

Appendix B LEGEND OF THE BUKLOG

The tale of the origin of the *buklog* was told to Thimuay Mangura of Vicente L. Imbing by his grandfather, Datu Lumok Imbing, who was the tribal leader from 1921-1958, and who in turn had heard it from his great ancestor Thimuay Imbing who ruled his people in the late 1800s. This story has been retold many times over and is a tale known to the *balian*s or shamans who specialize in the *buklog* rituals. The tale embodies sacred rites and beliefs associated with the various rites of passage among the Subanen people. The ceremony is still practised by the tribe. Here is the tale:

A long, long time ago, there was this man, the son of the union of an earthling and a supernatural, who lived on earth for a thousand years. His name is Jobrael. Sometimes he is called Jobraim. This Jobrael who lived for a thousand years was considered overstaying by Diwata Magbabaya. This Diwata Magbabaya is the Supreme God, the creator of heaven and earth.

One day, Diwata Magbabaya summoned Palmot, one of his trusted messengers from heaven. He said, "You go down to earth and tell Jobrael that he is already overstaying; his time is up and he has to come back to heaven where he belongs.

The angel Palmot went down to earth, and he looked for Jobrael and when he found him he delivered the Creator's message.

Jobrael argued and said, "I do not like to go back to heaven, I still want to stay here on earth."

The messenger had no choice but to go back to heaven without Jobrael. He told Diwata Magbabaya what happened. "Jobrael refuses to obey your orders, he likes to continue living and staying on earth."

When Magbabaya heard this, he told Palmot, "You go back to earth, bring this kettle with you" (the kettle is similar to the one in which you boil water), but instead of containing water, it was filled with rice bran, which is very light. "The moment," Magbabaya continued, "you reach earth, you put this on the ground and you let Jobrael lift this kettle up, if he can lift it up, then I will permit him to continue staying on earth."

Palmot brought the kettle full of rice bran to earth and he placed it on the ground as he was instructed by Magbabaya. He called Jobrael, he said, "There is a kettle sent by the Creator, if you like to continue your stay here on earth you better lift this up, if you cannot lift it, you will by all means have to go back to the Creator."

Jobrael held the kettle and when he tried to pull it up, the whole earth followed (it was like a magnet); when he tried to turn it, the whole earth turned around seven times with it. So Jobrael, in order to show that he can really challenge Magbabaya, the Supreme God, jumped and tried to pull the kettle up. When he did that, he realized that his human body was left on earth, and that he was already in spirit form, floating, flying around.

He then floated around a bit, and he drifted towards the east. When he reached the east, Jobrael was surprised to see so many people, and they were celebrating, dancing and making merry. So, he asked, "Why are you having this celebration here?"

The people answered, "Don't you know, that Jobrael, the overstaying person is now dead? That is why we have to celebrate."

Jobrael answered, "No, I'm still alive, I'm still around." Getting no response from the people he floated to the west, he witnessed the same thing, he met people who were celebrating because "Jobrael was now called by God."

Again, Jobrael insisted, "No, I'm still alive, I'm here, I'm the one." But this statement did not have any effect on the people.

He floated to the north, to the south, it was the same scene that he saw, people were having a celebration because Jobrael at last was recalled to heaven. He could not convince the people that he was still around and very much alive. Finally, he was thrown to heaven and caught and imprisoned by the messengers of the Supreme God, Magbabaya.

The Creator said, "You Jobrael are trying to defy my orders, because of this you will be imprisoned here in heaven and you will not be permitted to go anywhere, anymore."

Jobrael answered, "What will happen to my son and family on earth?"

Magbabaya said, "Your son will be given seven years to stay on earth, after which he will also be recalled back to heaven."

Once again, Magbabaya sent his messenger Palmot to earth to look for the son of Jobrael to deliver him the message.

Inasmuch as he was still single his friends said, "We better look for a wife for the son of Jobrael because he has only seven years to stay on earth and he has no descendants yet."

So they went on a quest to look for the right woman to become the wife of Jobrael's son. They went to the east, to the west, to the north, it was all the same, they could not find a woman that will match, or that was fit to be the wife of the son of Jobrael. Then, finally, they went to the center of the earth. There they found a Gomotan.

This Gomotan had a daughter who was also very beautiful and very intelligent. His companion decided, "Now we have found a match for the son of Jobrael." And they let him get married.

Although they were now married, she did not submit to him as a wife. She refused to offer food or the betel nut chew (*mamaq*) to the son of Jobrael. They were also living separately. When asked about this situation she replied, "We have to do something because you will only be staying here on earth for seven years."

On the first year of their marriage, after harvest time, she gave instructions to her people to mount crosses on the ground facing the east. On these she told them to offer betel nut and lime. The people followed exactly what she had told them to do, because they believed she was a very wise woman.

The following year, she again requested the people to make an altar. The platform is square-like, on it offerings were also placed. This altar will be hung inside the *sala* or living room of the house. Underneath, the altar is supported by a bamboo post. The altar was then decorated with *buri* leaves, or palm-like leaves called *pisa*. On this altar offerings will be placed, the blood of the chicken butchered for the occasion, a boiled egg, rice molded into balls and pieces of pork meat boiled without salt. Beside the altar is placed an earthen jar containing rice wine or *gasi*.

Then, after harvest, on the third year of their marriage, the wife of the son of Jobrael instructed her people to make an altar; buntings of cloth of black and yellow colors were decorations. Then she instructed them to cut wood and make carvings on it. This altar was later placed in the *lamin*, which is located in the ceiling of a Subanen house.

On the fourth year of their marriage, the wife of the son of Jobrael told the people to procure a large earthen jar. She then instructed them to mount bamboo sticks inside the jar, to tie them with strings and to place on the tips

of the bamboo sticks *mosala*, colored strips of cloth and Subanen sweets tied on the tips of the bamboo sticks. This jar, the wife of the son of Jobrael said, was to be placed near the main post of the house.

Meanwhile, the people wondered if the wife of the son of Jobrael was being given instruction by Diwata Magbabaya, because she was able to execute all of these offerings. But of course, they knew that she was also a very wise woman, so they did not question or doubt her wisdom, but instead followed all of her instructions.

On the fifth year, she requested the people to go to the forest and gather a certain kind of wood to be used for a post. She told them to bring this to the house, after which she asked the *balian* to apply some "medicine" on the post, and to offer prayers to prevent evil happenings, sickness or any untoward incidents to take place in their community.

Then, on the sixth year, she told her trusted people to go to the forest to gather a special kind of wood called *bayug* to be made into a mortar. She gave specific instructions that the tree, after it is felled, had to be carried on the shoulders of the men instead of having the carabao drag or pull it. When they went to the forest, they beat the gong and were chanting prayers. They got the trunk of the *bayug* tree as per instructions and brought it back to the house and presented it to the woman. She then called the *balian* to hew a mortar out of the wood, and told her people to have this placed under the house. She told them to cover it with *nipa* leaves to protect it from people who might step or fall on it. Then she told the people to play the gongs, to dance and also to butcher a pig for the occasion.

The following year — the last year that was given by the Creator to the son of Jobrael so he can continue living on earth — the wife then gave an order to her people to go to the forest and gather a special wood called *labalud*. She told them to cut eight trunks of this kind of wood. This time they brought it back to the house by having a carabao

pull the sled where they placed the tree trunks.

A few days later she instructed them to dig eight holes in square formation, the holes three meters equidistant from each other. On these holes a center post was placed or mounted facing the east. This is the first post that they erected in the platform site, facing the house. On this post, the *balian* applied some "medicine," after which the other remaining seven posts were mounted.

Then she told them to prepare the bamboos, which were split and flattened. These she said were to be used as the flooring of the platform. Since they were not to use nails as they did not have them yet, the posts and the flooring were tied with rattan vines which they also had gathered from the forest. All told, the platform construction was completed by sundown and there was much feasting, dancing and drinking of gasi to accompany the construction of the platform by the people of the wife of the son of Jobrael.

As per instructions of the wife of the son of Jobrael, in all of the seven years of yearly activities that she had given to his people to fulfill, they always had to butcher pigs and provide food and drinks for the people who were involved in the various stages of the ritual. There is also the continuous beating of the gongs day and night to provide accompaniment for the dancing from the time they have started gathering the materials which were ordered by the wife of the son of Jobrael.

And so it came to pass that in the seventh year, Palmot the messenger of the Creator Magbabaya was again sent back to earth to fetch the son of Jobrael. When he arrived on earth he looked for the son of Jobrael. Finally, when he couldn't find him on earth, he went to the center of the earth, the place where the son of Jobrael and his wife lived.

Upon reaching the center of the earth and finding the son of Jobrael, Palmot said, "I am here to get you now as ordered by the Supreme Creator, you have to go back to heaven for your time is up already."

Upon hearing this, the wife of the son of Jobrael answered and said, "No, you cannot get the son of Jobrael now, you see;" she told Palmot, "we have made all these things, and we do not even know how we will call or name all of them. Perhaps if you can give us the names of what we have made, then maybe you can bring my husband back to heaven with you."

She continued, saying, "Inasmuch as I have not even offered any food or betel nut chew to my husband, you cannot get him now, because we have not been living together. We have to make or perform all these things, even if we do not know what we would call all of these."

Palmot could not do anything. He scratched his head and said, "I myself do not know the name of all these. I will have to go back to the Creator and ask him what this is all about."

So Palmot, the messenger of the Creator, went back to heaven. When he reached heaven, the Creator asked him, "Where is the son of Jobrael? Did I not tell you to bring him back?"

Palmot replied, "Yes, oh, Supreme Creator, but when I reached the earth, I had to look for him. When I finally found him, I was confronted by his wife who told me I couldn't bring her husband back to heaven because she said they will have to know the name of the things that they have made in behalf of her husband, the son of Jobrael. Since I do not know them myself, I had to come back here to ask you."

The Supreme Creator said, "Why don't you describe these things to me?"

Palmot then proceeded to describe the figures that the wife of the son of Jobrael made beginning from the first year of their marriage.

The Creator said, "Ah, that is what you call the *salangsang*. You tell the people on earth that is how it should be called."

Then Palmot continued to describe the various activities and materials produced and made by the people for the wife of the son of Jobrael.

The Creator called the altar constructed during the second year, out of the seven years he had permitted the son of Jobrael to stay on earth, *binalay*.

The altar and offerings given during the third year were called *palasanding*. The bamboo sticks tied with rattan and decorated with *mosala* and mounted in an earthen jar, were named *banghaso*.

Then the Creator said, "The mortar is to be called *dulugan*, and the pestle, *pathaw*; the master post, *guingho ran tumayam*; the wood is flexible and does not break easily will be called *labalod*." The naming of the various parts was completed up to the seventh year by the Creator.

And finally, Diwata Magbabaya declared the whole structure and its attendant activities as the *buklog*.

After this, the Creator said, "Since the wife of the son of Jobrael has done this, we do not have the right to get him to return to heaven. They have offered these things for him, his wife has redeemed her husband now."

And so the son of Jobrael stayed on earth for many years and he lived together with his wife and grandchildren.

"That is the story of how the Subanen came to know about the *buklog*," Thimuay Mangura Vicente L. Imbing said. "Perhaps," he continued, "this might as well be the origin of other related rituals and celebrations in our Subanen culture."

"You know, some of the rituals here that have been observed within the seven-year period are also part of our rites of passage, like the putting up of a *banghaso* during our wedding ceremony, or the setting up of a *binalay* or the *salangsang* during healing ceremonies."

With these statements Thimuay Imbing concluded our conversation regarding the *buklog*.