

# Ancient Philippine Creation Myth: Malakas and Maganda



When the world first began there was no land; there was only the **Sea** and the **Sky**, and between them flew a huge, beautiful **Kite** (a bird similar to a hawk). One day, the bird, which had nowhere to land and rest, grew tired of flying about, and in frustration stirred up the Sky in a quarrel against the Sea. The Sky threw rain, thunder, and lightning that reached the Sea, who in turn rose up and hurled waves and hurricanes that reached the Sky.

In order to restrain its fury, the Sky showered a multitude of massive boulders down upon the Sea, which became the islands that formed the **Philippines**. These islands prevented the waters from rising any more - instead causing them to flow back and forth, and thereby creating the tides. Afterwards, the Sky then ordered the Kite to light on one of the newly-formed islands to build her nest, and to leave the Sea and the Sky in peace.

Now at this same time the **Land Breeze** and the **Sea Breeze** were married, and they had a child which they named **Bamboo**. One day, when Bamboo was floating against the sea, it struck the feet of the Kite. Shocked, hurt, and angered that anything should strike it, the bird furiously pecked at the bamboo until it split in half. Out of one section came a golden-bronze colored man, named **Malakas** (Strong One) and from the other half came a similarly hued woman, named **Maganda** (Beautiful One).

The earthquake then called on all the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea to see what should be done with these two, and the animals decided that they should marry each other. Together, *Malakas* and *Maganda* had many children, and from them eventually came all the different races of people.

After a while the parents grew very tired of having so many idle and useless children around. They wished to be rid of them, but they knew of no other place to send them off to. Time went on and the children became even more numerous that the parents could no longer enjoy any peace. One day, in an act of pure irritation and desperation, *Malakas* seized a stick and began beating them on all sides.

This so frightened the children that they all fled in different directions; seeking some place to hide both within and outside the house. Some of the children ran into hidden rooms in the house, several concealed themselves within the actual walls, while others hid in the fireplace. Some ran outside and the rest fled out to the sea.

Now it happened that those who went into the hidden rooms of the house later became the chiefs of the islands (*Maharlikas*); and those who concealed themselves in the walls became slaves (*Alipins*). Those who hid in the fireplace became the *Negritos* and the *Aetas*; and those who ran outside turned into free men (*Timawas*). As for those who fled to the Sea; they were gone many years, and when their children eventually came back, they had become the white foreigners.

## Notes

Because the Philippines has so many islands and is inhabited by different ethnic groups, Philippine mythology and superstitions are very diverse. Even the story of *Malakas* and *Maganda* vary from region to region, but specific elements of the story remain the same: there is a huge bird that splits a giant bamboo, and *Malakas* and *Maganda* emerge from the halves.

The names *Malakas* and *Maganda* also denote a deeper meaning and truth about *Pilipino* culture. *Pilipinos* consider women to be *maganda* - beautiful, sweet, and soft; while men as *malakas* - a strong and sturdy being to whom the family can depend on at all times.

The final part about the children who fled out to the sea and eventually came back as “white foreigners” seems to have been added to the original version that had been handed down orally over the years from generation to generation.

Ref.: <http://bakitwhy.com/articles/ancient-philippine-creation-myth-malakas-and-maganda>