

Aponibolinayen and the Sun

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Philippine

Intermediate

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One day Aponibolinayen and her sister-in-law went out to gather greens. They walked to the woods to the place where the siksiklat grew, for the tender leaves of this vine are very good to eat. Suddenly while searching about in the underbrush, Aponibolinayen cried out with joy, for she had found the vine, and she started to pick the leaves. Pull as hard as she would, however, the leaves did not come loose, and all at once the vine wound itself around her body and began carrying her upward.

Far up through the air she went until she reached the sky, and there the vine set her down under a tree. Aponibolinayen was so surprised to find herself in the sky that for some time she just sat and looked around, and then, hearing a rooster crow, she arose to see if she could find it. Not far from where she had sat was a beautiful spring surrounded by tall betel-nut trees whose tops were pure gold. Rare beads were the sands of the spring, and the place where the women set their jars when they came to dip water was a large golden plate. As Aponibolinayen stood admiring the beauties of this spring, she beheld a small house nearby, and she was filled with fear lest the owner should find her there. She looked about for some means of escape and finally climbed to the top of a betel-nut tree and hid.

Now the owner of this house was Ini-init, the Sun, but he was never at home in the daylight, for it was his duty to shine in the sky and give light to all the world. At the close of the day when the Big Star took his place in the sky to shine through the night, Ini-init returned to his house, but early the next morning he was always off again.

From her place in the top of the betel-nut tree, Aponibolinayen saw the Sun when he came home at evening time, and again the next morning she saw him leave. When she was sure that he was out of sight she climbed down and entered his dwelling, for she was very hungry. She cooked rice, and into a pot of boiling water she dropped a stick which immediately became fish, so that she had all she wished to eat. When she was no longer hungry, she lay down on the bed to sleep.

Now late in the afternoon Ini-init returned from his work and went to fish in the river near his house, and he caught a big fish. While he sat on the bank cleaning his catch, he happened to look up toward his house and was startled to see that it appeared to be on fire. He hurried home, but when he reached the house he saw that it was not burning at all, and he entered. On his bed he beheld what looked like a flame of fire, but upon going closer he found that it was a beautiful woman fast asleep.

Ini-init stood for some time wondering what he should do, and then he decided to cook some food and invite this lovely creature to eat with him. He put rice over the fire to boil and cut into pieces the fish he had caught. The noise of this awakened Aponibolinayen, and she slipped out of the house and back to the top of the betel-nut tree. The Sun did not see her leave, and when the food was prepared he called her, but the bed was empty and he had to eat alone. That night Ini-init could not sleep well, for all the time he wondered who the beautiful woman could be. The next morning, however, he rose as usual and set forth to shine in the sky, for that was his work.

That day Aponibolinayen stole again to the house of the Sun and cooked food, and when she returned to the betel-nut tree she left rice and fish ready for the Sun when he came home. Late in the afternoon Ini-init went into his home, and when he found pots of hot rice and fish over the fire he was greatly troubled. After he had eaten he walked a long time in the fresh air. "Perhaps it is done by the lovely woman who looks like a flame of fire," he said. "If she comes again I will try to catch her."

The next day the Sun shone in the sky as before, and when the afternoon grew late he called to the Big Star to hurry to take his place, for he was impatient to reach home. As he drew near the house he saw that it again

looked as if it was on fire. He crept quietly up the ladder, and when he had reached the top he sprang in and shut the door behind him.

Aponibolinayen, who was cooking rice over the fire, was surprised and angry that she had been caught; but the Sun gave her betel-nut which was covered with gold, and they chewed together and told each other their names. Then Aponibolinayen took up the rice and fish, and as they ate they talked together and became acquainted.

After some time Aponibolinayen and the Sun were married, and every morning the Sun went to shine in the sky, and upon his return at night he found his supper ready for him. He began to be troubled, however, to know where the food came from, for though he brought home a fine fish every night, Aponibolinayen always refused to cook it.

One night he watched her prepare their meal, and he saw that, instead of using the nice fish he had brought, she only dropped a stick into the pot of boiling water.

“Why do you try to cook a stick?” asked Ini-init in surprise.

“So that we can have fish to eat,” answered his wife.

“If you cook that stick for a month, it will not be soft,” said Ini-init. “Take this fish that I caught in the net, for it will be good.”

But Aponibolinayen only laughed at him, and when they were ready to eat she took the cover off the pot and there was plenty of nice soft fish. The next night and the next, Aponibolinayen cooked the stick, and Ini-init became greatly troubled for he saw that though the stick always supplied them with fish, it never grew smaller.

Finally he asked Aponibolinayen again why it was that she cooked the stick instead of the fish he brought, and she said:

“Do you not know of the woman on earth who has magical power and can change things?”

“Yes,” answered the Sun, “and now I know that you have great power.”

“Well, then,” said his wife, “do not ask again why I cook the stick.”

And they ate their supper of rice and the fish which the stick made.

One night not long after this Aponibolinayen told her husband that she wanted to go with him the next day when he made light in the sky.

“Oh, no, you cannot,” said the Sun, “for it is very hot up there, and you cannot stand the heat.”

“We will take many blankets and pillows,” said the woman, “and when the heat becomes very great, I will hide under them.”

Again and again Ini-init begged her not to go, but as often she insisted on accompanying him, and early in the morning they set out, carrying with them many blankets and pillows.

First, they went to the East, and as soon as they arrived the Sun began to shine, and Aponibolinayen was with him. They traveled toward the West, but when morning had passed into noontime and they had reached the middle of the sky Aponibolinayen was so hot that she melted and became oil. Then Ini-init put her into a bottle and wrapped her in the blankets and pillows and dropped her down to earth.

Now one of the women of Aponibolinayen’s town was at the spring dipping water when she heard something fall near her. Turning to look, she beheld a bundle of beautiful blankets and pillows which she began to unroll, and inside she found the most beautiful woman she had ever seen. Frightened at her discovery, the woman ran as fast as she could to the town, where she called the people together and told them to come at once to the spring. They all hastened to the spot and there they found Aponibolinayen for whom they had been searching everywhere.

“Where have you been?” asked her father; “we have searched all over the world and we could not find you.’

“I have come from Pindayan,” answered Aponibolinayen. “Enemies of our people kept me there till I made my escape while they were asleep at night”

All were filled with joy that the lost one had returned, and they decided that at the next moon they would perform a ceremony for the spirits and invite all the relatives who were mourning for Aponibolinayen.

So they began to prepare for the ceremony, and while they were pounding rice, Aponibolinayen asked her mother to prick her little finger where it itched, and as she did so a beautiful baby boy popped out. The people

were very much surprised at this, and they noticed that every time he was bathed the baby grew very fast so that, in a short time, he was able to walk. Then they were anxious to know who was the husband of Aponibolinayen, but she would not tell them, and they decided to invite everyone in the world to the ceremony that they might not overlook him.

They sent for the betel-nuts that were covered with gold, and when they had oiled them they commanded them to go to all the towns and compel the people to come to the ceremony.

“If anyone refuses to come, grow on his knee,” said the people, and the betel-nuts departed to do as they were bidden.

As the guests began to arrive, the people watched carefully for one who might be the husband of Aponibolinayen, but none appeared and they were greatly troubled. Finally they went to the old woman, Alokotan, who was able to talk with the spirits, and begged her to find what town had not been visited by the betel-nuts which had been sent to invite the people. After she had consulted the spirits the old woman said:

“You have invited all the people except Ini-init who lives up above. Now you must send a betel-nut to summon him. It may be that he is the husband of Aponibolinayen, for the siksiklat vine carried her up when she went to gather greens.”

So a betel-nut was called and bidden to summon Ini-init.

The betel-nut went up to the Sun, who was in his house, and said:

“Good morning, Sun. I have come to summon you to a ceremony which the father and mother of Aponibolinayen are making for the spirits. If you do not want to go, I will grow on your head.”

“Grow on my head,” said the Sun. “I do not wish to go.”

So the betel-nut jumped upon his head and grew until it became so tall that the Sun was not able to carry it, and he was in great pain.

“Oh, grow on my pig,” begged the Sun. So the betel-nut jumped upon the pig’s head and grew, but it was so heavy that the pig could not carry it and squealed all the time. At last the Sun saw that he would have to obey the summons, and he said to the betel-nut:

“Get off my pig and I will go.”

So Ini-init came to the ceremony, and as soon as Aponibolinayen and the baby saw him, they were very happy and ran to meet him. Then the people knew that this was the husband of Aponibolinayen, and they waited eagerly for him to come up to them. As he drew near, however, they saw that he did not walk, for he was round; and then they perceived that he was not a man but a large stone. All her relatives were very angry to find that Aponibolinayen had married a stone; and they compelled her to take off her beads and her good clothes, for, they said, she must now dress in old clothes and go again to live with the stone.

So Aponibolinayen put on the rags that they brought her and at once set out with the stone for his home. No sooner had they arrived there, however, than he became a handsome man, and they were very happy.

“In one moon,” said the Sun, “we will make a ceremony for the spirits, and I will pay your father and mother the marriage price for you.”

This pleased Aponibolinayen very much, and they used magic so that they had many neighbors who came to pound rice for them and to build a large spirit house.

Then they sent oiled betel-nuts to summon their relatives to the ceremony. The father of Aponibolinayen did not want to go, but the betel-nut threatened to grow on his knee if he did not. So he commanded all the people in the town to wash their hair and their clothes, and when all was ready they set out.

When they reached the town they were greatly surprised to find that the stone had become a man, and they chewed the magic betel-nuts to see who he might be. It was discovered that he was the son of a couple in Aponibolinayen’s own town, and the people all rejoiced that this couple had found the son whom they had thought lost. They named him Aponitolau, and his parents paid the marriage price for his wife—the spirit house nine times full of valuable jars.

After that all danced and made merry for one moon, and when the people departed for their homes Ini-init and his wife went with them to live on the earth.

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