

THE THREE FRIENDS AND *POSSALIA*
Tiga Sekawan dan Possalia

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THE THREE FRIENDS AND *POSSALIA*

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TIGA SEKAWAN DAN POSSALIA

CERITA RAKYAT DARI SULAWESI TENGAH

Ditulis oleh
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TIGA SEKAWAN DAN POSSALIA

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1. KESUSASTRAAN RAKYAT-SULAWESI
2. CERITA RAKYAT- SULAWESI TENGAH

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

The treasures of regional culture that are spread throughout the country need to be maintained and preserved. Cultural values contained in language, customs, and literary wealth in the form of oral literature need to be passed on to the next generation of the nation. One of the government's efforts to preserve oral literature is the writing of children stories. This activity was carried out by the Language Development and Cultivation Agency. The writing of children stories aims to publish literature that is valuable for elementary school-age children. The program is in line with the National Literacy Movement being launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture. With this children storybook, it is hoped that every school-age child can get used to reading and recognizing the riches of the nation's literature.

The story entitled *The Three Friends and Possalia* was originally titled "*Tatalu Topovega Rapa (The Three Best Friends)*". This story is one of the Kaili folklore texts in Central Sulawesi. This folklore has been documented by Herawati (2005) through a study entitled "*Human Image in Kaili Folklores*", but it has not been published in book form. The author raises this story because it is loaded with moral teaching values, including the values of honesty and social solidarity.

The author hopes that the cultural values contained in this story can be emulated and used as valuable life lessons. Hopefully this story will be beneficial and can foster good character and students' interest in reading so that the efforts to make language into a tool for character growth can be realized. Thank you.

Palu, April 2016

Herawati

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THE THREE FRIENDS AND *POSSALIA*

1. Kind Hearted Poor Boys

Once upon a time, there was a kingdom on Kaili Land called Bulava Kingdom. Bulava Kingdom was ruled by a just and wise king. The people in the kingdom shared a strong sense of solidarity. They always helped each other and lived peacefully together.

Bulava Kingdom was located on a beautiful hill. The scenery was captivating in almost every corner of the kingdom. The beauty of Palu Cove could be seen clearly from the top of the hill. Cows mooed and goats bleated everywhere in the villages and fields. The people raised them as cattle. Children ran everywhere in the villages. They played to their hearts' content in the village, the nearby forest, or the river. Here and there on the hill, *Jamblang* (*Syzygium cumini*, or black plum) trees bore abundant fruits. Children happily climbed them and picked the fruits. Every so often, they would throw the seeds to each other.

In the kingdom, there were three boys who were very good friends. The three of them were practically inseparable. They always played together all day. The first boy was Deakutu. He was called Deakutu because there were a lot of *kutu* (head lice) on his head. The second boy was Bugilepa. He suffered from scabs

and manges. His skin was covered with scabs, which he constantly scratched. The third boy was Tovasa. He was always snotty.

The three boys were orphans. Deakutu lived with his grandmother who worked as a fruit seller in the market. Deakutu's mother passed away when he was two years old, while his father, a fisherman, died at sea.

Deakutu loved his grandmother very much. He always helped her selling fruits in their stall. Every morning, before the sun was up, Deakutu had woke up and helped his grandmother preparing the fruits they were going to sell that day.



“Grandma, should I put these bananas in the basket?”

“There’s no need. Just tied them up with a piece of rope. We can carry them in our hands. Just put those papayas and guavas in the baskets,” his grandmother replied.

“Yes, Grandma. I will have a quick bath before we leave.”

“Go on, take a bath. When you finish, go eat your breakfast. I have prepared *sambal duo* (small, crunchy fish cooked with chili paste) and some rice.”

“Thank you, Grandma,” Deakutu said. He walked briskly towards the well behind their house.

While Deakutu lived with his grandmother, Bugilepa lived with a family who adopted him. He was an orphan and had never known his parents. He only heard stories about them. Bugilepa was orphaned since he was a baby. His father died from a disease, while his mother died in childbirth. Bugilepa was raised by a couple who had no child. His adopted parents worked as farmers. Even though he was not their biological son, they treated him very well. That was why Bugilepa loved them. When he was older, his adopted parents told him about his biological parents. Knowing that he was adopted did not make Bugilepa love them any less. In fact, he felt more grateful because they were willing to adopt and take care of him.

Tovasa lived with his sister and her family. His parents passed away when he was a baby. His mother died from asthma, while his father was killed in a horse-riding accident. His father had been a soldier in Bulava Kingdom.

As time passed, the three boys grew up together. They spent most of their time in each other's company. They had developed a strong sense of kinship and solidarity. They never fought or quarreled. Even though they were orphans and poor, they were raised to be kind human being. They were always glad to lend a hand to anyone who needed help. When the dry season came on the kingdom and water was scarce, the three boys often offered to help the villagers carrying water from the river to their houses. In exchange for their helps, the villagers gave them food and drinks.

One clear morning, the three friends were walking around the village. When they passed a house of an elderly woman they called *Ina* (Madam), they saw her getting ready to get some water from the river. They approached her and offered to help.

“Ina, let *torang* (us) get the water for you. Ina can just wait at home,” Bugilepa said.

“Yes, Ina. Let us help you fetch the water. Among the three of us, we can carry more water for you,” Deakutu added. He held out his hand, asking for the jug that the woman carried.

Ina said, “Well, if you really want to help me, I thank you very

much. Go to the river and fetch me some water. When you return, I'll prepare some food for you.”

“Thank you, Ina. We're going,” the three friends said in unison.

The three boys scuffled hurriedly to the river. In a dry season like this, the villagers went to the river to get water because their wells dried up. Every morning and afternoon, they came in droves to the river. Some of them washed their laundry there. Other swam and took a bath. Most of them carry jugs of water home for supply. Children particularly liked the dry season because it meant they could play in the river. They sometimes made toy boats from orange peels and played with it when they took a bath in the river. Some older children helped their parents with the laundry. A child would let a cloth that had been washed drifted in the water and another child would wait for it downstream. The latter would snatch the cloth from the water and rinse it before putting it in the laundry basket. It was easier and more fun for them to rinse cloth this way. That day, the three friends did not join the other children playing in the river. They filled the jugs with water and immediately returned to the woman's house. They carried the jugs on their shoulders.

They went back and forth to the river several times. Finally, the woman said,

“Hmm, you've bring enough water for me to last a couple of

days. Go on eat the meal. You must be tired carrying that much water!”

“Thank you, Ina!” Bugilepa said.

“Let’s have some meal first, then we continue fetching more water!” Deakutu said, sipping warm tea the woman had served. With his free hand, Deakutu scratched his lice-ridden head.

“You boys enjoy the food. Make yourself at home. I’m going to the next village,” the woman said.

“Yes, Ina, *torang* (we) will fetch you more water later.”

“Don’t forget to close the door when you leave. Finish your meal, okay.”

“Yes, Ina. Don’t worry. We’ll surely finish this delicious meal,” Tovasa said.

“I’m leaving now.”

“Take care, Ina.”

The three boys enjoyed the food and drink that had been prepared for them. Every once in a while, they broke in laughter because one of them cracked a joke.

This was the typical day of the three friends. They had no permanent job, but they never begged or stole other people’s

belonging. Every day, they went around the village, offering their help. The villagers who had known them well never hesitated to ask for their help.

“It’s good that you pass my house. I need your help. Can you cut these woods and dry them on the yard?” a man once asked them.

“This many woods, are you having a party?” Bugilepa asked.

“Yes, we are. Can you three stay here for a while? We might need more help later,” the man replied.

“Sure. We’ll cut these woods first,” Tovasa said.

“Why don’t you eat first? The food is ready in the kitchen. You need energy to cut all those woods,” the man offered.

“It’s fine. We’ll work first and eat later,” Bugilepa said.

“We have had breakfast at Deakutu’s house,” Tovasa added.

“Very well, then. When you are tired, just have some rest. Feel free to take the food and drinks in the kitchen.”

“We will, thank you!” the three friends said.



Every day, there was always something that they could help with. Especially when there was a party or cultural gathering. The three friends were always there to help. They believed that by helping the people, they would get enough food and drinks to last the day. The three friends were always grateful whenever someone gave them something to eat.

“Tovasa, today we got so many food and snacks,” Bugilepa said.

“Yes, we did. I am so full right now,” Tovasa replied.

“Why don’t you bring some for your grandmother, Deakutu?” Bugilepa suggested.

“Let’s just share them fairly. That way, each of us can bring something home,” Deakutu said.

“I agree. Let’s split them. There is enough food for us three to take home,” Bugilepa said.

“We need something to wrap this food with,” Tovasa said.

“Deakutu, take your machete and get us a banana leaf. We can use it to wrap these foods” Bugilepa said to Deakutu.

“Alright. I’ll be back with a banana leaf,” Deakutu said, leaving his two friends to find banana leaf.

He soon returned with a wide and long banana leaf in his hand.



“That was quick, Deakutu. Where did you get the banana leaf?”
Bugilepa asked.

“From your *mangge*'s (father) field, Bugilepa. He was looking for you.”

“Didn't you tell them where you were going, Bugilepa?” Tovasa asked.

“I told my *ina*. I told her I was going to catch fish in the river.”

“Well, I think it's time we go home. Let's gather here again this afternoon before we go to the river and catch fish,” Tovasa said.

The three friends always get on with each other very well. They never quarreled. Each of them understood the others' character and habits. Even though they sometime had different opinions, they never fought over them. They always resolved their differences wisely. Every time they could not find a solution for a problem, they would gather in their tree house and talk things over. They would discuss their situation and would always come through. They always tried to be fair and honest.

2. Possalia

One day, they heard that the palace would hold *possalia* ceremony. It was a huge party that would be held for seven days and nights.

It was a tradition in Bulava Kingdom that every citizen would participate in the king's ceremonies and parties. Everyone would provide help according to their own ability. Some contributed their crops or cattle, others contributed their time and skills. They would always help with the preparation without waiting for the king's command.

Every time a royal party or ceremony was held, the palace would be decorated beautifully. The people worked together to make decorations from coconut leaves and installed them around the palace gates. They decorated the palace long before the party started. Before that, they would clean the palace and its surrounding areas. Everyone worked together to gather trash and organize the royal gardens. They also clean the palace culturally, by calling shamans to clear the palace from bad spirits that might disturb the party. The shamans would communicate with the spirit world and informed them about the party. They did that to ensure that the party would go smoothly.

The news that the king was going to hold a ceremony in Bulava palace spread quickly all over the kingdom. Everyone came to the

palace to help, bringing their crops and cattle. The three friends also heard about the ceremony and discussed what they were going to do at Deakutu's house.

“Tovasa, my grandmother said that *possalia* ceremony would be held in the palace,” Deakutu said.

“I know, my sister also said the same thing. The king would hold a wedding reception for his son,” Tovasa said.

Bugilepa quickly chimed in, “Well, we're going to have so much fun. We have to go there, guys.”

“When is it?” Bugilepa asked.

“My grandmother said it would be held next week. There will be guests from Vatu Bula Kingdom,” Deakutu replied.

The three friends were elated with the news about *possalia*. They agreed to go to the palace and help with the preparation.

“When will we go to the palace, then?” Deakutu asked.

“The sooner the better, I think. There must be a lot of things we can do there. We can help cutting firewood or putting up decorations,” Tovasa said.

“Yes, we can help with many things,” Bugilepa agreed.

“We will have delicious food and snacks in the palace. And they

will be free,” Tovasa smiled.

Soon, the three friends set out to the palace. Once they arrived, they joined the people who had gathered and helped with the preparation. They came to the palace every day before the party.

A week later, the *possalia* ceremony that everyone was waiting for began. It was spectacular. The king married the crown prince to a princess from Vatu Bula Kingdom. Every person in the kingdom attended the party.

Every citizen in the kingdom loved the party. They enjoyed delicious dishes that the king provided for free. There were *utadada*, *kelor* soup, *sambal duo*, and *kaledo*, all were traditional dish that Bulava people loved. *Kaledo* was a kind of soup made from the legs of *donggala* cow. *Kaledo* was cooked with special spices, i.e. fresh tamarind and salt. People usually had *kaledo* with steamed cassava. It was one of their favorites.

In addition to food, the people also enjoyed various entertainment and games. Art groups from all over the land came to perform dances, *pantun*, traditional music, *rebana*, and cockfight.

The first day of ceremony began with a welcoming dance performed for the bride’s family from Vatu Bula Kingdom. The dancers wore Kaili’s traditional attire. Female dancers wore golden yellow dress and a shawl decorated with golden thread on its rims. Male dancers wore red dress. They also wore a headdress

called *sigá*, a piece of cloth shaped like a hat with a triangular top. This welcoming dance was performed with background music from traditional instrument called *lalove*. It was a wind instrument. The guests enjoyed the performance very much.

The guests were then invited to enter the palace and enjoy delicious dishes. Kaili's traditional dishes and snacks were served on a special tray called *bosara*.

It was a tradition in Kaili to also provide *sambulu*, betel leaves and areca nuts. *Sambulu* was obligatory in any ceremony because betel chewing served as the opening of any discussion. A *sambulu* consisted of a betel leaf, betel seed, lime, *gambier*, and areca nuts. Before beginning a formal discussion, the host would invite the guests and cultural leaders to chew *sambulu*.

King Bulava's family was happy with the ceremony. The people had helped them preparing a lot of entertaining activities, from art performances to games and competitions. Among those activities, cockfight was the people's favorite. In that contest, only a rooster of the highest quality would win. People brought their own roosters to enter in the contest.

The three friends did not miss the fun. They went to the palace as soon as they heard that the cockfight was going to begin soon.

“Quick, Tovasa! We have to get there before the cockfight starts,” Bugilepa said excitedly.

“Calm yourself. Deakutu is not here yet.”

“Tovasa, Bugilepa, come on go to the palace!” Deakutu called them from the yard.

“Come on, let’s go,” Tovasa said.

He then told his sister, “Sis, I’m going to the palace to watch the cockfight.”

“Okay. Be home before dark,” she said.

They immediately went to the palace. When they arrived, the cockfight had begun. The spectators cheered and called their favorites. Seeing how interesting it was, the three friends wished they had had a rooster to enter to the contest. Finally, they agreed to get one.

“Bugilepa, let’s enter the contest. Maybe we’re lucky and win the prize,” Tovasa said.

“But we don’t have a cock, Tovasa,” Bugilepa replied.

“Why don’t we buy one? I saw a man selling some in that corner,” Deakutu chimed in.

They collected their money and bought a cock to enter in the contest. They chose a big cock that they thought was the most beautiful and strongest. It had red feathers on its chest and body.

Its tails were black and its neck feathers were golden yellow.

Then, they went to the king with their rooster. In front of the king, Tovasa said, “Oh, Great King, we wish to speak with Your Majesty.”

“What do you want!” the king said.

“We want to enter the cockfight contest. What is the bet we have to pay to join?” Tovasa asked.

“The loser should pay fifteen *ringgit* and the losing cock will be slaughtered. It will be roasted and served to the people.”

“What if we win?” Deakutu asked.

“If you win, I will give you the prize, some money, rice, and other daily needs,” the king explained.

Hearing the prize, the three friends quickly agreed to join the contest.

“Well, we can win so much prize. Let’s just do it,” Deakutu said excitedly.

“But if we lose, we will lose our only rooster,” Tovasa said.

“There’s no harm in trying. If we win, we can split the prize between the three of us,” Bugilepa offered his opinion.

After a few minutes of discussion, the three friends agreed to enter their cock in the contest.

“Your Majesty, we agree to follow the rules. We wish to enter the contest,” Bugilepa said, representing his friends.

“Go to the arena and register your rooster. Good luck,” the king said.

Soon, the contest began. The cocks were pitted against each other. The final winner would fight the king’s rooster in the end. In the first few rounds, the three friends’ cock won the fight. It fought well. The three friends were very excited.

“Bugilepa, our cock has just won again. There’s only one more round to go. It only needs to defeat the king’s cock and we will get the prize,” Tovasa said.

“Do you think it can win against the king’s amazing rooster?” Bugilepa asked.

“We have to try, at least. If we win, we can bring home some money and rice,” Deakutu said, stroking their rooster compassionately.

“Let’s do it. Let’s hope it wins!” Bugilepa said.

They prepared for the final round and entered the arena.

“Go! Go! Go!” Bugilepa chanted. He was so excited seeing the fight between their rooster and the king’s.

“Do you think we can win, Bugilepa?” Deakutu asked, scratching his head.

“I hope so. Our rooster is strong,” Bugilepa replied.

“If we win, we will have a lot of money, guys,” Tovasa chimed in.

The fight was spectacular. Everyone yelled and cheered for their favorite. After a while the three friend’s rooster began to falter. The king’s cock attacked it fiercely. Seeing that, the three friends bit their lips and hoped they could win. With one final attack, the king’s cock defeated their rooster.

“What a luck! We lose the money and our chicken is roasted,” Tovasa said.

“We have nothing else, now. We have no money left. And what’s worse is I don’t have the heart to eat our rooster,” Bugilepa said.

“Let’s just go home. It’s late. We have to get home soon,” Deakutu reminded his friends.

They then returned home. They were a little disappointed that they lost. They walked side by side and did not say much along the way. Each of them was deep in their own thought. Deakutu

was clearly irritated.

“I still can’t believe that we lost. Our rooster was bigger than the king’s,” he said, tapping a stick he was holding to a mango tree.

Bugilepa and Tovasa heard him but said nothing. They just sighed.

They continued walking in silence. That day was exhausting. They really had a bad strike of luck. It was like they were being kicked while they were down. They had lost the bet and their rooster had been slaughtered.

3. The Three Friends' Wit

Their loss in the cockfight put a burden in their minds. They could not stop thinking about what they had lost in *possalia*. They thought about how to find some money to eat. That loss had cost them everything. In addition, they could not go around the village and offer people their help because everyone was still at *possalia*.

To find a solution for this problem, they agreed to have a discussion at their treehouse. The three friends gathered in Deakutu's Grandmother's field. They arrived almost at the same time.

Once they had sat down, they ate some bananas that Tovasa brought.

"Thank you for bringing us something to eat, Tovasa," Bugilepa said and reached for a banana. He peeled it and quickly put it on his mouth.

"Thank you, Tovasa. I'm glad you bring these bananas because I am so hungry," Deakutu added.

They quickly finished the bananas and relaxed. They laid down and tried to take a nap, but they just could not do it. Their minds were filled with the thought of their loss.

"We have lost fifteen *ringgit*. It's a lot of money and now we don't have any savings to buy food. What should we do now?"

Deakutu wondered, staring at the roof of the treehouse.

“We have nothing else now. We cannot ask for help from our neighbors because they also need to eat,” Bugilepa said, scratching his itchy legs.

“We shouldn’t have joined the cockfight,” Deakutu said.

“Why shouldn’t we, Deakutu? We could have won,” Tovasa asked.

“We shouldn’t spend all our money to buy a cock. We should’ve use it to buy some food, instead,” Deakutu explained.

“Well, that’s gambling for you. We never know we will win or lose. There’s no certainty in a gamble,” Bugilepa replied, sitting with his back to the wall.

“As the saying goes, ‘if you win you become a coal, if you lose you become ashes’. There’s nothing good could come from gambling. If we win, we surely will want to push our luck and try to gamble more. If we lose, we will also gamble again to regain our losses,” Bugilepa added.

Nobody said anything for a while. Suddenly, Tovasa said that he had an idea to solve their problem.

“Guys, will you accompany me stealing something?”

“What do you mean, Tovasa?” Bugilepa asked.

“Yes, what are you talking about, Tovasa? Should we become thieves? And, what is it that you want to steal?” Deakutu asked.

“We’re going to steal chickens. We’ll steal the king’s chickens. In the coops in the palace there are many chickens, we can have our pick.”

“But, should we steal?” Bugilepa asked.

“The king has many chickens. He wouldn’t miss it if we take one or two,” Tovasa said.

“What will we do with them?” Deakutu asked.

“We can sell them and use the money to buy some food. We may even have some left to save. We can use it to open small business,” Tovasa said.

The three friends then had a lengthy discussion regarding Tovasa’s plan to steal the king’s chickens. Bugilepa and Deakutu disagreed with him. They did not want to take the risk, especially if they were going to steal the king’s chickens. Tovasa kept trying to convince them that it was their only way out of their problem. They had nothing else and there was nothing they could do to earn money.

After debating and deliberating Tovasa’s idea, Deakutu and

Bugilepa finally agreed to accompany him stealing the king's chickens.

Under the cover of darkness, they went to the king's chicken coops in the palace that night. In front of the coops, they discussed who should enter and catch the chickens.

Bugilepa and Deakutu said in unison, "Tovasa, it should be you who goes in."

Tovasa replied, "It can't be me. You guys know I am snotty. I will surely sneeze a lot in there. We don't want to be discovered, do we?"

Bugilepa said, "It can't be me either. My scabs are always itchy. I will surely scratch them and I might knock things over in there."

"It should be you, Deakutu. Those lice in your head will surely defeat chickens' fleas," Tovasa said.

Deakutu accepted his defeat and said, "Fine, I will get in. You guys keep watch out here. If anyone comes, give me a signal."

Deakutu stealthily crawled towards the chicken coops. Once he was sure that it was safe, he opened the door and crawled in. Deakutu tried to make as less noise as possible. He did not want to wake the chickens up.

Deakutu managed to grab a rooster's foot. Suddenly, it crowed

loudly. The guards, who had been asleep, immediately woke up. He stood up and walked towards the chicken coops. Bugilepa and Tovasa quickly made their escape when they saw the guard. They forgot to warn Deakutu.

Deakutu had no idea that a guard was coming. Thinking that it was still safe, he crawled out of the chicken coops and his head slammed straight into the guard. Meanwhile, Tovasa and Bugilepa had disappeared. They ran like bats out of hell.

“Hey! Get out!” the guard snarled at Deakutu, whose body was still in the chicken coops.

“I’m screwed. Where are Bugilepa and Tovasa? Ah, they have left me,” Deakutu thought. He quickly got out.

“What are you doing in there?” the guard asked.

“I... I... I...,” Deakutu stammered. He was so nervous he did not know what to say.

The guard caught him and took him to the king. “Your Majesty, I have caught a thief in the chicken coops,” said the guard.

The king said, “Check the area, he might not be alone.”

The guard replied, “When I arrived, there was only him in the coops. If he had friends with him, they surely had run away.”

The king was furious that a thief managed to enter the palace complex and tried to steal his chickens.

“How come a thief can enter the palace complex?” the king asked the guard. His tone was menacing.

“Please forgive my carelessness, Your Majesty. I fell asleep. I woke up when a rooster crowed. I immediately checked the coops and found this thief inside,” the guard explained.

“You are paid to guard the palace, not to sleep on duty.”

“I beg your forgiveness, Your Majesty. I promise not to repeat that mistake.”

The king was not satisfied. However, he thought he could deal with the guard later. He turned to the thief.

“Hey, Thief! Come closer. I want to see your face. How dare you come here and try to steal my chickens?” the king snarled.

“Please forgive me, Your Majesty I had no choice,” Deakutu stammered.

“Why do you have to steal?”

“I have to do it because I have nothing else, Your Majesty. I and my friends lost everything in *possalia* the other day.”



The king took a close look at the thief's face. He was startled because he remembered the boy. He was one of the trio whose rooster managed to get into the final in the cockfight.

"Aren't you one of the trio who got into the final in the cockfight?" the king asked.

Deakutu replied, "I am, Your Majesty. My rooster lost against Your Majesty's cock."

"What is your name?"

The thief replied, "My name is Deakutu."

"Where are your two friends?"

"They ran away, Your Majesty."

"Then, I command you to go home tonight. Tomorrow morning, bring your friends here. If you don't come, my soldiers will find you. And if they do, I command them to give you three a beating until you cannot walk anymore. Do you understand?" the king said.

That night, Deakutu was let go. He quickly went home. Deakutu was furious with his two friends who had left him alone. He muttered and groaned all the way home, regretting his bad luck.

"How could they leave me?" he thought.

4. Facing the King's Challenge

The next day, around eight in the morning, Deakutu, Bugilepa, and Tovasa presented themselves to the king. They were afraid and did not know what to do. They were terrified to face the king. However, they were more scared that if they did not come, the king's soldiers would find and beat them.

Once they arrived in the palace, they reported to the guards that the king expected them.

“What do you want?” one of the guards at the gate asked.

“We are here to see the king,” Deakutu said.

“His Majesty is expecting us,” Tovasa added.

“Wait here. I'll announce your arrival,” the guard said.

“Thank you,” the trio said in unison.

The guard went in and reported to the king.

After waiting for a few minutes, the guard returned and took the three friends to the hall. The king was sitting on his throne. On his side, the court officers stood in a row. The three friends were very nervous.

“Oh, Deakutu. We will surely be punished severely. Look over there, all court officers are present,” Tovasa said, wiping the rope of snot falling from his nose.

“Calm yourself. The king is wise, we might not be punished,” Bugilepa tried to calm his friends even though he was also scared.

In front of the king, the guard bowed in respect. Seeing that, the trio followed suit, bowing to the king and the court officers. The king commanded the three friends to sit on the floor before him.

The king began to investigate. He asked them the reason why they had tried to steal the king’s chickens.

The three friends said, “Your Majesty, we plead guilty. Please forgive us. If Your Majesty give us a punishment of labor, we will gladly do it, but please don’t beat us.”

The king asked, “Why did you try to steal? What was your plan with the chickens?”

“We were going to sell them, Your Majesty. We would use the money to buy some food. We were starving and we had lost all our savings in the cockfight. We had also lost our only chicken.”

After asking a few more questions, the king made his decision.

“To replace your chicken that we roasted, I will provide you a roasted chicken. You can eat it, with one condition. You cannot

wipe your snot, nor scratch your head and body while eating. If you broke this rule, I will beat your legs until they broke. Do you understand? Will you accept this condition?" the king asked.

"We agree, Your Majesty," the three friends said.

The king instructed the maids to prepare chicken *utadada*, a chicken broth a la Kaili. While waiting for the food, the king told the three friends to clean the palace's yard. They had to cut the grass and weed in the yard. They also had to trim the hedges. The trio did the task gladly. They were grateful that the king did not sentenced them to a worse fate.

By midday, the king told his maids to serve the meal for Tovasa, Deakutu, and Bugilepa. The three of them were going to eat in the yard, under the sun. Meanwhile, the broth was especially spicy. When Tovasa had a sniff of the broth, he sneezed because the aroma was so strong.

The king then walked to the front yard of his palace and everyone present immediately stood to welcome him. The three friends tried to be calm. They were very nervous. Tovasa began to have a runny nose. Deakutu scratched his head because the hot sun had made the lice on his head restless. Meanwhile, Bugilepa was busy scratching his whole body. He was sweating from working all morning, and the sweat had made his scabs itch.

The king took his seat under the shade of his veranda. He said,

“You three are going to do the punishment for your mistake. You have tried to steal in the palace complex. You have agreed to the rule and you knew the punishment. My guards are ready with their mallets.”

“You can start eating after the gong,” the king added. He signaled a guard to sound a giant gong.

The guard hit the gong three times. The trio began to eat. Several soldiers guarded around them. They all held beating sticks, ready to hit anyone who broke the rule. One violation would be punished with five hits on the knees.



The trio began to eat. He had not even eaten half of the food, Tovasa began to shake his head. He could not bear it any longer. His mouth was utterly covered by a long thick snot running from his nose to his lap. It was like a wide towel was pasted on his lips. He could not put the food inside his mouth. With this situation, Tovasa had to find an idea to wipe the snot. He was thinking hard for a while.

He then asked the king's permission to tell a story, "Your Majesty, may I tell a story?"

The king said, "You may. But you still have to finish your meal."

"Yes, Your Majesty. Here is the story," Tovasa said.

He began to tell the story, "If I was a soldier, I would be a great sniper. Here is how I would hold my rifle. I'd put my left arm straight in front of me, the right hand on the trigger. I'd cock my head and take aim." Tovasa mimed the action, putting his left hand straight in front of him, as if holding a rifle. He put his right hand in front of his mouth, and pretended to pull the trigger. As soon as he pulled his right hand back, the snot hanging in front of his mouth fell on his lap. He was able to continue eating freely now. He quickly finished his meal.

Deakutu and Bugilepa whispered, "Congratulations, Tovasa. You are out of the wood." They both were sweating buckets. Deakutu's head were itching so much. Bugilepa scabs also itched.

They could not hold it any longer.

Deakutu quickly said, "Your Majesty, may I continue my friend's story?"

"Sure, but you still have to finish your meal," the king replied.

Deakutu then said, "I think Tovasa's story is not complete. He was a soldier, there would be a great risk of getting shot in the head. I thought it would make a better story if he wore a steel helmet. And the helmet would be decorated with tassels dangling from each side. Here is how you put on the helmet."

Deakutu mimed a soldier putting on a helmet. "You have to make sure that it is straight. Then, you comb the tassels so it dangles beautifully," he concluded.

Deakutu's moves were a disguise for his scratching. When he pretended to straighten the helmet, he scratched his head and when he combed the tassels, he scratched the side of his head. Since his itch had been relieved somewhat, Deakutu could continue to finish his meal.

Bugilepa whispered, "Congratulations, you two. Now I'm alone who has not done anything."

Bugilepa soon begged the King to be allowed to tell a story. "May I continue my friend's story, Your Majesty?"

The king replied, “You may, but you still have to finish your meal.”

Bugilepa quickly told his story. I have heard Tovasa and Deakutu describing a soldier. However, their descriptions are not complete. I think a soldier would look better and more charismatic if he wore his full attire. If I were the soldier, I would first put on my socks and shoes.”

Bugilepa scratched his legs. “Then, I’d put on trousers and shirt. Then I’d wore my red shawl and my wide belt.”

With each item of clothing, Bugilepa managed to scratch his hips, neck, arms, and his whole body. That way, he was able to continue finishing his meal.



Once there was no food left, the king stood and said, “Congratulations. You have finished your meal and you three have managed to find a way to wipe your snot and to scratch your head and body.”

The king knew that their stories were just a ruse. The king then said, “Are you going to steal again?”

The trio replied in unison, “Never, Your Majesty. We will never repeat that mistake. If we want to eat, we will work hard.”

The king knew that these three young men were good people. They turned into thieves only because they were in a desperate situation after losing in the cockfight. The king was convinced that they were not thieves.

“Very well, I forgive you this time. I don’t want to hear a report that you steal something in the future. If I do, I will find you and give you severe punishment,” the king said.

“Thank you for forgiving us, Your Majesty. We promise to not do it again,” the trio said.

Then, they went home, feeling grateful because the king did not punish them severely. They vowed to never steal again. They were also glad to have passed the king’s challenge.

5. Lived Happily Ever After

Days passed quickly after *possalia* week. The three friends learned a valuable lesson from their experience. Their mistake had almost cost them their lives. They made a vow to never gamble and steal in the future. They knew that stealing is a heinous crime.

“Because we follow Tovasa’s idea, we almost got punished,” Deakutu said when they gathered in their hut.

“Yes, we have done a heinous and shameful crime,” Bugilepa added.

“I am sorry that I suggested that idea. We have never done such a thing before, and we were fine,” Tovasa said with regret. His hand automatically wiped his snot.

“Thank God we could pass the king’s challenge. If we had not passed, the king would have had us beaten,” Bugilepa said.

They felt ashamed of themselves. They regretted their bad decision. They promised to be better individuals. The first step they would take was curing themselves from their illnesses.

Tovasa said, “We have to improve ourselves. We’d better find a way to cure our illnesses.”

“I agree. The two of us should find a cure,” Bugilepa said.

“I’ll go to a healer to get rid of my scabs. You too can find a cure for your snout, Tovasa. Deakutu has it easier. He only need to cut his hair off. Once he is bald, he will be rid of his head lice,” Bugilepa added.

“You are right, Bugilepa. Let’s go find a cure,” Tovasa said.

“I agree. From now on, we have to take care of our health and cleanliness. I will shave my head,” Deakutu chuckled and scratched his head.

The trio tried their best to cure themselves. Deakutu shaved his head. Tovasa got rid of his snout by regularly drinking honey from wild bees. Bugilepa got rid of his scabs by taking bath and changing clothes regularly. He only wore clean and neat clothes from that moment on. Bugilepa also drink a traditional ointment, a herbal medicine, prepared by Deakutu’s grandmother.

After consistently doing all that, they were cured. They changed their life style and became better men.

They grew to be diligent and hardworking men. Deakutu was glad because he was not distracted by the itch on his head anymore. With the head lice gone, his head never itched anymore. Bugilepa’s skin was finally free of scabs and Tovasa was no longer snotty.

Days went by and the trio had become men. The villagers liked them even more. They still walked around the village, offering to help anyone. Everyone loved them because they never refused if asked for help. In every *possalia*, they were always invited to organize the party and ceremony. They lived happily in Kaili.



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1. 2001–2016: Tenaga Teknis Balai Bahasa Sulawesi Tengah
2. 2016: Anggota Dewan Pakar Himpunan Sarjana Kesusatraan
3. 2016: Anggota Masyarakat Linguistik Indonesia (MLI)
4. 2014–2016: Dosen Luar Biasa di Universitas Tadulako, Palu

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1. S-3: Linguistik Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta (2009--2014)
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3. S-1: Sastra Inggris Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar (1995--1999)

Judul Buku dan Tahun Terbit (10 Tahun Terakhir)

1. *Kamus Dwibahasa Mori-Indonesia* (2012)
2. *Interferensi Penggunaan Bahasa Remaja di Kota Palu* (2014)

Judul Penelitian dan Tahun Terbit (10 tahun Terakhir)

1. Nilai Budaya Dalam Cerita Rakyat Totoli (2007)
2. Bahasa Bugis di Kabupaten Sinjai, Sulawesi Selatan: Kajian Sosiodialektologi (2008)
3. Artikel “Ekspresi Semiotik Tokoh Kajao Lali’do dalam Lontarak Latoa” yang terbit dalam Buku Masyarakat Sulawesi Selatan (2010)
4. Pemilihan Bahasa Masyarakat T tutur Konjo di Sinjai (2014)

Informasi Lain

Lahir di Sinjai, Sulawesi Selatan, 12 Oktober 1977. Saat ini menetap di Palu, Sulawesi Tengah. Kepedulian terhadap masalah-masalah kebahasaan dan kesastraan dibuktikan dengan aktif

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