Uyauy

TUWALI IFUGAO, IFUGAO PROVINCE, NORTHERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. *This is the most prestigious wedding ritual of the Tuwali Ifugao, builders of the world-renowned mountain rice terraces, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is during this ritual that the epic chant, Alim, is chanted by the highest ranking mumbaki, in a complex ceremony.*

A mock- uyauy wedding of a young Tuwali Ifugao couple.

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IT HAS THE PRESTIGE ritual rank next to the *hagabi*, although it is more complex and elaborate. The *uyauy* is formally started by a month-long, nightly gong playing and dancing in the house of the sponsoring couple followed by three full days of eating and drinking. The major parts are as follows:

Paldang – A group of priests go to the granary of the couple to offer a chick, to seek the approval of the gods and ancestral spirits for the performance of the uyauy. When the omens are good, they go to the house to the sounding of gongs to tell the sponsors that they can begin the uyauy. The rite is done in the granary. This, with the gong playing in the house constitute the *paldang*.

Holyat – After at least a month of dancing nightly, the *holyat* is held beginning at night lasting until morning. This ushers in the major portions of the uyauy. A large pig is sacrificed. Dancing, drinking and feasting mark the nightlong occasion. Meanwhile, the religious aspects of the ceremony are held inside the house starting early evening until midmorning the following day with the chanting of the *Alim*.

Gotad – This is the most festive part of the uyauy. People from near and far come in their best dress and ornaments. The occasion provides a moment for people to show off their status and adornments. They know who is who by their attire and jewelry. People dance, drink and feast. A large carabao or two are slaughtered for the grand public feast.

Lahun – This follows *gotad*. The husband and wife, in formal attire, perform some rites inside and outside the house then lead the procession to the house of a family in another village who had previously invited them for the occasion. After the usual drinking and feasting, they return home. The host couple gives the uyauy couple (*umiyauy*) a gift, usually a pig.

Punhidaan – This is held mainly for the relatives of the couple. They gather to eat and later to receive their respective portions of the meat called *bolwa*. At least two carabaos are slaughtered for this occasion.

Tokop – This is similar to the *lahun* but lasts longer. In this, more wine is served and more people, again dressed in full regalia, are in attendance. The couple goes to a farther village upon the invitation of another couple who must have had sponsored an uyauy. Just like in lahun, the *gopa* or speech-making is featured during the dancing. After the ceremonial gopas by the priest, one for each of the couple, dancing resumes. Now and then another gopa is rendered. Any *kadangyan* may deliver a gopa for the dancers and crowd.

A gopa begins with "*gopa-gopahan da kayu…*" by the *munggopa*. While this is done, the gongs and the people become silent. A minor ritual is done to close the day's affair. The following day is *tungo* (rest day) for the couple, but the rest of the household is busy. The hired man (*numbaal*) directs some men to see to the left-over meat. Whatever internal organs left are cooked and distributed to neighbors. The rest of the meat is cooked in bamboo tubes and left in the house as *panamtaman* for "tasting" of any guest.

Baw-i – This is an integral part of uyauy. The sponsoring couple accompanied by the numbaal, go on ceremonial visits to their relatives to receive the *baddang* (gift or help) or *tungngul* (payment of a baddang given by them or their parents before them). These are usually in the form of animals (chicken, pigs) but in recent times, money has become acceptable.

Haligunup – After a few more minor rites, the *haligunup* is performed. This ritual ends the whole uyauy. The couple now attains the status of kadangyan.

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