ILOCANO, ILOCOS NORTE, ILOCOS SUR AND ABRA PROVINCES, NORTHWESTERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. To honor, welcome or celebrate the birthday of a person or a group significant to a community, the padapada is performed within the circles of an Ilocano community, whether in the nuclear region or in a dispersed urban situation. A similar celebration is practiced in the island of Marinduque in central Philippines called patunggan, meaning to confer a crown.

THE CELEBRATOR is seated in front of the central gathering of the community. Sprigs of flowers are distributed among those present. The rites start with the placing of a garland of flowers on the head of the celebrator, simultaneously with the community singing of the padapadakam song, repeated continuously as the proceedings go on. The community lines up in a single file and then, one by one, present the celebrator with a spray of flowers. He keeps all these in hand until the flower presentation is completed. Sometimes, the celebrator is then asked to say a brief message. After the feting, the celebrator receives a shower of rice grains for more blessings.

The lyrics of the padapadakam is as follows:

Padapadakam a siragugak
A kunabblaw, manggpadayak
Ta nagtengan ti aldaw a pannakakajpanak
Da (Sam) ken (Max) a napnuan gasat
Balangat a naurnos dagiti sugatong
Nga amay mi kenka isaad ita ulom
Casta met nga iyawat mi kenka
Toy naurnosan umay a palma
Tupno in ti mangipakita
Ti ragragsak mi amin a tanyapada

(We are overwhelmed with joy
As we extend these greetings
And proclaim this day of birth
Of a friend so dear
We have put this crown together
That we now place on your head
As well as present this blessed palm
As a symbol of our rejoicing
All proof of the overwhelming joy
That we feel on this occasion
We pray to God that he will keep you
In good health and spirit
As well as your zest for life
That has been the envy of your peers).

(top photo) Lola Monang, a homebody centenarian grandmother with her great great grandchildren, a pioneer Philippine public relations octogenarian, Max Edralin (bottom), and Hadrian (opposite page), among cousins. All three were crowned with flowers and serenaded with a traditional song during a padapada ritual to celebrate their birthdays.