

# Epic of labaw donggon analysis



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The Hinilawod epic tells the story of the exploits of the three demigod brothers, Labaw Donggon, Humadapnon and Dumalapdap of Panay. In its original form the epic would take about three days to perform (including breaks for food and sleep), thus making it one of the longest epics in the world. Anthropologist Dr. F. Landa Jocano recorded a version of the epic from the inhabitants of Central Panay. This is how the story goes: When the goddess of the eastern sky Alunsina (also known as Laun Sina, "The Unmarried One") reached maidenhood, the king of the gods, Kaptan, decreed that she should marry.

All the unmarried gods of the different domains of the universe tried their luck to win her hand to no avail. She chose to marry a mortal, Datu Paubari, the mighty ruler of Halawod. Her decision angered her other suitors. They plotted to bring harm to the newlyweds. A meeting of the council of gods was called by Maklium-sa-t'wan, god of the plains, where a decision by those present was made to destroy Halawod by flood.

Alunsina and Paubari escaped harm through the assistance of Suklang Malayon, the goddess and guardian of happy homes and sister of Alunsina, who learned of the evil plot and warned the two so they were able to seek refuge on higher ground. After the flood waters subsided, Paubari and Alunsina returned to the plains secretly. They settled near the mouth of the Halawod river. Several months later Alunsina became pregnant and told Paubari to prepare the siklot, things necessary for childbirth.

She delivered a set of triplets and summoned the high priest Bungot-Banwa to perform the rites of the gods of Mount Madya-as (the mountain abode of the gods) to ensure the good health of the children. The high priest promptly

made an altar and burned some alanghiran fronds and a pinch of kamangyan. When the ceremony was over he opened the windows of the north side of the room and a cold northerly wind came in and suddenly the three infants were transformed into strong, handsome young men.

Labaw Donggon, the eldest of the three, asked his mother to prepare his magic cape, hat, belt and kampilan (sword) for he heard of a place called Handug where a beautiful maiden named Angoy Ginbitinan lived. The journey took several days. He walked accross plains and valleys, climbed up mountains until he reached the mouth of the Halawod river.

When he finally met the maiden's father and asked for her hand in marriage, the father asked him to fight the monster Manalintad as part of his dowry. He went off to confront the monster and with the help of his magic belt Labaw Donggon killed the monster and to prove his feat he brought to Angoy Ginbitinan's father the monster's tail. After the wedding Labaw Donggon proceeded home with his new bride.

Along the way they met a group of young men who told him that they were on their way to Tarambang Burok to win the hand of Abyang Durunuun, sister of Sumpoy the lord of the underworld and whose beauty was legendary. Labaw Donggon and his bride continued on their journey home. The moment they arrived home Labaw Donggon told his mother to take care of his wife because he is taking another quest, this time he was going to Tarambang Burok.

Before he can get to the place he has to pass a ridge guarded by a giant named Sikay Padalogdog who has a hundred arms. The giant would not allow Labaw Donggon to go through without a fight. However, Sikay Padalogdog

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was no match to Labaw Donggon's prowess and skill in fighting so he gave up and allowed him to continue. Labaw Donggon won the hand of Abyang Durunuun and also took her home. Before long he went on another journey, this time it is to Gadlum to ask for the hand of Malitong Yawa Sinagmaling Diwata who is the young bride of Saragnayan the lord of darkness.

This trip required him to use his biday nga inagta (black boat) on which he sailed across the seas for many months, went across the region of the clouds, passed the land of stones until finally he reached the shores of Tulogmatian which was the seaside fortress of Saragnayan. The moment he set foot on the ground Saragnayan asked him, " Who are you and why are you here? " To which he answered, " I am Labaw Donggon, son of Datu Paubari and goddess Alunsina of Halawod. I came for the beautiful Malitong Yawa Sinagmaling Diwata. " Saragnayan laughed.

He told Labaw Donggon that what he wished for was impossible to grant because she was his wife. Labaw Donggon then challenged Saragnayan to a duel saying that whoever wins will have her. The challenge was accepted and they started fighting. Labaw Donggon submerged Saragnayan under water for seven years, but when he let go of him, Saragnayan was still alive.

The latter uprooted a coconut tree and started beating Labaw Donggon with it. He survived the beating but was not able to surpass the powers of Saragnayan's pamlang (amulet) and eventually he gave up and was imprisoned by Saragnayan beneath his house.

Back home Angoy Ginbitinan and Abyang Durunuun both delivered sons. Angoy Ginbitinan's child was named Aso Mangga and Abyang Durunuun's son was called Abyang Baranugon. Only a few days after they were born Aso

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Mangga and Abyang Baranugon embarked to look for their father. They rode their sailboats through the region of eternal darkness, passed the region of the clouds and the land of stones, finally reaching Saragnayan's home. Saragnayan noticed that Abyang Baranugon's umbilical cord have not yet been removed, he laughed and told the child to go home to his mother.

Abyang Baranugon was slighted by the remarks and immediately challenged Saragnayan to a duel. They fought and Abyang Baranugon defeated Saragnayan and won his father's freedom. Labaw Donggon's defeat and subsequent imprisonment by the Lord of Darkness also angered his brothers. Humadapnon was so enraged that he swore to the gods of Madya-as that he would wreak revenge on all of Saragnayan's kinsmen and followers. Humadapnon prepared to go to Saragnayan's domain. He employed the aid of Buyong Matanayon of Mount Matiula who was well-known for his skill in swordsmanship.

For their journey they rode on a sailboat called biday nga rumba-rumba. They travelled through the region of the clouds, passed by the region of eternal darkness and ended up at a place called Tarambang Buriraw. In this place was a ridge called Talagas Kuting-tang where a seductive sorceress named Piganun lived. Piganun changed herself to a beautiful maiden and captured the heart of Humadapnon. Buyong Matanayon begged with Humadapnon to leave the place with him but the latter refused.

After seven months passed, Buyong Matanayon remembered that they have brought with them some ginger. One evening at dinner time Buyong Matanayon threw seven slices of ginger into the fire. When Piganun smelled the odor of burning ginger she left the dinner table because sorcerers hated

the odor of ginger. Immediately Buyong Matanayon struck Humadapnon, who became unconscious. He dragged his friend with him and they were able to escape. They continued with their trek and everywhere they went they exacted revenge on all of Saragnayan's people and relatives.

One day they reached a place called Piniling Tubig who was ruled by Datu Umbaw Pinaumbaw. There was a big gathering in the village and when they asked what was going on they were told that the datu was giving his daughter for marriage to whoever could remove the huge boulder that rolled from a mountain into the center of the village. Many men tried their luck but no one so far was able to even move the stone. Humadapnon took off his magic cape and used it to lift the stone and threw it back into the mountain. The datu kept his word and Humadapnon married his daughter.

During the wedding feast Humadapnon heard about the beauty of the goddess of greed Burigadang Pada Sinaklang Bulawan from a guest minstrel who sang at the celebration. After the wedding Humadapnon went to seek the hand of the goddess in marriage. Along the way he encountered Buyong Makabagting, son of the mighty Datu Balahidyong of Paling Bukid who was also travelling with the same purpose in mind. Upon learning of Humadapnon's intent, Buyong Makabagting challenged him to a duel. They fought and Buyong Makabagting was no match to Humadapnon's strength and skill.

The fight ended when Buyong Makabagting surrendered and even promised to aid Humadapnon in his quest. Humadapnon married the goddess and brought her home. Meanwhile, right after Humadapnon left to seek Saragnayan's followers and relatives his brother Dumlapdap left for

Burutlakan-ka-adlaw where the maiden Lubay-Lubyok Hanginun si Mahuyokhuyokon lived. For the trip he brought along Dumasig, the most powerful wrestler in Madya-as. Several months later they came to a place called Tarambuan-ka-banwa where they encountered the two-headed monster Balanakon who guarded a narrow ridge leading to the place where the maiden lived.

With the aid of Dumasig, Dumalapdap killed Balanakon. However, upon approaching the gate of the palace where the maiden lived he was confronted by Uyutang, a batlike monster with sharp poisonous claws. There ensued a bloody battle between the Humadapnon and the monster. They fought for seven months and their skill and prowess seemed to be equal. But on the seventh month, Humadapnon was able to grab on to Uyutang's ankle and broke it. Then he took his iwang daniwan (magic dagger) and stabbed Uyutang under the armpit.

Uyutang cried out so loud that the ridge where they were fighting broke into two and there was an earthquake. Half of the ridge became the island of Buglas (Negros) and the other became the island of Panay. Dumalapdap married Lubay-Lubyok Hanginun si Mahuyokhuyokan and then took her home. Datu Paubari was very happy when he was reunited with his three sons and he prepared a feast in their honor. After the celebration, the three brothers left for different parts of the world. Labaw Donggon went to the north, Humadapnon went south, Dumalapdap to the west and Datu Paubari remained in the east.