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The Bukidnon Myths of Sickness, Death and Afterlife

Francisco R. Demetrio, S.J.



The Bukidnon are the people in Central Mindanao whom the Spaniards, especially those who lived in Cagayan de Oro and Misamis, used to designate as "los Monteses," the Spanish equivalent of "Bukidnon" or people from the mountains or hills. This same people call themselves Tala-andig or Higaunon. The folk history of the Bukidnon links them as cousins of the Manobo to the east, the Maguindanao to the south and the Maranao to the west. It also connects them with the people of Misamis Oriental and Cagayan de Oro. As a matter of fact the culture hero of the Cagayanon and the Misamisnon is the same, namely, Agyu. As a unit, the Bukidnon is found today in the present province of Bukidnon which is bounded on the east by Agusan and Davao Oriental, to the west by the two Lanaos and Cotabato and to the south by Cotabato and Davao, and to the north by Misamis Oriental.

This article has three parts: the Bukidnon concept of sickness, the Bukidnon concept of death, and their concept of the afterlife.

Before we tackle these topics, allow me first to make this simple observation: sickness naturally leads to death; death also naturally leads to the afterlife. So by these topics we touch on what theologians ordinarily call eschatology, or the study of the last things (*ta eschata*). But to adequately describe the last things, we must also touch upon the first things or *ta archaia*. This is but right because when we touch the last things of a tribe, we cannot but make reference to the first things, because the spirit is what is featured in the beginning and end of man. For most believers, Christian or Muslim, God the Supreme Spirit, is the creator of the spirit of man. Allow me then to discuss first the following points as preliminaries to the discussion of the three topics:

God in the concept of the Bukidnon, good and evil as conceived by the Bukidnon, creation as conceived by them, spirit as they

conceive it, man as he is conceived by them and finally, health in the mind of the Bukidnon.

Not all these preliminaries will be discussed separately. For instance when we discuss the concept of God, we shall also include their concept of good and evil; when we discuss creation man will also be included; when we discuss the concept of spirit, health will also be touched upon.

The Bukidnon Concept of God

From the research of some Philippine scholars in the past sixteen or more years it has been reported that the Bukidnon believe in three major deities who lived in "a circular space of absolute brightness surrounded by a rainbow." The name of this circular space is the *banting*, or *Bulbulusan Balugtu*. Two of them sit inside the *banting*, facing each other, while the third is suspended over them, with its wings constantly flapping, thus balancing the *banting*. The first of the two sitting inside the *banting* has only one head. He is called *Mulug Manguyaw-uyaw* (One head and highest Planner) or simply *Wagas ha Magbabaya* (Pure Almighty). He is the god of good. The second does not look like a human being. For he has ten heads and a body. His name is *Dadhanhayan ha Suguy* (the God from whom permission is asked) or *Takinan Manawbanaw* (chief who owns the drooling saliva from his ten tongues) or *Gumagang-aw* (ten-headed one). He is the god of evil. The third being has one head, a body and wings. He is hawklike. He too has various names: *Takinan ha Tumanod* or *Bantay* (the superior head of the guardian spirits) or *Abukay Namintudan* (the extremely white god) or *Agtayaban Magbabaya* (Pure Almighty). In him the power of good and evil are perfectly equal and inherent. He dominates both the good and evil *tumanud*. Again, as reported by Carmen Ching Unabia (1976) and Victorino Saway (n.d.) the one-headed human-looking god and the ten-headed god are of co-equal power.

Unabia also presented along with her thesis, three volumes of texts: Volume 1 comprising mainly poetry and other shorter pieces with Binukid and English translation, 212 pages, referred to in this article as Unabia 1976 I; Volume 2 comprising Bukidnon Prose Narratives with both Binukid and English translation, or the *Mantukao* or folktales in prose about the heroes and heroines of the *Ullaging* which are in English with no Binukid texts; or folktales in Binukid without

English translations, 621 pages, referred to in this article as Unabia 1976 II; and volume 3 comprising five episodes of the Epic *Ulagang* as sung by four mountain bards: Pasal, de la Mance, Hirmaus and Saway. The text is in both Binukid and English, 829 pages, referred to in this article as Unabia 1976 II.

This equality of power is quite evident in their act of creating the world, man included. For although it was Mulug Manguyaw-uyaw who planned to expand the banting so that the two would have more space to move about, and in order to give rest to the hawklike deity, for this act meant also the creation of the earth and the heaven, it was Gumagang-aw who supplied the materials. The ten-headed one was seated upon the earth material. To get some of it, the hawk-like being had to enter one of the open mouths, go under Gumagang-aw to scoop some earth. After the earth was created, in order to fashion the hills, mountains and contours of the land, Magbabaya had to ask Gumagang-aw to give him some of his drooling saliva. After Magbabaya blessed it, the rains fell in torrents, and the dry earth became variably contoured, with gullies and rivers, covered with green grass plants and trees. They called it Haldan ta Paraiso.

Once again Magbabaya succeeded in convincing his companions to create someone like unto them who would take care of the newly made earth. So the three went to secure clay to fashion into man's body, rattan for his veins and arteries, water for his blood, and the andalogong wood for his bones. Magbabaya told Gumagang-aw to fashion the forms like unto him, with one head. But the shape would not be molded together without the sticky saliva from the mouth of Gumagang-aw. After the ingredients began to mold, the One-Headed deity requested the Ten-Headed One to fashion seven forms after Magbabaya. And it was done. Then Magbabaya enjoined Gumagang-aw to let them lie around while he returned to heaven to meditate on how to perfect the forms. He enjoined his companions not to touch them at all. But while he was away, Gumagang-aw started working on the forms and giving them life. He had just finished working on the sixth when Magbabaya looked down and saw them already living. He hurriedly returned and questioned Gumagang-aw on what he did. The answer was: "Why, do you think that you alone can perfect these forms?" Magbabaya's reply was: "Of course, because I was the one who planned the thing, and it was after my image that they were cast." Gumagang-aw answered: "True, but the materials that went into them all came from me. Nor would they be molded in your image without my saliva." Since they could not set-

tle the problem by argument, they decided to have a duel. He who wins will be the greater and will finalize the creative act. So they accoutred themselves with shield, sword, scabbard and belts and tried to hit each other with intense purpose and prowess. But after the fight, no one was able to inflict harm on the other. Seven times they went around the earth, still to no avail. They returned to the Haldan ta Paraiso to examine any damage done to either. Their shields, their belts, their swords all melted and sank into the earth. But neither could defeat the other. Finally reason prevailed. They decided to amicably settle the case. The One-Headed Being said to the Ten-Headed One: "Since you started working on the six figures, finish them, while I work on the seventh one left." Magbabaya endowed the seventh figure with the gift of intelligence. He was also given freedom to follow the path of good or evil (Unabia Thesis 1976, 198). He became the first human being. And he called him Adam. Seeing that Adam was alone and did not have a companion, he put him to sleep, took a rib from him, and turned it into a woman. She was called Eve. Then he gave them permission to marry each other and bring up offspring (Unabia thesis 1976, 199).

There are definite Christian vestiges in this myth. The three deities seem to be derived from the Christian Trinity. The third Person is often depicted as a dove. In the Bukidnon he is like a hawk. The name of the first man is Adam and his wife, Eve. The beautiful world that resulted from the rains and flood was called Haldan ta Paraiso. Neither the Jesuit missionaries in the nineteenth century, nor the early twentieth century American scholar Cooper Cole depict a threefold godhead. Be that as it may, we can point to these elements as quite certain: first, that good and evil for the Bukidnon are found within the godhead; that good and evil are co-equal in nature in that both of them are capable of producing life; and third that man is therefore subject to the influence of both good and evil.

In the Unabia myth, equality of power between good and evil lies in the fact that both depend on the other to bring about the act of creation of the world, and of man. Gumagang-aw could give life to the six figures he was working on. When Magbabaya questioned Gumagang-aw for working on the six figures, the latter made it clear that he too had as much power to make perfect their creatures as Magbabaya. In the ensuing duel, neither of the two could damage the other. Thus an amicable settlement was resorted to.

I would like to bring in another creation myth which I collected from a native Bukidnon; Mr. Tranquilino Sitoy, a native of Claveria,

Misamis Oriental in 1969. Sitoy informed me that this myth was very ancient among his people.

Mr. Sitoy reports: The creator, Hari ta mga Magbabaya, or simply, Magbabaya who lived in the seventh heaven (*ikapito ha langit*), came down to earth and molded the bodies of the first people from clay. He wanted them, however, to possess a sturdy body covering. So before breathing the gift of life into them, he went back to the sky in order to secure some hard material for their skin. While he was away, his own brother Mangilala, the "tempter," came up to the earth from the seventh tier of the Underworld which was his abode. He spotted the lifeless forms which his brother had fashioned. And he was pleased. He thought to himself: "Should my brother finish what he has begun, he would become more powerful than I." So he at once breathed life into the forms of clay so that they began to live as human beings. When Magbabaya returned, he found his creatures already alive and their body covering very frail. He knew it was his brother who had spoiled his work. Instead of destroying them, he took pity on them and allowed them to continue as they were thinly covered by their skin. However, he saved the extremities of their hands and feet by providing them with the covering he had brought down from his home in heaven. This became the nails on their fingers and toes. But afterwards, whenever people are tempted to do what is evil, the Bukidnon say that this is due to the fact that their life was breathed into them by the Evil One (Demetrio 1990, 79, note 69).

From this myth it is clear that there are at least two deities: Magbabaya and Mangilala; the god of good and the god of evil. These two are equally powerful: they can both create life; they are even said to be brothers. They are jealous of their equal power. Each seems to try to make his power greater. Magbabaya provides his creatures with thick covering so that they could not become easy prey of the machinations of the Evil One. The Evil One, on the other hand, when he saw that his brother would gain an ascendancy over him by supplying a protection against his machinations, tries to mollify this potential ascendancy by breathing life into his creatures with their very thin skin as covering. Thereby he neutralizes his brother's potential ascendancy.

However, the fact that his brother had protected the extremities of their fingers and their toes is symbolic of an ascendancy of Magbabaya over Mangilala. There are parts of the Bukidnon spirit that are impermeable by the Evil One. This part is at the extreme of

the spirit, namely, his freedom. Man's freedom is only permeable from within the spirit of man himself, not from outside by the devil. This permeability is possible only if the human spirit itself willingly acquiesces to be influenced.

The six forms which the ten-headed god had fashioned and to whom he had given life became the six *engkanto* who oversee the parts of nature that are related to the daily lives of the people: *talabugta*, is the guardian of the soil or earth; *Igbabasuk* is the guardian of the plants; *Bulalakaw* takes care of the rivers and bodies of water and all living creatures they contain; *Mamemelig* watches over the forest and its trees; *Lalawig* has care of the bees and their honey; and *Mamahandi* is in charge of whatever wealth man acquired including his cattle, carabaos, crops and farmhouse (Unabia thesis 1976, 199; Saway "Belief system," 28).

Since these spirits are the products of both the good and evil gods, they also partake of their double nature. The *engkanto* who watch over the things of nature have to be implored by man, their permission sought to avail himself of their goods.

The Bukidnon Concept of Man

Again from the research of Philippine scholars in the last seventeen years, man not only has a body but he also has a spirit. In fact we are told that he has seven spirits, or *makatu*. When all seven *makatu* are found in his body, the man is well and healthy. In his sleep, some of the *makatu* may leave the body and undergo experiences both pleasant and frightening. These experiences are recorded in the dreams of the person. Some evil spirits may lure the *makatu* to go with them and be imprisoned in a *balete* tree. Thus the person becomes sick. It is the shaman who must perform healing rituals to rescue the *makatu* from the evil spirits. The Bukidnon believe that death takes place when all the *makatu* are no longer inside the body. They seem to merge into one *makatu* and proceed to Mt. Balatukan for judgment (Cole 1956, 91-92).

The Bukidnon Concept of Spirit

We can postulate five kinds of spirits. First, the three deities who created the world, the guardian spirits and man himself. Second, the minor gods or deities, namely the six guardian spirits who have

control over the soil, the crops, material wealth, the forest and wild-life, the bees and honey, the waters and their resources. Third, the other spirits. They are all part of creation and are both benevolent and malevolent to human beings. The good spirits belong to Wagas ho Magbabaya; while the evil ones belong to Gumagang-aw. Once a man becomes close to spirits of evil nature he will be entrusted with evil power. He becomes a sorcerer. These spirits may also be called *tumanud* (guardian spirits). Some are identified like Mulin-ulin who gives guidance and right directions to a person (Unabia 1976, I:144); Batuwa who is responsible for strength and good health; Balakat who also protects man's health against evil spirits; Dumalandung, the constant companion and security of man; Talabusaw who provides him with unsurpassed strength and courage against the enemy. Other spirits protect a person according to his role and function in the community. Thus a datu has a *tumalambung* who provides him with dominating power in the community (Saway "Belief system," 30).

The evil spirits that do harm to human beings collectively are called *humahabay* or *agpuun*. Other evil spirits who cause the endeavors of man to fail or accidents to happen are also collectively known as *sumisigbat*, *sumasagelang* and *tumitigal-i*. Though they do evil to man they can be controlled by performing a particular ritual (Saway "Belief system" 30).

Wagas ha Magbabaya is the origin of all good power; Gumagang-aw is the source of all evil power. Agtayabun Migbaya is the superior head of all guardian spirits. The power of the guardian spirits, both good and bad, is dominated by Takinan hu Bantay. Powerful *datus* and *baylan* owe their power mainly to Agtayabun Migbaya through the benevolent *tumanud* or *legsa*. The *tumanud* of man is his immediate protector. He will not abandon man so long as he performs his spiritual obligations.

The Bukidnon Concept of Health

Man is in the state of good health so long as the *pitu ha makatu* or his seven spirits are dwelling in his body. When some of them are lured by souls of the dead or by evil spirits who imprison them in their abode or in the balete tree, the person gets sick. He is also in good health if the guardian spirits of health like Batuwa and Balakat take care of him. Rituals like *Kagmakatu* are meant to lure the *makatu* to remain within the person's body (Saway "Belief system," 30; Banaynal 1978).

The materials of this part of the article were supplied by an interview with a native Talaandig chieftain of Sungko, Lantapan, Bukidnon, Datu Makapukaw, last 18 September 1992.

Sickness for the Bukidnon is caused by many factors. These factors could be either by commission or omission. But before we take this up, there is another cause of sickness which I would call lack or absence. We said the human individual has seven souls or spirits. When all seven are present, he is in the state of good health. But when one or more are absent then he can get sick, especially if the absence is prolonged. How is the absence brought about? During sleep the *kamatu* go out of the person. They could be decoyed by some spirit of a dead ancestor or relative and brought to the land of the dead. Or they could be caught by the evil spirits and brought to their abode or imprisoned in a balete tree. The *pagmakatu* ritual or inspiriting ritual is performed to invoke the straying makatus to return to the body. Once they are inside, the other potentially harmful spirits of the earth are asked not to harm them for they have already returned. This ritual is also addressed to the guardian spirits of the human body who are called *pangunguyamu* or *panlilitan* to make the makatu return (Saway "Talaandig," 54).

There are factors of commission as causes of sickness. One can get sick if the soil is tilled without the necessary rituals. If one should take a bath without permission from Bulalakaw and the other spirits of water one is liable to sickness. One can get sick if he despises ugly persons or old people. Or for committing serious actions like killing a person without undergoing a *husay* or settlement by the datu and elders. Or for taking one's sister to wife without the necessary payments according to the tradition of the elders in order to appease the Minantay hu Batasan, the guardian spirit who watches man's actions in regard to customary law. Sickness can also result from making fun of the heroes of the epic, like Walo.

In a story related by Carmen Unabia, people, during a get-together where there was eating and drinking, were joking about the hero Walo. He was so-called because when he was hungry his waist band could be wound eight times around. But after he has eaten, and he was a voracious eater, it can go only once around. They were thus enjoying themselves at the hero's expense. Suddenly a very bright rainbow shaped like a hammock appeared with the hero on it. He berated them for making a joke at his expense. He told them to go on with their joking, but they should not be sorry for anything that would happen to them on the morrow. After the sun was up,

people saw many cracks on the earth and many large pointing fingers were seen emerging from the cracks. Soon after this all the people became sick and died. Only a young man called Salamantaw who did not participate in the jokes remained alive (Unabia 1976, II: 34-35).

Sickness comes when one repeats words which curse oneself, or when one curses (*panghimaraot*) the powerful spirits. Sickness can come from mentioning the name of tamanud that is forbidden to mention, or to mention its name in a trivial manner. Sickness, too, can come from the sin of elders which have not been subjected to judgment.

There are also factors of omission as causes of sickness (from an interview with Datu Makapukaw). Failing to ask permission from Bulalakaw and the other spirits of water can render one liable to sickness. Sickness can also be due to failure to follow and respect the elders, which can lead one to make serious mistakes. It can also result from failing to help another who is badly in need of help, and also for failure to pray to the powerful Magbabaya.

Sickness can result from neglecting to perform the yearly prayers: for the remission of sins; the yearly act of thanksgiving to the spirits for blessings received; or the yearly ritual of *pagpamahandi* to the guardian spirit of wealth and good harvests; and finally for failure to give thanks on one's birthday. Often sickness is the result of failing to give the bride price in marriage; or failure to pay a debt of conscience (*utang sa kabubut-on*). Also sicknesses can come from sulking, from sadness, from anger. Or sickness can be due to the curse of the elders.

Sometimes a person can also get sick (*tungod kay ang tawo salsalon sa Magbabaya sa tuyo nga palig-onon siya. O usbon ang iyang kinaiya moagi usab siya sa sakit.*) This is indeed "a testing on the part of the Almighty of a person in order to strengthen him or to bring about a change in his nature." This can be verified in the myth of Juan Pikas or the One-Sided Man. He was born only a halfman from head to toe. Growing up and finding himself in such a condition, so different from his companions, he asked permission from his parents to go and seek God in order to find out why he was thus created. On the way he met a horse with a very short tether but which was very stout; and a horse with a very long rope, but very thin. Having heard from Juan that he was going to God, they also requested him to ask God why they were so. Afterwards Juan met two persons: one who lived by the crossroad and who was kind and good to everyone who passed by, and another who lived near a high waterfall and who killed the people who passed by. Both men

wanted Juan to ask God if they would reach salvation acting the way they both did. Once Juan reached the land of God he asked him why he was created only a halfman. God replied that he did so only to test if Juan had a good mind. His coming to God in order to find out the reason was an instance of possessing a good mind. Thus God then and there made Juan into a complete human being (Unabia 1976, II: 112).

The Bukidnon Concept of Death

In general we can say that death is the permanent absence from the body of the seven makatu or spirits. From the creation myth as reported by Unabia, the good and evil god creators had an agreement: any person who would not conform to the laws and order of creation would become the subject of the evil god. When he dies he will become the subject of Gumagang-aw. The ten heads of Gumagang-aw, the evil god, symbolize the unstable state that a person who becomes his subject will experience.

We have at least two oral traditions telling of the Bukidnon's idea of death. The first was supplied by a certain Mang Poldo Vega, a native of Balingasag, Oriental Misamis, in northern Mindanao, which was collected sometime in 1946. The elders of the Bukidnon maintain that when a man dies, his soul must make its way to Mt. Balatukan. This journey is long and tedious, full of many obstacles. Some Bukidnon beliefs say that it takes at least a week for this journey. First the soul must pass through Liyang, a huge rock, in upper Napaliran. Thence, it proceeds to Binagbasan where the Tree of Record grows. Here the soul makes a notch on the tree to show that it has arrived. Then it goes to Pinagsayawan, where it dances the ritual dance of atonement for sins. It does not stop dancing until it begins to sweat profusely. Next it undergoes a haircut by Panamparan; thence it proceeds to Kumbirahan where it partakes in a banquet to satiety. Then the god Andalapit conducts the soul to Kadatuan which is at the foot of Mt. Balatukan. Here the gods pass judgment on the soul. If it is adjudged good, it is sent to Dunkituhan, at the summit of Balatukan, the cloud-capped stairway to heaven. If it is adjudged wicked, it is sent to a river on the other side of Balatukan where it is punished. Along with the other wicked souls it is made to fetch water night and day with a bucket whose bottom is perforated (Demetrio 1990, 100).

The second oral tradition reports: When a person dies his seven *makatu* or *gimukud* converge into one and begin to make the journey to Baya, the abode of the dead which is governed by Gemogunal, the governor of the dead. Before arriving at Baya, the *makatu* passes several places where he indicates the proof of his journey. The first place he arrives at is called Panampad, the place where he cuts a portion of his hair. After cutting his hair, he may proceed to Panigbasa, the place where he stabs something to indicate that he has passed by there. This particular belief reflects the practice of the Bukidnon of providing the dead person with a bolo inside the coffin. Others believe he must make a mark on a tree or on a soft limestone. After Panigbasa, he proceeds to Panganday. It is here that the person who died may express his farewell by singing the *ulaging* or any other song. In case the dead person does not know how to express himself by any artistic means, he may do so in any other manner he knows. As soon as the traveling *makatu* passes by Panganday, he arrives finally at Balatukan or Baya, the land of Gemogunal or Gememba, director of the land of the dead. He may spend the rest of his life here (Saway "Belief system," 36).

The Bukidnon Concept of the Afterlife

From what we know of the Bukidnon, it appears that the afterlife is a continuation of the kind of life one has led while living on this earth. We are told, for instance, that the social status on earth will continue in the afterlife: the *datus* will continue to be *datus*; the slaves and the lower classes will continue to be so; the rich will continue to be rich and the poor to be poor (Saway "Talaandig," 56).

However, there is a tale that tells of a rich and greedy woman who died. When she reached the underworld she was always hungry. No one offered her something to eat. Only the peels, bones and feathers and hair of the food and meat she ate on earth were given her. When she complained of this treatment, she was reminded that while still living she never shared her wealth with others. She was given another chance to mend her ways. On the way to the cemetery those following were surprised because the bearers of the bier stopped. They heard someone from within the coffin. They opened it and the dead woman was alive, asking for a glass of water. They gave it to her. She returned to her house and from a greedy selfish woman she became most generous, sharing her cattle, her granaries with the poor and the needy (Saway "Belief system," 38).

We have also mentioned above that those who follow their religious and social obligations upon dying become subjects of Wagas ha Magbabaya; and those who live against the order of creation and neglect to do their spiritual obligations become the subjects of Gumagang-aw, or the ten-headed god of evil. How, one may ask, is this separation brought about? Again, from the myth we know that upon arriving at Kadatuan at the foot of Mt. Balatukan, the judgment is made. Here it seems that the departed souls judged worthy of heaven are either sent to Dunkituhan, at the summit of Mt. Balatukan which is the stairway to heaven, or else the soul is sent to the other side of Mt. Balatukan to a river where it is made to draw water from the river by means of containers whose bottoms are perforated. In this task the souls sweat profusely and the river smells fishy because of their sweat (Saway "Belief system," 38). After they have expiated their sins, they can become subjects of Gemogunal, the director of the land of the dead. This is, however, only a conjecture. From the above discussions, perhaps we could conjecture that those sent to Dunkituhan become subjects of the god of good; and those sent to the other side of the Mt. Balatukan and punished become subjects of Gumagang-aw. However, are the souls of the Bukidnon once cleaned of their sins then deserving to become subjects of the good god, or do they remain subjects of the god of evil or of Gemogunal? This is not clear at all. From the Olaging we know that Lagonga, Agyu's father, now dead and filled with intense longing to visit his relatives in Nalandangan, was permitted by Gemogunal, governor of the dead, to come back disguised as an enemy warrior. He and Agyu fought. Langobaan, god of thunder, mediated between them. They recognized each other as father and son. They both went to the *alet* for a general reunion with the clan (Opeña 1979, 2450-2538).

The Afterlife in the Epics

In this regard the term "afterlife" is a misnomer. Why? Because ordinarily, the afterlife refers to life "after death." In the Bukidnon epic, the Olaging, the clan of Agyu, the Bukidnon hero, became immortalized, that is, they became in nature like the diwata. They were no longer subject to death, nor to hunger. They became so after they had partaken of the food of immortality: namely, chewing the *mamaen* given by Magbabaya or partaking of the meat of the mystical pig Makadingding which was sent by Magbabaya in order to kill the

people who were eventually resuscitated by Agyu. The pig was overcome eventually by Agyu. From being a very huge swine, it became a very small one. Agyu cooked it and distributed a slice of its meat to all his followers, thus rendering them immortals. We know how Agyu himself when he died at the hands of the daughter of his enemy Sawalan who cut off his head and threw him into the sea and was eventually brought to shore by kindly crocodiles, was restored to life by his son Anilao Mayan Anlao who placed a betel chew prepared by his mother in his mouth and prayed that it may find the seat of his life in order to bring him back to life. And this happened (Unabia 1976, III: 746-48).

We have another case of Insay or Mungan, the wife of Banlak, the brother of Agyu, whose rhythmical body was fashioned by a witch, and who left his wife and no longer cared for her after she had contracted leprosy. Because of her misery, Magbabaya took pity on Insay. The god sent her guardian spirits who gave her mamaen. This cured her of her sickness and she was also immortalized. As a sign of this tremendous event, Lena, her brother-in-law, who came to bring her provision in her lonely hut, was surprised as he neared her place because the piece of venison he brought jumped out of the basket and ran away as a whole deer. The honey he was carrying spilled and a swarm of honey bees flew away. When Lena beheld the hut, it was no longer a makeshift lean-to, but a huge palace, arched by a rainbow.

Finally the spirit boat or salimbal was lowered by the *diwata* from heaven to fetch the clan of Agyu. The whole clan was brought up to heaven. Upon arrival there, they could not see the Magbabaya because one of the clan had broken the taboo. Before boarding the salimbal he had bitten off the iron tip of his *kampilan* which he kept inside his mouth. As a result the whole clan were sent back to earth. But they were assigned a special spot on earth called Nalandangan. There they settled after constructing once again a village and the large *tulogan*. There they do not have to eat like ordinary people. The betel nut chew would be their food. They can be invaded again, go to war, fight and be killed. But they can be restored to life by magic rites. They can marry and be given in marriage. Like Agyu and his clan they practice polygamy, but with the rules and requirements of Malay conjugal union: the first wife is like the elder sister of all the wives of her husband; she should be consulted and should give her consent when he wants to marry again; he must treat them equally in regard material goods, and other things.

By way of complement to the Bukidnon afterlife, I append two reports on the Bukidnon heaven. The first by Luis Pasal and collected by Unabia and the other by Datu Kinolintang and collected by Victorino Saway.

Pasal claims that the heaven is supported on two trees. It has seven layers. The first is the heaven of happiness and joy, the home of the diwata. The second heaven is that of beautiful designs which beautiful girls copy on the clothes of their brothers. The third is the soft heaven, home of the witch and troublemakers. The fourth is the technicolored heaven, abode of Lemandeb the war-spirit (Talabusaw). The fifth is the horizontal heaven, home of Lintugut, director of thunder and lightning. The sixth heaven is the domed or circular heaven where Tinambulong, patron of Olaging singers lives. And the highest heaven on the seventh level is the abode of the Almighty (Magbabaya) who wills everything (Demetrio 1986, 48-49).

We could compare this with the heaven as reported by Victorino Saway from the account of his late father, Datu Kinolintang. He says there are also seven levels to heaven. But it seems that he mentions only the last three upper levels: the topmost heaven known as Luwayluway hu Langit or Ugbusan hu Malayen, dwelling place of Wagas ha Magbabaya, the sixth heaven, or Nanangenen, abode of the heroes of the folktales; and the fifth heaven called Ulagingen heavenly dwelling of the immortal epic heroes like Agyu, Pamulao, Banlak, Lena, and others (Saway "Talaandig," 2-3).

We must keep in mind, however, that in Pasal's version, the patron of the Olaging singers is found on the sixth level; while in Kinolintang's version the sixth level is given to the folktale heroes, and the epic heroes are consigned to the fifth layer.

We should also mention that Agyu and his clan did not remain in heaven but were sent back to the village of Nalandangan where they are still dwelling today. However, before boarding the *salimbal* they had already been *linibong* or immortalized. They therefore did not experience death.

Again from the Olaging we know that just men who have died do not necessarily go up to heaven. In the episode of the Battle of Nalandangan, Agyu fought with the spirit of his own father, Langonga. He had returned disguised as an enemy warrior. He returned because he could no longer sustain the longing he felt for his offspring in Nalandangan. It was from Gomogunal that he obtained permission to return in disguise.

Kinolintang mentions two other layers of heaven which are lower than the first three levels. *Malayen ha Imbunsud* or *Langit ha Nakatana* is the heaven that touches the earth. This should correspond to Pasal's first level, the home of the *diwatas*. The other heaven mentioned by Kinolintang is called *Malayen ha Insibay* or *Langit ha Inkusina* or extended heaven. However, it is not stated which layer is occupied by this heaven (Saway "Talaandig," 5).

From the *Olaging* it also appears that the just who die remain in the land of *Baya* and that they do not go up to heaven. This is clear from *Langonga's* visit to *Nalandangan* disguised as an enemy.

Conclusion

We have given a brief glimpse of how the Bukidnon in Central Mindanao regard the last things. We have also seen by way of preliminaries their first things, which are implied in the last. The concept of God found in the versions of Tranquilino Saway has obvious Christian influence in his three-personed Godhead: a one-headed, a ten-headed and a hawklike being balancing the banting where the two are seated by continually flapping his wings. On the other hand Tranquilino Sitoy's godhead: the creator God *Magbabaya* and his younger brother *Mangilala*, the tempter, appear to be more natively original, equally powerful and with dualistic implication: the one a good creator, the other a bad one. This is more in keeping with the concept of the good and bad creator, a motif very common in folklore all over the world. Their equality in power is seen in their ability to produce human life, found in both the Saway and Sitoy versions.

Every human being is in-dwelt by seven spirits or *makatu*, how these spirits in death merge into one and proceed to *Baya* or *Balatakan* for judgment. The spirits created by the evil god (Saway) are placed over the material things (soil, plants, water, forest and games, bees and honey, wealth) which subserve the needs of man. By judicious use of rituals and ceremonies a friendly and beneficent relationship is built up between the guardians of these natural resources and man.

In the Bukidnon concept, sickness can be caused either by the absence of one or more of the seven spirits in man or by man's committing certain acts contrary to custom or his omitting certain acts prescribed by custom. Death itself is the permanent absence from the

human body of the seven spirits. This absence includes its journey to Baye or Mt. Balatukan, the judgment the spirit undergoes and the final destination in Baya, under the headship of the god Gemogunal of all the just dead. We do not know whether those who are not admitted to Mt. Balatukan because they are unworthy and are consigned to expiate their sins are eventually sent up to the summit of Balatukan and or to heaven or whether they remain outside of heaven forever. From the epics, however, we know that in the end when the salimbal, the spirit boat, returns to fetch Agyu and his people, they will all be brought to heaven on earth or Nalandangan.

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