

The New Centre for Research & Practice

TALADRO NG MANANANGGAL
(COSMOGRAM OF THE FIRST
WHO SEVERED)

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AAA... LUMAYA... AUM

Bago ang langit, iisa ang katawan.
Bago ang lupa, iisa ang hininga.
Humiwalay ang Unang Manananggal.
Nagkaalalala ang itaas at ibaba.

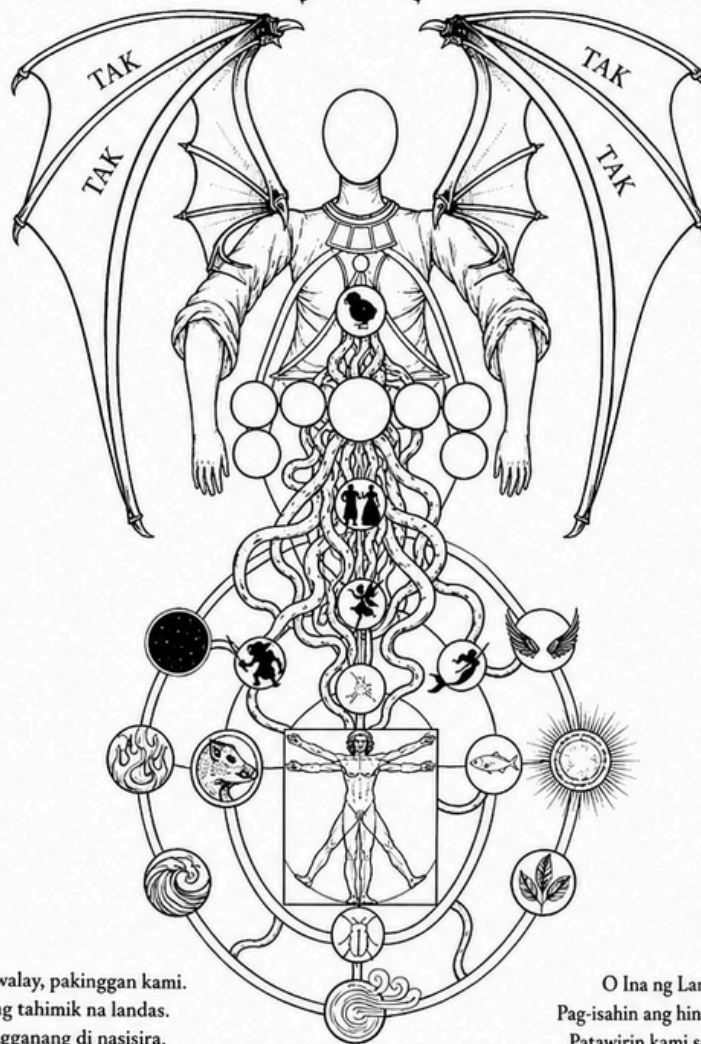
Hindi naputol ang banal na hibla.
Doon tumawid ang mga diwata.
Doon sumilang ang mga engkanto.
Doon nagtago ang dalawang daigdig.

AYO... LUMA...
NGARAL...
LUMA... AYO...
NGARAL...
TARA... NGALO...
UMAL...
AYA... AYA...
LUMA...

LAI... NGALAI... AUM...

O Unang Humiwalay, pakinggan kami.
Buksan mo ang tahimik na landas.
Ituro ang hangganang di nasisira.
luwi mo kami sa tamang daigdig.

IK IK IK IK
IK IK IK IK
IK IK IK IK



ANG
UNANG
HUMIWA
LAY

NGARUMA... OOO... AUM

Sa itaas, nanahan ang mga anito.
Sa ibaba, nagsipag-usbong ang nilalang.
Sa pagitan, huminga ang hiwaga.
Magkaugnay ang lahat ng buhay.

Alalahanin ang unang paghihiwalay.
Alalahanin ang hiblang nagdurugtong.
Alalahanin ang mga kasamang di-nakikita.
Lisang katawan pa rin tayo.

OMARA...
LUNGKAI... NAYO...
RUMA... TALAI...
NGORO...
AYA... LUMA...
SAI...
NGARO... NGARO...
OM...

O Ina ng Langit at Lupa,
Pag-isahin ang hininga naming watak.
Patawirin kami sa hibla ng hiwaga.
Basbasan ang aming pagbalik.

A-MA NGALU-TA-A AUM

According to the oldest account, there was once only one world. There was neither sky nor earth, neither sea nor mountain. Humans, animals, insects, trees, rivers, spirits, and ancestors had not yet taken their proper forms or places. All existed together within the body of the First One. The older orators do not give this being a personal name. They say only that she was the First. The name *Manananggal* belongs to a later age, after the world had already been divided. Literally, "The One Who Parts," a liminal being in Philippine folklore, the *manananggal* is traditionally described as separating her upper and lower body and traversing the night between the human and spirit worlds.

The First One had no face. She possessed neither eyes nor mouth nor any feature by which beings now recognize one another. Since nothing yet existed outside herself, there was nothing to behold and nothing to address. Only that she breathed.

The oldest orators speak the sound of this breathing:

Ik. Ik. Ik.

This was the first sound ever made and all later speech descended from it.

The First One possessed two great wings. They did not carry her through the air, for there was no air. They remained folded upon her back while she wandered the undivided world. Before the First Severance, a sentience emerged from within the body of the First One. It was neither laid nor born. The older accounts describe it as a black chick. There was no egg, and was therefore remembered as the *itim na sisiw*.

Some ritual lineages further maintain that the First Chick was never destroyed. They identify it as the source of the Manananggal's power. According to these traditions, there has only ever been one First Chick. It passes from one Manananggal to another at the moment of death, transferred from mouth to mouth with the final breath. No Manananggal possesses her own Chick; each bears the same primordial life that first emerged from the First One.

The chick settled upon the body of the First One. It pecked at her stomach and called into the silence to shriek and open. Thus the First One parted the Cosmos.

Only after the pecking of the chick did the wings move.

Tak.

The upper body rose.

Tak.

The lower body remained.

Tak.

The upper body became the Upper World.

The lower body became the Lower World.

Several orators add that, at the instant of the Severance, seven beings emerged from the opening between the Upper and Lower Worlds.

These beings had no faces.

They had no bodies.

They had no voices.

They possessed neither shape nor measure.

No names are given for them.

They are not counted among the *diwata*, the *engkantos*, the *anito*, or the *dead*. They belong to no order known to later creation. Ritual specialists generally refuse to speak of them in fear of their emergence. They are referred to only as the Seven Before Form.

Following the Severance, every order of being entered its proper place.

Birds took the sky.

Fish entered the waters.

Trees rooted themselves in the earth.

Animals spread through forests and grasslands.

Insects entered bark, leaf, and soil.

The *diwata* entered springs, forests, clouds, and places of abundance.

The *engkantos* settled in mountains, caves, rivers, crossroads, and ancient trees.

The *anito* remained among stones, hearths, graves, and the houses of their descendants.

Humankind alone was placed upon the Crossing.

For this reason, humans belong neither wholly to the Upper World nor wholly to the Lower World. Dreams, trance, sickness, healing, prophecy, and death are all understood as temporary crossings along the Living Way.

The oldest ritual traditions preserve no ordinary prayers to the First One. Instead they preserve only the sounds associated with the beginning.

When the Living Way is opened, the following sounds are uttered:

Ayo... Luma... Ngarai...
Luma... Ayo... Ngarai...
Tara... Ngalo... Umai...
Aya... Aya... Luma...

When the mountains, rivers, forests, or ancestral places are entered:

Omara... Lungkai... Nayo...
Ruma... Talai... Ngoro...
Aya... Luma... Sai...
Ngaro... Ngaro... Om...

The sounds are never translated. Orators maintain that they existed before language and therefore cannot be rendered into ordinary speech without losing their power.

The *taladro* (cosmogram) is a spiritual talisman, amulet, or cloth inscribed with mystical symbols, prayers, and secret words (oraciones), used in Philippine folk spirituality and healing. Its translations are thus:

Before the sky, there was one body.
Before the earth, there was one breath.
The First Manananggal parted herself.
The Above and the Below became the worlds.

The Living Way was not broken.
There the *diwata* made their crossing.
There the *engkantos* found their dwellings.
There the Two Worlds remained one.

The ancestors entered the Upper World.
The living entered the Lower World.
Between them lay seven hidden passages.
Thus every being found its place.

The wings yet beat in darkness.
And the unseen answers their calling.
The ancient crossings yet awaken.
So the worlds continue to remember each other.

O First Who Parted, hear!
Open the path with the primal shriek
The boundary that cannot be broken
Lead us home to the world.

O Mother of Heaven and Earth,
Make whole our scatterings.
Carry us across the ways.
And bless us in our return.

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