The tattoos for women indicate initiation into adulthood and full participation in the social life of the group. Tattoos signify acceptance, a sense of belonging, and identity. Daughters of the *kadangyan* (the rich) members of the community are obliged to have their tattoos when they reach puberty. The pressure of being labeled “different” from the rest of the community is a cause of shame. *Batek* also indicates permanent differentiation from peers. In different villages, there are stories of how the young girls without tattoos get teased by the young men. The young men would make fun of girls by spitting on their hands, and rubbing these on the girl’s arms. This was probably taken as a sign that the girls were entering a stage of maturity and, as such, obliged to accept their social functions such as getting tattoos or preparing for marriage.

(Source: "Batek: Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines" by Analyn Ikin V. Salvador-Amores)
Kalinga /Kalinga Tattoos (Batek).

In 16th century culture and society, tattooing was already a common practice among the major warrior groups in the Cordillera, i.e., the Bontoc, the Ifugao and the Kalinga. At the time of the arrival of the Spaniards, headhunting and tattooing were being practised more extensively than at the time of the coming of the Americans.

Tattoos were symbols of male valor: these were applied only after a man had performed in battle with fitting courage. Like modern military decorations, warriors accumulated tattoos with each act of bravery. Until today, tattooing and tattoo designs in the Cordilleras are best understood within the context of headhunting and of the mai’ngor
(warriors). Headhunting was the only known reason for tattooing and, to this day, no one knows exactly what those tattoos signify.
Tattooing starts at the back of the hand and the wrists. The first kill is denoted with stripe patterns which appear like tie band called *gulot*, or *pinupungol*. The term *munggolot* refers to the chief of the headhunting raid and literally means the “cutter of the head”, so when the *gulot* tattoo is earned, this means that the person has killed someone or has become a “headtaker.” Those who have killed two individuals have tattoo patterns on their hands. Warriors who have killed ten or more are the individuals who are permitted to wear the chest tattoos and other elaborate insignias (like the head axe) at the side of their stomach, back, thighs and legs and even the cheeks to connote unrivalled bravery of a warrior in a certain village. Tattooing increases in proportion to the number of heads or participation in headhunting forays.

The black tattoo pattern against the brown skin made warriors look fearsome to the other members of other tribes, and appear attractive to women. Headhunters inspired fear in other people, especially those not closely related to them, because the tattoos indicated that they had killed. At the same time, tattoos also inspired confidence in their kinsmen and village mates because headhunters were chief protectors. A settlement with one or more renowned headhunters made people safe from invasion, and their relatives could also feel confident in case of grave local disputes.

(Source: “Batek: Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines” by Analyn Ikin V. Salvador-Amores)

Kalinga / Kalinga Tattoos.

Tattooing used to be an important practice of the indigenous peoples in the mountain hinterlands of Cordillera, among them, the Ibaloi, the Kankanay, and the Kalanguya. But tattooing—*batek* (Kalinga), *fatek* (Bontoc), or *chaklag* (Ilocos)—is now a lost art even among the peoples who pioneered it in the country.
The designs of the tattoos take different forms and each design has different interpretations and meanings. The designs can be about nature (e.g., mountains, rivers, trees); animals (e.g., lizards, snakes, centipedes); geometric designs (e.g., triangles, curves, lines, diamonds, squares); and celestial objects (e.g., moon, star).

According to literature, the design and amount of tattoo a man wore is directly proportional to his success and rank as warrior. Among the Bontoc Igorots, the *chaklag* design indicated that the man wearing it had killed an enemy. Among the Kalingas, successful warriors (*maingor*) wore striped design at the back of their hands and wrists to signify their first kill.

More successful warriors wore more elaborate designs, comprising of khaman (head-axes), ufug (centipede scales) and bodies of gayaman (centipede), which were believed to be spiritually-charged symbols. The most successful warriors wore centipede designs on their cheeks. The warrior of the highest rank had anthropomorph tattooed just above his navel and small crosses adorning his face.

The tattoos on the women were primarily for aesthetic beauty. Generally called fattong, meaning, “to put on”, the body tattoos on the women served as permanent upper garment, the design of which often reflected their relationship with their environment.

(Source: *The Manila Times - Tattooed in the Past* by Sherma E. Benosa)
In the above pictures you can see Mrs. Natividad B. Suguiyao, Provincial Director of the National Commission on Indigenous People explaining her tattoos to me. Mrs. Suguiyao is very proud of her Kalinga heritage and decided a few years ago to have the traditional Kalinga tattoos tattooed on her body.
Kalinga / Kalinga Tattoos (Batek).

Eduardo Masferre.

© Eduardo Masferre

Threshing rice by pounding the grains apart from their stems. Lubuangan, Kalinga (anno 1948).
Winnowing separates the rice kernels from their husks. Lubuangan, Kalinga (anno 1949)
© Eduardo Masferre

Young woman smoking a cigar, Buscalan, Tinglayan, Klainga (anno 1952).
While waiting to photograph a group of people, Masferre turned and found this girl watching him. Ngibat, Tinglayan, Kalinga (anno 1954).
On his way to check the water in his rice fields. Men did not leave their villages unarmed. Ngibat, Tinglayan, Kalinga (anno 1950).

**Kalinga /Kalinga Tattoos (Batek).**

**Eduardo Masferre.**

Before I start my photo series about the tattoos I wish to mention Eduardo Masferre and post some of his wonderful pictures he took in Kalinga. The following images were scanned from a book or taken from the web (and thus not of very high quality).

*Eduardo Masferre* (1909-1995) born of Spanish descent, spent much of his life photographing the Cordillera, the mountainous regions in North Luzon. Masferre was a self-taught photographer. He bought his first camera in 1933. He set up a studio in
Bontoc after World War II, but was unable to make enough from his photography to support his family. He had to make a living through farming, but continued with his photography out of his love for the Cordilleras and its people. Over the course of his long career, he continually sought to explore and portray the beauty of the indigenous mountain cultures. In photographs that captured everything from basic daily tasks to local events.

© Eduardo Masferre

Gaddang couple wearing their best clothes pose in front of their house with woven bamboo walls. Callacad, Kalinga. (anno 1952)
Late afternoon Kalinga village scene. Villagers watch two men making knives or spearheads. The houses are raised about two meters above the ground, with lower portions fortified against enemy attack. Butbut, Tinglayan, Kalinga. (anno 1948)
© Eduardo Masferre

Water is carried home, sometimes from distant springs. In the background, rattan dries against a house. Buscalan, Tinglayan, Kalinga. (anno 1950)
© Eduardo Masferre

Kalinga girl smoking a cigar, Butbut, Tinglayan, Kalinga (anno 1954).
Kalinga /Kalinga Tattoos (Batek).

Kalinga is 4th slide-prone area in the Philippines.

Besides being a typhoon belt, the Philippines is surrounded by a ring of fire, an archipelago of volcanic islands sitting on the rim of the unstable undersea Philippine Trench, traversed by fault lines and its eastern seaboard prone to landslide.

In Kalinga, two major fault lines pass through a north-easterly direction from Mountain Province to Tinglayan. Another one passes through the same route from the corner boundary of Mountain Province and Abra to Tinglayan-Lubuagan and ends at Gobgob, Tabuk. Kalinga's topography is unfriendly: rolling terrain, steep gradients, highly exposed to erosion.
Kalinga / Kalinga Tattoos (Batek).

My main purpose for going to Kalinga was to document the Kalinga tattoos. Alas due to time constraints and bad weather (landslides) I was not able to finish my work. I did not meet Kalinga men with tattoos and I also missed the only surviving Kalinga tattoo artist.

A special thank goes to Mrs. Natividad B. Sugguiyao who helped me realize this photoseries and to all the charming ladies I was able to photograph.

The text accompanying my pictures was taken from the paper “Batek: Traditional Tattoos and Identities in Contemporary Kalinga, North Luzon Philippines” by Analyn Ikin V. Salvador-Amores.

My stay in Kalinga was marred by rains and landslides. Some remote villages can be inaccessible for several days due to frequent landslides.
Kalinga - Kalinga Tattoos (Batek)

Kalinga Province.

Kalinga is a landlocked province of the Philippines in the Cordillera Administrative Region in Luzon. Its capital is Tabuk.

Kalinga is surrounded by mountain peaks (elevation of 300 to 5,000 feet above sea level). It is divided into three areas centred around the Chico River: the mountainous western portion of the river’s basin, the valley of the river and its tributaries, and the level plains between the river and Cagayan province.
The Indonesian immigrants who came to Luzon thousands of years ago are said to be the ancestors of the present-day Kalingas.

Kalinga is believed to be derived from the Ibanag word “kali-nga” and the Gaddang word “kalinga,” both of which mean headhunters because the inhabitants of Cagayan and Isabela considered the Kalingas as enemies since they conducted head hunting attacks on Ibanag and Gaddang territory. The name may have also been acquired because of their practice of head-taking. The Spaniards picked up the term and the Americans followed suit.

There are many sub tribes in the province. The strong sense of tribal membership and filial loyalty results to occasional tribal war. The Kalingas were able to maintain their culture despite the occupation of the Spaniards, Japanese and Americans due to the mountainous terrain and warrior-culture of the people.