

The Origin of the Name “Jay-as”

This is a story from our ancestors passed on from one generation to another. This was how they got the name “Jay-as.”

Long ago, during the time of the flood, every human and animal died, they died at the time of the flood. Now, in Vanaw only Jay-an survived. This was because Jay-an got on a wooden raft he made. There was a large jar to which he tied the wood. He also took two dogs on the raft because Jay-an was a hunter. Later on, as the water receded, Jay-an came upon Majaljalpong.

So from then on, Jay-an went looking for a companion. There was no place he did not go to just to search for another fellow human being. After some time, he eventually reached Abra. In upper Ud-udyaw near upper Sallapajan, his dogs started barking. When he went to look, he saw a golden deer and he was amazed.

The dogs pursued [the deer]. They turned to Vya-ay and he continued following the sound of the barking dogs passing Likuan and then Lakub. He found one of his dogs jumping about but he did not find the deer, because it leaped down to the river channel in Lakub.

Astonished, he decided to rest after repeatedly inspecting the waters. Even his dogs failed to track down the deer which jumped into the river. (That is the reason there is gold in Lakub).

Now, he decided to go back. He called off the dogs and they all returned to where they first came from. It was truly a long way off but the people of old did not find it difficult because they were strong walkers. They were tall people and so had long strides.

When he reached upper Ud-udyaw, the dogs started baying again. He found them looking up a tree. When he looked up, he saw a woman perched upon the tree.

“What are you doing there? Get down,” he said, and the woman got down.

“What are you doing here?” he added.

“*Eh*, I climbed up the tree because I am the only one left. I was looking for a companion after finding myself up a high mountain. When the waters receded, I decided to wander around looking for another human being,” the woman said. I climbed up this tree to see if I could find smoke made by anyone building a fire but there was not any.

“Me too. I am Jay-an from the Vyanaw area. I have been trying to find one because none of my companions survived. I am the only one left. All of my people died,” he said.

“Even I, I am the only one left,” said Von-as.

“If that is so, then we should get married,” Jay-an told Von-as.

And so it was that they got married. Jay-an and Von-as thus became “Jay-as,” a plain in the Itneg territory in Abra. So when people went to Abra and were asked, “Where have you been?” they would say, “We came from the Jay-as area.” (I have made a short cut out of the names Jay-an and Von-as). Jay-an and Von-as are the names of the couple. When their descendants multiplied, they populated the Itneg part of Abra.

Those from the hinterlands of Kalinga, when they journeyed to the plains in the Abra area, they would call it “Jay-as,” after Jay-an and Von-as. The couple were the only ones left.

So that is how Jay-as got its name, in memory of Jay-an and Von-as who lived during the flood. This is the Vanaw version of the Flood. They combined their names to form “Jay-as.”

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