

Let us tell stories, myths and legends.

But let me start with intro about the meaning of the different terms.

The terms legend and folktale are sometimes used interchangeably with myth.

**Technically, however, these are not the same.
How should we distinguish them?**

A myth is a sacred story from the past. It may explain the origin of the universe and of life, or it may express its culture's moral values in human terms. Myths concern the powers who control the human world and the relationship between those powers and human beings. Although myths are religious in their origin and function, they may also be the earliest form of history, science, or philosophy...

A folktale is a story that, in its plot, is pure fiction and that has no particular location in either time or space. However, despite its elements of fantasy, a folktale is actually a symbolic way of presenting the different means by which human beings cope with the world in which they live. Folktales concern people -- either royalty or common folk -- or animals who speak and act like people...

A legend is a story from the past about a subject that was, or is believed to have been, historical. Legends concern people, places, and events. Usually, the subject is a saint, a king, a hero, a famous person, or a war. A legend is always associated with a particular place and a particular time in history.

**My interest in mythology intertwines with my interests in:
Astronomy, Archaeology, Astrology, Psychic Stuff, Skepticism,
Religion and Catastrophism.**

Philippine folk tales

Why the Sun Follows the Moon

The Sun and the Moon used to be married and shared the sky. One day the Moon had to gather vegetables in the forest and asked the Sun to watch over their children. She warned him not to get too near the sleeping kids because they might get burned.

He watches the kids from a distance but, because he wanted to kiss them, forgot his wife's warning. He bends over near his children and, horrified, sees them melt. He hides in the forest. His wife, the Moon, returns to find her children all melted. After some time, the Sun shows himself to the Moon. They fight: He throws the vegetables to her face and she leaves him.

On a clear night, when the Moon is full, you will see traces of vegetable leaves on her face. Their children have turned into stars, while the Sun keeps chasing after the Moon in an attempt to reconcile.

Philippine folk tales

The Legend of the Dama de Noche

A thousand years ago,

there was a rich maharlika, or nobleman, who spent his early bachelor days recklessly, wining and dining in the company of nobility. He drank the finest wines, ate the most delectable food and enjoyed the company of the loveliest, perfumed and bejewelled women of the noble class.

After years of this kind of life, the maharlika finally felt it was time to settle down and marry the woman of his choice. "But who is the woman to choose?" he asked himself as he sat in the rich splendour of his home, "All the women I know are beautiful and charming, but I am tired of the glitter of their jewels and the richness of their clothes!" He wanted a woman different from all the women he saw day and night, and found this in a simple village lass. She was charming in her own unaffected ways, and her

name was Dama.

They married and lived contentedly. She loved him and took care of him. She pampered him with the most delicious dishes, and kept his home and his clothes in order. But soon, the newness wore off for the maharlika. He started to long for the company of his friends. He took a good look at his wife and thought, she is not beautiful and she does not have the air of nobility about her, she does not talk with wisdom. And so the maharlika returned to his own world of glitter and splendor. He spent his evenings sitting around with his friends in their noble homes, drank and talked till the first rays of the sun peeped from the iron grills of their ornate windows.

Poor Dama felt that she was losing her husband. She wept in the silence of their bedroom. "I cannot give my husband anything but the delights of my kitchen and the warmth of my bed. He is tired of me." She looked to the heavens. "Oh, friendly spirits! Help me. Give me a magic charm. Just one

little magic charm to make my husband come home again, that he will never want to leave my side, forever!"

It was midnight when the maharlika came home. He opened the door of their bedroom and called for Dama to tell her to prepare his nightclothes. "Dama! Dama, where are you?" he called. He shouted all around the bedroom. He searched the whole house. Still the nobleman could not find his simple wife. Finally the nobleman returned to their bedroom, tired and cross. But, as he opened the door, he stopped.

A rare scent, sweet and fragrant, drifted to him. It was a scent he had never smelled before. He entered the room and crossed to the window where the scent seemed to be floating from. A strange bush was growing outside the window. Some of its thin branches had already reached the iron grills and were twisting around. And all over the bush were thousands of tiny starlike, white flowers, from which burst forth a heavenly, enchanting scent!

He stood there, completely enraptured by the glorious smell. "Dama..." he whispered softly, wondering, could this be Dama? The rich maharlika sat by the window, and waited for the return of his loving simple wife. But she did not come back. She never returned to him again. Only the

fragrance of the flowers stayed with him, casting a spell over his whole being.

In the moonlight, Dama of the night, or Dama de Noche would be in full bloom, capturing the rich maharlika, making him never want to leave her side, forever.

Philippine folk tales

Legend of the Banana Plant In the early days when the world was new, spirits and ghosts lurked everywhere. They lived in gloomy caves, they hid in anthills and tree trunks they frolicked in nooks and corners under the houses. In the dark, sometimes their tiny voices could be heard dimly, or their ghostly presence be felt. But they were never seen.

It was during these days of phantoms and unseen spirits that a young and beautiful girl lived. Her name was Raya, and she was a girl bold and daring. She was never afraid of spirits. She would walk in the shadowy forests, bringing along a lighted candle.

Then she would tiptoe into dark and dirty caves, searching the place for spirits. Raya only felt or heard them never having seen them. But Raya always felt the presence of one kind spirit, whenever she walked in the forest the spirit was with her at all times.

One day she heard someone call her name, and she looked up to see a young

handsome man. She asked him who he was, and he replied that his name was Sag-in, and he was the spirit who followed her around, and even confessed that he had fallen in love with a mortal.

They married had a child and lived happily, but Sag-in knew that his time on earth was short for he was a spirit-man, and would have to return to the spirit world soon. When he knew his time had come, he called Raya and

explained why he had to leave. As he was slowly vanishing, he told Raya that he would leave her a part of him. Raya looked down and saw a bleeding heart on the ground. She took the heart and planted it. She watched it night and day. A plant with long green leaves sprouted from the grave.

One day, the tree bore fruit shaped like a heart. She touched the fruit and caressed it. Thinking could this be Sag-in's heart? Slowly the fruit opened , Long golden fruits sprouted from it. Raya picked one, peeled it and bit into it. Then, she heard Sag-in's voice floating in the air:

"Yes, Raya, it is my heart. I have reappeared to show you that I will never forsake you and our child. Take care of this plant, and it will take care of you in return. It's trunk and leaves will give you shelter and clothing. The heart and fruits will be your food. And when you sleep at night, I will stand and watch by your window. I will stay by your side forever!"

Philippine folk tales

Legend of the Firefly

Fireflies!

Lovely little creatures, glittering, sparkling, throwing fragments of light in the dark night skies. How did the fireflies or alitaptap come about?

Once, along time ago, in the valley of Pinak in Central Luzon, one of the islands in the Philippines. There was a deep large lake rich with fish. There, the people of Pinak fished for their food, and always, there was plenty for all. Then suddenly, the big river dried up. In the shallow mud, there wasn't a fish to catch. For months, there were no rains. Out in the fields, the land turned dry. The rice-stalks slowly withered. Everywhere in Pinak, there was hunger. Night after night, the people of Pinak prayed hard.

"Dear Bathala," they would recite together in their small and poorly-built chapel, " send us rains, give us food to eat. For the people are starving, and there is want among us!"

Then one black and starless night, the good Bathala answered the prayers of the faithful people of Pinak. For suddenly up in the dark skies appeared a blaze of gold! A beautiful chariot of gold was zooming thru the sky. The people started to panic but a big booming voice came from the chariot

soothing them with words.

" I am Bulan-hari, and I have come with my wife, Bitu-in. We are sent to the heavens to rule Pinak from now on. We have come to give you good life!" As Bulan-hari spoke, the black skies burst open. The rain fell in torrents. Soon the dry fields bloomed again. The large lake rose and once again was filled with fish. The people were happy once more under the rulership of Bulan-hari.

Soon Bulan-hari and Bitu-in had a daughter. She grew up to be a beautiful maiden. Such long dark hair! Such lovely eyes under long curling lashes! Her nose was chiselled fine. Her lips like rosebuds. Her skin was soft and fair like cream. They named her Alitaptap for on her forehead was a bright sparkling star.

All the young, brave handsome men of Pinak fell in love with Alitaptap. They worshipped her beauty. They sang songs of love beneath her windows. They all sought to win her heart.

But alas! the heart of Alitaptap wasn't human. She was the daughter of Bulanhari and Bitu-in, who burst from the sky and were not of the earth. She had a heart of stone, as cold and as hard as the sparkling star on her forehead. Alitaptap would never know love.

Then one day, an old woman arrived at the palace. Her hair long and dirty. her clothing tattered and soiled. Before the king Bulan-hari, Balo-na, the old, wise woman whined in her sharp voice... that she had come from her dwelling in the mountains to bear the king sad news. The news being that she saw the future in a dream and it betold of their fate... the warriors of La-ut are coming with their mighty swords to conquer the land, the only solution is to have a marriage between Alitaptap and one of the young men, so as to have a heir to win the war.

At once Bulan-hari pleaded with his daughter to choose one of the young

men in their village. But how could the beautiful maiden understand? Alitaptap's heart of stone merely stood in silence. Bulan-hari gripped his sword in despair... " Alitapatap!" he bellowed in the quiet palace, "You will follow me, or you will lay dead this very minute!"

But nothing could stir the lovely young woman's heart. Bulan-hari blind with anger and fear of the dark future finally drew his sword. Clang! the steel of his sword's blade rang in the silence of the big palace. It hit the star on Alitaptap's lovely forehead!

The star burst! Darkness was everywhere! Until a thousand chips of glitter and light flew around the hall. Only the shattered pieces of the star on Alitaptap's forehead lighted the great hall, flickering as though they were stars with tiny wings.

Alitaptap, the lovely daughter from the heavens lay dead.

And soon, Balo-na's prediction had come true. Riding in stamping wild horses, the warriors of La-ut came like the rumble and clashes of lightning and

thunder. They killed the people of Pinak, ruined crops, poisoned the lake. They spread sorrow and destruction everywhere.

When it all ended, the beautiful, peaceful valley of Pinak had turned into an empty and shallow swamp. At night, there was nothing but darkness. But soon, tiny sparkles of light would flicker and lend glimmers of brightness in the starless night.

And so, the fireflies came about. Once, a long time ago, they were fragments from the star on the forehead of Bulan-hari's daughter, the beautiful Alitaptap.

Philippine folk tales

The Story of the First Durian (The Hermit's Three Wishes)

Barom-Mai was an old and ugly king who lived in a kingdom called Calinan in the Visayas hundreds of years ago. Although he was powerful, he was

helpless when it came to winning the love of his young bride, Madayaw-Bayho (daughter of Tageb, king of the pirates).

Barom-Mai asked his advisers to help him win his bride's love, and Matigam (the wisest of advisers) told him about Impit Purok, a hermit who lived in a cave in Mt. Apo.

They went to the hermit and he asked for three things: the egg of the black tabon bird, twelve ladles of fresh milk from a white carabao without blemish, and the nectar from the flower of the tree-of-make-believe.

The egg will be used to soften the bride's heart; the milk, to make her kind; and, the nectar, to make her see Barom-Mai as a young and handsome king.

The king finds the egg through the help of Pawikan, the king of the sea turtles. He luckily gets milk from a white carabao the following breakfast, thanks to his cook. Hangin-Bai, the nymph of the air, leads him to her sister, the wood nymph who had the magic flower in her hair.

Barom-Mai gives the three things to Impit Purok, who asked him to prepare a big feast after Barom-Mai wins his queen back, and to invite Impit Purok as the king's guest of honor.

Impit Purok mixes the three ingredients and instructs Barom-Mai to plant the mixture in the royal garden. The morning after it was planted, a tree grew. It had a sweet smell and tasted good. When Madayaw-Bayho was given the fruit, she fell in love with Barom-Mai.

The king throws a big feast but forgets to invite Impit Purok. In retaliation, Impit casts a curse upon the fruit: The sweet smell was replaced with a foul

odor while the smooth skin of the fruit was covered with thorns, which is how the durian smells and looks today.

Kankanay tales

How the thunder and the lightning came to be

Long ago, Lumawig came to the earth and married a girl. She had many sisters. They were jealous because he did not marry any of them. They put garlic under the bed of the couple. Lumawig smelled the garlic and he did not like the smell. He said to his wife: "I shall return to the sky. I shall take half of our child and leave you the other half." He divided the child into two parts, and took the head. The head was angry because it did not have its body, and it talked very loudly as it complained. Lumawig made it a body and gave it legs, and this head became the thunder. The half that Lumawig left behind could not talk, but Lumawig came back for it, made a head for it, and this creature later married the thunder, and it became the lightning.

Kankanay tales

The origin of the human race

Long ago, the gods came to the earth, but there were no people. They said, "It would be good if there were people. We shall create a man and woman." They took some earth and made two people and let them stand. They plucked the feathers from a chicken and made the chicken jump. "We shall make them laugh so that they will be alive." Then one of the creatures laughed. It became a man. The other heard the first one laugh, and laughed also. It became a woman.

THE MAIDEN STAR (Bontoc Igorot)

On a cloudless night, one looks up into heaven and finds the sky

beautifully studded with brilliant twinkling stars. On that part of the sky where one sees three stars lined together, these, it is said, are the three sisters and not so far away is a lone star, brighter, bigger, which is the star maiden.

The elders say that long, long ago, there was a rich young man who owned a large sugar plantation not far from his house. Beside this plantation was a lake of clearest blue water that sparkled in the distance. The man was proud of these possessions and was the envy of the village. Rich as he was he did not seek help when he tended his fields. He gave all the care and love to his plants, for from it came the best fayas in the whole mountain region.

But one morning when he made his usual visitation, he saw litters of sugar cane husk everywhere, a good portion of sugar cane gone, and the lake turbid. Angry, he went to the council of elders to investigate and to punish the culprits. An inquiry was made but they could not find anyone who would dare violate the pachipad. They decided then that he would catch the culprits himself and so that night he put up a shed near his field and kept vigil.

As the night deepened, he fell into a deep slumber and woke up to find a worse situation than the previous night. He swore to sleep during the day and really stay awake the following night. So that night as the world slept, he sat watching and waiting, and soon he could hear voices, laughter and running feet. He peeped through a parted growth and much to his surprise saw beautiful maidens cutting canes, while others swam in the lake. In a trance he watched and just before the break of dawn he got back his wits and so was able to snatch a white cloth that lay nearest to his hiding place. Soon the maidens after having their fun, dressed and flew back to the heavens to flicker their last ray before the approach of dawn, except one who could not find her white robe. Carefully hiding the clothes he took, he approached the maiden and carried her to his home. There they lived as man and wife, never again to be disturbed by other star maidens.

As the years passed, they were blessed with three lovely daughters. And every night from then on, the woman never slept another night, she just wove and wove long white robes. Until one night as the man slept with the world, they wore the robes and were gone. The man woke up and found an empty house and a cold hearth, and he was sad. He could

hardly wait for the night to come so that he may gaze up to the skies to see his beloved ones.

CHACHA' AND KED-YEM

(Bontoc Igorot)

This is the story of the two men who set the law and strength of the al-lawig, keeping one's word in the pechen. The enemy tribe who comes to make a pact with another tribe is protected by it, that whatever they eat or drink or smoke with the tribe with whom they have the pechen would fear no death.

Long, long ago, there were two gods by the name of Chacha' and Ked-yem. One was a warrior and the other a blacksmith. They were very good neighbors.

One day, Chacha' asked his wife the whereabouts of his two sons. His wife answered that she saw them go up the place of Ked-yem, the blacksmith. Taking a torch, the father went to the house of Ked-yem and asked for his sons. The blacksmith without looking up from his work just answered they were in his house, only that he had cut off their heads as they came everyday to destroy his work. He pointed to the tap-an where he placed the bodies and to the kapan where he placed the heads. Chacha' quietly took the heads and connected them with the bodies and both sons lived again. Then before leaving he told his friend the blacksmith that on the following day they will fight this matter out in the mountain.

So the following day, *Chacha' and Ked-yem met with their weapons and started fighting. In their strength they pulled out all the trees and plants around them in the forest till nothing was left to hurl at each other. When night came, not one was vanquished.

So Chacha' said that the fight would continue the following morning in the river. And so the two giants fought it out in the river turning and using all the stones, yet not one of them was hurt or fell. When night came and it was time to go home, the warrior suggested to the blacksmith that they be friends again and have the pechen. When they looked back where they had

fought, they found that kawa (spider) had fenced the river and so they went home. Then Chacha' said to Ked-yem, "From now on when I eat my rice you shall eat of it and feel safe and when I smoke my pipe, you shall smoke of it and have no fear that it will bring you ill health."

And so, they in-chur-is (bequeathed) the pacts of the gods to the earthlings on earth.

Beowulf the hero

Beowulf scholar Tolkien noted that the name Beowulf almost certainly means bee-hunter in Old English. The name Beowulf could therefore be a kenning for "bear" due to a bear's love of honey. Bees figure prominently in many mythologies in Europe and the Near East (see Bee (mythology)). Jacob Grimm attributes the term "bee-hunter" to a type of woodpecker.

Some scholars suggest that Beowulf could correspond to Bödvar Bjarki, the

battle bear, from Norse sagas. Both left Geatland (where Bjarki's brother was king), arrived in Denmark and slew a beast that terrorized the Danish court. They also both helped the Swedish king Eadgils defeat his uncle Ali in the Battle on the Ice.

An alternative theory is championed by author John Grigsby in his 2005 text, *Beowulf & Grendel: The Truth Behind England's Oldest Legend*. In this book, Grigsby argues that the word Beowulf translates as 'Barley wolf' and links this character to ancient warrior cults of Indo-European tradition such as the Ulfhednar ('wolf-heads') of Norse myth who may have gone into battle intoxicated with a sacred narcotic. This narcotic was most likely ergotized barley, a substance found in the stomachs of Iron Age bodies found preserved in peat bogs in Denmark such as Tollund Man. That these preserved bodies appear to have been slain in rites to the goddess Nerthus, mentioned by Tacitus in his *Germania*, has prompted Grigsby to argue that Grendel's lakedwelling mother may be a late echo of this goddess, and that Beowulf's victory over her represents the ending of her cult in Age of Migration Denmark by Odin-worshipping Danes.

Aliguyon

(Ifugao)

Once upon a time, in a village called Hannanga, a boy was born to the couple named Amtalao and Dumulao. He was called Aliguyon. He was an intelligent, eager young man who wanted to learn many things, and indeed, he learned many useful things, from the stories and teachings of his father. He learned how to fight well and chant a few magic spells. Even as a child, he was a leader, for the other children of his village looked up to him with awe.

Upon leaving childhood, Aliguyon betook himself to gather forces to fight against his father's enemy, who was Pangaiwan of the village of Daligidigan. But his challenge was not answered personally by Pangaiwan. Instead, he faced Pangaiwan's fierce son, Pumbakhayon. Pumbakhayon was just as skilled in the arts of war and magic as Aliguyon. The two of them battled each other for three years, and neither of them showed signs of defeat.

Their battle was a tedious one, and it has been said that they both used only one spear! Aliguyon had thrown a spear to his opponent at the start of their match, but the fair Pumbakhayon had caught it deftly with one hand. And then Pumbakhayon threw the spear back to Aliguyon, who picked it just as neatly from the air.

At length Aliguyon and Pumbakhayon came to respect each other, and then eventually they came to admire each other's talents. Their fighting stopped suddenly. Between the two of them they drafted a peace treaty between Hannanga and Daligidigan, which their peoples readily agreed to. It was fine to

behold two majestic warriors finally side by side.

Aliguyon and Pumbakhayon became good friends, as peace between their villages flourished. When the time came for Aliguyon to choose a mate, he chose Pumbakhayon's youngest sister, Bugan, who was little more than a baby. He took Bugan into his household and cared for her until she grew to

be most beautiful. Pumbakhayon, in his turn, took for his wife Aliguyon's younger sister, Aginaya. The two couples became wealthy and respected in all of Ifugao.

The Aswang

The aswang is the most dreaded of supernatural beings and is a person who assumes other forms, like that of a dog, pig, horse, or carabao, when he or she roams about at night in search of prey, particularly sick persons or expectant mothers. The form an aswang takes is usually extraordinarily large and of completely black color. In addition, the aswang can fly at night but only their head and intestines do so leaving the rest of their body behind on their bed. People are often warned against sleeping with their bellies exposed because an aswang might steal their intestines as they sleep. When the intended victim is not asleep, the aswang would stand upside-down and then emit a strong odor which will make the victim incapable of moving. The aswang will then eat the victim's internal organs starting from the heart down to the intestines.

The aswang is said to prefer eating unborn babies and can smell an unborn baby. Their modus operandi is to extend their tongue and extract the baby from the mother's womb. People who see, at night, what looks like a strand of cobweb hanging down (from a tree, for example) are warned not to reach for it as it may be the tongue of an aswang waiting to catch an unsuspecting person.

During the day, the aswang lives like a normal person and may even have a job and it is believed that the aswang never victimizes his or her neighbors. It is claimed that if you see your neighbor standing upside-down, then he or she is an aswang. An aswang can also be spotted by looking into their eye. Your reflection in an aswang's eye would be upside-down. But when one happens to look at an aswang in the eye, one should never look away but, rather, should try to stare down the aswang. It usually doesn't take long for the aswang to surrender and look away. But if you look away first, you're lost. Another method of detecting an aswang is to use a special oil that's prepared in an arcane and complicated ritual that can be performed only on Good Fridays. The oil will boil if it is brought near

an aswang.

The word "aswang" is often translated as "sorcerer" but this is misleading. First of all, sorcerers do what they do of their own free will while being an aswang is considered to be a state of sickness wherein the person who has

become an aswang is unable to control himself. A person becomes an aswang if another aswang blows air down his or her neck. An aswang can be "cured" with the help of a native healer (called a "mananambal" among Visayans) who will force the aswang to drink certain potions. The infected one will then vomit all sorts of weird things from an entire egg to a bird.

Many present-day Filipinos believe in the existence of the aswang and, in fact, there are those who claim that they live next door to an aswang.

The Legend of Mariang Makiling

[/size] According to legend, there was a time when the gods could live like ordinary mortals do. Although these gods were enchanted, they could speak, love, and even go to the market like what people do in our time. This story tells what happened to the daughter of two such deities. This is the story of Mariang Makiling.

Two deities, Dayang Makiling and Gat Panahon, had an only daughter name Maria. Because of her beauty and charm, she was the delight of her parents. The source of their joy and strength, Maria was, to them, a jewel, a treasure that made life full of light and laughter.

At that time people could talk with the deities face to face, and even sit with them side by side underneath a tree. People could also ask for help when they were in need, provided that they asked in a solemn manner.

It was the custom of Maria to go to a small market, sometimes called talipapa, on weekdays. Just like other women, she would on such occasions wear clothes made of silk and embroidered with flowers and wide stripes for this was the fashion at that time. Maria had long, black abundant hair which she usually decorated with pomelo flowers. When she went to the

market, her flowing hair would touch her ankles. As she passed along, gallant men would bow their heads to signify their respect.

When Maria went to the market, she was always accompanied by two Aetas, who served as her servants. These two servants stayed close behind Maria, and they both carried a basket each that was full of golden ginger. These golden ginger Maria would barter for such items needed for the home. There was no money at that time, and instead of buying, people bartered and exchanged their goods for the things that they needed.

On a market day, the residents of the area are not the only ones who would go to the talipapa. Merchants and people from neighboring towns would also go to the market. One day, Gat Dula, the ruler of the kingdom of Bay, came to the talipapa to while away the hours. A piece of animal skin with fine hair caught Gat Dula's eye and he reached out to touch the fur. At the same

moment, Maria was also reaching towards the same piece of animal skin and their shoulders accidentally touched. Their eyes met and Gat Dula bowed his head as a sign of respect and apology. And Maria responded with a shy smile as they parted from each other's company.

Since that first encounter, Gat Dula often visited the talipapa but he was not able to see Maria during these visits. One day, he saw Maria at the very place where they first met. He approached Maria and greeted her and Maria responded with a very sweet smile.

That was the beginning of their friendship which blossomed into love as the months passed. As time passed, the love affair between Gat Dula and Maria came to be known to Gat Panahon, Maria's father. Gat Panahon was angry. Even Dayang Makiling, Maria's mother, was distressed that her only daughter was in love with a mortal. Maria was then forbidden to go down to the earth. Her parents even took away from Maria the power of enchantment which enabled a deity to look and act like an ordinary mortal. But even though Maria and Gat Dula could no longer meet physically, their love endured. Maria continued to watch over Gat Dula. During a battle with the army of Lakan Bunto, the ruler of a neighboring kingdom who invaded the kingdom of Bay, Gat Dula did not suffer a single wound due to the

support of Maria's enchantment.

Unfortunately, Gat Dula's inability to see Maria caused him to fall ill and die. Maria asked the gods to give her the soul of Gat Dula and her request was granted.

The Legend of Puente del Diablo

Pilapila is a small barrio of Binangonan, a town in the province of Rizal, along the shores of Laguna de Bay. In Pilapila there is a mound of stone which the people of the place call "*Puente del Diablo*". According to the people of Binangonan, it is so called because the mound was at one time the foundation of a bridge that was constructed by demons. This story is about that mound of stone.

Once upon a time, a very kind and beautiful maiden, Isabel, lived in Pilapila. Many young men wanted to marry her, but she vowed to serve God alone. So she devoted most of her time to prayers. In spite of this, however, her suitors continued to visit her.

One day she decided to put an end once and for all to the visits being made by her suitors. She called them all to the house and told them: "*I will give my hand in marriage to anyone of you who can, in one night, build a bridge across the bay to the town market at Los Baños.*"

All the suitors were dumbfounded over what they heard. They knew that to build such a bridge in one night was impossible. They then left, one by one. For her part, Isabel felt happy now that her suitors will not bother her anymore.

Suddenly, a very elegant young man approached Isabel and kissed her hand. This surprised the young maiden, for she did not know this man.

"*I am one of your suitors,*" the young man said. "*I will try to fulfill your wish of having a bridge built across the bay.*" And then he left. After his departure, Isabel felt uneasy so she went to her room and prayed.

When night came, the people of Pilapila were awakened by a loud and terrible noise, a noise which they have never heard before. They went out of their homes to find out what was the cause of the noise. And they saw hundreds of demons working on a bridge across the bay!

Isabel herself saw what was going on and, terrified at what she saw, she made the sign of the cross and went to the barrio chapel. Inside the chapel, she realized that the man who had talked to her was a demon. She called for the church acolyte and asked him to ring the church bells. Then she took the cross from the altar and went to the place where the bridge was being constructed.

When the demons saw what Isabel was carrying, all of them scampered and left the bridge unfinished.

The following morning, the people of Pilapila saw a mound of stone along the bay. That mound of stone was the foundation of the bridge which the demons planned to build across Laguna de Bay.

The Legend of Sampaloc Lake

[/size] San Pablo, a picturesque and progressive city in Southeastern Luzon, is sometimes known as the City of the Seven Lakes. All of the seven lakes are rich with tales of their respective origins. A favorite story is that of Sampaloc Lake -- the largest and most beautiful of the seven lakes.

Once upon a time there lived in the northern side of San Pablo, a well-to-do but childless couple. They had a large garden of tamarind trees that bore the sweetest fruit in all the land. Many people from far and wide heard of the tamarind trees. And many of them wanted to taste the sweet tamarind fruit.

The couple felt very proud of their rich possession. They built a fence around their yard so that no stranger can pick any of the tamarind fruit. Just to make sure that no one could enter their yard, they had a big watchdog to guard the

yard.

God wanted to test the hospitality of the couple. And so, one day a fairy, disguised as an old beggar bent and wrinkled with age, approached the couple's garden and begged for some fruit.

"Please give me some tamarind fruit. I am hungry," the old woman pleaded.

The old couple did not even look at the old woman.

"Begone! We don't want to give any of our tamarind fruit away!" replied the couple angrily.

"Please, I am so hungry, and a fruit or two will satisfy me," the old beggar pleaded. *"I know your tamarind trees are laden with the most delicious fruit."*

Then, without any further ado, the old woman came near one of the large trees. She stretched out her wrinkled, skinny hand to pluck a curly thick pod hanging from one of the lower branches.

Upon seeing what the old beggar had done, the couple grew angry. They became so angry that they hurried back to their house, let their big dog loose, and set it on the poor woman. Alas, the poor woman was badly bitten.

Patiently, the old beggar bore her pains. But before turning away from that inhospitable spot, she touched the tamarind tree and, looking at the couple, said, *"You shall be punished for your selfishness."* Then she went slowly on her way.

Even before the old woman was out of sight, the sky became overcast. In a short while a terrible storm broke out, and heavy rain fell through the night.

The following morning all was peaceful. The man and his wife went out for their daily round as usual. They had hardly taken a few steps when, to their surprise, instead of the tall and green tamarind trees, there stretched before their unbelieving eyes a vast expanse of water shining in the morning sun.

Still unconvinced about what had happened, the couple went forward up to the bank of what now appeared to be a natural lake. And, wonder of wonders, they saw through the transparent water the dark mass of tamarind trees still rooted to the sunken ground!

From that day on, the place became known as "Sampaloc Lake" -- "sampaloc" being the Tagalog word for "tamarind". Nowadays, Sampaloc Lake is a tourist spot to which many lovers of nature, both young and old, go in order to admire the splendor and beauty it offers.

The Origin of Rice

There was a time, many, many years ago, when rice was not known to our people. At that time our ancestors lived on fruits, vegetables, birds, and wild animals which they caught while hunting in the mountains or the forests. Tilling the soil was still unknown. And poultry and hog raising was not yet a part of their way of living.

Because our people depended on the food which nature provided and not on what they themselves grew or raised, their stay in one place was only temporary. When there was nothing more to be hunted or gathered in a certain place, they would go to another region where there was plenty of food. Thus, they traveled from one place to another.

But our ancestors were proud, thankful and happy. They were proud of the things they had -- their brown skin, the race to which they belonged, and the customs and traditions which they practiced. They were thankful to Bathala, their god. And they were happy in the manner of living which they led.

On a typical day, the men could be seen going to the mountains or the forests to hunt, while the women and small children could be seen busily engaged in such useful tasks as fishing and gathering of fruits and vegetables. After a day's work, all wild animals that had been killed in the hunt and all fruits and vegetables that had been gathered, would be divided equally among all the groups of families which made up the balangay.

One day, a group of hunters went out to hunt deer. In their desire to have a good catch, they traveled far and wide until they reached the Cordillera Mountains. Having traveled so far, and feeling dead tired, they decided to take a rest under a big tree. It was nearing noon and all of them were hungry.

While resting in the shade of the tree, they saw, not far from where they were, a group of men and women whose features were quite different from those of ordinary mortals. The hunters realized that they were gods and goddesses who lived in that part of the mountain. All at once the hunters stood up and gave the deities due respect. The gods were glad of this gesture. In return, they invited the hunters to join them in their banquet.

The hunters helped in the preparation of the food. They butchered the deer and wild boar and then placed them one after another over the live coals.

In a short while, a servant of the gods got some bamboos and placed them over the fire. The bamboos contained small, white kernels shaped like beads. Soon after, the cooked kernels were placed in saucer-shaped banana leaves. The table was laden with roasted meat, cooked vegetables, and fresh fruits. Other bamboos were brought in and these contained what looked like pure water. The hunters soon learned that the crystal-like substance was not water but, rather, the wine of the gods.

At first, the hunters were reluctant in joining the feast after seeing the small, white kernels.

"We do not eat worms," the chief hunter said.

The gods smiled. *"These white bead-shaped kernels are not worms,"* replied one of the gods. *"They are cooked rice. They come from a certain kind of plant which we ourselves grow. Come and feast with us. After we have eaten, kill us if you find anything wrong from eating rice."*

After hearing the god's words, the hunters did not argue anymore. They feasted with the gods. They were satisfied and happy, not because they

were fed but because of the energy they felt after eating cooked rice. Their weak bodies became strong.

After the feast, the hunters thanked the gods.

Before leaving, every hunter received a sack of palay from the gods.

"This is palay," explained another of the gods. "Pound the palay, winnow and clean it very well. Wash the rice with water and place the washed rice between the internodes of the bamboo with enough water to be absorbed by the rice. Then place the bamboo over the fire until it is cooked. The sick will become strong and all of you will be satisfied after eating. Preserve some of the palay for your seedbed. Start planting during the rainy season. During the dry season, you can harvest the palay. Go now. Introduce the palay in your village and teach the people how to till the soil. You will progress and this will stop you from wandering from place to place."

After thanking the gods, the hunters left for their village. They followed the advice of the gods. They introduced the eating of cooked rice in their village. They taught their own people how to till the soil and plant it with palay. After many years, the practice of eating rice and the art of planting rice became widespread. Other balangays soon adopted the practice of planting rice.

Since then rice became known to our people. And along with the tilling of the soil, our people also learned to raise animals and to construct permanent dwelling places.

The Cow and the Carabao

(Northern Luzon)

It is said that a long time ago, the first cow and the first carabao wore skins

that fit them exactly. They could both walk on only their two hind feet then. They both served a farmer who demanded much of them as beasts of

burden. But the cow and the carabao were thinking that he made them work too much.

"No one should work this much under the heat of the sun!" the cow remarked. *"We deserve a vacation!"*

"What say you we play hooky one noon," the carabao proposed, *"while the farmer is resting in the shade, as he always does when the sun is at its most furious?"*

So it was that one noon, while the farmer who owned the first cow and the first carabao was fast asleep, the two friends shrugged off the plow and raced to the nearby river. They took off their skins, hung them on the low branch of a tree at the riverbank, and dived underwater. But alas, as they were having their fun, the farmer woke up, saw that his two beasts were missing from the fields where they belonged, took up his whip and went out searching for them. By following their footprints he found them almost immediately, bathing in the nearby river.

The farmer frightened the two beasts with his whip and made them scramble up to the bank. In their haste to appear decent before their master, the cow and the carabao switched skins, but then they were not able to get the false skins off again. As the carabao was larger than the cow, his skin sagged at the cow's belly, and the cow's skin clung tight to his flesh. And then it was impossible to retain their pride. They came before their master on all fours, begging to be forgiven. The farmer said they were forgiven, but they could no longer walk on only two legs, and they could never take off the false skins they wore. The cow and the carabao accepted their fate timidly, and handed down to their offspring their symbols of shame.

Why Dogs Wag Their Tails

(Visayas)

here was once a rich man who owned an old toothless dog and a cat. They were intelligent creatures, who could carry out almost any task that the rich man would give them. And they worshipped their master, and feared him, so great was his majesty.

The rich man had a daughter studying in a convent far away from his home. Every week, he would send her little gifts by carriage. But once, he had something very valuable to give her, and he could trust no one with its keeping save for his faithful cat and dog.

He turned to the cat first. *"Keep this ring,"* he commanded. *"It is magic. You are cunning as well as careful, and I trust you will not lose it."* Then he turned

to the dog. *"Guard the cat and the magic ring well,"* he instructed. *"You are strong and swift. Be watchful."* This being said, he sent the creatures away.

Now it so happened that a swift-flowing stream barred the way of the cat and the old dog. The two servants had no alternative but to swim across it. The dog agreed to have the cat stay on his back while he would swim to the opposite bank. It was then that the dog urged the cat to entrust the ring to him.

"You are not a very good swimmer. I am," said the dog. *"And the ring must get to the master's daughter. Even if you fall off my back as I swim, the ring will be safe with me."*

The cat protested. *"But the master had said that I should keep the ring, not you."*

The dog was angered by the cat's stubbornness, and he threatened to kill the cat if he would not give him the ring. The cat surrendered, and gave the ring to the dog.

But the dog was toothless and the ring had nothing to cling on to in his jaws. It got swept away by the current as the dog and the cat were in the middle of the stream.

"Look at what happened!" the cat snapped. *"Now we shall have to return to the master and tell him we had lost the ring."*

The dog swam back to the bank they had left, and deposited the cat on solid ground. Just then the cat noticed that the dog looked very frightened. *"Go on ahead to the master,"* the dog said to the cat. *"I am too ashamed and afraid to face him."* The dog swam to the opposite bank alone, and ran off. The cat tried to come after him by swimming across, but the water was too swift for him, and if he had not been able to swim back to shore he would have drowned.

The cat started his long, lonely trek back to the house of his wealthy master. He was the one who had to explain the sad situation. The master became angry with the dog, and he sent scouts all over the world to hunt for an old, toothless dog and to cut off his tail once he was found. The scouts looked and looked, but they could find no such dog.

To this day, when one dog meets another, he asks *"Are you the toothless cur who had lost a magic ring? If you are, then your tail must be cut off."* And the interrogated dog would bare his teeth to show that he had them, and wag his tail to say no, I had lost no magic ring.

To this day, also, dogs and cats fight, or at the very least mistrust each other. And, after one of them having almost drowned, cats could not stand the touch of water.

The Legend of the Lizard

Long ago, there was a mother who loved her only son deeply. She was a pious woman and her son imitated most of her good deeds, which were many. Her son was good at heart, but young. The woman knew that he still had much to learn before he could fully adopt saintly ways.

God decided to test this young son's piety and love for his mother. He sent a beautiful woman to capture the young man's eager heart. The beautiful woman urged the son to keep their meetings a secret from his mother, and though it pained the boy to do so, for he never kept secrets from his mother, he obeyed. But the real challenge had not yet been failed.

The beautiful woman beguiled the boy so that she was able to make him promise that he would do anything she asked. She therefore asked that he should – if he loved her as truly as he declared – cut out his mother's heart and bring it to her. The young man, blinded by love, dutifully slaughtered his beloved mother. It was exactly six o'clock in the evening, and his mother was reciting the Angelus then. He held the still-beating heart in his hands as he rushed to where he knew the girl stood waiting. But when he got to their meeting-place, the girl was not there. Nothing was there – save for the realization of what he had done.

The heart still beat, though it tarried long in the hands of the prodigal son. And then it began to speak. In his shock, the boy dropped the heart, and it fell into a crack in the ground.

"Are you in pain, my child?" the mother's heart inquired. *"Let me sing you a lullaby, to soothe you to sleep."* The heart softly started singing, as lovingly as its owner would have done. And in the son's remorse he fell flat on his belly and kissed the ground that the heart lay on. The boy was so filled with guilt and grief that he did not notice himself changing, growing smaller, losing all his hair and clothing so that he was a tiny web-footed thing, that kissed and kissed at the ground as if begging for someone's forgiveness.

At exactly six o'clock every night, when the Angelus strikes, the lizard comes down from the walls of the house, and crawls down to the floor, where it would make slight ticking sounds like quick kisses. It has been said that the lizard has not yet redeemed itself in its own eyes, and that with its tiny ears it could hear an ancient beating, and a lullaby that does not end.

The Legend of the Sun, Moon, and Stars

(Why the Sky is High)

ong ago, our elders say, the sky was so close to the earth that one could touch it. But there were only two people who could avail of that fact. They were the first man and woman.

It has been said that the first woman was so vain. She wore so much jewelry and despised work. Whenever the first man would ask her to do something, she would pout. She pouted when he asked her to clean the house. She pouted whenever he asked her to cook. She pouted whenever he asked her to grind the rice grains everyday for their food.

"But if you don't grind the rice, we don't get to eat," the first man reasoned, and even the vain first woman could not dispute that.

But it was so much work grinding the rice with a little pestles and mortars. So she poured all their rice for the day into a very large mortar and took up a very large pestle to grind it with. The pestle was so tall that when it hit the mortar, it touched the sky. The first woman was oblivious to this. She only knew she had to grind all the rice before her husband came home for supper.

She still wore all her jewelry. She noticed that her jewelry kept falling off or hampered her in any other way whenever she worked. So she hung her larger pieces of jewelry upon the sky, which were her silver comb, her gold ring, and her long pearl necklace. And then she went to work with the huge pestle, unknowing that as one end of the pestle pounded onto the rice grains, the other end was pounding onto the sky. The first woman only knew that having the sky so low only made her task more difficult. So she pounded harder and harder on the rice. Higher and higher the sky went, until with one enormous stroke, the first woman sent the sky flying up, never to come so close to the earth again.

She sensed a draft behind her neck and looked up. She was astonished to see that the sky had risen so high – and taken her most precious things with it! She could see her silver comb shining where the moon is now, and the beads of her lovely necklace twinkling all around it. Her golden ring was nowhere in sight. The first woman grumbled, *"I would have worn those*

things again if I'd known they would go to waste."

The Legend of the Three Races

In the beginning, the great god Kabunian decided that He was lonely. He came up with the idea of shaping a man out of clay that He could bring to life and talk to, and put in charge of the other beings on the Earth every now and then. He decided that He would make the clay man look like Himself.

He took some clay from the Earth, molded it into the shape of a man, and then placed it inside His oven. While He waited for the clay man to solidify, He

toured the Earth and amused Himself. Alas, Kabunian lost all track of time. When He remembered that He had left something in the oven longer than was ought, his first clay man was all burnt. It was black as coal all over. Its hair curled tightly from the heat. Kabunian anyway thought it a grand creation, and breathed life into it. But it was not yet the kind of man He wanted at the start.

So Kabunian gave it another try. He placed his second clay man into the oven. But this time, Kabunian became so eager to see what would come out, that He brought the clay man out while it was not yet fully baked. The second clay man was so pale that now we would call it raw. But it was solid enough, and Kabunian liked it well. He breathed life into it. But it was not yet the kind of man He wanted at the start.

At His third and final try, Kabunian resolved to be careful. He guarded the time while His third clay man baked to perfection. When His clay man was finally drawn from the oven it was a perfect brown, and its hair was straight and dark, and there was laughter in its cheeks. Kabunian loved this third clay man, and breathed life into it. But in the end He came to love the three Races of Man equally. He began to encourage the three Races to get along, for the truth is they had come from the same clay, and so are brothers.

The Tausug Story of Creation

One day, in Paradise, God decided that He would make the ruler of the Earth strong and steadfast. So he said to the angels, "Let us mold Man out of earth." The angels immediately went down to fetch some soil, but the devils, which were close to the soil, did not allow them to take it, for they were jealous of the angels. So the angels came rushing back to God. God saw that the devils could be placated by giving them something that He also gave His angels, and so He agreed to also give the devils revelation of everything He would do. Thus appeased, the devils helped the angels gather soil to create Man.

But Man made out of pure earth crumbled. So God mixed water with the soil, and the water held the scattering fragments together somewhat, but then the mixture would not dry. God therefore summoned the wind to dry the Man. And when the Man was dried, God saw that the Man was stiff, that he could not move. God thus placed fire inside Man. It was so that Man, in the end, was composed of the four elements of the Earth: earth, water, air and fire.

There were some problems with this marvelous creature, though. When Man sneezed, his neck stretched out. God told his angels (and the devils, too) that such a malady would be countered if the Man would say "*God bless me*" whenever he sneezed. The devils saw that they could play tricks on Man, and so, after having the simple fault of neck-stretching fixed, they created another

one. He made it so that Man's jaw dropped so far down that it touched his chest whenever he yawned. Presently, God revealed that this prank would be countered if Man would say "*God preserve me from the devils*" whenever he yawned. Thus the devils' joke was stifled.

But Man was lonely. So God put him to sleep and took a piece of his rib, and created Woman. He blessed them and what would be the fruits of their beautiful union.

The first children Man and Woman had were a white boy and a white girl.

Then they had a black boy and a black girl. The white boy and the white girl married and left Paradise, to live on the Earth on their own. The black boy and the black girl also married and lived on the Earth on their own. So the Earth became populated with whites and blacks first.

Life was well for Man and Woman in Paradise. But one day a stranger there came to Woman, offering her a fruit. But Woman was already full. She took the fruit anyway and ate it. When Man came along, she urged him to eat it, too. And because the two of them had been full to start with, their stomachs rebelled and they started urinating and defecating in Paradise. This caused God to throw them out, and to curse their entire line from ever coming back. It has thus been established that the real source of all our suffering is Woman's gluttony. Until now our two immortal forebears have not been found.

The Tortoise and the Monkey

The tortoise and the monkey came upon a well-grown banana plant. Both wanted to have the plant to himself. "*Wait a minute,*" the monkey said. "*Let's be fair. Let's divide the plant into two, and then assign halves for the both of us.*"

"*Yes, that's fair,*" the tortoise said at once.

"*And since I thought of it, I get to choose which half shall be mine!*" the monkey declared, and immediately he set to work cutting the banana plant. He kept the top part, the part which was golden with fruit, and left the ugly stump to the tortoise.

The tortoise did not complain. He only went up to the monkey and said "*We're good friends. Will you let me have some of your fruit?*"

"*No!*" the monkey snapped. "*We'd agreed to stick to our halves of the plant. I get to keep whatever comes of my half and you get to keep whatever comes of yours.*"

After finishing off all the bananas, the monkey planted the top part of the plant with the hope of growing some more fruit. The tortoise did not

have to

do anything with his half of the plant at all, as it was still rooted to the ground as a stump. But the top part of the banana plant could not grow roots, and thus it shriveled up and died. The tortoise's stump, on the other hand, grew to be another beautiful banana plant, and soon enough it made the monkey drool by having twice as many bananas as he had been able to extract from what had been his half.

The tortoise would not let the monkey come anywhere near his full-grown banana plant. "*We'd agreed to stick to our halves of the plant,*" he said wryly. The monkey went home and plotted.

The monkey decided to sneak into the tortoise's yard one night and steal the bananas straight from the plant. But the tortoise had been prepared for such a breach of friendship. He waited until the monkey had climbed too high up to be aware of anything going on at the ground, and then he laid sharp pebbles all around the roots of the plant. It was so that the monkey jumped down from the plant after having eaten as many bananas as he could, and was stung in so many places all at once!

The monkey was furious. He hunted all around for the tortoise. And when he did find the tortoise, he grabbed the slow-paced creature by the shell so that it could not get away, and said at once that he would be killed.

"*But, as we had been good friends, I will let you choose,*" said the monkey. "*I am thinking of grinding you and your difficult shell in a mortar and scattering your ashes. I am also thinking of throwing you into the sea. In which manner would you like to die?*"

"*Grind me to ashes,*" cried the tortoise, "*for I cannot bear the touch of saltwater!*"

"*Aha! So you hate saltwater!*" The monkey raced off down to the seashore and flung the screaming, flailing tortoise into the water, as far away as his strong arms could manage. "*Good riddance,*" the monkey said, thinking that he had dealt the tortoise the ultimate revenge for spiting his cleverness.

But then, just as the monkey was leaving the shore, he heard familiar

laughter drifting in the sea-breeze. He turned around and saw the tortoise only too near the shore, chuckling merrily.

"I'd fooled you, monkey!" he was shouting. *"The sea is the tortoise's home!"*

The monkey gave a howl of rage and bounded back to where the sand met the surf, but the tortoise had already gone back, still laughing, into the ocean's heart.

The First Monkey

There was a boy named Juan who was very lazy. He found it difficult to do even the simplest things, and he especially hated getting up in the morning. His mother did not know what to do with such an insensitive child. She knew she was spoiling him, but she did not know what else to do with him, as he was her beloved only child.

Juan's mother did not know the limits of her own tolerance. One day, Juan was playing outside the house, and she called him in for a very simple task. *"Juan!"* she called out. *"Come in here and find the ladle for me!"*

"I'm coming, Mother!" Juan cried, but he did not bestir himself to even walk two paces toward the house.

After a while Juan's mother grew suspicious, and when she saw that the boy was not obeying her, she dragged him into the house. *"You find that ladle! I want you to hand it over to me by the time I get back from the marketplace!"* Then she stormed off, leaving the lazy little boy to make or break his fate.

Juan did not try to find the ladle. He found instead a large wooden spoon that was too shallow for anyone to use as a good ladle. He said to himself, *"This will have to do."* He played again until his mother came home, and then he gave her the spoon, saying *"I can't find the ladle, Mother. I'm too lazy. This spoon will have to do!"*

"*Ooh, you tardy brat!*" his mother cried, and she proceeded to beat Juan with his "*makeshift ladle*". Juan became so frightened that he ran out of the house. Ah, but Juan's mother would not let him go scot-free! She threw the spoon at him, and it stuck to the base of his spine like a tail, to his mother's surprise. Then, instead of running any further, Juan swiftly climbed a tree to escape his mother's fury. Juan's mother strode to the tree and cried out to her naughty child:

"*Come down from there! I still have to punish you!*"

But Juan did not make any more complaints, or excuses. Only harsh chirping sounds came from his throat. Hair had grown all over his little body and he could no longer speak a word. Juan had become the very first monkey! Apparently, Juan's mother did not have to punish him. He had already brought the greatest punishment upon himself.

The Legend of the Pineapple Fruit

There was a pretty little girl called Pina who was pampered by her mother as an only child. Everything that Pina asked for, Pina got. Everything that Pina scoffed at was taken away. No one in her village was ever so spoiled as Pina. No one was ever such a snobbish child. She was so lazy, and she had never stirred a finger to work in her life.

Pina's mother was perfectly happy that way, for Pina remained dependent on her as a spoiled child. But one day, Pina's mother fell ill and there was no one to take care of Pina. She resolved that she would get well immediately for Pina's sake – but she knew she would need help.

"*Pina, Pina,*" she called weakly, from her cot. "*Come here a moment. I have something to ask of you.*"

Pina had never been asked to do anything in her life, and she was quite prepared to refuse, but she said anyway, "*What is it, Mother?*"

"*Pina,*" said the doting mother, "*I am too sick to make you anything to eat. I am too sick to eat anything solid. I need you to cook lugaw for me, Pina.*"

It is very easy: just put some rice in a pot, pour some water in with it, add a pinch of sugar, and leave the mixture to boil for a while."

"*Oh, that's too hard! I won't do it,*" Pina said firmly.

"*You have to, Pina!*" her mother pleaded. "*What will your poor Nanay eat?*"

But Pina was immovable. At length her mother resorted to shouting if only to catch her attention. Moping, Pina dragged her heavy feet down the stairs to gather the things she needed to make lugaw. She managed to find the rice, the water, the bowl, the sugar – but she could not find the ladle anywhere. How was she supposed to cook lugaw without a ladle?

"*Nanay, where is the ladle?*" Pina shouted.

"*It is beside the other kitchen utensils, Pina, you know where I keep them,*" her mother weakly shouted back.

But the ladle was not anywhere near the other kitchen utensils, and Pina was too lazy to look for it elsewhere. "*I can't find the ladle, mother,*" she complained. "*I guess I won't be cooking without the ladle.*"

"*Oh, you lazy child,*" Pina's mother wept. "*You won't even look! I hope you grow a thousand eyes so you'll be able to find it!*" After saying these words, Pina's mother noticed that the house had fallen silent. Pina was no longer griping downstairs! That was a marvel. Perhaps she was already cooking. Pina's mother would be happy if the child would cook her anything, even if it were burnt.

But a long time had passed, and still the house was silent, and still Pina's mother could not smell the cooking coals burning. She began to get worried. With all her meager strength she called out for Pina. Pina did not come, but the neighbors heard her pitiful cries, and they decided to drop by to see what was wrong. They took care of Pina's mother in the child's place.

"*Where is Pina?*" Pina's mother asked at once. "*Where is my child?*"

"*Oh, you know that girl,*" they assured her, "*she must be in some friend's*

house, having a good time. She hates responsibility. She may only be a little angry at you because you had asked her to work. It will pass, and she will come home."

Pina's mother rested easily with that thought, and she recovered quickly. But she was up and about and asking all around town for her precious little child, and still Pina had not returned.

One sunny day, while Pina's mother was cleaning their back yard, she saw a strange yellow fruit about as large as the head of a child that had sprung up from the ground. "*How curious!*" she thought, and bent to examine it. The strange, spiny yellow fruit, she saw, had a thousand black eyes.

"A thousand eyes...!" she gasped, remembering a mother's curse carelessly let out. "*My Pina!*"

But there was nothing to be done. Imagine a thousand black eyes and not one of them seeing, and not one of them being able to shed a tear. Pina's mother, who still loved the child more than anything in the world, decided to honor her memory by taking the seeds of the strange yellow fruit and planting them. When after a while there was more of the fruit, Pina's mother gave her harvest away to everyone she knew. Thus Pina, in another form, became generous to others.

To this day the Filipinos call the yellow fruit pinya, after the pretty spoiled child.

The Legend of "Landas de Diablo"

Malanday, Marikina, in Central Luzon, where rice fields flourish, there is a very straight path of stone leading from the side of the road to the center of a harvest realm. The denizens call it "Landas de Diablo" and regard it with superstitious fear. There is a story behind that marvelous work, they say, which makes it warrant their fear. It is a tale involving two young lovers and the Devil himself.

A long time ago, there was a jewel of a girl named Marikita, who lived in

the middle of a rice field. Her home was very far away from the main road, yet flocks of woosers braved the narrow bridges of land marking the rice paddies just to see her and sigh. She was lovely. Every young man in the village was beguiled by her – even Kabanalan, the handsome heir to an enormous fortune.

After one glance at the fair maid, Kabanalan could say that he regarded her with more worth than any priceless trinket in his father's home. He never wanted to have anything in his possession as badly as he did Marikita. He was gentle and kind, and he won Marikita's attention instantly.

He promised Marikita that if she would only agree to marry him, he would give her anything she wanted – anything at all!

In truth Marikita liked the young man Kabanalan, and she felt it safe to jest with him. She said, "If you would give me anything, I have this simple boon of you: make me a stone path that would span the length of the rice paddies that separate my father's humble hut from the main road. I tire of the land bridges. But make me this path before the night is done, for tomorrow is Sunday and I would not want to make my feet hurt one more time, before they reach the church!

"Make me that bridge by tomorrow, and tomorrow we shall wed."

Dazzled by her charm, Kabanalan promised her this. He would build her this impossibility, even if he would do it with his own two hands! Marikita only laughed. She liked the young man Kabanalan.

But Kabanalan took her boon for earnest. When he and Marikita parted, a shadow fell across his face. *"I know that even with all my wealth I could not fulfill her wish,"* he thought sadly. *"I would rather kill myself than disappoint her, all the same!"*

Despaired, he stumbled into a grove where a solitary mango tree stood, and from the deep shade a handsome stranger emerged.

"I see how heavy your heart weighs by the look in your eyes," the

stranger said mysteriously. *"Tell me what is wrong, perhaps I can help."*

Kabalan shook his head. *"No. No one can help."* He sighed forlornly. *"I had promised the most beautiful woman in the world an impossible wish."*

"What is that wish?" the stranger asked.

Kabalan told him of the stone path above the rice paddies that Marikita had asked for, and to his surprise, the stranger laughed.

"Is that all!" he cried heartily. *"I can do it. I can build that stone road for you overnight."*

"Do not jest, I beg of you," Kabalan said stonily. *"She will marry me if I will only grant her this one wish."*

"I have no doubt of it," said the wry stranger. *"I can build that stone road for you overnight."*

Kabalan was somehow convinced. *"If you would be so kind as to do this for me, I shall give you anything you ask for."*

"Will you give me your soul?" the stranger demanded.

Kabalan did not give it a second thought. *"Yes, I will,"* he declared. *"If only*

to please the fair Marikita."

The stranger brought out a piece of paper on which they scrawled their pact. Afterward Kabalan signed his name at the bottom of the page with his own blood.

The very next morning, Marikita was no less than shocked! She was stepping out, when she saw this sturdy stone path leading from her doorstep to the main road, where a carriage and a handsome young man waited, ready to take her to church. The young man was Kabalan. Upon seeing his love's blank bewilderment shift into an astonished smile, his own features brightened. Marikita rushed across the stone path toward

him, arms outstretched. He was the happiest man on Earth!

But as Marikita drew near, the mysterious stranger from the shadows of the lone grove appeared in a whirl of dust between her and her bridegroom. Everyone who saw him knew him at once. It was the Devil!

"I come to claim my wage!" he cried, and seized Kabanalan. With this prize in tow, the Devil disappeared. Marikita was left alone, staring after the void the builder of the stone path had left behind.

There were some witnesses, who had risen early for Mass, and had gathered on the main road near the end of the long stone path which they knew had not been there the night before. They saw Marikita turn deathly pale as she came to realize what her lover had done for her sake. She stood still for a long time. Then when her friends from town tried to approach her, she turned and ran back into her house, and slammed the door shut. She let no one speak to her, and even her own parents could not come near her.

Marikita was found dead soon after that, floating in the river by which she and Kabanalan used to take long walks. It was said that she had killed herself, but no one was quite so sure.

"Landas de Diablo", the Devil's Road, still stands, proof of this ancient story of a doomed love.

The First Bananas

[/size] Once upon a time, a very beautiful young woman was wooed by a handsome young man, whom she had never seen before, and who did not look like any other person she knew. His countenance was divine, his every movement graceful. Surely such a magnificent creature could not come from this world!

"I live far, far away," was only what the stranger told her at the start. *"In my land, everything is fair and good, reminding me of you."*

He enjoyed speaking about his land. Whenever he and the young woman were together, he spoke about such wonders and delights that the young woman was tempted to believe that he had not come from this world. At last she brought herself to ask "*What are you?*"

The young man seemed to blanch at this question, and he did not answer it at once. He stood up and walked around. He looked troubled. When he looked back at the young woman, it was with a beautifully sad smile.

"*Alas,*" he said, "*you have asked the question I had been warned to put from your mind. It is partly my fault for being so careless, I am sorry. This will be the last night for us to meet.*"

The startled young woman asked at once, What did he mean? The young man readily answered "*There is nothing more to hide. I am an elf-prince. I had only asked to be placed in the world of Man for some time. During that time I found the most radiant creature I have ever seen, and I fell in love with her. I made haste to tell my Father the King, who said 'If she loves you enough to accept you as you are without question, marry her. But if at the first opportunity, she asks, you must leave her, leave the world, and return home.'*" The elf-prince shook his head sadly. "*But I have done myself wrong. I should not have said so much about myself. I have made you curious of forbidden things.*"

Dawn broke just as he was ending his story. "*My kinfolk will be coming for me if I do not leave at once,*" he told the young woman. "*I must go.*" But the young woman, who had fallen in love with him, held on to his hands until the sun was well into the sky. It was then that, all of a sudden, and in the middle of his gentle pleadings, the elf-prince disappeared. As the young woman could not disappear with him, he left his mortal hands behind, which the girl would not release even after he had gone.

But the girl knew that he would have to hide those beautiful fairy hands. Thus she dug a hole in the ground where the fairy prince had stood, placed the hands in the hole, and marked the place of their short burial with a stone. She came back to the same spot day after day, paying reverence to the only memory she had of her love.

Then, one day, a plant started growing beside the rock she had set to mark the small "grave". She tended to it lovingly, until it blossomed to

be a tall plant with cool, broad leaves, and sweet yellow fruit which grew in clusters. The girl noticed that the fruit looked like fingers, and it was then that she realized that the plant was, in fact, her lover's final gift to her and her kind.

The Favorite Son

There was once an aged couple who longed very much for a child. As they were firm believers in the power of the Cross, it was to God that they prayed for solace in their old age. They wanted a child, if only one child, and they promised to cherish it with all their hearts.

Their prayers were answered and the old woman bore a son. The son turned out to be handsome and talented, but very spoiled. Despite the couple's poverty, the boy was sent to school and given fine presents for every special day of the year.

The couple loved the boy so much that they enjoyed little without him. They would not eat dinner before the boy arrived from school. But one night, the boy did not come home from school on time, and the couple became so hungry that they decided not to wait for the boy any longer. They ate with relish, unknowing that they were finishing even the boy's share of the meal. They only realized how hungry they were when there was nothing left on every plate on the small dining table.

"We'll pretend that I haven't cooked dinner yet," the old woman told her husband. *"Go upstairs and lie down on the bed."* As the old man did as he was bidden, the boy came into the house.

The old woman faced the boy and said to him *"Son, I'm afraid your father was sick today. I wasn't able to cook dinner. But I am going to make you a fine meal right now."*

The boy was angry at this. He did not know how to sacrifice. He was so angry that he took up a bolo from the kitchen and went upstairs, and stabbed the pillow his father was supposed to be lying on. As it was dark, the boy did not see that his father was not lying on the pillow he had torn,

but God made the pillow leak blood into his hands anyway, and in fear and remorse the boy ran away from the house, never to return.

The aged couple loved the boy very much. Even after he left, they prayed fervently for the boy to be forgiven his anger, and for the boy to have a good life nevertheless. As they prayed, through the years, the boy learned much of the ways of the world, as he made his way through it alone. He became wise, respected, and rich. He came to own a large orchard that was the envy of the land.

The favorite son lived in a great estate overseeing his orchard. Once, he saw a very old beggar outside his gates and took pity on him. He brought the beggar home, and as he was talking to him it dawned upon the boy that the beggar looked exactly like the father he had left some time ago! But he did nothing to confirm his suspicions yet. He asked the old man to stay awhile.

The old man said "*Sir, I've come to your lands because a famine had swept the town where I and my dear departed wife had lived, and I'd heard that a kind gentleman who owns a large orchard somewhere far away gives food freely to those in need. I had thought I would only benefit from your kindness*

only once. But you ask me to stay and be blessed with more than I had prayed for, and I must do something for you in return. Give me a task that needs a man's hands. I may be old, but I can still work."

So the young man told the beggar to work in a part of his orchard. He asked the beggar to cut down all the crooked trees. And, when the old man had done that, he asked the old man to straighten the crooked logs by placing them on top of a fire. But the old man could not do this. After a while of laboring he came back to the boy, and said "*I'm so ashamed of myself. I could not straighten even a single log. I think, sir, that when a man wants wood to become straight, he must tend to it and discipline it while it still has roots, and is young.*"

It was then that the young man knew that he was, in fact, talking to his old father. With tears in his eyes he embraced the old man, and confessed that he had been spoiled and ruthless, that he wished the old man had taught

him to respect and revere his parents so that no tragedy could have befallen them. The old man and the boy prayed together for the boy's sins to be forgiven.

Afterward, the boy cared for the old man, who came to live in the estate with his favorite son, and made his last days on earth happy.

The Mariners and the Four Asuangs of Capiz

Once a small boat containing one commandant, a captain and six sailors landed on the island of Capiz. They sought refuge in a house owned by a widow and her three lovely daughters. These women were very accommodating, and during their meals there was much gay talk and laughter. The meals themselves were of the highest quality. Never had the sailors been extended such hospitality!

And then one of the sailors noticed that his fork was shaped like a human hand. This observation prompted the mariners to quickly be done with the meal. The mariners began to form suspicions as to the true nature of the women in the house with them. They decided to watch out for strange happenings during their stay in Capiz.

The more curious three of the sailors investigated the lower rooms of the house they were staying in. There, they found the three lower halves of the bodies of women. The upper halves had simply broken away and disappeared. The sailors gave way to temptation and fear and smeared ashes on the top parts of these lower halves and changed their positions, to prevent the upper and lower halves from coming together again.

Later in the night the three upper halves returned and found the rest of their bodies defiled. The captain of the mariners heard their despaired weeping and

hastened downstairs. He found the three daughters of the widow who owned the house he slept in – in the form of flying night-creatures, or asuangs. The asuangs begged for him to wash the ashes from the lower halves of their bodies, and so moved was the captain by their pleas that

he himself washed the ashes off with a piece of cloth and water. The asuangs were able to reunite with their lower halves before daylight, when, they said, they would die a horrible death. They thanked the captain profusely, but were angry at the sailors who had done them wrong.

The captain tried to confront the three sailors who had played the trick on the asuangs, but they had run away. The asuangs pursued them, threatening to kill them unless they atoned for their crime by marriage. At last the three sailors had to submit to fate and return to Capiz as spouses to asuangs.

Anyway, the asuangs made them good wives. The three sailors who were never mean to the asuangs settled with women from Capiz and became happy. The captain and the commandant stayed in Capiz for a long while.

The Two Old Women and the Crocodile

An old woman was going down to the river with a washbasin full of dirty clothes, when she heard something rustling in the bushes near her. She was shocked to see a very large crocodile only so near.

"Please do not run away, old woman," the crocodile said. *"I have a favor to ask you."*

The old woman remained rooted where she stood, more out of fear than curiosity.

"In a cave near here I have hidden away my three hatchlings. They are restless little things, and I cannot be with them all the time. I beg you, watch over them while I am away hunting, and I shall reward you richly."

The crocodile led the stupefied old woman to her cave. Sure enough, three crocodile babies were there, fierce-looking and listless. For a moment the old woman was afraid the crocodile mother would feed her to the ugly little things, but she could not even command her feet to run away.

So, since she could not run, the old woman said she would do as she was bidden. The crocodile thanked her politely and then stepped out of the cave. The old woman was left with the three hatchlings, and since she could do nothing with them, she decided to lull them to sleep.

She cradled the hatchlings in her arms as if they were human children, and sang them a gentle lullaby. When the mother crocodile returned, a few hours before dusk, she found her babies peacefully at rest in the old woman's arms.

She was very thankful to the old woman.

"I had promised you a reward," she said. "Go to the bamboo plant just beside the entrance to this cave. Strike it with your fist three times and it will pour gold for you."

The old woman trusted the crocodile. She went to the bamboo plant and struck it three times with her fist. And soon enough, a tear appeared in one of the bamboo shafts, and gold poured onto her shaking hands. She took as much gold as she could carry, and then fled the site of the cave. With that much gold in her possession, she did not have to go down to the river to do the washing again, and so she never saw the kind crocodile again.

On the other hand, the old woman had a neighbor who became curious when she saw the old woman rushing home with an unusually heavy washbasin. She spied on the old woman as she took out the gold pieces and counted them one by one. Then she jumped on the old woman, and demanded that she be told where the gold had been acquired.

"You won't believe this," the old woman said, "but I got them by the river – from a crocodile who asked me to babysit her three hatchlings, and then rewarded me for doing such a good job."

"Hah! A crocodile! That's absurd!" said the saucy old neighbor. But she had already begun to plan about visiting to the riverbank herself.

The saucy neighbor bullied the old woman into telling her the location of the crocodile's cave. And then early the next morning, the saucy neighbor made her way to the very same cave.

She found the three hatchlings there: listless, as the old woman had said, and uglier than she had expected! But she had not come there to find them beautiful. She pressed the three hatchlings to her bosom, and when they did not calm down, she started getting angry and beating them with a stick. At last the crocodile babies were hurt so much that they fell into quiet whimpering, and, thus silenced, the saucy neighbor felt that it would already be easy to put them to sleep.

She sang them songs meant for ugly children, thinking that one lullaby was just like any other. The crocodile arrived and saw that her babies had fallen asleep, more out of pain than drowsiness. She was very angry with the saucy neighbor.

"I put your babies to sleep!" the saucy neighbor argued. *"Give me some gold as payment for my efforts!"*

The crocodile tucked away her anger, and coolly directed the old woman to the bamboo plant that stood by the entrance to her cave. She told the woman to strike the bamboo plant twice with her fist.

The saucy neighbor did so, impatiently. But instead of gold, scorpions came

pouring out of the crack that appeared on a bamboo shaft immediately after her fist came away. The scorpions fell upon the saucy old neighbor and chased her off, as befitted a mean shrew.

Pilandok and the Sumusong-sa-Alongan

(Maranao)

Pilandok was a prankster. He belonged to a poor family. One morning he left his parents to look for food. He walked and walked until he became tired. He lay down beneath a tree on which hung a huge beehive, closed one eye, and rested.

Soon a prince called Sumusong-sa-Alongan came by, riding on a horse. On

his saddle hung many bags of gold and other beautiful things that he had won on his conquests. He asked Pilandok what he was doing under the tree. Without opening his eye, Pilandok answered that he was the servant of a powerful sultan and that he was guarding a royal gong whom no ordinary man may beat. And then he pointed up at where the beehive hung.

"Let me beat the gong, Pilandok," Sumusong-sa-Alongan said.

"No, the sultan will be angry with me if I let just any man beat the royal gong," Pilandok said firmly.

"I am not an ordinary man. I am the son of a sultan myself. Here – I will give you a whole bag of gold if you will only let me beat the gong."

Pilandok pretended to think. And after a while, he said *"I'll take that bag. But please, beat the gong only when I am far away, for the sultan might come at the sound of it and chop off my head."*

Pilandok swept up the bag of gold and ran away as fast as he could. When Sumusong-sa-Alongan could no longer see him, the prince took a big stick from the ground and beat the beehive. Hundreds of angry bees were upon him in an instant, and if a troop of soldiers had not come his way and helped him, he would have died.

Pilandok lived happily with his bag of gold.

Pilandok and Sabandar

(Maranao)

We all know how the prankster called Pilandok tricked the prince Sumusong-

sa-Alongan into getting stung by bees until he almost died. Well, Pilandok just got himself into another fix. A relative of Sumusong-sa-Alongan, named Sabandar, went out searching for the man who had done the prince harm.

Sabandar came upon Pilandok as he was resting beneath a tree with a large black python coiled, asleep, in the branches. Sabandar asked if his name was Pilandok.

"I am Pilandok," the prankster answered truthfully.

Then Sabandar said that he would kill Pilandok, because the man had almost killed his relative Sumusong-sa-Alongan with a trick.

"No, wait," Pilandok said. *"In this town where I live, there are two Pilandoks. One is called Pilandok-from-Upstream, and the other is Pilandok-from-Downstream. I am Pilandok-from-Downstream. The other Pilandok is blind in one eye, and I am not."*

Sabandar was quieted. Yes, Sumusong-sa-Alongan had told him that the prankster he had encountered had one eye closed. This Pilandok-from-Downstream must be an honest man.

"Tell me what you are doing beneath this tree, Pilandok-from-Downstream."

"Ah! well," said Pilandok, *"I am guarding the black belt of a queen."*

Sabandar thought that the belt must be special indeed.

"Let me try the belt on, Pilandok," Sabangan said.

"No, the queen will be angry with me if I let just any man wear her special belt," Pilandok answered.

"Look...I'll give you everything I have right now if only you will let me try the belt on, Pilandok."

Pilandok pretended to think. And after a while he said, *"I'll take everything you have. But, mind you, don't wear the belt until I am far away, for the queen's guards might catch me lending her special belt to a stranger."*

Sabandar agreed to this. Pilandok took everything Sabandar had (which was a lot!) and ran away as fast as he could.

Sabandar took the sleeping python and wound it around his waist. The python, alarmed at being so rudely awakened, coiled itself tighter and tighter about Sabandar's waist until the man died. And then it went up the tree again to sleep.

Pilandok lived happily with all of Sabandar's possessions.

Pilandok and the Crocodiles

(Maranao)

The prankster Pilandok wanted to cross a deep river filled with crocodiles. But he had no boat, and no bridge was in sight. And then he had an idea. He called to the crocodiles underwater.

"What do you want?" they asked him irritably.

"Come up to the surface of the water," he commanded the crocodiles.

"My master, the sultan, wants to know how many you are in the river."

"Why?" the crocodiles demanded.

"He is going to give you gifts. Many gifts, and he wants to know how many would benefit from his kindness."

So the crocodiles floated until they filled the surface of the river. Pilandok jumped on their backs as if they were stepping-stones, and pretended to count as he carefully picked his way to the other side of the river. When he had safely reached the bank, he turned back to the crocodiles and shouted:

"I fooled you! I came from no sultan – and whoever with such ugly faces would receive plentiful gifts?"

Then he ran away as fast as he could, so that the crocodiles never knew what a master prankster tasted like.

The Blind Man and the Hunchback [/size] here was once a blind man and a hunchback who were the best of friends. One day, these two came upon a tall coconut tree.

"I think I suddenly have a craving for coconut," the hunchback declared.

"Huh? What are you talking about?" said the blind man. He did not see the tree, or the luscious fruits high above.

"Just wait here," said the hunchback *"There is a coconut tree nearby. I am going to try and climb up to the very top. As you cannot catch the fruits I will have to throw down, just wait here and count aloud the number of fruits you hear falling to the ground. After I get all the fruits from the tree, we will share."*

The blind man agreed. The hunchback shinnied up the coconut tree, but the hump on his shoulders was dragging him down, and once he got halfway up

the tree his grip loosened and he fell to the ground.

The hump on his shoulders touched the ground with a loud THUD! The blind man, grinning at what he thought was his friend's good fortune at being able to pick an unusually heavy coconut, shouted *"One!"*

The hunchback was disgruntled, but he said nothing. He shinnied up the tree again. But, like before, he got halfway up the tree and fell back down.

"Two!" the blind man shouted gleefully.

The hunchback was getting rather frustrated, and annoyed at what he thought was stupidity on the part of his best friend. But he said nothing. In a final, angry effort, he hitched himself up the tree, and almost got to the top this time, but didn't quite make it.

Down, down the hunchback went, and never before had the blind man heard such a loud THUD! from a coconut.

"Three!" the blind man shouted, and was astonished to suddenly feel his

face being bashed in.

The blind man staggered back. He did not notice it, but the hunchback had hit him in the face so hard that his sight had returned. He only retaliated by kicking his friend on the back so strongly that the hump was suddenly pushed back in! When the two recovered from their fits and realized that they had cured themselves, they became friends again, and resolved immediately that they did not care that much for coconut anyway.

The Boastful Turtle

[/size] here was once a turtle who talked so much that no creature could bear to be near him. He talked about anything and everything, and his favorite topics were flying and himself. How he would love to fly, he said, like the geese when the cold season comes. It must be wonderful to be up so high. Older and wiser creatures advised him to speak less and be more content with his lot, but the turtle would listen to no one.

He wanted to fly. He called out to a goose in flight, once, as she was flying off to meet her flock.

"Teach me how to fly," the turtle said.

"I can't right now," the goose answered. *"My flock is migrating for the cold season."*

"But I want to fly!" the turtle cried. *"And I want to fly NOW!"*

"We'll have to ask my flock," the gentle goose said.

So the goose and the turtle came to the flock, and asked if anyone could help the turtle out.

"He could bite sideways on a thick, strong stick, while two of us would hold either end of the stick in our beaks," someone volunteered. *"But he should not speak while biting the stick, or else he will fall and we could do nothing about it."*

In truth, the flock did not like the idea of having the turtle fly with them in such a manner. They knew how boastful he was, and besides that, they thought he belonged better on the ground. But the turtle bullied the geese into taking him along.

"Mind you, never open your mouth while we are above ground!" they reminded the turtle, as they started to lift themselves off the ground.

So, biting a stick held horizontally by two strong geese, the boastful turtle became the very first of his kind to experience flight. Far below him he saw the most wondrous things: trees shrinking until they were the size of mere mushrooms, fields looking like small patches of grass, rivers turning into silver snakes. But, most of all, he saw the other earthbound creatures of the world looking up at him, watching him, and he was deeply affected by their silent awe.

"They must think I am a magnificent creature, to have come so high above," the turtle thought. *"Well, I really am so marvelous! I feel like I am the greatest turtle in the world!"*

The turtle became so caught up in this delusion that, while looking down on his earthbound brothers, he opened his mouth to boast. The poor being's mindless conceit made him plunge to his untimely death.

ASUANG STEALS FIRE FROM GUGURANG

Long ago when the world was still young the good and evil gods were not yet enemies as they are now. They were friends, each living separately in a mountain (bolod, Bicol). One report even said that they were brothers. Gugurang, the good god, was living inside Mount Mayon, and Asuang, the evil one, inside Mount Malinao. As gods they had control of the welfare of the people. But Gugurang was more powerful than Asuang who was merely a subordinate; the former was the chief deity (cagurangnan) of the Bicol.

Now Gugurang was given full control over the people, who learned to look up to him for protection or for advancement. Whenever the people disobeyed his orders or wishes, he would cause the pit of the Mayon

Volcano to rumble

terribly. The people in time took this as a sign of warning, and accordingly, mended their foul ways. Or if their sins were beyond forgiveness Gugurang would make the volcano erupt to wipe out the sinners. Gugurang then became the symbol of the good (an mga marhay) ready to punish the bad (an mga maraot). When the people saw fire (calayo) flowing out of the crater of Mayon, they would grow afraid. They would then offer a sacrifice (atang) to him to appease his wrath. The Baliana, priestess, officiated in the ceremony. Always when they committed wrong, there would be loud moaning of the earth followed by an eruption of fire and lava (abo).

Now, Asuang had no fire in his abode inside Mount Malinao (to the north of Albay). He wanted to be as powerful as Gugurang, at least. If the people aroused his wrath, he wanted to subdue them by a fire or rumbling in Mount Malinao (this was still whole then). He entreated Gugurang to give him some fire but Gugurang emphatically refused.

"How dare you ask for my fire!" Gugurang thundered. The earth trembled. "Don't you know that when the fire in my seat is carried by hands such as yours the whole world will be set on fire?" "But I will be very careful," replied Asuang. "Be careful! I myself with all my power cannot handle it." "But how can you threaten the people with it?" "It is not my will that does it. It is someone else's that you or I do not know nor will ever know." "But the rainy days are coming and I need fire to make me warm in Mount Malinao." "Why," answered Gugurang, "you have lived there for many years and this is

the first time that you have asked me for it, what will you use the fire for? Look at your people; they can live without it."

"Well, it is time for you to give them fire now."

"Give them fire!" burst Gugurang. The earth shook and the people were more

afraid. But soon Gugurang quelled the commotion. Asuang himself was frightened. He never saw him that way before.

"They are not fit to have it yet! They must make themselves worthy."

"Well, am I not worthy?"

"You! you lay god! Look at your ragged mountain and compare it to Mayon which is the most beautiful in the world."

Asuang argued with him for a long time but Gugurang would not budge an

inch. Asuang suddenly discovered, which before he had not, that Gugurang

was all-powerful. Asuang narrowed his eyes and smiled with sinister import.

He decided to oppose him from now on.

"You want to be the omnipotent power," Asuang cried. "But between us two

there is not much difference. Why must I live in a humble place like Mount Malinao while you sit here gloating over your power unlimited and

unchecked?" "Stop!" The earth shivered as Gugurang stamped his feet on the

ground. Asuang only smiled this time. That made Gugurang angry all the more. He struck out but before his blow could land, Asuang had vanished already. Gugurang was greatly amazed at this-the new power of Asuang in

making himself invisible.

Then from a short distance in the room came the voice of the evil one,

"If I cannot get fire in good will, I will in bad-I will steal it." "Try-and before you can do that I will cut your mountain in twain."

"Then let there be war between us," countered Asuang. Thus the good and the evil became enemies from that time on. Motives were many to prove that Asuang was ambitious. It could not be doubted that the power to rule intrigued him. He determined to oppose every move of Gugurang. He gathered around him evil counselors and evil spirits whom he sent to the earth to turn the people to evil ways. After that, there was much immorality, lawlessness and crime. Gugurang in no time found out that it was Asuang who was causing all these things.

He sent pestilence to the barrios and for a moment the people turned to the omnipotent for protection. Gugurang asked them for another atang or sacrifice and warned them to follow his commandments strictly or be exterminated by floods or eruption. Against Asuang himself Gugurang was powerless to do anything. It seemed that in the twinkle of an eye Asuang came to possess hidden powers hitherto denied him.

Gugurang particularly guarded his fire lest his enemy make good his threat of stealing it. He assigned his trusted helpers (catambang) to guard the symbol of his power. He was afraid, besides, that if the fire were to go out of its confines the world would be consumed in a mighty conflagration.

But in spite of the precaution taken, Asuang was able to enter and locate the guarded object, and with many guiles and wiles, he bribed the guards with gold (bolauan). The temptation (sogot) was too sweet to be denied. Hence Asuang obtained possession of Gugurang's fire. Putting it inside a coconut shell he started with it.

Gugurang in his throne suddenly noticed that everything around him turned black, and that there were cries in the bowels of the volcano. But outside, the world was a fire. Every barrio that Asuang passed caught fire. "Asuang!" Gugurang cried. And with this he flew into the air pursuing the thief. While terror reigned among the people who were powerless against the conflagration, Gugurang and Asuang raced for supremacy. Gugurang must get the fire back, or else he would be left without any power at all. All the air around grew hot but still they hurried madly on. Asuang was nearing his seat and if he could get there before Gugurang, he would be lost for the good god who would then be under the spell of the devil.

Asuang braced up for the last stride and just as he was about to descend Mount Malinao, Gugurang caught up with him, snatched the fire in the coconut shell, and vanished with it. Asuang was greatly surprised. He could not make himself invisible, it as he would. Gugurang on reaching Mount Mayon returned the fire to its place, and everything as bright again inside. Now before doing anything else he set about stopping the conflagration. He bade the heavens (calangitan) to rain continuously. And there was in. And the

big fire was under control. The people at once offered atangs, because they were convinced it was Gugurang who had caused the fire because of their wickedness.

Then Gugurang punished the guards by chaining them to the precipices. Then for is revenge on Asuang-he ordered Lightning (Linti) and Thunder (Dalogdog) to strike hard against Mount Malinao that was defying him. Asuang attempted to bribe pi and Dalogdog. What is the use of your serving a master when you don't even receive any reward?" Asuang asked. "Why don't you join me? Here you can have what you want. You can e your master."

Linti, quite taken, asked, "You mean what you said?" Sure," the wily Asuang answered. It is true we are driven like slaves," said the thunder.

At this Gugurang sent his thunderbolt. Boom! Crash! For several minutes the world sank and bobbed and sank again. All the mountains creaked. Then a mighty crashing was made amid the din. Gugurang then ordered the lightning and the thunder to stop. All was over in a few minutes.

Then the people noticed that what was once Mount Malinao was but half now. They thanked the omnipotent for destroying the abode of the devil. (To this day one ho sails the Tabaco Bay will still see that Mount Malinao seems to have been cut while Mayon stands majestically unimpaired.)

The people for a time believed that Asuang was killed, but later his influence was 11 doing havoc with the populace. Incidentally, the people got fire, for the enterprising few kept some embers to keep themselves warm during the rain that followed the conflagration.

THE QUARREL OF THE VOLCANOES

(Bicol)

A very long time ago when there were very few people yet on the face of the earth, many queer things were wont to happen. It was because the people were yet very ignorant.

Mayon volcano was only then a mountain and as such had no fire or smoke. She was not as beautiful as she is now nor was she rich in vegetation; in fact, she But what she wanted mostly from borrowing from her neighbors as the Malinao Volcano and the Isarog Mountain.**. The Malinao Volcano (for she was then a volcano) being nearer to Mayon was the one mostly annoyed by the latter for her wants. In all Malinao Volcano was complacent and aided Mayon in all her needs, though at times, she felt like throwing her out of her window, but as by nature she was hospitable, she tried to do her best for her. Mayon, however, took advantage of this and abused the good character of Malinao and went to the extent of even talking what she wanted.

One day Mayon unexpectedly received some visitors and as it was already dinner time she had to prepare food for them but unfortunately there was no more fire in the oven. In haste, she went to her neighbor Malinao and asked for some fire to heat her oven. When she arrived, Malinao had already dined and all the fire in the oven was extinguished; however, she could very well give Mayon some for she had eternal fire in her crater. Malinao, tired of her fastidious neighbor, refused and thus incurred the hatred of Mayon who was more irascible and impulsive. At the time, Malinao was weaving a piece of cloth and beside her lay a big bolo. Mayon insisted on asking for help. Malinao however, was tired and would not yield to her pleadings even an inch. Mayon, thinking of her visitors and the advancing time, made a desperate effort to get the fire without Malinao's consent but Malinao was successful in wresting from her the fire. In desperation, Mayon grabbed the bolo and closing her eyes struck with all her might at Malinao and moments later, on opening her eyes, saw to her fright that she had beheaded Malinao.

Mayon hurried home with the fire and supplied her visitors' needs. She did not return the fire, for Malinao was dead.

To this day Mayon sends forth fire from her crater while the Malinao Volcano is now only a mountain without any smoke coming out of its crater. To this day too, the conical crater of Malinao can be seen at her foot where it fell when Mayon cut it off.

THE GODS AND GODDESSES

(Iloko)

Cabalangegan was formerly a jungle at the edge of the river Abra. On the far side of the river were mountains high and steep. On these mountains lived an old man named Abra, the father of Caburayan. The old man lived and controlled the weather. It is said that the river Abra was a gathering of water vapor, shaded, and the days were always bright with sunlight.

At that time Anianihan, God of Harvests, was in love with Anianihan, Goddess of Healing. Her mother, Lady Makiling knew about their mutual understanding, but Abra did not know it for the three were afraid to tell him since he might punish them as he disapproved of Anianihan. Abra wanted his daughter to marry either Saguday, God of the Wind, or Revenador, God of Thunder and Lightning. This being so, Anianihan took Anianihan from her home. Abra wept a great deal. He sent Lady Makiling away after beating her.

When Abra was alone, he wept day and night till Bulan, God of Peace and Calm, came. But though Bulan was there to brighten Abra's spirits, Abra did not stop weeping. He could not express his anger. He begged the other gods to bring back his daughter.

One day the sun, eye of Amman, shone so bright that the water of the river Abra was excessively heated. Smoke rose from the river. Soon, thick, black

clouds began to darken the sky. Then Saguday sent the strongest wind until the crowns of the trees brushed the ground. The god Revenador sent down the largest strings of fire. The heaviest of rains fell. All these frightful events lasted seven days. The river Abra then rose and covered the trees. There rose a vast body of water and the highest pan of the mountain could be seen. It looked like the back of a turtle from a distance. At this spot Abra lived.

On the seventh day, Abra heard a cry. He also heard a most sorrowful song. Abra dried his tears and looked around, but he saw no one. He determined to find Maria Makiling, his grandchild. He did not find her for the cries of the baby had stopped.

The search for the baby lasted three full moons, but to no avail and the poor old man returned to his home very sad. He lost all hope. His wits were gone. At that time Maria Makiling was under the care of the fierce dog Lobo, that was under a god of the Underworld. He had been punished by the other gods and that is why he looked like a fierce dog. He was sent down to do charity.
