

= Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang ( novel ) =

Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang ( [ bu??a ?rus da?ri t?i?k?mba? ] ; translated to English as The Rose of Cikembang ) is a 1927 vernacular Malay @-@ language novel written by Kwee Tek Hoay . The seventeen @-@ chapter book follows a plantation manager , Aij Tjeng , who must leave his beloved njai ( concubine ) Marsiti so that he can be married . Eighteen years later , after Aij Tjeng 's daughter Lily dies , her fiancé Bian Koen discovers that Marsiti had a daughter with Aij Tjeng , Roosminah , who greatly resembles Lily . In the end Bian Koen and Roosminah are married .

Inspired by the lyrics to the song " If Those Lips Could Only Speak " and William Shakespeare 's A Midsummer Night 's Dream , Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang was initially written as an outline for the stage drama troupe Union Dalia . Kwee intermixed several languages other than Malay , particularly Dutch , Sundanese , and English ; he included two quotes from English poems and another from an English song . The novel has been interpreted variously as promotion of theosophy , a treatise on the Buddhist concept of reincarnation , a call for education , an ode to njais , and a condemnation of how such women are treated .

The novel was initially published as a serial in Kwee 's magazine Panorama ; it proved to be his most popular work . By 1930 there had been a number of stage adaptations , not all of which were authorised , leading Kwee to ask readers to help him enforce his copyright . The work was filmed in 1931 by The Teng Chun and then in 1975 by Fred Young and Rempo Urip . Though not considered part of the Indonesian literary canon , the book ranks amongst the most reprinted works of Chinese Malay literature . It has been translated into Dutch and English .

= = Plot = =

Oh Aij Tjeng is a young ethnic Chinese man who runs a plantation in West Java . He lives there with his njai ( concubine ) , a Sundanese woman named Marsiti . The two are deeply in love and promise to be faithful forever . However , not long afterwards Aij Tjeng 's father Oh Pin Loh comes to tell Aij Tjeng that he has been betrothed to Gwat Nio , the daughter of the plantation 's owner Liok Keng Djim . Marsiti is sent away by the elder Oh and , after Aij Tjeng orders his manservant Tirta to find her , Tirta disappears as well . After the marriage , Aij Tjeng finds in Gwat Nio all of the same traits which made him fall in love with Marsiti , but even more polished owing to her better education . He falls in love with her and begins to forget Marsiti , and the couple have a daughter , Lily .

One day Keng Djim calls Aij Tjeng and Gwat Nio to his deathbed , where he confesses that he has recently learned that Marsiti was his daughter from a native njai he had taken as a youth , and that Marsiti had died . He greatly regrets that he and Pin Loh had her chased away from the plantation . Keng Djim hints that there is another secret to be shared , but dies before he can reveal it . Aij Tjeng calls for his father , to discover the secret , but finds that he too has died .

Eighteen years pass , and Lily is betrothed to a rich Chinese youth named Sim Bian Koen . Lily , although beautiful and talented , is obsessed with death and sadness ; she believes that she is destined to die young . She eventually tells Bian Koen to find another fiancée as she will soon leave him . She falls ill shortly thereafter , and doctors are unable to save her . In the aftermath , Bian Koen considers suicide and Aij Tjeng and Gwat Nio become sick from their despair .

By the following year Aij Tjeng and Gwat Nio have mostly recovered , having moved far away and turned to religion . Bian Koen , however , remains suicidal , and intends to go to war in China to find death ; the only thing restraining him is his promise to wait for the anniversary of Lily 's death . One day , as he is passing through the village of Cikembang , he finds a well @-@ kept grave . As he examines the area , he sees a woman who he thinks is Lily . She rejects his embrace and runs away . When Bian Koen chases her , he falls and passes out .

When he wakes up at his home , Bian Koen tells his parents that he saw Lily in Cikembang . After investigating , the Sims discover that " Lily " is in fact Aij Tjeng 's daughter with Marsiti , Roosminah , who was raised in secret by Tirta . Because of her beauty , equal to that of Lily in every way , she is known as " The Rose of Cikembang " . The Sims are able to contact Aij Tjeng , and after discovering Roosminah 's background they have Roosminah take over Lily 's identity . Her extravagant wedding

with Bian Koen is attended by thousands , including Marsiti 's spirit .

Five years later , Bian Koen and Roosminah live with their two children at the plantation Aij Tjeng used to manage . While Aij Tjeng and Gwat Nio are visiting , their granddaughter Elsy ( guided by Marsiti 's spirit ) brings them flowers from a tree Marsiti had planted . The family take it as a sign of her love .

= = Writing = =

Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang was written by journalist Kwee Tek Hoay . Born to an ethnic Chinese textile merchant and his wife , Kwee had been raised in Chinese culture and educated at schools that focused on preparing students for life in a modern world , as opposed to promoting tradition for its own sake . By the time he wrote the novel , Kwee was an active proponent of Buddhist teachings . He also wrote extensively on themes relating to native Indonesians and was a keen social observer . Kwee read extensively in Dutch , English , and Malay ; he drew on these influences after becoming a writer . His first novel , *Djadi Korbannja " Perempoean Hina " ( The Victim of a " Contemptible Woman " )* , was published in 1924 .

According to his original introduction , Kwee was inspired to write the novel after hearing his daughter singing Charles Ridgewell and Will Godwin 's " If Those Lips Could Only Speak " ( identified by Kwee as " Mimi d 'Amour " ) . He was struck by the melancholic lyrics and decided to write a " sad story or stage play " based on it . However , he did not begin the writing process until February 1927 , when the Union Dalia Opera requested permission to perform his earlier work *Allah jang Palseo ( A False God ; 1919 )* . As he considered the work too difficult for the native troupe , he began writing an original outline for their performance , based on his musings . Union Dalia performed *Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang* on 5 March 1927 , using an outline Kwee had written ; the novel was not completed until 20 April . During a conversation with fellow writer Khouw Sin Eng , Kwee said that part of the story had been based on William Shakespeare 's *A Midsummer Night 's Dream* , particularly the appearance of a dead person coming back to life .

*Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang* is divided into seventeen chapters and , in its first printing , was 157 pages in length . As such , it is considerably shorter than some of Kwee 's other works . Translator George A. Fowler writes that , unlike works published by Balai Pustaka , the book did not receive a professional copyedit before publication ; this was common for works of Chinese Malay literature , which " never had , nor indeed wanted , the corrective , prescriptive ' good literary taste ' filter of European editors " .

= = Style = =

*Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang* was written in vernacular Malay , as common for works by contemporary Chinese writers in the Dutch East Indies . Indonesian literary critic Jakob Sumardjo writes that Kwee 's use of the language , one common within contemporary society , was more " modern " than most of the more formal Balai Pustaka publications ( perhaps excepting *Abdoel Moeis ' Salah Asuhan [ Never the Twain ]* , published the following year ) : it remained focused on key events , those required to advance the story as a whole . The book uses non @-@ Malay words commonly : Sumardjo counts 87 Dutch words , 60 from Sundanese , and 14 English ones .

During dialogue , diction is dependent on the character 's social background : Sumardjo writes that Marsiti speaks as a poor villager with little education would , and that Aij Tjeng 's father and father @-@ in @-@ law use constructions and give advice only plausible if coming from older people . He finds only one character , the Columbia University @-@ educated Bian Koen , to be unrealistic : Sumardjo criticises Bian Koen 's emotionality , considering it unfitting of an individual with the character 's education and life experiences . In other instances Kwee builds suspense by extended use of ellipses , a form which Sumardjo suggests was inspired by contemporary silat ( traditional martial arts ) stories .

As was conventional in contemporary novels such as *Marah Roesli 's Sitti Nurbaya ( 1922 )* , *Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang* integrates poetic verse into its narrative . One example , an original

work in Sundanese , is sung by Marsiti after confiding her dream to Aij Tjeng . Two others are quoted from English poems . The first is an untitled work by Irish poet Thomas Moore , beginning with the lines " Go , let me weep " . The second is the epigraph from the novel *Hyperion* ( 1839 ) by American writer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow . A final piece of verse consists of the lyrics that inspired Kwee to write the novel . Malay @-@ language translations are provided for all English and Sundanese quotations . An example is one of three quatrains sung by Marsiti :

= = Themes = =

In his foreword , Kwee wrote that *Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang* was intended to lead readers to consider how fate is often at odds with the wants of those involved . Critical readings have , however , been diverse . The sinologist Myra Sidharta notes that the book is replete with mysticism common at the time , as does another sinologist , John Kwee . The latter cites four examples : a dream of Marsiti 's , later shown to be prophetic , in which she is forcibly separated from Aij Tjeng despite his previous promise that they would never part ; a discussion of reuniting with loved ones after death ; Marsiti 's spirit attending her daughter 's wedding ; and a scene towards the end of the novel in which Marsiti 's spirit guides Roosminah 's daughter to pick flowers for Aij Tjeng and Gwat Nio . Nio Joe Lan , in his history of Chinese Malay literature , notes that Kwee was the only Chinese writer of romances to also write on Eastern ( particularly Chinese ) philosophy . He finds mysticism to be a common theme in Kwee 's works , noting it as particularly well @-@ developed in the later novel *Soemangetnja Boenga Tjempaka* ( *The Joy of the Cempaka Flowers* ) .

Eric Oey of the University of California , Berkeley , writes that the novel 's mysticism builds into a promotion of theosophy and Buddhist ideals : Aij Tjeng and Gwat Nio read about both , then leave their materialistic lives to become more spiritual . Ultimately , he writes , the concept of reincarnation is put forth when Roosminah is discovered soon after Lily 's death . Faruk of Gadjah Mada University also notes the novel 's concept of reincarnation , drawing on its repeated emphasis on the parallels ( both physical and psychological ) between the half @-@ sisters Marsiti and Gwat Nio , as well as Lily and Roosminah .

Sidharta , considering the same interrelations between Marsiti / Gwat Nio , does not suggest reincarnation , instead writing that the novel showed that there is no difference in the love of a njai and a lawfully wedded wife . Translator Maya Sutedja @-@ Liem , in a similar vein , notes a " modern " message against mistreatment of njais . However , she concludes that the emphasis on the mystical powers which Marsiti seems to possess causes an abandonment of realism , thus rendering the book " anti @-@ modern " .

Much commentary has focused on the novel 's depiction of njais , a subject common in contemporary Chinese Malay literature . Sumardjo describes the novel as an ode to njais , citing Marsiti 's loyalty to Aij Tjeng and her pureness of purpose ; Marsiti is ultimately recognised for her devotion when her grave in Cikembang is moved to Batavia , with empty spaces on either side for Aij Tjeng and Gwat Nio . Sumardjo finds subtle criticism of the Dutch and Chinese men who kept njais , showing the women as often becoming victims of their lovers . He suggests that this was manifested in the character of Keng Djim 's unnamed njai ( Marsiti 's mother ) , who is banished after rumours spread that she has been unfaithful . Sutedja @-@ Liem likewise emphasises the role of the njai within the story , considering the novel to be an ode to the love and loyalty of the concubines .

Sidharta suggests that the novel was written as an argument that the illegitimate children of njais would be able to develop as any other person , given the proper education . Sutedja @-@ Liem likewise finds that the need for education ( including an understanding of music ) is a subtext found in the novel . However , unlike Sidharta she considers this message directed not only at the children of njais , but women in general . Only through receiving an education and following Chinese and European etiquette , she writes , could a woman be considered truly " modern " .

= = Publication history = =

Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang was originally published in 1927 , as a serial in Kwee 's magazine Panorama , running from March to September . The story was compiled as a book later that year and published by Hoa Siang In Kiok . This print run of 1 @, @ 000 copies , with the slogan " Roh manoesia djadi mateng dalem tangis / The soul ripens in tears " on its cover , sold out . However , in the foreword to the second edition Kwee suggested that " writing Malay novels ... was not enough to live on " .

The book has since proved to be one of Kwee 's most popular novels , and is one of the most commonly reprinted works of Chinese Malay literature . Its second printing was in 1930 , by Kwee 's publishing house Panorama , with a third printing by Swastika in 1963 ; at the time it was the only work of Chinese Malay literature to have been republished after the Indonesian National Revolution ( 1945 ? 49 ) . Sidharta records a fourth printing in 1972 , although she does not note a publisher . A new printing , adapting the 1972 spelling reform , was included in the second volume of Kesastraan Melayu Tionghoa dan Kebangsaan Indonesia , an anthology of Chinese Malay literature .

Several translations have been made . In 2007 Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang was translated to Dutch as De roos uit Tjikembang by Sutedja @-@ Liem ; this edition was published by KITLV Press as part of the anthology De Njai : Moeder van Alle Volken : ' De Roos uit Tjikembang ' en Andere Verhalen ( The Njai : Mother of All Peoples : ' De Roos uit Tjikembang ' and Other Stories ) . In 2013 the Lontar Foundation published an English @-@ language translation by Fowler under the title The Rose of Cikembang . This included an introduction to the subject and social conditions , penned by Fowler .

= = Adaptations = =

Stage performances and adaptations of Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang began before the novel was completed , beginning with the Union Dalia performance in 1927 . By 1930 numerous native and ethnic @-@ Chinese troupes had performed the story ; some received direct help from Kwee . Though these stage performances were sometimes credited for the novel 's success , Kwee discounted the idea , writing that the two mediums were different and , in adaptations , changes were necessary . He noted the tendency of native troupes to emphasise Marsiti 's role as one such change and considered most such adaptations ? excepting those performed by Dardanella ? to be of poor quality . He also found wrote that Native troupes generally did not pay him for the right to use the story , and in the 1930 edition Kwee asked readers to help him enforce his copyright by informing Panorama of any illegal performances . Stage performances have continued into the 2000s .

The novel has twice been adapted for film . The first adaptation , released in 1931 , was directed by The Teng Chun . The sinologist Leo Suryadinata lists it as the first domestically produced sound film in the Dutch East Indies , although the film historian Misbach Yusa Biran suggests that there was already a domestic talkie released in 1930 . In 1975 an adaptation was made by Fred Young and Rempo Urip under the title Bunga Roos dari Cikembang . Although the main points of the story remained the same , several of the Chinese names were Indonesianised . Oh Aij Cheng , for example , was renamed Wiranta , while Gwat Nio 's name was changed to Salmah .

= = Reception = =

Modern reviews of the novel have been positive . Nio describes the book as a " beautiful tragic romance " that " enchants the heart . " The Indonesian scholar of Indonesian literature Jakob Sumardjo writes that , though in most of his works Kwee appeared to be strongly impressing his point of view on the reader to the point of " tearing the novels ' structural balance " , this flaw was not present in Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang ; instead , Sumardjo finds it " truly good in its form and technique , though the ideals contained within may not be that significant " .

Fowler writes that the love between Aij Tjeng and Marsiti is handled with " unusual delicacy and tenderness " despite the social ostracism faced by njais . In a review of the English edition for The Jakarta Post , Linawati Sidarto describes it as " the ultimate weekend read " , " tugging at emotions

with the intrigues of love , lies and sacrifice " while at the same time providing an interesting insight into the now @-@ forgotten society in which it takes place . She describes Fowler 's introduction as " worth reading by itself " .

As with all works written in vernacular Malay , the novel has not been considered part of the Indonesian literary canon . In his doctoral thesis , J. Francisco B. Benitez posits a socio @-@ political cause for this . The Dutch colonial government used Court Malay as a " language of administration " , a language for everyday dealings , while the Indonesian nationalists appropriated the language to help build a national culture . Chinese Malay literature , written in " low " Malay , was steadily marginalised . Sumardjo , however , sees a question of classification : though vernacular Malay was the lingua franca of the time , it was not Indonesian , and as such , he asks whether works in vernacular Malay should be classified as local literature , Indonesian literature , or simply Chinese Malay literature .