

Supernaturals

HANUNOO MANGYAN, MINDORO ISLAND PROVINCE, CENTRAL PHILIPPINES. *The Hanunoo Mangyan believes in a spiritual world that is inhabited by different categories of supernaturals.*



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The stones of the daniw spirit (right) and the pamara (left).

Supernaturals

1. Seen (mountains, rivers, animals, people, etc.) and
2. Unseen (super ordinary beings, e.g. souls [karadwa], evil spirits [labang] and many other classes of spirits [kalag]).

Categories of spirits

1. Those that inhabit natural things (animals, plants, land, rocks, etc.) and
2. Those that inhabit amulets, charms (galing) of special plants or stones. The latter is controlled by men against evil spirits or for black magic.

Human souls

Souls are called karadwa or kalag. They believe that each man has a soul that exists near his body, but have differing opinions as to the number of souls a person possesses. One opinion is that each man has only one soul in the form of *tawo* (person). It is called karadwa *tawo*. Others believe a person has one karadwa *tawo* and another in the form of an animal, e.g. dog (karadwa *idhi*), bird (karadwa *manok*).

According to this view, souls in the form of animals have their own residences in the forest, exactly where is not known, but these souls approach the body of a man at birth. No one knows where these souls come from. They also believe that the soul of a man goes to the world of the dead after this death.

Evil spirits

When one dies, they say that a great number of evil spirits (labang) wander around near the house where the corpse is laid. Even if the evil spirits that eat human flesh are limited to certain kinds, all types are fond of the flesh of man.

Evil spirits appear in the guise of men or animals (male or female). The spirit is named after the form it takes. There are nine among the people of Hamili:

1. labang *kuti* in the form of a kuti, a cat – causes itchy toes or insanity;

2. labang *baboy* in the form of a forest pig *talon baboy* – causes coughing;
3. labang *manok* in the form of a small black wild forest fowl – causes headaches, makes one insane like labang kuti’;
4. labang *idu* in the form of a dog – bites men resulting in injuries;
5. labang *baka* in the form of a cow – does deeds similar to labang idu;
6. labang *karabaw* in the form of a carabao – does deeds similar to labang idu;
7. labang *kambing* in the form of a goat – does deeds similar to labang idu;
8. labang *lumalakaw* in the form of a small, naked Mangyan male or female who walks very swiftly – makes people lose their way and eats their flesh;
9. labang *tawo* in the form of a man or female who does not speak but whistles – visits homes of people and hides under the floor. It eats human flesh. It has vertically wide eyes as *labang lumalakaw* and has two kinds:
 - a. one that looks like a Hanunoo Mangyan with a loincloth or short skirt, but no upper body clothing; and
 - b. labang *damu’ong* in the form of *damu’ong* (lowlander) wearing long pants. This kind is most feared.

Evil spirits live in certain areas of the forest. They sleep during the day and come out at night.

Spirits for sorcery

Evil spirits are uncontrollable, but those for sorcery can be controlled. There are four classes:

1. *Apo panhiri* – dwells in a small stone called *panhiri*. The sorcerer (*panhiri’an*) who possesses this stone can order his spirits to make a detested person fall ill. An illness of this sort is called *hiniri’am*. The person will suffer from headaches, stomach aches, pain in the eyes and/or ears, toothaches, chest pain, swelling, etc. and becomes weak. The person will die unless treated by a medicine man

(*pamara’an* or *pandaniwan*). The amulet against this is the *sanga sa panhiri’*.

2. *Apo padaya* – resides in an amulet called *padaya*, made from a combination of several kinds of plants. The person suffers the same illness as mentioned in apo panhiri. The amulet that repels this is called *sanga sa padaya*.
3. *Apo pangiva* – dwells in a stone called *pangiva*, the possessor of which is called *pangiva’an*. There are only a few of them. If he utters an incantation in front of his stone, the person he hates will be attacked by violent pain that can continue for weeks. The victim dies if not treated by a medium called *panguli’an* who also holds the position of pandiwanan/pamara’an. The amulet against this is another pangiva’an stone.
4. *Apo sungayan* – this is the most terrible. A spirit of this class dwells in a *sungayan*, an iron cylinder some 12 centimeters in length, with a *sungay* or horn about the size of a little finger. It has a string so it can be hung on a tree. If an incantation “you die” is said by its possessor, the tree will wither in a couple of hours. If the point is directed toward a person, the person will die in three days. There is no method for treating this kind of illness. However, according to an informant, three kinds of plants can neutralize it: *anoling* (*Pisonia umbellifera*); *sabila* (*Nopalea cochinellifera* L.); and *bunwang* (*Ficus ruficaulis* Merr.).

Religious mediums

There are four kinds of medicine men or religious mediums:

1. *Pandaniwan* – one of the most important mediums in religious life. He possesses one or a few of sacred stones referred to as *batu daniw*. Spirits of stones (*kalag batu*), which are designated as *daniw* (sacred), are believed to dwell in *batu daniw*. Ordinarily, there are several *daniw*

spirits in these stones. The *daniw* stone is round, black and several centimeters in diameter. Each *daniw* spirit is human-like and wears a loincloth and shirt, or blouse and skirt, as the case may be. It drives away the evil spirits that cause illness or death. It also leads souls of the dead to *karadwahan* or the world of the dead. Only the *pandaniwan*, who are able to see the *karadwa* of a deceased person, can identify the person who is angry with his patient and can thus perform food offerings (*pangahawan*) to the deceased soul who is causing the illness.

2. *Pamara’an* – a *pandaniwan* is ordinarily also a *pamara’an* who possesses one or more round (or cylindrical) black stones (*batu pamara*) or stones of the *pamara* (spirits), which can control other kinds of spirits. The *pamara* dwells in the stones. When healing, the *pamara’an* cups his hands over the painful spots in the patient’s body diagnostic of the “scars” inflicted by the evil spirits, grasps the air there and throws these away. The process is repeated to equal in number the scars inflicted by the spirit. Having done this, he breathes on the white bead necklace of the patient, thus acquiring magical power to ward off evil spirits.
3. *Panibulan* – this is a medium who possesses a stone inhabited by a spirit called *tihol*. Similar to the *daniw* and *pamara*, it fights off evil spirits. The *tihol* looks like a small man and can fly around easily. It is invisible to ordinary people, so the possessor can make this spirit act for him as a spy.

4. *Pandulawan* – the possessor of a pair of small boards called *pandulaw* (approximately 25 centimeters x 5 centimeters x 1 centimeter). A spirit called *dulaw* dwells in the pair of boards. A patient who becomes ill due to the anger of land or water spirits can be cured by the *dulaw* spirits. The patient will itch

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with eruptions and he becomes thinner and weaker. He must undergo treatment by the pandulawan. The medium faces the patient when it becomes dark, and suddenly says “Uwaaa!” which is said to be the language of the dulaw. The medium then strikes the boards together over the head of the patient. The patient will become well the next morning.

Amulets

The *galing/hapinghaping* are commonly made from combinations of special plants and used for various purposes. They are classified into four types:

1. Amulets for safety: There are nine types in this group:
 - a. *Talitoktok* – keeps wicked persons away and keeps the family safe.
 - b. *Sapol* – locates thieves who steal agricultural crops.
 - c. *Awog* – places thieves in an abstracted state of mind.
 - d. *Tagalmo* – protects holder from bolo-wielding attackers by causing the bolo to snap from its handle.
 - e. *Tagilyas* – protects against arrows, spears and bullets by changing their trajectory.
 - f. *Tali'udong* – protects holder from bolo-wielding attackers by paralyzing the attacker's hand.
 - g. *Tabiyunan* – makes the front doors of houses shake when an outsider approaches to alert the household of possible danger.
 - h. *Panggagad* – informs possessor of the identity of future visitors.
 - i. *Tagadlom* – makes the holder invisible.
2. Amulets associated with customary law. There are at least four:
 - a. *Tagalukmay* – pacifies an angry man (also called *amigos* – friend).
 - b. *Dalupi* – makes the holder eloquent.
 - c. *Tampayak* – makes one brave.
 - d. *Tagoramig* – protects from boiling water during an ordeal.
3. Amulets for romantic relationships:
 - a. *Gayuma* – makes a person fall in love with the one who administers it.
 - b. *Pintas* – breaks up sweethearts, making one of them ill.
 - c. *Pabuli* – counteracts pintas.
 - d. *Tagablag* – separates boy and girl due to the jealousy of the possessor who uses it against the boy.
4. Amulets for health. These include:
 - a. *Kabal* – protects the user from injury.
 - b. *Himag* – protects against injuries to the head.
 - c. *Santas abad* – protects from injuries to other parts of the body.

Rice spirits

Cultivation of rice is made possible with the power of the *kalag paray* or spirits of rice. It is not known how these look like, but some say that they look like *daldalo* or termites that fly in great numbers.

There are two stories on the origin of rice:

1. Long ago, rice did not exist. A dog barked but no rice came; a cat mewed and rice arrived from the south (they believe that the home of the rice spirits is originally in the south).
2. Long ago, there was rice in Mindoro, but one day, it disappeared. Malway brought a dog to the forest to call back the rice. The dog barked, but the rice did not return. A cat mewed. Malway heard someone sobbing and saw that it was a rice plant. The rice said that the cat mewed when it was about to leave, but it was too late as the others have already left for the island of Panay.

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