

HANUNOO-MANGYAN BELIEFS : THEIR VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE WORLD

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For the Hanunoo-Mangyans of Southern-Mindoro the beginning of everything started with the Mahal Makaka-ako, a supernatural power "in charge" of the universe. No folktales are available to explain how creation took place, except the stories that clearly show a Christian influence. About the Mahal Makaka-ako, little is known. For this Divine Entity does everything by intermediaries or "messengers". They are sent to be of assistance to mankind, in any kind of difficulty that threatens the normal, and rather uncomplicated, pattern of everyday life of a Mangyan. The Mahal Makaka-ako is known to have compassion for man, although in a rather impersonal way, and from an undefined remote distance.

Life (*buhi*)

Life, on earth, as created and existing by the Divine Entity, is distinguished by the Mangyans into a visible and invisible dimension. Visible life is represented by mankind, the animal world, the plant world and by "other things", including: earth, stones, water and the sky with its celestial manifestations. Invisible life is thought to consist of the souls of everything alive here, or in the life to come, including even the Mangyan-house; the good spirits, whether familiar or possessor; the evil spirits; and the "earth people," a kind of dwarfs that can make themselves visible to man, be they helpful or harmful, and can offer additional means of protection.

Although initially all life, whether visible or invisible, was created with good qualities, emanating from the Mahal Makaka-ako, evil thoughts and actions entered the human souls, and caused certain souls to be converted into "evil spirits" in the afterlife. Our world, where all life resides, together with its surrounding heavenly spheres, is envisioned by the Mangyans as a great, round mass containing all life, and held solidly in place by a sturdy vine,

the *balugo*¹ that envelops and supports the whole. At the base of this huge liana, that is surrounded by water, resides the Apo Daga, or caretaker of the earth. The task of this spirit is to guard the vine and its roots, and keep them in good condition. If ever the branches of the vine would get detached, it would mean a disastrous flood affecting the whole earth.²

The Visible World

The visible world is classified and interpreted by the Mangyans in their own peculiar way, as it is understood by the Mangyan tradition. Their interaction with nature is often prescribed by a set of rules handed down in the course of tradition. A Mangyan depends on the surrounding flora and fauna, but Mangyan tradition has equipped him/her with an accumulated wealth of encyclopedic knowledge about the animal, vegetable and mineral nature, and the ability to make use of all these to the benefit of all those concerned, under the most optimal ecological conditions. Anthropological research revealed that among the Hanunoo-Mangyans, "1625 specific and mutually exclusive native plant type categories"³ are utilized for purposes of: food, medicine, ritual, personal beautification, technology, economy and trade, and social activities.

Mangyans, as upland farmers, apply the "swidden cultivation" method since time immemorial. This entails the cutting and cleaning of certain portions of the forest, to be planted with rice and a variety of root-crops, vegetables, etc. that are needed for their daily subsistence.

¹ *Balugo*, [*Entada phaseoloides* (Linn) Merr.] is *gogo* in Tagalog, used for washing the hair, and as a medicine for glandular inflammations, caused by general debility. (Quisumbing), p.400.

² Interestingly, it is a taboo among Mangyans to cut down a *balugo*-vine.

³ Harold C. Conklin, *The Relation of Hanunuo Culture to the Plant World*, (Yale, 1955), p.259.

The Mangyan Poet queries:

Kanta daga banayad Our good and precious soil
Hintay nguna ti mayad Would it be so beautiful
No ud saludnan guhad if we would not and toil?
Madali yi matup-ag Very soon it would be waste.

Kanta daga sa kaybi The land we possess of old:
Hintay di wa ti bali What's the value and the use
No ud tanuman ubi if not planted full with yams?
Ma-uyaw yi madali Very soon it'd be destroyed.

In the cleaning and burning of the fields, extreme care is taken that the fire will not spread to adjacent areas. To prevent this, a wide path, as a fire-trap, is cleaned around the whole portion to be burned. No unnecessary forest destruction is permitted within the tradition. After the portion has been used for a few successive years of intensive cultivation, the land is abandoned, and left to recover during a period of around ten years or more.

Forest areas that are thought to be "in possession" by nature-spirits, or are used as temporary burial places, are left alone and will remain taboo for any agricultural use.

In the past, this method of agricultural use of the land, resulted in a balanced ecology. However, the increase in population, the aggressiveness of migrant lowland settlers, and the delimitations by the government of land-areas set aside for other purposes, all these factors have severely affected the traditional shifting cultivation of the Mangyans. In reality, this method is no longer sustainable under the present deteriorating ecological conditions. The same can be said about the hunting, trapping and fishing activities of the Mangyans that show a sophisticated technique and a rich variety of hunting tools and trapping devices. They have provided them with a welcome supplement of protein to the carbohydrates of a rather monotonous diet of rice, bananas, and rootcrops. But nowadays, except for the occasional wild pig or monkey, the only protein-rich food supply collected, is coming from the sea at low tide, when mollusks and shells are gathered, and a number of wriggling squid is caught.

The present visible world that confronts the Mangyan every day, will present him/her with new challenges, often unexpected ones, that he has to cope with to the best of his/her abilities. But the Mangyan resiliency, ingenuity and art of adaptation for survival is still strong, and will carry him/her undoubtedly a long way through the difficulties to come.

The Invisible World

But there is still the invisible world, that is not to be underestimated in value, since it is experienced by the Mangyan as not less important than the one he/she has to deal with on a daily basis. Many bodily needs and problems can be solved by applying the help nature has provided, and medicinal plants are only a small but valuable part of it. But when there are diseases that defy any treatment with the standard medicines, of problems arising from the realm of the uncontrollable natural phenomena, or suspected unseen powers, it is the invisible world the Mangyan has to cope with. It might be that this revered tradition has provided him/her with ample resources to tackle problems that refused to be solved in the visible counterpart.

Presented here are: (1) the soul in its various dimensions; (2) the good spirits in different applications; (3) the evil spirits, whether "by nature" or "by accident"; (4) the earth people, and the various magical means of protection offered.

The Karadwa (Soul)

Is there anything as close to man, and yet as invisible as his soul? The human soul, or *karadwa*,⁵ will always accompany the "owner" of the body in life, wherever it goes. It will adhere to it like its shadow. Yet, for the Mangyans, its attachment to the body is "flexible." It can temporarily leave the body of its "owner", though still being connected with it by a thin lifeline. This leaving

⁵ *Karadwa (kadwa)* = the second part that the human person is consisting of, aside from the body)

can be voluntary, like when the "owner" of that soul is dreaming during sleep. After the person wakes up, the soul will be back again.

However, the soul will leave the body in fear, when it perceives a *labang* or evil spirit nearing the body. The *labang* wants to catch the soul to pervert it into an evil soul or spirit. If the soul then leaves the body, to escape the *labang*, the person concerned will become sick, and the body will weaken. A spirit-familiar, like a *daniw* is then needed, managed by a shaman, to drive the evil spirit away, and escort the wandering soul back into the body. At that moment the sick person will be well again. If, however, the shaman, through his/her familiar or spirit, would not succeed in making the soul return to the body of its "owner," notwithstanding the pleadings of the *pandaniwan* (a shaman controlling/operating a *daniw*-spirit), this might result in a permanent separation of the soul from the body, or death.

Mangyan poetic literature i.e., the *ambahan*, is full of these frustrating efforts of the shaman, in using all kinds of arguments to attract the wandering soul to rejoin its earthly body, and restore its owner to previous health. All the loveliness of surrounding nature are paraded by the shaman before the delinquent soul: "The bright moon in the sky/ the vines along the trail/ the sheltered mountainslope/ the shaded cocopalms/ the rustling nipa-trees/ the fragrant perfume-plants/ the water tumbling down/ waterfalls, so nice to watch." But it doesn't seem to make an impression on the soul any longer. However, the shaman will not yet give up:

<i>Kawo pagbali way man</i>	Soul, won't you come back again
<i>Labagan nagsibayan</i>	to the house you left behind,
<i>Aghuman inalikdan</i>	the field deserted by you?
<i>Ud aw ka magkanoy wan</i>	Do you not have pity on
<i>Ti nangulin sa lingban</i>	the children left in the house?
<i>Dait wa man rug-usan</i>	Small they are still, weeping loud,
<i>Ga uway ud way sansan</i>	like vines with leaves still in bud,
<i>Payi may pagguyabdan</i>	they have nothing to hold on to
<i>Salag wadi hagbayan</i>	They are only babies still.
<i>U di yawam ugsadan</i>	Even just around the house,
<i>Ud wa panton mangginan</i>	they are helpless, they can't walk.

But it will all be in vain, and the answer of the soul is definite and decided:

<i>Ti nangulin bay lingban</i>	"Those I left behind at home,
<i>Manalingsing man lukban</i>	the children, like sprouting leaves,
<i>Manipas man bailan</i>	even if they're washed and clean,
<i>Karadwa payig balkan</i>	still my soul will not come back,
<i>Una way ulinyawan</i>	even if they cry hot tears.
<i>Nakan kis-ab sugutan</i>	I will tell the reason why:
<i>Urog kang magtukawan</i>	I am happy where I am,
<i>Sa ud may amyan amyan</i>	No more storms and no more rains!"

And as a final reminder the soul is telling all of us:

<i>Kanmi bay paglabagan</i>	"Our house here on this side,
<i>Kawo no ud katim-an</i>	maybe, you don't know it yet,
<i>Padi nga sitay adngan</i>	is not built upon the Earth.
<i>Luwas way lugayawan</i>	Far outside heavens it stands!
<i>May takip waya amyan</i>	Far beyond the places where
<i>Alintapukan uran</i>	the storms and the rains prevail!"

Now the shaman knows, he has another task to fulfill, namely: to guide the soul to its final residence, the *karadwahan*, or abode of the souls in the afterlife, which might be hard to find without assistance. But with the powerful help of the *daniw*, or spirit-familiar, an expert shaman will succeed in bringing the soul of the deceased safely home.

The soul, on its way to the *karadwahan* might run into various difficulties, depending on how it has "behaved" during its lifetime if the deceased person was notorious for his/her evil behavior, like the practicing of black magic or the evil eye, that had caused several persons to die, the soul will not be able to cross the Namugluyan river. As the boundary between the material and spiritual, or supernatural world, this river will then be so flooded, that even the *daniw* who is guiding the soul, will not be able to make the soul cross to the other side. The soul then has to go back to earth, and might join the band of *labang*, or evil spirits, that are always making trouble for human beings.

But if the soul can cross without difficulties, because it has lived as a good Mangyan, faithful to the traditional customs inherited from the forefathers, then it will be met by Daga-Daga, the mythical Mother of all the Mangyans, who will give the soul a collection of perfume-herbs, so that it will be fragrant in its new, permanent home.

This abode of the souls, or *karadwahan*, is thought to be situated somewhere between heaven and earth. It is a place where souls go who have led a useful life, in interaction with their fellowmen. A new soul will meet there many friends in the former life. This new life will not necessarily be dull, because each one can do the same thing she/he was used to do on earth. There is a place also to make a garden, and cultivated a variety of plants. No one will be getting sick, or experience anything unpleasant. The souls will be there forever, but will have no notion of time. Moreover, they will keep "in touch" with those on earth, because they will notice everything that is going on among their relatives. They will know how they are behaving, and whether they are fulfilling their obligations towards the souls of the dead.

The souls can be displeased by misbehavior of their relatives on earth, and be "angry" with them for certain misdeeds; such as when a child is being punished too severely, or when food is being denied to a child, or when there is intense quarreling between relatives, husband and wife, or when relatives are being neglected, e.g. are not given a share of the communal food, nor visited at their homes, or are even forgotten at all. In these cases, the souls will vent their anger by punishing their relatives. This punitive action of the souls is called *sagbat*, which will be manifested by a sickness that can't be healed in a normal way, but will need a *pandaniwan* or shaman. Of course, the shaman will find out very soon that the sickness is caused by a *sagbat* of the souls, and he/she will also mention the reason why. He/she will then suggest appropriate action to appease the souls, so that the patient will recover.

Considering all these, the relationship between those on earth and the souls of the deceased, could hardly be considered a cordial one, but more a strained relation, mainly based on a constant fear of offending the souls of the forebears. Nevertheless, the

Mangyans accept this as part of their lives, that also knows the happy moments they are enjoying, within the framework of their tradition. Anyhow, once the soul has been "delivered" by the *daniw* to its final destination, to the satisfaction as well of the earthly relatives, the shaman can take his/her leave and consider his/her task successfully concluded.

Animals, trees, plants and the Mangyan dwelling are said to have a soul as well. As to the dog, the cat, chickens, etc., it is not clear from the different opinions, whether these animals eventually join the soul of their *amo*, or master, in the afterlife. Some expert shamans, or *pandaniwans*, are said to have seen the souls of dogs at the *karadwahan* of people. Trees and plants have their individual souls as well, and this is confirmed by the shamans who have perceived them in their trance. However, these souls are not thought to join the human being any longer after death, even if some are important as the preferred abode of certain spirits, like the *balete* (*Ficus s. Morac.*), the *bubog* (*Sterculia foetida L. Sterc.*), etc. Of all the inanimate objects, only the house of a Mangyan is mentioned as having a soul. Again, this clearly observed by the shamans. Even the soul of a house that at present is no longer existing, can still be seen by a shaman in trance, at exactly the same spot where this former house was built. Stones, soils, watersources, rivers, etc. do not have souls, but these inanimate objects can be important to the Mangyans when they are chosen as a "residence" of certain spirits, as will be explained later on.

Good Spirits

There are invisible spirits that are basically beneficent to humans and their surrounding environment, but they can be exploited as well for a bad purpose, or revert to doing harm. Some are "managed" by a human being, the shaman, who has the power to control and operate these spirits, and direct them to be active. The spirit will be fully obedient to the commands of the controlling shaman. This type of good spirit is referred to as a "spirit-familiar." Other spirits work on their own, e.g. as owners of a water-source, or a certain expertise, but can be approached by human beings asking for their intercession with regards to the

field of their expertise. These are called "spirit-possessors."

Both kinds need offerings to be presented by humans, and they reside in a stone or stones,⁶ which have to be sprinkled with blood from the offering (a chicken), in the course of a prescribed ritual, during which all participants have to show their respect in strictly adhering to the rules of the ritual. Neglecting or omitting periodic offerings, will result in the weakening and poor performance of the spirit, and failure of the requested benefits of healing, warding off evil, etc.

The Mangyan poet puts it this way:

<i>Magkunkuno ti panagdahan</i>	Quoth the spirit of the spring:
<i>Kan apwan itinungpang</i>	"What has been your offering?
<i>Sigin bunga uyunan</i>	Softly cooked rice there was none
<i>Sigin igiw raupan</i>	not a chicken even one!
<i>Guyabod wadi kaywan</i>	Only some fruits from a tree!
<i>Anitay ngap pinmadngan</i>	What else could the answer be
<i>Sirig ngap sinmaray-an</i>	but rains and a hurricane
<i>Yami day-an panlingban</i>	hitting house and yard again.
<i>Abiton lugod ginan</i>	What are you going to do?
<i>Buhawaon aw sangdan</i>	Incantation might help you
<i>Landuyon aw subungan</i>	or a seer and his wit!
<i>Saghuman di aw kunman</i>	Maybe he can solve you case
<i>Hanggan sa manundugan</i>	and prevent further disgrace."

Spirit-Familiars

"Spirit-familiars" are spirits that are controlled by a shaman, and are known among the Mangyans by the following five different versions, in order of power and importance, and each with its own capabilities and characteristics:

1. the *daniw* controlled by a *pandapiwan*;
2. the *pamara* guided by a *pamaraan*;

⁶ The *daniw* also occurs without the stone, residing then in the *palagayan*, a small china plate with various herbs and other paraphernalia of the *pandaniwan*, that is part of the *daniw* ritual.

3. the *tihol* handled by *panihulan*;
4. the *panguli* operated by a *pangulian*;
5. the *pamusik* where a *pamusikan* is in charge.

These "spirit-familiars," each managed by a knowledgeable and responsible person, male or female functioning as a shaman, are mainly used for the individual⁷ needs of a Mangyan. However, they should only be consulted, when all normal means have been exhausted, or all regular herbal medicines have failed, like with a serious sickness. Each one of these spirits, has a specific task and competence, for which this particular spirit is especially suited. The shaman of these spirit-familiars, when in trance, can perceive, by means of his spirit, which *labang* causes the trouble, how strong it is, etc. A spirit-familiar can be obtained by transfer or transmission from another Mangyan who might feel too old, or too sick, to keep up with the obligations involved in maintaining a spirit-familiar. Usually the new shaman is a relative of the old one, but that need not be. The neophyte shaman will have to go in training by his/her nestor to learn the secrets of the trade.

A person who needs the services of a shaman, will have to see the shaman personally at his house, to request his assistance. To have him/her called would be disrespectful. The shaman has to be ready at any moment to offer his services for the benefit of the Mangyans. If the shaman has decided to accept the particular case presented to him/her capacity, she/he will receive the string of beads that is being offered as the prescribed condition for acceptance. The shaman has thus committed himself/herself to treat the patient or handle the case, to the best of his/her abilities.

The offering to be brought to each of these "spirit-familiars" individually, represents the very existence of the spirit, without which it would be bereft of its power. The shaman is the one to perform the periodic offering, in accordance with the rules that pertain to each individual and specific ritual. She/He has to see to it that the prescribed offerings are regularly made, so that the spirit will always be "in condition." However, there is no need,

⁷ The exception are the *daniw* and *tihol* that can also be of assistance for the communal good of the Mangyan, like preventing a typhoon.

that the offering ritual be performed, everytime a patient is being treated or a case is accepted.

During the treatment of a patient, or handling of a case, the shaman should never be disturbed, nor get angry nor be impatient. And his/her language should never be offensive to anyone, not even to the evil spirit she/he is trying to evict. Offensive behavior of the shaman, will negatively affect the successful outcome of the case. Certain spirit-familiars are very sensitive to it.

A shaman among the Mangyans, like the *pamaraan* or the *pandaniwan*, should have a strong conviction in the *dangin* or power of this "spirit-familiar," and should not easily be deterred from undertaking a healing session, notwithstanding a strong adversary. This is actually what a Mangyan expects from a shaman who is handling a power that comes from the Mahal Makakaako, or God himself.

These "spirit-familiars" work for the good of the Mangyans, as directed by a good shaman, who has to take his task and responsibility seriously. However, in the hands of an unscrupulous and corrupt shaman, the power of this same spirit can be abused to cause severe harm to those supposed to be helped. But, as an assurance it can be said, that this reversion to evil is extremely rare, and the majority of the shamans among the Mangyans are very conscientious, have great faith in the spirit-familiar they are controlling, and are convinced of the efficacy of the spirit-power, or *dangin*, they are wielding.

A stone, or stones are collected on account of their attractive shape, color and composition, whether they are found in the soil, in a river, or at a water source, etc. Whether the stone is suitable for spirit possession, will afterwards be revealed in a dream. If there is no confirmation about it, the stone is useless and can be thrown away. But once confirmed of spirit possession the stone is used to serve as the "seat" for the spirit, and it is on this stone that the blood of the sacrifice has to be poured. This is a particular chicken bled for the purpose by nicking slightly the toe-nails to draw blood. Particular characteristics and differences of each of the five spirit-familiars are the following:

*Daniw*⁸

The *daniw* is the most powerful and versatile of the spirit-familiars, and can be employed for a variety of needs. To mention a few: healing of the sick in serious cases; to drive away a *labang* (evil spirit) that is harmful to a sick person; to appease natural elements, like storm, drought, flood, epidemic, etc.; to perform the complicated death-ritual, and ensure the well-being of the soul in the afterlife; to clear a certain forested area for agricultural use to the Mangyans as to placate the souls of the deceased. The *pandaniwan*, or shaman of a *daniw*, is a Mangyan who usually is a herbal doctor as well, who will use all the means at his/her disposal to heal the patient entrusted to him/her, or solve the problem that has been presented. A *pandaniwan* can only contact his/her *daniw* by means of a certain ritual formula, the *panangbayon*, that commands a large collection of separate prayers for each particular case. This extensive formulary has to be learned by heart by the shaman, and made available to be optimally effective.

In simple cases there is no need for involving the *daniw* in the treatment of the sick, because the herbal medicines will do. But in difficult cases, it might even be that one *daniw* will need another shaman to help him/her to fight a particularly stubborn *labang* that threatens the very existence of a patient. One *pandaniwan* might use another spirit-familiar, e.g. a *pamara* at the same time, although each additional spirit-familiar has to be controlled and managed separately, since each one acts through its own power and characteristics.

Pamara

A *pamara* is applied by a *pamaraan* to dislodge a foreign object that has been implanted under the skin by an evil spirit, anywhere in the human body. The object is called *ungon*, and can mean a thorn or the barb of an arrow inserted in the body, but in general

⁸ For a comprehensive treatment of the *daniw-pandaniwan* concept, see: "The Pandaniwan and his Danim Power: The Healer-Shaman in Mangyan Society," by Antoon Postma, in "Filipino Religious Mangyan Society," *Filipino Religious Experiences and NON-BIBLICAL REVELATION*, by Leonardo N. Mercado, (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1992), pp. 89-137.

it refers to a hurting painful area or spot of the body, inflicted by the *labang* or evil spirit.

In the hands of a good *pamaraan*, or healer with the *pamara*, this "sickness" can successfully be treated when a special stone is employed that is round and nicely shaped, and is called *bugso* or *mutya*. It is used in a stroking fashion over the painful spot, like when massaging. The *pamara*-spirit that resides in the stone, comes originally from a certain tree, watersource, or even from the sea.

When blood is poured over the stone, the shaman might say the following prayer: "Spirit of the *pamara*, when I use you for the sick, do heal the patient. Remove the obstacles that the evil spirit (*labang*) has planted in the ailing body. May this be the result of the healing power of the *pamara* entrusted to me."

Once the blood offering has been performed, there should be no more talk or any noise among the observers. The *shaman*, or *pamaraan*, will rub some blood of the chicken on his handpalms, footsoles, and shoulders, to make sure he will not be getting tired during the seance. During the treatment, the *pamaraan* or shaman, will remove from the body of the patient all the harmful objects placed there by the *labang*, and if there are wounds caused by this evil spirit (to be seen only by the shaman in his trance), then he will apply the proper medicine, that the *pamara*-spirit has been supplying. The *pamaraan* can observe in his dream what kind of *labang* (evil spirit), or *sagbat* (annoyance) of the souls of the diseased is causing the sickness. The shaman will use his *kusol* as charm (*Kaempferia Galanga* L. Zing.), a mixture of medicinal herbs and ginger.

The *pamara*-application can be performed at any time of the day or the night, and this spirit can "team up" with other spirits like the *tihol* and the *pamusik*. The rice and the chicken will be prepared as food for the shaman, and while he eats first, after the customary food offering, all persons present have to be quiet, and should remain seated, out of respect for the *pamara* treatment. Later, the observers will eat from the food prepared for them. The treatment of a patient with the *pamara*, can be reinforced by herbal medicines in their various application of poultice, rubbing in, drinking, etc. A normal sickness cannot be treated by the *pamara* appli-

cation. A regular and expert Mangyan acquainted with herbal medicines is needed in this case.

Tihol

A *tihol* is like a human friend. It will be faithful to you, and do what you order it to do. With human eyes it cannot be seen, but its voice can be heard by anyone who is present. You can call it anytime during the night. It is a small person, of one handspan, or about 23 cm. in size. The *tihol* is called to retrieve anything that has been lost. It will know the whereabouts of a person that went away, and didn't return; a fishingboat that drifted away or whether somebody is arriving. It can be told to check whether there is a *labang* around the house. It will know when a typhoon is coming, a severe storm, or anything serious in nature, in life or in the field.

Monthly offerings have to be performed after the new moon, and blood of a chicken should be sprinkled on the *tihol*-stone. That the *tihol* can only be heard but not be seen, is due to its power of the *tagadlom*, or charm of invisibility. It can even lend this power to its caretaker, or *tihulan*, so that this person can be at a certain place without being seen by others. The one who takes care of a *tihol*, can be assured that he and his family will be protected in times of war, and when there are fights. Moreover, it can be helpful in locating an important magic charm for further protection. A *tihol* is a very versatile spirit-familiar, with many powerful ways and means, and as of today, there are still many Mangyans who "own" a *tihol*, and make use of it.

Panguli

This spirit is said to originate either from a tree, a watersource or the sea. It is similar to the *pamara*, with this difference that the stone, considered to be the seat of the spirit, should be red-colored. This is symbolic to the task of the *panguli*-spirit, namely: to return the blood that was taken out by the *labang* from the body of the patient. It has to be restored to the wound of the person concerned to make him recover. The wound of a patient is caused by the (invisible) spear of a *labang*, and the blood is brought back

inside the wound by the shaman through the *panguli*, carrying it in his cupped hands. This process has to be repeated over and over again. The shaman of a *panguli* when in trance, can "see" the evil spirit or *labang*, that caused the trouble, and acts accordingly.

Pamusik

The *pamusik* resides in a *bugso* or black stone, or stones (up to four), similar to the ones used by the *pamara* and *tihol*. The blood libation on the stone(s) at the periodic ritual, is sometimes done towards the full moon, and the next time again at the following full moon. The toes of a chicken are pricked to draw blood, or if it has been used already before, it might be slaughtered altogether. The offering takes place with appropriate prayers. The spirit-familiar is called *pamusik* because the shaman, when humming him/herself into a trance, tightly closes his/her eyes (*pusik*), she/he then can "see", in his/her "dream" which *labang* is causing the trouble, and where it is residing. The method to scare away the *labang* is similar to that of the *daniw*, *tihol* or *tawo-pungso* performances, namely: by sweeping the *labang* away with a brush made of bamboo or of *bagakay* (*Schizostachyum* sp. Gram.). The *pamusik* can team up with the *daniw*, *pamara*, and other spirits during a nightly session. During the day it would not be possible for the *daniw*.

Spirit-Possessors

The *spirit-possessors* are good spirits that act on their own, and are not controlled by a shaman. However, they too are in need of periodic offerings, and these have to be provided by human beings. Usually a Mangyan, who lives close to the locality where the offerings are taking place, will take it upon him to organize the ritual, and notify the people around, of the occasion of the offering. Each one will then contribute.

There is a good number of spirit-possessors, and the ritual for them is generally the same. But their tasks are different, as well as their *modus operandi*. However, some general rules, similar to the ones applying to the Spirit-Familiars, are applicable as well to the Spirit-Possessors, such as:

1) Offerings have to be brought at regular intervals to avoid the weak and negative performance of the Spirit-Possessors.

2) The rituals have to be conducted in a sphere of solemnity, with due respect by the attending participants, and noise of any kind should be avoided.

3) Some powerful Spirit-Familiars, like the *daniw* and the *tihol*, can have insight in the procedure, and add their spirit-power if needed.

The most common of the spirit-possessors, and the ones mostly requested are the following:

Pagawa

The *pagawa* is actually a company of spirits who are working together in solving problems that concern the human being: his fields, plantations or animals that might be threatened. These spirits cannot be separated, but still have their particular characteristics and methodology.

Their task (*sakob*) is five-fold:

- 1) To protect the shaman and his family against sickness.
- 2) To watch over the rice in the field, to see to it that ritual prayers are said, to protect it against pests, etc.
- 3) To be on guard against *labang* or persons with "black magic" or *hiri*, so that they will not come near.
- 4) To protect against all enemies of the human beings.
- 5) To watch over the house-chickens, that they will not be eaten by the *kumaraon* or "eaters."

The foremost leaders are the *pagawa-pudpud* and their counterparts, the *pagawa-sungat*. They originate from the sea. Offerings brought to them are a pair of chickens (male/female), together with very fine rice (*sasa*).

The following are the companions of the *pagawa pudpod* and *pagawa-sungat*: *anito*, *baw-as*, *bululakawnon*, *idalmunon*, *kuramnag*, *makaskong* and *malingkod*. They live together in a small hut, consisting of a board of wood from the *dita*-tree, supported by bamboo posts, tied together with *inwag*-vines. This "house" of the *pagawa* should not be burned down.

It is of historical interest to note, that in 1634 the Jesuits in their yearly report to the SJ Father General in Rome, make mention of the *pagawa* as Mangyan (from the Naujan Lake area) ritual, taking place in a small hut, and how the missionaries told the Mangyans to burn down these places of superstition.

In case the *pagawa* ritual has been neglected, it is difficult to revive it, because many things are needed for it: vines, different kinds of wood, young coconut leaves, rice, chickens, cogon, etc. However, this type of ritual is rarely performed nowadays.

Panudlak

This ritual is held before the sowing of the rice seeds. If it is neglected, or done without the proper food offerings (rice/chicken), *sagbat* will take place, i.e. the souls of the deceased will feel offended. The result will be a bad harvest, or an epidemic, etc.

The offerings are placed on top of a *pungso* or termite-hill, or on the ground above it, where a little ricefield is prepared, which will then be planted with the first rice-seeds, before the actual *pamagas* (communal rice planting) will take place. This ritual is usually still observed even today, because of its importance for rice cultivation.

The *panudlak* has similarities with the *pagawa* and *idalmunon*, in that it also watches against any harm to the rice on the field, the health of the people and the domesticated animals of the shaman and his family. Still, each *saragdahanon* or ritual, has its own characteristics and working method.

Generally, no traditional rice-planting will take place in a certain locality, if a *panudlak*-ritual has not yet been performed by one or the other farming in that area.

Sapol

It is a ritual to ensure success in hunting, especially in catching game with traps, whether in the sea, the rivers or in the forests. This old tradition, according to the Mangyans, might have been existing already before the Chinese or the Spanish came to the Philippines. As with other rituals, the *daniw* can have insight in the workings of the *sapol*, and know the tools that are being used, like the bow-and-arrow. This ritual too is mentioned in the old (1634) Jesuit records, as being practiced by the Mangyans when they want to be successful at their hunting activities.

Panuldok

This is a ritual against rains, thunderstorms, excessive heat, earthquakes, etc. Its spirit is thought to be residing in a stone, or *bugso*. The blood is dripped at the base of a house support (*sulay*), that is joined by the *sambong*, a sturdy, sharpened piece of iron rod, symbolizing the strength that the house is expected to acquire after the ritual. The *kusol* (*Kaempferia galanga* L. Zing.) is used together with it.

In order of importance, the *panuldok* comes after the *tihol*. Since the *panuldok* is a ritual against typhoons, it will be capable to calm down a strong typhoon and rains, and is like a pacifier, requesting the *apo-bagyo*, or owner of the typhoon, to stop its destructive force of storm and rains.

When there is a strong typhoon, the *panuldok* can be assisted by the *daniw*, to observe together the "Forces of Heaven and Earth." However, each does it in its own way. The same goes for controlling excessive heat, when the *apo-daga*, the owner of the earth is requested to stop its unbearable heat.

Panagdahan Sa Danom

Panagdahan sa danom is a ritual concerning the watersources, river-springs, etc., and follows in importance after the *pagawa*. It is the one taking care of animals, that they won't get sick; further-

more it is in charge of the rice (on the field), that it will grow healthily, that no damage will be done to the plants by whatever agency, that the harvest will be bountiful. As to the locality where the ritual should take place, when it concerns a ritual at a river, it should be one that will not run dry, even at summertime. Moreover, it should be performed at a spot where there is a big pool of water, and not at a place where the current is strong.

If it concerns a spirit in the sea, it can be done at the beach. For the spirit of a watersource, it should be done at the same place. For a deep well, the ritual has to be held nearby.

In former times, a Mangyan in charge of the ritual of the water, or *panagdahan sa danom*, at the hour of offering, would be very polite in his language, whether to the Spirit or to his companions. This was done in order not to betray any information of his ritual tools and knowledge to evil forces.

The ritual is performed after the rice harvest, at the time of preparing the new ricefields, from the time of the *gamason*, or cleaning, till the moment before the sowing of the rice seeds, or *pamgasan*, or from November till May. At the offering, one red cock is needed. This will be sufficient even if many people will attend. At the arrival of those who like to attend the ritual, each family will voluntarily bring their share along of the offering, which can be a chicken, and a portion of rice. This individual share is called *tugyong*, their part of the offering to the Spirit of the Water. It is believed that those who have contributed to the *panagdahan sa danom* ritual will have an abundant harvest to come. At the moment of the ritual offering, with many people together, it is not permitted to bring any kind of musical instruments. Nor should there be any yodeling yells (*uwi*), or playing around in whatever way. At the well itself, no one should be playing with the water.

As to the type of clothes and decoration one has to wear, no piece of commercial cloth should be used, nor slippers, a hat, or upperdress that would not be made and embroidered in the traditional Mangyan way. Furthermore, the G-string should be worn, not a pair of long or short pants. The women should wear a Mangyan *ramit* (skirt), and carry the traditional *buri*-bag, with *nito*-vine decorations. Those of the men who had cut off their

traditional long hair, should not attend the water-ritual. If these regulations are not observed, a typhoon might occur, or a period of drought, or the rice harvest would be poor, or there would be plenty of sickness among the people. That's why, those in charge of the ritual, and those in attendance, have to behave in a respectful way all the time, and really believe in the *dangin* or power of the spirit of the water.

At the moment of the offering or *sagda*, a prayer should be said by the caretaker or shaman, like:

"You, Spirit of the water, come near now, because we have prepared an offering. Please, eat of the rice and the meat that we place before you.

Take care of the animals and our chickens, that they will not be eaten by the evil eater, or *kumaraon*. Watch over our rice plants as well, and don't permit the rats, the sparrows, the insects, or any other pests to destroy our rice, but that we may have a bountiful harvest.

Do not permit any kind of evil to come near, and protect us against any sickness or other problems. Let us not be visited by bad weather, typhoons, long droughts or sun eclipses, as well as famine. Keep our bodies from getting tired of the many tasks we have to do.

Protect us also against the evil spirit or *labang*, and against persons that practice sorcery, or *panhiri*."

These words will be repeated several times.

When the prayer contains the petition: "When we go to the forests, make us find plenty of honey from the various kinds of bees," this point will be clearly illustrated by the people who attend the ritual. They will have made a mock beehive from the leaves of the sugarpalm or *iyok*, suspending it at a low, overhanging branch of a tree standing near the watersource where the spirit dwells. It will be clear to all, how big a beehive the Mangyans are hoping to encounter in their search for honey.

After the ritual offering, the people attending can start eating as well. It will have to be done in a subdued and quiet mood, with as little noise as possible. This is in great contrast with the communal work activities called *saknong* that are usually lively affairs. At the ritual gathering no one is in a hurry to eat as fast and as much as possible, but each takes his time to get satisfied.

After the meal, the people go home quietly. If a lot of food is still left over, it can be brought home by the people, but not to be carried inside the house. This sacrificial food has to be consumed outside the living space of the house, e.g. on the platform or *pantaw*, in front of the house. Those inside the house who want to eat from the food, have to come outside to do so.

Those who were in charge of the ritual have to stay at home for five more days, and cannot do their regular work in the field, fetch water, or get firewood, etc. The unavoidable necessities of the body are the only exception for going away from the house for some distance. This rather strict regulation is called *kalhian*. When the five days and nights are complete, life can go on again as usual. This *lihi*, prohibition, is an expression of respect for the ritual performance that took place.

The majority of the Mangyans still believe in this ritual, and when the harvest is good, etc., they will ascribe it to the ritual that was held to the satisfaction of the spirit(s). Therefore, this *panagdahan sa dahom* ritual will be repeated annually.

Evil Spirits (*Mga Labang*)

The Mangyan philosophy on the origin of evil is not worked out very well. There is a complicated folktale existing, that relates how on a certain day in the past, a long object descended from the sky, looking like a long intestine of a *karabaw*. Upon advice of the village Elders, it was collected in a big container, with the admonition to stay away from it, and not to touch or to puncture it.

But as with the box of Pandora, there was some foolish person who considers it his duty to puncture the object with his *bolo*.

And out came all the biting, stinging and troublesome insects we have today. And they spread over the world, carrying with them all kinds of diseases that mankind is suffering from. They were the first *labang* the Mangyans had to deal with.

Since that time, the *labang* is the general concept of evil in action, as it is experienced in its negative and bad effect on human beings. The *labangs* are growing in number, and the increase is said to come from the disenchanting souls of the deceased who were refused admission to the abode of the souls, the *karadwahan*, because of their evil past. They returned to earth and were invited by the *labang* to join them.

The *labang* has many names, and occurs in many shapes and shades, depending on the type of sickness it causes, and the way it is thought to be done. The *labang* can only be seen by the shaman that controls a spirit-familiar. She/He can perceive the type of *labang* that is being dealt with, e.g. if it appears like a chicken, the shaman will conclude that it is, a *labang-manok*, that is troubling a sick person. Headache is associated with that type, so the ritual formulary, or prayers, of the shaman will be focused on that particular kind of *labang*.

A good *pandaniwan*, who controls a *daniw*, is usually able to dislodge a *labang* that is causing a soul to leave the body of its "master," out of fear of the *labang*. This separation of the soul causes the person to get sick. So the task of the shaman is, to remove the *labang* that stays in the vicinity of the patient, to allow the soul to be reunited with the body, and thus bring recovery to its "master." The *labang* can be called an evil spirit by nature since it was always like that, even if new recruits are made from among criminal souls rejected from the *karadwahan*.

An evil spirit by accident would be a spirit-familiar, like a *daniw* or *pamara*, that unexpectedly starts doing evil, instead of good, a thing we usually expect from spirit-familiars, because they are the goodwill messengers of the Mahal Makaka-ako.

If a good spirit is suddenly behaving in a bad way, it has been ordered to do so by the shaman in charge for some evil purpose of his/her own doing. The spirit-familiar can be blamed, because it

is only acting as it is told to do, without judging the morality of a certain case. The *daniw*, or *pamara*, etc. have no volition, or personal will. Thus is their nature.

The "criminal" in a case like that is the shaman, who has betrayed his profession to do good, and has become a *panhirian*, or sorcerer of black magic, out of extreme envy or jealousy towards the person that he ordered attacked by the spirit-familiar. The spirit is now turned into a *panhiri*-spirit, that retains its redoubtable power, and is now being applied to do evil, instead of good. Only a very good *pandaniwan*, possibly to be joined by other good shamans, can counteract such a formidable opponent, that is equipped with the spirit-power of a corrupted *daniw* or *pamara*-spirit.

Generally speaking, however, the good Familiar-Spirits, handled by the usually good shaman, will always be more powerful than the *labang* of any kind or caliber, or the dreadful evil caused by a *panhirian*-shaman, with his/her perverted *panhiri*^{or} spirit. The reason for this superiority of the Good Spirits, as explained by the Mangyans, is due to the fact that the Spirit-Familiars are sent by the Mahal Makaka-ako as messengers of goodness, to defeat the evil that is troubling this world.

Earth People and Charms

To this category of the invisible world belong certain immaterial entities and powers, often vaguely defined by the Mangyans, but comparably belonging to the realm of fairies (e.g. *duwende*) and their magic world. For reasons of restricting this paper from growing too long, I will limit myself to one representative sample of the *tawo basad daga*, or Earth People.

Putpot

It is an adult person of small size, like a child of eight to ten years of age. Generally dark-complexioned, there are also some who are more fair in skin color. But all have dark hair like the Mangyans. They usually dwell in the *balete*-tree, or steep rocks or

in termite-hills (*pungso*). If it befriends you, it can be of great help, but if it doesn't like you, it can be very troublesome, although by nature it is beneficial to mankind. A *putpot* might have a stone-charm like the one used with a *pamara*, and that makes it quite powerful. All of them have the *tagadlom*-charm that makes them invisible to humans, and they carry cotton in their hands to make their bodies nimble and light. They are dressed like Mangyans, but are around only when it is dark. You don't have to be afraid of them, because they don't team up *pamara*, *tihol* or *pamusik* familiar-spirits. Still, the *putpot* do not belong to that category. It is nice to have a *putpot* as a friend, and if one shows itself to you, ask it for a favor, and it will be granted. But if it is not your luck they won't show themselves to you. However, several Mangyans who have a *putpot* as a friend, said that it showed itself to them, and is very helpful when someone is in need, or is sick.

Charms

Charms, or *hapin-hapin*, among the Mangyans can be encountered in every phase and aspect of their lives. Charms are considered as a protection for body (and soul) in certain circumstances of life. Charms can consist of certain stones, mineral extractions, exotic objects, a mixture of certain plant parts (including the roots), and secret incantations.

Most of these, or their way of preparation, are inherited from the forefathers, but others were acquired after instructions received in a dream, or through advice of the *tihol* spirit-familiar. Anyhow, the Mangyans believe that charms are a gift to mankind from the Mahal Makaka-ako, as an additional means of protection against seen and/or unseen adversaries. On the other hand, they can be used for a bad purpose as well, like with the spirit-familiar. It all depends on the mentality of the one handling or applying the charm.

Among the Mangyans there are great number of charms, all with different names, made of different (mainly vegetable) substances, and with different applications and effectiveness.

Just to mention a few of the best known:

Lumay and Gayuma

This is a love-charm, said to be irresistible to whom it is applied. It consists of the roots of certain trees and plants, that preferably should be collected on a Good Friday. That time is also the right moment for testing its potency. Another type of *lumay* is a stone that was found inside a banana, and a twin of the *langka*, or jackfruit, is also effective as love-charm.

The charm is placed near where the girl, the object of the *lumay*, usually passes, and soon she will feel attracted to a certain boy. The charm is also mixed with tobacco, then made into a cigarette, and when puffing, the smoke is directed to the girl, with the same effect. Mangyans on a trip to the interior of Mindoro, will always try to obtain strong love-charms from other tribesmen, in order to try them out when they are back home again. Mangyans believe strongly in the potency of a guaranteed *lumay*.

Panuli or Sinamak

It is a strong charm against the *labang*, and consequently, against any serious sickness. Its composition is a mixture of parts of tall trees; and weeds, put into a little bottle, with coconut oil added. The oil should come from a single coconut out of a cluster that is facing east. Every Good Friday the oil should be changed so that the charm will retain its potency.

It can be placed above the door, and for sure, the *labang* will not enter. It can be burned, and the smoke, or smell, will drive the *labang* away. And it can be rubbed on the body as a repellent. It is also used against dizziness, by placing the charm in a coconut shell on live embers, and the vapors are trapped in a blanket which is wrapped around a patient. It is further used for stopping the bleeding of a wound, which afterwards will heal very quickly. If this charm is smoked, it is a medicine against skin-disease.

Tagadlom

At a last example, the *tagadlom* is a charm that can make a person invisible to others. The main ingredient of its substance, is something that is very rarely seen or found. For example, a stone found in the heart of a banana-tree of the *talindig*-variety. If found, it should be wrapped in a black cloth, and it should be worn as a *hagkos*-belt, then one is invisible to others. Of course, the bone of a black cat would have the same result, as well as the stone found in a quail's egg, and carried in the mouth. If these methods wouldn't work, you can always ask the *putpot* for a *tagadlom* when it shows itself to you. That the *tagadlom* is the favorite charm with thieves, and their likes, doesn't need mention!

Concluding Remarks

Such is the visible and invisible world of an Hanunoo-Mangyan of Southern Mindoro. A world full of variation and excitement (maybe a bit too much!), that will prevent life to be dull, because there is always something to think about.

That the Mangyan of the past could cope with all its complications, is surprising enough, whereas on the other side, it doesn't come as a surprise, when the modern-day Mangyan youth is not very much attracted to many aspects of this dual world, especially its invisible part. The challenges of the pre-20th century keep them busy enough to think about this aspect of their native culture.