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South Asia and Southeast Asia are rich in folklore and tales of monsters, creatures, and legendary beings. Sprits stalk the forests, revenants haunt the night, and monsters creep through the land.

A thread-

In Bengali legends, the Bhoot is a ghost-like being which comes in many shapes and forms.

One, Boba, is an ancient being which strikes when you are sleeping, strangling its victims while vulnerable.

It is believed to cause sleep paralysis.

The night spirit, Nishi, mesmerizes its victim with its voice calling out their name. Nishi then leads the person deep into the woods where they are never seen from again.

Meanwhile the Besho Bhoot haunts bamboo forests.

One must be wary particularly at night for their penchant is to lower bamboo stalks until you walk over them then they strike.

In Kashmir the Rantas is a monstrous creature with backwards feet, long talons, and sharp teeth.

She haunts the winter nights stalking men she fancies and kidnapping them.

The theme of backwards feet is found throughout South Asia; the Pichal Peri are described as ghostly creatures with backwards feet from the mountains of Pakistan and India.

In many descriptions, Pichal Peri disguises herself as a beautiful woman before revealing her true visage.

Only her feet give her away.

The Pichal Peri is either related to or a type of Churel who dwells in the trees.

The Churel is a spirit born from trauma, either from the abuse it suffered at the hands of in-laws while alive, or from death in childbirth.

Monstrous creatures born of trauma are also found in Javanese lore.

The Wewe Gombel is a vengeful spirit sometimes described as having pendulous breasts. She stalks and kidnaps young children.

Like the Churel, she is linked to trauma in life. It is said, she was originally a woman who was scorned by her husband who preferred the company of other women.

His neglect, abuse, and infidelity broke her spirit ending in death for him and her.

Interestingly, she often targets neglected children, even appearing protective of them.

In Malay folklore, the Penanggalan is the disembodied head of a woman flying with entrails hanging from its neck.

It generally targets young children and pregnant women.

Unlike the churel, the Penanggalan is still alive. By day it is an ordinary woman, at night it becomes the torso-less creature.

It is said the Penanggalan is a sorceress born from breaking a pact with a demon, or who deliberately invokes such powers.

By day she can be identified by the faint whiff of vinegar, which she bathes in.

She is related to the Krasue in Cambodia.

Another Malay creature is the Langsuyar, a vampiric ghost who feast on the blood of children. With long tresses which reach her toes and long claws, she flies through air hunting her prey.

She is said to be the ghost of a woman who died in childbirth.

Malaysian and Indonesian lore have many such entities.

Another is the Pontianak who also died during childbirth.

She stalks her prey by smelling their laundry, so the wise are advised to not leave their drying clothes outside at night.

She strikes with terrifying nails, eating the entrails of her victims

A similar type creature can be found in the Philippines.

The Manananggal can separate the top of its body from the rest, sprouting bat-like wings to fly through the air.

A vampiric monster, it preys upon sleeping victims, particularly pregnant women.

In Indonesia, the Jenglot is a relatively modern monster, said to be a human doll-like creature born from the spirit of those who sought out eternal life.

It has long terrifying nails.

Meanwhile the Toyol is the revenant of an infant used by the dukun in magical rituals often appearing green-skinned.

Interestingly, salt seems to be universally an apotropaic measure against these creatures.

Yet, not all such tales are of the monstrous. The Orang bunian are creatures of the forest who dwell as an invisible race in the forests.

They live parallel lives to humans, though are magical in nature. While mischievous they can be quite benevolent.

Each of these beings attest to the rich folklore of South Asia and Southeast Asia where spirits wander the lands. Many speak to social traumas and anxieties. Others, like the Orang bunian, hint at the idea of shared space, of a world in which human and spirit live side-by-side.

While you are here, please support the relief efforts in the Philippines. A few weeks ago they suffered massive devastation from a typhoon. I have included some links here but if you know of other collective relief efforts share below

<https://t.co/QJ4XKPzsKI>

more:

<https://t.co/S7dhxikyzp>

<https://t.co/EqeXoySfF1>

I'll cover more in the world of folklore in future threads.

adding some more places you can support relief efforts, thanks to [@tanda_na_bunso](#) for linking to [@NAFCON](#)

<https://t.co/N6TzZWKXoX>



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We are partnering with the **Consortium for People's Development - Disaster Response (CPD-DR)** and **Leyte Center for Development (LCDE)**, a pioneer in community-based disaster risk management and relief programs in the Philippines. Throughout the years, in partnership with CPD-DR and other grassroots organizations, NAFCON has delivered **efficient and timely** disaster relief to the most impacted communities.

Please consider supporting this effort today. More updates to come.

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Your support will go towards:

- Providing food and hygiene materials to help affected families
- Sustaining community pantries and medical clinics
- Primary health care services to families still living in evacuation camps displaced by calamities or militarization
- Humanitarian missions to grant livelihood assistance to vulnerable communities
- Grant cash and vegetable seeds to families in affected barangays
- Solidarity tours (online virtual tours that highlight the struggles of communities in the Philippines and listening to their stories)

You may contact us at info@nafconusa.org for questions or concerns.