

Philippine Myth

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Module No.9 : **Philippine Myth**

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Sources : <http://www.philippinesinsider.com/>



The Philippines is blessed with a multitude of mythologies and legends, yet too few of these tales are known and read today. **MGA ALAMAT** or myths form an important genre of folk literature. Together with legends and folktales, they constitute the large group of folk narratives in prose. A myth is "a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form" (Dundes, 1984: 1).

Here are some popular or readable Philippine Myths :

Philippine Myth on the Origin of the Pineapple



Philippine Myth on the Origin of the Pineapple

- An unpeeled pineapple has lots of medium-size dots that resemble a human eye. How did it get such skin covering? A Philippine myth tells us why.

Pina, a rustic girl, lived with her mom as tenants in a fruit plantation. Her mom was the hard-working type—working almost all the time, and Pina was also hard-working—but not with household chores. She loved playing all the time.

When her mom told her to do a household chore, she always procrastinated—she started the work but later laid it aside for tomorrow—a tomorrow which often never came. The myth adds that she often stopped in the middle of her household chore to play. She usually reasoned she couldn't find what it was her mom wanted her to do. But actually, the truth was she didn't pay attention to any of her mom's instructions in favor of playing. She felt confident in the thought of surely finishing a task later or tomorrow. And this to the chagrin of her mom.

The myth goes on to say that the mother, used to being too vocal with her careless ill wishes or curses on people who didn't delight her, was liberal on such habit on her only daughter. She reasoned that vehement scolding did some hidden wonders to juvenile stubbornness.

But one day, the myth says, Pina's procrastinations went too far for her mom to tolerate them anymore. Her mother had told her to get her wooden shoes from the under their hut. She went down their hut and looked under it. But on seeing her old rug doll, her imagination started working. She was soon playing with it. Her usual dialogue, saying "I can't see it," when actually she wasn't searching but playing, did it this time. Her mom shouted invectives plus a curse that, "May you grow dozens of eyes" so Maria would stop ever mentioning her favorite dialogue. Then suddenly, Maria just disappeared.

A search party looked all over the plantation for Maria, to no avail. And then Maria's mom saw a curious new plant species at their backyard. It was covered with eyes. She remembered her latest curse on Maria and knew the plant was her. From then on, she called the plant, a pineapple, or "Pinya" in Filipino.

The myth on the origin of pineapples aims at fostering obedience to parents as a priority, and that parents ought to watch how they deal with their kids.

Source : <http://www.philippinesinsider.com>

Philippine Myth: Origin of the Moon and Stars



Philippine Myth: Origin of the Moon and Stars

A long, long time ago, some Filipinos thought the moon was a silver crescent comb and the stars were necklaces of diamonds. The sky was said to be a mere arm-stretch away overhead. The Philippine myth goes this way.

The myth says that once, a small community lived in the middle of a rice field. They focused on rice and corn agriculture and they brought in abundant harvest each year. One of the families in the community was Maria's family. The myth continues that people in the community were so close that they knew each other well. Maria was known there as a pretty girl.

Particularly, she was known for caring too much for her long, silky hair. The myth says it was her pride, and lots of other girls in the neighborhood envied her for it. And Maria loved it. She

fancied herself the star of her village. So, the myth goes that she worked double time on her beauty, especially her long, jet black hair.

Maria cared so much for her hair. The myth says, aside from daily comprehensive herbal rituals, she regularly brushed her hair with a special silver crescent-shape comb. The myth says she let nothing touch her hair except the best material around. Even as she went about her daily chore she wore a coiled string of jewels and diamonds (supposedly common as ordinary rocks that time) to crown her hair—that's aside from the jeweled necklace she wore.

One day, according to the myth, as she was pounding grains of corn and palay (rice stalks) in a native wooden pestle with a wooden mortar, her mother noticed the jeweled string around her head, the silver comb stuck in her hair, and the jeweled lace round her neck. She scolded her and told her to lay aside everything while working. So, continues the myth, Maria hanged the comb and jewelry on the sky above her. Wanting to finish her work in a hurry, she pounded the grains hard by raising the mortar really high. She didn't notice hitting the sky which went up higher as she hit it with her pounding. Soon the sky went all the way up, along with her comb and jewelry. And they became the moon and the stars, according to his Philippine myth.

The myth's lesson? Don't be too preoccupied with vain personal beauty. Work always comes first. Too much self indulgence is bound to compromise on things that really count.

• Source : <http://www.philippinesinsider.com>

The Myth about the Shining Moon



The Myth about the Shining Moon

- Ever wondered why there has to be a moon at night? Aren't stars enough to light the skies at night? And with today's technology that can light up whole cities, is there still need for a moon? This Philippine myth tells us why it was decided one time that there ought to be a moon at night.

One day, this myth says, the moon had no light of any kind. It was a silent dark object that orbited the Earth. It looked for ways to be of use to the inhabitants of the earth, but to no avail. At times it even blocked the sun entirely from the planet, frustrating the sun with its job of lighting up the world. The myth says that the sun complained that it could only light up a side of the earth at a time, and the moon even sometimes prevented it from doing this.

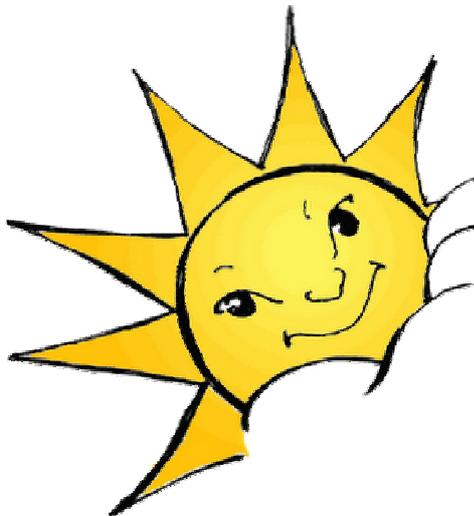
But the moon was not abashed. It continued to find a way to serve planet earth. The myth continues that one day, the moon noticed that the sun was very lonely. She wondered and approached the sun to ask what was the matter. The myth says the sun told her that he was again about to go to the other side of the Earth because the people there also needed its heat and light. The myth says the sun worried about the people on the opposite side who would have to suffer a day of darkness again. "If only I could shine both sides!" the sun said wistfully. He didn't want to leave the other side without light.

So, feeling desperate, the myth says the moon asked the sun if it could be of any help. The sun regarded the moon for a while and noticed that it had rocks and metals about it. The sun, says the myth, tried to shoot a ray of light on the moon and it bounced on the planet Mars. The light reflected was enough to make Mars squint its eyes. So the sun had an idea. According to the myth, it told the moon that it would give part of its light so the moon could shine on a half of the world, and then sun on the other.

This Philippine myth on the shining moon at night talks of a dark moon going around the Earth, eager to be of service to it. A shared light from the sun gave it its meaning.

• Source : <http://www.philippinesinsider.com>

Myth about the Sun



The Philippine Myth about the Sun

- According to a local myth, the sun was designed to be on earth. To begin with, it was supposed to light up the Earth. So, how come the sun ended up in the sky?

In the beginning, according to this myth, the Earth was so dark because there was nothing in the sky that could give light to it. Hence, there was no day. All throughout the day, 24 hours daily, there was only night time. So what the ancients did, says this myth, was to make bonfires to light up their surroundings, dry clothes on, and keep warm, aside from cook food, boil water, or burn debris. Sometimes, they had to build huge fires to light up whole

surroundings on special occasions and community rituals. But they eventually realized, the myth adds, that bonfires, no matter how huge, were not enough to provide enough heat and light drive for all of them. Bonfires were not enough to sustain any kind of development.

So the people thought of ways to remedy the situation. The myth continues that they knew there had to be some kind of a continuous supply of heat and light from a permanent source that didn't need human supervision. The supply had to be self-sustaining. So what did the people do? What they usually did. They resorted to what they discerned to be gods and goddesses that they believed controlled nature, the myth says.

After some worship rituals and offerings, finally the god of fire purportedly came down from above, according to the myth, and answered their supplication—a perpetual source of heat and light. The god was said to create a very big ball of fire. The myth says, the giant ball of fire was enough to warm and light up the whole surroundings—and even beyond. Miles upon miles of land was amply lighted up by this ball of fire. But it merely rested on the Earth. The myth continues, it was so big and hot that everybody had to stay inside caves to avoid being burned. Even the ground where it rested started to melt.

Seeing this, the god of fire threw the ball of fire to the sky. It was hurled away so strongly that it reached the sky and stayed there.

The local myth about the sun shows us that mere human efforts at life survival and progress is not enough. The sustaining power of nature and belief in a superior force or presence is needed.

• Source : <http://www.philippinesinsider.com>

Myth on Why Roosters have Crowns



The Philippine Myth on Why Roosters have Crowns

- Roosters anywhere in the world seem to be encumbered with a mission just before daylight appears on the horizon. Why do they have to crow? This popular folk myth offers an amusing suggestion why.

The myth begins by stating that long ago, before roosters were known to crow, Batalla was a

great kingdom nestled on a hill between two huge and majestic mountains somewhere in the North. Thick mists covered the hilltop early in the morning and in the evening. Thus, according to the myth, Batalla was a cold mountain fortress. The people's eating habits increased which, they claim, was due to the cold weather. So they gained weight and became increasingly sleepy. This affected the health of the people, according to the myth.

Learning of Batalla's growing health predicament, a rival kingdom from the plains below planned on an attack. The myth goes on that they planned an all-out attack at dawn. The King of Battalla asked everybody's help to save the kingdom; the soldiers, men and women, and even the children and animals. Haphazard preparations were done to defend the kingdom. But, says the myth, most of them found their physical unfitness the main concern—in fact, it was the number one hindrance to counter the impending attack. It was too late to limber up and train for battle. Hence, the myth adds, at dawn when the enemies were about to start the attack, everybody in the kingdom was fast asleep. It was a very cold night and everybody in Batalla, including the king himself, had a heavy supper the night before, according to the myth.

The myth continues that the enemies were poised to deal the first fatal blow on the kingdom when suddenly, for some reason, all the roosters in Batalla crowed loudly and simultaneously, waking up everybody in Batalla. Not only that, but the enemies were shocked and dumbstruck at what was going on. The myth says the enemies thought the crowing came from the people. In panic, the enemies imagined that ambush teams were hiding in the dark, and the crowing was a signal for the ambush. According to the myth, the attack was successfully repelled and the enemies ran away like mad chickens scampering for safety. In gratitude, the king put a crown on every rooster's head.

The myth on why roosters have crowns shows the significance of being warned as a preventive measure against any problem.

• Source : <http://www.philippinesinsider.com>

Myth on the Coconut Tree



A Myth on the Coconut Tree

- Considered by some as the second national tree, the coconut tree is as versatile and useful as the Narra tree. From roots to leaves, the coconut is valuable. But how did it come into being? The coconut tree has lots of myths about it, and here is one.

According to this myth, once there was a kingdom in Mindanao known as Bangonansa Pulangui ("kingdom by the river"), which was ruled by a just and kind sultan. The myth says the kingdom was known for Putri Timbang-Namat, the sultan's only daughter. She was a most beautiful and charming woman. Her name meant "lady grace."

Putri's admirers came from the seven seas, but she did not care for any of them. According to the myth, the kind sultan was touched by their persistence. One day, he tried to ask his daughter to choose from among them the man she would marry, the myth adds.

"I need a son to succeed me when I die," the father said, "and I wish that before I die, I would see you married," he added. The myth says the king thought of a contest for the princess' hand. A tournament was held to determine who among the suitors was worthy of the princess' love, the myth says.

In the palace garden, meanwhile, the myth says the princess met a young and handsome gardener, Wata-Mama. The myth says Wata-Mama decided to reveal his past to her. According to the myth he was of royal descent but had been lost when he was three. His father was killed by his greedy uncle. The myth says that the princess said, "We love each other, that's all that matters. "

The myth says a general was very jealous of Wata. So, that night, in the dark corner of the palace, he and his aides waited for the young lovers. The myth says the general suddenly emerged, struck Wata-Mama and beheaded him. The princess, fearless, picked up Wata's head.

After Wata's head was buried, the myth says, early one morning, while the princess was watching the spot, she saw a tiny plant growing from the ground. Suddenly, the myth says, it grew into a tree and reached the height of the window where the princess was sitting at. It produced a round fruit the size of a man's head.

Love's passion and jealousy's wretchedness can suddenly change lives disastrously. This myth on the coconut teaches that love is best kept going on its natural course.

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