



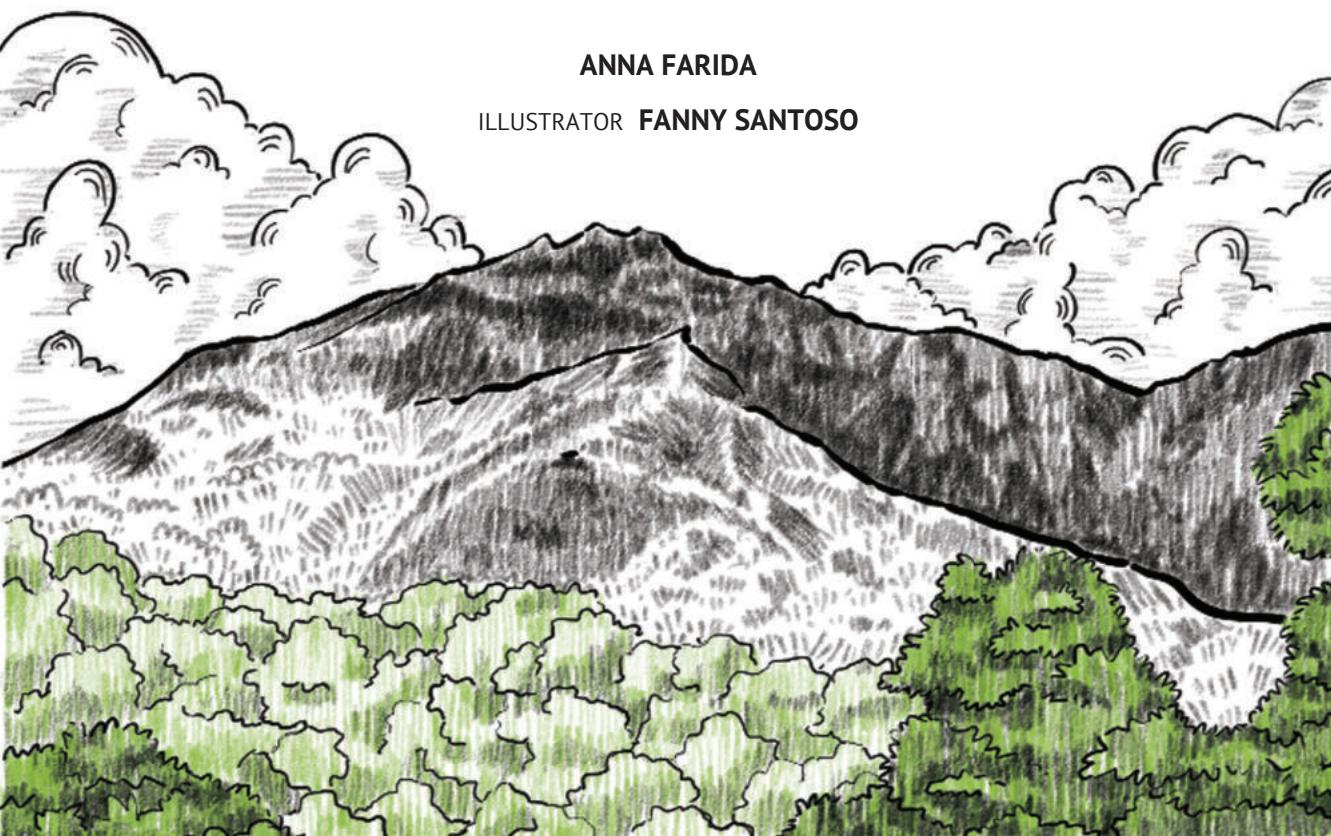
MINISTRY OF PRIMARY
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
2025

JAGAPAL BUMI

THE GUARDIAN MYTHS OF
THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO

ANNA FARIDA

ILLUSTRATOR FANNY SANTOSO



Copyright at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Republic of Indonesia.
All rights reserved.

Disclaimer: This book is prepared by the Indonesian Government in order to fulfill the need for quality, affordable, and evenly distributed educational books in accordance with the mandate of Law No. 3 Year 2017. The book is written and reviewed by various parties under the coordination of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. This book is a document that can be improved, updated, and revised in accordance with the dynamics of needs and changes of the times. Feedback from various groups addressed to the authors or via the email address buku@kemdikbud.go.id hopefully may improve the quality of this book.

Jagapati Bumi – The Guardian of The Earth

Translated from the book Jagapati Bumi, Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology 2023

Author : Anna Farida

Supervisors : Supriyatno
Helga Kurnia, Lenny Puspita Ekawaty, Emira Novitriani Yusuf,
Akunnas Pratama, Nurul Hayati

Illustrator : Fanny Santoso

Manuscript Editor : Maya Lestari GF
Arifah Dinda Lestari

Visual Editor : M Rizal Abdi

Book Desainer : Hasbi Yusuf, Suhardiman

English version

Translator : Caecilia Krismariana W.

Editor : Sofie Dewayani

Publisher

Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology

Published by

Center for Book Affairs

Jalan RS Fatmawati Gedung D Kompleks Kemendikdasmen Cipete, Jakarta 12410

<https://buku.kemendikdasmen.go.id>

First edition, 2023

ISBN: 978-634-00-2445-6

ISBN: 978-634-00-2444-9 (PDF)

This book uses PT San 10–18 pt, ParaType Google Fonts

vi, 90 pages, 17,6 × 25 cm.

Message from the Head of Center for Book Affairs

Hello, creative and book-loving children of Indonesia! These cool and exciting books are specially made for you. They're not just fun and enjoyable to read—they also expand your knowledge, spark your imagination, and shape your character. You'll be introduced to the rich and diverse cultures of Indonesia, too. Each book is beautifully illustrated with unique and captivating artwork that's a treat for the eyes.

Dear kids, a truly great book is one that touches your heart and stirs your spirit—just like the one you're holding now.

Happy reading!

Head of Center for Book Affairs

Supriyatno, S.Pd., MA

NIP. 196804051988121001

Foreword

Wait a minute.

What make you open this book?

Is it the cover? Or the title?

Is it by accident, or just out of curiosity? Jagapati Bumi.

What flickers through your mind when you read those two words?

At the very least, you know the meaning of “jaga” (to guard) and “bumi” (the Earth), don’t you?

We will unravel its connection to sacred pools, sacred trees, the drum of death, myths from Papua, and various taboos found in Kampung Naga.

You’ll also examine illustrations crafted with inking and sketching techniques using a limited color palette. Discover the hidden messages woven between the strokes of ink.

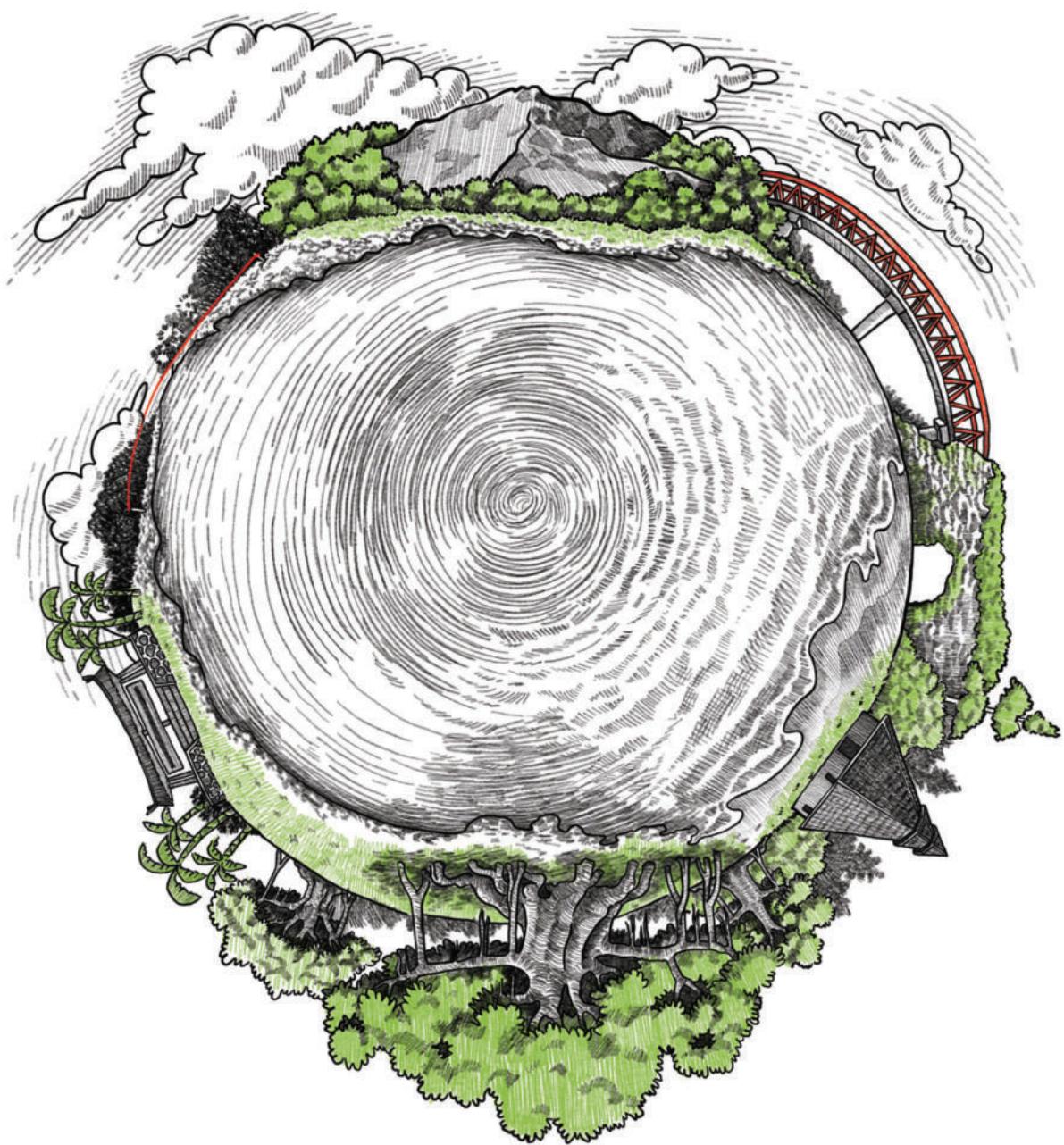
Let’s reveal the secrets.

Your shivering friends,

Anna Farida dan Fanny Santoso

List of Contents

- Message from the Head of
Center for Book Affairs – iii
- Foreword – iv
- Chapter **1 Shivering** – 1
- Chapter **2 A Sacred Pool** – 13
- Chapter **3 The Sacred Tree** – 27
- Chapter **4 Drum of Death** – 39
- Chapter **5 Papua's Guardian** – 49
- Chapter **6 Kampung Naga** – 59
- Chapter **7 The Guardian of The Earth** – 69
- Another Myth You Need to Know – 81
- Bibliography – 83
- Links – 86
- Book Creators – 88



Chapter 1

Shivering

*We need good myths that help
us to identify with our fellow human
beings ... that help us to realise the importance
of compassion ... that help us to venerate the Earth as
something sacred
(Armstrong, 2022: 28)*

Close your eyes for just a moment. Amid the world's hums and clatters, listen for the hush beneath. Remember the stories from your childhood—the ones that painted your smile, and the ones that kept you awake, that sent shivers down your spine.

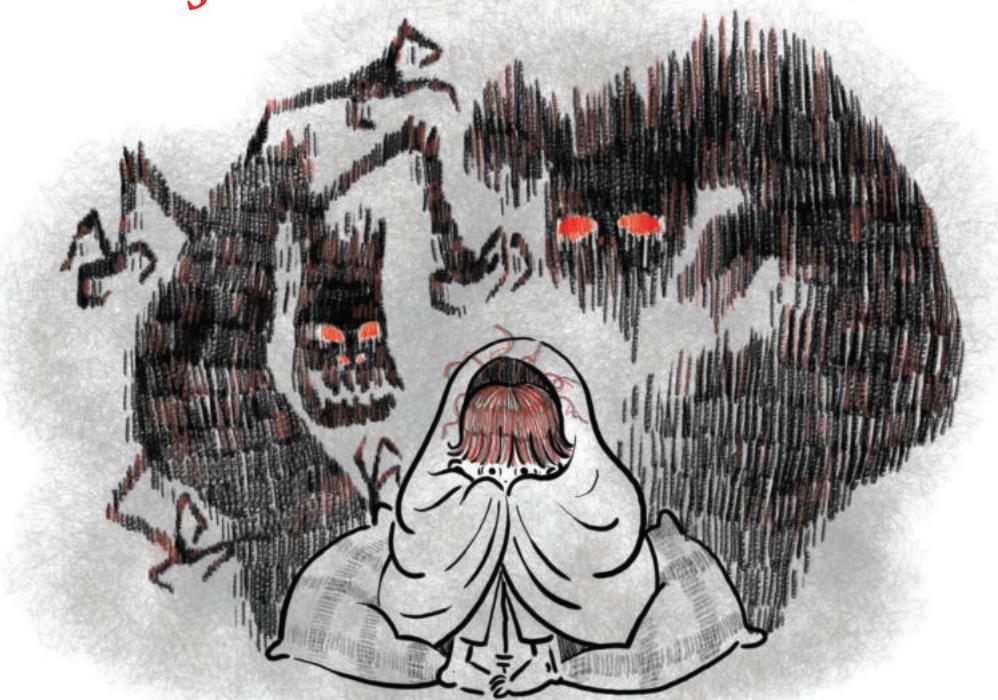


Let us remember.

We grow from childhood into who we are today, carrying countless stories, both of fears and hopes.

Have you ever felt anxious sleeping alone in the dark, even with the door tightly shut? You see nothing—yet deep inside, an uncontrollable whisper rises,

*“Something is near me.
Something is moving behind me.”*



Have you ever seen a butterfly enter your house, then you repeatedly glanced at the door, waiting for guests?

Have you ever accidentally put on your clothes inside out, then secretly hoping for good fortune?

Where do these beliefs originate?

Told by parents, friends, and relatives, passed down like heirlooms, these tales speak of the origins of the world, the supernatural, and the unseen realm.



Through generations, they evolve into myths: vessels of mystery, hidden truths, and secret symbols.

Now, get ready.

We are about to unveil the secrets. Beyond them lie the stories of how humans, across nations and in all their diversity, reach out to the Earth—and to the universe.

Myths in Various Countries



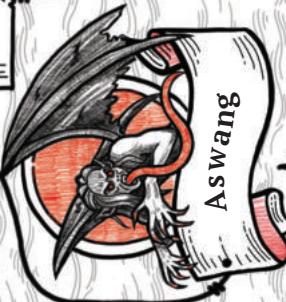
Stonehenge



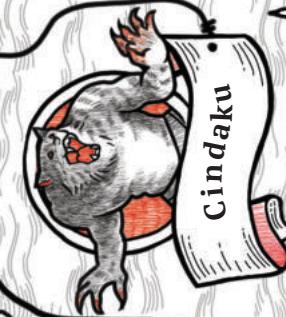
Kitsune



Bunyip



Aswang



Cindaku



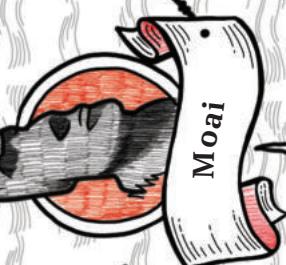
Ghoul



Wendigo



Anubis



Moai

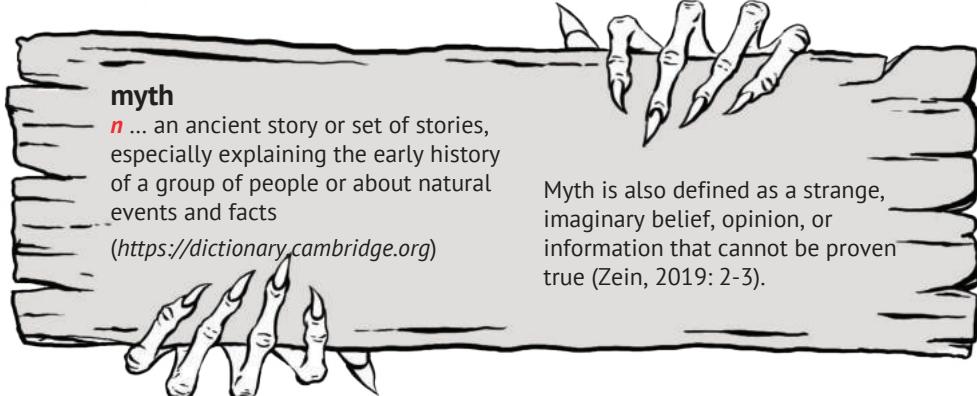
**There are myths across cultures
that share similarities.**



The prohibition of whistling at night, for example. That belief is found in some regions of Indonesia, Russia, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Mexico, and Canada.

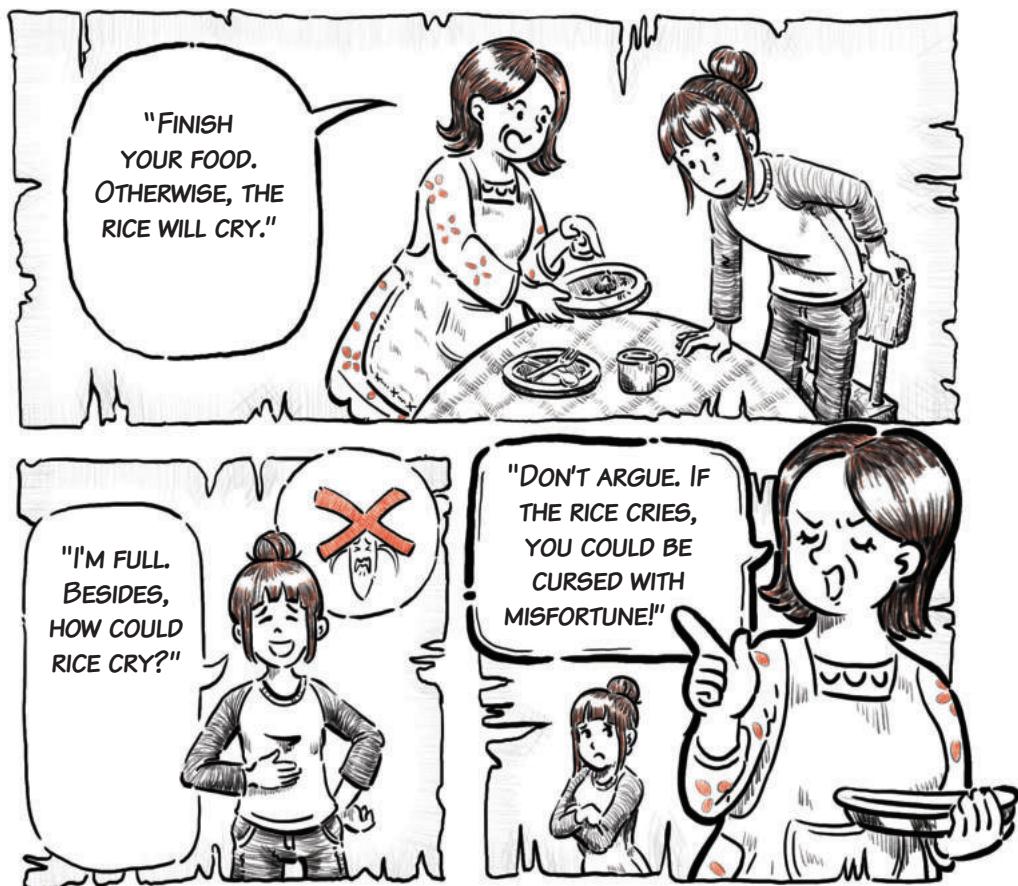
Black cats are considered as luckiness in Japan and Egypt, but are omens of misfortune in Italy and England.

**Why these beliefs persist,
many people simply say,
"I don't know. It's
something passed down
from our elders.
That's the custom
in this area."**



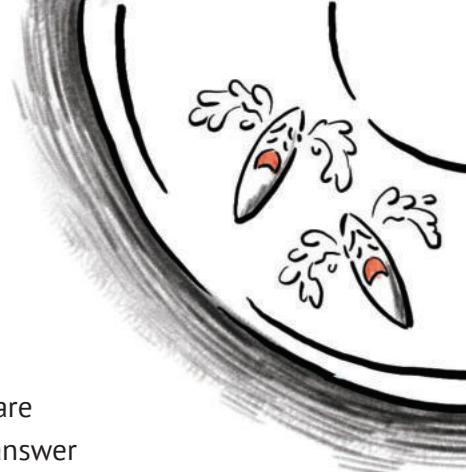
Myth is also defined as a strange, imaginary belief, opinion, or information that cannot be proven true (Zein, 2019: 2-3).

In some communities, myths serve as practical guidance for behavior, without lengthy explanation.



Try to refute those who have such beliefs, "Rice is inanimate; it can't cry. What does rice crying have to do with bad luck?" Believe me, such objections often lead to long-winded advice.

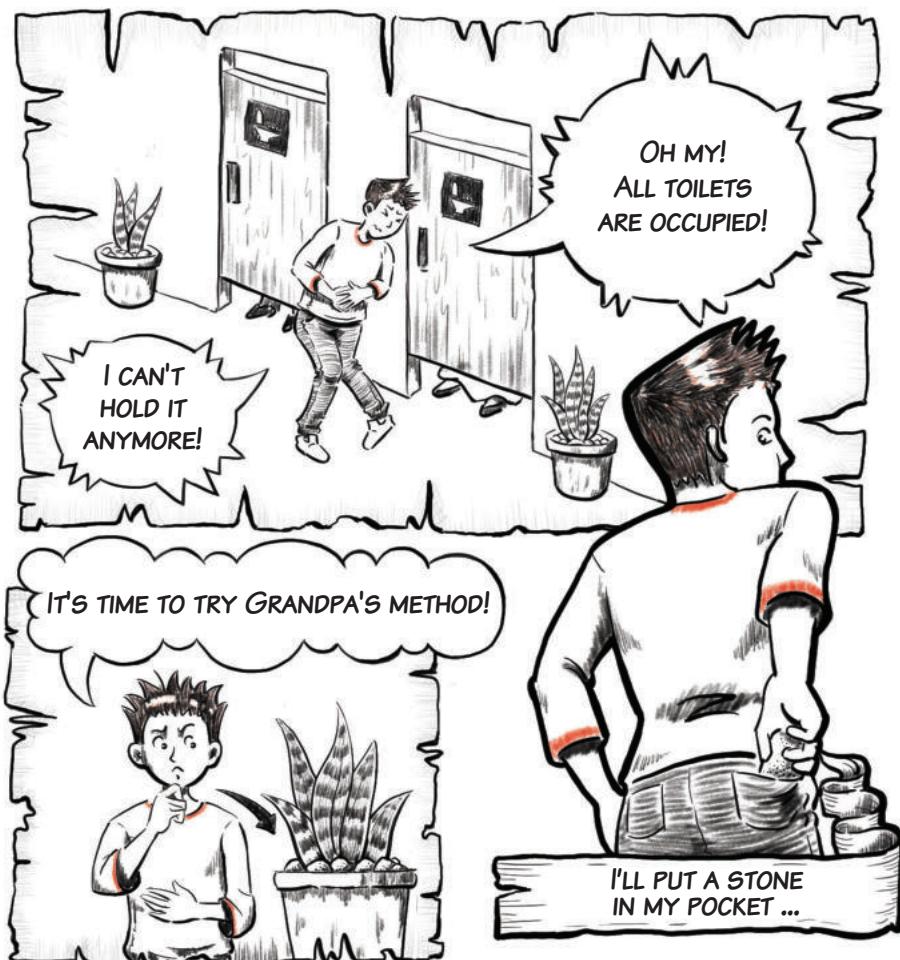
At first, people obey these myths just to avoid hearing such lengthy advice. However, gradually their reluctance may turn into belief. Unconsciously, some people feel anxious when they have leftover rice. Others come to a conclusion, "Wasting food, especially throwing it away, isn't a good thing. The crying rice is just an explanation to avoid wasting food."



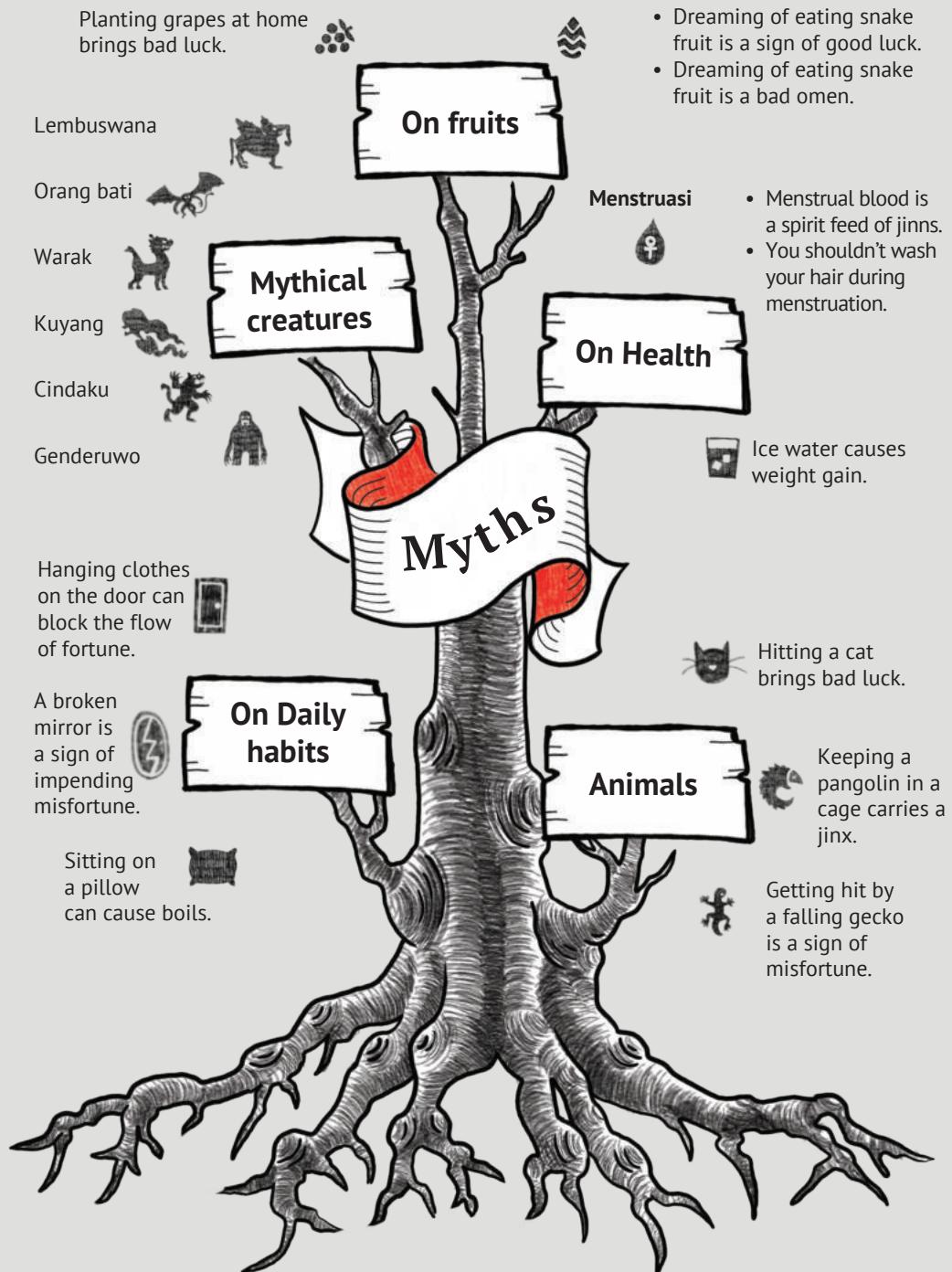
Whether rooted in worry or awareness, the effect of the myth remains the same—discouraging food waste. The influence of myth in shaping behavior is deeply ingrained in Indonesian society.

Usually myths exist to explain phenomena that are not yet understood before another, more reasonable answer emerges. Some gradually fade as society receives rational answers, while others persist to this day.

Have you ever heard this myth?
Hmm ... maybe you commit it too.



In our daily lives, we encounter myths that are woven into our life. If you dig deeper, you'll be surprised to discover how many other **myths** are circulating.



Among those myths, some might
make you laugh and wonder,

"What does that mean?"
"How is that connected?"
"Ah, I don't believe it."

There are also myths that
evoke fear. Just imagining them
makes your neck hairs stand up,
and a chill creeps down your
spine.

Creepy!

Indonesia is often a destination for cryptozoologists
to study various phenomena, including mythical
creatures like these.



Ebu Gogo

Flores



Orang Bati

Seram Island



Kawuk

Nusakambangan

Cryptozoology is the study of animals or creatures whose
existence remains uncertain or debated. These mysterious
beings are often part of folklore or mythology

(Ferrari, 2023: 1)

shiver

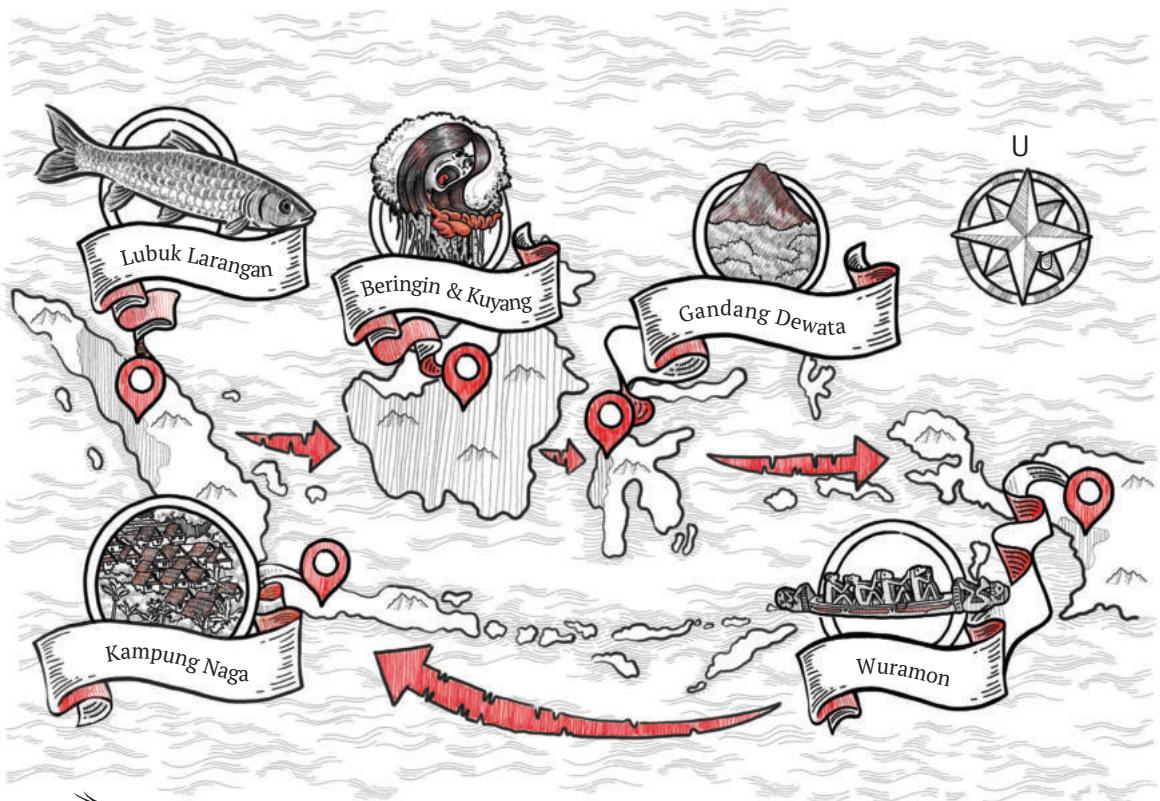
- ▼ When people or animals shiver,
they shake slightly because they feel
cold, ill, or frightened
(<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>)

Every ethnic group in Indonesia has its own unique myths passed down from generation to generation. For reference, Indonesia has more than 300 ethnic groups—more precisely, 1,340 ethnic communities (www.indonesia.go.id).

Then why are various myths kept alive and passed down through generations? Are our ancestors simply trying to scare us? Or is there another reason?

What secrets were they keeping?

We're about to begin to unravel them. Of course, we won't examine all 1,340 myths—just five of them. **These are the ones we'll explore.**



We already know a few things about myths from various parts of the world. Now, let's dive deeper into the myths of several places in Indonesia.

In each myth presented, let us observe and examine the information closely. Pay attention to each sentence and image—there might be a **hidden message**. Let's look carefully at what each event is trying to convey.

To gain a deeper understanding, make notes like this for each myth that draws your interest.

Notes on Myths

- Name of the myth
- Origin of the myth
- A brief description of the myth
- Your opinion about the myth
- Pros and cons of the myth
- What you like to know more about the myth

After finishing this book,

you will discover the answers
to these questions.

Why are myths important to
humankind? How do myths relate to
compassion? What does it mean that
the Earth is sacred, holy, and revered?

Therefore, be a part of every
story. Instead of simply being
a reader, become a participant.
Always relate each narrative
to your own experiences,
reflections, and thoughts.

Be the revealers of secrets.



Chapter 2

The Sacred Pool

Clouds hung over the skies of **Sumatra**, the moon appeared half full. On the riverbank, those two men looked helpless. One wandered back and forth, always returning to the same spot. The other was curled up and kept moaning, "My stomach hurts, it's like being pierced by iron!"

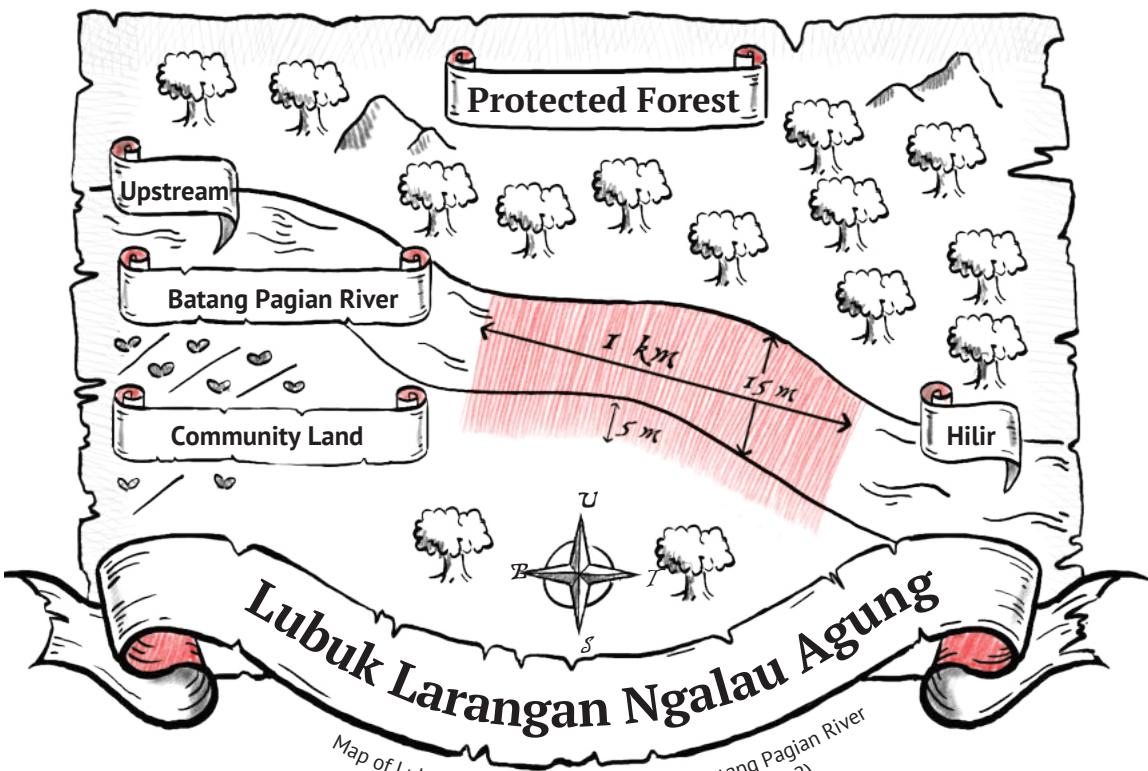
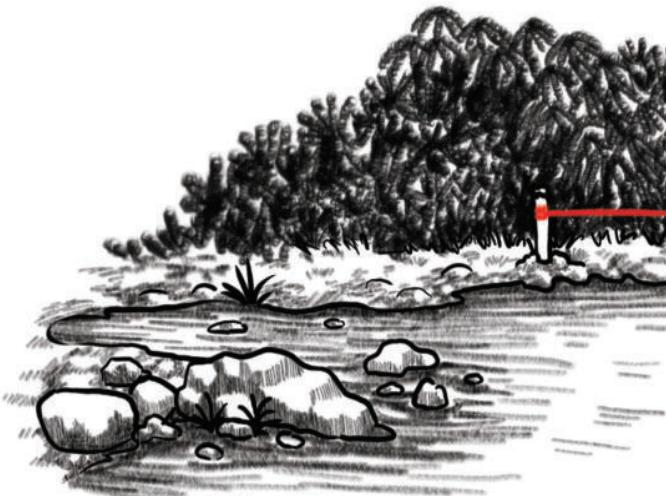
All night long, fear and cold gripped them. At dawn, villagers discovered the scene. One sat limp on the side of a basket full of fish.

The other was lifeless.

Word had spread. The prohibition of **lubuk larangan** had been violated.

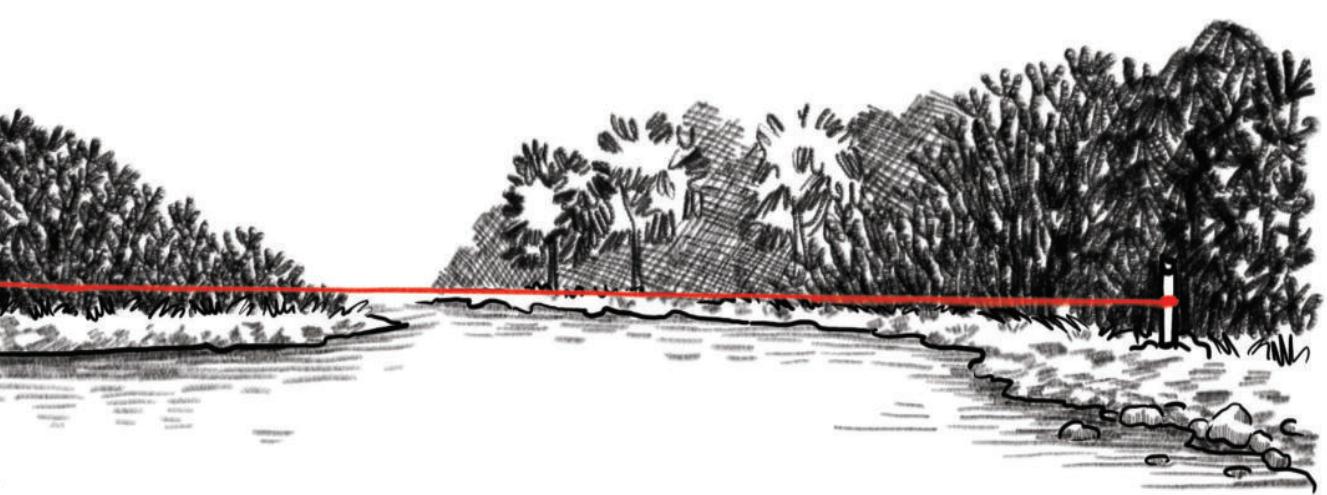


What is Lubuk Larangan?



Why are there stories tinged with tragedy that are close to Sumatra's people?

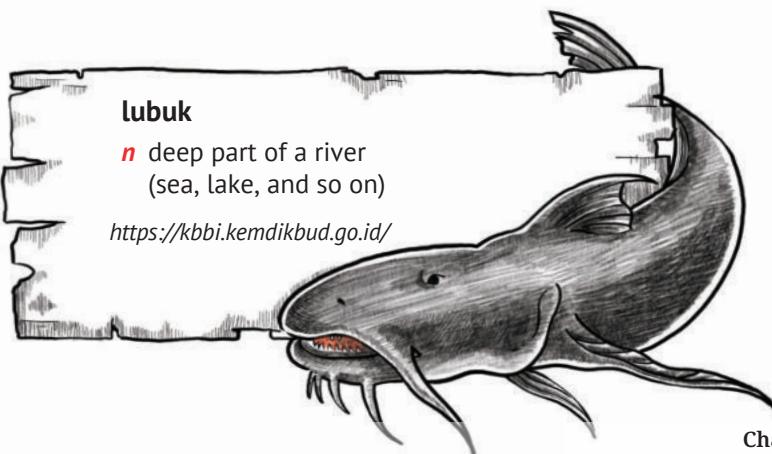




Lubuk larangan a sacred pool—is a section of a river considered sacred, where fishing is strictly prohibited. Generally, this protected area stretches about 1 kilometer long. In the picture, you can see the location of the lubuk larangan in Batang Pagian River in Kampuang Surau, West Sumatra. Only a small section of the river is designated as lubuk larangan. Local people living near the river are still allowed to use other parts of it for various daily needs—except for fishing.

The boundaries of a *lubuk larangan* are usually marked by a rope tied to trees, stretched across the river. Locals show deep respect for the area between the two sides of the rope. They refrain from fishing and littering carelessly. They believe that violating these taboos will bring misfortune. Communities living near the river also believe that humans are inseparable from—and even dependent on—nature. Although some may feel restricted by not being able to fish, they accept the rule.

The locals remind one another. If left unchecked, human desire to take more than necessary will be unstoppable. When the *lubuk larangan* rules are enforced, the river and its surroundings become calmer and cleaner. Fish and plants flourish in peace.



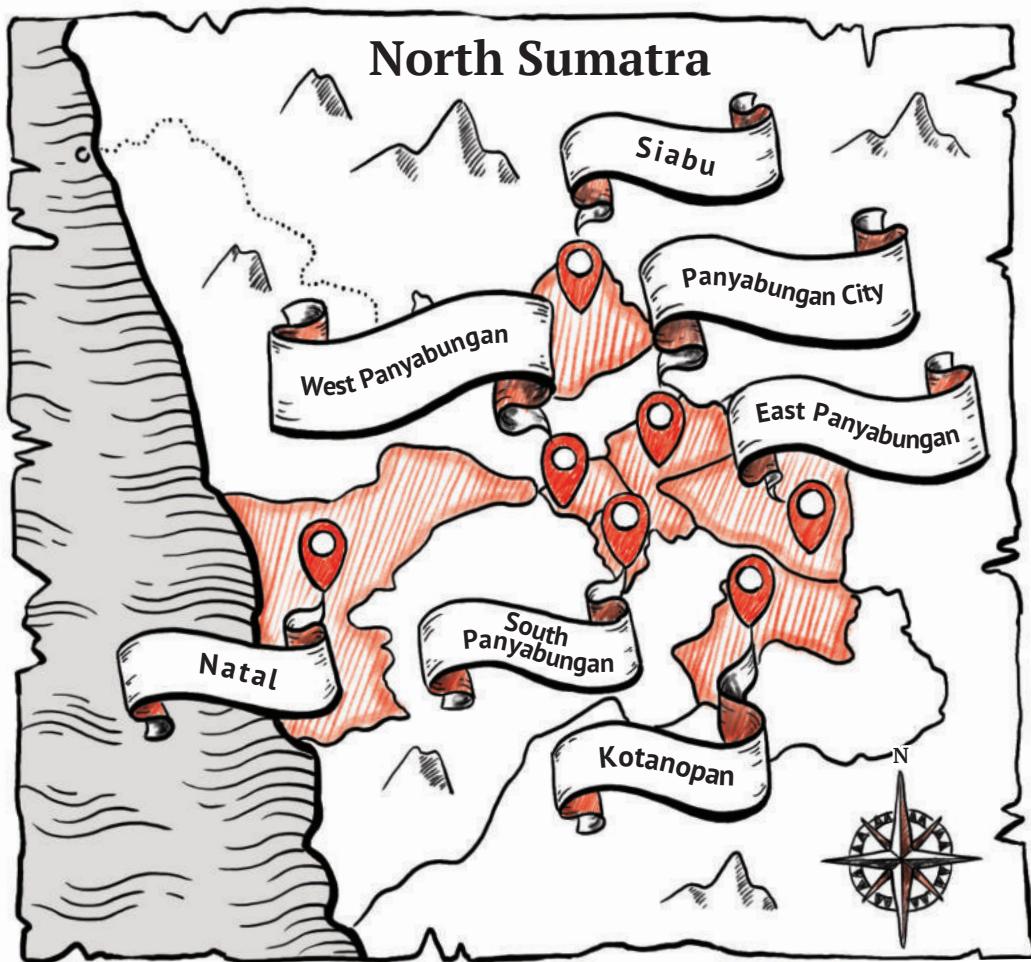
lubuk

n deep part of a river
(sea, lake, and so on)

<https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>

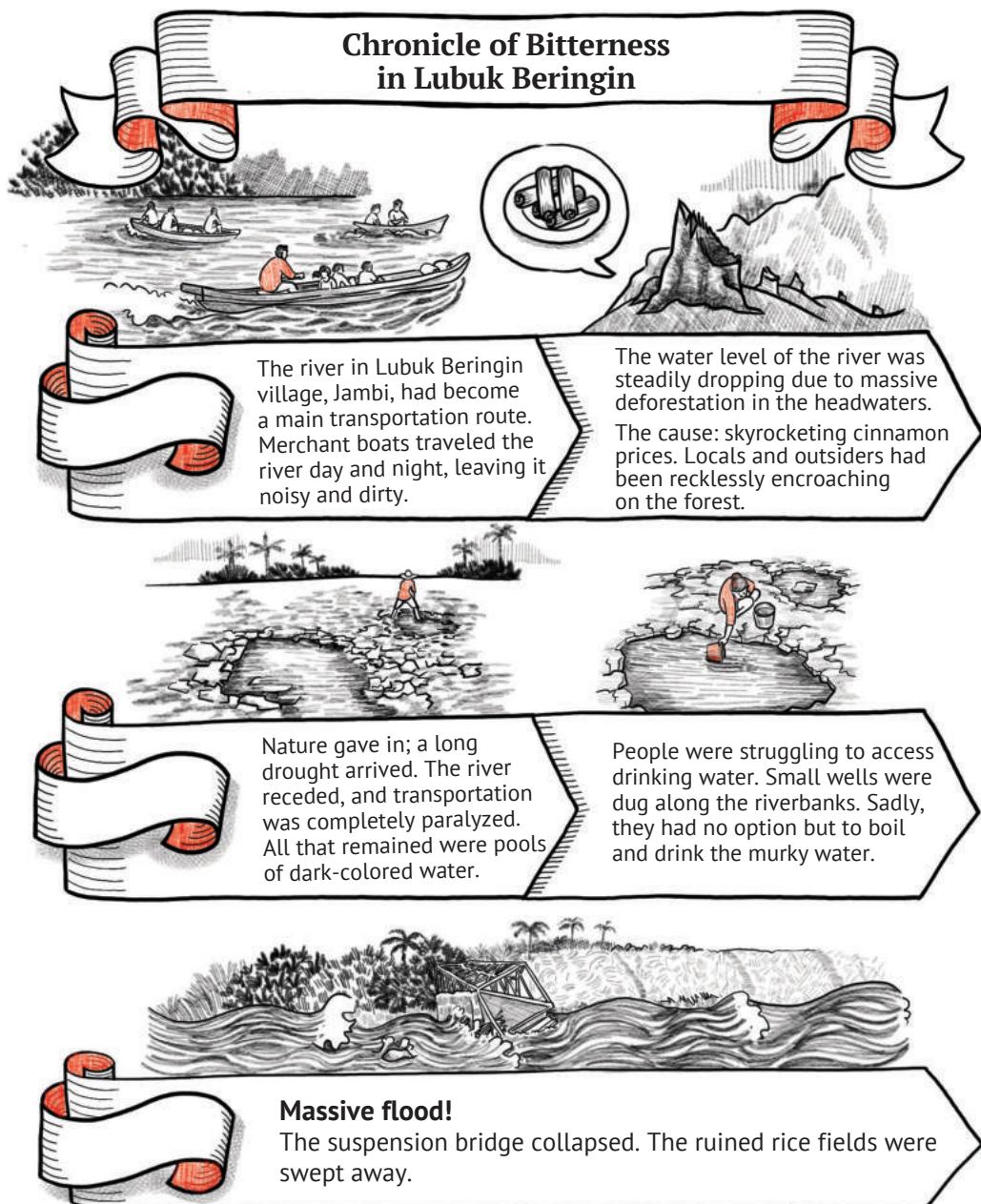
Villages with Lubuk Larangan Sites

Look at the villages marked in red. Those are where the *lubuk larangan* is found, in Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra. In this region, *lubuk larangan* is a familiar tradition, widely applied, and plays a vital role in community life. People understand the benefits of *lubuk larangan*. Even though many sections of the river are set apart as *lubuk larangan*, the fish in other parts are still sufficient to meet the community's daily needs.



Learning from Painful Experiences

In the village of **Lubuk Beringin**, Jambi Province, the rule of *lubuk larangan* is born from a painful experience in the past—a bitterness that no one wants to experience again.



Chronicle: a written record of historical events (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>)

From the chronicle you can imagine how sad the conditions were at that time.

That painful experience inspired the community to take better care of the river headwaters. They also wanted to commit to protecting nature, especially the rivers, and to passing on that commitment to next generations.

Community elders and local officials agreed to designate lubuk larangan, a conservation area in the river. The territorial boundaries and rules were agreed in line with traditional customs. The duration of the protection was also approved, set to last either one or two years.

The result of the community meeting was announced after Friday prayers. People understood the purpose of the lubuk larangan and willingly accepted it.

Taboos of the Lubuk Larangan



causing harm to the fish



taking the fish



disturbing the fish

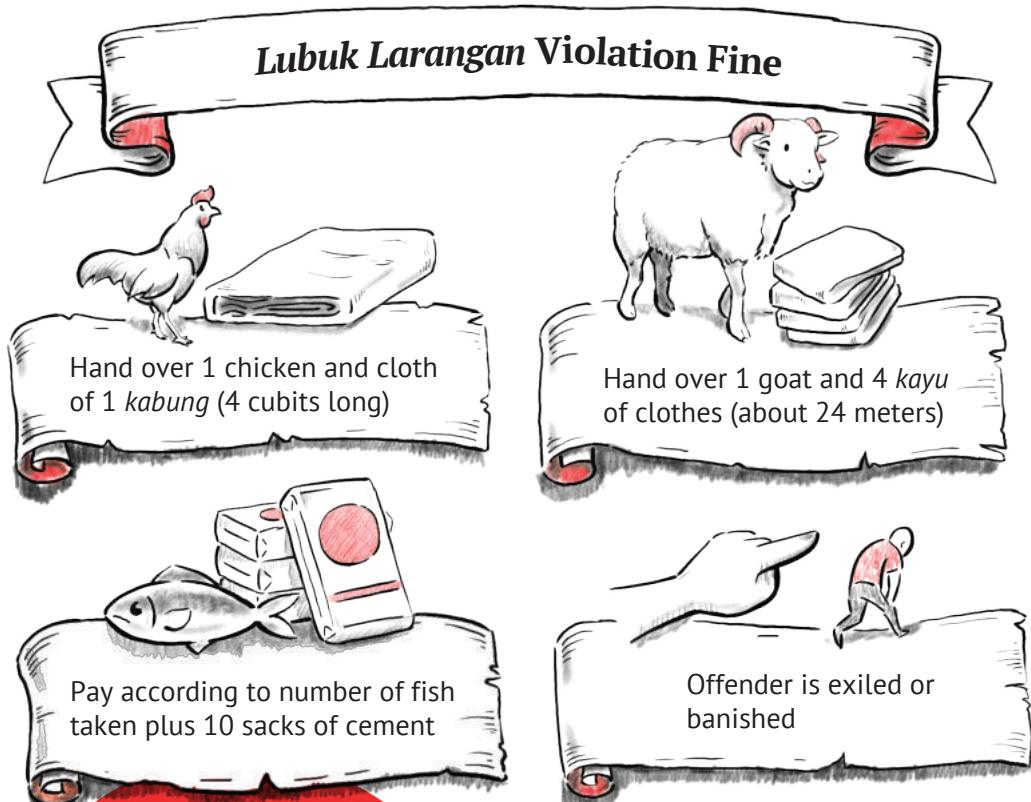


saying bad things around the sacred pool



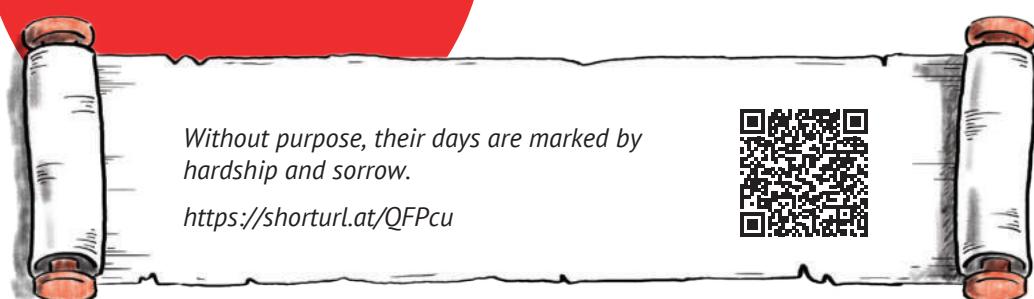
doing bad things, such as throwing rubbish, around the sacred pool

If someone breaks the rules, the customary court will step in. They'll have to say sorry according to local customs and face tiered fines depending on how serious the violation is.



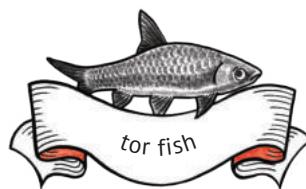
Customary law effectively deters violations. In addition, the community are afraid of ancestral oaths:

- **Cubit:** a unit of length from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow, approximately 45 cm
- **Kabung:** One sheet of burial shroud (about 2 meters)
- **Kayu:** Unit of length of shroud cloth (3 sheets for men, 5 sheets for women)



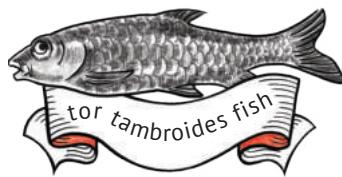
What also makes your neck hairs stand up is the belief
in the consequences awaiting
those who break the rules.



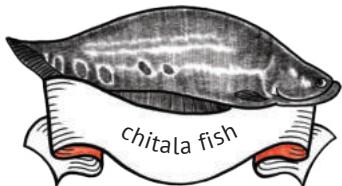


Fortunately, designating the area as a *lubuk larangan* doesn't make it inaccessible.

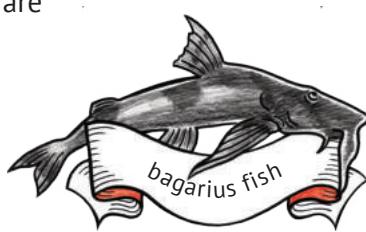
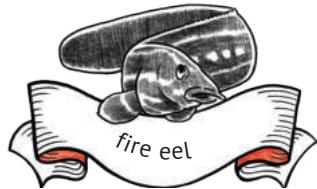
We are still allowed to approach the *lubuk larangan*, take and use water as needed, even swim among the fish there. Of course, we must always adhere to safety guidelines.

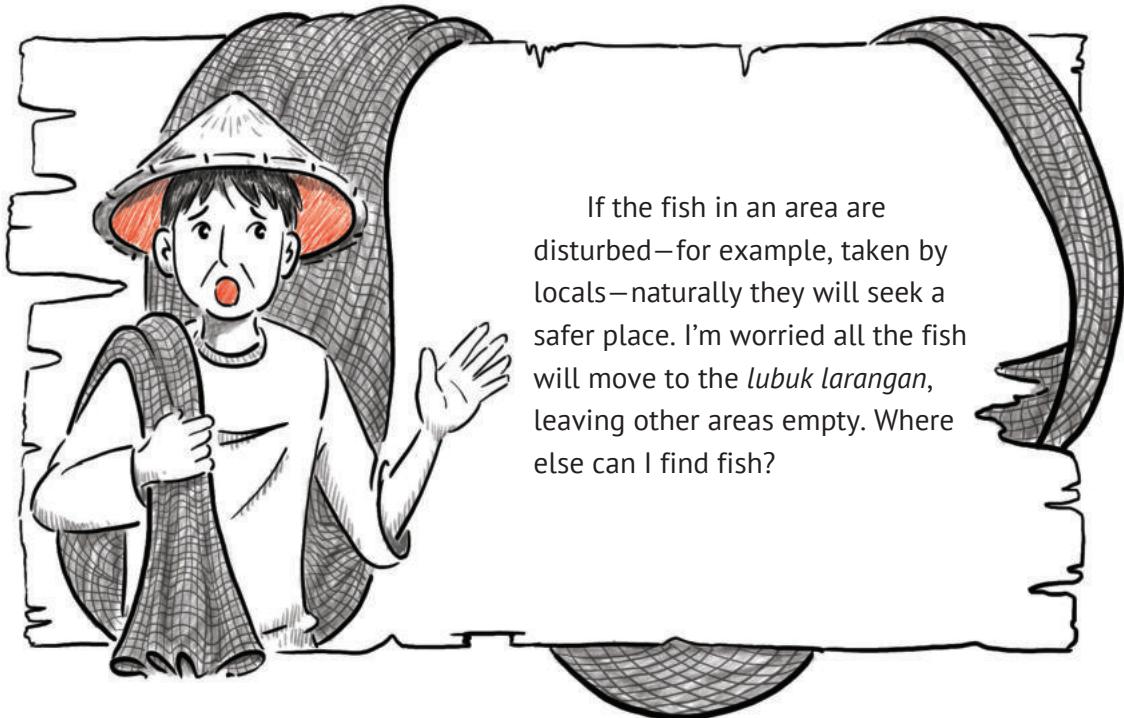


**After all, the
lubuk larangan is a
deep part of the river.
We never know the
mysteries hidden
within.**

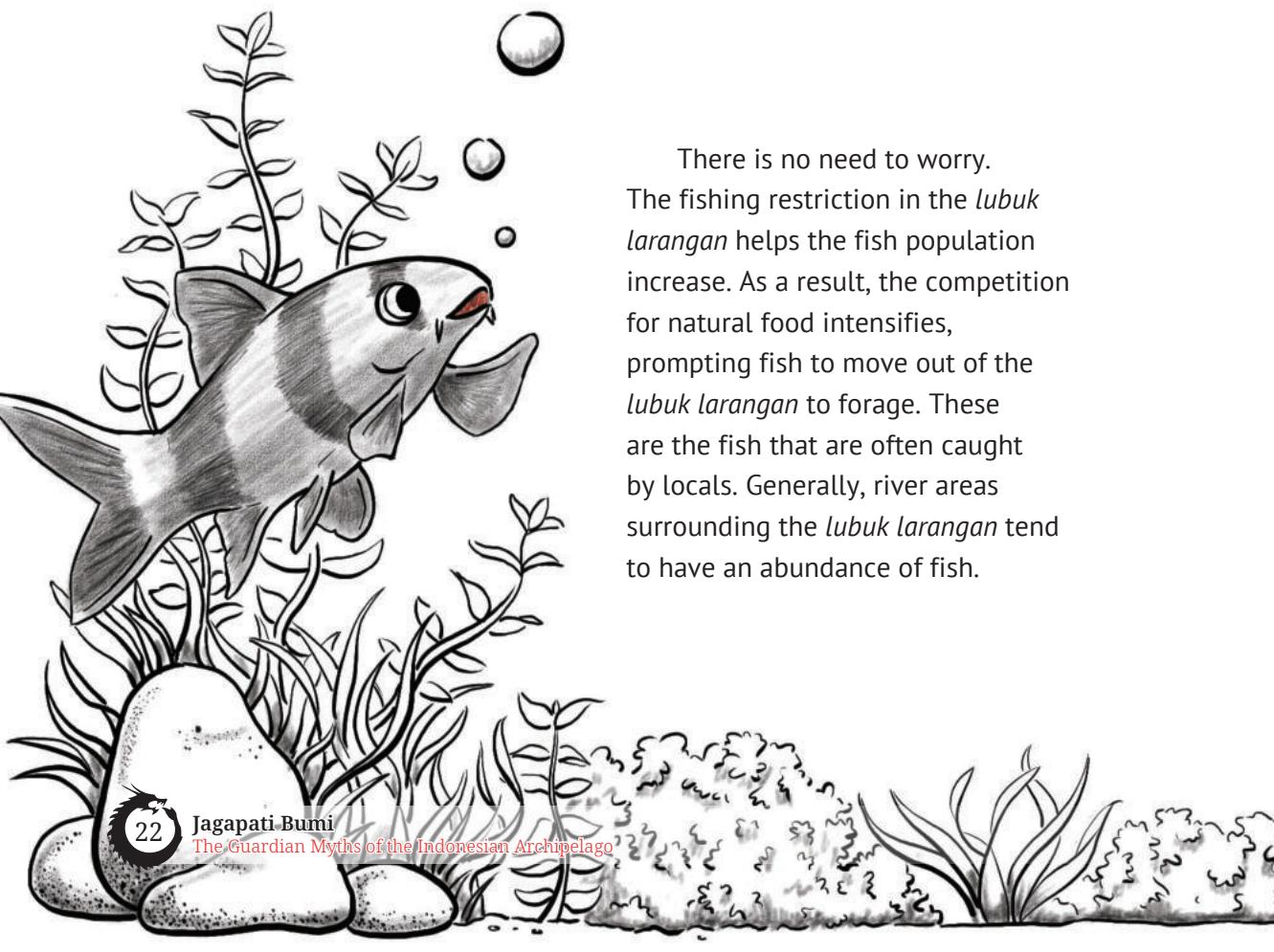


The good news is, designating the area as a *lubuk larangan* gives it a chance to rest and thrive. The river stays clean, and the once-rare local fish are returning to breed.





If the fish in an area are disturbed—for example, taken by locals—naturally they will seek a safer place. I'm worried all the fish will move to the *lubuk larangan*, leaving other areas empty. Where else can I find fish?



There is no need to worry. The fishing restriction in the *lubuk larangan* helps the fish population increase. As a result, the competition for natural food intensifies, prompting fish to move out of the *lubuk larangan* to forage. These are the fish that are often caught by locals. Generally, river areas surrounding the *lubuk larangan* tend to have an abundance of fish.

The Cries of The Fish Help!

Keep the river
clean!

Protect
the river's
surroun-
dings!

Don't overfish!

Stop the
polluters!

One of the things that troubles the fish is overfishing. This behavior causes the fish population to decline. The lubuk larangan is considered effective in stopping it. When fish populations are preserved, the community's food supply is also protected. People have come to understand that the rules and restrictions in the *lubuk larangan* are ultimately for the common good.

Moreover, the *lubuk larangan* isn't off-limits forever. As Eid al-Fitr draws near, the community awaits a special event with hopeful excitement. Everyone looks forward to it with great anticipation.

Fish Harvest in *Lubuk Larangan!*



The community is allowed to harvest fish from the *lubuk larangan* at a time agreed upon with traditional leaders—**usually once every one or two years**. The event begins with a prayer led by the traditional elder or the mosque imam. Afterward, community members of all ages join in the joyful harvest.

On that day, the *lubuk larangan* is opened to the public. It's worth noting that the fish harvest is carried out according to some rules. The permitted tools for catching fish include fishing rods, harpoons, scoops, or nets. The nets used must not exceed the width of the river..

The community members work together to harvest the fish; seasonings and grilling spots are set up along the riverbank. Soon, a savory aroma fills the air, making everyone hungry!



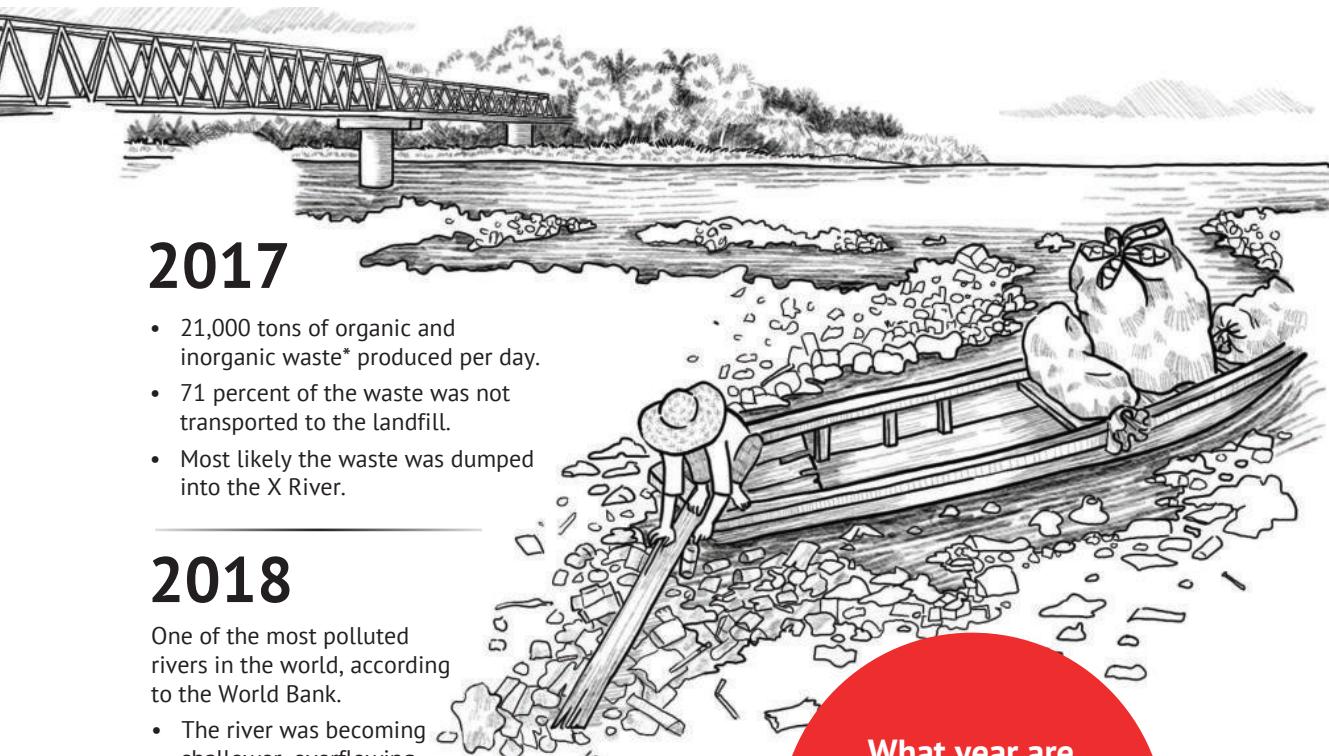
Gratitude for God's blessings and nature's generosity ends the joyful fish harvest. With prayers and words of advice, the *lubuk larangan* is closed again until next year.

Hopefully, now you understand. Gradually, the myth of punishment from the ancestors blends with an awareness of the importance of protecting the river and its environment. The mystery of the *lubuk larangan*, with its fears and warnings, continues to be kept alive to this day. In this way, we will feel uneasy when behaving disrespectfully toward nature. That uneasiness leads us to love nature by treating it with care and respect.

Share your thoughts.
Can the tradition of *lubuk larangan* be applied to this river?
What should we do to get started?

"WORLD CHAMPION"

The X River in Y City, 279 km long.



2017

- 21,000 tons of organic and inorganic waste* produced per day.
- 71 percent of the waste was not transported to the landfill.
- Most likely the waste was dumped into the X River.

2018

One of the most polluted rivers in the world, according to the World Bank.

- The river was becoming shallower, overflowing, and causing floods.
- The water quality was deteriorating.
 - » Pollution from livestock waste
 - » Household garbage
 - » Factory waste.
- Various toxic compounds emerged.
- 34.9 million people in 12 districts/cities along the river were at risk of skin diseases, diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, and poisoning from hazardous substances.

What year are you in?
What's happening to the rivers around you?

2019

Under-five child mortality: 300,000 cases.

- Poor sanitation
- Poor hygiene
- Unsafe drinking water.

2021

1,200 villages/sub-districts were affected by water pollution.

*organic (biodegradable waste, such as twigs, leaves, etc.) and inorganic (non-biodegradable waste such as plastic, glass, cans, and so on).

Chapter 3

The Sacred Tree

Your crown, reaching the
sky proudly arching, forming a shade
your bodhi leaves. Your roots, embracing the
earth burrowing deep into the ground.
Softly rustling, your leaves singing, gently
caressed by the wind. A bliss silently offered
at the foot, calling all to rest in peace.

(The Banyan Tree – Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana)

With every line, the poem sketches a tree that is grand, tall, and welcoming. There is a strength blended with joy and tenderness.

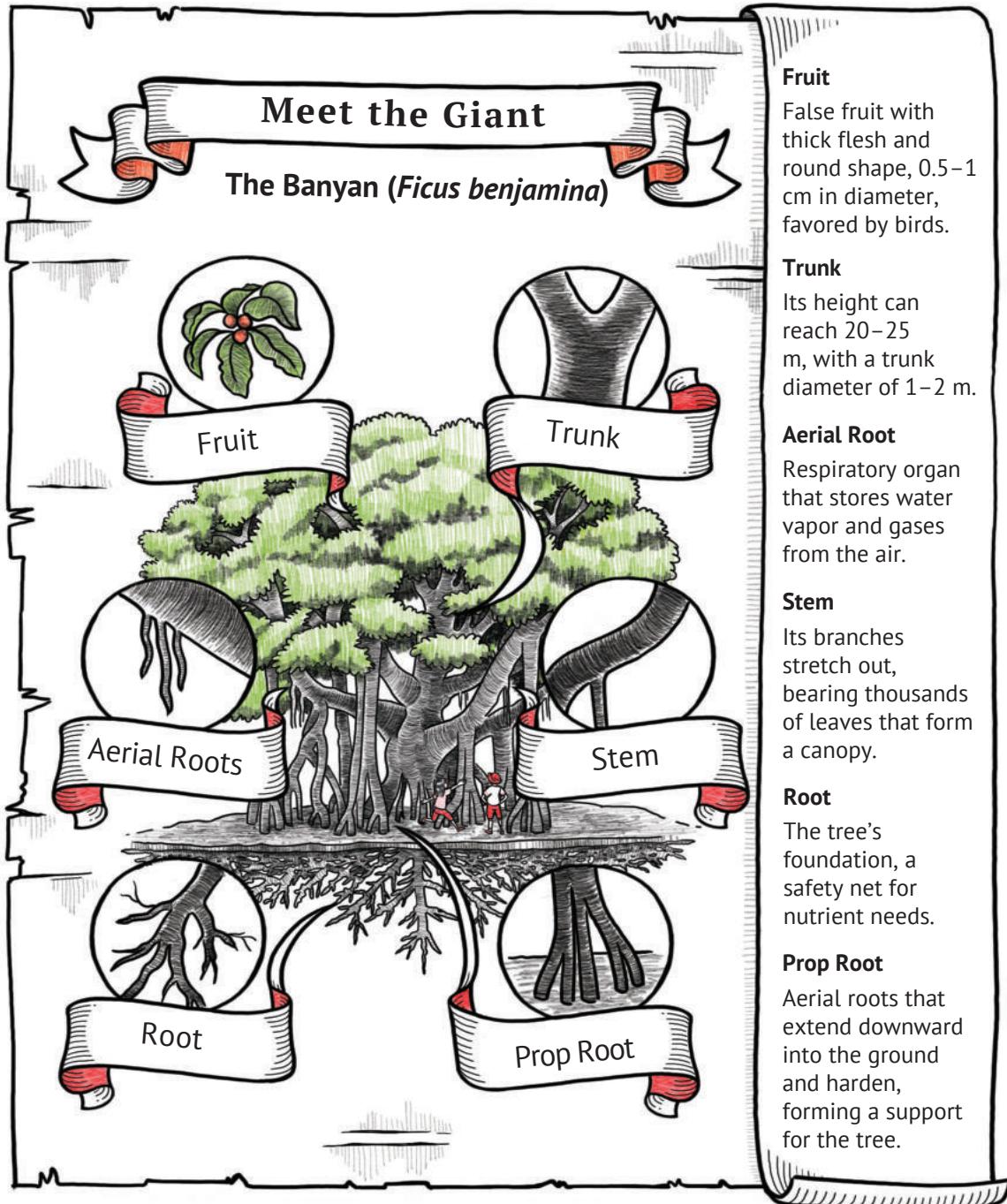
Is there such a grand tree near you? When you stand beneath it and look up, you feel like meeting a giant. A thick trunk with spreading limbs holds thousands of leaves bunched above. Its hanging roots sway quietly, as if trying to reach for you.

It is the banyan tree—a hardwood species found in many regions of Indonesia. It gives shade and is seen as a sacred tree. Since long ago, the banyan has been regarded as a sacred tree. Myths of **mysterious beings** inhabiting big trees are common tales in Indonesia, one of which is in Kalimantan. One myth in Kalimantan tells that great trees, like the banyan, are home to **kuyang**, a mythical creature creature.

Kuyang doesn't like its home being disturbed. Throwing trash near a banyan tree is believed to bring bad luck. Those who damage the tree may get sick, have trouble earning money, struggle to find a partner, or have nightmares. Cutting down a banyan tree carelessly is also believed to cause serious problems, such as accidents or even death.



**What is the banyan tree?
What makes it so special that
cutting it down is said to cost a life?
Let's take a closer look!**



Fruit

False fruit with thick flesh and round shape, 0.5–1 cm in diameter, favored by birds.

Trunk

Its height can reach 20–25 m, with a trunk diameter of 1–2 m.

Aerial Root

Respiratory organ that stores water vapor and gases from the air.

Stem

Its branches stretch out, bearing thousands of leaves that form a canopy.

Root

The tree's foundation, a safety net for nutrient needs.

Prop Root

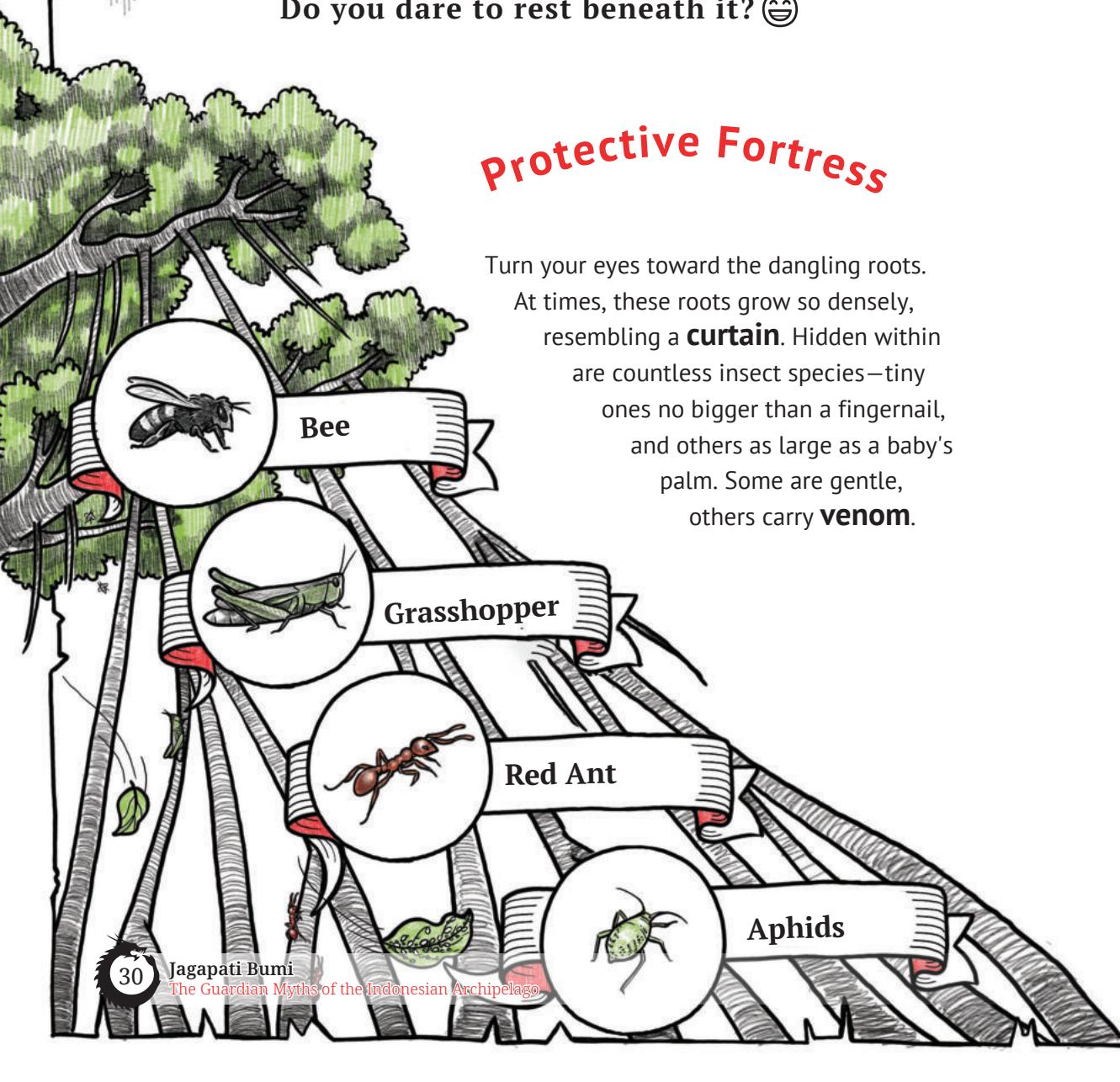
Aerial roots that extend downward into the ground and harden, forming a support for the tree.



Step closer. Be brave. If you treat it with respect, it will welcome you warmly and share many stories. You may rest—even drift off to sleep—beneath its shade. Hmm... lucky that the fruit of a tree as grand as a banyan is small and soft. Just imagine if its fruit were as big and hard as a coconut.

Do you dare to rest beneath it? 😊

Protective Fortress



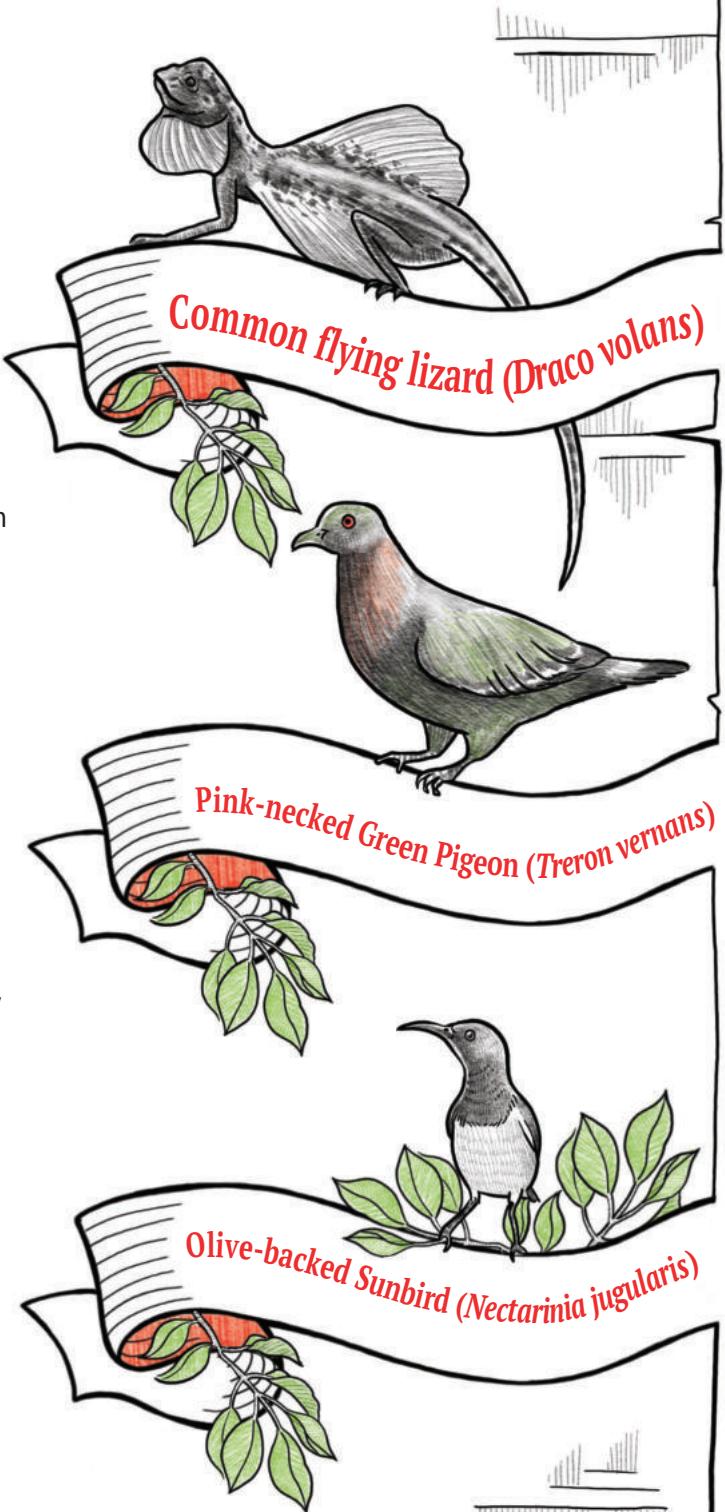
Turn your eyes toward the dangling roots. At times, these roots grow so densely, resembling a **curtain**. Hidden within are countless insect species—tiny ones no bigger than a fingernail, and others as large as a baby's palm. Some are gentle, others carry **venom**.

Food Court

Now, look up into the lush banyan tree. You may see a flying gecko. These lizards have limbs that can be extended as they glide through the air. They are commonly found in the banyan trees because they can easily find their main prey—**insects**—there.

You may also spot the green imperial pigeon, the olive-backed sunbird, and other birds. For them, the banyan tree is a fortress of **protection from predators** and a kind of **food court**. There are plenty of banyan seeds and various insects ready to eat.

These birds are not just in search of a free meal. They also help the banyan by consuming the aphids that are often harmful to its leaves.



The animals and the banyan trees form a mutually beneficial relationship—**symbiotic mutualism**.

With a bit of luck, you may spot the Bornean slow loris, a **solitary**, **arboreal**, and **nocturnal** animal.

In some regions, people often hunt slow lorises for **sacrifices**, **offerings**, or **witchcraft**.

Elsewhere, keeping a loris—let alone killing one—is believed to invite disaster. Fortunately, the myth of the kuyang, which roams at night, tends to favor the slow loris. Many hunters are too afraid to wander the forest after dark.

Trees, water, and earth unite as guardians of wildlife. Nature harmonizes itself to nurture a life worth living. Humans should never become destroyers.



solitary

(loner)



arboreal

(mostly living in trees)



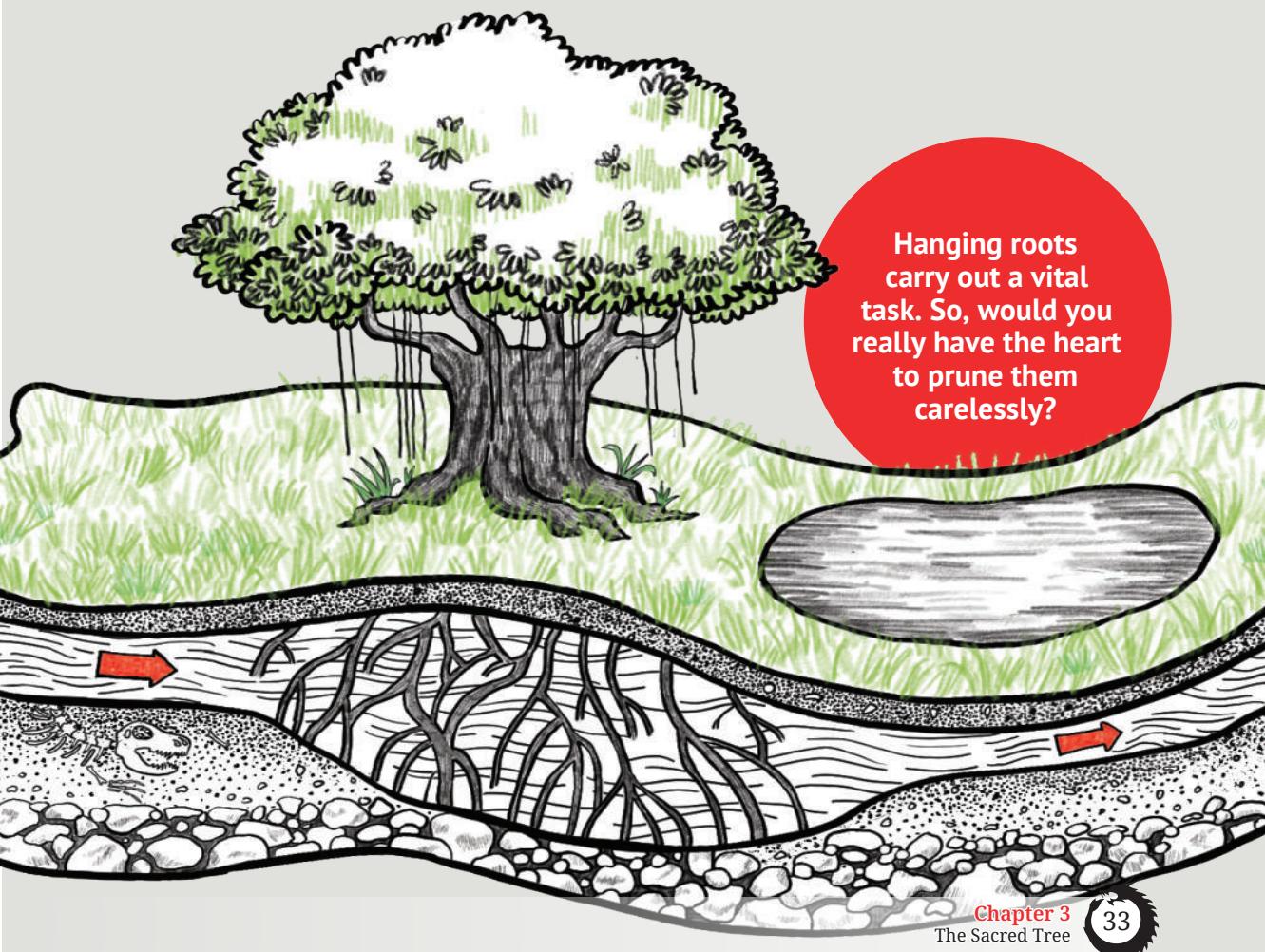
nocturnal

(most active at night).

Water Protector

Not only do they serve as homes and guardians for animals, large trees like the banyan also safeguard water. To carry out this important task, they require a generous supply of nutrients and oxygen. Underground roots alone cannot provide these needs. They need another kind of root—one that can absorb more air. Thus, hanging roots emerge, stretching down from sturdy, towering branches. Both types of roots—those buried in the soil and those dangling from above—work together to nourish the tree and help it breathe.

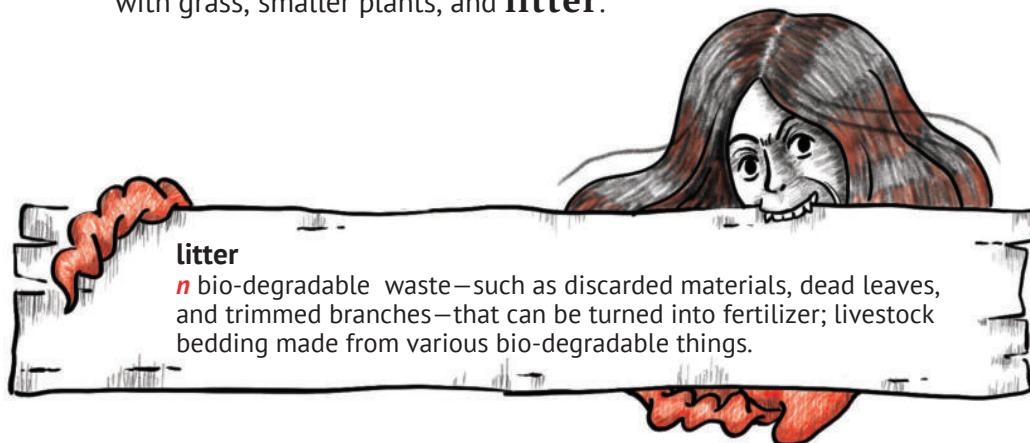
Those hanging roots act as the banyan's breathing organ. They begin to grow once the tree has matured. While still dangling in the air, these roots absorb moisture from the atmosphere. Over time, they grow longer and eventually reach the ground, where they begin to draw water and nutrients from the soil.



Hanging roots
carry out a vital
task. So, would you
really have the heart
to prune them
carelessly?

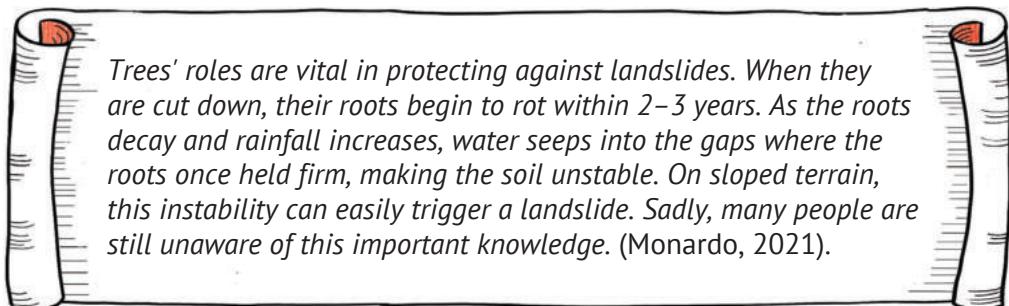


Healthy roots help trees grow lush, dense, and strong. In places where trees form dense canopies, temperatures tend to drop and humidity rises. Beneath these grand trees, the ground is usually covered with grass, smaller plants, and **litter**.



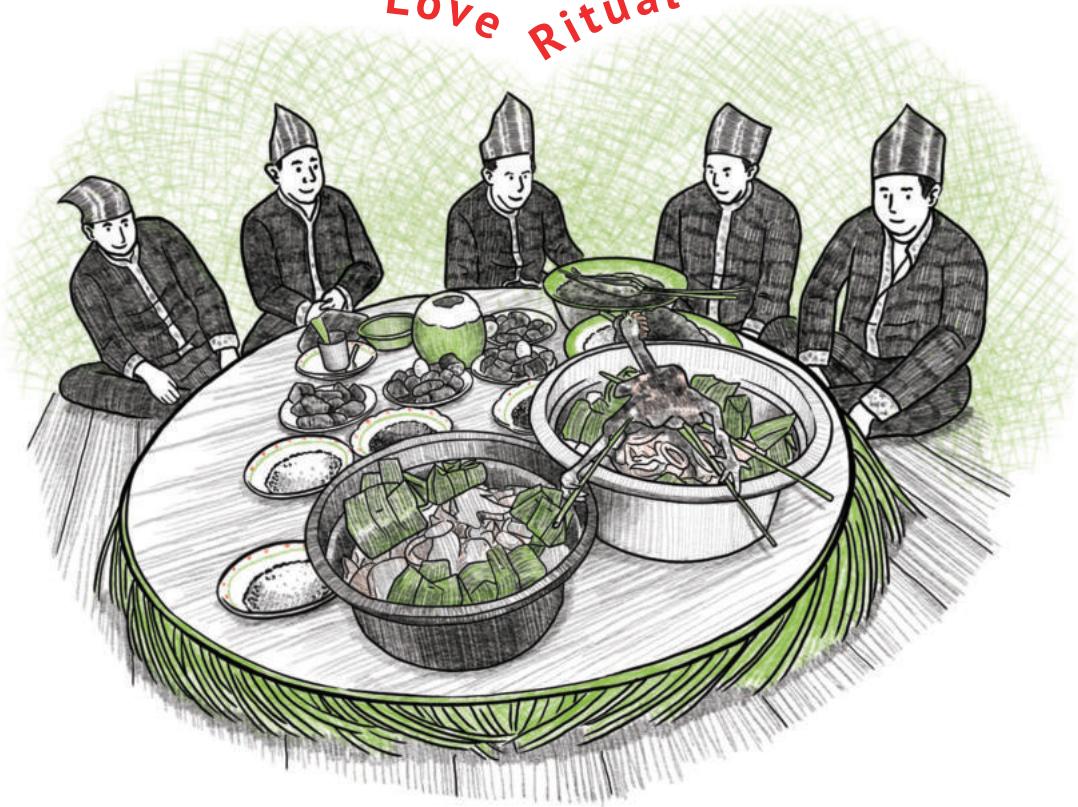
Tree litter serves to hold and temporarily store water.

Slowly, this moisture—along with nutrients—is released into the earth, helping the soil absorb it more effectively. Look at how nature works—even fallen leaves and twigs play a vital role.



Trees' roles are vital in protecting against landslides. When they are cut down, their roots begin to rot within 2–3 years. As the roots decay and rainfall increases, water seeps into the gaps where the roots once held firm, making the soil unstable. On sloped terrain, this instability can easily trigger a landslide. Sadly, many people are still unaware of this important knowledge. (Monardo, 2021).

Love Ritual



Keeping the forest clean is a necessity. The trees are cared for in accordance with the life principles of the Dayak people in Kalimantan. At the heart of their daily conduct and ritual practices lies a spirit of living in harmony with nature.

For example, the *Seserahan Hutan* ritual is carried out by the Dayak people as an expression of gratitude for the forest's bounty that sustains their lives. Prayers are recited and words of wisdom are shared.

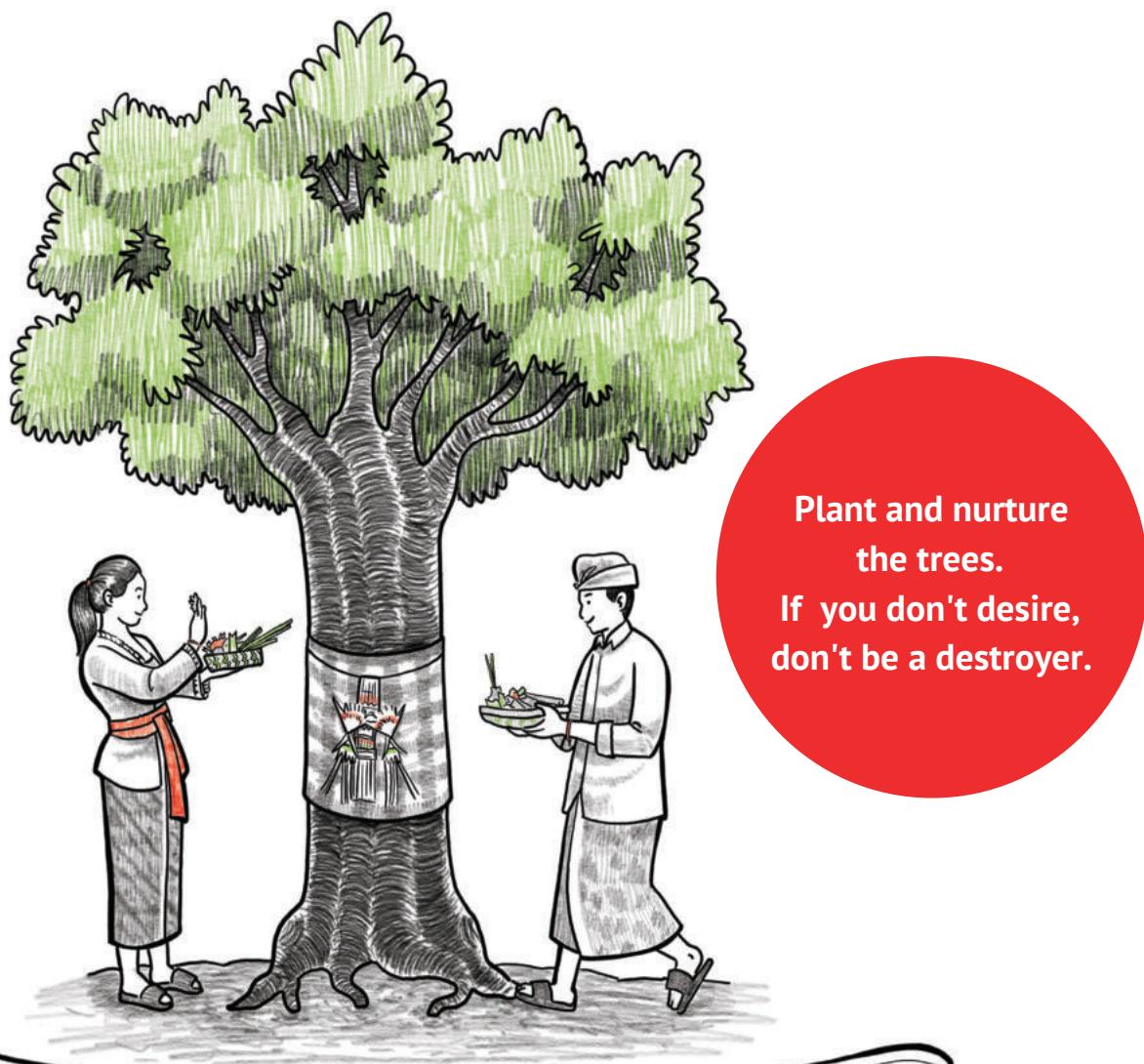
The traditional leader conveys the message of the ancestors: the forest must be honored, **the trees cared for and preserved**. To dishonor the forest and its trees is to dishonor life itself, and it will eventually bring disaster.

After the *Seserahan Hutan* ritual, residents are prohibited from entering the forest for seven days. They obey it with all their heart.

A small tribute we can offer to nature is allowing it time to rest.

A similar ritual is also performed in Bali. To preserve the relationship between humans and nature, the **Tumpek Wariga** ceremony is held. During this event, the community gives thanks for the presence of plant life.

On **Tumpek Wariga** day, people are advised not to cut down trees, and also not to pick fruit, flowers, and leaves. Instead, they are urged to plant trees and give offerings as a form of respect to the trees.

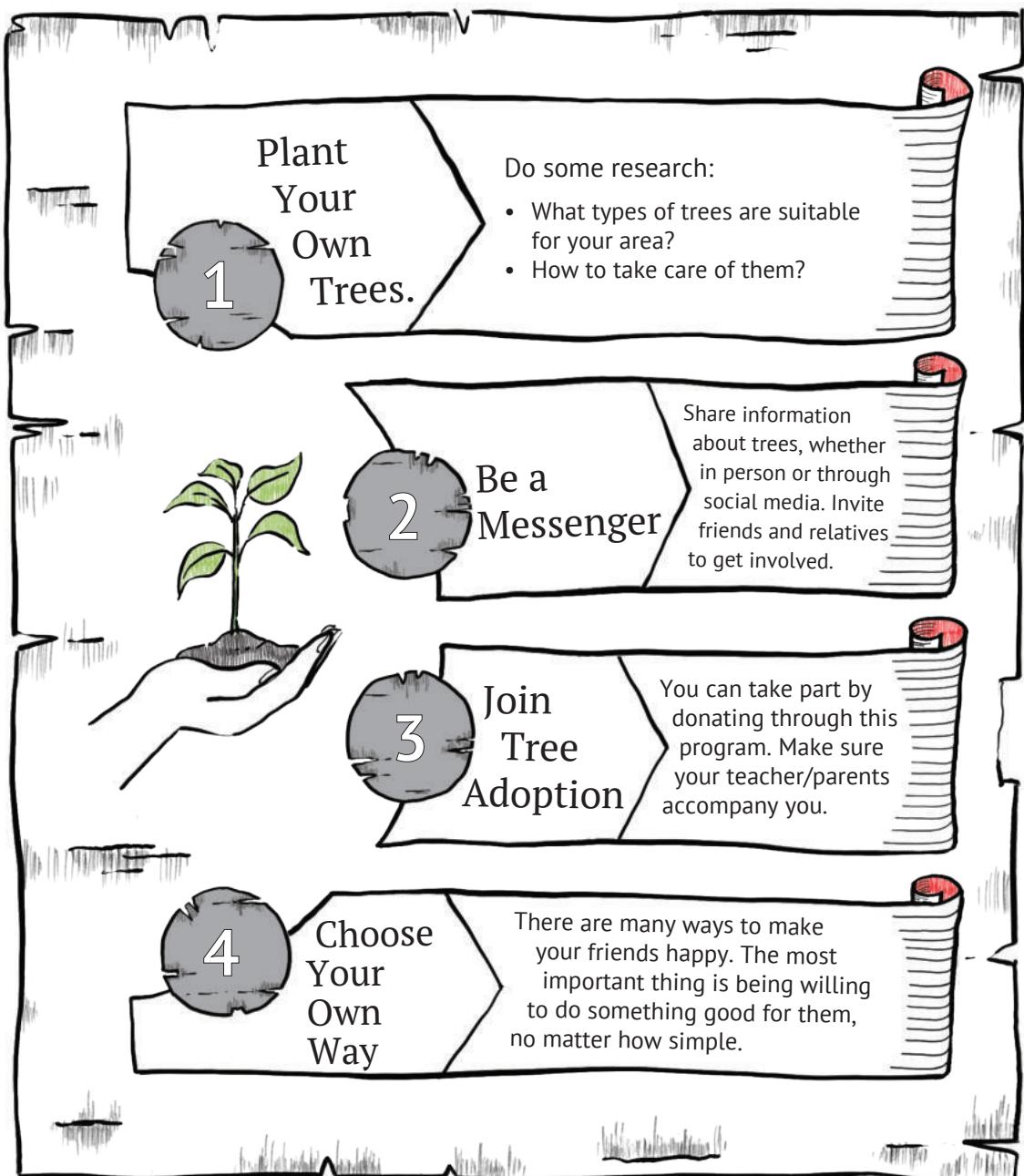


The *Tumpek Wariga* ceremony teaches us to treat plants with respect
To harm them is to damage the order of life.



Trees Friend

You can be a friend to trees, too. You don't have to plant a banyan—growing any kind of tree in a pot is meaningful. If you can't plant one yourself, take part in other ways. Here are some tips you can try.



Are You A Good Friend?

Have you ever done any of these?

Have you ever seen others do these things?



- Scribbling on tree trunks



- Urinating under a tree



- Throwing trash near a tree



- Forgetting to water potted plants



- Breaking a tree branch just for fun

You already know the secret.

Hopefully, you know what to do after this.

The greatness of a tree lies in the fact that we never see what it endures in the darkness of the soil, yet it offers us shade, the beauty of flowers, and the freshness of fruit.

Chapter 4

Drum of Death

The wind blows,
whispering a tale. One day, a man
marches boldly into the forest, brimming
with pride. A sharp machete hangs at his waist,
while a rifle and rope are slung over his shoulder.

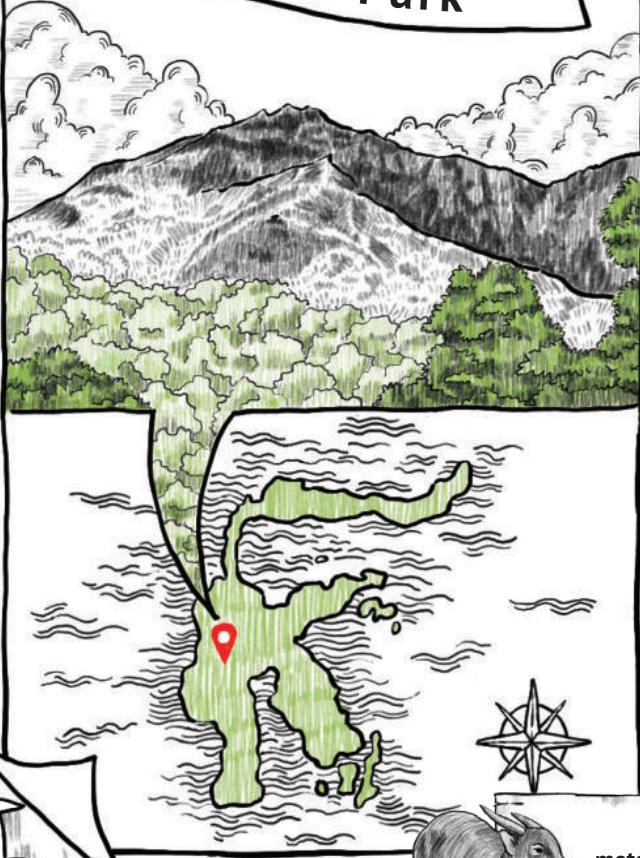
"I will hunt the anoa," he says.

Soon after, from the lofty mountain peaks, the distant
beat of drums echo faintly. No one knows who is
playing them. Still, the villagers by the forest's
edge understand: the hunter is no longer alive.
His pride—and his flesh—has vanished
into the depths of the jungle.

The **mystery** lies within Mount Gandang Dewata, the second-highest mountain on the island of Sulawesi. It is located in West Sulawesi, in Mamasa Regency.

This mountain and the area surrounding it serve as the largest natural reservoir in West Sulawesi. Rainfall is gathered here, held within the earth and forest, then channels it in many directions. Thanks to the mountain and its forests, the communities nearby enjoy a steady and reliable source of water.

Gandang Dewata National Park



Status:

National Park (Ministry of Environment and Forestry Decree No. 773, October 3, 2016)

Location:

Mamasa Regency,
borders Mamuju Regency

Elevation:

3,037 masl

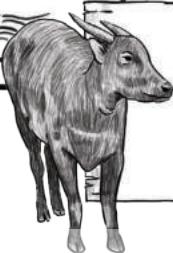
Area:

180,078 hectare

Source:

<https://ksdae.menlhk.go.id/>

meters above sea level (masl): a unit of measurement used to show how high a location is compared to the average level of the sea's surface

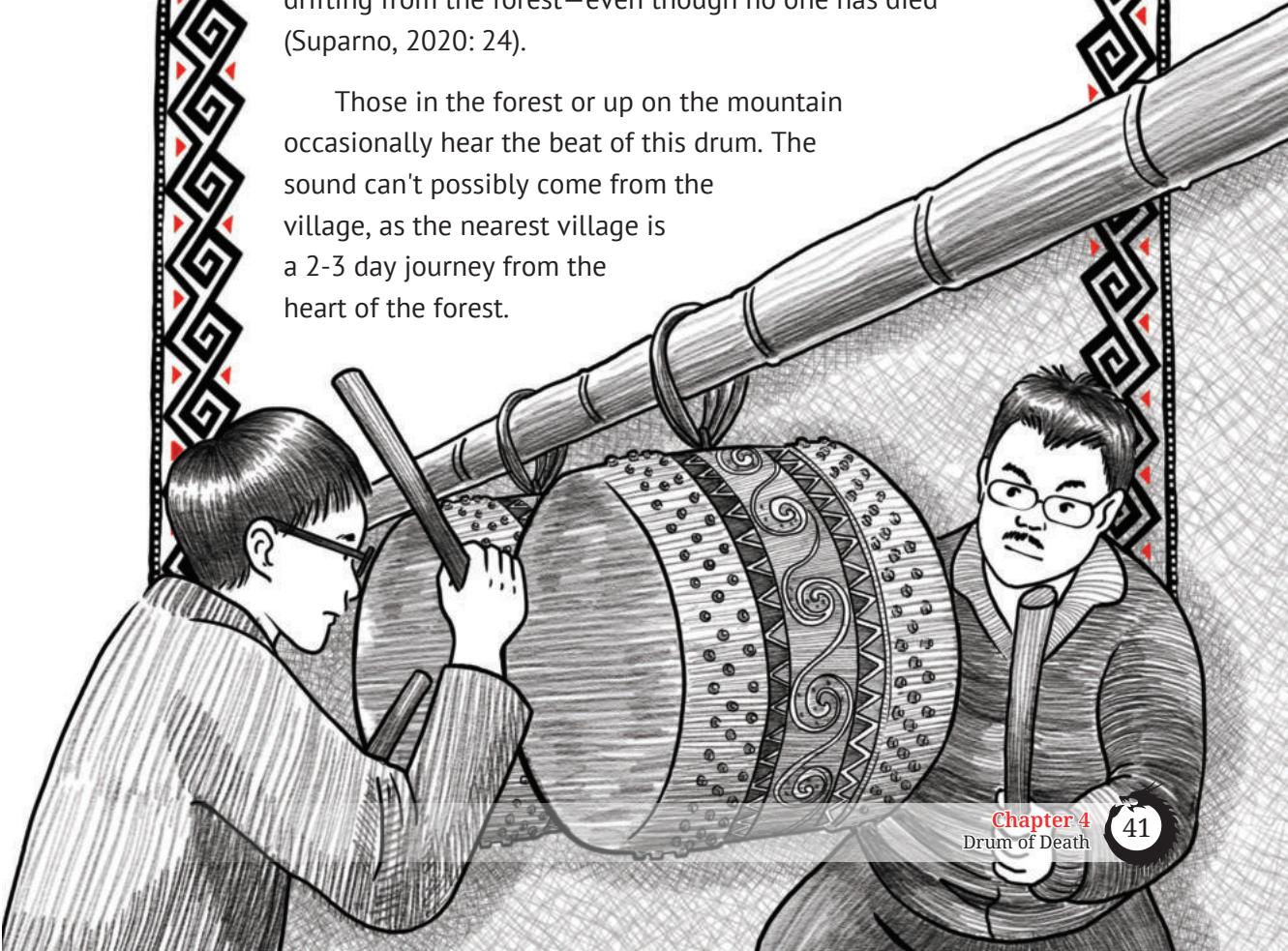


Based on the meaning of the words, "**gandang**" means drum, and "**dewata**" means deity. When the sound of drums echoes from the mountain's direction, villagers believe it is **a warning from the gods**. Anyone who defiles the forest—especially those who harm or kill the animals within it—will be struck by disaster.

The Death Drum of the Mamasa Indigenous People

In Mamasa tradition, there is a special drum that is played only when a member of the community passes away. Legend has it that the faint sound of this drum is sometimes heard drifting from the forest—even though no one has died (Suparno, 2020: 24).

Those in the forest or up on the mountain occasionally hear the beat of this drum. The sound can't possibly come from the village, as the nearest village is a 2-3 day journey from the heart of the forest.



Supernatural Race "To Pembuni"

Not only guarded by drums and their ties to death, Mount Gandang Dewata National Park is also protected by the myth of an **invisible supernatural** race known as **To Pembuni**. They inhabit Mount Gandang Dewata, sometimes revealing themselves to humans and interacting with certain people.

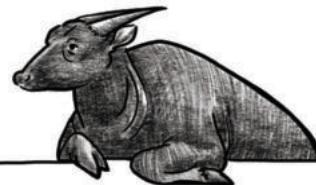
To Pembuni are disturbed when hikers yell, stir up trouble, or behave improperly. If these taboos are violated, To Pembuni **will send down blinding fog and strong winds**. These conditions are extremely dangerous for hikers, as they may slip, lose their way, or even face death.

To Pembuni are believed to dwell in a parallel world that is connected to the Mamasa and Toraja people. Only certain individuals, with a special gift, are able to communicate with them. At times, To Pembuni descend into villages, mingle with the community, and attend traditional ceremonies. The villagers always prepare extra food to serve and offer as gifts to the To Pembuni tribe.

(Soeparno, 2020: 25)

The Guardian of Biodiversity

The myth that the drum's sound is **tied** to death makes people cautious when in the forest or on the mountain. They watch their steps carefully, especially when passing through the moss forest. There, moss cloaks the roots and tree trunks as if with a living veil.



tie

v ... to relate to or connect to

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

The moss forest in **Mount Gandang Dewata** National Park is like a **living laboratory**, home to hundreds of plant and animal species yet to be identified. Countless **mysteries** remain awaiting discovery. Therefore, nature must be protected to ensure its preservation.

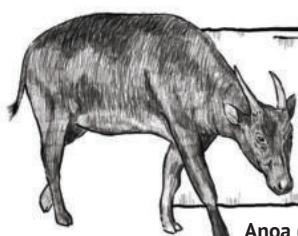


Take your smartphone
and scan this QR code.



Join an expedition or scientific
research trip
with experts
and researchers of biodiversity.

Page of National Research and
Innovation Agency of Indonesia (BRIN)
[https://penerbit.brin.go.id/press/
catalog/book/165](https://penerbit.brin.go.id/press/catalog/book/165)



biological

adj. ... connected with the natural processes
of living thing

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Anoa (*Bubalus sp.*), an endemic animal of Sulawesi Island

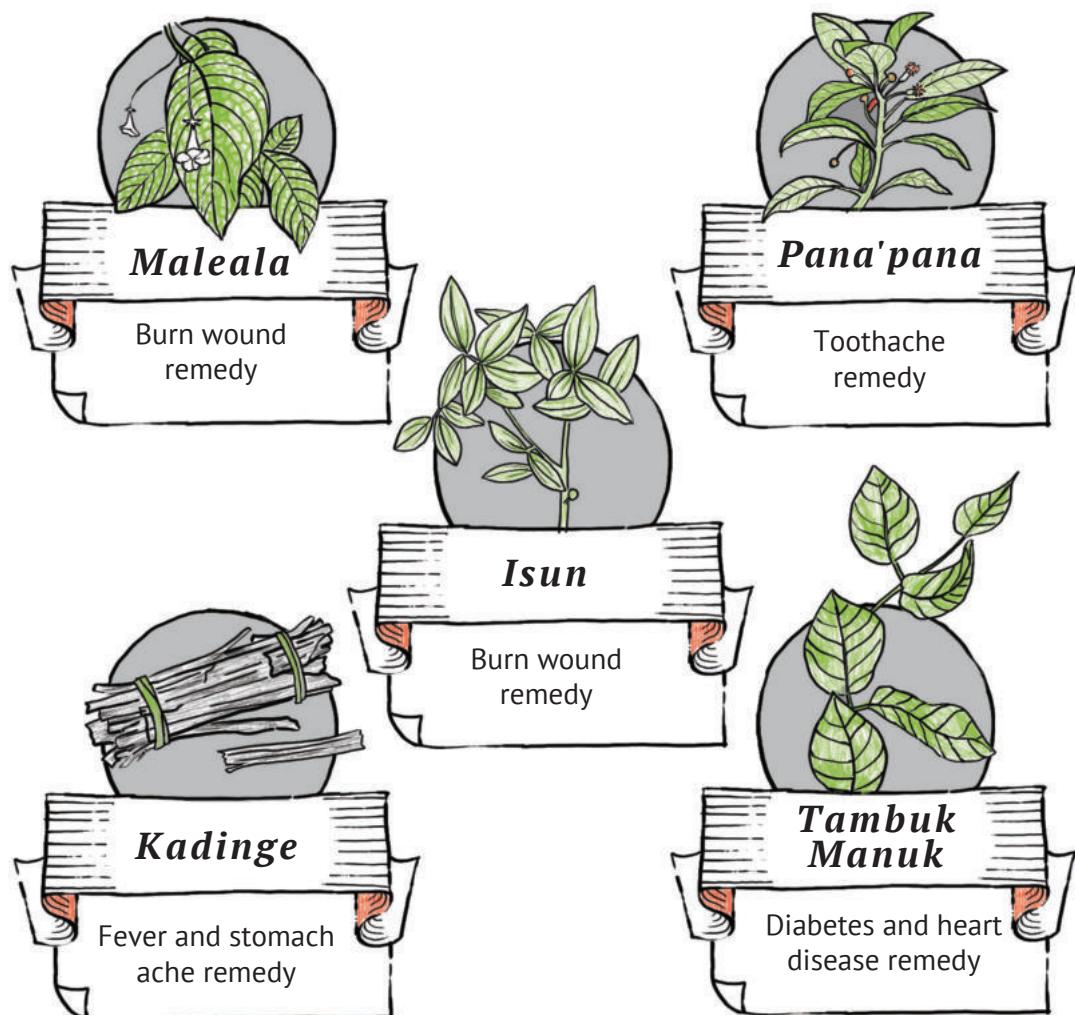


44 Jagapati Bumi

The Guardian Myths of the Indonesian Archipelago

Though shrouded in **mystery**, Mount Gandang Dewata still provides for the people. The surrounding communities use its forest resources wisely, taking only what they need—for example, gathering wild plants in modest amounts for medicine.

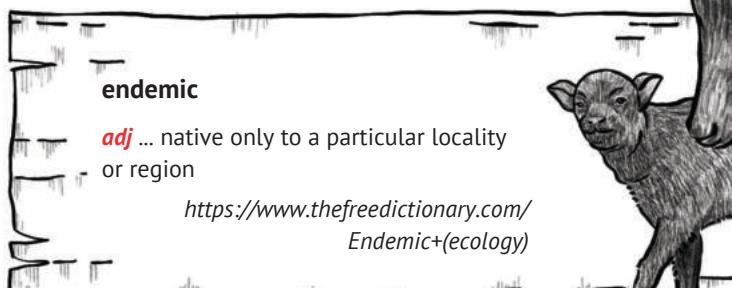
Wild Herb for Remedies



(Achmadi: 2018)

Not only medicinal plants, Gandang Dewata National Park has an extraordinary diversity of vegetation.

This park is home to several **endemic** plant species, some of which are considered among the rarest on Earth—such as orchids, bitti wood, rattan, wild areca palms, and a variety of other palm species. Sulawesi's endemic animal species, like the anoa, also inhabit **Gandang Dewata National Park**.



Long before it was declared as a national park, people had lived and found shelter in the Mount Gandang Dewata area. The mountain's biodiversity has always sustained them. Like a love returned, the community repays nature's generosity with respect and care.

They take only as much water from the springs as they need, gather vegetables and firewood for consumption, occasionally tap resin, or collect honey. They also manage fields that have been inherited through generations.

Nature Conservation Area

Mount Gandang Dewata is a nature conservation area. It serves to support life. In Indonesia, there are three types of nature conservation areas.

Forest park

This nature conservation area serves as a repository of plant and/or animal species—whether natural or cultivated, native or non-native—used for research, scientific study, education, supporting cultivation, cultural activities, tourism, and recreation.

National parks

A nature conservation area with native ecosystems, managed through a zoning system, utilized for research, scientific study, education, supporting cultivation, tourism, and recreation.

Nature tourism park

This nature conservation area is primarily used for tourism and outdoor recreation.

In-situ Conservation

The protection of flora and fauna populations and communities is carried out in their natural habitats.

Ex-situ Conservation

Flora and fauna are taken and cared for in environments designed to resemble their natural habitats.

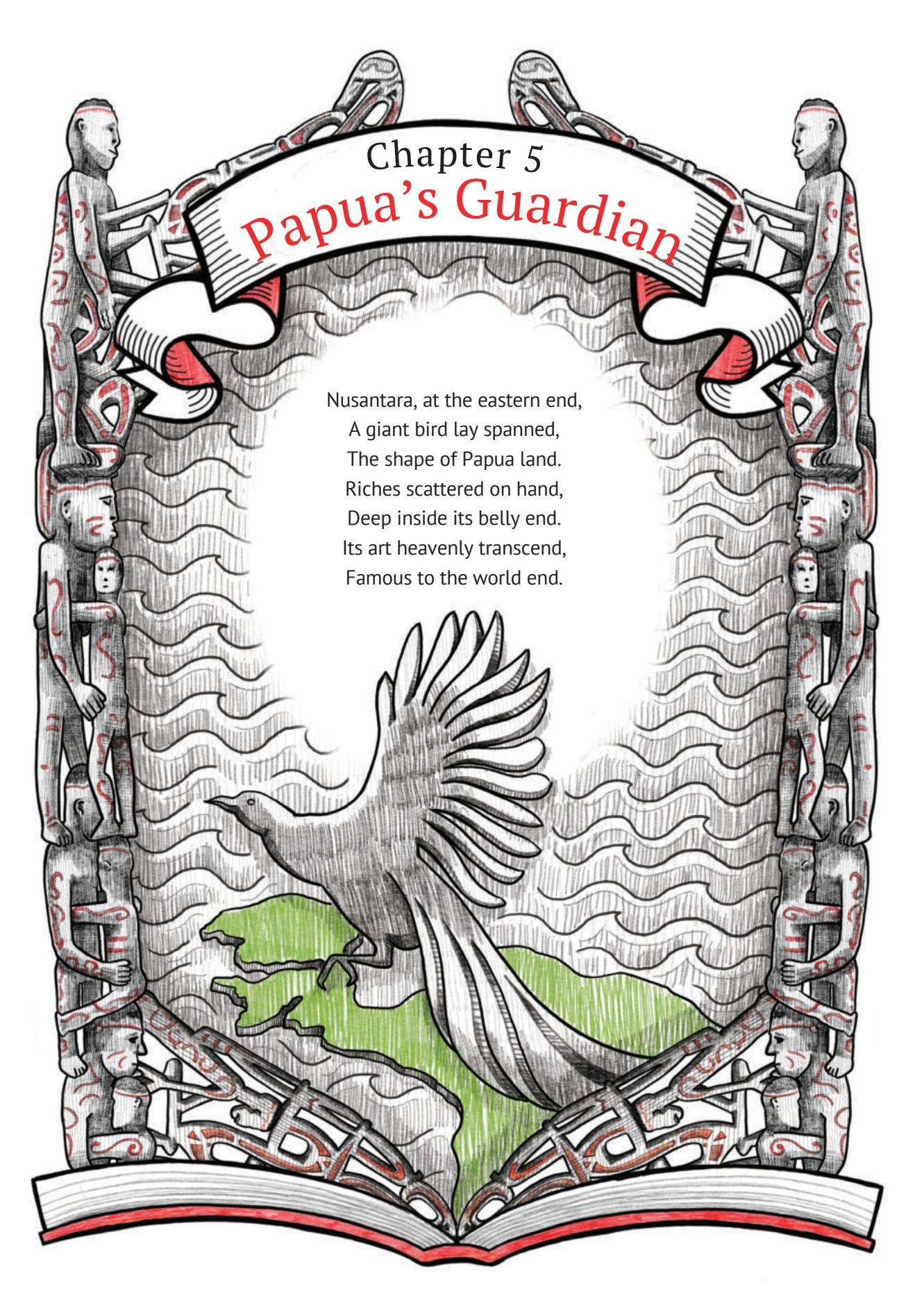
**Since being declared
as a national park,
all activities in Mount
Gandang Dewata have been
protected under
state law.**

This law is bound by whispered legends of the death drum's echo and the shrouding fog sent by **To Pembuni**. All of it serves as a warning for humans to be wary.

This area has also drawn the attention of researchers from across the archipelago and the world. Scholars seek to learn here, to study the wealth of knowledge hidden within its lush wilderness.

Truly, nature always shares its **goodness**. Mountains and forests are protective fortresses, guardians of life's source. **So**, if one day you find yourself visiting **Mount Gandang Dewata**, be sure to greet it with deep respect.





Chapter 5

Papua's Guardian

Nusantara, at the eastern end,
A giant bird lay spanned,
The shape of Papua land.
Riches scattered on hand,
Deep inside its belly end.
Its art heavenly transcend,
Famous to the world end.

Fumeripits and the Spirits of the Ancestors

**Say the greeting: *Foi! Jou suba! Mahikai! Kaonak! Koya!*
*Amolongo! Yepmum! Nare! Dormom! Wa ... wa ... wa!***

Papua welcomes you with breathtaking landscapes: the Mount of Jayawijaya, the Paniai Lake, the Mamberamo River, the twilight city of Kaimana, and vast swamp forests. More than 200 tribes call this land home—including the Asmat. The Asmat people live beneath the shadow of a powerful myth: **Fumeripits**. Some regard him as a god, others as the first human.

It is told that *Fumeripits*, feeling lonely in his home, carved wood into human statues. In the stillness, he beat the tifa drum. Suddenly, the statues began to breathe, to **dance**, and transformed into the first people of the Asmat tribe—the carvers of their lineage.

This myth, passed down through generations, nurtures the Asmat people's belief that they are part of nature. Trees are regarded as manifestations of the self.

The stem represents the hands, **the fruit** represents the head, and **the roots** represent the feet



For the Asmat people, protecting the trees is the same as caring for themselves. Because of this belief, the forests, rivers, and marshlands have been preserved.

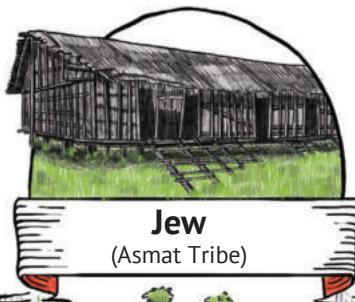
The Asmat and other Papuan tribes depend on forest products—fruit, leaves, and animals—for their livelihood. However, above all, they prioritize treating nature with care and respect. They firmly believe that the spirits of their ancestors always watch over their behavior when using natural resources

Papuans House

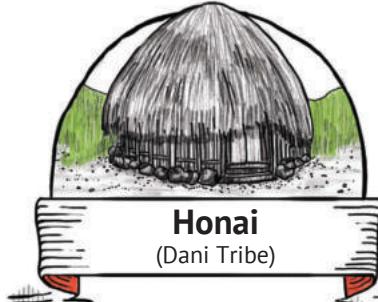
One sign of the close bond between the Papuans and nature is their homes. The materials used come directly from the environment—wood, sago leaves, and rattan. Not just any tree can be cut down. The selection is made carefully, beginning with offerings to the ancestors. Sometimes, using a tree requires blessing from the local traditional leader.

Their homes are built in harmony with the surrounding environment—for example, to withstand the extreme cold of the mountains and the heat of the coastal areas, to endure water, storms, floods, and earthquakes, or to be safe from wild animal attacks.

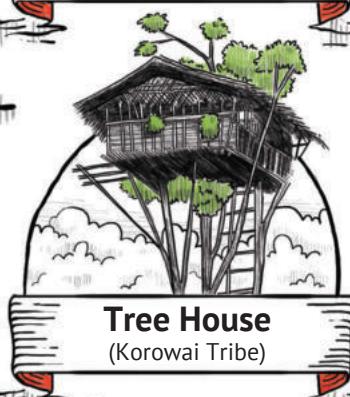
(<https://beritapapua.id/>)



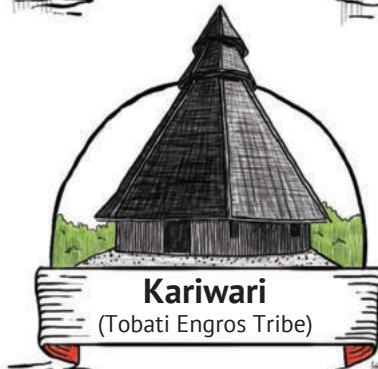
Jew
(Asmat Tribe)



Honai
(Dani Tribe)

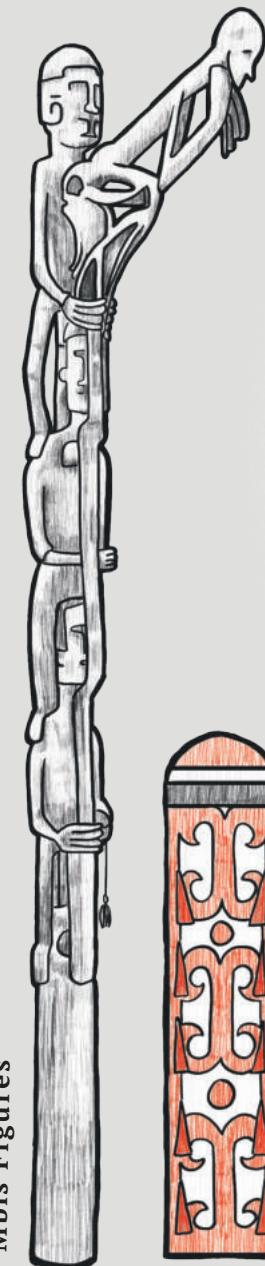


Tree House
(Korowai Tribe)



Kariwari
(Tobati Engros Tribe)

Wuramon the Spirit Canoe



Mbis Figures

In addition to their deep respect for nature, Papuans embrace honoring their ancestors as a way of life. The Asmat people, for example, hold ceremonial rituals accompanied by the carving of statues that symbolize their ancestors.

When you travel there, you'll find Asmat carvings with nature themes.

In addition, there are carvings with themes of objects familiar to the Asmat people such as animals, plants, lightning, water, shields, Mbis figures, drums, and more.
(Rumansara, 2014: 64-68).

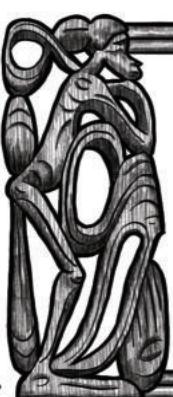


Among the renowned traditional **Asmat** carvings is the wuramon motif—the spirit canoe. This boat design symbolizes the vessel used by ancestors in the afterlife. From that spiritual world, the ancestors guard and watch over humans on earth. This carving expresses the Asmat people's gratitude to their ancestors for their continued protection.



The Asmat people often place various statues in open spaces—forests, fields, swamps, and especially sago groves. In doing so, they believe the ancestral **spirits watch over the sago trees**, a vital food source for indigenous Papuans. Under this protection, the land thrives, the sago palms grow strong, and the harvest sustains the community.

At the same time, the community looks after one another. Each village typically has its own sago plot. They will not harvest sago from another village's land—even if it lies deep within the forest. Though the landowner can't see them, **spiritual eyes are believed to be watching**.

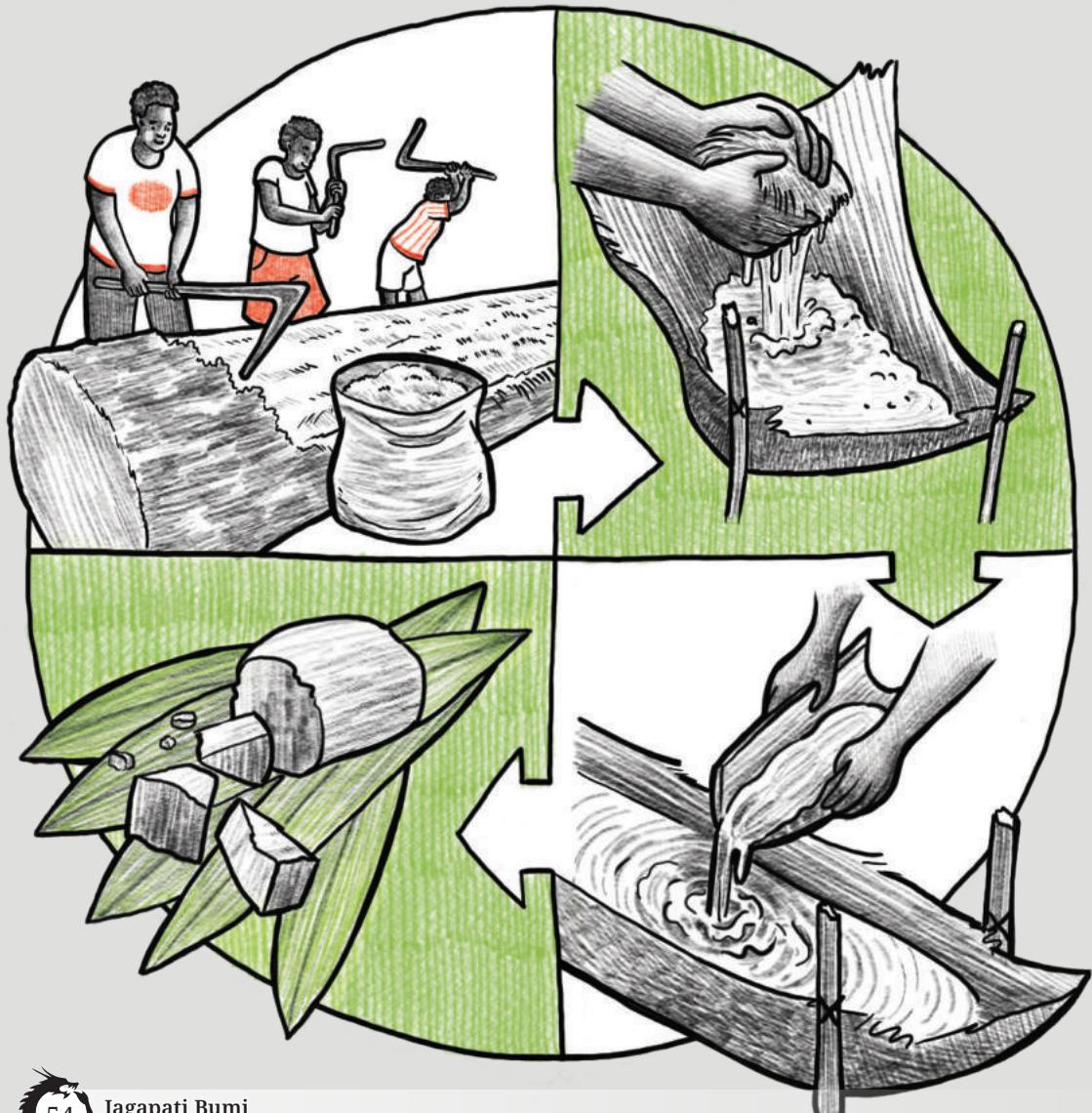


REPUBLICA.CO.ID, JAKARTA -- Agronomy expert from the Bogor Agricultural Institute, Prof. Bintoro Tjokroamidjojo, stated that Indonesia is the world's largest producer of sago, as 60 percent of this food source is found in Indonesia, especially in Papua and West Papua.

([https://news.republika.co.id/berita/n31iiq/indonesia-pengasil-sagu-terbesar-dunia](https://news.republika.co.id/berita/n31iiq/indonesia-penghasil-sagu-terbesar-dunia))

In the Asmat language, sago is called **amos**

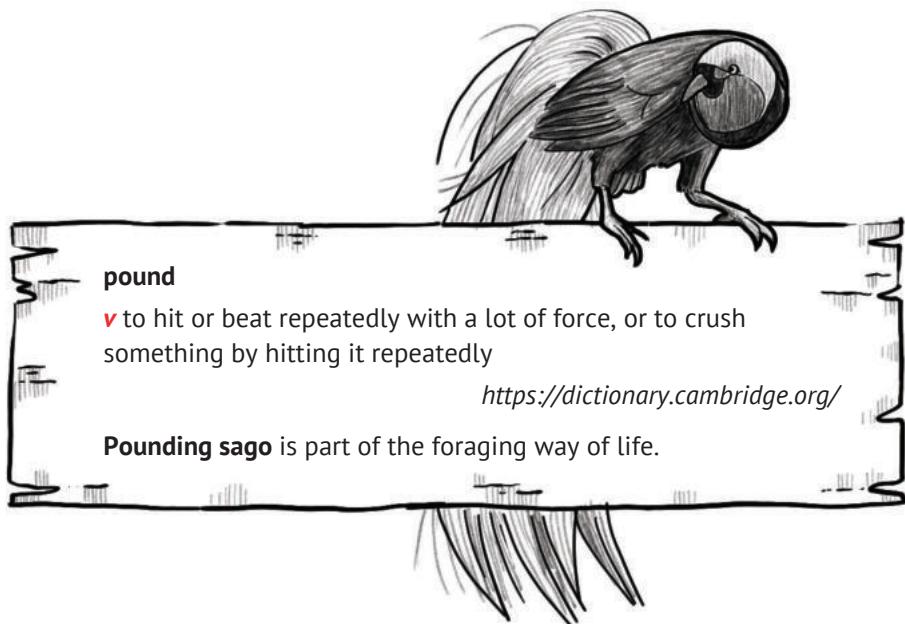
The ritual of harvesting sago cannot be done carelessly; trees must not be cut down at random. The cutting begins with prayers led by traditional elders, seeking permission from the ancestors so that the harvested sago will be sufficient to meet the community's food needs. They do this out of respect and care for nature, as one would care for their own family.



After the selected sago tree is felled, the villagers work together in pounding its trunk. The pounding tools swing in turn—tapping, striking, and breaking the inner part of the trunk into fragments

Mounds of sago flakes are doused with water, stirred, then squeezed. The liquid extract is left to settle until dense sago flour gathers at the bottom. Every step is carried out with reverence, with the belief that the ancestors are always present—watching over and walking beside them.

After working hard, they joyfully bring the sago home to their families. Part of it is sold or traded in the market for other necessities, until the time comes to return to the forest and pound sago again.



Papuan people live communally and depend greatly on the forest for their daily needs, such as farming, hunting, gathering, and making use of its wood.
(Marsono, 2013).



In addition to its mysterious tropical rainforests, Papua also boasts numerous swamp forests. These water-saturated areas help protect surrounding regions from flooding by absorbing excess water. Swamp forests also supply water, preserve diverse flora and fauna, purify the air, and capture and store carbon. It is believed that the spirits of the ancestors continue to roam in canoes to safeguard Papua's swamp forests.

Swamp forest water tends to be murky, brownish, or blackish, caused in part by the decay of submerged plants and animals. Water from swamp forests has the potential to be utilized as a source of clean water, though its use is constrained by factors such as physical properties of water, chemical content, and biological components (Kamun, 2010: 1).

These natural barriers do not pose a threat to the swamp forest. The greatest danger to swamps comes from human activities, such as plastic waste, industrial waste, and pollutants from mining sites.



World Wetlands Day (WWD) is observed every year on February 2nd. Many countries have committed to an international agreement to protect wetlands around the world. This agreement is known as the Ramsar Convention, which was signed on February 2, 1971, in the city of Ramsar, Iran.

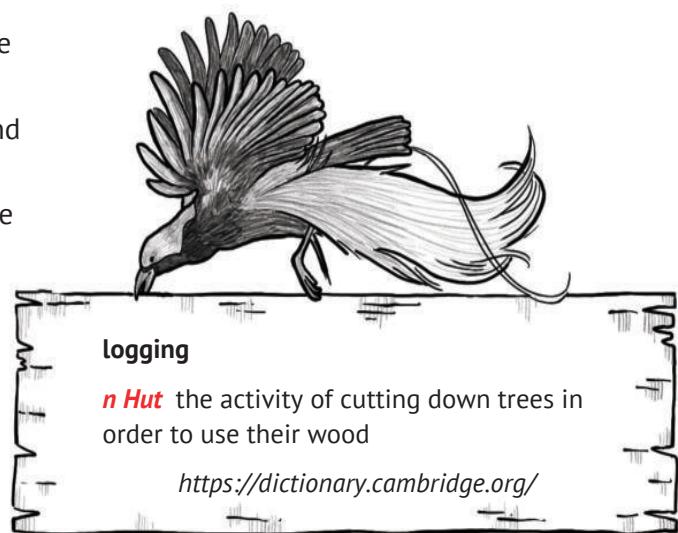
<https://sdmhutkupang.bp2sdm.kehutanan.go.id/?p=3208>



Illegal logging is another threat to Papua's forests. Indeed, this crime wounds the Land of the Bird of Paradise, an island that has become one of the lungs of the Earth. While indigenous communities protect the forest with deep reverence, others choose to betray it. Not only the forests, but even protected conservation zones have become targets of exploitation.
(<https://sdmhutkupang.bp2sdm.kehutanan.go.id/?p=3208>).

This cruelty involves many malicious individuals. As you know, the logging process cannot be carried out alone. The stolen wood must be transported using large vehicles. Other criminals ensure those vehicles slip through and make it out of the forest—even leaving Papua Island.

Restoration efforts continue to be made. Locals, alongside Forest Police, patrol the vast and wild landscapes of Papua. The ancestral guardianship of nature is now complemented by conservation initiatives and law enforcement. This ensures that nature remains kind, the Earth is spared from disaster, and the spirits of the ancestors rest peacefully in the afterlife.



For Papuans, ancestral spirits are always present in every pulse of life, including their use of the forest and its surroundings. Papuans' life principles are deeply intertwined to nature—inseparable from the land, forest, water, and air. Their ancestors also taught us that nature is like a loving mother, willing to sacrifice herself so that we may live. She feeds, raises, and cares for her children. At the same time, the community should be like children who care for their mother—Mama Land, Mother Earth.

Otherwise, due to human negligence, nature may rise in fury and unleash various disasters. At the same time, it could collapse—worn down by exhaustion, illness, and suffering.

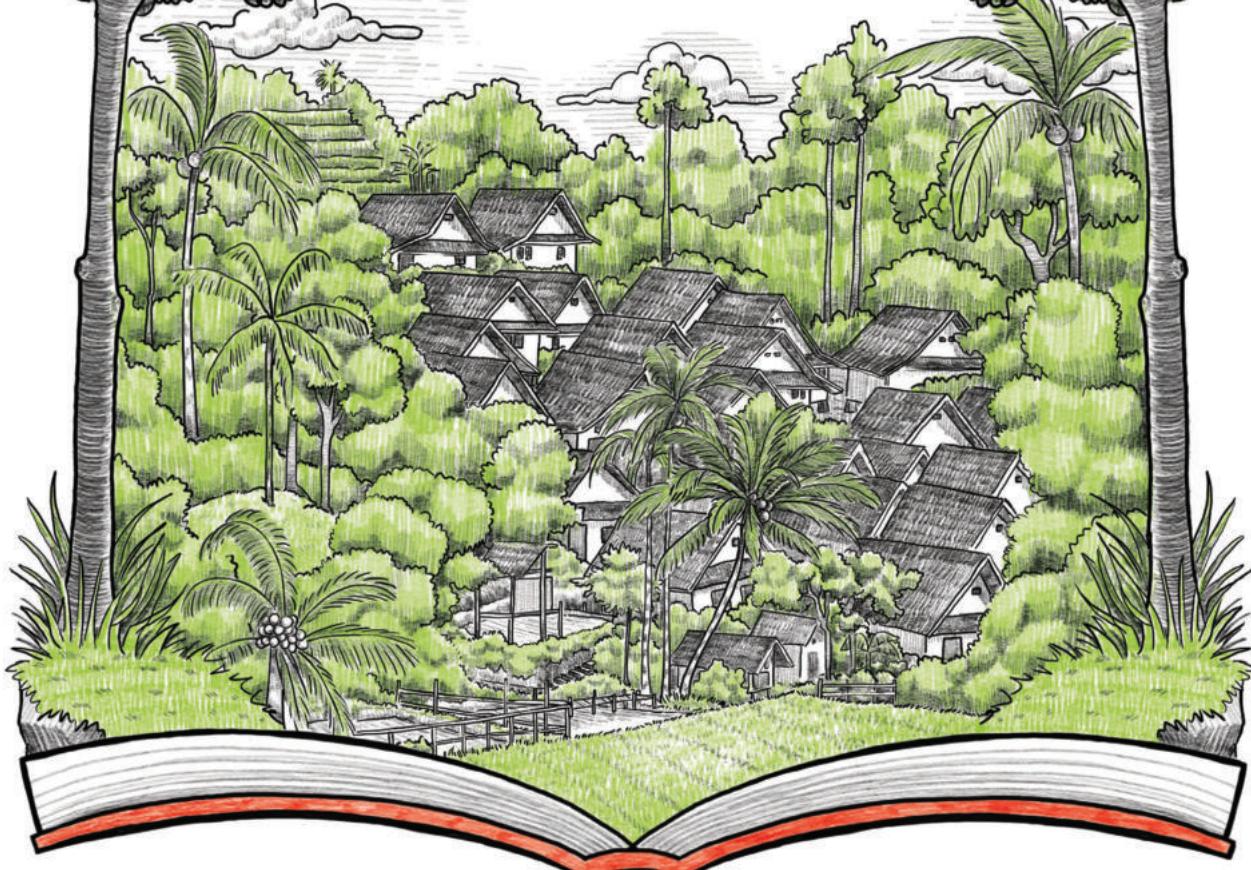
So, what can we do to care for nature?



Chapter 6

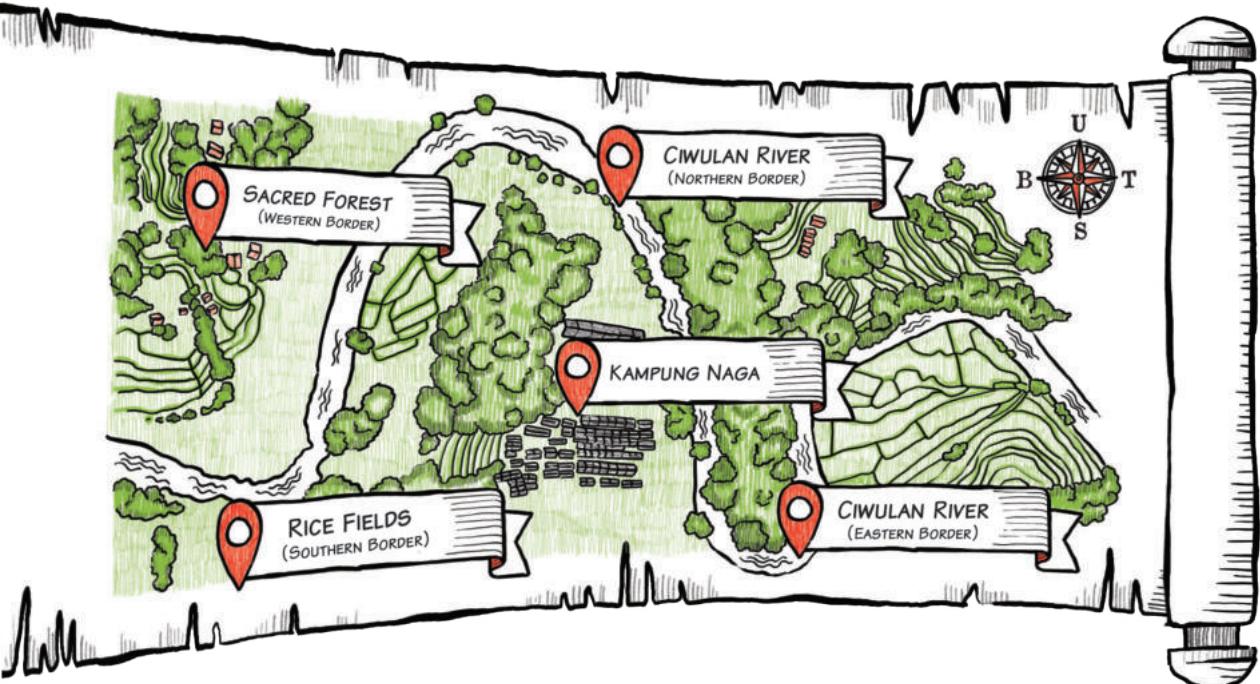
Kampung Naga

Atop a hill
on the western side
of Kampung Naga lies
a forbidden forest. Nothing
is taken from it—not even a
single fallen leaf, nor a broken
branch. There are no eerie tales
of invisible force or wild beasts
threatening lives. Yet one word
alone keeps everyone away,
reverent, and wary
pemali!



Our journey now brings us to the island of Java. There's a village known as Kampung Naga. It is located in Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java Province. Despite its name—Kampung Naga (Dragon Village)—you won't find any dragons there.

The origin of the name remains a **mystery** to this day. Most people believe it comes from the word na gawir, which means “on the cliff” or “in the valley.”
(Wahyu, 20019: 18).

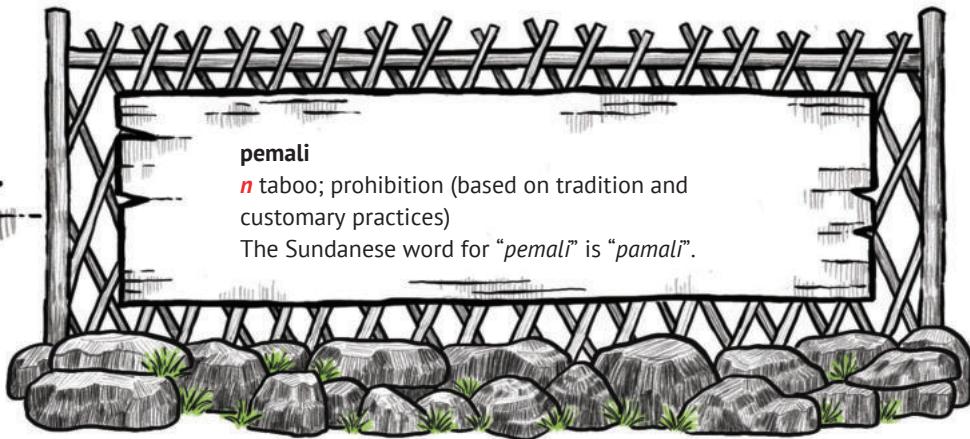


This village is indeed perched on the edge of a cliff, in a fertile valley. The Ciwulan River flows along its north and east sides, while to the west it borders a sacred forest.

And so, the sound of water flowing over stones, joined by the chorus of cicadas, will accompany your journey. What **secrets** lie within this village? That is the meaning you will uncover and the wisdom you will discover.

Mysterious Stairs

Get ready. First, you need to know—this village is not a tourist destination. You may visit and explore with a guide. That way, you won't get lost or violate **pemali**—the village's rules.

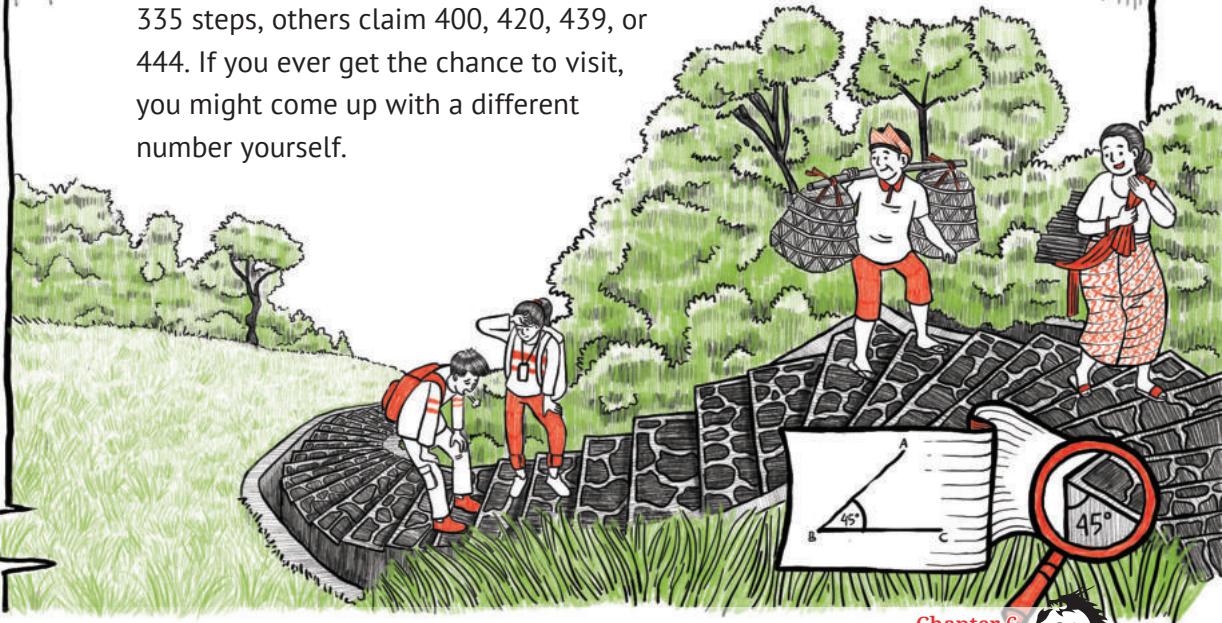


pemali

taboo; prohibition (based on tradition and customary practices)

The Sundanese word for "pemali" is "pamali".

To reach Kampung Naga, you must descend a steep staircase of hundreds of steps angled at 45 degrees. These stairs are used daily by locals heading to markets, schools, health services, or other places. But the staircase holds a mystery. Some say there are 335 steps, others claim 400, 420, 439, or 444. If you ever get the chance to visit, you might come up with a different number yourself.



It Is Prohibited to Merge Clean and Dirty Areas

The Kampung Naga area is divided into an inner and an outer zone. Residents' homes, the mosque, the community hall, and the communal rice barn are part of the inner zone. The outer zone includes bathing, washing, and sanitation facilities. The sheep pens and the *saung lisung*—a traditional hut used for pounding rice—are also located in this outer zone.

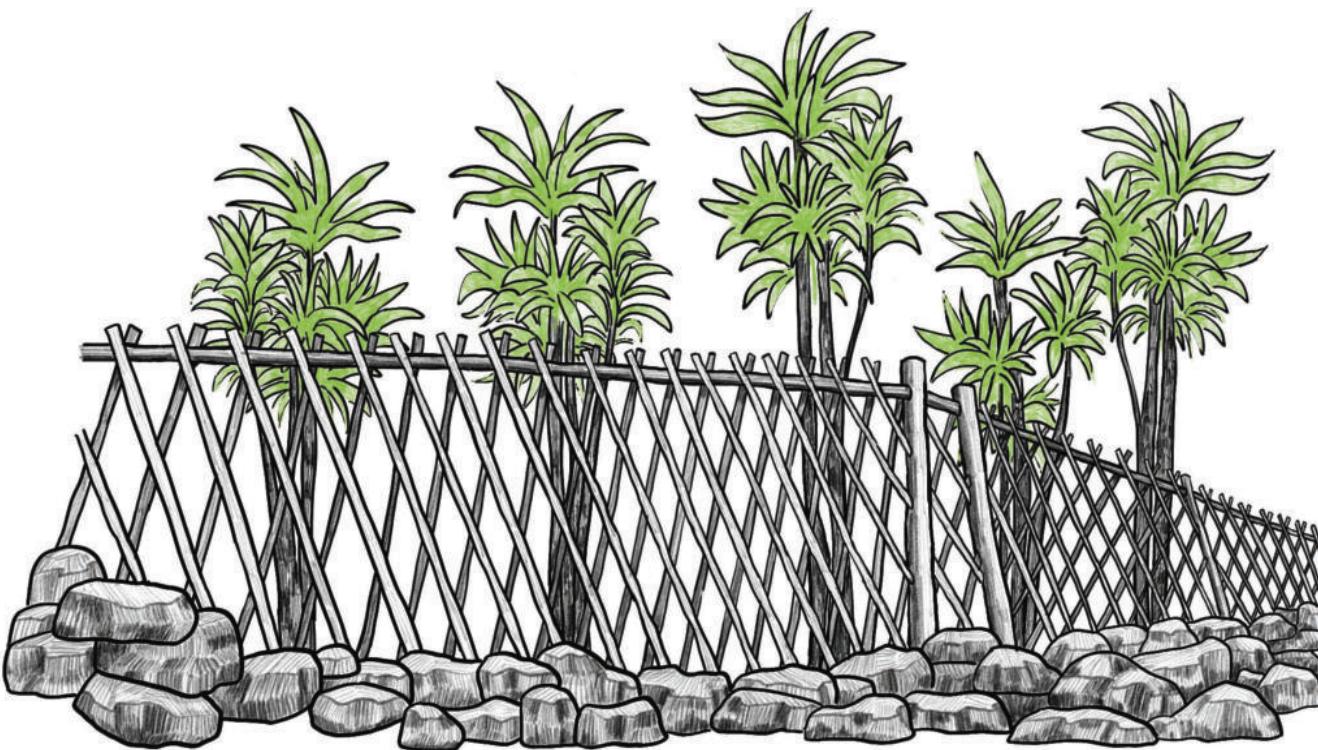
Buildings in Inner Zone of Kampung Naga



The inner and outer areas are separated by a double-layered crisscross bamboo fence known as the ***kandang jaga***. Beyond serving as a divider, the ***kandang jaga*** is also believed to ward off misfortune and danger. Therefore, any replacement of the fence is preceded by a ritual offering.

In Kampung Naga, it is considered **taboo** to place homes alongside unclean areas such as bathrooms. The home is truly a place for living and resting, where cleanliness is carefully maintained.

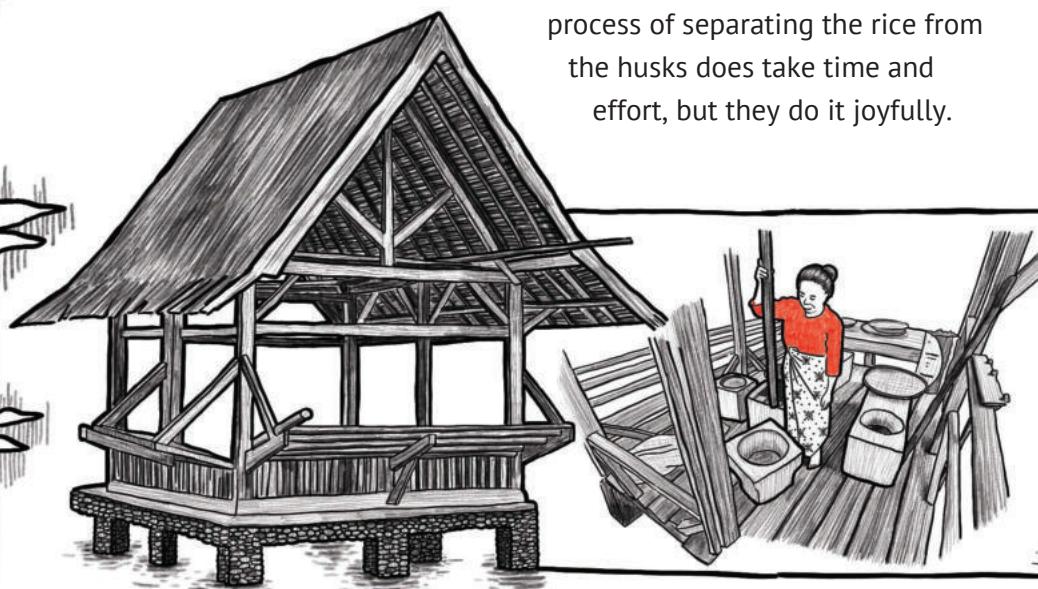
Washing clothes or kitchen utensils, bathing, and sanitation needs are all done in public bathrooms outside the residential area. All Kampung Naga villagers share the duty of keeping these communal facilities clean.



<https://repository.kemdikdasmen.go.id/25741/1/Leaflet%20Kampung%20Naga%20-%20Tasikmalaya.pdf>

Saung Lisung

In the *saung lisung*, villagers usually pound rice together while sharing stories and joking around. The process of separating the rice from the husks does take time and effort, but they do it joyfully.



The rice pounding area sits above a fishpond. The leftover rice husks that fall into the water become food for the fish. Humans and animals alike enjoy nature's bounty.

The people of Kampung Naga hold to a wise saying: "*Daging kaasaban ruyung, keret picen.*" It means that just like a thorn in meat has to be pulled out, anything that disturbs community life should be removed. (Illiyan, 2017: 10).

Taboos of the Home

After exploring the area, move closer to the houses. In Kampung Naga, the homes are lined up in rows, facing each other.

This layout enables residents to watch over and care for their neighbors.

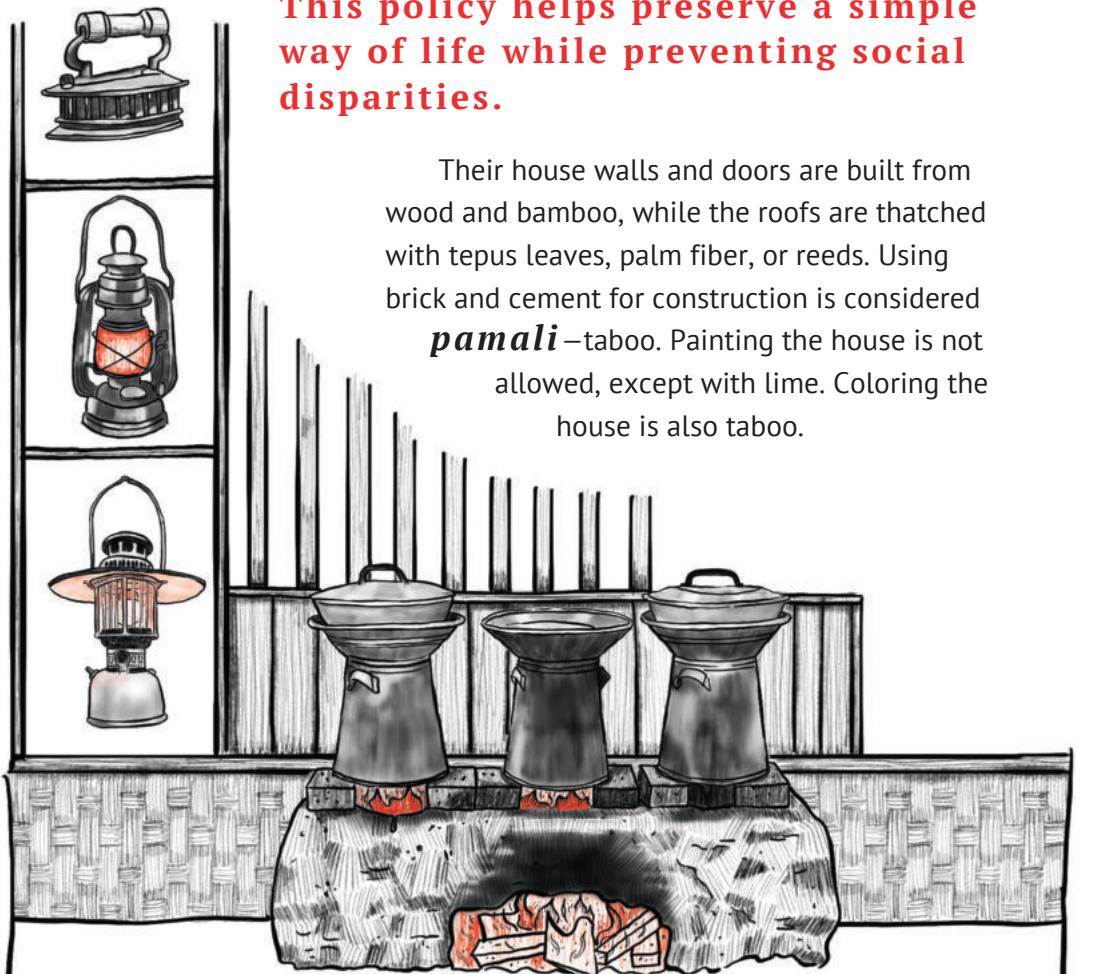


As you enter one of the homes, you will enjoy a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Ask the residents why there are no chairs inside, and you will receive a smile along with the answer, "It's *pamali*. So that everyone sits equally low and stands equally tall."

In their homes, the people of Kampung Naga live without electricity. They use *Petromax* lamps and lanterns for lighting, and wood-fired stoves for cooking. Only under certain conditions do they turn on or charge their electronic devices using a battery. They must use it sparingly, since the battery's capacity is limited..

This policy helps preserve a simple way of life while preventing social disparities.

Their house walls and doors are built from wood and bamboo, while the roofs are thatched with tepus leaves, palm fiber, or reeds. Using brick and cement for construction is considered *pamali*—taboo. Painting the house is not allowed, except with lime. Coloring the house is also taboo.



One of the guiding principles of life in Kampung Naga is *Teu saba, teu soba*. *Teu banda, teu boga. Teu weduk, teu bedas. Teu gagah, teu pinter*. Its meaning is that, essentially, humans possess no inherent superiority and therefore have nothing to boast about. Simplicity in life is what truly matters.
(Hermawan, 2014: 142).

Keep in mind that simplicity carries real benefits. With roofs made of palm fiber or tepus leaves and walls of wood and bamboo, the houses stay naturally cool and comfortable, making fans or air conditioners (AC) unnecessary.

The houses are built from wood and bamboo, supported by stones without cement. This type of construction is lighter and more flexible than the brick houses. The houses in Kampung Naga are renowned for their **resilience against earthquakes**.



Despite being situated in a disaster-prone area, Kampung Naga has never suffered major damage from natural disasters. In 2009, Tasikmalaya was struck by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake, but no buildings in Kampung Naga were affected. All the houses are earthquake-resistant.
(Anggita, 2022: 121).

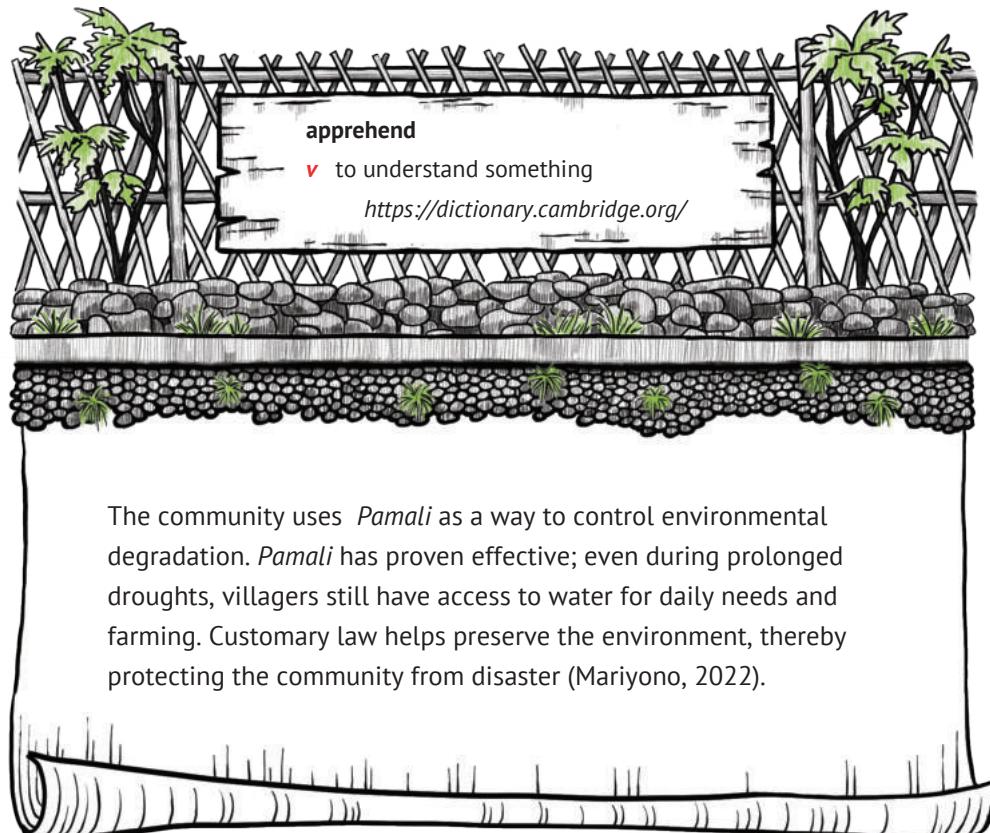
The people of Kampung Naga believe that if they care for nature, it will provide the best protection in turn. They adhere to the ancestral teachings to live in harmony with nature, not merely to exploit it.

The villagers apprehend that the traditional customs, though filled with taboos, are not meant to burden them.

Pemali carries a sacred message, legacy, and consequences.

There is love and a message of kindness to humans, encouraging them to preserve nature for the future. That is what makes the simple life of Kampung Naga survive until now.

Are there similar taboos in your area as well? Do you also apprehend their meaning and purpose?



Chapter 7

Jagapati Bumi The Guardian of The Earth

*The misty shore, behold,
locked in a gaze, stories yearned.*

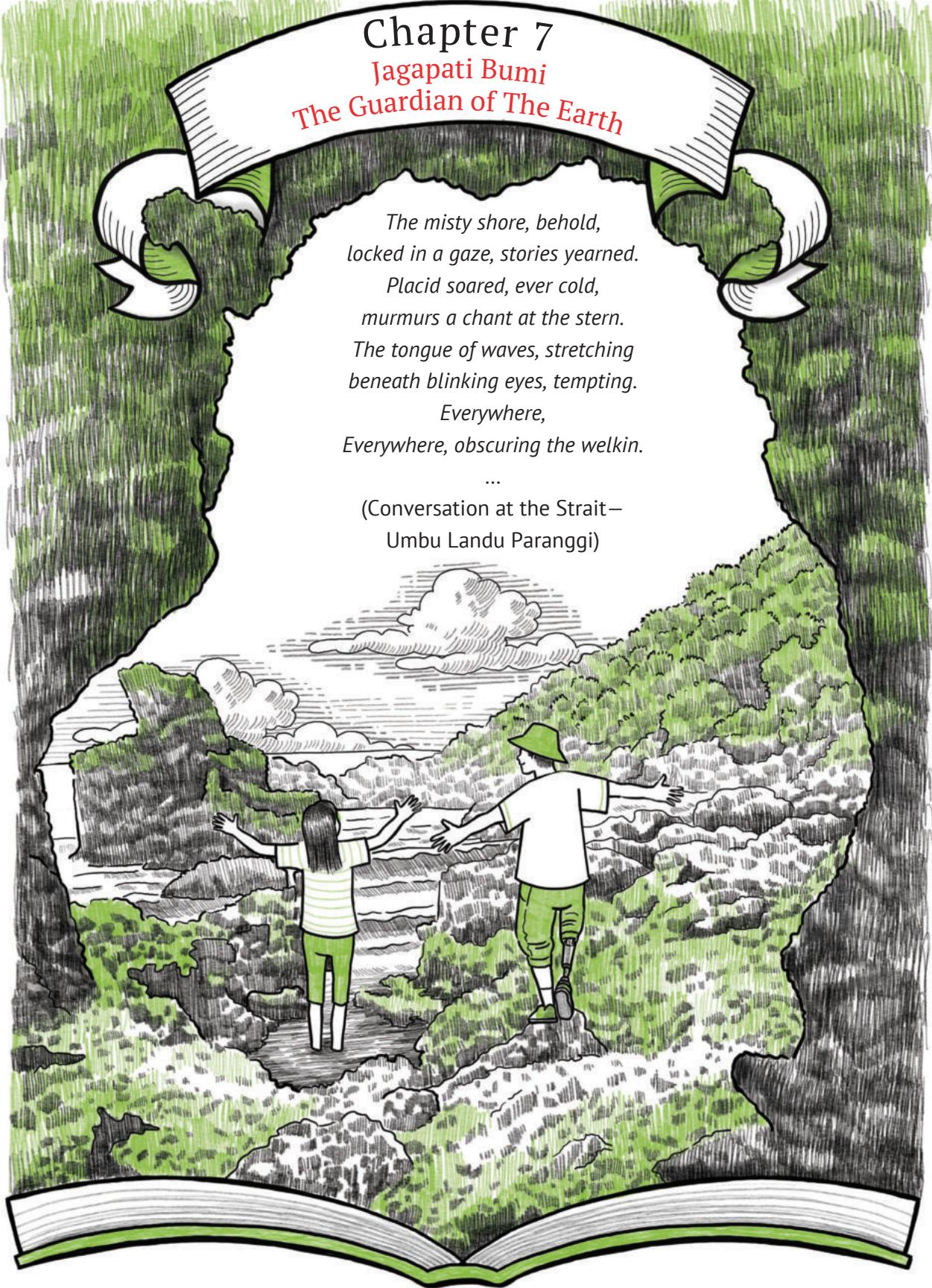
*Placid soared, ever cold,
murmurs a chant at the stern.*

*The tongue of waves, stretching
beneath blinking eyes, tempting.*

*Everywhere,
Everywhere, obscuring the welkin.*

...

(Conversation at the Strait—
Umbu Landu Paranggi)



Through the poem Conversation at the Strait (Percakapan Selat), you can feel the beach being portrayed so vividly. It seems to tell a story, to gaze, and to murmur through the crashing waves.

In the poem "The Banyan Tree" you read in Chapter 3, the tree is depicted alive. It struggles for water and nutrients, sings, sways gracefully, and even beckons and calls upon you.

Have you realized how many friends have accompanied you on your journey of ***uncovering secrets*** from Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua, to Java? You have talked with rivers and trees, sounds and clouds, swamps, countless animals, and people.

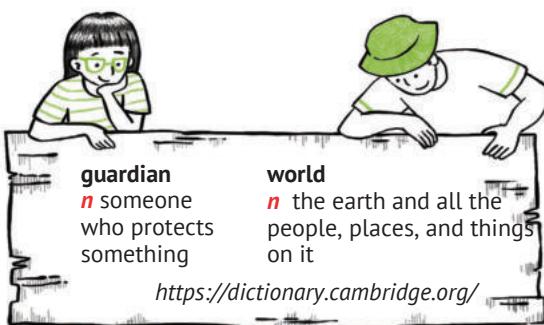


You have read story upon story. Many secrets have already been revealed. Though these stories and secrets come from different regions, divided by land, sea, and sky, can you find what they share in common?



What are *the secrets*
and important messages
behind
these myths?

Perhaps you are beginning to sense their meanings. Through the stories passed down, later known as myths, our ancestors intended to pass on values of goodness, to **protect the world**, and to become **guardians of the Earth**.





So, why are so many myths still around and believed by people today?

Is giving advice, facts, and scientific explanations not enough?

Graphs or reports can present data on the hunting of endangered animals and the dangers of illegal logging.

So why are myths like the kuyang or drum of death still needed to raise environmental awareness?

Surely you have often heard about the importance of protecting the environment. The media continually highlights environmental damage that poses a threat to the Earth. Environmental organizations—in Indonesia and around the world—continue to raise their voices, urging people to **protect and preserve nature.**

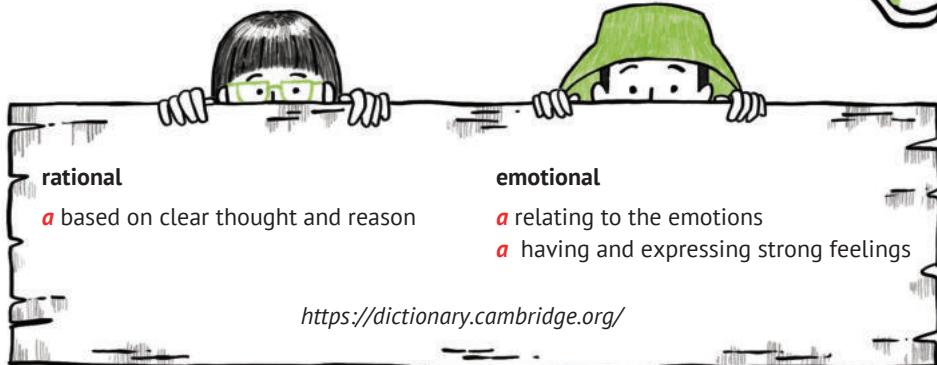
However, information that appeals to the mind is not enough to move everyone. It also requires approaches that stir the emotions.

When discussing the impact of careless human actions on the environment, we often hear terms like pollution, emissions, erosion, ozone, and waste. Facts in the form of pollution statistics and other information increase our **knowledge**, but they don't always move our **hearts**.

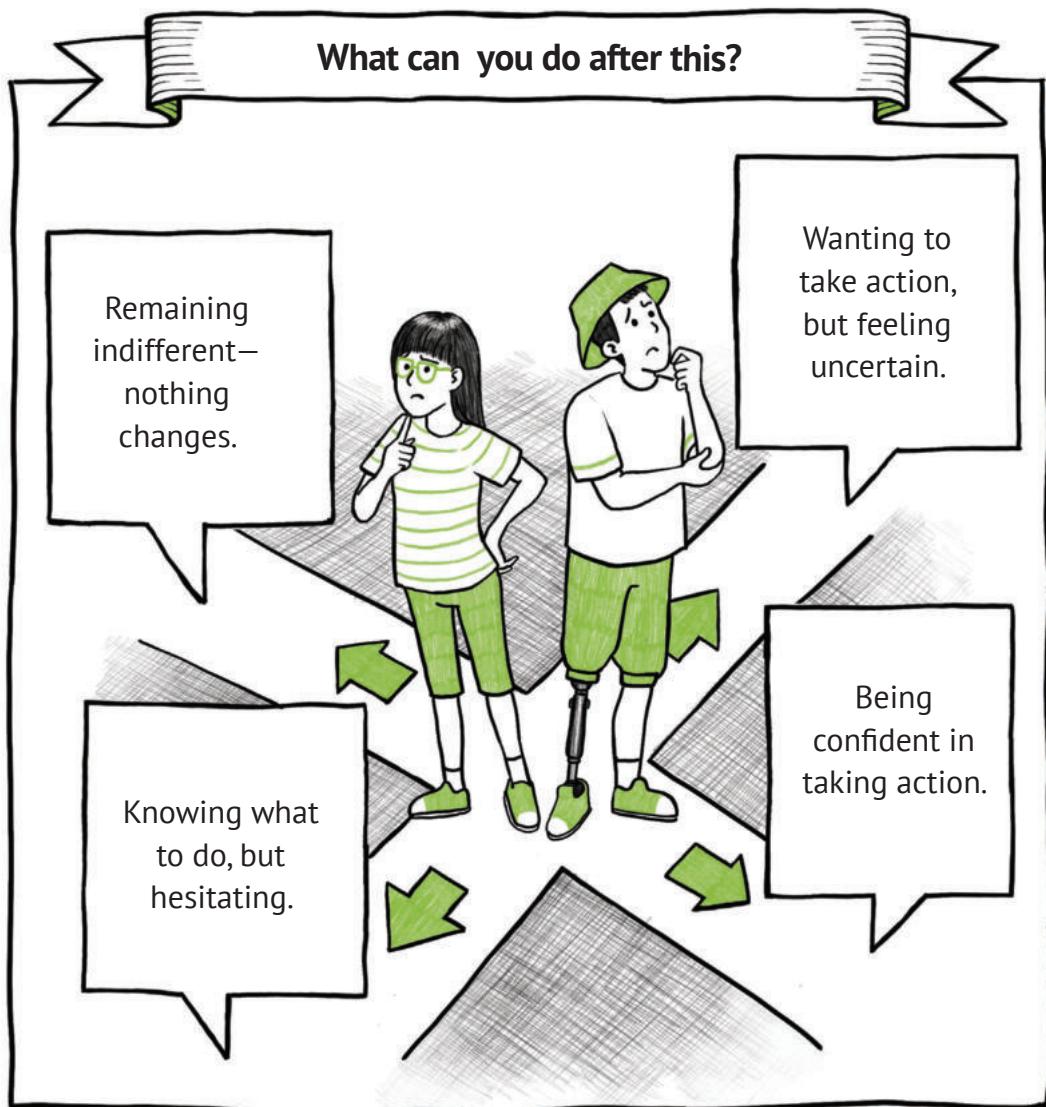
We sometimes just know, but aren't emotionally moved. In contrast, environmental myths that circulate in various regions can't be rationalized, yet they have the power to stir emotions, thus influencing people's attitudes and behaviors.

Transforming the way we view and act towards the environment requires both elements. **Rational** and **emotional** aspects need to be awakened together.

(Summarized from Armstrong 2023: 25-26)



So it is that myths and facts intertwine. Together, they shape knowledge as well as nurture human awareness and compassion for the environment. That is the secret you have uncovered throughout your journey across the islands.



So then, once our knowledge and emotions have been awakened, what will we do?



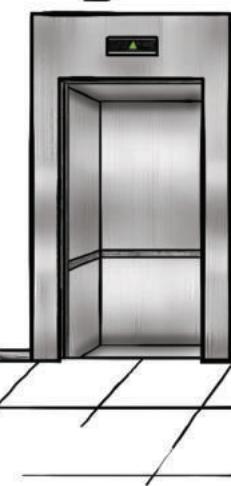
There are plenty of **sources you can explore**— both in print and digital formats. You can also ask your teachers, parents, or other trusted individuals. Chances are, you'll quickly find information on **ocean pollution, illegal logging, flooding, global warming, climate change, river sedimentation, illegal waste dumping**, and more.

Hmmm... do you think the issues are too overwhelming? Are you capable of doing anything? Or will you simply give up?

Giving up and staying silent are not options. Everyone on this Earth can play a role, even in the simplest and easiest ways. There are several teams you can join. You can still contribute and make a difference. So ... which team are you on?

Becoming the guardian of the Earth

1 Relaxed Team



2 Home Team



3 Neighborhood Team



4 School Team



1. Relaxed Team

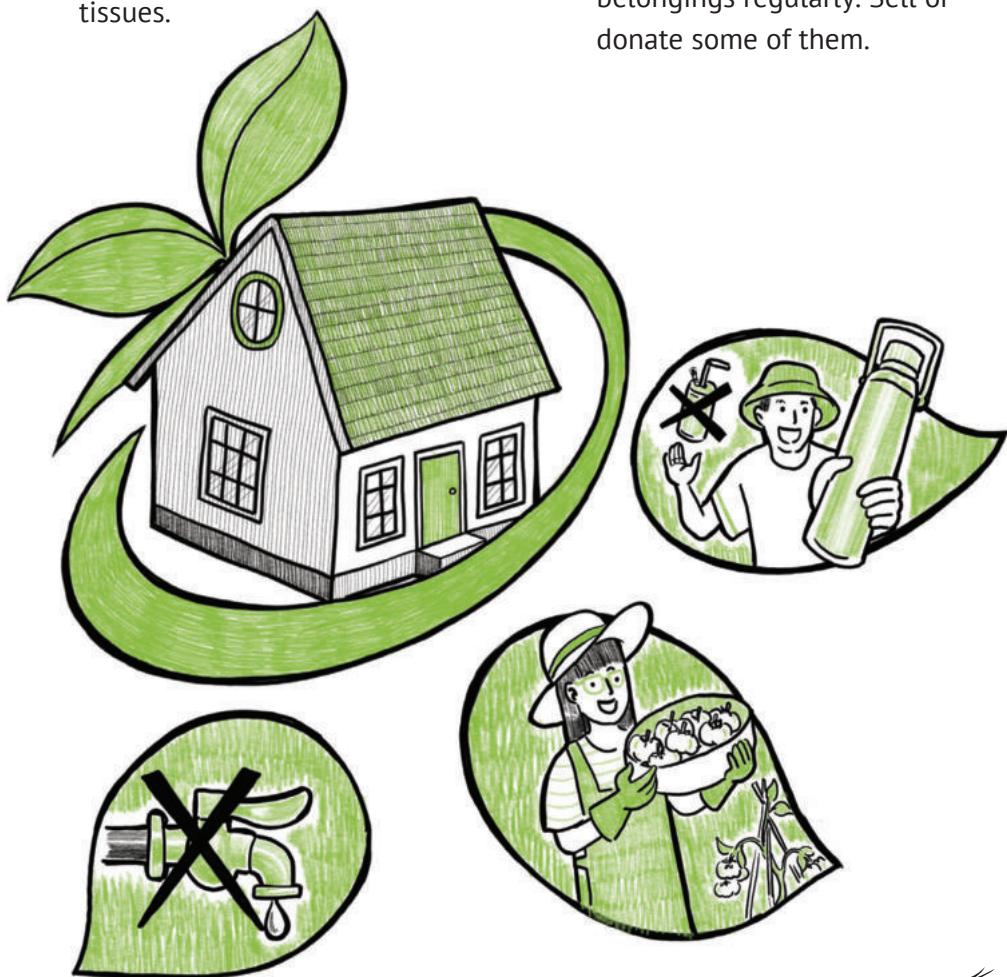
- Use electricity wisely. Unplug the cable after charging.
Turn off lights when not in use.
- Use water wisely. Turn off the tap while soaping your hands.
- Join environmental groups, either offline or online.
- Share information from the groups through various media to raise awareness among your friends.

2. Home Team

- Sort trash into organic and non-organic.
- Plant flowers, vegetables, or trees.
- Buy refillable items or larger packages to reduce packaging waste.
- Close the water tap tightly after use.
- Use a cloth handkerchief to reduce the use of paper tissues.

3. Neighborhood Team

- Bring your refillable water bottle. Bring your own shopping bags to reduce waste.
- Prioritize shopping at nearby stalls. This will reduce fuel consumption and prevent you from overbuying.
- Use a bicycle for short trips or take public transportation.
- Sort and select your belongings regularly. Sell or donate some of them.



4. School Team

- Bring your own food and drink from home.
- Invite your friends to discuss environmental issues.
- Ask your friends to get involved—start with nearby areas, such as sorting waste in the school canteen.
- Turn cleanliness into a theme for student orientation, and pass on your concern to your juniors.
- Make an environmental awareness group. Start by inviting your close friends to join.
- Encourage your friends to ride bicycles or take public transportation together. If you can't do it every day, make it a weekly habit.
- Share what you've done on social media. Tag and invite other groups to do the same.



Is being **a guardian of the Earth** always easy and fun? Will others—your friends, family, neighbors—instantly support you? Not always. You might have to take action on your own, and even face unpleasant remarks or criticism.



**Will criticism hold
you back? Do you
hesitate to take the first
step simply because
you feel alone?**

Before answering that, let's revisit what we did at the beginning of this book.

**Close your eyes, and
recall the stories from
your childhood.**

After exploring the myths and their role in protecting nature, these stories shouldn't merely awaken longing or whisper unease.

Now you can attach meaning to those childhood stories.

You understand that those stories can carry messages—encouraging goodness and warning against wrongdoing.

Now your task is to preserve and spread that meaning in whatever way you can—even if you must begin alone. No act of kindness is ever wasted. It may take time to prove that goodness brings more goodness, including friendship. Trust that nature will never let its companion remain alone for long.



Another Myth You Need to Know

Rambut Monte Pond

Krisik Village
Gandusari District
Blitar Regency
East Java



The locals around the pond believe that:

- The water of Rambut Monte Pond is sacred, flowing through a mystical channel that reaches the southern coast. It is believed to possess healing powers and the secret to preserving youth.
- The fish in the pond—known as sengkaring—are said to be centuries old, their number never increasing or decreasing. These fish are believed to be the reincarnations of soldiers who disobeyed their leader's orders. The community dares not disturb, let alone catch, the fish from the pond for fear of inviting disaster.
- The old trees surrounding the pond must not be cut down, as they are believed to be the dwelling places of nature spirits.
- This pond is also believed to be the kingdom of various supernatural beings that guard it. Visitors must watch their behavior so as not to provoke the wrath of these guardians.

This myth preserves the community's respect for water as a source of life. People become more mindful in how they care for the lake's water, soil, stones, trees, and animals.

(Summarized from Fitrahayunitisna: 2019)

Akal-akal

Ambon Island
Moluccas



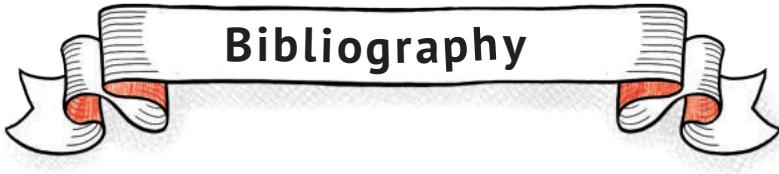
Long ago, the people of Ambon Island believed in a local myth called *akal-akal*. Before undertaking important activities, for example building a house, holding a wedding, going out to sea, they considered many factors—the right timing, such as the specific month and day, the location, the individuals involved, and the actions to be carried out.

This practice shows the vital influence of the natural environment on human existence. Thanks to the wisdom of *akal-akal*, both community life and the environment are well-preserved.

This tradition must be preserved so it does not fade away. People should not become selfish, overly self-confident, or too dependent on technology. The tradition encourages people to care for the natural environment and for one another. *Akal-akal* guides people to act thoughtfully, thereby protecting nature from harm.

Fishermen also rely on *akal-akal*, carefully choosing specific times to go out to sea. Their equipments are environmentally friendly, ensuring the ocean well preserved. Smile on, my dear ocean

(Summarized from Helmina, <https://kantorbahasamaluku.kemdikbud.go.id/2018/07/luntunya-kekuatan-mitologi-akal-akal/> accessed on October 31, 2023 20:20 Western Indonesian Time)



Bibliography

- Amelia, M., Robot, M., Reteg, I.N. (2023). *Optimisme, Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya* Vol. 4 No. 1. “Analisis Semiotik dalam Puisi ‘Percakapan Selat’ dan ‘Di Sebuah Gereja Gunung’ Karya Umbu landu Paranggi”. <https://doi.org/10.35508/optimisme.v4i1.10573>.
- Achmadi, A.S. et al. (2018). *Ekspedisi Sulawesi Barat: Flora, Fauna, dan Mikroorganisme Gandangdewata*. Jakarta: LIPI Press.
- Armstrong, K. (2022). *Sacred Nature: Bagaimana Memulihkan Keakraban dengan Alam*. Bandung: Mizan.
- Ferrari, R.F. and Ekawardhani, Y. (2023). *Jurnal Penelitian Mahasiswa Desain* Vol. 03 No. 01, April 2023. “Perancangan Buku Cerita Bergambar mengenai Cryptozoologi Indonesia”. <https://doi.org/10.34010/divagatra.v3i1.9635>.
- Fitrahayunitisna. (2019). *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Budaya Nusantara* Vol.3 No.1. “Kesadaran Ekologi dalam Mitos di Telaga Rambut Monte Desa Krisik, Kecamatan Gandusari, Kabupaten Blitar. Malang: Brawijaya University.
- Fitrianingsih, A. (2021). *Morfologi, Taksonomi, dan Filosofi Tumbuhan*. Nusa Tenggara Barat: Penerbit P4I.
- Handaya, R.D.(2021). *Law Research Quarterly*, 7 ((3)), 257-268. “Indigenous People, Local Belief, and Its Protection in Indonesia: Case of Asmat Tribe Belief”. <https://doi.org/10.15294/lrq.v7i3.48163>.
- Hermawan, I. (2014). *Sosio Didaktika*: Vol. 1, No. 2 Des 2014, “Bangunan Tradisional Kampung Naga: Bentuk Kearifan Warisan Leluhur Masyarakat Sunda”
- Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. (1995). *Sistem Keyakinan pada Masyarakat Kampung Naga dalam Mengelola Lingkungan Hidup (Studi tentang Pantangan dan Larangan)*. Jakarta: Penerbit Eka Putra.

- Kamun, Y. (2010). *Kajian Potensi Air Rawa dan Kearifan Lokal sebagai Dasar Pengelolaan Air Rawa Yomoth sebagai Sumber Air Bersih di Distrik Agats Kabupaten Asmat Provinsi Papua*. Fakultas Geografi Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta: Majalah Geografi Indonesia, Vol. 24, No. 2, September 2010.
- Lestari, U.F.R. (2014). *Gramatika, Vol. II, No. 1, Januari-Juni 2014*. “Mitos Asmat Fumiripits dalam Kajian Antropologi Sastra”.
- Mariyono, S.G., Indraneu, T., Singkawijaya, E.B. (202). *Jambura Geo Education Journal, Vol. 3 No. 2, September 222*. “Integrasi Budaya Kampung Naga sebagai Mitigasi Bencana di Kabupaten Tasikmalaya Provinsi Jawa Barat”.
- Marsono, D. and Ullo, F. (2013). *Studi Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam dan Lingkungan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat: Kasus Cagar Alam Pegunungan Arfak. Kabupaten Manokwari, Papua Barat* (Tesis). Yogyakarta: Perpustakaan Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Ngakan, P.O. (ISBN : 978-602-6619-69-3) Prosiding Seminar Nasional Biodiversity Conservation. “Konservasi Keanekaragaman Hayati untuk Mewujudkan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan di Indonesia.
- Norsidi. (2016). *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial: Sosial Horizon. Vol. 3, No. 2. Desember 2016*. “Pelestarian Daerah Aliran Sungai Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Lubuk Larangan Desa Lubuk Beringin Kecamatan Batin Hi Ulu”.
- Nurkamilah, C. (2018). *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Lintas Budaya Vol. 2 No. 2, 2018*. “Etika Lingkungan dan Implementasinya dalam Pemeliharaan Lingkungan Alam pada Masyarakat Kampung Naga”.
- Pawarti, A., Purnaweni, H., Anfforo, D. (2012). *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Alam dan Lingkungan*. Semarang
- Power, C. et al (2017). *Human Origins: Contributions from Social Anthropology*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Rahmatullah, Z. and Saraswati. (2021). *Jurnal Riset Perencanaan Wilayah dan Kota*. “Kajian Mitigasi Bencana berbasis Kearifan Budaya Lokal di Kampung Adat Naga Desa Neglasari Kecamatan Salawu Kabupaten Tasikmalaya.

- Revaldo, H.V. (2020). *Mitologi Dunia: Mitos-Mitos Terkenal yang Dipercaya Masyarakat Penjuru Dunia*. Yogyakarta: Diva Press.
- Riyanto, S. (2022). *Analisis Pemecahan Masalah dan Pengambilan Keputusan Strategis*. Jakarta: Penerbit Gramedia.
- Rumansara, E.H. (2014). *Inventarisasi dan Verifikasi Karya Budaya Seni Ukir Asmat*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kepel Press.
- Rustandi, A.K. Aminudin, C. Fadly, R. (220)). *Ecotas: Jurnal Ekologi, masyarakat, dan Sains*, Vol. 1 No. 1. 220. “Identifikasi Manajemen Kolaborasi Pengelolaan Taman Nasional Laut di Indonesia”.
- Rhama, B. (2019). Taman Nasional dan Ekowisata. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius.
- Saragih, F.A. (2020). *Jurnal Ayumi*, Vo. 6, No. 2, September 2019. “Analisis Kontrastif Simbol Metafora dan Budaya dalam Takhayul Masyarakat Jepang dan Indonesia”.
- Sarumpaet, R.K.T and Budianta, M. (2010). *Membaca Sapardi*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Soeparno, L. (2020). *Taman Nasional Sulawesi: 9 Pesona Pulau Celebes*. Jakarta: Bhuana Ilmu Populer.
- Smidt, D. (1993). *Asmat Art: Woodcarvings of Southwest New Guinea*. Leiden: Periplus Editions.
- Utami, A. Demma, Semu, Y.D., Karaeng, A. (2022). *Pangale Journal of Forestry and Environment*. Vol 2 No 2. Desember 2022. “Aktivitas Masyarakat di Desa Lambanan pada Zona Tradisional Taman Nasional Gandang Dewata (TNGD)”
- Vina, S., Aunurohim (2013). *Jurnal Sains dan Seni Pomits*, Vol. 2, No. 1. “Tingkah Laku Makan Rusa Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*) dalam Konservasi Ex-situ di Kebun Binatang Surabaya”.
- Wahyu, F., Sari, L.K. and Zid, M. (2019). *Jurnal Geografi Edukasi dan Lingkungan*, Vol. 3 No. 1, 2019. “Perilaku Masyarakat Kampung Naga dalam Mengelola Sanitasi dan Fasilitas Kesehatan.”
- Zain, U. and Newi, E.E. (2019). *Buku Ajar Ilmu Kesehatan (Memahami Gejala, Tanda, dan Mitos)*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Deepublish.



<https://www.beritasatu.com/nasional/718507/cegah-tanah-longsor-doni-monardo-ajak-masyarakat-menanam-pohon-di-kemiringan> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://indonesia.go.id/proil/suku-bangsa/kebudayaan/suku-bangsa> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://dprdkalselprov.id/ritual-adat-seserahan-hutan-desa-paau-wakil-rakyat-tumbuhkan-generasi-muda-peduli-hutan/> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/ditwdb/lubuk-larangan/> accessed on August 17, 2023

<http://ppi.unas.ac.id/lubuk-larangan-dan-kearifan-lokal-dalam-pemanfaatan-sumber-daya-perikanan/> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://talopak.digitaldesa.id/wisata/taman-nasional-gandang-dewata> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://ksdasulsel.menlhk.go.id/post/80/mitos-suara-gendang-dewa-digunung-tertinggi-sulawesi-barat> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://ksdae.menlhk.go.id/info/5443/gema-gandang-dewata.html>

<https://www.papua.go.id/> diakses accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://sdmhutkupang.bp2sdm.kehutanan.go.id/?p=3208/> accessed on October 24, 2025

<https://beritapapua.id/> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://www.the-qrcode-generator.com/> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://thepurringjournal.com/blog/cat-superstitions-around-the-worldfrom-10-countries/> accessed on August 17, 2023

<http://perpustakaanbpnbjabar.kemdikbud.go.id/> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://repositori.kemendikdasmen.go.id/25741/1/Leaflet%20Kampung%20Naga%20-%20Tasikmalaya.pdf> accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/> accessed on August 17, 2023

https://app.mindmup.com/map/_free/2023/07/0cb18cf01e7a11ee-8be7352037904adc accessed on August 17, 2023

<https://www.tempusdei.id/2021/10/6649/malioboro-dan-umbu.php> accessed on August 19, 2023

<https://news.republika.co.id/berita/n31iiq/indonesia-penghasil-sagu-terbesar-dunia> accessed on August 24, 2023

<https://kantorbahasamaluku.kemdikbud.go.id/2018/07/lunturnya-kekuatan-mitologi-akal-akal/> read on October 31, 2023

Book Creators



Anna Farida is currently learning to write child-friendly books. She believes that quality, engaging children's books are essential for nurturing a love of reading in young minds. Currently she lives in the outskirts of Bandung with her family. Anna's work can be accessed at www.annafarida.com.



Fanny Santoso known by the pen name Studio ARA, is a graduate of Visual Communication Design at ITB and has loved drawing since childhood. Since 2007, she has been illustrating children's storybooks. One of the books she wrote and illustrated is *Sahabat Kecil Putri Pandan Berduri*, which received the Best Illustration Award from the Islamic Book Award at IBFI 2018. Her artwork is showcased on Instagram @studio_ara12.

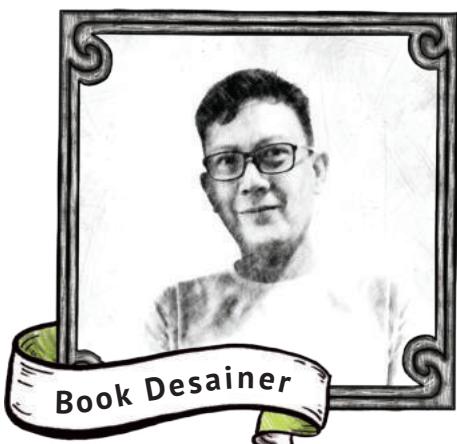


Arifah Dinda Lestari fondly known as Dinda, enjoys reading books and gardening. A Biology graduate from the University of Indonesia, she lives in Depok, West Java. Since 2020, she has held a certification as an editor for educational books. Dinda loves learning new things. Say hello to her on Instagram @arifahdindalestari.

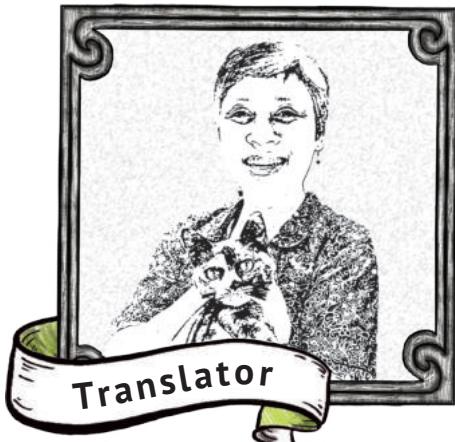


Maya Lestari GF is the recipient of the Adikarya IKAPI Writer of the Year 2023 award. Four of her books have been nominated for Best Children's Fiction at the Indonesia Book Fair (IBF) in 2023, 2018, and 2014. Maya is also actively involved in various initiatives to strengthen children's literacy in Indonesia. She currently resides in Yogyakarta. You can reach out to her on Instagram at @mayalestarigf.

M Rizal Abdi, simply known as Abdi, has been a visual storyteller since 2004, working with various indie book publishers and magazines. As an apprentice at the Center for Religious and Crosscultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University, he actively researches the relationship between humans and nature through the lens of cross-cultural religion. You can reach out to him at kotakpesandarimu@gmail.com.



Hasbi Yusuff is a book designer based in Bandung. His hobbies include playing music and reading books. He has designed many educational books. You can contact him via email at abi.yusuf09@gmail.com



Caecilia Krismariana W commonly known as Kris, spends her days working with words as a translator, writer, and freelance editor. Her book titled *Kue Ulang Tahun Widi* (Widi's Birthday Cake) won the Samsung KidsTime Author's Award 2016 Second Prize. You can read her light-hearted writings on her blog: krismariana.wordpress.com.

Sofie Dewayani is an Indonesian writer and literacy educator dedicated to nurturing meaningful reading and writing experiences for children. She believes that stories help children see themselves and the world with empathy, imagination, and wisdom.

