

Folktales from the Philippines

Edited by



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How the First Head Was Taken

Igorot

One day the Moon, who was a woman named Kabigat, sat out in the yard making a large copper pot. The copper was still soft and pliable like clay, and the woman squatted on the ground with the heavy pot against her knees while she patted and shaped it.

Now while she was working a son of Cal-chal, the Sun, came by and stopped to watch her mold the

form. Against the inside of the jar she pressed a stone, while on the outside with a wooden paddle dripping with water she pounded and slapped until she had worked down the bulges and formed a smooth surface.

The boy was greatly interested in seeing the jar grow larger, more beautiful, and smoother with each stroke, and he stood still for some time. Suddenly the Moon looked up and saw him watching her. Instantly she struck him with her paddle, cutting off his head.

Now the Sun was not near, but he knew as soon as the Moon had cut off his son's head. And hurrying to the spot, he put the boy's head back on, and he was alive again.

Then the Sun said to the Moon, "You cut off my son's head, and because you did this, ever after on the earth people will cut off each other's heads."

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- Source: Mabel Cook Cole, *Philippine Folk Tales* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1916), pp.111-112.
 - The term "Igorot" is applied, somewhat loosely, to the indigenous peoples of the four mountain provinces of Luzon: Benguet, Mountain Province, Ifugao, and Kalinga-Apayao.
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The Man with the Coconuts

Tinguian

One day a man who had been to gather his coconuts loaded his horse heavily with the fruit. On the way home he met a boy whom he asked how long it would take to reach the house.

"If you go slowly," said the boy, looking at the load on the horse, "you will arrive very soon; but if you go fast, it will take you all day."

The man could not believe this strange speech, so he hurried his horse. But the coconuts fell off and he had to stop to pick them up. Then he hurried his horse all the more to make up for lost time, but the coconuts fell off again. Many times he did this, and it was night when he reached home.

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- Source: Mabel Cook Cole, *Philippine Folk Tales* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1916), p. 88.
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The Boy Who Became a Stone

Tinguian

One day a little boy named Elonen sat out in the yard making a bird snare, and as he worked, a little bird called to him: "Tik-tik-lo-den" (come and catch me).

"I am making a snare for you," said the boy; but the bird continued to call until the snare was finished.

Then Elonen ran and threw the snare over the bird and caught it, and he put it in a jar in his house while he went with the other boys to swim.

While he was away, his grandmother grew hungry, so she ate the bird, and when Elonen returned and found that his bird was gone, he was so sad that he wished he might go away and never come back. He went out into the forest and walked a long distance, until finally he came to a big stone and said: "Stone, open your mouth and eat me." And the stone opened its mouth and swallowed the boy.

When his grandmother missed the boy, she went out and looked everywhere, hoping to find him. Finally she passed near the stone and it cried out: "Here he is." Then the old woman tried to open the stone but she could not, so she called the horses to come and help her. They came and kicked it, but it would not break. Then she called the carabao and they hooked it, but they only broke their horns. She called the chickens, which pecked it, and the thunder, which shook it, but nothing could open it, and she had to go home without the boy.

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- Source: Mabel Cook Cole, *Philippine Folk Tales* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1916), pp. 84-85.
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Dogedog

Tinguian

Dogedog had always been very lazy, and now that his father and mother were dead and he had no one to care for him, he lived very poorly. He had little to eat. His house was old and small and so poor that it had not even a floor. Still he would rather sit all day and idle away his time than to work and have more things.

One day, however, when the rainy season was near at hand, Dogedog began thinking how cold he

would be when the storms came, and he felt so sorry for himself that he decided to make a floor in his house.

Wrapping some rice in a banana leaf for his dinner, he took his long knife and went to the forest to cut some bamboo. He hung the bundle of rice in a tree until he should need it; but while he was working a cat came and ate it. When the hungry man came for his dinner, there was none left. Dogedog went back to his miserable little house which looked forlorn to him even, now that he had decided to have a floor.

The next day he went again to the forest and hung his rice in the tree as he did before, but again the cat came and ate it. So the man had to go home without any dinner.

The third day he took the rice, but this time he fixed a trap in the tree, and when the cat came it was caught.

"Now I have you!" cried the man when he found the cat; "and I shall kill you for stealing my rice."

"Oh, do not kill me," pleaded the cat, "and I will be of some use to you."

So Dogedog decided to spare the cat's life, and he took it home and tied it near the door to guard the house.

Some time later when he went to look at it, he was very much surprised to find that it had become a cock.

"Now I can go to the cock-fight at Magsingal," cried the man. And he was very happy, for he had much rather do that than work.

Thinking no more of getting wood for his floor, he started out at once for Magsingal with the cock under his arm.

As he was crossing a river he met an alligator which called out to him: "Where are you going, Dogedog?"

"To the cock-fight at Magsingal," replied the man as he fondly stroked the rooster.

"Wait, and I will go with you," said the alligator; and he drew himself out of the water.

The two walking together soon entered a forest where they met a deer and it asked: "Where are you going, Dogedog?"

"To the cock-fight at Magsingal," said the man.

"Wait and I will go with you," said the deer; and he also joined them.

By and by they met a mound of earth that had been raised by the ants, and they would have passed without noticing it had it not inquired: "Where are you going, Dogedog?"

"To the cock-fight at Magsingal," said the man once more; and the mound of earth joined them.

The company then hurried on, and just as they were leaving the forest, they passed a big tree in which was a monkey. "Where are you going, Dogedog?" shrieked the monkey. And without waiting for an answer, he scrambled down the tree and followed them.

As the party walked along they talked together, and the alligator said to Dogedog: "If any man wants to dive into the water, I can stay under longer than he."

Then the deer, not to be outdone, said: "If any man wants to run, I can run faster."

The mound of earth, anxious to show its strength, said: "If any man wants to wrestle, I can beat him."

And the monkey said: "If any man wants to climb, I can go higher."

They reached Magsingal in good time and the people were ready for the fight to begin. When Dogedog put his rooster, which had been a cat, into the pit, it killed the other cock at once, for it used its claws like a cat.

The people brought more roosters and wagered much money, but Dogedog's cock killed all the others until there was not one left in Magsingal, and Dogedog won much money. Then they went outside the town and brought all the cocks they could find, but not one could win over that of Dogedog.

When the cocks were all dead, the people wanted some other sport, so they brought a man who could stay under water for a long time, and Dogedog made him compete with the alligator. But after a while the man had to come up first. Then they brought a swift runner and he raced with the deer, but the man was left far behind. Next they looked around until they found a very large man who was willing to contend with the mound of earth, but after a hard struggle the man was thrown. Finally they brought a man who could climb higher than anyone else, but the monkey went far above him, and he had to give up.

All these contests had brought much money to Dogedog, and now he had to buy two horses to carry his sacks of silver. As soon as he reached home, he bought the house of a very rich man and went to live in it. And he was very happy, for he did not have to work any more.

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- Source: Mabel Cook Cole, *Philippine Folk Tales* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1916), pp. 91-94.
 - This tale is similar to Aarne-Thompson type 513.

- Note by Cole: "The story shows the influence of the Christianized native, among whom cock-fighting is a very popular sport. It is found only among those Tinguian who come into contact with this class."
 - Addendum by Ashliman: Cock-fighting remains a very popular sport in the Philippines.
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The Carabao and the Shell

Tinguian

One very hot day, when a carabao went into the river to bathe, he met a shell and they began talking together.

"You are very slow," said the carabao to the shell.

"Oh, no," replied the shell. "I can beat you in a race."

"Then let us try and see," said the carabao.

So they went out on the bank and started to run.

After the carabao had gone a long distance he stopped and called, "Shell!"

And another shell lying by the river answered, "Here I am!"

Then the carabao, thinking that it was the same shell with which he was racing, ran on.

By and by he stopped again and called, "Shell!"

And another shell answered, "Here I am!"

The carabao was surprised that the shell could keep up with him. But he ran on and on, and every time he stopped to call, another shell answered him. But he was determined that the shell should not beat him, so he ran until he dropped dead.

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- Source: Mabel Cook Cole, *Philippine Folk Tales* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1916), p. 89.
 - Note by Cole: "Another version of this tale is found in the British North Borneo in the story of

the plandok and the crab."

- Addendum by Ashliman: Variants of this fable (Aarne-Thompson type 275A*) are found throughout Europe.
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Links

- D. L. Ashliman's [Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts](#).
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Revised August 26, 2000.