

# Flood Myths from the Philippines

edited by



[D. L. Ashliman](#)

© 2003

---

## Contents

1. [The Flood Story \(Igorot\)](#).
  2. [The Flood Story \(Bukidnon\)](#).
  3. [Links to related sites](#).
- 

Return to D. L. Ashliman's [folktexts](#), a library of folktales, folklore, fairy tales, and mythology.

---

## The Flood Story

### Igorot

Once upon a time, when the world was flat and there were no mountains, there lived two brothers, sons of Lumawig, the Great Spirit. The brothers were fond of hunting, and since no mountains had formed there was no good place to catch wild pig and deer, and the older brother said, "Let us cause water to flow over all the world and cover it, and then mountains will rise up."

So they caused water to flow over all the earth, and when it was covered they took the head-basket [a bamboo basket, in which the heads of victims are kept prior to the head-taking celebration] of the town and set it for a trap. The brothers were very much pleased when they went to look at their trap, for they had caught not only many wild pigs and deer, but also many people.

Now Lumawig looked down from his place in the sky and saw that his sons had flooded the earth and that in all the world there was just one spot which was not covered. And he saw that all the people in the world had been drowned except one brother and sister who lived in Pokis.

Then Lumawig descended, and he called to the boy and girl, saying, "Oh, you are still alive."

"Yes," answered the boy, "we are still alive, but we are very cold."

So Lumawig commanded his dog and deer to get fire for the boy and girl. The dog and the deer swam quickly away, but though Lumawig waited a long time they did not return, and all the time the boy and girl were growing colder.

Finally Lumawig himself went after the dog and the deer, and when he reached them he said, "Why are you so long in bringing the fire to Pokis? Get ready and come quickly while I watch you, for the boy and girl are very cold."

Then the dog and the deer took the fire and started to swim through the flood, but when they had gone only a little way, the fire was put out.

Lumawig commanded them to get more fire and they did so, but they swam only a little way again when that of the deer went out, and that of the dog would have been extinguished also had not Lumawig gone quickly to him and taken it.

As soon as Lumawig reached Pokis he built a big fire which warmed the brother and sister; and the water evaporated so that the world was as it was before, except that now there were mountains. The brother and sister married and had children, and thus there came to be many people on the earth.

- 
- Source: Mabel Cook Cole, *Philippine Folk Tales* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1916), pp. 102-104.
  - Notes by Mabel Cook Cole:
    1. The mythology of nearly all peoples has a flood story.
    2. A bamboo basket, in which the heads of victims are kept prior to the head-taking celebration.
    3. The folklore of all countries has some story accounting for the acquisition of fire. The Tinguian tale is as follows: Once in the very old times Kaboniyon sent a flood which covered all the land. Then there was no place for the fire to stay, so it went into the bamboo, the stones, and iron. That is why one who knows how can still get fire out of bamboo and stones.
  - Return to the [table of contents](#).
- 
- 

## The Flood Story

### Bukidnon (Mindanao)

A long time ago there was a very big crab which crawled into the sea. And when he went in he crowded the water out so that it ran all over the earth and covered all the land.

Now about one moon before this happened, a wise man had told the people that they must build a large raft. They did as he commanded and cut many large trees, until they had enough to make three layers. These they bound tightly together, and when it was done they fastened the raft with a long rattan cord to a big pole in the earth.

Soon after this the floods came. White water poured out of the hills, and the sea rose and covered even the highest mountains. The people and animals on the raft were safe, but all the others drowned.

When the waters went down and the raft was again on the ground, it was near their old home, for the rattan cord had held.

But these were the only people left on the whole earth.

- 
- Source: Mabel Cook Cole, *Philippine Folk Tales* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1916), pp. 125-126.
  - Notes by Mabel Cook Cole:
    1. A somewhat similar belief that a giant Crab is responsible for the tides is widespread throughout Malaysia. The Batak of Palawan now believe, as also do the Mandaya of eastern Mindanao, that the tides are caused by a giant crab going in and out of his hole in the sea.
    2. The similarity of this to the biblical Story of the Flood leads us to suppose that it has come from the neighboring Christianized or Mohammedanized people and has been worked by the Bukidnon into the mould of their own thought. However, the flood story is sometimes found in such a guise that it cannot be accounted for by Christian influence. See, for example, [The Flood Story as told in the folklore of the Igorot tribe](#), on page 102.
  - Return to the [table of contents](#).
- 
- 

## Links to related sites

- [Creation Myths from the Philippines](#).
  - D. L. Ashliman's [folktexts](#), a library of folktales, folklore, fairy tales, and mythology.
- 
- 

Revised January 4, 2003. ref.: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/flood-phil.html>

Look more here [www.culture-etc.aboutphilippines.ph](http://www.culture-etc.aboutphilippines.ph)