



# *The Tobacco of Harisaboqued*

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*Intermediate*  
*5 min read*

A legend of the volcano of Canlaon on the island of Negros. It is told generally in Western Negros and Eastern Cebu. The volcano is still active, and smoke and steam rise from its crater.

Long before the strange men came over the water from Spain, there lived in Negros, on the mountain of Canlaon, an old man who had great power over all the things in the earth. He was called Harisaboqued, King of the Mountain.

When he wished anything done he had but to tap the ground three times and instantly a number of little men would spring from the earth to answer his call. They would obey his slightest wish, but as he was a kind old man and never told his dwarfs to do anything wrong, the people who lived near were not afraid. They planted tobacco on the mountain side and were happy and prosperous,

The fields stretched almost to the top of the mountain and the plants grew well, for every night Harisaboqued would order his dwarfs to attend to them, and though the tobacco was high up it grew faster and better than that planted in the valley below.

The people were very grateful to the old man and were willing to do anything for him; but he only asked them not to plant above a line he had ordered his little men to draw around the mountain near the top. He wished that place for himself and his dwarfs.

All obeyed his wish and no one planted over the line. It was a pretty sight to see the long rows of tobacco plants extending from the towns below far up to the line on the mountain side.

One day Harisaboqued called the people together and told them that he was going away for a long time. He asked them again not to plant over the line, and told them that if they disregarded this wish he would carry all the tobacco away and permit no more to grow on the mountain side until he had smoked what he had taken. The people promised faithfully to obey him. Then he tapped on the ground, the earth opened, and he disappeared into the mountain.

Many years passed and Harisaboqued did not come back. All wondered why he did not return and at last decided that he would never do so. The whole mountain side was covered with tobacco and many of the people looked with greedy eyes at the bare ground above the line, but as yet they were afraid to break their promise.

At last one man planted in the forbidden ground, and, as nothing happened, others did the same, until soon the mountain was entirely covered with the waving plants. The people were very happy and soon forgot about Harisaboqued and their promise to him.

But one day, while they were laughing and singing, the earth suddenly opened and Harisaboqued sprang out before them. They were very much frightened and fled in terror down the mountain side. When they reached the foot and looked back they saw a terrible sight. All the tobacco had disappeared and, instead of the thousands of plants that they had tended so carefully, nothing but the bare mountain could be seen.

Then suddenly there was a fearful noise and the whole mountain top flew high in the air, leaving an immense hole from which poured fire and smoke.

The people fled and did not stop until they were far away. Harisaboqued had kept his word.

Many years have come and gone, but the mountain is bare and the smoke still rolls out of the mountain top. Villages have sprung up along the sides, but no tobacco is grown on the mountain. The people remember the tales of the former great crops and turn longing eyes to the heights above them, but they will have to wait. Harisaboqued is still smoking his tobacco.

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