

# NOTES ON PHILIPPINE DIVINITIES

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## Introduction

THIS PAPER IS ETHNO-HISTORICAL IN NATURE. IT IS DESIGNED to put together representative pantheons of different Philippine divinities. The materials for this purpose have been gathered from historical documents, ethnographic monographs, and field observations conducted by the writer and other fieldworkers among different indigenous religious groups in the various parts of the country.

No sociological analysis of these cosmologies or their manifest theologies is made except to point out that their persistence through time — from the early Spanish contact to the present — indicates they are closely interwoven with the lifeways of the people. The divinities described here are, as they were in the past, conceived as beings with human characteristics. Some of them are good and others are evil. Many stories about the workings of these supernatural beings are told. They participate in the affairs of men. These relationships reinforce local beliefs in the power of the supernatural beings, as those people who participate in community affairs witness how these deities, invoked during complicated rituals, cure an ailing patient or bring about success in hunting, fishing, and agriculture.

Some of these deities are always near; others are inhabitants of far-off realms of the skyworld who take interest in human affairs only when they are invoked during proper ceremonies which compel them to come down to earth. In this connection, the spirits who are always near, are the ones often called upon by the people for help. These supernatural beings are led by the highest ranking deity and not by any one supreme divinity, for each has specific and some independent function.

## Luzon Divinities

### *Bathala or Abba*

The highest ranking deity of the ancient Tagalogs was called *Bathala* or *Abba*.<sup>1</sup> Like other divinities the world over, *Bathala's* origin

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Juan de Placencia, "Customs of the Tagalogs," *The Philippine Islands*. Blair and Robertson, (eds.) Vol. VII (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company) pp. 185-189.

was not known. He merely appeared one day and announced his lordship over mankind. So great and powerful was *Bathala* that no one ever dared question his demand for obedience and reverence from man. Because historians and writers often refer to this Tagalog deity as the god of the ancient Filipinos, *Bathala* gradually became the accepted representative deity of the whole nation.<sup>2</sup>

*Bathala* was said to be the creator of all things — the sky, the earth and all the vegetation around us. He dwelt in the highest realm of the eternal space called *kawalhatian* or *sky*. Just and merciful, he was said to be the sustainer, keeper, nourisher, and protector of mankind. Sometimes he seemed very human. He welcomed gifts from people with deep appreciation; and was pleased when men were helpful and obedient to his moral laws. He was lavish in his love towards those who kept his commandments and paid him homage. To a certain extent, however, his kindness made many of his favorites lazy — always depending upon him to do things for them, an attitude from whence came the dominant characteristics of the Filipinos — the *bahala na* or “*Bathala takes care*” philosophy of life. This forms the base of two outstanding character traits of the people — the tendency to be easy-going or resigned and the tendency to be venturesome or audacious in time of emergency.

While *Bathala* was said to be compassionate and forever understanding to contrite hearts seeking forgiveness, he was equally exacting in his punishments to sinners. He did not hesitate to send thunder and lightning to strike the transgressors of his laws. He presided over the lesser divinities who cared for the needs of the people and guarded the general welfare of the reverent families. His power and goodness were devoted to the interests of the people to whom he was the almighty protector.

#### *Lesser Divinities Assisting Bathala*

*Divinities of the sky.* As creator of the material world, *Bathala* has many minor divinities assisting him. Among these lesser deities who lived in the sky were *Idianali*, goddess of labor and good deeds; *Dumangan*, deity of good harvest; *Amanikabli*, lord of the sea; and many others. *Idianali* married *Dumangan* and they had two children. *Dumakulem*, a strong, agile hunter who became the guardian of created mountains, and *Anitun Tabu*, the fickle-minded goddess of the wind and rain.

*Amanikabli*, the husky, ill-tempered ruler of the sea, was said to have never married after his love was spurned by a beautiful mortal maiden, *Maganda*. In his frustration, *Amanikabli* swore vengeance against all

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gregorio F. Zaide, *History of the Filipino People* (Manila: 1950) p. 22; Conrado Benitez, *History of the Philippines*. (New York: Ginn & Company, 1950) p. 89.

mortal beings. This is the reason that even today, old folks say, he sends turbulent waves and horrible tempests every now and then to wreck boats and drown men.

The most beautiful divinity in the court of *Bathala* was *Mayari*, the goddess of the moon. *Mayari* had two charming sisters, *Hana*, goddess of the morning, and *Tala*, goddess of the stars. They were said to be the daughters of *Bathala* by a mortal wife who died after she had given birth to these three beautiful goddesses. *Bathala* took these three sisters to the sky and made them members of his celestial court.

*Ikapati*, goddess of cultivated land, was the most understanding and kind among the deities of *Bathala*. Her gift to man was agriculture. As the benevolent giver of food and prosperity, she was respected and loved by the people. *Ikapati* was said to have married *Mapulon*, the god of season. They had a daughter named *Anagolay* who became the goddess of lost things. When *Anagolay* reached maidenhood, she married *Dumakulem*, son of *Idianali* and *Dumangan*, with whom she had two children, *Apolaki* who became the god of the sun and patron of fighters, and *Dian Masalanta* who became the goddess of lovers.

From the union of these gods and goddesses came the order and regularity of the Tagalog world. However, as life became more and more complex as a result of the expanding social relationship among the worshippers, *Bathala* sent down to earth the ancestral spirits to help these different divinities administer to the needs of the people on earth. Each of these spirits had a special office. Some of them were assigned as guardians of those who fight in war and others were given the task of protecting men from illnesses. However, as time went on, these spirits became the interceding divinities between men and the gods. They were the ones to whom sacrifices were offered whenever the people desired something. These sacrifices were performed by the *catalonan* or priest.

*Divinities of the lower world.* Like the modern Christians, the early Tagalogs believed in the life hereafter. In fact, belief in transmigration of the soul was one of the chief reasons these people offered sacrifices and performed all sorts of religious rituals. The earthly belongings of the deceased person were buried with him because it was believed that the spirit of the said person would need these things during his journey to the other world. In some groups, slaves were said to have been buried with their masters, and in others, the dead man's wife or captured enemies.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Miguel de Loarca, "Relacion de las Islas Filipinas," *The Philippine Islands*. Blair and Robertson, eds. (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1903) Vol. V, p. 121; Fay Cooper Cole, *The Wild Tribes of Davao District, Mindanao*. (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1913).

The ancient Tagalogs also believed in the final judgment of men — punishment of evil and rewarding of the good. The souls of the good men were said to be brought to a village of rest called *Maca*, which resembled the Christian paradise, where they enjoyed eternal peace and happiness. However, those who deserve punishment were brought to *Kasanaan*, the village of grief and affliction where they were tortured forever.<sup>4</sup> These souls were kept there by the chief deity named *Sitan*.<sup>5</sup>

*Sitan* was assisted by many mortal agents. The most wicked among them was *Mangagauay*. She was the one responsible for the occurrence of diseases. She wore a necklace of skulls, and her girdle was made up of several severed human hands and feet.\* Sometimes, she would change herself into a human being and roam about the countrysides as a healer. She could induce maladies with her charms.

If she wished to kill someone, she did so by her magic wand. She could also prolong death, even for a number of months, by simply binding to the waist of her patient a live serpent which was believed to be her real self or at least her substance.

The second agent of *Sitan* was called *Manisilat*. She was sometimes known as the goddess of broken homes. She was said to be restless and mad whenever there was a happy home within sight. Determined to destroy every happy home, she would disguise as a woman healer or an old beggar, enter the dwelling of her unsuspecting victims, and then proceed with her diabolical aims. With the aid of her charms and magic powers she would turn the husband and wife against each other. She was most happy when the couple quarreled and danced in glee when one of them would leave the conjugal home.

The third agent of *Sitan* was known as *Mankukulam*,<sup>6</sup> whose duty was to emit fire at night, especially when the night was dark and the weather was not good. Like his fellow agents, he often assumes human form and went around the villages, pretending to be a priest-doctor. Then he would wallow in the filth beneath the house of his victim and emit fire. If the fire was extinguished immediately, the victim would die.

The fourth was called *Hukluban*. She had the power to change herself into any form she desired. In fact, some people said that she

<sup>4</sup> Placencia, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-196.

<sup>5</sup> Note the striking resemblance of our present-day Biblical name *Satan*, ruler of the underworld, to *Sitan* of the ancient Tagalogs. [*Sitan* may be the Islamic *Saitan*, of the same meaning which indicates that at the time the Spaniards came to the islands, Islam had already gained a considerable foothold in the religious belief systems of the early Filipinos.

[\* Cf. the Indian goddess Kali, whose attributes are similar to this *Mangagauay*. Sometimes, Kali is identified with Yama, the regent of the dead, in Indian Mythology. Ed]

<sup>6</sup> For some reasons, the *Mankukulam* never dared meet directly the gaze of other persons. Jose Nuñez, "The Mancocolam," *El Renacimiento*. (Manila, December 9, 1905).

had greater power than *Mangagauay*. She could kill anyone by simply raising her hand. However, if she wanted to heal those whom she had made ill by her charms, she could do so without any difficulty. It was also said of her that she could destroy a house by merely saying that she would do so.

*Priests and priestesses of the Tagalog divinities.* Among the priests and priestesses of the different Tagalog divinities were *Silagan*, whose duty was to tempt people and to eat the liver of all those who wear white clothes during mourning and take their souls down to the depth of *Kasanaan*. This was the reason the ancient Tagalogs usually wore vari-colored *tapis* or *barrel skirt*.

*Silagan* had a sister named *Mananangal*. This fiend could be seen walking along dark trails and lonely paths without her head, hands or feet, because her work was to frighten people to death.

The third minor agent of the environmental gods was *Asuan*.<sup>7</sup> The natives swore that they had seen *Asuan* fly at night, murder men, eat their flesh, and drink their blood.<sup>8</sup> He has four brothers, *Mangagayuma*, *Sunat*, *Pangatahuyan* and *Bayuguin*. All these five brothers were sent by the divinities to this world in the form of human beings, with special duties to do.

*Mangagayuma* specialized in charms. He made charms out of herbs, stones, and wood which, when used by lovers, had the power to infuse the heart with love. Thus he deceived people, although sometimes, through the intercession of good *anito*, his skill would not work. *Sunat* was a well-known priest. *Pangatahuyan* was a soothsayer; while *Bayuguin's* work was to tempt women into a life of shame.

#### *Malayari*<sup>9</sup>

Among the early people of Zambales, it is recorded that *Malayari* was considered the highest ranking deity. Powerful and almighty, *Malayari* was said to be the creator of all things on earth. He was the master of life and lord of death. He was compassionate and loving. He granted satisfaction to the desires of his favorites. He sent rain for the fields of his worshippers, good health for those who follow his wishes, and wealth and good harvest for all those who faithfully observed his laws. However, like other gods, *Malayari* was also exacting and cruel in his punishment of those who ignored his command-

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Diego Lope Povedano, *The Ancient Legends and Stories of the Indios, Jaraya, Jiguesinas, and Igneines* which contain their *beliefs* and *diverse superstitions*. An annotated translation presented as thesis to Far Eastern University by Rebecca P. Ignacio. (Manila, 1951).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Jose Ma. Pavon, *Brujerias, Y los Cuentos de Fantamas*. (El Pueblo de Jimamaylan Ysla de Negros, 1837), and Plascencia, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-196.

<sup>9</sup> Domingo Perez, "Relation of the Zambals," *The Philippine Islands*. Blair and Robertson, eds. (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1903) Vol. XLVII, pp. 300-306.

ments. He would send down disease, famine, misery and destruction to the unbelievers, especially those who refused to offer him sacrifices.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Divinities assisting Malayari*

In administering the affairs of the universe, *Malayari* was assisted by several minor deities. These deities were called *anito*. Among these *anito* were:

*Akasi*.<sup>11</sup> Sometimes considered as having powers equal to that of *Malayari*, *Akasi* was the celebrated god of health and sickness. Sacrifices for the immediate recovery of the sick were made to this god. No one had seen *Akasi*, although many of the priests claimed that they had talked to him.

*Manglubar*. Another deity serving *Malayari* was *Manglubar*, god of powerful living. His main duty was to pacify angry hearts. Hence, when anyone in the village had committed crimes, it was the priests of *Manglubar* who were sent to pacify the relatives of the offended party. The reconciliation, if ever such was considered by the offended party, consisted in the criminal's giving gold or something of equal value to the relatives of the murdered person, according to the rank of the latter. If the murderer could not pay the price demanded by the offended party, the priest killed one of the murderer's son or a very near relative. If the murderer could not do any of what the offended party demanded, he was killed.

*Mangalabar*. Often called the guardian angel, *Mangalabar* was the god of good grace. It was said that she used to accompany the priests wherever they went, especially when they went hunting. If the expedition was successful, sacrifices given to this deity was colorful, if otherwise, the ceremony was less elaborate. It is interesting to note that under no circumstances would the person who invoked *Mangalabar's* aid enter the house without offering some gifts. Although it was not explained very clearly why sacrifices had to be given, some people said that if they did not do so, they would be blessed with luck the next time that they embarked on an expedition.

*Aniton Tauo*. As god of wind and rain, *Aniton Tauo* was said to be superior to any of her associates. However, because of her conceit, *Ma-*

<sup>10</sup> Describing the ritual to *Malayari*, Father Perez wrote: "...These Indians (the Zambals) have their priests and priestesses, although such have no jurisdiction over the others; for here every one is master of his own will, and they alone recognize superiority in one in so far as he gives authority to the other priests and priestesses for some special sacrifice. This priest is called *bayuc*, and he dresses like a woman. He wears a *tapis* or apron and ties up his hair like a woman, although above the *tapis* he wears and girds his *catan*, on the left side and on the right side, an *ywa* or dagger." Domingo Perez, *op. cit.*, pp. 300-306.

<sup>11</sup> Some people considered *Akasi* superior to *Malayari*, as evidenced by this song: "Magyaman man a *Malayari*, Monagon si *Akasi*." (Freely translated: "Although *Malayari* is powerful *Akasi* gets the first fruits.") Domingo Perez, *ibid.*, p. 304.

*layari* punished her by reducing her rank. The Zambales offered her *pinipig*<sup>12</sup> of the best kind during harvest season. The sacrifices using these ingredients are called *Mamiarag*.

*Dumagan*. As god of good harvest, *Dumagan* caused the rice to yield better grains. *Dumagan* had several brothers helping him. All these were equally powerful as he was. *Kalasakas* was responsible for the early ripening of the ricestalks, *Kalasokus*, for turning the grains yellow and dry, and *Damulag* for keeping the flowers of the rice plants from being blown away by hurricanes. These gods had many priests and priestesses serving them.

#### *Lumawig*<sup>13</sup>

Among the Bontok and Kankanai groups of the Mountain Province, *Lumawig* was described to be the creator of all things and the preserver of life. He had a wife called *bugan* with whom he had two children — *Bugan* and *Obban*. *Bugan* grew to be a lovely goddess of romance while *Obban* became the goddess of reproduction.

There were also many inferior gods serving *Lumawig*, among whom were *Kabigat*, *Bugan*, *Balitok* and *Wigan*. These deities held close relationship with mankind through the *anito* and other ancestral spirits. The powers of these *anito* were, in turn, declared to men by the different priests and priestesses. Some of these *anito* were good, some were evil, and others were neutral. They were represented by carved idols.

#### *Kabunian*<sup>14</sup>

The Ifugaos, like the rest of the ethnic groups in the Mountain Province, called their chief deity, *Kabunian*. This deity dwelt in the fifth region of the universe. Incidentally, the Ifugao world had a region above the skyworld where the important deities lived. These deities however recognized *Kabunian* as the highest ranking deity among them.

The minor gods assisting *Kabunian* in the performance of his work were divided into groups, namely,<sup>15</sup>

*Bulol*, gods of household who were held to be the souls of ancestors long departed, resembling the Roman *lares*. They were represented by little statues, carved out of hardwood in the form of human beings.

*Gatui*, divinities of practical jokes. These deities correspond to the "harpies" of the Greeks. Unless given sumptuous offerings, they were

<sup>12</sup> Young rice grains pounded thin and brittle. In the Bisayas, it is called *ubas* or *limbuk*, in the Ilokos, *iniruban*.

<sup>13</sup> R. F. Barton, *The Mythology of the Ifugaos*. (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1955) pp. 5-11. See also Laurence Lee Wilson, *The Skyland of the Philippines*. (Manila: Benipayo Press, 1956) pp. 150 ff.

<sup>14</sup> The mythology of the ethnic minorities of Mountain Province is difficult to study. To the Benguet group, *Apo* was the acknowledged highest ranking deity. The Ifugaos have *Kabunian* as chief deity; while the Bontoks, *Lumawig* is the worshipped head.

<sup>15</sup> R. F. Barton, *The Half-Way Sun* (New York: Brewer and Warren, Inc., 1930) p. 122.

said to feast on the souls of the villagers, especially those of the unborn. To a great extent, miscarriages among the Ifugao mothers were attributed to these deities.

*Tayaban*, god of death. Like the *Gatui*, these gods feasted on men's souls. They revealed themselves to the world in the form of tiny, flying monsters covered with shiny scales, so that they look like fireflies during nighttime.

*Kikilan*, two-headed monster serving as bodyguards of *Tayaban* and *Gatui*.

*Munduntug*, evil spirits of mountain. These divinities were called mountain ghosts because they haunted hunters in the forests, causing the latter to get lost in the jungle.

*Makalun*, messenger of the gods. They had wings. Their duty consisted in running errands for the superior deities of the skyworld and summoning other divinities to attend the various ceremonies performed by the priests of the village.

*Bakayauwan*, good spirits of the mountains. Unlike the *Munduntug*, they were friendly and helpful to the hunters.

*Mahipnat*, great spirits of sacred places. They dwelt in the downstream regions and were sometimes referred to as spirits of deified heroes.

*Bibao*, spirits of ordinary places. They were found in the cliffs, in the house-roofs, in the boulders and in the streams. They were almost everywhere. Stealing souls and causing sickness were among their mischievous acts. However, when bribed with a sumptuous feast, they become very kind and helpful; giving the celebrant prosperity, peace and happiness.

*Halupi*, spirits of remembrance. These spirits were responsible for reminding villagers about what their priests wanted them to remember. They pestered the debtors with recollections of debts, calmed the controversants to accede to the demands of their creditors, and had a wide field of usefulness in commercial transactions and love affairs.

*Fili*, guardians of property. These deities kept watch over the property and belongings of their favorites to prevent their being stolen or destroyed by thieves and trespassers.

*Libligayu*, spirits of sickness. Sometimes known as "liverspearers" the *Libligayu* were responsible for causing abdominal pains. In order to exorcise these spirits, the priests when dancing swung their spears in front of the patients, at the same time singing: "Libligayu of the mountains, please, we entreat, remove your spear from the liver of this man, your friend. Remove it, *Libligayu*, and use it to spear the deer in the forest."

*Libligayu* were related to *Hibalot*, spirits of sickness which caused ulcers of the intestines, and *Dadungut*, spirits of the tombs, which bit

those who entered the graveyard of the dead ancestors without proper permission.

*Makiubaya*, spirits of the gates. These divinities kept watch over the gates which the villagers built at the various approaches of the villages.

*Binudbud*, spirits of the feasts. They were invoked to check on men's appetite during festivals. When so implored they would descend to the village and tie up the stomach of the guests so that even if little food and drinks were served, the guests would be satisfied. These deities were also called upon to neutralize the passion of men so that there would be no trouble, no fight and no untoward feelings among the guests.

*Imbagyan* or *Lingayan*, messengers of death and guides of souls. One of the *imbagyan* was named *himpugtan* who had the power to terminate anything that displeased him or his favorites. He was the one to whom the people pray to spare them from death; whom they invoked to end famine, to cause death to any enemy, and to end almost anything they desired.

*Banig*, ghosts that permanently haunt the hillsides, caverns and uninhabited houses. They were the cousins of *kolkolibag*, the spirits of birth, which caused, unless propitiated with proper sacrifices, difficult labor to delivering mothers by blocking the birth canal with their magic wand, and *midu*, omen spirits, who concoted omen and auguries, especially from birds, snakes, insects and trees.

*Hidit*, gods of rituals. They are the ones who saw to it that proper punishments for those who broke taboos were meted out. To this family of gods belonged *puok*, god of wind. The *puoks* were the ones responsible for wrecking the dwelling of the sinners and destroying the crops of those who refused to pay them homage.

*Hipags*, spirits of war. Ferocious and cannibalistic by nature, these deities were the ones invoked by the fighters before starting any expedition. The *hipags* were believed to furnish the men-of-war with courage and valor in the field of combat. Some images representing the *hipags* were in human form, some in cock or wild boar, while others were plainly fragments of human jaws and hard river stones. They roam about the river-banks, hillsides and springs.

### Bisayan Divinities

#### *Tungkung Langit*

The Sulod of Central Panay, in Western Bisayas, conceived of the universe as divided into three regions: *Ibabawnun* (upperworld), *Pag-tung-an* (Middleworld), and *Idadalmunun* (Underworld).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> F. Landa Jocano, "Sulod: A Mountain People in Central Panay, Philippines." *Philippine Studies*. (November, 1958) pp. 422-423.

The *Ibabawnun* was divided into two dominions — one occupied by the male *diwata* and the other by the female *diwata*. The most powerful male *diwata* was called *Tungkung Langit* which name means “pillar of the skies.” His origin was not known. He merely appeared in this realm one day and proclaimed his power. He was assisted by other less powerful deities, viz., *Bangun-bangun*, the deity of universal time who regulated the cosmic movements; *Bahulangkug*, the *diwata* who changed seasons; *Ribun-linti*, god of lightning and thunderstorms; *Sumalongson*, god of the river and seas; *Santonilyo*, the deity of good graces, and *Munsad Burulakaw*, the god who had direct power over men. The latter was the most respected and feared among the deities of the Upperworld.

The all-powerful female *diwata* was *Alunsina*. She was assisted in her activities by many lesser divinities, among whom were *Muropuro*, goddess of the spring, rivers and lakes; *Labing Daut*, goddess-in-charge of rain-clouds; *Tibang-Tibang*, goddess whose charge was to keep the balance of earth and maintain the succession of night and day and so many other heavenly chores.

The powerful deity of the *Pagtung-an* is *Paiburong* and his wife, *Bulawanon*. Where these two came from was also not known. They had five children: *Ginbitinan*, who became the wife of *Munsad Burulakaw*; *Matanayon*, goddess-wife of Sulod culture-hero, *Labaw Dunggun*; *Layang Sukla*, goddess of beauty, *Surangaun*, god of the sea, and *Tugang Tubig*, the god of rivers, streams, and lakes. The lesser divinities of *Pagtung-an* were headed by *Pabuaya* and his wife, *Durumuun*.

The Underworld of *Idadalmunon*, also swarmed with different *diwata*. The highest ranking *diwata* was *Panlinugon*, the *diwata* of earthquake. He was assisted by his brother *Tungkung Langit* (not the same deity from the Upperworld) who supported the world as his name denotes, and his wife, *Luyong Kabig*, the *diwata* who controlled the stream of snakes at the entrance of the Underworld. *Luyong Kabig* had a sister named *Luyong Baybay*, the *diwata* who controlled the rising and falling of tides. She married *Paigrab*, an unknown *diwata* and they had one child *Magsanladung Biday*.

#### *Kaptan and Dialaon*<sup>17</sup>

The ancient Bisayan world was divided into three parts: *Kahilwayan* or the skyworld, *Kamariitan* or the earth, and *Kasakitan*, the underworld.

*Kaptan*, who was the principal of the important deity of the early Bisayans, lived in *Kahilwayan* and, whenever he wanted to go down to the world, he passed through the Madyaas mountain in Panay. There were many minor deities under *Kaptan*, among whom where: *Makliumsa-*

<sup>17</sup> Miguel de Loarca, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

*twan*, lord of the plains and valleys; *Maklium-sa-bagidan*, lord of fire, *Maklium-sa-tubig*, lord of the sea; *Kasaray-sarayan-sa-silgan*, lord of the streams; *Magdan-durunuum*, lord of the hidden lakes; *Sarangan-sa-bagtiw*, lord of storms; *Suklang-Malayon*, guardian of happy homes, and her sister *Abyang* and *Alunsina* who became goddesses of the sky after the great deluge.

*Kamariitan* was ruled by *Sidapa*, goddess of death, and her husband, *Makaptan*, god of sickness. *Makaptan* was considered by the natives as an evil god because he went out frequently to send disease to ravage the village during lean seasons. He did such diabolical acts because, according to some old folks, he had not eaten anything of this food or drunk any *pangasi* (rice wine). And so in revenge, he made the people suffer.

The court of *Sidapa* and *Makaptan* also abounded with many minor divinities. These divinities were under the supervision of a powerful deity, *Danapolay*. *Makaptan* had two brothers, *Magyan* and *Sumpoy*, who became the lord of the Underworld or *Kasakitan*. *Magyan* was charged with the task of carrying souls of the dead to the infernal regions. When he had thus carried them there in his boat called *balanday*, *Sumpoy* would rush forward and would take these souls to a region called *Kanitu-nituhan*. There another deity took over the responsibility over these souls. This deity's name was *Sisiburanon*. Good or bad, *Sisiburanon* treated these souls on equal terms. He was assisted by two huge *kuruntang* (giants) — *Simuran* and *Sigumarugan*, guards of the *Kanitu-nituhan* gates.

It must be noted that in the case of the poor people, their souls remained forever in the Underworld should no one of the living relatives offer sacrifices for their redemption. *Sisiburanon* kept these unredeemed souls in virtual slavery and, after years of staying there, these souls were fed to *Simuran* and *Sigumarugan*.

It was also believed in those days that when a man died, his soul would have to pass the infernal regions before it could be admitted in *Kahilwayan* if any one of his relatives would offer sacrifice to *Pandaque*, *Sidapa's* spokesman.

### Mindanao Divinities

#### *Pamulak Manobo*<sup>18</sup>

The Bagobos of Mindanao believed in the highest ranking deity named *Pamulak Manobo*. Sometimes known as the plant person, *Pa-*

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Fay Cooper Cole, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107; A. L. Kroeber *Peoples of the Philippines*. (Lancaster, Pa: Lancaster Press, Inc., 1943) p. 205; Laura Benedict, "Bagobo Myths," *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 26, No. XCIX (1913). See also E. Arsenio Manuel, *The Maiden of the Buhong Sky*. (A complete Song from the Bagobo Folk Epic *Tuwaang*). (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1958).

*mulak Manobo* was said to have created all things on earth. Like other gods, he was the giver of good harvest, the source of rain and wind, and above all, he was the master of life and death. As the highest ranking deity, he lived in the highest realm of the sky where he observed the doings of men on earth. Gifts for this god should always be wrapped with white and should be placed in the center and above the offerings intended for other spirits.

In his capacity as administrator of human life, *Pamulak Manobo* was assisted by many divinities, among whom were: *Malaki t'ohu K'waig*, hero of the head of the waters who destroyed sickness; *Toglai* and his wife, *Toglibon*, deified spirits of the Bagobo ancestors who gave the people their language and custom. They were also the ones who took charge of births and marriages; *Tulos-ka-balat*, spirit of sacrifices. He was considered the spirit-intercessors with the higher divinities for the *Bagobos*. It was to this deity that a yearly sacrifice was made; *Buso*, evil spirits who ate the flesh of dead persons. These were described as huge beings with curly hair, big feet and long nails, small arms, and possessed two big, pointed front teeth. *Mandaragan* and his wife *Darago* are patrons of the men-of-war. They lived in the depth of Mt. Apo. It was said that the smoke and fire which come out of the summit of this mountain come from the stove of this couple. *Tigyama* were protectors of families. Although kind and understanding, these spirits harm those who did not obey the rules of the family life and those who were disrespectful to old folks as well as to the other spirits. The most mischievous spirits working for *Pamulak Manobo* were the *Sir'ing*. These beings lived in caves, cliffs, and other dangerous places. They often-times disguised themselves in the human form and abducted women and children whom they fed with snakes and worms in their mountain abode.

The god of agriculture was a huge, hairy being named *Tarabumo*. He lived on the slopes of Mt. Apo. He was the guardian of the crops and it was for him that shrine known as *parobanian* was erected in the center of the rice fields. The patron of blacksmiths and brass workers were brothers *Tolus ka towangan* and *Tolus ka gomanan*. These two deities had a sister named *Baitpandi*, a kind goddess who taught the Bagobo women how to weave.

#### *Tagbusan*<sup>19</sup>

Among the Manobo of Mindanao, *Tagbusan* was the most powerful. He ruled over the destiny of both gods and men in the Manobo world. He was assisted by many divinities, namely:<sup>20</sup> *Benevolent deities* — *Umlu*, a class of higher beings who on special occasions, through

<sup>19</sup> God of war.

<sup>20</sup> John M. Garvan, *The Manobos of Mindanao*. (US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1931) p. 190 ff.

the intercession of the *diwata*, succor mortals; *Diwata*, deities whom the priests propitiate during ceremonies for impending dangers;

*Dangerous deities* — *Panaiyung*, a class of fierce deities who make men mad; *Pamdiya*, divinities who initiate war and incite men to fight; *Busau*, dangerous spirits who caused the destruction of men; *Tagbanua*, spirits who inhabit the gloomy and solitary places, and *Tame*, huge divinities who guard the untravelled jungles and misled the travelers to their doom. These were very kind divinities if respected but most ferocious when aroused. The mischievous rice thieves were called *Dagau*. *Anit* or *Anitan* was the powerful guardian of the thunderbolt.

*Deities of lust and love* — *Tagabayau*, dangerous goddess who incites incest and adultery; *Agkui*, divinities who urged men to indulge into sexual excesses.

*Divinities of agriculture* — *Kakiadan*, the goddess of rice; *Tagamaling*, the goddess of other crops; and *Taphagan*, goddess of harvest. She guarded the rice during its storage in the granary.

*Divinities of celestial phenomena* — *Inaiyau*, manipulator of the winds and storms. He also wields the thunderbolt and the lightning; *Tagbanua* (different from one mentioned above) god of rain and supervisor of forest divinities; and *Umouivi*, the god of clouds.

*Other spirits* — *Sugudun* or *Sugujun*, the god of hunters and trappers; *Libtakan*, god of sunrise, sunset and good weather; *Mandait*, the spirit of the souls; *Yumud*, watergod; *Ibu*, queen of the afterworld; *Makalidung*, the founder of the world; *Mandayangang*, a harmless giant whose home was in the far-off mountain forest; and *Apila*, god of wrestling and sports.

#### *Other divinities*

*Magbabaya*. Among the Bukidnon, *Magbabaya* was considered the highest ranking deity.<sup>21</sup> He lived in a house like those of the Bukidnon themselves. He had lesser spirits working for him. Some of them were: *Domalongdong*, deity of the northwind; *Ognaling*, deity of southwind; *Tagaloambung*, deity of eastwind; *Magbaya* divinity of the westwind. There were two other divinities who served as special agents to *Magbabaya*. There were *Tagumbanwa*, guardian of the fields and *Ibasasag*, patroness of pregnant women.

Among the numerous divinities of *Magbabaya* were: *Ipamahandi*, goddess of accident; *Tao-sa-sulup*, god of material goods, and *Tigbas*, was the most respected among the minor deities serving *Magbabaya*. *Tigbas*, was the most respected among the minor deities serving *Magbabaya*. *Busao*, god of calamity, was the most

<sup>21</sup> Fay-Cooper Cole, *The Bukidnon of Mindanao*. Fieldiana: Anthropology, Vol. 46 (Chicago: Chicago Natural History Museum, 1956) p. 94.

feared. It was this last god whom the Bukidnon offered sacrifices regularly.

*Manama* and *Tigianes*. The *Gianges* of Cotabato worshipped two principal gods — *Tigianes* and *Manama*. *Tigianes* was the creator of the world and *Manama* was her governor. *Todlay* was god of love. He married *Todlibun*, goddess of marriage. *Diwata* was the protector of the house and she was the one whom frequent sacrifices were made.

*Subanun divinities*. The *Subanun* of upper Zamboanga believed in the following deities — *Tagma-sa-dagat*, lord of the sea; *Tagma-sa-yuta*, lord of the earth; *Tagma-sa-mangga-bungud*, lord of the woods; *Tagma-sa-uba*, lord of the rivers; *Tagma-sa-langit*, god and protector of the sick, and *Diwata-sa-langit*, god of heaven. This last deity was considered the most powerful and the almighty lord of all.

#### **Concluding remarks**

Thus far we have described the structure of the representative pantheons of Philippine divinities. This hierarchical arrangement of positions and functions of the different gods and goddesses provides a convenient conceptual framework against which Roman Catholicism was accepted with relative ease.