

# Patay Ritual

**BONTOC, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE, NORTHERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES.** *There is a ritual among the Bontoc that starts and ends any important activity, whether economic, social or religious. It is seen as a way of sharing products of human activity with the anitos thru the butchering of a pig or chicken. This is the patay.*



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Fronting an ator is a set of stone slab chairs where the elderly men sit in council.

and a small gourd of *fayas* (sugarcane wine). They build a fire at the site, butcher the chicken, saving three tail or wing feathers to be impaled on the trunk of the *papatayan* tree. The chicken is butchered, separating the breast from the back, exposing the entrails. The boys are allowed to cook half of the breast and one leg which they eat with the rice and *fayas*. After the meal, the boys take the rest back to the ator. The old men inspect the entrails for omens, then cook the rest and eat. If the omen is not good, this is repeated after about three to four days.

THIS IS DONE only in the main or lead *ator* in a community which may have a number of ator. This ator should be the repository for the sacred utensils used for the *patay*. The *kachangyan* (the highest ranking men of wealth) compose the ator and act as council for the village. Patay is done as need arises. To start, the ator must have a pot ready and one black native chicken. Two boys are sent to the *papatayan*: one carries a lighted torch and the sacred pot to cook the chicken in, while the other has a plate of rice and a small basket to hold the chicken

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