



# In the Beginning

## A Filipino Story

Noong unang panahon (once upon a time) in the beginning of everything, there were only four beings: their names were Melu, Fiuweigh, Diwata, and Saweigh.

The four beings lived together on a small island surrounded by water. Their island home was no bigger than a hat! There were no trees or grass — only the four beings and their bird, who was named Buswit.

One day, Melu, Fiuweigh, Diwata, and Saweigh decided to send their bird to fly over the waters to see what he could find. The bird flew away for a long time, and when he returned he brought three things back: soil, a stem of rattan plant, and some rattan fruit.



Melu, who was the greatest of the four, took the soil and began to shape it. He used a tool called a paddle to sculpt and pound the soil as if he were sculpting a pot out of clay. When Melu was finished sculpting, he had made the Earth! Then, he took the seeds from the rattan fruit and planted them in the Earth. The seeds started to grow and grow until the Earth was covered with plants and fruit.

The four beings watched the growth for a long, long time and felt satisfied. But then Melu asked, “Of what use is this Earth and all the rattan and fruit if there are no people?”

The others agreed, and said, “Let us make some people out of wax.” They each took some wax and worked for a long time shaping and sculpting human forms, but when they put the wax figures close to the fire, they started to melt! The beings realized that people could not be made out of wax.

Next, they decided to try to use dirt to shape and sculpt the people. Melu and another being worked together and it all went well until it was time to add the noses. Melu’s companion was in charge of making the noses and he decided to put them on upside down! When Melu saw what had happened, he said that upside down noses would not do, because when the rains came, water would drip right into their noses, and everyone would drown!

The other being did not want to change the people’s noses, but when his back was turned, Melu quickly seized all of the noses one by one, and turned them right side up, as they are now. He was in such a hurry to turn the noses right side up that he left a mark on each face as he pressed them into place — a mark that can still be seen on people’s faces today.

