

Bontok. March 16. 1925.

Reverend and dear Father Selga,

I beg you to excuse me for having delayed to answer your letter of the 28th February, wherein you are asking me some informations about lightning and thunder here in the mountains.

I have been for about 11 years here in these places and I may tell you the following :

1. I could cite several cases of having seen the lightning strike the mountains; however rarely was it the very top of the mountain that was stricken, but rather some place or spot along the mountain slope, where one or more trees were to be found.

2. We have lightning and thunder most during the months of May and June. During the 6-7 first years I was here it happened that thunder followed some typhoon and ordinarily was it a sign that the typhoon was over; but during the latest period we have had thunder even during typhoons.

3. Personally I know two cases where persons were stricken by the lightning. Those persons (two women) were inside their houses when they were killed, and also their house burned down. It is certainly a curious fact that such things happen, especially that the houses here are very low (not more than 5 meters high) and scattered irregularly along rather a flat spot of the mountain slope, while maybe some 200--500 meters farther is the mountain top reaching 100--2-300 meters above the place of said houses.

4. For what concerns the superstitions of the people about thunder: A person killed through lightning is to be buried outside the town as it is the case with all persons killed by an accident; they look upon such death as being a punishment of the Anito (Spirit). When some people are on the mountains, while thundering, they take the leaves of runc-sticks and put them on top of their carga they are bringing home, or if they have nothing to carry, they put said leaves in their hair. (for them, this a preventive means) The men who are travelling with their axe (as is nearly always the case) will hide the axe, because they say: it attracts the lightning. Those people who are at home, very often will burn the bones of pigs because in their belief the thunder is the voice of the pig of Lumawig (their God)... and the lightning itself is considered by some as a female pig that bites and kills.

5. Of course when somebody has been killed through lightning they make a big Caniaw in order to still the anger of their God.

I hope these few informations are the kind you wanted and asked me for.  
very sincerely yours in J.K

*José Anseeuw*  
Father José Anseeuw