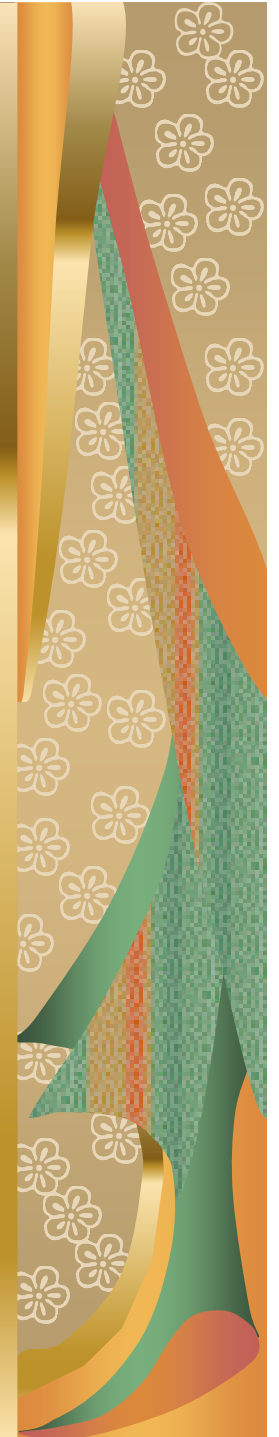





# THE YOGAD AND GADDANG RITUALS OF ISABELA: MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

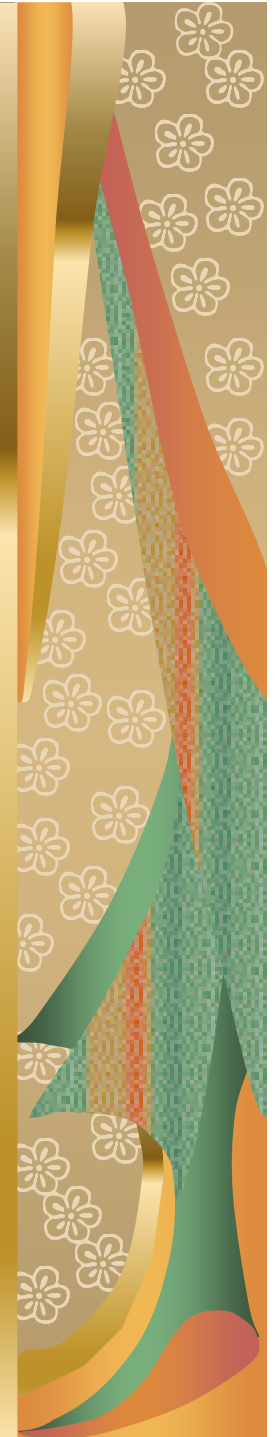
**Dr. Ernesto C. Toquero.** Project Coordinator. "Profiles of the Living Cultural Masters of Isabela" A research project funded by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts; Director Panrehiyong Sentro ng Wikang Filipino

**Dr. Elena S. Toquero.** Study Leader, "The Yogad and Gaddang Rituals". Director for Culture and Arts Center, Isabela State University, Echague, Isabela.

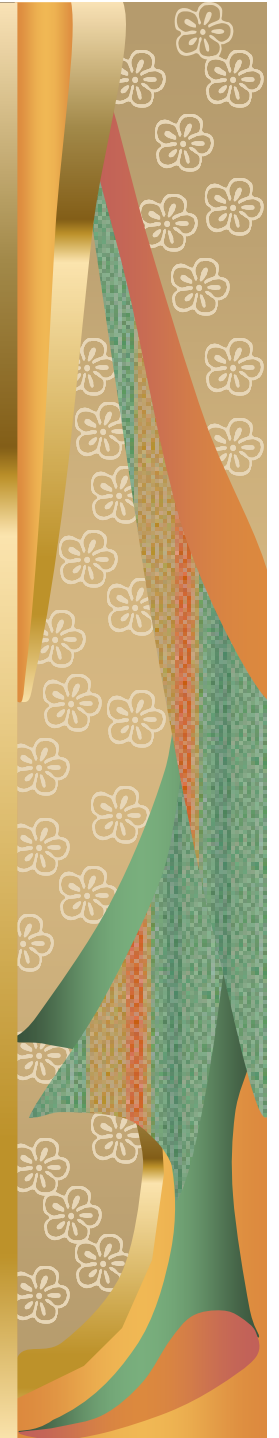





The trend all over the world today is for Nation-States to take steps to protect their cultural patrimony because of economic, political, social and diplomatic dividends (Zialcita, 2002). Cultural heritage enrich people's lives giving a deep spiritual sense of community and environment, from the ancient past to the living present. They are irreplaceable and precious. The preservation, protection and profiting from thousand of years of cultural heritage is now one of the concerns of the world under the auspices of the UNESCO (Urban Age, Winter 2000).

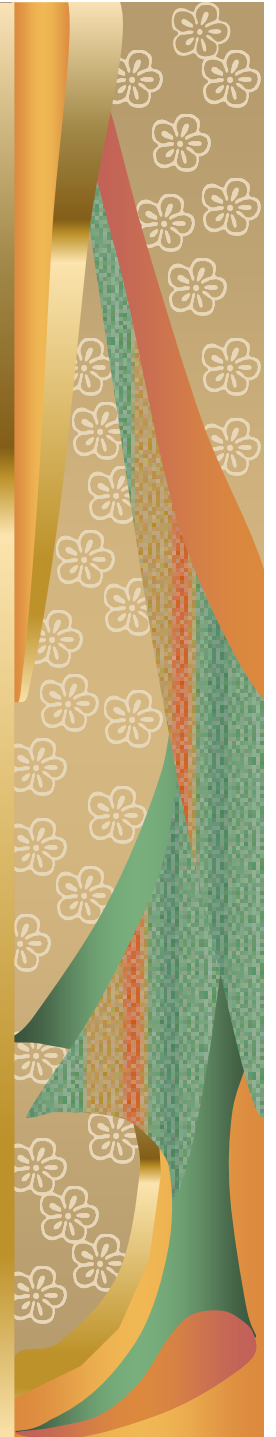


The danger of losing the indigenous culture and arts of the original Yogads and Gaddangs of Isabela point to the need to preserve whatever intangible heritage there is left before they all vanish with the death of the living cultural masters. This documentary work attempted to capture in print/video the rites and rituals of the Yogads and the nine (9) anito rituals of the Gaddangs.

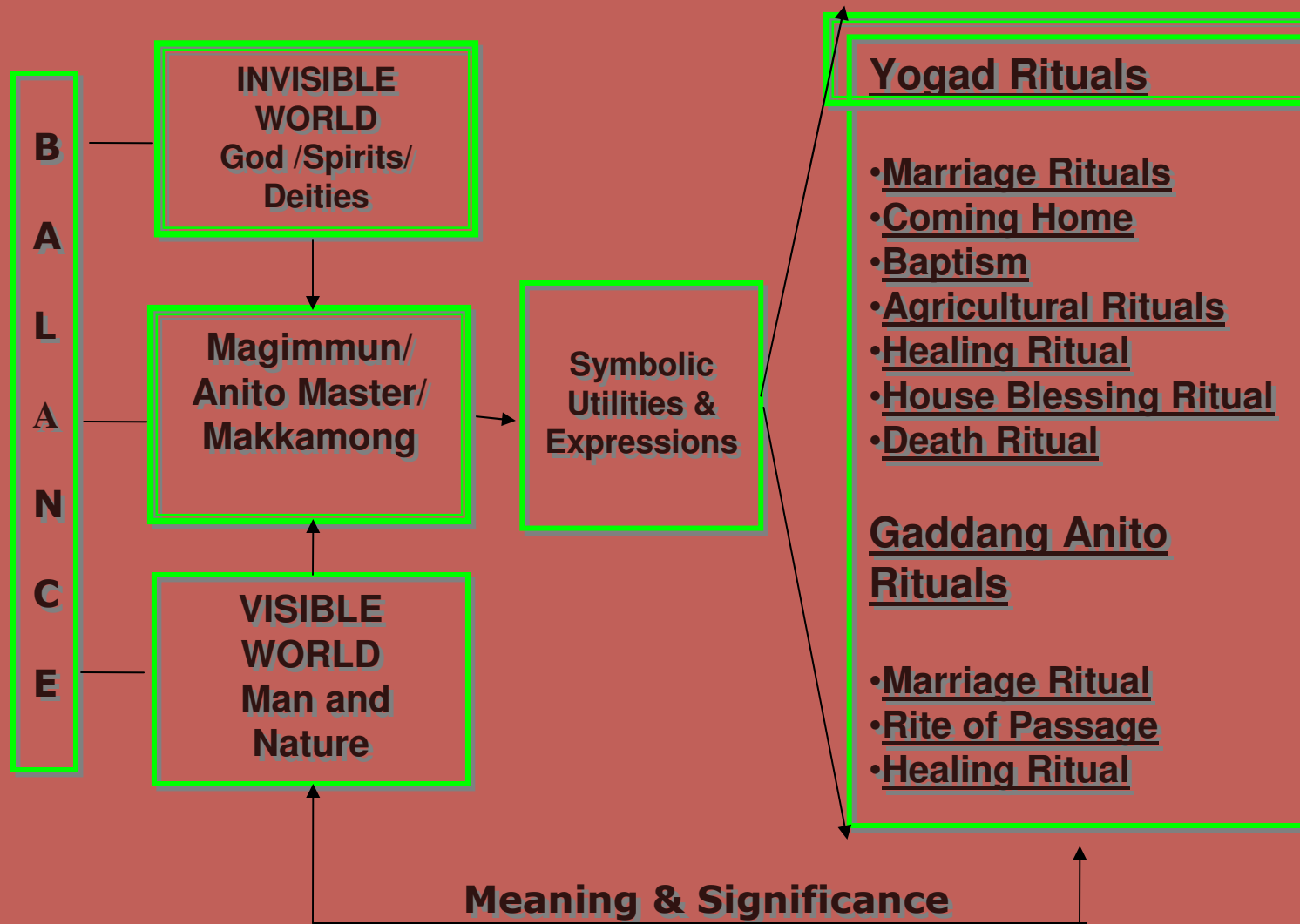




It also tried to discover patterns of meaning and significance, in the various manifestations of their sacred beliefs in life and existence as a people. Data were gathered using videotapes and interviews with the aid of tape recorders and field notes. Data were analyzed using content analysis and interviews to validate the findings with the masters and/or key informants.



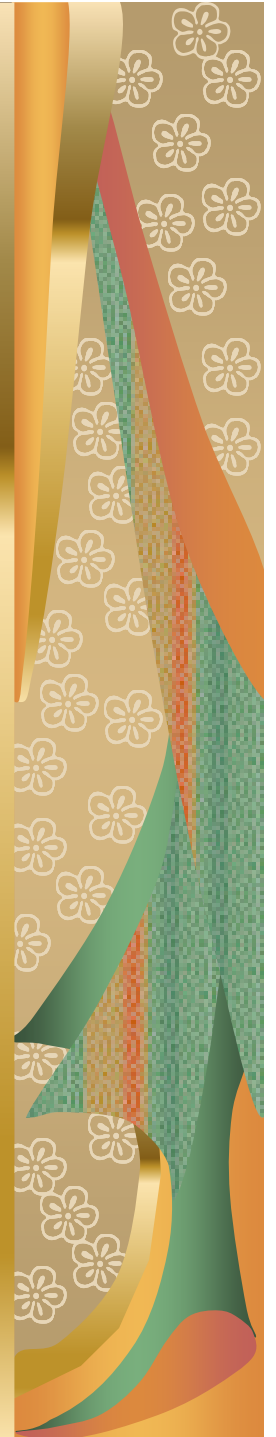
# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



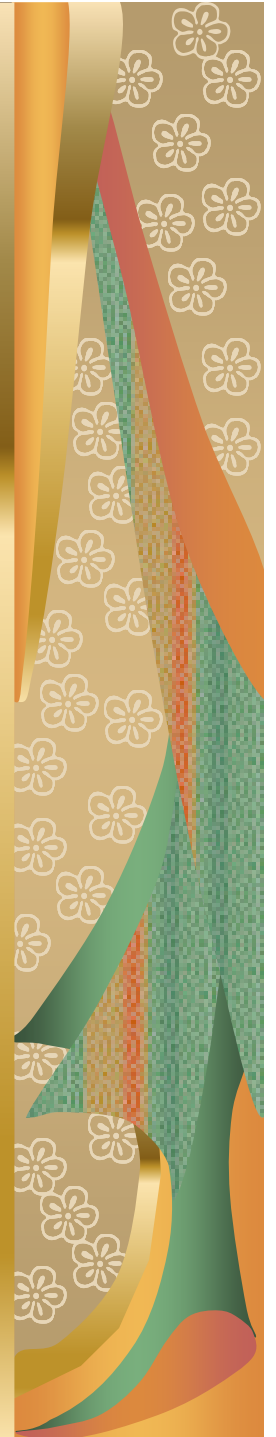
# Presentation of Data

## The Yogad has:

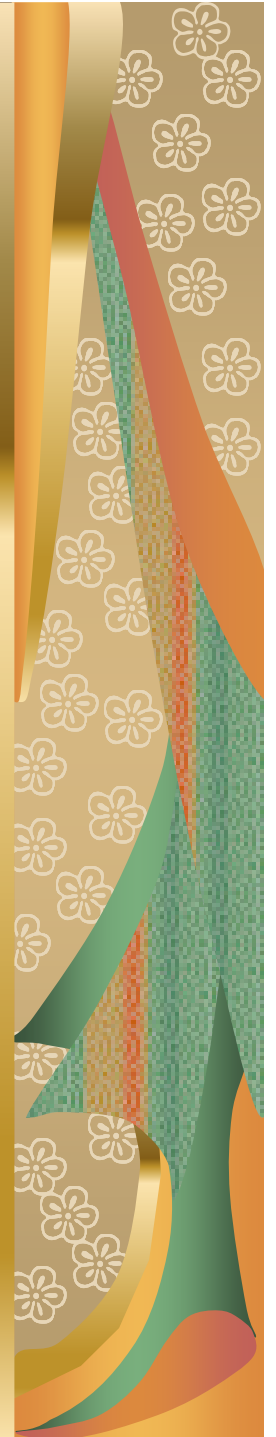
- Seven Marriage Rituals: First Entrega, Daggat, Church Wedding, Gala, Palannak, Final Entrega and Dallut;
- One Coming Home Ritual the Karontan Nu;
- Two Baptism Rituals the Church Baptism and Tabayag;
- Four Agricultural Rituals Tobacco Planting Ritual, Corn Planting Ritual, Pest Control Ritual and Harvest Ritual



- Three Healing Rituals Talado, Banca Ritual and Patunnak;
- Two House Blessing Rituals Sisiwa for New House and Sisiwa for old Houses inhabited by Spirits
- Five Death Rituals Karontan Nu Kararwa, Arian Yu Ulo Nu Manuk, Pabulun Yu Gamit Na, Magamumuat and Maddigut (Gul-gul)

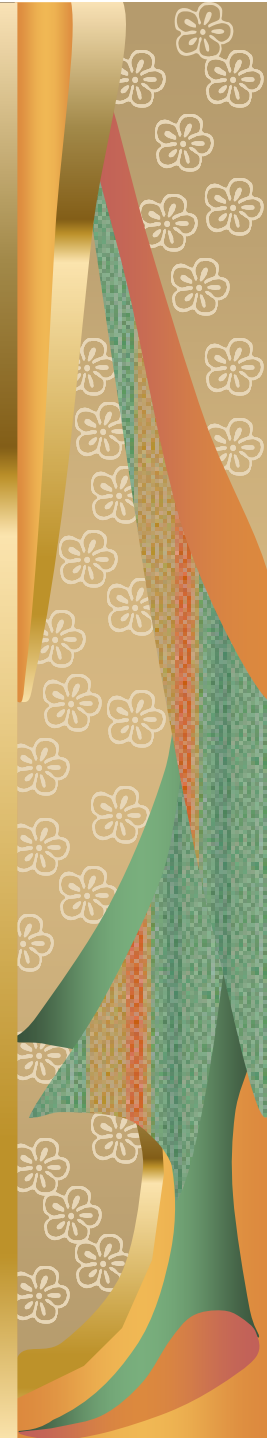


**The First Entrega is the stage when all the promised foodstuff, money and clothing needed in the wedding are given to the parents of the bride on the date set. As the party of the groom is arriving they are showered with rice by the bride's party as a sign of welcome and acceptance**

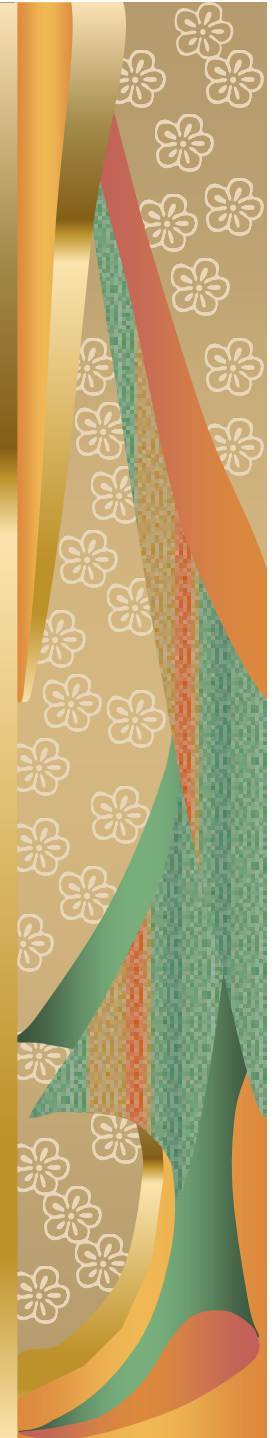




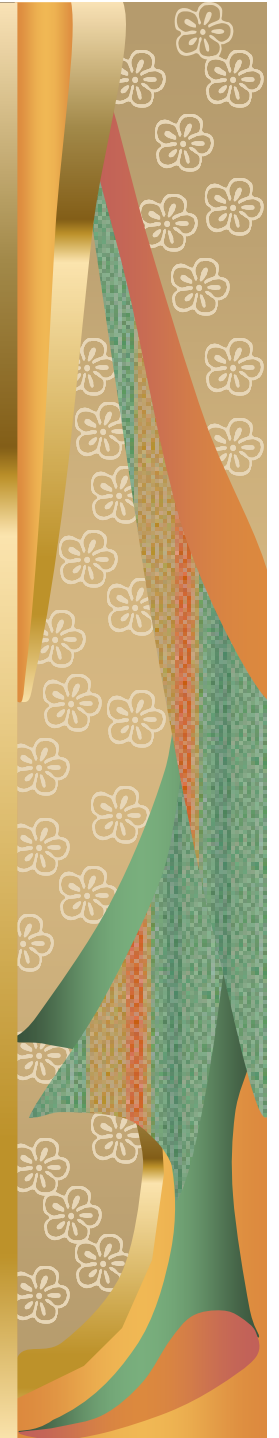
DAGGAT is the stage when the bride and groom and their relatives pound rice together followed by dancing around the mortar while the couple showers them with rice mixed with liquor. Then the pestles are tied to a post. The activity is a sign of unity cooperation, joy, celebration and close family ties between the couple and their relatives



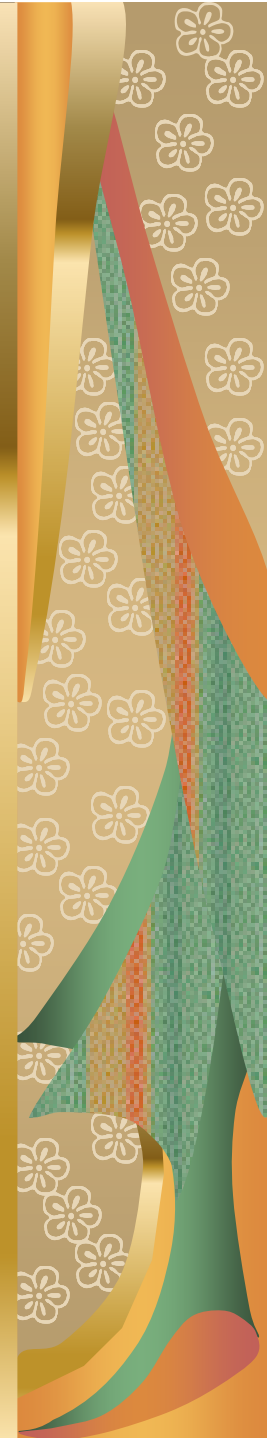
**Church Wedding** is done among the Christian Yogads in their own church depending on which religious sect they belong. The ring, arras, chord and veil symbolizes unity, economic prosperity, loyalty and commitment, respectively.



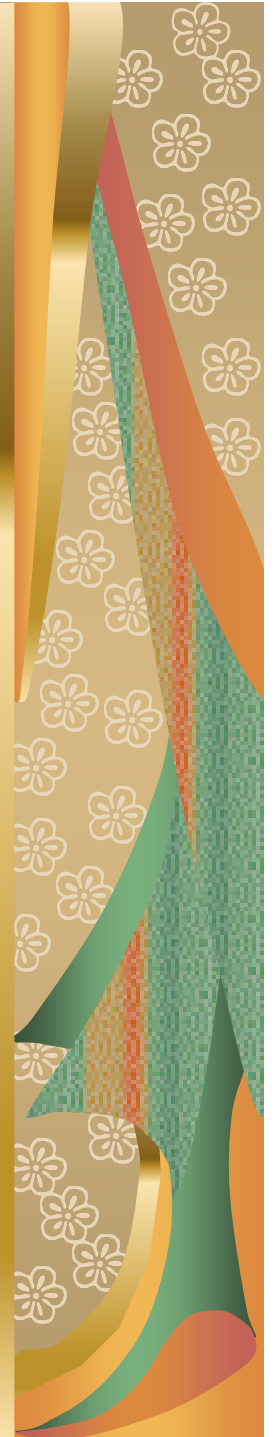
**The Gala** is done after the church wedding. The couple are made to dance at the center of the wedding venue while relatives and friends pin money on their clothes. This Yogad tradition is done to raise a substantial amount for the newly married couple to start a new life as husband and wife. It signifies family support and cooperation, generosity joy and pride



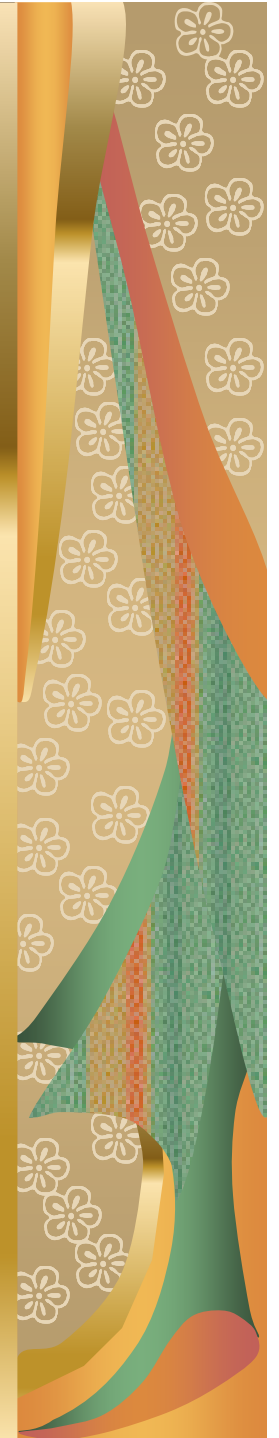
**The Palannak** is done in addition to the gala. During this stage, cigarettes, liquor/beer, soft drinks, candies and other goods are sold to friends and relatives of the bride and groom at an unusually higher price often quoted by the buyer to raise more funds for the newly wed. This is still a part of family support cooperation, joy and celebration




**The Final Entrega** is done on the morning of the day after the wedding. the groom's parents deliver to the bride the basic necessities needed by the new couple such as kitchen wares and utensils, mat, blanket, pillow, a pair of clothes for each of the couple and money

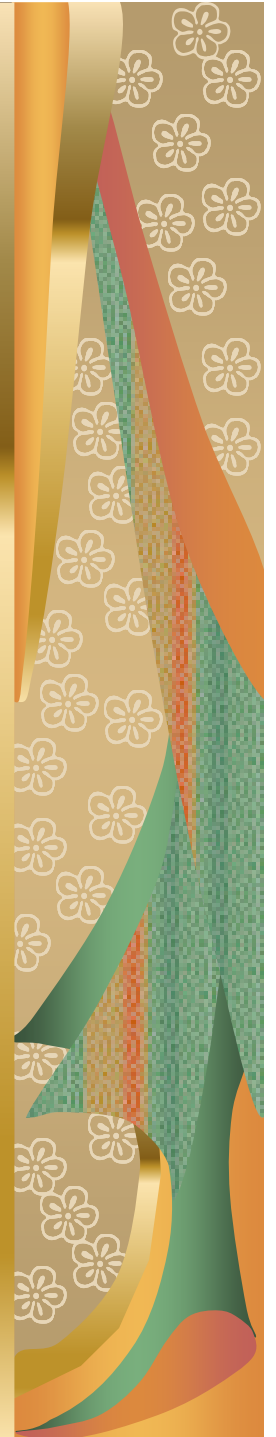


**Dallut** is the final advice. It is a beautiful musical cum dance advice usually performed by a yogad elderly couple with the bride and groom and four others. It is a final a gesture of goodwill and concern for the harmony and well being of the new couple in their life apart from their families.



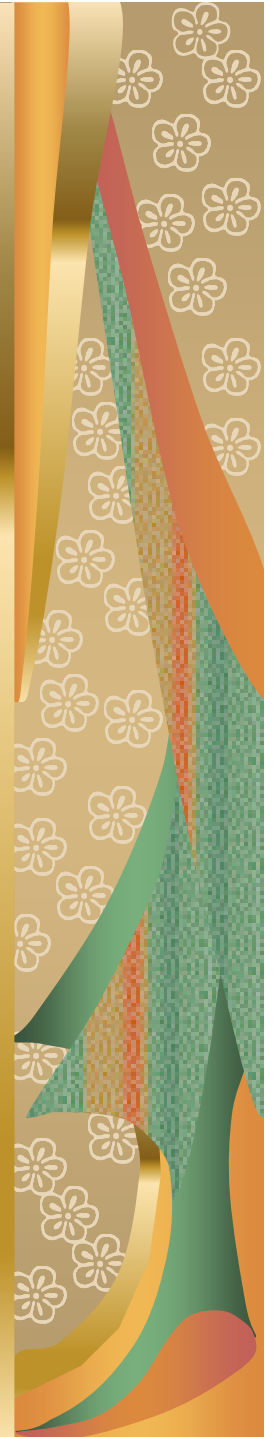
## Coming Home Ritual

 **Karontan Nu** is a prayer call for the spirit of a new born child to join his/her body in going home. This is usually done when the mother gives birth in the hospital and is to bring home the newborn baby. It is believed that the ritual should be done lest the baby's spirit wander to unknown and unseen places causing the child to be sick.



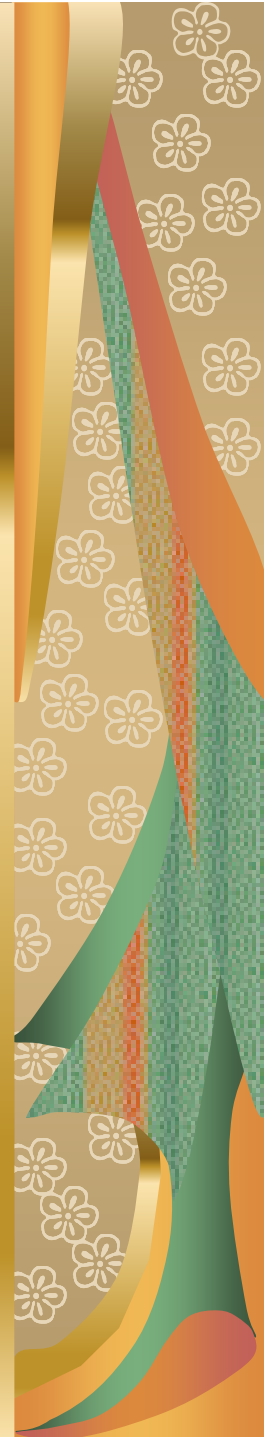
# Baptism Rituals

***Baptism in Christian churches*** is a universal rite of initiation performed with water, usually in the name of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) or in the name of Christ. The pouring of water with the sign of the cross signifies the cleansing from original sin making the child a child of God and a member of the church. The racing of Godparents carrying the child towards the door of the church signifies prosperity and/or success for the child.




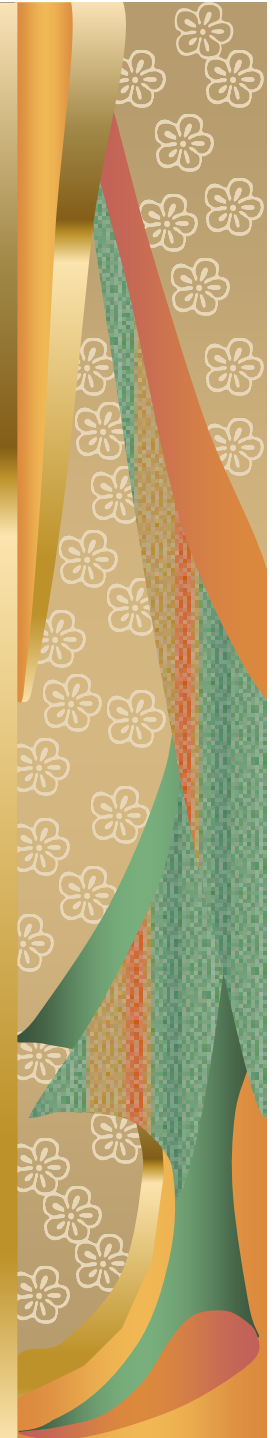



**Tabayag** *is* an indigenous baptism ritual. The ritual commences with an elderly relative calling the unseen to join the ritual, with a loud weird voice. Then each of the baptism sponsors carry and dance with the child alternately while placing money on a plate/container placed at the center of the ritual venue as a gift to the child.

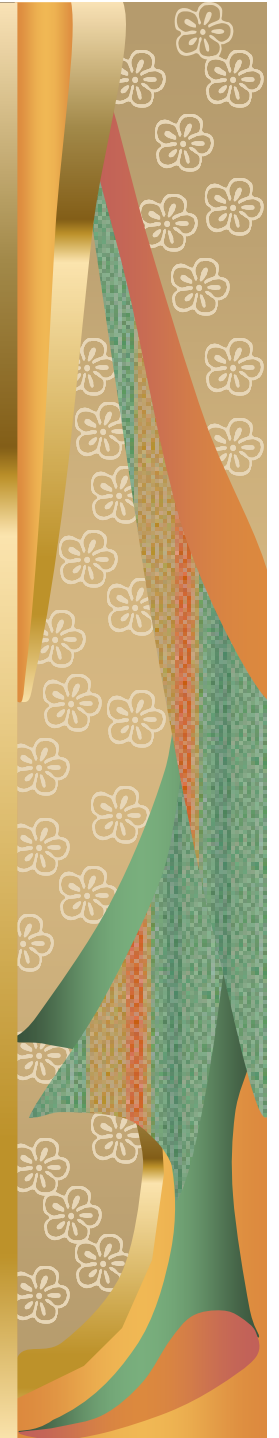


## Yogad Agricultural Rituals

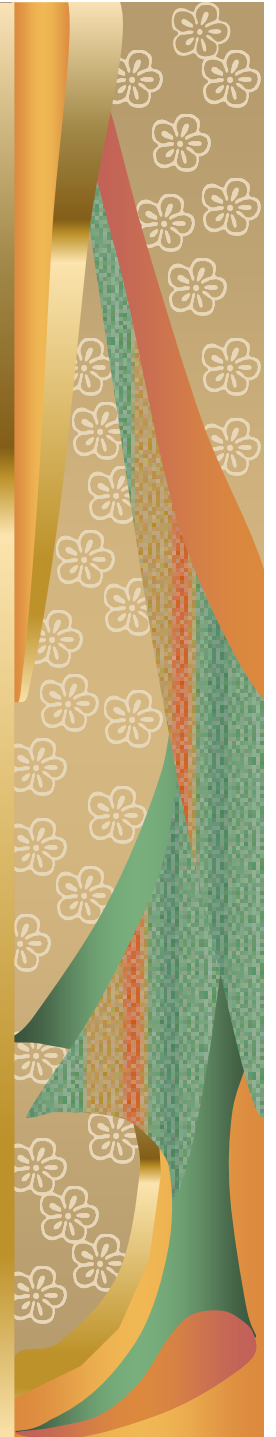
 **Tobacco Planting Ritual.** Before planting tobacco the Yogads makes an food offering as a manifestation of respect to the unseen spirits and/or former owners/ inhabitants of the land in exchange for the spirits' protection and blessing for his crop.



 **Corn Planting Ritual.** The Yogads also believe that planting corn should be done only when the sky is clear and filled with stars and that an offering (atang) that contains a mixture of corn seeds, chicken beak and nail should also be made so that the spirits of the land will protect the corn and the chickens will not scratch and eat it. The clear sky and the abundant stars will ensure a good harvest.

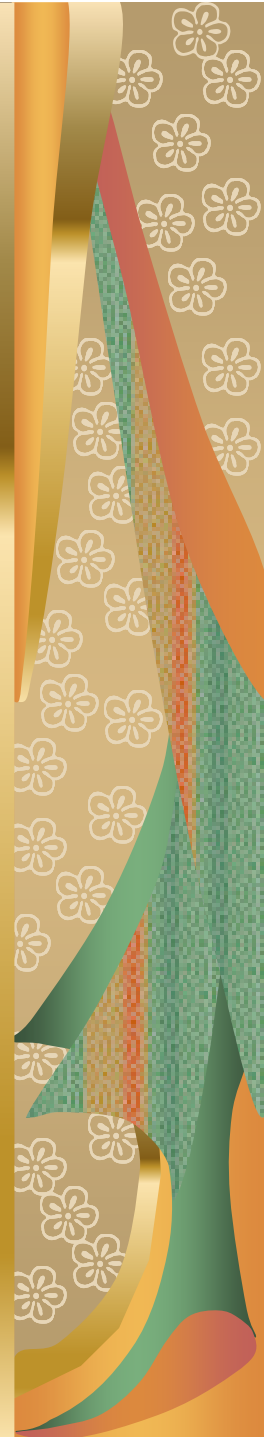


**Pest Control Ritual.** The Yogads believe that seeking favor and protection from the spirit of the land and to the former dead owners of the land can protect their plants from pest infestation. They do this by digging a hole and carefully burying the *atang* while praying to the spirits for the protection of their crop.

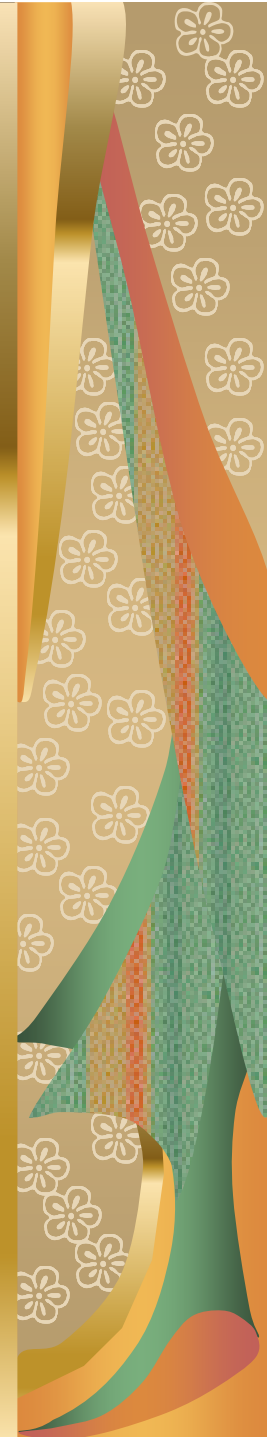


# Yogad Healing Rituals

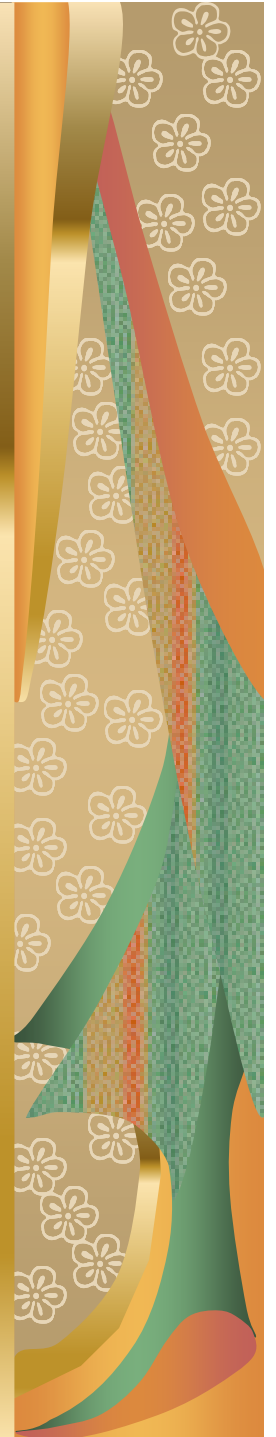
**Talado** is a Yogad way of diagnosing sickness with the use of a newly laid native egg. It is believed that when the newly laid chicken egg “stands” erect to questions asked about the sickness, the spirits are giving a positive response; but if it falls the spirits are giving a negative reply. Native Yogads who are practicing this, swear to the efficacy of the ritual.



**The Banca Ritual .** This ritual lasts two days. On the first day the healers prepare the miniature boat (banca), decorate it to make it attractive to the spirits, and go to the house of the sick to perform the ritual. While dancing and singing sacred songs the spirits enter the body the faith healer causing her to fall into a trance . While in this state she diagnoses and heals the sickness, catches the spirits causing the disease, and loads them into the boat. Very early the next day, the banca is made to float with the river current, together with the evil spirits, away from the sick person.

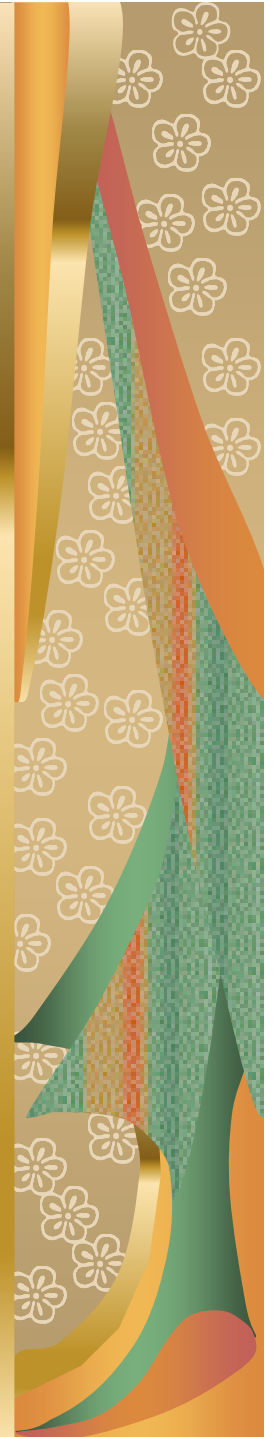


**Patunnak** is a ritual done to drive away evil spirits and *karangat* (ghost) forces before or while a house is constructed so that the occupants of the new house/building will be freed from illness and will have bountiful blessings. This is done by making a food offering while praying for protection and support



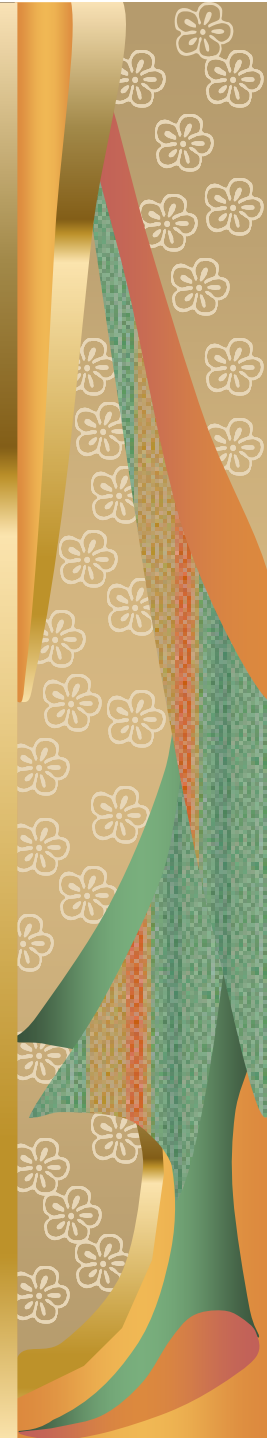
# House Blessing Rituals

**Sisiwa for New House** is a ritual done before the owners occupy a newly constructed house. The *uali* (offering) is performed by a *masisiwa* to drive away spirit occupants. This is done by making a food offering placed on a 'bilao' while praying or making peace negotiations with the spirits.




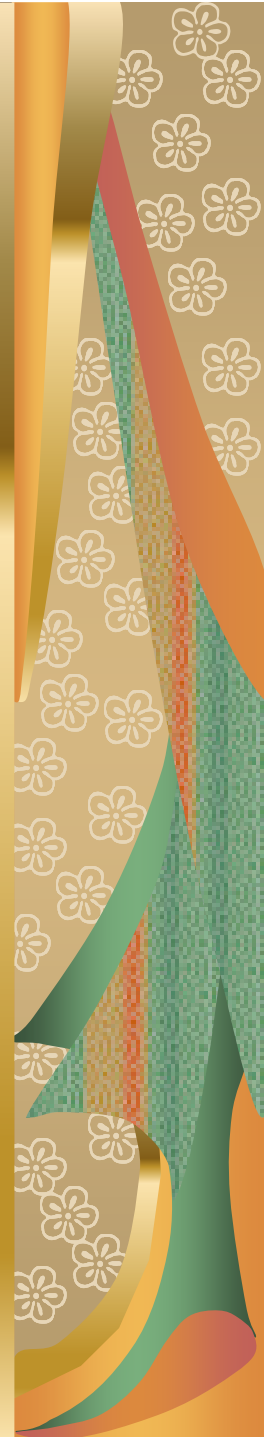


**Sisiwa for inhabited old house** is done to expel ghosts and other evil spirits felt by the occupants in an old house. Similarly an atang is offered as peace offering while the masisiwa negotiate with the disease or trouble causing spirit to leave the house peacefully.



# Yogad Death Rituals

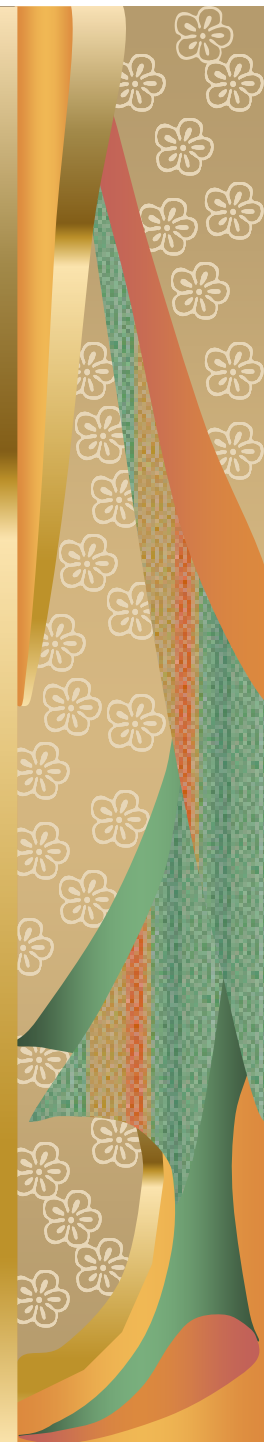
 ***Karontan Nu Kararwa*** is the Yogad way of summoning the spirit of their dead member to be able to know his/her will, advice and/or misgivings that need to be addressed. This is a practice that is done twice. The first is done three (3) days after the dead is laid in state at home. This is repeated after the burial. It is believed that the ritual is best done at twilight because this is the time of the spirits.



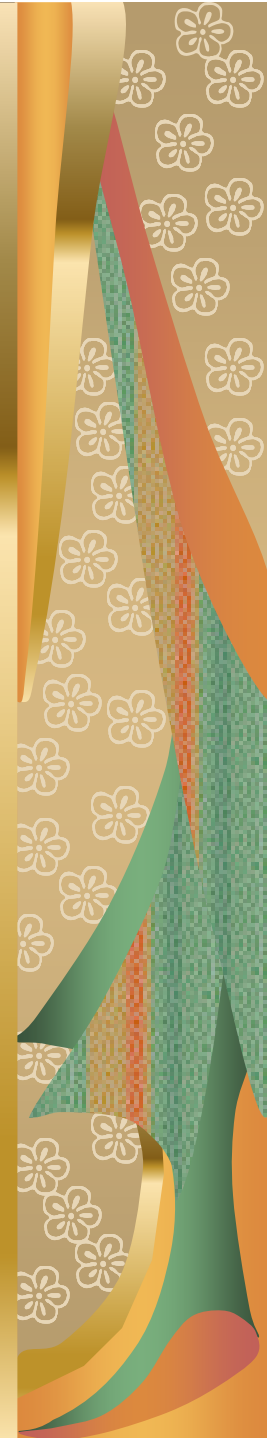
**Arian Yu Ulu Nu Manuk** is a ritual done when the coffin is brought out of the house. An elderly relative severs the head of a red rooster with one swift bolo cut to signify the triumphant separation of the dead person's body and the soul so that the soul is free to travel to the afterlife. It is a Yogad belief that if the ritual is not done the soul will stay and wander on earth and worst, he/she may inflict *titil*, which means sickness and harm to the family. The *titil* can only be cured through family prayers and *uali* (food offering).



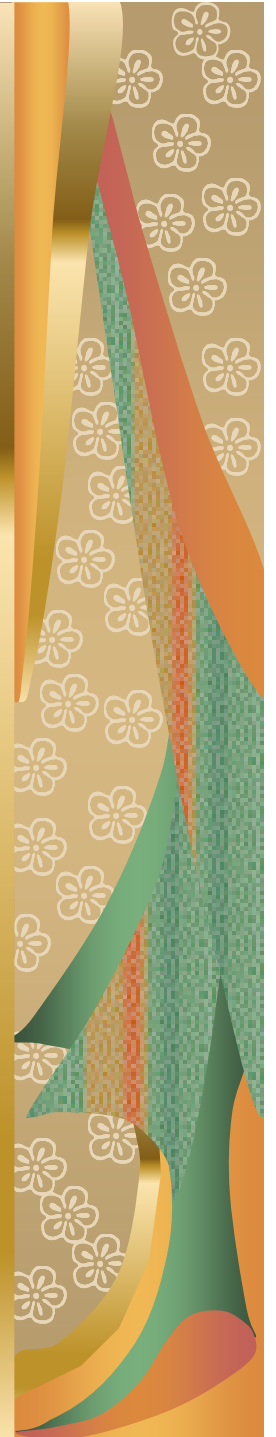
**Pabulon Yu Gamit Na** is done when the dead person is to be buried. The bereaved family gives the things they believe are needed by the dead for a safe passage to the afterlife, such as selected clothes, white bedding, toothbrush and paste, comb, wallet/purse, shoes, blessed candle and match, rosary, coins, prayer book, needle and thread.



**Magamumuat** (washing) is a purification or cleansing rite done after the burial. All those who accompanied the dead to the cemetery should go back to the house of the dead to dip their hands into the mixture of burnt hay ash and vinegar and pat their forehead and nape three times to prevent them from dizziness and/or being hexed or the cause of hex (anannung).



**Gul-Gul** (bath) is done one week after the burial as a means of release from the physical and emotional stress suffered by the family during the duration of the wake. A *magimmum* performs the *gulgul* with the bereaved family in the river. Before the *gul-gul* the *magimmum* prepares the following: one (1) white mature rooster and plain cooked glutinous rice. The rooster must be dressed by manually pulling all feathers then cutting it into four pieces and grilling it. No condiment or salt will be used. The *magimmum* also brings with her a little portion of burnt hay ash placed in a coconut shell. She then calls the family member one by one into the river and administers the pouring of the ash mixed with water over their heads. She turns each member three times and quickly plunges him/her in and quickly pulls him/her out from the water. After this purification rite, the whole family must consume the rice and chicken with no left overs. The chicken bones must be thrown into the river.





# THE GADDANG ANITO RITUALS

## A. MARRIAGE

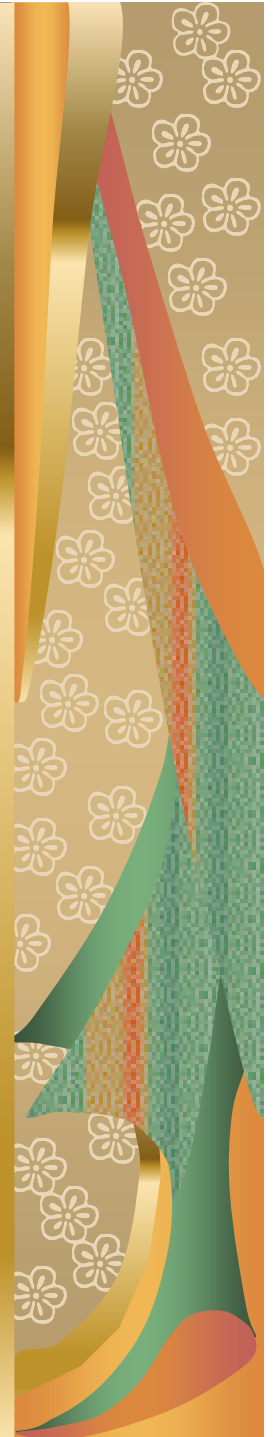
1. Ballauan
2. Mangakkit
3. Mattakkilala

## B. RITE OF PASSAGE

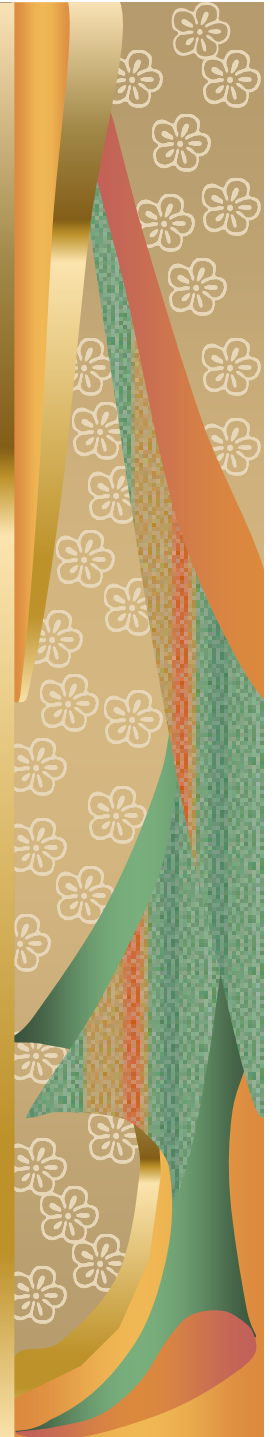
4. Palancing
5. Kayaw/Palagfu
6. Darawun

## C. HEALING

7. Patunnok
8. Mabbawang
9. Immuno-Gakit

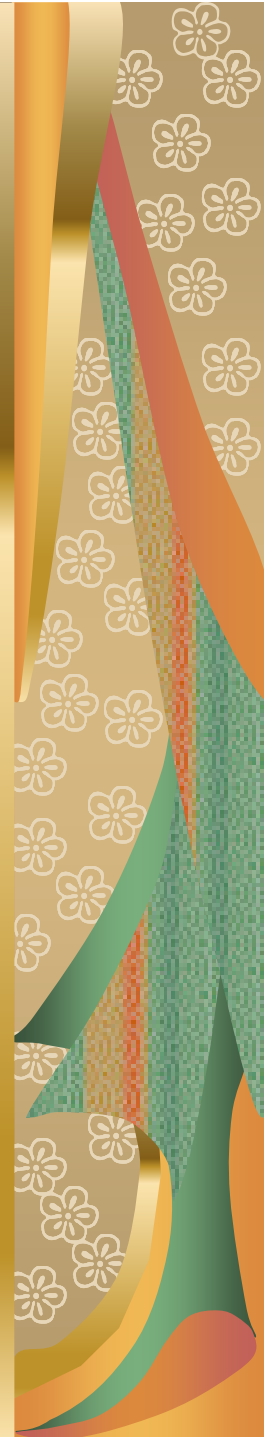


**Ballauan** is a song ritual made to appeal to the anitos to bless the newly weds with good health. The singing is done by a group of ladies and a group of gentlemen who sing alternately, responding to each other in songs. Group eating is done after the singing. The song is seen as a mantle of protection covering the couple against any sickness.

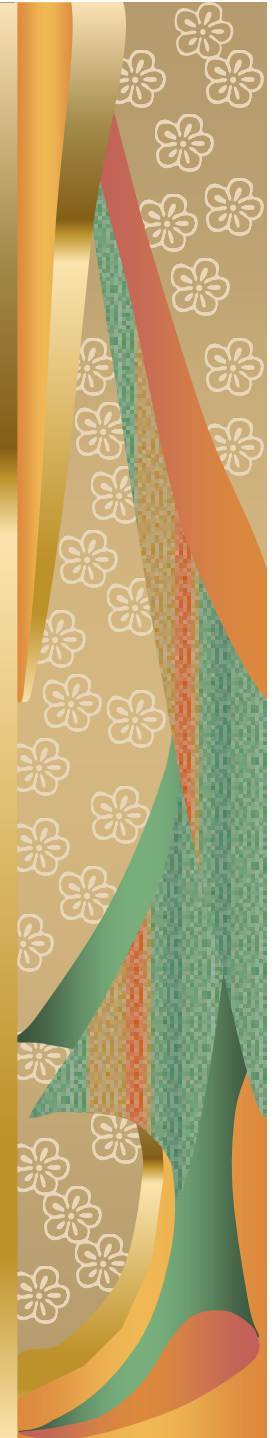




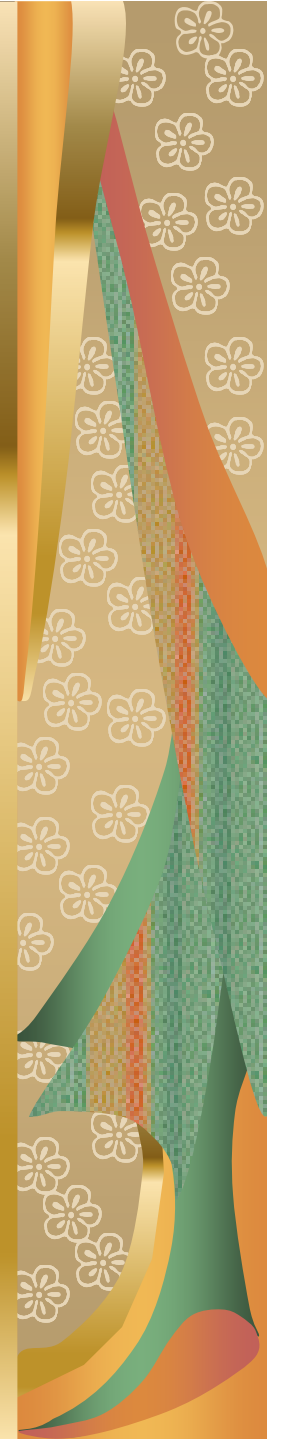
MANGAKKIT is the last piece of advice given by the anito masters to the newly wed in the form of songs and dance. The couple sit on a pillow with their backs against each other while the anito masters sing the mangakkit song. While the singing is done, the couple is covered with a blanket and glasses of gin are placed on their heads. After the ritual, the materials used are sold and the proceeds are given to the newly wed. The ritual aims to deepen and strengthen the relationship of the new couple, ensuring them of a strong marital relationship and readiness to face a new life with the protection of the spirits.



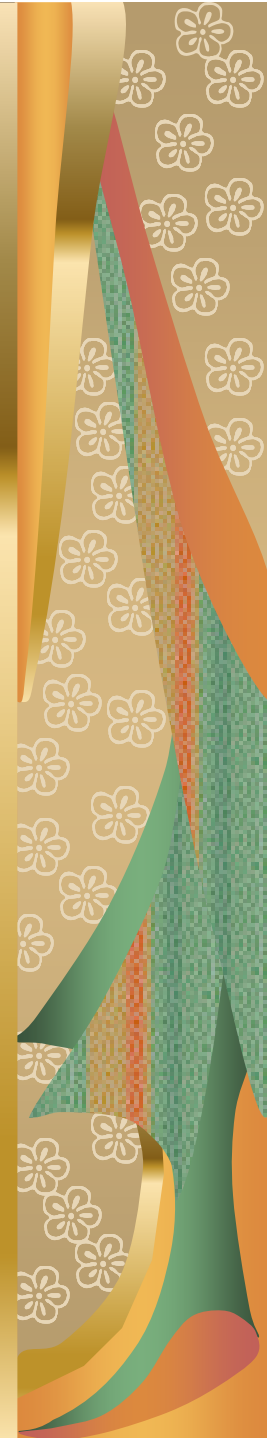
**Mattakkilala** is a marital ritual where the dal-lag (vine rope) is placed individually on the foreheads of the new couple to exorcise the spirit of sickness or problems that descended on them. This is done while chanting sacred songs and shaking the korong-korong. The ritual is culminated by the rubbing of coconut oil on the forehead necks, arms and backs of the couple by the makammong and all those who wish them well.



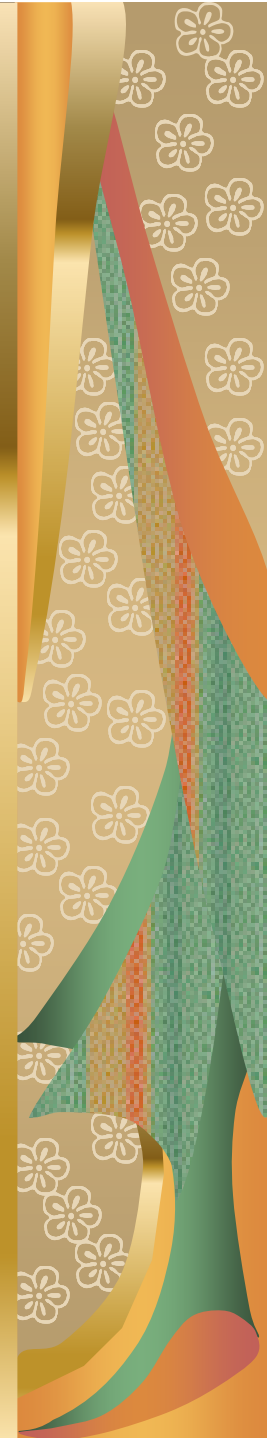
# RITE OF PASSAGE RITUALS



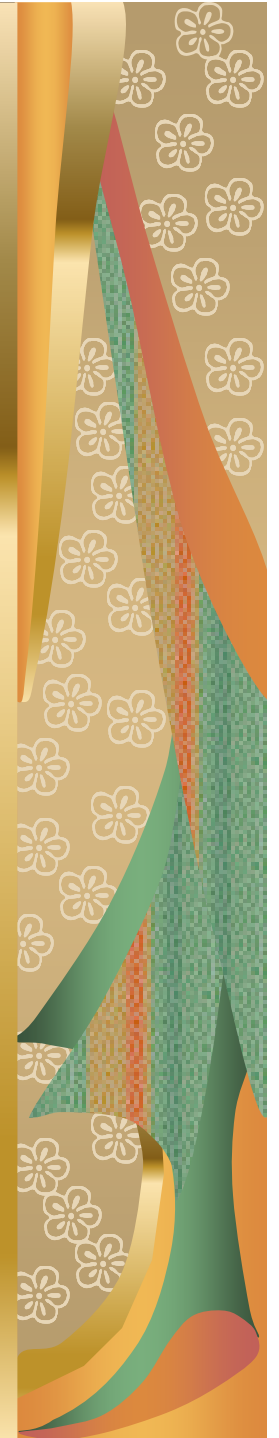
**Palancing** is a ritual of a child's initiation into the rites of the anito. On behalf of the family, the *makammong* asks for the forgiveness of the spirits and while chanting and shaking a garland shell (korong-korong) crowns each of the members of the household with vines to exorcise the evil spirits and makes them wear a necklace made of seeds resembling rosary beads for protection from evil spirits. The ritual is culminated by placing a food offering and tying a sacrificed chicken at the center of the roof as peace offering for continued protection and abundant blessings.



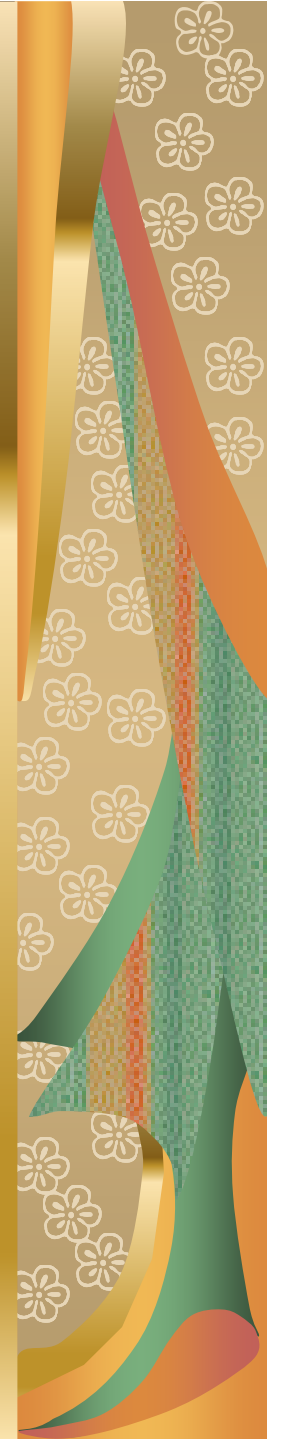
**Kayaw/Palagfu** (*jumping*) is a ritual done in recognition of a person's change of status or lifestyle. The new couple enters into a makeshift hut made of banana leaves as a symbol of their entry into a new state of life while the *makammong* blesses them and prays for good harvest, health and protection from misfortunes. Then the newlyweds jump out of the hut, followed by the relatives. This is followed by the butchering of a pig, cooking, eating and celebration.



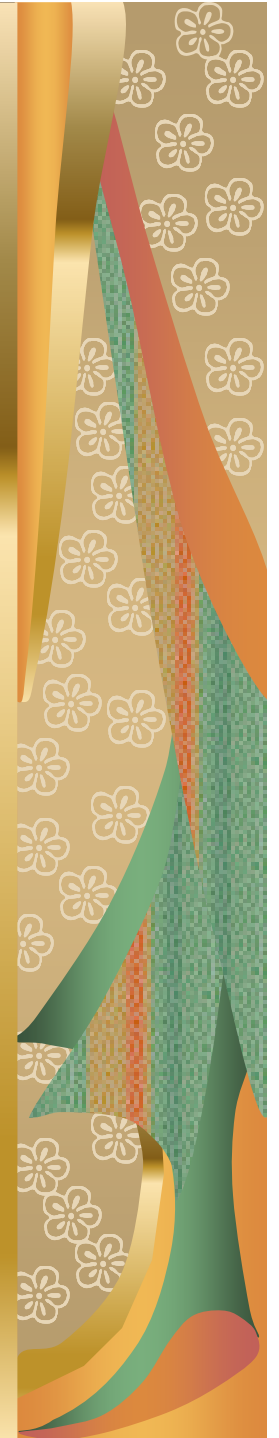
**Darawun** is a ritual done for children who have come of age (seven years and up). The children are positioned in such a way that the boys are always placed higher than the girls where they are given pieces of advice. Then the children are made to enter a makeshift hut where they watch the dancing of the mengals after which food is offered to the spirits followed by the sharing of food with the community. The ritual emphasizes gender roles in a Gaddang family.



# HEALING RITUALS

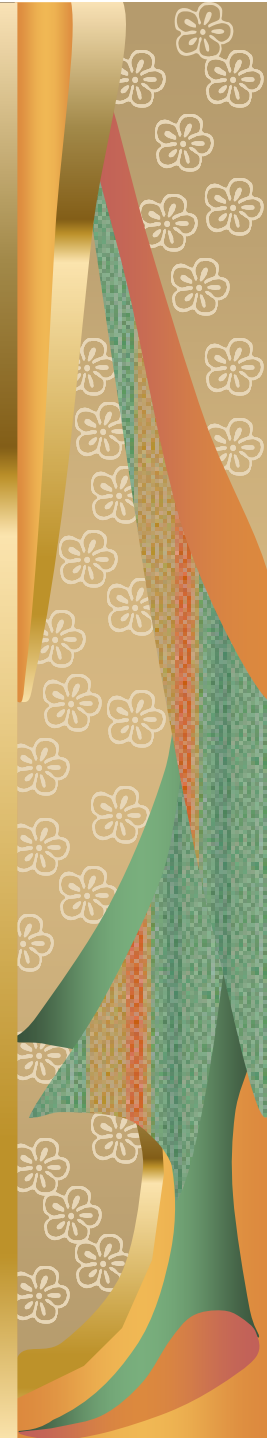


**Patunnok** is an anito rite for the sick which is performed by the makamongs for two (2) consecutive days. On the first day, the ritual starts by striking Chinese bowls with sharp knives while chanting the anito song to call the spirits. Then a native pig is butchered and the makamongs evaluate the pig's bladder to see if the sick person can still live or if he/she can still endure the illness. After the diagnosis, the makamongs take small portions of meat from each part of the pig, place the parts on two plates together with rice and offer it to the spirits. Then they chant and dance around the *amingan* (hut built specially for the purpose) shaking a garland of garden snails to appease the spirits and drive away misfortunes.

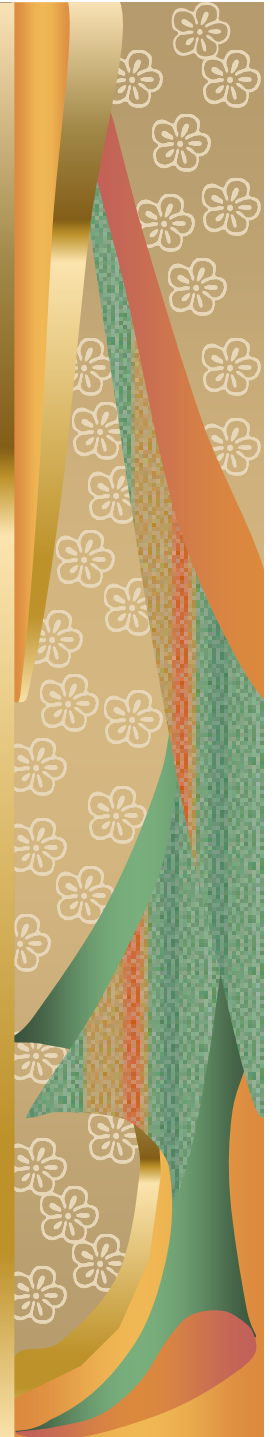




On the second day, the makammongs start the ritual by chanting until the spirits possess them and put them into a trance. While in the trance, they dip a small banaba twig into a basin of water and sprinkle water on all present to bless them. After that the entire household align themselves in front of the makamongs who sip and blow liquor on their right hands one by one to blow away their sickness and misfortunes. This is followed by the beheading a native chicken at the center of the amingan and left there to die as a final peace offering to the spirit healers.

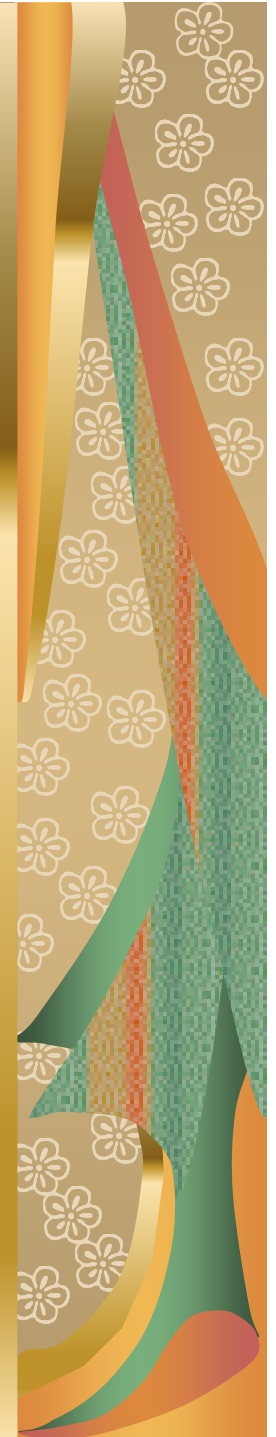


**Mabbawang** is a ritual ensuring the longevity of the lives of the members of a family and to strengthen their family ties. This is done by having a picnic on a river bank with all family members in attendance and foods cooked only with salt are shared in celebration




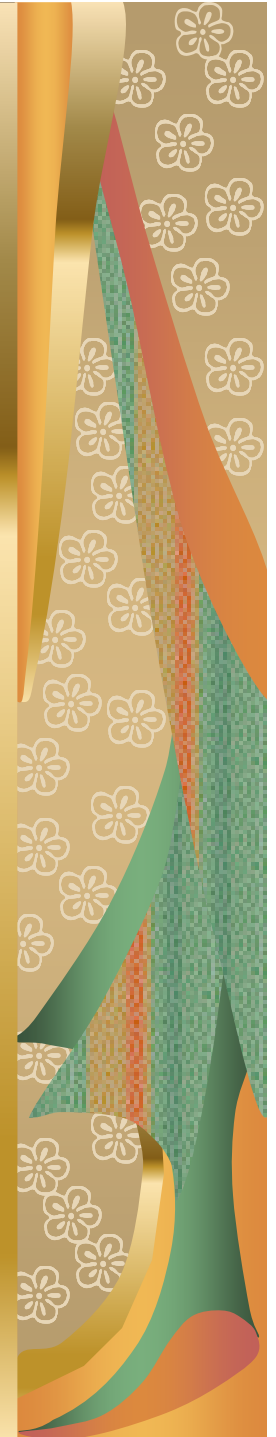
**Immuno-Gakit Ritual** is a community ritual performed to drive away general sickness and malaise from the village. The anito master strikes the Chinese bowl with a sharp knife several times to call the spirits while he/she chants a prayer. Then the master gets bottle of coconut oil and requests the spirits to bless and heal the sick members of the community. Then he anoints, with oil, the foreheads of all members who desire healing. Then the anito master sips liquor and spits it out on the pig and chicken to be sacrificed. He slits the chicken's neck with a sharp bolo and allows the blood to drip over the head of those who want to be well.

The heads of the chickens and the pigs are severed and brought to the raft. People who want to ask the spirits for assistance or blessings to cast away their misfortune/sickness are instructed to give a coin as donation (regardless of the value) which is placed on the raft. As one body, all members of the community chant while pushing the raft into the river. The people believe that, with the ritual, the spirit/s will take away the people's misfortunes, malaise and/or sickness with the raft to the far seas and leave the people in the community in peace.



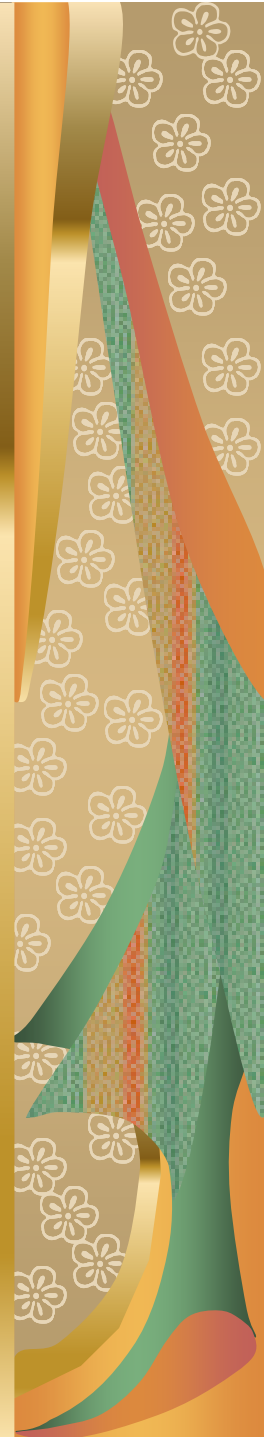
## ANALYSIS

 The rituals show a pervading pattern of values/meanings that are present/manifested/implicit across rituals from marriage to death. The rituals are but overt manifestations of a community guided by the values of love and life of a people caring for its members. In the marriage ritual, the outstanding values manifested are the desire for unity and support, acceptance, harmony, care as symbolized by gestures of welcome, cooperation, provision of needs, working together, loyalty, commitment, generosity, joy and celebration. As for the infants and children who have undergone the rite of passage the rituals point to the values of responsibility to welcome and accept the child into the Gaddang/Yogad community manifested through the family's and community's show of support, celebration and joy for the integration/initiation of the child into the mainstream. The agricultural rituals involved in planting tobacco and corn and pest control reveal the practice of respect and the seeking a harmonious relationship with the environment and the unseen spirits/past owners of the land in order to have a good harvest, all for the good and well being of the family. The healing and house blessing rituals point out to the desire for peace and harmony with the unknown forces controlling his universe because he deeply cares for his love ones.



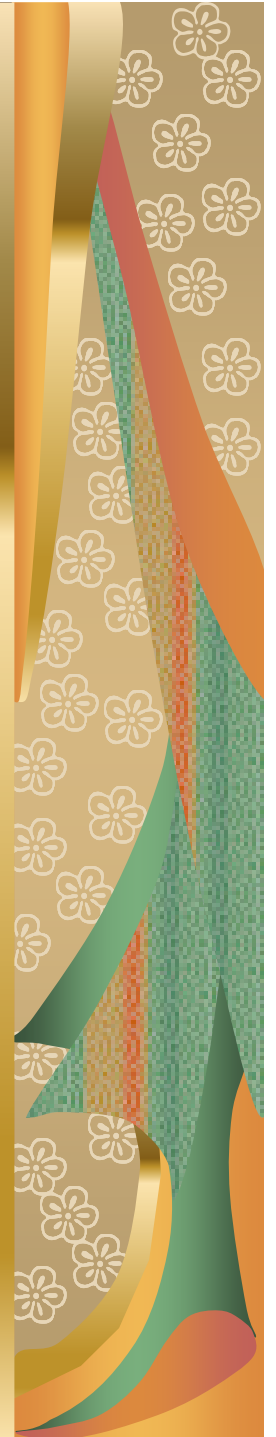
## Continuation of ANALYSIS

These rituals may seem absurd and incongruous but the deeper meaning points to a people wanting to protect their loved ones from the unseen and the unknown which are incomprehensible to them. The death rituals paint a touching picture of an ethnic tribe whose love and care for their loved ones extend beyond their earthly life. Though the practices involved seem pathetic and comical, they actually fire the imagination in the people's creativity of being responsible for their dead kin/loved ones assuring them even of a good life in the great beyond.



## CONCLUSION

The Yogads and Gaddangs have a rich intangible heritage as manifested in their rituals, from the union of a man and a woman to form a family and the processes/challenges which they undergo to nurture their family from birth through life and death. Their rituals show intense love, care and support for each other against life's problems and the negative elements, human circumstances and evil spirits that disturb their mutual harmony, health, wealth and their harmony with nature and the spiritual world. The rituals are their coping mechanisms in preserving these values. Today more than ever, there should be a strong effort not only for the preservation of this priceless heritage but in making them a living force that will shape/nurture the inherent values of love, life, community, family, solidarity, responsibility and harmony with the spirit of God which has always been the core values of the Yogad and the Gaddang people. The essence of a unified community of life and love deeply pervades the life support system of the Yogads and Gaddangs.



## Literature Cited

Guidelines for the Establishment of Living Human Systems Updated Version, 2002.

A lecture delivered by Mr. Enrico Manlapaz, National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Resource Person at Isabela State University on October 21-23, 2005.

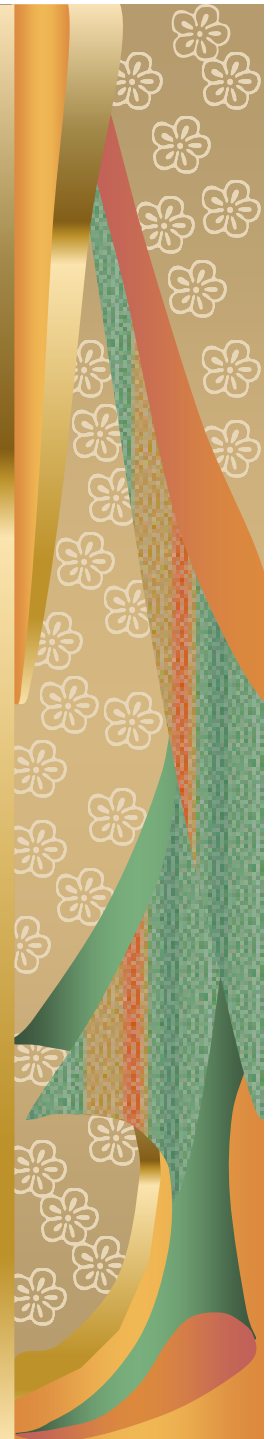
Paper Presented by Director Huh Kwon, UNESCO International Training Workshop on the Living Human Treasures System, 1999.

Urban Age, Winter 2002. A xerox material given by Mr. Josan Lorenzana as a Resource Speaker in the Cultural Seminar held at Isabela State University, 2003.

UNESCO International Training Workshop on the Living Human Treasures System (October 13-18, 1999, Seoul).

UNESCO International Training Workshop on the Living Human Treasures System (November 1-6, 2000/Seoul, Namwon).

Zialcita, 2002. A xerox material given by Mr. Josan Lorenzana as a Resource Speaker in the Cultural Seminar held at Isabela State University, 2003.





## On-Line Sources

Culture and Arts Philippines.

Likha Pilipino Folk Ensemble, 2001-2005.

Obusan, Ramon. Importance of Dance in our Culture, CCP 2000.

Peralta, Jesus T. Glimpses: Peoples of the Philippines national  
Commission 2000.

Rituals and Omems of IPS: Indigenous resource Management  
Practices. H. Marcos C. Cordero/Minda News 22/June 2001.

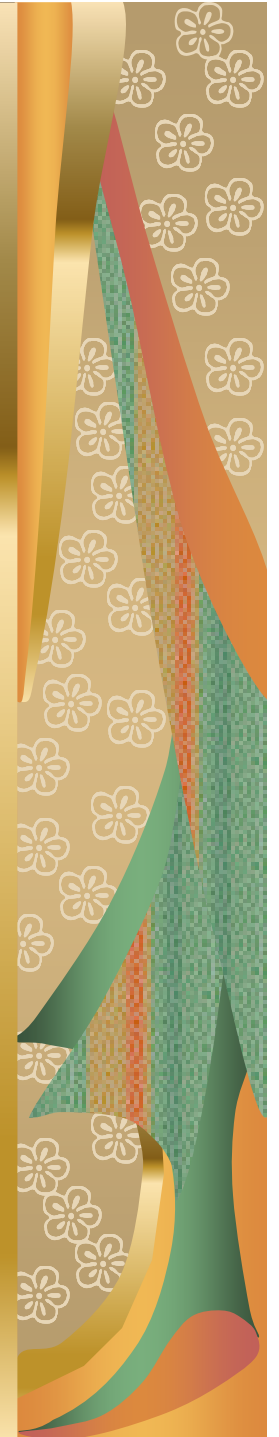
Sanghaya 2001 Philippine Arts and culture Year Book.

<http://www.delapaz-ewf.org/history.htm>

<http://www.likha.org/history/dance.asp>.

[http://www.longman.com.uk/tt\\_pri/calendar nov oo.htm](http://www.longman.com.uk/tt_pri/calendar nov oo.htm)

<http://www.delapaz-ewf.org/history.htm>





Thank you very much !

