

# Kopkoppatti

derived from the narrative of  
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Long, long ago, there was an old man named Wawwus. He was alone in life. He had no wife, no children.

One day, he went to the forest in Furor to clear land for planting vegetables. He was able to clear a large area that day. When it was almost dusk, he went home to the village to rest.

The next day, he went back to Furor to widen further his planting area. But he was shocked to find that the clearing that he made the day before was back to being a forest. "Why are the trees that I felled standing again? I trimmed all of these grasses, but why are they tall again!" he wondered to himself. He grew nervous, thinking that it could be an omen of his impending death. He could not understand how this vision before him could have happened.

Though puzzled, he opted to clear the land again just to find out if the trees, the grasses and the vines that he will cut would regrow. When he was through, he went home to rest.

On the third day, he returned to the jungle to inspect his clearing. But as he expected, once more, everything was standing as they were.

"What am I to do? This can't be! What could make all these grow back again so fast?" he kept asking himself. Though extremely annoyed, he thought to himself, "I know, I'll clear everything again and then wait to see what will happen. I will find out how these things are able to grow back." As before, he lopped off the trees, grass and vines. When he

finished, instead of going home to the village, he hid beside the clearing to keep watch.

As darkness settled, he soon saw a skinny old woman arrive. Only her bones held her body together. The old woman came to the clearing and while skipping around she chanted:

Boros, lumusog-lusog.  
Ban-ong, umusbong-usbong.  
Puno, lumago-lago.  
Sibit, pumilipilit.

Wawwus' eyes grew wide with disbelief! While the woman intoned her incantation, the fallen trees resurrected, the cut vines writhed and coiled. Though astonished, Wawwus was seething with anger. "Hoy! So, it's you who has been raising back all that I have cut! Don't attempt to flee or I will split your skull."

Wawwus angrily strode towards the cowering woman. "No! Stop! Please don't kill me," the woman begged.

"Who are you and why do you exhaust me?" Wawwus asked, furious. "For several days you've wasted all my hard work."

"I am Kopkoppatti," the woman replied. "Why do you keep clearing this land when it is mine after all?"

"If this is yours, then why do you leave it unkempt?" retorted Wawwus.

"I restore all that you've cut down because that's where my cucumber vines cling to. Look at my cucumbers, you've wasted so many of them. Anyway, I'll just compensate you for all your efforts. Come home with me so I can give you some jars," offered Kopkoppatti.

"Where do you live?" Wawwus inquired.

“Just down there,” pointed Kopkoppatti. Wawwus followed her as she walked.

They walked down the path until they reached Kialliw. They followed the stream and stopped before a large boulder that blocked the trail. Kopkoppatti lodged her feet between gaps in the rock to climb up and soon she was at the top. Peering down upon Wawwus, she taunted, “I’m leaving now and there’s nothing you can do!”

Wawwus tried to grasp the rock but he kept slipping. He hurriedly picked up a big stone. “Go ahead, try to escape and I’ll crack your head with this stone,” he threatened.

That scared Kopkoppatti. “No, no, please, don’t hurt me. I’ll help you climb up,” she said. Kopkoppatti grabbed a stray branch and carved notches on the rock to give Wawwus some foothold. Wawwus crept up the rock and together they hiked until they arrived at Kopkoppatti’s home.

Kopkoppatti’s house looked like a huge earthen boulder that stood on wooden stilts. As they entered, Wawwus observed that her home was strewn with jars, gongs, and pots. Kopkoppatti took a jar and fetched water from a nearby stream. She gathered some washed off sticks, branches and tree roots for firewood. She made a fire and laid a pot onto it. “Turn your back so I can cook our meal,” Kopkoppatti asked Wawwus.

With backs to each other, Wawwus tried to peek at what Kopkoppatti was doing, while Kopkoppatti kept trying to conceal her motions.

Wawwus could not believe what he spied upon. When Kopkoppatti took her *fianiw* (rice ladle) and stirred with it, the water suddenly boiled and cooked rice overflowed from the pot, although no rice was ever put into it. Kopkoppatti then removed the pot, grabbed another, filled it with water

and laid it onto the fire. She then took a *sandok* (dipper) and stirred the water with it. The water boiled and two pieces of meat were found in the stew. As soon as it was cooked, she took the pot from the fire.

“Okay, you may face me now,” Kopkoppatti instructed Wawwus. “Let us eat.” She took rice and meat from the pots. They ate heartily.

After their meal Kopkoppatti spoke, “Which of these do you wish to take—the jar, the gong or the large pot?”

“I already have a pot,” Wawwus lied.

“What about the large jar?” asked Kopkoppatti.

“I also have a large jar,” replied Wawwus even if he did not own one.

“Would you like to take the gong then?” offered Kopkoppatti.

“I already have a gong,” Wawwus replied. In truth, he did not have any of the things he refused.

Wawwus stood and went straight for the *fianiw* and *sandok* which Kopkoppatti used for cooking. “I’m taking these two.”

Kopkoppatti sobbed. “Please don’t take those or I’ll grow hungry,” she begged. “What will I have to feed on?”

“But these are what I want,” insisted Wawwus.

“Let’s just share the *fianiw* and *sandok*, we’ll take half of both,” suggested Kopkoppatti.

Wawwus agreed. They split the *fianiw* and *sandok* which of course became smaller.

Before Wawwus left, Kopkoppatti warned him. “After you bring home the *fianiw* and *sandok*, never brag about them. Never tell anyone that you get your food from those because then they will lose their power. The moment you reveal our secret, even my half of the *fianiw* and *sandok* will lose its magic and I’ll starve to death.”

As soon as Wawwus reached home, he eagerly tried out the magical *fianiw* and *sandok*. He put water in a pot and set it onto the fire. He reached for the *fianiw* and stirred with it. Suddenly, the pot was full to the brim with cooked rice. He then set another pot onto the fire and reached for the *sandok*. He stirred the water and soon he felt something inside the pot. He peered down and saw a piece of meat stewing. The meat was enough for one person, but it could be cut in half to feed two people.

From then on, all Wawwus had to do was gather firewood for cooking. He stopped tending the fields and no longer raised livestock or went hunting. Soon, he neglected his *payyiw* and other fields. He never had to sweat for food.

Years flew by, Wawwus made full use of his *fianiw* and *sandok*. His neighbors noticed the change in him. The villagers wondered how Wawwus never grew hungry when he did not even plant rice, hunt, or raise livestock. Some of them tried to spy on him. They were incredulous that he can eat rice even when rice was scarce and everybody else had only sweet potatoes to harvest. He even had meat without having to hunt or raise animals.

One day, a neighbor slaughtered a pig. He invited Wawwus to his feast. Being a good friend, Wawwus accepted the invitation.

Because there was *fiayas*, it was not long before Wawwus got drunk. In his stupor, Wawwus started to boast. He told his friends all about his magic *fianiw* and *sandok*.

His friends, however, found his story incredible. “Why don’t you prove it? Let us go to your hut right now,” they challenged Wawwus.

Possessed by the rice wine, he accepted the challenge. His friends all followed him to his hut. “Stay out here while I go inside to cook,” he said.

All five of them remained outside. Wawwus went in and set a pot onto the fire. He took his *sandok* and stirred the water inside the pot.

Later, his friends grew impatient because it was taking Wawwus a long time to cook. They peeked inside the hut. “Why does he keep stirring the pot?” they all wondered.

Wawwus came out of his house. Drenched with sweat, he soon burst out crying. His puzzled friends inquired why he was weeping.

“The magic *fianiw* and *sandok* that Kopkoppatti gave me have lost their power,” explained Wawwus. “Now it’s certain that I’ll starve.”

“But how and where did you come upon those items?” his friends asked. Wawwus soon told his story.

“Since the things she gave you are now useless, why don’t you go back to Kopkoppatti and take her pot, gong and jar,” they suggested.

Next morning, Wawwus went to Kopkoppatti’s hut in Kialliw, but it was no longer there. He searched hard but never found it. He failed to take the pots, jars or gongs. Wawwus was filled with remorse. He regretted that his brag caused the *fianiw* and *sandok* to lose their magic.