

## Family Laws of the Apayaos: The Place of Woman

Social and family laws of the savage Apayao tribe of the Philippine mountains have completely solved the woman problem by considering her two distinct beings, a beast and a spirit. As a mere animal she is sold like any other inferior creature or chattel may be, but her spiritual independence she retains even after marriage. The sale of her body is taken charge of by her male relatives. (Lacking these intermediaries, however, as when she is an orphan without male kin, she frequently sells herself and keeps the price she brings as a part of the inheritance of her future children.

There are some 25,000 of the Apayaos, living in the subprovince of Apayao and in neighboring mountain regions. They know no pottery or weaving; they practice dry agriculture and are a warlike people whose weapons are the headaxe, the shield, the bow and arrow and carved war clubs. They tattoo the body and are highly esthetic in temperament, according to an account by Dr. H. Otley Beyer, head of the department of anthropology of the University of the Philippines, who has made a close study of Apayao customs.

When Apayao girls reach the marriage age, at 14 or 15 years, they are for sale to the highest bidder and may fetch as much as P2000. The purchase having been arranged with some ambitious young luck of the tribe, the girl becomes his sole wife and one of his slaves. He values her

for the promise she gives of developing into a good creature for work in both house and field. She goes to his home, to preside over its domestic affairs, taking with her the whole of her share of her parents' estate. This becomes the nucleus of the estate of her children. What she brought in the marriage market is divided equally among her immediate male relatives. It is not the price they had for her; it is the price of her body only—of herself as a physical being, in other words, a beast.

Her honeymoon is short and passionate. It is truly a honey-moon, lasting precisely one lunar month. At the end of it her husband cuts off her hair and makes of

it a wig for himself—one of three handsome ones with which he makes his own coiffure daily; spending several hours in the process, oiling and combing the wigs before his mirror and weaving them securely about a brightly fringed turban. He goes in for curls and puffs, he is effeminate and a very cruel and merciless warrior.

That wife is accounted excellent whose hair grows profusely and shortly provides her husband his necessary three thick switches to add to his own long tresses.

When he has made himself as handsome as artifice and nature permit, he sets out on a journey, taking with him as traveling companion the prettiest Apayao virgin he can induce to go along. At noon and at night the vagrant couple eat and rest in the homes of other Apayao bucks who are away on journeys of the same sort. The slave wives provide all necessary hospital-



TYPICAL GROUP OF APAYAOS: A CHIEFTAIN AT THE LEFT. THE WOMAN AT HIS RIGHT IS A WIDOW, WEARING ALL HER PINERY. AT THE EXTREME RIGHT IS A COMPANION FOR A JOURNEY.

ity, which must be furnished without cost and which may never be denied to visitors. Thus the Apayao men have a gay time. The number of their comely young companions is limited only by their appetite and their fortune, and these errant creatures are as welcome in their own homes as in those of other tribesmen. Jealousy is not aroused, there being no spiritual union between husband and wife, and the wife slaves as hard to provide meals for the husband's companions of his frequent travels as to provide for the husband himself.

But the advantage is not all with the pretty travelers. Here is where the spiritual part comes into the law. If children are born of their peadillos, they inherit nothing and the father has no responsibility toward them. They have only the hospitality accorded any stranger. When these women become mothers they naturally lose favor as the men's companions. Platonic regard does not go that far, and it looks too queer for a man to be traveling about with a sweet friend of the other sex who must divide her attention between him and one or more children—not easily carried over the mountain trails.

Apayao law makes the woman pay for her follies, by which she forfeits her chance to be sold into physical wifehood that keeps her soul inviolate and secures the heritage of her children. True, she may go

laughing away on a romantic journey with a gay young blade married hardly a month, while the wife goes drudging to the fields where women and children do all but the very heaviest work. But there is a day of retribution, which is the day of the soul's triumph over the things of the flesh.

Not one jot of the Apayao wife's property is shared with her husband, whose union with her, while it may give him personal ease and satisfaction, is for her only something done and endured for the sake of the tribe; more closely, for the sake of the village; and still more closely, for the sake of her children, to whom all that she has finally goes. Tribal and even family ties are not highly regarded among Apayaos as a people, but mothers there are identical with mothers the world over.

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The husband may not touch the least of the Apayao wife's property to call it his. An American traveler once purchased a hunting knife from an Apayao for ten centavos, wanting it for a collection. Almost immediately he heard quarrelling in the rear of the house, and soon the man, much crestfallen, came back and offered him constantly mounting sums, even up to five pesos, for the return of the knife. Finally it was learned that the knife was his wife's, not his, and the chief had fined him five pesos for selling it. The American gave him back the knife; he gave it back to his wife with humble apologies and promises of no further infringement of her prerogatives; and then she herself sold the knife back to the visitor for ten centavos.

She had taught her husband his lesson, that was the satisfaction she sought in sticking to the law.

Apayao bucks affect in the presence of visitors a great disdain of their wives. All their houses have stoops, where it is pleasant to rest. Here the visitor is taken, and here he talks with his host while the women fetch and carry at the latter's gruff command. When they approach the visitor they must avert their eyes. They can never utter a word or make the least sign even in reply to questions addressed to them in their own language. But all this is a cloak of formalism for manner's sake. As a matter of fact, when visitors are not around the Apayao husband takes rather a back seat; he shares the cool and shaded stoop with his wife and as many of her gossiping neighbors as may wish to drop in to chat with her. The woman of the Apayao tribe dwells in two realms, the menial physical one which custom creates for her and the aloof and spiritual one she creates for herself. She accepts the drudgery of the one for the sake of her children, that none of her daughters may be tempted by hardships to go on jocund road trips, catering in a mad way to the impulses of their bodies but quite ruining their souls. Even Apayao women therefore recognize their dual nature as very high and very low creatures—taken by and large. When their honeymoon is over they stoically strip themselves of every ornament and give these all to their husbands along with the abundant black tresses he shears from their bowed head to make his wigs. The sheared spouse arises, chastened of all vanity, to go her different way spiritually until time ends; and during this long period she values only that which is the soul's; only

once or twice, on festal occasions of the tribe, does she ever again resort to ornament or artifice making her physically attractive, and these occasions are the compunctions of custom, not of her own desire.

One of the most diverting trips to be taken in the Philippines is that which takes the traveler through the mountaintribe re-



APAYAO BRAVE AND GIRL ON A LARK. THE TEXT TELLS OF THIS TRIBAL CUSTOM.

gion of northern Luzon, and starting at Baguio. Winter is the season of the year in which to undertake it. Trails, bridle paths and frequent resthouses minimize discomforts; the roughing is never too much and the noble scenes and curious studies of the people and their customs are true rewards of the journey.

#### BOOK ON TAGALOG

"What Should be the National Language of Filipinos" is a brochure on this thesis by Eulogio B. Rodriguez, chief of the Filipiniana division of the Philippine Library and Museum. Philippine Education Company publishes the work, which tells of Spanish studies in the dialects and the advantages they derived therefrom. Pigafetta, who came with Magellan, acquired a knowledge of 150 Cebuano words and 426 Moro words.

"The missionaries had a natural method of absorbing the languages and dialects. They unreservedly associated with the nationals, attending their fiestas, listening to their *duplhan*s, attending their *concepcion*s, taking part in the *parusals*, baptismal fetes and birthday parties, and occasionally daring even the recitation of native poetry.".....

Rodriguez says "It seems to be clear, when one attempts to determine the origin of the races, that the tribe or nation from which the Tagalogs came enjoyed from the beginning, or at the time of establishing itself in the archipelago, a higher degree of culture than the other Philippine peoples which did not have a system of writing or, at all events, had a more rudimentary one, and accepted the Tagalog, abandoning their own."

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