

# Legends and myths of Kalinga, Philippines

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## The Legend of the Sleeping Beauty

In those days, tribes were not in good terms with each other. Tribal wars were common.

There was a man in Tinglayan called Banna, who had extraordinary bravery and strength. He had an unusual charm so people look up to him for leadership. He was also a very good "ullalim" singer.

One day Banna realized that he needed a life time partner, someone to share his life with, so he went in search for a wife.

Since there were no eligible women in his barrio he decided to ascend Mount Patukan, a mountain east of Tinglayan and go to the sitio of Dacalan, Tanudan.

While it was still daylight, he stopped and rested under a big tree at a distance away from the village so that no one could see him. This is because he might provoke trouble by his presence.

When night came, Banna slowly went down nearer to the village and searched for a place to observe. After some time, he heard a soft, melodious female voice singing the ullalim. He was drawn to the voice and moved closer to the hut. Peeping, he saw the most beautiful woman he had ever set eyes on. Long, wavy hair, dark, fringed eyes, and a voice that grew sweeter and sweeter as he drew closer to the hut.

Banna was mesmerized...captivated by the lyrical voice. The leaves of the trees around him seemed to be dancing in unison with the woman's ululations.

He knew it was extremely dangerous for him to reveal himself inside the village territory, but his burning desire to meet the woman, was stronger than his sense of survival.

He knocked boldly at the "sawali" (bamboo made) walls of the hut.

" Anna tago," (Someone's here.)

" Umma sanat?" (Who is it?), the singing stopped, but the spoken words were the most appealing sound Banna had ever heard.

" This is Banna" from Tinglayan.

He heard hurried movements from the house, then a male voice spoke harshly, "What do you need?"

The natives were very protective of their women and properties, and Banna knew that he could get killed by his boldness.

"I don't mean any harm, I come in peace. I would like to meet the woman who sings the ullalim with passion."

The family was so nervous of letting a stranger in the house and had urged him to go home instead. But Banna was persistent and had refused to go.

Dongdongan - the father of the woman - slowly opened the door and saw a young, handsome man standing like a sentinel at the door. He repeated his plea for Banna to leave but the stance of the Banna indicated, he would not be budged from where he stood. So, he reluctantly let him in.

"I am Banna from Tinglayan"

Once inside the house, as dictated by tradition, Dongdongan handed Banna a bowl of water. It was an old tradition that once a stranger is accepted into a house, it is also understood that he will be protected and kept safe by the host family. As a symbol of this unwritten agreement, the stranger would be given a drink of water.

This is called "paniyao". If a stranger is not given one, then it denotes an existing hostility which may result to a deadly fight if the stranger does not leave immediately.

The second phase of the ritual continued. Dongdongan offered Banna the "buyo" - a bland, powder which when chewed with certain leaves would produce red tinged saliva. This concoction is called "moma".

Ullalim was the official means of communication then so they sang as they talked. Banna too had a strong, masculine voice and it was apparent he could sing well.

In his ullalim Banna revealed his search for a wife. Dongdongan introduced him to her daughter, Edonsan, who readily accepted Banna's handshake.

Banna, then and there proposed to Edonsan. Edonsan in turn, accepted the proposal and there was a flurry of activity, as all the village folk were invited to a meeting and then a "canao" (festivities with dancing and singing). Banna and Edonsan dance the "salidsid" (courtship dance) to the tempo of the gongs, while the community participated in the "tadok" (dance for all). The celebration lasted the whole day, with everyone in the village participating. No one had gone to the fields and to the kaingin as people usually did. The village people were the witnesses to the exchange of vows between the two. There were no officiating priests or Judges, no official documents to sign, but the vows were always kept and were considered sacred by everyone in the village.

Tradition also dictated that Banna had to stay with Edonsan's family for 7 days to prove his sincerity and purity of intention. Banna and Edonsan had their honeymoon along the slope of the Patokan Mountain picking guavas and wild strawberries, making love and dropping by the river to catch fish for supper.

In the evening of each day for the seven days that Banna was there, Edonsan took Banna to each of her relative's house. It is considered good luck to do so, as it is believed that the blessings and approval of relatives are vital to the happiness of the couple.

At the end of the 7th day, the couple prepared to leave for Banna's village where they will establish residence. The parents of Edonsan and the village people prepared native cakes and tobacco as gifts for the departure of the newly married couple.

As dawn broke, the village people came together to see them off. The two left happily, with their hands entwined against each other. The trail was adorned with guavas and strawberries and they had a handful as they trek towards the summit of Patokan.

It took them 8 arduous hours to get to the top.

As soon as they reached the top, they heard unusual noises coming from Banna's village which was a few miles below them.

Banna had a premonition that it was something dangerous so he instructed Edonsan to stay put and wait for him. He was going down to his village to investigate the cause of the ruckus.

Banna ran all the way down to the village. As soon as he was seen by the village people, a cheer reverberated in the air. He was informed hastily that their village was under siege and that his leadership was needed to drive the trespassers away.

The bloody, face to face encounter of the two warring tribes went on for hours, spears and bolos clashed against each other as more bodies piled up in between the cluster of the nipa huts. The great number of the invading tribe slowly weakened Banna's men. One by one they fell, bloodied, to the ground. He could not possibly go back to Edonsan, Banna thought. He would fight up to his very last breath - but he had to make sure Edonsan does not come down to the village.

Hastily, he instructed one of his men to warn Edonsan, but the man never made it far. He and Banna were simultaneously wounded and fell bleeding to the ground. Banna died with his spear in his hand and his last vision was the face of Edonsan .

Edonsan, on the other hand, waited and waited...and waited. But there was no Banna to take her home. She was weak from weariness and heartache. She had no desire to live without her Banna.

When it was evident, Banna was not coming for her, she slowly crumpled to the grassy- matted forest and wept uncontrollably. Tears flowed down from her cheeks as she grew weaker and weaker and the tears flowed more and more copiously.

Night came and Banna had not returned yet...and Edonsan had grown weak with grief and fatigue, her breath slowly coming out in gasps... until she closed her eyes and breathed her last.

On the spot where her body was laid to rest, sprang two waterfalls which are believed to be the tears of Edonsan.

In Tinglayan, one can clearly see from a distance, the beautifully, shaped body of a reclining woman.

And that is the legend of "The Sleeping Beauty" folks, as handed down orally, from one generation to another.

As the story is passed on, additions and omissions are done by each set of generation. What is important is that the undying love of Banna and Edonsan will always be remembered by the people of Kalinga.