

**SERI GENTENG**  
*Seri Genteng*

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**Language Development and Cultivation Agency**  
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## **SERI GENTENG**

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CERITA DARI KALIMANTAN BARAT

# **Seri Genteng**



Ditulis oleh  
**Yeni Yulianti**



## SERI GENTENG

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### Hak Cipta Dilindungi Undang-Undang

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PB 398.209 598 4 YUL s	<b>Katalog Dalam Terbitan (KDT)</b> Yulianti, Yeni Seri Genteng: Cerita Rakyat dari Kalimantan Barat/Yeni Yulianti. Penyunting: Wenny Oktavia. Jakarta: Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016. ix 54 hlm. 21 cm. ISBN 978-602-437-087-9 <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. KESUSASTRAAN RAKYAT-BALI</li><li>2. CERITA RAKYAT- BALI</li></ol>
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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

In the beginning, Seri Genteng was one of the folklore that I liked and then I cited. I found this story when I gathered data for oral literature research in Tayan, one of the districts in West Kalimantan. This story is not popular, even for the Tayan people themselves. When Language Development and Cultivation Agency gave the opportunity to write literacy reading material for children from elementary to high school level, I decided to recount it.

In the past, staple food choices have not been as varied as they are now and the procedure for planting rice in the highlands—often called farming, is not as common as it is today. At one time, rice seedlings were brought by a child to his mother to be planted near their residence. Long story short, in the process of growing rice there is a sad story between them which leads up to the origin of caterpillars that we often find in the field, Enten, the Seri Genteng.

Imperfection is a certainty, for that the author expects new input and ideas for the improvement of subsequent books. Finally, the author would like to express gratitude to God. Hopefully the author will be given another opportunity to write. Let us succeed the National Literacy Movement conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Happy reading.

West Kalimantan, April 2016  
Yeni Yulianti

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## SERI GENTENG

This is a story of a mother and her daughter, named Enten, who lived in a small hut, on a mungguk (hill) called Segasing Sebeman. The mungguk is in Tayan, Sangau Regency, West Kalimantan. It is located near the magnificent Tayan Palace and the so-called second longest bridge in Indonesia after Suramadu. Tayan is a hilly region with large branched river streaming through the valley. It is blessed with fertile soil, sun shining all year long, and sufficient rainfall that supports agricultural activities. All plants grow without excessive care. No matter how poor the people there they will not go hungry. There was a beautiful tender-faced woman with long black haired bun. She had brown skin tone with visible veins on her hands, sign of a hard worker. She also had a more likely thin but sturdy and tough body.

On one fine morning, she bundled some supplies with a cloth and fastened a machete on her slim waist. “My daughter, I’m going to the forest for a while to look for sweet potatoes. Take care and stay in the house until my return,” said the woman to her daughter,-Enten.

“Yes, Mother.” Enten replied as she was walking down the stairs with her mother. Enten watched as her mother left until she disappeared behind the trees.



After doing some household chores she leaned against the kitchen wall of her hut. She then remembered of tangkin (a rattan basket) that used to be carried by her mother on her back fastened with a shabby cloth slung over her chest. Enten wanted to weave a tangkin for herself. Enten found a pleasure in weaving.

She learned to weave rattan from her mother. She tried to get familiar with the rattan that had been cut into sections.

She often made mistake weaving the loose end, but it did not stop her. She repeated it so many times until she got it right. Sometimes she asked her mother for a help to finish the weaving. Generally, Enten sang while she was weaving. But there were times she was weaving whilst crying thinking of her father who had not been home since 9 full moons.

Rumor has it that her father was drifted and drowned into the river when he was catching fish with net. When the night was clear, Enten often climbed onto her hut roof starrng at the stars scattering in the sky. She believed her father rested among the shining stars and he sparkled as if he wanted to talk to her from the heaven.

Whilst weaving, Enten boiled lemongrass in a pan of water. “It is good for body,” so her mother said and she kept that in mind. She wanted to give it to her mother when she returned home. Enten loved her mother very much. All of her hopes resided in her

mother. She always prayed for her mother at night. At night, her mother usually told her stories about their ancestors, plants that grew from the seeds they had sown, hundred and thousand-year-old trees, and also creatures that only came out at night.

Enten was about 7 or 8 years old, she was not sure, only guessing. At such a young age, Enten had been already good at helping her mother. Sometimes she boiled sweet cassava and some leaves for their meal, swept the one and only chamber, and weaved rattan or watched her mother weaving the yarn that had been spun from cotton whilst singing. One day, her mother sang a song that sounded peculiar to Enten's ears. She was curious but did not interrupt. Her mother's eyes were teary. She sang the song in ancient language whilst crying. Enten was still curious about the meaning of the song. Enten was lost in daydreaming until there was a knock on the stairs.

"I'm home. Take this sweet potato and vegetables inside!" there was the voice of her mother from under the shack.

Enten rushed to open the door. The day had turned to dark, so she had to squint to be able to see the outside. She carried the fully loaded tangkin inside.

"Mother, Mother ... Mother take a bath soon. I've boiled water with lemongrass for you," shouted the sweet and diligent little girl.

“Alright, dear. I’m feeding our cattle first. I’ll take a bath after that and then we shall have dinner together. What are you doing, dear?” asked the mother.

“I’m weaving, mother. I planned to make a tangkin that fits my size. I want to help you carry this sweet potatoes home on my back,” explained Enten excitedly.

“Be careful, you can hurt your hand,” reminded her mother

“I’ve got a little wound, mother. But it’s alright; Enten has treated it with betel leaves.”

Tears were running down her mother’s face. She was grateful for having a very good daughter who never hesitated to help and always be obedient. Enten indeed had always been a good and obedient child.

Instead of playing, she helped her mother taking care of herself and their house. She would rather go with her mother to the hill than do nothing. She could help her looking for food or at least be a pleasant companion. After all, her mother was all she had after her father was gone. Enten still remembered the day his father was last seen.

It was a clear afternoon. Her father took a little rice and wrapped it with banana leaf. He added a pinch of salt and a small piece of liak (lit. red ginger). He planned to set a trawl this afternoon in

the lake not far from their shack. It was only about 3 kilometers away. Thereafter he was going to catch fish with net in a river slightly receding to the estuary. Enten whined to come along, but her father forbade her.

Enten cried because she really wanted to set the trawl. She was always ecstatic to see many fish stuck in the trawl that had been set an hour or two hours earlier.

This time her father carried a large trawl, about five fingers wide of net opening (mesh size). Another trawl only had a mesh size of two fingers wide. Enten had been imagining her father would return with many fish, which were about half kilogram each, and she would roast the fish on the embers in the fireplace.

She hugged her father down the stairs. He watched his father walked away until rocking grass and trees stopped. That was her last memory with her father. Tonight the moon had risen at the corner of their hut. After dinner, Enten and her mother sat at the end of the stair, looking up to the sky and enjoying the breeze kissing their face.

“I missed father, mother,” said Enten breaking the ice between them.

“So do I. I hope your father is doing fine. Let’s pray for him,” replied her mother as she wiped the tears that suddenly came out

of her eyes. She always believed her husband would return someday. Their conversation made the night darker.

“Does father miss us, Mother?”

“Well of course.”

“Are you sure?”

“Absolutely.”

“How come?”

“Your father often comes to my dream.”

“What does he say?”

“He says he misses you.”

“Why doesn’t father come in my dream?”

“He doesn’t want to bother you.”

“How come father saying that?”

“He wants you to sleep tight.”

“But I want to see father.”

“Your father will never leave us, Enten”

“Father is always in our mind, isn’t he? Father will always be remembered, right?”

“Indeed, my child. Father will always be in our memory.”

“I understand, mother. I pray father could hear us.”

“Of course.”

“I want to pray and hopefully I can see father even it is only in a dream. May I, mother?”

“I will pray the same.”





A mosquito interrupted their conversation. It rested on Enten's right arm. The girl was reluctant to kill it, so she just blew it away. Then she took a small bottle containing water extract of wilted betel leaf, poured out some of its content and applied it on her skin.

It had unfavorable aroma that helped to keep mosquitoes away. Their conversation did not continue. Each was busy playing with their minds. Enten rested her head on her mother's lap. Eyes closed, her mother stroked her black hair. Enten fell asleep shortly.

Her mother carried her lovingly and laid her on emben (a swing made of a piece of cloth tied to two poles). She then kissed the crown of her one and only daughter. She also laid herself under the child's emben. She rested her head on a stack of cloth belonged to her husband. She hummed until her voice grew soft and she fell asleep. Enten woke up the next day. The morning was bright. Birds sang as she walked down the stairs. She went to a well by her favorite water apple tree beside the hut. She drew water from the well and then washed her face. What a refreshing! She looked around searching for her mother.

“Mother is probably out looking for firewood or wild fern in the forest.” So she thought.

She took a pestle, a long wood with a rounded end, used for crushing or grinding substances in a mortar. Then she saw a bunch of sweet potato leaves in a ragak (rattan basket). She picked the leaves from the stalk and put them inside the mortar. Enten started pounding. She learnt it by watching her mother. She could not pound long though because her hands were small. She put the pestle back and had breakfast her mother had prepared by the fire pit. Two purple sweet potatoes and arenga palm sugar made a perfect duet. She finished them whilst sitting on the stairs. A cat, out of nowhere, was meowing next to her feet.

“Oh, are you hungry?”

Enten reached out a piece of sweet potato toward the tawny colored cat. She stroked the cat’s back and head. The cat ate up a piece of sweet potato that she gave. After a pensive moment, Enten continued pounding the sweet potato leaves. The cat trailed her and waited for her while she was pounding. After removing the sweet potato leaves and cleansing the mortar and the pestle, Enten cleaned up the kitchen and washed some dirty plates and glasses. Thereafter, she sat down again at the stair end waiting for her mother to come home. The cat was meowing and squirming on Enten’s legs.

“What is it?” asked Enten as if the cat understood her.

The cat walked down the stairs and kept meowing right on the ground facing the stairs of the hut. Enten watched her and then trailed her down the stairs. The tri-colored cat walked slowly toward the forest. She wanted Enten to follow.

The cat often turned and looked back. Enten understood the gesture. Enten walked behind the cat. She was curious about what the cat wanted to show. They walked for hours, down the hill until arriving at a village. A feeling of surprise and fascination came to her simultaneously. She had never seen anyone but her mother and father. She was amazed looking at rows of houses with flower garden in the yards. Enten was mesmerized at the nice outfit, the shining necklace, and also the pretty bracelet blinking in the hands of people she encountered. She continued trailing the cat. The cat took her to a luxurious house at the end of the road. Enten stunned just before she stepped up the stairs when a girl about her age came out of the house and they exchanged look.

“Who are you?” interrogated the girl who came out of the house. She had a beautiful cheerful face with two dimples on both her ripened cheeks. The cat jumped onto her lap.

“My name is Enten. Who are you?” Enten replied in barely heard voice. She felt awkward to talk to other than her parents.

“Come, Enten. Let’s get inside and see my mother. My name is Senarai.”

The friendly invitation comforted her. She smiled as she took Senarai’s hand. She paid attention to Senarai’s outfit. It was a blue fabric with colorful threads in the sidelines. She could not help but to feel amazed. The house was extremely large for Enten. It had ladder board staircase with carved sides. A carving also decorated the front door. Entering the middle room, there was a soft thick carpet. She observed the surroundings. She counted 5 doors in the house, whereas her hut only had front and back door. Enten was invited to get inside the back room where a woman whose face shared resemblance with Senarai was preparing vegetables. Nearby there was a blackened kettle on a stove fueled with a stack of burning coals. Seeing them, the woman smiled widely.

Senarai hold the woman’s hands. “Mother, Mother, our cat has brought in a friend. Her name is Enten. Look at her. She seemed to have come from a far place.”

Senarai introduced Enten to her mother who was cooking. Enten was mesmerized looking at the two alike but different generation women.

The mother opened a wider smile. She caressed Enten’s head, then reached out and hugged Enten.

“Welcome, child. Welcome to our house. Just fell free, Enten. May I know where you live?” interrogated Senarai’s mother.

Enten was again mesmerized by the hospitality and beauty of the woman in front of her. She then replied haltingly.

“I’m from far behind the hill over there. I live with my mother in the forest,” answered Enten while she was pointing the north. Enten herself did not know the name of the forest.

“Your mother must be looking for you. Nevertheless, it has already afternoon It is better that you spend the night here.”

Enten nodded. Senarai’s mother then offered her to change with her daughter’s clothes. It was a pair of blouse and skirt. The fabric was so soft. The blouse had color combination of red and black on the neck and arm. Enten was ecstatic, and she had never had clothes like that before. Senarai showed her a chamber to take a bath at the back of the house. The water was flowing down through bamboo billet right from a spring not far from the house. Enten felt a bit strange with an object that Senarai called dipper. Senarai then showed her how to use the dipper. After taking a bath and getting dressed up, Senarai took Enten out in the yard. There were a variety of fruit trees laden with almost ripening fruits. The closest to the side door was a ripening papaya tree. Senarai and Enten talked on a pile of wood.



“Enten, what about your father and mother?” asked Senarai while offering rambai fruit that she had just picked to Enten. Enten was a bit surprised to hear Senarai asking such question, but she answered it anyway.

“I live only with my mother in a hut on the hill. My father has gone long time ago and has not returned yet. The last time I saw him was when he left for fishing. We don’t know what happened to him. I miss him deeply, so does mother.”

Senarai felt bad to have asked that very sad thing.

“I’m sorry, Ten. I didn’t mean to make you sad.”

“I know, Senarai. You didn’t do anything wrong.”

“Do you have sibling?” asked Senarai again.

“No, Senarai. It seems I have been destined to have no sibling unlike you,”

“Your mother must love you so dearly and she is also in confusion waiting for you to return tonight.”

“I guess so. Mother loves me so much more than life. She gives me half her food portion so that I can grow up fast.”

“So you can help and take care of her.”

“That’s right, Senarai. I want to take her role looking for food and to make sure she never starves and tired. She’s old enough.”

“You’re a good child, Enten.”

“I hope so, Senarai. You too are a very good and friendly girl.”

Both smiled happily. A new good friend always makes a happy heart. Moments later, the mother called out Senarai and Enten to get inside.

The night had come and lamps had been lighted. There were Senarai’s father and sibling sitting in the living room. Enten awkwardly greeted them and answered their questions. She did not notice the calico cat sitting next to her the whole time. That afternoon, Enten was like having a new family. Such a good acceptance made her forget about her sadness, thinking of her mother for a while.

At dinner time, Enten sat with the whole family of Senarai around the dishes. Enten was amazed looking at the variety of dishes served in front of her. There was stir-fried vegetables, boiled pumpkin, finely pounded pungent leaves, fish fried with coconut oil, and a pot full of steamed white grains. She never had a meal with such variation of dishes. It was shown clearly that Enten hesitated.



So Senarai's mother had the initiative to fill Enten's plate with all kinds of the dishes. The plate was full and looked so tasty. The aroma aroused Enten's appetite. She ate the dishes on her plate one by one. Unbearable, Enten asked them what the pulen (soft, chewy, and sticky textures) grains were.

“What is this?”

All motions in the room came to a halt and everyone stared at Enten. The question was unpredictable. Senarai asked her back.

“You don't know rice, do you?” asked Senarai full of confusion.

“Is it a kind of plant?” Enten replied her with another question. Everyone looked at each other. What a weird girl. They might have thought so.

“So this is the first time you eat rice, Ten?” asked Senarai's father.

“This is the first time I see it. Up there, we plant and eat tubers, fruits, and vegetables available in the forest,” replied Enten still in confusion.

The mother smiled and sat in front of Enten. Then she said softly,

“Dear Enten, this rice comes from a plant called paddy. People grow it in rice field. This is actually what's inside the curved grains at the tip of the paddy stalk. If you like, tomorrow morning

Senarai will take you to see what rice plant looked like. Will you come along?"

"Sure, I will."

"I'll go with you, okay?" said Senarai's older sibling from the corner.

Enten smiled broadly and she threw a glance at Senarai who was also smiling broadly. That was an exciting dinner for Enten.

She ate fast not only because the dishes were delicious, but also because she was starving. Looking at the way Enten ate her meal, Senarai's mother refilled Enten's plate.

"Please have some more, Enten. Don't hesitate. You can eat all up if you want to. I have a feeling 'someone' is going to like it so I cook more than usual." Teased Senarai's mother.

"Sure, I'd loved to. I really like it. I feel like I don't want to stop eating."

The family laughed at what Enten had just said. They looked astonished, and yet happy.

"Enten, eat as much as you want! Do not be shy and embarrassed! Tomorrow we'll teach you how to plant and care for rice plant. When you get home, take a basket of rice for your mother at home," the heavy voice of Senarai's father sounded so

melodious and warm. Enten thanked them many times. Suddenly she remembered of her father again, how she missed him, and her heart was in pain.

After having meal, Enten and Senarai got the job to clean all the utensils used for dinner. Senarai's older siblings folded the mat and swept the floor, meanwhile the mother removed the dinner leftover into smaller containers with lid. Senarai's father checked the lanterns making sure they could provide sufficient light throughout the night. Dirty utensils were taken to the back porch of the house to be cleaned. Before cleaning started, Senarai must draw water from the well first. That night the volume of water from the spring was small, so the water did not reach the house. The two girls finished the job quickly and playfully. Night crawled but they had not felt sleepy yet. Enten asked Senarai to play pingsot (a kind of finger throwing game similar to rock-scissors-paper).

This time Senarai was the one who got confused. She had no idea what kind of game that was. Enten was glad to explain it slowly and clearly. The atmosphere was livelier when Senarai's two older siblings joined them playing pingsot. Enten amazed every one by always breaking even. Whoever her opponent, Enten neither lost nor won. When the night came, Senarai's father, mother, and siblings left them to rest. Enten and Senarai had not

felt sleepy. Enten asked permission to lie on the roof. Upon hearing that, Senarai cheered. She also loved to do so.

“I never thought you like to look at the night sky, Enten.”

“Well I like to do it with my mother, and with my father too when he was still around. We often talk about objects in the sky and also our ancestors whose spirits become the stars.”

“Do you think those stars are the spirits of our ancestors?”

“That’s what my mother and father said.”

“I’ve just heard it.”



“Our ancestors are always around, and show up when the night is clear. Look at how they blink to us.”

“Yes, I guess you’re right. Someday we’ll be with them up there, becoming one of those stars.”

“Indeed. We are stars.”

Enten and Senarai took some time looking at the sky until the night was getting late. Senarai’s father noticed they had been up there for too long finally asked them to get down.

“Senarai, Enten, please get down from genteng (lit. “roof”), the night is late, you can get ill.”

“Yes, father.”

Upon hearing unfamiliar word, Enten asked Senarai.

“What is genteng?”

Senarai turned to Enten. It was the second time Enten asked her unordinary question.

“Genteng is roof. You know it, don’t you?”

“No, I don’t. It sounds like a weird word.”

“Oh, perhaps it’s a word from the Java Island across the sea. That’s where my father came from and he often uses words from there,” explained Senarai.

“Oh I see, genteng, it’s a funny word,” Enten said.

Senarai did not say a word but laughed. Night was clear, only a little cloud hanging. Then they went inside hastily. After checking the doors and windows were all closed, they got ready to sleep. On a wide plaited mat, Enten shared space to sleep with Senarai’s siblings who had been deep in sleep. They snored softly. Enten laid down straighten her body. She was thinking about her mother.

“Perhaps mother cannot sleep thinking about me. I am sorry mother,” she mumbled softly to herself. Enten tried to relax and closed her eyes. Her body needed to be recharged for tomorrow’s journey back to her home to the embrace of her dearest mother.

Morning came. Upon hearing the crowing of cock, Enten woke up. She looked at Senarai who was still snoring beside her. Thinking of her mother again, Enten wanted to leave for home soon. She slowly shook Senarai’s body and whispered to her.

“Senarai, wake up. I need to go home soon. My mother may have been confused since yesterday looking for me.”

Enten patted Senarai’s arm.

“Enten, you wake up so early,” stammered Senarai.

“The rooster has crowed, the sun will rise in no time.”

Senarai opened her eyes, stretched her body for a while, and then sat down nodding. She smiled to Enten.

“I’ll go and tell my father, mother, and siblings,” replied Senarai.

“Okay. I have been thinking of my mother since last night. I should not make her feel worry longer,” Enten reasoned.

“I understand, Enten. Why don’t you wash your face and take a bath if you can take the cold. You will feel fresh afterwards,” suggested Senarai.

“I’ll just wash my face. It’s cold to take a bath,” Enten chuckled and Senarai joined her before she went to look for her parents. Senarai’s siblings had already woke up and been doing their chores. Senarai’s eldest sibling was cooking rice.

Enten walked behind Senarai heading toward the backyard. There were Senarai’s father and mother sowing corn. One of Senarai’s siblings was feeding the cattle. Once close to Senarai’s parents, Enten immediately expressed her intention to go home soon. Upon hearing the reason, Senarai’s mother nodded. She embraced Enten in a gentle hug and sent her regard for Enten’s mother. She also apologized for asking Enten to stay last night. Enten returned her hug.

“Enten is very happy to get to know this family. It’s like I have a new family,” said Enten.

“I’m glad to know you are happy to be with us.”

Enten hugged her tighter. Senarai’s mother kissed her head and told her to be careful on her way back home.

Shortly thereafter, Senarai’s father showed up from the kitchen. He had something to be given to Enten. It was a package wrapped with a large leaf and tied with a strong tree root.

“These are rice seeds.” He said to Enten.

“Oh. What should I do with them?” asked Enten with enthusiasm.

“Well, just make holes on the ground and then sow some seeds into each hole. Cover the seeds with soil so they are not visible and safe from the chicken. Wait until they grow and ready to harvest,” instructed Senarai’s father to Enten.

“I’ll remember it and tell my mother.”

“Good girl.”

“Enten is so happy to be here. May I call you father?”

“Of course. I also have been thinking a name to call you.”

“What is it, father?”



“Because you can always get seri (even) in games and like to play on genteng (roof), then I shall call you Seri Genteng.”

Enten’s eyes sparkled.

“Thank you, father.”

“Let’s just say it is a remembrance from us, Enten.”

Enten gasped in response to what she had just heard. She did not want this new father became a memory too soon. All of sudden the face of her no return father flashed by. After a short pause Enten remembered of something.

“Father, Senarai told me that genteng is a word from the island across the sea.”

“Enten, Senarai is right. I sailed with the royal army of the neighboring island to this land. If you and your mother are willing, come back here, and I will tell you the full story of how I got here.”

The answer had gotten Enten mesmerized once again. Enten was amazed by the fact that there was another island somewhere across the sea and different language spoken. She was lost in her own mind until she heard a soft voice talking to her.

“Here’s a little food for your journey.”

Senarai’s mother offered her a package. Enten was moved by the kind gesture.

“Thank you very much, mother. Please excuse me.”

Enten bade farewell to the family. She almost forgot about the cat. The calico cat showed up and followed her. Enten turned and looked at Senarai.

“The cat wants to be with you. Take good care of her!” uttered Senarai as if she could read Enten’s mind. Enten nodded steadily.

She caressed the head of the cat and then walked away slowly. The cat walked in front of Enten as if a guide. Since then, Enten called the cat “Kuten” as an abbreviation for kucing Enten (lit. “Enten’s cat).

After several steps, Enten turned around. She waved her hands to her new family. Suddenly tears were falling down her cheeks.

The sun was above the head when Enten and Kuten arrived at road end to their hut on the hillside. From a distance Enten saw her mother pacing back and forth near the stairs. Enten ran toward her.

“Mother...,” shouted Enten.

Like a lightning in midday, her mother was surprised. She looked and rushed toward the sound.

“Enten, my daughter, where have you been? I almost lose hope waiting for you.”

“Forgive Enten, mother. Enten went to the village down the hill. Yesterday this cat invited me to take a walk. I did not realize that I had gone too far and I had to stay for the night there.”

“But are you alright, dear?”

“Enten is very fine, mother. I met a kind family. Senarai and her family gave me a lot to be brought home.”

“Who is Senarai?”

“Enten’s new friend, mother, and this is Enten’s cat. She has been following me wherever I go since yesterday. May I keep her?”

“Of course.”

Her mother embraced her tightly. She was relief and happy. She then looked at the package that Enten brought. She asked another question.

“What do you bring, dear?”

“These are paddy seeds, mother.”

“Paddy?”

Enten was also confused at first, “mother, but the more I ate it, the more I like it. I know it from the family who takes care of Kuten”

“Oh, I see. So how does it work?”

“These grains should be put in holes on the ground to become plants. Later on grains will come out at the tip of the plant. We called the grains paddy. After the grains are full, we may harvest them. We then pound them out of their skin and cook them in a pot with some water. These are called rice that tastes delicious, mother. Let’s make holes on the ground!”

“How long will it take to grow, Enten?”

Enten did not reply. She forgot to ask about it. In spite of that, Enten continued reporting excitedly every message from Senarai’s family. Everything that was told by Enten made her mother excited and grateful.

“Go have a rest, my dear. I’ll make holes and plant the seeds.”

“Thank you very much, mother. Enten was indeed very tired.”

The mother embraced her for a while. Thereafter, Enten climbed up the stairs and lay down on a mat where her mother used to lie down. Enten was tired but she was so happy. The mother recalled

what Enten had said about planting the grains. Then she began making holes around their hut. She put four or five rice seeds into each hole. She then covered the hole with soil. She wondered what kind of plant that would grow out of the hole. Enten said it was delicious.

She kept making holes until all the grains in the pocket were gone. Sweats were all over her body and her skin got sunburn. She finished just before the dusk.

Night came, Enten did not wake up and her mother preferred not to wake her up. She thought Enten was too tired. So she let her sleep and lay herself down next to her daughter. They both were sound asleep. The night had not over yet when Enten was awoke. She looked around for her mother. Darkness was all around. It seemed her mother had fallen asleep before lighting the lamp. She noticed her mother was sleeping next to her.

“Mother, is the rice cooked?” she asked while rocking her mother who was sleeping. Her mother stretched her body and replied, “I have planted all the seeds the way you had instructed. It’s still dark. We’ll go have a look together when morning comes.”

“Mother, Senarai’s father gave me a new name, Seri Genteng. He said it’s for remembrance. They also invited us to visit them. Would you go, mother?”

Her mother glared.

“What does Seri Genteng mean, dear? When the time has come, I sure would.” She remembered her husband’s last message to not go too far and always take care of their hut. Enten then told her about the time she spent with Senarai playing pingsot and lying on the roof. Her mother listened attentively.

She responded with nods and smiles.

“How is the new kind family, dear?” asked her mother again.

“They are very kind. They make me feel like I am a part of the family from the first place.” Enten replied excitedly.

Then the sun rose imperceptibly. They went out and immediately took a look at holes with rice grains inside. Nothing grew yet. Enten could not help to feel disappointed.

“Have you really put all the seeds inside?” she asked hoarsely.

“I have, Enten. I planted them the way you had told me.”

Enten went into the hut again. She wanted so bad to eat rice. She wanted no other. She lay by the pot, hugged it, and sang.

“Grow quick O paddy. Enten, the Seri Genteng wants to eat you  
....”



On and on she sang the lyric. Upon hearing it, the mother cried. She drew water from the well and watered each hole hoping the expected plants to grow soon. Then she responded to Enten with a song.

“Rice crop, my daughter is starving. Be germinating soon so we can eat...” The mother continues to look at the hole one by one until she lost track of time.

Enten lost her voice. She did not want to eat anything else. She fainted in the kitchen. Her mother was panic. In the dark of night, she kept singing asking for a sprout to emerge. She went around the house untold.

“Mother, Enten is hungry, I want to eat rice.”

Enten sang so softly and sadly from the hut when her mother kept going around supervising the holes filled with rice grains. Enten forgot to ask Senarai family, of how long it would take to wait for the plant to grow and ready to harvest. She had imagined herself the plant did not take so long to grow and turn into cooked rice.

Upon hearing her daughter sang so sadly, the mother was sorrowful.

“Tie your belly, Enten. Hold your hunger for a while,” suggested the mother from under the hut. She was looking for anything edible.



In the hut, Enten followed her mother's suggestion. She wrapped her belly as tightly as possible with her mother's long cloth, hoping it could help her diminish the hunger. Enten hugged the pot again and sat by the stove. Enten continued to sing.

“Grow quickly, oh rice crop. Enten, Seri Genteng wants to eat you ....”

The mother sang in respond to her daughter's song.

“Oh paddy, my daughter is starving. Be germinating soon so we can eat...”

On the seventh day, a sprout grew out of the soil. The mother who could only wobble around was thrilled when she saw it.

She shouted expecting Enten to come down and see the dreamed plant. There was no reply from the hut. The mother who had been supervised the paddy holes for days thought Enten was sleeping all day long.

A day or two had passed but there was still no rice grain as expected. Enten and her mother had no choice but to wait longer.

From day to day Enten tied the cloth more tightly around her waist. Unexpectedly, Enten's body was gradually shrinking. One day she accidentally rolled into a hole on the floor above their pinfold.

In the pinfold there was a big pig that had not been fed. The pig saw an object had dropped and thought it was food. Gulp! Enten was swallowed.

The mother did not aware what had been going on. She got into panic when she realized Enten was not there. She looked for Enten everywhere until she finally heard a voice coming from the pinfold.

“Mother, mother, Enten was swallowed by a pig for I’ve been stricken rice. Hit its stomach! Enten will be able to come out when the pig is nausea and vomiting.”

The mother was aghast. She cried and hit the belly of the pig. She looked pale and tottered.

“Hit stronger, mother. I’m inside the stomach, but I still feel nothing,” Enten small voice was heard again.

The mother blew the pig’s stomach harder. She did not know how many times she had laid punches until the pig vomited everything out of its stomach.

The mother then looked for Enten to no avail. “Enten, Seri Genteng, my daughter, where are you?”

“Mother, mother, I’ve a tiny body. You must be able to see me at daylight.”

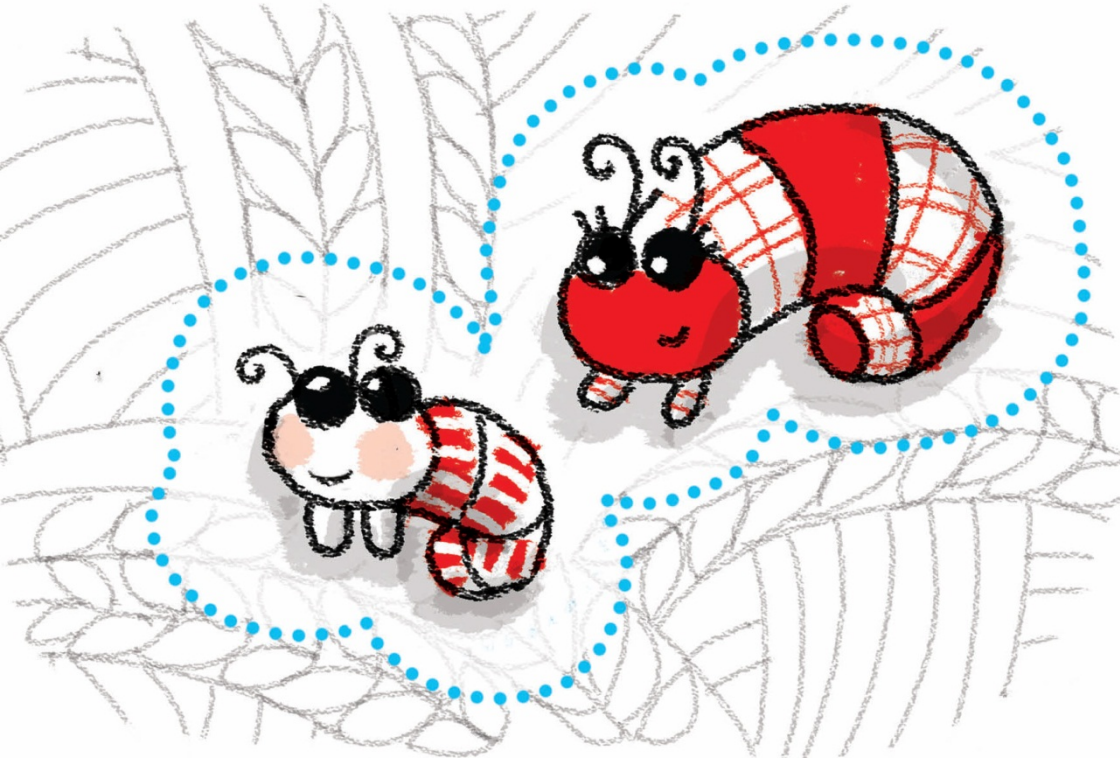
Upon hearing Enten's voice, the mother was sobbing. She waited for the dawn before she began looking for her daughter under the house and around their pinfold. She noticed a small object writhing by a puddle. The object had its midsection body shrunk and encircled by red and black color. The mother wept as she recognized it was the color of the cloth that Enten used to tie her stomach when she was starving.

“My daughter, oh my daughter...,” she yowled as she was lifting her daughter's tiny body.

“Put me by the paddy, Mother. Enten, the Seri Genteng wants to live there,” she spoke to her mother.

Walked with a limp, the mother granted the wish of her daughter. She cried on and on. She then lifted her palm and prayed hoping for her body to be like her daughter. All of sudden, a heavy rain fell and lightning struck. Her wish was granted, her body shrunk to as tiny as her child, only a little bit bigger.

Both, the mother and Enten, attached to the stalk of paddy that had grown tall. Their bodies wriggled.



Another story, when Enten held the pot tight and kept asking for cooked rice for days, Kuten, the golden brown cat that had lived in the hunt for a while returned to the village down the hill.

Days and weeks passed, Senarai began to feel an oddity with the cat's behavior. "There must be something happened to Enten," she thought. She then told her mother and the whole family about

her desire to visit Enten and her mother. Unexpectedly, her father, mother, and siblings wanted to go along.

On one fine day, they departed carrying enough food. The father put himself at the back. Kuten lead the way as always. They rushed without even taking a break and arrived at Enten's hut before midday.

Once they arrived at the hut where Enten and her mother lived, Kuten the cat mewed so loud continuously.

“Enten, Seri Genteng, Seri Genteng.... Where are you?”

They were calling out Enten and her mother as they dispersed all around the hut. On one side of the hut, they found rice plants thrived.

Seri Genteng, Seri Genteng, let's play pingsot and lie on the genteng again....” Seranai sobbed as she called Enten out. She imagined Enten and her mother must have been caught in trouble.

The silence was haunting when a weak voice was heard. It came from the direction of the rice plant.

“Senarai, Senarai .... It's me. I become tiny, I am by the paddy. Now Seri Genteng cannot play pingsot and climb up the genteng anymore.”

The voice that came from the thriving paddy plants was really heartbreaking. Senarai as well as her family was shocked. She immediately searched for Enten alias Seri Genteng on the sidelines of the plants.

Shortly after, they saw two caterpillars white and red black that shrunk in the abdomen. They attached on paddy leaf.

“It’s Enten, the Seri Genteng and the mother will take care of the rice plants so that we are not starving anymore.” Enten’s small voice was heard.

Senarai was crying under the crop. Her family approached her and they kneeled by the two creatures that used to be no different from them. Their human figures left no trace.



Having seen them, Enten's mother cried. She wanted to shake their hands. Her circumstance was very painful. Don't know what the Almighty had planned for them.

“Senarai, good girl, I thank you and your family for being so kind to Enten. Let the name of your family be remembered.”

Enten's mother made her voice to Senarai and her family who were sobbing upon hearing it.

“I'm Senarai's mother, sister. I have wanted to see you for a long time. How come we meet like this?”

Senarai's mother was also sobbing. Her chest and shoulders shook with sadness. Senarai's father did not have a heart to come near them. He preferred to look around. After having deep conversation and consideration due to the event, Senarai and her family decided to move and live there to continue working on the field that Enten's mother had started. Hence, many fields can be found in highlands. That is the story of rice plant caterpillars called Seri Genteng. Many people believe their presence to indicate abundant harvest at the end of the season. The story from Dayak Tayan tribe is also known elsewhere with different caterpillar names and variations of story.

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2006–sekarang: Peneliti Sastra di Balai Bahasa Kalbar

### **Pendidikan terakhir**

S-2 Ilmu Budaya Universitas Gadjah Mada.

### **Judul buku dan tahun**

1. Satu Kata: Istimewa (2012)
2. Merawat Ingatan Rahim (2013)



3. Taman Kata di Halaman Bahasa (2014)
4. Arca: Sepilihan Teks dan Foto tentang Seni Arca Klasik (2014)
5. Nyanyian Larut Malam: Sajak-Sajak Li Po dan Tu Fu (2015)
6. Penulisan Cerita Rakyat 2015: Cerita Rakyat Sebagai Wahana Pembangunan Karakter Bangsa (2015) – kumpulan tulisan pemenang lomba penulisan cerita rakyat Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 2015.

### **Informasi lainnya**

Penulis selama ini fokus melakukan penelitian dan kegiatan yang berkaitan dengan Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah. Beberapa tahun terakhir gemar mengumpulkan cerita rakyat di Indonesia dan berniat memetakannya. Pada tahun 2015, penulis tergabung dalam tim ensiklopedia saat perhelatan Frankfurt Book Fair 2015 lalu. Ia juga mempelajari bahasa isyarat dan mendampingi komunitas tuli. Selain itu, penulis juga berminat mempelajari puisi dari tokoh luar Indonesia seperti menerjemahkan dan membukukan haiku-haiku Tiongkok karya Li Po dan Tu Fu. Saat ini penulis sedang menyelesaikan manuskrip novel dan menjadi editor buku kumpulan esai tentang Gunung Penanggungan, kumpulan cerita rakyat dan puisi anak, serta turut aktif mendirikan beberapa komunitas atau rumah baca sekitar perbatasan Malaysia-Indonesia.

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Pembinaan Bahasa. (2001—sekarang)

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S-1 Sarjana sastra dari Universitas Negeri Jember (1993—2001)

S-2 TESOL and FLT dari University of Canberra (2008—2009)

### **Informasi Lain**

Lahir di Padang pada tanggal 7 Oktober 1974. Aktif dalam berbagai kegiatan dan aktivitas kebahasaan, di antaranya penyuntingan bahasa, penyuluhan bahasa, dan pengajaran Bahasa Indonesia bagi Orang Asing (BIPA). Ia telah menyunting naskah dinas di beberapa instansi seperti Mahkamah Konstitusi dan Kementerian Luar Negeri.