

Faidi Rizal

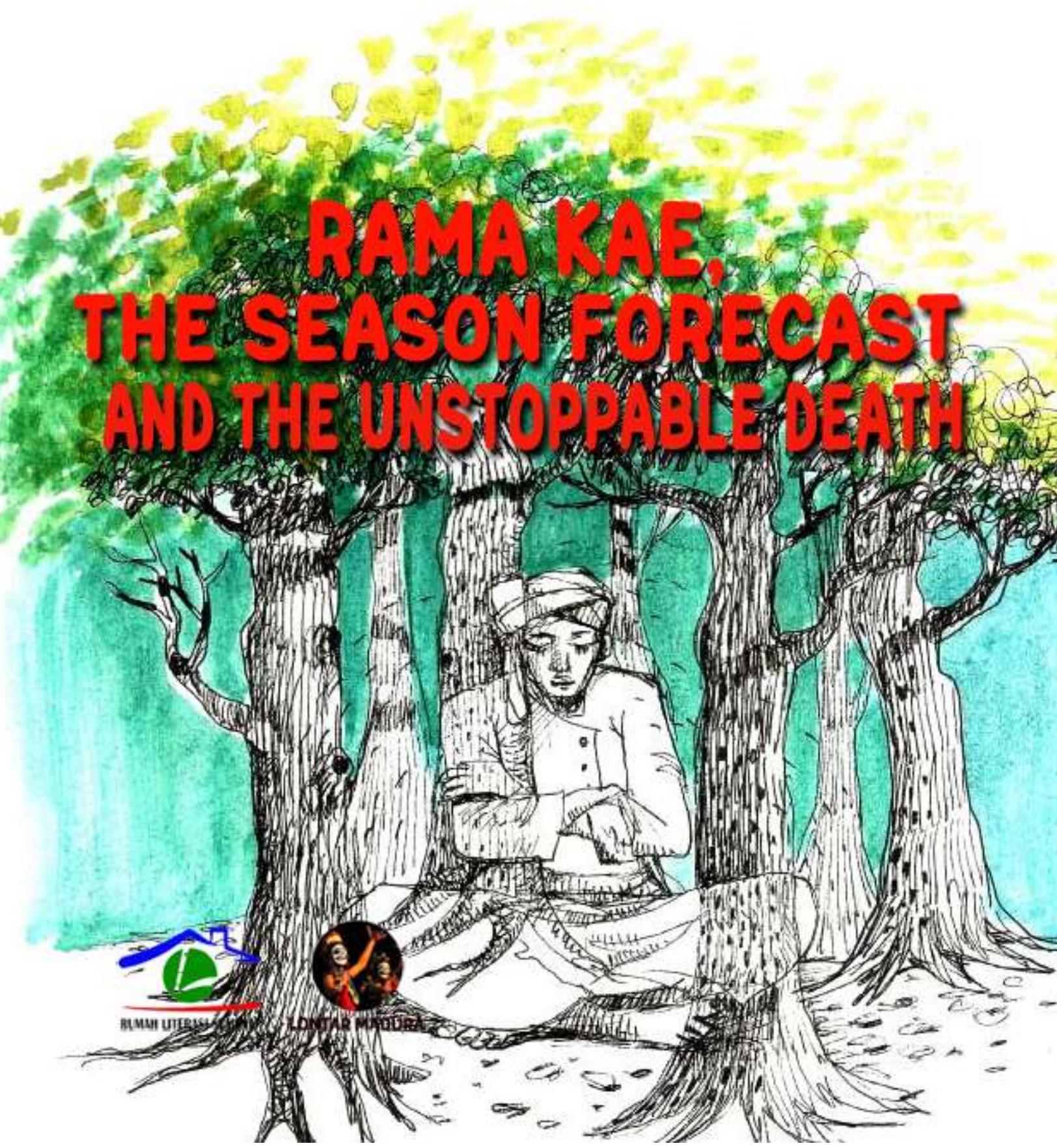
# RAMA KAE, THE SEASON FORECAST AND THE UNSTOPPABLE DEATH



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# **RAMA KAE, THE SEASON FORECAST AND THE UNSTOPPABLE DEATH**

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For the people of Bandungan, Rama Kae is a figure of humble, authoritative, religious, and misterious man. His presence often became a role model for many people. He had an excellent moral character. He spoke wisely and never showed hatred and envious feelings or any other negative feeling. He was consistenly devout and always asked people to be religious. In addition, he did many irrational things that amazed people.

That tall and bright-skinned man who enjoyed wearing a robe, later on, became the cause of the Bandungan people existence. Therefore, we, the Bandungan people, feel obliged not only to remember him and tell stories about him to the next generation, but also to preserve his precious heritages in the form of either the tangible or intangible ones (science and ethics).

Just like a long journey, the figure of Rama Kae actually is our history that would never be completed to be told in pieces of papers or through oral stories. Every time, there will be a new story that needs to be disclosed.

His stories, indeed, are not published in a book like the stories of other Sumenep kings. However, we have his stories and we orally pass the stories from one generation to the next. We tell our children the stories to let them know their true origin, that hundreds of years ago, here, in Bandungan, there lived a powerful man named Tumenggung Huda.

Now, let us follow his story. Nyi Ma'mi (to name one among many of his descendants), one of Rama Kae's descendants who is still alive until now, told us that Rama Kae's real name was Kiai Tumenggung Huda. He was actually a migrant from Java. Although there is no information about his precise origin in Java, according to some stories, he was one of high-ranked officials in the kingdom of Songgenep at the time.

The name Rama Kae itself was a nickname indirectly given by Bandungan people. For them, the word *rama* was an honourable name for a person. The word is also use to address a father, meaning that Kiai Tumenggung Huda was a considered a father who protected and loved their children.

The word *kae* means 'kiai', a religious leader in traditional Islamic community in Java. Kiai, for Bandungan people or Madurese, generally has been one of three most-respected central figures, as the Madurese philosophical expression *bhupa' bhàbhu' ghuru rato* 'father, mother, teacher, and leader'. The nickname was not easily given to him by Bandungan people. He got the name because Kiai Tumenggung Huda was the right figure to have the name. He was a great scholar with a high moral character and those qualities provided the best reason for him to be granted the title "Rama Kae".

Rama Kae or Tumenggung Huda lived among Bandungan people hundreds of year ago. His family had very easily adapted to the local people who lived long before their arrival. As a foreigner, he just knew how to get along with the local inhabitants.

He always showed good characters and never hurt anyone. He was a patient and kind person who was always willing to be a good person for himself and his family to live a harmonious life. For the reason, he did not only gain people's respect, but also their love and honor. People always came to him for advice. It did not take a long time for him to develop his own quality and to realize his objective which was leading people to the right path, the one blessed

by God. In a short time, many people visited him to consult many issues, from the simplest ones like family issues to the cultural ones that were more difficult and took wider scope.

Those people were leaving Rama Kae's house enlightened and calmed. They left with relaxed and broadened minds, which previously were stumped, and also a feeling of anxious-free. Those people then, along their way home or in the fields or everywhere, thought and were sure that Rama Kae was not an ordinary person, but a very special one. He was a figure of God's saint whose words would come true and would cure grieves or disappointments. When someone looked in his eyes, there would be remarkable peace like the morning dews. Every move he made created a positive energy.

Each stumbling upon him, people would stop for a while to talk or just greet him. People believed that, that way, they would obtain peacefulness which, essentially, cannot be told orally or in writing, peacefulness that could not be described in any way.

That was the beginning of his sainthood being recognized by the people. From day to day, he got more respect from the people who knew him. Each day, everyone honored him even more. However, he did not take advantage from people's respect and honor for his own or his family's benefit. He maintained his position as someone who helped other people's lives. He kept his close and harmonious relationship with his neighbours. He kept hatred away from his heart although some people showed hostility toward him.

"Do we need to warn them, Kiai?" a neighbour once asked when finding someone ignoring Rama Kae.

"That would be unnecessary. We will only get another hatred feeling that will consume your heart. If that happens, we will only trigger another hatred and later on we will have conflicts among us," Rama Kae responded calmly and with soft tone.

“Let us wait. One day, they will realize their misbehaviour. They only have not realized it. It doesn’t mean that they don’t want to!” Rama Kae further suggested to reduce the tensed situation. Rama Kae’s words and his hands rubbing the man’s shoulder successfully placated the man.

Let us skip for a moment the conversation between Rama Kae and the man and let us change the story background to a house in the end of the village where Rama Kae and his family lived. It was not a fancy house owned by a rich person. It stood tall among coconut and palm trees. It was an eye-catching one since the house was different from the others.

Once Rama Kae got to the house, the owner who was previously ignorant to Rama Kae and gave an irritating look felt sick. The entire night, he had a fever. In his dream, he met a strong man in a white robe with a peaceful face. The man in a robe then spoke in a calm tone.

“Think for a moment! Have you ever done someone wrong?” The man in a robe asked.

“What do you mean?” The rich person responded in his dream.

“If you ever did someone wrong, you had better meet that person and ask for an apology,” the man in the whiter robe spoke and the disappeared.

For a few minutes, the man seemed to think about what happened in his dream. He had a blank look. He was totally confused with what the mysterious man told him a moment ago. He tried to remember everything he had done, from the moment he left home in the morning until he arrived home in the evening. He was shocked when he remembered before getting to his house, he had ignored a greeting from one of his neighbours in the end of the village.

“Right. This afternoon my heart was full of hate and envy toward Rama Kae who was highly respected,” the rich man spoke to himself after waking up from his dream. The next day, early in the morning, he immediately left home

and went to Rama Kae's house. Just like in his dream, he really visited Rama Kae to apologize. Strangely, before even stepping on the front yard of Rama Kae's house, his fever subsided and he started to feel better.

Since then, he told the stories many times to many people with the hope that people would respect and honor Rama Kae. He told people to respect foreigners who came in peace and love, and not spread hate instead which only brought the most unpleasant pain.

The story spread over the entire village. People heard about Rama Kae's sainthood that they was amazed and respected him even more. They also felt protected by Rama Kae's gentle attitude except those who had not known Rama Kae yet. In this story, those people will be mentioned again.

In one morning, a piece of wood that looked meaningless was stuck into the ground by Rama Kae. He pronounced *basmallah* 'by pronouncing to the name of God' before stuck the wood. That piece of wood was meant to secure his big-strong-white-horse's rein. The horse was like the one of a warlord who was rich in battle experience.

Who would expect that that piece of wood in a man's arm size would grow to a small tree with many branches and thick leaves. Nor any one would ever expect that one day the tree would act as a sign of season changing. We named the tree *Nanggher*. It is actually a tree able to live hundreds of year since Rama Kae's living period until today.

Now, let us continue this story by telling you first about one of Rama Kae's horses that was actually the historical backgrounds of several names in our village, Bandungan. The horse, for Rama Kae, other than being a transportation instrument, was also Rama Kae's loved four-legged friend. It was no surprise that he always washed the horse in a small river whose water flowed throughout the rain season.

His routine of washing the horse became the inspiration of the neighbourhood to call the river Tojharan. Tojharan is a small river whose both banks have large rocks. Those rocks were the cause of the river's name. Tojharan was derived from the word *to* and *jharan*. The word *to* means 'rock', while *jharan* means 'horse'. It did not take a long consideration for Bandungan people to name the river *Tojharan*.

Until now, our ears have been so used to hear the name. The local people believe that someone will hear a strong horse's neigh whenever visiting this river at night. This can be a sign that long before we live here, hundreds of year ago, this place was where Kiai Tumenggung Huda washed his horse.

In the southwest of Bandungan village, there was another village with not so many inhabitants in it. Rama Kae was interested interact with the people. His purpose was to establish a good relationship with the people before asking them to be more religious and ready for the afterlife.

Each time visiting the village, Rama Kae always rode his favourite white horse. He also fastened his horse's rein on a shady tree in the middle of the village. It was precisely on that place that Rama Kae's horse kept scratching the ground with its feet that the grass on that area went dry and dead. The people then named the village *Parama'an* which means 'where the horse's feet scratched the ground'.

It was undeniable that Rama Kae or Kiai Tumenggung Huda's fame had spread wide even beyond Bandungan village. His fame divided the people into two. The first one was those who happily accepted Rama Kae. The other group consisted of those who could not accept Rama Kae. Some of them even grew a feeling of abhorrence. They wanted to prove whether what people said about Kiai Tumenggung Huda was true.

There was a tall man with a thick moustache who was extremely curious. He thought that someday Rama Kae would be more famous and memorable

than him if he did not do anything about it. After buying rice, he walked through a bund. With a strong, steady gaze, the man walked tall and slowly, hoping to stumble upon Rama Kae. He desperately wanted to know what Rama was like.

“I really want to know!” The tall man spoke in a low voice.

From afar, he could see a humble hut equipped with a small praying are where the children learnt to read Koran and a big shady tree next to it. His heart beat faster and faster, could not wait anymore the see the famous person. With his supernatural power and extreme arrogance, the man kept longing to meet Rama Kae face to face without any proper address or self introduction as he usually did.

Such things bring grist to his mill. The man was so happy because he got what he wanted. He met the bright-skinned man who always wore a white robe. It happened that Rama Kae was leading his favourite horse to the big tree.

“Well, I guess this is my lucky day. I will put a spell on his horse to disturb it!” He joyfully spoke.

And that was precisely what happened to the horse. When the man was walking next to Rama Kae who had just done fastening his horse’s rein, the horse suddenly acted violently as if it just got hit by a stone. It did not stop there. The horse started to horrifyingly neigh. However, Rama Kae had his own way to calm down the scared horse. He gently and affectionately caressed his horse’s head and shoulder and the horse calmed down.

“Excuse me, mister! What are you bringing that my horse got so mad? He seemed so scared to see those two sacks that you’re carrying,” Rama Kae gently started a conversation hoping that he would not offend the man.

“This?” The man responded in a flat tone. “Nothing. I’m only carrying salt in these two sacks.”

“I see,” Rama Kae smiled. He just slowly nodded. The man did not realize that Rama Kae actually knew that he was carrying rice. Rama Kae let the man telling lies. He did not reprimand the man. In his heart, Rama Kae wished that the man would soon realize his lies. To him, a lie would lead someone to misfortune and pain.

“Would you like to stop by for a minute, mister? Just for a cup of coffee and a short conversation?” Rama Kae politely asked.

“Oh, no. I’m in a hurry!” The man gave a short response and quickly passed Rama Kae while giving him a cynical look. Rama Kae still politely responded with a warm smile.

Along his way home, the man with the thick moustache laughed. He thought that he had beaten Rama Kae and assumed that Rama Kae was actually not as great as people told him all this time. He thought that Rama Kae was not different from the other ordinary men in his village. To him, it was proven by his successful attempt to make Rama Kae’s horse turned mad although not very long.

Whenever coming across someone, he always told the story about his success in making Rama Kae’s horse mad. He was too pride of himself. He boasted of his power with the hope that people would prefer him to Rama Kae to be honored, praised, obeyed, and respected.

The man did not realize that something serious would happen to him. He was busy telling people about his superior power that had successfully made the Rama Kae’s horse angrily neigh. He forgot that out of his awareness he would cry for some other situation.

Once he got home, the man, still in his laugh, once again told the story. Deep in his heart, he seemed to be unable to stop telling and telling the story until all his neighbours admired him, until everyone obeyed his command.

“My dear husband!” His wife worryingly called him from the kitchen.

“What’s wrong?” The arrogant man shockingly jumped and immediately rushed to the kitchen, thinking that something had happened to his wife. He was stunned to see what happened. Something irrational was happening.

“What’s this?” the wife asked while trying to make sense. The man, still in shock, could not figure out what had happened.

“Did I tell you to buy rice? Then, why did you bring me salt? Are we going to eat salt?” The wife bombed him with questions.

The man then remembered when Rama Kae asked him about what he was carrying. To deceive Rama Kae, he said “salt” while the truth was rice. Those two sacks of rice had turned to salt, just like his answer to Rama Kae.

“This is impossible!” The man said.

“What do you mean ‘impossible’? Do you think I cannot see?” The wife responded.

“This must be black magic!” The man tried to make an excuse, but still did not want to realize his fault and admitted his wrongdoing. His hate grew even bigger. His anger accumulated.

The next day, the arrogant man came to Rama Kae’s house with a revengeful feeling. He planned to do something worse than before to Rama Kae. This time, he did not only want to make the horse gone mad. It would be much worse. Rama Kae actually had sensed the man’s plan and visit. He only pretended to be calm and unaware of what would happen.

Rama Kae welcomed the arrogant man with a friendly smile. He politely asked the man to sit in the praying area, the place where he usually had his guests. Rama Kae did not have any hate feeling although he already knew why the man came to his house. He showed excellent hospitality to this guest who clearly intended to do harm to him.

Shortly after politely asking his guest to sit down, Rama Kae took leave for a while. Not long after, Rama Kae reappeared from the kitchen, bringing a cup of coffee. He used to do all these things to his guests, including this one guest who was came with hatred in his heart, an angry feeling resulted from humiliation he got from his irritated wife when finding the rice he brought turned to salt.

They had met for over than thirty minutes. There was no sign of hostility from the man's eyes. In fact, the man felt so peaceful sitting next to Rama Kae. He did not expect that his intention to hurt Rama Kae had quietly changed to a great respect and admiration. It was just like what people told him. Every word coming out from Rama Kae became serenity that brought peace to his heart. This time, he experienced it firsthand.

He moreover saw by himself something that was just illogical. And his admiration grew even bigger. He saw Rama Kae calmly spread a fishing net in a piece of field right next to his praying area. Remarkably, the field turned to a pool full of fishes that were swimming freely. When the fishing net was pulled, Rama Kae got many big and fresh fishes.

“No ordinary man can do all this,” the man spoke to himself while putting his hand on his chest. His tears began to fall. He felt so damned for hating someone who was so loved and blessed by God. He was truly sorry and he asked for an apology for any wrongdoing he had done.

“Just wait for a moment, please!” Rama Kae tried to stop the man when he wanted to go home.

“At least, until these fishes are cooked and we can eat them together,” Rama Kae explained. He just did not know how to respond. At first, he wanted to hurt Rama Kae, but now the man he hated so much had asked him to eat together.

Let us now move our attention to the growing tree. The branches kept coming out and made the tree leafier and shadier. Birds continued to fly over and alight in it. They then created nests and had their babies there. In fact, almost every morning, Bandungan people would try to make a visit to the tree and waited for ocean fishes to fall, just like waiting for fruits falling from a tree. Indeed, those fishes were brought by birds from the ocean and perhaps once those birds alighted on the treetops, the fishes fell.

At the time, no one knew that the tree which kept giving them fortune in the form of fish and of course its shadiness would become a sign of season change. How was that sign read? Let us once again observe how Rama Kae showed things that amazed people.

One day, during a dry season, Rama Kae sat back and relaxed with some people under the Nanggher tree that as not as shady as it was during the rainy season. Its leaves were withering and falling to ground. It left a few strong branches only. One of the men, unexpectedly, threw a question about when the rain would come.

“Soon it seems!” A friend of him quickly responded.

“I don’t think so. It might be longer than we thought,” the other gave his opinion. “In my calculation, it should have been the rainy season by now. But I don’t know

why there hasn’t been any single drop of rain until now,” another guy spoke questioningly.

“Dear friends, just notice that!” Rama Kae spoke while pointing his forefinger to a big branch in the northeast. The people who were sitting with him immediately turned their heads to the direction pointed by Rama Kae’s finger. “What about it, dear wise man?” one the men asked.

“If the branch grows leaves, the rain will come soon. Before you know it. But look! Some leaf buds have started to grow,” Rama Kae explained. “It means ...” Rama Kae did not continue his words, but slowly nodded and smiled instead.

Since then, people in Bandungan would not start plowing their farms and planting the corn seeds even if rains had fallen many times when the meant branch had not grew any leaf yet. If they ignored the sign, they had to be ready to find their plants dying from water shortage at any times since the rains were actually not a sign of rainy season but only passing their place.

Until today, we, the people of Bandungan, continue to strongly believe the sign. We will start to plow our farms and fields the branch in the northeast area has grown leaves. If it has not had any leaf yet, we will not do anything because it means that the rainy season has not come yet. Even if there is a rain falling, it will not be the rain of true rainy season.

Rama Kae was getting old. He no longer had strong bones like when he was younger. His strong and healthy skin was getting wrinkled. Nevertheless, he had done many good things in Bandungan. Because of his persistent efforts and gentle behaviour, our village became a rich, safe, and prosperous place. The people who previously hated him had turned to his students who were fond of meditation.

We believe that Rama Kae had completed his duties in our village. He were the inspiration of the names *Parama'an*, *Tojharan* river, *Kaju Raja*, and the one who taught us about the signs of season change. There is another name that has not been mentioned yet in this story, *Bhuju' Lanceng*. This name has the following story, a sad story that Rama Kae could not tell anyone, including his own wife and son. However, it was a matter of time that we would know this sad story.

It was the day when he saw many people crying because of grief and loss. Rama Kae actually knew the incident beforehand. He actually knew what would happen that day before his closest people knew, before their cries broke in his house, before the sun completely went down, before his loved white horse neighed in grief.

That day was when his son had his last day even before he had a chance to get married. Many people were shocked and could not believe it. They knew that Rama Kae's son was very healthy and never suffered from any serious ill.

"That is his destiny," Rama Kae told the people who came to his house. "No matter how powerful a man is, no matter how strong he is, he would never be able to reject God's will. Including myself!" he continued.

The people could only bow their heads and affirmed Rama Kae's words. His son was buried in Parama'an village, and thus, the village is widely known as *Bhujū' Lanceng*. The word *lanceng* means 'single, never been married'. This word refers to Rama Kae's son who died before he had a chance to get married.



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