

The Story of Gaygayoma Who Lives up Above

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Philippine

*Intermediate
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One day, while Aponitolau sat weaving a basket under his house, he began to feel very hungry and longed for something sweet to chew. Then he remembered that his field was still unplanted. He called to his wife who was in the room above, and said: "Come, Aponibolinayen, let us go to the field and plant some sugar-cane."

So Aponibolinayen came down out of the house with a bamboo tube, and while she went to the spring to fill it with water, Aponitolau made some cuttings, and they went together to the field, which was some distance from the house.

Aponitolau loosened the earth with his long stick and set out the cuttings he had brought, while his wife sprinkled them with water from the bamboo tube. And when they had filled the field, they returned home, happy to think of the splendid cane they should have.

After seven days Aponitolau went back to the field to see if the plants had lived, and he found that the leaves were already long and pointed. This delighted him, and while he stood looking at it he grew impatient and determined to use his magical power so that the cane would grow very fast. In five days he again visited the field and found that the stalks were tall and ready to chew. He hurried home to tell Aponibolinayen how fast their plants had grown, and she was proud of her powerful husband.

Now about this time Gaygayoma, who was the daughter of Bagbagak, a big star, and Sinag, the moon, looked down from her home in the sky, and when she saw the tall sugar-cane growing below, she was seized with a desire to chew it. She called to her father, Bagbagak, and said:

“Oh, Father, please send the stars down to the earth to get some of the sugar-cane that I see, for I must have it to chew.”

So Bagbagak sent the stars down, and when they reached the bamboo fence that was around the field they sprang over it, and each broke a stalk of the cane and pulled some beans which Aponibolinayen had planted, and the stems of these beans were of gold. Gaygayoma was delighted with the things that the stars brought her. She cooked the beans with the golden stems and spent long hours chewing the sweet cane. When all that the stars brought was gone, however, she grew restless and called to her father, the big star:

“Come, Father, and go with me to the place where the sugar-cane grows, for I want to see it now.”

Bagbagak called many stars to accompany him, and they all followed Gaygayoma down to the place where the sugar-cane grew. Some sat on the bamboo fence, while others went to the middle of the field, and all ate as much as they wished.

The day following this, Aponitolau said to his wife:

“Aponibolinayen, I am going to the field to see if the bamboo fence is strong, for the carabao will try to get in to eat our sugar-cane.”

So he set out, and when he reached the field and began looking along the fence to see if it was strong, he kept finding the stalks that the stars had chewed, and he knew that someone had been there. He went into the middle of the field, and there on the ground was a piece of gold, and he said to himself:

“How strange this is! I believe some beautiful girl must have chewed my cane. I will watch tonight, and maybe

she will return for more.”

As darkness came on he had no thought of returning home, but he made his meal of the sugar-cane, and then hid in the tall grass near the field to wait. By and by dazzling lights blinded his eyes, and when he could see again he was startled to find many stars falling from the sky, and soon he heard someone breaking the cane. Suddenly a star so large that it looked like a flame of fire fell into the field, and then a beautiful object near the fence took off her dress which looked like a star, and she appeared like the half of the rainbow.

Never had Aponitolau seen such sights; and for a while he lay shaking with fear.

“What shall I do?” he said to himself. “If I do not frighten these companions of the beautiful girl, they may eat me.”

With a great effort he jumped up and frightened the stars till they all flew up, and when the pretty girl came looking for her dress she found Aponitolau sitting on it. “You must forgive us,” she said, “for your sugar-cane is very sweet, and we wanted some to chew.”

“You are welcome to the sugar-cane,” answered Aponitolau. “But now we must tell our names according to our custom, for it is bad for us to talk until we know each other’s names.”

Then he gave her some betel-nut and they chewed together, and he said:

“Now it is our custom to tell our names.”

“Yes,” said she; “but you tell first”

“My name is Aponitolau and I am the husband of Aponibolinayen.”

“I am Gaygayoma, the daughter of Bagbagak and Sinag up in the air,” said the girl. “And now, Aponitolau, even though you have a wife, I am going to take you up to the sky, for I wish to marry you. If you are not willing to go, I shall call my companion stars to eat you.”

Aponitolau shook with fear, for he knew now that the woman was a spirit; and as he dared not refuse, he promised to go with her. Soon after that the stars dropped a basket that Gaygayoma had ordered them to make, and Aponitolau stepped in with the lovely star and was drawn quickly through the air up to the sky. They were met on their arrival by a giant star whom Gaygayoma introduced as her father, and he told Aponitolau

that he had acted wisely in coming, for had he objected, the other stars would have eaten him.

After Aponitolau had lived with the stars for some time, Gaygayoma asked him to prick between her last two fingers, and as he did so a beautiful baby boy popped out. They named him Takyayen, and he grew very fast and was strong.

All this time Aponitolau had never forgotten Aponibolinayen who, he knew, was searching for him on the earth, but he had been afraid to mention her to the stars. When the boy was three months old, however, he ventured to tell Gaygayoma of his wish to return to the earth.

At first she would not listen to him, but he pleaded so hard that at last she consented to let him go for one moon. If he did not return at the end of that time, she said, she would send the stars to eat him. Then she called for the basket again, and they were lowered to the earth. There Aponitolau got out, but Gaygayoma and the baby returned to the sky.

Aponibolinayen was filled with joy at the sight of her husband once more, for she had believed him dead, and she was very thin from not eating while he was away. Never did she tire of listening to his stories of his life among the stars, and so happy was she to have him again that when the time came for him to leave she refused to let him go.

That night many stars came to the house. Some stood in the windows, while others stayed outside by the walls; and they were so bright that the house appeared to be on fire.

Aponitolau was greatly frightened, and he cried out to his wife:

“You have done wrong to keep me when I should have gone. I feared that the stars would eat me if I did not obey their command, and now they have come. Hide me, or they will get me.”

But before Aponibolinayen could answer, Bagbagak himself called out:

“Do not hide from us, Aponitolau, for we know that you are in the corner of the house. Come out or we shall eat you.”

Trembling with fear, Aponitolau appeared, and when the stars asked him if he was willing to go with them he dared not refuse.

Now Gaygayoma had grown very fond of Aponitolau, and she had commanded the stars not to harm him if he was willing to return to her. So when he gave his consent, they put him in the basket and flew away with him, leaving Aponibolinayen very sad and lonely. After that Aponitolau made many trips to the earth, but at Gaygayoma's command he always returned to the sky to spend part of the time with her.

One day when Takyayen was a little boy, Aponitolau took him down to the earth to see his half-brother, Kanag. The world was full of wonders to the boy from the sky, and he wanted to stay there always. But after some time while he and Kanag were playing out in the yard, big drops of water began to fall on them. Kanag ran to his mother and cried:

“Oh, Mother, it is raining, and the sun is shining brightly!”

But Aponitolau, looking out, said, “No, they are the tears of Gaygayoma, for she sees her son down below, and she weeps for him.”

Then he took Takyayen back to his mother in the sky, and she was happy again.

After that Takyayen was always glad when he was allowed to visit the earth, but each time when his mother's tears began to fall, he returned to her. When he was old enough, Aponitolau selected a wife for him, and after that Takyayen always lived on the earth, but Gaygayoma stayed in the sky.

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