



Domain 4

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES CONCERNING NATURE AND THE UNIVERSE

These aspects of heritage are the most conceptually fleeting and largely abstract such that these are overrun by modernity and hard science, especially the introduction of national education, which have a leveling effect on cultures. In the past, cyclical events, such as agricultural or ritual cycles, are known by looking at constellations. Presently, such knowledge has been supplanted by the Gregorian calendar. The most popular of these heavenly bodies are the three stars in the belt of the constellation Orion.

Cosmology

HANUNOO MANGYAN, MINDORO ISLAND PROVINCE, CENTRAL PHILIPPINES. *The Hanunoo Mangyan's universe is known as sinukuban (dominion) or kalibutan (all that surrounds). All existence, visible and invisible, is embraced in this concept. The universe has an ellipsoidal shape like a coconut, composed of plural strata ('oklot) and between one stratum and another is the pawa' (interval space).*



MANGYANS

This is a wild people of the mountains of Mindoro, very much lighter in color than other Philippine tribes. This is probably due to the fact that they have lived in the depths of the forests, though there is a tradition, probably of no value, that they are descendants of some white race. They are a nomadic people with no idea of agriculture or of the value of money. Exceedingly timid, they take to flight on the approach of a stranger.

Archival Photo

IN PANAYTAYAN municipality, people say that the universe has eight strata, the fifth stratum from the highest is the earth on which people live. Those from Hawili say that the lowest stratum is the earth, with a flat surface and over it the sky (*langit*) composed of eight horizontally arching strata. The earth stratum is named '*usa ka daga*' (one land).

To the Mangyan, the image of the earth is concentrically composed of three parts. The area inside the smallest oval is *daga'* (land) and the broad sea around it is *dagat* (sea). Most have an image that the land itself is floating on the sea, which can be reached by going straight down through the land. The outer edges of the sea (and land) are covered with thick woods and rocks with nothing beyond. All other arching strata of the universe converge in this border area. This is said to be the *katapusan* (ending) of the universe and is believed to be inhabited by horrible beings called *labang tawo* (evil spirits in the form of persons) that kill people and eat their flesh.

Land is classified into two: *ratag* (plains) inhabited by Christian lowlanders and the *bantud* (mountainous area) inhabited by the Hanunoo

Mangyan. Living space for the Hanunoo is the *kabalayan* (settlement) inhabited by people and the *talon* (forest) inhabited by various kinds of spirits. *Kalag*, spirits of plants, loiter in the forest. A large number of *labang* (evil spirits) also prowl there, especially at night, in specific sites. Sacred stones used by medicine men and most kinds of medicinal plants with magical powers are also found in the forest.

The soul of the dead (*karadwa/kalag*) is said to go to the *karadwahan* (world of the souls), believed to exist far beyond the forest. The corpse itself is buried in a graveyard (*lubongan*) in the forest. This area provides them with resources needed in daily life: swiddens, houses, tools, clothes and others.

The Hanunoo world develops in this spatial setting. People (*tawo*) are classified into *damu'ong*, those who arrived by boats, referring to non-Mangyan or lowlanders (interchangeably, *Kiristiyano* or Christians), and the Mangyan, in the broad sense.

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(opposite page) To the Mangyan of old, the universe has three layers, the fifth from the top of which is the earth, that is in turn composed of three parts.