

# ANITISM: A SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS NATIVE TO THE PHILIPPINES

STEPHEN K. HISLOP

## I. INTRODUCTION

The word *anitism*, or the Hispano-Filipino form *anitismo*, though not in current usage, has been defined in Retana's glossary<sup>1</sup> as "Asociación de ideas religiosas que tiene por fundamento el culto a los anitos," citing Isabelo de los Reyes, who further defines "anitos" as "almas de los antepasados."<sup>2</sup> Fernando Blumentritt characterizes primitive Tagalog religion as continual invocation and adoration of the anitos, the souls or spirits of their ancestors.<sup>3</sup> From its original meaning of "ancestral spirit," the word *anito* acquired throughout the Philippines the general meaning "spirit."<sup>4</sup>

The other term in general parlance to describe Filipino primitive religion was *anitería*, used mainly by Spanish missionaries, often in a very derogatory sense.<sup>5</sup> Though Blumentritt<sup>6</sup> attempted to use the word in a purely descriptive sense, the term *anitería* appears too often in the missionary literature in a prejudicial sense; for this reason I have avoided it in this paper, as I believe de los Reyes' word *anitismo* to be a more useful term to describe the original religious system of the primitive Filipinos.

## II. ORIGIN OF PHILIPPINE RELIGION

At first glance, the fact that the Filipinos worshiped the spirits of their ancestors might tend to indicate Chinese influence. In fact, in the year 1375 the Chinese Emperor, during the height of friendly relations between the two nations, incorporated into the Chinese religion the worship of Sulu's

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<sup>1</sup> W. E. Retana, "Diccionario de Filipinismos con la Revisión de lo que al respecta lleva publicado La Real Academia Español." *Revue Hispanique*, LI (1921), 32.

<sup>2</sup> *La Religión Antigua de los Filipinos* (Manila: 1909), 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Diccionario Mitológico de Filipinas*, 1895 (2nd ed.), 19. In fact, Protestant Missionary Leo L. Leeder states positively that, "The dominating ideals of all pagan religion [in the Philippines] is the belief in *anito*, a class of supernatural beings" (*A Survey of Pagan Tribes in the Philippines and of Missionary Efforts Toward Their Evangelization*, Columbia: 1956, p. 7).

<sup>4</sup> R. A. Kern, "Anitu," *Journal of Austronesian Studies*, 1:2 (1956), 6. According to Kern the word *anito* is of Malayan origin and has spread Eastward of Polynesia from the Philippines. He traces the root of the word to *andito*, "those there, far away" (7). See also Blumentritt's summary of correspondences in Malaysian languages with the Filipino *anito* "ancestor spirits" in *op. cit.*, 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> For example, W. E. Retana, *Un Libro de Aniterías: Supersticiones de los Indios Filipinos* (Madrid: 1894). The title gives somewhat of an indication of the author's bias.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, 20n. See also Retana, *Revue Hispanique*, *loc. cit.*

ivers, mountains, and forests.<sup>7</sup> Other than this one instance of incorporation, obviously for political purposes, there is no indication that either country influenced the other's religion. In fact, Blumentritt believed that the Malayan demonology (anitism) was sufficiently diverse from Chinese religion to prove it had an independent origin.<sup>8</sup>

At present Chinese influence in the Philippines is seen mainly in the instruments used in worship, such as Chinese jars and gongs. There are indications from excavations in Palawan that these Chinese jars were used even in ancient times in the same way that today's Tagbanwas use them for storing rice wine which is used in religious ceremonies for communication with the spirits of the dead.<sup>9</sup>

Other observers of Philippine primitive religion have traced it to a likewise superficial basis, such as similarities in manner of dress and ornamentation.<sup>10</sup> A more serious attempt to link Filipino primitive religion with Hinduism is in various explanations of the Filipino deity Bathala, although there is no agreement on exactly what Sanskrit word is the origin of the word *Bathala*.

Parece probable que deriva del Sans. *bhattra*, respectable, considerable; pero tambien pudiera ocurrir que proviniera de *awatara*, avatar, es decir: descendimiento de un dios á la tierra bajo una forma visible, como los 10. avatares de Wishnu. En Mal. *berhala*, que se asemeja á la forma Tag. significa un idolo á que se rinde culto divino. En Pam. *batala*, es un ave en quien tenian sus supersticiones.<sup>11</sup>

A modern Spanish Jesuit, Pablo Pastells,<sup>12</sup> has still another theory, that the word *Bat-ala* is derived from *Bata-Allah*, or "child of Allah"! The fact that this was seriously believed by some of his predecessors may be seen in an anonymous Manila *Relación* of 1572, which forbade the use of this name on the grounds of its supposed Muslim association. Perhaps the simplest and most satisfactory explanation may be that the word is essentially native Malayan, and not from a source as the above forced interpretations indicate.

Of a different character is the Philippine word *diwata*,<sup>13</sup> which can definitely be traced to India and beyond, to the same source as Greek *theos*, Latin *deus*, Spanish *dios*, English *deity*.<sup>14</sup> However, in this case, although

<sup>7</sup> Henry O. Beyer, "The Philippines Before Magellan." *Asia*, November, 1921, p. 966.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, 20.

<sup>9</sup> See Robert B. Fox, *Pre-History of the Philippines* (Manila: 1967), 17.

<sup>10</sup> See Juan R. Francisco, "Analogous Customs, Beliefs and Traditions in India and the Philippines," *Historical Bulletin*, June, 1963, p. 145.

<sup>11</sup> T. H. Pardo de Tavera, *El Sanscrito en la Lengua Tagalog* (Paris: 1887), 23. See Juan Francisco's critique of this book in *Asian Studies*, August, 1968.

<sup>12</sup> Editor of Francisco Colin, *Labor Evangélica* (Barcelona: 1904), 64n.

<sup>13</sup> With the forms *dewa*, *devata*, *dewata*, *divata*, *diwata* (Blumentritt, *op. cit.*, 44, 45).

<sup>14</sup> "*Diwata se deriva del sanscrito deva ó devatà, de modo que tanto el latin Deus como el filipino Diwata tienen el mismo origen.*" (*Ibid.*, 45n.) With this de los Reyes is also in agreement: "La palabra *diwata* . . . debe proceder de los devas é devatas de los hindus, dioses protectores." (*Op. cit.*, 40n.)

the origin of the word is somewhat clearer, its use is much more diverse, I have collected a list, by no means exhaustive, of sixteen uses of this word in Philippine languages. Blumentritt catalogs the use of *diwata* in eight languages of the Philippines. With the Bisayans, the word is the equivalent of Tagalog *anito*.<sup>15</sup> The Bataks of Palawan believe that *diwata* refers to all spirits, good and bad. The Tagbanwas believe that these are invisible spirits. The Mandayas limit the word to refer to one spirit, but the Manobos believe it refers to spirits. The Subanos use *diwata* to refer to one of their gods. The Tirurays believe *diwata* is a great eight-headed fish. The Maguindanaos have images called *diwata*, but the word *dewa* refers to a goddess.<sup>16</sup> Among the Magahats, *diwa* refers to a forest god and also to the spirit who owns their land. *Diwata* is the thanksgiving feast with the offerings that are offered.<sup>17</sup> Among the Bukidnon, the *diwata* were believed to be men of heaven.<sup>18</sup> The early Spaniard missionaries made the observation that the Cebuanos used *divata* to refer to any god, especially an image of a god.<sup>19</sup> Among the Bilaans, some hold *Dwata* to be the god of goodness, older than the evil god Mele, though others hold that he is younger than Mele, god of evil.<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that the use of the word *Diwata* is confined to the southern part of the Philippines. The Tagalogs, however, were aware of the existence of *Diwata*, believing Him to be the universal Supreme Being, whereas Bathala was the supreme deity of the Tagalog people only.<sup>21</sup>

The word, therefore, which was not original in the Philippines, acquired various meanings throughout the archipelago and did not in any case form a basis for religious faith. The basis for religious faith had already been established in the Philippines before this word had entrance; this already existing basis is what is called in this paper anitism.

### III. CHARACTERISTICS OF ANITISM

#### GENERAL CONCEPT

In the eyes of the early Spanish missionaries, the "Indios" had no religion as they understood religion. They were observed to worship without

<sup>15</sup> De los Reyes (*loc. cit.*) confirms this use.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, 44-46.

<sup>17</sup> Timoteo S. Oracion, "Ceremonial Customs and Beliefs Connected with Magahat *Kaingin* Agriculture," *Silliman Journal*, July, 1955, pp. 224, 231, 232n.

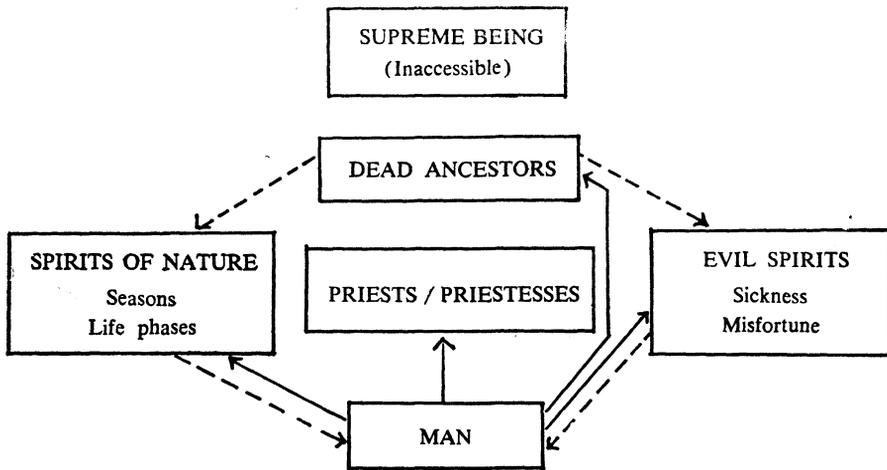
<sup>18</sup> Tranquilino Sito, "The Bukidnon Ascension to Heaven," *Philippine Magazine*, October, 1937, p. 445.

<sup>19</sup> In the account of the discovery of the Santo Niño image in Cebu City. See Pedro Chirino, "Relation of the Filipinas Islands and of What Has There Been Accomplished by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus," Emma Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, XII, 181.

<sup>20</sup> It was the former consideration which led the Philippine Bible Society (Protestant) to adopt this name for God in their original gospel translation, as far as I know, the first attempt to use a purely native word for God in the Philippines. Lorenzo C. Genotiva, "Bilaan Religious Beliefs and Practices," *Silliman Journal*, 1st quarter, 1966, pp. 57, 58n.

<sup>21</sup> See the Tagalog etiological myth "How Lansones Became Edible," *Filipino Popular Tales* (Lancaster: 1921), 402.

temples or organized priesthood, honored no founder, and used no scriptures.<sup>22</sup> To them it was a vast maze of pagan superstitions to be replaced as quickly as possible. Patterns of worship by the Filipinos may be seen in a sketch by the contemporary missionary, John A. Rich.<sup>23</sup>



#### SPIRITS OF ANCESTORS

Both the "spirits of nature" and the "spirits of ancestors" of the above diagram are of course the *anitos*.<sup>24</sup> Though the theory that the word *anito* was directly derived from the Sanscrit *hantu* ("death") may be doubted,<sup>25</sup> Pardo de Tavera was at least correct in identifying the *anitos* with the dead. Jose Rizal traced the use of the word *anito* from "tutelary genius, either of the family, or extraneous to it," to the final meaning in his day of "any superstition, false worship, idol, etc."<sup>26</sup> In the usage of the word, it may be

<sup>22</sup> Antonio de Morga, "Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas," Blair and Robertson, *op. cit.*, XVI, 132. I have reserved a discussion of human sacrifice to the end of this section (*infra*, n. 44, p. 13), as the sources are in much disagreement over whether such a practice existed in the Islands. De Morga (133) denies it, but Silvestre Sancho ("Las Creencias de los Primitivos Filipinos," *Misionalia Hispanica*, II, 1945, no 4, p. 16), Retana (*Un Libro de Aniterias*, vi, n), and Blumentritt (*op. cit.*, 70) affirm that it occurred regularly.

<sup>23</sup> "Religious Acculturation in the Philippines," *Practical Anthropology*, September-October, 1970, p. 200. The dotted lines are my addition, and show effects of both sets of spirits on man, and also the effects of ancestral spirits on the other two sets.

<sup>24</sup> Along with Bisayan *diwata*, Ilocano *aroiias*, and the other terms locally used for spirits of the dead.

<sup>25</sup> See Juan R. Francisco, "Indian Influences in the Philippines with Special Reference to Language and Literature," *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, January-September, 1963, p. 32n.

<sup>26</sup> Editor of de Morga, *op. cit.*, 131n.

seen that it originally meant the spirits of ancestors, then all spirits, then the images which were constructed to represent the household spirits.<sup>27</sup>

The ancestors who had passed on went to the spirit-world and shared an existence with the spirits who had never been mortal. These spirits of the ancestors then had some kind of influence upon the other spirits who could help or harm those still living. In order to keep on good terms with the spirits that had been ancestors, it was believed necessary from time to time to hold great feasts in their honor, so that they would intercede in behalf of the living to the spirits of nature. The spirits of the dead were likewise involved occasionally in causing the death of the living through sickness, so that the afflicted would join his ancestor in the spirit-world.<sup>28</sup>

### OTHER SPIRITS

Not only people, but also animals, and indeed all visible objects possessed spirits. In addition, a peculiar belief of the Ifugaos was that all things and people had a "soul-stuff" differentiated from the soul itself; the belief was that this "soul-stuff" was what gave desirable attributes to people and things.<sup>29</sup>

But the spirits themselves inhabited both animals and objects in the same way in which they inhabited man. To the anitists, there was no such thing as an "inanimate" object. Anitos were represented in their mythology as having been in existence since the creation of the world,<sup>30</sup> each anito having its own "special office," such as giving rain, making the rice grow, increasing the quantity of the rice, etc.

Objects likewise were believed to possess spirits. Often images were made by one particularly skilled in carving or sculpting,<sup>31</sup> and through them were worshiped the spirits of those who had died.

They possessed many idols called *lic-ha*, which were images with different shapes; and at times they worshiped any little trifle, in which they adored . . . some particular dead man who was brave in war and endowed with special faculties, to whom they commended themselves for protection in their tribulations.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Although images were made for the household anitos, anitos of the mountains, the forests, the streams, and the sea were worshiped, but had no visible representations (Blumentritt, *op. cit.*, 19-21).

<sup>28</sup> From Glen Grisham, "Pagan Priests of Benguet," *Philippine Magazine*, February, 1933, p. 399, and Barton, "My Ifugao Brother's Gods," *Asia*, October, 1929, p. 809.

<sup>29</sup> For a further explanation of these beliefs, and their connection with head hunting, see *ibid.*, 813.

<sup>30</sup> That the Tagalog myths attributed the origin of anitos of nature to creation by Bataala may be seen in Miguel de Loarca, "Relation of the Filipinas Islands," Blair and Robertson, *op. cit.*, V, 173.

<sup>31</sup> The makers of these images were called in Tagalog *manganito* (Blumentritt, *op. cit.*, 75).

<sup>32</sup> Juan de Plasencia, "Relation of the Worship of the Tagalogs, Their Gods, and Their Burials and Superstitions." Blair and Robertson, *op. cit.*, VII, 189.

In addition to the good spirits (the *anitos*), the primitive Filipinos venerated out of a feeling of fear evil spirits or *mangalos*.<sup>33</sup> Particularly feared by the Tagalogs was the crocodile, to which they sacrificed pigs by throwing them into the river or lagoon. They often revered the crocodile by calling it *nono*<sup>34</sup> or "grandparent" and pleaded to it to be spared from harm.<sup>35</sup> It was believed that the *nonos* had given man five commandments, curiously reminiscent of the Ten Commandments, which were, "Do not kill, do not rob, do not commit adultery, do not lie, do not drink intoxicating beverages."<sup>36</sup>

The *nonos*, like the *anitos*, were "spiritualized" so that a folk-belief was current among the Tagalogs that it was necessary to ask permission of the *anitos* or *nonos* before planting in a field or even before merely walking through it (*pasintabi sa nono*).<sup>37</sup> The belief persists to the present day that the farmer must offer something to the spirits of the rice in order that they may ripen quickly. Thus, the farmer in Malitbog, central Panay, performs the *bari* (breaking) ritual just before harvest, in which he breaks the heads of a few stalks of rice in sacrifice to the spirit of the whole ricefield. As one farmer explained his reason for performing this ritual, "The rice has spirits, too, and when you dry some of the stalks their spirits would appeal to the rest [for] sympathy and this hastens the ripening of the entire crop."<sup>38</sup>

#### PLACE OF WORSHIP

The first Spanish missionaries were unanimous in their surprise at discovering that the Filipinos did not worship in temples. The worship of *anitos* was consequently entirely home-centered. All homes, no matter how poor, possessed an altar for *anito*-worship.<sup>39</sup>

It is not quite accurate to say that the early Filipinos lacked buildings of community worship, as there existed *simbahan* which were "semi-permanent buildings intended for worship"<sup>40</sup> or sometimes caves.

<sup>33</sup> Los Bisayas antiguos veneraban al *Mangalo*, teniendo que los devorase las entrañas invisiblemente, pues á el atribúan la muerte de los que fallecian no siendo ya ancianos." (Blumentritt, *op. cit.*, 80-81.)

<sup>34</sup> The term *nono* appears to be another word for *anito*. That is, both were terms meaning the spirit of one who had lived before. The *nonos* could further be identified as "visiting *anitos*." The use of the word *nono* was not confined by any means to the crocodile; the belief appears also in the myth of the old man of the anthill (*matanda sa punso*), in which the white ants (*anay*) were identified with *nonos* or *anitos*. (*Ibid.*, 84.) The balet tree, according to some, was the favorite habitat of the *nonos* (*ibid.*, 88-89.)

<sup>35</sup> De los Reyes, *op. cit.*, 35-36.

<sup>36</sup> Frank C. Laubach, *The People of the Philippines* (New York: 1925), 45.

<sup>37</sup> Blumentritt, *op. cit.*, 97.

<sup>38</sup> Felipe L. Jocano, "Agricultural Rituals in a Philippine Barrio," *Philippine Sociological Review*, January-April, 1967, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Masayoshi Shonago, "The Philippine Islands as Viewed from a Religious and Social Standpoint, Especially Before the Introduction of Christianity," *Tenri Journal of Religion*, March, 1955, p. 49.

<sup>40</sup> Eufronio Alip, "Closing Remarks." *The Beginnings of Christianity in the Philippines* (Manila: 1965), 230-231.

The Spanish missionary Juan de Plasencia carefully noted the worship of anitos by the primitive Filipinos.

It is true that they have the name *simbahan*, which means a temple or place of adoration; but this is because formerly when they wished to celebrate a festival, which they called *pandot*, or 'worship,' they celebrated it in the large house of a chief. There they constructed for the purpose of sheltering the assembled people, a temporary shed on each side of the house, with a roof, called *sibi*, to protect the people from the wet when it rained... During this time the whole barangay, or family, united and joined in the worship which they call *nagaanitos*.<sup>41</sup>

Jose Rizal notes that temples were built only for worship of anitos, and these buildings were called *ulango*. No buildings were made for the worship of Bathala.<sup>42</sup>

#### PRIESTHOOD

Though the native religious priesthood was apparently not so well-organized as the elaborate Catholic religious system, it was functional and a duly recognized part of the primitive Filipino society. The services of the priests were used by the people mainly in determining which anitos had to be placated and how to do this. The primitive priesthood of the Kalinga is still in existence. The Kalinga medium performs two duties: caring for the departed and curing the sick by seeking and returning the soul of the afflicted.<sup>43</sup>

#### SUMMARY

A modern Spaniard has summarized Filipino primitive religion by saying it consisted of four basic elements: animism, worship of spirits of ancestors, almost no temples, and human sacrifice.<sup>44</sup> In view of the fact that there is such a scanty record of human sacrifices in the Philippines, it may be concluded that it was not a *typical* practice of the primitive Filipinos. Instead, the existence of a well-defined priesthood may be substituted, this priesthood consisting of mediums (*katalonan*) between man and the anitos.

<sup>41</sup> *Op. cit.*, 185-186.

<sup>42</sup> *Op. cit.*, 132.

<sup>43</sup> Edward Dozier, *Mountain Arbiters* (Tucson), 165.

<sup>44</sup> Sancho, *loc. cit.* I do not believe he is being fair when he says that Filipino primitive religion was "characterized by human sacrifice." The so-called "human sacrifice" mentioned by Blumentritt (*op. cit.*, 70) in his definition of *Lalaon* is a killing of slaves of a wealthy person in order that they might accompany him to the spirit-world and serve him there. It was not therefore by any means a common occurrence. If human sacrifice played such an important part in Filipino religious observances there should be abundant references in missionary literature beyond the mere statement that it was a common feature of pagan religious practice. As it is, to my knowledge the only fully documented record of a regular (yearly) rite of human sacrifice may be found in Warren D. Smith's "An Account of a Human Sacrifice Held by the Bagobos, District of Davao, Mindanao, P.I.," *The Philippine Journal of Science*, June, 1908, pp. 194-196.

## IV. DEITIES

I have described first the spirits because these formed the major part of early Filipino worship. As Rich's chart indicates, the Supreme Being was considered unapproachable. The Filipinos were not ignorant of his existence, of course, but did not believe that man was worthy to worship him directly.

The god *Bathala*<sup>45</sup> has already been mentioned. Its origin has been variously conjectured, but little is known definitely; what is known is that its use is widespread in the Philippine Islands. Sometimes *Bathala* was described as a large bird (*Tigmamanukin*), but the full term in Tagalog for the Supreme Being was *Bathala-Maykapal*, which literally means Creator-God. The Bisayans of the western islands worshipped *Laon*<sup>46</sup> as Supreme God, while those of the Eastern Visayas held *Abba*<sup>47</sup> as Supreme God.

Lesser deities of importance were *Maylupa*, god of the soil, and *Nono*, who when elevated to deity, was god of the waters and was placated by offerings thrown into the water from boats; others believed *Nono* to be a god of the forests, and therefore, it was sacrilege to fell them.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly enough, the supreme deity of the Ilocanos was *Angngalo*, the first man, though they also believed in the Creator *Maykapal*.<sup>49</sup>

The Pangasinans were noted for their gods of war, among them *Apolaki*, *Makanduk*, *Inaginid*, and *Barangao*. The latter was known by various Filipinos as god of the rainbow; the rainbow had an important place in their cosmology as the bridge between this world and the spirit-world.<sup>50</sup>

Among demigods, *Ginarawan*<sup>51</sup> was a named evil spirit of the Tagalogs. At this point, the spiritual beings become more numerous and more familiar to their worshippers, for it is these lesser deities with whom the common man feels he can deal directly. Such beings as the *agta*, the *aghoy*, the *engkantada*, the *buso*, the *aswang*, and the myriad host of "myth-animals" and "bad animals" were limited only by the exceedingly fertile imagination of the rural Filipino.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Other forms are *Badhala*, *Badla*, and *Bahala* (Blumentritt, *op. cit.*, 27-28).

<sup>46</sup> Whence comes the name of the volcano Kanlaon on Negros Island. See *ibid.*, 69-70.

<sup>47</sup> This was the first of the deities of the Philippine Islands that the Spaniards encountered. Antonio Pigafetta recorded of the Cebuanos that, "they have no other worship than raising their clasped hands and their face to the sky; and . . . they called their god 'Abba.'" (*First Voyage Around the World*, Manila, 1969, p. 30.)

<sup>48</sup> Sancho, *op. cit.*, 19.

<sup>49</sup> De los Reyes, *op. cit.*, 95-96.

<sup>50</sup> Colin, *op. cit.*, 65. See also Sancho, *op. cit.*, 38.

<sup>51</sup> In Tagalog, *si Ginarawan*. Sancho wrongly spells this as one word, *Siguinarugan*. The use of this "personal article" *si* gives somewhat of an indication of more personality or humanity than of supremacy or divinity. For example, the Tagalog Bible always has *ang Dios*, but *si Jesus* or *si Cristo*.

<sup>52</sup> Brief description of the Bisayan *agta* and *aghoy* may be found in Richard Arens, "Animism in the Rice Ritual of Leyte and Samar," *Philippine Sociological Review*, January 1956, p. 2n. In the same place he gives the particular characteristics of beliefs in *engkantada* (fairies) in Leyte and Samar. An interesting description of the beliefs connecting wild and imaginary animals with the spirit-world may be found in Laura

### V. TODAY'S CULTURAL MINORITIES

It is the beliefs of the still-remaining mountain-dwellers who have never accepted either Christianity or Islam that the various primitive beliefs may still be seen. These have been thoroughly studied by many anthropologists, and there is abundant literature concerning these tribes' beliefs, especially since the arrival of the Americans. It may be presumed that many of these beliefs are similar to the beliefs of the lowlanders before they accepted a more organized religious system. A few of these persisting beliefs should therefore be examined to give a full view of Filipino primitive religion.

The most notable characteristics of "primitive religion" of the mountains of Luzon are prayer and sacrifice, with which is connected the *kanyao* or feast. The prayers cannot be easily separated into prayers of petition and prayers of worship, for life in the mountains is not divided into "sacred" and "secular" aspects, as is the life of the more "civilized" people. It may even be said that worship forms an integral part of the mountaineers' social structure.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting of the mountain peoples, and certainly the most studied, are the Ifugaos. The number of deities worshiped by these people is almost countless. In modern times there has been an attempt to elevate one of these gods to the position of Supreme God, probably in a desire to prove their native religion has teachings equivalent to those of the Christian missionaries.<sup>54</sup> The two principal native gods considered by mountaineers to be the equivalent of the Christian's god are Lumawig and Kabunyan. Missionary William Scott in examining beliefs concerning these deities concludes "that Cabunian is a class or place of deities; that Lumawig is a culture hero turned into a god; and that either or both have become the subject of an *apo-dios* concept through religious acculturation."<sup>55</sup> Another Ifugao "deity," *Muknongan*, has been called supreme god, but the word merely signifies "one to whom sacrifice is due."<sup>55</sup>

W. Benedict, *A Study of Bagobo Ceremonial, Magic and Myth* (New York: 1916), 31-40.

<sup>53</sup> William H. Scott, "Worship in Igorot Life," *Philippine Sociological Review*, July-October, 1960, p. 19. "Igorot pagan worship penetrates into almost every aspects of Igorot life, and actual prayers, rites, and religious songs accompany every phase or step of his life he considers significant." (*Ibid.*, 21.)

<sup>54</sup> This Supreme Being they term the *Apo-Dios* (Lord-God"), But there is much disagreement among themselves as to which god to be accorded the honor of greatest. For a discussion of this problem in the light of religious acculturation, see William Henry Scott, "The Apo-Dios Concept in Northern Luzon," *Practical Anthropology*, September-October, 1961, pp. 207-216. Scott believes that the idea of one supreme god is a borrowing from Christianity, because none of the native gods bears sufficient similarity to *Dios* of the Christian Filipinos.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>56</sup> Lourdes S. Dulawan, "The Ifugaos," *Unitas*, March, 1967, p. 33. The whole subject is obscure, partially due to the fact that Christian observers themselves may be in disagreement as to the meaning of supreme god among a primitive people. In the examination of the controversy concerning the origins of the word *diwata*, it was seen that though the Tagalogs believed Bathala to be *their* supreme deity, they recognized *Diwata* as the supreme deity of the universe. It appears that singling

Rather than attempt to interpret Ifugao religion on a hierarchical basis, the fact must be accepted that it is thoroughly polytheistic and without gradations of deities. A natural question to ask is, why do so many gods exist? For an answer to this query, Ifugao society itself must be examined, for it is natural for a people to construct their religious systems in terms of their own society.

. . . in the Ifugao society the looseness in organization and vagueness in definition of their local units and the great emphasis upon kinship relation have made the priests to be derived, and to function primarily on the basis of kinship groups, that is, the relationship between practitioners and participants of a ceremonial rite is almost exclusively based on kinship ties. In the dispersion of kindred and the emphasis of nuclear family as corporate groups have resulted in the development of a large number of priests in the Ifugao pantheon. As every priest invokes for his own gods, a great number of priests will obviously create a great number of deities.<sup>57</sup>

The religious practices of today's Kalingas may be characterized as pre-occupation with the propitiation of evil spirits. The good spirits and the deities of kabuniyan (the "sky-world") do not need worship, since they do not harm man.<sup>58</sup> This is in agreement with the records of other primitive peoples in the Philippines, that is, the lack of concern for worshipping the higher deities, and a preference for dealing with the more familiar spirits.

The Negritos of the Philippines, the one race indigenous to the Philippine Islands that is not of Malayan stock, nevertheless have apparently similar beliefs to those of the Malay Filipinos. For example, the Negritos of the Visayas worship *engkantos* and *taglogars* as well as the spirits of their ancestors, just as do the Bisayans. Two differences may be noted; the spirits of the Negritos' ancestors wander underground, and the spirits of nature are not given individual names but are instead considered collectively as the *enkanto*.<sup>59</sup>

## VI. INFLUENCES OF ANITISM ON CHRISTIANITY

Even among lowlanders today, Christian observers are alarmed at the extent of pagan practice among those who are called Christians, to the ex-

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out one god for absolute supremacy is a concept foreign to at least some primitive religions; Christian evaluators of these religions are incorrect when they attempt to force these beliefs into categories which are almost meaningless to the primitive people.

<sup>57</sup> Yih-Yuan Li, "The Structure of the Ifugao Religion," *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica*, spring, 1960, p. 397. In the Chinese text, there is a diagram of the Ifugao's conception of the universe whose center is of course Ifugao-land. See also Francis Lambrecht, "Ancestors' Knowledge Among the Ifugaos and Its Importance in the Religious and Social Life of the Tribe," *The University of Manila Journal of East Asiatic Studies*, July-October, 1954, pp. 359-365. His theory explaining the multiplicity of Ifugao deities connects the deities with ancestors. In fact, many of the deities of Filipinos may definitely be traced to the first men of the tribe (Genotiva, *op. cit.*, 66n).

<sup>58</sup> Dozier, *op. cit.*, 162.

<sup>59</sup> Timoteo S. Oracion, "Notes on the Culture of Negritos on Negros Island," *Silliman Journal*, third quarter, 1960, p. 215.

tent that their true religion may be considered paganism, with Christianity merely an addition to their paganism rather than a replacement of it.<sup>60</sup>

This may be seen, for example, in practices connected with honoring one's ancestors. Observers have seen here a clear and rather free interchange of pagan and Christian elements. Among Filipino fishermen an especially large catch is expected on All Souls' Day, because then the spirits of their ancestors are helping them. Though this is an official church saints' day, the observances of the day are more akin to pagan observances. The spirits are believed to expect a good meal either in the home or at the cemetery in return for their "aid" to the fishermen.<sup>61</sup>

In fact, the rural Filipinos in general believe the Christian *santos* are either the same, or in the same class as, the *anitos* of pagan belief.<sup>62</sup> This is a serious problem for the Catholic Church. From the very beginnings of Christianity in the Islands, the same images through which the *anitos* were worshipped were then used to worship the *santos* of the Church.<sup>63</sup>

The influence of primitive religion still lingers on, even among those nominally converted to Christianity. Rural Filipinos may, more often than not, still feel it more important to pay one's respects to inhabitants of the spirit-world, rather than to the one Spiritual Father of all. One who has the responsibility for religious training in the barrio must bear this in mind, and must also cope with the pagan attitude of attempting to get something from the higher power or higher powers, rather than the desire to give oneself to God's service in unselfish dedication to a life of helping one's brethren. Finally, we who are more highly educated must resist the tendency to despise primitive Filipinos as possessing unscientific and superstitious notions about God. The Christian engaged in church or social work in rural areas must guard himself against the greatest evidence of paganism—self-centeredness. If he can throw off this sin, he can then be in a better position to aid his less-educated brothers. "How dare you say to your brother, 'Please, let me take that speck out of your eye, when you have a log in your own eye? You imposter! Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will be able to see and take the speck out of your brother's eye.'" <sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> For example, this is Leeder's evaluation of the Isinai (*op. cit.*, 15).

<sup>61</sup> Richard Arens, "Animistic Fishing Ritual in Leyte and Samar," *Philippine Sociological Review*, October, 1956, p. 28.

<sup>62</sup> F. Landa Jocano, "Filipino Folk Catholicism," *The Philippine Educational Forum*, November, 1966, p. 46.

<sup>63</sup> Alip, *op. cit.*, 230.

<sup>64</sup> Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount." (Matthew 7:4,5; *Good News for Modern Man.*)

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