

HOW THE LIZARD LOST ITS COLOR



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A long time ago, a village was known for its beautiful mats, baskets and fabric. Some were smooth and some were rough. It came in various colors—yellow, red, blue, white and black. All of them were pleasing to the eyes.



Their designs came from the house lizards. A long time ago, the house lizards had the most beautiful skin. More beautiful than the monitor lizard or the chameleon. More colorful than the gecko and iguana.

People would come to the home of the house lizards in a bright spot in the forest. The weavers and carvers would gather



around them. They copied the colors and patterns from the house lizard's skins. When the people came back to their own houses, they arranged these into different designs for weaving and carving.

But time came when people became careless. They would step all over the plants and grass where the house lizards liked to stay. The trees shook from all the noise and the mess.



Because of this, the house lizards fell to the ground. From then on, the house lizards learned to blend in with the color of the soil, rocks and moss so that the people would not see them. They hid their spots and lines. They also let their yellows, reds, blues, blacks and whites fade. Time passed and their skins turned into the color of ash. They hid completely in the corners and cracks in the forest as well as in the posts and ceilings of houses.

The weavers and carvers felt sad because it seemed that they also lost the colors around them. The people prayed to Bathala and promised to be more careful of the house lizards and its home from now on. When dusk came, Bathala said to the house lizards, "You shall forever be remembered by your unique colors and patterns even if you can no longer return to your old selves." The house lizards bowed and kissed the ground in honor of Bathala.





From then on, the colorful house lizards appeared in the dreams of weavers and carvers.

And so the house lizard patterns were woven again into fabrics. They were also carved back into bamboo furniture and utensils. They appeared as marks and designs on clay being baked in the hot sun. Although not as beautiful nor colorful as before, the house lizards remained in the imagination of the people as they first appeared to them.