

Pedit - Prestige Feast

IBALOY, BENGUET PROVINCE, NORTHERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. *When the prestige of a person among the Ibaloy has been on the rise for some time, he validates his wealth and prestige in his community. He does this by celebrating an extended succession of rituals, done during the waxing moon phase. This is often initiated by a wedding, culminated by sacrifices of animals in a grand gesture of meat-sharing that secures his reputation in the community, even if this leaves him finally impoverished.*

A TETEG RITUAL is observed two or three days after the celebration of a wedding. A part of this is a solemn ritual called *ma-ingilin* at nightfall. The couple seeks the services of a *mumbunung* (ritual specialist), to perform the *teteg*. The *mumbunung* calls on *Kabunyan* and the departed ancestors to give their blessings. One pig is sacrificed as an offering to *Kabunyan* as a necessary start of a marriage and to bring good fortune to the union.

Firstly, the *mumbunung* offers a cup of *tapey* (rice wine) with a prayer called *pelitik* to establish communication with the *kabunyan* spirits and the ancestors for them to come down to bestow good favor. Then the *mumbunung* passes the cup of *tapey* to the bride and groom to share as a symbol of their union. After the drinking, a full-grown male pig (*otik/molmol*) is sacrificed. The head of the pig is covered with a blanket, while the *mumbunung* sits by the pig chanting a prayer offering the pig to the *kabunyan*, to the celestials and spirits of the forebears.

After the prayer, the pig is killed the traditional way with a stake through the heart. It is singed, washed and placed on a matting of reeds on the floor of the house. Laid on its back, the hind legs are cut followed by the forelegs. A central incision is made exposing the internal organs. The liver is then

examined together with the bile, and passed on to the *mumbunung*. If the omen is good, blessings are given and the couple is said to have a propitious life and will be capable of performing the rites of the *pedit*.

The meat of the pig is sliced, cooked and placed in a basin during the offering prayer. Blankets, clothing, beads and coins are placed in a winnower with a cup of *tapey* side by side with other offerings. The *mumbunung* repeats his previous prayer. A portion is set aside from every part of the pig for the couple who takes their meal inside the house. Part of the internal organs is set aside for the *mumbunung*. The people are then served food. The couple refrains from activities outside the house and keeps the embers burning in the fire through the second night of the *teteg*.

After a year or two, the *teteg* is followed by the *tolo* (three) ritual where three pigs are sacrificed to start the *pedit* rites proper. Three pigs are leg-tied in front of the house of the host. The expenses for the ritual are shared by the couple's parents. Neighbors participate by preparing *tapey*, camote, rice, *gabi* and firewood.

The *pedit* proper commences with the pounding of *kintuma* (rice variety), for *tapey*. The rice is cooked by older women. The rice is placed in winnowers, mixed with yeast

(*bobod*) covered with banana leaves and allowed to stand overnight. The following day, the fermented rice is placed in jars (*koli*) for further fermentation.

Next, the animals are acquired for the sacrifices. Pigs, cows and carabaos are selected for pure colors. Black native pigs are preferred. At the first quarter of the moon (*beska*) the host sets all things ready. Messengers (*man-ayag*) are sent to invite people. The man-ayag accompanies the guests to the venue. Upon their arrival, butchering of the animals begin. At nightfall, the *kadingan* ritual starts.

The host offers a cup of tapey and hands it to the parents of the host, who in turn, offers it to the spirits of their forebears with a prayer called *peltik*, asking them to watch over the celebration. What follows is the offering of one pig (a sow) placed in front of the house. A cup of tapey, piles of blankets, garments and coins (*palata*) are placed in winnowing trays (*liga'o*) and set beside the pig. The mumbunung offers these to the ancestors (*ap-apo*). The pig in this ritual is called *kading*.

After the *kadingan* prayer, the mumbunung signals the animal killing with a sharp stake (*iwik*) to the heart through an initial knife incision. The pig is singed, butchered and the bile sac examined for omens. The pig is sliced and cooked and again offered using the *kadingan* prayer for the spirits to share in the meat. He then takes the blankets and tastes the tapey, so that they may bless the couple with wealth to enable them to perform a higher *sida* (feast). Then the gongs, *solibao* and *patitik* (piece of iron) are played. Pairs of dancers pick up the blankets and dance. Midway through the dances, an elder stands up to shout a blessing, called *bas-abas* or *datok*. The dancing goes on until they tire. The elders also sing *dayday-eng* in the form of *kulibas* (riddle), *eteki* (praise), *solog* (humor), *dayko* (monologue), *alibay* (conversation), *tonton* (genealogy), *diba* (taboo) and *al-alig* (analogy). Discussions on any topic go on, as well as the singing of popular songs. Wine is continuously served through the night. Three forms of dances are performed: *ginalding* (Ibaloy), *inesa/tinaktak/bina-roy* (Kankana-ey) and the *ginat-tiley* (Kalanguya) depending on the ethnicity of those participating.

Following these is the *dep-pagan* (to catch) which is done the night after *daligom*. It is a day for *dedap* or a tournament for catching pigs, where selected persons demonstrate their skill in catching and tying full-grown castrated pigs. The pigs are freed in the family's enclosed yard. This ritual is called *libon*, where the mumbunung calls Kabunyan to make the event peaceful. After the offering is made, a chicken is whipped on the wings until dead, singed over fire, cut, sliced open, cooked and served, followed by the singing of the *bay-yog*, a ballad about the exploits of the spirits, sung by the elders. In this celebration, a jar and cup of tapey (*binagvas*) is set on the floor in the middle of the chanting folks. An elder holding a piece of reed (*omok*), dips this in the bowl of tapey while directing the singing of the *bay-yog*, until this is finished. The singing usually lasts for three hours, in which the male and female deities are enumerated starting with the male deities: *Pati, Lumawig, Kabigat, Gatan, Ballitoc, Suyan, Amduyan, Kalan, Wigan, and Lopis*. The female deities follow: *Bangan, Bagan, Pe-ey, Yapeng, Lingan, Ub-bang, Angban, Angtan, Apinan* and *Daugnen*. Following these are the so-called servants (*abagen*): *Ibaga, Tengnan, Bintawen* and *Maudi*.

The ritual procedures in the higher stages of the *pedit* are similar to the *tolu*, differing only in some additional rituals like the *daing* (performed in the *lima, pito, siyam*, etc.) where old people gather at the host's yard forming a circle with joined hands. The leader then starts singing extemporaneously, asking *adi-kaila* (the unknown) to reciprocate the host for the sacrificed animals. They swing, bending knees low, slowly circling the yard. They take turns in leading the singing. Before the *bay-yog* ends, two folks move outside the house to perform the *dojos*, a concise summary of the *bay-yog*, enumerating and praising the *bay-yog* characters, which are the kabunyan and the twenty-four deities, and the chanting of the *bay-yog*. More people are invited and more animals are killed. The celebration is extended depending on the available resources. Each extended *pedit* stage, as in the foregoing, is named depending on the number of pigs sacrificed.

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