

THE NICE SCENT OF TARU MENYAN
Bau Wangi Taru Menyanyan

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The Royal Family of Dalem Solo

Once upon a time, the Kingdom of Surakarta was led by a just and wise king named Raja Dalem Solo. The king was highly respected and revered by his people. King Dalem Solo had three sons and one daughter; they were all very handsome and beautiful. The children were called by their order of birth, the First Son of Dalem Solo, the Second Son of Dalem Solo, the Third Son of Dalem Solo, and the youngest daughter was called the Fourth Daughter of Dalem Solo. The royal family lived in harmony and peace.

One day, while sitting at the park of *keputren*¹ with her *dayang*², suddenly the Fourth Daughter of Dalem Solo yelled and squealed.

“Mbok³ Dayang, do you smell a nice scent like I do?” asked the Fourth Daughter while sniffing the fragrant smell.

The maid also smelled the nice scent and tried to get more of it. “*Sembah Dalem*⁴, Kanjeng⁵ Putri⁶, you are right. This smell, oh, hmm ... where does it come from, huh?”

¹ A part of the palace where the princesses (royal daughters) reside

² Palace maid

³ Javanese form of address to older women

The *dayang* wondered as she stood up and walked towards the eastern part of the park. “There is no mistake, Kanjeng Putri. This fragrant smell comes from the east, but . . .”

“But, but what, Mbok Dayang?” The princess also rose from her seat and approached Mbok Dayang and continued her words.

“The scent is very soothing. What kind of flower producing such a very charming scent like this, Mbok?” asked the Fourth Princess of Dalem Solo while breathing deeply, very deep as if she was surrounded by the fragrance.

“Well, that is exactly the case, Kanjeng Putri, I don’t know whether this is the smell of flowers or other fragrance. But really this scent is very pleasant.”

“Well, Mbok Dayang, let’s get in and report this to the King.”

The Fourth Princess of Dalem Solo and Mbok Dayang entered the palace. Half running, the princess approached her three brothers who were sitting in the *balai bendul*⁷ with their father.

⁴ Javanese polite way of greeting the royalty

⁵ The rank or title given by the Sultan of Yogyakarta or Sunan Surakarta to a person whose position is at the level of a regent

⁶ Princess

⁷ A part of the palace where the King usually receives the people who want to meet him

“What is up, my dear sister? Why are you running out of breath?” asked the First Son of Dalem Solo. Meanwhile, the other two older brothers and father looked at her in surprise.

“*Sembah bakti, Ayahanda. Sembah Bakti, Kakanda*⁸.” Bowing down, the Fourth Princess of Dalem Solo told what happened in the park. In half disbelief, her three older siblings and father then headed to Keputren Park.

“Hmm, hmm, hmm, how fragrant,” remarked the Second Son of Dalem Solo.

“What is this scent?” echoed the Third Son of Dalem Solo.

King Dalem Solo approached the eastern part of *keputren* and span many times while continuing to feel the fragrance that seemed to be coming out of nowhere. King Dalem Solo broke down the silence, saying, “My sons and daughter, you need to know, this scent is a sign for you to go in an adventure.”

The four children of Dalem Solo looked at one another in confusion, not really understanding what their father was saying. Even before King Dalem Solo finished explaining his point, the Third Son of Dalem Solo interrupted, “Does that mean we should leave this palace?”

⁸ Javanese polite way of greeting the father (*ayahanda*) and the older brothers (*kakanda*)

“Is that so, Father?” clarified the Fourth Princess of Dalem Solo with an increasingly puzzled face.

The father took a deep breath. He stared at his sons and daughter seriously.

“Calm down, my children,” the King continued his words. “Yes, you must find the source of the pleasant scent. That place will lead you to the real life. This request is a command, my children.”

They were silent and brooding over their father’s command, until the voice of their father broke their silence.

“What do you think, my children?”

“*Sendika dawuh*⁹, Father,” the four children of Dalem Solo answered in unison.

It was said that King Dalem Solo and his four children continued to smell the scent whose source was unknown for the next couple of days. Before the children left the palace, all the supplies that were needed for the adventure were being well prepared.

The next day, the four children of Dalem Solo were ready to venture into their journey, and then they came before the King of Solo to bid farewell.

⁹ Javanese polite way of saying “yes, I am willing”

“Father, we are here to bid goodbye. Please bless us, even though we still cannot understand the purpose of this journey,” said the First Son of Dalem Solo. “*Sembah simpuh*¹⁰, Father. Later, we will find the meaning of this journey.”

The youngest daughter sat next to her father, sobbing. While hugging his daughter, King Dalem Solo remarked, “Well, my children, I allow you to wander looking for that scent. Take care of your siblings, my First Son, especially your younger sister.”

That was the message of King Dalem Solo to the First Son of Dalem Solo. The First Son was responsible for leading his younger siblings in this long journey.

The king sent his four children away with sadness. Then, the four children of King Dalem Solo left the Kingdom of Surakarta to head to the east of Java.

Dewi Kayangan¹¹ Looking for the Source of the Nice Scent

At the same time, the fragrant scent reached the sky. It was so fragrant that one goddess was fascinated by the scent. The Goddess then went in search of the source of the scent.

¹⁰ We respect you with full reverence

¹¹ Lit. the Goddess of Heaven

“Hmm, I have to find the source of this pleasant scent.” The Goddess breathed in the scent as deeply as possible while thinking, “I wonder what this scent signifies.”

The Goddess said again, “If I find the source of the fragrance, wherever it is, I will protect the fragrance and I will stay there.” That resolution fueled the Goddess’ determination to search for the source of the scent until she found it.

“All right,” the Goddess was now really determined and started looking for it in the sky.

Since she could not find the source of the scent in the sky, the Goddess decided to look for it somewhere else.

The goddess finally decided to go to *marcapada*¹². She descended to Earth and continued looking for the source of the scent.

The scent overwhelmed the goddess. Days went by, and even months had passed, but the Goddess still not gave up in her search. She was absolutely determined to find the place of origin of the fragrance.

With her strength, the Goddess began to focus her senses. She made the best use of her nose to smell thoroughly. Her eyes scanned the Earth, a place that she perceived to be the source of

¹² The human world; Earth

the fragrance that troubled her heart. She also did not forget to ask God for directions.

“Oh Lord, the All-knowing, guide Thy servant to find that fragrance.”

While continuing to pray and endeavor, the Goddess finally heard a divine whisper that instructed her to go straight to a certain place on Earth.

“Go down to Earth. There is an island with many big and towering trees. However, there is only one tall, big tree, and its lush branches smell nice.” whispered the divine voice in the Goddess’ ears.

After searching for some time, she finally arrived at the place of the scent’s origin. The place was more precisely located near a fountain where there was a towering tree that emitted a fragrant scent. Without doubt, the Goddess came down and set her foot on the ground for the first time. “This is *amerta*¹³. You can find the fragrance in this place and your duty is to take care of it,” Sang Hyang Widi¹⁴ whispered to the Goddess.

“Very well, Ida Betara, thy servant will guard this tree and fully obey the wills of Betara¹⁵,” said the Goddess to Ida Betara¹⁶.

¹³ Something immortal, timeless, unforgettable

¹⁴ The All-in-One God

¹⁵ God

Finished delivering the command, Ida Betara magically disappeared in an instant.

The goddess very carefully observed the towering tree. She tasted the smell with her peaceful heart. She felt great tranquility.

“Like I have promised, I will take care of this tree. I will live near this tree.” Without realizing it, the goddess had actually forgotten to ask Ida Betara the name of this fragrant tree. The Goddess then sat cross-legged and meditated to ask for guidance from Ida Betara.

Not long after the Goddess meditated beside the tree she had just discovered, finally she heard a divine voice from the sky.

“Goddess, your prayer and your supplication will I grant you as long as you stay in this place forever. Later there will be an earth man looking for this place.”

“What if thy servant could not keep the promise? What would happen to thy servant?” ask the Goddess to Ida Betara.

“In that case, remember, your descendants will replace you on Earth in the future.”

¹⁶ Balinese Hindu Goddess

“Thank you, oh, Ida Betara, I am willing to live in this place. Then, what is the name of this tree and who will come to this place later?”

“Call it *taru menyan*¹⁷ tree. The one who would come to this place is a nobleman from the Javanese plain not far from this place.” After saying so, the divine voice vanished.

Having already fallen in love with this tree, without much thought the goddess accepted the terms of the divine voice. From that day on, the Goddess lived in that place. As time went by, the place came to be called *Trunyan*. The origin of the *taru menyan* tree then became the legendary name of Trunyan village.

Long story short, one afternoon, the God of the Sun, Surya, was spotted to be spying on the Goddess. When the Goddess was engrossed in her act of walking around the *taru menyan* tree while talking to it, the Sun interrupted her.

Not only that, whatever the Goddess did, the Sun’s rays always tailed behind. This was very disturbing and made the Goddess angry at the Sun.

Then, the Goddess went into a cave, but Sang Hyang Surya did not stop following her. Burning sunlight penetrated the cave. The

¹⁷ *styrax benzoin* in Latin or *Boswellia* tree. A balsamic tree that secretes aromatic oleoresins collected from the bark of the tree. In Balinese language, *taru* means tree, and *menyan* means fragrant

Goddess could not resist her anger anymore that she deliberately turned her back from the Sun. The Goddess' behavior was considered an insult by Sang Hyang Surya. As a result of her mischief, the Goddess was cursed by the Sun. She was cursed to supernaturally conceive and give birth to a feminine son. After that, the goddess also gave birth to twins, male and female. The birth of a pair of twins of different sexes is called *kembar buncing*. The people in Bali still uphold a belief that rituals should be performed for the birth of *kembar buncing* for the good of the children. In succession, the Goddess gave birth to the last child, a baby girl. This event was considered strange by the Goddess, but she resignedly lived her life. The Goddess raised and educated her children with full of love by herself.

Long story short, after the children grew older, the Goddess returned to heaven and her children continued to live in Trunyan. However, before leaving her children, the Goddess gave her children some advice.

“Listen, my children, I must return to heaven. There's something I have to do there. You are grownups now. I won't be worried to leave you in this place. Later, there will be humans occupying Trunyan Village. In fact, some of you are going to get married to one of them, an earthly man who approached this place.”

The goddess then flew home to heaven. Although she could not fulfil her promise to stay forever on Earth, her offspring had

replaced her. The four children of the Goddess were living in harmony while waiting for humans to come to their place. They busied themselves by taking care of the *taru menyan* tree located in Trunyan. Thus is the story of the Goddess and her children.

The Journey of the Four Siblings

It was dark. The journey of King Dalem Solo's children had led them to the border of East Java and Bali Strait (formerly called Strait Balamboang). The four siblings were none other than the First Son of Dalem Solo, the Second Son of Dalem Solo, the Third Son of Dalem Solo, and the Fourth Princess of Dalem Solo. They decided to spend the night in a village.

The village was very quiet because the inhabitants had stopped their activities. They all had gone to bed. The four children of Dalem Solo stayed in one of the homes of the people at the end of the village. They rested to recuperate their energy. The next day, they continued the journey to the island of Bali.

In their odyssey, they finally arrived in the western region of Bali Island. Bali is an island with beautiful scenery and is very fertile. The silence that befell the four children of Dalem Solo throughout their journey was a sign that they truly enjoyed the beauty of Bali.

Nearly achieving their destination, the four siblings stopped at the brink of a ravine with a depth of approximately 6,000 feet. Across the ravine there was a small village like a remote island.

After arriving in the border of the eastern part of Bali Island, namely between Culik Village located in Karangasem and Tepi Village located on the border of Karangasem and Buleleng regency, the four children of Dalem Solo could smell the scent more strongly. They grew increasingly curious with the scent.

They continued walking to search from one area to another. When they arrived in the area of Batur, the nice scent stung their noses even more.

They went to enjoy the beautiful scenery at Mount Batur, the lake with a crater and an amazing panorama on the boundary of the horizon.

Mount Batur constantly released a blob of smoke from its two craters accompanied by the roar of animals in the jungle. Arriving at the southern foot of Mount Batur, the youngest daughter of Dalem Solo decided to permanently stay in that place. The place is now known as Pura Batur.

“*Kakanda*, let me stay in this place. I really love this place. Please continue the journey to find the source of the fragrance.”

“All right, *Adinda*, I will let you stay here if you want to. Take care of yourself well,” said the First Son of Dalem Solo who really appreciated the decision of his younger sister.

The three sons of Dalem Solo granted the Fourth Princess' wish to stay forever in this place.

She chose to stay, for the Fourth Princess had no power to go through the stony, uphill, steep, and precipitous roads. Afterwards, the three of them left their sister to live in that place.

The temple on which the sister resided is located in what currently is Batur Village, Kintamani Sub-District, Bangli Regency. Pura Batur stands near the southwestern edge of Lake Batur. Pura Batur is also called Pura Pradana. Pura Batur is the dwelling of the Lord who is worshipped by people wishing to strengthen the spiritual community in building prosperity of the society.

The entire population of Bali builds big and small *pelinggih*¹⁸ as a form of their devotion as human beings.

The Fourth Princess of Dalem Solo, after becoming a goddess, was granted the title of Ratu Ayu Mas Maketeg. To this date, the name Queen Ayu Mas Maketeg has become a legend in Trunyan Village.

In fact, Pura Batur still stands majestically until now. This legend shows that Pura Batur, alternatively called Kalangan Anyar by the

¹⁸ A place of worship as an embodiment of the one that is revered or worshipped in a ceremony as described in the architecture of the temple

government, is similar to Batur Village, Mount Batur, and Lake Batur which cannot be separated anymore.

The Origin of the Village's Name and the Titles of the Sons of Dalem Solo

After leaving the Fourth Princess of Dalem Solo, the three brothers continued their journey down Lake Batur. Next to Lake Batur there was a volcano, Mount Batur. Lake Batur was formerly a caldera lake. Mount Batur is about 1,030 meters above sea level (asl).

When they reached a flat plain to the southwest of Lake Batur, they heard the sound of a bird. It was still early in the morning. The sun had just risen from the bedrocks of the eastern horizon. The Third Son of Dalem Solo was pleased with the bird's voice. In fact, he shouted with joy while looking at the bird that continued chirping and singing more and more melodiously.

“*Kakanda*, stop for a moment, listen to the bird's voice,” the Third Son of Dalem Solo said to the First Son of Dalem Solo while laughing merrily.

“Don’t act like a child, *Adinda*¹⁹. Remember our purpose for doing this trip,” the First Son of Dalem Solo reminded his younger brother.

"Ah, *Kanda*. Just a moment,” said the Third Son of Dalem Solo while continuing to sulk to make his siblings stop and take a rest.

The First Son of Dalem Solo continued to remind his younger brother. “Remember, *Dinda*, I won’t hesitate to leave you here if you keep getting loud.”

“*Kanda*, I just want to enjoy the beautiful sound of the bird. Why don’t you give me some time to refresh?”

“Your childish act makes me angry, *Dinda*. Very well, if that’s what you want, *Dinda*.”

The First Son kept walking, followed by the Second Son of Dalem Solo from behind. The Second Son could only be silent and did not dare to argue against his eldest brother. The long journey they took was exhausting. Time did fly. Who would have thought that it had been months since the siblings left the Kingdom of Surakarta to look for that nice scent. They waded through rivers, passed through vast wilderness, and climbed the cliffs of mountains under the stinging sun. Meanwhile, the Third Son of Dalem Solo insisted on catching the bird. Every now and

¹⁹ A polite way of addressing younger brothers or sisters

then the bird also chirped to tempt the First Son, but it was ignored.

“*Kanda*, please wait a minute. I will catch the bird for our traveling companion,” he shouted from behind his brother. Finally, the Third Son of Dalem Solo managed to catch a Balinese starling and ran after his two older brothers.

“*Kanda*, I caught this bird. Come on, *Kanda*, listen to his singing. It’s really beautiful,” remarked the Third Son of Dalem Solo while showing off the bird to his two older brothers.

What the third sibling did made the First Son angry. His brother’s careless action made the older brother decide to leave the younger brother in that place. It was decided that the Third Son would not continue the journey with them. However, the Third Son of Dalem Solo did not want to live in that place.

“*Dinda*, with a heavy heart, I am asking you to stay here,” said the First Son of Dalem Solo.

“Please, *Kanda*. Let me stay on this trip,” pleaded the Third Son of Dalem Solo pitifully.

The Third Son of Dalem Solo still wanted to continue the journey with his older brothers to find the source of the fragrant smell they had been looking for. However, his eldest brother also

insisted that he should not travel with them anymore. They were both equally persistent.

“No, *Dinda*. You stay in this place,” said the First Son in a loud voice.

“No, *Kanda*. I will still go with you,” the Third Son continued with a halt.

His brother’s insistence made the oldest son furious. When he could no longer contain his fury, the First Son of Dalem Solo kicked his brother really hard that his brother fell cross-legged. Due to this incident, the place where the Third Son fell was named Kedisan Village, derived from the word *kedis* which in Balinese means bird.

That is why, in Kedisan Village there is a Betara statue sitting cross-legged. The Betara is none other than the Third Son of Dalem Solo. Then, he was awarded the title of Ratu Sakti Sang Hyang Jero and led Kedisan Village. Now, this Betara *melinggih*²⁰ in a *Meru Tumpang Pitu*²¹ inside Pura Dalam Pingit in Kedisan Village.

Kedisan Village is located in Kintamani Sub-District, Bangli Regency. It is one of the few villages that surround Lake Batur

²⁰ Dwell

²¹ A sacred seven-roof building inside a temple

called *wingkang ranu*²². Since then, this place has been known by the name of Kedisan Village.

After leaving his third brother, the two sons of Dalem Solo continued eastward along the shores of Lake Batur and arrived at another plain. About half a day journey, they reached the plain. On the way, they met two women. Both women were doing *petan*²³. Delighted to see humans in this place, the Second Son of Dalem Solo then greeted the two women.

“Hi, beautiful ladies, what are you doing here?” greeted the Second Son of Dalem Solo.

“We’re doing *petan*, young man,” the two women answered in unison.

The First Son of Dalem Solo ignored the exchange of greeting between his younger brother and the two women. Again, the First Son did not like his younger brother’s attitude. Without further ado, the First Son ordered his younger brother to stop following him to find the source of the fragrance that they had been looking for. The Second Son was told to stay and settle in this place.

“Like the third brother, you must stay here,” said the First Son in a high tone. However, again his younger brother refused just like the third brother. This made the oldest brother upset. Then, the

²² The name for the villages in Batur supervulcano area

²³ The activity of searching for head lice commonly done by women

First Son kicked his brother really hard, causing him to fall in a *melingkuh*²⁴ position. This incident formed the origin of Abang Village that later developed into a prosperous village.

Despite his unwillingness, the Second Son finally lived in this place and became a leader in Abang Village. Until now, in this area there is still a Betara statue made of stone in a *melingkuh* pose. The word *melingkuh* made the village earn its name, Abang Dukuh Village. According to the origin of the word known to the local people, the village's name comes from the word *melingkuh*. Then, it was also called Abang because the village is part of Abang Village. No one could argue against the First Son of Dalem Solo.

Feeling sorry, he left his brother who fell with his face down. As the eldest brother, he could not protect his younger brothers as his father's will. The First Son went on his own way to find the source of the fragrance.

Taru Menyan Tree and Trunyan Village

The next day, the First Son of Dalem Solo walked alone searching for the source of the nice scent. His siblings remained to stay in Batur Village, Kedis Village, and Abang Village, respectively. The First Son of Dalem Solo began to feel lonely, but he was determined to pursue his original goal. He marched

²⁴ Face down

northward along the steep and precipitous east edge of Lake Batur.

“My brothers and sister, forgive *Kanda*. Forgive me if I was wrong for leaving you behind. Father, forgive, your son,” he said in his heart.

For a moment, the First Son of Dalem Solo stopped by the lake. He rested under a shady banyan tree while enjoying the remaining supplies.

Finished enjoying his favorite food, the eldest son then looked around him. It was very quiet. He began to breathe the air around him.

“Is it just me who can smell the fragrance around here? Is the fragrant tree not far from here?” The First Son of Dalem Solo asked himself. After that, he leaned back under the banyan tree and fell asleep for a moment. In his sleep he suddenly saw the tree he had been looking for.

“O Prince, you should know that the tree you have been looking for is called *taru menyan*. *Taru* means tree, *menyan* means fragrant. This *taru menyan* tree only grows in the nearby area. Go northward, you will find a towering tree. There, a goddess has been waiting for you. The beautiful goddess is combing her long hair under the tree. Later, that place will become Trunyan Village.

Surely, you'll be king there." That was the voice he heard in his dream. The soft voice became faint and disappeared.

The First Son of Dalem Solo jolted up from his sleep. He pinched both cheeks and hands, saying, "It's not a dream."

"So, the *taru menyan* tree will be better known as Trunyan Village later," he said, barely audible. The First Son's dream was not a mere dream. After all, the dream he had was actually a very meaningful clue.

Finally, the answer to the quest of the First Son of Dalem Solo began to get revealed. The journey began again. The First Son of Dalem Solo continued walking down a steep hill. He resumed his journey.