A YOUNG MAN’S parents commonly negotiate with the girl’s parents, with the kin group acting on their behalf if the parents are deceased. It takes about two and a half years to complete a dowry (tande/hingkat). Saka sikrit is the initial step in negotiating a marriage contract. The go-between for the boy and his parents is a relative who is good at speaking. He comes with the boy’s parents bringing gifts (rice, palm toddy and a pig) to the girl’s parents. The grandfather, uncle or father is the spokesperson for the girl. If the girl’s parents are interested, they will eat with the boy’s parents. The grandfather, uncle or father is the spokesperson for the girl. If the girl’s parents are interested, they will eat with the boy’s parents. The grandfather, uncle or father is the spokesperson for the girl.

After this is the pangalagad. The boy serves the girl’s family for as long as it takes to complete the dowry. He can go home only to prepare the dowry. They may live as husband and wife, and even have children. He can only be freed to go home upon payment of the dowry. The girl’s kin can also make personal requests from the boy’s kin since the contract is between kin groups and not between individuals.

Nakaganas is the formal wedding event, whereas the saka sikrit and tande/hingkat are more of a betrothal. The feast is called kombiti. It includes all the activities on the occasion of a marriage, merry-making, dancing, which is borrowed from Western culture, and drinking. Elders spend considerable time (two hours) exhorting the newlyweds on the obligations of married couples. The entire dowry is presented here, and after the activities, the girl goes to live in the home of the boy.

Kalagan, Davao del Sur, Southern Philippines. The Kalagan, another Islamic group, also has their own rites of passage reflecting the practice of other people practicing Islam.

AT ABOUT the fourth and fifth month of pregnancy, a panday (native healer) prays over the woman’s belly. On the seventh month, a ceremony (kandari) is held to ensure a safe delivery. The extended family is invited. The imam or pandita (ritual specialist) applies oil on the woman’s belly and offers a padua salamat (thanksgiving prayer). The local midwife who is the balasun (a female native ritual specialist) helps the mother deliver. Upon delivery, the panday whispers the Muslim shahada (Islamic profession of faith) to the infant’s ear.

When the child is about three months old, another kandari is held. In a ceremony called paggyitting, the child’s hair is cut. In a ceremony called paggyitting, the child’s hair is cut. In a ceremony called paggyitting, the child’s hair is cut. The first verses of the Koran are read by the imam (Islamic priest) or uzalad (Islamic scholar) then he cuts off a tuft of hair from the forelock. A relative takes this for safekeeping. During the feast, a sadaka, a small packet containing a voluntary offering for the child is placed beside the dinner plates of guests.

The pag’Islam (sommat – meaning, desirable) is the male and female circumcisions. The males have their circumcision in a group, done by a male specialist. Both rituals are preceded by prayers.

Marriage Among the first acts is the negotiation of the bride price. A third party that will serve as the go-between negotiates the mahr (bride price) or panggo (dowry). The agreed amount is given to the couple as beginning investment for their married life. The groom provides the dress, cow/s, goat/s, chickens, rice and other food for the feast. The wedding date is chosen by way of the potikaan, soothsaying, largely influenced by the phases of the moon. The new moon is preferred. The eve of the wedding is called kaatipunan, where there is a festive atmosphere. No liquor is served, but people dance. The wedding day is known as kwain. The couple bathe separately; believed to rid them of impurities. Relatives lock the door with string and paper money (lapun). The groom’s relatives are to match this amount when they summon the bride. If the site is far, several lapuns may be set up, one even on the bride’s face, which is covered by a fan with pasted paper money. The fan is removed at the start of the ceremony.