

# Magbangal

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Philippine

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*Intermediate*

*3 min read*

Magbangal was a good hunter, and he often went to a certain hill where he killed wild pigs for food. One night as it was nearing the planting season, he sat in his house thinking, and after a long time he called to his wife. She came to him, and he said:

“Tomorrow I shall go to the hill and clear the land for our planting, but I wish you to stay here.”

“Oh, let me go with you,” begged his wife, “for you have no other companion.”

“No,” said Magbangal, “I wish to go alone, and you must stay at home.”

So finally his wife agreed, and in the morning she arose early to prepare food for him. When the rice was cooked and the fish ready she called him to come and eat, but he said:

“No, I do not want to eat now, but I will return this afternoon and you must have it ready for me.”

Then he gathered up his ten hatchets and bolos, a sharpening stone, and a bamboo tube for water, and started for the hill. Upon reaching his land he cut some small trees to make a bench. When it was finished, he sat down on it and said to the bolos, “You bolos must sharpen yourselves on the stone.” And the bolos went to the stone and were sharpened. Then to the hatchets he said, “You hatchets must be sharpened,” and they also sharpened themselves.

When all were ready, he said: “Now you bolos cut all the small brush under the trees, and you hatchets must cut the large trees.” So the bolos and the hatchets went to work, and from his place on the bench Magbangal could see the land being cleared.

Magbangal’s wife was at work in their house weaving a skirt, but when she heard the trees continually falling she stopped to listen and thought to herself, “My husband must have found many people to help him clear our land. When he left here, he was alone, but surely he cannot cut down the trees so fast. I will see who is helping him.”

She left the house and walked rapidly toward the field, but as she drew nearer she proceeded more slowly, and finally stopped behind a tree. From her hiding-place, she could see her husband asleep on the bench, and she could also see that the bolos and hatchets were cutting the trees with no hands to guide them.

“Oh,” said she, “Magbangal is very powerful. Never before have I seen bolos and hatchets working without hands, and he never told me of his power.”

Suddenly she saw her husband jump up, and, seizing a bolo, he cut off one of his own arms. He awoke and sat up and said:

“Someone must be looking at me, for one of my arms is cut off.”

When he saw his wife he knew that she was the cause of his losing his arm, and as they went home together, he exclaimed:

“Now I am going away. It is better for me to go to the sky where I can give the sign to the people when it is time to plant; and you must go to the water and become a fish.”

Soon after he went to the sky and became the constellation Magbangal; and ever since, when the people see these stars appear in the sky, they know that it is time to plant their rice.

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