

**LIGHT AND LIES OF SI GUNAM**

*Cahaya dan Dusta si Gunam*

Property of the State  
Not for Commercial Use

**Language Development and Cultivation Agency  
Ministry of Education and Culture  
Republic of Indonesia  
2018**

## LIGHT AND LIES OF SI GUNAM

Translated from  
*Cahaya dan Dusta si Gunam*  
written by Ferdinandus Moses  
published by  
Language Development and Cultivation Agency  
Ministry of Education and Culture  
in 2016

This translation has been published as the result of the translation program organized  
by The Center for Language Strategy and Diplomacy Development,  
Language Development and Cultivation Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture  
in 2018

Advisory Board	Dadang Sunendar Emi Emilia
Project Supervisor	Dony Setiawan
Translator	Ida Bagus Putra Yadnya
Reviewer	Rahayu Hidayat
Editor-in-chief	Theya Wulan Primasari
Editorial team	Andi Maytendri M., Ayu Dwi N., Didiek Hardadi, Ferry Yun, Hardina Artating, Herfin A., Lale Li Datil, Larasati, Meili Sanny S., Putriasari, R. Bambang Eko, Rizky Akbar, Roslia, Saprudin Padlil, Syukron Ramadloni, Toni Gunawan, Yolanda

All rights reserved.

Copyrights of the original book and the translation belong to  
Language Development and Cultivation Agency,  
Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia.

Language Development and Cultivation Agency  
Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia  
Jalan Daksinapati Barat IV, Ramangun, Jakarta  
Telepon (021) 4706287, 4706288, 4896558, 4894546  
Pos-el: badan.bahasa@kemdikbud.go.id  
[www.badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id](http://www.badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id)

## **LIGHT AND LIES OF SI GUNAM**

### **Sunshine in Kampung Separi**

The morning sunshine swept Kampung Separi in Tenggara, Kutai. The shady village with all kinds of trees made its own elegance for every eye looking at each corner of the village. Rows of hills like sleeping giant ranks slipped into their own power for everyone who saw. Especially for anyone who woke up during the morning greeted after a full day of activity from the clatter of life, slashing moments of life to roll up the ongoing time without ever being able to get rid of by anyone. Time would continue and always ran for all life.

The beauty of natural charm was also felt shaken for anyone who took care of the natural surroundings. Leaves, as always, never fell when the rainy season and the wind were so fast coming that made everything ever more unpretentious, making everything always hurry bitter and sweet of everyday life, and making all the life behaviour of the villagers always calm, beautiful, and full of togetherness. Then, if at any time the fate that seemed unpleasant or disastrous came to family, relatives, or even someone who was not known once, the inhabitants also did not hesitate to greet each other and helped. Almost all of them understood, how life was just like a good attitude of

the royal life in the palace of the Sultanate of Kutai Kartanegara in the past. The life of the palace gave its own influence for every society to always live to help each other. In fact, even now, the residents lived to always tighten the sense of kinship for each other without a demanding attitude especially *pamrih*, or vested interest as always done by local community leaders. They were role models who were strongly committed to serving and not to be served in the life-style for each other. Almost every day anyway, if one of them had the opportunity to mingle with the community, the public figures in fact always concreted their real acts. Not just good at speaking advice, but also for the sake of life to be better and the spirit of togetherness.

It was also due to the togetherness of life that the husbands and wives always welcomed the morning with amazement. The residents seemed to gain new passion and inspiration in life.

Although life should not always run in a sweet situation, but in bitter though, every citizen was somehow often taught and even accustomed to being gratitude although bitter gobbled up their daily lives. Life was not only happening on land, but also in the river just like a life that never stopped to hunt for fish. All was done for the survival of a life. Fishing had long been a tradition. Tradition of other ways when farming or taking care

of the garden had to change like when harvest or while waiting for the harvest season to arrive.

### **The Journey throughout the Mahakam River**

It was a story of a married couple who had floated for a long time in the river for a living from day to day. They were a pair of husband and wife who wanted to try to find a new life: Gunam the husband and Ben the wife. To make a living in the village like hunting in the wilderness was temporarily abandoned. Fishing in the river had begun.

In a time that would never stop and did not stop because it lasted so long from time that could not be felt again, except the shadow of the morning, afternoon, evening, and night, the couple were still faithful to be in a brown wooden *candik* boat passing the time from upstream to downstream. Although the colour of the boat they were sailing with became faded, but their spirit never faded away. Their spirit was always burning like a fiery fire although it took long enough time for the wood on their boats to decay, but they never tired in the hunt for fish. Their spirits never decayed as if all the time was a journey of life that must always be implemented and fought for failure for both of them who have left their hometown though temporarily.

Just to be known, the couple had not come home and no one knew when they wanted to come to their hometown. Nobody

knew when they should go home. Nobody knew whether a necessity when they should return to the mainland while starting life as usual in the village? Probably it was not either. Even though their journey together along the river made the time as if it can be great moss. However, they continued to prove their loyalty to catching fish in the river. All was carried out in order to fight for life.

In the river, without fearing how many more trips dragging their age, they should continue. They were like human beings who never thought even be afraid and worried whenever they had to think about age.

It was just as old as the existence of this nature. Those were the couple often thought. Gunam the husband and Ben the wife thought that was merely to encourage their own life.

When the residents had questioned their age, the man always mentioned that age was an equation with this nature. That is, while this realm existed, that's where age and all their growth existed. The couple were like they really did not mind the age. As long as the spirit always took and accepted the reality, the way of life would continue to light. Nevertheless, they were also happy to find and browse the hunt, like looking for the direction of the river that was unlimited, a direction that often for them was an inch of the road to happiness. That's how the couple got happiness. They always thought that every inch of distance in

front of him was a hope. Again, it's a kind of way of testing of their own feelings and hunches against time. That's it.

They had been in the river for months to this day. How much they felt enjoyed by their own loyal conversation as a couple of husband and wife. A conversation that seemed not limited to words, but hunch and taste, conversation of a pair of two lives with ever-burning zeal.

"Is there still a last place off this river before we decide to get anchored out of fatigue?" said Ben to her husband named Gunam.

Looking ahead, a river with no end, except for the enormous grove of large trees and small swamps on either sides, Gunam digested the words of his wife. Gunam only murmured in his mind that during this life he never wafted if the river provided an end. Was there still an end? How can it ended when the spirit of fishing in the river was always on, to think?

"Rivers will never provide an end. Forever," said Gunam to himself.

"Um ... yes, maybe that's why, because the river seems eternal, I'm still questioning whether your love is still intact to me, Ben. Once again, is your love intact and true to me as long as, as broad, as powerful, even as beautiful as this river and is as real as in reality as endless or even culminate? How far can you keep your love for

me? Once again, while the river is indeed endless," added Gunam. With anxious remarks Gunam again said; "Then, will you end your loyal love to me when we meet the last rivers later?" Ben just nodded. Gunam seemed not to catch the body language of his wife very well. He said again, "If so, we are just packing fake love along this river. The love that teaches us to always try. "

Gunam and Ben were both silent, except for the pounding of the water and the breeze of the wind that were increasingly showing its greatness. The greatness of the pound of water that no longer seemed to whisper, but shouted as a witness for their existence. Even so, they both still sailed in the middle of the length downstream of the river. So, at this time it could be said that they were a couple who were still busy looking for the final direction to complete the journey of life to fish in the river.

### **Sailing through Mahakam River**

The villagers call them a pair of husband and wife, Gunam and Ben, who were struggling to live more than they could get from hunting or farming in their hometown. Gunam and Ben assumed that they had done everything before starting to fish in the river.

About the hometown of the past, it was just a village of never-ending memories of their hearts in the ark of problem that forced the couple to pack new spirits by searching for fish. Indeed, their life in a village was also not lacking because a life by farming



also had been able to suffice them. However, in the name of seeking a new life different from the usual way of life in the village, the residents where they lived also seemed to understand that the couple were already prepared as they wanted to say goodbye to seek a new life. They wanted to wade through the river; held a new hunt.

"Rather than having to be hypocritical. How guilty was the life in hypocrisy, " Gunam told Ben a day before they were about to leave the village.

Almost all residents in their hometown once thought that it was too desperate decision for them. In fact, some residents in the village where they lived also had said that such a way would like to escape from the reality of life in the village. However, Gunam and Ben did not care about such a talk. Although they realized that the villagers were also very concerned about them, although in fact they also understood that such talk was still very human. Gunam along with Ben were still looking for the end of their hunt for fishing in this river while letting the boat where to go. If they found the point of satisfaction from the end of the journey, it's a sign of some sort of end of their journey as a couple. They continued to seek the end of the journey endlessly, without despair.

"Looking for the end. Once again, whether there's still a final end," Gunam said to himself.

All the problems in taking the life of fishing in this river, in the middle of the expanse of the horizon enveloped, together with the ripple of small waves that occasionally rolled up, sometimes seemed to hiccup and sometimes not, and the night seemed to discourage especially frightened the intentions of their journey. Especially when the rain poured down their boats, they must face lovingly, in their togetherness as a pair of husband and wife. They were like having their own words to nature. Perhaps that was the reason why they still survived. The proof of survival that until this very moment was still looking for the end of a journey. End of a river downstream. The proof of survival as a pair of husband and wife. No one knew how long they were looking for downstream of this Mahakam River. The river was really making its own calculations for anyone who wanted to sail there. Many people had failed when they sailed.

In fact, their journey was as real as it was, they were still looking for fish in the river to this day. They were like looking for the end of a never ending downstream. They still survived. Unless, when at the end of this river, they perceived to be an end for them in the pursuit of a hunt in the river, whether this was some kind of recklessness or coercion in the assumption? Yes, even though most of the population thought they were weird. No one knew why it was strange if they just kept looking for the end of fighting for a life despite the distance in the river, though occasionally along with the ferocity of erratic weather in the Mahakam River, amok

that was at one time ambushed and dragged them. They still did not stop looking for the end of this river. An end as the end of their journey, the end of the river that could be said also as the end of a fatigue or concentration in their minds.

In the course of traveling time in this river, suddenly there were boats leaning. It indeed indicated the presence of a land. They felt like finding a new village. No one knew whose boats were there leaning on the land. No matter what the island was. Whether it was the land of anybody's life. Ben smiled while sobbing happily as she said.

"Is this the end of a river that we are looking forward to?"

"No."

"Is this the new land of a new village we are about to stop, Gunam?"

"Then, have we come to the end of this journey as the new land has appeared? Then is this the new village?"

However, don't you see, the residents who look passing by and seem so strange. Why they seem not to welcome the end of our journey? See also, the row of the hills around us, somehow also look strange to me."

"Not yet," Gunam replied so briefly.

They were still looking for the tip of a river downstream, and kept seeking in loving patience. They realized for some time that they must take into account the length of this journey. *Ah*, never mind, how frightened life was whenever it came to complaining and calculating how much age should continue. The proof, the boat carrying Gunam and Ben still flew without rest, sailing downstream. Flowing, for them, was like a stream in an area as large and as powerful and as unimaginable as the end of the river. The thing that they had not realized was that they were as real as it was until now, did not find an end of the journey of fish catching while tracing this river. Even if they encountered various lands and villages, it was still not for them to feel worthy to land the boat. Although once they met the land and the village, it was far away for the couple to stop there. The proof they were still in the river looking for the downstream of a river. They kept on sailing until they returned again to their own hometown, namely Separi.

### **Gunam and Ben in Separi**

On a sunny afternoon in Kampung Separi, there was a modest house occupied by a couple of husband and wife. The husband was Gunam and the wife was called Ben. They again struggled to live a hard and light of life with gardening and kept the joy when undergoing the bitterness and sweetness of life. Every day they relied on sustenance from farming in the garden. They undertook

all their jobs with the spirit of togetherness and loyalty from day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year, until they discovered the expected life at a time. In coping with all this, Ben never complained. For her to complain was a cowardly attitude in life. Complaining was a sign of inadequacy. However, one day, Ben said also to her husband.

"Our life has never changed, we always lived like this. Every day and time, it's never changed," Ben grumbled to Gunam.

"Be patient. We have tried and always tried, haven't we? When we have tried, but we cannot afford to survive, what can we do, we still have to face and try, unless we die in our minds."

"Your words were just for entertaining and spinning, Gunam. It has always been like that. Nothing changed in what you said. It's the same as our lazy spinning fate although sometimes above and sometimes down, but it has always been down for so long," said Ben.

"Yes, be patient, Dinda Ben. You never know. Because every time, after gardening, I also try to go fishing between the upstream and downstream of Mahakam River. I'm going back to that river again. Even, when the night comes, despite the fierce weather that you never knew because you must have fallen asleep, I still fish as much as possible to get something to eat from day to day. Please understand!" Gunam said in a high tone.

The evening was late. The conversation between Gunam and Ben questioning the flow of life from time to time was over. On a very quiet night and the cold air enveloped their rest, they greatly wished to change.

Early in the morning, Gunam woke up to get back to work. This time was not farming or fishing, but hunting animals. He said goodbye to Dinda Ben.

"You pray for me and wish me luck and my today's hunt runs smoothly. Take care of the house carefully," said Gunam.

"Will you take me with you, Gunam?" yelled Ben.

"No need. There is no need for us to repeat long tiring journey to penetrate from upstream to downstream. Our experience at that time was enough. Once experience is enough. Now it is very much dependent on how we pluck the wisdom and pleasure that even when the pleasures are left in our minds each. Is there any pleasure that you feel when we were together at that time, Dinda Ben?" Ben just nodded, embarrassed. She smiled a little smile. While cleaning the paths with scratching broom stick. Ben said goodbye to Gunam who wanted to go hunting. How happy the wife was when she saw the man had the spirit of hard working. While alone at home, Ben continued to clean up the yard until the sun revealed from the east.

"Where does your husband go, Ben?"

"Going to hunt. Probably the same as your husband does, Olo. "

"The spirit of your husband is incredible. Yes, just like my husband, he also goes to earn a living by gardening for us to live as a family."

"Yes, it must be like that. We should not give up to always fight in life. Men are nothing but the most powered machines to always remain tough," Ben said.

### **Conversation from Kampung Separi**

At dawn in Separi, the hills looked so earthy, the sun slowly popped out without a doubt, in a modest house. Coming home from the hunt, suddenly Gunam said to his wife.

"In the morning like this, as long as the sun has not crossed to dwell on the sky shining on its heat, is there any plan happier than every time we are always like this and so, Gunam?"

"What do you mean, Ben? Don't you ever say that it is enough and we should be grateful. Never mind, Ben, for the umpteenth time, stop your complaints."

"Yes, at least we can continue to the field while looking at corn or other crops you've planted. Or somehow go to a neighbour's house for a mere friendship while sharing a story or at least go back to fish, like your spirits when filling time other than farming. "

"However, to do all that must be re-thought, Dinda Ben," said Gunam in a flat voice.

Gunam instantly paused while staring intently at the eyes of his wife. Besides looking at Ben, he also stared at the trees, windows, room doors, as well as some plates and plastic cups from leftovers, then, back to look at the wife a little empty. Occasionally he grasped Ben's hands like a cold sweat of fear. It made Gunam start to realize a little bit. "Always worried," he told himself. Life seemed to be enslaved by fear. In fact, for him, by grasping the hand of his wife, was an entertainment as well as making it a source of excitement, incomparable entertainment. It's the one and only entertainment on earth, Gunam thought. The most unique entertainment of His power for a pair of husband and wife.

Some plates and plastic cups from breakfast still scattered, as well as some fish side dishes and vegetables from the remaining fields. Also a glass of coffee and a glass of warm dyed tea that had left a little. And a voice of birds that happened to perch on the branches of the trees outside mixed with sound of water from the source of perennial springs that brought them to an atmosphere. What kind of atmosphere. No one knew what atmosphere. Probably an atmosphere of such a closeness between Gunam and his wife.

During the day, after they had talked endlessly since the morning, Gunam said again.



"Dinda Ben, maybe I'd better go back to the river for fish this afternoon. Or if necessary I do farming again re-planting seeds from the rest that we have planted in the past. Or we go to a relative in our village. Where do you want to go, Dinda Ben?" Gunam said lightly. This time Ben did not answer. Ben was only busy cleaning some glasses and plastic plates from the rest of their meal. Then, again she rushed to show her bustle, ie taking a broom and *sula*. After that, she took anything to clean the home yards. Ben looked so keen that everything was always clean, despite living in a modest home. Then, while looking preoccupied with her busy cleaning the yard, Ben said to Gunam.

"What kind of man are you, Gunam! I'm busy but you don't want to help. I know you've been doing a lot of work today," Ben said with fury.

"You must know, Dinda Ben, I'm really busy too. Although I seemed to look ignorant, but you should know that I was much more concerned about the seriousness of my will that I could continuously do," said Gunam who seemed not to be outdone. Then, he said again, "Moreover, let us today unite thinking and if necessary new ideas are needed among us. You know, Dinda Ben, I'm so tired and stuffy to always

satisfy our needs. The need of the day and time to time that will never be able to make us stop the accelerating pace that goes on."

For a moment Ben was silent again, except by her increasingly unsettling preoccupations. She dug the yard with a broomstick as if she did not want to lose.

"You should know, Gunam. At least, you can do something else. I do not know what it is. Either visit the garden when necessary while weeding the corn plants that we have been planting for several months. Or if necessary you do something in the fields so that the rice we plant is not disturbed by rats or by a flock of birds. The most important thing you do must really be from your free time. Besides, Gunam, we should know that we do not need to mention and swear from everything we have done. Whatever you or I do is for the needs of our togetherness as well. And...."

"Huss ... and what, Dinda Ben? Mind your words so that I can always hear even when you're angry. Oh, Dinda Ben, what happens with you that you speak of like that. It seems that you always think that nothing is better in what I have done!" Gunam said.

"Who thinks there's nothing better in what you do, Gunam? However, whatever the task or the job we have, it really needs a big responsibility, especially the words and good spirit. Didn't you ever tell me, Gunam? If our efforts are little, yes, the fortune that we have can also be a little. Hence, I want to say that indeed sustenance is in the hands of God. While you're trying, yes, keep

on trying, I am sure we must never be far away from that sustenance."

"Stop! Enough! Dinda, you even advised your own husband. You seem to preach. It is enough for me to just hear a sermon from a priest who is authorized if it is only to hear such advice, Dinda," said Gunam, apparently getting annoyed.

"Dinda did not mean to advise you, Gunam. Who am I? I am just a wife that you have. How dare I preach. You had better go back to work hard, Gunam. Without much demanding especially questioning about sustenance. Sustenance has its place. Sustenance is destined for who is most entitled to receive it. I am more pleased to see my man calm without demanding much, but tries a lot."

This time Gunam was completely silent. He put all the equipment for fishing. He looked so silent. Not a single word came from his mouth. Slightly dreamy and so thoughtful, he threw a gaze at the yard that was so full of trees. He seemed to accept and made a spirit over his wife's words.

Like a season that never broke its promise at the beginning of the year, a season to make it rain, strong winds, and the night air piercing bones. It was perceived by Gunam as freshness. He started thinking about doing something rather than busy talking about something.

At night, Gunam began to think about something. Something he contemplated. Something that he wanted to be made with the real attitude of an action to show the proof of his conversation since morning with his wife. He wondered what it was. He did not know what he wanted to do. Only Gunam who was the most able to taste and digest. No one knew that. Even Dinda Ben. Like a night that always came and its arrival was without permission, except for the promise to make it as part of the morning and afternoon since this world existed. That was what happened and was perceived by Gunam: he considered that love was indeed beautiful because it came with full force and at the same time, surprising everyone by something that was proper.

Then, in reality it ended up making Gunam always and must fight. Gunam started to arrange his life. Gunam began to make up his daily life from feelings that were less certain. He began to think and think to encourage himself and then prayed that what he and his wife had thought and done and wanted to do were blessed. Together with Dinda Ben, Gunam started to re-energize and strengthen himself to let be gone be bygone and then declared all his good deeds.

Yes, nobody knew what Gunam was thinking about. Not many plans he mastered, except for the feeling of good intentions. Gunam deliberately initiated the craving of good intentions with feelings, without realizing it. Now Gunam really wanted to go

back to find fish and cultivate from the good feelings that had less so erratic in the recent times. Once again, Gunam just wanted to dispatch his good intentions through feelings. With his wife, he re-expressed the depths of his feeling to become the most valuable spirit of excitement with innocent feeling again. Gunam started all the action that he would pass with the spirit and the burning thought. His spirit came from the tears belonging to humans born to poverty. Gunam also remembered the importance for himself to interpret the language of sweat. Yes, the point was, Gunam thought about the spirit of his own feelings. As it was. What was that? Only Gunam knew. He felt that nothing was more important than in the middle of fun to play with the spirit of himself from the feeling of being so lazy and stopping to continue to work despite Gunam always came home late till in the morning.

Suddenly Ben awakened because she happened to want to go to toilet. She felt quite surprised without Gunam with whom she was always and indeed always while resting. However, this time she did not get it. Ben then intended not to continue to rest. Ben waited until Gunam to come up. All the worries hit Ben. However, thanks God, everything went fine. It was not useless for Ben to wait Gunam because after a lapse of a few hours, Gunam came bringing the results of the hunt.

"What's the matter with you, Gunam, what time is it? You should take a rest first, Gunam. Then you may start every morning to work together for everything we have to do," Ben said grumpily.

"You should work with me, Gunam, because after all Dinda is your wife. It is appropriate and proper for Dinda to know or observe the kind of work you are doing, Gunam.

"I did not mean not to take you, Dinda Ben," Gunam said. Suddenly, the words of Gunam to his wife somewhat made Ben furious. Ben felt no longer regarded by Gunam. Disputes even became increasingly so.

"Hear. Listen to what your husband says, Ben. I did not mean that at all. Only, I as a man feel very responsible for our needs from day to day, even for our future," said Gunam.

"What else. Hey, listen to you, Gunam, what else, what else should I hear? Because it is not as usual. It's like the last time you've broken your promise, Gunam. Or you probably have another wife?" Ben said angrily.

"My God, Dinda Ben, do not be prejudiced," said Gunam. There was more fighting between Ben and Gunam. The pair of husband and wife were involved into an increasingly unbroken quarrel. However, Gunam really understood that a real man was completely away from his intention to harm his life partner.

Moreover, they had long been tested by togetherness that was very demanded by the spirit of mutual open and loving.

Finally, there was agreement between Ben and Gunam; they preferred to save their relationship all this time, by realizing that a fight was a very unimportant thing to do. They also increasingly agreed that their relationship was a relationship that was always based on love. The argument would only make their relationship worse. Because there was something much more important to the couple, that was, they must continue to struggle and struggle to fill this life into better beings. Bad times and good times should be borne by those two who were no longer two, but one. Nevertheless, the journey of life the couple had gone through was not always beautiful, but something that strengthened their journey. So, something that made them disagree with each other was something that should be a habit that must be shared. Because they also believed, as long as they could be patient, God would never sleep watching Ben and Gunam's trip.

### **The Blessings of Kampung Separi**

As the saying goes, there is no effort to be wasted whenever man is always faithful and try his best to live his life, so is the household life of Gunam and Ben. The pair of husband and wife, one time got so abundant sustenance from God. Blessings approached their life journey as a couple along the path of life.

Whenever blessings came, they would no longer be able to avoid Sang Hyang's blessing.

Not only for a pair of husband and wife, but also for the people in Kampung Separi. Gunam and Ben, as well as villagers, began to feel the harvest of rice, corn, and other crops. Never again did they feel hungry especially the lack of foods. However, their simple lifestyle did not change, that was, to wear clothes from bark to make clothes and pants for their daily activities. Their principle of facing the day was also unchanged, ie by staying strong to have daily life to always wake up at dawn as usual. To put it simple, they must start the day before the fly flew, a flock of birds passed over their house, even a chicken started crowing. It was done for years. Blessings were also felt for Olo and her husband, they felt the harvest was amazing.

As usual, every time she waited for her husband to come home from the adventure of earning a living, Ben often talked to Olo. Olo was always faithful waiting for her husband to come home.

"Your efforts are not in vain, Ben," said Olo. "Do not think because of me alone, but also due to our prayers for our husbands, Olo," Ben said.

"Yes, but at least, all of us and of course the inhabitants of this village no longer feel bitterly to bear the pain of life."



"Oh, Olo, don't think that in the past when we or you were in trouble then you named it bitterly to bear the pain of life. Not so, Olo. No. Do not mistakenly interpret the process of every journey of life. Because yesterday or today, our struggle remains the same. It's just, lately that blessing is on our side. Most importantly we remain patient to bear all happen," said Ben ending her conversation with Olo.

Despite the abundant blessings, Ben still always prayed for Gunam safety to avoid any obstacles during adventure to earn a living. It was done because she sometimes panicked witnessing her husband who left since dawn and came home late without bringing anything from his work. However, helplessly Ben had always lived patiently. She let him go and waited back until his nose was visible in her eyes. That was the happiest event. Not long after that came the man she awaited. He seemed to carry a variety of fishing results.

"You got incredible fishing results, Gunam.

"Thank you, Ben. This is the blessing of your prayer. Every wife always prays for her husband when going to adventure to make a living," said Gunam while glancing, then smiled at Ben. "If you go too fast fishing, the fish will dive again, then disappear looking for baits in another place," said Gunam added.

"Do you think that fish are capable of thinking as far as that?" Ben said mixed with laughter. "Yes, I think so, Dinda. After all, if the night gets late, the fish are mostly diligent in searching for food near the surface of the water. The fish always prefer to play in the water surface. It makes you more easily to catch the fish," Gunam said confidently.

Whether going fishing, farming, or hunting, things went smoothly and were very productive. The grace of God seemed to give more sustenance for them. So was the case with the villagers. Kampung Separi became a place full of blessings. Everything flourished from time to time. Then, one day, Ben increasingly felt the blessing of Sang Hyang. It was not enough for her to express her feelings of gratitude and she told her husband that she intended to ask Gunam and the villagers to make a thanksgiving event. The event was named *erau*, an old ceremony from the past taking the form of gratitude that had been done by royal family or palace, even since the ancestors, by inviting all prominent community leaders who served the kingdom. Usually they came from all corners of the kingdom while carrying various foodstuffs and livestock. In the ceremony, the Sultan and other relatives of the palace provided a banquet to the people as a token of thank of the Sultan for the devotion of his people. The *erau* which would be intended by Gunam for Kampung Separi was a form of gratitude to God as a giver of every favours in all life activities.

## **Thanksgiving Ceremony**

After the villagers harvested rice, Gunam, Ben, and the residents, agreed in the near future to hold a ceremony of gratitude to Sang Hyang. The ceremony was named *erau* which was long ago intended to be made with a bunch. The adat chief had already approved the event to be carried out. The residents agreed. Each head of household was ready to bring a dish based on the blessings of Sang Hyang. They volunteered to contribute in the form of chicken, rice, pig, and various other items necessary for the needs of the ceremony.

Agreement among the villagers occurred, namely that the thanksgiving event would be held at night for sixteen nights. At the event agreement was made for women and men who did not have a partner to immediately determine their life partner.

At the time, the event was also believed to be an occasion when every woman and man who met then could love each other. The point was to simply know that it was certainly a match for both. Then, if both agreed they could continue on the marriage stage, the future life was already considered good and could be said to be the soul mate.

*Erau* party began to take place. The residents of Separi were partying frenetic. A resident said that this ceremony, in addition to thanksgiving, must be made very festive and memorable. They

looked very happy showing a variety of behaviour, ie there were some people dancing following the music boom and the scream of a singer and some who circled the previous yields that had been collected into one. The produce was mounting, about three meters tall. One by one amongst the residents seemed to be swaying to the rhythm of the customary chief's instructions, even some of them were also swaying to and fro, swaying freely without burden and swaying for a tribute to the habit of giving thanks. A moment later, one of them also shouted, "Let us give thanks for Sang Hyang who has always bestowed an infinite sustenance for us. Keep going and keep dancing. Eat and drink as much as you can."

Day after day the event of thanksgiving ceremony went on, almost no one seemed to rest. The time for the chicken and pigs they wanted to slaughter had come. Before slaughtering, the chickens and pigs that had previously been tied first were carried to be paraded on a field. After that, while singing and praying thanks to Sang Hyang, the animals were cut off. The results of the pieces were processed variously, some were burned, fried, and boiled. All of them were cooked with the finest ingredients. After that, the foods were eaten rollicking.

Still a few days ahead to end the ceremony. The entire population of Separi rejoiced and again sang. All spilled in the field into one for always party and partying.

## **The Lies of Gunam**

Thanksgiving ceremony was still going on in the field. The booming of music and the people's singing were unceasingly. In addition, they were mutually excited to express thanks to Sang Hyang.

Back at the story of Gunam, it turned out that since the first night of the event, he was not present. "Why didn't you joint the thanksgiving event, Gunam?" asked Dinda Ben.

"It is okay. Never mind."

"What do you mean by never mind, Gunam? You don't keep your promise.

Why? Why, Gunam?" Said Dinda Ben.

"There's no need for Dinda to intervene."

"Yes, I have to. It must be. Dinda should intervene, Gunam. Remember always, I am your wife. I should know all the responsibilities and the mirror you have and all are on Dinda. So is the mirror I have is on my husband, that is, you, Gunam, you. Come on, Gunam! "

"Stop it. Stop. Ben, the most important thing is that tomorrow early in the morning you have to prepare the most important equipment. I'm going to fish in the river," Gunam ordered.

Ben was speechless unable to speak anymore. Ben was about to ban Gunam again. But somehow. All the way she didn't know how to tell him. Everything she did was in vain. Although she was full of disappointment and far from sincerity, she still prepared the fishing equipment for Gunam. Ben grieved to the sky, inwardly she spoke to Sang Hyang. Speaking inwardly, Ben was about to tell Sang Hyang that it was not from her will to let Gunam, but rather his will to insist on going fishing. However, returning to her nature as a wife at least Ben has given directions to her husband about all the risk whenever anything happened with Gunam.

The sky remained blue and majestic as the surface of gelatin. It was always so in its loyalty as the eternal roof for the world. The clouds that were always white were becoming increasingly indicative that, day after day, life in Kampung Separi was always good and there were no obstacles to the people in the village who were doing thanksgiving for the owner of life. The echoes of gratitude continued to be heard through the ears to absorb inwardly.

Ben actually had a great hope for her husband into this fourteenth night. It was still only two days left and the thanksgiving feast would be over. Dinda Ben again persuaded Gunam.

"Gunam, will you reconsider it?"

"There's no need to go back to think about it. You know, your husband is worried about running out of food stuffs again. Who would care if we run out of foods," said Gunam.

"I did not mean that, Gunam. Your wife just wants to say why you then become so worried as if you don't know where you want to go, while ...."

"Ah. Enough, Dinda. Be it known to you that, this is the most lucrative day when I go fishing, because the Mahakam River is very quiet as the people do not go fishing. So, of course, many fish along the river will all be our food," said Gunam.

"Yeah, I know, but there are still few days to come, Gunam. You do not have to force and take a chance like this. After all, the thanksgiving ceremony is over tomorrow," said Ben trying to advise Gunam.

"It does not matter, Dinda. You do not have to worry and hesitate because on the last day tomorrow, your husband will surely attend the thanksgiving event. The most important is that you can be present on the closing day. As my promise to the customary chief that at the closing ceremony tomorrow I'll beat the drum as a sign of thanksgiving event is over. Then our thanksgiving event to Sang Hyang is finished. Please understand, Ben."

Dinda Ben was silent. She couldn't afford to talk to Gunam, except for hoping that he would always be all right. Women

sometimes had very sharp feeling. Suddenly Ben called out to her husband.

"Gunam. Gunam! "Ben ran hurriedly. She pulled Gunam's arms immediately. Ben's eyesight was deliberately thrown to her husband. She hoped that Gunam could catch her cue that she really didn't want to be left alone.

"Why do you look so frightened like that, Dinda?" Gunam said as he embraced her shoulder. "Why and why? The way you look at me is strange. Why do you then sweat like this? Tell me, Dinda. Answer," Gunam said as he looked into her eyes without blinking.

"I don't know what to say to you anymore. Ah, to be honest wholeheartedly, I do not want you to go back fishing this time," said Ben so worried.

### **Feeling Anxious from Upstream to Downstream**

Late afternoon in Kampung Separi, the day before the thanksgiving event was over, the party was still going on with noisy. As usual the people hummed while holding various events for Sang Hyang. Meanwhile, Gunam was taken by Dinda Ben to the Mahakam River. On the riverbank, it was hard for Ben to let Gunam go.

However, everything she said just like passing in the ear of Gunam. Ben wanted to say something to him again, but she did



not dare. She was only able to see the eyes of Gunam. Her lips were frozen instantly and looked empty in the eyes of Gunam. Then the man hugged. As they embraced each other, Ben bravely whispered, "You should have understood, Gunam, how hard I feel about letting you go."

"Stop worrying, Dinda, your husband just goes fishing. Nothing more. I do not want to linger. Do not be worried anymore. It can all drain your energy. Think good," whispered Gunam.

Then Guman began to drift with the boat. While installing the bait at the end of the fishing line, he pulled the threads of fishing line. He threw it in the direction he trusted most. He was confident that there would certainly be fish caught by the bait lure soon. Gunam had followed the fishing rod for half an hour already, but not a single fish seemed to eat the bait. Gunam seemed to be unlucky, but he never gave up. He kept thinking positively and stuck to his conscience. There was no uncertainty in it. He continued to stay faithful until there were fish that ate the bait. Instantaneously Gunam looked very happy because he felt there was something eating the bait. "Well, am I right, it's really great that you have a husband like me, Dinda, I've almost caught a fish to start with. The rest will surely be many," said Gunam to himself with a sure feeling. For a moment the rod was pulled up, all of a sudden the bait was gone. In his belief the bait was swallowed by the most awaited fish. It's simply a bad luck

for Gunam. However, Gunam patiently continued to wait until the fish were entangled.

Then he gave back the bait on the fishing line hoping to get back to the mouth of a hungry fish. Patience was required when fishing in the river. The brown and turbid river, plus the occasional wind blowing hard, made Gunam really keen to follow the instinct to stretch the bait where the fish were actually located. Patience, at least, answered the waiting for each of the expected results. Not long afterwards he again felt his fishing line vibrating. It was somewhat hard, like stuck in the middle of a hungry big fish. Gunam was really happy. Immediately, without thinking further, he pulled the rod. Gunam glared in wonder. Apparently, it was only a fracture of a tree branch. Gunam immediately frowned. A spontaneously ready smile was detained again.

"I should always have great patience," he said thoughtfully. Gunam was already accustomed to face every kind of trap like this. Patiently he again hooked the bait at the end of his fishing line.

The proverb was also true that lucky cannot be achieved and unfortunate cannot be rejected because after that all of a sudden the bait was eaten by a stingray. Gunam was actually happy to catch the fish. He quickly brought the fish home. He didn't care whether the fish would be deliciously eaten or not. At least

Gunam was sure that the fish could still be taken benefit, such as he could use the tail of the stingray to beat drums at the end of the event. Gunam didn't forget that the head of adat at the end of the thanksgiving event would ask Gunam to beat the drum. The drum would be a sign of the closing of the event. Then, Gunam hurried up to meet Dinda Ben. How happy he was. He could not wait to surprise her. Gunam could not wait to show off his ability to catch a stingray.

"Ben, cut the tail of this stingray immediately. Don't forget, I cannot wait. And don't forget to smoke the fish either," shouted Gunam.

Dinda Ben was suddenly surprised. She could not understand what had happened to her husband that she must witness with her own eyes that her husband was carrying stingray. She was just surprised. Furthermore, Ben was unable to say anything more, except to obey his orders.

"Dinda Ben, I'll use the tail of this stingray to hit the drum at the thanksgiving event later." It seemed that Ben was very disturbed to hear it. She was increasingly troubled. It ended up being a deep rage to Gunam.

"No need, Gunam. No need. Please listened to my suggestion. Please do not use it to hit the drum. I hope you do not do that. "

"Calm down and be patient, Dinda. Don't get angry and misunderstood all my wish. It's not good. You'd better help me think," said Gunam.

"I don't get angry, Gunam, but I wonder why you want to hit that drum at the end of the thanksgiving event with a stingray tail."

"Ah, please, Dinda. The most important is that you do not get too embarrassed. At least you've learned and then tried to understand your husband. But, never mind, no matter what happened you are still my wife, Ben.

There is no need for us to fight each other especially blasphemous each other," said Gunam. Secretly Gunam still kept the desire to be with Dinda Ben to discuss about the willingness to beat drum.

"Gunam, isn't it enough to beat the drum just with your hands and fingers?" Ben questioned again.

"No, Dinda Ben. No. Anyway on the last night we must be all-out, fasting, if necessary all night along to make us not sleep," said Gunam convincing.

### **Gunam Disappeared**

The expanse of the sky looked bluish as if it told the sunny horizon for the residents who were holding the thanksgiving feast with great fanfare. This was the day most awaited by all the inhabitants of Separi, arriving at the peak of completion. The

residents had reached the sixteenth night. It was the final night of a thanksgiving feast named *erau* that was held by all the villagers.

Unchanged, on a vast field that could hold the entire population of Kampung Separi, there were still present of husbands and wives, and children to grandchildren. As usual their bodies were only wrapped with barks, and some were naked. All was also still as usual, that they had fun to play their own role. They were dancing, humming around the pigs and chickens that were always available to be ready to cut. There were also people drinking *tuak*, some were eating grilled meat with greed. They seemed soluble in the frenetic thanksgiving feast. However, the party ran so earthy and peaceful. They did not interfere with each other. Everyone looked cheerful and free to and fro in one field. They moved to fulfill their own want and will. Once even twice, in the midst of chaos, the customary head with some relatives who helped yell out gave affirmation to the inhabitants. The customary head begged in his invitation to perform the ceremony until the very last day with the best attitude. All could do whatever they liked to do but most importantly remained in one field. Then, when someone came out of the field or did not join the event during the sixteen-day period, it directly meant not to respect the Sang Hyang who was always protecting and providing sustenance for them.

Furthermore, while swiftly standing in the crowd, the customary head was quietly watching the people one by one. He knew every resident of Kampung Separi.

His attention was especially to Gunam because it was on this last day that he must close the traditional party by beating the drum. Obviously, after being given instruction on when to precisely start to beat. The customary head had already gone around many times, he began to panic because he had not seen Gunam. He also searched for Gunam's wife, but he did not meet her either. In the middle of the crowd, he began to ask everyone on the field.

"Did you see Gunam?" the chief asked.

"It was only on the first day alone that he was seen with Ben," said one resident.

The customary head was getting angry, half-confident, he went back and kept looking for answers from residents who knew at least about Gunam and his wife during the thanksgiving event in Kampung Separi. He asked one by one again, but he also got various answers from the residents.

"I saw him, but on the first day alone."

"Not yet, I have not seen Gunam. I had only met Gunam's wife. After that we did not see each other again."

"Yeah, I just saw him some time ago. However, I couldn't remember on what day to the time of this thanksgiving event took place. I do not know more. Please ask the others, they may know."  
"

"The last time I met Gunam was just when he was about to say goodbye, he said for a moment to take some food for this thanksgiving event."

The customary chief was increasingly panicked where Gunam and Ben were. However, he was convinced that Gunam never lied to him. He kept searching, probably skid over the crowds of people in the field. It's just that, as already agreed, the event must be closed by Gunam. No other. Because he was the man who pioneered the continuity of the thanksgiving ceremony in Separi. So, it must be Gunam who hit the drum. The adat head kept searching and searching without any discouragement. He asked around. The answers of the inhabitants also became diverse.

"Gunam? Gunam whose wife was named Ben? I only met Ben."

"No, I did not see Gunam." "Hmm, no. Yes, I do not see Gunam. "

"Gunam indeed said goodbye to me, but he said he would come back when the ceremony was nearly over."

"I don't know, usually, Gunam often goes with the customary chief?"

The customary head continued and kept looking for Gunam. Meanwhile, time kept going, Gunam and Ben were not visible yet. Meanwhile, early in the morning the event must be closed and the drum had to be beaten by Gunam. However, the evening was getting late but he was nowhere to be found.

Almost every hour the customary chief called on every resident to celebrate the *erau* ceremony so as to always be responsive to the situation of this issue. This ceremony could make all customary heads very panic because this ceremony was a form of writing agreement among the population with the universe, the universe that was always maintained and guarded by Sang Hyang. Without Sang Hyang, what was the meaning of the ceremony. However, the customary head always exclaimed that this ceremony of gratitude should always be done not by playing games. Due to the frequent encounter of such deviations as to the continuity of this thanksgiving ceremony the adat chief also advised many times that long before the ceremony was held, each or some of the villagers had been informed of how this ceremony could proceed well and sacred. In addition, the customary chief also asked the residents to keep clean during the event. The creation of hygiene and the spirit of togetherness would make the sacred ceremony run smooth.



## **The Dream of Dinda Ben**

Once, in the night away from the hustle and bustle of the residents who were celebrating the event, in a deep night's rest, Ben dreamed of meeting Gunam. In such a long dream, Gunam said from the sincerity of his heart to his wife. This is the dream of Dinda Ben.

"Dinda Ben, don't worry whether I'm going back to the thanksgiving feast. Trust your worries in your deep heart honestly. Ben, if I don't come home it means I will pick you up at night, in a dream or out of the night's rest.

Dinda Ben, remember when the sun is flushed before setting, your eyes still remain in my own mind lonely. I still go hunting at the time when many residents are partying. Never mind, Dinda, don't be sad anymore.

Be patient, Ben, next year is in sight. No need to worry about tomorrow even though it is uncertain. Certainty will be bright or maybe vice versa. Don't you remember that every night you are staring at the moon and stars? The moon and stars are always faithful to cheer up even the sad heart.

I just left the village that expressed grateful while partying for few days. They actually dissolved in a party atmosphere. Somehow they just had a party. In fact, in the tradition that had been done by

the ancestors, the main part of the event was to give thanks to Sang Hyang.

Dinda Ben, I'm scared. Fear of having to go back to the ongoing party. However, what can I do, before or during the closing ceremony, I must beat the drum.

Dinda Ben, how are you doing there? Is it the same with me? Every second I was hunted by fear. If you were here, for sure I won't be able to see you again because I wouldn't return to the ceremony.

If you only knew how very frightening the night in my hunt this time, you must have forbidden me. I'm glad you did not know. Therefore, you should not question whether I will go home one day. I'm here like without a night, not like you and those who every night could be joking in their dreams. I hope every time you stay awake, Dinda Ben, especially in the night. I heard the news that the villagers are boisterous partying, especially the wives and husbands.

Ben, I really missed you more. Always be aware, as I tell you, for how unlucky I am if I cannot protect you, Dinda. Every second I step in the hunt, the increasingly frozen panic is present. The trees seem to be no longer waving their leaves, no sign of the wind. The residents are just busy partying. They seem to ignore the advice of traditional leaders. Hopefully they do not become arrogant. Dinda

Ben, I'm worried, just like waiting for a bad change. It's natural that lately, before I leave, the residents seem to no longer heed the customary tradition. Ironically, the residents increasingly engrossed with each other. They are no longer afraid of Sang Hyang.

Dinda Ben, I don't know to whom should I say if not to you? I should be able to put this feeling to a customary figure in our place. All residents are busy as busy with each other alone and themselves. Perhaps, they complain only with themselves. Ah, how selfish they are. In fact, Sang Hyang is the most generous and forgiving unreplaceable.

Dinda Ben, my hunting ground is getting sting and rusty, my eyes are red because I did not know what time to rest this word when sleepiness slowly ambushed. Like without evening or even a night, the sun is like reluctant to wink its light eyes for a moment. No night, like the absence of a night in my daily life.

Dinda Ben, I'm always afraid that the people in our village someday are hit by the ark of chaos. Since the fertile season came, they raved every second along with the stinging aroma of *arak*. Without a definite action.

Dinda Ben, I'm afraid the scorching sun full of dust will struck our village, as if preparing to wreak havoc. The calamity of the wind is mixed with dust and unpleasant news.

Dinda Ben, you once said that I should never be afraid to always pray and offer gratitude, so that the fears would slowly disappear.

Dinda Ben, I do not know. The ferocious animals in my hunting place never want to know. If I am not alert, I'll be the best meal for the animals. I do not know how far I continue this hunt, Dinda. Surely, it's never dark and there seem no night here, except for my darkened mind. I cannot remember anything else, except you, Dinda Ben. Even I don't know the rest of my trail either.

Now, in front of me are rivers and jungles. I was already thinking of hurrying home and stopping all the hunting activity.

There is no wind especially the small waves in the river that are usually racing each other. I am now about to walk through the jungle. In my mind, every means I must conquer even at the expense of my life. I am faced with two choices in my time right now. I let myself be threatened by the river in front of me or die because of the true watch animals of the jungle. Choices. At least, you've told me that life is an option, Dinda Ben.

I do not know whether I can continue the rest of the journey that runs along with the horizon like without night. I do not know where the night is. Dinda Ben, if only my mind was not ambushed by fear, surely you never escape from thinking of me. Even I can imagine how panicked you are and you will not be able to sleep because every time you are thinking of me.

Never mind, Dinda Ben, as I said, now in front of me, lay the vastness of the wilderness. In fact, like we've been through, the river seems to be without upstream.

How can I cross without a boat and the points of the compass to take me to you. There is nothing to wait for, except for the miracles that enable me to return to you, in the vastness of the wilderness. Rather than dies ambushed by a herd of animals, there is no other choice.

Now I choose to swim. The boat is the body and the river. The compass in my mind is only you. I'm definitely coming home, Dinda Ben. If I do not come home, surely I would come by dream and then pick you up?"

Just in the morning before sunrise from the east, Dinda Ben awoke from his sleep. Ben could not help thinking. With staggered steps she immediately sought a place of solitude. Then, she interpreted the dream as if she met her husband, Gunam.

### ***Karma***

The boisterous thanksgiving feast in the last day was still going on. Gunam told Ben first to get back to the thanksgiving feast.

"Gunam, I want to go there together. I am afraid what people think of me when they see me coming alone?" asked Ben.

"Never mind, calm down. Thanksgiving event for Sang Hyang will soon be over. You do not have to worry too much. If some people ask, you just tell them that I'm already in the crowds first. "

Time was pointing at midnight, Gunam prepared to beat the drum marking the thanksgiving feast was over. However, Gunam forgot that in fact he must wait for instructions from the custom chief first. A moment later, when the party crowd was busy in the middle of the night, without noticed by anyone else, Gunam without thinking again hit the drum with the tail of stingray as a sign that the event was over. Once the tail was beaten to the drum, instantly without his knowing, the ears of the residents moan in agony. The people ranging from children to adulthood felt great pain to hear the deafening sound. The atmosphere was gripping. The villagers moaned at each other. Out of ignorance, Gunam still looked fun just behind the drum with the drummer tool from the tail of stingray in his hand. The residents increasingly screamed in pain. The second drum blow made the eardrums of the people all break. Liquid from their ear holes seemed to appear melted. Unbeknownst to the residents, Gunam, outside his consciousness, hit back the drums with the tail.

Only a few times the tail of stingray was hit, the atmosphere was increasingly gripping. The simple night situation instantly turned dark. The spark of light from the sky in the form of an unceasing

lightning-bolt emitted light and the friction of black and dark clouds.

The villagers were distraught because their ears had also broken. They were unable to hear the thunder of lightning from the friction of the clouds, except for the eyes that looked toward the sky. It was like a knife cutting through the horizon and looking like a snapshot of an image repeatedly. The people who witnessed the natural phenomenon were incredibly frightened. The customary chief said, "We are all exposed to the curse of Sang Hyang because of Gunam. This is the result of Gunam's beating the drum with a tail of stingray." Almost all regretted the behavior of Gunam. Because of that behavior, the residents must bear the misfortunes. Although no one could listen to each other, every one spoke.

"This is due to the act of Gunam who since the first didn't follow the thanksgiving ceremony." "Gunam is out of his mind. He should have beaten the drum just enough with his hands. "

"Yeah, it's because Gunam had hit the drum with the tail of the stingray." "Gunam who pioneered the thanksgiving event, should have always been in the field where we all gather."

"He was so egoistic. He betrayed the Sang Hyang."

"Yes, yes, right, Gunam has made fun of Sang Hyang. He didn't join the thanksgiving ceremony. He even just came on the last day."

The flash of lightning and the thunderous rattle of lightning were about to target Gunam's body. He ran away headlong. He almost died. How far he ran, the sounds and flashes of lightning seemed to quickly hit him. Gunam still ran in the darkened horizon. Wherever he ran, the clouds that touched each other produced lightning. Wherever he stepped following the winding path, the lightning always wanted to spray electrical energy into his body. At last he ran crossing a variety of terrain ranging from crossing the embankment, the rim along the Mahakam River, and ended between two valleys. It was there that he realized that the bamboo container to put his cigarette was still hanging on his waist in which a stone antidote from danger was stored. Immediately he took the stone, then rubbed it on the yellow bamboo to produce a fire. Gunam had betrayed his own loyalty to the universe. He was not able to save himself. Thunderclouds with hot clouds covered his body.

The inhabitants of Separi were also affected by the *karma* of Gunam. They had become piles of long winding stones. Until now, the stones were witnesses to a betrayed thanksgiving ceremony.



## **Stories to Remember**

Ben felt that things were going very fast. All seemed so dashed, not overtaken, and immeasurable. Gunam was just a memory for Ben. All the time seemed to make her thought bubble by curiosity. However, it was all too late. All were like inevitable darkness. Darkness unfolded without permission like not knocking the door first as it passed without saying a single word.

"I always look forward to hearing from you, Gunam. Though just a shadow flashed through my mind." Ben wondered.

This morning Ben woke up earlier than usual. One day when very little brightness, black clouds seemed to hang so great. The air was so cold. As cold as the feeling of lacking hope and endless tipping that became anxiety that every time could be intensified. Nevertheless, Ben still did not forget the village that had been fossilized since then. On the table, as always, she wanted to immediately feel, just to feel, had to feel, must she feel the memory?

"Should what I feel this time make my feelings even more vulnerable or become increasingly aimless because Gunam and the residents had become stones?"

I walked slowly while holding tightly the letter that I wanted to write. Then I opened the window. I always saw the area of Mahakam River from upstream to downstream from the river

adjacent to our former village. The beautiful magnificent river that was enough consoling the feeling of prone today. The river that always faithfully encountered the hills surrounding it. Although some parts of the hill were reluctant to show for being united with memories.

I always remembered you, Gunam, though it's just a shadow flashing in my mind. In my wondering, I dissolved.

After being dissolved for some time, I suddenly just scooped up my cell phone, motorcycle key, also a small agenda. An agenda for something that I should record even the smallest in memory.

Then, I immediately rushed to the river because only there I thought I might be able to meet him. I couldn't figure out why I rushed over and for what intentions. Perhaps because of the feeling of longing. I thought.

Arriving at the river, I did not find Gunam in my mind. Quiet. I just found an old man who was silent on the river bank. Slowly I approached him. Apparently he knew my arrival. It made me surprised this time because it was very quiet here. Strangely enough, he understood very well for he directly called my name.

"What are you looking for, Ben? You look nervous. Please sit by the river. Sit next to me, if necessary in front of me. "

I really did not understand the meaning of that sentence. It surely made me startled. I just kept quiet. After I sat in front of him, he then pulled the music instrument from behind his shirt. He played so many rhythms. The sound of the instrument was so soft. Melodious. His rhythm was so thrilling in my feelings. Feeling like the river's breeze bringing news to me fast. Ah, I wondered what the message was. Perhaps a question of my longing for you. The man was still preoccupied with his instrument. A rhythm that seemed familiar to me through my ears. And now the rhythm seemed to stop, all of a sudden. It seemed my turn to continue to answer it.

"I promised someone here, actually. Hmm, did you see him?" He said nothing. Then, he continued the rhythm of his instrument. "It's really unclear," I said thoughtfully. Later, I left somewhat away from him. Suddenly the man said to Ben. "You should know, Ben. It all comes from the stubbornness of human nature. Humans are very difficult to set up so that they often disturb the comfort of the universe itself. "

"What do you mean?" Ben asked in surprise.

"Do you know, Ben, what is the essence of the ceremony?" Asked the old man.

Ben looked surprised at the question from the old man. In fact, Ben knew the answer. But somehow Ben seemed uninterested in

the old man's question. Then, Ben intended to go further. But before she went any further, her steps and thoughts seemed to have been read by the old man.

"Stop. Stop. Hear me!" Said the old man rather loudly.

"Yes, Sir. What's wrong? I already know the meaning of this conversation," Ben said. "No, it is not a matter whether you know or you don't know, but this is a sacred event that should not be allowed to continue. For whatever reason, it is not justified when the thanksgiving ceremony is abused and ... "

"Wait a minute, old man, what do you mean by saying *abused*? I do not understand!" replied Ben.

"Look, Ben, the fact is right now and the real one is you. I have not finished saying and you just cut off the conversation. "

"Oh ..., I'm sorry, old man. It does not mean that at all. "

"That's enough, the point is this, Ben. Please be known to you that in fact it is not justified when the thanksgiving ceremony is only used for excessive parties."

"Excuse me?" Ben said curiously.

"The point is never to turn the ceremony into a drink party because Sang Hyang does not like when the gratitude is used only for fun without praying for Him. Then, in fact, some are drinking

liquor. That's very unreasonable, Ben. It's absolutely wrong, you know. "

"All right, old man. I am very grateful. " Ben did not get over it. She began to take in the sincerity that had already happened."You know, Ben. Many also act against customary rules, such as, busy drinking liquor during the thanksgiving ceremony is taking place. Then people do not listen to the adat head's advice. "

Now I was sitting not far from the river. The river was so quiet. Only a few unused boats stuck on the river's edge. There were some that just resembled the peninsula. In fact, it's real. Others were just white sand and waves that always rolled up licking the beach so visibly untiringly and endlessly. I wandered alone in this river. I began to perpetuate the memory.

I always remember you, Gunam. We are no longer two but one soul, before you finally say goodbye to me forever.

"Let's go through the upstream and downstream of our journey." As you said, while taking my hand in this memory.

Yes, Gunam was no longer by my side. However, my conversation with him seemed to be so imprinted. It was still glued. It's as if I'm still talking to him, like in a conversation with dozens of fantasies; like a parable, let me suppose, like paper and glue. That's my connection with him.

In an imaginary memory, I always remembered you, Gunam. You often said that our country is beautiful. The beauty that should made us always proud. Proud to live and reside in rich and fertile land. The vast oceans were also great blanketed horizon that was always unpretentious to accompany us under the dim moon that never stopped shining, especially fading away. The hills seemed to testify in its loyalty never to lie to always line up neatly. People always referred to it as a line of loyalty in the river bed. Also the joy of the glazed night that warmed our feelings unceasingly.

Ah, how beautiful our country was, as you said while hugging me at that time. My memory. A sort of healing memory. I always remembered you, Gunam. We dissolved in a hug until the early morning came, as blind as our minds to take into account the true depth of our problems. Indeed, we were different in everything, Gunam, except in love.

Again love. How complicated and unfussy when questioning our affair. Love, love, and love. However, love itself seemed to be sneaking on the other side of the reef.

From that time on, I forgot exactly when, we were also almost inseparable simply because they called us as two very different lives. Then they often mentioned that I and Gunam were humble couple. Go ahead, provided we came back to Kampung Separi later. Gunam, I still remembered when I said something painful. You then embraced me so tightly and whispered "Believe me that

we will find an end after crossing this river because sometime we will return to our hometown, Separi. However, the village has become an impossible civilization to be restored; civilization that will not be timeless, for it can be eroded into the lungs of the times.

All passed very quickly, I was back awakened in the morning in a day that I didn't remember somehow. I opened the shutters in my room. I always remembered you, Gunam. From a river that once tested our love power. A village that was always filled with memories in my memory to you, like reading your letters to me that were still neatly arranged in the pile I had ever kept. All indeed seemed to pass quickly and could not be overtaken and immeasurable.

All time seemed to make my mind swell with curiosity. However, all seemed to be too late. All were like inevitable darkness that unfolded without permission, like not knocking on the doorstep first.

A treatment disregarding natural phenomena had led to disaster. A thanksgiving ceremony named *erau* had been transformed into a party that was far from thanksgiving. Gunam was swallowed by the event. Gunam hit the drum with a tail of stingray.

Like the rhythmic music of Kutai played by an elderly man at the time, it slashed Ben's feelings slowly. However, I always and still

always remembered you, Gunam. From the river named Mahakam. I thought it was not enough with tears to remember you. I always remembered you, even though you had become a stone, Gunam.