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## Wedding rituals among the Pulangihon in North-Central Mindanao

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THESIS ABSTRACT  
(1245)

Title: WEDDING RITUALS AMONG THE PULANGIHON

IN NORTH-CENTRAL MINDANAO

No. of pages: 228

Researcher: David John M. de los Reyes, S.J.

A5 D45 95

Adviser: Dr. Fernando Zialcita, Ph.D.

Year: 1997

Subject Area: Anthropology

Degree Conferred: M.A.

Statement of the Problem:

Main Problem: To describe the Pulangihon wedding ritual.

Sub-problems: What are the principal features of Pulangihon marriage? What are some of the key symbols in the marriage rituals?

Procedure: The researcher engaged in a ten-month fieldwork in one Pulangihon territory. In the course of such fieldwork, he (1) observed several actual weddings, (2) carried formal and semi-formal informant interviews with many locals, and (3) immersed himself in the ordinary life of some Pulangihon communities.

Treatment of Data: Observation and interview data from three of the weddings actually witnessed by the researcher were gathered and grouped together as case studies. Data obtained from a study of a vocabulary pertinent to weddings as well as from informant descriptions were used to come up with an overall picture of the Pulangihon marriage rituals. Thirdly, data from general immersion, from talking with 350 local couples, from casual conversations and semi-formal interviews helped arrive at some general features of Pulangihon marriage.

Findings: This research found that, although polygamy is allowed, the vast majority of Pulangihon marriages today in the fieldwork area are monogamous. Uxorilocality is not the Pulangihon practice. In practice, the marriage rule forbids first- and second-cousin marriage. (The marriage rule, however, allows certain interesting marriage patterns yet undescribed in the ethnographic literature.) More importantly, Pulangihon marriage may be seen as an exchange contract between the bride's kin group and the groom's kin group: certain goods and services in exchange for the woman (her sexuality, her work, her children).

The overall Pulangihon marriage ritual can be described as a sequence of tasks. After the completion of the mate selection, the overall process formally begins with a highly ritualized negotiation called *kagun* in which a marriage is proposed and accepted and the bridewealth is agreed upon by the bride's and the groom's kin

groups. The setting of the wedding date is a separate and less elaborate session. After this, the main preparatory activities are the gathering of the bridewealth items and the material preparations for a wedding feast. The bridewealth is transferred during this pre-wedding period; the bridewealth often includes items needed for a wedding feast.

The actual wedding ceremonies begin with a ritualized arrival of the groom and his kin group to the bride's house. A pig sacrifice is usually (but not always) carried out at the foot of the stairs of the house. The main wedding rites proper include: (1) an exchange of either rice balls or betel nuts between the bride and groom, (2) a smearing of the joined hands of the bridal couple with the blood of a sacrificial chicken and (3) a series of solemn words given by persons of authority. To these main rites may be added other rites. There is always a feasting towards the end of the ceremonies.

After the wedding, the groom renders a bride service to his in-laws. Custom requires him to reside in his parents-in-laws' household. Also, some time after the wedding, the groom's family is expected to host an *olak*, which is a gathering and feasting in the groom's family's house. This may also include a gift exchange between the two kin groups. The entire getting married process formally ends when the married man (along with his wife) returns to his parents. This ending is most visibly ritualized in cases where bride and groom come from different villages.

As for key symbols, the *datu* and the bride's house are present during the entire marriage process while the idea of balanced exchange is extensively used to describe and to think about various aspects of the marriage process. Finally, one object (also called a *kagun*) fully appears to be a key symbol in the earlier part of the process.

**Conclusion:** The Pulangihon do have their own wedding and marriage rituals.

In a broad sense, their rituals share features with the wedding and marriage rituals of other Bukidnon sub-groups, described elsewhere in the ethnographic literature.

But they also have items which are not described elsewhere in the ethnographic literature.

**Recommendations:**

1. A fuller comparison of the marriage and wedding rituals of various Bukidnon subgroups can be carried out.
2. Studies of other Pulangihon rituals can be carried out. Such studies can help arrive at a broader understanding of the ritual symbols.
3. A study can also be made of the adjustments being made in the rituals due to intermarriage with the Visayans, who have come into Pulangihon territory.