

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Name of Intangible Heritage    | : Ifugao Punnuk (tugging ritual) |
| b. Domain* (see below)            | : Social practice                |
| c. Name of Community              | : Tuwali Ifugao                  |
| d. Geographic location            | : Hapao, Ifugao                  |
| e. Date, Frequency, Institutional | : usually August annually        |
| f. Persons/Orgs. Responsible      | :                                |
| i. National Bodies                | :                                |
| ii. Resource Persons              | :                                |
| Directly Participating            | : Hapao Ifugao                   |
| iii. Resource persons             | : Norma Respicio (Researcher)    |
| iv. Coordinating Bodies           | :                                |

2. Description

- a. Brief Description of cultural Space or cultural expression:

Revised June 12, 2013

***Punnuk: Closing the Harvest Season with the Tug-of-War along the River Hapao***

**A Country Report**

**By Norma A. Respicio, PHILIPPINES**

**I General description:**

The **punnuk** is a tug-of-war game among members of three communities in barangay Hapao, town of Hungduan in the province of Ifugao. The several-round competition is held at the Hapao River. It is the final activity in the **huowah** or ritual-activities observed after the completion of harvest. The enactment of the punnuk formally puts to a close the agricultural cycle, and signals the beginning of a new one upon its consummation.

## II The huowah

### A. *Baki and Inum*

The two ritual activities in the huowah that precede the **punnuk** are: the **baki** and the **inum**. Both are sponsored by the **dumupag** or designated lead family in the harvest. Both are enacted on the same day and at the ground floor area of the traditional house of the dumupag. The first in the huowah is the baki which is performed in the morning. It is a ritual divination with 3-5 chickens (sometimes includes a pig) as sacrifice. It is presided over by village priest (/s) or **mumbaki who looks into the position, color and size of the bile of the sacrificed animals for auspicious signs** and chants expressions of gratitude to the gods for the harvest and to the ancestors (reciting names of 3-5 generations) for the rice fields bequeathed to the present generation particularly those of the dumupag. The mumbaki, the members of the family of the dumupag, and the community members in attendance all partake of the cooked meat at lunch. The second ritual activity following the baki is the **inum** or the drinking of rice wine. It is enacted in the evening. Three jars of varying sizes are brought out by the dumupag. They all contain rice wine or **bayah** prepared by the dumupag. The mumbaki invites the ancestors of the dumupag and his/her spouse from 4-6 generations by chanting their names one by one to partake of the wine. The mumbaki is given the honors to open the jars and have the first taste starting with the large jar or **binouwangon**— around 2.5 feet tall, then the medium-sized jar or **dinoaman**, and finally the **guling** which is a foot-high jar but contains the best tasting rice wine amongst the three. The community members in attendance then partake of the wine but only from the largest jar. Shouts of revelry emanating from the house of the dumupag signal the rest of the community to join the booze **until dawn**.

### B. **Punnuk**

The third and the last of the huowah ritual-activity is the punnuk. It is held on the day after the baki and inum. It is the tug-of-war participated in by male members of three communities – children and adults **alike**. Traditionally, **only** the able bodied men, whether young or old, join the actual tug-of-war in the river while the women content themselves joining the march to the river embankment where they cheer their village

mates and jeer or taunt the members of the opposing or rival communities. **Due to popular clamor among community members, a tug-of-war exclusively for women was held last year (2012) and the community plans to continue featuring a women's tug-of-war in the succeeding punnuk.**

The point of convergence and the site of the punnuk are at the **hipukana**, the area where two rivers, Hapao River and a tributary river, meet.

### **1. Material Elements: Tinaggu and the Pakid**

The punnuk tug-of-war features two important material elements: these are the **tinaggu** (also called **kina-ag**) and the **pakid**. The tinaggu is a figure made up of rice stalks (**goyami**) and tightly bundled with vines **locally known as a-eh**. The figure often resembles the scarecrow but there are other forms of the tinaggu such as a large monitor lizard **or baniya**. It is the object thrown into the middle part of the river and the subject of tugging between two contending groups that are situated on opposite sides of the river across the current. To pull the tinaggu to their side each of the groups uses a pakid which is a stem of a tree that is three to five meters in length. The pakid is sourced from the **attoba** (also called atolba) tree [*Callicarpa formosana* Rolfe family Lamiaceae] which is generally known for its durability. A stem with a root that is formed like hook is selected **so it can be firmly hitched on the tinaggu**. From there, the tugging between the contending groups ensues. The pakid has a circumference of around three inches for easy and firm grasped by the participants. The first group to pull the tinaggu to their side is the winner.

**2. Production** of the tinaggu is done three days before the punnuk while the pakid is gathered days before the event as the attoba tree where it is taken grows predominantly in the forest hills, far from the communities. **In Barangay Baang, a baki or ritual prayer accompanied by a chicken sacrifice is enacted to consult the gods regarding the auspicious day for gathering the pakid.** Often times, **the men go to the forest before the harvest period to look for the tree with the longest stem and reserve it for the punnuk.** The longer the pakid, the more advantageous for the group, as more men can



join in the pulling during the tug-of-war. Both the tinaggu and the pakid are prepared by the men of each participating community. At least two pieces each of tinaggu and pakid are brought to the river for the tug-of-war because in the event that there is a tie in the match and another round is necessary to decide the game, or when a pakid gets destroyed, there is always a ready pakid and/or tinaggu as replacement.

### **III The Setting**

#### ***A. Geographic/Physical***

Hungduan is a municipality of Ifugao bounded in the northwest by Mountain Province and in the southwest by Benguet. Among the nine **barangays** that comprise Hungduan, only Hapao Proper, Nungulunan, and **Baang** are known to practice the punnuk. The three barangays are situated at the central area of Hungduan and are distinctive for their impressive expanse of terraced fields all with stone-walling. The whole area is formed like a wide elongated basin with its southern flanks so expansive and gradually elevated in contrast to its western and southwestern flanks which are steep. The Hapao River traverses the very midst of the site. The waters rumble through large smooth-surfaced stones that swiftly flow from the heights of Mt. Alawitan and Mt. Polis, and fed by small tributaries from Mt Kapiligan.

#### ***B. The People and their Main Economic Activity***

The members of the three communities belong to the Tawali ethno-linguistic group, just like the greater number of the population in Hungduan. They are ingrained rice-agriculturists. Their stone-walled terraced fields grand and expansive are the tangible lasting testaments of a hardy and ingenuous people. And their living traditions such as the huowah – baki, inum, and the punnuk, all centered on their rice agriculture, are intangible heritage practices that have endured through generations. The agricultural cycle centered on the traditional rice variety, usually starts with the sowing of chosen rice grains or **pinung-o** in October or early November and followed by the preparation of rice fields prior to the replanting of seedlings from the seedbeds in early December. So that by May

the grains form and then ripen till golden yellow and harvest would then commence in late June or early July.

### ***C. The Social Structure***

The society is stratified. Those occupying the upper ranks are the **kadangyan** or the traditional rich families owning several large terraced fields that are inherited from ancestors. In the agricultural cycle, work on the rice fields of the **kadangyan** is given precedence over those of the other members of the community owning small plots. There is a **dumupag** or the designated family from the **kadangyan** class who leads in all agricultural activities particularly the **huowah** or post harvest ritual-activities. The **dumupag** is chosen through consensus by the village elders and the **mumbaki** or village priests, on the basis of the extent of rice fields owned and social stature held in the traditional society. The **dumupag** necessarily emanates from the **kadangyan** family that owns the widest and biggest number of rice fields which are believed to be the oldest among the terraced fields in the area. Being the lead family, the **dumupag** has the exclusive privilege to declare the commencement of harvest and calls on everyone in the community to join the harvest starting off with his/her rice fields. Only after harvest is completed in the rice fields of the **dumupag** can the **umuonub** or the family with the second largest rice fields start harvest in his/her rice fields. Then it is followed by the **mikatuo** or the family with the third largest rice fields, followed by the **makap-at** or the family/families with the fourth largest rice fields. In all the foregoing, harvesting is a cooperative labor shared by the community members along with the respective owners of the rice fields. A harvester receives five bundles of rice from the rice field owner in exchange for a day's work. Only after the rice crops of the **makap-at** are harvested will the small rice field-owners harvest their crops. And since the fields of the latter are small, harvesting can be done simply by them.

## **IV The Enactment of the Punnuk**

### ***A. Community participation; colorful and celebratory***



At around nine o'clock in the morning, the members of the three communities, joining the punnuk, start marching through the rice-terraced embankments towards the direction of the River Hapao. The predominant red color of their traditional attire is a stunning contrast to the lush vegetation in the surrounding forest hills. Red-colored leaves of the **dong-a** (also called dongla) [*Cordyline fruticosa* (L.) A. Chev. family Agavaceae], believed to be attractive to the gods, are embellished on their heads. The tinaggu is swayed in their arms and the pakid is constantly raised by the men carrying them while a bunch of the dong-a is waved by the rest of the participants to the tempo of boastful shouting, goading and cheering in unison by all participants.

### ***B. Imploring blessings from the gods***

The cheering and exchange of pointed criticisms to put down the confidence of the opposite group/s become more feverish as the participants approach the river embankment. The first two groups arriving at the designated area in the river are the first to compete in the tug-of-war. But before the game begins, a participant called **munggopah** from one of the competing groups recites a **several-line** prayer imploring blessings from the gods: **Maknongan** the almighty, **Daya**, of the sky, **Laud**, of the sea, and **Bago** the god of the earth, not just for a good game but also for their community's health and well being. And this would be promptly followed by a recitation of another **several-line** verse from the munggopah of the opposing group also addressed to the gods imploring that bounty and good luck shine on them. **The munggopah holds a spear decorated with dong-a leaves at the blade end. While reciting the gopah or prayer he twirls the spear, slightly releasing it in the air then stomps the lower end on the stone or ground in unison with the tempo and timbre of his voice. His dexterity as munggopah always solicits awe from the participants especially the children intently listening and watching the proceedings.**

### ***C. The Game, tug-of-war***

After the versifications, a tinaggu is then thrown at the very midst of the river by one of the opposing groups **and positioned in such a way that the head is towards the east against the directional flow of the water so that the lower extremities are towards**

the west. Almost instantaneously, several of the participants from each group hook their pakid on the upper torso of the tinaggu – one near the left arm pit and the other near the right armpit, under the watchful eye of an appointed referee from each group. Upon the signal of the referees, the tugging ensues. The constant pulling by each group invites deafening shouts and cheers from those on the river embankment eagerly hoping for a victory on their side. The group that pulls with greater, concerted strength can bring the tinaggu closer to their side, sometimes even pulling along the opposing group, and attaining victory in the game. The winning team then faces-off with the remaining group for another round of game. Challenges for another round/s can go on and on so long as there is still a tinaggu to pick and pull, and until everyone gets tired.

#### **D. *The winner and the losers***

Whoever wins the most number of matches in the tug-of-war is declared the over-all champion, not only in the punnuk but of the entire harvest season. The losers go home feeling forlorn as it is generally believed that their harvest would be easily consumed and thus will not last till the next harvest season while those in the winning side are all euphoric, oozing with confidence that the forthcoming year would indeed be a year of plenty and that their rice granary will always be full and replenished every time.

To further demonstrate sportsmanship and camaraderie, the men who still have the strength to spend engage in a wrestling game called **bultong** or **dopap** after which everybody – men and women, takes a dip in the river and enjoy the cool refreshing waters.

**V Significance of the traditions** related to harvest, and the huowah –baki, inum, and punnuk.

- **religious** - as shown in the rituals of baki, inum and in the recitation of verses at the river to thank the gods for the harvest and implore the gods' continued assistance in the life of the community for the whole year;
- **revelry and celebration** - as observed in the inum, during the march along the terraced fields, and in the dedicated cheering especially at the tug-of-war games;
- **sportsmanship** in the tug-of war for both winners and losers;



- *unity and efficiency as a community* as seen in the speedy production of the tinaggu, the procurement of the pakid, and in the enactment of the punnuk, the marching synchronized to the tempo of their chants punctuated by shouts of “Hagioh!” as they negotiate the undulating embankments of the terrace fields leading to the river, the cheering in unison by village-mates, and in the show of strength in the entire enactment of the game;
- *discipline in the strict observance of taboos* such as abstaining from eating leafy vegetables, delicate shells, and fishes during the entire duration of harvest by the entire members of the community and none bathing for the dumupag and mumbaki during the entire duration of the huowah. The leafy vegetables are not regarded as auspicious food since they shrink when cooked, while the delicate shellfishes are shunned due to their easily crushed shell covering. It is believed that the foregoing characteristics could have similar adverse effect on the harvest such as easy depletion or destruction. The smell of fish is said to be disdained by the gods and therefore avoided. Pods such as beans can be served for food since they expand when cooked and this characteristic could be equated to the multiplication of harvest.
- *systematized sharing of labor in the fields* for efficiency in harvest, and to deter the spoilage of crops;
- *high consciousness re traditions* is very apparent among community members (children, adults, women and men), the mumbaki, the village elders, kadangyan and the *dumupag* especially seen in the practice or observance of community traditions especially those related to the agricultural life as demonstrated in the religious observance of rituals and annual enactment of the huowah – baki, inum, and the punnuk. Through continuous observance and/or enactment, the *transfer* of the traditions to the younger generations is ensured;
- and the unparalleled dedication of the *government officials in the town and barangay levels* such as the Mayor, barangay officers and particularly the municipal tourism officer to their *responsibility in safeguarding* the huowah particularly the punnuk from waning or being commoditized and distorted through unscrupulous interventions, and from falling into the trap of pure



spectacle or show for tourists' consumption. The officials lead the community members in raising their guard against the entry or dissemination of non-traditional rice varieties that necessitate the application of chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Non-organic farming and non-endemic varieties of rice and other plants will greatly affect the gains attained in the safeguarding and propagation of intangible cultural heritage such as the punnuk. ■

**Data Gathered from the Following People Interviewed on March 16 to 17, 2013 Hapao Centro, Hungduan in Ifugao:**

**Village Elders:**

Lucio Adamme of Barangay Baang, 80 years old

Romeo Buddihon of Barangay Baang, 82 years old

Pedro Mang-uhan of Barangay Nungulunan, 60 years old

**Mumbaki:**

Bandao Atolba of Pangah-an, Barangay Hapao, 90 years old

Rosa Atolba, Wife of Mumbaki Bandaw Atolba, also of Pangah-an, Hapao

**Village Elders and Mumbaki:**

Antonio Bumangabang, Barangay Hapao Proper, 79 years old

Gano Napadawan, Barangay Hapao, 84 years old

Victor Melong (Mandulyaw, native name) Barangay Hapao, 78 years old

**Dumupag:**

Elena Pangiwan Uyammi, 62 years old

Husband of Dumupag, Jose Uyammi, 61 years old

**Caretaker of Inheritor's Rice Fields:**

Monaliza Bimuyag, and

Husband of Monaliza, Mr. Rey Bimuyag

**Local Government Officials:**

Ramon Gayadang, Barangay Captain of Hapao Proper, 49 years old

Joseph Nakake, former Councilor of Hapao Proper, and mumbaki 59 years old

Rowena Sicat, Municipal Tourism Officer of Hungduan, 38 years old

**Note: The writer herself observed the entire harvest period and the huowah, and witnessed part of the punnuk while in Hapao in 1975.**

## Harvest Rituals in Hapao

Ifugao society is stratified. Those occupying the upper ranks are the *kadangyan* or the traditional rich families owning several large terraced fields that have been inherited from their forebears. In the agricultural cycle, work on the rice fields of the *kadangyan* is given precedence over those of the other members of the community owning small plots.

Leading all agricultural activities is the *dumupag* who is the eldest son or daughter of a *kadangyan* family, and chosen through consensus by the village elders and *mumbaki* or ritual specialists. A criteria in the choice of the *dumupag* other than ownership of extensive rice fields or an elevated social status, is the luck to achieve good harvest in all paddies sufficient to sustain the rice needs of all families in the community until the next harvest in the succeeding year. A *dumupag* can be replaced if successive misfortunes befall the community such as frequent fatal accidents, epidemic or pest infestation in the rice fields.

In Hapao the sight of women manually cleaning wet terrace fields signal the start of the *haw-ang* or planting season. Preparing the fields and rice seedlings generally begins in October and lasts until December when the seedlings are transplanted in paddies constantly fed by waters coming from the surrounding forests above it.

It would take at least six months before the rice grains are ready for harvest. The right time to harvest, however, is not simply dictated by the ripening of the grains but also by beliefs, ritual practices and accompanying taboos learned from forebears and strictly observed even to this day.

Prior to the declaration of the commencement of harvest which is a privilege solely of the *dumupag*, a *dupag* or harvest ritual is performed at the ground floor area of the house of the *dumupag*. Officiated by a lead *mumbaki* and his apprentice, the *dupag* ritual is held from deep in the night and lasts until noon time of the following day which can also be the first day of harvest if the omens permit.

Although there is no hierarchy among the *Tuwali mumbaki* of Hapao, the one who leads the *dupag* and *huowah* rituals is called a *munbun-ong* and his apprentice, a *mumbaki*. But in the performance of other rituals, all ritual specialists are referred to as *mumbaki*.

### 1. Harvest Ritual

- A. Dupag Ritual
  - a. Honga di page
  - b. Mongaya

The dupag ritual has two components: first is the *honga di page* where four chickens are sacrificed, their blood drained into a bowl, and the position of the bile vis-a-vis the liver is inspected.

The *manalitalik* or the playing of three *gangsa* (gong) and *ribit* (drum) follows if the omen is favourable. Otherwise the playing of the instruments has to be postponed until the next day to which the mumbaki may sacrifice another chicken.

Upon the successful performance of the *honga di page*, the second component of the dupag which is *mongaya* proceeds at the break of dawn. The *mongaya* has the pig as the sacrificial animal. The bound pig is laid on its side on the ground before the house of the dumupag. Just beside the pig is a spear struck to the ground. Before killing the pig, the mumbaki and his apprentice perform elaborate divinations consisting of dances and chants while encircling the pig nine times. In between rounds the mumbaki and his apprentice go back to the ground area of the dumupag's house to resume the chants punctuated by sips of *bayah*, rice wine, from their respective cups which are promptly dipped into the jar to refill.

The following are the details of the nine-round dance by the mumbaki and his apprentice:

During the first dance, the apprentice pours *bayah* on the pig's body followed by the playing of the *gangsa* and drum. On the second and third round the mumbaki followed by his apprentice dances around the pig while chanting.

The fourth round is the mumbaki's turn to pour *bayah* on the pig while he and his apprentice dance around it. The chants continue and there is a more concerted playing of instruments before a *pahiking* (backpack) is brought out and placed near the pig. Once again, the *gangsa* and drum are played and the mumbaki goes around the pig twice.

On the sixth round, the mumbaki picks up the *pahiking* while his apprentice gets the spear as they dance. Both men return the *pahiking* and the spear on the ground. On the seventh round, it would be the mumbaki's turn to get the spear and his apprentice, the *pahiking*.

On the eighth round the mumbaki wears his *bayyaong* (blanket) like a wrap-around skirt impersonating *Imbahay*, the weaver-goddess, while his apprentice holds the spear impersonating a *mun-anup* (hunter) as they both dance around the pig. On the ninth round



the mumbaki and his apprentice exchange roles: the apprentice is Imbayah and wears the bayyaong like woman in a wrap-around skirt and even taunts the pig with the hem of the skirt. The mumbaki carries the pahiking and with spear on hand he takes the role of the hunter. He chants and continues to dance around the pig. A part of the mumbaki's chant is the story of the myth of Inhabyan, the goddess of the wind from the *Ud Daiya* (Upstream Region), challenged by a *mun-anup* (hunter) who is described holding a spear and carrying a pahiking on his back. The chant relates the defeat of the hunter by Inhabyan. The story is a reminder to the people not to challenge the power of nature.

In between the chant and dance rituals, the people in attendance take short breaks under the house of the dumupag. To fill up the time, people exchange stories in between sips of bayah. Others simply enjoy the music from an *ungiyong* (flute) played by a young man.

After the dancing and chanting, the pig is killed using an *uwik*, a pointed stick made of *bilau*, a wild reed, and its tail (*ipos*) is cut and inserted in the wound to effectively stop the blood from gushing out. After a while, the ipos is removed and placed on the pig's body along with two rice stalks, a cup of bayah and one stem of *hinanganga* grass (*Cyperus sp.*), which always accompany a sacrificed pig.

The mumbaki then sits beside the pig and chants -reciting within memory the names of all the mumbakis in the past who have performed the same *baki* as he makes his promise to continue the tradition. The mumbaki will end the chant by drinking bayah.

After this, the mumbaki dips his finger into chicken blood and daubs it in quick succession on the bamboo clapper kept in the ritual box; on one strip of rattan that will be used to bundle harvested rice; on two rice stalks; on the grass; on the ipos; and three chicken feathers which are then held all together in one grip. The mumbaki then faces the rice fields and performs the *wagah* (blessing). Wielding a *pangwagay* – a bundle of ritual objects – the mumbaki chants a prayer to invoke the gods of high heaven particularly Daya, the god of the Upper Regions; blesses the forest, the hills and the terraces and implores for abundant harvest of rice from the terrace fields and crops like taro and sweet potato that are grown in the mountain sides or swidden.

Subsequently, the mumbaki will put the ipos, uwik and the stem of the *hinanganga* inside the *kinteb* (ritual box), which contains offerings from past rituals.

After chanting, the sacrificed pig is cut up, its bile examined for the omen, and its intestine called *binodbod* is kept inside the house for drying until the day of the punnuk.

To make known to everyone that the dupag ritual has been successfully performed, two bundles of reeds are set up right along the edge of the house yard of the dumupag. This is a signal for the harvesters (strictly women) led by the dumupag to gather at the first level of the latter's rice fields. Just like the dumupag, all the harvesters are garbed in attires fully covering their body –long sleeved blouses, loose trousers, rubber boots, a wide-brimmed hat, and a towel beneath the hat to shield their faces from the heat of the sun. Some hold an umbrella as an extra protection from the searing sun. But everyone has the *gamolan* or small harvest knife on one hand and several strips of bamboo to bundle the harvested rice, on the other hand. But before actual harvest commences, the dumupag, holding two rice stalks, looks up towards the direction of the sky and offers a chant to Daya. As she concludes her chant, the women start harvesting the rice.

Only after harvest is completed in the rice fields of the dumupag can the *umuonub* or the family with the second largest rice fields start harvest in his/her rice fields. Then it is followed by the *mikatuo* or the family with the third largest rice fields, followed by the *makap-at* or the family/families with the fourth largest rice fields. In all the foregoing, harvesting is a cooperative labour shared by the community members along with the respective owners of the rice fields. A harvester receives five bundles of rice from the rice field owner in exchange for a day's work. Only after the rice crops of the makap-at are harvested will the small rice field-owners harvest their own crops.

## 2. Post Harvest Ritual

### A. Huowah

- a. Baki
- b. Inum
- c. Punnuk

### B. Hinukhukab Ritual

### C. Hagnong Ritual

After harvest is completed in Barangays Hapao, Baang and Nungulunan, the dumupag determines the most auspicious time to hold the *huowah* or the final ritual activities to end the harvest season. The ritual activities are preferably held during the first quarter moon (*nakayang*) to enjoy an abundant harvest. While waiting for the announcement of the huowah, the women busy themselves in the terrace fields; covering the paddies with mulch by stomping their feet on the rice stalks to enrich the soil and uprooting some stalks to pile up into mounds on which garlic, and onions are grown.

The first two ritual activities – the *baki* and the *inum*- are enacted a day before the punnuk held at the ground floor area of the dumupag's house. The baki, which is usually performed in the morning but not later than 5 o'clock in the afternoon, is a ritual



divination with two to five chickens (sometimes includes a pig) sacrificed. It is presided over by a *mumbaki* who chants expressions of gratitude to the gods for the harvest and to the forebears (reciting names of three to five generations) for the rice fields bequeathed to the present generation, particularly those of the dumupag.

Upon the completion of the baki, and the bile positions of the sacrificed chickens (and pig) are pronounced good by the mumbaki, one of the male elders stands on an elevated terrace field embankment adjacent to the paddies of the dumupag. He looks towards the houses across the lower tiered fields and nearby villages he shouts at the top of his voice inviting people to the inum or drinking of *bayah* or rice wine. He also announces that the following day is *tungoh* or a day of rest from work in the fields and enjoins everyone to prepare for the punnuk.

The bayah, especially prepared by the dumupag several days before the huowah and stored in three jars of varying sizes are then brought to the ground floor area of the house of the dumupag. Before the jars are opened, the mumbaki chants one by one the names of four to six generations of the dumupag's forebears and also those of the spouse', inviting them to drink the wine.

The mumbaki is given the honours to open the jars and have the first taste starting with the large jar or *binouwangon*—almost a meter tall—then the medium-sized jar or *dinoaman*, and finally the *guling*, which is a foot-high jar that contains the best-tasting rice wine amongst the three. The community members in attendance then drink the wine but only from the largest jar.

Immediately after partaking of the wine prepared by the dumupag, the mumbaki, along with other village mates, transfer to the house of the umuonub where he performs another baki by sacrificing two chickens and partaking of bayah. He repeats this process at the house of the mikatuo, as long as there is bayah prepared for the occasion.

While the people continue with their drinking of rice wine deep into the night or even until the wee hours of the following day, some of the men then busy themselves in preparing the materials for the punnuk.

The punnuk is the much-anticipated tugging ritual done in the Hapao River participated in by members of barangays Hapao, Baang and Nungulunan.

Before the family of the dumupag goes to the site of the punnuk, the mumbaki will perform a short baki while preparing the chicken sacrificed during the huowah together



with the dried intestine (*binodbod*) of the pig previously sacrificed during the dupag ritual. Referred as *kapat di kinaag*, the pig's intestine is equated to the *a-e* vine, which is the binding and strengthening material for the *kina-ag*, the subject of tugging during the punnuk, and symbolizes strong ties in the community. The food offerings are placed on a *hukup* (basket container for cooked rice) to be eaten before going to the river for the tugging ritual.

It is recalled that prior to the late 1990s, the punnuk was held in three separate areas of the river, and tugging was done one after the other in a synchronized manner, on the same day.

The following were the competing villages and the respective three sites of the tugging:

- 1) The people from the villages of Bocoh (Hapao) and Dayandi (Baang) competed in *kihdog* - upper side of the river, near the hot springs.
- 2) The people from the villages of Proper Hapao, Pidol, Kiangdo, Mamoyboyod (Hapao) and the villages of Tinangaan, Dayukong, Kihagad, Liblibot, Kawayan, Butwagan, and Saboyangan (Baang) competed in *pulla* - the boundary between Hapao and Baang in the lower part of the river.
- 3) And lastly, the people from the villages of Bulanan and Paniki (Hapao) and the villages of Patpat, Tikidan, and Duyong (Nungulunan) competed at the *nunhipukana* – the confluence of two rivers coming from Barangays Hapao, Baang and Nungulunan.

The *nunhipukana* has been retained as the site of the now-centralized punnuk with Hapao occupying the eastern boundary; Baang, the southwestern boundary; and Nungulunan, the northwestern boundary of the Hapao River.

If the current in the *nunhipukana* is strong and the participants are forced to transfer to another part of the river, a group will not participate if it would mean crossing boundaries as the recognition of *kigad*, boundary, is very important in Ifugao society. As what happened in the last punnuk, due to the strong current and high waters at the *nunhipukana*, the punnuk was held at an upper area of the river. The people from Barangay Nungulunan did not participate in the actual tugging as it meant crossing boundaries. However, some men from Barangay Nungulunan engage in their own tugging game at their part of the river to make use of their *pakid*.

Traditionally, the able bodied men, whether young or elderly, join the actual tugging ritual while the women content themselves joining the march to the river embankment where they cheer their village mates and jeer or taunt the members of the opposing or

rival communities. With the centralization of the punnuk, the design of the traditional punnuk was also modified to include a separate tugging activity for the women and children.

The punnuk features two important material elements: these are the *kina-ag*, and the *pakid*. The *kina-ag* is a figure made of bundled *goyami* or rice stalks. This is the object thrown into the middle part of the river and the subject of tugging between two opposing groups huddled together on opposite sides of the river across the current.

To make it strong enough to withstand the forces of pulling by groups of male adults, the *kina-ag* is tightly bundled with vines called *a-e* (*Tinospora sp.*). Although the *kina-ag* often resembles the human form specifically called *tinaggu*, other forms such as *baniya* or large monitor lizard, a figure resembling a monkey, or simply a sturdy ring of rice stalks and *a-e* vines may be used. The *kina-ag* is always embellished with leaves of the *dong-a* (*Cordyline fruticosa*), a plant used to mark boundaries in terrace fields. Its bright magenta leaves are believed to be pleasing to the gods. The *kina-ag* can only be prepared after the *baki* during the *huowah*.

The *pakid*, on the other hand, is a very durable three to five meters long hooked sapling of the *attoba* tree (*Callicarpa formosana*) used by the opposing teams to pull the *kina-ag* to their side.

While the *attoba* tree grows along mountain sides, the men prefer gathering in the far forest hills to get longer saplings several days before the punnuk. In Baang, the *inumban* ritual is performed, where chicken is sacrificed, by those assigned to gather the *pakid* to ensure success in the expedition. This ritual is not done in the other two barangays.

The men searching for the tree will look for one with a twin or triple stem, one of which is cut to form a sharp hook. The hook should be firmly hitched to the *pakid* before the tugging can ensue. Parts of the *pakid* will be shaved to provide a better grip and the tip decorated with *dong-a* leaves.

At least two pieces each of the *kina-ag* and *pakid* are prepared and brought to the river on the day of the punnuk. This is to provide the players with a ready replacement in case another round is needed to break a tie or if the *pakid* gets destroyed. Some would only bring symbolic *kina-ag* to be showed off during the march to the river but not to be used during the actual tugging. The first group to pull the *kina-ag* to their side up to the river embankment wins the game.



At around nine o'clock in the morning, the members of the three communities joining the punnuk start marching through the rice-terraced embankments towards the Hapao River. The predominant red colour of their traditional attire is a stunning contrast to the lush vegetation in their surroundings; dong-a leaves also are embellished on the men's heads. To the tempo of boastful shouting, goading, and cheering in unison by the participants, the kina-ag is swayed and the pakid is constantly raised by the men carrying them while dong-a leaves are waved by the rest.

The cheering and exchange of sharp criticisms to put down the confidence of the opposite groups become more feverish as the participants approach the river embankment. The first two groups arriving at the designated area in the river are the first to compete in the tugging ritual. But before the game begins, a participant called *munggopah* from the first group that arrived in the nunhipukana will recite a four-line verse imploring blessings from the gods: *Daya* of the sky, *Laud* of the sea, and *Bago* of the earth. The prayer is not just for a good game but also for their community's health and well-being. And this is promptly followed by a recitation of another four-line verse from the *munggopah* of the opposing group. The recitation is delivered and composed impromptu.

After the versifications, a kina-ag is then thrown in the middle of the river by one of the groups, and in a second, the two teams strike the kina-ag with their pakid to hitch. But as is more often the case, when the currents of the rivers are strong, two elders from each of the team hold and securely fasten the hook of the two pakid to the kina-ag. Once done the tugging ensues. The constant pulling by each group invites deafening shouts and cheers from those on the river embankment eagerly hoping for a victory on their side. The group that pulls with greater, concerted strength can bring the kina-ag closer to their side until they reach the river embankment attaining victory in the game. The winning team then faces-off with the remaining group for another round of game. The challenges to another round can go on as long as there is still a kina-ag to pick and pull or until everyone gets tired.

Whoever wins the most number of rounds in the tugging ritual is declared the over-all champion, not only in the punnuk but of the entire harvest season. The losers go home feeling forlorn as it is generally believed that their harvest would be easily consumed and thus will not last until the next harvest season while those in the winning side are all euphoric, oozing with confidence that the forthcoming year would indeed be a year of plenty and that their rice granary will always be full or replenished every time.



Every kina-ag used in the punnuk is thrown into the river to be swept away by the currents so that when the remains are seen by those in the lower communities, they would know that the harvest in Hapao has been completed.

Further demonstrating sportsmanship and camaraderie, men with enough strength left engage in a wrestling game called *bultong* or *dopap* or in arm wrestling called *hangul* before everybody takes a bath in the river.

There are many associated observances of taboos and discipline during harvest ritual. For example, the community abstains from eating leafy vegetables, soft covered shellfish, and fish during the entire harvest. Leafy vegetables are not regarded as auspicious food since they shrink when cooked and soft covered shellfish are shunned because they are easily crushed. It is believed that these characteristics can have similar effects on the harvest, leading to easy depletion or destruction. The smell of fish is said to be disdained by the gods and therefore avoided. Legumes such as beans can be served for food since they expand when cooked and this quality is equated to the multiplication of harvest. Also strictly observed by the dumupag and mumbaki is none-bathing during the huowah and no hair cut until the punnuk is over to prevent the loss or dissipation of the blessings and good fortune accumulated during the entire harvest season.

Three to four days after the punnuk, the *hinukhukab* ritual is performed. This is for the purpose of putting back the *hukab* (ritual box cover) and to properly close the kinteb (ritual box), which has remained open from the time of the dupag ritual and kept atop a bundled rice or in a corner of the *owang* (granary) owned by the dumupag. A chicken is sacrificed during the performance of the *hinukhukab* officiated by a mumbaki.

A few weeks after the punnuk, the mumbaki is again called for the performance of the *hagnong* ritual where two chickens are sacrificed. The ritual is performed to allow the people to repair their terrace fields in preparation for the next planting season.

Norma A. Respicio and Cecilia V. Picache

#### Informants:

Virginia Basilio, Barangay Baang

Jose Uyammi, husband of dumupag

Rowena Sicat, Barangay Hapao

Dinamling Mangigib, Barangay Baang

James Bimaynin, apprentice of Dinamling Mangigib, Barangay Baang

Note: Once old stock is depleted, *in-apoy* ritual is performed (sacrificing 3-4 chickens) before opening the newly harvested rice.

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4/10/2013

- b. History, development and social, symbolic and cultural function:
- c. Technical description, authenticity, style, genre, influential schools and (for material objects) materials, function, method of production and use.
- d. List of recognized practitioners:



- e. Sustainability and possible risks of disappearance, pressures or constraints: economic, technological, climatic, etc.:
  - i. Religion:
  - ii. Armed Conflict
  - iii. Language
  - iv. Economic/technological
  - v. Climatic
  - vi. Difficulty in documentation
  - vii. Tourism
  - viii. Increase/decrease in Population
  - ix. Limitation of educational system
  - x. Other factors

3. Justification for inclusion in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage:

- a. Value as human creative genius
- b. As a specific creation and not simply a vast field of creation
- c. Its roots in the cultural tradition
- d. Role in society
- e. Excellence
- f. Value as testimony of living cultural tradition

3. Recorder : Dr. Jesus T. Peralta  
 4. Institution : NCCA  
 5. Date : 4/13/2013  
 6. File Reference Number :

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\*Domains:

- a) oral traditions and Expressions, incl. language as vehicle of the Intangible Heritage
- b) Performing Arts

- c) Social Practices, rituals and festive events
- d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- e) Traditional Crafts



Reçu CLT / CIH / ITH  
Le 11 AVR. 2014  
N° 0325



PAMBANSANG KOMISYON PARA SA KULTURA AT MGA SINING

### CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the **PUNNUK**, a tugging ritual and game of the Ifugao, is item number 272 in the Philippine Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Electronic files in the database and word processed forms are included as a folder in the National Cultural Data Bank being maintained by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). The data may be accessed through the NCCA Portal, specifically in the Cultural Data Bank.

The Cultural Data Bank is protected under Republic Act 10066, also known as the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009.

This certification is being issued as supporting evidence for the **PUNNUK**, one of the ICH elements included in the multinational nomination of "Tugging Rituals and Games" for inscription on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Certified by:

**ADELINA M. SUEMITH**

Officer in Charge, Executive Director

March 12, 2014

Republic of the Philippines • Office of the President

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