

The Ulahingan: Turning Grief into Courage

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March 20, 2001

Summary of the Epic

The Ulahingan is divided into two main parts: the *kepu'un-pu'un* and the *sengedurug*. The *kepu'un-pu'un* comprises “the beginning,” (Maquiso 1:1) or the origins of Nelendangan; it is likened to the roots of a clump of bamboos. The *sengedurug* is an individual bamboo, meaning that it is a portion of the whole epic, but is in itself complete. There are four recorded and published versions of the *kepu'un-pu'un*, five including the later Langkat story. Of the 1,647 known *sengedurug*, only five have been published so far by Elena Maquiso. Twenty-five years after the research started, five creation myths, supposedly parts of the *kepu'un-pu'un*, cropped up, and were included in fourth and fifth series of the published Ulahingan.

The four main versions of the *kepu'un-pu'un* not including the added creation myths are: the Saliling version, the Mampinda'upan version, the Bangcas version, and the Manggung version. The names belong to the tala'ulahingans who related their versions of the *kepu'un-pu'un* in prose.

Let me recount the main features of the Saliling version.

Two brothers led a group of people who lived in a place called Banobo. [These people, apparently, came from an area today called Indonesia, sired by a datu who left it due to an altercation with other datu there (Maquiso's footnote, 1:60).] The two brothers were Tabunaway, the elder and therefore the *timu'ay* or chief, and Mamalu. When Sarip Kabungsuwan and Rajah Baginda arrived from the west to spread Islam, Tabunaway refused to accept the new religion, but instructed his brother to do so. However, he was not to convert anybody to it, because, he said, “If there anyone who will come whose doctrine I like, we will follow that.” This, he added, was their covenant which is true for all generations to come.” (Maquiso 1:61)

Tabunaway removed to the mountains of Simu'ay with that part of his people who did not want Islam, but after every harvest would go down to Banobo to give Mamalu threshed rice, wild honey and resin. When he grew old, his brother asked him to live in Banobo, which he did, but without most of his people.

When, in the next generations, the sultanate of Maguindanao was established by the grandchildren of Mamalu, the followers of Tabunaway were forced to pay tribute – the same “tribute” that Tabunaway had paid to his younger brother as a demonstration of his love. This tribute had to be delivered to the sultan before anyone could eat his harvest. Some generations after, Pemulew and his brothers Agyu, Lená and Vanlak decided that they would pay tribute to the sultan for the last time.

As it turned out, the decision was negotiable. Pemulew and his people did not give anything to the sultan in the next harvest, but when summoned to explain, Pemulew replied that the harvest was poor. When the sultan, in anger, raised their tribute to three times the previous one, Pemulew and his people decided to pay the tribute in seven days, which, however, still turned out to be insufficient. This angered the sultan even more, but upon Pemulew's entreaty that they would pay the balance in the next harvest in addition to the yearly tribute, the sultan relented.

An irate nephew of Pemulew, Kuyasú by name, however, insisted on going back to the palace to confront the sultan. After a heated exchange, he ends up driving his spear into the sultan's abdomen and escaping with the same spear through the window.

Pemulew and his people are overtaken by the followers of the sultan, bound, jailed and tortured. One after another, the brothers dream of the same beautiful woman, who finally reveals herself to Pemulew because he is the most humble of them all, and tells him that his people will find themselves unbound, and must immediately flee to the mountains "in an orderly fashion." (Maquiso 1:67)

So they do. But in Kituvéd, Mungan, Vanlak's wife, asks them to leave her, for, having contracted leprosy, she has become a burden to them. Agyu builds a small hut for her, hollowing out a log, which she would beat day and night to indicate that she is alive and well.

They proceed to the east until they reach Aruman, gaining "supernatural strength and endurance in the midst of hunger, thirst and other difficulties." (Maquiso 1:68) Agyu assumes leadership of the group, for Pemulew has grown old.

The brothers continue to visit Mungan, bringing her food, even as they settle down in Pinamatunan for several harvest seasons. Then a miracle happens: in his last visit, Agyu finds that Mungan is no longer a cripple. He is instructed by her not to tell anyone.

In Pinamatunan, Pemulew is instructed by the same woman who appeared to them the first time to transport the people to Aruman. From Aruman, Agyu visits Mungan in Kituvéd, and finds, in place of her hut, a golden palace on top of which was a rainbow, with seven *meresen etews* descending upon it. Mungan tells him to take his brothers and sisters there, leaving the people behind for the meantime.

The trip turns out to be a meeting with the *meresen etews*, who have been instructed by the *katulusan* who are in charge of the portals of heaven to give them the betel nut of semi-immortality. All taste of it except Mungan, who prefers to become an *adtulusan*, staying in her palace to serve "as a channel to the younger generation of *rana'anen* to become *adtulusan* in due course of time." (Maquiso 1:72) After the betel nut, they receive the *pinipi* of semi-immortality from mayas who alight on the winnowing basket Pemulew was instructed to set on the porch.

The next step in their trip to heaven is to face different kinds of adversaries. They have to overcome Makeyvakey and "the smaller but fiercer giant, Kumaka'an." They have to kill the giant boar Makaranding, who has a dagger for a tusk, and can therefore cut their stomachs open, removing all their internal organs. However, according to the *meresen etews*, after their intestines have been removed, the Midlimbag with all the *katulusan* will replace their intestines with golden chains, and heal all their wounds.

As commanded by the meresen etews, they butcher the boar and apportion the meat to everyone. They do, in fact three times, but there is always one share too many. Finally, Agyu recalls his son Bayvayan, who has been out hunting. He calls out to him, and the son appears smiling from the bushes. This, says Agyu, is an indication that Bayvayan will not go with them to heaven, but has to go around the world to gather followers and convert them. His share of the meat will be preserved for his followers.

So Agyu takes Bayvayan's share and throws it away, and it becomes a live pig upon touching the ground. That pig would become one of Bayvayan's adversaries in his own time, so Lená builds a stone enclosure around it and Bayvayan departs.

Each of the people's share of the meat is cooked in a big pot, and each becomes bigger as it is cooked, more than enough for every individual, with no left-over. The people would not get hungry for seven days. On the seventh day, they were supposed to eat just a little from whatever they had. However, Agyu and his brothers would not have to eat anymore, because they already had for chewing the betel nut of semi-immortality.

The same thing happens to the *balanak* fish Mungan catches with one arm for them once they arrive at her place. Once more, to Bayvayan belongs the leftover, which becomes a live balanak in a pool for his later delectation.

Mungan tells them to proceed to Aruman, where they are to be taken up to heaven in a *sarimbar*. So Agyu calls his cousin Tulalang to ask him if they would go with him. Tulalang, when he arrives, takes a grain of rice, places it on a hearth without fire, and covers it with one half of a coconut shell. When he takes off the cover, the rice is already grown and ripened. Agyu does the same, and his rice also grows and ripens. But when the grain of each is opened, it turns out that Tulalang's has red stripes, indicating that he was favored by the diwata of war, while Agyu's is white, indicating that he was favored by the diwata of peace. Agyu therefore concluded that Tulalang's path was different from his own, and so Tulalang went home.

Agyu and his people reach the sixth level of heaven through the *sarimbar*, which is pulled by a chain. They have become fully immortal. There, the highest *katulusan* tells them that they now have free access to the Midlimbag, and are mightier than the *imbayabay*, the *inggaib* and the next generations of *rana'anen*. They are also told that they will not dwell in that heaven, but will go to Nelendangan, a paradise prepared by the Midlimbag for them. This is to be their reward since, as the Midlimbag tells them, "You overcame your earthly difficulties with patience and perseverance without cursing your Midlimbag."

So Agyu and his people reach Nelendangan, where they build their settlement.

The epilogue of Bayvayan follows. When Bayvayan leaves his father in Kituved, his grandfather Lagaba'an commands him to perform the *sa'ut*, or war dance. Bayvayan circles seven times, then falls, dead tired. Lagaba'an therefore declares that Bayvayan has to go around the world seven times before reaching his own paradise.

Bayvayan's course is not as clean as Agyu's. Malingling, his contemporary, curses (*baliew*) people to lessen the number of his followers, until Bayvayan finally meets him in Bukidnon. Bayvayan throws his ring into the Pulangi River where it becomes a big lobster. He bids Malingling to catch the lobster so that he could *baliew* Bayvayan's followers. Malingling falls into the falls in the effort, thus ending his work of cursing.

Thereafter, Bayvayan uncovers the boar at Bavuy, and the balanak at Kituved. But in both places, a number of his followers fall short of faith. When the sarimbar comes, several other people are left behind for one reason or another. At the first level of heaven, Kukukay demands a maiden as he did with Agyu, but the maiden Bayvayan constructs out of the organ of one has to bones, and therefore could not stand, so Kukukay demands that she be changed. Bayvayan protests. Since the best was not given, Kukukay breaks the chain of the sarimbar and it falls; then he seals the portal with a rock and plants bamboos there, making it impossible from thereon for other generations to reach heaven.

The Midlimbag welcomes Bayvayan and his followers to a separate Nelendangan but declares that their powers will be limited, for they will serve merely as allies of Agyu, inspiring the rana'anen to chant the Ulahingan. They reach their Nelendangan by walking. (Maquiso 1:60-86)

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The other versions are merely variations on the same theme. The most interesting thing to note about these variations is that each "beginning," or reason for the Nelendangan destiny, is situated in a different historical time, though expressive of the same type of suffering. In the Mampinda'upan version, for example, Agyu and his people were under "a certain form of *gubiernu* where they were obliged to build a schoolhouse and to send their children to school." The teachers would beat the children, and so Agyu beats the teacher with his pestle, breaking the teacher's bones and causing his death. The incident happens five times over, so the people are captured, and, like the previous version, are bound and imprisoned and kept without food. They escape with the help of the woman in their dream, but they come under Maguindanao rule, there to suffer again. The Bangcas and the Manggung versions are similar, while the Langkat story talks of an American district school supervisor by name, William Manyon, who sent a policeman to fetch Mampuruk, their leader, when some children in his place would not go to school. (Maquiso 1:86-143)

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Having been provided with a view of the sufferings that gave rise to Nelendangan, we are ushered into the first sengedurug, which is a lengthy description of that paradise, and the first battle that takes place there.

Nelendangan is, indeed, a paradise, dominated by a vast turogan worthy of the mightiest Manobo warrior class, a turogan built over a mighty river with its mouth to the sea. There are baths galore, for every class of Manobo: young maidens, married women, tired old people, and warriors. There is a great big playground for the adolescent warriors to romp around in. And what is best, no one has to eat, and yet all can feast, all the time, partaking of the betel nut to fill stomachs, to heal wounds, as well as to revive the dead.

In this first episode, or sengedurug, the warriors fill up Agyu's turogan so densely that a bead, even if it fell, would not be able to land on the floor, so entangled are the legs of these warriors one upon the other. Despite the presence of the warriors, however, Agyu finds space to cavort with his wife, who chastens him, but gives in to him. It is in the midst of this fun and play that Agyu notices the entrance into their harbor of a big enemy ship. They engage in combat with the occupants of that ship, later to find out that its head is none other than Lagaba'an, Agyu's father, who has come to visit because he misses his children. (Maquiso 1:144-290)

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Series 2 of Maquiso's Ulahingan contains two sencedurug. One has been entitled "The Adventures of Impehimbang and Nebeyew" and the other "Begyasan's Visit to Insibey."

The first sencedurug starts with the feats of Impehimbang, an infant and a son of Agyu, who is here called Begyasan. While Begyasan and his men are out invading another kingdom, a boat comes to invade their own. Impehimbang, lost on the shore, confronts the boat, dries up the sea by praying to the diwata, orders that the boat be broken, and commences an offensive by dancing the sa'ut, leading the enemy to think it is a deception. The enemy already in disarray, a second boat comes, this time bearing the men of Yendang – which is this sencedurug's name for Nelendangan. The men take over the fight. Nebeyew, another son of Begyasan or Agyu, is caught by the enemy at the waist; his feet are turned into a sword, which upon rubbing become flames on Nebeyew's face, and threaten to raze the kingdom together with its neighbors. Begyasan, worried, summons his wife Tigyekuwa, who opens a tiny jar of oil and sprays its contents into the heavens, turning it into a shower. The fire is doused after two days.

Begyasan, now at a loss as to the cause of the devastation, asks Tigyekuwa to formulate the rules. The difficulty, she says, is a "product of yourselves," for it is a sin before the Almighty to invade other nations." (Maquiso 2:31-35)

In the second sencedurug, the women are left behind in Yendang with Layunlayun or Pemulew, the men having gone off to fight. Tabagka, the tomboy sister of Agyu, proposes a feast to the other women to drive out the dark cloud that has fallen on the kingdom. They ask Layunlayun's permission, but he refuses it. Tabagka appeals to Yambungan, the princess of Pinintu, who finally agrees. And so the feast is held, going on for days, slighting Layunlayun so much that he leaves the kingdom to go hunting with his loyal dogs.

A roaring sound is heard in the midst of the feast, and when Tabagka and Yambungan try to probe it, a ring drops in front of them, indicating their warriors' difficulties in battle. They decide to help the men and gear themselves for war.

However, for some reason, they end up fighting their own men. Ayamen warns them, but they go on anyway. The fighting stops only when Ayamen, transforming himself into liquid, manages to snatch Yambungan's *tabyew*, which, its contents strewn to the ground, makes all combatants fall. They all fly back to Yendang, only to encounter another battle: this time, an invincible infant fights them, throwing flames from his brow to engulf the kingdom as well as nearby realms.

Again, Tigyekuwa Meyumang comes to the rescue, shaking out the contents of the *tabyew* to extinguish the fire. The infant invader turns out to be Layunlayun, who explains that he did it because of the offense of the women and the disregard of the men. Mendeyawi, or Agyu, apologizes, but tells the old chief that he is a tribal treasure, and therefore should not place himself in danger. Again, peace returns to the tribe. (Maquiso 2:217-221)

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Maquiso's series 3 contains another two sencedurug: "The Dream of Begyasan" and "The Golden Tree."

In “The Dream of Begyasan,” the warriors of Yendang are again called to the large house of Pemulew, without explanation, until Begyasan, having arrived, falls into a trance and through it learns that an enemy is about to invade the kingdom. True enough, another long period of fighting occurs. The only way the men of Yendang could win is to take hold of the magical vessel in the keeping of a maiden who sees the fighting from her chair in the clouds. This maiden is in turn guarded by an eagle. Ayamen tries several times to get to the maiden by changing himself into lightning, but is each time seen by the eagle. Asking the help of his spirit guide, Ayamen, Lena on earth, falls into a trance, and is advised to brandish the *tubao* of sixty warriors in front of the eagle. Ayamen does so, thereby hypnotizing the bird, and then grabbing the magical *tabyew*.

Ayamen is just in time, for the invading army has begun the dance of victory and the men of Yendang are already bound. Trying to escape, they burst into flames, with the fire, as usual, threatening to engulf the kingdom. Ayamen throws the contents of the *tabyew* into the fire, and it is immediately extinguished.

As it turns out, the head of the invaders is their honored ancestor, who wants to teach them “that peace is better than war, but that if the kingdom were threatened by an enemy, the warriors must defend it, not by their boasting, but by the might of their arms.” (Maquiso 3:9-10)

In his own words:

“You have been neglecting them,
All your tribal ancestors.
You have forgotten these beings,
And that is why you suffer.
x x x
They all come from within you,
These miseries you suffer;
Everyone in the whole tribe,
No one is spared from misfortune,
Even those who are quiet,
Not a one is exempted...
x x x
It is well known to us all,
How we are a people of courage,
We have no equal in this.
We are a land of brave men,
No one can surpass our kind.
But no need to brag about it
To all the nations around.” (Maquiso 3:164-166)

In the second sengedurug, “The Golden Tree,” Begyasan or Agyu falls so ill that Lekumbing, or Tigyekuwa on earth, his wife, asks Gumemba or Tuhawa, Begyasan’s brother who heads a neighboring kingdom, for help. Begyasan reveals to his brother that he is worried over a lost glowing tree that he sees in a vision.

Lekumbing goes to Yegpinted, the Creator, to ask where the glowing tree is, and she is told that it is in the kingdom of Melekdayen, where Pinuklew, or Lena, must be sent to retrieve it.

Pinuklew uses amulets to send the guards and birds that guard the glowing tree to sleep, then removes it from its pot. He escapes in a small boat that flies when he taps it.

Upon arrival in Udanan, or Yendang, or Nelendangan, he gives the tree to Begyasan, who turns it over to Yambungan, their sister, and its rightful caretaker. But Melekdayen and its king invade the kingdom, angry over the loss of the tree. The fight of foul words between Begyasan and the Melekdayen king turns into a wrestling and boxing match, but Lagaba'an, the father of Agyu, arrives, commanding them to end their fight, for the tree has been assigned to Yambungan's care from the start. He reprimands the king of Melekdayen for his envy, and praises Udanan for retrieving the tree. Finally, he brings the dead back to life. (Maquiso 3:169-170)

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In series 3 of her Ulahingan collection, Maquiso states that, 28 years after her Ulahingan research began, "younger chanters, their number increasing with the passing of time, particularly within the second half of the last decade," started to show interest in learning the Ulahingan trade. "Even the little children show curiosity and some are learning how to chant the epic," she adds. The year of publication of this particular series was 1992.

In 1993, Maquiso brought out the fourth series of the Ulahingan. The thickest of the five, it contains the first version of the creation story. "Logically," Maquiso explains in her introduction, "the creation portion of the kepu'un-pu'un (prologue) of the Ulahingan should have constituted the first publication of the Ulahingan series." But no such materials "surfaced when the research started in 1963 or 29 years ago."

"It was a surprising event," Maquiso confesses, "when the first creation version appeared four years ago or 25 years after the research started."

When asked why no such materials were revealed at the beginning, Abraham Saliling and Samaon Bangcas, her two main informants, answer, "You did not ask for it." (Maquiso 4:1)

The tala'ulahingan of the first creation story is Gobalia Silay, who at the time of publication was 45 years old. A farmer, he reached grade four, was a member of the *pekilukesen*, the tribal council, and belonged to the Langkat sect at the time of publication. Producing 39 different materials in a period of three and a half years, he may have been 41 years old when he chanted the creation story. (Maquiso 4:3-4)

Several features of this creation story must be brought to the fore: first, after making the first man, Yegpinted, the Creator, forms the first woman out of the man's rib; second, this first couple eat the forbidden fruit; third, the act causes their "shame and embarrassment which, in turn, cause them to hunger for food;" (Maquiso 4:7) fourth, the woman delivers twin males, one of which gets lost and dies when his elder brother finding him, brings him home; fifth, the second couple are told by a voice that thunders from above (the voice of the Creator, the tala'ulahingan explains) that they have the free will, and can "seek their own destiny;" (Maquiso 4:9) and sixth, Maquiso and others in the research team are mentioned in the Ulahingan itself, by the tala'ulahingan who chanted it.

Let me quote the summaries of the four other versions of the creation story for better comparison with each other:

Pasid Mampayanang's version: "The earth and the seas are created by the Supreme Being. In an assembly of the deities, it is decided to continue with the creation. They send a pigeon to get bits of soil from the earth. After a long flight, the bird brings the soil to the

immortals, who create the land out of it. The foundation of the land is a huge iron pillar staked in the sea. Then, the deities build the firmament (although it is too close to the earth), create the plants, the sun, and – as their favored beings – the humans to govern the earth, and finally, the animals as companions of the humans. The ruler of the evil spirits asks the Creator to be changed to a human being, in order to live on each, and the breath of life is granted to him. When the Supreme Being withdraws from the earth, human misery starts. One human being dies and is buried in the ground. On the tomb, the humans start planting edible plants, which grow well. Still, the firmament and the sun are too close to the earth, but it is lifted up by the son-in-law of the Creator.

“Hence, the Supreme Being decides to summon all the subordinate deities, namely: the diwatas of the East and West, the diwatas of the North, the diwatas of the Underworld and the Zenith, the diwata of vegetation, the ruler of the evil spirits, the goddess of fertility, the diwata of famine, the diwata of the animals, the goddess of war, the ruler of the honeybees, and the diwata of temptation. The Supreme Being asks them to support and assist his creation by extending their love and care to the humans. They reply that they owe all their power to the Supreme Being and will follow his instructions to do their best in care of his creation.” (Maquiso 5:9)

Cayog Mamcambat’s version: “In the beginning, there are only chaotic waters floating in darkness. It comes into the mind of the Supreme Being to create the earth. He sends a bird to get some soil and shapes a post out of it. He erects the post in the rotating center of the sea and fixes soil on the post to cover the sea with land. The Creator appoints a guardian to watch over and to maintain the cosmic pillar. He lets the plants appear ahead of man for future medicinal use and creates the birds.

“Because the Deity is saddened that he has no companion, he creates the first man out of soil and gives him the breath of life. Then he takes a rib from the man and creates the first woman, who is animated in the same way. The Supreme Being warns the first humans not to eat fruits of a certain plant, which is owned by the devil. The humans, however, are disobedient and eat fruits that have fallen from the tree. They become aware of their nakedness and make clothes. To punish them, the Creator withdraws their immortality. The first woman gives birth to children in fast succession (a fact the chanter regards as ‘unpleasant’), first only to male, then only to female babies. Being grown up, the siblings become partners and continue to multiply.

“The Creator calls the human creatures for an assembly and asks them how they want to organize their community. They suggest ‘to impart in relation to our sons’ (=patrilineal kinship ties) and to set boundaries for their land properties. The Supreme Being appoints human leaders and immortals to various responsibilities to take care of and to sustain the human community.” (Maquiso 5:145)

Lumabao Angcondem’s version: “The creation of the world and of mankind is only mentioned in the opening of this version without going into details. After this, the Creator, sends his finger ring to call all immortals to an assembly in his palace. He gives them the power to rule over the earth. Only now, the chanter recalls the acts of creation: The Deity built several posts in the center of the sea as the foundation of the earth. Since the earth was still dark, he created the firmament with the sun, moon and stars. To green the earth, he called into existence plants, fish, birds, chicken, bushes, herbs, grass and rice. He created man and woman and sanctified them by giving them understanding. Now, the Supreme Being sends his head wear to call all the immortals to a second assembly, in which he assigns them to govern in their respective places for mankind’s welfare: the sun has to rise in the east and to be on guard to discover the first sign of a problem; another immortal is appointed to the west to be alert by the time of sunset; eternal are appointed to the north and to the south to watch over the mortals. The immortals promise to watch carefully over the whole creation. The Creator assures to [sic] preserve and protect the universe. The immortal of the east expresses his confidence in the creative and sustaining power of the ‘Magnificent Artist’ and praises his works. The immortal of the west, too, acknowledges the

divine plan as rightful and pleasant. Finally, the chanter recalls the unsurpassing [sic] power of the Creator and the wonders of his creation.” (Maquiso 5: 237)

Subidan Ginta'us' version: “In this...version, the Supreme Being is called ‘the child’ or ‘the toddler.’ He lives, homeless and parentless, in the vastness of the chaotic waters. Then he commands clouds and fog to turn into a mansion for him. He creates the immortals and changes his finger ring into a youth, who looks like him. The Child and the youth are sitting in their mansion at the center of the primordial waters, where they are circling in a large swirl. The Child is waiting for a floating steel [sic] to pass by. He snatches the drifting metal and, in the same way, he snatches a drifting turban from the waters. Then the Child rubs his feet and legs and transforms them into the universe. But the earth starts to crumble to dust. The Child mixes the earth with stones to give it cohesion.

“A dragon materializes from the breastplate of the Child, who orders him to uphold the world just formed. Then the son of the earthquake is created to take care of the forthcoming human beings. The youth is appointed to polish the cosmic pillars supporting the earth. The turban is commanded to fashion the heaven. The Child creates the various layers of the firmament. Yet, the earth is still void. The youth realized that plants, bushes, and trees are missing. Therefore, he approaches the diwata who is hold the base of the earth for help. But this immortal cannot assist him because if he would leave the foundation, the world would be in peril. So the youth has to face the Child. The Toddler reveals the youth, that there will be a time, when he after having come of age – can no longer be approached. Then his voice can only be heard.

“The chanter, without mentioning the plants any further, states now that the human beings were created. The ruler of the grain is appointed as caretaker of mankind. The humans are mortals, and, like a breeze, they will pass by. But they are made for beauty and delight in sincerity and in truth, endowed with strength and power and are granted, themselves, the right to create.” (Maquiso 5:309)

The Epic and Livunganen-Arumanen Society

The existence of five different versions of a creation story, none of which have any similarity whatsoever with each other except for two, the similarities between which are pegged on the Biblical convention of the woman coming out of the man’s rib rather than on any detail that would have been expected from a “pagan” culture that is otherwise not known for its penchant for anatomical description, is an unusual occurrence.

It is a commonplace in folkloric research to verify the authenticity of a piece through the similarity of its main details with at least four other versions, or its occurrence through at least three generations. Using this rule, the five versions of the creation story in the last two series of the Ulahingan, as is where is, fail to pass the test of authenticity. That they suddenly cropped up 25 years after the research efforts started, as testified by Maquiso, lend further to the questions they raise rather than answer. Until folklore scholars definitively establish their authenticity, therefore, it should be the duty of analysts not to include them in studies pertaining to a reading of the society from which they came.

Rather than start with the “creation story,” therefore, let me deal with what Maquiso calls “the beginning:” that is, her original kepu’un-pu’un, the five versions of which are in the first series of the collection.

The five versions of the original kepu’un-pu’un show a society that suffered extremely – and, to add, continuously, through the centuries. The arrival of Kabungsuwan and Baginda

through the 12th and 13th centuries (for the two did not arrive together, but a century apart), and the separation of the two brothers for their mutual survival, was only the first torment the Livunganen-Arumanens had to undergo. The second was the exaction of tribute, and its subsequent increase and increasing injustice, through the centuries, an unfortunate outcome of Tabunaway's brotherly love for the younger Mamalu. The third was the felt imposition of formal education on their young, which the Americans brought upon their conquest of the interior areas of Mindanao and which also may have had a continuing history. All these become reasons in the various versions of the original kepu'un-pu'un for the removal of the tribe most likely farther and farther into the hinterlands, away from their seaside dwelling in Banobo, on the western coast of Mindanao north of the present-day Cotabato City, following a route north and then west of the Pulangi River, upwards west of the Cagayan River. (Maquiso 1:7, map)

These three stages of suffering are all expressed in the five versions of the original kepu'un-pu'un. From these five versions we are able to get a clear and forthright understanding of the history of the Livunganen-Arumanens, in a manner of elucidation none of the other Philippine epics at least in the Asean collection provide. Such a history gives us a sound basis from which to start an analysis of the tribe: its political economy, social system, culture, cosmology, arts and literature; that is, with the help of a few outside sources like the CCP Encyclopedia of the Arts and Maquiso herself.

On top of the three-phased centuries-old exploitation and oppression felt by them, the major means of subsistence of the tribe was food gathering and *kaingin*, two unstable sources of food that depended more on the environment rather than man's ability to overcome it. The CCP Encyclopedia description of the Livunganen-Arumanen economy is instructive:

The men build houses, hunt, fish, trap, and fell trees in preparation for clearing the fields. They hunt pigs, deer, chicken, and various kinds of fowl with traps, spears, bows and arrows, and hunting dogs. They catch fish with baskets, hook and line, nets, traps, and spears, and gather honey in the forest. They are expected to defend their settlement, a task which was important before WWII, when they were engaged in much intertribal fighting.

Women bear a great part of the burden of work. They clear the fields, plant, weed and harvest. They make earthen pots, weave, sew, and embroider. They do all the household work, including heavy chores such as drawing water, often from sources far from the house. They take care of the children and serve guests. (CCP 68)

In addition, Maquiso cites "one tradition that points to a famine as the cause for the people's transfer from Aruman to Libungan." And then, "another famine struck and the people moved out and settle in what is now Barongis, a barrio of Libungan municipality."

These combined circumstances most likely are what led to the construction of Nelendangan, a paradise on earth where Agyu and his people lived in the wide expanse of homes built on top of rivers and in the midst of the highest mountains, overlooking the sea, eating easily picked betel nut for food, taking a bath in ceramic-laden baths fed by natural streams, and worrying only about their battles with neighboring kingdoms which always saw them rise from the dead, and which always had a peaceable end, for they were protected by their ancestors and spirits. If to Dundes an American tale like Jack and the Beanstalk is reflective of the sexual obsessions of the American people, (Dundes 33-61) Nelendangan to the Livunganen-Arumanens cannot but be reflective of more elemental desires: a life easier than one in constant pursuit and hunger.

Little has been written of the Livunganen-Arumanens, possibly one of the earlier sources of the Manobo tribes that spread to the present Bukidnon, Davao, Agusan and (partly) Surigao provinces. We can, however, draw quite a few insights on them from descriptions of other Manobo tribes. Francisco Col-om Polenda, for example, writing about his own people, the Western Bukidnon Manobos, identifies the Manobo obsession with betel nut thus:

30 The betel chewing which people practice today is one thing which gives physical strength when they feel the need for it.

15 When God ends the world, when mankind's true home is revealed, which is the golden country where all people will be given a home, there will no longer be food. God will remove people's desire to eat. 16 At that time betel chew will serve as food for all. (Polenda 142)

The preoccupation with betel chewing as a substitute for food arises from the difficult circumstances of the Livunganen-Arumanens. These same circumstances should also account for their political and social system. Of their political and social system, Maquiso says that they had five classes – the ruling class, the *walian* or shaman, the warrior, the commoner and the slave; but in the Ulahingan itself, we seem to see only a warrior class supported by men and women with the power of magic, and none of the others. The warriors are the rulers themselves, and are sometimes magicians too; the women have special magical powers, but are sometimes warriors too. None seem to be commoners, and certainly none are slaves.

Again, our glimpse into Livunganen-Arumanen society can be sharpened through the eyes of those who have seen other Manobo tribes. E. Arsenio Manuel, in describing the Manuvu' east of the Pulangi River (Bukidnon, Davao and Agusan provinces), cites Garvan as saying in 1931 that "the datu authority system did not seem to exist with the Agusan Manobo, nor was this system known to the Mandaya." (Manuel 316) In tribes farthest from Muslim influence, Manuel claims, the *bagani* authority system was in place instead, at least until the early part of the twentieth century. Following Garvan, he describes the *bagani* as a "warrior-chief" who attained six ranks according to the number of persons he had killed, these ranging from five to fifty. He adds that in the epic *Tuwaang*, "the leader of the banwa (village) or ingod (country) was never a datu but the bahani'." (Manuel 316-7)

Polenda, describing his own tribe, the Western Bukidnon Manobo, states in essays written in the 1960s (when the term datu had, as Manuel indicates, been adopted) but published in 1989, that

1 A man is not born a datu. 2 He can become a datu only if he is gifted with the ability to be a levelheaded thinker who understands the behavior of his fellow, both good and bad. 3 Also, even though a man may have descended from a line of datu, if it is evident that his customs and behavior are bad, he will not be made a datu. (Polenda 105)

Granted that the Livunganen-Arumanens lived nearer the Muslims, it is doubtful that they supported a ruling class separate from their warrior class, especially since they never attained to wet-rice planting in the centuries under question, and were moreover subject to various kinds of harassment.

As to the question of whether the Manobos in general, including the Livunganen-Arumanens, had a class of slaves, Polenda again provides an answer:

1 No human being wants to become a slave. 2 No one wants to be ordered about by some other person. The best way to live is for each person to be in charge of all his own doings as he chooses here on the earth. 3 It is important for us humans to remember that none of us is born a slave; none of us is born to be ordered around by someone else. 4 It is only later in one's life that a person becomes a slave and must obey the order of another person.

5 Slavery is the result of wrongdoing or wickedness, for when a person commits a crime and is judged for it, he must become a slave if he cannot pay the penalty imposed upon him, that is to say, he must go into slavery if he has no wealth to pay the fine which the elders and datus have levied and to which a number of people have witnessed.

The lesson imparted by Engels is clear: slavery arises when a society discovers surplus, whether through the taming of animals or the use of relatively larger-scale agriculture. It cannot exist permanently in a society that engages only in subsistence, swidden farming and food gathering, no matter how rich the land. It certainly cannot exist as a permanent class in a society that is constantly on the run due to harassment by enemies and fraternal tribes as well. Polenda upholds this thesis in his circumscription of the terms of slavery in his own society.

More likely, then, the classes in Livunganen-Arumanen society were the warrior class, the walian or shaman class, and the common farmers, with a number from any of these classes but especially the last ending up as slaves for certain periods of time. Slaves could also have been captured through the intertribal wars. But more likely than not, these slaves were not permanent fixtures, for it is not very easy to keep slaves when a tribe is on the run.

Such a social structure is in fact upheld from a reading of the Ulahingan. There is no mention of slaves in the epic. All enemies are just simply killed. And since they are most likely relatives, they are thereafter restored, both in terms of life and status in their own societies. The warriors themselves are the rulers, the brothers and sisters of Agyu being in the lead, not from any ruling class rule of inheritance, but from the perceived ability to lead. Agyu becomes the leader because Pemulew, his brother, sees his sense of balance. Lena, another brother, is a star in battles, and we could see him following Agyu. Vanlak, a third brother who left his wife Mungan behind and therefore showed a grave weakness, is rarely heard of. In the second sencedurug in series 3, "The Golden Tree," the tala'ulahingan mentions a Gumemba, brother of Agyu who heads a neighboring kingdom. If the tribe had a ruling class, the present ruler would have handed down his right to rule to an eldest son or even daughter rather than a brother, with none of the brothers establishing kingdoms of their own. As it appears, while the same family maintains leadership, such a leadership arises from inheritance of genes rather than inheritance of rights.

The text of the epic therefore upholds the claims of Manuel and Polenda about neighboring Manobo societies southwest the Cagayan River and west and east of the Pulangi River, farther away from Muslim influence, as being true also of the Livunganen-Arumanens, who stayed east of the Pulangi River farther down in present-day North Cotabato.

That the tribe had not yet attained full slavery in the sense of bodies being bought and sold is further proven in the epic's treatment of women. In the first sencedurug, it is Tigyekuwa, Agyu's wife, through her magic mermaid's lock, who revives Ayamen or Lena, and makes him recognize that his father is the head of the invading army. In the first as well as the second sencedurug in series 2, she also serves the same purpose. In the second sencedurug of series 3, she actively looks for the cure to Agyu's sickness, going to the extent of talking to Yegpinted, the Creator himself.

Moreover, Tigyekuwa is not the only woman in the Ulahingan series. The second sengedurug in series 2 revolves around the desire of all the women of Nelendangan, led by the sisters Tabagka (supposedly the tomboy) and Yambungan (the peaceful one) to help their men in battle. They even go to the extent of daring their men to engage them in battle, after they have wiped out the enemy and revived their brothers. And in the second sengedurug of series 3, their dead father affirms Yambungan as the designated keeper of the golden tree.

Engels related the rise of slavery with the historical oppression of women. Using this yardstick, the treatment of women in the epic becomes further evidence that slavery *in the full sense of the term* had not yet developed among the Livunganen-Arumanens, even though their Maguindanao brethren may already have exercised the privilege, not only over captives from other shores but over the Livunganen-Arumanens themselves. Even granted that *aliping namamahay* and *aliping sagigilid*, or pre-slavery-proper forms of slaves, did exist among the Livunganen-Arumanens, they are nowhere mentioned in the Ulahingan.

What we have before us in the Ulahingan is a gentle culture, one that wages war only because it is forced to do so; in fact, one that wages war in order to end war; moreover, one that relies on women and ancestors to stop war. In “The Adventures of Impehimbang and Nebeyew” (both sons of Agyu), Tigyekuwa (Agyu’s wife), asked by her husband to issue the rules (“Since you have not been assailed/ You have not been made angry”) intones, after clearing her throat and humbling herself (“Succinct and clear are my rules/ For I am but a woman/ I am a female only”):

What lies deep in my conscience
Is to stop all invasion
Forswear all provocation,
For indeed great are one’s sins
In storming other nations,
Direful is the transgression
Assaulting other regions
In the Almighty’s presence
Before the great Creator.
Now, return to your lands
So go back to your own homes.

And of course, we have the conclusion to the first sengedurug in series 3, already related in the summaries above.

The cosmology of the Livunganen-Arumanens is the inverse of their simple society. As would be expected of semi-communal tribes, their spirit world is composed of seven layers, the lowest of which is uninhabited, and the highest of which belongs to the supreme diwata, or simply, Diwata, variously called Yegpinted, Kerenen, Midlimbag, Suguy, Megbeveya, Memintaran, Misuara, Alataala. This supreme diwata is the creator, the ruler, who is immortal and without end. Below the highest layer live the *katulusan*, composed of six male diwatas who control the four corners of the world (east, west, south and north) as well as its zenith and base. On the third layer exist four types of diwata, those that have to do with the economy of the tribe: its horticulture, agriculture, sources of meat, and fish. The fourth layer is inhabited by diwata that direct the flow of such aspects of human life as love, fate, fortune and law. The fifth layer, on the other hand, is reserved for such diwatas of trouble as war, death and evil. And the sixth layer belongs to the *inggaib*, or playful spirits, and the *busaw* or supportive but impish spirits that inhabit various features of nature such as the trees and rivers, as well as houses. (CCP 71-2, Maquiso 24-7)

In the Ulahingan, we are introduced to the Diwata of the seventh layer and to the *katulusan*, particularly one named Kukukay, the custodian of heaven's portal, as well as to the *meresen etews*, who seem to be the *katulusan*'s messengers, but not much else. Such a structure would seem to correspond to the simplicity of Ulahingan society (not Livunganen-Arumanen society itself) in the sense of the Diwata corresponding to the warrior chief and the *katulusan* to the *pekilukesen* or council, with the warriors serving as *meresen etews*. Gone, of course, is the third layer of diwatas, for in a paradise without need for food, they serve no purpose. So too for the next three lower layers, for they too are of no use to immortals, except perhaps for the god of war, who in any case is not the one served by the wars waged by these immortals.

Of all the arts of the Livunganen-Arumanens, the Ulahingan is perhaps the greatest. Compared to the headdresses, weaves, baskets, musical instruments and houses of the Bukidnons, who are also Manobos, the visual arts of the Livunganen-Arumanens are not as intricate. But the intricacy of their descriptions in the Ulahingan, the interweaving of their *sengedurug*, the rich texture of their language, all point to an imagination vastly more complex than those of their brother Bukidnons and Ilianen – at least those discovered so far by Unabia, Opeña and Wrigglesworth. This complexity can be seen more vividly in two aspects of the Ulahingan as described by Maquiso, the first being in its pairing of lines and the second in its melodic movements.

It will be noted that in the *Agyu* compounded by Pat Melendrez-Cruz, as in Unabia's **Bukidnon Myths and Rituals** and Opeña's *Olaging*, the line-pairs come only in ones. In the second series of Maquiso, she cites, not just such a line-pair, but two-line units, three-line units, four-line units, and even five-line units, quite difficult to make especially since the epic is chanted, and not written. Moreover, she also notes,

it is surprising that some melodic movements have a very wide range, sometimes beyond an octave which, with glissandos, sound operatic. This wide range runs counter to a common characteristic of indigenous music, which is of very narrow degree, with seconds and thirds mainly in wavelike movement.

But this urges us on to a comparative analysis of the Ulahingan with the two Bukidnon versions of the epic.

The Ulahingan Compared with the Epics of its Brethren

Pat Melendrez-Cruz, while doing us a service in putting together, in "*Agyu*," the three versions of the origin of and first adventure at Nelendangan, also did a disservice to the two cultures of the Livunganen-Arumanens and the Bukidnons because in "*Agyu*," we fail to distinguish the marked differences between the two cultures.

In Unabia's and Opeña's Bukidnon versions of the epic, the line-pairs really do come only in twos. But in Maquiso's version, as cited above, the line-pairs come not only in ones, but also in twos, threes, fours and fives. When Pat Melendrez-Cruz combined all three, it appeared that the version of the Livunganen-Arumanens also came in pairs of ones.

This is a very important distinction because from it issues the essential difference between the two cultures, coming as they may have from one root. In none of the episodes cited by Unabia and Opeña is it related that the Bukidnons underwent the same hardships as the Livunganen-Arumanens. Unabia's version tells of the origins of the enmity between the

Bukidnons and the Maranaws, but it is clear there that they were two different peoples from the start. The Maranaws invaded Mt. Palawpaw once, routing the men of a certain Datu Dalabahan, but in subsequent attempts were turned back by Mangkalidu's men. And then after "a long period of time," (Unabia 19) Datu Mambalentus forged a permanent peace with Sultan Bagunsalibu by gifting him with a beautiful and intelligent Bukidnon lass, Bai Gawhanen, to wife.

This is a very different history from that of the Livunganen-Arumanens, who were exploited and oppressed first, and for centuries, by their very own brothers, the Maguindanaos, and subsequently by the Americans, who would not understand their culture.

Unabia's myths also relate the flight of Agyu's family, but this was from Spanish incursions in Cagayan de Oro. Told by their spirit guardian to escape to Mt. Kitanlad, they do. And in fact, the general area became the Talaandig's permanent sanctuary.

We must remember the distinction in the geography of the two Manobo peoples. North Cotabato, the nest of the Livunganen-Arumanens, constitutes the central plains of Mindanao. Whatever mountains there are in the area are mere high hills, except the part going towards Bukidnon on the north, where the kepu'un-pu'un is supposed to have taken place but which the Livunganen-Arumanens do not presently inhabit. Bukidnon, on the other hand, especially west of the Pulangi River towards North Cotabato and Davao, keeps the highest mountain ranges in Mindanao – sharing, in fact, the highest peak in the Philippines, Mt. Apo. The Bukidnons themselves are situated east, west and north of the Pulangi River, spreading all the way southwest of the Cagayan River, nestled in the rich delta between the two rivers, close enough to civilization in the north but even closer to the high mountains they could always use as their rear in battles.

Such geographical differences contributed immensely to the separate histories and, consequently, the culture and arts of the two peoples. The Bukidnons were able to protect themselves more effectively against incursions by other tribes, and especially by the more socially and politically, and therefore militarily, advanced Muslims, due to their natural mountain and river fortifications. The Livunganen-Arumanens were, and still are, hemmed in, surrounded, contained, by plains on one side and the crocodile-infested (then) Pulangi River on the other.

This geographical disparity dictates the differences in their cultures as well as in their treatment of the same epic, the same story. The Bukidnons, judging from the intricacies of their headdresses, garments houses, and for that matter festivities, dances (11), musical instruments (8), and forms of folk literature (13), had the time and leisure to develop a relatively more complex culture than their brethren in the south. (CCP 174-191) While it could be true, of course, that many folk literary forms (only the Ulahingan) and dances (there are only three) of the Livunganen-Arumanens may not have been discovered yet, a visual survey of their dresses and houses would establish the difference. (CCP 68-75)

If such is the case, then why is it that the Livunganen-Arumanens seem to outdo the Bukidnons in the matter of songs (8 against 4 Bukidnon types) and the language of the epic (five levels of line pairings against one for the Bukidnons)?

The answer, too, lies in their circumstances. The same genius that relative peace afforded the time and ease to develop headdresses, garment designs, houses, dances, festivities and types of folk literature, constant harassment has forced to concentrate on the less concrete and less material creations of music and epic. This is why the Livunganen-Arumanens could cook up, in

their minds, more songs and also more intricate melodies, as well as more levels of line-pairs within their epic; and, perhaps, more sencedurug, if true that they have at least 1,647 of these against just a few known episodes for the Bukidnons. The mind is most fertile in times of battle stress, even if the hands are bound by the necessity of bearing arms.

Another feature that distinguishes the Bukidnons and the Livunganen-Arumanens is the temper with which their respective versions of the epic are told. The Talaandig Bukidnons, in Unabia's version, take time out to describe the geography of Nalandangan, reflecting the lushness of the ocean and virgin forests that surround them (the ocean "that is expanded," "that is scooped...dug out like a lake," "where the wind whirls during typhoons," "fragrant flowers," "huge red blossoms...to decorate their bodies," "junction full of ferns," "full of *pandan* flowers...," "sea full of balite trees"). They even talk of a "junction full of sugarcane," indicating the existence of that type of agriculture among them. When they describe the *tulugan* of Agyu's family, they are more concerned about the strength (not the power) of the structure to hold up with a degree of permanency, and the many little details that add up to the strength. (Unabia 47-70) The same may be said of Opeña's version, which adds a fort and an embroidered yard to its description of the Yandang paradise. (Opeña 171-191)

In contrast to the minute details (as in embroidery) of the two Bukidnon versions, the Livunganen-Arumanens concentrate on "The spaciousness of the dwelling; /To indicate the greatness." (Maquiso 1:155) The magnificent dwelling is "Fashioned [no less] by Suguy /Designed by Diwata:" (Ibid 160)

The mansion facing where the sun rises
Is shaped like a crocodile,
The extended house purlin
Directed towards the east
Has been carved like a reptile.(Ibid 156)

Moreover, the chamber is walling "Made of glass... /Silver is the panel." (Ibid 161) The magnificence is extended to the court or playground, which is "for amusement /For all the adolescents": "The court is made of porcelain, /The playground of tinkling glass." (Ibid)

The same differences in description apply to the baths. In Opeña's version, the trails leading to the baths include those for the beloved sister, those for the old, those for the strong men, those for the other women, and for those who have fornicated. The trail for the beloved sister and the perfumed women are described in lush detail, including roots used as ceremonial tables (Opeña 181), a rack for the skirt, a "special tapping plant for making perfume" (Ibid), a balustrade for going up (Ibid 183), architectural details worthy of a visually inclined people capable, through their more peaceful circumstances, of materializing their dreams. The version barely describes the paths of the strong men, reserving but two lines for it: "The place with the depression /The level plain..." (Ibid)

In the Maquiso version, on the other hand, the trails described are those of the young maidens, followers of the favorite sister (enclosed with "huge rocks with lines of glittering gold," "sea floor ... of silver, /...ocean bed of bright metal; ...inside wall of glass, /...sparkling bright the bottom", the married women with plenty of children (so that there are plenty of broken twigs along the way), the recently married girls ("...Path is half fading in scent, /Partly vanishing its aroma"), and the warriors. Rather than emphasizing the playful parts as the Opeña version does, the Livunganen-Arumanens concentrate instead, after detailing the bath of Pinintu, the favored sister, on the warriors' paths to the baths: "...Ground to dust is the sand, /Turned to powder the

pebbles...” because, in the case of Mendeyawi te Yendang, or Agyu, “He war-dances while proceeding /On his way to take a bath, /Performs the sa’ut as he follows /Along the path to his swim.” (Maquiso 1:163-168)

In other words, the descriptions in the Livunganen-Arumanens version of the epic are much more concerned with conveying power and might, and the ability to fight, while the descriptions in the two Bukidnon versions portray a society that has had its time with peace, and could therefore pay much more attention to the details of its *habi*, or weave.

In fact, only Opeña’s version contains a “History of the Sky,” (Opeña 165-6) described as “the peerlessly embroidered heaven.” And it is worth noting that many of Unabia’s tales revolve around Bayvayan, the muse of the chanters, rather than Agyu, therefore containing the battle of Nalandangan for the Bukidnons to only one episode, which is Opeña’s.

There are other differences, showing increasing disparities in the two societies. Opeña’s version includes a cook, a character the likes of which is never mentioned in the Ulahingan. It also mentions, in the genealogy of Agio’s family, two wives for Agio and three for Banlak. In the Ulahingan, Tigyekuwa, with her heavenly and earthly names, is the only wife of Agyu. And Vanlak is not heard from again after his abandonment of Mungan. In fact, Bayvayan is never mentioned as an illegitimate son of Agyu, but arose out of the hairwash used by Lena that floated downstream to a maiden who used it. It would seem then that among the Bukidnons, more class differentiations arose due most likely to the surplus afforded by their more peaceful conditions (that enabled them to plant sugarcane), and as a consequence of those class differentiations and surplus, women’s roles were also diminished, so that we see much less of the magnificent warrior women of the Livunganen-Arumanens in their versions of the epic.

To appreciate the Ulahingan further, we could compare it with Wrigglesworth’s “Tulalang Slays the Dragon.”

As Maquiso mentions in her Ulahingan series, Tulalang was a cousin of Agyu, and therefore, by implication, a minor character in the panoply of stars. Indeed, while the Ulahingan is concerned with major battles that spell the death or continuation of their universe, Tulalang is more concerned about his dress, fitting his turban around his head five times before he settles on his looks. The text is not as rich as any of the three versions already discussed, not being as disciplined in its use of line-pairing or word enrichment – at least as translated by Wrigglesworth. The narrative concentrates on the action rather than on thick descriptions, as in the Ulahingan, or on details of the tribe’s cultural weave, as in the two Bukidnon versions.

A look at Wrigglesworth’s anthology of Ilianen Manobo folktales would explain this difference. It may be inferred from the Pilanduk tale in this anthology, expertly translated by Wrigglesworth, that the Ilianen Manobos went farther up the mountains than the Livunganen-Arumanens, and therefore did not have to deal with the Maguindanao oppressors as much. As a happy consequence they developed a much lighter spirit, and also, less experience in battle. They were, rather, more inclined to trickery to survive. While, therefore, they have their own version of Lená, who saves Nelendangan single-handedly after the invader has killed Yugung, Agyu, and all its other warriors, turning the invader into a betelnut tree; and while, certainly, their Lená is just as strong as the Lená of the Livunganen-Arumanens, they add new spice to the character: he has a sense of humor, and he uses trickery. Furthermore, his tale, like the other tales in Wrigglesworth’s collection, is rich with dialogue, or more accurately, banter – banter that thrives on wit and outwitting the enemy.

In conclusion, we could say that the Ulahingan, like all epics and, indeed, folk traditions and literatures, arose from a mix of the particular conditions that confronted the particular character of the Livunganen-Arumanens. Thus, while this people, with the Bukidnons and the Ilianens, stemmed from the same Manobo roots, they responded to different stimuli in another way, thereby creating widely different variants of the same stories.

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