



WHISPERS FROM THE PAST:

TALES OF LEGEND AND LORE FROM MIDDLE BORNEO

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Contributors:

The communities of Kapit and Sri Aman, Sarawak of Malaysia and Kapuas Hulu, Kalimantan of Indonesia, with special thanks to:

Saweng Sat, Rumah Dagum
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Inik Omut, Landau Kumpang
Marzuki, Senai
Hermansyah, Hulu Gurung subdistrict
Syabirin, Hulu Gurung subdistrict

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WWF-Malaysia

Alicia K.C Ng
Amanda Nayra Jengging
Cynthia Chin
Fiona Faith Maurice
Mark Liao Jun
Vivien Yeo
Zora Chan

WWF-Indonesia

Abroorza Ahmad Yusra
Jimmy Syahirsyah
Maria Theresia

Translator:

Nuraini Soulisa

Copy editors:

Doreena Naeg
Mark Johnson

Designers and illustrators:

Hippydroid, Dannyzsung and Atharie
Ramadhanty (for stories from Kapuas Hulu)
Riana Liao Kang Ya (for stories from
Sarawak)

Layout:

Ageng Mulyono

WWF-Indonesia (Hulu Kapuas Landscape)
Jl. Bukit Tilung RT02/RW01, Kedamin Hulu,
Kecamatan Putussibau Selatan
Kapuas Hulu, Kalimantan Barat

WWF-Malaysia (Sarawak Conservation
Programme)
7th Floor, Bangunan Binamas, Jalan Padungan,
93100 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

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Preface

Whispers from the Past: Tales of Legend and Lore from Middle Borneo is a collection of stories from the indigenous tribes in the Sri Aman and Kapit divisions, Sarawak and Kapuas Hulu, Kalimantan. These stories feature the people's relationship, dependence and respect for nature, age-old customs and social interactions, all of which have been passed down orally through the generations.

When WWF began working with these communities in implementing conservation work under the transboundary Green Economy in the Heart of Borneo project between 2016 and 2018, they found that these communities have a rich oral history. Knowing that these stories will be lost in time if nothing was done, WWF decided to help document these folklore for future posterity.

Plato once said that the arts is an imitation of nature and here, in Borneo, he could not have been more right. The natural phenomena seen in these stories can be read as a symbol of reality, with the connections between nature and man often reflected in the tales of their respective communities. These tales are a vivid sign of life and the welfare of the communities involved as well as the overall health of the environment, each tale a gem worthy of preservation.

Without further ado, we present the first of the stories.



STORIES FROM SARAWAK, MALAYSIA



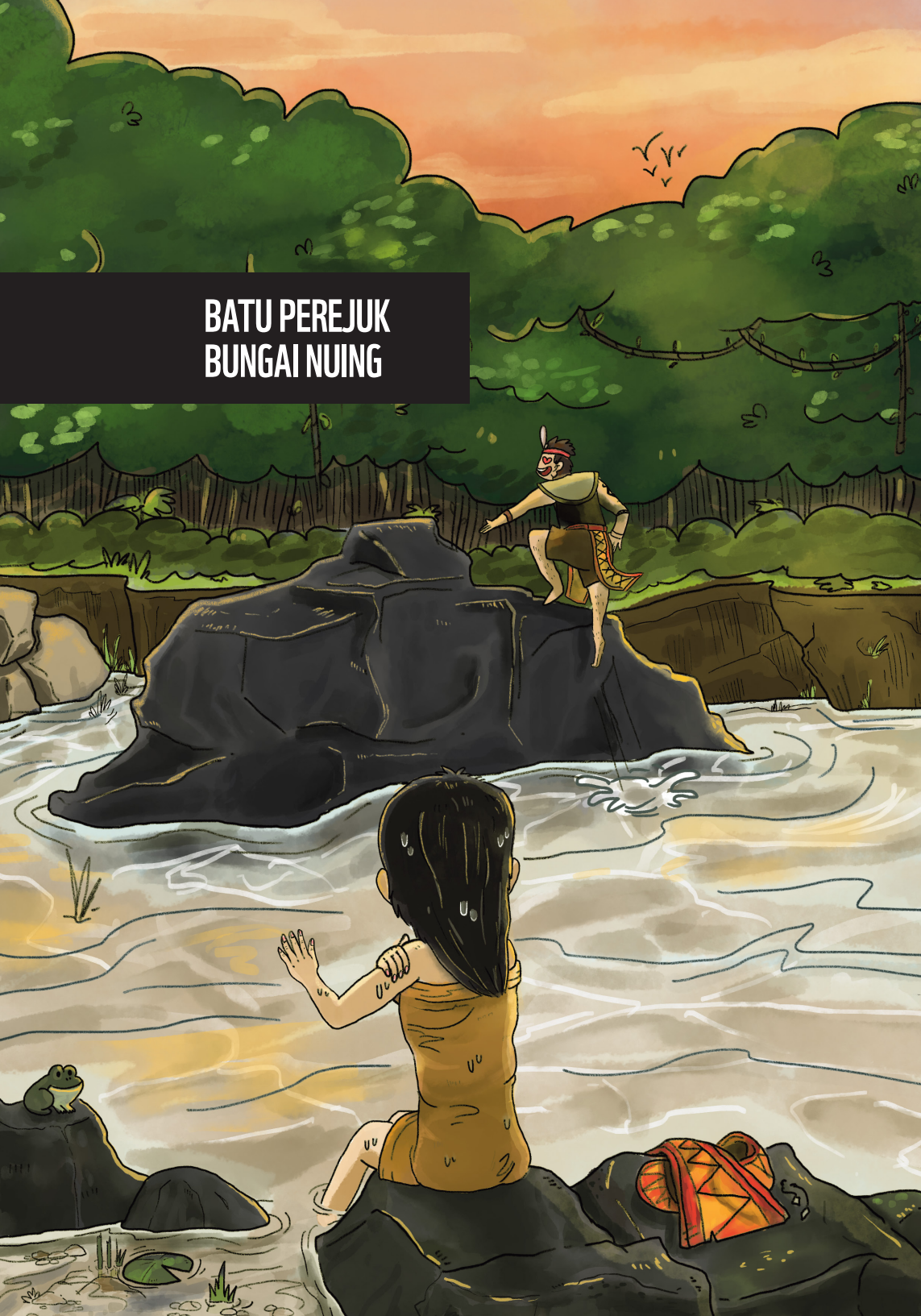
**THE SPIRITS OF
PANGGAU LIBAU**

THE SPIRITS OF PANGGAU LIBAU

According to Iban belief, there was once a place known as Panggau Libau, where mystical Iban warriors lived. It was said to be located on the mountain, where the headwaters of Air Panggau River and Gelung River were located.

In many stories told by the Iban, there are several famous spirits, namely Kumang (the most beautiful woman from Panggau Libau), Keling (the strongest, most powerful and handsome man) and Bungai Nuing (a warrior who usually appears as Keling's competitor to impress Kumang). In those stories, there are also other characters. One of these other characters is Pandak Segatak. However, the three main characters are the ones often mentioned. In the past, the Iban believed that the spirits would come to help them when needed.

BATU PEREJUK BUNGA NUING



BATU PEREJUK BUNGA NUING

Not far upstream from Nanga Makut, there is a huge stone in the river known as Batu Perejuk Bungai Nuing. During low tide season, one can clearly see the rock that is in the form of a human's back shoulder. Batu Perejuk was believed to be able to decide if a person possessed mystical powers. The strongest spirit that was able to jump to the top of the stone was Keling.

Many years ago, it was believed that Kumang bathed in the river and placed her toiletries on the rock. In the old days, women did not wear swimming suits but wrapped themselves with a piece of cloth. Seeing that she was very beautiful and seductive, Bungai Nuing tried to impress her by leaping from the lowest point to the top of Batu Perejuk, but could only barely reach the top. There was also another fellow named Pandak Segatak, who tried to take the leap but he did not even reach the middle part of the rock, managing to reach only half of it.

It is said that even to this very day, if there is anyone who is able to leap from the lowest point to the top of Batu Perejuk, he will be blessed with mystical powers.

Batu - Rock

Nanga - River mouth (usually a longhouse will be built near a river mouth, thus it is known as Nanga followed by the name of the place)

Perejuk - Jump, leap



**TABOO OF BATU
PEREJUK BUNGA
I NUNG**

TABOO OF BATU PEREJUK BUNGAI NUING

It is said that if locals go upstream by boat to hunt along Katibas River and they see a piece of wood or stick caught in the middle of Batu Perejuk, their hunting trip will be a fruitful one, and they will go home with a catch of either wild boar, deer or monkey.

The locals also put coins in odd amounts in the middle of Batu Perejuk to ask for good luck and blessings from the spirits.

Batu - Rock

Perejuk - Jump, leap

HUNTER AND THE TALL GHOST



HUNTER AND THE TALL GHOST

Hunters from Nanga Makut get excited when the chirpings of *kikih*, *tupong* or *nendak* are heard during a hunting trip. When any of these birds are heard singing, it is a good sign that the hunters will return home with a wild boar for the family to feast on.

When Saweng Sat was in his 70's, he went hunting with six loyal and reliable hunting dogs. His trip into the forest nearby his longhouse was a fruitful one as he managed to hunt down a wild boar. As he was busy slaughtering the boar and cleaning its stomach, his dogs suddenly barked furiously. Not only that the dogs were barking, they charged towards one direction but then reversed at the same time. He sensed that the dogs were in fear. That was when he remembered about the spirit of the tall ghost in the forest. The tall ghost is believed to be the spirits of ancestors wandering in the forest.

Sudden terror struck him so he quickly cut the boar in two and only took half of it home immediately, never to go back for the other half of the boar.

Kikih, tupong, nendak - Names of birds in Iban language

TATTOO AND EARRINGS



TATTOO AND EARRINGS

It is believed that only Iban warriors who had gone to travel on a journey to adulthood, or head hunters who had brought back heads of their enemies have significant tattoos inked on their bodies as their identities.

For Saweng, who was born in 1933, tattoo was just a fashion statement. He has tattoos on his body and neck that were inked on him traditionally since he was 18 years old. He started having tattoos as he wanted to appear masculine in front of the ladies. During his time, tattoos were traditionally hand-tapped onto the skin by local tattooists who used metal stitching needles dipped in a mixture of sugar and ash from the back of a wok for the ink.

Saweng also has enlarged earlobes, which is not common among the Iban. He got his earlobes pierced traditionally by his friend Nimang Tuswok using the sharpened shoot of a palm locally known as *aping*. He said that it was a popular trend at that time to have big earlobes but not elongated ones like the Kayan, another ethnic group.

**A STONE CAVE,
KUMANG AND
BUNGAI NUNG**



A STONE CAVE, KUMANG AND BUNGAI NUIING

Hill paddy farming is one of the core activities among the communities in Song, Kapit. While clearing areas for the planting season near Nanga Makut, one of the villagers had a vision about spirits warning him not to clear anywhere near to Batu Rumah, a small stone cave near his farm because the clearing has reached their patio. Since then, none have been allowed to cut any tree near the stone cave out of respect for the unseen spirits.

At the river in front of the stone cave, there are two famous stones. One is known as Batu Keramak Kumang, which means stone that has been scratched by Kumang, a beautiful Iban goddess. Opposite the river is Batu Srap Bungai Nuing, described as a stone that has been slashed using his hand by the mystical warrior Bungai Nuing. The locals believe that the stones were slashed and scratched by Kumang and Bungai Nuing who were unable to control their lustful feelings for each other, although Kumang already had Keling as her soulmate.

Batu Rumah - A house that turned to a large stone



SALT AND IPOH STONES

SALT AND IPOH STONES

When Bungai Nuing was hunting, he tried to dart an animal. Unfortunately, he missed his target and dropped his bamboo casing or *tempilah* into the river in Nanga Makut, Katibas. Inside the case, there was salt and *ipoh*, a type of poison used to coat a dart's head. The salt and *ipoh* turned into stones as soon as they touched the water.

Furious, Bungai Nuing cursed the place and warned the people living along Katibas River to never ride their boats through the area between the two stones in the river as it would bring them bad luck. Since then, no one has ever ridden through between the stones, fearing that unfortunate events would befall them.

On the contrary, those that have been facing bad luck, especially people that are going through bad marriage or cannot find their life partner, or fail to have any offspring after marriage, would ride their boat between the stones and chant to the spirits in the area, dropping coins as offering to have their bad luck reversed.

Tempilah - A bamboo casing used for storage

Ipoh - A type poison that is used to coat dart heads



**A VISIT FROM
THE SPIRIT OF AN
ANCESTOR**

A VISIT FROM THE SPIRIT OF AN ANCESTOR

It was a hot sunny day when Peter Jabat and his wife were busy clearing an area near Nanga Nging to start a farm. They just moved back home to their village after 11 years working in Peninsular Malaysia. After hours of manually clearing the area with machetes, suddenly a cold breeze blew in their direction. While they were enjoying the breeze, rain suddenly came down even though the sky was bright.

The rain did not last long, and as soon as it stopped, they both heard three long howling sounds. “Auuuu...” by the riverbank, “Auuuuu...” in the middle of the hill and finally “Auuuuu...” on top of the hill. They stopped whatever they were doing and went home immediately out of fear that unseen spirits would harm them.

On that same night, Peter’s aunt dreamt of Peter’s late father asking what he was doing on the land. When his aunt told him this, Peter came to believe that he was visited by his father or ancestor, who appeared as a tall mystical spirit that must have taken three big steps from the riverbank to the top of the hill.



**IBAN WARRIOR
AKI BUGEK**

IBAN WARRIOR AKI BUGEK

There was a mystical warrior known as Aki Bugek. He was born in Ulu Katibas, Nanga Ngeranau, and is the great grandfather of Tuai Rumah Peter Jabat. When he was given an after-birth bath ceremony, *nganjung anak mit mandi* in the river, a strange phenomenon occurred - a whirlpool formed in the river. Villagers who saw this as a sign that he was a special person who had been selected by the spirits.

One day, when he was all grown up, he was attacked by a crocodile in the river as he was bathing. He fought the crocodile and managed to pull out one of its teeth, sending the crocodile fleeing in pain.

That night, Aki Bugek had a dream. In this dream, a man told him that the tooth could be used to cure coughs. So whenever he had a cough, Aki Bugek would scrape off the crocodile's tooth and mix the powdered scrapings in a glass of water to drink. It worked like a miracle, and Peter himself had drunk the crocodile tooth water mixture before. Unfortunately, the crocodile tooth was gone in the great fire that razed his longhouse to the ground several years ago.

Aki - Grandfather

Nanga - River mouth (usually a longhouse will be built near a river mouth, thus it is known as Nanga followed by the name of the place)

Tuai Rumah - Headman/chief of a longhouse

Ulu - Upstream



THE DEATH OF AKI BUGEK

THE DEATH OF AKI BUGEK

Locals believe that Aki Bugek drowned when his boat sank in the river, because he saw his own death earlier in his dream and told some people about it. In his dream, Aki Bugek was told that he would be in danger if he returned to his birthplace in Ulu Katibas. However, he did not believe in the prophecy. It was said that he was only found by his friend Abul about a month later with his body facing down on the shore of Rantau Embau, Nanga Takan.

His body did not rot and in fact during the funeral, his head grew longer and longer as if he was turning into a huge snake or *nabau*. As the villagers witnessed the incident, one of his friends shouted and told him not to change as everyone would be afraid of him. And so, he turned back into a normal human being. This is partly the reason why the Iban recognize big snakes as sacred, because they believe that their ancestors can change into a snake after death.

Aki Bugek's grave is located at Takan River, Katibas. He was not buried in the ground but was put on a bed frame structure called *salung*, built from Bornean ironwood. *Salung* was only built for Bujang Berani, a well-respected Iban warrior. Amazingly, the ironwood grew to become living trees.

Aki - Grandfather

Nabau - Huge snake

Salung - A warrior's body placed on top of a bed frame structure made of Bornean ironwood



AKI BUGEK AND THE SHORT-TAILED MACAQUE



AKI BUGEK AND THE SHORT-TAILED MACAQUE

In the olden days, the Iban and Kayan were enemies and they had a long tribal war. Aki Bugek was also involved in the war. One time, as he and his fellow men were returning from war in Batang Kayan, Indonesia, they got lost. While trying to find their way back home, they chanced upon a short-tailed macaque. The macaque pointed the way out and they followed it until they eventually arrived home safely.

That night, Aki Bugek dreamt that the macaque told him that it had helped him and his men to find their way home safely. It also made him promise that the people from his generation would not eat any short-tailed macaque.

Aki - Grandfather



**CRESCENT
PHEASANT IN THE
HOUSE**

CRESCENT PHEASANT IN THE HOUSE

One morning in October 2019, Ina Amba was sitting at the *ruai* with a few other women, chatting away as usual. Suddenly, a pair of crescent pheasants flew into the longhouse. It was a strange incident as the birds were not deterred by the sight of humans. They wandered without any sign of fear. The crescent pheasant or *burung sengayan* was regarded as a bird that would bring great luck. After seeing the pair of birds with their strange behaviour, the villagers captured them and placed them into a cage, after which they started making preparations for *Gawai Burung*, a ceremony to welcome the birds.

The next day, the villagers were all dressed in traditional clothing. They carried the cage down to the riverbank to officially bring it back up to the longhouse, with women dancing and people playing traditional music. After bringing the birds for a tour of the longhouse, they placed the cage in front of the headman's house and started praying and asking for blessings. After the ceremony, they released the birds through the front door to thank them for their visit.

Burung - Bird

Gawai Burung - Ceremony to welcome birds

Ruai - An open area inside a longhouse

Sengayan - Crescent pheasant

RUN AWAY FROM BAD OMEN BIRDS



RUN AWAY FROM BAD OMEN BIRDS

In Iban culture, when certain types of birds fly into the longhouse, there are two significant meanings - the birds will bring good luck and success to the longhouse residents or ones that will bring horrific events to the people. The people in Ulu Katibas still hold on to this belief to this day.

When a bad omen bird flies into the longhouse, the villagers believe that this is a visit from a bad and harmful spirit, and that they need to leave the longhouse by the next day or very bad things will befall them. They cannot stay in their relatives or friends' houses, but instead will only be able to stay in their farm huts. After three days, they are allowed to return to their longhouse. However, a three-day ceremony must be performed to protect the longhouse and chase away the bad spirit.

After three days in isolation, different types of plants with sharp thorns such as lemon, lime, bamboo and rattan will be cut and placed around the longhouse. The Iban believe that spirits are afraid of sharp thorny plants and will not be able to enter. During these three days, no one is allowed to leave the longhouse and make any noise. No one is allowed to come visit as well.

After three days, the ceremony ends and everything goes back to normal.

WHEN A HUNTING DOG DIES



WHEN A HUNTING DOG DIES

Hunting dogs or *uduk ngasu* play important roles in the rural areas of Sarawak, especially remote areas with no shops to buy meat from. They are used to hunt for sources of protein such as wild boars.

Ina Amba shared that she used to have a good female hunting dog that would stand gloriously in front of her boat as she navigated the river. Whenever the dog caught the smell of a wild boar, it would jump into the river and swim towards its prey. It could bring home two wild boars single-handedly in a day without even needing to be in a pack.

Sometimes, hunting dogs get injured or lose their lives on hunting trips while fighting with their prey that are usually bigger than them. When a hunting dog dies, its master will hold a special burial because unlike any other dogs as it had made great contributions and sacrificed its own life for its master and family. It will be brought to a hunting dog's burial ground and placed on top of a wooden table-like frame. The master will also place offerings of matches, salt, rice and the jaw of the wild boar the dog died hunting.

Upon returning from the burial ground, the master will mourn for three days along with all the other hunting dogs that usually went hunting with the dog that died. They will wear a white stringed collar for three days. And during the three-day mourning period, the master will not hunt, and masters of other hunting dogs wearing white stringed collars will also follow the tradition.

Ina believes that if the master does not hold a special burial and mourn for the dog, he will be cursed with bad luck for being ungrateful.

Uduk ngasu - Hunting dogs



**GIANT
SPIRIT**

GIANT SPIRIT

Many years ago, a villager from Rumah Peter, Tipong Nyanggai was harvesting her paddy farm on the hill by the Nging River. Her husband was not well and could not walk fast but she insisted for him to come along because she did not want to be alone. A few hours in, they heard a strange and loud sound that went, “Tuak-tui...tuak-tui” at 5 p.m. The sound did not stop until 6.30 p.m. By then, she had already begun to feel very scared. She went back to the longhouse without her husband and asked the headman for help.

The villagers rushed to her farm and brought her husband home. When the villagers arrived at her farm, they could still hear the sound loud and clear, although nothing happened to them. That evening, Tipong had a nightmare. She saw a giant spirit searching for two pigs that it was hunting. The two pigs that the giant referred to were Tipong and her husband!



**CROCODILE TRAP
SET FOR HUMAN**

CROCODILE TRAP SET FOR HUMAN

According to an old tale, when a swarm of stinging honey bees appear out of nowhere in the middle of a main river, one must not jump into the river because that is a *panjuk baya* trap set by a crocodile to ensnare its victim. If one jumps into the river, one will become a crocodile's meal. This is a tale told by the elders in Katibas, Song, as a warning to their children and to keep them safe. They also say that the incident will only happen in main rivers, and not in smaller streams moving upstream.

Baya - Crocodile

Panjuk - Trap



ORANG-UTAN AND GINGER

ORANG-UTAN AND GINGER

Once there was a man who went hunting and got lost in the jungle. He wandered in the jungle and searched for a way out for almost a week but could not find it. One evening, he came upon a huge and tall tree. He could hear voices speaking in Iban but he could not see the people because it was pitch dark. From the sound of it, it appeared that they were delivering a baby.

“Push!” one of them said. And soon after, a baby’s cry filled the air. Another voice said, “Quickly, pound the ginger and rub it on the mother’s stomach!” While he was focusing on the voices out of curiosity, a piece of ginger fell to the ground near him. He quickly took that piece of ginger and put it into his *tempilah* or bamboo casing where he kept his darts. Moments later, he fell asleep.

In the morning when he woke up, he finally caught sight of what he thought were humans the night before. They were all orang-utans. They were hanging from tree branches high above him. The man was left in shock, puzzled by what had happened the night before. On that day, he somehow managed to find his way out of the jungle rather easily for some strange reason. Once out, he found himself in a farm with a small hut. He entered the hut to find a fellow villager staying in it, although it took him a while to remember who the villager was.

Later, he told all the villagers about the orang-utans who could speak their language and mystically helped him find his way out of the jungle. And so, the Iban started eating ginger and using it for postnatal care. And it was the orang-utans that taught the people to do so. Since then, it has become taboo for the Ibans in Menyang Taih to kill orang-utans.



A colorful illustration of a white gibbon hanging from a vine in a forest. The gibbon has a black face and a small tuft of white hair on its head. It is holding a small blue object in its right hand. A young boy with dark hair and a brown tunic is looking up at the gibbon with an open mouth, as if in awe. The background is a soft purple and pink sky with green foliage and trees. Several orange starburst shapes are scattered throughout the scene.

WHITE GIBBON OF TINTING EMPELIAU

WHITE GIBBON OF TINTING EMPELIAU

Once upon a time, there was a man named Buja. He saw a mysterious white gibbon during his hunting trip at a ridge of a hill or *tinting* and shot it with a dart. Although his dart did hit the gibbon, the animal remained very active and pretty much alive. Buja shot it again and again until eventually he used up all his darts, but the gibbon was somehow unaffected.

Unsatisfied, Buja went home to make more darts before going back into the jungle for the gibbon. He made many attempts to kill the gibbon and made more darts every time they ran out. On the seventh day, the gibbon finally fell. Satisfied, Buja went to retrieve the gibbon. But when he touched the animal, he suddenly felt unwell, fell to the ground and fainted.

While he was unconscious, he dreamt of the gibbon speaking to him, asking for mercy and to be released. In that dream, the gibbon told Buja that someone would come to pick him up. In return, it gave Buja a piece of stone that would help him become successful. He made Buja promise that all his generations would not harm any gibbon anymore. Buja took the stone, woke up from his dream and walked away, and the white gibbon seemed to have disappeared. This is how the ridge that Buja went hunting is named as Tinting Empeliau.

Empeliau - Gibbon

Tinting - The ridge of a hill, the highest line on the top of a hill

THE PYTHON THAT HELPED THE IBAN



THE PYTHON THAT HELPED THE IBAN

Longhouse Chief Manggat Meringai trembles whenever he sees a python – dead or alive. If he sees one, he will move away from it and quickly chants a short prayer so that no harm shall fall on him and his family.

Being a descendant who believes that a python had once helped the Iban to fight off the Orang Ulu or Upriver People, including the Penan and Ukit, Manggat Meringai and all his generations are forever indebted to pythons.

Many years ago, when the Iban and Orang Ulu were at war as the former wanted to expand their territory, a python turned into a man to help the Iban. As a result, the Iban won the war and drove the Orang Ulu further into the hinterland.

From thereon, the Iban made a pact with the python that they would not harm any python out of gratitude to the serpent. For generations, pythons are not harmed.

Different descendants of the Iban community have their own beliefs and do not eat certain wildlife. Those who still hold steadfast to this traditional belief or *adat* may have contributed to the conservation of some wildlife to this day in the area.

Adat - local customary practices and tradition



WHEN A
KETUPONG VISITS

WHEN A *KETUPONG* VISITS

Many years ago, when Manggat Meringai was a bachelor, a bird known to the Ibans as *ketupong* (*Sasia abnormis*) flew into his old longhouse. He tried to chase the bird out but to no avail.

He told his late uncle Nili Obat about the incident and only then was told that *ketupong* is one of the spiritual birds that the community believes in. The next day, his uncle performed a *miring*. After the *miring*, the whole longhouse was closed and covered with woven cloths known as *pua kumbu*, for three days. No one was allowed to do anything during that period, and no visitors were allowed.

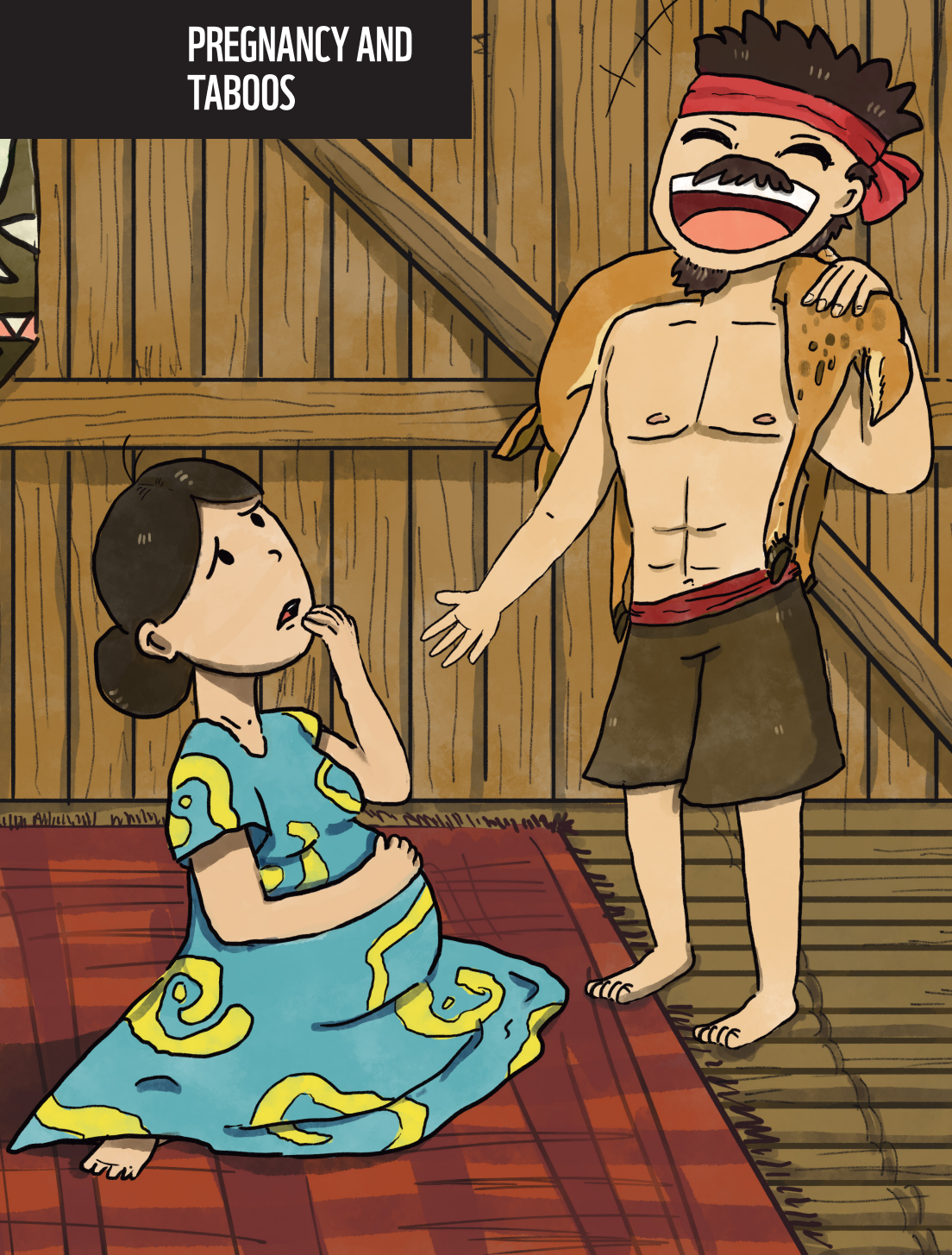
Manggat's current longhouse is about 10 minutes' walk from the old site. Since they moved out in 1993 until today, the villagers encountered a similar situation once, whereby a *ketupong* flew into the longhouse.

However, by then Rumah Manggat had opened its door for ecotourism and could no longer close the longhouse for three days and ask their guests to leave. So instead, they performed *miring* only to ask for peace and that no harm shall fall on them and their guests.

Miring - A traditional prayer ceremony to appease the spirits

Pua kumbu - Finely woven fabric; usually worn or used by the Iban during traditional ceremonies and festivals

PREGNANCY AND TABOOS



PREGNANCY AND TABOOS

The Ibans share a general belief that a pregnant woman is vulnerable. Thus, a pregnant woman and her husband need to follow certain taboos during the pregnancy period. One of these taboos is that a husband must not hunt or slaughter any animal while his wife is pregnant. Failure to observe these taboos may cause difficulty in delivery, or the child will bear some defects or physical deformities.

Once there was a pregnant woman. One day, her husband went to the jungle to hunt for animals. He set a trap and caught a deer. Nothing happened to the woman after the hunting trip and the couple went on with their daily life as usual.

However, a few months later when she was in labour, she screamed in pain. Her screams sounded like that of a deer and she died during childbirth. The villagers believed that she had been cursed by her husband's actions for breaking the taboo during her pregnancy.



**HOW NALAN
MANUK GOT ITS
NAME**

HOW NALAN MANUK GOT ITS NAME

Once upon a time, a man named Busing from Menyang Taih went into the jungle and wandered around with a blowpipe in hand. Suddenly, he heard the crowing of roosters and thought that there was a longhouse nearby. He continued his journey and followed the sound of roosters.

As he was getting closer to that place, he hid behind a huge tree to take a peek at what was going on. He saw a group of men gathering in an open area. Two of those men stood in front of the crowd and covered the roosters with cloth.

When the two men revealed the roosters, Busing was shocked to see that they were the mystical people from Panggau Libau and Gelong. They were holding a cockfighting competition and Busing was the first man to witness the activity.

After some time, Busing came out from his hiding place but was caught by Bungai Nuing, an Iban warrior from Panggau Libau.

“Who are you and what are you doing here?” Bungai Nuing asked.

Busing replied, “I... I am a human who lives in a nearby area. I had never seen an activity like this before in my entire life.”

“Ah! Then you should learn and teach cockfighting to the Iban people,” Bungai Nuing told Busing.

After Busing watched the cockfighting, he was allowed to return to his village. Since then, the open area has been known as Nalan Manuk, and it is considered a sacred ground because of the incident. Today, Nalan Manuk remains a primary forest that is part of the proposed Ulu Sungai Menyang Conservation Area, which is over an hour's trek from Rumah Manggat.

Manuk - Rooster / chicken

Nalan - Cleared level space, a defined area that is close-cut so that it is pleasant for recreational activities

**THE CURSE OF
BATU BABI,
RUMAH ENGSONG**



THE CURSE OF BATU BABI

Deep in the heart of Sarawak lies a longhouse called Rumah Engsong, which is located at the mouth of the Kain River in Bukit Mabong. This is a story from there.

A long long time ago, a man by the name of Baji Jambok decided to build a longhouse along Sungai Senyaro Kiba. Naturally he was elected longhouse chief after that, with 13 households under his wing. Some years later, Baji and his longhouse community decided that it was time for his son, Langgat Baji, to take over and become his successor and next chief of the longhouse. Langgat then decided to move the entire community and built a new longhouse in a place called Batu Babi at Kain River, which is the same location of present day Rumah Engsong.

Many many years later, a different leader was now chief of the community, and his name was Jarau Guntor. One night, Jarau dreamt that his grandson, Engsong Sigeh would become the one and only leader of the community after Jarau resigned. True enough, 30 years later, Engsong fulfilled the prophecy depicted in his grandfather's dream and became chief until this very day.

Now the good people of Rumah Engsong had an unwavering belief that a giant rock nearby was a sacred thing, not to be trifled with. It lay near the *pendai* of the longhouse, which is the place where they bathed by the river.

According to longhouse lore, a man called Saging Kering Nadai Untak Tulong once went hunting with his three dogs. They were called Sengkalan, Chapan and Mansai, faithful hunters to Saging. At the river mouth of the Batang Empanang Kanyau, they caught sight of a wild boar and ran after it. They chased it from sunrise to sundown until finally they reached Nanga Kain in the dark. When they cornered the boar, it transformed into a giant rock. Saging was so frustrated by then, he kicked the rock in anger and called it Batu Babi or Boar Rock.

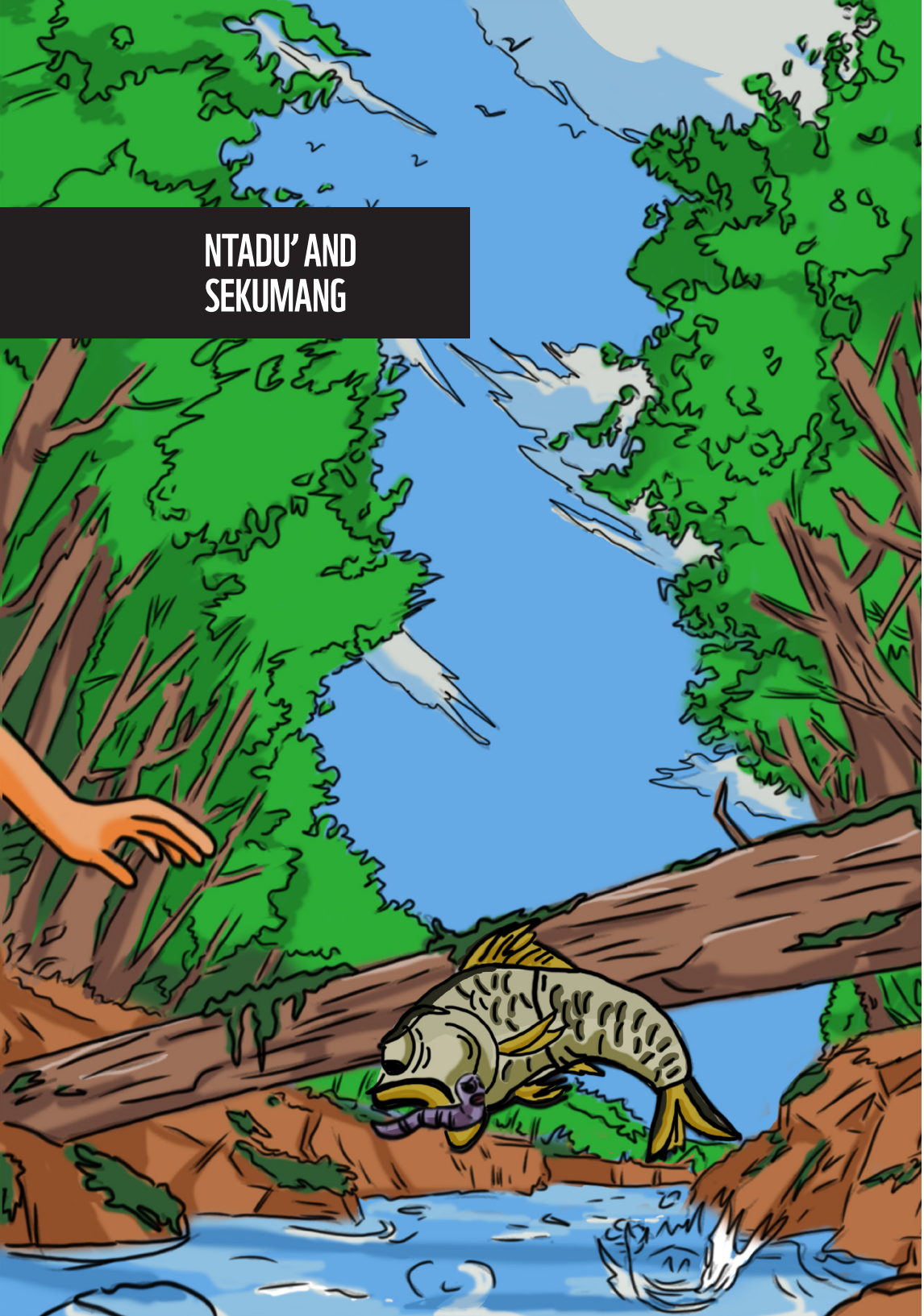
Of course, to modern day people, Batu Babi is just a large harmless rock. However, talk to the people of Rumah Engsong and many still believe in the curse of death the rock imparts to those who dare to light a fire on it. They will tell you, this was what had happened to their own longhouse kin and it will happen to others who dare show disrespect to the rock they call Batu Babi.





**STORIES FROM
KAPUAS HULU,
KALIMANTAN,
INDONESIA**

NTADU' AND SEKUMANG



NTADU' AND SEKUMANG

One night, Sekumang's child turned into a *ntadu'*, a type of caterpillar. However, he constantly wanted to be nursed by Sekumang. It was not the mother's milk that he drank, but her blood. Sekumang decided to go across the river where Bamai was staying. She ran as fast as she could because Ntadu' could not stop sucking her blood.

When crossing the river on a fallen tree trunk, Ntadu' sucked her even harder. "Aaaaah...Ntadu'! If you keep doing it, this trunk will break and we will fall into the river!" Sekumang cried out in pain. "Wait, wait," said Ntadu'.

Langkung, a type of fish that happened to be under that tree trunk heard Sekumang's squeals. He jumped to the surface to snatch Ntadu'. Instantly, Sekumang was relieved from her pain. The *langkung* then swam away, right into Bamai's *bubu* which was located not far from that tree trunk.

Shortly afterwards, Bamai came to check on his *bubu*. There he found a trapped *langkung*. "Wow! This *langkung* has a big belly!" said Bamai. He then cleaned the fish and found Ntadu' inside. Bamai instantly beat Ntadu' to death.

Bubu - Fish trap

**MAMANG BULAN
AND MAMANG
TUWAU**



MAMANG BULAN AND MAMANG TUWAU

Mamang Bulan and Mamang Tuwau were getting married. After the wedding, Mamang Bulan went on a journey to a place to make a boat.

Before he left, he instructed his wife, "You must alert the dog when you deliver some rice to me."

"All right," answered Mamang Tuwau.

So when Mamang Tuwau delivered rice to her husband, she would call for the dog, "Yip... Yip..." She repeated that on the second day and the third day.

On the fourth day, however, she disregarded her husband's request. This was because when Mamang Tuwau was walking towards her husband's boat, she saw a beam of light. "Oh, I see. It's no wonder my husband requested me to call the dog, so that the light would not appear." Hence, Mamang Tuwau was jealous of the light.

Feeling resentful, Mamang Tuwau threw away the rice she brought to the street and went home. When she arrived home, she went straight inside the mosquito net and covered her head and feet with pillows. Shortly afterwards, her husband came home.

"Why did you throw away the rice?" shouted Mamang Bulan who just found the rice that his wife had thrown away on the street. "No wonder I kept waiting, but you never came. I was starving." Mamang Bulan was angry, but he tried to hold his anger and talk to his wife nicely.

However, Mamang Tuwau remained cold and distant. She was still jealous of the light she saw earlier. She was silent, unwilling to speak.

"You are still quiet. It seems that you don't like me anymore," said Mamang Bulan. "Then can I ask for the *damak* inside my box?"

Then Mamang Tuwau threw the *damak* at him. Mamang Bulan took it and threw it to the sky. The *damak* he threw suddenly turned into *akar beruru*.

"Goodbye, my wife. You don't like me anymore, so I will return to the sky," said Mamang Bulan, while climbing up the root. Realizing that her husband would leave her, Mamang Tuwau got up and begged.

"No, I don't want you to leave me, my husband. Let me come with you," sobbed Mamang Tuwau.

"No," her husband said. "You won't be able to stand it because we will pass through the fires of hell. Then you would ask for water because of thirst."

"We'll just bring some supplies then," said his wife. After thinking for a while, Mamang Bulan finally allowed his wife to join him.

Akar beruru - A type of forest root

Damak - Dart



THE TAPANG TREE

THE TAPANG TREE

As they passed through the fires of hell, Mamang Tuwau whined, “Oh Mamang Bulan, I’m so thirsty. I need some water.”

“Where is the water you brought earlier?” asked her husband.

“It’s already finished,” said his wife.

Mamang Bulan decided to carry his wife. Throughout the journey, Mamang Tuwau constantly complained and asked for water. There were seven layers of hell. They made it through six layers, but at the seventh layer, Mamang Tuwau fell onto a *tapang* (*Koompassia excelsa*) tree. Mamang Bulan could no longer carry her.

“I’m sorry, my wife. That’s why I didn’t want you to join me. You asked for water constantly,” cried Mamang Bulan. He then went to the sky by himself.

Mamang Tuwau who was still holding onto the *tapang* tree stayed still at her spot. She kept hoping for her husband’s return. Sitting on the *tapang* tree, she missed her husband dearly, but he never came back for her.

That is the reason why *tapang* trees always make a wailing sound. It sounds like “Woooooo ...wooooo...” and it is believed that they were the sounds of Mamang Tuwau crying out for her husband, Mamang Bulan.



**THE THREE POOR
BROTHERS AND
*ANTU PANYANG***

THE THREE POOR BROTHERS AND *ANTU PANYANG*

Once upon a time, there were three brothers who lived with their father in a place far away. They were Secopak, Segantang and Lin. One day, their father fell ill and not long after that, he died. The three brothers were clueless as to whom they could ask to perform the funeral prayer for their father. The oldest brother suggested, “An *imam* usually takes care of the funeral and performs a prayer for the deceased.”

“What does an *imam* look like? Do we know him?” asked another brother.

“The main feature of the *imam* is his long beard,” the oldest brother answered.

Secopak and Lin then set out to find the *imam*. After a long journey, they met someone with a long beard down to his chest. They immediately called the person. “O... *tuan imam*.”

“Yes,” answered the person.

Secopak and Lin explained the events that had happened. “Our father has passed away. Can you help us do a prayer for our father?”

“Yes, I can help you,” said the person.

They returned home, bringing the man with a long beard. Arriving home, the long-bearded man went straight to see the father’s body. As it turned out, he did not intend to wash their father’s body at all, let alone pray for him. What the long-bearded man did was actually tearing the body apart and started eating it.

The three brothers were shocked. The man they thought was an *imam* was actually *antu panyang*, a type of ghost. The terrified brothers ran away as far as they could. Each of them brought some food supplies. The oldest brought with him *sawi* seeds, the second one took *arum* seeds while the youngest brought seven eggs.

After a long walk, they finally stopped at a place and built a small house. The oldest began farming and so did the second brother, while the youngest was trying to hatch his chicken eggs. Their lives had been peaceful since then.

Antu - Ghost

Arum - Red spinach

Imam - Worship leader

Panyang - Long

Sawi - A type of small leafy mustard green

Tuan - Sir or master

THE ROOSTER OF A POOR MAN



THE ROOSTER OF A POOR MAN

Lin and his brothers lived peacefully in a village. Lin was the only one in the family that reared chickens. The chickens hatched from the seven eggs that he brought along when he ran away from home after witnessing a ghost, *antu panyang*, eating their father's body. Lin then took care of his chickens to become tough roosters to be pitted.

When his roosters were big enough, Lin brought them to a bustling village for cockfighting competitions. Lin's roosters were unbeatable.

Concurrently, King Rum, a king from a distant land ushered a challenge to King Berdad. "If my rooster is able to defeat yours in a cockfight, then I will surrender all my property and treasures to you. However, if you lose, all of what you own will become mine!"

"All right," said King Berdad, accepting the challenge. King Berdad then ordered his ministers to find people who owned the toughest roosters. From talks in the village, the minister heard about the supernatural power of Lin's roosters. The minister came to see Lin. Lin accepted the offer.

During the match day, Lin's rooster stood tall and firm. But the rooster of King Rum was no less intimidating. It was just as tall as the heads of persons sitting and its crow was incredibly loud.

Before the match started, Lin petted his rooster and chanted, "*Kambing sibiri-biri, burung terbang di atas kuda ayam ini di dalam negeri, ayam pelihara bujang juara.*" Lin chanted a mantra for his rooster to do well in the competition and that may it fly high and be a champion.

The fight began. Lin released his rooster. Miraculously, without touching the ground, the rooster spun with such speed, flying, and then as fast as lightning, its spurs caught the neck of King Rum's rooster. Instantly, the rooster of King Rum collapsed and died. Hence, King Rum lost the bet to King Berdad. He then surrendered his land to King Berdad. Lin and his brothers were given the honour to rule in that land.

THE KING'S CONTEST



THE KING'S CONTEST

Once upon a time, there was a king trying to find a son-in-law. He had a daughter and wanted an heir to succeed him.

The king ordered the Minister of Hulu Balang to announce a contest. The contest was rather unusual. The king was seeking a liar whose lies could not be confirmed. An announcement was made and interested participants were asked to gather at the palace courtyard on a set date. The process would call for candidates to appear before the king and present their lies. Anyone who could successfully lie to the king would then have the right to marry the king's daughter.

On the appointed day, people in the country flocked to the palace courtyard. The men who participated in the contest were all hoping to be the king's son-in-law. The first participant said, "A cane can turn into a dragon." The king shook his head. "That can be true," replied the king. The first participant failed.

The second participant said, "A fork can turn into a tuning fork." The king shook his head again. "That can be true," replied the king. The second participant also failed. The same happened to almost all contestants. Many lies were told, but they were always countered by the king that could be true, until up to a point where he almost gave up.

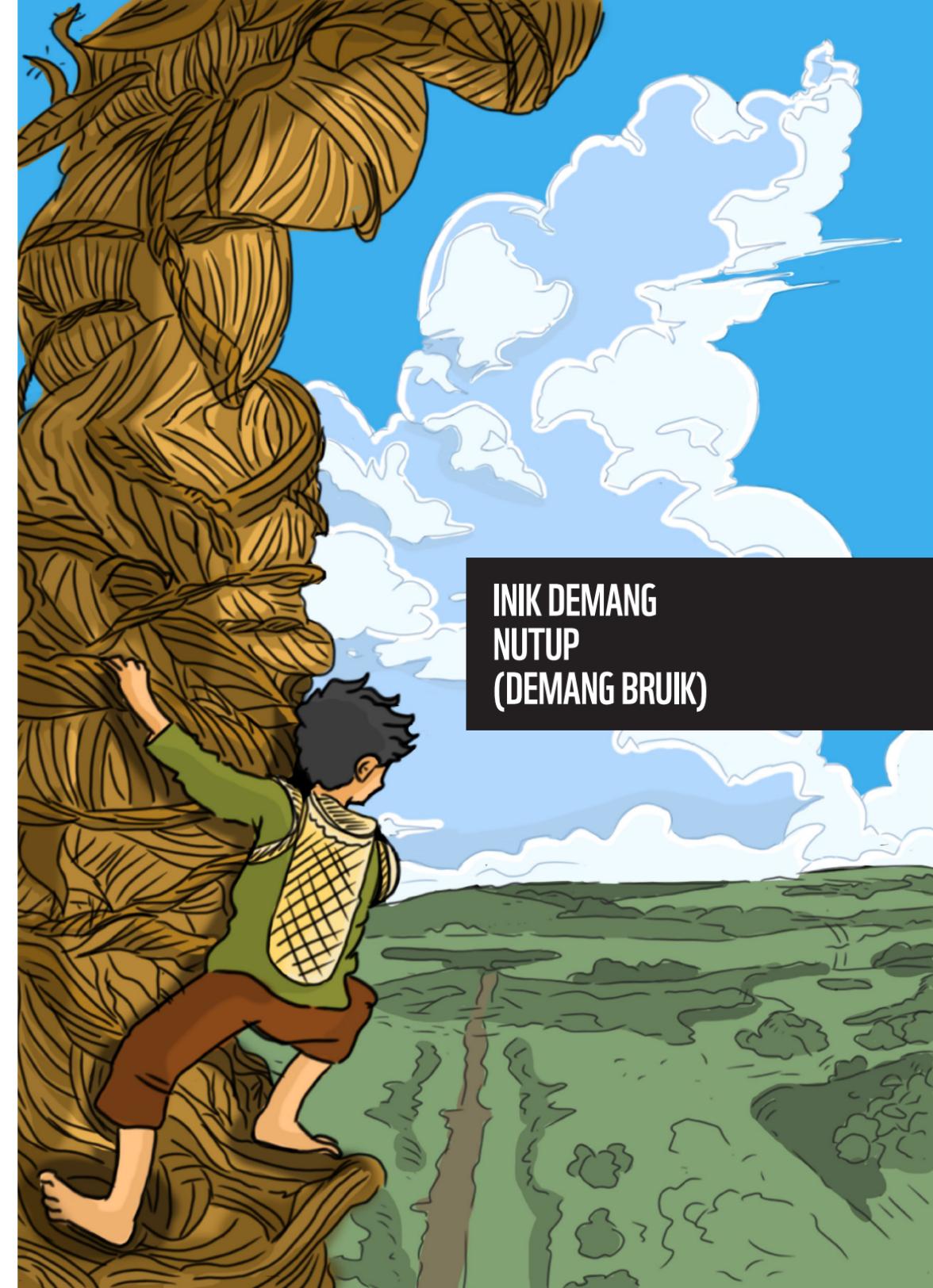
Then a young man, who was abandoned by his parents on the island of Java when he was still small, came. His birthplace was Uncak Kapuas.

He did not tell his lies verbally. Instead, he handed the king a letter. The king read the letter and was unable to say anything. Then the king stood up and announced to the entire crowd at the courtyard.

“Here’s a lie that I cannot justify if it’s true.” The king read aloud the contents of the letter.

“The king’s grandmother is in debt to my grandmother. The amount of debt is indefinite.” The king closed the letter. “This is a lie that I cannot justify. If I were to validate the contents, it means that my grandmother had indeed been in debt. Everything we have in this country would not be able to cover the debt.”

The young man was called and stood next to the king’s daughter. “He certainly is a smart young man. I’d give my daughter in marriage to him and he will replace me as a king,” exclaimed the king which was then hailed by the crowd with a thunderous applause.

An illustration of a person with dark hair, wearing a green long-sleeved shirt and brown pants, climbing a massive, textured tree trunk. The person is barefoot and has a woven basket on their back. They are looking down at a vast, green, hilly landscape below. The sky is blue with large, white, stylized clouds. The tree trunk is made of many layers of brown, fibrous material, possibly bark or roots.

**INIK DEMANG
NUTUP
(DEMANG BRUIK)**

INIK DEMANG NUTUP (DEMANG BRUIK)

Long ago, Beluan Hill in Nanga Tepuai and Ampan Hill in Nanga Pedian were connected to each other. The height of those hills could almost reach the sky. Hence, people with supernatural power would only need to use *beruru* roots, a type of forest roots, to ascend to heaven. Demang Bruik, a supernatural being, often used these roots to descend from heaven to earth.

Demang Bruik's child had a craving for fish, so he descended to earth to a fish pond called Sarai Dalip to catch some fish. He brought along with him fishing nets and *beriut*, a type of woven rattan bag, which he would later use to bring the fish back to heaven.

Arriving at Sarai Dalip, Demang Bruik immediately cast his nets into the river. He caught lots of *tamun* or gourami fish. When he had caught enough, Demang Bruik returned to heaven. Up there in heaven, he cooked the *tamun* fish and served it to his child. The child ate the fish in such a hurry that he accidentally swallowed the fish bones.

Demang Bruik tried to get the bones out of his son's throat, but he could not so he became very worried and furious. In his anger, he lifted Beluan Hill to block Embau River so that no human could cross that river.

After quite a distance he carried the hill, he met his friend in Lokan Maram. His friend called him out, "O... Where are you going, Demang Bruik? Come and eat with me."

Demang Bruik dropped by to see his friend who was residing in Lokan Maram. Lokan Maram was located behind Nanga Pedian. They had a meal together and were having a good time. When he was about to continue his journey, Demang Bruik could not lift up Beluan Hill as it was already submerged in Lokan Maram. He did not have much energy as he ate too much. To this day, Bukit Beluan is located in Lokan Maram behind Nanga Pedian.



DEMANG BRUIK LEFT FOR JAVA

DEMANG BUIK LEFT FOR JAVA

Demang Buik headed downstream to Embau. On his way, he stopped at Ntilang Bosi where he built a hut and grew some crops. He also made a boat which he planned to sail to the island of Java to meet the King of China. Under the boat, he made a compartment to be used for storage.

Once the boat was completed, Demang Buik dried some rice. Then he left for Java. When he arrived on the island of Java, he was welcomed by the King of China and was treated to a hearty meal. The king asked Demang Buik about himself and he told the king he was from West Kalimantan. Demang Buik was well treated by the king who ordered his servants to cater to Demang Buik's needs. Every day a servant would send food to Demang Buik in his boat and each time, Demang Buik would retain the cutlery. He kept them in the compartment at the bottom of his boat. This went on for a few days, until the servant reported to the king about Demang Buik's odd behaviour. This prompted the king to probe into Demang Buik.

"Why have you not returned to us all the plates that you used?" the king demanded, but Demang Buik feigned ignorance.

The king got annoyed and decided to arrest Demang Buik. The king's guards caught Demang Buik and proceeded to take him to prison, Demang Buik pulled out a Majapahit *keris* and quietly stuck it into a Javanese banana tree. All of a sudden, the day became dark as if it was night. Seeing the sky darkened, the king was frightened. He wondered if that had anything to do with Demang Buik.

Demang Buik was finally released. The King of China asked him why the day had suddenly become dark. Demang Buik explained and made an offer. "I struck the Majapahit *keris* into a Javanese banana tree. That is why the day turned dark. I'll give it to you, but in exchange, I will bring home all the plates that I used to West Kalimantan."

The King of China accepted the offer. Demang Buik then returned to Kalimantan. He settled down and had a family at Ntilang Bosi.

None of the children of Demang Bruik were human, they turned into crocodiles in the Kapuas River. Therefore, people believe that the Embau people will never be eaten by crocodiles because of their origin that was descended from Demang Bruik.

Keris - A type of dagger

BUKIT SEMARAU



BUKIT SEMARAU

Bukit Semarau has a dark side that not many people are aware of. It was not a hill as it is today. It was a ghost known as Semarau. Acting as a moral policeman, the ghost would peer into houses and stared at its residents especially when they did not adhere to the religious teachings.

This unnerved the residents who turned to religion for some respite. But that did not stop the ghost from moral policing. So when the residents continued with their *haram* ways in the form of consuming forbidden food or participating *haram* acts, Semarau would bring its moral policing act to a higher notch. It would cause the surrounding air to roar and sudden torrential rain.

Semarau continued with its moral policing until of such time, it ceased its operations when it turned to be a hill. Thus, the birth of Bukit Semarau.

Haram - Unlawful

LIANG MENYADI



LIANG MENYADI

A wedding ceremony was about to take place in a longhouse. Not far from that longhouse, stood a house where a father and his child lived. When the residents of the longhouse were busy preparing for the wedding the child went to the longhouse to see the activities.

One time, after visiting the longhouse, the child came home with a package. He was told not to open the package until his father returned. The boy was excited. When his father returned home, the child opened the package. It contained pig dung.

The father was not amused so he thought of ways to pay back. The wedding ceremony lasted for a few days. On the seventh night of the celebration, the father found a *kelempiau*, a type of small ape. He dressed the *kelempiau* with a shirt, pants and a headband, and then threw it to the people at the wedding. They were laughing loudly.

Suddenly, there came roaring thunder and lightning. The lightning struck everyone in that longhouse and they turned into rocks. Only the father and son survived. Today, the place still exists and it is called Liang Menyadi, located in the Landau Kumpang village in Hulu Gurung subdistrict of Kapuas Hulu district.

Liang - Cave

ABDULLAH THE MERCHANT AND HIS FATHER'S HERITAGE



ABDULLAH THE MERCHANT AND HIS FATHER'S HERITAGE

There was a bachelor merchant named Abdullah who lived with his mother. His father had passed away. Abdullah was a poor man. One day, Abdullah asked his mother about the wealth left by his father.

“My son,” answered the mother. “Your father left a few things when he died; a shirt, a *kopiah* or Muslim headdress, a flute and 10 cents.”

Abdullah then informed his mother that he would go to the market the next day to buy something. It was then that his meager inheritance was given to him.

Abdullah went to the market, wearing the clothes and carrying the money that his father had left him. At the market, he bought three cents worth of long beans, three cents of onions, and three cents of cooking oil. He had one cent left that he planned to use to buy goods that cost a penny. He began asking around, but found nothing equivalent to the amount of money he had left.

Abdullah then met a seller who made round breads. The bread seller was Chinese. The price of the round bread was only one cent, so he bought a piece of bread. However, when Abdullah was about to pay for the bread, the seller did not want to take his money as it was too large in value, about a thousand dinars.

“Even if you take all my bread, you would still have a balance, and I don’t think I have enough change to give you,” said the seller to Abdullah.

Abdullah was puzzled because he thought that he had only one cent left. Upon returning home, he told his mother about the incident. His mother then told him about the efficacy of the clothes he wore. It was no ordinary clothes but a heritage that manifested one’s loyalty and piety, and hence, had the ability to produce a desired wish.

SELUKUP



SELUKUP

Selukup had six older brothers. His brothers were all eager to settle down and all dreams of marrying the king's daughter. Coincidentally, the king was also looking for a son-in-law. Coming up with a list of requirements to vet the suitors, the king decreed that anyone found violating the agreement would be sold off. Selukup's six brothers were all sold off except for Selukup who was too young to get married. Selukup was still staying with his parents.

When he became an adult, Selukup asked his mother the whereabouts of his brothers. His mother told him what had happened.

Then Selukup said, "In that case, I must go and propose to the king's daughter!" His mother pleaded with him not to do so as she feared he, too, might be sold off.

For days, Selukup kept asking his mother to propose to the king's daughter on his behalf. Finally, she relented. She went to the palace and proposed in her son's place to the king but she was rejected.

Hearing the king's response from his mother, Selukup did not give up. He kept proposing through his mother and this went on for quite some time until the king agreed. He saw Selukup's persistence and requested Selukup to come to the palace.

The next day, Selukup went to the palace. Upon his arrival, Selukup was asked to abide by an agreement that stated that both parties, the king and Selukup, must not lose their temper during their interactions. Whosoever lost his temper first, would be sold. Selukup agreed.

The next day, the king requested Selukup to go to his cattle farm. He was to shoot any flies or animals that were sitting on top of a cow's body with the weapon given by the king.

After arriving at the king's cattle farm, Selukup started shooting at the king's cattle, instead of the flies or other insects. After many cattle were shot, he slaughtered the animals and sold the meat. Seeing this incident, the king called him and ordered him to go to the flower garden to clean some plants.

The king had indeed almost lost his temper when he saw that many of his cattle died, but he remembered their agreement and refrained from getting angry.

The next day, Selukup went to the king's flower garden, and he cleaned the garden. Strangely, he not only cut the grass, he also cut the flowers which he sold in the market. After some time, Selukup was once again called by the king to appear before him. Seeing the work done by Selukup, the king almost lost his temper, but refrained because he remembered the agreement.

The king ordered him to do a great many tasks, but Selukup managed to complete all of them with ease. His intention of selling some of the king's possessions was to raise money to buy back all his brothers who had been sold off by the king.

Finally, Selukup married the king's daughter. During the wedding ceremony, each guest was given a nice plate, while the king, who was none other than his own father-in-law, was given a shell. Having been publicly humiliated, the king could no longer control his anger. He was very angry at Selukup.

"How disrespectful you are, Selukup!" the king shouted at him.

Seeing the king's anger, Selukup took the letter of agreement and handed it to the king. Since he had lost his temper, he was then sold by Selukup to redeem his brothers. In the absence of the king, Selukup was awarded the kingship.



DAYANG LIDI AND HER ANIMAL COMPANIONS

DAYANG LIDI AND HER ANIMAL COMPANIONS

Long time ago in a country, there lived a king named Bulu Pejarum. One day, King Bulu Pejarum got married. After a while of being married, the king departed for a long journey.

Before he left, he said to his wife, “O my wife, when you give birth to our child later, keep him if it’s a boy, but kill her if it’s a girl.”

After the king had left the country for some time, his wife gave birth to a baby girl. Since it was a girl, the wife could not bear the thought of killing her own child, so she gave the child to the indigenous people to take care of. To deceive her husband, she buried a *lesung* as if it was the child resting in her grave. After a while, the king returned to his country and he asked his wife.

“My wife, have you given birth to our child?” said the king.

“I have but I gave birth to a girl, so I buried her according to your instruction,” answered his wife.

The king headed to the place mentioned by his wife, to pay homage to his daughter who had died. Arriving there, the king performed a prayer. A crow was there and it spoke.

“*Gak geriung raja nyembahyang lesung* (It’s very odd for a king to worship a mortar).”

“Eh? Is this a human or mortar?” murmured the king. Again the crow said, “*Gak geriung raja nyembahyang lesung.*”

After completing his prayer, the king returned to his palace. Then the king told his wife about the incident at the cemetery. “The crow spoke to me,” said the king. “It said, ‘*Gak geriung raja nyembahyang lesung.*’ So, was it not our child that I prayed for?”

His wife did not answer.

After a while, the child, who was left to the indigenous people to be cared for, was placed on a boat by her caregiver and left adrift. The child's name was Dayang Lidi. She was equipped with a paddle and a cane. Not far from where the boat was drifting away, a mousedeer saw Dayang Lidi and asked her.

"Where are you going, Dayang Lidi?"

"I have been abandoned by my parents. I don't know where I'm going," said Dayang Lidi.

"Can I come with you?" said the mousedeer.

"Of course, you can," said Dayang Lidi.

After a long journey following the current of the river, they encountered several other animals such as a pig, an eagle, a gazelle and a crocodile. All of them boarded Dayang Lidi's boat. So now the boat had seven passengers. Their journey was easier because many more were paddling. Finally, they met with King Timah. The king asked the mousedeer as he knew that the person they had brought was actually his niece, the daughter of King Bulu Pejarum.

"We followed brother Lidi," said the mousedeer.

"That is not brother Lidi, but it's Dayang Lidi, she is my niece," said King Timah.

"Eh...Don't argue with us, this is brother Lidi!" said the mousedeer.

"Okay then, let's have a contest, any contest you wish and we will accept," said the king.

"All right," said the mousedeer. "We will have a yam eating contest, one basket for each one of us; if we cannot finish it we lose and will hand over brother or Dayang Lidi."

Then the King Timah, "If you win, we will leave this country to you."

"All right," said the mousedeer.

The next day, they started a yam eating contest. Dayang Lidi's group was represented by a pig, while its opponent was a person. After the match was over, it turned out that Dayang Lidi and her animal friends won the contest. With one country in their possession, they continued on their journey.

As their journey passed through seven kingdoms, they conquered all of them with the contest they created. When Dayang Lidi reached adulthood, she became the queen to these kingdoms.

THE UNGRATEFUL POOR MAN



THE UNGRATEFUL POOR MAN

In a village far away from the crowds, there lived a poor woman and her son. The mother was old and could not work anymore, so her son fished in the river for a living. He would keep some for food while the rest he would sell at the market. On bad days when there was no catch, the mother and son would have nothing to eat.

Their house was small, with only seven pieces of tiles on the floor and a three-piece *kajang* or roof on top. One day, the poor man was tired of fishing so he went to the house of a very wealthy merchant. The poor man talked to the merchant about his problem.

“Merchant,” he said, “I always go fishing in the river, but now I am bored and I want to learn a new way that can make my life happier and better than before.”

“All right,” said the merchant, “I’ll teach you a way that might be useful to you.”

The merchant took a fishing rod and a roll of string. Then he prepared the fishing hook and tied it with a fishing line and he gave it to the poor man.

“Why this?” asked the poor man. “I’ve been fishing every day. I was asking you for another way, other than this. If it’s this tool, I’ve already used it every day,” said the poor man.

“This is a way that I can help you and for you to figure out. If you don’t trust me, you won’t be asking me for advice,” said the merchant.

The poor man almost refused it as he was not expecting this. Eventually, he accepted the gift after listening to the merchant’s explanation.

One morning, the poor man went to the place where he usually fished. At around 7 a.m. he cast out his new fishing line and by 3.00 p.m. there was no tug on his fishing line but at around 3.30 p.m. his line went crazy. It seemed he finally caught a huge fish.

The poor man could not reel in the fish; it took every ounce of his energy to finally reel it in after a heavy and long tussle. Finally, he managed to pull in his catch.

However, it was not a fish. It was an old woman who appeared even older than his own mother. He undid the fishing hook that was attached to the woman's mouth, and then the old woman started to talk to him.

"I had been tortured excessively as you pushed and pulled me left and right that whole time," she said.

"Listen poor man, today you are my husband, tomorrow you are also my husband," she said. The poor man simply ignored her.

It was getting dark and the poor man returned home with the old woman following closely behind him. When he got home, he saw his mother sleeping. He and his mother had not eaten for days already, and they had to starve again that night.

By nightfall, the poor man fell asleep, paying no attention to the old woman. That night, the old woman prayed. She asked God for a three-storey house in place of the poor man's house. She also asked the house to be filled with beautiful lights and furnishings as well as other necessities such as dishes, bowls, clothes and that the house would not lack in anything. The poor man and his mother were still in deep sleep, unaware of what was happening to their house at that time.

When the poor man woke up, he felt something strange in his house; his sleep was different than usual. When he opened his eyes, he saw that his home had turned into a luxurious, three-storey house, and decorated with lights that illuminated all the rooms.

The poor man had not eaten for days and he was very hungry. When he saw a serving food cover in the middle of the room, the poor man went straight to it. He saw a cat walking around the cover while the old woman was nowhere to be found. As he lifted the food cover, he saw all kinds of food beneath it. Initially, the poor man had only wanted to eat rice but there was so much luxurious food including beef, chicken, fish and bread. The man ate to his heart's content.

The cat kept walking around the poor man, asking to be fed, while he feasted. When the cat was on his right, he pushed it to the left, and when it was on his left, he pushed it to the right. When it stood in front of him, he kicked it. This went on. After he had his belly filled, the poor man closed the food cover back tightly, ignoring the cat as he refused to feed it.

After sitting comfortably, a woman came and sat next to him. It was the same woman he found yesterday but her form had changed to a very beautiful woman.

She reprimanded the poor man saying, "How could you? You've never eaten this much in your life and you've never had a house this beautiful all your life. I tested you, while resembling a cat. Why did you push it away and even kick it when all it did was just circling you?"

The poor man could only gasp. The woman continued, "You had no intention to feed it, not even one bite. That is not yours; you have all of these because of me, my love, my affection to you, poor man, my wealth, my ingenuity that I have served you. Now, even just for one cat, you won't feed it, while you still have plenty of food that you can't possibly finish!"

"What's the point for you to become rich? You're too stingy to share your wealth with others."

As it began to get dark, the woman left the poor man. There stayed the poor man, sitting in his house that had been transformed back to its original form, a seven-piece floor and a three-piece roof top.



STORY OF A SNAKEHEAD FISH

STORY OF A SNAKEHEAD FISH

In a dried-up lake, there was a giant *gabus* or snakehead fish living alone with no offspring. There was not much water left in that lake and it was just below his chest.

One day, there came a *pekaka* or kingfisher looking for prey, particularly fish. After flying around the entire lake, the bird landed in the middle of the lake that had only a few crannies left. He saw a snakehead fish that lived in the cranny in the middle of the lake.

“Well,” said the bird, “I found my prey today. There’s a giant snakehead fish in this dry lake.”

The snakehead fish said, “But don’t eat me yet, because if you eat me, I’ll be dead, if you don’t eat me, I’ll be dead, too.”

“My children and grandchildren have all died. If you look behind me, you see the water has dried up and is running low, just below my chest. Since you will eat me later, please listen to my song first,” added the fish.

The bird agreed to listen to the snakehead’s sweet tune: *“Anak angang burung pekaka tingang mengawang dalam rima’, menuk boruk nunggal perdukala ular lidi naga jentera, urang tua bebalit muda, patutlah pekaka menjadi raja.”*

The *pekaka* was ecstatic when he listened to the snakehead’s song, singing praises and prophesy that he would be a king. Flying here and there with joy as if he was really going to be a king, he did not realize that there was a thorny rattan in his path. The bird’s neck got stuck in the thorny rattan. The *pekaka* died before he could eat the snakehead fish.

A few moments later, an *enggang* bird or hornbill came along. He too was looking for fish. He flew all over the lake, from one end to the other while calling out, “Aaar ... aaar ... aaar ...” until he got to the middle of the lake where he saw a bit of water in the gap between the crannies of that lake. There he saw the snakehead fish and said, “Oh! The snakehead is huge. It would be very satisfying to eat it.”

The snakehead replied, "If you eat me, I will die, and if you don't eat me, I will also die. All of my offspring are dead because the water has evaporated. Before you eat me, you should listen to my song first." The hornbill agreed to listen to the snakehead's song before eating it. The snakehead sang the same song he did for the kingfisher earlier but this time around he addressed the song to the hornbill.

The hornbill flew around the lake and surrounding forest, back and forth. However, he lost his mind as he was overly excited to be a king. Suddenly, the hornbill hit a tree branch in the jungle and it pierced through his casque. The hornbill fell to the ground and died.

After the hornbill died, *boruk tungal*, a monkey, arrived at the lake looking for something to eat and it saw the big snakehead fish.

The monkey said, "Well, today, I'll be very full eating this giant snakehead. I will never be hungry again." The snakehead gave his usual self-pity reply and offered to sing a song to the monkey before his last moments.

Boruk tungal was happy as he called out, "Ook... ook... ook..." while jumping excitedly from tree to tree. In his excitement, he accidentally fell from a tree and died.

Then came a dragon snake, moving across the lake looking for a prey. Finally, he came to the middle of the lake and saw the snakehead. "Oh, how fortunate I am to find such a big fish. I'll be so full when I gulp him down in one bite," said the dragon snake. Again, the snakehead responded the same to the dragon snake.

The thought of becoming a king excited the dragon snake and he slithered around erratically. In his excitement, he accidentally tripped on a rock, injured his head and died.

A few moments later, an old man came. He saw the large snakehead fish, picked it up and put it into his bag.

As the old man walked to his home, he suddenly heard a voice calling from behind him. "Hi old man," said the snakehead fish. The old man kept silent and did not answer. Still ignoring the call for the second time, he was trying to find out where the voice came from. The old man uttered to himself, "The voice sounds like it came from a place nearby." He was called again by snakehead for the third time.

"Hi old man. Would you listen to my song?" asked the fish.

"Sure," said the old man as he continued to walk. The snakehead sang his song to fool the man.

The old man got carried away listening to it and he tripped over some roots on the ground. He fell and the snakehead fish jumped out of the bag and into a nearby river. The old man looked over his shoulders, but the fish was no longer there. Then he looked down into the river, the snakehead fish was swimming effortlessly. Finally, the fish was free.

AKA' RINTIT



AKA' RINTIT

Once upon a time, there was a house in a village that had a goat barn below it. There lived the oldest and the largest goat in the barn. His horns were long and curled to the point that it almost touched his eyes.

One night, the oldest goat said to his offspring, "All of you, please don't make a single sound before I tell you to. I'm going to ask all of you a question. Who do you fear the most in this world?" he asked.

Some of them answered, "The one we fear the most in this world is a dog because if he chases us, we get very scared of him."

Since there were many goats under that house, he gave a chance for others to answer, "What we fear most, other than dogs, is a snake." The old goat asked again to the other children and grandchildren. "Those over there, what are you most afraid of in this world?" His other grandchildren said, "What we fear most is a bear."

There were so many other animals that they were afraid of. After a while, having learned the answers from his grandchildren, the old goat continued his talk.

"What you are afraid of in this world, it's all the same. They don't scare me or make me tremble when I come face to face with them."

While he was talking, there was a tiger next to the barn eavesdropping on the conversation. The tiger was about to prey on the goats in that barn, but he waited because the goat was still talking to his grandchildren. The tiger was also curious about their conversation.

Then the old goat spoke again, "Everything that you are afraid of does not scare me at all, that includes tigers, bears and deers. There is only one thing that terrifies me. Even if I just hear his roar, I would run home instantly. His name is Aka' Rintit," he said.

Once they learnt of what the old goat was afraid of, they got scared, too. Meanwhile, the tiger standing next to their barn was stunned, so he held the thought of eating them.

Not long after that, two men came from another place with the intention to steal the goats under that house. They both knew that there were many goats there and they did not carry lights, out of fear of being spotted by the owner.

While fumbling around, they grabbed the first goat-like silhouette they could see, stuffed it into a sack and hastily made their escape. After running for quite a distance, night slowly turned into day. As it had become brighter, one of the men decided to peek into the sack. He was shocked to see that the colour of the goat's fur was a strikingly brilliant orange with black stripes.

Immediately they knew that they had mistakenly kidnapped a tiger instead of a goat. Being stuffed in a sack and surrounded by frantic screaming, the tiger was struck with confusion and was too scared to move. The thieves hurriedly scaled up a tree, fearing that the tiger would chase them. The frightened tiger quickly took this opportunity to escape. The tiger gathered all his friends and family and told them what had happened to him the night before. "Last night," said the tiger, "I heard the old goat I was about to prey on, saying that what he feared most in this world was Aka' Rintit. Tigers, wolves and others wouldn't scare him, only Aka' Rintit."

"This Aka' Rintit was the one who kidnapped me last night. Do you all want to see what type of monster Aka' Rintit is? I will take you to the place where I was taken to this morning."

"All right," said another tiger, "We will come with you."

The tigers journeyed back to the tree and as they arrived, the tiger exclaimed, "That's Aka' Rintit up there on that tree, the one who carried me last night!"

The two men were terrified seeing all the tigers had gathered under the tree and that the big cats would eat them.

As the men were scared, they began climbing higher up the tree. In a state of panic, they pushed each other and one man accidentally grabbed the end of a dead branch. The branch snapped and the men fell to the ground with a loud thump. Seeing the incident, the tigers ran in terror, fearing that Aka' Rintit was after them.

APANG SEKUMANG WENT HUNTING



APANG SEKUMANG WENT HUNTING

Long ago in ancient times, there were two men. They were Apang Sekumang and Apang Saji. They were neighbours who lived in a village located in the upstream of Embau River.

Apang Sekumang wanted to go hunting at a place upriver, known as Titin Kedingkil. He met his neighbour Apang Saji to share his plan to *ngelangai* or set up animal traps.

Sekumang asked Apang Saji for a favour, to look after his house while he was away hunting as he might need to stay on for a few more days until he returned.

"All right," said Apang Saji, "I will watch over your house." Time passed, and Apang Sekumang was set to leave. He was using a large boat. During the trip, he passed through the first cape where he met a mousedeer. The mousedeer could speak, and he called out to him.

"Where are you going sir?" asked the mousedeer.

"I'm going to Tintin Kedingkil," answered Apang Sekumang. The mousedeer asked, "Can I come with you?"

"Yes, you can, it's better to have two heads than one," said Apang Sekumang.

The mousedeer hopped onto the boat, and they began paddling it together.

As they were on their journey, they met a turtle. It called to them, "Where are you going?"

"We are going to Tintin Kedingkil," answered Apang Sekumang.

The turtle asked again, "Can I follow you both?" Apang Sekumang gladly replied, "Why not, it's better to have three heads than two."

Now the three of them were already in the boat, paddling together in unison. After paddling off for some distance, they passed by the next cape and met a gazelle. The gazelle asked Apang Sekumang the same question asked by the mousedeer and turtle. Apang Sekumang then invited the gazelle to come along.

As they passed the next cape, they met a deer. The deer also asked if he could come along and Apang Sekumang invited the deer to join as well. The boat moved faster with the help of the animals. They then met a bull and a tiger. Apang Sekumang also allowed them to come along.

After a long journey, they finally reached their destination, Tintin Kedingkil. When they arrived, they worked together to build a hut to spend the night. Apang Sekumang thanked his animal companions. His burden was greatly lifted by the animals.

Ngelangai - Set up animal/fish traps



**ANTU PANYANG
AND THE SMART
TURTLE**

ANTU PANYANG AND THE SMART TURTLE

Apang Sekumang went hunting with the seven animals that he met along his journey. They built a hut in Titin Kedingkil and took a rest there. Next day, Apang Sekumang with a few animals went to set animal traps and a *bubu* in the river. The yield was more than enough for all. Some of the fish would be smoked or *salai*. The next day before leaving for *ngelangai* again, Apang Sekumang decided that someone had to guard over the smoked fish at the smoking area. The tiger and bull volunteered. "We are big and agile. Both of us are fast enough to watch over the smoking area," they said. "Alright," said Apang Sekumang. "If anyone wishes to take it, don't give it to them and watch it with caution." Both of them agreed. Apang Sekumang and the other animals then left.

Moments later, came an *antu panyang*, a long ghost, and asked them, "What are you two doing?" asked *antu panyang*.

"We are guarding the *salai* we made out of the catch we got yesterday."

"Can I have it?"

"No, you can't," they both said, "If you take it, what would we eat?" The ghost said, "In that case, I will take it by force."

Antu panyang took the *salai* that was on the *parak*. He was kicked by the tiger and the bull, but he kicked them back, and they could not fight him. Finally, he took all the *salai* and left the bull and the tiger, defeated. The tiger and the bull could only stare with anger.

Not long after that, Apang Sekumang and friends returned with newly caught fish. As their *salai* were no longer there, Apang Sekumang asked the bull and the tiger. "Where are the *salai* that were on our *parak*?" said Apang Sekumang.

The bull and the tiger answered, "*Antu panyang* had taken all of it. He was very strong, we both couldn't fight him."

"That's horrible! Tomorrow let's fight him and get our *salai* back. It is impossible for the three of us to lose to one ghost," said the deer, pig and gazelle. "How do you think it would turn out with the three of you? Even the two of us couldn't fight him, I'm big and my horns are long," said the bull. "Tiger is strong, has sharp nails and long fangs but could not defeat *antu panyang*," added the bull.

Dreading for tomorrow's fight, the group worked together to smoke the newly caught fish. When morning came, everyone departed except for the deer, pig and gazelle. Just like the day before, they were approached by *antu panyang*. A fight broke out but the three animals could not win against the ghost. The *salai* were taken by *antu panyang* again.

"*Antu panyang* was strong so we could not fight him," wailed the deer when Apang Sekumang found out that all the *salai* were gone like the day before. Apang Sekumang was furious but he couldn't blame it on his animal friends.

"It's okay, tomorrow we will guard the *salai*," said the turtle and mousedeer. "Eh," said the others, "Small creatures like you two want to tend to it? Just a flick by *antu panyang*, you will die instantly," they said, underestimating their smaller friends.

"Not necessarily, let's see," said the turtle.

Apang Sekumang then came up with a decision. "All right, tomorrow it's turtle and mousedeer's turn to look after our *salai*."

As usual, Apang Sekumang and friends went out the next day to look for more food so that each of them would have enough food to bring home. After they left, the mousedeer chatted with the turtle. The mousedeer instructed the turtle to tie its legs.

Sometime later, the *antu panyang* came. Again, the ghost asked, "What are you two doing?" he asked.

"We were both tasked with guarding this *salai*," they both said. "Can I have your *salai*?" asked *antu panyang*. "Yes, you can but don't finish it, otherwise, there will be no food left for us to eat," the mousedeer and turtle said.

After *antu panyang* finished eating the *salai*, he just noticed that the mousedeer was tied up on its legs. "What are you doing sir mousedeer?" asked *antu panyang*.

"My legs hurt, so I asked the turtle to tie them so they could be straight again," said the mousedeer. "Oh... if that's the case, I want to do that too because my legs and arms hurt. Can you two help me to tie a rope to my feet and hands so that they could heal?" asked *antu panyang*.

"All right," said the mousedeer and the turtle, tying the hands and feet of *antu panyang*. After tying them tightly and giving him no chance to escape, they took a resin that people normally used to start a fire. They burned the resin and let it melt into *antu panyang's* eyes.

Antu panyang yelled out in pain, "Are you trying to kill me? I could die from the melted resin!"

"Oh!" said the mousedeer and turtle, "Why do you keep stealing our *salai* when you already took two *parak*. If you don't tell us where you keep our *salai*, we will kill you," they said again.

"All right," said *antu panyang*, "I'm keeping them at a place, not far from here. There is a big tree there, that's where I kept them. Just go there and take them."

After *antu panyang* told them that, they took the melted resin and dripped it into *antu panyang's* eyes and body. Finally, the *antu panyang* died.

When Apang Sekumang and friends returned to their base, they all went to the big tree to retrieve their stolen *salai*.

"Where is *antu panyang* now?" Apang Sekumang asked.

"If you want to see him, he is now behind our hut, dead," said the mousedeer and the turtle.

When they got there, they were shocked to find that *antu panyang* was killed by the turtle and mousedeer.

“If we look at the mousedeer and the turtle, their bodies are small and weak compared to us. But because they are incredibly smart, they are actually stronger than us. Forgive us for underestimating you,” said the tiger and the rest of their friends.

Few days later, they returned to their respective homes happily. They shared the *salai* evenly and Apang Sekumang thanked his animal companions for their help.

Antu panyang - Long ghost

Bubu - Fish trap

Ngelangai - Set up animal/fish traps

Parak - Local word to keep smoked food

Salai - Refers to food that is smoked



APANG SAJI,
THE GREEDY ONE

APANG SAJI, THE GREEDY ONE

When Apang Sekumang returned home, he smoked the *salai* again since some of them were still undercooked.

His neighbour Apang Saji saw smoke coming out of Apang Sekumang's house and thought the house was on fire. He called his wife, "*Oi... Konyi'-konyi*," said Apang Saji calling out to his wife, "There's a fire in Apang Sekumang's house! It would burn his house completely. Let's go there!" he added.

The two of them went to Apang Sekumang's house, and when they got there, they cut the yams, banana trees and everything else to prevent them from getting burnt.

"Eh? Why did you cut everything?" Apang Sekumang asked his neighbours.

"I thought your house was on fire," said Apang Saji. Apang Sekumang said, "I was smoking some fish. Come into the house."

The couple went into Apang Sekumang's house.

When Apang Saji and his wife went to Apang Sekumang's house, they saw him smoking some *salai*. "Eh... *konyi*," Apang Saji called his wife. "Look at all the food he got, that must be very filling. It must have been satisfying to eat. If that is the case, I would also like to look for fish too." His wife nodded in agreement.

Apang Sekumang then invited his guests to the meal he had just prepared. Apang Saji and his wife ate ravenously. When Apang Saji reached home, he quickly prepared for his fishing trip. He left the next day with just enough supplies. He took a large boat to Tintin Kedingkil. As he began his journey, he met a mousedeer on the first cape.

The mousedeer asked, "Where are you going Apang Saji?"

"I'm going to Tintin Kedingkil like Apang Sekumang, to *ngelangai* there to find food," said Apang Saji.

"Is that so, then I'm going with you," the mousedeer told Apang Saji. "Okay, it's better two of us than just me alone," said Apang Saji.

The mousedeer hopped into the boat and a thought came across Apang Saji's mind when he had a closer look at the mousedeer. "Just look at this mousedeer, it's so big and could climb himself into the boat."

He took a knife and tried to stab the mousedeer from behind. The mousedeer was shocked at what he saw, he quickly jumped back to the edge of the river. "Oh no. The mousedeer got away," said Apang Saji.

After that, he met the turtle. Once the turtle got onto the boat, he tried to kill it too for a side dish. Then he met the gazelle, deer, and all others that had gone *ngelangai* with Apang Sekumang before. Apang Saji wanted to kill each of the animals but he never succeeded. On the final cape, Apang Saji met a bull. When he was about to stab the bull with his knife, the bull swerved and kicked him, then pounded Apang Saji's head against the gravel by the edge of the river. He was badly injured and his head swelled up to the point that it started looking like a hornbill. Experiencing tremendous pain, he could only muster enough strength to get up and pace to his boat. He then just laid down inside the boat, letting it drift with the current.

Apang Saji never reached his destination, but miraculously made it back home safely. As he arrived home, he was welcomed by his children, Seduk, Seliuk, Selangkung and Selanak. His children called out their mother.

"Mother! Father has brought a hornbill," they laughed. Although Apang Saji was semi-conscious, he heard what his children said and replied, "*Lojit* eyes! What do you mean by a hornbill? This is my head, it was almost crushed by the bull's feet."

His wife helped her husband to the house and treated him. His wife asked how he ended up so miserable. Apang Saji then told her what he had gone through.

"Due to your greed and impatience! This is what you get!" scolded his wife.

Konyi - A local expression of endearment

Lojit - A local word to express displeasure or being sarcastic

Ngelangai - Set up animal/fish traps

THE GREEDY MERCHANT



THE GREEDY MERCHANT

Once upon a time in a country, there lived a wealthy merchant. He had two palaces on the land and two others by the sea. In his house, the merchant lived with his wife. They have no children.

One day, a king passed away. The royal family was looking for someone to dig up a grave for the king's burial. They already found two people, but they wanted one more. When passing by the merchant's house, the royal family called on the merchant.

"We are looking for one more grave digger for the king's burial," said the royal family. The greedy merchant jumped at the chance and accepted the offer.

"If that's the case, I can join them digging up a grave for the king," said the merchant.

The three grave diggers were paid thirty cents each. The next morning, they went to dig the grave for the late king.

After a few hours, the grave diggers completed the task and they were waiting for the royal hearse to arrive but it did not. Not even a single person from the royal palace came. Approaching noon, there were still no signs of the royal hearse. One of the grave diggers said, "I'm starving, why haven't they arrived yet?"

"Oh... well then, I will go to the nearest village to get some food," said the merchant. The merchant met a man selling pancakes or *kue serabi* for five cents each. He bought three pieces of *kue serabi* and ate them together with the two other grave diggers.

One of the men sighed saying that it was getting late in the afternoon and the *kue serabi* was not enough as he was still hungry. He said he was tired of waiting since the palace workers have not brought the king's remains.

The merchant told him he may go but he would not get any payment. The man agreed and left.

Sunset came and went, the royal hearse did not come. The other grave digger also decided to leave and let the merchant do the work alone.

The merchant thought to himself happily, with two other men gone, he would earn a total wage of 75 cents after deducting the 15 cents he spent earlier on food. Night fall came and the merchant was getting tired. He had to cover himself with banana leaves as he was being attacked by mosquitoes left and right. While he was asleep, two unknown men stood next to the merchant.

Without making a sound, they immediately beat the merchant left and right with a whip. When lashed from the right, he was blocked by a pancake on his right, and when beaten up by the stranger on the left, he was again shielded by another pancake on his left, and so on. The merchant himself was powerless to fight the two strangers and the only thing that helped him at that time was the pancakes.

After some time, the royal hearse came. They saw leaves in the grave. When they cleared off the leaves, they saw the merchant beneath. The merchant could no longer move but he was still alive. He was too shaken to explain what happened to him during the night. The king's burial went on and when finished, they brought the merchant back by using the same hearse that brought the king to the cemetery.

After reaching the merchant's house, they left him there. His wife was startled to see her husband's condition and she treated him until he was fully recovered. The next day, the merchant told the story to his wife.

“Well then, I just realized how important alms are, I was half dead,” her husband said. “If I hadn’t bought pancakes, when we dug up the grave, maybe I would have died,” the merchant told his wife. “I was beaten, whipped by two strangers in the pit, beaten from the right, defended by the right pancake, beaten from the left, and again the left pancake shielded me. I could only lay helpless. If only there were no pancakes, and I would have been hit harder by them, then I would probably be dead already.”

The wife went silent after hearing what happened. The merchant told his wife that he decided to donate four of their palaces to charity.

The next day, the merchant distributed his wealth to those in need. The merchant no longer treasured his wealth because he knew how important alms were. Not long after that, he also decided to live in isolation, while his wife was left alone in a simple house.

**REWARDS FOR
A MERCHANT'S
GENEROSITY**



REWARDS FOR A MERCHANT'S GENEROSITY

After giving away a large portion of his fortune, the merchant wished to live on his own. However, when he was about to leave, the merchant met an old man.

The old man called out to him. "Hey, merchant, where are you going?"

"I'm going somewhere," said the merchant.

"I have something that I'd like to ask you, o merchant. People all over this country have received your alms except me. So, I'm asking for alms from you, o merchant," said the old man.

"All right then," said the merchant.

Hence, the merchant had to postpone his journey. He brought the old man to his humble home. Arriving at the house, the old man said, "Merchant, I want this house and its contents and also your wife." Due to his promise with the old man, the merchant could not decline the request. He handed the house, including his wife, to the old man. His wife, who was devoted to him, did not oppose her husband's decision.

After leaving everything to the stranger, the merchant resumed his journey. Now he had nothing left, after losing his wife and his house, he was completely alone in this world.

On his journey, he saw a large tree that grew in a shaded and beautiful place. The ground was spotless and all the trees were neatly arranged. The merchant rested for a while and he immediately performed his prayer.

After completing his prayer, the merchant looked around his surroundings. There were beautiful flowers surrounding the tree. He had never witnessed such beauty before. Then, he picked one of those beautiful flowers and tucked it into his *peci* which is a rimless cap. Then the merchant resumed his journey.

After leaving that place, he saw a village from a distance. When he arrived at the village, he saw a small child. He asked the child a rather strange question. "O my child. Is there a house in this village without a kitchen?" asked the merchant.

The child was smart. The child brought the merchant to the house that had no kitchen which turned out to be a mosque. The merchant echoed the call to prayer. After completing the call to prayer, the merchant performed a prayer.

Apparently, during his call to prayer, his voice was heard by a king who lived in that country.

Then the king asked his Minister of Hulu Balang, "Who did the call to prayer at the mosque? I have never heard such a beautiful voice in our country," said the king. The king commanded the minister to bring the man to the palace.

The minister departed to find the man who made the call to prayer at the mosque. When they reached the mosque, they saw the merchant praying. When he had finished praying, the minister approached him and told him about the king's order.

When they appeared before the king, the queen saw a beautiful flower that was tucked in the merchant's cap. She was very interested in the flower, "Sire," whispered the queen. "Can you ask for the flower that he tucked in his cap?" "All right," said the king.

But when the queen touched the flower, something strange happened. At that moment, the king who had always loved his wife became even more affectionate to her as he hugged her tightly with more love. Then the king's son also touched the flower, and the same thing happened; the king and the queen hugged their son continuously. This went on as they were scrambling over that one flower.

The king asked the merchant, "Merchant, this one flower won't be enough for the three of us as we are scrambling to hold it. Why don't you get us some more flowers like this so each of us can hold it at the same time?"

As the merchant set out to pick more flowers like the one he found earlier in the wilderness, he came across a big and beautiful house. As it was already time for prayer, he wanted to perform *shalat* inside that house. When the door opened, the merchant was shocked to find a beautiful woman who was none other but his own wife.

"I was ordered by the king to get some flowers."

"Please don't go, o merchant. This is our home," said his wife.

Finally, after fulfilling his promise with the king, the merchant returned to the house where his wife was waiting for him. Finally, there the merchant stayed, in the most beautiful house with his lovely wife who had become even more beautiful.

Hulu balang - Warrior

Peci - A rimless cap

Shalat - Islamic prayer

MENTAWIT



MENTAWIT

The community believes that Mentawit village has existed since the days of the kingdom. The beginning of its existence is said to have originated from the odyssey of a person named Bujang Ramban. Bujang Ramban, also known by the name of Raja Ketit, wandered around one day looking for a place to live and work. Thus, he met with each ruler of various territories. At each ruler, he asked about their territorial boundaries.

Temenggung Lidung, a ruler of Lidung River answered him by saying, “My boundary is from the spring at the foot of Bukit Semarai to the mouth of the Lidung River.”

Raden Pati, who ruled Lidi River, also answered “My area spans until where the Lidi River branched off into two. That is my territory.”

Finally, King Ketit met with the ruler of Pengansah River who told him that there was no ruler between Lidi River and the estuary of Lidung River. Raja Ketit immediately headed to the place in question, and when he arrived there, he cut down some wood as a sign of his existence. He then put a spell on it so that his intention would be achieved without any problem.

Raja Ketit also planted a *mentawai* tree which is also known as *empakan*. Hence, the river that flowed in the area was later called Mentawai River. As time passed, more people came to live in the area. There stood a village and the people named it “Mentawit”, an acronym came from the names of Mentawai River and Raja Ketit; *Mentaw* and *it*.

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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND TO
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HUMANS LIVE IN HARMONY
WITH NATURE.**



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WWF, Avenue du Mont-Bland,
1196 Gland, Switzerland. Tel. +41 22 364 9111.
Fax. +41 22 364 0332

For contact details and further information,
please visit our international
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