

Apo's Gift to Tinglayan

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Ten-year-old Alingon walked along the emerald green rice terraces of Tinglayan, listening to the gentle rushing sound of the Chico River below. The morning mist clung to the steep mountain slopes, wrapping the traditional Kalinga wooden houses in a blanket of cool fog. Alingon carried a small woven rattan basket, searching for wild coffee seedlings with his grandfather.



Because Alingon and his grandfather carefully planted native coffee trees along the bare mountain slope, the soil slowly grew stronger roots. Months later, when heavy monsoon rains poured over the Cordillera mountains, the sturdy tree roots held the earth firmly in place. As a result, the village pathways remained safe and free from dangerous landslides.



Walking further up the trail, Alingon noticed some villagers throwing plastic wrappers near the crystal-clear mountain stream. Because the plastic blocked the tiny water channel, the stream began to overflow and muddied the nearby vegetable gardens. Alingon realized immediately that careless actions always led to messy and harmful consequences for everyone.



Determined to fix the problem, Alingon gathered his classmates from the local Tinglayan elementary school after classes ended. Because he explained the connection between littering and polluted water with great enthusiasm, his friends eagerly agreed to help him clean up. Together, they carried bamboo bins to the riverbanks to collect all the scattered trash.



Because the children diligently cleared away the plastic waste and planted more flowering shrubs, the stream gradually returned to its pristine state. The crystal-clear water sparkled under the midday sun, reflecting the vibrant colors of indigenous butterflies hovering above the banks. Because the water was clean again, colorful local fish swam back into the shallow pools.



One afternoon, Alingon noticed that the village weaving shed was running very low on traditional thread made from native cotton plants. Because past weavers had not planted enough cotton bushes the previous year, the elders struggled to finish the intricate Laga weaving patterns. Alingon understood that failing to plan ahead meant losing precious cultural art forms.



To solve the shortage, Alingon asked the school's agriculture teacher for guidance on cultivating indigenous cotton plants. Because he watered the soil every single day and protected the young shoots from stray goats, the cotton pods grew thick and fluffy. Within a few months, there was more than enough harvest to supply the entire village of weavers.



Because Alingon provided abundant raw cotton to the weaving cooperative, the artisan mothers could finally create magnificent, colorful traditional garments. The rhythmic clack of the backstrap looms echoed joyfully through the wooden houses of Tinglayan once more. Because the traditional art was preserved, visitors from neighboring towns came to admire the vibrant Kalinga textiles.



During the village harvest celebration, the respected elders gathered the community around a warm bonfire under the starlit sky. Because of his helpful actions and wise choices, Alingon was called forward to be recognized for his dedication to the community. The village elders placed a hand-woven beaded headband on his forehead as a symbol of pride and leadership.



Looking out over the peaceful, thriving terraces of Tinglayan, Alingon smiled softly as he held his grandfather's hand. He finally understood that every small choice he made was like a pebble dropped in a pond, creating ripples that shaped the world around him. With a grateful heart, he looked forward to a bright future where his actions would always nurture his beloved mountain home.