MONSTERS
FROM THE FOLKLORE
OF THE PHILIPPINES

by Graeme Davis

The folklore of the Philippine Islands contains a number of new and interesting monster types, which are treated here for the AD&D® game. Since the Philippines is an area with a number of native languages, the same monster may appear with slight variations under a number of different names; most of the local names are given for those treated here, and for a more complete survey, the reader is recommended to Maximo D Ramos’ Creatures of Philippine Lower Mythology (University of Philippines Press, 1971).

Demons

Filipino demons seem to be creatures of a highly magical nature rather than inhabitants of another plane. Many of them live in large trees, and they are rarely pernicious or evil, content for the most part to frighten away those who intrude on their territories or fail to treat them with due respect, and only killing when greatly enraged. They are great pranksters.

All Filipino demons can become invisible at will, and each has a personal charm or jewel which is the source of its strength. If this can be won from the demon by wit or force, it will give the bearer the same strength (typically in the region 18th - 23rd) — the DM may select according to the power of the demon or roll on d6. Bright sunlight banishes them.

While the DM might rule that Filipino demons should be turnable on the ‘Special’ line of the clerics vs undead matrix, they do not seem to be deterred by holy symbols, and some actually delight in collecting numbers of them from frightened villagers.

AGTA (Demon)
Frequency: very rare
No Appearing: 1
Armour Class: 3
Move: 12
Hit Dice: 8
% in Lair: 90%
Treasure Type: R
No of Attacks: 2
Damage/Attack: variable
Special Attacks: size change, fear
Special Defences: size change
Magic Resistance: standard
Intelligence: average-very
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Size: variable
Psionic Ability: nil
Lvl/xp value: Agta: VII/1150 + 10/hp
Kapre: VII/1190 + 10/hp

The Agta, Bawo or Ungo appears as a muscular, black-skinned humanoid, and can vary its size instantly between 1ft and about 30ft. It is generally about 10-12ft in height, which may be its natural size.

As it increases in size, it becomes stronger, as follows: when it shrinks to 1ft, it has 2hp, attacks as a 1HD monster and causes 1d4 damage on a successful hit. It can enlarge itself to a maximum height equal to half its maximum hit points (as rolled on d8) in feet, i.e. an Agta with 54hp can reach a maximum height of 27ft. For every foot of its height, it will have 2hp, and for every 4ft of its height it attacks as a monster of 1HD and causes 1d4 damage. Thus, at 1-4ft it attacks as a 1 HD monster and causes 1d4 damage, at 5-8ft it attacks as a 2HD monster for 2d4 damage, and so on, up to a maximum of 8HD and 8d4 damage.

Agta live in large trees, particularly favouring banyans and mangroves, and resent any interference with their trees. They attack with two fists, and on a successful double attack can rend as a Carnivorous Ape (Monster Manual), causing additional damage as for two successful fist attacks.

Another type of Agta is the Kapre or Fugot, which has a shapechange ability in addition to the Agta’s size change. Its favourite forms are those of a dark cat, dog or boar which has fiery eyes and breathes blue-green fire, a pure white fowl, or a dead bird and often mutilated corpse. In this last form it will caper along, singing merrily to itself and eating by pushing food into its bubbling nock-stump. Characters of less than 4th level who see it in this form must save vs spells or flee.
BATIBAT (Demon)

Frequency: very rare
No Appearing: 1
Armour Class: 4
Move: 12"/18"
Hit Dice: 6
% in Lair: 20%
Treasure Type: 1+R+U
No of Attacks: 3 or 2
Damage/Attack: feet 1-8, claws 1-4, bite 1-8
Special Attacks: see below
Special Defences: see below
Magic Resistance: 10%
Intelligence: very
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Size: M (6-2ft)
Psionic Ability: nil
Attack/Defence Modes: nil
Lvl/xp value: VII/1275 + 6/hp

The Batbat is a relative of the Agta and Pugot, but does not have their shape-changing abilities. It is a dark-skinned humanoid, 8-10ft tall and broad enough to fill a doorway as it enters. The only magical ability it possesses is the ability to ride a sleeping victim in the same manner as a Night Hag (Monster Manual), although it will only do this under great provocation. In one story where this occurs, the Batbat attacks members of a family which owns a large post — all that remains of its home tree, which it still inhabits. It is not known what happens to the souls of those ridden to death by a Batbat.

TIKBALANG (Demon)

Frequency: very rare
No Appearing: 1
Armour Class: 1
Move: 12"/18"
Hit Dice: 6
% in Lair: 20%
Treasure Type: 1+R+U
No of Attacks: 3 or 2
Damage/Attack: feet 1-8, claws 1-4, bite 1-8
Special Attacks: see below
Special Defences: see below
Magic Resistance: 10%
Intelligence: very
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Size: M (6-2ft)
Psionic Ability: nil
Attack/Defence Modes: nil
Lvl/xp value: VII/1275 + 6/hp

Apart from these abilities, the Tikbalang can fly at will by walking on air, and can cause blindness, disease and insanity once each per day. It can use a word of recall once per day, vanishing in a cloud of dust and falling stones similar in effect to the hailstone type of ice storm, which causes 1d6 damage to any within 10ft of the spot it vacates (saving throw halves damage). In its natural form, it can also roar once per turn, causing fear as the spell unless the appropriate saving throw is made. 5% of Tikbalangs can also immolate in the same way as a Type VI Demon (Monster Manual), the flames causing 3d6 damage to any within range.

If forced into hand-to-hand combat, the Tikbalang will assume its natural form, and can attack either with two claws and a bite or with its two talons.

The Tikbalang may be forced to surrender its charm if it can be ridden like a horse until exhausted. The stone is a rounded pebble which glows like a hot coal, and no Tikbalang stone confers less than 20 strength; some may also confer other of the Tikbalang's abilities. Tikbalangs have immense strength, and if pressed throw rocks as a Stone Giant (Monster Manual) or uproot trees to use as weapons.

Tikbalangs sometimes have great wealth, and are particularly enthusiastic collectors of holy symbols and other religious items, sometimes extorting them from villagers along with other valuables on a protection-racket basis.
ASWANG
Frequency: very rare
No Appearing: 1
Armour Class: 4
Move: 12'/18'
Hit Dice: 5
% in Lair: see below
Treasure Type: nil
No of Attacks: 2
Damage/Attack: 1-3
Special Attacks: see below
Special Defences: see below
Magic Resistance: standard
Intelligence: average-very
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Size: M (5-6ft)
Psionic Ability: nil
Attack/Defence Modes: nil
LvL/xp value: Aswang: V/435 + 5/hp
Balbal: V/360 + 5/hp

The Aswang, Mangalok or Boroka has the appearance of a normal human woman, and indeed exists as such by day, often living a normal village life. At night, however, she takes on her true nature, becoming a humanoid monster with a hag-like appearance, strong nails and a very long threadlike tongue. She may also shapeshift at will to the form of a huge night-bird with the head of a woman.

The Aswang can sense death in the same way as the Segben, at a distance of up to 1 mile, and will sit on the roof of a house where the corpse lies, sucking out its blood and organs through her long tongue. The tongue may be extended up to 12ft in length, and has a sharp point, but is so fine as to be indetectable 90% of the time, except to individuals with the ability to see invisible. She will attack the living in the same way, piercing the jugular vein with her tongue as the victim sleeps, and draining blood at the rate of 1hp per round. Her saliva contains a local anaesthetic, which requires sleeping victims to save vs poison or continue to sleep through the attack. When fully gorged (having taken blood equal to half her original hit points) the Aswang’s humanoid form appears swollen as if with an advanced pregnancy, and her movement rate is halved. The Aswang is particularly vulnerable at this time, and takes great care not to be seen.

The Aswang will only fight if she cannot flee. She uses her strong nails or the talons of her avian form in self-defence, a successful hit causing 1-3 points of damage in either case.

A human may become an Aswang in one of four ways:

i) by the application of a magical ointment compounded of chicken dropping dissolved in coconut oil and mixed with human flesh and blood, along with certain other magical operations;

ii) the daughters of an Aswang will inherit her condition;

iii) the kiss of a dying Aswang will pass on her condition to one willing initiate;

iv) an Aswang may force her condition upon another by lacing their food with human flesh or with her own saliva.

The ointment is the secret of the transformation ability; normally hidden about the house in a stoppered bamboo tube or clay jar, it is used every night to effect the transformation. Human form may be regained by exposure to sunlight, or by washing off the ointment in fresh water. The Aswang is repelled by salt, vinegar and certain spices in the same way as a

MANSALUAN
Frequency: very rare
No Appearing: 1-12
Armour Class: 7
Move: 4'/18'
Hit Dice: 1-1
% in Lair: 20%
Treasure Type: nil
No of Attacks: 2
Damage/Attack: 1-4/1-4
Special Attacks: see below
Special Defences: see below
Magic Resistance: standard
Intelligence: animal
Alignment: Neutral (evil tendencies)
Size: S
Psionic Ability: nil
Attack/Defence Modes: nil
LvL/xp value: II/44 + 2/hp

The Mansaluan is a flying creature sharing the characteristics of both hawk and bat. It has a reptilian head with glowing gemlike eyes, while its tail is long and fine, like a woman’s hair. In addition to its wings it has a monkey-like pair of hands, and a strong pair of talons the size of human feet.

Its main attack is with its sharp tongue, which it can shoot forth from its mouth with great speed. It normally attacks in the same manner as a Stige (Monster Manual), seizing a victim in its hands and claws and piercing the neck or abdomen with its tongue. A separate attack roll is needed for the tongue, but this is made at +4 if the claw attack has been successful.

Once attached, the Mansaluan drains 1-4 hit points of blood from its victim per round until it is killed or dislodged, or until it has taken an amount of blood equal to its own hit points, at which time it will fly off, gorged.

It can use one or both talons to defend itself when attached to a victim, holding on with its hands only; each claw inflicts 1-4 points of damage on a successful hit, but for each round of such defence the Mansaluan has a cumulative 5% chance of falling or being knocked from its victim,
**SEGBen**

**Frequency:** very rare  
**No Appearing:** 1-3  
**Armour Class:** 7  
**Move:** 18"  
**Hit Dice:** 2+2  
**% in Lair:** 10%  
**Treasure Type:** nil  
**No of Attacks:** 1 or 2  
**Damage/Attack:** hooves 1-3,  
*bite* 1-4 + special  
**Special Attacks:** see below  
**Special Defences:** see below  
**Magic Resistance:** standard  
**Intelligence:** low  
**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil  
**Size:** S (3ft at shoulder)  
**Psionic Ability:** nil  
**Attack/Defence Modes:** nil  
**Lvl/xp value:** III/120 + 3/hp

The Sgiben is similar in appearance to a hornless goat, with glowing eyes and large ears. It exudes a sickening charnel smell which requires any character coming within 5ft of the beast to save vs poison or attack at -1 for 2-8 turns through nausea.

Segben are destroyed by sunlight, and generally hide in the darkest recesses of the forest until dusk, when they appear under the floor of a house where someone lies gravely ill or dying. They can sense the smell of death at a distance of up to a mile, and will seize any opportunity to make off with an unguarded corpse. They are not known to frequent graveyards, however, apparently preferring to move in immediately after death.

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**MANTABUNGAL**

**Frequency:** very rare  
**No Appearing:** 1-6  
**Armour Class:** 7  
**Move:** 15"  
**Hit Dice:** 4  
**% in Lair:** 20%  
**Treasure Type:** nil  
**No of Attacks:** 2 or 3/2  
**Damage/Attack:** hooves 1-4,  
*tusks* 1-10  
**Special Attacks:** nil  
**Special Defences:** nil  
**Magic Resistance:** standard  
**Intelligence:** animal  
**Alignment:** Neutral  
**Size:** L  
**Psionic Ability:** nil  
**Attack/Defence Modes:** nil  
**Lvl/xp value:** III/85 + 4/hp

These ferocious beasts are described as having a bovine body with a shaggy coat like a yak. They have no horns, but their jaws are equipped with two sets of huge boarlike tusks, one pointing upwards and the other downwards. Mantabungal are forest-dwellers, and appear to be similar to wild boars in their habits. They are extremely aggressive, and will attack on sight.

Their main weapon is their tusks, with which they can attack three times in two melee rounds; they have been known to engage two opponents at once, attacking each alternately. They can also lash out with their forehooves, but not while fighting with their tusks. They are sometimes thought of as demons, but have no personal charms nor any of the typical abilities of other Filipino demons; this reputation may have arisen as a result of their ferocity.
Other Monsters

The descriptions given above are for some of the more distinctive Filipino monsters: the folklore of the Philippine Islands contains several other creatures which can be equated more or less precisely with European counterparts.

Aghoy, Encante, Mangmangkit, Mahomanay, Palasekan and Tahamaling are some of the local names given to a race of creatures almost identical to the Sylvan Elf (MM). Their physical appearance is the same as Tolkien’s Elves, and their activities are the same as those of British Elves or Faerie, although they dress like ordinary Filipino villagers.

Calanget, Lampong, Lupa, Matanda and Tianak are beings similar to Dwarves and Gnomes (MM). Their underground dwellings are usually guarded by large termite mounds, and they are reputedly very wealthy, although their gifts of gold and gems to humans frequently turn into dust or pebbles after a short time. They have the power to ruin crops if offended.

The Catao and Ug hoy are the Merfolk (MM) of the Philippines. Being partly fish and partly mammal, they attack those who eat fish or meat, and they have the charm ability of Nixies (MM). They generally drag victims underwater to drown, but have been known to become enamoured of charismatic humans, kidnapping them and casting water breathing on them in the same way as Nixies.

Several types of Giant and Ogre also inhabit the Philippines. The Bannog is a giant bird similar to a Roc (MM), and the Ikugan is a giant monkey, but the others are similar to Hill and Stone Giants (MM) and the Mountain Giant (FF). Filipino Ogres are, for the most part, identical to their European cousins (MM); their names include Kumao, Sir’ing, Ta’awi, and Tarabusao. The Busao is a Cyclops type, and the Dato-Busao, or King Busao, has a forehead horn. The Kurita has two or three pairs of arms. Some Filipino Ogres have the ability to shapechange into human or animal form. Strangely, the Indian Garuda (Deities & Demigods — now Legends and Lore) is known in the Philippines, but has the habits of a bloodthirsty Ogre.

Certain types of Aswang, Iqui and Boroka (see above), as well as the Manananggal of Indonesia (FF), they may be related, but the description of the Aswang given above deliberately excludes the separable head characteristic of the Penanggalan, since the Aswang is almost always a normal human with the ability to transform, rather than an Undead monster taking possession of a headless body.

Since a great number of Filipino monsters have the ability to shapechange into animal form, it is difficult to tell whether there are creatures which can be described as Lycanthropes (MM), although the Malakat and an unnamed beast from Ayapao do appear to be European-style werewolves. The latter may even be a Jackalwere (MM) or something similar, since it has a doglike smell even when in human form. At any rate, an iron knife with which one was attacked passed through its body without causing it any harm.

Lastly, the Philippines abound with witches and wise-women, who, like their European counterparts, can cause and cure all kinds of diseases and ailments and assume the form of various animals.

There are also a few unique and extremely powerful monsters, which seem to be an attempt by the natives to explain solar and lunar eclipses. The Minokawa or Baua is a huge bird, the Baconaua is an immense shark, and the Mamelu or Marcupo is a huge snake, all of which account the sun or moon from time to time, but are persuaded to release it by the noise and music made by the Filipinos at the festival of each eclipse.

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