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TÉMBHUK OLO-OLO



BUMI LITERASI SUMENEP



LONTAR MADURA

TEMBHUK OLO-OLO

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In the east of Madura island, in Sapeken to be precise, there exists a historical trace of a small island but the biggest one among the other neighboring islands. Its name is Sepanjang. The island has a long tale which is the origin of *Tembhuk Olo-Olo*.

A long time ago, in Makassar area, South Sulawesi, there lived a king who had to leave his kingdom to perform a duty. The assigned duty would take him a long time that he had to leave his wife. Before leaving his palace, the king talked to the queen, “My dear wife, if you get pregnant after my departure, the baby will not be mine.” The queen remained silent and nodded.

The king had been away for a long long time, but the queen somehow got pregnant. Eventually, the king heard about his wife’s pregnancy and decided to go home although he had not finished his duty. The king went home to confirm the queen’s pregnancy.

Arriving at the palace, the king was overjoyed. He thought about his future child who would be the successor of his reign. However, behind the joy, the king started to have doubts and suspicion to the queen’s pregnancy. “What should I do? I do hope to have a crowned prince to be my successor someday, but somehow I find all this hard to believe,” the king spoke doubtfully.

The king thought whether the baby in his wife’s womb was truly his. “I was on duty for a long time. How come she got pregnant?” That question had been haunting the king’s mind. “I am afraid the baby is not truly

mine?” The king spoke in a whisper and tried to convince himself that his doubt was actually reasonable. He then recollected the moment before he left the palace, when he told the queen that if she got pregnant after his leaving, the baby would not be his.

One day, the king summoned his queen. “My dear wife, I just want to confirm that the baby inside you right now is truly mine,” the king said.

“Your Highness. This baby, the one inside my womb, is truly your child!” With shedding tears, the queen tried to convince the king. The queen claimed that she never cheated on the king when he was away.

However, the king continues to suspect the queen’s pregnancy although she had explained with tears to convince him. Since the doubt kept haunting him, the king eventually gave a condition to his wife that when the baby was born, she must abandon him.

“If the baby is truly mine, and if he is truly the crowned prince, a convincing proof shall emerge!” The king spoke to the queen. Listening to that order, the queen felt so sad, but there was nothing she could do.

When the baby came, the queen had to abandon him as the king’s order. The baby boy was wrapped in a piece of cloth and also given a head cloth as a sign of his true inherited royalty. Next, the baby was put into a big bamboo stem and then set adrift into the sea. That way, maybe the king would like to save his kingdom from disgrace and humiliation.

The queen was heartbroken to lose her baby. There was nothing she could do but accepting what had just happened. “My dear son, forgive me. I have to let you go because I have to obey your father’s order. I wish for your safety and I hope someone will find you,” the queen said her last words in tears before setting his son adrift.

A few days later, in another island named Sepanjang island in the area of Sapeken, the people heard the news about a baby who was washed ashore and found by a fisherman. They say that the fisherman who found the baby was a foreign ulama who came from Java. He came to meditate in Sepanjang island that had deep forests all over the place. He found peace and felt at home in Sepanjang that he asked his wife to live with him in the island. His wife then gave birth to a daughter.

When the fisherman went to catch fish in the sea, he heard a baby crying from afar. "I feel like I hear a baby crying. Where does that cry come from?" The fisherman whispered with a feeling of surprise and curiosity. The other fishermen also felt the same curiosity to suddenly hear a baby's cry.

The ulama fisherman, together with his fellow fishermen rowed their boat while trying to locate and move closer to where the cry came from. They finally found the source which was a big bamboo between coral reefs. They were shocked to find what was inside the big bamboo stem. It was a baby boy with a royal head cloth.

"Dear wise man, get that big bamboo, quick! A fellow fisherman told the ulama fisherman. The fisherman then quickly lifted the baby from the bamboo stem. He brought the baby boy home and took care of him as his adopted child.

The baby grew up as normal as the other babies, but the neighbours realized that he was not an ordinary child. The neighbours believed that he was a royal descendant since he was found with a royal head cloth. Full of curiosity, people started to visit and see the baby.

Meanwhile, some of the neighbours heard the rumor that the king of Makassar had once abandoned his baby in the sea. People in Sepanjang island then believed that the baby was the king of Makassar's son who was

abandoned. The baby was then named Raden Panji Suhartono. Some called him Raden Panji Suhartomo. The ulama fisherman came from Java, he gave the baby boy a Javanese name.

Later on, the baby was well known as Raden Panji Suri since he came from the east part, Makassar. The ulama and his adopted son lived in West Pajan area of Sepanjang island. When Raden Panji Suri became an adult, the people of Sepanjang had him as their leader. Raden Panji Suri took the ulama's daughter as his wife. Both lived peacefully and happily in Sepanjang. Raden Panji Suri had animal companions, a dog and a cat, that would faithfully keep him accompanied wherever he traveled. Both, the dog and the cat, were so smart that they were able to understand what Raden Panji Suri and his wife spoke. In addition to the pets, his father in law also gave him a dagger-like knife as a weapon.

Since Raden Panji Suri ruled the island, the lives of Sepanjang people were safe and peace. Raden Panji Suri was a brave and firm leader who served his people very well. Every problem and issue that happened in Sepanjang were always well and wisely solved that he was respected and obeyed by the people of both inside and outside Sepanjang islands.

The fame of Raden Panji Suri in time reached the king of Makassar. The king believed and confirmed that Raden Panji Suri was his son. Later on, the king ordered his general to meet Raden Panji Suri to ask him to go back to Makassar.

“General! I order you to bring half of our soldiers with you and go to Sepanjang island and bring Raden Panji Suri back to Makassar!”

“Yes your highness, I am ready to carry out your order,” the general responded.

Afterward, the general and the soldiers sailed to Sepanjang island.

After a long journey, they arrived to Sepanjang and started to walk through the forest. They met someone and they did not that that someone was the person they were looking for, Radin Panji Suri.

“Excuse us young man, could you tell us where the leader of this place lives?” the general asked.

“Ah, the man lives over there, Sir,” Raden Panji Suri pointed at a certain direction. “If I may know, why do you want to meet him?” He continued his words while still keeping his true identity in secret.

The general answered, “We would like meet him and deliver a message from our king in Makassar”

“Well, I can bring you there gentlemen if you wish,” Raden Panji Suri offered a help.

Arriving at the intended house, Raden Panji Suri stopped and asked the general to enter his house. “Sir, what is the king’s message if I may know. Perhaps I can help you deliver the message to Raden Panji Suri,” Raden Panji Suri offered a help again.

“Oh I am afraid I cannot do that young man. I have to give him this message in person.” The general politely refused the offer.

The general started to be suspicious of the young man since he had never mentioned where Raden Panji Suri lived. “Excuse me, young man! Who are you anyway and where is Raden Panji Suri actually?” the general asked. Raden Panji Suri did not say a word for a while and then revealed his true identity, “Gentlemen, I am the one who you are looking for.”

The general and his soldiers were shocked and amazed. The man who walked with them through the forests turned out to be the person they were looking for all along. However, they were astonished by the young man’s hospitality, manner, and humble appearance.

“Pardon us your highness, we were ordered by our king to bring you home to Makassar,” the general told his true purpose.

“I am so sorry, general! I am afraid I cannot and I will not go home to Makassar. I will continue staying here in Sepanjang for life no matter what,” Raden Panji Suri explained his unwillingness.

Next, the general and his soldiers went home to Makassar with empty hands. Despite Raden Panji Suri’s refusal, the king of Makassar did not want to lose hope. The king kept sending his general to persuade Raden Panji Suri to go home. However, the general still went home without Raden Panji Suri.

Finally, the king became displeased and order the general to force Raden Panji Suri to go home at all costs. “You may not fail again this time! Force him to go home! If he still refuses, do anything to bring him home dead or alive. If he is dead, bring me his head!” the king gave the order with anger.

The general and the soldiers kept loyally doing what the kind ordered although they would meet the same failure again and again. The last order was to bring back Raden Panji Suri dead or alive. Raden Panji Suri did not change his decision. He knew that bad things might happen after his constant refusal toward the king’s order. Finally, Raden Panji Suri’s people and the king’s soldiers engaged in battle. It was a violent battle and took many lives. The king’s soldiers had to face their defeat and ran away for the lives into the forest.

The people of Sepanjang were happy for the victory over the king’s soldiers. Raden Panji Suri also celebrated his success. After the celebration, one by one, the people of Sepanjang left the forest was covered in human blood.

Raden Panji Suri's leadership became more famous across the Sepanjang island. The people Sepanjang thought that they had made the right choice of making Raden Panji Suri their leader. When celebrating their victory, Raden Panji Suri suddenly sense something undesirable. All of a sudden, he was attacked by his own dog. The dog, without warning, got stressed and confused that it got mad and pawed Raden Panji Suri. In a great shock, Raden Panji suri was bitten on the neck by the black dog which unexpectedly got wild and dangerous. The dog seemed to change its attitude because of the putrid smell of human blood coming from the forest.

Blood came out from Raden Panji Suri's neck. He then died in the middle of the forest. The dog and the cat were puzzled to his master motionless. The two ran to their master's house to inform Raden Panji Suri's wife.

As soon as they got to his master's house, the dog and the cat bit Raden Panji's wife's dress and pulled her outside. The wife was confused and did not understand the pets' attitude. They seemed to try the tell her something. Afterward, Raden Panji Suri's wife followed her two pets.

The dog and the cat led Raden Panji Suri's wife to the forest and then stopped right next to Raden Panji Suri's body that was on the ground, breathless. The was extremely shocked and she could not believe that Raden Panji Suri had died. The shook Raden Panji Suri's body, but nothing happened. Still, there was no sign that Raden Panji Suri was alive and could be saved.

Raden Panji Suri's wife and the two pets were so sad. It was too late to save Raden Panji Suri's life and they had lost him forever. The wife was so sad that she could not think rationally anymore. She finally asked her loved pets, "We no longer have him and this life feels worthless without him.

Now, are you both ready to die?” Both pets nodded, gave an impression that they were ready to lose their lives.

Next, Raden Panji Suri’s wife pulled a knife stuck on Raden Panji Suri’s body and then stabbed it into the dog’s and cat’s bellies until they died next to his master’s body. After killing her two pets, Raden Panji Suri’s wife thrust the knife into her own stomach. She then died next to her husband and the two pets. The three took their own lives for their master.

The news about Raden Panji Suri’s death was eventually heard by the soldiers of Makassar king who were still hiding in the woods of Sepanjang. The soldiers then decided to take Raden Panji Suri’s head as a proof for the king of Makassar. Those soldiers searched for Raden Panji Suri and cut the head off him.

“Now, we can bring Raden Panji Suri back to Makassar though it is only the head,” a soldier told his fellow soldier.

However, a strange thing happened to the soldier who was carrying Raden Panji Suri’s head. After travelling for a week, the soldier thought that he had gotten to Makassar, but he turned out to be in the Sepanjang water. He then sailed again to Makassar. However, he never arrived at Makassar and, again, ended up in the Sepanjang water.

“What is going on here”? The soldier felt confused and hardly believed what had happened to him. Since the weird situation kept happening, the soldier finally came to a conclusion that Raden Panji Suri’s head was unwilling to be separated from the body. He then decided to bury Raden Panji Suri’s head in the area of Sepanjang, in Bengbeng to be precise, while Raden Panji Suri’s body was buried by the local people in Pajan Barat, next to the local office of Indonesian Forest Enterprises (Perhutani) in Sepanjang. The soldiers did not dare to go back to Makassar

empty-handed. They stayed there and became the inhabitants of Sepanjang.

It is in a forest of Bengbeng area where Raden Panji Suri's head was buried; the local people call the place *Tembhuk Olo-Olo*. *Tembuk Olo-Olo* are Madurese words. The west part of Sepanjang (including Pajan Barat and Bengbeng) is inhabited by people migrated from the island of Madura or Madurese descendants, especially from Kangean island, while the eastern part has become the place for migrants from Sulawesi or descendants of Sulawesi people. Therefore, the people of Sepanjang have several languages: Madurese (Kangean) and languages of Sulawesi (Bugis, Bajo, and Mandar).

The word *tembhuk* means 'a pile of dirt and rocks', while *olo-olo* has the meaning of 'human head'. Currently, however, *Tembhuk Olo-Olo* has been given a gravestone like the other graves.

Until now, many people, from the neighboring places or outside Sepanjang, still visit *Tembhuk Olo-Olo*. Most visitors are Javanese. There are those who just make a visit; there are also people who come to meditate.

Sepanjang island has two villages, Sepanjang village in the west and Tanjung Kiaok (Toroh) in the east. We can reach Sepanjang village from two different directions. From the west part of Sapeken island, we can go to Tembing wharf in the west part of Sepanjang. From the east, directly from Sapeken, we can go to the wharf in Tanjung Kiaok village (Toroh), but this route is longer than the first.



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