

= Allah jang Palsoe =

Allah jang Palsoe ( [ a?lah ?ja? pal?su ] ; Perfected Spelling : Allah yang Palsu ; Indonesian for The False God ) is a 1919 stage drama in six acts written by the ethnic @-@ Chinese author Kwee Tek Hoay . Based on E. Phillips Oppenheim 's short story " The False Gods " , the Malay @-@ language play follows two brothers , one a devout son who holds firmly to his morals and personal honour , the other who worships money and prioritises personal gain . Over more than a decade , the two learn that money ( the titular false god ) is not the path to happiness .

Kwee Tek Hoay 's first stage play , Allah jang Palsoe was written as a realist response to whimsical contemporary theatres . Though the published stageplay sold poorly and the play was deemed difficult to perform , Allah jang Palsoe found success on the stage . By 1930 it had been performed by various ethnic Chinese troupes to popular acclaim and pioneered a body of work by authors such as Lauw Giok Lan , Tio le Soei , and Tjoa Tjien Mo . In 2006 the script for the play , which continues to be performed , was republished with updated spelling by the Lontar Foundation .

= = Plot = =

Brothers Tan Kioe Lie and Tan Kioe Gie are preparing to leave their Cicuruk home to find work : Kioe Lie will go to Bandung , while Kioe Gie will go to Batavia ( now Jakarta ) and become a letter @-@ setter . As they are packing , Kioe Lie 's fiancée Gouw Hap Nio visits . She leaves some snacks with their father , the poor farmer Tan Lauw Pe , before going home , promising to take care of Pe while his sons are away . The brothers finish packing , say goodbye to their father , and head for the train station .

Three years later , Kioe Lie visits his brother in the latter 's Batavia home . Kioe Gie has become an editor of the newspaper Kamadjoean and is known as a generous philanthropist . Kioe Lie , meanwhile , has become the manager of a tapioca factory , but is planning to leave for competing business run by Tjio Tam Bing , who has offered him twice the salary . Kioe Gie asks him to reconsider , or at least not take any customers , but Kioe Lie is set on his goals . Before Kioe Lie leaves , the brothers discuss marriage : since Lie has no intent to marry Hap Nio soon , Kioe Gie asks permission to marry first . Though Kioe Lie disapproves of Kioe Gie 's sweetheart , a poor orphan girl named Oeij Ijan Nio , he agrees .

Another four years pass , and Kioe Gie has become editor @-@ in @-@ chief of Kemadjoean and married Ijan Nio . He is concerned , however , over the newspaper 's new political orientation : the owner , Oeij Tjoan Siat , is aiming to make the paper pro @-@ Dutch East Indies , a stance that Kioe Gie considers a betrayal to the ethnic Chinese . When Tjoan Siat comes to Kioe Gie 's home to ask him to follow the former 's new political leanings , heavily influenced by a monthly payment of 2 @,@ 000 gulden offered by an unnamed political party , Kioe Gie refuses and resigns .

During the following week Kioe Gie and his wife sell their belongings and prepare to move back to Cicuruk . This departure is delayed by a visit from Kioe Lie , who reveals that he will be marrying Tam Bing 's widow Tan Houw Nio ? Tam Bing having died the year before . Kioe Gie is horrified , both because the widow has the same surname and because Kioe Lie had promised their father on his deathbed to marry Hap Nio . After an extensive argument , Kioe Lie disowns his brother and leaves .

Five years later , Kioe Lie and Houw Nio 's marriage is failing . Owing to poor investments ( some made with embezzled money ) , Houw Nio 's gambling , and Kioe Lie 's keeping of a mistress , they have lost their fortune . Kioe Lie tries to convince his wife to sell her jewellery , thus allowing him to return the stolen money . Houw Nio , however , refuses , tells him to sell the house and his mistress ' jewellery , and then leaves . Soon afterwards , Kioe Lie 's friend Tan Tiang An warns him that he will be arrested by the police unless he flees the colony . Together they rent a car and Kioe Lie heads for the port at Batavia .

Passing through Cicuruk , the car breaks down and , while the chauffeur attempts to fix it , Kioe Lie takes shelter in a nearby home . He learns that it belongs to Kioe Gie and Hap Nio , who have built up a vast farm , garden , and orchard that provides them with ample income . The two

philanthropists are friends with the area 's elite , and Hap Nio is happily married to a rich plantation administrator . When Kioe Gie and his companions return from playing tennis , they discover Kioe Lie hiding shamefully under a piano . Kioe Lie admits that he was wrong to be greedy . When a police officer arrives , Kioe Lie confesses to poisoning Tam Bing , then runs outside and shoots himself .

= = Characters = =

= = Writing = =

Allah jang Palsoe was the first stage play by the journalist Kwee Tek Hoay . Born to an ethnic Chinese textile merchant and his wife , Kwee was raised in Chinese culture and schools that focused on modernity . By the time he wrote the drama , Kwee Tek Hoay was an active proponent of Buddhist theology . However , he also wrote extensively on themes relating to native Indonesians and was a keen social observer . He read extensively in Dutch , English , and Malay , and drew on these readings after becoming a writer .

According to the historian Nio Joe Lan , Allah jang Palsoe was the first stage drama in Malay by a Chinese writer . The six @-@ act work was written in vernacular Malay , the lingua franca of the Indies , and was based on E. Phillips Oppenheim 's short story " The False Gods " . Though in his foreword Kwee Tek Hoay apologised for the quality of the stage play , writing that " the content and arrangement of this book are far from what you could call neat " , Sumardjo praises his language , feeling that the story flowed well .

At the time Allah jang Palsoe was written , stage performances were heavily influenced by orality . Contemporary theatres , such as bangsawan and stamboel , were unscripted and generally used fantastic settings and plotlines . Kwee Tek Hoay heavily disapproved of such whimsy , considering it " better to say things as they are , than to create events out of nothing , which although perhaps more entertaining and satisfying to viewers or readers , are falsehoods and lies , going against the truth " . After condemning contemporary playwrights who merely wrote down existing stories , Kwee Tek Hoay expressed the hope that ultimately a unique form of Chinese Malay theatre ? inspired by European theatrical traditions but dealing with Chinese themes ? could be developed . Allah jang Palsoe was intended to be the first published stage play in this new tradition .

Kwee Tek Hoay made numerous recommendations for the play 's casting , costuming , setting , and music . He wrote that if sufficiently talented actors to portray Kioe Lie and Kioe Gie could not be found , " it would be better to not perform this show " , and that Ijan Nio needed to show " a perfect woman or wife " , as opposed to the " fierce and rough " Houw Nio . He provided four set designs , to be used at appropriate points in the plot , and gave suggestions for setting up the needed backgrounds and props . Kwee recommended that the play include only one song , John Payne and Henry Bishop 's " Home ! Sweet Home ! " , which was to be performed in the sixth act with either English or Malay vocals and a trio of piano , viola , and guitar or mandolin .

= = Analysis = =

The title Allah jang Palsoe is a reference to money , with an underlying didactic message that money is not everything in the world , and that an unquenchable thirst for it would turn one into " a money animal " . Throughout the dialogue , money is referred to as the false God , with Lie as a character who deifies money to the point of ignoring his other duties and only realising his error after it is too late . Gie , although he does become rich , does not consider money a god , but is a philanthropist and holds to his morals . The Indonesian literary critic Sapardi Djoko Damono writes that such a message would have been popular among ethnic Chinese of the contemporary Indies , and as such the play would have been a favourite of social organisations .

The Indonesian literary critic Jakob Sumardjo likewise notes money as the central issue of Allah jang Palsoe , writing that the play shows individuals doing anything to earn it ? even sacrificing their

values . He writes that the corrupting nature of money remains present in the best of times , and considers Kwee Tek Hoay 's message to have been too heavily based in morality rather than considerations of social and human factors . As a result , he writes , readers are brought to understand the lust for money as a " human illness " which must be overcome : they should follow the example of Tan Kioe Gie , not Tan Kioe Lie . John Kwee of the University of Auckland , citing Gie 's departure from Kamadjoean , suggests that this was a challenge directed at the Chinese Malay press , then becoming increasingly commercial .

Allah jang Palsoe also contains themes unrelated to money . The sinologist Thomas Rieger notes the presence of a Chinese national identity , pointing to Gie as a young man " excelling in all Confucianist values " , leaving his comfortable job rather than becoming an apologist for the Dutch colonial government to the detriment of his ethnic Chinese peers . Another sinologist , Myra Sidharta , looks at Kwee Tek Hoay 's view of women . She writes that his depiction of an ideal woman was not yet fully developed in Allah jang Palsoe , though she finds Houw Nio to be a depiction of how a woman should not act : selfish and addicted to gambling .

In a preface to his 1926 drama *Korbannja Kong @-@ Ek* ( The Victim of Kong @-@ Ek ) , Kwee Tek Hoay wrote that he had drawn inspiration from the realist Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen in that work , having read and reread the author 's plays . Damono finds signs of Ibsen 's influence already present in Allah jang Palsoe . He compares the stage directions in Allah jang Palsoe to those in Ibsen 's *Hedda Gabler* and finds them to be similar in their level of detail .

= = Release and reception = =

The script for Allah jang Palsoe was released by the Batavia @-@ based publisher Tjiong Koen Bie in mid @-@ 1919 . This edition included a foreword from the author , four illustrations of recommended stage decor , a number of performance guidelines , and a brief outline of the state of the theatre among the ethnic Chinese . Kwee Tek Hoay paid for this printing , a run of 1 @,@ 000 copies , out of his own pocket and saw large financial losses . The stage play was republished in 2006 , using the Perfected Spelling System , as part of the first volume of the Lontar Foundation 's anthology of Indonesian stage dramas .

Allah jang Palsoe was well received and broadly adopted . Troupes were allowed to perform the play as a charity opera , though proceeds were to go to the Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan branch in Bogor . One performance is recorded as garnering 10 @,@ 000 gulden . According to an advertisement , by 1930 the play had been performed " tens of times " and was popular with ethnic Chinese theatre troupes .

Kwee Tek Hoay received numerous letters from fans of Allah jang Palsoe , spurring him to continue writing . Considering the play too difficult for native troupes to stage , when one such troupe , the Union Dalia Opera , requested permission to perform it , Kwee Tek Hoay instead wrote a new story for them . This later became his best @-@ selling novel *Boenga Roos dari Tjikembang* ( The Rose of Cikembang ) . Another of Kwee Tek Hoay 's stage dramas , *Korbannja Kong @-@ Ek* , was inspired by a friend , who wrote him a letter asking for another comforting and educational play after reading Allah jang Palsoe .

In 1926 Kwee Tek Hoay wrote that , after Allah jang Palsoe , the quality of stage performances in the Indies had increased noticeably . Nio notes that the quantity of stage plays by ethnic Chinese authors likewise increased . Though not many were ultimately published , the body of work pioneered by Allah jang Palsoe included plays by Kwee Tek Hoay ( *Korbannja Kong @-@ Ek* , *Mait Hidoep* , *Plesiran Hari Minggoe* ) , Lauw Giok Lan ( *Pendidikan jang Kliroe* ) , Tio le Soei ( *Jan Tio* ) , and Tjoa Tjien Mo ( *Beng Lee Koen* , *Hsi Shih* ) .

Sumardjo writes that , though Allah jang Palsoe was published seven years before the Rustam Effendi 's *Bebasari* ( generally considered the first canonic Indonesian stage drama ) , Kwee Tek Hoay 's writing shows all the hallmarks of a literary work . Though the drama is not considered part of the Indonesian literary canon , performances have continued into the 21st century . In May 2003 , the Jakarta @-@ based Mainteater put on an abridged performance directed by E. Sumadiningrat . Another Jakarta @-@ based troupe , Teater Bejana , has included it in their repertoire .

