Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events

Rice harvesting ceremony

1. In anticipation of the rice harvest, the building of storage houses becomes a priority. This is accompanied by the gathering of tree bark to make tangkeb (backpack) and likun grain containers to hold the harvest inside granaries.

2. Before the start of the harvest, there is a ritual sacrifice called the “first fruit” incense ceremony.

3. When the young rice is harvested, care is taken that the stalks do not fall over. The stalks that do fall are replaced. However, only seven of these fallen stalks are replaced by grass (amugamug weed) that resemble rice.

4. When the harvest reaches the house, it is smoked over the fire, then over incense. When done, it is scraped to thresh the grain with seashell and not underfoot. When scraped, it must be cooked.

5. When this is done, it is pounded – the rice is not to be winnowed. The remaining unhulled grains are picked out by hand. Then, the rice is cooked.

6. For the sacrifice, one chicken, two eggs, lime, areca nut and betel pepper leaves are prepared. After these are cooked, they are placed separately on an offering tray. Rice wine is also included.

7. The deities are then called to watch over the field.

8. Early the next morning, after the sacrifice, the rice is harvested. The first batch harvested is called the “exchange of first fruits”. This is made into rice wine.

9. This wine is drank after the harvest is over. Sometimes, when there is little rice left, an island of rice is saved and when harvested, this is used to make rice wine for guests.

6. Offerings must be placed on the mortar, wrapped on top and the sides with pisa leaves. This will need one chicken, one egg, four portions of betel-nut chew and two portions of drink offerings.

7. Next, for the offering upstairs in the house, six chickens, six eggs and six portions of drink offerings are needed. The ritual specialist prays to the memenwa (spirits of the forest): “This is why we are not to become ill, because we have held an end of the harvest ceremony.”

8. The next morning, he takes his spear and walks in a circle around the offering trays seven times. He throws down the pitenugen used as a drum, under the house.

9. The ritual specialist gets a piece of wood and splits it in four to carve a split board-walled offering stand. For this, one chicken, an egg, four portions of betel-nut chew and one portion of drink offering are required. This ends the ceremony.

End of harvest ceremony

1. After the harvest comes the preparation of drink-offerings – eleven are prepared. Wood for the pitenugen (drum) is secured. Ulian wood with circumference bigger than the thigh, six feet and a hand-span long