

Pinaing / Pinading Ritual

ITNEG*, ABRA PROVINCE, NORTHWESTERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. *At the gate or entrance of nearly every village, a number of peculiarly shaped, water-worn stones are found. These are either beneath a small shelter, or nestled among the roots of some great tree. These are the “guardian stones” and in them lives Apdel (“the spirit who guards the town”).*



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A pinading nestling on the roots of a tree, where Apdel, the village guardian spirit, dwells.

MANY STORIES are said about the *pinaing*, but all agree that if proper offerings are made to them at the beginning of a great ceremony – such as when the men are about to undertake a raid, or when sickness is in a nearby village – the resident spirit will protect the people under his care. This is why a group of people may be seen gathered there early in the morning

several times each year. They anoint the head of each one with oil, put new bark bands on their “necks,” after which they kill a small pig. The medium mixes the blood of the slain animal with rice and scatters it on the ground while she recites the story of their origin. Then she bids the spirits from near and far to come and eat and to be kindly disposed.

In Bakaok and other villages, it is customary for the medium to summon several spirits at this time followed by the dancing of the *tadek*. The people of Luluno always hold a ceremony at the *pinaing* before the planting of the rice and after the harvest.

Following this ceremony in the village of San Juan, a miniature raft (*taltalabong*) is loaded with food and other presents and is set afloat. This carries provisions to any spirit who might have been prevented from enjoying the feast.

These stones are of particular interest as they present one of the few instances in which the Tinguian associates supernatural beings with natural objects.