



Mamanwa ritual by/Malu Maniquis

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To better understand the indigenous peoples, learn from their rituals w/ no prejudice. This ritual was intended to ask blessings for the project. The babaylan (spiritual leader) summoned forth the spirits of the earth. The ritual lasted for 2 hours and I was only able to shoot for less than an hour. Four came but I can only recall the two w/c had an impact on me. The spirit warrior of the forest was angry because it said it traveled so far from the forest, why was the ritual being done not inside or near the forest, and was even more angry because the village is not even a Mamanwa (mixed residents), and was fuming mad even further becoz the chicken being used was not native but a white leg horn (poultry-raised) ,thus, disrespecting Magbabaya (the Creator); and that the babaylan should know better. Thus, the chicken was spared from being offered and butchered. The first spirit is the one w/c asked for tobacco. The 2nd spirit (the warrior) is the one that asked for a drink becoz it was very thirsty from travel. The last spirit that arrived actually came from underneath the earth where we were standing-- considered a dark spirit (not "bad/evil" as we Christians put it). It was a child who was also angry, was so disturbed that he had to emerge. He was irked w/ the laughing of the non-indigenous kids, disrespecting the ritual. The "babaylan" who have been taken over by the spirit of the "child" suddenly charged at the crowd of non-IPs..shooing them away. So they were asked to leave. Our presence was also questioned ...by the first spirit. It was only appeased when it was explained that we were there to document and do a project upon the invitation of the tribe. Some members of the tribe, especially the bae (female elder), kept talking to the spirits. It also came to a point that they seem to be arguing w/ the spirits which at one point took turns in taking over the babaylan. It was explained later that sometimes spirits can be mischievous and can play with you. Thus, one has to talk and if need be, argue w/ the spirits to put them back to their proper place which is to act as spirit guides and should not harm humans especially if these humans do not mean any harm or are simply ignorant. I have seen other rituals of different tribes, and each experience amazes me. I have so much respect for the indigenous peoples and their beliefs. I hope watching this will have the same effect on you.

Look also here: www.babaylan.philippineculture.ph