

## **1. Description**

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: The Yakan or Yacan of the Philippines. They speak the language of Yakan that is Malayo-Polynesian, related to Sama and Bajau language. (9)

1.2 ISO code (3-letter code from ethnologue.com): yka (9)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Sulu Archipelago, Western Mindanao, Malaysia (Sabah), but mostly the Basilan Island (6 degree 40' N and 122 degree 00' E) (9)

1.4 Brief history: Scant information due to little contact with other ethnic groups. The main belief is that the Yakan descent stems from Sulu archipelago, but the Yakan believe they are descendants of the Orang Dyaks. Known information includes; Islam is said to have started in the Philippines in 1380 (before Islam was animism), missionaries were able to penetrate Basilan by 1654. In 1842, a fugitive from Cavite, Pedro Cuevas, killed the leader of the Yakan, Datu Kalun. Pedro prevented battles with the Tausug and the Spanish garrison earning him the name Datu Kalun and the leader of Yakan. The new Datu Kalun rid Basilan of pirates and marauders. In 1844 the French try to take over Basilan Island but Yakan warriors protect their land. In 1895, Sultan of Sulu tries to claim rights over the Yakan land but fails. In 1899, Americans show up and intervene, which was supported by the Yakan. In 1904, Datu Kalun dies and his nephew, Gabino Pamaran/ Datu Mursalun, succeeds him. Presently the Yakan are under Spanish rule and follow their government. Spanish colonization of the Philippines began in 16<sup>th</sup> century. (3, 6)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Missionaries had a big effect on Yakan culture. Missionaries showed up in 1645 and were able to convert many Yakan. The parishes became alliances of individual families, affiliated by choice not residence or kin. Mosques became the center of the villages. Schools were never really big. Children were supposed to learn the Quran and no higher education than that. Schooling was brought with the Americans in 1899, but it is not until later when the parents start allowing their children to attend public school. (3,5,6)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): Mountainous area, tropical with a rainy season, April-October, and dry season, November-April.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Population size is around 106,000 people, half the population of Basilan. It is difficult to determine where one village stops and another starts so mean village size cannot be determined. Home range size is about 6 residents in a 50 to 100 square meter house two meters off the ground. Density is about 82 people per square kilometer. (2,6,11)

## **2. Economy**

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): rice, coconut, and cassava. Yakan believe that only Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday are good days for farming. (4,6,11)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Cattle (4,11)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Punyal (small knife), barong (symbol of strength), taming (shield), budhak and sankil (two types of spears), bangkung, and pira. (3)

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production: Usually the men plow and harrow and the women weave and do household chores but it is not uncommon for women to help plow the fields. In the Yakan society, men and women are pretty equal. (5)

2.6 Land tenure: Land is individually owned and by tradition not legal titles. (5)

2.7 Ceramics: Is used to make pottery and water bowls. Weaving is used more often.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Children are encouraged to share their food and toys. (6)

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Live in the inside of the Island. Traded with villages on the coasts for fish.

## **3. Anthropometry**

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): Tall, brown skin, slanting eyes, black hair, and high bridged noses distinguish the Yakan from other cultures. (4)

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

#### 4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): When puberty starts and they are married (6)

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): average of 6 (7)

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): When puberty starts (6)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: 36.5% Divorce is a common thing and either spouse can initiate it. If the wife wants a divorce, the bride price must be returned. If the husband wants a divorce, the bride price does not have to be returned. (5,7)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Yakan culture allows a man to have up to four wives, but Yakan usually do not have many wives. The man is required to get permission from his first wife to marry the second and the man has to be able to support all of them financially. (6)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: The groom's family pays the bride's family and dowry and the groom's family pays for the wedding. (6)

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Property is divided equally between all children. The oldest child is treated as an equal to the youngest. (5)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Quarreling in family is discouraged. Mischievous boys are preferable to quiet ones because it is more likely for that boy to exhibit bravery, but if bad reputation is gained, it will affect the boys' ability to find someone to marry. (6)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Not any accounts of homosexuals. The Islam belief is that homosexuals cannot get married because it is a heterosexual ceremony.

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Endogamy, Yakan try to marry inside their group to keep their culture intact. Marriage between cousins is preferred. (6)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? Only one father and for conception the father is not supposed to be present. The father does help raise the children. (6)

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") The mother is the receptacle for human growth and the husband has to struggle to satisfy the mothers every desire so the child is born healthy. A woman is at her highest social status when she is pregnant. (6)

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Some reports of rape but it is a very uncommon event and is dealt with by the Imam and council. (5)

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): Cross cousins are the ideal spouse, but fourth cousins are considered taboo and the cousin should be more distant. (6)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Women are married to only one man but they can get a divorce and remarry. (6)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: No

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? The father and older siblings.

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: about 100 % (10)

4.22 Evidence for couvades: No

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): One clear father

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? Male will put his life on the line for any relative and anyone in his clan because he expects his tribesmen to do the same for him and to back him up. (6)

4.24 Joking relationships? Being funny is a prominent goal of Yakan speech. (11)

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Bilateral: father's and mother's kin are of more or less the same importance. There is a great feeling of solidarity among relatives. More respect is given to the elders of the father but both sides are respected. (8)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: If incest occurs and a child is born disabled, the child is still raised as if normal. The disabled child is just encouraged to be a pious Muslim to offset his origins through the accumulation of merit. (6)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Yes, wedding is a three-day event. The Imam officiates the wedding, repeating every question three times. The groom's parents then turn a pillow three times and the bride and groom sit on the pillow resulting in them becoming married. There is a party into the night. Everyone leaves except the wedding party where they see who can remain awake the longest. Everyone leaves then and the bride and groom bathe separately to cleanse themselves, the groom stamps his foot to show his strength, touches the bride first with his right hand and kisses her on the forehead with his eyes open. Then they consummate their love. (6)

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? At birth, the child is given a temporary name until a naming ceremony is performed. The ceremony is called pagtimbang, during the ceremony relatives and friends join together to recommend names until the parents accept one of the suggestions. (6)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Preferred within the community to keep their culture intact. (6)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Parents arranged the marriages but more recently, the kids have a say in who they marry. (6)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

## **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Out-group vs. in-group cause of violent death: Out-group death occurred when warriors fought to protect the land. Most common in-group death was a result of revenge killing to redeem a family's honor. The Yakan believe if there is a reason for the murder and it was a respectful death, person was not eating or taking a bath, then they will not be punished for it in afterlife. (4,6)

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Revenge and war (4,6)

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Fierce warriors but the Yakan are an overall peaceful and respectful culture. (4)

4.18 Cannibalism? No

## **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: The houses are not centered, scattered throughout the area, so it is hard to determine where one village stops and another one starts. (4)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Have a permanent home where they stay all year.

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The Elderly are well respected. The Imam and council are the head of the community (5)

5.4 Post marital residence: After marriage, the couple gets to decide which of their parents they want to stay with until they build a house of their own. Also, once married the spouse must ask the other if they can leave the house every time they want to go somewhere. (6)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): No

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): The young watch their elderly to figure out how to live life. Girls once they are 4 starts to help the mother with household chores and the boys help farm. (6)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization: The village has a mosque as its center point and houses scattered all around the area. For the house, there is a cooking shed, a head zone (rituals take place), a foot zone, and a porch (for conferences, discussions, and litigation). The house is elevated 2 meters, so there is a ladder in the front. The ladder has an odd number of steps because Yakan believe odd equals life and even equals death. They have nuclear homes, individual units of production and consumption. (2,6,11)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): Men and women live together.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Sleep in house on bamboo. (6)

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Clans separated based on their parishes. (6)

5.12 Trade: Bartered with neighboring clans and societies. (6)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Imam, head of the langgal, Bahasa, shaman that summons spirits to cure sick and tell fortunes (never works with the Imam), Tabib, assists the Imam but was part of Yakan tradition before Islam. Elderly are socially higher. (5)

## **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: Pray five times a day (Fajr, Shurooq, Zhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Eshau). Many ceremonies that require preparation and time. (3)

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): For medication, they use roots and herbs and the Imam prays. Bahasa will summon spirits to help. (8)

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Planting and harvesting have rituals.

Death ritual: funeral must take place within 24 hours. The body is placed in the grave on their right side facing Mecca. Imam reads a prayer and teaches the deceased what to say on its way to judgment so they can move to the afterlife. The spirit of the deceased stays at home for seven days. The journey to the next world takes 100 days. At day 50, a goat is sacrificed so the spirit can cross the sea. On the 100<sup>th</sup> day a grave marker is placed on top of the grave symbolizing a boat, the boat is for the spirit to use in afterlife. Throughout the 100 days, prayers are said by all. (5)

Birth ritual: The ritual is known as paglekkad. On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month after a pregnant women suspects her condition a panday, midwife, massages the women's abdomen, the number of fingers the panday uses reflects estimate of the stage of pregnancy the women is in. At the end of the ritual, the midwife turns and spits to scare away saitan(devil) and allow a peaceful delivery. During the final quarter, sexual intercourse is limited to specific days of the week, which was believed to yield intelligence, obedience and long-lived child. If birth is during the day, the child will have a hard life, if at night an easy life. If the birth is during thunder and lightning, the child is bound for greatness. During labor, the panday is summoned and the father cannot be present. After birth, the umbilical cord is severed with a non-metallic cutting mechanism, the remains are burned with jackfruit and buried under a coconut tree. If the child ever becomes sick, the umbilical cord is unburied and mixed into a drink for the child to drink. Thought to cure the sickness. When the baby is born, a pillow is put in the baby's mouth then the Imam sticks a finger in the mouth followed by the father putting his finger in the mouth. The mother allows the baby to drink from the left breast if the baby is female, if male the baby drinks from the right breast because the right breast means strength. The baby is shown around the village and the hosts give small amounts of money to the mother. (6)

6.4 Other rituals: There is a belief that there is a special devil who may attack and torture people during the second month of the year. Bathing rituals are performed on three successive Wednesdays to avoid the danger. (5)

6.5 Myths (Creation): Muslims don't really deny any beliefs of creation in the Quran: World was created in six days by Allah, big bang theory or universe expansion, life came from water, and creation from Adam and Eve.

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Big into music and art. Vocal and instrumental music is important in ceremonies. The kalangan, jamiluddin, lunsey, and lembukayu are courting songs. The katakata is a long traditional song narrating the lives, loves, and historical backgrounds of people who lived during early times. The Yakan believed that such stories originated from people who lived in another world. The katakata is sung only at night, at a big gathering with food served by the host or hostess. The singing, in episodes, may last for several nights. The singer lies on a mat, the back supported by several pillows. The audiences, either sits or lie around the singer. The jamiluddin relates love stories. At present, it is also sung when families discuss marriage engagements. Both the katakata and jamiluddin are sung by wise men and women of the tribe. The sa-il and lunsey are sung during a wedding ceremony, with messages revolving around good advice regarding married life. Another type of sa-il is sung during the magtammam or Quranic graduation. The Yakan are also famous for their hand weaving. They make all designs by hand so every cloth is unique. (3,4,6)

- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: The men are the main leaders of the Islam religion. The women's job is to teach children the Quran. Males are required to attend Friday prayers while women may not be as religious. (3,6)
- 6.8 Missionary effect: Parishes and mosques were put up and Islam was adapted.
- 6.9 RCR revival: Today festivals are thrown to honor the old traditions. Tourists are allowed to come and watch.
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: See under Passage Rituals. They believe in judgment day, heaven, and hell. (3)
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? No
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): The people are Islam so they believe that the world is divided in two, abode of Islam and abode of unbelievers. Jihad is a holy war waged by Muslims to protect abode of Islam. Magsabilim is a small-scaled Jihad that protects personal property and family. Magsabil kills anybody who comes his way. The belief is that however kills more during this time will have more servants in heaven but the kill must be justifiable. Yakan believe in the five pillars of Islam and that heaven has eight classes. (3)

## **7. Adornment**

- 7.1 Body paint: Not a normal thing but faces are painted for weddings. (6,10)
- 7.2 Piercings: No
- 7.3 Haircut:
- 7.4 Scarification: No
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): A crocodile tooth polished with a hole at the base is believed to bring good luck when worn as a necklace. The Yakan also wear amulets against bullets wrapped in black cloth, sewn in triangular form, and tied around the neck. Belts made of snake bones are strung together to protect against bodily pain. One charm that protects them from sicknesses due to evil spirits is the manik tegiyas, a necklace or bracelet made of the fruits of a flower beaded together. The manik sembulan is made of a bamboo stem cut into short pieces, strung together either as a necklace or bracelet, and serving as added protection against sickness inflicted by evil spirits. To gain more strength against evil spirits, men and women wear the anting-anting. Consisting of a string with a piece of cloth containing beads as pendant. (3)
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Face paint for weddings. After creating a foundation of white powder, the make-up artists proceed to paint dots and lines in various patterns on the faces, creating the effect of formal and elaborate masks, which match the ornate costumes of the celebrants. (3,6,10)
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Men wear a pis, head cloth, and a kandit, belt or sash, while women wear a short skirt over trousers and hand woven cloth tied around it. (3,10)
- 7.8 Missionary effect:
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

## **8. Kinship systems**

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: All siblings are equal. (6)
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: No cases of having to marry brother or sister.
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): Marriage between cross-cousins is favored. (6)

## **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

Yakan do not consume pork. (6)

The name Yakan came from the mispronunciation of the Yakal tree native to the island. (6)

Yakan created traps to help with hunting: niyas to trap roosters, leppa to catch birds, and bubu to freshwater fish. (6)

In Yakan society, the women control the finances with husbands input. If a man has more than one wife, subsequent wives come to the first wife to request money when they need to buy something for their children. (6)

In Yakan women are circumcised at a young age. To the Yakan circumcision signifies dignity and honor, it is a cleansing rite that enables Muslim women to pray in the proper fashion, and it gets women ready for adult responsibilities. (10)

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