

THE SACRED WELL OF JATI HERANG
Sumur Keramat Jati Herang

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THE SACRED WELL OF JATI HERANG

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Cerita Rakyat dari Banten

SUMUR KERAMAT JATI HERANG

Ditulis oleh
Widowati Sumardi

Sumur Keramat Jati herang

Cerita Rakyat dari Banten

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1. KESUSASTRAAN RAKYAT-JAWA
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Foreword

Literature work is not only series of word but it also talks about life, both realistically and idealistically of human. If it is realistic, the literature work usually contains life experiences, good model, and wisdom which have been added various style and imagination along with it. Meanwhile, if it idealistic, the literature work contains moral lecture, good character, advices, philosophical symbols, culture and other things related to human life. The life itself is very diverse, varies, and full of various problems and conflicts faced by humans. The diversity in humans life also affects to the diversity of literature work because the contents are inseparable from civilized and dignified humans life.

The literature works that dealing with life utilizes language as medium of deliverance and imaginative art as its *cultural land*. On the basis of the language medium and imaginative art, literature is multidimensional and multi-interpretative. Using language medium, imaginative art and cultural dimension, literature deliver messages to be reviewed or analyzed from various perspectives. The outcome of that perspective depends greatly on who is reviewing and analyzing with various socio-cultural and knowledge background. There is a time when a literary reviewer reviews from the point of view of metaphor, myth, symbol, power, ideology, economy, politics, and culture can be refuted by other reviewers who see from perspective of sound, referent, or irony. Even so, Heraclitus said, "However opposite they work together and from different directions, the most beautiful harmony emerges".

There are many lessons that we can get from reading literature, one of which is reading folktales that are adapted or reprocessed into children's stories. The results of reading literature always inspire and motivate readers to be creative in

finding something new. Reading literature can trigger further imagination, open enlightenment, and add insights. For this reason, we express our gratitude for the processors for the story. We also express our appreciation and gratitude to the Head of the Coaching Center, Head of the Learning Division, and Head of the Subdivision of Modules and Teaching Materials and staffs for all the efforts and hard works carried out until the realization of this book.

Hopefully this storybook is not only useful as a reading material for students and the community to foster a culture of literacy through the National Literacy Movement program, but also useful as an enrichment of our knowledge of past life that can be utilized in addressing current and future life developments.

Jakarta, June 2016

Regards,
Prof. Dr. Dadang Sunendar, M. Hum.

Preface

This book, entitled *The Sacred Well of Jati Herang*, was adopted from a Banten folklore in a village called Tampeuyan in the Mancak region, Serang District. Actually this folklore has several versions, but the author chooses one version that the reader can take lessons from. This story is told by locals from one to another, it tells of a village girl who was forced by her parents to take a bath in Jati Herang Well, to quickly get a partner. When someone visits Jati Herang Well with ill or insincere intentions, the water will turn cloudy and no longer clear.

The Elder of Jati Herang Well, was a man who was powerful and had built Banten mosques at that time. He was appointed as the village chief because of his many services to the village of Tampeuyan. By presenting this story, it is hoped that the younger generation can maintain and preserve the cultural assets in their respective regions, so that cultural heritage and traditional values in a region are not going to be extinct and their authenticity is maintained.

In relation to that, on this occasion the author would like to thank the Head of Language Development and Cultivation Agency, Prof. Dr. Dadang Sunendar, M. Hum., Head of the Banten Language Office, Muhammad Lutfi Baihaqi, M.A., and the Folklore Literacy Committee of the Center of Cultivation, Language Agency, who have given the author the opportunity to

retell this story in the form of children stories. The author also would like to thank her beloved husband, Rusmanto, M.Pd. and her son Kevin Tegar Eka Yudha for their prayers. Hopefully this activity can continue so that the cultural values that exist in Indonesia will not disappear.

Serang, May 2016

Widowati Sumardi

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THE SACRED WELL OF JATI HERANG

1. The Sacred Well of Jati Herang

The afternoon was clear. The children in Tampeuyan Village were playing outside. For the past few days, they had been cooped up inside because the rain had kept pouring. A clear afternoon like this was too good an opportunity to miss.

Kosim ran as fast as he could, pursuing his friends. He only needed to touch one of them. Playing 'It' in the afternoon was a habit of those children. Every once in a while, their scream and laughter would pierce the air. They were genuinely scared of being caught and genuinely happy to elude the catcher. Kosim kept trying to catch one of his friends. Once he caught him or her, they would be 'it' who chased around the other children. Kosim and his friends would not stop playing until *adzan* Magrib called them to pray in the mosque, or until their parents called them home.

A middle aged man was returning home from praying in the village mosque and called his wife, "Nyai, is the coffee ready? An afternoon like this should be enjoyed with a cup of coffee and a plate of steamed cassava." This man was Syekh Mahdum.

“Give me a few minutes. The water’s not boiling yet. The firewood is all wet from the rain yesterday. It’s hard to get the fire started,” Syekh Mahdum’s wife said from the kitchen.

These last few days, it was always raining in Tampeuyan Village. Fields and farms were all wet. The plants glistened with water drops on their green leaves. The farmers welcomed the rain happily. They considered rain as God’s blessing. Most of the people in Tampeuyan Village were farmers. They spent their days in the fields and rice farms.

“I haven’t seen Kosim all day, Nyai. Where is that boy?” Syekh Mahdum asked about his son.

“The usual, Abah. He’s playing with his friends. The weather’s so nice, let him enjoy it for once, Bah.”

“It’s not that I forbid him from playing, Nyai. I just don’t want him to come home too late. It’s not good for anyone to come home after Magrib, after the sun set.

This is Thursday night, it’s a taboo to stay home at dusk. He may be followed by evil spirits.” Syekh Mahdum always loved his only son.

“Tonight is a full moon night, and it is a Thursday night. Today is the fourteenth of Maulid, Abah, do you forget?” Syekh Mahdum asked. Maulid was the day of Prophet Muhammad’s birth. It was

on the third month of Islamic calendar. People of Tampeuyan Village called this month Maulid.

“You are right. Well, there will be many people visiting Jati Herang tonight. Just like every year.”

“So, are you going to Jati Herang tonight?” she asked.

“I think so,” Syekh Mahdum said. Syekh Mahdum had always guided people in their pilgrimage to perform the ritual of taking a bath at Jati Herang Well. He had been doing that since he was young.

“Nyai, could you help me make coconut leaves torch for tonight? Even though the full moon will shine bright, I will need the torch,” he added.

“I will, Bah. We’re lucky that the coconut leaves in our stock are still dry,” Nyai said. Nyai always obey her husband. She would do anything Syekh Mahdum asked.

The ritual of taking a bath at Jati Herang Well on Thursday night, the fourteenth day of Maulid month was a tradition of Tampeuyan Village. This ritual was believed to help the performers to realize their wishes.

“Assalamualaikum.”

Syekh Mahdum had just finished performing *salat Isya*, the evening prayer, when he heard the greeting.

“*Wa’alaikumsalam*. Come on in,” Syekh Mahdum welcomed his guest.

Kodiman family was the first visitors tonight. After stating their intention, the husband and wife walked together with Syekh Mahdum to Jati Herang Well. Their daughter followed behind them.

Maryani, the daughter, was seventeen. But she had no prospect of getting married. There was no man coming to ask for her hands. Other girls her age in the village had all been married and had children. That was why Mr. and Mrs. Kodiman were worried. They did not want their daughter to be old and single. They brought Maryani to Jati Herang Well to bathe her, wishing that it would smoothen her way towards marriage.

The full moon shone brightly above Tampeuyan Village. Cicadas and crickets sang around this group of people. The road was slippery after the rain yesterday, but it did not discourage Kodiman and his wife to go to Jati Herang Well. Unlike her parents, Maryani was reluctant to go. She did not believe in these rituals.

“How can taking a bath in Jati Herang Well bring me a husband? I don’t believe it, Mother,” Maryani changed her mind and wanted to turn back.

“Don’t say that. You have to believe that everything is possible for Allah. We are praying to Allah, the only God, not to the well.”

“But, Mother, I want to go home. I don’t want to take a bath at a well in the middle of the forest. The water must be cold and dirty,” Maryani said.

Her mother pulled her hands and spoke softly so that Syekh Mandum would not hear. “Maryani, just do what I ask, please?”

Maryani and his parents arrived at Jati Herang Well. As usual, ten meters before the well, Syekh led them in reciting prayers. It began with reciting *Alfatihah* and praises to the Prophet Muhammad, followed by other prayers, adjusted to what the visitors requested.

After praying, Maryani prepared herself to be bathed. Her parents would bathe her with the water from Jati Herang Well. Maryani just accepted her fate. She did not want to disappoint her parents.

The moon was reflected in the well. It was as if the moon wanted to feel the cool and clear water. Just as Maryani’s mother scooped the water with a coconut shell, it turned murky. Everyone was startled, except Syekh Mahdum. He knew what was happening.

When the clear water turned murky, it meant there was someone who was not sincere among the visitors. That individuals did not really want to come to Jati Herang Well.

“*Astagfirullah*, let’s ask for God’s forgiveness.” Maryani’s family did, but Maryani stayed silent. Her face was sour. She put on her clothes again. She called off the plan to be bathed at Jati Herang Well.

The cicadas and other forest insects stopped chirping. Unlike when they first arrived, now everything was silent. The sky turned dark. Luckily, Syekh Mahdum had prepared the torch made from coconut leaves. He took out a box of matches and lit the torch.

They decided to return home because it was not possible to continue with the ritual. Under the light from the torch, they could see the road a little better. Owls hooted somewhere in the forest. Maryani shuddered with fear every time she heard them. She walked briskly, holding her mother’s arm tightly.

On the way home, Syekh Mahdum talked a lot about the origin of the sacred well. It was believed that the well came from a staff of a religious man called Ki Boyot Santri.

One day, Ki Boyot Santri and his pupils had passed Tampeuyan Village in their travel. They had been thirsty but they had not been able to find a water source. With his power, Ki Boyot Santri

had stuck his staff on the ground and said a prayer in the name of Allah. God had granted him a miracle. When he had pulled out the staff, clean and clear water had sprouted from the hole.

Everyone had had their share of drink. His pupils had rejoiced with that miracle.

“Go, have a drink to your heart’s content. This water will give a blessing for the people of this village.” Ki Boyot Santri had prayed and his prayers had been true. Jati Herang Well had never been dry and everyone could take the water.

The following day, there was a news that Maryani was ill. Her parents had taken her to a famous healer. However, he could not cure her. Nobody knew what illness she is suffering from or why. Some suspected that it was a punishment for her careless words about the sacred well.

Besides Maryani, there were also some people from the next village visiting the Sacred Well of Jati Herang. They visited by themselves without being accompanied by a guide or anyone who understood the rules of visiting the well. However, they could not find Jati Herang well, even though they had taken the correct road.

They used the road that Syekh Mahdum always used to the well but instead of arriving at the well, they ended up at Pasir Mountain. They were lost because they came without permission

from the village elders or Syekh Mahdum. They just walked in circle in Pasir Mountain until the morning. Some villagers found them in a state of exhaustion because they had been walking all night. The villagers took them home and they apologized to Syekh Mahdum and the people of Tampeuyan Village.

The news of what happened to Maryani and those people spread around. Since then, nobody dared to do anything rash or inappropriate when it concerned with Jati Herang Well.

Until today, Jati Herang Well was still visited by people. The local used the water from the well for their daily needs, both at home and at village mosque. The water of Jati Herang Well never dried, even in dry season.



2. Building the Great Mosque of Banten

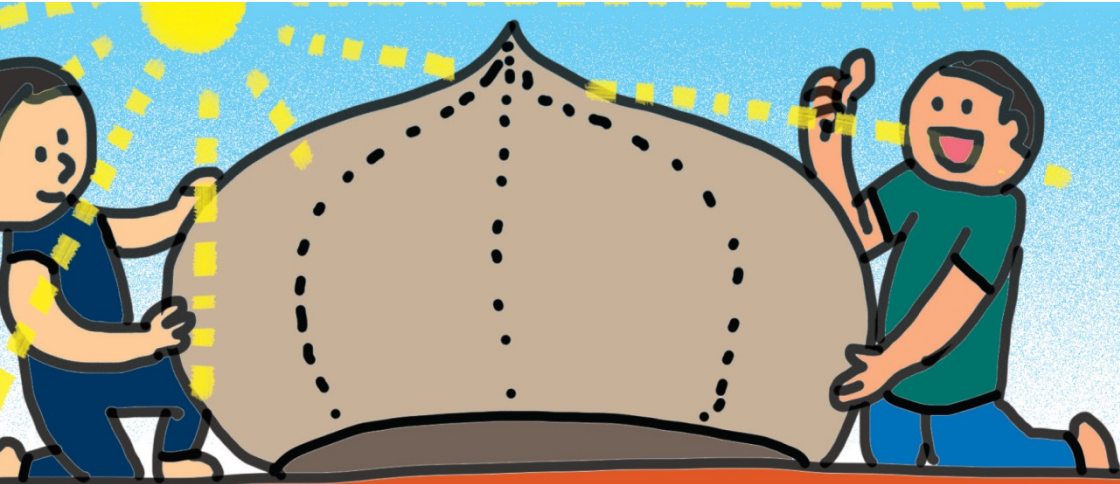
“What brings you to this humble village, Gentlemen? It is an honor for us to be visited by great people like you,” Syekh Mahdum welcomed the people from Banten Sultanate.

“Well, Syekh, we are coming here to ask for your help. The Sultan wants you to join the builders from other villages to build a mosque in Banten Sultanate.”

Syekh Mahdum was well known in Tampeuyan Village as a skilled builder. He had worked on houses, mosques, and other buildings.

No one could compete with him in terms of the quality and beauty of his buildings. Most of the buildings in the village were his work.

The next morning, Syekh Mahdum went with the Sultan’s emissaries to the building site. They were riding on a coach pulled by a strong horse. They stopped at Parakan Village to pick up another builder from the village. Then they picked up two builders from Nembol and Gulacir Villages. These four builders were the best in the Sultanate. The Sultan of Banten specifically asked for them to oversee and work on the project, building the Great Mosque of Banten. Since it was the Sultan himself who gave the order, they did their best to build the mosque. Local people worked together to help them finishing the mosque.



Time went by. Days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months. Syekh Mahdum had been leading the other builders to work on the mosque all those months. Today, white clouds were scattered in the sky over the newly built Mosque of Banten. Syekh Mahdum and his fellow builders were very satisfied with their work. It was an honor for them to contribute in the building of the Great Mosque of Banten.

The officials of Banten Sultanate praised their work. Syekh Mahdum and the three builders had finished their work on time. The mosque was beautiful and of high quality. There was nothing to be complained about from their work. These four builders were exceptional.

“You have worked very hard and have built a high quality mosque. I thank you very much for your hard work. You are the best builders we have here. Now, Banten Sultanate wants you to build a tower next to the mosque.” Sultan asked Syekh Mahdum and his fellow builders to build a tower.

Syekh Mahdum and his friends immediately set to work. They built the tower near the Great Mosque of Banten. The 24 meter brick tower would serve as an outpost to watch the sea and as a storage for Banten’s weaponry and ammunition.

The bottom of the tower was octagonal. Its door was similar to the doors in Hindu-Buddha Temples. At the top of the tower was

installed a *memolo*, a decoration put on top of buildings. The *memolo* was made from clay. It was shaped like a blossoming flower. The clay was put in hot fire to harden, so that it would last for a long time. When they installed the *memolo* at the top of the tower, they found that it was too small.

They decided to bring it down and replace it with a new one. The next day, they made a new *memolo*. They crafted it carefully and with extra attention to details. Once the shape was perfect, they put it in a furnace for several hours. By afternoon, it was ready to be installed. This time, they nailed it perfectly. The *memolo* fit the tower and was very beautiful.

The final step in their work was painting the tower. It was not easy to paint a tower that stood 24 meter tall. They prepared and installed scaffoldings from bamboo and small trees around the tower to enable them reaching every side of the tower. However, the scaffoldings could not reach the very top of the tower. The scaffoldings were three or four meters short from the peak of the tower.

To make it more interesting, Sultanate announced a contest. “Whomsoever possessing the skills to paint the top of the tower without using scaffoldings or ladders will be eligible for a handsome reward from the Sultan.”

Under the hot Banten sun, the builders began to paint the tower. Their bodies were wet with sweat. If not for the Sultan's order, they might consider to give up. For safety and security, strong and long ropes were tied around their waist. That way, if they slipped, they would not fall straight to the ground.

Syekh Mahdum did not use any of those security measures, however. He did not climb the scaffoldings to paint the tower. Instead, he brought an umbrella and climbed the stairs inside the tower to its top. Once he reached the top, he opened his umbrella and jumped down. With his martial arts skills, he managed to float in the air and paint the outer side of the tower very neatly. His superb inner energy allowed him to make his body as light as a feather. In fact, Syekh Mahdum was able to walk on water without falling down.

Syekh Mahdum floated slowly and painted his side of the tower from the top to the bottom. He also painted the parts that nobody could reach with the scaffoldings. Everyone was mesmerized with his display of extraordinary skill, including the builders from Nembol and Gulacir Villages.

“Syekh, what is the secret to be able to fly like that? Can you teach us?”

“Sure. I’ll gladly teach you. But it can only be given to someone with a pure heart. This skill cannot be taught to common man and cannot be used for bad deeds.

Once you have the skill, you have to regularly fast and you have to be pious,” Syekh Mahdum explained.

“By the way, where is Jailani?” Jailani, the builder from Parakan Village, had disappeared when the people gathered to watch Syekh Mahdum painting the tower.

“I haven’t seen him since we finished painting the tower, Syekh,” the builder from Nembol said.

“Very well. Let’s just rest. We set out to our villages tomorrow. It feels like decades since the last time I saw my family,” Syekh Mahdum said. They then retired and performed *salat Magrib*, the dusk prayer.

3. The Reward from Banten Sultanate

The sound of roosters crowing woke the builders up. Morning had come. The sun peeked slowly in the East. It would soon go up and shine brightly. This would be a beautiful day.

“Today, you can return to your villages. As a token of gratitude, Banten Sultanate will pay you fair wage for your work, with some bonus. Your work is exceptional. I was superbly amazing. This Great Mosque will be the pride of Banten for many years to come.”

The Sultan of Banten and his officers said farewell to the builders. Each of them received a large amount of money. Syekh Mahdum received another reward as well. Banten Sultanate gave him the first *memolo* that they took down because it was too small for the tower. It was a great honor for Syekh Mahdum. Sultan told him to install the *memolo* at the top of his mosque in Tampeuyan Village.

The builders set out to their own villages on foot. It was a long journey from Banten to Tampeuyan Village. It would take Syekh Mahdum two days of walk. When the sun went down, they arrived at Waringin Kurung Village. Cicadas and crickets chirped in the night air, like a beautiful song.

The four builders were exhausted after walking all day. They decided to spend the night in an empty hut they found on the road. They built a campfire in front of the hut and went to bed.

The loud music of cicadas in the middle of the night did not disturb their sleep at all. They were all fast asleep because their travel had exhausted them. All they wanted to do was sleep the whole night and continue their journey home tomorrow.

In the quiet night, in the dim light of the fading campfire, a sharp sound echoed. Someone had stepped on a twig and snapped it. The sound woke Syekh Mahdum from his sleep. Syekh Mahdum suddenly felt that he had to check on the reward that Sultan had given him. His hand patted the floor around him, trying to find the package where he had kept the *memolo*.

His suspicion was confirmed. That cracking sound was from someone who had stolen his bag. Syekh Mahdum immediately got up and pursued the thief. He did not want his valuable reward fell into the wrong hands.

“Give me back the bag!” Syekh Mahdum called when he saw a shadow in front of him. It was a man wearing a mask. The masked man did not even stop to look around. He kept running forward. Syekh Mahdum could not let him get away. He jumped and grabbed the nape of the man’s neck. However, the man possessed great martial art skills too.

A fight ensued. They both assumed a fighting stance. The man attacked first. Syekh Mahdum darted left to avoid the punch. They fought hard. Each threw and parried punches, darted here and there. The man attacked Syekh Mahdum relentlessly, but Syekh Mahdum could avoid them all.

The masked man took out a machete and slashed at Syekh Mahdum. Syekh Mahdum blocked the attacks with his bare hands. It was not a fair fight. One should not bring a weapon to a fist fight. However, Syekh Mahdum did not want to fight. He just defended himself and tried to get back what was rightfully his.

For the most part of an hour, Syekh Mahdum only defended, he did not attack at all. He avoided and parried the attacks without trying to harm his attacker. After fighting for so long, there was no sign that one of them would win over the other.

Syekh Mahdum feigned at one point. The man quickly slashed his machete towards Syekh's back. Syekh Mahdum had anticipated it. He turned around and grabbed the man's wrist, turning his machete to the man's neck. Syekh Mahdum threatened to cut his throat if the man did not return his bag. It was an empty threat, but it worked.

“Please forgive me, Syekh. Please don't kill me. I'm sorry, I made a mistake.”

Syekh Mahdum was startled because the voice was familiar. Syekh took off the man's mask.

“*Astagfirullah*, it is you!” Syekh Mahdum exclaimed. The masked thief was Jaelani, the builder from Parakan Village.

A few moments later, the roosters in Waringin Village crowed loudly. The dawn had come. Waringin villagers woke up and went to the village mosque to observe *salat Subuh*, the dawn prayer. Syekh Mahdum and Jaelani walked side by side to the hut where their companions were still asleep. They walked as if nothing had happened.

Syekh Mahdum understood that Sultan's reward might tempted some people to steal it. It was a great honor to own a gift from Sultan. Syekh Mahdum sincerely forgave Jaelani.

“Wake up! Let's pray together,” Syekh Mahdum woke the two sleeping builders. They slept so soundly and had no idea what had transpired that night. Syekh Mahdum had no intention to tell them. He wanted to keep it a secret to avoid any embarrassment on Jaelani's part. Syekh Mahdum suddenly remembered something. Now he understood why Jaelani had disappeared when he painted the top of the tower.

Jaelani was jealous of Syekh Mahdum's skills. He made a plan to test how skillful Syekh Mahdum was. If he had won the fight, he would have owned Sultan's gift. He would have returned home

and announced to the people of Parakan Village that he had been a great builder. However, it was all just a dream, now.



4. Syekh Mahdum was Appointed as Village Chief

Syekh Mahdum arrived at his village at dusk. He was welcomed by a concert of cicadas, crickets, and other night insects. The people of Tampeuyan Village were happy to welcome him home. Kosim, his only son, ran and embraced him tightly. They had not seen each other for months. Kosim's friends also approached Syekh Mahdum as he entered the village. They shook his hand and kissed it to show their respect.

“*Alhamdulillah*, Abah is finally home,” Nyai took his hand and kissed it. She had been missing him so much. She had stayed home with Kosim, her only son, all those months. The house felt empty without Syekh Mahdum. While Syekh was working in Banten, the people who wanted to visit Jati Herang Well had been guided by Nurdin, one of his trusted pupils.

The news of Syekh Mahdum's return spread all over the village. Every villager came out to meet and congratulate him. People went in and out of Syekh's house only to see him. They were proud of Syekh Mahdum because he had won the contest that Sultan Banten had held.

The villagers could not wait to install the *memolo* that Banten Sultanate had rewarded. They would install it at the top of the village's mosque. It was what Sultan had told Syekh Mahdum to

do. It was a great honor for Tampeuyan Village. Not every village in Banten Sultanate had received such a reward.

The next morning, when the sun began to shine, the people prepared to install the *memolo*. Birds chirped overhead, making the morning more beautiful. The *memolo* was a decoration made from burned clay. It was in the shape of a blossoming flower. The people worked together to put it at the top of Tampeuyan Mosque. The women in the village had prepared various dishes for *bancakan* later. *Bancakan* was a gathering where people ate together. To show their gratitude, the people of Tampeuyan Village slaughtered a goat.

The people in Tampeuyan Village had been planning to appoint Syekh Mahdum as the village chief. Since the Chief Sardi passed away, the post had been left vacated. For the last year, Tampeuyan Village had no village chief. The people felt that today was the perfect moment to execute their plan. Once they install the *memolo* at the top of their mosque, they would also appoint Syekh Mahdum as the new village chief.

Syekh Mahdum put the *memolo* himself. He asked for help from some villagers who were brave enough to climb to the top of the mosque. It went smoothly. The decoration was now sitting atop the mosque of Tampeuyan Village. Everyone was happy and proud. They promised to take a good care of it. To this day, it was still there.



“Ladies and Gentlemen, let’s give a huge round of applause for our new chief, Syekh Mahdum,” a man announced. He then gave the opportunity for Syekh Mahdum to deliver a speech. The villagers were proud to be led by a great man like Syekh Mahdum. They believed that under his leadership, Tampeuyan Village would be a better place.

Since Syekh Mahdum became the chief, the people called him ‘*Lurah Sakti*’ (the Skillfull Chief) or “Syekh Mahdum Sakti”. Everyone in the village knew about his great skills. Among his many skills, the villagers most frequently talk about his skill in painting the tower of Banten Mosque. Syekh had painted the 24-meter-tall tower without using any scaffolding. Everyone was amazed at his powerful ability.

Under his leadership, Tampeuyan Village changed. The people were more prosperous because their chief always provided good examples. Lurah Sakti always worked on his field without complain. He worked hard and diligently. Seeing him had motivated the people to do the same. The people lived harmoniously without any conflict. The village had become a peaceful place. In the past, there had been incidents where cattle were stolen. Since Lurah Sakti led the village, it had never happened again. In short, nobody dared to do bad things in the village.

5. Kosim's Circumcision

That day, Kosim turned seven years old. Kosim was the only son of Syekh Mahdum. He was a smart and obedient boy. At such a young age, he had finished reading the whole 30 *juz* (chapters) of Alquran. With guidance and direction from his parents, Kosim grew to be a diligent and pious boy. He was the apple of their eyes.

“Abah, I want to be circumcized like my friend, Rohim, Bah,” Kosim said to his father one day.

“I cannot wait to grow up so I can help Abah working in the field.”

It was a common belief that a boy would grow up quickly when he had been circumcized. They would grow taller and bigger. Circumcision was a tradition of the village. It was one of the highly regarded practice in the religion of the people. Kosim's parents quickly agreed to give him his wish. The people believed that it was not a good thing to postpone circumcision if the boy had asked for it.



Kosim's circumcision would be celebrated with a huge party. Every villager in Tampeuyan was invited to the ceremony. In fact, Lurah Sakti also invited people from surrounding villages. A music group from Leuwi Badak Village was invited to perform in the party. That group was well known in the area. They performed with full ensemble of *kendang* (traditional drum made from wood and cow hide).

The performers were professionals and very skillful at their arts. A day before Kosim's circumcision ceremony, everyone in Tampeuyan Village was busy preparing for everything. Some slaughtered buffaloes, some prepared the spices and herbs for cooking, some fetched the equipment from Leuwi Badak Village, and some others tidied up the whole village. In short, every villager participated in preparing Kosim's circumcision celebration.

Kutilang and *Cipau* chirped outside Kosim's window, waking him up. The wound left from his circumcision was still wet. It had not been fully healed yet. Grimacing with pain, Kosim got up. He remembered that today was the big day.

His circumcision celebration would be held this morning. Kosim took a bath and dressed himself in a new sarong, a gift from his father.

The day crept on slowly. Guests were arriving from all over the place. Today was a very happy day for Lurah Sakti's family. The villagers also enjoyed the day. They would not miss the opportunity to enjoy the delicious dishes at the party. In addition, they could enjoy the magnificent performance of the *kendang* group from Leuwi Badak Village. Their performance was so good that everyone stayed for a long time at the party.

The ensemble consisted of *kenong*, *kendang*, trumpet, *gong*, and other traditional instruments. The performers played them very beautifully. As the day went on, the party got more and more festive. People danced on the floor, following the music. Children played and laughed around the stage. Every once in a while, they climbed up the stage to see the huge *gong* up close. They would laugh merrily every time it was hit. The deep reverberating 'gooong' sound echoed loudly in the air and the children would cheer.

6. The Disastrous Gong

Kosim's circumcision celebration was held until late at night. Everyone in the village was exhausted and slept in until the sun was up. The instruments were left at the stage because it was too difficult to take them in the dark. The villagers would take them to Leuwi Badak Village this morning. The people would gather at Lurah Sakti's house this morning to clean up after the party.

Not everyone slept in that day. Lurah Sakti woke up at dawn even though he was as tired as everyone else.

As he squared away the traditional instruments, Kosim and his friends played near the stage. Lurah Sakti did not notice them. He lifted the *gong* off its holsters, wanting to put it with the other instruments. As he lifted the huge heavy brass *gong*, the rope slipped from his hand. The *gong* rolled off the stage and fell on Kosim. Kosim let out a yelp as the heavy *gong* hit his head. He slumped unconscious on the floor.

At the time, the villagers had just arrived at the house. They quickly ran towards Kosim, feeling guilty because they had let their chief work alone. Lurah Sakti was upset and blamed himself. It was his fault that had caused this misfortune. His only son had become the victim of his carelessness.

“Kosim, wake up, Son! Kosim! Wake up!” Nyai held Kosim in her arms and shook his body, trying to wake him up. However,

Kosim did not opened his eyes nor moved a muscle. Lurah Sakti checked his pulse and felt a faint throb.

“Abah, what happened to Kosim, Bah? Why won’t he wake up?” Nyai cried over Kosim’s body.

“I’m sorry, Nyai. It is our fate. We have to accept this disaster as God’s plan.”

“But Kosim is our only son, Abah. I don’t want to lose him.”

“Have faith, Nyai. We have to accept this with an open heart. Let’s pray that Allah the Almighty heals our son.” Lurah Sakti tried to console his wife.

That afternoon, the bad news spread all over the village. Kosim, the son of Lurah Sakti, had passed away. He had woken up once and called his father and mother. A moment later, he closed his eyes and let out his last breath. Every villager gathered at the house to pay their final respect. Kosim’s friends cried because they lost a good friend.



The funeral procession was conducted immediately. Everyone went to take Kosim to his final resting place. Everything was quiet in the village that day. It was a complete contrast to the day before. The joy they felt during the circumcision celebration had evaporated.

After the funeral, Lurah Sakti spoke in front of the people. He could not hide his sadness. It was clearly shown on his face, even though he had tried to appear strong. At the end of the speech, Lurah Sakti announced that he had vowed to never let anyone in Tampeuyan Village to play a musical instrument like *gong*.

Anyone broke this rule would face a misfortune. Everyone then returned to their home with their own sorrow. Kosim, the son of Lurah Sakti, was a kind and pious boy that everyone loved. Now he had gone forever.

Since Kosim passed away, Nyai was the most affected. She missed her only son. She often locked herself in her room and was lost in daydreams. Lurah Sakti now seldom left the house. He did not want to leave his wife alone for too long. She was very devastated. Lurah Sakti understood what she was going through. It was not easy to accept that someone we loved had gone forever, especially if they were our children.

Sometimes, Nyai felt that she heard Rohim calling Kosim from the yard, asking him to play hide and seek. Rohim had been

Kosim's best friend. He also missed Kosim very much. Rohim often came to the house just to talk to Nyai. Nyai always welcomed him because Rohim reminded her of Kosim.

As time passed, the people in Tampeuyan Village began to let go of Kosim. They gradually accepted what had happened. A few years later, they had forgotten Lurah Sakti's vow and the rule he implemented in the village. One day, a man pushed his cart of ice cream on the village road. He offered his ice cream with a sing-song voice, "Iceee creaaaam..." He also hit a small gong to attract children. At one point, he stopped under a tree near the mosque of Tampeuyan Village. Out of the blue, a rock hit his head.

"Ouch!" the ice cream seller moaned. Blood flowed from his forehead. Some villagers who saw him quickly approached and helped him.

"Mang, we're sorry, but there is a rule in this village forbidding anyone to play any *gong*-like instrument or brass instrument," a villager said. Since then, nobody in the village dared to broke that rule. They were afraid that a misfortune would befall them.

The news about that rule and its consequence spread everywhere. The people in Tampeuyan Village still believed this myth today. The people told the story to their children and taught them that from Sibuyung Village to Alas Tua or Tapak Kabayan, it was forbidden to play a *gong* or any other *gong*-like brass instrument.

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1. *Idiom Bahasa Dayak Ngaju*, Penelitian Tim (2007)
2. Simbol dalam Upacara Nyadiri, Penelitian Tim (2008)
3. Analisis Butir Soal ujian Nasional Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia SMA/MA Tahun 2010/2011, Penelitian Tim (2011)
4. Tinjauan Fonologi: Bahasa di Kampung Cangkore Kabupaten Pandeglang, Penelitian Tim (2013)
5. Konjungsi pada Karya Tulis Siswa dan Implikasinya bagi Pembelajaran Menulis (2014)
6. Korespondensi Bunyi Bahasa Jawa Cangkore dan Cirebon, Penelitian Tim (2014)
7. Kajian Antropolinguistik: Pemertahanan Identitas Daerah di Banten dalam Kumpulan Dongeng Ki Buyut Tirem (2015)
8. Pemantauan Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia pada Media Luar Ruang di Kota Tangerang Penelitian Tim (2015)
9. Pemertahanan Tradisi *Mace* Syekh pada Era Industrialisasi di Kota Cilegon (2016)

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Lahir di Jakarta, 22 Mei 1973. Menikah dan dikaruniai satu anak. Saat ini menetap di Jakarta. Aktif bekerja di Kantor Bahasa Banten. Terlibat di berbagai kegiatan di bidang kebahasaan dan kesastraan, beberapa kali aktif dalam penyiaran kebahasaan dan kesastraan di RRI Kalimantan Tengah dan radio swasta Banten, menjadi pemakalah seminar, dan juri kegiatan kebahasaan dan kesastraan di Banten.

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