

ORIGIN OF THE IFUGAO TINAWON RICE

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Carving by Albert Magguling

There once lived two young brothers, Wigan and Kabigat, who are descendants of Tadona in Kiyangan. The brothers lived with their father Pudol in Kayang, a prosperous and distant village of Kiyangan. The gods blessed them with a good life, plenty of chickens, pigs, ducks, dogs and other precious possessions.

Unfortunately their dogs always chased, killed and ate the other animals. This unpleasant behavior from the dogs angered the two brothers. One day the brothers took hold of some wooden clubs and used them to strike the dogs. The shrieking of the dogs aroused the curiosity of their father Pudol, who was inside the house. He looked out from the door and questioned the two boys about their unkindness to the dogs. Their father then explained that the dogs were in fact raw meat eaters and hunting dogs.

Upon learning that their dogs were for hunting wild animals, the brothers got themselves ready for a hunting spree. When everything was ready, they fastened their scabbard to their waists, tucked in their beetle nut bags, carried their backpacks, pulled-out their shining sharpened spears, pulled along their chained dogs and went on their hunting trip. Upon reaching the hunting ground, they let loose the dogs who ran barking and chasing the wild animals. When the brother noticed that the dogs were chasing their quarry towards Kabunyan, where Liddum resides, the two brothers decided to follow the dogs closely for fear that they might lose them.



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Using the footprints of the dogs and their quarry as guides, the brothers followed the dogs and saw that their quarry had entered Kabunyan. The quarry went straight to the bamboo grove behind the backyard of Liddum in Kabuyan. The brothers followed behind, took their aim on their spears and hit their quarry. The groaning of the dying quarry prompted Liddum and his people to come around and investigate what was happening.

When Liddum saw the slaughtered animal, he confronted the two brothers and accused them of killing their animal.

Wigan spoke up and explained humbly that the animal they had killed had come from the jungle of Kiyangan and that this wild pig had been chased by their hunting dogs to Kabunyan. He explained further that most people of Kiyangan hunt these wild pigs for their viand. He tried to convince Liddum by pointing out the physical differences between the wild pigs of Kiyangan and the wild pigs of Kabunyan. The snout of the wild pigs of Kiyangan is longer and more pointed than the wild pigs of Kabunyan. Liddum, being the god of plenty and the one who blessed them with many animals, knows that truth, and accepted Wigan's explanation and made peace with them.

Then the two brothers gutted and cut their quarry and shared some with Liddum and his people in Kabunyan. Much to the brothers' surprise, Liddum and his people quickly gobbled up their share of meat together with uncooked rice. The raw meat with fresh blood made their mouth frothy. The brothers looked on realizing that these Kabuyan people were raw eaters, very much like the dogs. But Wigan decided to show these Kabuyans what good food was. He quickly brought out his flint with a special stone and produced fire out from it. He cooked the meat and some rice, which he had asked from Liddum, in bamboo tubes.

When the meat and the rice were cooked, the brothers invited Liddum and his people to eat with them. The aroma of the cooked food was very appetizing and fulfilling to the Kabuyan people, so much so that they were able to eat only a portions before they felt full and satisfied. They were really amazed that Wigan had changed the taste of the food. "Fire can make food taste so good," answered Wigan. Because of the good taste of the cooked food, Liddum wanted to have their fire. He offered some of his pigs, chickens, gold, and other wealthy possessions in exchange for the fire. But Wigan and his brother Kabigut refused all of it saying that they had plenty of those things in their home in Kayang. What they actually wanted was the aromatic large grain rice variety of Liddum's that they found to be more fulfilling and satisfying compared to their rice in Kayang.

So Wigan asked Liddum if he would trade his aromatic large grain rice for their fire. To this, Liddum was delighted. It was indeed a big bargain; the fire meant so much to him and his people. "That was a smart idea," Liddum said to Wigan, " for it is true that you have plenty of rice in Kayang but it is the upland rice that has no ritual and thus it does not last long. Your big granaries are filled with your harvest but they will only last for two months unlike our Skyworld

rice that would last a whole year through.” So it happened that Liddum, god of the Skyworld and the god of plenty, traded his aromatic large grain rice variety to Wigan of Kiyangan for fire.

Before Liddum handed them the two bundles of the Skyworld palay, he first taught them the rice rituals and earnestly told them that it is important to perform these rituals starting from the sowing of the palay seeds up to the post harvest. According to Liddum, by observing properly and religiously these rice rituals, this large rice variety with its aroma and good taste will be free from rice pests and rice diseases. By observing these rice rituals, there will be a good harvest that will last the whole year round. So Wigan and Kabigat thanked Liddum and promised him that they would perform the rice rituals in caring for the Skyworld palay.



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Before the brothers went home, they taught the Kabunyan people how to produce the fire and how to cook food using the fire. As a gratitude to the generosity of Liddum, Wigan built a fireplace/cooking place for Liddum.

Then the brothers went home feeling good and proud. They had not only brought home hunted wild pigs but also a wonderful rice plant. They told their worried father about their unusual adventure that had caused a delay in getting them back home.

The brothers planted this rice variety in their field in Kayang, propagated it and shared it with other Ifugao people. As the people tasted it and experienced its good satisfying effect, many people built rice fields across the mountain slopes and wherever possible just to plant this Skyworld rice plant. From that time to the present, this is the rice variety we plant in our Ifugao rice fields.

Because we believe that it came from Liddum of Kabunyan, we sometimes call it the Skyworld rice plant. Today, it is commonly known as *Tinawon* rice because, as the name implies, it is raised only once a year.