

**Phase II Documentation of Philippine Traditional Knowledge and Practices on Health and
Development of Traditional Knowledge Digital Library on Health for Selected
Ethnolinguistic Groups: The TALAINGOD MANOBO people of Sitio Laslasakan, Sitio
Bagang, and Sitio Nalubas, Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao del Norte**

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2013

Summary

An ethnopharmacological study of the Talaingod Manobo was conducted from May 2012 to May 2013. The one-year study included documentation primarily of the indigenous healing practices and ethnopharmacological knowledge of the Talaingod Manobo. The ethnohistorical background of the tribe was also included in the study. The study covered (3) Sitios, namely Sitio Laslasakan, Sitio Bagang, and Sitio Nalubas, Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao del Norte. Our main host organization here was the ***Salugpungan Ta Tanu Igkanugon***. The researcher selected Sitio Nalubas as the study satellite site.

A total of 108 plants and 3 other natural products, 2 traditional healers, and 5 community informants in the community were documented. Documentation employed the use of prepared ethnopharmacological templates which included: medicinal plants and other natural products, herbarial compendium of selected medicinal plants, local terminology of condition and treatments, rituals and practices, and traditional healer's templates. Immersion in the community was the primary method employed. Interview and participant-observation, and forest visits were utilized to gather data. Focus group discussions were also done as a form of data validation. Formalized informed consent for this study was asked from different peoples' organizations, religious institutions, and from different key individuals prior to the documentation and collection of medicinal plants.

1 Introduction

The effort to continue the traditional health practices documentation initiative of the University of the Philippines Manila College of Medicine (Department of Pharmacology), and its funding agency Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, has led to the present project entitled “Phase II Documentation of the Philippine Traditional Knowledge and Practices on Health and Development of Traditional Digital Library on health for Selected Ethnolinguistic Groups: Mindoro, Zamboanga, Davao and Cordillera.”

One of the selected sites was the Davao region which we divided into three province-unit research areas: (a) Davao del Sur and Davao City, where three of our five sites are located (Malita {for Tagakaolo group}, Todaya, and Makilala {for Tagabawa Bagobo group}); (b) Davao del Norte, where Talaingod is located {for Talaingod Manobo group}, and (c) Davao Oriental, where Mati is located {for Mandaya group}.

The different sites we visited for a project that initially centered on plants and peoples' health practices and views gave us lasting engagements with diverse organizations, individuals, and communities that, even after the formal ending of the project (May 2012 to May 2013), opened continuing joint community-academic activities and plans meant to deepen community initiatives and exchanges to generate knowledge of their localities for the peoples' uses.

Perspectives and objectives

From the very beginning, our engagements with the selected sites had been guided by this perspective of cultivating long-term engagements on the basis of shared interests on indigenous knowledge and community-building projects.

As a theme (indigenous health concerns and practices) that resonates well with every area we have visited, the core objective of the project—to make a systematic documentation of plant-based medical knowledge among Kaolos, Tagabawas, Matig-Talomos—immediately connects it to three other aspects of concern in and for the areas:

- (1) conservation of herbal sources (plant and non-plant materials) in their localities—found abundant but fastly disappearing—and the immediate addressing of their many other socio-environmental concerns, especially in the context of their much-challenged ecological areas given their marginalized socio-political standing;
- (2) developing resource materials from such documentation for use as teaching materials in the *lumad* (Mindanao indigenous peoples) schools of their areas; and,
- (3) deepening the scope and rigor of the generated knowledge by designing long-term knowledge and community-strengthening links between local cultural specialists and academe-based individuals.

Our initiating plants-and-health theme, therefore, quite naturally branched into three other future possible and doable joint projects: (a) resource conservation and medicinal plant gardening and folk-friendly processing; (b) development of education materials (for use in both lumad and non-lumad contexts, primary to tertiary levels); and (c) undertaking continuing co-researches on local history, folk science and folklore, and indigenous philosophies and folkways in general.

Such future projects with the particular sites where we did plant collections and interviews—Matamis, Dimoluk and Calatagan villages in the Tagakaulo (or Kaolo) area; Sibulan, Todaya, Makilala, and Locatong villages in the Tagabawa Bagobo area; Dulyan, Laslasakan, and Nalubas villages in the Pantaron Manobo (or Matig-Talomo) area; the Palo Cuatro village of Balyan Nanay Parong and the Kamunaan garden and lumad museum of Atty. Al Aquino—can only be undertaken in the background of deepening friendly bonds between us and key individuals and organizations in the mentioned communities.

Selection of study areas

The ethnomedical study of the Talaingod Manobo was conducted mainly in sitio Nalubas, Brgy. Palma Gil, Talaingod. This village is the furthestmost village from the main town of Sto. Nino of Talaingod and closest to the major forests of the Pantaron Range. The selection for the study sites was based on the criteria that these major sampling areas are long-standing research sites of one of our team members (MJ Paluga) and so the key individuals and organizations we have connected with for this study are either the same individuals and organizations our team member has for long been connecting with or 'snowballed' community figures from key lumad friends of the areas.

The general criteria used for our site selection for the whole project are the following: (a) the community has reputation for indigenous medical/healing practices, i.e., presence of at least three actively practicing indigenous healers; (b) the community is living at or near forested areas; (c) the community is known to have continually practiced its indigenous traditions; (d) the community has stable peace and order situation; and (e) the community can be accessed using available means of transportation within a reasonable period of time. The first three items of the above list are given more weight in our area selection in cases where not all of the criteria are optimally passed by a possible field site.

Gathering of information

Sampling approach and plant-collecting methods

Our sampling practice is designed more for collecting as many plant samples as possible in the context of a simultaneous, on-going random 'mapping' or searching of key informants or healing specialists (usually called as snowballing approach). The data, therefore, being non-systematically taken, is not usable for formal quantitative analysis. However, some rough patterns emerging from our data-sets are suggestive of some exploratory potential and given brief discussions below.

The researcher documented the community's concept of health and wellbeing and how they respond to each one; the different medicinal plants utilized by the healers and the counterpart illnesses that it cures; their diverse healing methods and practices alike. Free and prior informed consent was implored before any documentation was done.

The researchers' immersion with the community allowed them to observe their culture and some patterns of behavior, participate in their activities of daily living (ADLs) and learn aspects of their language, beliefs and struggles in life. Participant observation and interview, mostly informal were utilized to gather data while collection of medicinal plants for scientific identification and herbarium specimen storage was done through forest exploration with the informant and applying some practical suggestions given in Martin (2004).

The researchers also conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) among health care providers mostly participated by mothers and trusted elders in the community and initiated consultation meetings with key informants, tribal leaders and members of the community.

Organizations and institutions

As much as possible, cognizant of the key social and political importance local formal organizations play in building and strengthening lumad communities in the context of political challenges that are generally called 'development aggression', the rule we followed is always to work with organizations (and in areas not so organized, with key individuals or cultural experts) that we believe have achieved a high 'moral standing' in the villages we are directly working with.

The following lists the major organization and individuals we have directly worked with relative to our study:

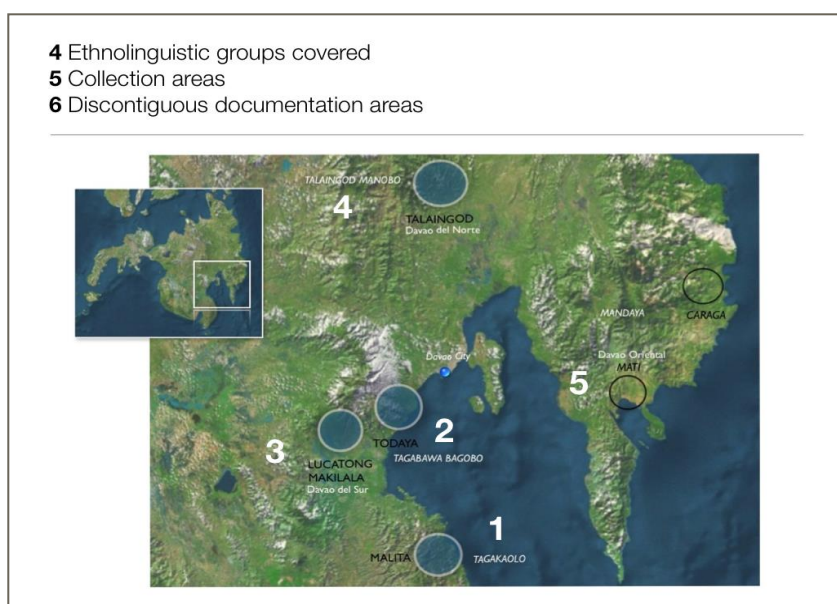
Talaingod. Our main host organization here was the ***Salugpungan Ta Tanu Igkanugon***. The legendary Datu Guibang Apoga was so kind in giving us some of his time for a series of interviews. The following served as our main Informants, guide and plant collection consultants: Datu Ansag Mansimoy-at (Nalubas), Teody Mansimoy-at (Nalubas). Hasul (Bagang), Rennie – Sitio (Laslasakan), Cita (Laslasakan), and Tungig Mansimoy-at (Nalubas).

The researchers were able to identify some traditional healers in the community and informants who supported and spared time to be interviewed. One of the profound observations and realizations of the researchers while finding key informants in the community is that the knowledge in healing and the utilization of the medicinal plants are not concentrated on specific number of people only. There are some people who are considered as the community health experts or specialists but the basic knowledge about medicinal plants use is shared by the community members alike.

Ethnopharmacological templates were prepared to aid the researchers in what to collect and gather that is considered to be essential for the study. The prepared guide questions did not confine us from documenting the abundance of traditional knowledge and practices of the Talaingod Manobo people. Aside from the templates, the researchers were also equipped of instruments for documentation such as voice recorder and digital camera which were utilized in the whole process of the study. Permission to record was sought prior to conducting any interviews or simply taking their pictures.

2 The land and the people

Overall, the five plant collection sites covered by the study fall under the traditionally-labelled 'Davao area' since the time of the early Jesuit missionaries, but now divided into three Davao areas: Davao del Sur (and Davao City), where three of the five sites {see map above} are found (**1** Malita, **2** Todaya, **3** Makilala-Locatong {we fused our collections from these villages and treated them as one site because of their relative proximity, geographic and ethnographic-wise}), Davao del Norte, where **4** Talaingod is located, and Davao Oriental, where **5** Mati is located.



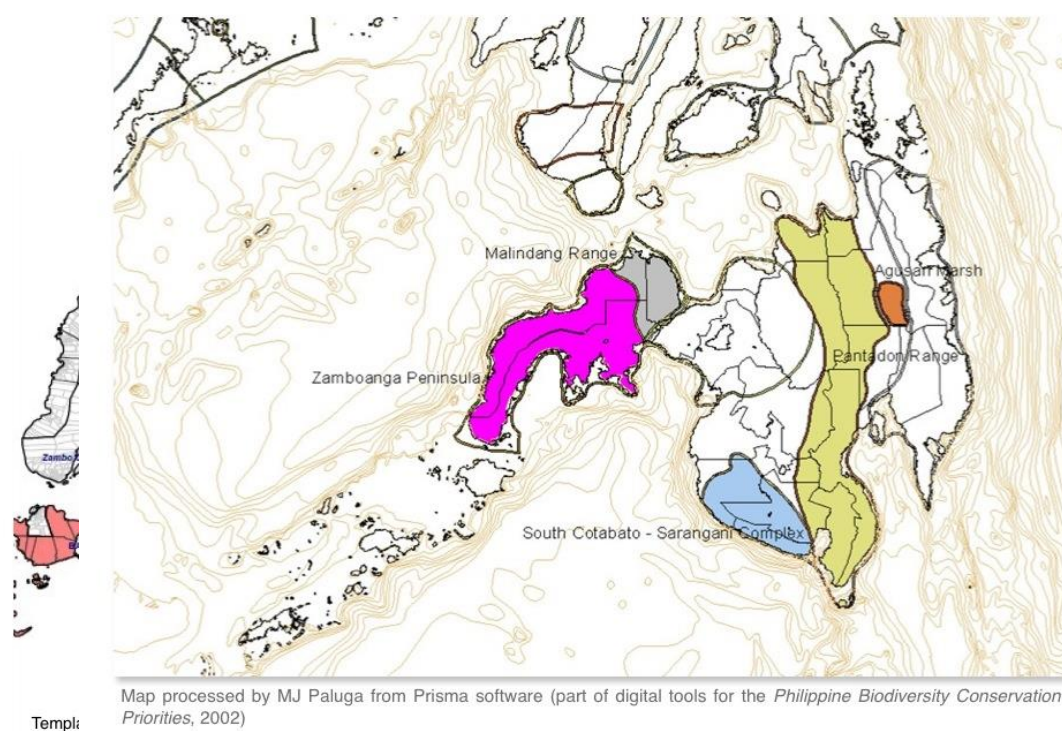
Template map from: <http://gspace21.ls.apple.com/html/attribution.html>

This part of Mindanao, the southeastern region, covers two major families of lumad groups {those covered by this study is in boldface}: the *Mandaya group* (covering seven named ethnolinguistic groups, like the **Mandayas**, Mansakas, **Tagakaolos**, and others: see the important study of Nabayra, 2012a) and, perhaps better seen as a super-family, the *Manobo group* (covering diverse and highly dispersed groups—like the Higaunons, Matigsalugs, Arakan Manobos, and many others). Also under the Manobo family are the Bagobo groups: **Tagabawa**, Klata or Jangan, and Obo {called also as Manuvu by EA Manuel}, the three ethnolinguistic groups that surround Mt. Apo. In the *Norte/Agusan* area are two other sub-groups of the Manobos: the relatively lowland Agusan-area Manobos {Agusanons} and the highlanders, the Pantaron or **Talaingod Manobos** {also wrongly called, 'Ata Manobos'} and the Bukidnons.

Downward from this covered area, one meets the *Blaan-T'boli group*; of South Cotabato; and upward from this area, one meets the *Aeta/Negrto group* (Mamanuas) of the northern Mindanao area.

Geographic and related features

What is usually called in most literature as 'Ata Manobos'—which we prefer to call here as Talaingod Manobos or, to cover a broader group including their kin-group the Matigsalugs, what we propose to collectively call the Pantaron Manobos—are, in the self-ascription of peoples of the area are either Matig-Talomos or Matig-Simongs because these are peoples dwelling in the two major river systems in the Talaingod area, Talomo River and Simong River, both linking downstream to the bigger Libuganon River, an important site for inter-



DISTRIBUTION OF MANOBOS IN MINDANAO (BLUE) AND THE LOCATION OF PANTARON (MATIG-TALOMO) MANOBOS (YELLOW BOX)

ethnic interactions among highland Manobos, including the Langilans, the Dibabawons, and, downstream, the Mandayas and the Mansakas near the Tagum area.

A very important reference point to situate geographically the Talaingod Manobos should be the great Pantaron Mountain Range, which is classified as an important biogeographic sub-sub-region of Mindanao, forming like its bio-cultural backbone, as it serves as an important homeland-area to many groups under the wide-ranging Manobo family or superfamily of Mindanao {see the distribution of Manobo groups in the map above}.

Field-based observations and some ethnic patterns. Of the six data-gathering sites we have visited, those in the Pantaron area are the most non-aculturated indigenous communities if measured from the perspective of vibrant traditional knowledge systems and material culture that the people are still practicing.

We feature in this report (see separate photo-panel notes) two aspects of their material culture that are relevant in understanding the wider frame of their health-seeking practices: (a) their traditional house structure and its broader spatial and cognitive dimensions, and (b) one of their utilized plant-kind, named *saat*, which dramatizes a multifunctional intersection of objects-for-healing and objects-for-ornamentation and even identity-marker objects: for us, this use of *saat* is an iconic example of a view, observable in differing degrees in the varied communities we have visited, that sees 'health concerns' as linked to 'concerns about beauty' and 'cultural identity', a view that is much de-emphasized in a highly atomized way of relating to things.

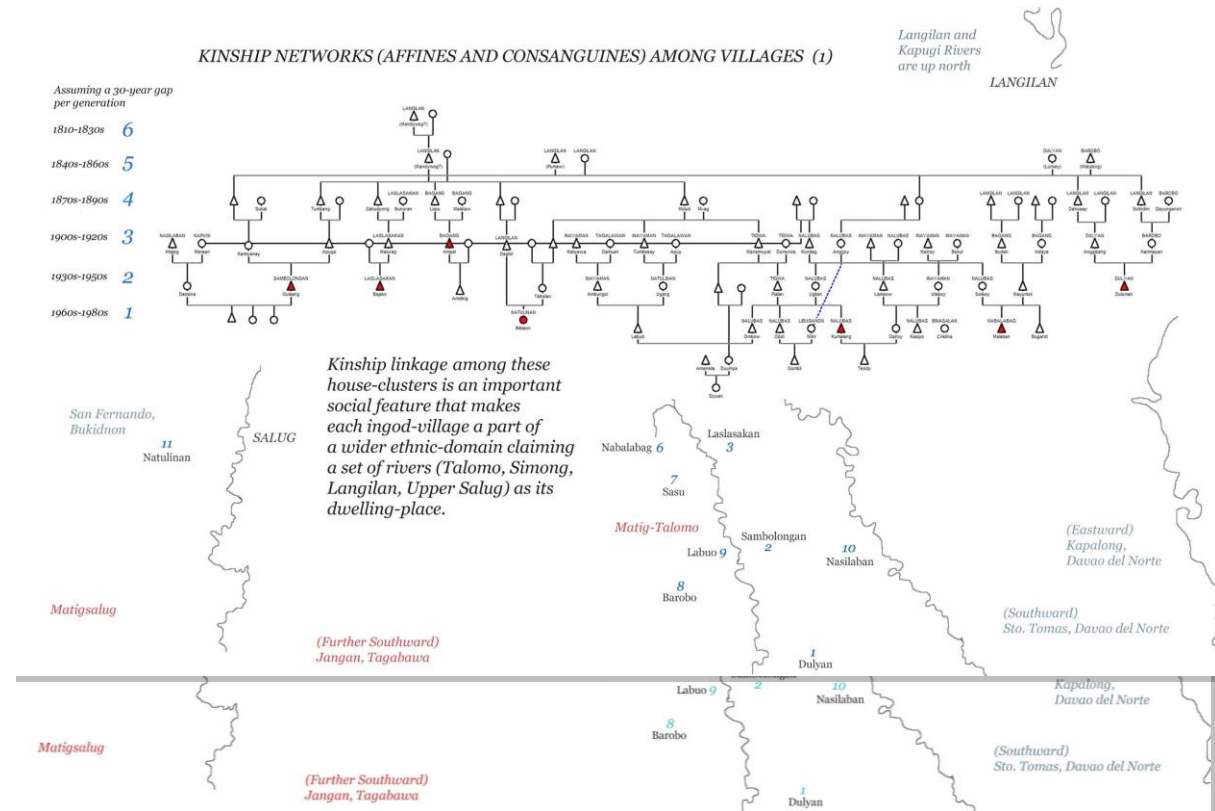
Two important features of Talaingod Manobo indigenous social structure before its growing 'absorption' (or 'interfacing', depending on one's analysis) into the modern nation-state structures are the following: (a) the presence of an expansive kinship-network across space, and (b) the deep-time genealogical links of diverse yet contiguous communities: these two aspects serving as the material basis for the emergence of the consciousness of a social 'domain' sharing an idealized ancestor figure, like 'Man-oloron' or 'Tolalang' (or 'Tuwaang') as sung in their great epics. These features, while true to all the other sites we have visited, are given stronger empirical basis, as far as our study is concerned, in the area of Talaingod.

We present below two map-history plates (below and next page) for the Talaingod-Pantaron area and its village networks and genealogical linkages. (This is part of an 'ethno-geographic' and genealogical study of the area conducted by MJ Paluga, MD de Castro, IT Catarman, and RR Cagula last 2011, partly supported by a Kalumaran study on customary laws of the Manobos.)

3 History

Available literature

Although there are a few unpublished studies and published article-essays on the Manobos of Talaingod area we have read, there is, to our knowledge, only one published book on the 'Ata Manobos', the study of Bajo (2004) which is mainly from the Kapalong area. The Davao-



based *lumad* support group, *Sagip* (Solidarity Action Group for Indigenous Peoples), which was organized in the 1990s in response to the anti-logging and ancestral domain-defense struggles of the Talaingod Manobos, has some data-basing of documents of crucial historical and anthropological value. We have relied mostly on this information as our preliminary guide in understanding the place, plus additional data from previous series of fieldworks in the area by one member of our team (MJP).

A very recent publication (Kalumaran, 2013), still unlaunched but provided to us by the publisher for review, featuring the two major recent-day 'heroes' of Talaingod Manobos, Datu Guibang Apoga of Talaingod and Bai Bibyaon Ligkayan Bigkay of Bukidnon (two sides of the Pantaron range Manobos), gives a popularized but fairly accurate description of the main outlines of struggles of the area.

4 Material culture

An unsystematic survey listing of highland Manobo material culture can be found in the classic ethnographies of Cole (1913) and Garvan (1931), the latter specifically mentioning, very briefly, the 'highland Atas' in his report. Up to this time, no systematic study has yet been conducted in the Talaingod area focusing on material culture. In our last fieldwork, we made a preliminary survey of the aspects of Nalubas-area material culture, especially those related to health and healing practices. The ethnographically-unique importance of their *panubaran* architecture, their traditional *baloy* houses, and the identity-marking role of their *saat-binokol* bracelet are described in the photo-panels in the last section of this report.

5 Economic activities, political structures and processes, social institutions

Like many upland indigenous peoples of Mindanao, the Talaingod Manobos have traditionally relied for their subsistence needs on rotational farming (of native varieties of upland rice and cultivating a range of root crops), river fishing, and hunting of some wild fauna (pig, deer, birds) in the forests (see an important study of *kaingin* and other indigenous economic activities in Gloria and Magpayo, 1997). Abaca extraction is a major cash crop for Tagabawas since the early 20th century.

Lebar (1975: 63), culling data from the classic works of Cole, Garvan, and the linguist Elkins, and relying mostly on the pioneering ethnographic survey between 1960-1965 of the highland indigenous peoples of Mindanao by the Aram Yengoyen, has the following entry for 'Ata Manobos':

Synonyms. *Atag, Dugbatang, Dugbatung, Tugauanum*

ORIENTATION. Ata is classed as a member of the Manobo family of languages by linguists of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (Elkins et al. 1969-70). Ata (Atag) speakers are found nowadays primarily in northwestern Davao Province, on the upper reaches of the Lasang (Lasan) and Libuganon rivers (Ma-pula, Palma Gil, Asuncion, Kapalong and Santo To-mas), although they extend across provincial boundaries into parts of southeastern Bukidnon and southwestern Agusan. The dominant economic activity is still swidden cultivation of rice and tubers, with corn now becoming popular. In 1961, the Ata around the Kapalong, Maguinon, and Kapugi, tributaries of the upper Libuganon, were **producing a surplus rice harvest**, which is presently quite rare. Any food **surplus is traded to the lowland Christians** for clothing, bolos, knives, and canned fish. **Hunting and fishing** occupy most important roles among the Ata, and **of all of the Davao groups, their aboriginal subsistence patterns are the least unchanged**. Wild pigs, monkeys, and reptiles are taken with the use of bows and arrows, spears, and wicker traps. Fish are caught by the damming and draining of creeks or with bamboo fish traps. **Beyond the nuclear family household, the political coordination and leadership found among the Bagobo and Mandaya is absent among the Ata**. Polygynous family households are

also absent. The exchange of material goods as part of the bride-price is usually absent, since objects of value are very scarce. **Ata material culture, except for simple subsistence tools, is noted for its paucity.** The elaborate abaca weaving and silversmithing *[this is not validated in our fieldwork, as we found the presence of metalsmithing based on a highly modified metal-forging technology adapted for a mobile life]* found among other Davao groups is also totally absent. Western-style clothing is worn and obtained through trade. Although Ata as a dialect remains as a household and interhousehold language, Cebuano-Bisayan is used as a lingua franca in interacting with the Bisayans. (Emphasis added and comments inserted.)

Cole (1913: 162ff.) located the people whom he called Ata in a broad area stretching from the Libuganon and Lasang (where they were known as Dugbatang or Dugbatung; also Tugauanum) to the headwaters of the Davao and Pulangi rivers, north and west of Mount Apo. Garvan (1931: 5) , quoting older Spanish sources to the effect that *ata* was a Bisayan term applied in southern Mindanao to Negritos in the interior northwest of the Davao Gulf, implied the use of the term in a generic sense for dispersed groups of mixed Negrito-Manobo ancestry. Garvan further cautioned against confusion of the term Ata in the above sense, and Atas (Hataas, Ataas), meaning "high" or "those who dwell on the heights," referring to a people of advanced culture located by older Spanish sources on the northwestern slopes of Mount Apo. It is evident, as implied by Cole, that the term Ata has been used in a variety of meanings, and that groups referred to by that name may differ culturally. Thus Ata-speakers in the Lasang River area show strong Bagobo influence and in other than a linguistic sense, might be passed as Bagobo; on the other hand, Ata-speakers on the upper tributaries of the Libuganon evidence few Bagobo cultural traits (Elkins et al. 1969-70).

6 Knowledge and practices on health

The following will present a synthetic view of the general patterns that we think can serve as interpretive frame for the health/healing practices of the four indigenous groups that we have studied (Tagabawas, Tagakaolos, Mandayas and Talaingod Manobos; our empirical data for the Mandaya group, however, is more based on secondary materials, pre-gathered collections and information from the *Kamunaan* museum, and less on in-depth fieldwork interactions with indigenous healers).

Schematic themes in indigenous life and health practices

The set of five meta-categories given in the table below is constructed as a working frame in order to approach, organize, and link varied practices and categorizations by indigenous communities, especially those related to health and well-being concerns.

The heuristic frame stands on the initiating idea of the importance of the category 'house' in the Austronesian/Philippinesian civilizational roots. This point is asserted both in the *Pantayong Pananaw* school's emphasis on the study of *bayan/banua/ili* 'community' categories {with Zeus Salazar as a major scholar contributing highly seminal studies along the line of house-society lexico-semantic links: for example, *bayan* is a lexical form of *ba(ha)yan*} and in the observation of Claude Levi-Strauss (in Waterson, 2009) that Southeast-Asian societies should be called 'house societies'.

The main assertions of the heuristic frame are the following: starting from the initiating idea of the central importance of 'house' across diverse ethnolinguistic groups:

1. The wider expansion of the idea of 'house' as dwelling place is, in the context of Mindanao, the category *banua/banwa*, forming a *baloy-banwa* house-world schema.
2. There is a categorial double for the idea of a 'world' in the indigenous worldview, captured nicely in the term *dakel banwa*, 'great world', in the Tagabawa language, in reference to the unseen 'world of the afterlife', the '*kabilang daigdig*' or '*kabilang buhay*' among Tagalogs.
3. The idea of an unseen world among *lumads*, and its many phenomenological descriptions in both emic and etic reports, is better grasped if understood as describing a mode of experiencing this same socio-physical world: the experiencing of it as a world of terrifying, spectral qualities.
4. The two other (maybe more than two) important meta-categories in indigenous life, 'livelihood' and 'spirituality', can also be better grasped in their central conceptual structure if they are lined-up with the meta-category 'afterlife': they are outlining varied modes of relating to the world of realities given in the *baloy-banwa* schema. (See the heuristic and interpretive notes in the B-table of 'Selected ethnolinguistic groups...' table given below.)
5. The concerns of the indigenous communities we have studied relative to 'well-being', 'health concerns', 'afflictions', and their culturally-linked concerns with 'livelihood', 'food', and 'having a good life' (*maganda*/beautiful and *maginhawa* {literally,

'breathable' and also 'loving', based on the Manobo and Mandaya categories}}—all these can be structurally understood if juxtaposed with the given heuristic frame. (See the table below: 'Where is the concern with health...')

6. The ubiquitous concern with spirits and their role in indigenous construal of 'sickness' and 'afflictions' can also be framed well and grasped of its probable logic if linked to the constructed heuristic frame.

From the above perspectives, one sees why indigenous peoples' notions relative to 'health' (and plant use) are substantively linked to their dual (a) socio-economic concerns with food and livelihood and (b) psycho-ecological concerns with the 'spirits' and hope-emphasizing 'spirituality.'

The general pattern emerging from this approach in making sense of *lumad* views on health appears to be this: that while positive aspects of health and well-being are of this side of the 'world' (*baloy-banwa* dimension), and its major concerns with 'good food', 'good house', 'good work', and 'good air' (a *ginhawa*-as-love or 'loving atmosphere'), major health related disturbances—sickness and afflictions—are construed as coming from the 'other world': the 'world of images and specters'.

7 Traditional healers

Talaingod Manobo healer profiles

Datu Ansag Mansimoy-at

Datu Ansag Mansimoy-at is from Sitio Nalubas, Brgy. Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao del Norte. He can no longer remember when he started the practice of being a healer. What Datu Ansag can remember is that he learned it from knowledgeable elders who also use traditional plants and non-plants in healing. To become a baylan, Datu Ansag said, one also learns how to identify particular medicinal plants through dreams. In dreaming, a baylan can also identify the causes of the affliction.

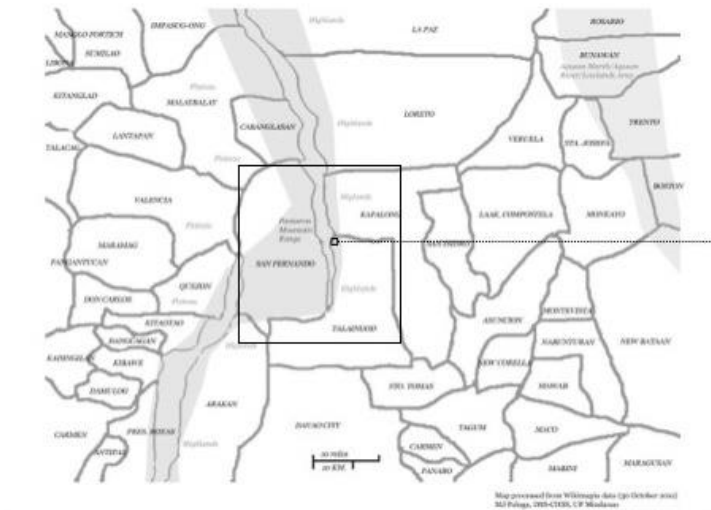


Datu Bunlay Mansimuy-at

Datu Bunlay serves as one of the respected elders of the village and, by his present role, can be said to be the village's chieftain, although Nalubas folks consider many elders in their village as their 'consultants' and 'mediators' in times of conflicts and other situations needing crucial advice. Datu Bunlay's house also serves as a prayer-house *panubaran* which functions also as a 'lying-in clinic' of sorts for patients who more or less need constant attention.

Photos, Plates, Tables

THE MATIGSALUGS OF THE HIGHLANDS OF BUKIDNON AND THE 'ATA MANOBOS' OF TALAINGOD HAVE VERY CLOSE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINKS THAT THEY CAN BE CALLED COLLECTIVELY AS PANTARON MANOBOS



Although politically divided into Bukidnon and Davao del Norte provinces, the indigenous peoples of the highlands of the Pantaron range (especially its San Fernando-Talaingod segment)—usually separately called now as Bukidnon-side 'Matigsalugs' (literally, 'dwellers of the Salug' or what is called later downstream as Davao river, with headwaters in Pantaron) and Davao del Norte-side 'Ata Manobos' (or more accurately, 'Matig-Talomos', 'dwellers of the Talomo river, one of the two major rivers of Talaingod, the other being Simong; both connects with Libuganon river, the major river of Tagum)—can be grouped, anthropologically-speaking, as Pantaron Manobos, as they are very closely sharing genealogies, a language, epics, material culture, and having present-day actual interactions, like in the case of Natulinan (Bukidnon side) and Nalubas (Davao side).



We camped for two days besides Basagan, one of the major river in Pantaron, to get samples of the culturally significant *saat*-plant (see separate photo-panel notes) and a few medicinal plants not readily accessible near the village. Basagan area is, for the locals, a two-hour trek from Nalubas, and is part of their major fishing and hunting grounds. A band of villagers who passed by our camp shared to us a whole string of frogs of different kinds which they caught further downstream. They were returning to their respective villages in Talaingod after staying for some days in San Fernando (Bukidnon side) for the May 2013 national election. Perhaps some of them participated in the election but many others, more probably, just stayed there because of the election's festive atmosphere, with lots of money and goods circulating around as local politicians release money to influence votes directly and indirectly.

**THE TRADITIONAL PANTARON MANOBO *BALOY-TULUHAN* HOUSE
AND ITS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STRUCTURES**

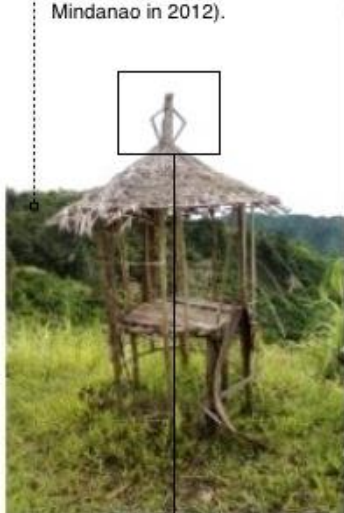


All the intersecting posts of the house do not use nails but are bound together using a range of stylized tying-pattern of the rattan rope.

All field photos taken from Talaingod on May 2013 by AM Ragragio

**THE SAAT PLANT AS AN EXAMPLE OF A MEDICINAL-ORNAMENTAL AND
IDENTITY-MARKER OBJECT AMONG PANTARON MANOBOS**
**THE PANUBARAN 'PRAYER-HOUSE COMPLEX' AS PART OF THE BALOY-BANWA SCHEMA
AND ITS ROLE IN HEALTH-PRACTICES OF PANTARON MANOBOS**

The *ginatong-gatong* 'round-house' is unique in that it is the only circular-shape architecture of the four house-types in Talaingod (the other three being, the regular *baloy*, the field-hut *pinajag*, and the crop-storage *lalapong*). It forms as part of the mountain-ridge *panubaran* complex which includes two other structure-types: the large *panubaran-baloy* that can accommodate several families (like their earlier *tuluhan*-longhouse' structure which forms as the original dwelling-place for extended families before they split into nuclear-family house-units) and the smaller *baloy*-huts constructed by each nuclear family of the village. The *ginatong-gatong* structure houses several material culture objects (shield, spear, headgears, clothes). What is shown here is a structure partly ruined due to strong rains and winds in the previous months (part of the typhoon Pablo that ravaged eastern Mindanao in 2012).



Part of the agricultural field area (*uma*, 'upland farming') devoted to rootcrops, corn, or upland rice: note the opened patches and the surrounding fallow area, a characteristic landscape resulting from the practice of rotational farming (called *kaingin* by Bisaya lowlanders).



A hamlet near Nalubas: note how the size of the cleared *baloy-lama* area relative to the covering *kaguyangan*-forest which seems to engulf it (see discussion in sub-section 'Three socio-physical spaces...', especially the item number three).



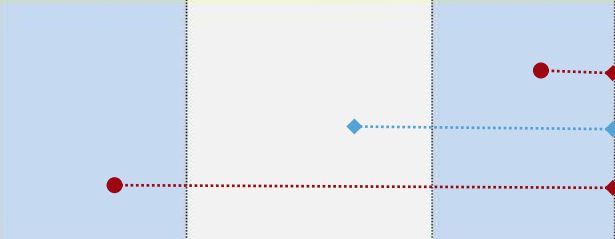
All the photos here are from Nalubas, Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao del Norte, taken last May 2013 by AM Ragragio.

The *ginatong-gatong* 'round-house' (an important structure in the Pantaron Manobo prayer-complex characteristically constructed in strategic mountain ridges) has an *inotaw* (*otaw* is metathesis for *tawo*, 'human') human figure on top of its roof. This round-house has a ritual function related to health-concerns: a person with severe affliction, if practicable, is brought to this outer-rim part of the village, accompanied by the *baylan*-priest. The priest does a *panubadtubad* prayer and the afflicted person is made to touch the round-house, 'to place a mark'. In ordinary occasions, a sick person, when family help fails, is just brought to the *baylan*'s house in the village which also functions as a *panubaran*, like the house of the present *baylan*, Datu Bunlay.



Selected Ethnolinguistic Groups and Key Indigenous Categories Pertaining to Life and Living (A)						
Ethnolinguistic Groups	Meta-categories and local terms					
	Bahay HOUSE	Pamumuhay LIVELIHOOD	Daigdig WORLD	Kabilang-buhay AFTERLIFE	Pananampalataya SPIRITUALITY	
	The following can serve as a <i>lumad</i> meta-category translating the above concepts:					Other terms related to health, healing, and others
<i>Lumad</i>	BALAY	KAORYAHAN	BANWA	INGOD TO GIMOKOD	PANUBAD	
Tagakaolo	<i>balay</i>	pag- <i>uya</i> , pag- <i>eyya</i> (Bis. 'pamuyo': pag-puyo; uya, eyya, puyo, cf. Manobo, ugpa—lahat, maisasalin, sa literal, na pag-tira-sa-bahay {kalagayan-sa-bahay}; Kaolo: 'mano ya pag-uya mayo don' = kumusta ang pagpuyo/panginabuhian ninyo diha? = kumusta ang iyong pagtira, kalagayan-sa- buhay/bahay?)	<i>banwa</i>	kilot ('laing kalibutan' = ' ibang daigdig ', ginagamit ng mga dating pari para sa impiyerno'), tas na lupa (kabilang daigdig)	panawag-tawag (tawag = Manobo, tubad; pagsasalita, pakikipag- usap), pangintuu	magpamulung (bulung = gamot), anituwan ('may anitu'; manggagamot); magkedel (sakit)
Tagabawa	<i>bale</i>	kangayan ka kantayan (makunan ng ikabubuhay'; kantayan, Tag. buhay , ikabubuhay)	<i>banwa</i>	dakel banwa ('puy-anan sa nangamatay') (sa literal, ' malaking bayan ')	panubad-tubad ; 'ang pagtuo sa lumad, nga sa pagtan-aw niya sa kalibutan, anaay nagmugna ug sagrado, pasabot, girespetuhan kay dili binuhat sa tawo' (ang paniniwala ng lumad, pagtingin niya sa daigdig, na may naglalalang nito, sagrado, dapat respetuhan dahil hindi ito gawa ng tao)	bogok (sakit); ginawa (hininga , pag-ibig); balyan (mabalalan (mag- papaanak), tara-ilos (hilot),
Pantaron Manobo	<i>baloy</i> , tuluhan	kaoyahan, katubungan (magandang buhay, mapayapa, walang problema sa pagkain)	<i>ingod</i> , <i>kalibutan</i> (sanlibutan = 'isang pag-libot', kabilogan)	ingod to <i>gimokod</i> (sa literal, ' daigdig ng mga larawan ')	panubad-tubad (sa Magbabaya)	goinawa (hininga , pag-ibig); balyan (manggagamot, tagapagsagawa ng ritwal)
Mandaya	<i>balay</i> , bay, bailay; bunsali, abat (in dawot)	talaba(h)o, kaballagan, pyagkugi(h)an (pagsisikap'), pyagkaya, pyag-agos (paghahanap ng ulam/makain)	katadman, <i>kalibutan</i> , pullo, <i>banwa</i> , liwagan, lugar	'naa lang dinhi, tapad lang nato, pero dili makit-an kay espirito man' (dito lang sa tabi, pero hindi makikita)	pagtuo, <i>pagtaya</i> , pagkamatinaon, matinumanon, naghigugma sa abyan nga nagbaya: panawag- tawag ('offering of drinks, lighting of candles, burning of incense, or offering chicken blood')	balyan (manggagamot)
Blaan	<i>bali</i>	det gu mwe kakaan? (saan ang makunan ng makain ?), 'det galabek dad to?' (ano ang kadalasang trabaho ng mga tao dito?)	bong <i>banwe</i> , bong kabanwe	ang dautan nga tawo, ginaingon nga mupaingon sa ilalom sa yuta (mule lam tanu , 'ilalim ng lupa'), lugar ni Blagul (ug ni Se We, daghan siya totoy, kay sa iya katotoy ang mga bata nga mamatay); ang maayo ug dinaugdaug kuhaon, i- rapture, paadto kay Fye We' (ang masasama, pupunta sa Kalilaliman, kay Blagul, ang mabubuti, kukunin ni Fye We, dadalhin sa Kalawakan)	kaftoo, kdasal , dasal (katulad ng Tagalog na dasal)	
With translation inputs from friends: Kerlan Fanagel (Blaan), Prof. Emmanuel Nabayra, Jr. (Mandaya), Benito Dawsay, Teody Mansimuy-at (Pantaron Manobo), Matet Gonzalo, Raquel Mandaya (Tagakaolo), Tio Monico Cayug (Tagabawa Bagobo)						

Selected Ethnolinguistic Groups and Key Indigenous Categories Pertaining to Life and Living (B)					
Ethnolinguistic Groups	Meta-categories and local terms				
	Bahay HOUSE	Pamumuhay LIVELIHOOD	Daigdig WORLD	Kabilang-buhay AFTERLIFE	Pananampalataya SPIRITUALITY
	The following can serve as a <i>lumad</i> meta-category translating the above concepts:				
Lumad	BALAY	KAOYAHAN	BANWA	INGOD TO GIMOKOD	PANUBAD
HEURISTIC AND INTERPRETIVE NOTES	The linguistic form BALAY is the most stable across areas; the concept may translate well as house = dwelling place ; as <i>tuluhan</i> , <i>torogan</i> (Maranaw; Tag., <i>tulogan</i>), it is the place where one 'sleeps and rests': a moving-and-resting place par excellence)	The terms <i>oya</i> / <i>eyya</i> may be related to the forms <i>puyo</i> (Bis.) and <i>ugpa</i> (Manobo); the underlying concept may translate well as place-condition-means of living or the house as 'life-place': if the house is the foundational space, <i>ugpaan</i> / <i>kaoyahan</i> describes the quality (living a 'beautiful life') of that living-resting-place house.	Banwa/ingod is the larger dwelling place enwrapping the life-place of the house : it is a 'life-world', defining both (a) the sphere where one does life in the broadest sense, and (b) the world as a breathing-caring (ginawa/goinawa), living-and-life-giving sphere (cf., 'life' as <i>umo</i> , in Obo Bagobo {Cabazares and Tamos, 2013}, with its it-is-alive-if-it-gives-life logic).	Either as two linked worlds (two-sided worlds: this-side and the-other-side or the-seen-world and the-unseen-world) or three (the 'other world' is divided again into 'world-below' and 'world-above'), the idea of <i>banwa</i> and <i>dakel banwa</i> , is perhaps well conceptualized as the same earth-world seen from different angles (or, emphasizing different dimensions): its socio-material aspects (<i>banwa</i>) and its symbolic-affective-virtual aspects (featuring spectral qualities and sensed images: 'the world of <i>gimokod</i> -images').	The ghostly, spectral world of the <i>dakel banwa</i> is re-experienced in this domain as a world of faith-evoking contingencies, prompting one to think of the world as a person-to-talk-to (or a person to call from the depths of one's <i>ginawa/loob</i>): this is perhaps the basic sense of <i>panubad-tubad</i> or <i>panawag-tawag</i> practices.
	The three categories (<i>balay-oya-banwa</i>) can be diagrammed as two concentric circles of an expanding/deepening living space, with its mode marked by a third category <i>oya</i> ('mode of living').			The idea of an other-world/ <i>kabilang-buhay</i> is, therefore, a second qualitative handling of the <i>balay-banwa</i> : <i>gimokod</i> -thinking as a second <i>oya</i> -mode, the world as full of potent spectral entities. It is the <i>ginawa/buot/loob</i> that senses this dimension of the everyday world, sometimes accessing this in dreams. Imagine the diagrammed life-circle as split into two when everything in it is suddenly infused with spectral qualities: this splitting is the very sense of <i>buhay-kabilang-buhay</i> mode of thinking.	Perhaps in its germinal design, the indigenous world portrays an expansive balay-banwa world experienced thrice : (a) as a caring sphere where one moves and sleeps, (b) as a terrifying place where almost everything in it, and even itself as a whole, can be seen as both having familiar and deathly, spectral dimensions: a world where unseen and half-seen forces and powers are ascendant in our senses, and (c) as a world-person to talk to.

Where is the concern with health and well-being located in the <i>balay-banwa</i> frame?				
Bahay HOUSE	Pamumuhay LIVELIHOOD	Daigdig WORLD	Kabilang-buhay AFTERLIFE	Pananampalataya SPIRITUALITY
Dwelling place: place where one moves (sit, stand, work, eat, drink, walk around, breathe and love {as <i>ginawa/goinawa</i> }, sleep, dream, think)	Describes the quality of that living-resting-place house (living a 'beautiful life'/magandang buhay): mode of living . <u>First mode</u> of experiencing the house-world: as a caring sphere where one moves and sleeps.	The life-world enwrapping the house: (a) the sphere where one does life in the broadest sense, and (b) the world as a breathing-caring sphere . The expanded 'house'.	<u>Second mode</u> of experiencing the house-world: as a terrifying place where almost everything in it, and even itself as a whole, can be seen as having deathly, spectral dimensions.	<u>Third mode</u> of experiencing the house-world: as a world-person to talk to .
Indigenous views on well-being and health: (a) what makes a good life (<i>magandang buhay</i> , <i>kangayan ka kantayan</i> {Tagabawa Bagobo}, <i>katubungan</i> {Pantaron Manobo})? Satisfying one's objects of thought/desire for each domain...				
'magandang bahay'	'laging may mapagkukunan ng pagkain', 'maginhawang buhay'	'magandang lupain'	'magandang kamatayan'	'pagmamahal ng may-kapal' (ginawa ng Manama {Tagabawa Bagobo}, goinawa ng Magbabaya {Pantaron Manobo})
Indigenous views on well-being and health: (b) what obstructs the making of a good life? Afflictions coming from...				
 <p><i>The center of gravity of indigenous concerns with sickness and afflictions appears to be located in this domain.</i> The world-body is experienced as subject to intrusive, malevolent forces and dangerous powers.</p>				

The *busaw*-force of *Ingod-to-Gimokod* (IG) {spectral-world} is seen as actively seeping into the **house-world** and challenges its *kaoyahan* {mode of living}. This explains why the central figure of the IG-domain, the **balyan**, who officiates agricultural rites is also the figure of healing and medicines.

8 Materia medica

The study was able to document a total of 108 plants and 3 other natural products, 2 traditional healers, and 5 community informants in the community were documented from the 3 sitios covered in Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao del Norte. The appendix lists the scientific name, local name/s, common name, its indication, part/s used, preparation, and direction for use and the plants actual photo if available.

Based on the name's frequency mentioned in the collated set of listed afflictions provided us the rough idea of the possible 'top-ranking' of plants and non-plants utilized by respondents of each area. Therefore, led to the top 4 frequently used herbal plants in various afflictions which included: bayabas (*Psidium guajava* L.) , orasan (*Meliosma* sp.), mandalingan (Genus indet.), iso (*Blumea balsamifera* (L.) DC.), banag (*Smilax lanceifolia* Roxb.).

Most of the preparations are made from single plants and are prepared by boiling (decoction) and (infusion), and are taken orally or applied as poultice.

Physical concerns with highest range of multiple cures (top 6) documented were measles, diarrhea, stomach ache, post-partum relapse, body pain, and fever.

If a more rigorous sampling is done with this pattern in view, it opens up the interesting question of the ecological and cultural factors that serve as basis for the emerging ranking.

Again, although our sampling practice is unsystematic, it is interesting to observe some commonalities and differences in the kinds of afflictions given importance by our informants on the basis of their memory-based responses to our simple question, 'what are the illnesses and afflictions in their area and what plants are utilized for their treatment?'

The study also documented (3) local illnesses and conditions, and (1) ritual done in the community.

Concluding Points

How the community can make use of the research

Area/Ethnicity	Important area features	Health Needs	Can research help? In what way?
Malita (Tagakaolo)	Areas visited have high literacy rate	Health materials for the community	Protection of key medicinal plants
Todaya (Tagabawa)		Guidebook on useful plants for illnesses	Advocacy and teaching materials for their school
Makilala (Tagabawa)	Has Brgy. Health Clinic, midwife; near the town, access to market; limited sources of herbal, plant		Data will help NGOs working in the community
Lokatong (Tagabawa)		Technical needs in establishing their herbarium; materials for herbarium	
Talaingod (Manobo)	Far from the central town	Hygeine, Basic health training	Scientific plant identification; capsule and syrup making, ointment
Mati (Mandaya)		Kamunaan museum (Atty. Al Aquino): scientific plant identification	

The table above lists a sample of health needs and some possible intervention responses

KEY **INDIVIDUALS** IN THE COMMUNITIES ARE CONTINUING **PARTNERS** (OF UNIVERSITY-BASED RESEARCHERS) IN DOING SUSTAINED DOCUMENTATION, PROCESSING, AND APPROPRIATION FOR **VARIED USES BY THE PEOPLE** OF THE GROWING DATA

It is important to underline the **evolving nature** of the research

that can be undertaken as take-offs of this study.

As mentioned in the opening chapter, this study is conducted with a long-term view of a healthy interaction between knowledgeable villagers and academe-based individuals who are committed to forging closer bonds with the struggling indigenous communities. The

evolving nature of this kind of research should result to a continuous checking and rechecking of the data, assumptions, and interpretations in the course of any collaborative works on the theme of local history and cultural analysis for community self-knowledge.

IF FOLKS DO **HAVE LIVING KNOWLEDGE AND ACCESS** TO USABLE PLANT SOURCES (LIKE THE MANOBOS LIVING NEAR THE PANTARON RANGE), WHY ARE THEY **STILL ATTRACTED** (PERHAPS EVEN CONSIDERING AS MORE EFFECTIVE) **TO USING NON-INDIGENOUS, COMMERCIALIZED MEDICINES?**

An observed disjoint in folks' knowledge and behaviour might just be overtaken by the **development of new attitudes** if there is a continuing shared activity between villagers and academe-based researchers

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