

**Department of Behavioral Sciences**  
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**TAYAW SHI KE'DOT: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY  
ON THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PIG OFFERINGS  
IN THE IBALOY RITUALS IN LOAKAN, BAGUIO**

An Undergraduate Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of Behavioral Sciences  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of the Philippines – Manila

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Bachelor of Arts in Behavioral Sciences

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*The Community and Research Proponent shall have joint rights  
to all works and materials resulting from such research*

January 2026



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## **APPROVAL SHEET**

The thesis entitled “*Tayaw Shi Ke’dot: An Ethnographic Study on the Cultural Significance of Pig Offerings in the Ibaloy Rituals in Loakan, Baguio*”, prepared and submitted by **Bianca Pauline L. Tapalla** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Behavioral Sciences is hereby accepted.

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## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is dedicated to the Ibaloy community of Loakan, Baguio, whose generosity and trust allowed me to witness their rituals and learn from their stories. I am deeply grateful to the elders, ritual specialists, and families who shared their knowledge and welcomed me into sacred spaces. I also extend my sincere thanks to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Baguio, particularly Ms. Rachelle and Atty. Myra, and to the Indigenous Peoples' Mandatory Representatives (IPMRs), especially Joselito Shontogan or "Sir Bhoy," for their guidance and support in ensuring that this research was conducted with care and respect.

Within the university, I am thankful to the Department of Behavioral Sciences for its mentorship and encouragement. I am especially grateful to Ma'am Tess De Guzman, my thesis adviser, for her guidance in ethnographic research and her belief in this work. I also acknowledge Ma'am Diane Monsada, my program adviser, for their continued support throughout my academic journey.

To my family, thank you for being the foundation of this work. My mother, Veronica Payod, your unwavering belief sustained me. To my spouse, Mark Raven, thank you for your patience and encouragement. Wilmyr Marcus Primo and my siblings, especially Vince Joseph Usop, thank you for your constant support. This research spanned nearly a decade. Through moments of doubt and persistence, I am grateful for the resilience that carried me forward and for God's guidance throughout this journey. Above all, this work reflects the relationships that shaped it and stands as a testament to the enduring wisdom of the Ibaloy people and to the values of care, respect, and reciprocity that give research its meaning.

*Padayon.*

## ABSTRACT

*Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* is a sacred Ibaloy ritual that summons ancestral spirits through prayer, dance, and animal offering. This study examines the cultural and symbolic significance of pig offerings in Ibaloy ritual practice in Loakan, Baguio, situating the ritual within ongoing processes of cultural continuity amid modernization.

The study employs ethnographic methods, including participant observation and semi-structured interviews with elders and ritual specialists (*mambunong*), to analyze how pig offerings are performed, interpreted, and transmitted across generations.

Findings indicate that pig offerings function as central ritual mediators that reinforce Ibaloy identity, ancestral reciprocity, and communal cohesion. The offering facilitates socialization and the intergenerational transmission of ritual knowledge. Ritual efficacy is signaled through the pig's vocalization, while the animal's accessibility enables broad community participation. Gendered roles in caring for, sacrificing, and distributing the pig reflect and reproduce culturally defined social order. Beyond their material value, pigs operate as symbolic vessels linking the living, the ancestors, and *Kabunian*.

This study contributes to symbolic anthropology and Indigenous ritual studies by demonstrating how animal offerings operate as multivocal symbols that sustain cultural continuity, social relations, and cosmological balance within an Indigenous community navigating modern change.

**Keywords:** Ibaloy, *tayaw*, *ke 'dot*, ritual, pig offering, symbolic anthropology, ethnography, indigenous knowledge systems and practices, cultural resilience, cultural identity

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE .....	i
APPROVAL SHEET .....	ii
DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Overview of the Study .....	1
Rationale.....	2
Statement of the Problem .....	3
Objectives of the Study .....	4
Significance of the Study .....	5
Scope and Limitations.....	6
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....	8
DEFINITION OF TERMS.....	8
Ritual .....	8
Offering .....	9
<i>Tayaw</i> .....	10
The Ibaloy and Their Ritual Traditions .....	11
The <i>Mambunong</i> .....	12
Gender Roles in the Ibaloy Rituals .....	14
The Different Rituals of the Ibaloy People.....	16
Symbolism of Animal Offerings.....	18
Feasting, Reciprocity, and Prestige.....	20
Continuity and Change in Ritual Practices .....	20
Material Culture of Ibaloy Ritual Life.....	21
Archeological Artifacts .....	21
Ibaloy Costumes.....	22
Ibaloy Musical Instruments.....	22
Ibaloy Ritual Tools.....	23
Theoretical Framework .....	24
Rituals and Symbols.....	25
Symbolic Anthropology: Culture as Webs of Meaning .....	25

Ritual Process: Stages and Transformation .....	26
Offering and Mediation.....	26
The Pig as a Multivocal Symbol.....	26
Social Systems, Learning, and Indigenous Knowledge.....	28
Rituals and Social Systems .....	28
Learning Through Observation and Participation .....	29
Gender Roles in Ritual Practice.....	30
Indigenous Knowledge and Oral Tradition .....	31
Continuity, Change, and Adaptation.....	33
Cultural Materialism and Commoditization .....	33
Rituals as Living Traditions.....	34
Conceptual Framework .....	36
III. METHODOLOGY.....	40
Research Design.....	40
Research Locale .....	41
Sources of data .....	41
Data Gathering Procedures .....	42
Entry into the Community.....	43
Permission and Consent.....	43
Observation .....	43
Participation .....	44
Interviews.....	44
Post-Ritual Validation.....	44
Instrumentation.....	45
Data Analysis .....	46
Ethical Considerations .....	48
Reflexivity of the Researcher.....	49
IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	51
The <i>Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot</i> .....	54
Ritual Process.....	59
The <i>Keshew</i> (Thanksgiving Ritual) .....	59
The <i>Tayaw</i> (Dance).....	64
The <i>Taydiw</i> (Suspension of Pig).....	67

The <i>Indutsek</i> .....	68
The <i>Ba'diw</i> (Chant).....	69
<i>Sapnak ng Taydiw</i> (Repetition).....	71
The <i>Bangkilay</i> (Altar) .....	73
Procedure for Offering Pigs in Rituals.....	76
Preliminary Rites.....	77
Butchering of the Pig .....	78
Supplementary Rites .....	79
Ritual Meaning.....	81
Symbolism of the Pig in Ibaloy Rituals .....	82
Social Functions of the Pig in Ritual Life.....	84
Cultural Transmission Through Ritual Practice .....	85
Adaptation and Continuity in a Changing World .....	87
Concluding Synthesis: Convergence of Symbolism, Practice, and Social Life .....	88
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS.....	89
The Symbolic Power of the Pig in Ritual Life.....	90
Liver, Blood, and Body as Messages .....	92
The Pig's Cry as Practical and Sacred .....	93
Practicality, Abundance, and the Fit of the Pig in Ibaloy Rituals .....	95
Balance of Symbolism and Material Reality .....	95
Fit for Ritual Demands.....	95
The Pig as a Social Instrument.....	96
Collective Labor, Kinship, and Balance .....	96
Distribution as a Moral and Social Statement .....	97
Pig Offerings as Cultural Identity and the Preservation of Memory .....	97
Identity Expressed Through Repetition and Collective Movement .....	97
Cultural Transmission Through Exposure, Participation, and Ancestral Obligation.....	98
Continuity, Adaptation, and Reflexive Transmission.....	98
Contribution to Anthropological Understanding .....	99
The Pig as the Anchor of Continuity .....	99
The Pig as the Heart of Ibaloy Ritual Life.....	100
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	102
For the Ibaloy Community .....	102

For Youth Engagement and Cultural Transmission .....	102
For Researchers and Future Studies.....	103
For Educational and Cultural Institutions .....	103
Directions for Future Research .....	104
REFERENCES.....	105
APPENDICES.....	108
APPENDIX A. ORAL TESTIMONIES OF IBALOY ELDERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS	108
A1. Testimonies on Keshew (Thanksgiving Ritual).....	108
A2. Testimonies on Tayaw (Dance Ritual) .....	109
A3. Testimonies on Taydiw (Suspension of the Pig) .....	109
A4. Testimonies on Indutsek .....	109
A5. Testimonies on Ba'diw (Chant) .....	109
A6. Testimonies on Sapanak ng Taydiw .....	110
A7. Testimonies on Bangkilay (Ritual Altar) .....	110
A8. General Cultural Testimonies .....	110
APPENDIX B. PERMITS .....	111
B.1 CERTIFICATION PRECONDITION .....	111
B.2 CERTIFICATE OF VALIDATION .....	112
APPENDIX C. FIELDWORK PHOTOGRAPHS .....	113
Auxiliary Rituals .....	115
Ritual Tools .....	116
Instruments and Clothing Used in Rituals .....	117
APPENDIX D. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE COMMUNITY .....	119
APPENDIX E. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS .....	120
E1. Informed Consent Form.....	120
E2. Interview Guide .....	121
E3. Interview Questions .....	122
APPENDIX F. CURRICULUM VITAE.....	123
APPENDIX G. FIELDWORK NARRATIVE AND ETHNOPOETRY .....	124
ETHNOPOETRY .....	125

# I. INTRODUCTION

## Overview of the Study

The Ibaloy call themselves “Ibadoy,” though they may also be known as “Igodot” or “Igorot.” These names derive from the old Tagalog root word “golot,” meaning “mountain chain,” with the prefix “I” signifying “people of” or “dweller in” (Scott, 1966). The Ibaloy (Ibadoy, Ivadoy, Igodor, Igorot, Nabaloi, Inibaloy, Ibaloy) are one of the largest indigenous groups in Benguet province, native to the southern part of the region, including Baguio City. Early settlements included Loakan Liwanag and Loakan Proper, once a single barangay. While some families migrated to neighboring provinces, the mountains and valleys of southern Benguet remain central to Ibaloy identity.

This study argues from the outset that pig offerings in the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* function as a multivocal ritual symbol mediating relationships among the living, the ancestors, and *Kabunian*, while reinforcing kinship, reciprocity, and cultural resilience. By focusing on these offerings, the research explores how the Ibaloy sustain cultural continuity and social cohesion amid the pressures of modernization, urbanization, and changing social conditions.

Ritual practice is central to the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot*, with pigs serving as key symbols of social, spiritual, and cosmological relationships. Their selection follows culturally specific rules concerning gender and number, reflecting local knowledge and ancestral guidance.

This study examines how the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* structures social relationships, transmits cultural knowledge, and sustains Indigenous identity, portraying the Ibaloy as a dynamic community where ritual is actively practiced and adapted.

## Rationale

Ritual is a key mechanism through which Indigenous communities maintain cultural continuity, transmit knowledge, reinforce kinship, and negotiate identity. This study situates the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* within anthropological discussions on ritual continuity, intergenerational knowledge transmission, Indigenous identity, and cultural adaptation amid modernization.

Many Ibaloy youth navigate both ancestral and urban worlds, participating in rituals while engaging with modern life in Baguio. Their varying attentiveness during ceremonies illustrates how ritual knowledge is negotiated and transmitted across generations.

Modernization and globalization introduce lifestyles and values that can challenge the transmission of Indigenous knowledge. Tourism and urban development, for example, may reframe cultural practices as performances, reducing their social and spiritual significance (Alejandria-Gonzalez, 2016). At the same time, the responsibility of cultural transmission increasingly rests on elders and ritual specialists, making intergenerational continuity both crucial and fragile (Ona & Solis, 2017; Paredes, 2019).

In Loakan, the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* remains a central anchor of Ibaloy identity and kinship. Although certain material elements have adapted over time, such as the use of bottled tapuy, the pig continues to hold an indispensable role, structuring relationships of reciprocity, affirming obligations to ancestors, and mediating connections between the human and spiritual worlds. This continuity exemplifies how ritual practices adapt while maintaining their core symbolic meanings. By centering on pig offerings, this study contributes to anthropological discussions on how ritual embodies cultural resilience, sustains identity, and facilitates intergenerational knowledge transmission in contemporary Indigenous communities.

## Statement of the Problem

This study investigates the central question: What is the significance of pigs in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* among the Ibaloy of Loakan, Baguio? The Ibaloy people of Loakan maintain rich cultural traditions transmitted across generations, with rituals playing a central role in expressing social, spiritual, and communal values. Among these practices, the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* occupies a prominent place, in which pigs are considered indispensable. Within Ibaloy cultural life, pigs function not merely as livestock but as ritual beings imbued with social, spiritual, and symbolic significance.

To address this central question, the study is guided by five sub-questions. First, how do Ibaloy elders and ritual specialists interpret the meaning of pig offerings, and how do emotions, memories, and moral values shape these interpretations? Second, how do participants interpret and emotionally experience the act of butchering within the ritual context, including feelings of responsibility, reverence, and connection to ancestors and spirits? Third, how are pigs selected, prepared, and offered during the ritual, and what cultural rules, ancestral narratives, or ritual instructions guide these practices? Fourth, how do pig offerings reinforce kinship, reciprocity, and social cohesion within families and the wider community, including relationships between the living and the ancestors? Fifth, how do younger Ibaloy participants engage with the ritual, and how do they navigate ancestral expectations alongside the influences of modern life?

Through these questions, the study aims to examine both the symbolic dimensions of pig offerings and the lived experiences of ritual participants. It seeks to illuminate how ritual practice, emotion, and social values intersect within the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*, positioning the ritual as a dynamic and living expression of Ibaloy culture, memory, and continuity amid social change.

## Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine the cultural significance of pig offerings in Ibaloy ritual practice, particularly within the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* in Loakan, Baguio. By addressing the central research question and sub-questions, the study explores the connections between pigs, ritual performance, social relations, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. The following specific objectives were pursued:

- Explore the processes of the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* and the treatment of pigs, including selection, preparation, offering, and the roles of participants during the ceremony.
- Analyze the symbolic meanings associated with pigs, including how their cries, blood, meat, and gender communicate ideas about strength, fertility, prosperity, and moral values, and how they connect participants to ancestral spirits.
- Examine the social functions of pig offerings, including how the ritual reinforces family cohesion, reciprocity, respect, and collective identity within the Ibaloy community.
- Document the sensory and embodied dimensions of the ritual, including the sounds, scents, and movements that shape participant experience and contribute to the ritual's meaning.
- Investigate the continuity and adaptation of the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* in contemporary times, focusing on how the ritual is preserved, modified, or adapted in response to social, economic, and cultural changes.

## Significance of the Study

This study provides documentation of Ibaloy cultural heritage, capturing both ritual practices and the symbolic role of pigs in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*. By preserving detailed accounts of selection, preparation, and offering, the research fosters intergenerational awareness and connection, helping younger Ibaloy understand the meanings behind each practice. In doing so, it supports efforts to safeguard cultural traditions amid the pressures of modernization, urbanization, and external cultural influences that can erode Indigenous knowledge (Bachiller, 2013).

The research contributes to anthropological discourse on ritual symbolism, sacrifice, and reciprocity. It demonstrates how pig offerings operate as multivocal symbols that mediate relationships between the living, ancestors, and *Kabunian*, while reinforcing social cohesion, kinship, and community values. By analyzing both the structure and the lived experience of the ritual, the study highlights the ways in which Indigenous knowledge is practiced, transmitted, and embodied rather than simply remembered or described.

This study emphasizes the dignity, wisdom, and depth of Ibaloy ways of knowing. It honors the elders whose memories and guidance sustain ritual practices, and it gives voice to participants' emotions, reflections, and attentiveness during the ceremony. In doing so, it highlights ethical research relationships grounded in mutual respect, care, and reciprocity, showing that ritual is not only a symbolic structure but also a space of shared responsibility, attention, and memory.

Finally, this research encourages empathy and understanding of cultural continuity in contemporary contexts. It celebrates the lived humanity of the Ibaloy community, portraying rituals as dynamic, meaningful, and resilient traditions that continue to shape identity, values, and social life. While this study documents and analyzes the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* in Loakan, it does not

make comparative claims about Ibaloy practices in other regions or among other Indigenous communities.

### **Scope and Limitations**

The study is centered on the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* of the Ibaloy as practiced in Loakan Proper, Baguio City. Fieldwork was conducted during a two-day period, specifically on June 10 and 11, 2025, when rituals were scheduled and observed in the community. The research gives primary attention to the role of pigs, which are the central animals offered in the ritual, while also noting related ritual components such as the preparation of rice wine (*tapuy*), excluding the fermentation process, the performance of ritual chants (*ba'diw*), and the construction of the altar (*bangkilay*). These elements are described only insofar as they contribute to understanding the pig's place in the ritual. The content is limited to the ritual stages that were directly observed during fieldwork: *Keshew*, *Taydiw*, *Tayaw*, *Ba'diw*, *Sapnak ng Taydiw*, and *Bangkilay*. Other stages, variations, or rituals not performed within the observation period were excluded from the scope of the study.

Given the wide distribution of the Ibaloy across the Cordillera region, this research concentrated on Loakan Proper, which is recognized as an Ibaloy community in Baguio City. Although Loakan also hosts other Cordilleran groups and non-indigenous residents, the informants consulted were specifically Ibaloy to maintain cultural focus. As such, the findings are limited to this community and are not intended to be generalized to all Ibaloy groups in the Cordillera.

The study faced several limitations that must be acknowledged. Data relied heavily on oral testimonies provided by elders and *mambunong*. While oral tradition is a vital source of cultural knowledge, it is susceptible to memory lapses, selective recollections, and personal interpretation. Cultural protocols also restricted access to certain sacred aspects of the ritual, limiting the depth

of detail that could be documented. For example, we were not allowed to enter the ritual space during prayers offered for the host family. Similarly, during the reading of the pig's innards, information could not be gathered because this moment is considered highly sacred and reserved for the *mambunong*. Some rules of the ritual were not explicitly shared with outsiders, and certain chants, practices, or knowledge are confidential and accessible only to the *mambunong*, and/or community members. Even community members acknowledged that some terms, jargons, and symbolic meanings are difficult to fully articulate, and their explanations often required repeated clarification during interviews, informal conversations, and group discussions.

As an adult woman and non-Ibaloy researcher, my presence in the field influenced my access and understanding of the ritual. The guidance of the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative, the community, and the host family was essential in navigating the cultural norms and boundaries of participation and observation. My interpretations are shaped by my experiences during the limited fieldwork period and by the specific informants who chose to share their knowledge, as well as by the moments when access was withheld.

Finally, the study does not attempt to include all aspects of Ibaloy cosmology, beliefs, and taboos connected to the ritual. These remain important areas for future research, which could extend the present work through longer immersion, broader community participation, and comparative studies across multiple Ibaloy communities in the Cordillera. Despite these limitations, the research provides insight into the central role of pigs, ritual practice, and lived experiences within the Ibaloy community in Loakan.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

#### Ritual

Rituals have long been recognized by anthropologists as central to cultural and social life. Drawing on Turner (1969), rituals can be understood as symbolic processes through which communities manage transitions, tensions, and change, passing through stages of separation, liminality, and reintegration. Turner emphasized that rituals foster a sense of togetherness, or *communitas*. Douglas (1966) similarly highlighted how rituals structure cultural order, showing how offerings and other practices mark what is sacred or ordinary, pure or polluted. Sills (1987) added that rituals transmit important knowledge in societies where traditions are practiced rather than written, serving as living stories that connect people to their ancestors and cultural identity. These theoretical perspectives frame the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* as both a symbolic process and a lived practice among the Ibaloy.

In this study, rituals refer to the indigenous religious and ritual systems practiced by the Ibaloy in Loakan. Among the Ibaloy, rituals—locally called *ke 'dot*—are sacred, communal acts performed to fulfill spiritual, social, and ancestral obligations. One elder described *ke 'dot* simply: “The one that is led and done by the *mambunong*.” *Ke 'dot* encompasses all rituals or sub-rituals performed during community events, such as the *cañao*, and embodies both spiritual and social dimensions. As another elder explained, “Everything that they did is a *ke 'dot*.” *Ke 'dot* are deeply rooted in Ibaloy cosmology and worldview, serving as vital expressions of their relationships with *Kabunian*, nature, and ancestral spirits. Rituals are conducted to heal the sick, give thanks, request blessings, and guide the souls of the departed. These acts are not merely ceremonial; they are

essential for maintaining balance between the physical and spiritual worlds, affirming kinship ties, upholding customary law, and transmitting cultural knowledge across generations (Prill-Brett, 2004).

## **Offering**

Animal offering, also called sacrificial offering, is a ritualistic practice found in many cultures worldwide. It typically involves the ceremonial killing of an animal to honor, communicate with, or appease deities, spirits, or ancestors. Anthropologists have shown that animal offerings function not only as religious devotion but also as symbolic communication, social cohesion, and cultural continuity. Douglas (1966) emphasized the symbolic role of purity and pollution, noting that animals often represent moral and social order, and their offering helps maintain harmony. Turner (1969) described offerings as part of a ritual process that allows communities to transition through social states. Girard's (1972) theory of ritualized violence is acknowledged but not central to this study; while he emphasizes the channeling of aggression through sacrificial acts, the analysis here focuses primarily on mediation, reciprocity, and the reinforcement of social and spiritual relationships rather than violence. Van Gennep (1960) identified offering as a key act marking life transitions such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death.

While these theories emerge from diverse cultural settings, they illuminate how Ibaloy pig offerings operate as moral, spiritual, and social mediators within their community.

In Ibaloy culture, animal offering—most notably the pig—is deeply rooted and serves religious, social, and symbolic purposes. Sacrificial rituals, or *ke'dot*, are performed during life-cycle events such as births, weddings, and deaths, as well as healing and agricultural rites. The ritual involves the public killing of the animal, followed by communal feasting, dancing, and the

playing of indigenous instruments. One Ibaloy informant explained, “*Offering is not only the animals but also the things that the deceased relatives need to be comfortable in the other life. It is something that is requested, or it may symbolize the life of the deceased when they were still alive.*” These offerings reinforce social bonds, uphold hierarchical and kinship structures, and transmit knowledge and respect across generations.

### *Tayaw*

In Ibaloy culture, *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* refers to the ritual that includes the *tayaw* – a traditional dance performed during community feasts such as the *cañao*. *Tayaw* is considered a sacred act that facilitates communication with ancestral spirits and expresses communal identity. Scholars have highlighted the symbolic importance of such ritual dances. Turner (1969) emphasizes that rituals generate *communitas*, a sense of togetherness and equality among participants, which is evident in how *tayaw* fosters unity and shared purpose. Geertz (1973) frames rituals as performance and text, interpreting them as culturally coded acts that convey meaning, morality, and social structure; in this view, *tayaw* functions as a symbolic text, expressing Ibaloy cosmology, values, and intergenerational connections.

The *tayaw* embodies moral, social, and spiritual dimensions. It invites ancestral presence, structures community engagement, and reinforces reciprocity and respect among participants. Its performance is inseparable from the wider *ke 'dot* ritual, which collectively sustains Ibaloy identity, kinship obligations, and intergenerational knowledge transmission (Prill-Brett, 2004).

By anchoring the *tayaw* in Turner and Geertz, this study positions the dance not merely as a cultural artifact but as a symbolic and performative mechanism through which the Ibaloy experience, transmit, and negotiate social and spiritual relationships.

## The Ibaloy and Their Ritual Traditions

The Ibaloy, one of the indigenous peoples of Benguet Province, have long been recognized for their elaborate ritual practices. These rituals, collectively referred to as *pashit* or *cañao*, serve multiple purposes including healing, thanksgiving, agricultural fertility, death commemoration, and prestige-building (Scott, 1966; Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985).

Among these, Ibaloy rituals known as *ke'dot* are conducted to honor their Supreme God, *Kabunian*. The three primary purposes of *ke'dot* are: to heal the sick, express gratitude or pray for God's blessings, and guide deceased relatives to their final destinations (Afo ni Ibadoi Project Team, 2008). A *mambunong*, an indigenous priest or priestess, leads these ceremonies, directing prayers and overseeing ritual acts. *Ke'dot* often include prestige feasts, curing séances with animal offerings, and the use of fermented rice wine (Santos & del Mundo, 2017).

While *ke'dot* encompass a wide range of Ibaloy ritual practice, this study specifically focuses on the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*, the most complete ritual in Loakan. Unlike general *ke'dot*, the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* combines offering, chants, dance, and communal feasting into a single, integrated performance, reinforcing kinship, social cohesion, and ancestral connection.

During one ritual preparation, I observed the careful arrangement of pigs for offering. Community members moved quietly around the space, some whispering instructions, others adjusting the animals' positions. A mix of pride, fear, and reverence filled the air. The *mambunong* walked through the group, reciting prayers in a gentle, low, steady voice, and everyone followed with silent attention. This moment demonstrated that ritual knowledge among the Ibaloy is transmitted not only through instruction but also through embodied practice: the tension in the

hands, careful steps, cautious glances, and shared responsibility convey meaning as powerfully as words.

Prill-Brett (2004) notes that Ibaloy rituals are socially integrative, strengthening kinship ties through reciprocity. Bachiller (2013) frames Cordillera rituals as “living traditions,” adaptable to changing times yet rooted in ancestral values. The *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* exemplifies this adaptability. Its endurance despite modernization illustrates cultural resilience, showing how fear, obligation, pride, and reverence combine to sustain the community's connection to ancestors, the spiritual world, and one another.

### **The *Mambunong***

At the heart of Ibaloy rituals is the *mambunong*, a ritual specialist who presides over offerings and invokes the spirits of ancestors and *Kabunian* (Prill-Brett, 2004). The *mambunong* possesses esoteric knowledge transmitted orally, often inherited through family lineage or apprenticeship. The learning process is not formal; it is immersive, experiential, and deeply personal. Apprentices sit quietly beside the *mambunong* for hours, watching her hands move in precise gestures, listening to the chants, and feeling the curling smoke around them. There is a mixture of fear, awe, and responsibility—fear of making a mistake that could disrupt the spirits, awe at the knowledge and presence of the *mambunong*, and a deep sense of duty to preserve sacred practices. Through this process, the apprentice absorbs not only technical skill but also a profound sense of identity and connection to the community and its ancestral lineage.

According to literature, the *mambunong*, a native priest or priestess, officiates the ritual or *ke'dot*. She holds a critical role in Ibaloy society as both a spiritual leader and a cultural guardian. Among the Ibaloy, there are more female *mambunong* than male, in contrast to the Kankana-ey of

northern Benguet, where male *mambunong* predominate (Gutierrez, 2015). The *mambunong* leads prayers, directs ritual performance, and acknowledges the ancestors who pioneered *ke'dot*, recognizing their ability to intercede for the host family with *Kabunian*. This spiritual lineage is carefully passed down, and every descendant of a *mambunong* is considered a potential candidate for the role (Afo ni Ibadoi Project Team, 2008).

Historical accounts from literature mentioned some of the most respected recent *mambunongs* in Baguio City including Connon Pucdo, Dansuyan, and Bangay, whose age and service earned them admiration. Connon Pucdo, in a 1987 interview, shared that her path to becoming a *mambunong* involved a series of tests experienced in dreams. Only after passing these spiritual trials did she acquire the knowledge and skills of the role. She described the process as overwhelming yet humbling, nights filled with visions, the smell of smoke, and the echoes of ancestral voices shaping her understanding. These experiences reinforce the belief that women possess a unique spiritual capacity to mediate between the living and the divine, giving them a central role in the maintenance of cultural practice and community well-being. Connon also said that the role of a *mambunong* is handed from generation to generation. Thus, every Ibaloy with a *mambunong* ancestor is also a potential *mambunong*. Tofeng, one of the earliest known ancestors of Ibaloy in Loakan, is a *mambunong*. His sister was Damon whose daughter, Kanadja, was a *mambunong*. And rightly so, the *mambunong* in Loakan, Jean Bayeng Walang, is Kanadja's great grandchild. (Afo ni Ibadoi Project Team, 2008)

During my fieldwork, the current *mambunong*, a 90-year-old woman, performed with deliberate care, her hands steady as she adjusted offerings and guided participants. Her voice, soft yet unwavering, led prayers that carried the weight of decades of ritual experience. Observing her,

it was clear that ritual authority is both inherited and embodied, expressed in gestures, speech, and the quiet attention commanded from the community.

Paredes (2019) highlights the elders as custodians of memory. Their ritual knowledge is fragile, threatened by generational gaps as younger Ibaloy pursue education and modern livelihoods. Observing Amanda Cados perform rituals, feeling the curling smoke, hearing her chants, and noting her subtle gestures of guidance, it becomes clear that ritual authority is not merely a title. It is a lived, embodied presence, carrying the weight of history, family, and community. Clifford and Marcus (1986) remind us that ethnographic accounts are co-productions between researcher and informants, emphasizing that documenting rituals is always shaped by the interplay of observation, participation, and shared trust.

### **Gender Roles in the Ibaloy Rituals**

Gender plays a significant and complex role in Ibaloy religion and ritual, particularly in the context of the *mambunong*, the ritual leader. Unlike many other Indigenous cultures in the Cordillera, where male figures traditionally dominate religious leadership, the Ibaloy community shows a more balanced gender representation among their religious practitioners. Studies by Prill-Brett (2004) highlight that women often serve as *mambunong*, leading major rituals such as the *ke'dot*, which include healing, thanksgiving, and death ceremonies.

This inclusion of women is not incidental but deeply rooted in Ibaloy religious tradition. According to Gutierrez (2015), female *mambunong* often provide spiritual guidance and perform rituals requiring direct communication with ancestral spirits and *Kabunian*. Connon Pucdo, a well-known Ibaloy female *mambunong*, explained that her appointment came through divine guidance and her ability to pass various spiritual tests, including dreams involving the ancestors (Afo ni

Ibadoi Project Team, 2008). This underscores the Ibaloy belief that women possess a spiritual capacity to lead and mediate between the living and the divine, giving them a crucial role in maintaining cultural practice and community well-being.

Gender roles in Ibaloy rituals are shaped by the concept of balance, though they are not rigid. One elder remarked, “*Even before, everyone is expected to work. You can do any work as long as you are capable.*” During my fieldwork, this gendered complementarity was evident and reflects an Ibaloy conception of balance rather than hierarchy. Men focused on heavier physical work, lifting and positioning pigs onto the altar and constructing the ceremonial space, muscles tense with effort, coordinating each movement carefully to avoid mistakes. Meanwhile, women moved seamlessly among tables and family groups, preparing clothes and personal items for the deceased, arranging money, tobacco, cigarettes, and *tapuy* (rice wine), cooking rice, preparing vegetables, and attending to guests and relatives who came to observe or participate. Their work in serving and guiding others allowed the ritual to function efficiently, showing that balance in roles does not imply equality in all contexts. Young participants watched attentively, learning by observation, helping where they could, and sharing smiles with the elders whose faces were more serious as they carried out their duties. In this way, the preparation and performance of the ritual revealed the interplay of pride, reverence, responsibility, and care, with every contribution—physical or social—recognized as vital to the success of the *ke'dot*.

Literature shows that even in the *tayaw*, both men and women participate, reflecting shared responsibility in maintaining cultural and spiritual unity. Women often perform symbolic movements tied to their roles in the ritual, while men follow with complementary steps, together creating a performance that embodies the harmony of the community (Prill-Brett, 2004). This gendered complementarity reinforces social cohesion and embodies communal values while

remaining sensitive to the practical division of labor. In Ibaloy culture, gender is therefore not a matter of limitation or hierarchy but an integrated part of ritual life. Both men and women hold indispensable roles, contributing to the spiritual, social, and cultural continuity of the community, and each person's participation is guided by capacity, respect, and communal responsibility rather than rigid rules.

### **The Different Rituals of the Ibaloy People**

The Ibaloy people of Benguet maintain a rich tradition of rituals that structure spiritual, social, and moral life. These rituals are integral to community well-being, ensuring harmony with both the natural and spiritual worlds. While the Ibaloy perform a variety of rites, these rituals contextualize the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot*, within which pig offerings hold particular symbolic weight.

*Pashit* is a grand cañao performed by Kadangyans—wealthy individuals or those esteemed by the community—and involves offering nine or more pigs to *Kabunian* as thanksgiving. It emphasizes gratitude, communal recognition, and reciprocity (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985).

*Timongaw* is performed to restore balance and health when misfortune or spiritual disruptions occur, such as encounters with dwarfs (*ansisit*). Pigs or chickens are offered, prayers are made to ancestral spirits, and the moral focus is healing and spiritual protection (Prill-Brett, 2004).

*Sari* is a reconciliation ritual, resolving quarrels or interpersonal conflicts. Through offerings, prayers, and chants, the community symbolically restores harmony, emphasizing forgiveness and moral order (Afo ni Ibadoi Project Team, 2008).

*Aspol* appeases spirits of the deceased who may appear to travelers or the living. Offerings and prayers ensure the spirit does not harm the living, highlighting respect for the dead and vigilance toward unseen forces (Gutierrez, 2015).

*Sangbo* is a thanksgiving ritual performed when wealth or material blessings are accumulated. It centers on gratitude, communal recognition, and cohesion, with offerings, prayers, and feasting reinforcing social ties (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985).

*Sapnak* ensures the repose of the deceased's soul and often involves repairing sacred ritual objects, emphasizing memory preservation, spiritual continuity, and devotion across generations (Prill-Brett, 2004).

*Ka'fe* guides the dead to their final resting place or invokes blessings from *Kabunian*. It can last for multiple days, with offerings of animals and material items that the deceased may need, accompanied by prayers and chanting. The ritual reinforces memory, spiritual continuity, and the intimate connection between living and dead (Gutierrez, 2015).

Within this broader ritual landscape, the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* integrates dance, chants, music, and pig offerings, transforming ritual into a communal performance. The *ba'diw* chant acts as a dialogue between the living and the dead, enabling communion across realms (Bachiller, 2013). Geertz (1973) frames such performances as symbolic texts conveying meaning, while Turner (1969) interprets ritual dance as fostering *communitas*. These performances embody unity, continuity, and shared memory.

Collectively, Ibaloy rituals demonstrate a moral universe in which acts of offering, prayer, and performance mediate relationships with ancestors, *Kabunian*, and community members. Each

ritual reinforces social cohesion, ethical responsibility, and spiritual vigilance, setting the stage for understanding *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* as a ritual where pig offerings carry heightened symbolic and communal significance.

A famous passage from the chant, as cited in the Afo ni Ibadoi Project Team (2008):

*Ka'fe's* chant for burial will start through this line of a *mambunong*:

*Kuwan kunu niya kavuniyan na  
Bangan na kavuniyan niy, 'Nu metey  
I ine ju ame ju, ixepi yo say mebiyag  
kayu, ma fedad, kayu, manditsuy I  
kuvu yun salun ju, dugam ju,  
empalapalapad kayu ngu ni ulay,  
diteng kanu. Isunga ixepi yu iy ame  
ju. Ta si 'katuy edafuwan ju shiyus ju.  
Kuwan kunu nunta Bangan na  
kavuniyan. Sin tafuy kami xet kami ka  
man kapi.' Say egwaten kunula men  
afu sun en inetu. Awat ju la ta iyena  
ingkapi mi si 'kayu lay enadjuwan*

Said this goddess, Bangan, a goddess, 'If your mother/father died, that you will live, you will be lucky, your pigs will be prolific and plenty, your animals, your plants, you will be fortunate, you will be well. That is why you celebrate the *ka'fe* for your father because you came from him, he is your god,' said Bangan, the goddess. 'We also celebrate *ka'fe*.' So that he will be accepted by his grandparents and by his mother. Accept him because we have celebrated *ka'fe*. You will take care of him."

### **Symbolism of Animal Offerings**

Animal offering holds a central place in Ibaloy ritual life, woven into both the spiritual and social fabric of the community. According to Douglas (1966), offerings act as a way to preserve symbolic order, mediating between what is considered pure and dangerous. In the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*, pigs carry this role in vivid, tangible ways. Their blood is not just a physical substance but a visible life force, offered with care to the spirits and ancestors, marking recognition of the sacred.

The meat becomes a shared resource, redistributed among participants, reflecting reciprocity, generosity, and social cohesion. The gender and number of pigs are carefully observed, following ancestral expectations, as these factors are believed to determine the efficacy of the ritual. One elder explained, “*The louder the pig’s cry, the more it reaches the ancestors and the whole community,*” highlighting the intertwined importance of sound, presence, and spiritual communication. During fieldwork, I watched elders handle the animals with steady hands and focused eyes, while younger family members observed quietly, learning the meaning behind each careful gesture.

Turner (1969) frames offering as part of a ritual process involving separation, liminality, and reintegration, and in the Ibaloy context, pigs serve as living mediums of these transitions. Voss (1987) notes that offerings also reinforce social order, which was evident as families collaborated during preparation—some managing the animals, others arranging complementary offerings—each action reflecting respect, devotion, and shared responsibility. In these moments, the weight of moral and spiritual duty is palpable: fear, awe, pride, and reverence all blend as participants engage in acts that sustain their cultural and spiritual worlds. The offering is thus not only a symbolic gesture but a deeply felt human practice that binds the living, honors ancestors, and maintains the rhythm of Ibaloy communal life.

Thus, the pig operates simultaneously as sacrifice, message, resource, and moral anchor, serving to connect the living with their ancestors, transmit cultural knowledge and communal values, mediate social obligations, and embody both spiritual and ethical responsibilities within the *Tayaw Shi Ke ’dot*.

## **Feasting, Reciprocity, and Prestige**

Redistributive feasting is a hallmark of Cordillera rituals. By sponsoring a feast and offering pigs, a family demonstrates not only wealth but also moral obligation and social responsibility, signaling their care for the community and ancestors (Prill-Brett, 2004). Prestige in this context is earned through generosity, not accumulation, and the ability to host and redistribute resources reflects the family's commitment to communal values. Turner (1969) stresses that feasts generate *communitas*, a sense of solidarity that transcends social divisions. Geertz (1973) views ritual feasts as cultural "texts," expressing values of reciprocity, obligation, and kinship. Bachiller (2013) documents how feasts reinforce collective memory, while Alejandria-Gonzalez (2016) notes that rituals remain markers of identity amidst globalization. Ona and Solis (2017) further observe that while substitutions occur, such as bottled rice wine replacing tapuy jars or cigarettes replacing native tobacco, pigs remain essential, anchoring ritual authenticity and linking acts of generosity to enduring social and spiritual obligations.

Prestige is earned through generosity, not accumulation, and the redistribution of pigs during feasts embodies both ethical responsibility and communal solidarity, reinforcing moral, social, and spiritual bonds within the Ibaloy community.

## **Continuity and Change in Ritual Practices**

Indigenous rituals are not static relics but living, adaptive traditions that respond to changing times. Alejandria-Gonzalez (2016) highlights that rituals negotiate modernity by incorporating new materials while keeping their symbolic meaning intact. Ona and Solis (2017) note how modern substitutions, such as bottled liquor or cigarettes, coexist alongside traditional elements, reflecting flexibility without compromising the essence of the practice. Douglas (1966)

observes that even as rituals evolve, symbolic boundaries are carefully maintained. Bachiller (2013) describes Cordillera rituals as “living traditions,” continuously reinterpreted across generations, preserving both authenticity and adaptability.

These practices demonstrate cultural resilience, defined in this thesis as the capacity of Ibaloy rituals to adapt to contemporary circumstances while maintaining core spiritual, social, and moral meanings across generations. Even with changes in materials, timing, or participation, the rituals retain their central function of reinforcing social cohesion, spiritual communication, and communal responsibility. Elders play a key role in sustaining this resilience, guiding participants and ensuring that the symbolic and ethical dimensions of *ke'dot*—particularly the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*—remain understood and respected. In these moments, the endurance of ritual practice highlights the ability of Ibaloy culture to absorb modern influences without losing its foundational significance, ensuring continuity and meaningful participation across generations.

## **Material Culture of Ibaloy Ritual Life**

### **Archeological Artifacts**

The material culture of the Ibaloy—including tools like the *uwek*, ritual platforms such as the *bangkilay*, ceremonial clothing, and musical instruments—provides tangible connections to centuries of spiritual and cultural practice. These objects are more than functional; they carry symbolic weight, embodying ancestral knowledge, communal identity, and ritual protocols. Items such as *tapuy*, *indutsek*, and *sapsap* demonstrate how natural materials are integrated into ritual life, reinforcing relationships with the environment. Pigs, costumes, and instruments act as embodied extensions of belief, showing how material objects facilitate ritual efficacy, mediate between the physical and spiritual worlds, and enable learning through practice. These artifacts do

not merely represent ritual ideals; they require physical engagement and skill to be effective, teaching participants through repetition and careful observation how spiritual power is enacted and how communal responsibilities are fulfilled. In interacting with these objects, participants experience the embodied dimensions of tradition, internalizing ritual forms, movements, and the ethics of care that underpin Ibaloy cultural life.

### **Ibaloy Costumes**

Ritual garments mark identity and support embodied performance. Women wear the *Kambal* blouse and *Di'vet* wrap-around skirt, often accented with *samra* cloth, signaling cultural pride. Men wear a simple g-string with dark stripes (Afo ni Ibadoi Project Team, 2008). During the *Tayaw*, women drape *Sarong* blankets, and men wear two *Tayaw* blankets over their shoulders. These heavy, textured garments require care and strength to move gracefully, linking body, movement, and spirit. By physically navigating the weight and form of these garments, dancers experience how embodied knowledge is inseparable from ritual authority and efficacy. Children and youth observing and mimicking these movements learn not only the steps but the ethical and spiritual significance embedded in each gesture, highlighting how material culture functions as a conduit for learning through practice and transmitting cultural memory.

### **Ibaloy Musical Instruments**

Musical instruments structure the rhythm, energy, and spiritual resonance of rituals. The *Gangsa* family—*Kalsa*, *Pinsak*, and *Tihitik*—plays in sequential order, guiding dancers and reinforcing ritual timing (Prill-Brett, 2004). The *Solibao* and *Kimbal* drums establish the foundational rhythm, coordinating movement and ensuring ritual cohesion. Drum faces are prepared carefully, and vibrations resonate through the participants' bodies, creating a shared sense

of embodiment in the ritual space. The instruments function as more than tools; they are active mediators of spiritual presence, making visible the flow of power and facilitating the efficacy of the ceremony. Young participants observe and mimic musicians, learning the sequence of strikes, the force, and timing, showing how the instruments are critical in teaching both the technical and moral dimensions of ritual performance, passing knowledge across generations through hands-on practice.

### **Ibaloy Ritual Tools**

*Tapuy* - Rice wine used in ritual contexts to symbolize communion with both ancestors and deities, strengthening spiritual and social bonds (Prill-Brett, 1987).

*Uwek* –a pointed wooden stick used to pierce the side of the pig, initiates the sacrificial process and is essential in fulfilling ritual protocols (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985; Prill-Brett, 2004).

*Sapsap* – typically a banana leaf, is used to lay the pig before offering, symbolizing respect for the offering and maintaining ritual cleanliness (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985; Prill-Brett, 2004).

*Singkalong* – During Ibaloy rituals, the singkalong, a bamboo container, is used to hold tapuy or broth from the sacrificial pig, playing both a symbolic and functional role in the sharing of blessings and spiritual communion (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985; Prill-Brett, 2004).

*Indutsek* – a post made of pine pith, serves both as a protective symbol and a spiritual vessel during Ibaloy rituals, often positioned near the household's entrance to welcome blessings and repel malevolent spirits (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985; Prill-Brett, 2004).

*Bangkilay* –an altar-like structure made for offering pigs. It is constructed using four posts with sticks woven serving as platform and is used as an offertory table for butchered pigs, acting as a sacred intermediary between the living and ancestral spirits (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985; Prill-Brett, 2004).

Together, these artifacts, costumes, instruments, and ritual tools show how material culture in Ibaloy life is not merely decorative but constitutive of ritual practice. They enable participants to engage physically and morally, linking movement, attention, and intention to spiritual outcomes. Through direct engagement, observation, and imitation, participants develop embodied understanding, ensuring that ritual knowledge is both effective and ethically transmitted. Material culture thus mediates learning, reinforces communal responsibility, and sustains ritual efficacy, making the spiritual and social dimensions of Ibaloy life inseparable from their tangible objects.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is structured around three interrelated pillars:

- Rituals and Symbols
- Social Systems, Learning, and Indigenous Knowledge
- Continuity, Change, and Adaptation

These pillars provide the analytical foundation for understanding the significance of pigs in the *tayaw* ritual of the Ibaloy in Loakan, Baguio. They allow the researcher to examine pigs not simply as animals but as cultural symbols that carry spiritual, social, and practical meaning. Within this framework, five main analytical variables guide interpretation: symbolism, ritual practice, kinship, cultural transmission, and adaptation. These variables are treated as lenses for analysis, not as causal claims, to structure and interpret ethnographic data.

### **Rituals and Symbols**

Rituals are structured cultural acts that express meaning, connecting people to one another, their ancestors, and the spiritual world. Among Ibaloy rituals, the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* is particularly central, combining music, dance, and offerings, with pigs at its core. Theories of symbolic anthropology, ritual process, and offering provide the foundation for interpreting pigs not as mere animals but as carriers of layered cultural meaning.

### **Symbolic Anthropology: Culture as Webs of Meaning**

Clifford Geertz (1973) emphasized that culture is a network of significance, requiring “thick description” to interpret human actions. In the *tayaw*, the pig is a cultural text: while outsiders may see only an animal being butchered, the Ibaloy view it as communication with *Kabunian* and the ancestors (Sacla, 1987). Victor Turner (1969) highlighted the multivocal nature of symbols. The pig simultaneously represents spiritual offering, family prestige, and communal blessing, demonstrating how symbolic meaning reinforces ritual efficacy. Mary Douglas (1966) argued that rituals also mediate purity, danger, and cosmic order. In the *tayaw*, pigs carry away imbalance, helping restore harmony between visible and invisible worlds. This pillar shows that pigs embody moral, spiritual, and cosmological responsibilities.

## **Ritual Process: Stages and Transformation**

Arnold van Gennep (1960) described ritual as a process of separation, liminality, and incorporation. In the *tayaw*, the separation begins when the family prepares the pig, the liminal stage occurs during offerings and dance, and incorporation happens when meat is distributed. Turner (1969) explained that liminality fosters *communitas*, a temporary suspension of social distinctions. The pig functions as a liminal object, enabling participants to embody spiritual and social transformation. Understanding this process helps interpret why the community collectively invests emotion, care, and attention in the pig offering.

### **Offering and Mediation**

Offering theory frames the pig as a mediator of social and spiritual obligations. Girard (1972) suggested that offerings channel communal tensions, and Voss (1987) emphasized that pigs in the Cordillera carry the “heaviest symbolic load.” Harris (1979) highlighted practical reasons, such as meat yield and reproductive efficiency, but the symbolic rationale, grounded in ancestral expectation, remains dominant (Sacla, 1987). This pillar clarifies that pigs operate at the intersection of practical necessity and ritual symbolism, sustaining the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot's* efficacy.

### **The Pig as a Multivocal Symbol**

From these theories, the pig emerges as a multivocal symbol in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*. It carries multiple overlapping meanings:

- Spiritual – a gift to *Kabunian* and the ancestors (Sacla, 1987).

- Social – a sign of prestige and generosity for the family (Bagamaspad & Hamada-Pawid, 1985).
- Cosmological – a mediator restoring balance between visible and invisible worlds (Douglas, 1966).
- Practical – a source of nourishment distributed to the community (Prill-Brett, 2004).
- Economic – an investment that shows offering and commitment (Harris, 1979).

Clifford Geertz (1973) emphasized that the goal of anthropology is to provide a “thick description” of culture. In the context of this study, this approach requires understanding the pig in the tayaw ritual not as a single symbol but as a complex entity whose multiple meanings overlap and reinforce one another. The pig in the tayaw is a dense cultural symbol that reveals the depth and intricacy of Ibaloy ritual life.

The first group of theories provides a foundation for interpreting the pig as both a symbolic and ritual object. Symbolic anthropology allows the pig to be viewed as a cultural text rich with layered meanings. Ritual process theory explains the centrality of pigs in transitions between stages of life and death. Theories of sacrifice clarify why pigs, in particular, are selected for ritual purposes and what they signify. Ethnographic studies by Sacla (1987) and other Cordillera scholars provide the contextual grounding necessary to link these theoretical perspectives to Ibaloy cultural practices. In observing the tayaw firsthand, I realized that each theoretical lens helped illuminate aspects of the ritual I might have otherwise overlooked—the symbolism of the pig, the stages of communal transformation, and the reinforcement of social and spiritual order. Drawing from these

foundations, the tayaw is approached not merely as a ceremonial event but as a cultural performance in which pigs function as mediators, symbols, and carriers of meaning.

### **Social Systems, Learning, and Indigenous Knowledge**

Rituals are not only symbolic actions but also mechanisms for maintaining social systems and transmitting knowledge across generations. For the Ibaloy, the tayaw ritual functions both as a religious observance and a social event. It reinforces kinship ties, demonstrates respect for tradition, and teaches younger members how to engage in cultural life. To understand these dimensions, the study draws on theories of social systems and authority, social learning and cultural transmission, and indigenous knowledge and oral tradition. These perspectives provide a foundation for examining how pigs, as integral elements of the tayaw, are linked to the broader structure and organization of Ibaloy society.

#### **Rituals and Social Systems**

Max Weber (1978) argued that rituals are not isolated practices but are embedded in social systems and structures of authority. Rituals reinforce what he called “traditional authority,” which is based on customs and the legitimacy of ancestral ways. In the Ibaloy context, when a family offers pigs in the tayaw, they demonstrate loyalty to ancestral tradition. This reinforces their position in the community and shows that they uphold the values of their forebears. Scott (1966) noted that the Ibaloy historically referred to themselves as “Igodot,” or “people of the mountains,” emphasizing their rootedness in place. This rootedness is not only geographic but also cultural. Rituals like the tayaw serve to express and renew this belonging. Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid (1985) also emphasized that rituals in the Cordillera are important mechanisms for strengthening kinship ties and ensuring that social obligations are remembered.

Prill-Brett (2004) highlighted that the distribution of meat in rituals is not a casual sharing but a structured act that reinforces social order. The pig is butchered and divided according to hierarchy: the first share is offered to the spirits, then to the *mambunong* (native priestess), followed by kin and community members. This redistribution is both symbolic and practical. Symbolically, it shows that the spirits and ancestors are honored. Socially, it makes visible the bonds of kinship and reciprocity. From this perspective, the pig in the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* functions as a social object as much as a religious one. Its offering reaffirms authority, kinship, and community solidarity.

The structured distribution of meat—first to spirits, then to ritual leaders, and finally to kin and community—demonstrates how the pig enacts both spiritual and social obligations. This pillar interprets pigs as instruments that reinforce community hierarchy, kinship, and collective responsibility.

### **Learning Through Observation and Participation**

Theories of learning also help explain why rituals remain strong in Ibaloy society despite pressures from modernization. Albert Bandura (1977) developed social learning theory, which argues that people learn behaviors by observing others and then imitating them. In rituals, children see their elders' tying pigs, preparing offerings, dancing, and chanting. Without formal teaching, they begin to learn what is expected of them. Lev Vygotsky (1978) added that learning happens in the zone of proximal development—the space between what a learner can do alone and what they can do with guidance. In the *tayaw*, younger participants are guided by elders and the *mambunong*. They may not yet know the full prayers or dances, but through repeated participation, they learn step by step.

Barbara Rogoff (2003) described this process as guided participation. Instead of separating learning from real life, communities like the Ibaloy teach their children by involving them directly in cultural activities. Through helping with preparations, carrying ritual objects, or joining in the dance, young people gradually acquire ritual knowledge. Prill-Brett (2004) observed that ritual practices in the Cordillera are not written down but passed through active involvement. This makes participation essential. Without it, knowledge cannot be transmitted. Paredes (2019) further explained that oral tradition is fragile because it depends on memory, practice, and continuity. If younger generations stop participating, the knowledge may be lost.

These theories show that the tayaw ritual is not only about honoring ancestors but also about teaching and learning. The pig plays a central role in this process. It is through the handling, offering, and distribution of the pig that much of the ritual knowledge is practiced and observed. By watching the young Ibaloy mimic the elders during the tayaw, I could see how theory met practice: social learning and guided participation came alive, and the importance of oral transmission became immediately visible.

### **Gender Roles in Ritual Practice**

Gender is another important aspect of rituals. Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid (1985) noted that in many Cordillera communities, men and women have complementary roles in rituals. Men are usually responsible for the physical act of butchering the pig, while women prepare the food and sometimes lead the prayers. Prill-Brett (2004) observed that among the Ibaloy, women can also become *mambunong*. This is significant because in some neighboring groups, only men serve as ritual leaders. This shows that Ibaloy society allows for flexibility and recognizes spiritual authority in both genders. Gutierrez (2015) documented the life of Connon Pucdo, a respected

female *mambunong*. She inherited her authority through dreams, which were interpreted as signs from the ancestors. Her story demonstrates how ritual power is not simply assigned by gender but can be granted through spiritual experience. Sacla (1987) also described the role of ritual specialists in Ibaloy society. The *mambunong* acts as the keeper of tradition, leading prayers, interpreting signs, and ensuring the ritual is properly done. Their authority does not come from formal schooling but from community recognition and ancestral sanction.

These examples show that the pig offering is not just an act of offering but also a site where gender roles and spiritual authority are expressed. Men and women participate differently but in complementary ways, ensuring that the ritual can be carried out successfully. During the ritual I observed, the division of labor became clear: men handled the heavy physical tasks while women prepared offerings, attended guests, and ensured smooth progression. The atmosphere reflected pride, care, and a sense of shared responsibility, highlighting the lived experience of gendered roles in ritual practice.

### **Indigenous Knowledge and Oral Tradition**

Rituals in the Cordillera are deeply tied to oral tradition. Sacla (1987) emphasized that Ibaloy rituals rely on the spoken word—chants, prayers, and oral instructions passed from one generation to another. Unlike formal religious texts, these traditions are not written down but are remembered and performed. Prill-Brett (2004) explained that oral transmission requires constant practice. The *ba'diw* chants, for example, are learned by listening and repeating. Without occasions to perform them, memory fades, and knowledge disappears. Paredes (2019) warned that indigenous knowledge is vulnerable in modern times because it is not institutionalized. Once elders pass away without apprentices, rituals risk being forgotten.

This fragility underscores the importance of rituals such as the *tayaw*, which function as living classrooms where knowledge is actively practiced and renewed. Clifford and Marcus (1986) emphasized that ethnography is a co-constructed process, and in this study, the researcher's understanding of indigenous knowledge is shaped by the insights and experiences shared by Ibaloy elders. Their oral traditions are not merely information but living expressions of cultural identity. Being present during the *tayaw*, I could witness oral knowledge in action—chants repeated, movements guided, and the elders' quiet corrections of younger participants—bringing theory into vivid, lived experience.

The second group of theories highlights how rituals are connected to social systems, learning, and knowledge transmission. From Weber's (1978) perspective, the pig offering reinforces traditional authority and kinship structures. Theories of social learning illuminate how ritual knowledge is transmitted through observation, guidance, and active participation. Ethnographic insights from Prill-Brett (2004), Sacla (1987), and Paredes (2019) demonstrate how oral traditions, though fragile, remain powerful vehicles for cultural continuity. Across these perspectives, the pig emerges as more than an animal; it is central to maintaining social order, educating younger generations, and sustaining indigenous knowledge. Anchored by the pig offering, the *tayaw* ritual functions simultaneously as a sacred practice and a social institution within Ibaloy society. Observing these dynamics in real time made clear how symbolic, social, and educational roles of the pig interconnect, giving depth to my ethnographic interpretation.

This pillar demonstrates that pigs are vehicles of social cohesion, moral instruction, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Their offering integrates learning, authority, and cultural continuity within the *tayaw*.

## **Continuity, Change, and Adaptation**

The third foundation of the study focuses on how rituals, such as the Ibaloy *tayaw*, persist and adapt in contemporary contexts. Rituals are not static traditions; they evolve as communities encounter economic, social, and cultural changes. Despite these adaptations, their core significance often remains intact. To understand this process, the study draws on theories of cultural materialism, commoditization and ritual economy, and perspectives on indigenous resilience and adaptation. These frameworks help explain how the pig offering continues to hold central importance even as life in Baguio and the wider Cordillera undergoes modernization.

This foundation also informs the development of the study's conceptual framework. It provides the analytical structure necessary for interpreting ethnographic observations and organizing findings. Within this framework, the main variables—such as the symbolic role of pigs, ritual practice, kinship, cultural transmission, and adaptation—are defined, and their interrelationships are examined to illuminate how the *tayaw* ritual is maintained and negotiated over time.

### **Cultural Materialism and Commoditization**

Marvin Harris (1979) developed the perspective of cultural materialism, which argues that cultural practices often have material bases. People choose practices that are adaptive to their environment and resources. Applied to rituals, this suggests that pigs may have been chosen because they reproduce quickly, eat a wide range of food, and provide a large amount of meat. However, Harris's (1979) perspective alone cannot explain the full meaning of pigs in rituals. Voss (1987) observed that in Cordillera societies, pigs are “the social products which carry the heaviest

symbolic load.” They are not only material resources but also symbolic carriers. This shows that material and symbolic reasons must be combined.

In modern Baguio, as Ona and Solis (2017) explained, rituals have faced changes due to modernization. Families may no longer have the space or time to raise pigs themselves. Instead, they purchase pigs from markets. Similarly, other ritual materials have been substituted: bottled liquor and rice wine instead of jarred *tapuy*, or commercial cigarettes instead of native tobacco. These substitutions reflect commoditization—ritual items becoming products that can be bought and sold. Alejandria-Gonzalez (2016) cautioned that tourism and commercialization may also change how rituals are understood. When rituals are performed for visitors rather than only for the community, their meanings can shift. Yet she also noted that communities negotiate these pressures in ways that still keep their cultural identity alive.

In this perspective, commoditization does not mean the death of rituals. Instead, it reflects how communities balance tradition with economic and practical realities. By witnessing families use purchased pigs and bottled offerings while still performing the *tayaw* with reverence, I could see how adaptation preserves core meanings despite modern substitutions.

### **Rituals as Living Traditions**

Rituals are best understood as living traditions, as Bachiller (2013) described in her work on Cordillera culture. This means they are not static but flexible, adapting to new contexts while retaining their essence. For example, while materials may be substituted, the central role of the pig remains. Sacla (1987) documented how Ibaloy rituals have historically been adaptive. Even as colonial pressures and modernization reached the Cordillera, the basic elements of rituals endured. This shows that adaptation is not new but has always been part of cultural survival. Alejandria-

Gonzalez (2016) emphasized that rituals can survive globalization because communities find ways to adapt without losing their identity. This makes them dynamic cultural resources, not fragile relics. From these perspectives, the pig offering in the tayaw should be seen as a resilient tradition. It adjusts to changing conditions but continues to embody spiritual, social, and cultural meanings.

The third group of theories emphasizes how rituals adapt and endure over time. Cultural materialism (Harris, 1979) provides insight into the practical and economic factors influencing ritual practices, while symbolic perspectives highlight the meanings embedded within these practices. Research on modernization (Ona & Solis, 2017; Alejandria-Gonzalez, 2016) and living traditions (Bachiller, 2013) demonstrates how rituals persist by adjusting to changing social and cultural conditions. Reflexive ethnography underscores that the researcher's understanding is always an interpretation shaped by both theoretical frameworks and lived experiences within the field. Being present at the tayaw, these frameworks helped me interpret not just what was done, but why it mattered to the community—how the past, present, and future converged in each movement, chant, and offering.

These theories helped me interpret the tayaw ritual as a dynamic cultural performance. Symbolic anthropology revealed the layered meanings of pigs and ritual elements. Ritual process theory highlighted the stages of transformation and communal unity. Theories of offering explained the pig's central role in mediating social and spiritual obligations. Social systems and learning perspectives showed how kinship, authority, and indigenous knowledge are reinforced and passed to youth. Cultural materialism and adaptation studies clarified how modern substitutions coexist with tradition, ensuring continuity. Together, these frameworks allowed me to move beyond description and understand the tayaw as both symbolic and social practice. This

pillar interprets pigs as symbols of cultural resilience and moral continuity. They reveal how the tayaw negotiates change while sustaining spiritual, social, and ethical functions.

By combining the three pillars, the conceptual framework positions the pig as a multivocal analytical object. It is a spiritual offering, a marker of prestige earned through generosity, a mediator of social obligations, a tool for learning and embodiment, and a resilient element of cultural continuity. The variables of symbolism, ritual practice, kinship, cultural transmission, and adaptation serve as analytical lenses, allowing interpretation of the pig's multiple roles without implying causality. This framework provides a systematic basis for analyzing ethnographic data, explaining how the pig sustains ritual efficacy, social cohesion, moral responsibility, and intergenerational knowledge in Ibaloy society.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework serves as the bridge between theory and research. It identifies the key variables of a study and explains the relationships among them, providing a structured approach for analyzing data and drawing informed conclusions. In the study of the significance of pigs in the tayaw ritual, the conceptual framework is grounded in the foundations of symbolic anthropology, ritual process theory, social systems and learning theories, and perspectives on continuity and change. These theoretical pillars serve as analytical lenses, allowing the pig to be interpreted as a multivocal object within ritual rather than implying any causal hierarchy.

Further understanding of the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* and associated animal offerings allows for the examination of the connection and significance of these cultural aspects, highlighting how the Ibaloy culture distinguishes itself among other ethnolinguistic groups of the Cordillera. The ritual, with emphasis on the pig offering, centers on processes, symbolic meanings, and cultural

representations. This includes the purposes of the ceremonies, the spread and continuity of the practice within the community, preparations and procedures, materials used and their representations, participants, food items, and other sociocultural aspects of Ibaloy life. In this framework, each of these components is treated as a variable that provides an analytical lens for interpreting the role and meaning of pigs in the ritual.

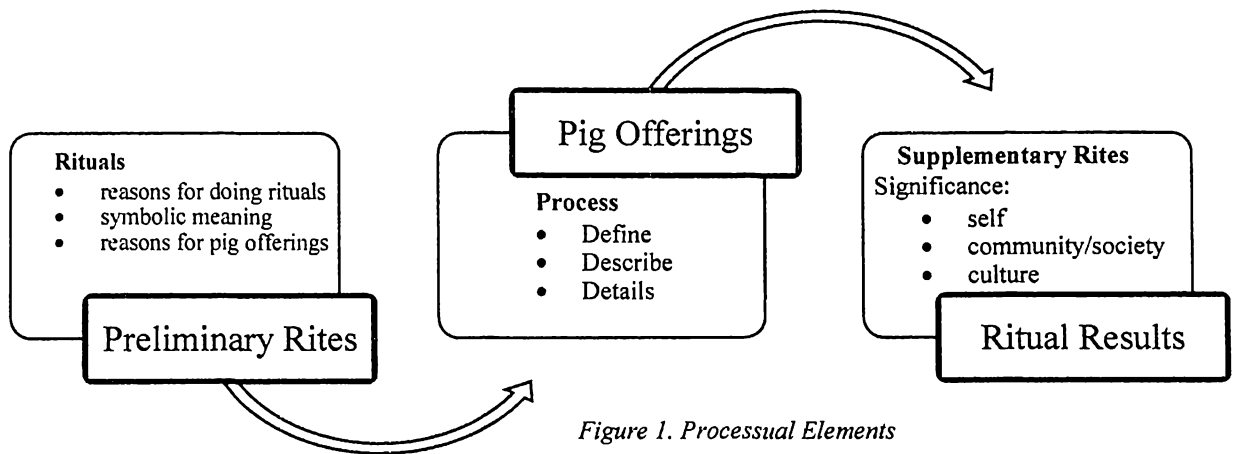


Figure 1. Processual Elements

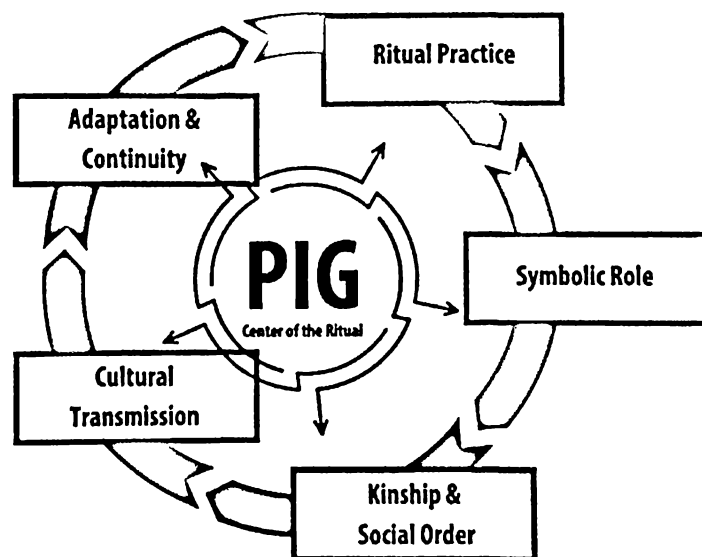
The conceptual framework of this study is informed by existing theories and ethnographic research, emphasizing the interconnected roles of ritual, symbolism, cultural transmission, social structure, and adaptation in the Ibaloy practice of pig offering within the ritual. Drawing on symbolic anthropology, the pig offering is analyzed as a cultural symbol that embodies fertility, prosperity, spiritual communication, and communal identity. Turner (1969) highlights the capacity of rituals to foster *communitas*, emphasizing social cohesion, while Douglas (1966) underscores the symbolic ordering of purity and danger, framing the ritual's significance in cosmological and moral terms. Within this context, the pig emerges as a multivocal symbol, encompassing spiritual, social, cosmological, economic, and practical meanings, extending beyond its material value. This pillar allows the researcher to interpret pig offerings as central nodes in a network of symbolic relationships, showing how material acts embody multiple layers of meaning. The *Tayaw Shi*

*Ke'dot* itself is a processual event involving preparation, offering, chanting, dancing, and distribution, reflecting van Gennep's (1960) framework of rites of passage. In each stage, the pig serves as the central element, marking transitions and reinforcing communal solidarity. At the spiritual level, the ritual facilitates communication with ancestral and cosmological powers, while at the social level, it strengthens kinship ties and community cohesion. Redistribution of pig meat according to established hierarchies sustains kinship structures and affirms social order, as noted in Cordillera ethnographies. Sponsoring families gain prestige, reinforcing their position within the community through the ritual act of giving. This pillar demonstrates that the pig functions simultaneously as a spiritual mediator, a social marker, and a symbol of communal reciprocity.

During fieldwork, kinship and ritual authority were observed to intersect. Elders led *ba'div* chanting and determined qualifications for participation. Younger relatives observed and learned through imitation, practicing gestures, sequences, and proper offerings under elder guidance. During meat distribution, elders received larger portions, symbolizing status and authority, while others received portions according to social norms. This observation clarifies how ritual practice, social hierarchy, and cultural transmission operate together, with the pig offering as the analytical lens through which these dynamics are interpreted. These ritual functions are closely tied to cultural transmission, as knowledge, values, and social roles are passed to younger generations through observation, guided participation, and oral tradition. Theoretical perspectives on learning, including Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural approach, and Rogoff's (2003) guided participation, underscore how cultural knowledge is acquired through active engagement in social practices. From this perspective, the pig serves as a pedagogical medium, enabling the interpretation of handling, offering, and distribution as critical learning moments within the ritual. At the same time, literature notes that rituals undergo adaptation in

response to broader social and economic changes. Harris (1979), through cultural materialism, emphasizes how shifts in subsistence and commoditization influence ritual practices. Studies of Cordillera rituals show how traditions adjust to modern pressures while retaining their symbolic essence (Alejandria-Gonzalez, 2016; Ona & Solis, 2017). For the tayaw, the shift from home-raised to market-bought pigs reflects adaptation, yet the pig remains irreplaceable, allowing interpretation of continuity, resilience, and cultural negotiation in the ritual.

Taken together, the symbolic role of pigs is inseparable from ritual practice, which sustains kinship and social order, facilitates cultural transmission, and responds to historical and contemporary pressures through adaptation and continuity. Observations of elders guiding youth and ritualized meat distribution illustrate how these variables operate together in practice. The pig offering is thus interpreted as both a spiritual and social mechanism, anchoring meaning, authority, pedagogy, and communal identity in Ibaloy society. By explicitly framing each variable as an analytical lens, this conceptual framework allows the pig to be understood in its multiple dimensions without implying direct causality.



*Figure 2. This framework illustrates the central role of pigs as symbolic mediators in the ritual*

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic research design. Ethnography was selected because it provides a means of understanding cultural practices by situating them in their lived contexts and by engaging deeply with the people who perform and interpret them. Since the goal of this research is to examine the significance of pigs in the rituals of the Ibaloy community in Loakan, Baguio City, ethnography was deemed appropriate as it combines observation, participation, and interpretive analysis of meanings, practices, and ritual events. The methodology sought to not only record the sequence of the tayaw ritual but also to interpret the symbolic, social, and pedagogical roles of pigs as understood by the Ibaloy community. The study is grounded in interpretive and symbolic anthropology, emphasizing thick description and meaning-making. This approach positions the researcher to understand the tayaw ritual as a culturally embedded event, where the pig is both a ritual object and a carrier of layered meanings.

Clifford and Marcus (1986) argued that ethnography is not neutral; it is a co-production of knowledge between the researcher and the community. This study was therefore guided by reflexivity, recognizing that my own presence and cultural background shaped the process of interaction, observation, and interpretation. By situating the analysis on ritual events, associated practices, and the meanings attached to the pig offering, the research identifies patterns of social organization, spiritual communication, and cultural transmission within the Ibaloy community. Through this approach, the study was able to document the ritual in detail, while also incorporating community voices and explanations, making the findings a shared account of meaning rather than a detached observation.

## **Research Locale**

The research was conducted in Loakan Proper, Baguio City, recognized as a historically significant Ibaloy settlement where rituals, including the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot*, continue to be actively practiced. Loakan remains an important site and valuable for ethnographic study for understanding Ibaloy cultural life because it preserves living ritual traditions amid urban expansion and modernization. The community provides a context in which kinship ties, cultural practices, and ritual performances remain vital, offering insight into both continuity and adaptation in Ibaloy society. The field site also provided a setting for close observation and participation, enabling detailed ethnographic documentation. The field site was both a place of observation and hospitality. Elders welcomed me into the family's communal area and offered meat and *tapuy*, allowing me to observe the *tayaw* dance closely while respecting my personal limitations.

## **Sources of data**

The participants of this study consisted of community members who played key roles in the performance and interpretation of the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot*. Central to the research was a highly respected *mambunong*, or ritual priestess, who presided over the ceremonies and provided detailed explanations of the meanings of specific actions, prayers, and offerings. Elders served as primary sources of interviews, contributing oral histories, symbolic interpretations, and contextual knowledge about the ritual. Other youth and community members participated in the feasting, dancing, chanting, and other aspects of the ritual, offering additional perspectives on communal involvement and practice. In total, 49 participants provided consent and contributed data to the study, including the *mambunong*, elders, and youth/community participants. While many other

community members attended the ritual, this group constituted the formal participants who were observed, interviewed, and engaged for research purposes.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants who were most knowledgeable about ritual practice or directly involved in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* were included. Recruitment was assisted by local gatekeepers or the IPMRs, who guided the researcher to individuals recognized within the community for their expertise and active participation. In some instances, snowball sampling occurred, as initial participants recommended other knowledgeable elders or youth actively involved in the ritual.

The study drew on multiple types of data. Primary ethnographic data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and field notes documenting ritual sequences, symbolic practices, and interactions within the community. Secondary literature included published studies and interpretive analyses of Ibaloy ritual life, such as Moss' (1920) *Nabaloi Law and Ritual*, which documented early twentieth-century practices, and Cariño's (1985) *Towards an Understanding of Ibaloy World-View in Ritual and Dance*, which provided interpretive frameworks for understanding ritual meaning.

By combining these sources, the study triangulated ritual practice, symbolic interpretation, and community perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* ritual and the central role of pigs within Ibaloy cultural life.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

Data collection employed a participant-observer approach, allowing the researcher to observe and participate in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* while maintaining analytical attention to the

symbolic, social, and cultural dimensions of the practices. The procedures were carried out in the following chronological sequence:

### **Entry into the Community**

Before entering the community, a pre-conference was held with two Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives from Loakan. The purpose of this pre-conference was to learn the proper protocols for conducting research in the community, including ethical engagement, community consultation, and culturally appropriate research practices. This stage ensured that the study adhered to local expectations and respected Ibaloy cultural norms.

### **Permission and Consent**

After the pre-conference, a formal community conference was conducted to obtain permission to conduct the study. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed to obtain a Certificate of Precondition in compliance with Republic Act No. 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997. Additionally, individual informed consent forms were distributed to participants who agreed to be interviewed or otherwise contribute data, ensuring voluntary and documented participation.

### **Observation**

Observation of the ritual was conducted during a two-day *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot*. Detailed field notes were maintained to record the sequence of activities, participant roles, spatial arrangements, and social interactions. Photographs and audio recordings were captured with prior consent, while respecting cultural restrictions on sacred acts and chants. Observations focused on the symbolic, social, and procedural aspects of the ritual rather than personal experiences of the researcher.

## **Participation**

As a participant-observer, the researcher engaged in non-sacred aspects of the ritual, including communal meals and social interactions. Participation allowed for understanding the flow of the ritual, the roles of participants, and the ways in which social cohesion and cultural meaning were enacted, without documenting restricted ritual elements.

## **Interviews**

In-depth and informal interviews were conducted with the *mambunong*, the sponsoring family, and selected elders to clarify the symbolic and practical significance of the pig offerings and other ritual elements. Additional informal conversations and group discussions with community members provided contextual information about social roles, kinship obligations, and community participation. Interviews were conducted to supplement observational data and to provide a nuanced understanding of ritual meanings and cultural transmission.

## **Post-Ritual Validation**

Following the ritual, a validation meeting was held with the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives. The purpose was to ensure that the collected data were factual, consistent with community customs, traditions, beliefs, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices, and appropriately presented for dissemination. The community reviewed and agreed on the content, extent, and manner of presentation of the data. A Certificate of Validation was subsequently issued, confirming the accuracy and ethical compliance of the study's findings.

## **Instrumentation**

The primary instruments employed in this study included notepads for field notes, a digital recorder for interviews, and a camera for visual documentation. These tools were used only after securing informed consent from participants, ensuring that all data collection complied with ethical protocols. In cases where documentation was restricted, memory recall and reflective note-taking were employed as alternatives to preserve observational and conversational details.

Interviews were conducted in a mix of English and Filipino, depending on the preference of the participant. However, many community members naturally used their Ibaloy dialect during conversations. They typically translated or paraphrased their responses into English, as this was easier for them than Filipino, while demonstrating clear understanding of both languages. This process allowed for accurate capture of nuanced cultural meanings while maintaining accessibility for documentation and analysis.

The study employed flexible interview guides as instruments. These guides provided prompts to direct conversation but were not rigid questionnaires. This approach allowed participants to elaborate freely, introduce topics relevant to their experiences, and share insights in their own words. The ethnographic openness of this approach ensured that the data reflected authentic, community-centered perspectives, and allowed emergent themes to be captured in real time. Through these instruments, the study gathered rich qualitative data encompassing symbolic, social, and procedural dimensions of the ritual. Field notes, recordings, and visual documentation were systematically integrated to support the interpretation of pig offerings as central elements of ritual practice, social structure, and cultural transmission within the Ibaloy community.

## **Data Analysis**

The data collected from key informants, interviews, participant observation, and field notes were analyzed using thematic analysis informed by symbolic anthropology and ritual process theory. The analysis followed a systematic process to ensure that interpretations were grounded in both empirical data and theoretical frameworks.

First, all interviews and field notes were transcribed verbatim. In cases where participants spoke in the Ibaloy dialect, the conversations were translated into English as directly as possible. Where nuances of the dialect could not be fully captured, contextual notes were added to preserve meaning. These transcripts, along with observational field notes, photographs, and audio recordings, formed the corpus of primary data for analysis.

Second, coding was conducted in multiple stages. Initial open coding involved reading through the data repeatedly to identify recurring ideas, behaviors, and statements related to the ritual. Codes were labeled to reflect both descriptive content and interpretive significance, such as “symbolic role of pig,” “kinship reinforcement,” “ritual authority,” and “intergenerational learning.” After open coding, axial coding was used to organize codes into broader categories corresponding to the five key analytical lenses of the study: symbolism, ritual practice, kinship, cultural transmission, and adaptation.

Third, categorization of data enabled the researcher to link observed patterns to theoretical concepts. For example, codes relating to the preparation, offering, and distribution of pigs were grouped under ritual practice and interpreted using van Gennep’s rites of passage framework. Codes related to gestures, chants, and the roles of elders and youth were analyzed through social learning theories, including Bandura’s social learning model, Vygotsky’s sociocultural approach,

and Rogoff's guided participation framework. Similarly, the symbolic significance of pigs was examined using Geertz's symbolic anthropology, Turner's multivocal symbolism, and Douglas' ideas of order, purity, and danger.

Throughout the analysis, interpretation was carried out by connecting empirical evidence to theoretical frameworks. Each category was examined to understand how it contributed to the cultural meaning of pig offerings. For example, the observation that elders received larger portions of pig meat was not interpreted in isolation; it was analyzed in relation to theories of social hierarchy and ritual authority, illustrating how kinship and status are reinforced through ritual acts. Similarly, the way younger participants learned through observation and participation was analyzed as a mechanism for cultural transmission. Adaptation of ritual materials, such as the use of market-bought pigs, was interpreted through the lens of cultural materialism and contemporary adaptation studies, showing how traditions persist while accommodating modern realities. Secondary sources, including ethnographies, historical documents, and prior studies, were triangulated with primary data to verify consistency and enrich contextual understanding. Archival documents, such as Moss' *Nabaloi Law and Ritual* (1920) and Cariño's *Towards an Understanding of Ibaloy World-View in Ritual and Dance* (1985), were used to situate current observations within broader historical and cultural contexts.

Finally, reflexivity was maintained throughout the analytical process. Following Clifford and Marcus (1986), the researcher critically reflected on how personal background, presence in the field, and interactions with community members influenced both data collection and interpretation. Analytical decisions, including the identification of themes and categorization of codes, were continuously validated against field observations, community explanations, and post-

ritual consultations with Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives to ensure cultural accuracy and ethical representation.

In summary, the data analysis process involved systematic transcription, iterative coding, categorization, and theoretical interpretation. By integrating primary ethnographic data, secondary literature, and archival sources, the study examined patterns of meaning, social practice, and symbolic representation. This approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the pig offerings within the ritual, highlighting their roles in symbolism, social cohesion, kinship reinforcement, cultural transmission, and adaptation without making causal claims.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were central to this research due to the sacred and culturally significant nature of the ritual. The study adhered to the ethical frameworks and guidelines established by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, specifically the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process in accordance with NCIP Administrative Order No. 1, series of 2012, also known as the Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices and Customary Laws Research and Documentation Guidelines of 2012. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed to obtain a certificate of precondition, in compliance with Republic Act No. 8371, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997. These frameworks ensured that the research was conducted with full respect for Indigenous protocols, cultural norms, and legal requirements.

Before any documentation or participation, verbal and written consent was obtained from the community, including elders, the *mambunong*, the sponsoring family, and other participants. Individual informed consent forms were provided to participants who agreed to interviews or other contributions, ensuring voluntary participation. Confidentiality was maintained for participants

who requested it, and sensitive ritual elements, including certain chants and ceremonial acts, were intentionally excluded from written, audio, or visual documentation in accordance with community instructions.

The study also recognized principles of Indigenous data sovereignty and co-ownership of knowledge. All data collected are understood as shared intellectual property with the community. The research design, analysis, and dissemination of findings were guided by this principle, ensuring that the Ibaloy community retains authority over how their cultural knowledge and practices are represented. This aligns with the co-authorship statement outlined in the front matter, emphasizing collaborative interpretation, shared control of research outputs, and respectful acknowledgment of the community's contributions. Reciprocity was practiced throughout the research process in accordance with Ibaloy cultural values. The researcher engaged in communal meals, shared knowledge and observations, offered tokens of gratitude, and provided copies of photographs and recordings to participants. These practices ensured that the research benefited the community and reinforced respectful, ethical engagement.

Through adherence to NCIP guidelines, FPIC, Indigenous data sovereignty, and principles of co-ownership, this study maintained ethical integrity while documenting and analyzing the ritual, centering the rights, perspectives, and authority of the Ibaloy community.

### **Reflexivity of the Researcher**

Ethnography, as Clifford and Marcus (1986) emphasized, is a co-created process shaped by both the researcher and the community. In this study, my positionality influenced not only access to the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* ritual but also interpretation of its meanings. Early guidance from

elders clarified appropriate behavior in ritual spaces, emphasizing respect for sacred areas and ensuring that participation aligned with cultural norms.

My background and personal experiences shaped how I perceived and engaged with the ritual. These positionalities affected how I observed interactions, interpreted symbolic actions, and understood the significance of pig offerings, kinship structures, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. Recognizing these influences allowed me to critically reflect on potential biases and remain attentive to the Ibaloy worldview. The interactions with elders, the *mambunong*, and youth provided insights into the enactment of authority, learning, and cultural continuity. Observing how guidance was given and knowledge was transmitted clarified patterns of teaching, participation, and social hierarchy, which informed both data collection and analysis. By integrating reflexive awareness into the research process, the study acknowledges that ethnographic knowledge is never neutral. Interpretations arise from a collaborative engagement with the Ibaloy community, producing a co-created account that captures cultural meaning while situating the researcher within the context of the observed practices.

The methodology presented in this chapter provided a systematic and ethical approach to understanding the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*. Using ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation, interviews, and community engagement, the study explored the symbolic, social, and educational roles of pigs in the ritual within broader Ibaloy cultural, social, and historical contexts. Reflexivity, ethical compliance, and collaborative engagement with the community ensured that interpretations were co-created and respectful of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices.

The following chapter presents the findings of the ethnographic fieldwork, organized around the ritual process of the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* and the symbolic role of pigs within it.

#### IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents and analyzes ethnographic data gathered during the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*, focusing on the ritual sequence, the symbolism of pig offerings, and their social functions within the Ibaloy community. The analysis is informed by symbolic anthropology, ritual process theory, and perspectives on Indigenous knowledge transmission. Through these analytical lenses, the chapter examines how pigs serve as multivocal symbols, how ritual practices structure social life, and how cultural knowledge is maintained and transmitted across generations.

My first fieldwork in Loakan took place during a cold season when the air carried a dry chill that brushed against my face each time the wind moved. The open ground felt firm under my steps, and the smoke from outdoor cooking drifted upward in thin lines that curled slowly before dissolving into the sky. Even without rain, the cold settled quietly over the ritual space, giving everything a steady, almost hushed atmosphere. From early morning, I could hear people arranging benches, setting out jars, and preparing leaves and firewood. Conversations mingled with the low crackle of burning wood, and every so often the sound of animals shifting in their pens punctuated the rhythm of activity.

As a student learning how to conduct ethnography, I followed the movement of the family and their relatives as they prepared for the *tayaw*. The way they handled the jars, clothing, and animals revealed a familiarity that I had not yet grasped. When the elders gathered to begin the ritual, the tone of their voices shifted, and the pace of activity slowed. The offerings in the early rites were laid out with careful precision, each item placed not only for its practical role but for the presence it would hold throughout the ceremony. Even the way people stood, stepped aside, or leaned in to watch told me that these acts mattered in subtle but significant ways.

I was invited to join the *tayaw* during this visit. The dance felt grounded and steady, and the sound of gongs wrapped around the space as if guiding our steps. When I moved with the others, I noticed how the rhythm shaped the way people communicated without speaking. A nod from an elder, the shifting of hands to adjust a cloth, the way feet pressed softly against the wooden floor created a sense of shared movement. Through this, I began to notice details that would have otherwise blended into the background: the weight of the pig hung for *Sedpang* or *Taydiw*, the scent of rice wine during *Batbat*, and the careful repetition of prayers in the *Sapnak* rites.

My understanding then was limited to what people shared in passing or what I could interpret while trying to keep up with the unfolding events. Some explanations were short and spoken while someone tended to a task. Others were gestures or simple reminders not to step in a certain direction. Several elders who guided me during that time are no longer with us, and some ritual practices have since shifted with their families. Looking back, I recognize that some of the meanings I recorded were incomplete or loosely understood because I was still learning how to observe and ask questions.

The material that follows reflects the ritual as I witnessed and documented it during this first field experience, shaped by the atmosphere of that cold, dry season and the guidance offered by the family and community members who welcomed my presence. Some information and details would later be clarified, corrected, or expanded upon in my return visits.

*Tayaw*. The indigenous dance of Ibaloy, an invitation for dead relatives being remembered in the ritual to enter the house of the hosts and join the festivities. The *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* consists of several sub-ritual or ceremonies. Herein in the order of performance are: *Keshew* or *Deb'on*,

*Sedpang or Taydiw, Batbat, Sapnak ni Sedpang, Sapnak ni Bangkilay, and Sapnak ni Indutsek.*

Each of these sub-rituals or ritual rites need animals to butcher.

*Keshew.* A ritual to present gifts to the sponsoring family's dead relatives. These presents are clothing apparel, cash, and animals.

*Deb'on* is performed when the remains of the dead are transferred nearer the family house as a response to the dead's requests that had been made through dreams or signs. It is only performed when a *mambunong* determines that a family member's sickness signifies the dead relatives' request for transfer of burial place.

*Sedpang or Taydiw.* Half the body of the pig will be hung inside the house, specifically at the upper doorway. The ritual, which is the higher level of presenting gifts, initiates the dancing of *tayaw* and the singing of *ba'diw*. The sponsoring family enjoins dead relatives to dance the *tayaw* and invite them into their home through the ceremony and singing of *ba'diw*. The ritual is usually conducted in the afternoon, signaling the dancing of *tayaw* overnight until the following day.

*Batbat.* An array or display of several jars of *tapuy* or rice wine. This ritual, which follows *sedpang*, continues the presentation of gifts for dead relatives and the last ritual held for the day.

- *Salaw* – earthen jar
- *Pulos* – *tangkay ng gabi*
- *Bigaho* – bilao
- *Kawil* – bao ng niyog

*Sapnak ni Sedpang*. The repetition of prayers held during the *sedpang* the previous day.

*Bangkilay*. The proper ceremony is either *Ka'fe ni Bangkilay* or *Sapnak ni Bangkilay* depending on the incidence whether it is the first time or the repetition of the ritual. The *bangkilay* is an altar-like structure made for offering pigs. It is constructed using four posts with sticks woven serving as platform and is used as an offertory table for butchered pigs.

*Indutsek*. The proper ceremony is either *Ka'fe ni Indutsek* or *Sapnak ni Indutsek* depending on the incidence whether it is the first time or the repetition of the ritual. *Indutsek* is a wooden stand done to protect the dwelling place like the main door or is erected in front of the kitchen door.

*Sabusab*. A short ritual that culminates the *tayaw*; *ka'fe* or *sapnak* where the *mambunong* gives the final blessings for the family and the people attending the ritual. The *shelos*, referring to the nine distinct portions of the pig, were prepared with careful attention to detail as part of the *sabusab*. Each portion holds its own role in the unfolding of the ritual and is handled with intention. These include *baten* (kidney), *bala* (lungs), *puso* (heart), *pali* (spleen), *taheb* (spinal bone), *beneng* (belly fat), *patay* (skin), *tagdang* (ribs), and *altery* (liver). Water and soup are the key materials for the rituals together with the basic necessities in the kitchen. While the *mambunong* prays, she dips a long leafed-grass into the water then sprinkles it over the family members and the people. She does the same using the soup.

### **The *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot***

Returning to Loakan a decade later meant stepping into a place both familiar and noticeably changed, both in weather and in the life of the community. A decade had passed since

my first fieldwork, and although I am still a college student working to complete the research I had begun years earlier, I carried a different kind of awareness this time. I am still learning, still trying to understand the logic of rituals, but now I had enough background to recognize the subtle shifts in the space, the practices, and even in myself as a researcher.

This return highlights how ritual practice is situated in both continuity and change. It shows that the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* is not static; the ritual evolves alongside shifts in community composition, environmental conditions, and the researcher's perspective. For pig offerings, this awareness allows the researcher to observe not only the act of sacrifice but also the continuity of symbolic meaning across generations.

The ritual grounds after a decade were no longer as open as I remembered. Modernization had led to new structures around the area, slightly narrowing the once-spacious surroundings. There were more fences, more concrete edges, and fewer wide patches of bare earth. Yet the environment was still unmistakably Loakan—pine-scented air, cool temperature, the dry cold that settled on the skin without rain, and the movement of people preparing for ritual in ways that felt both continuous and adaptive. Rain fell throughout my stay, a steady pattern that softened the soil and darkened the bark of nearby trees. The air felt heavier than during my earlier visit, and the cold settled deeper, especially in the early morning. Water dripped from the edges of roofs, producing a quiet tapping that blended with the distant sound of blades chopping firewood and the muted conversations of relatives gathered under shelters. The scent of wet cement gathered at the base of the ritual grounds, rising each time someone crossed the space. Many of the people who once explained the ritual to me were gone, and their roles were carried by their children or relatives.

These environmental and spatial changes demonstrate how ritual practice adapts to shifting physical and social contexts. The care with which offerings, including pigs, are handled despite rain and narrowed spaces underscores the community's continued respect for ritual order and for the symbolic potency of the pig as a mediator between the human and ancestral realms.

Although the same ritual was performed, it served a different purpose for the family hosting it, and it introduced a different tone. Some sub-rituals that I had witnessed before were not conducted this time, while others were emphasized more clearly. People explained that each family decides according to their needs and circumstances, and the rain seemed to influence the pace of movement and the arrangement of objects. The jars, leaves, and butchered animals were brought out carefully to keep them dry. Prayers continued despite the weather, their rhythm steady even as droplets hit the ground around us.

The selective adaptation of ritual components illustrates the Ibaloy principle of contextual flexibility while maintaining symbolic integrity. The careful handling of pigs and other offerings conveys the enduring cultural belief that these animals carry spiritual weight and sustain ancestral connections, reinforcing the centrality of pigs in the ritual's sacrificial logic.

My research process had become more structured by this point. Since the work remained under Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices, I coordinated closely with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. Before gathering any information, I met with elders and community members, clarified the purpose of my study, and followed the steps needed to seek permission. After documenting the ritual, I returned for a validation meeting where the community reviewed the material to ensure accuracy. The process created a sense of shared responsibility for

the information, and it emphasized that the knowledge belonged to the community first before it could appear in my writing.

This structured research process reflects the Ibaloy value of communal authority and co-ownership of knowledge. Just as pig offerings are carefully regulated within ritual sequences, ethnographic knowledge is treated as a shared cultural asset, highlighting how control and stewardship over information mirror the management of sacred objects in ritual practice.

Unlike during my first visit, I did not participate in the dance. Instead, I focused on observing how each action connected with meanings expressed by the people performing them. The rain brought out different textures and sounds. Cloth darkened with moisture as relatives held offerings close to their bodies. Cooking pots released warm steam that mixed with the cool air. People adjusted their footing on the softened ground and passed information to one another in short, practical exchanges. It was through these movements that symbolic meanings became visible in ways I had overlooked before. The alignment between the deceased and the animal, the order of the offerings, and the placement of structures like the bangkilay were explained with more clarity than I had previously understood.

Close observation emphasizes the interconnection between ritual form and meaning. Each gesture, including the careful handling of pigs, encodes social respect, ancestral reverence, and cosmological alignment. This illustrates Douglas' notion of ritual as a mechanism for maintaining symbolic boundaries and social order.

This more recent documentation reflects how the ritual is practiced within its present context, marked by changes in the community, the weather, and the purpose behind the ceremony.

It is shaped by the cooperation between myself, the hosting family, and the broader community who ensured that the details recorded here remain true to their own understanding of the ritual.

This collaborative aspect underscores that ritual interpretation is co-constructed and socially mediated. The pig, as a central offering, maintains its role as both a cultural and social touchstone, linking community members to one another and to their ancestors while situating the ethnographer within this relational framework.

Among the Iballoys of Loakan, the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* is considered the most complete and socially integrative of rituals. It is not a singular act but a constellation of practices: keshew (thanksgiving prayer), bangkilay (altar construction), ba'diw (ancestral chant), taydiw (suspension of pig), and the culminating tayaw dance. These interlinked rituals represent a complex cultural text that encodes gratitude, reciprocity, memory, and renewal. Cañaos are described as political and social performances where families assert wealth and reaffirm kinship. The *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* exemplifies this role, with pigs at the center of its sacrificial logic. Unlike other animals, pigs are considered indispensable, because their blood and meat are directly linked to ancestral recognition and communal solidarity.

The structured sequencing and centrality of pigs in the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* reflect the multivocal symbolism highlighted in symbolic anthropology. Pigs are simultaneously material, social, and spiritual mediators. Their indispensable role affirms communal cohesion, kinship obligations, and ancestral communication, demonstrating how ritual practices encode and transmit complex cultural meanings across generations.

## Ritual Process

### The *Keshew* (Thanksgiving Ritual)

The *Keshew* ritual began at 9:00 AM when the 90-year-old *mambunong*, Amanda Cados, arrived. Though her appearance was physically unassuming, there was an unmistakable presence about her—an almost imperceptible aura of quiet authority that seemed to bend the space around her. The morning air, crisp with lingering dew, felt cooler as she approached, as if the world had acknowledged her passage. Gravel shifted softly under her deliberate, measured steps, and the murmurs of relatives softened instinctively, their voices dropping to a near-whisper. I noticed my own breathing slow, my heart racing with anticipation, and the sting of smoke from the fires made every inhalation a conscious, sometimes sharp effort. There was something magnetic in the way she moved, her gaze sweeping over the offerings, the animals, and the participants, as if reading not just the objects before her but the intentions and attentiveness of every person in the space.

This presence emphasizes the *mambunong*'s central role as mediator between the living and the spirits. Her authority and deliberate actions signal the moral weight of the ritual, demonstrating that the *Keshew* is not only a sequence of acts but also a ritualized enactment of respect, gratitude, and social order. The participants' attentiveness reflects reciprocity: they honor her authority as she ensures that the offerings, particularly the pigs, fulfill their spiritual and communal purpose.

The ritual's offerings included four pigs and a cow. The choice of animals reflected both ancestral expectation and contemporary realities. As one elder explained, "*Ang hayop na ginagamit ay depende sa nageddemand... pero sa hirap ng buhay, common gamitin ang baboy.*" Another added, "*Mura ang baboy.*" Pigs had been carefully procured from local areas: "*Bumibili*

*naman kami sa area namin, hindi sa city,*” ensuring proximity and practicality, while modern ordinances restricted raising pigs in residential spaces: “*Hindi na pwede mag-alaga ng baboy sa residential area... May area naman na pinapayagan mag alaga ng baboy basta malayo sa kabahayan.*” These constraints shaped the ritual without diminishing its significance. Gender remained essential—female pigs for female spirits, male pigs for male spirits—ensuring the offerings aligned with the ancestral and spiritual logic. The cow, tethered nearby, symbolically continued a deceased father’s livelihood as a cattle herder. Its rough, warm fur pressed against the hands of caretakers, its low rumbles merging with the metallic tang of blood and the smoky air, creating an almost tangible connection among humans, animals, and spirits.

The careful selection of pigs and the inclusion of a cow demonstrates that *Keshew* functions as a moral economy, where gratitude is materially and ritually enacted through the offering of animals. Pigs serve as instruments of reciprocity and moral obligation, their preparation and presentation signaling respect for ancestral authority and reinforcing communal bonds. The gendered allocation of animals further reveals an intricate symbolic logic linking humans, spirits, and livestock.

The *shafajag*, the thirteen distinct portions of pig, was prepared with meticulous care and put in a basket. Each segment—*baten* (kidney), *bala* (lungs), *puso* (heart), *pali* (spleen), *taheb* (spinal bone), *beneng* (belly fat), *patay* (skin), *tagdang* (ribs), *altery* (liver), *shedi* (feet), *pangal* (jaw), *bitoka* (stomach), and *susut* (small intestine)—was carefully arranged. One elder reminded me, “*Unang titingnan ay liver para basahin kung ano ang kailangan ng ancestors... Mambunong ang nagbabasa.*” The cries of the pigs were equally critical: “*Hindi pwedeng gigilitan lang basta ang baboy, dapat iiyak muna... malalaman ng spirits na may ritwal para sa kanila.*” If the cry was insufficiently strong, the animal would be replaced. Tools like the *uwek*, a sharpened guava

wood, were used to pierce the pig at the precise spot over the heart, a tactile, intimate act laden with ritual significance.

This preparation highlights the pig as a vessel of communication with ancestors. Each body part, the arrangement, and the ritualized cries transform the animal into a symbolic mediator. The act reinforces the Ibaloy moral framework: proper execution of the ritual fulfills obligations of respect and gratitude, while failure to perform the sequence correctly could signal neglect of spiritual responsibilities. Clothing, shoes, *tapuy* (rice wine), soft drinks, and bottled liquor were also offered. “*Bibigyan ng damit dahil worn out na daw ang mga damit ng spirits,*” one elder explained, emphasizing that only new items could be presented: “*Kailangan bago ang mga ioffer na mga damit, hindi pwede ang second hand.*” These remained untouched for three days, after which the family could use them, preserving the dignity of the deceased. Offerings were carefully extended both to internal spirits—inside the home, including Tatang Sang-it, Nanang Lucia, Baby Boy, and Pedong—and to external ones, such as the siblings of the interviewee’s mother. Family members and the *mambunong* were tasked with inviting the spirits to partake of the food, ensuring the offerings were received as intended. In some cases, a cow was specifically included in the offering if the deceased had raised cattle in life, directly fulfilling the spirits’ demands: “*May baka na inalay dahil nag-aalaga ng baka ang isa sa mga namatay at yun ang dinemand ng ispirito.*”

This demonstrates that *Keshew* is a structured system of reciprocity and moral accountability. Material offerings, including pigs, function as expressions of gratitude and care, ensuring that ancestral spirits are acknowledged and respected. The prescribed timing, quality, and selection of offerings maintain ethical and symbolic integrity, reinforcing social cohesion and intergenerational moral responsibility.

Labor was coordinated yet fluid. Men typically carried out heavier work such as butchering pigs and lifting the animals, while women focused on preparing rice, cooking, and distributing offerings. Children assisted according to age: eight-year-olds gathered firewood, ten- to fifteen-year-olds cleaned internal organs, and older adults managed cooking and prepared *pinuneg* (blood sausage). Roles were determined by practicality and “*common sense na lang*,” as one elder said, emphasizing flexibility while maintaining order. This structure allowed for intergenerational exposure: “*Exposure talaga para mapreserve... isinasama ang mga kabataan*,” ensuring that even the youngest participants absorbed the ritual’s rhythms, care, and reverence.

The allocation of labor underscores that the *Keshew* is both a ritual and an educational practice. Participation embeds moral and cultural lessons in the younger generation, teaching them about reciprocity, respect, and the centrality of pigs as sacred offerings. It reinforces that ritual knowledge is transmitted through guided practice, observation, and engagement with ethical norms.

At one point, I mistakenly crossed a rope marking the sacred boundary. An elder approached, gently guiding me back: “*Do not cross the ropes na nakatali sa paa ng baboy, nagsimula na ang ritwal*.” I felt my face flush with embarrassment, but the correction grounded me in humility, highlighting the necessity of attentiveness and respect. Every sound, smell, and movement felt amplified—the low grunts of the pigs, the cow’s exhalations, the scraping of hooves on damp cement, the sting of smoke in my eyes, the warm heat from cauldrons pressed against my skin, and the metallic tang of blood pooling in basins. My body remained alert, absorbing the intensity of the ritual in real time, fully participating in its rhythm without fully understanding all its unseen forces.

This interaction illustrates how physical and sensory immersion facilitates understanding of ritual significance. The pig, as a central offering, embodies moral and spiritual authority, and the researcher's embodied experience reflects the careful attention and humility expected of participants.

The *mambunong* moved deliberately among the offerings, her gestures precise and authoritative. Each adjustment, placement, and observation carried weight; she alone guided the prayers and readings that ensured the living and the spirits remained connected: "*Mambunong lang ang nakakaalam ng prayers... kapag nawala ang mambunong, mawawala ang cañao,*" one of the elders casually mentioned. The community's movements—men lifting pigs at the threshold, women arranging offerings, elders observing, children learning by doing—formed a subtle choreography, a living map of connection, reverence, and memory.

The ritual choreography demonstrates how pigs operate as focal points of social and spiritual mediation. Every gesture maintains balance between the living and the dead, illustrating the inseparability of moral obligation, gratitude, and reciprocal responsibility in Ibaloy cosmology.

By 1:00 PM, the slaughter, prayers, and feasting concluded. Careful cleaning and reorganization of the ritual space signaled a shift from sacred intensity to communal festivity. Fires dwindled, sending thick smoke curling upward, leaving a bitter yet grounding scent that clung to my hair and skin. The heat from the emptied cauldrons lingered, imprinting a residual warmth on the air and floor. Voices grew louder, more relaxed, and children ran freely, their laughter and shouts weaving through the cooled smoke. I felt the tension in my own body melt into a contemplative calm, a shift from the acute awareness of sacred duty to the quiet satisfaction of

participation. Every sense—sight, sound, touch, and smell—remained attuned to the lingering presence of the ritual, marking the space as both transformed and prepared for what would follow.

The conclusion of *Keshew* reveals how ritual closure reaffirms social cohesion and the cyclical nature of thanksgiving. Pigs, having fulfilled their sacrificial and communicative roles, symbolize the successful enactment of moral obligations and the reinforcement of communal and ancestral bonds. The *Keshew* had left its mark—the ritual’s sensory traces, the echoes of animal cries, the smoke, the warmth, and the careful choreography of human movement. As the household settled into a festive rhythm, it felt as though the space was holding its breath, poised for the next ritual to continue the conversation between the living and the spirits. The care, attention, and devotion evident in each act ensured that the ancestral knowledge, transmitted through gestures, sounds, and touch, remained vivid, alive, and ready to unfold again.

Overall, *Keshew* functions as a moral and symbolic economy: pigs are not only offerings but active participants in sustaining ethical reciprocity, communal solidarity, and intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. The ritual’s practices materialize gratitude, uphold ancestral demands, and reinforce the moral fabric of Ibaloy society.

### **The *Tayaw* (Dance)**

The *Tayaw* dance ritual began around 2:00 PM, with light drizzle mixing with the earthy scent of wet clay underfoot. The ritual space was dynamic, as the dance moved from the front of the house toward the back of the cemented complex, tracing a path of both performance and ancestral connection. The host family led the first steps, followed by close relatives, and eventually the wider community joined. This sequence fostered Turner’s concept of *communitas*, creating a sense of shared experience and togetherness that transcended age, gender, and social roles.

The layered ensemble of instruments—resonant gongs *Kalsa* and *Pinsak*, the sharp metallic strikes of *Tihitik*, and the drum-like beats of *Solibao* and *Kimbal*—provided the rhythmic structure guiding every movement. Instrument handling required respect, and participants sought permission from the *mambunong* or elders before touching, playing, or observing. One elder reminded, “*Pag tinry mo nang di ka marunong, papagalitan ka... kailangan magpaalam talaga sa elders o sa matatanda if sasali o manonood o magoobserve sa ritwal o kahit maghahawak ng instruments.*” Children and newcomers often learned by watching, absorbing the steps, timing, and reverence silently: “*Sinasama lang ako, hindi na ako nagpaturo, pinapanood na lang hanggang sa matutunan.*” This observation and gradual participation exemplify embodied learning, where cultural knowledge is transmitted through action rather than words.

Dancers wore heavy, traditional blankets—the two-piece *Tayaw* drapes for the *manedjaw* (male dancers) and the one-piece *sarong* for the *maneshong* (female dancers). These blankets were authentic, thick, and heavy, pressing firmly against the dancers’ bodies, a tactile reminder of ritual continuity, unlike the lighter commercial versions. Men moved with *garalgal* (strong, forceful) steps, while women’s movements were *mahinhin* (gentle, flowing), yet both contributed to the overall rhythm and cohesion. Because men were often engaged in labor-intensive tasks, including butchering, women frequently danced more, sometimes wearing male drapes to maintain participation. One elder explained, “*There were simply more women than men in the Ibaloy population,*” highlighting how demographic realities shaped dance practice. The *mambunong*’s *pangjet*, a ritual headpiece, signaled authority, guiding transitions, adjusting rhythm, and maintaining spiritual oversight. *Tapuy* was poured and shared among dancers, linking the community through both physical action and ancestral presence.

During the dance, the *Ooway Adibay*, a chant or call to the *anitos* (spirits), sounded intermittently. Its sing-song tone gradually shifted from soft to loud, creating a palpable spiritual atmosphere. Dancers responded subtly, their movements accommodating the ritual call. Spirit possession occasionally occurred, temporarily transforming participants into vessels for ancestors, their movements shifting subtly under an unseen influence. At one point, an elderly woman was possessed by the spirit of her uncle, a known heavy smoker. Though she did not usually smoke, she lifted a cigarette, drawing deeply, her gestures perfectly mirroring his habitual movements. The elders watched closely, speaking with awe: “*Si Uncle nandyan... hindi sya nagyoyosi pero dahil sumapi si Uncle, ayan na.*” Another elder explained, “*Magiiba ang sayaw kapag nandyan na ang spirits,*” highlighting how rhythm and movement subtly shifted in the presence of ancestral spirits. Those particularly prone to possession were known as *éma*, temporarily merging body and spirit in the dance.

As the *Tayaw* concluded, dancers’ blankets clung damply to their bodies, their exertion leaving traces of collective memory in motion. Women adjusted *sarongs* and blankets, men rested after labor and dance, and children observed and imitated the steps from the edges of the circle. Even subtle gestures of the *mambunong* conveyed authority and the careful release of the ritual’s energy. Through these actions, the *Tayaw* reinforced kinship, continuity, and communal identity, demonstrating how ritual embodies cultural knowledge, social cohesion, and shared memory. Turner’s *communitas* is evident in the mutual attentiveness and interconnectedness of participants, while the repeated movements, patterns, and chants sustain embodied cultural memory across generations. The ritual space itself held the memory of movement, music, and ancestral presence, bridging participants into the next ceremonial act.

## The *Taydiw* (Suspension of Pig)

By 3:30 PM, attention turned to a single pig prepared to be suspended on the wooden post, known as *sedpang* or *taydiw*. The pig was first butchered on banana leaves, with the initial blood collected by a family member, prayed over by the *mambunong*, and sprinkled across the ritual space to confer blessings. An elder emphasized that the wound should not be covered: “*Huwag takpan ang sugat ng baboy... para ang blessing ay makabalik nang malaya.*” The pig’s innards were carefully removed following the *davak* method for the *mambunong* to read, ensuring communication with the ancestors.

Before suspension, the *mambunong* approached the ropes, tracing the fibers with her hands while murmuring prayers to invite ancestral attention. This act of blessing the ropes positioned the pig in a liminal space—neither fully of the human world nor yet of the spirit world—preparing it as a conduit between the living and the ancestors. Her precise gestures reinforced the sacred logic that every element—ropes, post, and animal—is interconnected in ritual efficacy.

Several elders and youth then hoisted the pig onto their shoulders. The physical coordination required careful attention, yet the shared effort created subtle moments of communal connection: small smiles and quiet chuckles passed among the hoisters. The pig was tied securely, facing the rising sun, in accordance with customary practice: “*Hindi alam kung bakit sinasabit ang baboy, basta nakagisnan lang, yung ulo dapat sa kung saan sisikat ang araw,*” an elder explained. Observers maintained vigilance, mindful of ritual boundaries: “*Pag nagtanong ka ay papagalitan ka... basta bantayan na lang, mabilis dapat mag-catch up,*” another elder added.

Once suspended, the *mambunong* continued her prayers over the pig, holding a blade grass flower that an elder likened to a “magic wand.” At this moment, the pig transcended its material

form, becoming a symbolic participant that links the gathered community to ancestral spirits, with the ropes and post infused with ritualized presence. The sensory environment—smoke, blood, exertion, and the scent of blade grass—heightened the sense of liminality, emphasizing the pig’s central role in both spiritual communication and communal effort.

Elders and youth stepped back, their faces reflecting exertion and satisfaction. The combined labor, observation, and precise positioning exemplified the Ibaloy understanding that ritual is relational, embedding human effort, spiritual attention, and social cohesion within a single act. This moment prepared the space for the subsequent *khasna* ritual, where sponsors would be marked with pig’s blood.

Later, the pig was carefully removed. The *mambunong* prayed again to maintain the ancestral blessings before it was cooked and shared. This act of removal marked the transition from a liminal offering to communal nourishment, sustaining the pig’s sacred role while facilitating social and kinship continuity.

### **The *Indutsek***

The *Indutsek* ritual was not performed during this ceremony, as conditions did not warrant it. Elders explained that *Indutsek* occurs only when specific omens or protective needs for a household arise: “*Wala ng indutsek,*” one elder noted. The *Indutsek* is a wooden post set upright near the house entrance, exposed to sunlight, serving as a silent marker of past rituals and household sanctity. “*Indutsek ay isang kahoy na nakatayo... dapat walang overhang... malapit sa door at naaarawan,*” one elder explained.

Traditionally, performing *Indutsek* requires substantial offerings—usually three pigs—and depends on financial means and perceived spiritual fortune: “*Kung may pera, puwede; kung may*

*swerte ka, puwede... thanksgiving for acceptance of luck.*” These explanations highlight the integration of material resources, ancestral guidance, and ritual timing in Ibaloy ceremonial logic.

Even without enactment, the elders’ discussion imbued the *Indutsek* with continuity, memory, and cultural authority, reminding participants that rituals are measured, precise, and contextually significant. Unperformed rituals retain social and spiritual weight, anchoring collective memory and signaling the ongoing relevance of ancestral knowledge.

### **The *Ba’diw* (Chant)**

At 7:00 PM, the ritual song of the Ibaloy—the *ba’diw*—began. This chant-like song serves as a call to the spirits, a dialogue between the living and the dead. The opening prayer sought permission from *Kabunian*, establishing a safe and respectful connection with the ancestors before the communal chant could proceed. One elder described the *ba’diw* as “jamming with the souls,” capturing its interplay of storytelling, prayer, humor, and shared reflection. The chant was not merely a song; it was a living space where memory, emotion, and ancestral presence intertwined. Some aspects of the chant remain analytically restricted due to sacred restrictions, and their precise meanings are not detailed here to respect the Ibaloy prohibitions on revealing certain ritual knowledge. Voices rose and fell in measured rhythms, alternating between solemn requests for blessings—including health, diligence, love, and guidance—and lighthearted, humorous stories. Elders proposed content and affirmed it with *asbayat*, or “second the motion,” ensuring coherence and collective consent. One elder reminded participants, “*Bawal ang pikon*,” emphasizing that truths spoken within the chant must not provoke offense. Laughter and humility were woven into the ritual, reflecting the moral and social economy of the community. Participants who felt

discomfort could quietly step aside, preserving the integrity of the chant while allowing learning and reflection to continue.

Participation in the *ba'diw* was highly regulated. Only elders and knowledgeable individuals could lead, while unqualified members and outsiders observed quietly: "*Bawal magsampitaw*," they were told, for speaking out of turn could disturb the chant. Learning occurred through observation, imitation, and guided participation. Occasionally, younger participants were permitted to perform a *ba'diw* using *tapuy* (rice wine) as an offering, linking physical ritual to experiential learning and reinforcing the communal connection between the living, the offering, and the ancestors.

Elders' voices layered with laughter, soft murmurs, and occasional sighs, creating a rich tapestry of sound. Every story, prayer, and gesture carried communal memory, grounding participants in the past while connecting them to the present. Elders reminded everyone not to fabricate stories or distort truths, as this could disrupt the flow of the *ba'diw* and the communication between the living and the spirits. The chant gradually drew to a close with the phrase "*Isa-pat tayu la*"—"Accept it now"—signaling the consolidation of all stories, concerns, and prayers into a final offering to Kabunian. This collective act allowed participants to release tension, reflect, and strengthen both ancestral and social bonds. Through this process, the *ba'diw* animates the pig offering, transforming it from a material gift into a spiritual message, ensuring that the animal's sacrifice carries meaning across both human and ancestral domains.

As the last echoes of the *ba'diw* faded, participants collectively exhaled. Although the formal day concluded around 4:00 PM, the energy of the ritual persisted, flowing into evening feasting, laughter, and conversation. Children ran among adults, elders exchanged reflections, and

youth remained engaged until 2:00 AM. The rhythms of dance, the chants, and communal laughter fused into a single pulse, leaving the sense that the ritual did not truly end but continued in the shared memory, spiritual presence, and lived experience of all participants.

### ***Sapnak ng Taydiw (Repetition)***

The second day began early, at 8:53 AM, with preparation of the pig offering for the *Sapnak*, or *Sininapnak Ng Taydiw*, a deliberate repetition of the previous day's ritual. Another pig was prepared to replace the one removed from the *Taydiw* the night before. The air was cool and lightly misted by lingering rain, clinging to hair and clothing, while the faint scent of wet earth mingled with the lingering aroma of smoke from earlier fires.

Elders, the host family, and youth carefully handled the pig, placing it on banana leaves and *sapsap* (blade grass), a traditional practice that facilitated butchering while maintaining ritual propriety. Hands became slippery with moisture and the texture of the leaves, requiring coordinated effort as the pig was lifted, guided, and positioned. Elders directed each movement with subtle gestures, whispered reminders, and soft corrections, ensuring respect was maintained. Even amid the physical strain, small smiles and quiet chuckles passed between participants, acknowledging shared effort while preserving communal harmony.

After the prayers, the family performed *kegwes*, stirring the cooking meat counter-clockwise as prescribed, a movement both deliberate and symbolic. Each stir produced a faint sizzling and crackling, a gentle percussion accompanying the murmured chants of the elders. The rhythm of their hands, combined with the aroma of cooking meat and wet leaves, created a distinct atmosphere from the previous day's *Taydiw*, quieter yet deeply attentive, emphasizing continuity, precision, and care.

Throughout, the elders underscored the significance of repetition: “*Sapnak o sininapnak ay gagawin uli,*” one explained, highlighting that repetition is not mere habit but a reinforcement of spiritual and communal obligations. In oral cultures such as the Ibaloy, ritual repetition strengthens memory and ensures the transmission of proper procedures across generations. Through repeated performance, participants internalize timing, gestures, and sequence, creating embodied knowledge that extends beyond verbal instruction. Every detail—the folding of leaves, the placement of the pig on the post, the angle at which it was pierced—carries layered meaning, ensuring that both material and symbolic aspects of the ritual are preserved.

By mid-morning, the *Sapnak Ng Taydiw* offering was fully arranged and prepared. Prayers were recited over the pig and its surrounding implements once again. The *mambunong*'s voice, soft yet firm, traced the contours of the ritual space, blessing the ropes, the meat, and the participants who labored alongside her. Although the ritual was familiar, its repetition kept it responsive and alive, its rhythm echoing through the complex as if the spirits themselves were observing, acknowledging, and approving the care with which the offerings were made.

As the ritual approached its quiet culmination, the air was thick with the mingling scents of cooked pig, banana leaves, and the earthy dampness of the morning. Elders observed solemnly, ensuring each gesture—arranging leaves, stirring meat counterclockwise, and attending to ceremonial ropes—was performed correctly. Younger members moved in tandem, their cautious smiles betraying both effort and pride in participating. The *mambunong* moved deliberately among them, whispering blessings over meat and tools, her soft yet authoritative voice infusing the moment with quiet solemnity. This repetition reinforced the continuity of the *Taydiw*, maintaining ancestral presence while cultivating shared labor, focus, and reverence among the living.

As the final portions of the *Sapnak Ng Taydiw* were completed, some community members shifted to preparations for the next ritual. *Gabi* (taro) was arranged alongside pigs, *singkalong* (bamboo vessels) were crafted to hold pig broth and *tapuy* (rice wine), and the wood needed to assemble the *bangkilay* altar was gathered. The careful, repetitive work of the *sapnak* thus not only fulfilled ritual obligation but also prepared the community collectively for subsequent ceremonial acts, weaving continuity, memory, and social cohesion into the ongoing performance of the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*.

### **The *Bangkilay* (Altar)**

As morning light spilled over the compound, preparations for the *bangkilay* altar were underway. Elders, youth, and host family members moved with deliberate care, arranging pine poles bound with *aguy* (rattan) and framing them with fresh *afay* (runo leaves). Bamboo *singkalong* vessels holding pig broth and rice wine were positioned alongside *salaw* jars of *tapuy*, while freshly harvested *gabi* (taro) was prepared nearby.

An elder explained, “*Bangkilay ay table, dun kinakatay ang baboy, adapted from the Old Testament na meron ding table, para daw makita din ng soul na may kinatay din doon.*” The *bangkilay* functioned as both a practical workspace and a symbolic focal point, serving as a point of contact between the living and the ancestors. Its central placement and slight elevation ensured that all participants oriented themselves toward it while making the offering visible to the spirits. Another elder emphasized, “*importante ang offering ng ka'fe sa bangkilay, kasi parang yung spirits nung parents nila must be respected sa kinalalagyan nila, yung level sa afterlife.*” A second elder added, “*pag wala pang bangkilay, mababa pa ang level nila sa after life, parang may ranggo, hindi makakapunta sa mga area na pinupuntahan nila sa afterlife,*” explaining how spatial

position reflects hierarchy and access in the spiritual realm. Two conditions were strictly observed for the pig: its head pointed toward the sunrise, and its body aligned with the house doors, connecting the offering with cosmic and spatial order and ensuring ancestral visibility.

Around midday, the *tayaw* dance was performed inside the house. The rhythmic gongs—*kalsa* and *pinsak*, the low rumble of *solibao* and *kimbal*, and the crisp strikes of *tihitik*—intertwined with the scents of cooking meat and steaming taro. Though brief, this indoor performance acted as a blessing for the home, a bridge between the human and spirit worlds. Dancers moved in measured steps that harmonized with the unseen presence of ancestors. Only after the *tayaw* concluded did attention return fully to the *Sapnak Ni Bangkilay*. An elder explained, “*ka’fe ay parang thanksgiving sa parents nila pero nagawa na nila kaya sapnak na ang gagawin, papalitan na ang bangkilay,*” highlighting the continuity of ritual acts.

The *mambunong* approached first, her hands moving deliberately as she prayed over the ritual tools and the *bangkilay* table. Her soft yet firm voice filled the air with solemn reverence that seemed to settle over everyone present. Once her prayers were complete, youth and elders carefully lifted the pig onto the table, its weight shifting and resisting under their combined effort. Brief smiles flickered across faces, yet the sacredness of the moment remained palpable. The pig was then prayed over again before being butchered directly on the *bangkilay*. After butchering, the pig was laid on banana leaves on the ground; the skin was burned, hair removed, and innards extracted, while the meat was prepared for cooking. Once fully cooked, it returned to the *bangkilay* for another prayer, solidifying its role in the ritual.

The *mambunong* then read the pig’s liver and spleen, interpreting omens and signs for the family’s future. In this way, the pig served not only as a sacred offering but also as a vessel of

ancestral guidance, bridging the worlds of the living and the dead and anchoring both in a shared moment of connection and reverence.

Throughout the afternoon, *khasna* was performed, smearing pig's blood on the cheeks and sometimes foreheads of the host family. Eight food portions were arranged: four dedicated to spirits who had died naturally and four to those who had died unnaturally. Prayers accompanied each portion, ensuring proper acknowledgment and honoring, while guests carried food home, reinforcing reciprocity and social bonds.

*Tushok* offerings, made from long wooden sticks with taro leaves to hold rice and viands, were placed along key paths—entrance, exit, and an additional route—signaling to spirits and the community that the ritual space had been properly recognized. Normally, a *sabúsab* ritual cleansing would follow to remove lingering errors or bad intentions, particularly if bones were dug up, but on this day it was unnecessary. The ritual's integrity remained intact through the careful execution of *bangkilay*, *tushok*, and *khasna*.

As the afternoon drew to a close, with offerings secured and food shared, the household settled into a quieter rhythm. Coordinated labor, prayers, and communal presence left an enduring trace of ancestral connection. The *bangkilay*, *tushok*, and *khasna* anchored the living while honoring the dead, establishing a visible, elevated, and central space where humans and spirits converged. The rituals reinforced hierarchy, visibility to ancestors, and the continuity of communal and spiritual life. The household was left suffused with reverence and the subtle, lingering presence of ancestors—a rhythm that would resonate in stories, memories, and reflections in the days to come.

## Procedure for Offering Pigs in Rituals

Among the Ibaloy, the offering of a pig forms the beating heart of ritual life—a gesture so central that the entire ceremony orbits around it. To outsiders, the act might appear straightforward: an animal set aside, slaughtered, cooked, and shared. Yet for the community, the pig offering is never merely the handling of a body; it is a rehearsal of relationships, a communication with ancestors, and a reaffirmation of belonging that unfolds through sound, scent, gesture, and memory. Elders often say that a ritual without a pig is like a story without a beginning—possible, perhaps, but incomplete.

The ritual is guided by a sequence of stages, each dense with meaning and disciplined precision. The preliminary rites establish the sacred order: the *mambunong*'s invocation, the farewell to the pig, the drawing of boundaries, and the summoning of ancestral presence. These movements do more than organize the space; they assert control over the ritual environment, aligning participants, spirits, and offerings in a shared moral and spiritual horizon. The careful orchestration reflects the Ibaloy belief that ritual efficacy depends on precision, attentiveness, and respect.

The butchering of the pig is simultaneously practical and cosmological. Each step—from piercing and allowing the blood to flow freely, to singeing and cleaning, and to the removal of organs—is performed with deliberate care. Elders, drawing on knowledge transmitted across generations, regulate the process with discipline. The reading of the liver and spleen transforms the pig from material animal into sacred message, a text through which ancestral approval, warnings, and guidance are revealed. In this way, control over each act is inseparable from moral

responsibility, teaching participants that the success of the ritual hinges on attentiveness, ethical comportment, and respect for both living and spiritual beings.

Distribution and consumption extend the offering's significance into the social realm. Meat is allocated according to status, age, kinship, and ritual role. Portions for the spirits are offered first, followed by the *mambunong*, host family, elders, and finally the broader community of relatives and guests. Through this patterned sharing, the pig's body becomes a material enactment of social balance, reciprocity, and moral obligation. Eating together consolidates communal ties while reaffirming connections with the ancestors, whose presence is recognized but not directly seen.

In its entirety, the pig offering is not a simple sequence of tasks but a carefully regulated choreography of meaning. The ritual stages—preparation, butchering, and distribution—demonstrate the interplay of control, discipline, and moral responsibility, showing how participants are guided to act with reverence and precision. The offering embodies a structured encounter with the past, a public affirmation of the present, and an investment in future harmony. Each repetition, gesture, and allocation teaches successive generations what respect entails, how reciprocity is practiced, and where humans stand in relation to the spirits that shape their world.

### **Preliminary Rites**

Ritual days begin not with a single action but with a gradual thickening of atmosphere, as if the space itself gathers intention. The *mambunong* arrives first, not dramatically but with a kind of gravitational presence, and the courtyard reorganizes around her. People fall into softer tones, children hover on the edges, and the pig—already sensing an unfamiliar order—shifts its weight and snorts. This is the moment when everyday life loosens and the ritual world tightens its grip.

The *mambunong*'s prayer begins low, almost conversational, as though she is reacquainting herself with spirits she knows personally. Her voice rises and falls with the cadence of someone calling across distances—inside the home, beyond the yard, further still into the layered realms where ancestors linger. The words themselves matter, but the pauses matter more; they mark the places where humans wait for spirits to answer, or at least to listen.

Then comes the gesture that is both intimate and symbolic: a tuft of hair plucked from the pig's tail. The pig flinches; even that small resistance becomes part of the ritual grammar. The hair is brushed under its armpit, a strange but tender farewell act, like smoothing the collar of someone about to leave. This moment reveals the double consciousness of the ceremony: the pig is both animal and offering, a being with breath and a conduit for blessing. Geertz would say this gesture is “a story the community tells itself about itself”—and indeed, it is a reminder that sacrifice is relational long before it is violent.

Boundaries of rope are drawn around the pig. They create a circle not just of space but of meaning; to cross them carelessly would be to step into ritual without consent. Tools are placed deliberately, banana leaves unfurled with the soft rasp of their surfaces catching air. The *uwek*, a sharpened piece of guava wood, gleams faintly. The pig must cry before the offering can begin, and everyone listens for it—an expected disturbance, a necessary rupture. When the cry finally comes, sharp and sudden, it feels like the sound that opens a door no one can see but everyone recognizes.

### **Butchering of the Pig**

When the *uwek* enters the pig's side, it does so with the steadiness of hands shaped by generations of repetition. There is no spectacle, only precision. Blood wells immediately, dark and

warm, and no one moves to cover the wound. The flowing blood is not a mess but a message: blessings that must spread freely. The first blood is gathered and sprinkled, and as droplets arc through the air and strike the earth, they create a constellation of red marks—tiny points of contact between the living and the unseen.

Singeing the hair brings a new layer of sensory texture. Fire licks the skin with a quick orange flare, and bristles curl and blacken. The smell—rich, slightly sweet, unmistakably animal—thickens the air. Someone rinses the carcass, steam rising like a brief ghost from its surface. Then *davak* begins, the traditional butchering that is less a technique than an embodied inheritance. Elders step in as if answering a summons; their hands move with a choreography born from long memory. Younger relatives watch with the careful eyes of apprentices.

The pig must remain intact. A single nail lost is not just an error but a disruption in the ritual's moral geometry. Even the innards are lifted with care, their colors glistening—purples, reds, and browns layered like an anatomical palette. The *mambunong* leans in to read the liver and spleen. In that small circle of focused attention, time seems to pause; the world narrows to texture, shape, and sheen. An indentation on the liver, a firmness in the spleen—these become messages. What she reads is not arbitrary; it is the condensation of cultural logic, the way a community understands consequence, continuity, and consent from the ancestors. Her verdict—continue, postpone, abandon—ripples outward and settles on every face.

### **Supplementary Rites**

When the reading gives permission, the atmosphere softens into movement again. Pork is boiled with salt, and as the pot simmers, the courtyard fills with a warm, familiar aroma—the scent of gatherings, of shared history. A portion is set aside for the spirits, offered with quiet words. The

*mambunong* and the host family take the first bites, not out of privilege but obligation: to mediate between the spirit world and the living one.

Distribution is a social map rendered in meat. The *mambunong* receives the *ulpo*, the thigh that acknowledges her labor, her intercession. The host family receives the *ihol*, the prized cuts that signify both honor and responsibility. Then the meat radiates outward—first to elders, who are handed five slices, their status measured in thickness and count; then to married adults with four slices; single adults with three; children with one generous piece. The portions are not merely food but symbols of relational weight—respect, kinship, reciprocity. In this moment, the community becomes visible not as an abstract category but as a network of embodied ties.

As everyone eats, small human moments accumulate. Someone laughs too loudly at a remembered story; a child tries to balance rice on a spoon too big for her hand; an aunt wipes her face with the hem of her shirt, leaving a faint smear of broth. The fire burns low, conversation rises in layered threads, and the sounds of chewing, talking, and firewood settling mingle into a single textured hum.

By late afternoon, as the light thins and shadows stretch long across the ground, the ritual space returns to its ordinary form. But something stays differently arranged in the people who move through it. Ritual, in this community, does not simply offer blessings; it reaffirms the fragile, necessary work of being human together—through sacrifice, through sharing, through the thick weave of memory and meaning that holds a people in place.

## Ritual Meaning

The *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* embodies one of the Ibaloy community's most encompassing ritual expressions of memory, reciprocity, and ancestral connection. More than a sequence of actions, it constitutes a dense symbolic system through which the living actively negotiates obligations to the dead, reaffirm bonds with kin, and situate themselves within an enduring moral and cosmological order. Each sub-ritual, including *keshew*, *bangkilay*, *taydiw*, *ba'diw*, and *tayaw*, contributes a distinct layer of meaning that intersects with and reinforces the others. At the center of this interconnected ritual system stands the pig, not merely as an offering but as the primary material and symbolic axis through which ritual efficacy, moral responsibility, and ancestral recognition are made possible.

The central argument of this section is that the pig functions as the key mediating agent through which Ibaloy ritual meaning is produced, communicated, and sustained. The pig does not simply accompany ritual acts but actively enables them by materializing reciprocity, embodying obligation, and providing a visible and audible medium through which communication with the ancestors occurs. Through the pig, the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* becomes intelligible as a moral system, one that binds humans and spirits into a relationship structured by discipline, respect, and careful attention to prescribed forms.

At the heart of these rituals is the pig, an animal whose offering is imbued with spiritual, social, and cultural significance. Its role extends beyond sustenance or sacrifice. Through its cry, blood, organs, and meat, the pig becomes a vessel through which ancestral presence is acknowledged and engaged, and through which communal order is reaffirmed. The pig materializes reciprocity by transforming human labor, care, and resources into a form recognizable

to the spirits, while also redistributing that offering back into the community through shared consumption. Knowledge of these practices is transmitted through observation, participation, and oral storytelling rather than formal instruction, making the ritual both a lived and learned experience. Despite modern pressures and changing lifestyles, the pig remains central to Ibaloy ceremonial life, sustaining continuity between generations and anchoring ritual knowledge in embodied practice.

## **Symbolism of the Pig in Ibaloy Rituals**

### **The Pig as a Spiritual Vessel**

For the Ibaloy, the pig is regarded as the most potent ritual offering. While other animals such as carabaos, horses, or chickens may be used depending on the demands of particular spirits or circumstances, elders consistently emphasized that the pig holds a distinct position because of both its accessibility and its spiritual weight. Offering a pig communicates seriousness, sincerity, and respect toward the ancestors. Its presence marks the ritual space as one that is morally accountable and spiritually visible. In this sense, the pig functions as a spiritual vessel, carrying human intention, gratitude, and obligation toward the ancestral realm in a form that is considered appropriate and effective.

### **Cry and Blood as Signs**

The pig's cries during restraint and piercing are not incidental but are understood as an essential component of ritual communication. Elders explained that the voice of the pig is "heard above," signaling to the spirits that the ritual is being performed with proper reverence and intensity. As one elder stated, "*Hindi pwedeng gigilitan lng basta ang baboy, dapat iiyak muna*

*ang baboy*.” This insistence reflects a belief that ritual efficacy depends on visible and audible signs of offering, not merely on completion of the act itself.

Similarly, the initial flow of blood from the pig, collected during the piercing with the *uwek*, is treated as a vital medium of connection. When sprinkled around the ritual space, the blood blesses the area and invokes protection, fertility, and sustenance for the household. Blood is not treated as a metaphor alone but as a substance through which human action becomes legible to ancestral forces. Through blood, intention takes material form, reinforcing the idea that ritual meaning emerges through controlled bodily processes rather than symbolic abstraction alone.

### **Gender Alignment and Organ Significance**

The requirement that male pigs be offered to male spirits and female pigs to female spirits reflects a broader Ibaloy concern with balance and alignment between the human and ancestral worlds. This correspondence reinforces the idea that ritual effectiveness depends on precision and moral attentiveness. The pig’s internal organs, particularly the liver or *altery* and the spleen or *pali*, are read by the *mambunong* to assess ancestral response. These readings do not simply predict outcomes but provide ethical guidance, indicating whether the ritual has been properly conducted or whether corrective actions are needed. In this way, the pig’s body becomes a site of interpretation through which ancestral approval, caution, or discontent is made visible.

### **Markers of Completion and Ritual Boundaries**

Following the offering, the placement of *tushok*, skewers made of rice, taro, and pork, at entrances and pathways serves as a material marker of ritual completion. These markers delineate the boundary between ritual time and ordinary time, signaling to both humans and spirits that

obligations have been fulfilled and balance has been restored. The pig's role extends into this final stage by anchoring the transition out of ritual space, ensuring that closure is clearly communicated and that moral and spiritual responsibilities are properly concluded.

## **Social Functions of the Pig in Ritual Life**

### **Division of Labor and Communal Cooperation**

Ritual performance requires coordinated effort across generations, organizing participation through shared labor rather than rigid role assignment. Men often handle the transportation and slaughter of the pig, women typically oversee food preparation, and children assist with tasks such as cleaning organs and gathering firewood. As one participant noted, "*Walang gender sa tasks pero common sense na lang.*" While these patterns are common, they are guided less by fixed rules than by situational judgment and elder instruction. Elders and the *mambunong* direct the flow of activity, drawing on their ritual knowledge to ensure that each task is carried out with proper timing and respect.

Participation does not automatically result in full ritual knowledge, but it creates conditions for learning through proximity and repeated exposure. Even when children and younger participants do not perform central ritual acts, their involvement allows them to witness how responsibility, restraint, and attentiveness shape ritual life. In this way, the pig becomes a focal point around which cooperation, discipline, and ethical awareness are practiced, reinforcing communal bonds without assuming that observation alone guarantees transmission.

## **Meat Distribution and Social Order**

The distribution of pork following the offering reinforces social roles and reciprocal obligations within the community. Portions are allocated in a hierarchical order, with the *ulpo* given to the *mambunong*, the *ihol* reserved for the host family, and the remaining meat shared among relatives, neighbors, and guests. Each allocation reflects respect for ritual responsibility and acknowledges contributions made during the ceremony. Through this process, the pig mediates relationships, translating ritual labor into tangible recognition.

Rather than functioning as a mechanical reinforcement of social order, meat distribution operates as a moment of moral negotiation. Participants are reminded of their position within the community and their obligations to others, while shared consumption fosters solidarity. The pig thus serves as a medium through which social cohesion is enacted and renewed, not as a guarantee of harmony but as an opportunity for its continual reaffirmation.

## **Cultural Transmission Through Ritual Practice**

### **Observation, Storytelling, and Guided Participation**

Ritual knowledge among the Ibaloy is transmitted primarily through observation and storytelling rather than formal instruction. Young members learn by watching elders perform ritual acts, noting how the pig is handled, how offerings are positioned, and how organs are read. As one elder explained, “*Exposure talaga para mapreserve... isinasama ang mga kabataan.*” Learning emerges through repeated encounters with ritual situations rather than through explicit teaching.

At the same time, access to certain forms of knowledge is deliberately limited. Prayers and divination remain the responsibility of the *mambunong*, who is believed to be appointed by the

Holy Spirit. “*Mambunong lang ang nakakaalam ng prayers... kapag nawala ang mambunong, mawawala ang cañao.*” This selective transmission underscores that ritual continuity is not automatic. It depends on the presence of knowledgeable individuals and on the community’s recognition of their authority. The pig offering facilitates learning by anchoring attention and participation, but it does not in itself ensure the preservation of ritual expertise.

### **Intergenerational Learning**

Even as explicit instruction declines, younger generations continue to learn through partial participation. Children assist in peripheral tasks, gradually internalizing the ethical, social, and spiritual responsibilities embedded in ritual practice. Learning unfolds unevenly and often retrospectively. As one parent reflected, “*Natututo din ang mga kabataan, kahit sa isip mo ay wala na, pero darating din yung time sa mga kabataan na matuto.*” Understanding often becomes meaningful only when individuals are later called upon by ancestral demand or familial obligation.

This pattern highlights an important limitation in causality. Ritual participation creates opportunities for learning, but comprehension and commitment depend on timing, personal experience, and social context. The pig offering acts as a recurring reference point through which meaning can be revisited, rather than as a mechanism that guarantees transmission.

### **Challenges in Transmission**

The transmission of ritual knowledge has become increasingly difficult due to modern pressures, religious shifts, and urbanization. Elders note that fewer young people are able or willing to participate fully in rituals. “*Hindi na willing pumunta ang ibang kabataan sa mga ritwal, dahil*

*sa work, sa school, wala ng time sa mga ganyan ritwal.*” Reduced participation limits exposure and weakens the continuity of embodied knowledge.

Despite these challenges, the ritual continues to function as a moral reference even when practiced by a smaller circle. The pig offering remains a visible marker of Ibaloy identity, sustaining a shared understanding of ancestral obligation even as participation becomes more selective and episodic.

## **Adaptation and Continuity in a Changing World**

### **Economic and Practical Adaptations**

Economic and environmental changes have altered how rituals are prepared and conducted. Families who once raised pigs now often purchase them due to urban restrictions or financial constraints. Homemade *tapuy* is sometimes replaced with store-bought alternatives, and cigarettes may substitute for traditional tobacco. These adjustments reflect pragmatic responses to changing conditions rather than a rejection of ritual values.

Crucially, the pig itself remains non-negotiable. While materials and methods adapt, the pig continues to anchor ritual meaning. Its presence preserves the symbolic integrity of the ceremony, demonstrating how adaptation operates around, rather than in place of, the central offering.

### **Spiritual Continuity and Cultural Identity**

Even as participation declines, the pig continues to anchor Ibaloy cultural identity. Proper offering, with attention to gender alignment, cry, blood, and organ divination, signals continued

recognition of ancestral expectations. The ritual does not guarantee belief or participation, but it provides a framework through which relationships between the living and the dead can be reaffirmed. Elders emphasize that persistence depends on spiritual conviction: “*Kung kaya ipagpatuloy mas maganda kaso mahirap na dahil hindi na naniniwala ang iba sa mga ritwal kaya hindi na nagpupunta, dahil na rin sa mga pagsama o pag anib sa mga religions.*”

### **Resilience Amid Change**

Despite challenges, the pig remains a symbol of continuity, serving as a conduit for ancestral guidance, ethical order, and intergenerational responsibility. Its cry, blood, organs, and distribution anchor ritual life, ensuring that the core of Ibaloy ceremonial practice persists even as times change. Knowledge may be transmitted differently, and participation may decline, but the pig sustains the cultural and spiritual threads that define Ibaloy identity.

### **Concluding Synthesis: Convergence of Symbolism, Practice, and Social Life**

Taken together, the social functions, modes of transmission, and adaptive strategies surrounding pig offerings show how symbolism, practice, and social life converge within Ibaloy ritual. The pig functions as a symbolic mediator, a focal point of labor, and a social instrument through which responsibility, cooperation, and moral order are enacted. Its offering does not guarantee continuity, but it creates a recurring space where meaning can be learned, negotiated, and reaffirmed. Through the pig, ritual symbolism becomes tangible, social relations become visible, and ethical expectations are enacted in practice. Even as participation narrows and transmission becomes uneven, the pig sustains the cultural and spiritual threads that define Ibaloy identity, allowing the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* to persist as a lived and responsive ritual process.

## CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS

This study has demonstrated that pig offerings in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* operate as a multivocal ritual symbol that sustains spiritual mediation, social cohesion, and cultural continuity among the Ibaloy of Loakan. Across the preceding chapters, the analysis has shown how pigs function simultaneously as offerings to ancestors, as organizers of social relations, and as vehicles through which moral obligation, reciprocity, and ancestral authority are made visible and actionable. Rather than treating the pig as a single symbol with a fixed meaning, this research has demonstrated how its significance emerges through ritual practice, sensory engagement, and collective participation. This chapter serves as the final interpretive synthesis of these findings, drawing together the symbolic, social, and experiential dimensions of pig offerings to articulate their broader cultural implications.

My understanding of Ibaloy ritual life did not emerge primarily from explanation but from sustained engagement with the presence of the pig at the center of ritual space. When I first entered the cemented yard of the old *talyer*, the ritual was already underway, not through formal declaration but through embodied preparation. Smoke drifted from damp pine wood and stung my eyes. Rain from the previous night clung to the ground, blending with the smell of earth and pig hair. People moved with quiet familiarity through the space, men sharpening knives, women preparing rice inside the house, children watching closely as they waited to be called for small tasks. These movements did not merely accompany the ritual. They enacted it.

In these moments, the pig stood tied near the entrance, its body shifting slightly amid the murmur of voices and activity. Observing this, it became clear that the ritual did not begin at a singular point in time. It began with the arrival of the pig. Its presence reoriented the compound,

drawing attention, regulating movement, and marking a transition from ordinary social time to ritual time. The pig's breathing, its restraint, and eventually its cry shaped the emotional and moral atmosphere of the gathering. Through the pig, ancestral attention was made perceptible, and human action became accountable to forces beyond the visible community.

What this study has demonstrated is that pig offerings are not simply performed as ritual obligations. They are felt, embodied, and socially negotiated. They function as thresholds through which the Ibaloy enter into sustained relationships with their ancestors, reaffirming kinship ties, moral responsibility, and communal identity. As this final chapter shows, the pig operates not only as an offering but as a central symbolic and practical medium through which Ibaloy ritual life continues to be lived, interpreted, and reconfigured in the present.

### **The Symbolic Power of the Pig in Ritual Life**

Throughout the fieldwork, it became clear that the pig functions as the primary bridge between the living and the ancestors. This role can be understood through Victor Turner's concept of multivocal symbolism, in which a single ritual symbol carries multiple meanings simultaneously, operating at practical, emotional, and cosmological levels. For the Ibaloy, the pig is at once sustenance, offering, message, and obligation. Community members explained this with confidence grounded in lived practice: "*Kailangan mag-offer ng baboy para may magagamit sila sa afterlife.*" Another elder stated, "*Ang babae, bibigyan ng babaeng baboy para dumami sila doon.*" These statements reflect a shared understanding that the pig is not merely representational. It is a concrete provision for the dead, expressing care and responsibility toward ancestors who continue to exist within a parallel moral and spiritual order.

This mediating function aligns with Mary Douglas's discussion of ritual as a system that manages boundaries between realms. In the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*, the pig occupies a controlled position between the human and ancestral worlds. Its body is handled, prayed over, and offered according to strict rules that regulate contact between these domains. The pig allows interaction without collapse of boundaries. It becomes the acceptable medium through which humans address the ancestors, offer gratitude, and fulfill moral debts. In this sense, the pig is not symbolic in abstraction but operates as a regulated conduit that maintains balance between life and death, presence and absence.

During the ritual, this mediating role becomes embodied through the actions of the *mambunong*. Standing near the pig, she whispers prayers and touches its body with deliberate care, treating it as a messenger rather than an object. These gestures situate the pig within what Arnold van Gennep describes as the ritual process, particularly the liminal phase, where entities exist between defined states. At this moment, the pig is no longer fully part of the human domain, yet it has not fully entered the ancestral realm. It occupies an in-between position that allows transition, communication, and transformation to occur.

The pig's first cry marks this transition clearly. Elders repeatedly emphasized its importance: "*Mas malakas ang iyak ng baboy. Yun ang naririnig ng spirits.*" The cry functions as a signal that the ritual process has begun and that the offering is active. Within Turner's framework, this sound activates the multivocal symbol, making the pig simultaneously a physical body, a communicative agent, and a moral claim upon the ancestors. The cry is not interpreted metaphorically but treated as an audible message that announces the family's intention and readiness to engage with the spirit world.

Through these layered meanings, the pig mediates relationships not only between the living and the dead but also among the living themselves. Its offering requires coordination, discipline, and adherence to shared rules, reinforcing collective responsibility. By situating the pig within a structured ritual process, the *Tayaw Shi Ke 'dot* demonstrates how mediation is achieved through controlled action rather than symbolic abstraction. The pig becomes the point at which ritual process, multivocal symbolism, and boundary maintenance converge, enabling communication across worlds while sustaining social and moral order within the community.

### **Liver, Blood, and Body as Messages**

This analysis is based on what elders and ritual specialists were willing to share during the fieldwork, with the recognition that some meanings, interpretations, and ritual knowledge remain restricted and are not openly discussed with outsiders. What is revealed, however, points to a shared understanding that what is sacrificed in the pig offering is not only the animal's life but its body as a communicative medium. The pig's physical form becomes a language through which ancestral demands, approvals, and warnings are conveyed to the living.

Among these bodily signs, the liver holds particular authority. Elders consistently emphasized its interpretive importance: "*Doon malalaman ang dinidemand.*" Rather than describing the act of reading itself, attention is directed to what the liver represents. It is understood as the clearest site where ancestral intention becomes legible. When the *mambunong* examines it, the surrounding community responds not as passive observers but as moral stakeholders. The collective silence and focused attention reflect a shared recognition that the message revealed does not concern the ritual alone but the future obligations, well-being, and conduct of the household.

Blood operates within a related but distinct symbolic register. Elders explained that blood carries vitality and protective force. When used in blessing, it is not simply marking space but activating it, asserting that ancestral presence has been acknowledged and engaged. Blood signals sincerity and commitment. Its visibility reinforces the seriousness of the offering and affirms that the family has fulfilled its responsibility to make the ritual known to the spirits.

Other bodily elements extend this communicative logic. Organs placed in baskets correspond to specific prayers, while even seemingly minor elements such as hair are treated with care. Elders explained that nothing from the pig is without meaning once it has entered the ritual sphere. These parts do not function independently but collectively, forming a coherent system of signs through which intention, respect, and accountability are expressed. The pig's body is thus transformed into a structured message rather than a collection of physical remains.

Through this understanding, the pig cannot be reduced to a vessel that merely carries meaning. It becomes the message itself. Its body articulates ancestral expectations, while its treatment reflects the moral discipline of the living. What is communicated is not abstract belief but relational obligation. The pig's liver, blood, and body together form a language that sustains dialogue between worlds, even as certain meanings remain guarded, known fully only to those entrusted with ritual authority.

### **The Pig's Cry as Practical and Sacred**

The pig's loud cry is a central reason for its selection as the primary ritual offering. Elders consistently explained that sound itself functions as a medium of communication between the human and ancestral realms. "*Yun ang maririnig ng spirits,*" they stated, emphasizing that the pig's voice is not incidental but necessary for ritual recognition. In this understanding, sound

operates communicatively, carrying human intention upward and signaling that the offering has been properly initiated.

Beyond communication, the pig's cry performs a ritual function. The moment the cry is released marks the formal activation of the offering. It announces that the ritual has crossed from preparation into execution, transforming ordinary space into ritual space. The cry gathers attention, regulates movement, and synchronizes the actions of participants, elders, and ritual specialists. Its timing and intensity are not left to chance but are closely watched, as they indicate whether the ritual is proceeding in an appropriate and respectful manner.

The cry also serves an evaluative role within the ritual process. Elders explained that a strong and audible cry reflects the pig's vitality and the seriousness of the offering. A weak or suppressed sound is understood as problematic, raising concern about whether ancestral attention has been adequately secured. In this way, sound becomes a criterion for ritual efficacy. It allows participants to assess, in real time, whether the offering meets ancestral expectations and whether the ritual is unfolding correctly.

Through the pig's cry, material characteristics are transformed into ritual logic. The animal's physical capacity to produce sound becomes evidence of its suitability as an offering, linking bodily vitality with spiritual effectiveness. The pig's abundance, strength, and vocal presence reinforce its central role, not only as sustenance for ancestors but as an active participant in ritual communication. Sound, therefore, is not merely expressive but constitutive of the ritual itself, shaping how the offering is recognized, evaluated, and ultimately accepted within the Ibaloy ceremonial world.

## **Practicality, Abundance, and the Fit of the Pig in Ibaloy Rituals**

### **Balance of Symbolism and Material Reality**

While the pig carries deep spiritual weight within Ibaloy ritual life, elders and families consistently emphasized that its ritual importance is not diminished by its material practicality. Rather than reducing the offering to convenience, they described practicality as one of the reasons the pig is considered appropriate and respectful. “*Mura ang baboy, sa hirap ng panahon,*” one participant explained, situating the choice of animal within everyday economic realities without separating these from sacred obligations. Chickens are understood to be too small to meet ritual demands, while carabaos and horses are prohibitively expensive. Goats, though available, are considered insufficient because they do not cry loudly enough to be heard by the spirits.

In earlier years, pigs were commonly raised around households, making them readily available when rituals were required. Today, local ordinances restrict this practice. “*Hindi allowed mag-alaga ng baboy sa residential,*” one community member noted. Despite these constraints, families continue to acquire pigs from nearby areas, demonstrating that the ritual commitment persists even as material conditions change. The continued effort to secure a pig reflects not a weakening of belief but an ongoing prioritization of ritual responsibility.

### **Fit for Ritual Demands**

The pig is repeatedly described as fitting the demands of both ritual efficacy and communal obligation. Its size allows it to feed both the spirits and the gathered community, its cry fulfills the communicative requirements of the ritual, and its cost remains manageable for most families. A younger man assisting with firewood remarked, “*Mga elders ang nagsasabi ng halaga ng pag-aalay ng baboy. Kami, sumusunod lang dahil yun ang nakasanayan.*” His statement points to a

shared understanding that material suitability operates within, rather than outside of, sacred authority.

Material suitability, therefore, enhances rather than undermines ritual significance. The pig is not chosen despite its practicality but because its material qualities align with spiritual expectations. Its abundance, accessibility, and physical attributes allow it to function as a complete offering, one that satisfies ancestral demands while remaining achievable for the living. In this way, symbolism and material reality converge, reinforcing the pig's enduring centrality within Ibaloy ritual practice.

## **The Pig as a Social Instrument**

### **Collective Labor, Kinship, and Balance**

The pig functions as a focal point around which social life is organized and rendered visible. Its preparation and handling require coordinated effort across generations, structured by ritual norms and elder authority. Men carry the animal, straining under its weight, while women prepare rice, boil meat, and welcome guests. Children wash organs, fetch firewood, or run errands. A young man reflected, "*Kanya kanyang destino,*" signaling that each participant has a defined role. Cooperation in these acts is not spontaneous but guided and disciplined, reinforcing kinship ties and maintaining the moral economy of the community. Through these structured tasks, participants demonstrate respect, accountability, and reciprocity, performing duties that are both socially expected and spiritually significant.

## **Distribution as a Moral and Social Statement**

The allocation of pork articulates social order, respect, and lineage. The *mambunong* receives the *ulpo*, the host family the *ihol*, elders are given thicker slices, and children and guests share warm broth that softens the cold air. These distributions are neither random nor purely egalitarian. Each portion reflects the relational hierarchy and the obligations of reciprocity that sustain communal cohesion. The pig, therefore, functions as a social instrument that concretizes moral expectations: generosity confers prestige, careful adherence to roles maintains balance, and participation enacts accountability. In offering, preparing, and consuming the pig, the Ibaloy enact a ritualized economy of social relations in which material sharing and spiritual practice converge, making visible the ethical and hierarchical principles that structure every day and ceremonial life.

## **Pig Offerings as Cultural Identity and the Preservation of Memory**

### **Identity Expressed Through Repetition and Collective Movement**

The pig offering is tightly integrated into Ibaloy cultural identity, functioning as both symbol and practice. Participants expressed this connection in simple phrases that carried layered meaning: “*Tradisyon na yan,*” “*Nakasanayan na,*” “*Tawid shi kaafuan*” (*Ipinamana ng mga ninuno*). These statements were made during everyday movements—cutting vegetables, adjusting blankets for the *tayaw*, stirring the boiling pot of pork—demonstrating that ritual is embedded in daily life. The acts of preparation and participation are not separate from social and personal identity; they constitute identity itself.

During the ritual, the pig functions as the focal point around which bodies, attention, and obligations converge. Men bend toward the fire, muscles straining as they lift the animal. Women prepare rice and attend to guests. Children wash the pig’s organs under running water, feeling the

warm liver and intestines as they imitate the elders' careful motions. Through these embodied acts, the pig operates as a container of collective identity, a material and social anchor that both expresses and reproduces what it means to be Ibaloy.

### **Cultural Transmission Through Exposure, Participation, and Ancestral Obligation**

Elders repeatedly emphasized the importance of experiential learning: "*Sinasama lang kami noon. Pinapanood na lang hanggang natutunan.*" Knowledge is rarely conveyed through explicit instruction; it is absorbed through observation, embodied practice, and participation in the rhythms of ritual. Young participants learn by holding the pig's organs, listening to its cry, and watching the *mambunong* read the liver and spleen. Even those who may not fully grasp the symbolic or spiritual dimensions still recognize that the ritual must be performed with care.

The pig thereby functions as a vehicle of cultural memory and identity. It mediates intergenerational transmission by situating learning within practical, embodied acts, while simultaneously carrying symbolic meaning. Memory is enacted through repetition and presence rather than through formal teaching. Even when some prayers are forgotten or young participants remain silent during the *ba'diw*, the pig continues to embody and convey tradition, creating a tangible link between past and present.

### **Continuity, Adaptation, and Reflexive Transmission**

Participants expressed concern about the sustainability of ritual knowledge. "*Hindi ko alam kung magagawa pa ng next generation.*" "*Malungkot kasi hindi basta maituro.*" Changes in work, schooling, and religious affiliation reduce direct participation. Elders are fewer, and the *mambunong* must withhold certain prayers from wider circulation, limiting explicit transmission.

At the same time, some recognize subtler forms of continuity. “*Kahit sa isip mo ay wala na, darating din yung time na matututo.*” Even when young people do not understand every symbolic meaning, they absorb the ritual’s rhythm, movements, and ethical expectations through observation and engagement. The pig operates as a conduit for these lessons, enabling a form of cultural transmission that is embodied, iterative, and mediated through participation rather than verbal instruction.

### **Contribution to Anthropological Understanding**

This study demonstrates how pig offerings in the *Tayaw Shi Ke’dot* function as a multivocal medium of cultural transmission. By centering ritual practice, embodiment, and material symbolism, it shows how animal sacrifice serves not merely as performance but as a means through which identity, memory, and social responsibility are conveyed. These findings contribute to anthropological discussions on ritual and memory by highlighting how ceremonial acts operate as structured, experiential, and embodied processes of cultural continuity, even under conditions of partial participation or adaptation.

### **The Pig as the Anchor of Continuity**

Despite changes, one truth remains: the pig cannot be replaced. Store-bought wine may replace homemade *tapuy*. Tobacco brands may change. Houses may become cemented. But the offering of the pig stays. It is the anchor that holds the shape of the ritual together. Through it, the ritual remains intact, flexible yet rooted.

## The Pig as the Heart of Ibaloy Ritual Life

This study investigated how pig offerings in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* sustain spiritual mediation, social cohesion, and cultural continuity among the Ibaloy of Loakan. Fieldwork demonstrated that the pig is central to these processes, functioning simultaneously as a symbolic mediator, a practical focal point of communal labor, and a conduit through which obligations, reciprocity, and moral order are enacted. Through its cry, blood, organs, and distribution, the pig connects the living and the dead, anchors ritual knowledge across generations, and reinforces social, ethical, and spiritual frameworks. The research questions regarding the pig's role in ritual efficacy, social structure, and cultural transmission were addressed through participant observation, interviews, and analysis of embodied practice. In theoretical terms, the pig operates as a multivocal symbol, as Turner would describe, conveying multiple layers of meaning that encompass spiritual, social, and moral dimensions. It also functions as a site of mediation, in the sense Douglas outlines, translating human intentions into forms recognizable to ancestral spirits while providing a structure through which the living coordinate their actions. The organized sequence of ritual stages further embodies van Gennep's concept of ritual process, marking transitions from ordinary to sacred time and guiding participants through shared responsibilities.

All testimonies and observations converge on a single conclusion: the pig is the heart of Ibaloy ritual life. Elders emphasized that no other offering can replace it. While substitutions such as store-bought tapuy or tobacco brands may occur, the pig remains indispensable. It carries identity, conveys memory, communicates with ancestors, nourishes the living, and structures participation across generations. Its significance is both material and symbolic, practical and sacred, and its provision underpins the coherence and continuity of the ritual complex. The pig structures social labor and moral responsibility. Men lift and position the animal according to ritual

prescription, women prepare food and manage hospitality, and children perform supportive tasks. Distribution of meat follows a moral economy, reflecting kinship, status, and reciprocity. Elders emphasized that the ritual's efficacy depends on precision and respect at every stage, demonstrating that control, discipline, and ethical conduct are inseparable from the offering itself. Material suitability enhances rather than diminishes ritual significance; the pig's size, cry, and abundance satisfy both practical and sacred demands, reinforcing its centrality.

These findings are specific to the Loakan community and derived from a short-duration fieldwork period. Some ritual meanings and practices remain restricted, shared only among elders or the *mambunong*. This analysis acknowledges these limits, recognizing that certain aspects of the pig's sacred significance cannot be fully disclosed. Nevertheless, observation, participant narratives, and guided participation provide a robust account of the pig's role in ritual, social, and cultural life, demonstrating its centrality to the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* and the continuity of Ibaloy identity.

By recognizing the pig as the core of Ibaloy ritual life, this study affirms the importance of culturally grounded ethnography for understanding how indigenous communities sustain meaning, identity, and continuity in a changing world. The pig exemplifies the convergence of multivocal symbolism, mediation, and ritual process, showing that ritual efficacy and cultural transmission are inseparable from the embodied, relational, and moral dimensions of communal life. The *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* emerges not as a static tradition but as a living, structured, and socially negotiated process, with the pig as its indispensable anchor.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this ethnographic study on the cultural significance of pig offerings in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* of the Ibaloy community in Loakan, Baguio, the following recommendations are proposed. These recommendations aim to support cultural continuity, ethical research practice, youth engagement, and the respectful use of Indigenous knowledge. They are grounded in the lived realities observed during fieldwork and in the expressed perspectives of Ibaloy elders, ritual specialists, and community members.

### **For the Ibaloy Community**

The study demonstrates that ritual knowledge among the Ibaloy is primarily transmitted through participation, observation, and embodied practice rather than through formal instruction. In light of this, it is recommended that community-led and elder-guided opportunities for intergenerational engagement be encouraged within culturally appropriate boundaries. Informal post-ritual conversations, storytelling, and guided explanations—when permitted by cultural protocols—may help younger members better understand the meanings and responsibilities embedded in the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*. These efforts should remain firmly under the authority of the community and ritual specialists, ensuring that sacred knowledge is shared selectively and respectfully. The continuation of ritual practice itself remains the most vital means of cultural preservation, and any supportive activities should strengthen, rather than replace, the living performance of ritual.

### **For Youth Engagement and Cultural Transmission**

Findings from this study show that younger Ibaloy participants engage with ritual life in varied ways, navigating both ancestral expectations and contemporary influences. Rather than framing this as cultural loss, it is recommended that youth engagement be understood as a process

of negotiation between tradition and modernity. Community-initiated mentorship arrangements—where youth assist elders or ritual practitioners in non-restricted tasks—may foster learning through proximity and responsibility. Encouraging youth participation in preparatory activities, music, dance, and communal labor can reinforce cultural pride and belonging without imposing rigid expectations. Such engagement allows cultural knowledge to be absorbed gradually, in ways that align with both individual readiness and community values.

### **For Researchers and Future Studies**

This study underscores the importance of ethical, collaborative, and culturally grounded research when working with Indigenous communities. Future researchers studying Ibaloy rituals or similar Indigenous practices are strongly encouraged to adopt participatory and community-approved methodologies that prioritize Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), respect for restricted knowledge, and Indigenous data sovereignty. Researchers should remain attentive to the limits of access and interpretation, recognizing that not all aspects of ritual life are meant to be documented or analyzed. Long-term engagement, reciprocal relationships, and transparency regarding research goals and outputs are essential to ensuring that academic inquiry does not become extractive or harmful.

### **For Educational and Cultural Institutions**

Educational institutions, cultural organizations, and heritage agencies may draw on the insights of this study as contextual reference for understanding Ibaloy ritual life, provided that such use is undertaken in consultation with the community. Any incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into educational materials, exhibits, or programs should avoid reducing ritual practices to spectacle or static tradition. Institutions are encouraged to support initiatives that foreground Indigenous voices, emphasize living cultural practices, and uphold the authority of the community

over representation. Collaborative partnerships that respect cultural protocols can contribute to broader public understanding while safeguarding the dignity and integrity of Ibaloy traditions.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Given the limited duration and site-specific nature of this study, future research may explore comparative analyses across different Ibaloy communities in the Cordillera region to examine variations in ritual practice and symbolism. Longer-term ethnographic immersion could provide deeper insight into processes of learning, succession among ritual specialists, and changes in ritual participation over time. Further studies may also examine the intersections of ritual practice with contemporary concerns such as land use, urbanization, education, and cultural policy, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of how Indigenous ritual life adapts within changing social contexts.

These recommendations are offered with humility and respect for the Ibaloy community, whose generosity and guidance made this study possible. Ultimately, the continuity of the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot* and the cultural significance of pig offerings rests not in documentation alone, but in the continued practice, care, and commitment of the Ibaloy people themselves. This study aspires to support, rather than define, that living tradition.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A. ORAL TESTIMONIES OF IBALOY ELDERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

This appendix compiles only Ibaloy voices—their explanations, ritual instructions, cultural reflections, memories, and interpretations expressed during fieldwork.

#### A1. Testimonies on Keshew (Thanksgiving Ritual)

##### *A1.1 On Choosing Animals*

- “Ang hayop na ginagamit ay depende sa nagdedemand... pero sa hirap ng buhay, common gamitin ang baboy.”
- “Mura ang baboy.”
- “Bumibili naman kami sa area namin, hindi sa city.”
- “Hindi na pwede mag-alaga ng baboy sa residential area... May area naman na pinapayagan mag-alaga ng baboy basta malayo sa kabahayan.”

##### *A1.2 On Reading Organs*

- “Unang titingnan ay liver para basahin kung ano ang kailangan ng ancestors... Mambunong ang nagbabasa.”

##### *A1.3 On the Pig’s Cry*

- “Hindi pwedeng gigilitan lang basta ang baboy, dapat iiyak muna... malalaman ng spirits na may ritwal para sa kanila.”

##### *A1.4 On Clothing Offerings*

- “Bibigyan ng damit dahil worn out na daw ang mga damit ng spirits.”
- “Kailangan bago ang mga ioffer na mga damit, hindi pwede ang second hand.”

##### *A1.5 On Offering a Cow*

- “May baka na inalay dahil nag-aalaga ng baka ang isa sa mga namatay at yun ang dinemand ng ispirito.”

##### *A1.6 On Children’s Involvement*

- “Exposure talaga para mapreserve... isinasama ang mga kabataan.”

##### *A1.7 On Division of Labor*

- “Common sense na lang.”

##### *A1.8 On Mambunong Authority*

- “Mambunong lang ang nakakaalam ng prayers... kapag nawala ang mambunong, mawawala ang cañao.”

## **A2. Testimonies on Tayaw (Dance Ritual)**

### *A2.1 On Ritual Instrument Handling*

- “Pag tinry mo nang di ka marunong, papagalitan ka... kailangan magpaalam talaga sa elders o sa matatanda.”

### *A2.2 On Learning the Dance*

- “Sinasama lang ako, hindi na ako nagpaturo, pinapanood na lang hanggang sa matutunan.”

### *A2.3 On Spirit Presence During Dance*

- “Si Uncle nandyan... hindi sya nagyoyosi pero dahil sumapi si Uncle, ayan na.”
- “Magiiba ang sayaw kapag nandyan na ang spirits.”

## **A3. Testimonies on Taydiw (Suspension of the Pig)**

### *A3.1 On Orientation Toward Sunrise*

- “Hindi alam kung bakit sinasabit ang baboy, basta nakagisnan lang... yung ulo dapat nasa kung saan sisikat ang araw.”

### *A3.2 On Learning Through Observation*

- “Pag nagtanong ka ay papagalitan ka pa... basta bantayan na lang, mabilis dapat mag-catch up.”

### *A3.3 On Mambunong's Ritual Tool*

- “Yun yung parang magic wand niya.”

## **A4. Testimonies on Indutsek**

### *A4.1 On Non-Performance*

- “Wala ng indutsek.”

### *A4.2 On Its Function and Placement*

- “Indutsek ay isang kahoy na nakatayo, symbol na may nangyaring ritwal sa isang household... sa labas ng bahay ang indutsek... dapat naaarawan.”
- “Hindi rin alam kung bakit dapat naaarawan ang kahoy.”

### *A4.3 On When It Is Performed*

- “Kung may pera, puwede; kung may swerte ka, puwede... thanksgiving for acceptance of luck.”
- “Para hindi na masayang yung swerte, either galing sa Lord o galing sa ninuno.”

## **A5. Testimonies on Ba'diw (Chant)**

### *A5.1 Description of the Ba'diw*

- “Jamming with the souls.”

### *A5.2 On Emotional Conduct*

- “Bawal ang pikon.”

### *A5.3 On Prohibited Participation*

- “Bawal magsampitaw.”

### *A5.4 Closing the Chant*

- “Isa-pat tayu la.”

## **A6. Testimonies on Sapnak ng Taydiw**

### *A6.1 On Ritual Repetition*

- “Sapnak o sininapnak ay gagawin uli.”

## **A7. Testimonies on Bangkilay (Ritual Altar)**

### *A7.1 On the Meaning of the Altar*

- “Bangkilay ay table... adapted from the Old Testament... para daw makita din ng soul na may kinatay din doon.”

### *A7.2 On Spirits' Status in the Afterlife*

- “Importante ang offering ng ka’fe sa bangkilay... yung level sa afterlife.”
- “Pag wala pang bangkilay, mababa pa ang level nila sa afterlife.”
- “Parang may ranggo, hindi makakapunta sa mga area na pinupuntahan nila sa afterlife.”

### *A7.3 On Replacing the Bangkilay*

- “Ka’fe ay parang thanksgiving sa parents nila pero nagawa na nila kaya sapnak ang gagawin, papalitan na ang bangkilay.”

## **A8. General Cultural Testimonies**

### *A8.1 On Learning Through Exposure*

- “Sinasama lang kami noon. Pinapanood na lang hanggang natutunan.”
- “Natututo din ang mga kabataan, kahit sa isip mo ay wala na, pero darating din yung time na matututo.”

### *A8.2 On Declining Participation*

- “Hindi na willing pumunta ang ibang kabataan sa mga ritwal, dahil sa work, sa school, wala nang time sa mga ganyan.”

### *A8.3 On Effects of Religious Change*

- “Mahirap na dahil hindi na naniniwala ang iba sa mga ritwal kaya hindi na nagpupunta, dahil na rin sa pag-anib sa mga religions.”

### *A8.4 On Cultural Preservation*

- “Ito na lang ang natitirang culture naming na kailangan i-preserve.”

### *A8.5 On Cosmological Logic of Pig Offerings*

- “Kailangan mag-offer ng baboy para may magagamit sila sa afterlife.”
- “Ang babae, bibigyan ng babaeng baboy para dumami sila doon.”

# APPENDIX B. PERMITS

## B.1 CERTIFICATION PRECONDITION



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Control No. CP-**IKSP**- CAR - 2025 - 12

### CERTIFICATION PRECONDITION

To Whom It May Concern:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that Ms. **BIANCA PAULINE L. TAPALLA** has applied for the issuance of a Certification Precondition for the proposed research entitled "**Tayaw Ritual Rites: An Ethnographic Study on the Significance of Pigs on the Culture of Ibalois in Loakan, Baguio City**." Conducted inside the Ibalois Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) in Loakan, Baguio, City.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY FURTHER, that after the conduct of the required Free and Prior Informed Consent Process in accordance with NCIP Administrative Order No. 1, Series of 2012, requirements, thus the Certification Precondition for the aforementioned research is approved, subject to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) entered into by and among the respective researcher, the ICCs/IPs of Loakan, Baguio City and the **National Commission on Indigenous Peoples**.

The grant of this Certification Precondition is subject to the following conditions:

1. Data gathered shall be used solely for research purposes;
2. Researcher must notify this office in writing before actual research starts;
3. Research output must be presented to the concerned Indigenous Peoples for validation;
4. A Certificate of Validation shall be issued by the ICCs/IPs, and
5. A copy of the validated research output shall be submitted to the community and the NCIP.

THIS CERTIFICATION is issued in compliance with Republic Act No. 8371, otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 and NCIP Administrative Order No. 01, Series of 2012, otherwise known as the Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) and Customary Laws Research and Documentation Guidelines of 2012.

This Office, however, reserves whatever action needed to be undertaken to protect the rights and interest of the Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples concerned, including the cancellation/revocation of this certification, as the case maybe.

Issued this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June 2025 in Baguio City, Philippines.

  
**ATTY. ROLAND B. CALDE**  
Regional Director

cc: Concerned ICC/IPs  
NCIP Provincial Office/CSC  
NCIP RO TMSD

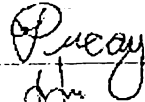


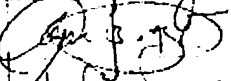

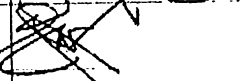

## B.2 CERTIFICATE OF VALIDATION

IBALOY ICCs/IPs  
Loakan, Baguio City

### Certificate of Validation

This is to certify that a Validation of a research entitled, *Tayaw Ritual Rites: An Ethnographic Study on the Significance of Pigs on the Culture of Ibalogs in Loakan, Bagulo* was conducted on 28 November 2025 where researcher Bianca Pauline L. Tapalla presented the research output, including her conclusions and recommendations.

We find the information contained therein to be factual and properly reflective of our customs, traditions, beliefs, customary laws and IKSPs. We also agreed and are satisfied with the content, extent, and manner of presentation of the information and knowledge that may be published or communicated by the researcher.

No.	Name	Signature
1	YABU PUEAY	
2	Marilyn S. Tongawan	
3	Marilyn J. Olucan	
4	HOLL P. TACIF	
5	JOSELITO B. SORIANO	
6	SAMSON P. AMISTAD	
7	MARVIN BINTAN	
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## APPENDIX C. FIELDWORK PHOTOGRAPHS

This section presents selected photographs from fieldwork\* among the Ibaloy of Loakan, documenting aspects of the *Tayaw Shi Ke'dot*\*\*.



### *Keshew* (Thanksgiving Ritual) Offerings

The assortment of clothing, *tapyu*, cigarettes, and animals reflects the family's gratitude to ancestors, symbolizing generosity and the reciprocal flow of blessings between the living and the dead.



### *Taydiw* Ritual (Suspension of Pig)

Suspending the pig invites ancestral attention, signaling the community's readiness to communicate with the spirit world and uphold ritual obligations.



The *Tayaw* Dance expresses communal unity and joy; dancers embody gratitude, kinship, and the continuity of Ibaloy identity through movement.



The *Sapnak Ng Taydiw* (Suspension of Pig) Ritual – repetition of the *Taydiw* ritual done on the second day, repeating the suspension ritual on the second day reinforces the request for ancestral favor, emphasizing persistence, respect, and ritual

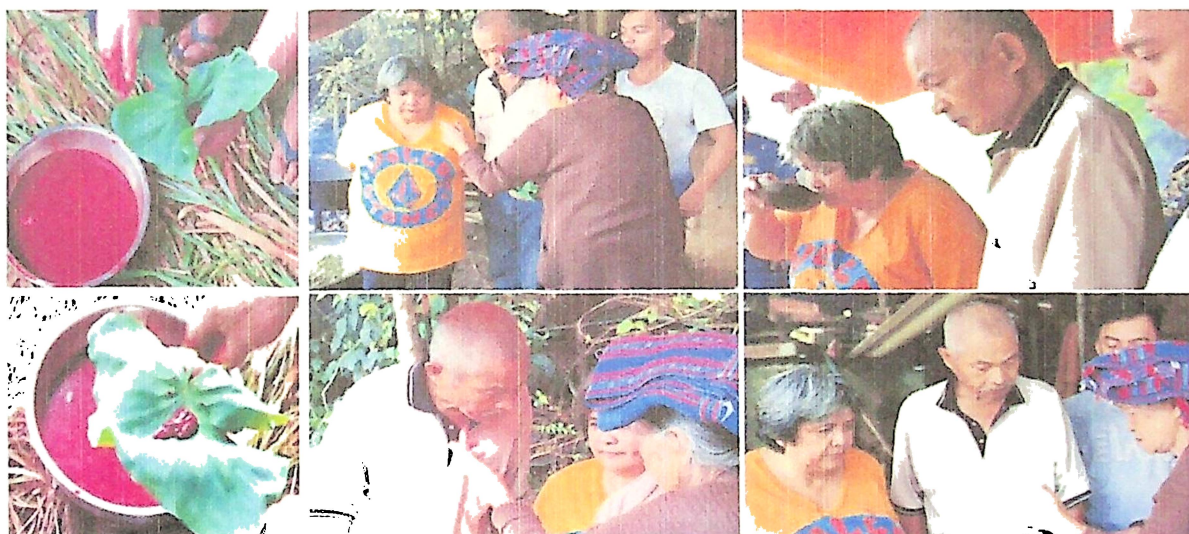


The *Bangkilay* (Altar) - Made of 13 pine poles tied with *aguy* (rattan) and framed by 16 pieces of *afay* (runo leaves) together with *singalong* and *salaw*, formed a sacred frame that marks the ritual boundary—an embodied space where humans and spirits may interact.

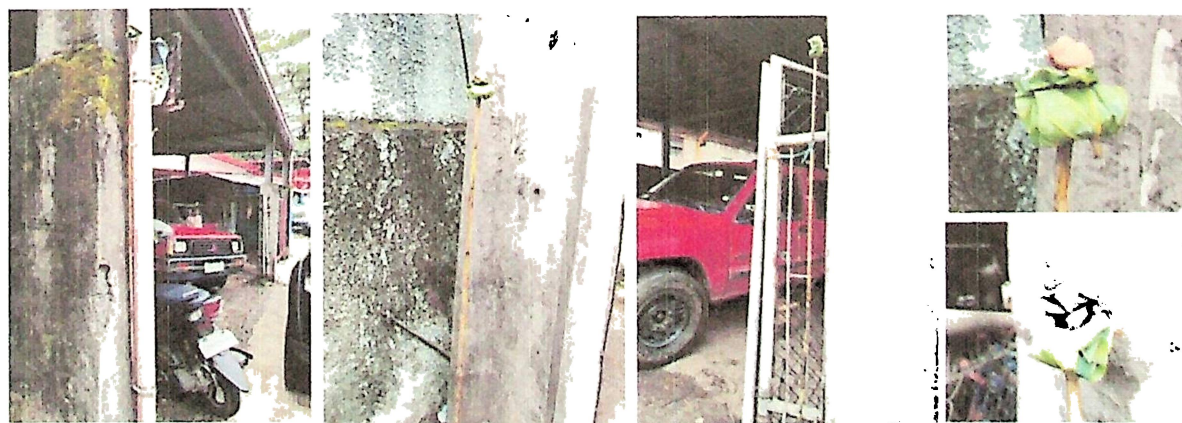
## Auxiliary Rituals



*Kegwes* (Stirring the Meat) - Stirring the boiling meat after prayers affirms the host family's responsibility to nourish



*Khasna* - Pig's blood smeared on cheeks/forehead; ideally kept for three days to stay visible to spirits. The smearing of pig's blood marks participants as recognized by the spirits, ensuring visibility and protection in the sacred moment.



*Tushok* (Skewers Signaling Closure) - These food-filled skewers placed along paths announce that the *cañao* has concluded, guiding spirits home and communicating ritual completion to the community.

## Ritual Tools



*Uwek* - a pointed stick made with guava wood, used to pierce the side of the pig



*Singkalong* – made of bamboo, used as a container for *tapuy* (rice wine) and broth from the butchered pig.



*Tapuy and Salaw* - Rice wine in earthen jars embodies hospitality and sacred exchange, offered both to human guests and unseen spiritual kin.



*Sapsap* – typically a banana leaf, is used to lay the pig before offering



Blade grass flower (*bunga ng blade grass*) – Held by the *mambunong*, it becomes an instrument of blessing

## Instruments and Clothing Used in Rituals



### Gangsa (Kalsa and Pinsak)

The gongs provide the sonic core of Ibaloy ceremonies, their ringing uniting dancers, hosts, and spirits within a shared auditory field.



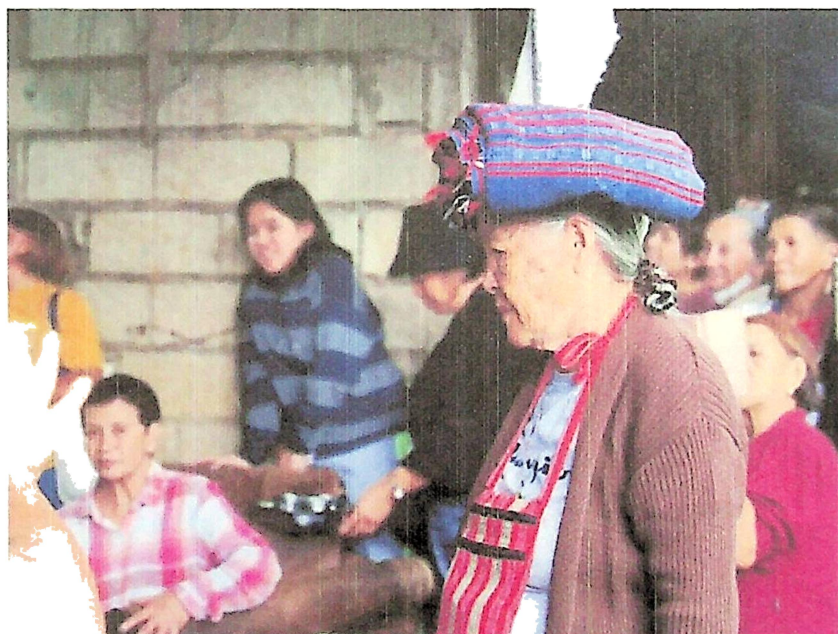
*Tihitik* - a pair of metal about 9 inches long. These slender metal pieces produce sharp tones that punctuate the rhythm of ritual, calling attention to moments requiring focus or transition.



**Solibao and Kimbal** - These drums ground the *Tayaw* dance with deep resonant beats, symbolizing the steady, collective heartbeat of the community.



The *Sarong (pinagpagan)* - a wrap-around blanket usually worn by Ibaloy women, and *Tayaw (Pindak shindig)* - two blankets usually draped on the shoulders of men, are worn during the dance. Worn during ritual dances, these textiles express identity, dignity, and continuity; their patterns and placement visually anchor performers within tradition.



*Pangjet* – worn by the *mambunong* as a ritual blanket headpiece, signifying ritual authority, lineage, and the enduring identity of the community.

*\*All photos were taken by the researcher, Bianca Pauline Tapalla, and her spouse, Mark Raven Tapalla during the two-day cañao on June 10 and 11, 2025 at Nora Banes Ricablanca's Residence*

*\*\*For confidentiality and ethical considerations, the identities of individuals appearing in the photographs have not been disclosed.*

## APPENDIX D. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

*At the request of the Ibaloy community, this list of names has been included to honor those who participated in the research and attended the cañao. Only individuals who provided their consent and signed the attendance sheets are listed.*

Eroll B. Tagle	Grace C. Batiyeg
Joselito B. Shontogan	Jonalyn E. Codiay
Juanita Shodang	Alaiza Aradanas
Magdalena Pagnas	Yabut Pucay
Nelia Macay	Mylyn Olosan
Soledad Antonio	Marilyne S. Tongawan
Clotilda Ngoay	Samson P. Amistad
Joseph L. Agnawa	Marvin Binay-an
Teresa B. Pateño	Kim Tristan
Anita B. Shontogan	Nora C. Milanés
Irene A. Ines	Teiry Batiyeg
Alicia Mae O. Himiwat	Mary Jane C. Finatec
Aldrik Kent John N. Lovpaz	Teresa U. Berdao
Alara Q. Aradanas	Julita Cata
Elnora Shodang	Marciana D. Waguís
Leticia Shodang	Gorajon Balar
Janet B. Ortín	Juliet Camilan
Orlando W. Brabante	Virginia Dulay Batangi
Orina Cadiay	TM Batiyeg
Maila C. Lopez	Teresa Cipriano
Rebecca C. Ecom	Arjay P. Viscaya
Maria Teresa S. Bendaen	Carlo Banes Ricablanca
Leticia Gregorio	Jeoffrey A. Gregorio
Mylyn J. Ohosan	Nora Banes Ricablanca
Amanda Cados	

# APPENDIX E. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

## E1. Informed Consent Form

University of the Philippines Manila  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Behavioral Sciences

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: *An Ethnographic Study on the Significance of Pigs on the Culture of Ibaloy in Loakan, Baguio*

#### Purpose of the Research

I, Bianca Pauline L. Tapalla, will conduct a fieldwork study which includes interviews about the significance of pigs in the rituals and culture of the Ibaloy people. This research aims to:

- Identify the various rituals in Ibaloy culture,
- Explain the process of pig offering, and
- Describe the importance and meaning of offering pigs.

I will document the pig-offering ritual of the Ibaloy as part of this fieldwork. The fieldwork will take place in Loakan, Baguio, and will last approximately two to three days, depending on the duration of the ritual. My participation may include observation, involvement in activities, and interviews with participants. The interviews may be conducted in person, with respect to the traditions and comfort of the participants.

#### Participant Rights

- Your participation in this fieldwork study is **voluntary**.
- You may decline or withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.
- You have the right not to answer any question or not to participate in any activity you are uncomfortable with.

#### Privacy and Confidentiality

- Information and observations collected during this fieldwork will be used **solely for research purposes**.
- You may choose to keep your name anonymous or use a pseudonym.
- Photos, videos, or audio recordings will only be used **with your consent**.
- All data will be securely stored and destroyed after one year, in accordance with ethical research standards.

#### Participation and Consent

By signing below, you acknowledge that: You understand the purpose, process, and your rights as a participant in this research, and you agree to participate in the related interviews.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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Blanca Pauline L. Tapalla  
Student Researcher  
09760682820 | [bltapalla@up.edu.ph](mailto:bltapalla@up.edu.ph)  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **E2. Interview Guide**

### **I. History**

- a. History of the place where the Ibaloy reside
- b. The people who make up the Ibaloy community
- c. History of pig offerings in Ibaloy culture

### **II. Description**

- a. Offering
- b. Pig
- c. Pig offering
- d. Ritual

### **III. Various Rituals in Ibaloy Culture**

- a. List of Ibaloy rituals
- b. Importance of rituals in the community
- c. Rituals that include pig offerings

### **IV. Pig**

- a. Importance of pigs in daily life
- b. Importance of pigs in rituals
- c. Symbolism, Meaning, and Significance of Different Parts of the Pig:
  - i. Head
  - ii. Meat
  - iii. Blood
  - iv. Internal organs
  - v. Tail
- d. Pig Offering
  - i. Reasons for performing the offering
  - ii. Significance of pig offerings in society or community
  - iii. Importance of pig offerings in rituals
  - iv. People required to conduct a pig offering
  - v. Materials needed to carry out the pig offering

### **V. Process of Pig Offering**

- a. Activities before performing the ritual (Preliminary)
- b. Source of the pig
- c. Raising the pig
- d. Capturing
- e. Slaughtering
- f. Interpretation
- g. Distribution
- h. Activities after performing the ritual (Supplementary)

### **E3. Interview Questions**

Good morning/afternoon! First of all, I would like to thank you for taking part in this study. I understand that you have many responsibilities, and I am truly grateful for your time and participation.

This interview will serve as an important component of my research on the significance of pigs in Ibaloy culture. During the course of this interview, I will ask you about your views on rituals in your culture, the processes of pig offering, how you feel about them, and what your role is in these practices.

Please don't worry—you are not required to answer any questions you are not comfortable with. This interview will last around 15 to 30 minutes, depending on how the discussion progresses.

You also don't need to worry about your identity and responses, as everything you say will be kept private and confidential. If you agree, may I record our conversation using my video camera?

How about a tape recorder instead?

Thank you. Do you have any questions?

If not, and you are ready, then let's begin.

#### **On pigs in rituals:**

- What does the pig symbolize in society?
- What is the significance of pigs in daily life?
- What are the important parts of the pig, and what are their uses or meanings?
- What is the importance of pigs in culture and rituals?
- What is the process of conducting a ritual involving a pig?
- What tools or materials are needed to perform the pig ritual?
- What are the methods used to carry out the ritual?
- Where are the pigs used in rituals sourced or caught?
- Why are pigs the chosen offering in these rituals?
- How is the pig symbolically interpreted in the ritual?

#### **On people in the community:**

- Who performs the ritual? (hierarchy)
- Who are the people with the power or right to lead or conduct the ritual?
- Who are the individuals necessary to ensure the proper performance of the ritual?

#### **Symbolism, Importance, and Meaning of the following:**

- Pig
- Ritual
- Parts of the pig
  
- What is the process of offering a pig?
- How do you interpret rituals and animal offerings?
- How do you interpret the offering of a pig?

# Bianca Pauline L. Tapalla

Meadow Park Subdivision, Molino 4 Bacoor City Cavite | bltapalla@up.edu.ph | 0976 068 2820

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

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2011- Present	University of the Philippines <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Bachelor of Arts in Behavioral Sciences</i></li></ul>	Ermita, Manila
2007-2011	Caloocan High School <i>ESEP (Engineering Science Educational Program)</i>	10 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Caloocan City
2001-2007	Ninoy Aquino Elementary School	Longos, Malabon City

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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Dec 2022 – Mar 2023	Human Resources Supervisor	Ace Hardware Philippines, Inc.
Aug 2022 - Dec 2022	Talent Acquisition Specialist	uPraxis Group Limited
Feb 2022 - Aug 2022	Talent Acquisition Specialist	Quess Corp Limited
May 2021 - Oct 2021	Human Resources Specialist II	24HRPO

## ORGANIZATION AFFILIATIONS

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2011-2014	UP MANILA BEHAVIORAL STUDIES SOCIETY <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Documentation Committee</li></ul>
2014-2015	ROTARACT CLUB OF UP MANILA <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>University branch of the International Rotary Club aimed to aid in serving the underprivileged</li></ul>
2011-Present	UP Musicians' Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>PR and Events Head Executive Committee; Documentation Committee. Hosted Musical and Cultural events</li></ul>

Volunteered works: Child Rehabilitation Center, Salinlahi and Gabriela Youth.

*\*References Available Upon Request*

## APPENDIX G. FIELDWORK NARRATIVE AND ETHNOPOETRY

Arriving in Loakan, Baguio, I was immediately aware that I was entering not just a neighborhood, but a living network of relationships, memories, and ancestral presence. From the first moments, I felt the careful attention of elders, the quiet guidance of the *mambunong*, and the playful curiosity of children observing every move. I was a witness, a learner, and, in small ways, a participant—carrying bamboo, rinsing taro, and fumbling to keep pace with the rhythm of the *tayaw*.

This research would not have been possible without the generosity, patience, and trust of the Ibaloy community. The elders welcomed me into spaces usually reserved for kin, shared stories and practices with care, and allowed me to witness rituals that are sacred and deeply personal. Young people offered guidance and occasional laughter, reminding me that cultural knowledge is alive in small, everyday acts of observation and participation. I also wish to acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives (IPMRs) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) for granting permission, facilitating access, and supporting the conduct of this fieldwork. Their guidance ensured that research was carried out respectfully and in accordance with indigenous protocols, safeguarding both the community and the integrity of Ibaloy cultural practices.

I am profoundly grateful to everyone who opened their homes, shared their practices, and allowed me to be present in moments that blend devotion, memory, and care. This thesis is grounded in your generosity, your patience, and the intangible yet palpable wisdom that flows through each gesture, each offering, and each dance. The following ethnopoetry is a humble attempt to honor those experiences and the voices that shaped them, translating what I observed and felt into words that carry some measure of your stories, presence, and ritual life.

## ETHNOPOETRY

### *Alingawngaw na Hakbang*

*Ako'y namangha ng aking masakhihan  
Tradisyon na mula pa sa mga matatanda  
Sa akin ay inyong pinakilala  
isang bahagi ng inyong kultura.*

*Inanyayahan ninyo na ako'y maki-'tayahaw'  
Suot ang telang 'sarong' ang inyong tawag  
Solibao at Gangsa ay malayang pinatutunog  
Na may gabay ng inyong mahal na  
'mambunong'.*

*Kung papanoorin ay tila kay dali  
ngunit nang subukan, ako'y napangiwi  
Ang 'tayahaw' na inyong iniindak  
ay may nakalilito rin palang padyak.*

*Tila naging parehong kaliwa ang mga paa  
Hindi magkandatuto sa tunog ng gangsa  
ngunit ng lumaon ay nakasunod din  
ang aking ngiwi ay napalitan ng ngiti*

### **Echoed Steps**

I was amazed at what I saw,  
A tradition passed from elders' law.  
You shared with me, with care and pride,  
A piece of culture I could not hide.

You invited me to join the 'tayahaw,'  
Wearing the sarong that you call.  
Solibao and Gangsa freely played,  
Guided by your honored *mambunong's* way.

At first, it seemed so easy to view,  
But when I tried, my grimace grew.  
The 'tayahaw' you danced with steps so sly,  
Confused my feet, yet I had to try.

Both feet felt like they were all left,  
Unable to match the *gangsa's* heft.  
Yet in time, I caught the pace,  
And my grimace turned to a smile on my face.

*BY: Bianca Pauline L. Tapalla*