

THE TALE OF DEWI SEKARDADU
Cerita Dewi Sekardadu

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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

THE TALE OF DEWI SEKARDADU

1. The Daughter of King Blambangan

Blambangan, that was the name of the kingdom located at the eastern end of Java Island. In the beginning of the 14th century, Blambangan Kingdom was ruled by King Menak Sembuyu, one of the descendants of Prabu Hayam Wuruk of Majapahit. King Menak Sembuyu had a wife and a daughter named Dewi Sekardadu.

A few days after the birth of Dewi Sekardadu, Blambangan people flocked to the royal palace to see their newborn princess. They were very curious with the beauty of the little princess who was said to be very charming. From a distance, the king's face could be seen alighted with joy. He walked towards the queen who was holding the newly born baby in her arms. The beauty of the little girl in the queen's arms was a combination of both parents' beauty. Her eyes were sharp, implying that someday she would become a smart girl. Her eyelashes were long and curly, her nose was of medium-sized, her lips were red, and her cheeks were dimpled. The king ceaselessly smiled at his little princess and occasionally kissed both of her adorable cheeks.

Not long afterwards, the king said before his people, "O my beloved people, today there is good news for you. The queen and

I are happily welcoming our little daughter whom we have been waiting for a long time. We are announcing to you that this little princess is named Dewi Sekardadu. Hopefully, our daughter will be the pride of her parents and the proud member of the Kingdom who could contribute to the kingdom's good image, and later give birth to a wise leader.”

The king and the queen were very grateful for their daughter. As an expression of gratitude to the Creator, that day the queen ordered the royal chef to make *nasi tumpeng*¹ and *bubur merah*² to share with the people.

2. Dewi Sekardadu Suffers from a Severe Illness

Dewi Sekardadu grew to be a very beautiful, smart, lively, and virtuous girl.

One day, she asked her father's permission to go to the forest looking for flowers along with her *emban*³. The king allowed her to go on a condition that she would soon return after getting the flower that she wanted. Unbeknownst to her, the king ordered

¹ Traditional dish made of rice that is shaped like a cone and usually yellow in color

² Literally means red porridge, which is a type of food commonly made to celebrate the birth of a baby. The food is actually not red, usually brown, and made ultimately of fine rice flour.

³ Javanese term for a nanny or a caregiver in a palace

Patih Bajul Sengara to escort her from a distance. Dewi Sekardadu was very happy to be allowed by her father to go to the forest. She hummed happily as she walked into the forest.

She had been walking for a long time, but she still could not find the flower she had been looking for. Finally, she saw colorful flowers growing in the middle of a lake. She was so fascinated by the beauty of the flowers that she wanted to pick one of them and bring it home to the palace. The *emban* forbade her to pick the flower because the path leading to the lake was muddy, and she had to pass through the bushes. Dewi Sekardadu insisted on getting the flower. She kept walking toward the lake. Unfortunately, when she almost grabbed the flower, she was bitten by a mosquito. Dewi Sekardadu was oblivious of the mosquito's attack. She kept walking until finally she got the beautiful flower.

The day was getting late, so Dewi Sekardadu invited the *emban* to go back to the palace. Arriving at the palace, she immediately took a bath and went into her bedroom to rest. She felt very tired after playing all day long in the forest.

The king and the queen were already at the table to enjoy dinner prepared by the royal chef. They wondered why their only daughter was not present in the dining room.

“My wife, it is very unusual for our daughter not to turn out for dinner. She is usually present in the dining room before us. In fact, she always helps the cook to serve food on the table,” the king told the queen.

“Maybe our daughter is not feeling well, *Kakanda*⁴,” the Queen answered.

After that, the queen ordered the *emban* to call Dewi Sekardadu to quickly come to the dining room to have dinner with her mother and father.

The *emban*, half running, headed back to the dining room and told the king and the queen that Dewi Sekardadu could not attend the dinner. Dewi Sekardadu’s body shivered with a very high fever.

The king and the queen rushed to Dewi Sekardadu’s room. They were very surprised by the conditions of their daughter. Their daughter’s body was thoroughly covered with red spots, and she had a very high fever. The king immediately summoned the royal physician to treat his daughter’s illness.

After a few days, there were no signs showing the healing of Dewi Sekardadu’s illness. She could hardly open her eyes because the red spots grew in number and spread on the eyelids.

⁴ A polite address to an older person

The queen took care of her only daughter very affectionately. She was assisted by the *emban* in her daughter's care. The queen herself gave the potion prescribed by the physician with great tenderness. She was also the one who gave the medicine according to the instructions given by the physician.

“*Kakanda*, we're running out of potions. All the potions given by the physician have been completely used, but our daughter has not recovered. In fact, it seems that her disease gets even worse. What should we do, *Kanda*?” said the queen, sobbingly.

“Yes, *Dinda*⁵. I have told Patih Bajul Sengara to seek another physician,” the king said as he wiped the queen's tears with her pink handkerchief.

As the days and weeks passed by, dozens of physicians in Blambangan Kingdom were summoned, but Dewi Sekardadu's disease did not heal. The king and the queen grieved. The entire palace also grieved.

3. King Menak Sembuyu's Contest

King Menak Sembuyu did not want to be immersed in his sorrow. Although his was very upset, he remained hopeful for the healing of his daughter. He did not despair because of the sad event.

⁵ A polite address to a younger person

He rose from his chair engraved with *garuda*⁶-patterned carvings after a bit of sleep. It had been several days that he could not sleep because he was thinking of his daughter.

He then called Patih Bajul Sengara to come before him. The agile *patih*⁷ rushed to the king and then delivered his salutation with his head bowed and his palms pressed against his chest.

“Thy servant hath come before you, Your Majesty,” said Patih Bajul Sengara.

“Sit down, Patih Bajul Sengara!” welcomed the king.

Patih Bajul Sengara immediately took the position of sitting cross-legged on the floor with the head still bowed and his hand lowered on top of both legs with a grasping position.

“*Mahapatih*⁸, some of the healers you took to this palace could not cure my daughter’s illness. That is why I’m calling you here.”

“What can thy servant do, my Lord?”

“Announce to all the people of this country that whoever can cure my daughter’s illness will be given a prize.”

⁶ A symbolic eagle believed by some religions in some Asian regions to be the king of birds with strong power

⁷ A confidant of the king

⁸ The highest *patih* (confidant of the king)

“Thy servant will immediately do your order, Your Majesty.” Patih Bajul Sengara hurriedly rose from his seat and immediately executed the king’s order.

Blambangan people were gathered after hearing the sound of *kentongan*⁹ as a sign of an important announcement of the palace. One of Blambangan warriors called out among the crowd, “O people of Blambangan, whosoever can heal the daughter of King Menak Sembuyu, Dewi Sekardadu, from her illness, he or she will get a prize from the king. If the person is a woman, she will be made Dewi Sekardadu’s sister, and if the one who succeeds in healing the princess is a man, he will be made an *adipati*¹⁰ of the kingdom.”

Not long after the announcement, dozens of healers were present at the royal palace trying to cure Dewi Sekardadu’s disease.

None of the healers, though, managed to cure the disease of the princess. They gave up trying to cure the rare disease suffered by the princess.

⁹ A traditional communication instrument made of wood , sounded by hitting the instrument with a long bamboo stick, commonly found in villages and used to announce something important or emergency

¹⁰ An honorific for the head of a *kadipaten*

One of the healers even went on saying that the disease was a curse of the gods. The thoughtless remark caused the king and the queen to be more anxious.

The king's palace that day was very quiet. No sight of soldiers passing by to and fro, escorting someone to Dewi Sekardadu's room. Only the *embans* were seen going back and forth the room carrying a tray of food and drink for the queen who was in the room to accompany her beloved daughter. No one else was present in the room. They were afraid of contracting Dewi Sekardadu's disease.

That afternoon, the king heard the news that there was a person with magical power who could cure any diseases. The man dressed all in white and lived in a place away from the crowd. King Menak Sembuyu immediately ordered his *patih* to look for this man.

Patih Bajul Sengara ordered his soldiers to spread to various parts of the country in search of the man's whereabouts. One week after that, some soldiers reported that he had met someone dressed in white on a mountain. The white-dressed man was very polite, and he could cure any illnesses.

Patih Bajul Sengara pulled the bridle of his horse and directed his horse into the mountain according to the soldier's direction. Upon arriving at the mountain, Patih Bajul Sengara encountered the

man in white. At first, he was a little hesitant with the person he met. The person dressed in white was different from what he had previously thought. He thought the person he was looking for was an old man with a small stature like Blambangan people in general. However, the person he saw was very different. The man he met was young; his face glowed, his stature high; and apparently he was not a native of Blambangan. The *patih* greeted the man. The man answered the greeting of the *patih* with a smile.

After that, the two people introduced each other. From the introduction, the *patih* learned that the man's name was Maulana Ishak. "Hmmm, that is not a typical name in the country of Blambangan," murmured the *patih*.

The *patih* informed Maulana Ishak about his purpose coming to the place. After that, he asked the man's willingness to come to the palace at the request of King Menak Sembuyu. Maulana Ishak immediately complied with the request of the *patih* to come to the king's palace in Blambangan.

The two men finally arrived at the gate of Blambangan Kingdom after a few days of traveling on a horseback. Before seeing the condition of Dewi Sekardadu, Maulana Ishak asked the *patih*'s permission to rest briefly to recuperate. Maulana Ishak used the time given by the *patih* as well as possible. He cleansed himself,

performed *wudu*¹¹, and prayed. He prayed to God the Creator to give him directions to treat the illness suffered by Dewi Sekardadu.

After that, Patih Bajul Sengara escorted him to *keputren*¹², where Dewi Sekardadu rested. Maulana Ishak examined the condition of Dewi Sekardadu carefully. He immediately asked for the *patih* to find guava leaves, god leaves, and lime juice. While waiting for the items he asked for, he delivered the results of his examinations to the king and the queen.

“Based on the observations of thy servant, the princess has been attacked by a very high fever for quite a long time. Her body is shivering, and there is blood coming out of the pores. These are signs of Dewi Sekardadu having been bitten by a mosquito. The mosquito that has bitten the princess is a dangerous one, Your Majesty. Usually, this type of mosquito is found in dirty water bodies.”

“What do you mean? How is it possible that there is such a place in my palace? It is impossible for my daughter to go to such dirty places.”

¹¹ Ablution, performed before a prayer

¹² A part of the palace where the princesses (royal daughters) reside

“Forgive thy servant, Your Majesty. I did not mean to offend you, Your Majesty. I just reported the results of Dewi Sekardadu’s examination.”

The queen held the king’s hand while looking at the king’s eyes gently. “*Kakanda Prabu*, do you remember a few weeks ago our daughter went to the forest looking for flowers? Upon her return from the forest, she suddenly had a very high fever, and her condition grew worse. It’s possible that our daughter was bitten by a mosquito, just like what this young man said, while she was in the forest.”

The king nodded his head in agreement to the queen’s words. Not long after, the items requested by Maulana Ishak came. T

he man deftly accepted the herbs and immediately made the potion. Guava leaves, god leaves, and lime were washed thoroughly. Then, he boiled some water and put the leaves into the boiling water.

The boiled water was let sit to leave only a small amount of juice, and the juice was then poured into a glass. The potion was mixed with lime and was given orally to Dewi Sekardadu. Maulana Ishak gave the recipe of the potion to an *emban* and told her to give it to Dewi Sekardadu twice a day. In addition to giving instructions on the medicine, Maulana Ishak advised the king and

the queen to give some of their crops to their poor people and pray to God the Almighty for the healing of their daughter.

A week went by. On a *balai-balai*¹³ in the *keputren*, a young woman with shoulder-length hair let loose was sitting along with a middle-aged woman donning a hair bun like a typical noblewoman. They were none other than Dewi Sekardadu and her mother the queen who were chatting on the *balai-balai* of *keputren*. The queen's face looked radiant, different from how she looked a few weeks ago. She was very happy that her daughter had recovered from her illness.

The king and queen were very blessed that their effort was paid off. Making serious efforts while continuously praying to God was the best thing to do to cure their child from the rare illness. Dewi Sekardadu had gradually recovered, and she reverted to how she used to be. She returned into the young woman who captivated everyone who saw her. Her gentle but lively manners made her more attractive to everyone, especially the young men, including Patih Bajul Sengara, who often stole a glance at the only princess of his lord.

¹³ A seat or bed made of bamboos or woods

4. The Winner of the King's Contest

The *Pendapa Agung*¹⁴ of Blambangan Kingdom was crowded with people from various circles. From the common people to the nobles, from the natives of Blambangan to those from abroad, all gathered in one place. All of them flocked into a place that was very quiet in the past few weeks. That day, King Menak Sembuyu fulfilled his promise to reward the person who could heal his daughter.

“Peace be upon you, my dear people. A few weeks ago I held a contest for all of you. Today, I announce to you that this contest is closed. Our daughter, Dewi Sekardadu, has recovered from her illness.

There was someone who managed to cure her. We thank this young man for having successfully healed our daughter. For his service, we should give the prize as we have promised. We therefore appoint this young man an *adipati*, who will lead a new *kadipaten*¹⁵.”

As the winner of the contest, Maulana Ishak was appointed an *adipati*. In just one month of his leadership in the new *kadipaten*, many developments could be seen in the *kadipaten*'s orderly economic system and the socio-cultural conditions of the people.

¹⁴ Great *Pendopo*

¹⁵ Equivalent to a duchy

The king became increasingly interested in the young man. His highly polite manner, self-discipline, and resourcefulness in religion made the king want to take him as a son-in-law.

Eventually, the king married Maulana Ishak to his daughter, Dewi Sekardadu. Dewi Sekardadu was immediately taken by her husband, Maulana Ishak, to his *kadipaten*. They lived happily in that new place. In the second month after their marriage, Dewi Sekardadu was blessed by the Supreme Creator with an extraordinary gift, a fetus in her womb. This happy news was soon delivered to the king and the queen. They were very happy because they would soon have a new descendant that would succeed the king.

5. The Mischievous Plot of the *Patih*

Mahapatih Bajul Sengara was jealous with the happiness of the royal family. He plotted a cunning plan against Maulana Ishak. He tried to plant the seed of hatred in the king toward Maulana Ishak. He told the king that Maulana Ishak was not a native of Blambangan so that his descendants would not be worthy of being a successor to the king. The king began to get affected by the words of Bajul Sengara. He thought very hard of how to get rid of Maulana Ishak and separate him from his daughter.

“What should I do, *Patih*? My daughter, Dewi Sekardadu, loves her husband very much and she now conceives the young man’s seed. I’m confused, *Patih*.”

With a cynical smile, Patih Bajul Sengara launched his cunning plot again, “You’d better send him to a very distant place to keep him away from Dewi Sekardadu, Your Majesty.”

“What should I tell my daughter about her husband?”

“That’s easy, Your Majesty. You only need to assign her husband with a duty to cure the disease that is plaguing the people of that region, my Lord.”

“You’re really smart, *Patih*.”

Accidentally, someone overheard the conversation of the king and Patih Bajul Sengara. That person hurriedly left the place so that the king and his *patih* would not find out that she had heard their evil plans. With a pale face and trembling feet, she stormed into the queen’s room. She immediately put some fruits in the queen’s room and left the room in a hurry.

Meanwhile, these days Maulana Ishak was anxious. He could sense that something bad would happen to him. However, he did not know what it was. To relieve his anxiety, he drew himself closer to the Most Merciful God. He prayed that he and his family would always be protected by God from anything bad.

Maulana Ishak had just finished the pre-dawn prayer. When he opened the door of his house to breathe the cool morning air, he heard the hoofs of a horse around his house. The rider turned out to be a soldier of the royal palace. It was very unusual for a soldier to come to his place that early in the morning. The soldier brought the king's message for Maulana Ishak. The message contained an order for Adipati Maulana Ishak to go to a place plagued by a deadly disease. "All right, soldier. Please convey to Your Majesty that I am ready to carry out his duties."

Maulana Ishak walked back and forth in front of his wife's bedroom. He opened the door of the room and watched his wife sleeping with her growing belly. He closed the door again, and then continued walking back and forth with his head full of turmoil. He did not share his feelings with his wife because he did not want to make his wife sad. A pregnant woman should not feel any sorrow; she should always be happy. Sorrow would negatively affect the baby inside the womb. There were so many thoughts raging in his head. He wanted to take his wife out to the place, but he did not want his wife to suffer, should she follow him away. On the other hand, he could not bear leaving his pregnant wife alone.

Maulana Ishak walked to his beloved wife's bed. His wife woke up. Then, after explaining that he had received a noble assignment from the King, he bid good-bye to his wife.

“Before I leave, I’ll send someone to pick up the *emban* to keep you company, *Dinda*. I will feel rest assured to leave you with someone who loves you,” Maulana Ishak said to his wife with a smile.

“Please come back soon, *Kanda*. We will miss you very much, *Kanda*,” said Dewi Sekardadu as she caressed her bloated belly.

Dewi Sekardadu let go of her husband with tears welled up in her eyes. The princess was not really sure why she was very upset with the departure of her husband. In her heart she pleaded with God the Most Protecting to protect her husband wherever he was and pleaded for her husband’s safe return.

Three months had passed, but Dewi Sekardadu’s husband still had not returned from carrying out the task given by her father. She began to worry about her husband, even though he always comforted her and asked her to calm down. The *emban* told Dewi Sekardadu that God would always protect His good and obedient servant. She went on to say that Adipati Maulana Ishak was a good and pious person. Surely God would always protect him.

The *emban* could not bear to see the sadness of her beloved Dewi Sekardadu, but she did not dare to tell her what she had accidentally heard as she was walking to the queen’s room. She clearly heard the conversation between the king and Mahapatih

Bajul Sengara. Thinking about the evil plot she had overheard, she suddenly got nervous, and her lips quivered.

“*Bibi*¹⁶, are you sick?” The *emban* was surprised to hear the question from Dewi Sekardadu. She just shook her head. “Take a rest, *Bibi*. You must be exhausted. Look at your face; it’s really pale.” The *emban* was embarrassed with Dewi Sekardadu who showed a great concern for her. She should be the one to comfort Dewi Sekardadu instead, not the other way around.

Meanwhile, at a place several miles away from the house of Dewi Sekardadu, Maulana Ishak was confronted by a crowd of black veiled attackers. The gang was composed of five people dressed in black and riding a horse. They forbade Maulana Ishak to return home. They threatened to take his life if he fought against their order.

Maulana Ishak, being powerful but also humble at the same time, just smiled at their threats. He then asked them to get out of his way. Instead of acceding to his request, they attacked him. Maulana Ishak managed to escape and survive the attack. He immediately headed to his house.

Upon arriving at his residence, Maulana Ishak was struck by the news that many of the people in his *kadipaten* had been punished by the king for their alleged rebellion against the king. Finally,

¹⁶ An address to an old female, usually of a lower class or position

Dewi Sekardadu's husband realized that someone was trying to overthrow him by instigating the king. During his leadership in the new *kadipaten*, he taught his people to read and write the Arabic *pegon*¹⁷. It turned out that his policy was regarded as an attempt to teach his people to rebel against the king.

On that dark night, Maulana Ishak heard the whistle of a flying arrow nearby. He followed the sound to its source. The whistle stopped at the tree in front of his house. He approached the source of the sound. He saw an arrow stuck on the tree. At the end of the arrow, there was a small roll of paper. He pulled the arrow and took the paper. The paper was actually a letter containing an order for him to meet someone in a certain place. He rushed to the place mentioned in the letter. He was surprised to see the person in front of him when he arrived at the destined place. The person was none other than Patih Bajul Sengara. He tried to make sure that he did not see it wrong.

“Greetings, Patih Bajul Sengara,” Adipati Maulana Ishak gave his salutation to Patih Bajul Sengara while bowing his head and positioning his hands as if he was doing a meditation.

“Greetings, Adipati Maulana Ishak,” said Patih Bajul Sengara, replying the greeting with his heavy voice.

¹⁷ Arabic script used to write Javanese

“My lord Mahapatih, what is it that made you ask me to meet in this place late at night like this?”

“I want you to leave this place as quickly as possible, before more of your people become the victims of your deeds.”

“Are you threatening me, my lord? What have I done that made you want me to leave this place?”

“You have made a big mistake by teaching your people to read and write. I know you want to teach them to rebel against the king’s power.”

“You are totally wrong, my lord. I never meant to do that.”

“Nonsense! Just remember, you have to leave this place or your people will have to pay the price for your resistance.” After saying so, Patih Bajul Sengara left Maulana Ishak.

Maulana Ishak finally learned the reason behind the imprisonment and the disappearance of a great number of his people. He did not have the heart to let innocent people fall victims to the heinous acts of Patih Bajul Sengara. With a heavy heart he decided to leave his wife who was then seven-month pregnant. He left their home because he did not want to make his people suffer even more.

6. The Abduction of the Baby

Two months after her husband left her, Dewi Sekardadu gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. The baby was different from other babies. His face emitted a bright light. Everyone who saw it felt peace in them. So did the king and the queen. The king and the queen were happy to see the birth of their grandson. The birth of his grandson reminded the king of the birth of Dewi Sekardadu. The king also remembered how he had prayed in front of his people that someday his daughter would give birth to a descendant who could rule Blambangan wisely. Deep in his heart he hoped that this was the moment God answered his prayer.

Patih Bajul Sengara was not pleased to see how the king was so delighted with the birth of his grandson who was apparently the son of someone whom he really hated, Maulana Ishak. So, he continued with his plot to instigate the king. He reminded the king that his grandson was not the original descendant of Blambangan, so he was not worthy of being the king's successor. This time, though, the king was not affected by the words of the *patih*. His heart was already melted by his grandson. He was very fond of his grandson.

Patih Bajul Sengara did not easily give up. He unceasingly incited the king. Coincidentally, there was a deadly disease outbreak in Blambangan. Many people died from the disease.

Patih Bajul Sengara used this incident as an opportunity to advance his plan in getting rid of Maulana Ishak's son. He told the king that the sudden plague that struck the Blambangan people was caused by the birth of his grandson.

“Your Majesty, according to the famous shamans in Blambangan, the plague that is currently occurring here is caused by the heat that emanates from the baby's soul. Really, Your Honor, sooner or later the baby will be a disaster to this country.”

The incessant incitement by the *patih* eventually affected the king. The king decided to keep the baby away from Blambangan. The king frowned, thinking hard of how to take the baby from Dewi Sekardadu away. Dewi Sekardadu never left her baby alone even for a while. Even if she had to leave her baby for a bath or other things, she would always entrust the baby to her beloved *emban*. It dawned on the king's mind that he would ask the *emban* to take the baby somewhere.

That morning, out of the blue a soldier came to pick Dewi Sekardadu up. The soldier said he was assigned by the king to escort Dewi Sekardadu to the palace. Dewi Sekardadu was surprised; it was so unusual of her father to ask her to come to the palace all of a sudden like this. She had no bad thoughts at all, though. “Maybe my father would give me a job related to the disaster that hit his country lately. The *patih* who is usually trusted to run the duty of the country is probably going out of the

palace.” That was what Dewi Sekardadu thought. This time, she had to entrust her baby to a reliable *emban*.

“*Bibi*, please take care of my son properly, will you? Father called me to the palace. I will be back as soon as possible,” She gave her baby to the *emban* with tears that she could not hold back. After that, she rushed to the horse-drawn carriage that was waiting for her in front of the house. A few moments later, the *emban* heard horses’ stomps nearby, and they stopped right in front of the house. The *emban* thought that Dewi Sekardadu had returned to retrieve something she left behind at home. She was wrong. One of the horsemen entered the house and asked for the baby in her arms. According to the soldier, he was assigned by the palace to bring the son of Dewi Sekardadu to the palace. The soldier tried to convince the *emban*. The *emban* eventually handed the baby to the soldier without any suspicion whatsoever.

The soldier picking up the baby was the one assigned by the palace to throw the baby away into the sea.

The baby was put into a beautifully crafted and carved chest previously prepared in a carriage. Then, the baby was to be thrown into the ocean. The soldier who was assigned with the job did not have the heart to leave the baby in the open sea.

He waited for a passing ship, and as soon as he saw one, he released the chest. Only after he was convinced the chest was taken by someone who was on the ship that he left the place.

One night there was a merchant ship crossing the Strait of Bali. When the ship was in the middle of the ocean, suddenly it stopped moving. After being examined by the crew, it was found that the ship had crashed into a beautifully carved chest. It was like a chest commonly used by the nobles to store their valuables. The people on the ship were surprised to find inside it was a very beautiful baby. The ship's captain was grateful to be able to save a baby who was dumped by an evil person. Then, the baby was handed over by the ship's captain to the ship's owner, Nyi Ageng Pinatih, a wealthy businesswoman from Gresik.

7. The Struggle to Search for the Lost Child

Dewi Sekardadu could no longer hold the tears from streaming down her cheeks. When her husband decided to leave her, she could still bear her disappointment. However, when her infant son was gone, she could not help but cry. She was disappointed with her father's deeds. Finally, she decided to leave Blambangan Kingdom.

Dewi Sekardadu was confused as to what she should do to find her child. She heard that her son had been exiled to the ocean and

found by crew members sailing in the Strait of Bali. She went to the shore, waiting for ships that anchored there, accompanied by her faithful *emban*. Every time a ship was anchored, she rushed to find out the whereabouts of her son. However, there was no clue at all. Finally, she decided to ride on one of the ships that would sail to Surabaya. She hoped to get more information about her son's whereabouts there. In the journey, the ship that took her to Surabaya was hit by very large waves that it finally sank. The body of Dewi Sekardadu was found by fishermen who were looking for fish in the sea. Then, the fisherman rescued and took her to their home in Kepetingan area, Sidoarjo. Dewi Sekardadu finally settled in the area until the end of her life.

8. Joko Samodra

Joko Samodra. That was the name of the adopted son of Nyi Ageng Pinatih.

The boy was named Joko Samodra because he was found in the middle of the ocean, or *samudra* in Indonesian, when he was a baby. Nyi Ageng Pinatih took care of the baby like her own child.

When Joko Samodra was 11 years old, she sent him to Pesantren¹⁸ Ampeldenta, Surabaya. She entrusted her son to

¹⁸ Traditional Islamic boarding school

Sunan Ampel, the caretaker of Pesantren Ampeldenta, to learn about religion from him.

One night, after *Tahajud*¹⁹ prayer, Sunan Ampel went around to pray for his *santri*²⁰ and examine his *santris* one by one. He was surprised to find that one of his *santris* emitted a blinding light. He marked the *santri* by tying the ends of his *sarung*²¹ into a knot. When morning came, he called all of his *santris*. He asked them whether any of them waking up with his *sarung* tied into a knot. It turned out that the student who emitted the light was Joko Samodra. He suspected that Joko Samodra was not an ordinary boy.

When Nyi Ageng Pinatih visited Joko Samodra at the *pesantren*, Sunan Ampel searched for information about Joko Samodra. After Nyi Ageng Pinatih told the story of Joko Samodra, he became more convinced that the boy was not a child of ordinary people. The boy was found in a chest that typically belonged to noblemen. Sunan Ampel then remembered the story of his friend who recently stayed in Pasai. Before going to Pasai, his friend told about his story to Sunan Ampel. Now Sunan Ampel was

¹⁹ A voluntary prayer performed after evening prayer and before dawn prayer

²⁰ Students of a *pesantren*

²¹ A cloth commonly worn by male students in a *pesantren* as a long skirt

convinced that Joko Samodra was the son of his friend, Maulana Ishak.

After that, Sunan Ampel suggested that Nyi Ageng Pinatih change the name of Joko Samodra to Raden Paku so that the name would not remind Joko Samodra of how he was thrown away into the ocean when he was a baby. Nyi Ageng Pinatih heeded the advice of Sunan Ampel. She fully believed in the *ulama*²² who was highly respected by the community.

Raden Paku was a close friend of Sunan Ampel's son, Raden Makdum Ibrahim. They shared brotherly love and always reminded each other in good deeds.

At the age of 16, Raden Paku and Raden Makdum Ibrahim were told by Sunan Ampel to study more about their religion in Pasai.

They also studied other sciences, such as social science, economics, and culture. Upon reaching Pasai, the first person that Raden Paku met was Maulana Ishak. Sunan Ampel had told Raden Paku that Maulana Ishak was his father. The meeting between the father and his son for the first time ever was very touching. Both shared their respective stories. Raden Paku reported that he was found by the crew of a ship in the ocean and adopted by a woman from Gresik.

²² Islamic cleric

Later, he was educated at Pesantren Ampeldenta under Sunan Ampel's care. Maulana Ishak also explained why he left Raden Paku and his mother. Raden Paku sobbed as he heard his father's story. He cried not because he felt neglected by his grandfather, but he cried thinking about the fate of his mother whose whereabouts were still not known.

During his stay in Pasai, Raden Paku and Raden Makdum Ibrahim learned many things from various scholars in the archipelago and even scholars from foreign countries.

After three years in Pasai, the two friends were told by Maulana Ishak to return to their homeland. Maulana Ishak equipped both of them with a package of white cloth containing soil. Later, when it was time to establish a *pesantren*, they were told by Maulana Ishak to look for a land whose soil was exactly the same as the one they brought from Pasai.

Arriving at Ampeldenta, Raden Makdum Ibrahim was ordered by Sunan Ampel to settle and preach in Tuban. Meanwhile, Raden Paku was ordered by Sunan Ampel to return home to his adoptive mother, Nyi Ageng Pinatih in Gresik. During his stay in Gresik, he helped his mother to trade while practicing the knowledge he gained during his time at the *pesantren*.

Raden Paku often traveled from one island to another to run his wares. His efforts were fruitful. When his business reached its

glory, he asked his mother's permission to quit his job. He wanted to focus more on teaching religion.

His adoptive mother granted his request. Eventually, he founded a *pesantren* located on the highlands, making him earned the nickname of Sunan Giri.

Although Raden Paku or Sunan Giri had achieved his glory and gained respect from people, he did not stop his search for his biological mother. One day, he went to meditate. In his meditation, he was told that his mother, Dewi Sekardadu, had died and been buried in Kepetingan area, Sidoarjo.