



The Passing of Loku

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Philippine

Intermediate
2 min read

The tale of Loku is applied to a large, ugly lizard which climbs to the rafters of houses and gives the peculiar cry that suggests its name. This lizard, although hideous, is harmless; it lives on centipedes. Its strange cry may be heard everywhere in the Philippine Islands.

Hundreds of years ago a very wicked king named Loku ruled the Philippines. He was cruel and unjust, and condemned to death all who refused to do his bidding. He had vast armies and made war on all until his name was feared everywhere.

His power was very great. He conquered every nation that opposed him and killed so many people that the god, viewing the slaughter from his throne above, sent an angel to order him to cease from warfare and to rule the land in peace.

Loku was in his palace, planning an assault on his neighbors, when a soft light filled the chamber, and a beautiful angel appeared and delivered the mandate of the master.

The cruel king paid no heed, but dismissed the holy messenger in scorn. "Tell your master," said he, "to deliver his message in person. I do not deal with messengers. I am Loku. All fear my name. I am the great Loku."

Hardly had he spoken when the palace shook to its foundations and a mighty voice thundered, “Is it thus thou Slightest my word? Thou art Loku. All shall indeed know thy name. From every crevice thou shalt forever cry it in a form that suits thy ill nature.”

The courtiers, alarmed by the shock, rushed to the king’s chamber, but Loku was nowhere to be found. The royal robes lay scattered on the floor and the only living thing to be seen was an ugly lizard that blinked at them from among the plans on the table.

They searched far and wide, and when no trace of the king could be found the courtiers divided the kingdom and ruled so wisely and well that there was peace for many years.

As for Loku, you may still hear him fulfilling his punishment. From crack and crevice, tree and shrub, he calls his name from dark till dawn: “Lok-u! Lok-u! Lok-u!”

And he must cry it forever.

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