

A Guide to the Islands of Corpses and Gold

From Then Till Now

This Story is but one Song in a Sea of Voices.

Before, there was only the Sky and the Sea. Bathala, the Creator, saw a coconut floating in the vastness of the Sea from his throne in the Sky. It would not have taken root without land so Bathala sent down his familiars, the crocodile, the turtle, and the eagle. They became the three Island groups, Buwaya, Pawikan, and Haribon.

The coconut took root and soon forests covered the Islands. In time, that same tree began to wilt. Bathala felt mercy for the tree and granted it a second life. And from the tree emerged the Tawo.

Though from the same Mother Tree, the Tawo were greedy and bloodthirsty, and they always fought amongst themselves. They separated into different communities called Barangay; some stayed along the Sea and rivers, some retreated to the mountains, and others found other islands to call home.

For ages, the Tawo sought each other out and stole and killed. Ships were sailed in raids and in defense. Lives were a commodity as valuable as gold.

From where the Sun rises, past the never-ending waters of Dagat Sinilangan, came giant ships fitted with arrays of cannons. On these ships are men whose skin reflects the Sun.

They preached about the Sun's goodness. The Tawo who listened were baptized in the Sun's Light. Those who resisted were baptized in the Sun's Fire.

Decades since the Sun Priests first arrived, and the Islands are more fractured than ever. Tributes for the insatiable Sun have tipped the bountiful balance between Nature and Tawo. Neighbors and brothers are too entrenched in deeply rooted vendettas to unite against the Light and Fire. Monsters born of spreading hate are multiplying. And enterprising forces are taking advantage of the chaos.

These Islands are of corpses; the Seas, of blood. This is your home. Find your place in it.

What is this Setting?

These are the Islands of Blood and Gold, a folklore-fantasy setting heavily inspired by Philippine legends and myths and Classical Filipino culture, written as a campaign setting for tabletop roleplaying games. Being completely accurate to the culture and folklore of our ancestors is impossible, but I tried to make something familiar and respectful to them.

The societal culture detailed in this setting is based on accounts and letters from the Spanish presence on the islands at the time. Very little remains of precolonial oral and written literature made by Filipinos themselves, so their perspective of their own culture is lost. While I appreciate the accounts of the Spaniards that enable us to have a glimpse into what we have lost, the colonizers had values and perspectives different from our ancestors, so it is good to take what they have written with a healthy amount of awareness that they aren't completely favorable depictions.

There's also the issue that the Spaniards themselves are part of the cause of our culture and literature becoming lost, but a preface is hardly the appropriate place to get into this "what if" situation. This whole setting, and the stories it can potentially create, is my "what if".

Acknowledgements

These books, tabletop RPGs, and other forms of media helped me in writing this setting:

*Barangay – Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society by William Henry Scott
Philippine Folk Literature Series by Damiana Eugenio
Karanduun and Gubat Banwa by Makapatag
A Thousand Thousand Islands by Zedeck Siew and Mun Kao
Princess Mononoke by Studio Ghibli
Guidebook to the Duchy of Valnwall by Peter C. Spahn*

What System can I run this setting with?

I wrote this setting with the Old School Renaissance and D&D in mind, but I intend for it to be system-neutral.

Themes and Adventures

*The setting has a huge focus on **Anti-Colonialism**, so most conflict has to do with that and its effects on culture and nature.*

*A lot of conflict also has to do with gold and greed, and the best ways of satisfying that hunger for wealth is **Delving Into Dangerous Places** and **Waging War With Other Villages**.*

*Conflicts and problems are solved in the perspective of **Healing Illnesses**. Illnesses are any disruptions to the harmony of one's body, community, or even the entire islands. The method of healing is up to the discretion of the healer; whether through parleying, defense, or more direct means.*

*Another huge focus is on **Naval Combat And Travel**, so slap on some naval mechanics to your favorite ruleset.*

200 Native Names

You may use names in any language you like, if meaning is what's important to you.

But if you must adhere to the naming sense in the Islands, here are the names of 200 natives. Wear their names well and proudly.

Abayan, Abtin, Aganad, Agas, Agawin, Agbayani, Agbibilin, Aglibut, Agpalo, Agtutubu, Aguio, Agyu, Apoy, Araw, Aso Managa, Bagasbas, Bagot-banua, Bagsik, Baguio, Bakay, Balalayao, Balandra, Balaraw, Balatama, Banaag, Bangkain, Banklak, Banlak, Bantok, Battalan, Batum-bakal, Baybay, Bayun, Bia, Biagan, Bilog, Binaohan, Bitadlok, Biuag, Bocalan, Bugnos, Bugtong, Bulakna, Bulanawan, Bulandi, Bulosan, Bunuan, Bunyi, Buso, Buwan, Dahan, Dakila, Dalisay, Dalit, Dalogdog, Danao, Dayanghirang, Dilag, Dimaano, Dimaapi, Dimagiba, Dimailig, Dimalanta, Dimasupil, Dimaya, Dimayuga, Diwa, Dumagas, Dumagat, Dumalapdap, Dungo, Euminung-gud, Gagalak, Galang, Gipit, Golobatnon, Gumabay, Halili, Hangad, Hulag-ay, Humadapnin, Huni, Igkasan, Ilagan, Ilaw, Indarapatra, Iro, Kaakbay, Kabungsuan, Kaeg, Kagampang, Kaibigan, Kalayag, Kalinaw, Kalinga, Kalupitan, Kanlungan, Karimbang, Karunungan, Katakataka, Katapang, Kaylaw, Kilala, Kimuyog, Kolakog, Kusgano, Kuyugan, Labaw Dingin, Labis, Lakan-ilaw, Laksamana, Lam-ang, Lamdagan, Langit, Ligaya, Litaw, Lmabat, Lumaban, Lumanlan, Lumtuad, Lunak, Luwalhati, Mababangloob, Mabini, Madamba, Madayag, Magana, Maganda, Maglaya, Magpantay, Magtuto, Makabuhay, Makadengdeng, Makalinaw, Makalipat, Makapagal, Makasait, Makiling, Malakas, Malaki, Malana, Maliksi, Manalili, Manalo, Manalon, Manalunta, Manasan, Mangabel, Mangahas, Mangtanggol, Manibog, Marikit, Masangga, Matamis, Matan-ayon, Matubis, Matulin, Namokatkat, Ondayag, Pagaspas, Pagunsan, Palaris, Palikpik, Panganiban, Pataksil, Paubari, Pomolau, Puyat, Ragasa, Sabakan, Sagisag, Saklolo, Salonga, Sanga, Saplala, Sikat, Sulayman, Sulit, Sumarang, Sumulong, Tabang, Tabil, Taer, Talaw, Tambuwanai, Tanghal, Tanikala, Taposok, Tawan, Tibayan, Tigas, Timbankaya, Tumakder, Tungol, Tusok, Ulap, Utali, Yakapin, Zula

The World, briefly put

Here are some general details about the Islands, the Sea surrounding it, and the folks living in them. Useful for when you need to explain the setting in brief, or as a handout for players.

You are Tawo. Natives of the Islands and raiders of the Sea. You live for trade and War, and feast at the end of the day. You descended from the Mother Coconut Tree, making you as much of a native as all others on the islands.

The Islands are the broken corpses of the familiars of Bathala. He sent them down from the stars so that we would have a home. No one lays claim on the Islands, for there is plenty of land for everyone.

In the Islands, you are surrounded by Nature. Forest-laden mountains, valleys netted with rivers, naturally-formed cave Underworlds, the expanse of the Sea. Anything constructed is still inexplicably natural; fortifications are made of bamboo and natural formations of the ground, mansions are made of hardwood, and temples are simply ancient trees.

Everything on the Islands is alive. Diwata is what gods and nature spirits are called, and Yawa is what demons are called, though the line separating the two are blurred. Diwata exist in the mountains, the trees, the seas, and even the stars in the sky. Give them their due respect and hospitality.

Water connects all. They are roads, paths from one place to another. Boats and ships are exceedingly common. Those who do not have a boat know how to swim. Water is never a barrier.

Social castes are volatile. The Datu is head, judge, and general of his barangay. Timawa are free men who follow the Datu of their own volition. Oripun are debtor slaves owned by the Datu or wealthy Timawa. Rising through society is a matter of hard work, enterprising spirit, or martial might. And falling down the castes is an easier task.

Each barangay (community) is a largely independent chiefdom. There are loose federations of Datu, but without a King figure. These alliances are built on trade and mutual protection. Barangays outside federations and alliances are trade partners or targets for raids and war.

Other island natives and folk have varied relationships with Tawo. Different cultures and values have caused indifference and wars many times before, but it is possible to choose harmony.

Monsters are the product of enmity and turmoil. There is no inherent evil, only unfortunate circumstances. Hate, destruction, war, colonization; to truly purge monsters, one must purge these first. Makes you wonder if it's even possible.

Colonization is a disease spreading through the islands. From where the Sun rises came giant ships, each with an army of cannons and guns. The priests of the Sun enslave Tawo and burn through the resources of the Islands. If nothing is done about it, the fate of the Islands is sealed.

The Tawo

You wish to know about the Islands? There is much to learn, *apo*. Why don't we start with our own culture, the culture of the Tawo? Sit down, for this will be a long lecture.

Ancestries

The first of our ancestors were born from the first coconut tree. We take after this tree we call Mother Tree.

We **Tawong Kinis**, Smoothmen, came from the meat of the coconut fruit. Our skin is smooth and mostly hairless, but our long and slender limbs give us a range of physicality unlike other Tawo. As if insecure of our featureless skin, we adorn it with jewelry, pins, and tattoos more than any other Tawo.

We **Tawong Ilog**, Crocodilemen, came from the bark of the coconut tree. Our skin is tough and scaly, our jaws are a powerful natural weapon. Our stout limbs give us no favors in land travel, but the water is our second habitat. We are stubborn and punitive when it comes to tradition.

We **Tawong Balahibo**, Ratmen, came from the fibrous husk of the coconut fruit. We are the shortest and hairiest of the Tawo. With our small, padded feet and hands, we have a tendency to sneak away from certain danger. We are cowardly alone but capable in numbers.

We **Tawong Sungay**, Carabaomen, came from the branches that hold the coconut fruit. Our skin is covered with short, dark hair, our heads are crowned with horns in a half circle, and our feet are hoofed. The strongest of the Tawo, we are always eager to finish the work we start.

We **Tawong Puno**, Treemen, came from the palms of the coconut tree. We look the most like our Mother Tree, with skin made of branches, palms and leaves twisted around each other. Traces of the magic of creation flow through our blood. We are aloof but firm on their feet.

Local Cultures

The Islands are covered with Mountains, and the lifestyle of those that live among the clouds differ greatly from those from the lowlands. They call themselves the **Taga-Bundok**; they are mostly nomads living in these forest-laden peaks, never staying in one place for long, hunting and gathering from within reach. They are expert archers, their technique refined as their main means of feeding the family.

Those that live in the lowlands of the Buwaya have perfected large-scale agriculture by irrigating the flat plains with ditches sourced from rivers. The **Taga-Buwaya** are also expert merchants; their ports are the centers for most of the foreign trade in the Islands. And for them, War is also a business venture.

Those that live on the broken shells of the Pawikan are surrounded by the Sea, more so than any other Culture in the Islands. It is said that the **Taga-Pawikan** are capable of faring the Sea before they learn to walk. And of course, they are also relentless foes in a Sea Raid.

Those that live in the wings of the Haribon live connected to each other, compared to other Islands. The **Taga-Haribon** celebrate the Sultan, a royalty above all Datus of the Island, appointed by the Minokawa, the Sun Eater. Because of their religious fervor and organization, the Sun Priests have yet to make a foothold in the Haribon. They think of others as weak for letting the colonizers set foot on their Islands

Other-Folk are fellow natives of the Islands alongside us Tawo. They have their own ways of life, but it is not unheard of for them to live among us in a Barangay. In such circumstances, special considerations for us and them are kept for harmony to prevail.

The Tawo and Community

The Barangay

The **Barangay** is the settlement, community, or group of Tawo, led by the Datu. In different parts of the Islands, the community is also known as **Haop**, **Lunsod**, **Banwaan**, and **Bayan**. From nomadic tribes of a handful of families, to thriving communities numbering hundreds of households. The bonds that build a Barangay come before ancestry. Forged in warfare, and cultivated in peace.

The Barangay lives within and as part of Nature. Our houses line rivers and shorelines for kilometers. The land and Sea is only ever borrowed. You can plant anywhere in a farm, but you only ever own what you sow and never the land. If you take in excess, you will be punished by Nature itself.

Relations with Other Barangay

Each Barangay is independent, and a Datu only has power over their immediate following. There are loose federations of communities and villages on these islands, built by Datus who protect, trade, and give tributes to each other. We call them **Kadatuan**. These federations are not ruled by kings; Datus of smaller and weaker villages may defer to older, stronger and richer Datus, but deference does not give a Datu control over another's Barangay.

Outside the Kadatuan, there are all kinds of relationships. We have friends and trade partners from near and far. Trade is a bond that connects the Islands, and even other nations' shores, together. We also have enemies with feuds originating from ages past. Distance is not too high of a wall, for the seasonal winds will take you anywhere if you wait for the right time.

Relations with Other-Folk

We Tawo are not the only folk living on the Islands. Animals and beasts are found in every area of the Islands, the Sea, and the Sky. There are also the bloodthirsty Aswang, the prideful Dambuhala, the protective Bantay Dagat, the mischievous Anakbalete. These Other-Folk are different from the us, in physiology, temperament, and culture, but do not be mistaken. They are different, but they are not absolute evils.

Just as in our relationships with other Barangays and Tawo, our relationships with Other-Folk are varied and robust. The Aswang may have most Tawo as enemies because of their nature, but find themselves accepted by others. The Dambuhala may cause terror for their neighbors, but others have found themselves leading their own Barangay of Tawo. The Bantay Dagat may be in constant conflict with us for the sake of protecting their precious Sea, but they are also known for giving refuge to the abused.

Social Castes

Our Barangay is divided into three castes: the Datu, the Timawa, and the Oripun.

Our **Datu** leads our Barangay. We receive his bahandi treasures, listen to his judgement in times of trials, and follow him to War. Other Tawo know them as **Rajah**, **Batara**, **Sarripada**, **Timuay**, and **Kammaranan**. No one in the Barangay is more skilled in the sword, the boat, the net, the anvil, or the tongue, for an untalented Datu is a Datu who cannot lead.

You too can become Datu of your own Barangay. One becomes when they gain a following, whether through valor or through fear.

The **Timawa** is the Free Man. They owe no debt to the Datu, but they follow them of their own volition and for their own protection. Other Free Men across the islands are known as **Ginoo** and **Orangkaya**

They are like the Knights and Samurai of distant nations from the west and north. They are free to accumulate wealth, and free to pursue a craft without the need to farm for food. But they must follow their Datu into battle.

They are even free to release their bond from their Datu and pledge allegiance to another, but rumors about those who do that are rare.

A Timawa who has earned the Datu's utmost respect and trust becomes their close confidant and personal retainer called the **Maharlika** or **Maginoo**.

The **Oripun** or **Alipin** is the Debtor Slave, making up most of our population. They owe a Debt to the Datu or a wealthy Timawa and they work to pay it back. Their creditors do not have complete control over them, however. The Oripun must always be given time to practice his own craft and tend to his own farm.

In War, they are **Horohan**; footmen in land battles and oarsmen in sea raids. By participating in War, they can be given part of the loot, earning their freedom much faster. They might also be recognized for their bravery and valor and become Datu, too.

For the lines between Datu, Timawa, and Oripun are blurred and volatile. Both the Timawa and Oripun can gain a following and become Datu of their own Barangay, but being Datu does not erase one's Debt.

There are a multitude of languages and dialects used in these Islands, and so the words other Barangays may use to call their social castes, but the concepts are the same.

Common Trades and Crafts

In our Barangay, there is a diverse set of roles that keep it running.

Almost everyone in the Barangay tills a plot of swidden farmland, aside from their own craft and profession. This makes the majority of our population a **Magsasaka**. The Datu or wealthy Timawa might have Oripun to farm for them but when extra hands are needed, they will get their bahags muddled, too.

The plains of the Islands of the Buwaya enable more bountiful farming. The **Masawarat** are the farmers who continue to innovate in irrigation technology.

We taught you skills in boating before you could hold a sword, for without knowing how to paddle a baroto, you will never be able to get anywhere. The most skillful in the paddling and steering of sea vessels among us is called the **Mandaragat**.

Our **Manggugubat** wield swords, spears, and shields to protect the Barangay and follows the Datu into battle. In the Islands of the Pawikan, warriors are called **Mangagayaw** and specialize in prestigious Sea Raids.

In times of peace, our warriors' swords are sheathed and use their ships to trade with other Barangays or far off Nations as **Karakal**. Those who live in the Islands of the Buwaya are perhaps the most skilled in the art of trade. From these isles come the **Maglalako**, full-time merchants of wares, primarily clothes.

Our **Mangingisda** launch their fishing boats into the Sea, rivers, and lakes to harvest their bounties with nets, traps, and tridents.

Our **Mangangayam** set out deep in the forests with bow in hand and dogs in front to hunt game like deer and boar. They also make use of traps like pitfalls, nets, or ballistas. In the islands of the Buwaya, they are known as the mangagaso.

the gatherers of the taga-bundok know where to find and harvest the islands bounty. they know ways to go through a brush nd climb the highest of trees.

There is danger and death lurking everywhere in these islands. Our **Babaylan** heightens our chances of continued existence with their knowledge of herbal medicines. They are also capable of communicating with the Spirits, so that they may intervene between illness and black magic. The **Manggagaway** is the more sinister counterpart of the Babaylan for instead of healing, they curse with their dark sorceries. Though their application of the magical forces may be different, they are two sides of the same slate. The Babaylan who restores also has the knowledge to hurt their fellow Tawo. So does the Manggagaway know how to take away illnesses.

baliyan, katulunan
mangkukulam

Our stories and legends are told and passed down through song, which makes the **Paraawit** the keepers of our lore and literature. Our very own is an impressive professional, for he is able to sing without rest for days.

I, the **Parawali**, am an elder and teacher to the Barangay. My wisdom, accumulated through a lifetime, is used to help everyone here; Oripun, Timawa, and even the great Datu. Oh, do not mistake my boast for arrogance, or the buwaya might swallow you whole.

In building a functional Barangay, just as important as the warriors are the **Panday**. They are the ones who build and craft everything we use and everything we sell. It is but a generalized term, because every Panday has their own specialization.

Those who craft iron tools and weaponry are the **Panday sa Puthaw**.

Those who fashion gold into the elegant accessories we wear everyday are the **Panday sa Bulawan**.

Those who can pick out the best hardwood trees and sculpt them to their vision are the **Panday sa Kahoy**.

Those who erect houses, more importantly, the sturdy and lasting Balay where the Datu resides, are the **Panday sa Balay**.

Those who sit in front of their looms everyday to weave intricately designed clothes and textiles are the **Panday sa Habul**.

Those who sculpt clay into pottery of all kinds and sizes, with which we contain almost everything, are the **Panda sa Dihoon**.

Those who carve out whole logs to create any seaworthy vessels, from dugout baroto to the plank-built karakoa, with which our travel and trade flows, are called the **Panday sa Bangka**.

Those who paint onto our skins with ink and needles the marks of true warriors, are called the **Panday sa Batuk**.

There are enough professions here to convert fantasy RPG classes with, though they're not 1:1 conversions. The Manggugubat or Mangangayaw are like Fighters specialized for either on land or sea, the Mangangaso is like a Ranger, and the Babaylan, Manggagaway, and Paraawit can be used as spellcasters of different kinds. You'll be hard-pressed looking for equivalents for classes like the Thief or Paladin, because the Tawo does not have a culture that supports these professions.

The Tawo and Conflict

War

The seasonal winds, Amihan and Habagat, tell us when it is time for War. With the winds before our sails, we glide above the Sea towards a harvest of gold and Oripun. Timawa follow the Datu on his karakoa or on their own ships, to find glory in the heat of battle. Oripun row the boats of their creditors and try to accomplish heroic acts to earn their freedom.

The Sea is our most common battleground. We lift our sails to raid a Barangay, and their defenders lift their sails to meet us in battle. War paints the Sea red, and the Sea is the grave of many Tawo.

The reefs underneath the waves, the hidden channels and currents, we know how to navigate around and through them. Our karakoa ships glide through them effortlessly by design of our ancestors. The Sun Priests' galleons stand no chance against these invisible threats. Their hulls crack and their keels lead them where they do not wish to go. Utilize these elements of our Seas against them; our ships' freedom and mobility are our only advantage against their legion of cannons.

War on land is less common and prestigious. If our enemy does not have boats to defend themselves with, we face them on the beaches and shores. In the wilderness, we avoid head-on confrontation. Instead, we stalk our prey and wait for the perfect moment to strike.

In War, we fight for gold and slaves, not land. There is enough land for everyone, but not enough hands to work it. The gold is divided amongst the Datu and those who fought beside him. The slaves are either ransomed back to their Barangay, sold in trading ports, or integrated into ours as Oripun, filling many roles.

Being warriors is our occupation, and War is our business. But we do not attack those we don't have a grudge against. Only then is War reprehensible.

Do you think of our culture of War as cruel? We cannot stop now; our ancestors passed down these grudges and cycles of death. If anyone is to forge a new path, it is you who are seeing these Islands with a new mind.

Disease

We think of disease as a disruption of harmony. They are manifestations of antagonistic forces in the flesh. Fevers from insect bites, organ failure from Aswang attacks, cancers and swelling from the curses. These are diseases of the body, but disruption of harmony does not only exist on such a small scale.

You could say our Barangay is diseased when it is slowly being eaten up by War, harassed by hateful Halimaw, when it is challenged by the storms and disasters of Yawa, or anything that causes the community unrest. And the Islands themselves are being plagued with the colonization of Sun Priests. Their Light and their Fire burn everything in their path.

When faced with disease, there are those who stand to resist it. Parleying with the opposing party is a common method. Strengthening and augmenting the ailing body, so it would stand a better chance in the fight, is another. Seeking and destroying the antagonistic forces is the most direct approach.

There are not a few Tawo who think of themselves as healers of illnesses. Some stay in service to a Datu, others travel the Islands and Sea, looking for problems to solve.

Peace

Just as War, Peace is dictated by the Seasons. We enjoy periods of Peace before the winds bring our enemies to our shores once again.

In Peace, we still lift our sails, but in the pursuit of trade. We bring the commodities we have produced to neighboring and faraway shores and ports, and we bring back commodities that we need.

A sacred way of attaining Peace is through the Sanduguan. The Datus of two Barangays let their blood spill on a cup of wine, which they both drink. They are now brothers of one blood; between brothers, grudges are forgotten and Peace prevails.

The Tawo and Culture

Physical Appearance and Attire

Our basic attire is the bahag *g-string* and malong *tube skirt*, though jackets and trousers are not uncommon. Textiles made right at home are used as headdresses, sashes and cloaks. These common clothes, made from cotton, abaca, and silk, have colorful patterns derived from Nature.

We keep our attire light and breathable to combat the humid climate of the Islands. But however lightly we wear, we always show off extravagant gold and jewelry. Even the poorest Tawo would not be found outside without gold to weigh on their limbs.

Tattoo patterns of bird feathers and crocodile scales, to give some examples, are a common sight. Especially in the Pawikan islands, where they believe tattoos are the marks of bravery and valor. Their most elite warriors are covered from head to toe, forgoing clothing on their backs to showcase their inked skin and strike fear into their enemies.

We chew on betel nut many times in a day; it is a common pastime and intimate means of bonding. You will not see an adult Tawo on these Islands whose teeth have not been stained black or red from the betel nut's pigment. Smile, weigh your body with gold, and show you are Tawo!

Travel

The Islands are netted with rivers and surrounded by the Sea, and so seafaring is our main mode of transportation. Skill in the Sail and the Paddle is ubiquitous, and even the smallest child can swim. Remember, the Sea and its waters connect us together, not keep us apart.

I've heard songs of faraway nations that use beasts to lug their cargo on long journeys. We have no need for the use of these beasts; they turn rivers into obstacles rather than pathways for they cannot swim as well as we do. Perhaps they do not have many rivers?

Work and Art

Hands are just as busy in Peace as in War. Every Barangay on these Islands burn a plot of forest to make land fertile for farming. We periodically switch our farm plots and let the forest grow back so that we don't strangle the life of Nature out of that area.

Those who had the fortune to settle on plains and riverland have methods of irrigation that can support wider rice farms and plantations of fruit. Those who have settled on the mountains prowl its forests and heights for game. Those near the rivers, swamps and Sea harvest from the bounty of underwater life.

Our artisans and craftsmen pursue their craft with such skill and intricacy. Art is present in every product; in the colorful patterns of our textiles, the proud symbolism of our tattoos, the sophisticated sculpture of our gold jewelry, and even the nailless carpentry of our houses. Our written literature exists in the form of characters carved into slates of bamboo or copper but it is oration and song that give the legends life, so we pass down most literature orally, parent to child, or paraawit to Barangay.

Trade and Goods

We Tawo are natural-born merchants. In times of Peace, our warriors use their ships to sail to other Barangays and neighboring nations to trade. Many seaside Barangays act as trading

ports; commodities from our Islands are exported here, while jewelry, metals, and other products are imported here from foreign lands.

Rice is so common as a trading good, it is almost like a currency. Fruits like coconuts and bananas, and tubers like yams and gabi are shipped by boatloads. Coconut is also often processed as oil.

Barangays by the river and seaside sell fish, sea salt, turtle shells, and pearls. Barangays in the mountains bring down their forest game and hides, horns and antlers, and wax and honey from beehives.

Textiles are also a valuable commodity. Blankets and cloth are weaved by folks who stay home, and threads of cotton and abaca are spun by them. Pottery is another handmade export.

Our Islands have few reserves of iron ore, so steel and iron weaponry or other products to be repurposed or smelted is a common import. We also make good use of foreign weaponry, like the katana and luthang. Porcelain and stoneware is often imported from the never-ending island in the north, while bronze gongs and elegant textiles are imported from islands from the nearby south.

Feasts and Food

Feasting and drinking are the fitting capstone to our hard, long labor in both War and Peace. The Datu is obligated to sponsor this merrymaking for his workers and warriors. In feasts, the Datu, Timawa, and Oripun eat under the same roof.

We boil rice, root crops and bananas. We roast, fry in coconut oil, or smoke vegetables, fish and meat. We make rice cakes by steaming in sections of bamboo or wrapped in banana leaves.

We make alcohol by distilling rice, sugarcane juice, or barks, palms, and saps of certain trees. We never drink alone, for it is a social tradition.

To our family, friends, and guests, we put betel nuts from our hands to mouth. This builds camaraderie. Though, this tradition is not limited to feasting, but also done in everyday life.

I noticed your mouth watering and stomach grumbling from this lecture. It is good to have a deep love for our food, but we have more to discuss!

Gold

There is no way around it; we are obsessed with gold. Its gleam, its weight, its texture; sails are lifted and wars are waged for these. How much gold one has dictates how respected they are.

Most gold is stockpiled in one's home, to be passed down to our children. But we also wear what we can as common attire. Gold in the form of headdresses, earrings, necklaces, armbands, bracelets, rings, and anklets; we hang this precious metal wherever we can. Some even have golden pins hammered into their teeth and members.

Gold is just stockpiled in one's home. Gold is worn as part of common attire. These are in the form of headdresses, earrings, necklaces, armbands, bracelets, rings, and anklets. Some even choose to have golden pins hammered into their teeth.

Gold is also widely accepted as a medium of trade, especially in trade with other nations. Not even the Samot can deny the appeal of our gold!

Housing

Our Datu lives in a balay, a house supported by high beams of hardwood. We use a ladder to enter the main chamber with walls made of wood and floors made of bamboo and rattan. Be careful when stepping on the floor while the Datu is asleep; the floors might make noise.

A higher floor is used as the quarters of the Datu and his family. The roof is steep and made of bamboo or palm leaf shingles, designed to protect the interior from the frequent rain and storms. A fence surrounds the hardwood beams beneath the house floors, to be used as a storeroom and cage for animals.

The outside of the Datu's balay is used as a community center, where important events are held. It is where we meet, where we feast and celebrate, where we enact judgement, and where we rally for War.

Smaller Barangays need not make separate houses, for the Datu's balay can provide roof for a few families. If a Barangay's population is larger, Timawa and Oripun might build their own houses.

Wealthy Timawa who can afford the materials and labor can also make smaller balay. They dare not build one more extravagant than the Datu's, which is the same as challenging the Datu's power. Both Timawa and Oripun can live in balay-balay, cottages made of lighter materials. They can pick up their balay-balay and settle where it's most convenient; usually it's where their farm crops are, or lined along the rivers or Sea.

In times of War, defenseless Tawo retreat to tree houses. These temporary shelters, only accessible by ladders or vines, are made impossible to reach by enemies by pulling the way up. The area underneath these houses may also be trapped.

I've heard songs of Taga-Bundok living in dug-out huts, with walls and roofs made of mud and thatch, sealed carefully to keep away the coldness of their climate. Their Datus seem to not care for extravagance, and opt for the same sizes of huts as their people.

Slavery and Debt

Oripun make up the majority of our Barangay. They are either born from Oripun parents, bought from Samot merchants, or taken in Sea Raids. They owe a **Debt of Wealth** to their creditor, who are usually the Datu or a Timawa.

To pay off this debt, they must work. Oripun with their own houses gives their creditor a portion of their farm crops or profit from their trade. Oripun without their own houses live with their creditor, accomplishing work given to them. Work is usually tending to their creditor's harm and housekeeping, but is not limited to these.

A creditor does not have control over all of their Oripun's time. An Oripun must always be given time for his own craft and goals. The smaller the debt, the more time an Oripun has for himself.

The fastest way an Oripun can pay their debt and earn their freedom is by participating in War. They join their creditor or Datu's forces as Horohan, oarsmen and footmen. By showing skill and valor in War, they might be rewarded with a portion of the loot. A generous Datu might even write off the debt of an Oripun who showed incredible bravery, making them a Timawa.

Debt not only exists as Debt of Wealth, but also as **Debt of Gratitude**. When you receive a great favor like freedom, protection, forgiveness, and other generous acts, you are expected to be thankful and to pay it back any way you can. But unlike Debts of Wealth, it is hard to approximate the value of a Debt of Gratitude, and so it is common for the debtor to inflate the value so that they will not risk offending their benefactor.

The Barangay frowns on those who cannot repay debts of gratitude. It is not a formal crime, but societal pressure is a strong force. This is how a wealthy and powerful Datu can buy loyalty; by taking advantage of Debt of Gratitude and showering his constituents with his generosity. Timawa, even though they are free men, cannot easily pledge their services elsewhere. And Oripun, even when they have repaid their Debts of Wealth, will most often stay in their creditor's good graces and employ.

Do you think this culture of debt is cruel and unfair? It is built on blood and war, fitting for Islands made of corpses. It will be difficult to change the minds of Tawo, for this is all we've known. It will be difficult, but not impossible.

The Tawo and Spirituality

Paganito

Everything is alive here. The trees and the mountains, the Sea and the stars in the Sky, the beasts that roam and the tools we use, the area we settle on and even abstract concepts. Everything has a spirit that lives inside and embodies it.

We call the gods that inhabit nature **Diwata**. We worship and pay tribute to them as we go about our day, like how our mangangaso offer their first hunt of the day to Banwanun, god of the forests.

They are not always in our favor. When the gods seek to harm us, we call them **Yawa**, demons. The lines between Diwata and Yawa are blurred, like how Habagat is the Southwest Wind Diwata who brings rain that nourishes our fields, but also the Yawa that brings destructive storms.
busaw

They require remembrance from us. When they are not remembered, they make themselves known with their wrath.

Even our ancestors desire our remembrance. We call them **Umalagad**, for they stand by us. We pay tribute to them by singing their tales, like that of Panas, the first warrior, or Bakod, who put up the first palisade.

Most Tawo do not worship a deity above all else. We thank our creator, known as **Bathala** **May Kapal** in some islands and **Kanlaon** in others, for our existence, but we give tribute to the spirit that would help us most in our current plights. There are exceptions, of course, like those who live in the Islands of the Haribon, where the Sun-Eater **Minokawa** who rests in the great volcano Duyang Ibon is worshiped above all.

We create **Anito** to aid in our worship;. They are statues and statuettes depicting a Diwata, Yawa or Umalagad, carved in wood, stone or ivory. We also have religious craftsmanship in our pottery or sword hilts, among others.

Worship the spirits to your own convenience. Pray to the Diwata of the land our Barangay settled on for a good harvest. Give tribute to the Yawa of poisons to make the venom wrapping your blade more potent. Whisper to the crocodiles of the river that they may leave your boat alone, but attack your passing enemies.

An Incomplete Selection of Diwata, Yawa, and Umalagad

There are as many spirits as there are stars in the Sky. Here is a small selection of the ones we know, for it would be impossible to recognize them all. Know that they may also be known by different names in other islands.

Lalahon – Diwata of the Harvest
Alimugkat – Diwata of the Sea
Banwanun – Diwata of the Forest
Kidlat – Diwata of Lightning
Dian Masalanta – Diwata of Love
Pandaki – Diwata of Wealth
Mural – Diwata of the Underworld
Magwayen – Ferryman of Souls
Arapayan – Diwata of Poisons and Venoms

Makaptan – Diwata of Disease

Amihan – Diwata of the Northeast Monsoon and Winds

Habagat – Diwata of the Southwest Monsoon and Storms

Bakunawa – Diwata that Eats the Moon

Minokawa – Diwata that Eats the Sun

Tambanokano – Diwata that Eats Islands

Pandagwan – Umalagad of the Fishing Net

Busung – Umalagad of Social Behavior

Panas – Umalagad of War

Hukum – Umalagad of Law and Justice

Bakod – Umalagad of Fences and Walls

Magic and Natural Sciences

Our knowledge of magic is intrinsically connected to the application of natural sciences and the invoking of the spirits. Our Babaylan applies his knowledge of the herbs and plants of the forest, while calling for guidance from the Diwata. Our Paraawit etch into her heart the songs and legends of our ancestors, while asking the ancient Umalagad for favors. A Mangagaway studies the poisons and venoms of the creatures of the Islands, while casting curses through the names of Yawa.

There are other ways of using magical effects without the know-how. A most common form is through small jars of **Oil**, infused with herbs or parts of creatures. When these are applied on your body, you will instantly feel a magical effect, such as your wounds closing up, or your arms turning into the wings of a bat.

Castors of spells and curses might prepare magical formulas and recipes on slates of bamboo beforehand. We call these **Mentala**. I've heard songs of witches who have their formulas tattooed to their skin, making themselves human Mentala.

We also craft **Anting-Anting**, amulets, talisman, weapons, and objects enchanted with sorceries. Wearing Anting-Anting can make one impervious to blades and bullets, conceal one's identity, or give new abilities that might turn the tide of War.

Descriptions of Nature and Environment

Now enough about our culture. Let me sing to you about our **Banwa**, the surrounding Nature and environment that we are inextricably part of.

Seasons and Weather

The seasons on the Islands are brought by the Wind Diwatas, Amihan and Habagat.

Habagat dances in the Heavens, creating swirling vortexes in the clouds. The Season of Habagat is marked with devastating storms, winds with the strength of a thousand men, and

overflowing rivers. This is indeed a time of destruction, but also of life, for the rain also nourishes the land.

With the flap of Amihan's wings, the clouds are blown away and we see the Sun without any cover. Amihan's winds are cool and dry, and more clothing is worn during the season. This is also the time to rebuild and regroup.

The Surface

The **Ibabaw**, Surface, is the world we inhabit alongside Nature. Most of us Tawo have no cause or reason to leave this world, aside from select and hardened adventuring folk.

Every area as wide as a bow shot is the territory of countless lives. These intersecting areas develop a relationship and ecosystem that connects all.

Forests

Most of the Islands are blanketed by thick forests. Here, the sunlight barely pierces through the canopy of leaves above. Great trees are as old as the forest they live in, with wood as hard as iron. Fruit and flowers, splash with color a background of green and brown. Here, birds and monkeys dart across the trees, their cries echoing past many bow shots. The buzzing of bees leads to their hives, where sweet honey is harvested. Here, the ground is disturbed by hooved beasts, and smaller mammals, reptiles, and critters crawl anywhere and inhabit any hole. Canine and feline predators prowl and prey on any creature they set their eyes on.

Mountains

Mountains crown the Islands and pierce the Sky with their peaks. Said to be home to Diwata who descended from their home in the Sky to live among us. Here, the clouds create a biting coldness and a fog that obscures vision. Even the highest mountains are covered in forests and pine trees.

Volcanoes

Many of the peaks in the Islands are active volcanoes. The blood of Bathala's Familiars still course through these volcanoes, waiting to erupt. Here, the rivers and springs boil from the heat of the Familiars' blood. We believe these waters to be sacred and healing. Here, the surface that otherwise looks like a mountain's are scarred from eruptions of the past. The rock in these scars glint with hardened glass.

Flatlands

In between the forests, the mountains, and the sea, strips of flatlands can be found. Small in amount of area, compared to everything else that surrounds it. Here, the grass grows above the tallest Tawo when uncut. The flourishing trees bear many fruits. The frogs that live here croak in chorus when the Sun goes down. Here, one won't have to travel long to find a flowing river. Some Barangays have found a way to turn the dirt into gold, by carving their own rivers. These new pathways of water enrich vast patches of land, ripe for farms in sizes unthinkable in the forests.

Beaches

The boundary between the forest and the beach is abrupt. One step is all it takes to go from dense brush to the expanse of the Sea and Sky. The beach is like a portal to the Sea. The sharp cliffs that stand towering in the sides are the door frames, and the fine, unstable sand are the steps. Here, the coconut trees breathe in the open air. Here, creatures can exist in both worlds of the Islands and the Sea.

Swamps

Swamps are a special, strange intersection of land and water. They can cover shores of both rivers and the Sea. Here, the mangroves, short trees with roots above the ground, create forests. These trees grow, twist and intersect into each other, creating walls not unlike nets. These mangrove forests are capable of supporting life; both creatures of land and Sea feel protected by the mangrove's branches and roots. One should be wary of braving the swamps, for even storms get lost in these special forests.

The Underworld

The **Kalaliman**, Underworld, is where our souls eventually go. But it is not purely a place of death, for life still moves within.

There are many entrances to the dark tunnels and chambers that run underneath the surface. Water seeps in from above, often making the ground and walls slippery or creating streams and lakes within. There are entire ecosystems in these caves, with semi-permanent residents and those who never leave.

These natural caves range from simple structures to multilevel complexes. The deeper it goes, the more it has creatures that call it home; their relationships with each other are as interwoven as the cave's tunnels.

Living Caves

These are the most common and closest to the surface of the subterranean caves. Here, very little light seeps in. Stalactites and stalagmites are like the teeth of a creature you are willingly going further down the throat of. Here, ecosystems are to be found. Beasts of the forests and mountains take shelter for the night, while nocturnal creatures head outside to hunt. Deeper inside are creatures whose bodies have undergone incredible changes to adapt to their dark and dank homes. Here, some Tawo hide out in times of War. Some Tawo leave their dead in shelves stacked along the cave walls. The walls, floors, and ceilings take back the gold that was mined from them eventually.

Volcanic Caves

These caves can be found near volcanoes, or when you have travelled deep enough. Here, the blood of Bathala's familiars flows, fiery and red. Being in the very presence of their blood can boil you alive. The sharp stone that makes up the walls, floors, and ceilings are forged in these fiery rivers. Here, you might find the Anakminokawa, offspring of the sacred Sun Eater.

Underground Rivers

Underground Rivers are a special intersection of the Sea and the Underworld. Here, Magwayen, Ferryman of the Dead, sends the spirits to stay. Yawa lurk and lavish in the darkness. Here, one could explore aboard a ship. Some rivers are wide enough to carry many karakoa, and some tributaries only a small boat can pass through.

The Sea

The **Karagatan**, Sea, sustains and connects life. But just as much as it brings life, it also doles out death.

Our warships glide through its vastness as commonly as we walk on land. But underneath its waves, is a world not all of us may ever reach. The waters are teeming with life, creatures with fins, with shells, or with malleable bodies. The Bantay Dagat have a constant presence from their castles adorned in corals and pearls. And deeper still are trenches where the Light of the Sun doesn't reach.

There are no walls in the Sea. Instead, you are surrounded by an inescapable, crushing pressure and danger that can come from any direction.

Rivers

Rivers net the Islands, making pathways that connect everything to everywhere. Follow them upstream and above waterfalls and you will find the mountains. Follow them downstream and you will find lakes or the Sea. Here, the creatures of the land never stray too far away. The herds brave the predators lurking just below the water to satisfy their thirst. The Tawo settle nearby to supply their daily needs.

Sea Bed

Underneath the waves, a geography not unlike what we see on the Surface can be found. The Sea Bed makes up most of the geography of the Sea. Here, sand stretches into plains, erects into hills, and erupts into rocky volcanoes and mountains. Grass and plants of the Sea sway with the currents. Here, the herds of the Sea graze and the predators of the Sea hunt.

Coral Reefs

The Bantay Dagat live in castles made by cultivating coral reefs. The results are magnificent, living mansions that continue to grow. The colonies of corals come in all kinds of shapes and colors. Here, the Bantay Dagat inhabit the tunnels below and in between. Other beasts of the Sea also take cover within the reefs.

Sea Trenches

Winding passages and inconceivable depths. The songs say that Sea Trenches were created by Bakunawa, the Moon Eater, when he slithered and burrowed under the Sea looking for a place to rest. Here, the strangest forms of Sea life swim in complete darkness. The children of Bakunawa patrol its depths, protecting what we know nothing of, at the very bottom that none of us have ever reached.

Mirage Islands

These Islands are neutral ground between us Tawo and Bantay Dagat. They appear and disappear with the tides and waves. Most mirage islands are only sand hills, some with scant structures. Some are covered with semi-aquatic plant life. Stuck in between two worlds.

Locales in the Islands and Sea

Let me tell you of the places and localities in the **Islands of the Buwaya, Pawikan, and Haribon** that we have seen or heard of. Know that these places do not paint a complete map of this archipelago, but should give you a general idea of each Island group. There are a thousand islands in this Sea, and a thousand places to be seen in each one.

Islands of the Buwaya.

The Buwaya, lying in the north, is the largest of Bathala's familiars, thus making the largest Island group of the archipelago. It lays on its stomach with it's head to the east and tail to the west. It's body is curved to form the shape of a crescent moon. Over the ages, the tail has broken off and drifted away, forming its own island called Buntot.

The spiny scales along its back make up two mountain ranges running parallel to each other, through the length of the main island and the tail. These mountains of varying sizes and heights are individually named after the Diwatas that call them home, but the northern range is collectively called **Tabing Hangin**, and the southern range is collectively called **Basag Bagyo**. They take the brunt of the winds and storms of the monsoons, protecting the **Daluyan Valley** in between them.

The Daluyan Valley and River were shaped by the flow of rainwater from the mountain ranges. It runs along the bases of the Tabing Hanging and Basag Bagyo ranges. The Barangays who settled along this valley are blessed with flatlands that support wide irrigated farms.

In these Islands, colonies and pueblos of the Sun Priests are multiplying and spreading, taking over the bountiful farms and flatlands. The countless Barangay and Kadatuan across the Buwaya are intertwined with histories of war. They cannot forget about their ancestors' vendettas. When they learn that the individual is more susceptible to the Fire, it would be much too late.

La Capitolio

From here, the Sun Priests stage their colonization, led by Gobernador-Heneral Fuerza. It is a flourishing center of trade and commerce, fortified by a gulf in between the head and leg of the Buwaya. Once held by Rajah Bumatay, it was burned with Fire. The Grand Cathedral, run by Cardinal Del Sol, was built on top of the ashes and bodies. Numerous Barangays have congregated under its Light, creating the biggest and only city in the Islands. Its constituents live in constant labor and eternal poverty, as the price of living under the protection of the Light is more than they can afford.

Kitakita Volcano and Lake

On the head of the Buwaya is a small volcano surrounded by a great lake. The eye of the Buwaya, the songs say, where precious minerals formed by the heat of the volcano fill the caverns inside. A war between the villages settled along the lake has been raging for generations to claim that treasure. Until a victor has been decided, none shall set foot on the volcano.

Daang Langit Rice Terraces

The biggest Barangay of Taga-Bundok seen on these Islands. Thousands and thousands of terraces of arable land were carved on the face of the mountain. The visionary Datu Banawi created this feat of ingenuity to eliminate the need for the nomadic life that the mountains have forced on them. But the way of life and legacy that he built might crumble and fall from the earthquakes coming from the mountain itself.

Magayon Volcano

The songs tell of the warrior Magayon who died in war. Where her corpse was buried, a volcano sprouted and grew in the shape of a perfect cone. Those who live at the foot of the Volcano pay tribute to her spirit as Umalagad of the surrounding land. But since thieves have taken more than they should from her forests, she has refused to show her face.

Pueblo Liwanag

Once a place shrouded in the shadows of a thick forest canopy, until the Sun Priests came and brought down the trees to create a pueblo. Light pierced finally the land, but with the felling of trees came malice and enmity from those who lived in it. Now, the surrounding area is rife with Halimaw.

Barangay Iragapa

A Barangay alongside the Daluyan River. Their irrigated farms and plantations are among the largest in the islands. This wealth of agriculture drew the eyes of La Capitolio. Attempts to subjugate the Barangay were resisted by Datu Agus, but how does one win against the greedy Fire?

Kabagyuhan Underground River

A cave complex with a main underground river spanning the entire tail of the Buwaya and several branches. It has several entrances, but the largest and most known one is where the tail was cut off from the main body.

Forest of the Giant Balete

Deep in the forests of the Buwaya stands a Balete tree as old as the island itself. Only a handful of Tawo have ever seen it for the sorceries and trickery of Anakbalete lead explorers astray. The songs say an entire Barangay of Unano and Nuno live in carved tunnels inside their mother tree. Unthinkable hoards of wealth are stored within, portions of which are given to individuals they are fond of. But beware, accepting these treasures come with limiting conditions.

Islands of the Pawikan

The Pawikan is the easternmost island group of the Archipelago. Most of its body has sunk or washed away, but its shell, broken apart and drifted, remains.

To the East is the Sinilangan Sea. The impenetrable vastness. We have seen the Sun be born anew and rise from the horizon of this Sea for ages. Many have tried to cross this Sea, but none has ever come back.

There are Islands here with no trace of living Tawo. I warn you, do not take these Islands lightly. They are abandoned or inhabited by Gods, overrun by Nature and her creatures, or something worse.

There was once a mighty Kadatuan on these Islands. The Datus of the Pawikan are connected with alliances and trade, with the Sea serving these connections. But now the Kadatuan is fractured and war is brewing; a war between those baptized by the Light of the Sun Priests and those who reject the colonizers. Who were once brothers and allies now turn on each other, and the Sea will be their battlefield.

Pueblo Atabay Araw

The easternmost Island of the easternmost Island group. Datu Kaliso and his Barangay are watchers of the impenetrable Sinilangan Sea and its vastness, of the Sun and its glorious rising. When the ships of the Sun Priests pierced the Sinilangan Sea, Datu Kaliso believed their words, for it came from the Sun himself. The Sun Priests baptized him in the Light, and he has been their servant ever since. He rallies his other allies under the banner of the colonizers.

Barangay Mangatang

An island to the west of Atabay Araw, its size pales in comparison to its neighbor. Datu Pagunsan and his men strong-arm seafaring traders who make use of their straight, and those who resist are raided for their merchandise. They are the first to stand up to the Sun Priests and the newly baptized Datu Kaliso, and other Datus followed suit.

Barangay Pudong Talisay

The followers of Datu Minulwan live peacefully on the canopy of a forest. Generations ago, the first Datu on the island planted seeds of a Talisay tree, so that it may grow and be seen by her mother, who stayed behind on a distant island. That tree has grown and spawned an entire forest, strong enough to support an entire Barangay.

Dahongduguan Island

An island surrounded by high grass. Once, a Barangay was settled here but because of the sins of their Datu, the Diwata have cursed their land to grow grass taller than any Tawo and sharper than any sword. A few survive, subsisting on the rare areas free of the deadly grass.

Biringan Island

This Island's existence has been an enigma for ages. The Aswang and Anakbalete and Dambuhala sing of it; an Island devoid of Tawo, a paradise for Other-Folk, an escape from War's folly. It is not on any map, nor do the stars show the way to it. Even if it is found, I doubt its residents would allow anyone to disclose its location.

Pueblo Bungansakit

A fortified Pueblo made by the Sun Priests in the Southernmost Island of the Pawikan. It was razed to the ground by raiders from the Haribon Islands, who hated the Sun Priests. Now, there is only rubble, inhabited by terrifying Halimaw. Unwittingly, they guard treasures of the Sun Priests.

Wiwitan Island

The Centermost Island of the Pawikan. The dead of almost everyone from the Pawikan are buried here, therefore it is neutral ground. But a powerful caster of curses, known only as the Hukluban, desecrated our ancestors and raised the dead of the Island to do her bidding. For what purpose, no one knows.

Islands of the Haribon

The Haribon is the southernmost Island group of the archipelago. It lays on its side with its wings extended, but it will never fly again.

In the center of the Island is the Duyang Ibon Volcano, the highest peak in all of the Islands. The Taga-Haribon believe the Minokawa, the Sun Eater, sleeps inside the volcano. They await her awakening, so that she may swallow the Sun.

Over the ages, some of the flesh of the Haribon has sunk, creating large lakes. Its feathers remained floating on the Sea, creating many swamps.

The communities in Haribon are connected in their belief in the Minokawa and the Datus are loyal to the Sultan. They are organized in such a way not seen anywhere else in the archipelago, which enabled them to repel colonization thus far.

Coastal villages are preoccupied with defending against the forces of the Sun Priests. Meanwhile, settlements further inland are preoccupied with the protection of wildlife from the creeping corruption from the other Islands.

Balai sa Danao

The Palace of Sultan. The highest quality hardwood supports and walls, and engravings filled in with gold. It was built 10 Sultans before, and has stood the test of time. It faces a large lake and the Duyang Ibon Volcano. The Sultan's Lake glitters from all the golden scaled fish that live in it. Surrounding the lake is the Sultan's Barangay, whose population rivals that of La Capitolio. The Sultan's loyal followers are free to take from the lake, but traitors will drop dead the second they steal from it.

Barangay Fatima

Barangay Fatima is a coastal settlement on the northern coast of the Haribon Islands. Here, Datu Fatima and her warriors repel the forces of the Sun Priests and their baptized Taga-Pawikan.

Malamuk Swamp

A large swampland area. Once, a wealthy Datu settled here, but now his Barangay is largely abandoned. Yawa called Salot ni Makaptan plague the swamp, sending mosquitoes and disease, making the surrounding area uninhabitable. The songs say his wealth is still untouched, guarded by a death by a thousand bites.

Lagusan Swamp

Swamps are known to be easy to get lost in, and getting lost means death, but Lagusan Swamp is an area more eerie than deadly. Those who have explored the swamp say they find themselves in worlds different from what they know, once they traveled deep enough. This arduous journey-portal seems to shift, for no excursion ends up in the same place, the same other-world. Those living near the swamp fear something from the other-worlds might make the same journey towards the islands eventually.

Nakabuhi Lake

An ancient eruption of the Duyang Ibon Volcano once shook the Island and created the Nakabuhi Lake. It is not known, however, how a giant serpent ended up taking residence in the bottom of the lake. Since then, the serpent has terrorized the nearby Barangays, but only when bathed in moonlight.

Sumpong's Mountain

This mountain stands beside the Duyang Ibon Volcano, but its height pales in comparison. Living on its heights is a Dambuhala named Sumpong. He is a temperamental one; friendly and hospitable one day, fierce and dangerous the next. Those who live nearby have learned to stay away from the mountain, which has only caused Sumpong's condition to worsen.

Saleh Forest

In this forest lives a giant Eagle, a sacred animal for the Taga-Haribon. It perches on a great Narra tree and visits other Islands every so often. One day, it came back with a cauterized hole through its chest, and yet it could still fly. Those tasked with protecting it fears the worst; that it has become a Nadunot.

The Sea

Bakunawa's Trench

A nomadic Barangay upon a hundred karakoa

Kataw Rajah Castle

a mirage island with only stone chairs

Natives and Other-Folk of the Islands

We are not the only natives of the Islands. We share our existence with many others. Some capable of selfless good or incredible evil, some lead by instinct and nature. They have grown in numbers in these lands, and spilled their blood on these waters. They are friends and foes, with as much claim on the Islands as we do.

Forces of the Tawo

In War, we must have organization to fight effectively. Morale is a fickle thing, but our warriors would go to the Underworld and back with the Datu leading us at the helm.

A legion of soldiers is called *hukbo*. A smaller group is called *lipun*.

Horohan, Oripun who are too inexperienced to be called warriors. They row the Datu or a Timawa's warships and are the first to charge as footmen. They wear light armor or none at all, and are equipped with a spear and their ship paddle.

Mangangaso, the hunters of the forests. Their refined skills in moving undetected, setting traps, and accuracy with ranged weaponry make them a valuable force in War. They wear little armor to none at all, and are equipped with bows or blowguns, and machetes to protect themselves with.

Mangugubat, warriors who hold their own in the chaos of combat. They appear on the battlefield with light to heavy armor, though confident warriors think of armor as unneeded weight. Equipped with a spear to throw as an initial attack, before charging in with a shield, sword, and dagger, they have an entire arsenal to deal with whatever is thrown at them. The **Mangangayaw** are their Sea Raiding counterparts.

Mangigiba, warriors specialized in the use of gunpowder in war. The power of gunpowder can render armor useless, but the luthang and lantaka are unwieldy, inaccurate and expensive weapons. It takes gold and training to be truly effective with them, and so only the richest in a barangay bring these potent weapons of war into the battlefield. Preferring to stay agile, the Mangigiba wears light armor and carries a dagger or shortsword aside from their bombastic weapons.

The **Babaylan**, **Manggagaway** and **Paraawit**, casters of spells and sorceries. They are rarely seen on the battlefield, but their presence and indirect effort can change the tides of battle. They prefer to wear light armor or none at all, and are only equipped with light weaponry, for their inexperience with heavier arms might do more harm than good.

Karanduun, living legends of War. Datus or elite Timawa with innumerable kills and overwhelming valor; they stand in the frontlines, leading their hukbo or lipun. Aside from their preference of armor and weapons, they are equipped with the most potent amulets and

magicks. Their bravery is not to be underestimated, for legends speak of Karanduun defeating giants and monsters with their strength and wit. bayani, kadangyan, maengel

Aswang

The Aswang are bloodsucking, flesh-eating witches, often living as hermits away from us Tawo. An aswang does not subsist on our flesh and blood alone, but perhaps it is these that power their magicks. They set out at night to stalk on easy prey, using their various sorceries to ensnare their meal. However, I've heard songs of Aswang who live in a village of Tawo. They either hide their true nature, or have an agreement with the Datu that his Barangay will be spared from her cravings.

Aswang are especially averse to salt, ash, and garlic, but weaponry imbued with magic bleeds them as well. If you face an Aswang alone, they know they will be able to overpower you. But they take flight when your numbers are against them.

Unless transformed, an Aswang will not look any different from, but there are ways to tell them apart. Their meals are unflavored, for eating salt and garlic cause them great harm. They and their homes have a distinct slimy smell that cannot be washed off.

Below are sorceries we have observed Aswang use. Younger Aswang seem to be able to use one of these spells and abilities, but older, more experienced Aswang display around three.

Roll a number of d6s that reflects the Aswang's experience, from 1 to 3.

1. Growing bat-like wings to fly.
2. Shapeshifting into an animal.
3. Extending their tongues to suck blood discreetly from a distance.
4. Invulnerability from specific forms of damage.
5. Exerting extraordinary bodily strength.
6. Casting powerful curses.

Dambuhala

The Dambuhala are giants, many times larger than us, and greater in power; sons and daughters of mountains and hills, and just as sturdy as their parents, so the songs go. Beware, they are protective of their uphill or cavernous homes; many Dambuhala would not hesitate to attack and eat you if you trespass their territory. But harmony with them is not impossible, for I know of a few communities of Tawo led by a Dambuhala Datu.

Being especially connected with their mountainous habitats, the travelling Dambuhala is a rare sight. So, the Dambuhala have no seafaring culture. But once their fighting spirit has been lit, there is very little that can extinguish it.

Dambuhalang Gurod, giants as tall as three Tawo stacked on top of each other. They are prideful and would often try to prove their worth by fighting trespassers. Their thick skin acts

like natural armor. With their long limbs and enormous strength, the destructive power of their tree spears rivals that of cannons. Some Dambuhalang Gurod roam away from their birthplaces to find a worthy battle, and a few even become Datu of their own barangay.

Dambuhalang Bundok, a rare existence even among the Dambuhala. The songs say they grow to the size of hills; their skin is covered in layers of dirt and moss. They have grown lazy under the weight of their own bodies but once angered, they are a calamity. The songs tell us of some mountains on the Islands that are in truth Dambuhalang Bundok, covered in a thick layer of dirt and rock after ages long slumbers.

Bantay Dagat

The Sea brings new life to all. Those who receive this gift are known as Bantay Dagat. They take after the other creatures of the sea, having bodily features necessary to survive in the deep. Gills, fins, and tails with scales the likes of fish.

They gather into communities much like a Barangay, led by a Rajah. One main difference is that War between Banta Dagat is rare, almost non-existent. Perhaps this is due to the presence of Alimugkat, Diwata of the Sea, surrounding them always, giving them connectedness and a sense of purpose. The Sea gives them power and life, and they cannot part from it for long.

We often get into conflict with them, for our seafaring can be considered trespassing by them. They are the stewards of the Sea and everything in it, so they can get zealous and overprotective. Some of my greatest friends are Kataw, so it is possible to come to an understanding with them.

Duyung, souls of Tawo who perished in the Sea. The cause may be a Sea Raid or a storm, it does not matter. They are all given new life and the tail of a fish; fur turns into scales, rough hides turn into those of a shark, and leaves turn into seaweed; in their new forms, they populate the Sea in childlike innocence. Their curiosity towards the Tawo comes from hazy memories of their former lives. But beware their innocent curiosity; they are known to put mangingisda into a trance and pull them towards the deep, only to get a closer look at the folk they once were. Those taken by a Duyung are never seen again.

Kataw, former Tawo who willingly gave themselves into the embrace of the Sea. Perhaps it is to escape a pitiful life, or the end of a search for a greater purpose. They become the warriors of Alimugkat, able to harness water in their attacks. They develop gills in their neck that can be hidden, which allows them to blend in with Tawo briefly. They are stricter and less aloof than the Duyung, eager to protect their new homes.

Anakbalete

The Balete is a mysterious and enchanted species of tree, found deep within forests. Born out of it are the Anakbalete, small but two legged folk not easily seen when they don't want to be found. Do not trust the stability of their temperament, and you would probably be better off

keeping a healthy distance. They would sooner flee than do battle, but not without hexing their pursuer first.

Those who manage to befriend them may receive generous gifts, which may sometimes be too good to be true, or at least without tricky conditions. Those who offend them, whether purposeful or not, might not find their way out of the forest.

It is good practice to chant *Tabi-tabi po* to let the Anakbalete of your presence, so that they are not surprised and angered.

The **Unano** are naturally curious. They are small enough to stand on the palm of a hand, and are very friendly towards children. However, they are known to steal trinkets that catch their eyes and add them to their hidden hoard.

The **Ligawin** are invisible creatures, unlike their other siblings, inhabiting trees of all kinds. They strike conversations with passers-by. If they are entertained, they might be generous and grant power or luck. Otherwise, their conversation partner will find themselves lost in the forests for days or months.

The **Nuno** live in anthills, termite nests, or similar dirt mounds. They are very territorial; passers-by who do not acknowledge the territory of the Nuno can attract their ire. Their victims find themselves with weird ailments or mutations, such as swelling of body parts and vomiting of black blood. But gain their favor, and they might provide you wisdom and knowledge, which some might argue is a better reward than wealth.

A Selection of Native Creatures

The Islands have a vibrant population of fauna in its forests, mountains, caves and the Sea. Predators, prey, and everything in between. The list below is by no means a complete bestiary, but I will run out of breath before I call the name of every creature who calls these Islands home.

There are 50 creatures on this list, so you could roll a d100 and halve the result if you want to randomly choose one.

1. Archerfish *Ataba*
2. Bat *Paniki*
3. Bee *Bubuyog*
4. Beetle *Salagubang*
5. Boar *Baboy Ramo*
6. Centipede *Alupihan*
7. Cockroach *Ipis*
8. Cone Snail *Balisungsong*
9. Crocodile *Buwaya*
10. Crab *Alimango*
11. Cloud Rat *Ulapdaga*
12. Dog *Aso*
13. Eagle *Haribon*

14. Elephant *Gadya*
15. Fire Ants *Hantik*
16. Firefly *Alitaptap*
17. Flying Fish *Bolador*
18. Flying Squirrel *Lipadilaga*
19. Frog *Palaka*
20. Gecko *Tuko*
21. Grasshopper *Balang*
22. Hermit Crab *Umang*
23. Jellyfish *Dikya*
24. Leech *Linta*
25. Leopard Cat *Maral*
26. Macaque *Matsing*
27. Mantis Shrimp *Alupihang Dagat*
28. Monitor Lizard *Bayawak*
29. Moray Eel *Igat*
30. Octopus *Pugita*
31. Owl *Kuwago*
32. Pangolin *Halintong*
33. Python *Sawa*
34. Rhinoceros *Sungaykuda*
35. Salamander *Balubid*
36. Scorpion *Alakdan*
37. Scorpionfish *Alakdanisda*
38. Sea Cow *Dugong*
39. Sea Turtle *Pawikan*
40. Shark *Pating*
41. Snake *Ahas*
42. Spider *Gagamba*
43. Squid *Pusit*
44. Stingray *Pagi*
45. Swordfish *Malasugi*
46. Tiger *Musangbatuk*
47. Turtle *Pagong*
48. Wasp *Putakti*
49. Water Buffalo *Kalabaw*
50. Whale Shark *Butanding*

Halimaw

Halimaw, monsters born from enmity and ill will. They are not natural occurrences but products of hate and fear. This corruption grants these creatures dark powers, often at the cost of their sentience.

The Aswang and other casters of curses make their own Halimaw familiars to do their bidding. With dark sorceries, they alter the form of small beasts. The **Sigbin** is a dog-like

creature, but devoid of its fur, and it's head swapped places with it's whip-like tail. They can render themselves near invisible and consume your shadow without you knowing.

The **Wakwak** is another Halimaw familiar, a winged creature with a crow's head, but leathery wings like that of a bat, and talons like sharp daggers. They are named after the sound of their wings. If you can hear them, you are safe. But if the sounds stop, it means they are about to pounce.

The **Tiyanak** are unwanted infants, left by their mothers in the forest to die. Their cries echo throughout the forest, drawing anyone unsuspecting. From afar, they look like any normal infant but when approached, one can see more clearly it's piercing teeth, knife-like claws, and bloodshot eyes. They seek the warmth of their mother's embrace, but only ever finds a fleeting trace in the blood of their victims.

The **Tigbalang** appear like Tawo, but with disproportionately long limbs and even longer hair. Be wary if you meet one in the forest, for they are known to take people to where they are never found again. Why this is their nature, no one can say for sure. But I've heard traces of songs that say they are looking for their lost love.

The **Bangungot** are born from the spirits of trees we have cut down. They're too young, and not ready to be used for our homes, tools and boats; and now they seek revenge. In the dead of night, they sit upon the chest of someone sleeping. They appear as a lean, bony bipedal creature, but the weight of their hate is too heavy to bear; the victim suffers from nightmares and eventually, death by suffocation. They will continue to do so until they have found who cut down their tree. Whole villages have fallen from the attacks of the Bangungot.

The **Busaw** are eaters of corpses. Before, they were Tawo who ventured into the Underworld unprepared. First, they will run out of light. Second, they will run out of food. Afraid and lost in the maze of the Underworld, they will soon have to resort to eating the corpses buried there, of which there is never a short supply. They will gain a taste for it, and soon they will lose their sense of self. The more they eat, the more their body will change; sharp teeth, hooked nails, a long tongue, and large, bloated bodies. I warn you, do not enter the Underworld unprepared.

The **Amalanhig** are born from the desire of neverending War. An ancient song tells of a Datu who was disappointed in his warriors, whose bodies weaken and minds tire. In the pursuit of relentless and unwavering warriors, he sought the help of a Manggagaway. The sorcerer covered the warriors in a thick layer of a mysterious dark soot and slit their throats. From the bloodied corpses rose undying, rotting and stiff-bodied, mindless suckers of blood.

The **Gawigawen** are born from those who fell in a battlefield. They are similar to the Amalanhig in that they are monstrous products of War. Blood, viscera and parts have fused together to form a giant with six heads. The battlefield is their refuge, for whatever they lose, they can replace an endless stock of the dead. They hold massive weapons of war and with these, they seek to endlessly continue the War and bloodshed that caused them to be.

The **Markupo** are the embodiment of poison and venom. They are potent tools of War; we celebrate poison by covering our blades with the deadly substance, yet we dread our enemies

arrows tipped in venom, granting us a death of unimaginable pain. The Markupo are born from this hypocritical fear. They are great serpents with red crests of a cock, tongues of many thorns, teeth as big as an elephant's tusk, and forked tails. Their poison breath kills anyone it touches.

The **Nadunot** are a breed of Halimaw that is quickly becoming more common. There is a corruption eating at our Islands and its fauna. Diseases from across the Sea. Trees destroyed by axe and fire. The blood of beasts. The sludge washed away on our rivers to uncover the glint of gold. The rewriting of our culture and disrespect of Nature. This corruption has always existed, but it has spread out of control with the landing of the Sun Priests on our shores. The balance has tipped, so now the Nadunot attacks.

There are general types of Nadunot, each with a definite cause. Animals are the common victims of this corruption, but I would not doubt that others can fall victim to it.

Roll a d8 and apply the resulting effect to living things including but not limited to fauna and flora.

1. Legion – they attack in numbers that belittle armies.
2. Reinforced – iron-like appendages to sate their blood thirst.
3. Gigantism – growing in size to cease becoming the prey.
4. Fire – to return the flames thrown at their homes.
5. Fusion – with the songs gone from everyone's lips, who can tell them apart?
6. Shadow – when they are not seen as equals, why show up at all?
7. Diseased – living rotting flesh with an aura of death.
8. Sludge – spreading the discharge they drowned in.

Kaluluwa

The Kaluluwa come from the essence of life that leaves the body in death. While most return to the Sea or enter the Underworld, some stay tethered to the Islands.

The **Wiwit** are ghosts still tethered to the Islands. Whether it is through burial desecration, or because of extreme regret or feelings of vengeance, they stay walking on the Islands, whether it is their will or not. Some retain their intellect, while others become mad, faced with an eternity of an existence they cannot escape.

The **Umalagad** are spirits of the ancestors of the Tawo. They are objects of veneration and worship. They help their descendants who pray to them, supporting them with advice, or protecting them from threats. They glow with all the gold they wore when they once lived.

The **Lolo** are a kind of Umalagad, reserved for Datu and Karanduun whose legends and feats would live on in song for generations. They have the form of a giant crocodile, the most physical form of all the Kaluluwa. Perhaps it is their desire to be the subject of song and legend again that tethers them to the Islands still.

Lower Diwata/Yawa

While the most powerful Diwata and Yawa, reside in their own realms, like the Sky, the deepest parts of the Sea, or behind the gates of Mural, there are spirits, gods, and demons that also call our Islands home. We call them Lower Diwata or Yawa. They are spirits that live inside Nature; trees, mountains, beasts, and even Tawo constructs, for those are also made from material taken from Nature. Everything in the Islands are alive, for the Lower Diwata and Yawa inhabit them.

Children born out of a marriage between Diwata and Tawo are rare, but this phenomenon exists. Their children will inherit the ancient parent's powers and weaknesses, as well as their finite parent's mortality. They are known as **Half-Diwata**.

Some Lower Diwata or Yawa are agents of their more powerful, ethereal counterparts. They are incarnates of natural phenomena, extensions of a Diwata and Yawa's power; their voices and hands on our Islands, acting out their desires, will, and punishment.

The **Salot ni Lalahon**, Pestilence of Lalahon, appear as giant, insatiable larva. From their mouths they spew locusts and worms that eat through anything. They are sent to diminish the farms and food stores of those who have angered Lalahon.

The **Salot ni Makaptan**, Pestilence of Makaptan, appear as bloated, wet corpses. From their ever open mouths, mosquitoes freely fly in and out. The sting of these insects bring a feverish haze which, if left untreated, becomes the cause of many deaths on the Islands.

The **Anakidlat**, Children of Kidlat, are beings of pure energy. With their touch, creatures boil from the inside and trees explode. They are a neutral force for the most part. Without direct orders, they strike down anything without judgment.

The **Anakhabagat**, Children of Habagat, are walking storm clouds. When the Diwata plays and dances on the clouds in the Sky, the pieces of clouds that fall onto the Islands continue his performance. Their dance brings forth winds, rains, and floods.

The **Anakamihan**, Children of Amihan, are giant birds who help their Diwata in clearing out the clouds in the sky. Their winds are as powerful as the force of a hundred Tawo. They are often in conflict with Anakhabagat.

The **Anakbakunawa**, Children of Bakunawa, are giant sea serpents with fins along their spine. They roam the Sea and guard the trench where their Diwata sleeps. They are imbued with the power of the six moons that have been eaten before. They are the most active when the last moon appears in the night sky.

The **Anakminokawa**, Son of Minokawa, are giant fiery birds that reside in the rivers of fire inside volcanoes. Their roars cause eruptions and their breaths are as hot as lava. They stoke the fires of the volcanoes for their Diwata's eventual awakening.

The **Anakbanwanun**, Son of Banwanun, are giant white deer who gracefully roam the forests. Grass and plants sprout from their footprints. Our Mangangaso customarily leaves their first kill of the day for their Diwata, for they fear the Anakbanwanun will turn ferocious and bare hidden fangs on them.

The **Bantay ni Mural**, Sentinel of Mural, are giant beings who guard the Underworld. They are covered in a dark miasma, but it does not obscure the huge songil that they wield. The songs say they are the stewards of the corpses and souls of those buried in the tunnels of the Underworld, and that they open the gates to Mural.

The **Anakalimugkat**, Son of Alimugkat, are whale shark many times larger than the normal whale shark. The spots on their backs reflect the stars in the night sky, and their tails produce the waves and currents. The songs say the largest of the Bantay ni Alimugkat have entire caves and rivers inside them.

Samot

The Sun Priests aren't the first foreigners to set foot on our shores. Peoples with similar cultures and technologies from the neighboring South, peoples from the Neverending Island in the North; they are also present in the Islands. They are merchants, bringing metal-ware, stone-ware, textiles and goods to the shores, and leaving with commodities from nature. They are pirates, pillaging the Islands and its natives for what they're worth. They are neighbors, living in the same Barangays.

We have had relations with the **Southern Samot** since ages and eras past. We borrow from their culture, language, and technology, and we share ours. On our ships, we have traded resources and waged war with each other. The Sea connects us in a strong bond.

The **Northern Samot** comes from an island that starts from the Sea and goes on forever. There, they wage War to control land. The larger the territory you control, the more legitimate your claim to be King. A neverending War to control a neverending land comes with great innovations to technology. And so we trade with them for their cannons and guns, as well as swords and other treasures.

Sun Priests

This section about the colonizers of the Islands is written by one whose Barangay was subjugated by them and has lived under the Light.

The Sun Priests come from the vastness of the Sinilangan Sea to the East, where the Sun rises. Before, we believed the Sinilangan Sea was impenetrable for none of us had crossed it and come back to tell the tale. Holy are the Sun Priests, for what could the messengers of the Sun and impossible travelers of the Sinilangan Sea be but holy.

The Sun Priests need the resources of the Islands to satisfy the Sun's endless hunger, so they say. Our ancestors have watched the Sun rise and fall for ages, yet he rarely took from them. His warm rays give us sight, grow our plants, and protect us from the cold. Why did he

not tell us about his hunger? Why forcefully take what we would have given as tribute? I do not know the answer, and my body is too labored to think.

To gather the flesh and essence of the Islands, the Sun Priests use powers and magics given to them by the Sun: Light and Fire.

The Light

The Light will save us all. The Sun Priests have built grand churches of stone and gold on the Islands, urging all to live under their protection. Towns built around these churches are called *Pueblos*, and we pay to live near it by stripping off our gold and culture. They gave our Datus new titles; they are now *Principales*, officers in charge of taxation. Our Datus, who endowed us with luxuries, now take wealth from us.

Under the Light, it is easy to forget how we lived before. Our gold is taken from us, we are disconnected from Nature behind many walls, and we live in constant labor. To appease our hearts, the Sun Priests hold a neverending festival full of color and merrymaking.

The church is an illuminating presence at the very center of our lives now, but no one has thought of looking under its shadows. I have seen it, stone tunnels and dungeon chambers where anything hidden will never see the light of day again.

When pirates and invaders are seen in the horizon, the Sun Priests can erect impenetrable walls of Light. To cross this wall is to burn with the heat of the Sun. Within these walls, the Sun Priests say the bloodshed of War and the chaos of Other-Folk and Nature cannot harm us. We can rest easy in the absolute safety of the Light.

The Fire

The Fire damns all unbelievers. There are those who resist living under the Light. There are those whose nature is undesirable for the Sun Priests. And there are those who they deem a danger against them. They are all subjected to the Fire.

Each of the Sun Priests' ships are fitted with dozens of sun-forged cannons. Our shores are carpeted with iron and fire. Their lines of muskets can break the force of any charge, with them not shedding a drop of blood. They conscript our warriors to guide them through our Islands on our warships, and then send them to sift through the destruction they have made for stragglers.

The **Mosquetero**, Musketeers, are the lowest of the forces of the Sun Priests. Equipped with light armor and muskets, they form lines of guns. They shoot from afar then stab at anyone who gets near with their bayonets.

The **Caballero**, Mounted Knights, are the heaviest of their forces. They cover their entire bodies with metal armor, forged in the heat of the Sun, leaving very little weakness. They arm themselves with heavy polearms, and ride atop brave horses.

The **Men of the Burning Cloth** are few but powerful, for they borrow magic from the Sun. They are followed by Santelmo, spirits of Fire, who follow their every command. Their garments and robes look as if they perpetually burn, but they never seem hurt by the flames. They preach of the goodness of the Sun as they ride into War.

Descriptions of Tawo Items, Tools, and Valuables

Mediums of Trade

We have no primary currency on these Islands. Trade flows with barter; we offer the products we have made and commodities our environment provides us. But there are some items of value commonly accepted on any trading port.

Grains of **rice**, overflowing in clay jars, will be accepted by any Karakal as it is the staple food in the Islands and even beyond. **Salt**, formed into blocks with lye, is a product desired by everyone for it enhances any food. **Gold**, powdered and weighed by tahils, is a powerful medium of trade, especially in the foreign market.

Weaponry

Axe - The **Bunang** has a crescent head; to its front is a concave edge, and to its back is a thinner, sharp point like a pick.

Blowgun - The **Sumpit** is a meter long wooden blowgun. It is a perfect weapon for stealth but in the heat of battle, it can be fitted with a bayonet to be used as a makeshift spear. Its projectiles, the **Kalway**, are thin arrows fitted with fishbone arrowheads. They are not damaging by themselves but when coated with poison, they are devastating.

Bow - The **Sikarom** is a bow almost as long as a Tawo. It's arrows, **Pana**, are fitted with iron arrowheads.

Cannon - The **Lantaka** is a cannon much too heavy for one Tawo to bring to a battlefield. In placements atop walls and ships, it can fire upon your enemies with the force of a hundred spears. Our lantakas, brought to our shores by the Northern Samot, are made of bronze, while the cannons on the ships of the Sun Priests are made of cast iron.

Fighting Stick - The **Pamalo** is a long stick of hardwood or rattan, used for training but is not a stranger to the battlefield.

Mace - The Mace is a weapon wielded by the Men of the Burning Cloth. It has a heavy, iron head with protruding spikes, as if to evoke the image of the Sun.

Musket - The **Luthang** is a weapon powered by black powder. It is a rare weapon in our hands, but it is standard issue for the Sun Priests. When fitted with bayonets, it could be used like spears in melee combat.

Polearm - The **Songil** looks like a heavier spear with a longer, double-edged blade and longer reach. It is designed for melee and would probably be too heavy to throw reliably.

Short Sword - There are three kinds of short swords on the Islands. The **Dohong** is a bolo designed for agriculture and woodcutting, but still makes for a good weapon. The **Kalis** is a short sword with a wavy edge, a favorite among warriors. The **Rapier** is brought here by the Sun Priests; it has an elegant handguard and a thin but double-edged blade.

Spear - The **Sibat** is a vital weapon in a warrior's arsenal. It is formidable in melee, but also excels in ranged combat when thrown. Here's a trick: on one end of a length of rope, tie your Sibat. Tie the other end around your wrist. Makes for easy retrieval after throwing your spear.

Sword - There are three kinds of swords. The **Kampilan** is made on the islands; it has an engraved hilt, a single straight edge, and a forked point. The **Katana** is a sword imported by the Northern Samot; its blade has a single, curved edge.

Armor

Chainmail - The **Batung-batung** is a mail of interlinked chains, reinforced with plates of hardwood, bamboo, or hides of beasts.

Light Armor - Our light armor is the **Barote**, made by braiding and weaving abaca and bark fibers. The weave of the armor is tight and intricately made to withstand cuts. **Leather armor** is a simple armor made from the hardened hides of beasts, used by the Sun Priests.

Plate Armor - The Plate Armor is an armor used by the Sun Priests that covers the entire body in metal plates. Forged in the fires of the Sun.

Shield - The **Kalasag** is a shield made of rattan, hardwood and resin. Different communities make their Kalasag differently; there are kalasag with prongs at the top and bottom, others have generally rectangular shapes, and some are made into circular shapes. All of them are designed with elaborate engravings and paint, for they are also used ceremonially.

Tools and Gear

Adventuring Gear - The **Sari-sari** is an assortment of mundane items and tools. Useful when you have run out of arrows or torches, or didn't buy a tool you eventually realized you needed.

Alcohol - The **Alak** is a clay jar full of alcohol. We love our strong liquor, but do not drink from it on your lonesome. It will make you look pitiful. Alak is meant to be enjoyed with others.

Bag - The **Bayong** is made of long leaves weaved into a handheld bag. It may surprise you, but it can carry a decent weight.

Bamboo Carrying Basket - The **Bangkat** is a large, open rattan basket worn on the back, designed for collecting bamboo. It has more room for items than a knapsack, but the contents will be less protected from falling out.

Bamboo Noisemakers - The **Kalakopak** is a pair of bamboo pieces with slits down the middle that are hit with each other to make noises. We call it that way because of the sound it makes.

Bamboo Pole and Section - The **Kawayan** is a versatile makeshift tool. As a pole, it can be used to manipulate things from a distance, like probing for traps. Cut and sharpen them into spears or javelins, or make smaller spikes for a pitfall trap. Cut off a section to use as a container for liquids or as a makeshift cooking pot. Use them as slates for writing; our Babaylan carve magical formulas and recipes onto them.

Bamboo Trumpet - The **Bodyong** is a hollow piece of bamboo. Put it on your mouth to amplify your voice. Our Babaylan uses one for rituals.

Bed Mat - The **Banig** is mat woven from long leaves. A more comfortable alternative to sleeping on the bare ground.

Betel Nuts - **Bunga** is important in our social culture. We love chewing on these nuts so frequently, our teeth are stained black or red! To fail to offer a bunga to chew to a guest of your house is a major offense. To offer a half-chewed betel nut from your mouth to someone is an act of flirtation. Always have bunga with you, for you do not know when you will be faced with a social situation.

Caltrops - A bag of **Tinik**, plant thorns, or fishbones can be used in a number of ways, usually to make a victim out of someone's feet.

Clay – Stored in a bamboo section, **Luwad** is powdery and flaky. But when mixed with water, it becomes a malleable substance.

Cooking Pot - The **Kawali** is a clay pot used for general cooking.

Crossbow Trap - The **Balatik** is a crossbow trap triggered by a tripwire to send flying a shaft that can stop large game in its tracks. A tool commonly used by Mangangaso.

Drill - The **Abluwang** is an iron tool used to bore holes into wood.

Drum - The **Gadang** is a single wooden drum with a body shaped like a drum and deerskin as the drumhead. The rhythmic banging of drums boost the morale of our warriors and syncs the rowing of a boat.

Engraved Boar Tusks - These **Pangil** are used in rituals invoking the Diwata, Yawa and Umalagad. Boar tusks are engraved with magic formulas to please them. In ritual, they are offered to the gods and thrown on the ground; the spirits make their answers known by the positions of the fallen tusks.

Fishing Net - The **Lambat** is a net cast into the Sea and pulled back up to catch fish. To cast these nets effectively requires such dexterity that Datus often pride themselves in being experienced in their use.

Fishing Trident - The **Sarapang** is a pole with an iron three-pronged head used in catching larger fish. It is connected to a boat with a strong rope, for the strength of what it catches might pull a lone Tawo under.

Glass Beads - The **Butil** is often used for decoration of clothing and cheap jewelry, but a creative mind might be able to think of another use for it. Sold per pouch.

Glue - **Pandikit** is an adhesive mixture of rice and sago starches. We stored it in a small clay jar, kept airtight with deerskin to prevent drying out.

Gong - The **Agung** is a circular plate made of bronze and played by banging with a stick. Ones made by the Southern Samot are of the highest quality.

Grease - **Langis** is made of coconut oil and a thickener, stored in a clay jar. Makes it less likely to spill than oil.

Gunpowder - Gunpowder is what gives the Luthang and Lantaka their force and power. It is extremely volatile, and the slightest spark might set it off.

Hammer - The **Palo-palo** is a heavy stone head fitted onto a wooden handle. With this and an anvil, our Panday sa Puthaw creates many swords and tools.

Healing Balm - The balm made from the **Pili** tree sap is used as first aid for wounds and cuts. When applied to recent wounds, the patient should feel some relief and healing.

Hunting Net - The **Batung** is a net made of strong, thick cordage to entrap large game. Our Mangangaso would lead their prey to where these were set up beforehand, tied between two trees.

Incense - Imported from the Northern Samot, these thin sticks spread a fragrance with its smoke when burnt.

Jar - The **Banga** are jars made of clay used to store all kinds of things like foods and liquids. They come in different sizes.

Knapsack - The **Kupit** is an enclosed bag woven of leaves and worn on the back. It offers less space for items than the Bangkat but with this, you wouldn't have to worry about those items falling out.

Knitting Needles - The **Koging** is a pair of wooden sticks used for knitting clothes.

Medicinal Herbs - A pouch of **Tambalan** is full of herbs and remedies that help one's healing.

Nose Flute - The **Tongali** is a flute that is played by putting it to one's nose and blowing out. Magsasaka believe rice grows faster when you play them a melody on the tongali.

Oar - The **Sagwan** is carved from wood and is a must have for all seafarers. They come in leaf-shaped and dinner plate-shaped blades. Warriors hone their skills in the oar just as much as the sword.

Pickaxe - The **Piko** is a tool most used by Taga-Bundok, for they live near where ore is found.

Rations - **Kanin** is the general term for food. For travel, we wrap non-perishable foods like dried fish and meat, or root crops, berries and nuts in banana leaves for easy storage.

Rattan Ball - The **Sipa** is made by looping rattan over itself again and again until it forms a ball. It is used in playing a game of the same name where the goal is to prevent the ball from touching the ground by kicking it up with your feet.

Rope - **Lubid** is a length of cordage made by twisting and braiding together abaca fibers

Sand – Stored in a bamboo section, it's **Buhangin**. I thought it could be useful.

Saw - The **Lagari** is an iron tool used to more precisely cut wood than with an axe, used by woodworking Panday.

Shovel - The **Pala** is a carved wooden tool used to dig holes out of dirt and sand.

Sickle - The **Salat** is a smaller bolo used for the cutting of grass and weeds.

Snare - The **Balolong** is a tool used to entrap small creatures consisting of a length of rope and some wood. Beware not to use it for larger beasts; they will just force it apart.

Sorcery Ingredients – An assortment of ingredients that helps a sorcerer with their magic. It consists of an unappetizing collection of herbs, bugs, and parts of animals.

String Instrument - The **Kudyapi** is a long, two-stringed lute, played to accompany the singing of epics and legends.

Tongs - The **Kipit** is an iron tool used by the Pandaw sa Puthaw to pick up objects too dangerous to touch, like super-heated metal.

Top - The **Kasing** is a toy carved from wood. It is made to spin with a length of rope wrapped around it.

Torch - The **Tanglaw** is a stick of bamboo cut up into four prongs at the top - in the middle of these prongs, barks and wood from a resin-rich tree are inserted. The resin helps to maintain a fire for a longer time. Be sure to bring a good amount when exploring at night or the Underworld.

Anting-Anting

Our tools are not limited to the mundane. We can also harness the inherent magic of Nature to make consumables, weapons, and objects of power that we call **Anting-Anting**.

Oils

Oil of Healing - This mixture of oils and various herbs heals wounds instantly when applied on the skin.

Oil of Flight - This oil-infused white bat's wings mixture grants the power of flight for a time. When applied on one's arms, one can fly for a minute.

Oil of Antidote - This oil-infused lagtang roots mixture neutralizes poisons and venoms when applied to the wounds where the poison entered.

Oil of Fire Resistance - This oil-infused kalampisaw roots mixture protects one from intense heat for a minute. It needs to be applied on the whole body.

Oil of Hardwood Skin - This oil-infused narra bark mixture hardens one's skin, acting as natural armor.

Oil of Camouflage - This oil-infused chameleon tail mixture turns one's skin into one like a chameleon for a minute. This allows one to move around without being seen.

Oil of Venom - This oil-infused venom glands mixture eats through flesh with much potency. When applied to your weapon, it grants you advantage in combat.

Magic Artifacts

Manananggal Kalis - The Kalis sword's blade detaches from the hilt and flies in the way the holder of the hilt wants. It can attack nearby foes, but leaves the holder unprotected.

Bayong of Holding - A weaved bag that holds 50 items while only weighing like a turtle shell. If destroyed, it's contents will stream out in a potentially dangerous way.

Firefly Torch - An ordinary-looking branch which fireflies flock to. Grants illumination that doesn't burn itself out. The fireflies must be killed to extinguish it and they can only be replenished in outside areas.

Tuwaang's Kalasag - A large shield made of hardwood, enchanted to grow into a dugout canoe which can fit two people.

Talipahon - A spear designed for vanquishing distant foes. When thrown at enemies from afar, it damages more than a normal spear. But in melee combat, you may as well use another weapon.

Tonina's Headdress - This golden headdress may conceal your identity, but over-usage might cause the loss of self.

Suklay of Slumber - This magic comb casts a spell of eternal sleep on the one whose hair it runs through. Using it again on the hair of one afflicted with the spell will wake them up.

Anito of Habagat - This golden statue depicts the wind Diwata among clouds. Pray to it and summon the storm, but know that it does not protect you from the destruction that you wished for.

Matling's Tongali - This nose flute forces armor to fall to the ground when played. The armor of the one playing is also subject to this effect.

Agimat of Water Stepping - This amulet enables the wearer to step on water as if it is ground for a few seconds, after which the wearer will sink back into the water. It cannot be used when the wearer is also already submerged with water.

Kalasag of Featherfall - This rattan shield will allow its user to glide with the winds instead of falling from a great height.

Agimat of the Alupihan - This amulet causes plants and bamboo to bend away from the wearer.

Kisap Sibot - This spear causes the thrower to teleport where it was thrown. However, using it in quick succession might cause disorientation.

Cruel Betel Nut Box - Betel nuts stored in this box absorb its magical effects in 5 days. When chewed, the pigment of these betel nuts can inflict wounds on anyone besides the chewer.

Inalok Ladle - This wooden carved ladle turns into stone those who eat from it.

Sari-Sari Luthang - This gilded musket can use anything as a projectile, granted it fits the barrel. The explosion that propels the projectile will not destroy it. Because of its magical nature, it takes longer to reload than a normal luthang.

Si-Gantar Alam - This gilded cannon sends shockwaves at its targets, destroying anything along its path. No wall can stand up to it, no Tawo survives it. But due to the nature of its attacks, it cannot attack targets at a distance.

Pagi Whip - A short whip made from the tail of a stingray, enchanted to be used against Aswang.

Agimat of Usapang Hayop – This amulet is shaped like a golden clam shell that you can open and close. Insert the essence of a creature in it and gain the ability to talk to the same kind of creature for an hour. However, you also forget all other languages in that hour.