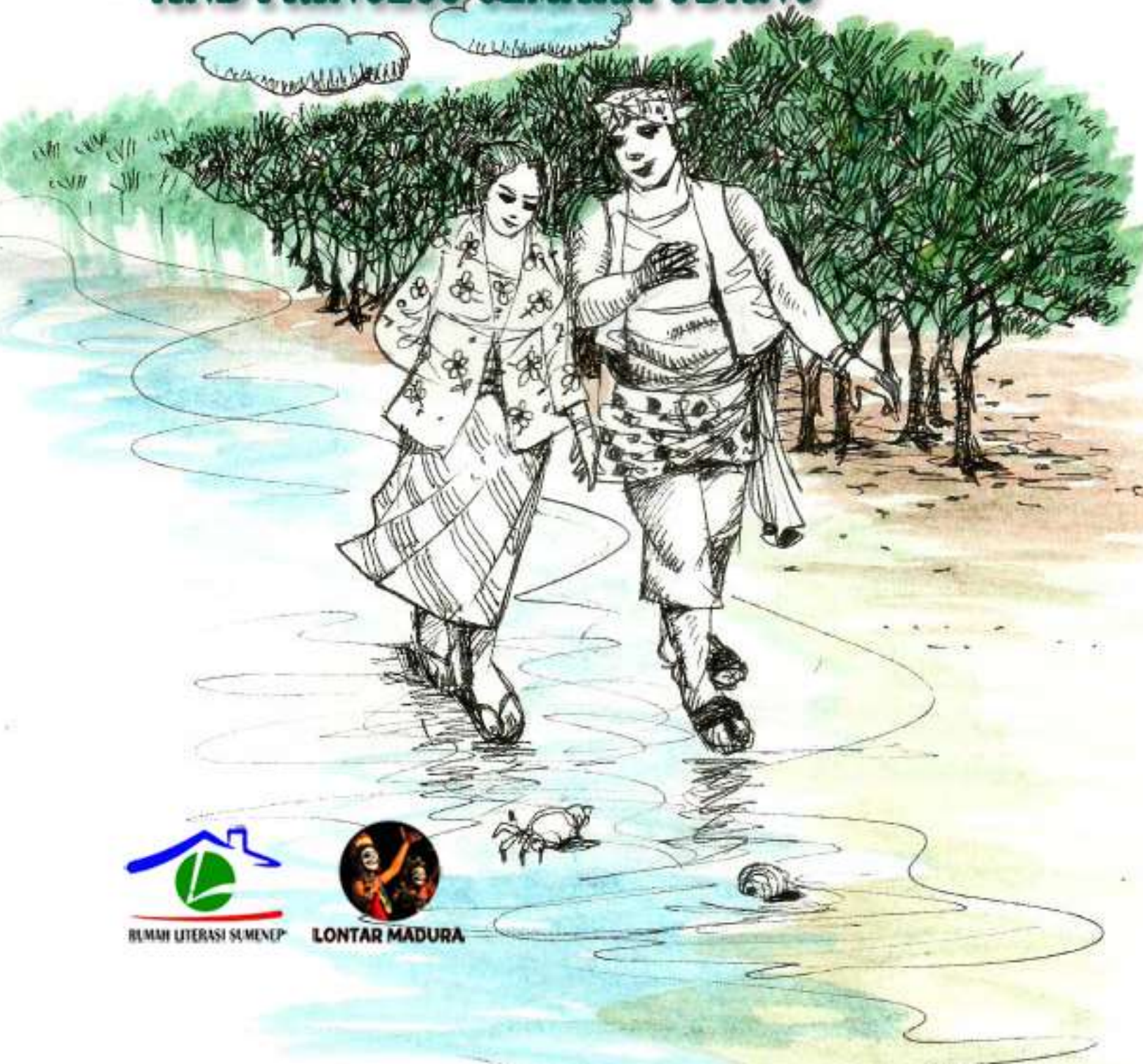


Ngati Ati

THE STORY OF PRINCE JAKA LOMBANG AND PRINCESS CEMARA UDANG



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LONTAR MADURA

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Ngati Ati

Lombang Beach is one of the finest tourist destinations in East Java. It is located in the Regency of Sumenep. Many domestic and foreign tourists visit the the place. The beach is famous with its clean white sand and a forest of *cemara udang* ‘horsetail casuarina’ (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) trees, a rare species of pine tree in the world. Everyone will want to revisit this place to enjoy its beautiful scenery. Lombang Beach is located about 26 km north of Sumenep's center. A public transportation or private vehicle can be used to reach the beach. We can travel through the main road from Batang-Batang District to the north, and then Legung Market to the east. We can also go through Batang-Batang Village to the east and then take turn to the north. Along the journey, tourists can enjoy the hilly scenery on the left and right sides of the road that are decorated with lines of old tala palm trees. In the area of horsetail casuarina forest, visitors can find polite and humble food-hawkers. Those food hawkers carry the food items on their heads while offering them in a unique dialect. It is easy to find eating places that sells special food of Madure like *pecel* (a traditional Javanese salad consists of mixed vegetables in a peanut sauce dressing), *rujak cingur* (traditional salad consists of vegetables, fruits, and beef muzzle in a spicy dressing consisting of peanust, shrimp/fish paste, and palm sugar), *soto Madura* (Madurese spicy beef soup), tala palm fruit, cold young coconut water, etc. Those who want to go along the coastline can rent a horse in a fairly cheap price. The horse renters will serve their customers in



a friendly manner. However, those who just want to relax can sit under the horsetail casuarina trees, on the clean sand, or can play with the seawater with the other family members and enjoy the blue ocean water.

However, have you ever heard the story behind the horsetail casuarina trees around the famous Lombang Beach? If you have not, you should continue to read the following paragraphs which tell the story of Prince Jaka Lombang and Princess Cemara Udang.

They say in the eastern part of Madura Island, there was a small prosperous and wealthy kingdom. The kingdom was located in a fertile land and had a rich fishery. The kingdom's name was Candiraja. The people were hardworkers. There were fishermen as well as farmers. The area of northern coast was the source of income for the fishermen. The northern coast area was rich with fish and shrimps. The farmers also diligently worked their farms. The farms could grow rice only once in a year. However, the hard-working farmers also grew secondary crops or fruits as variations. Therefore, after the rice growing season, the farmers planted vegetables and fruits such as cucumber, cassava, watermelon, and legume.

The king ruled justly and wisely. He was a generous king. Every problem happening among his people was always justly resolved. Likewise, whenever the king found a poor citizen, he would help them and taught them how to make a living. Therefore, the people loved and admired their king. Unfortunately, the king had a haughty queen. The queen boasted her wealth and treasures all the time. Whenever going to see the people, she always showed off her jewelry. The king however had a kind teenage son. In his young age, the prince already inherited his father good characters. The prince was generous, just, and wise. His name was Prince Jaka Lombang.

One day, the queen heard from the servants that Prince Jaka Lombang was in a romantic relationship with a peasant girl named Radina. The queen did not like it. She then summoned her son to come before her.

"My son, is it true that you are seeing a peasant girl?" The queen asked.

"Pardon me, mother. It is true. I have a romantic relationship with Radina, a girl from Legung Village, " the prince answered.

"Do you, child, forget my words?" the queen responded.

"I do not understand what you are trying to saya, mother," the prince replied.

"Do you know who Radina is and where she comes from? She is just a daughter of a poor fisherman." the queen said.

"I understand, mother. Radina was just an ordinary girl. But I am really in love with her. She is an honest and hardworking person. I really like her character eventhough she is just a fisherman's daughter. She loves helping others." The prince tried to elaborate his reason.

"You have to find a lady of blood royal." The queen heatedly said. "What is in having a poor girl as a wife," The queen continued.

"But, mother ...," the prince tried to interrupt. "I really love her and father has blessed our relationship." The prince spoke with his face looking downward.

"Your father is a weak man. I already suggested him to find a royal lady. What a shame! A prince, the heir of the throne, will marry a peasant girl. Worse, she is poor!" the queen was upset.

"Pardon me, mother. I kindly ask for your blessing." The prince put his arms around her mother's leg.

"No!" The queen shouted once again.

"From this day on, you may not leave the palace to see that poor girl again."

The queen secretly sent some guards to dispose Radina, the girl who the prince loved. One day, without the prince's knowledge, Radine was exiled to a far and remote island. The prince was sad, but he did not know where to find her while no one knew her whereabouts.

One time, famine happened all over Madura Island. Candiraja kingdom could not escape from the disaster either. Lands dried out. Crops became completely dry and resulted in nothing. The fishermen experienced the similar misfortune. They could not catch any single fish as if the fish were all gone. People became very poor and had not enough food. Many people died of starvation. A previously prosperous and rich country slowly turned to a poor one. This was due to the absence of taxes and tributes. The king covertly asked Prince Jaka Lombang to visit his people. Arriving at hilly area in north of Legung Village, the king found a village with many inhabitants who suffered from illness and starved to death. As if no body could survive, dead bodies were found all over the village.

"This village is full with *batang*² 'corpse'," the king king spoke in a depressed tone. "Remember, whenever you reach this place, this is the village of *Batang*. You must save the people from famine." The king gave his order.

"Teach them the right way to grow plants, choose crops that are suitable for the land condition, and do not forget to teach them how have to have a clean and healthy way of life. Do not let the same disaster happen again!" The king elaborated his suggestion to

² (Translator) The word *batang* is a shorter form of the Madurese word *bâbâthang* ‘dead body of a human or an animal’

his son. Nowadays, this particular village is known as Batang-Batang Village. It is located in the south of Legung, the fisherman settlement.

The king continued to think about the catastrophe and became sad. He called all of the kingdom officers to discuss the condition and to find a solution to the disaster. However, no officer could find a way out. The king became more disheartened.

"What kind of officer are you. When this country was rich, you praised me all the time and were so eager to give me suggestions. But when this country is in poverty, not a single solution you can offer me." The king was so angry.

"You see those many fishermen in Legung and Dungkek dying from hunger. They are barely able to catch fish and shrimp. Farmers on the hills fail to harvest their crops. Oh, my poor people!" The king expressed his unhappiness with his face looking downward.

The atmosphere turned to a quite and intensified ambiance. There was no officer dare to make any movement while sitting. Everyone gloomily looked down.

"Excuse me, father," Prince Jaka Lombang's voice broke the silence. "Allow me to offer you an idea," he continued.

"What can you offer me, my son?" The king asked.

"Let me find a solution!" Prince Jaka Lombang began to speak his mind. "Let me take a journey to seek a solution from God. I kindly ask your blessing to solve this country's problem. I feel sorry for our people who have suffered for so long." The prince spoke and bowed to his father.

"Very well then, you may go. Do not come home before you get a solution. My prayers are with you." The king let his son travel.

Accompanied by two loyal guards, the prince underwent his journey. He wanted to find a solution to overcome his people's difficult situation. When they get to a forest, Prince Jaka Lombang meditated there. He sat on a big rock in the middle of the forest. For months, he sought for the God's guidance. In his ultimate step of praying, his face brightly shone. The rock he was sitting on turned to a flat object like a spread mat. His guards were amazed of the miraculous phenomenon and then named the rock *toteker* or the Rock of Mat. The rock can be found in Banuaju Barat Village in the District of Batang-Batang.

"Let us continue our journey." Prince Jaka Lombang spoke to his guards.

"Where are we going, your highness?" A guard asked.

"We will sail across the sea and go to an island." The prince replied in a firm voice. His figure was skeletal, but his face looked bright and full of hope. Not far away from the forest there were leaving, they heard someone shout for help.

"Help, help! Please do not take my sheep," an old man begged while holding a guardman's leg. Other guardmen tried to hold the old man who was struggling to get loose and tried to keep his sheep. Apparently, some guardmen had taken a villager's sheep by force. Another guardman hit the old man's back with a cane.

"Please, sir! Please!" The old man groaned. However, the guardman kept mercilessly hit him.

"This sheep is a replacement for the tax you have not paid for months," the guardman yelled.

"This is the king's order." The other guardman screamed.

Seeing the incident, Prince Jaka Lombang was exasperated.

"Hey, soldier! Release the old man and give his sheep back!" The prince snapped at the guardmen.

"Who are you? How dare you interfere with my business!" The guard snarled and irately stared at Prince Jaka Lombang.

"Hey, soldier!" a guard who accompanying the prince snapped. "Do not be impudent! Respect the prince!" the prince's guard warned.

"Who are you? You filthy and muddy folks dare to speak rudely to us soldiers." The guardman in uniform replied. "Stay out of this. We have the order from the queen to collect taxes for the palace. Do not you know that this country is poor now? So the palace needs a lot of tributes." He continued. The guardmen seemed to not realize that they were standing in front of the prince.

"What kind of soldier are you? The palace never ordered to collect huge taxes, let alone extort people." The prince spoke in a high tone.

"You look carefully. Do you recognize who I am?" The prince yelled while taking off his filthy clothe. A gold buckle was seen to be attached to his belt. Suddenly, the guardmen's faces turned pale. Their eyes reflected doubt. They were not so sure if the gold buckle really represented a prince, but some of them began to realize it.

"Forgive us, your highness!" A guardman nervously spoke while immediately sitting and bowing to the prince. The other guardmen followed him.

"Forgive us, Prince. We did not realize that you are Prince Jaka Lombang," the guardmen spoke in chorus.

"Pardon me, Prince. I noticed you not in your regalia. We could not recognize you." A guardman continued.

"That is right, Prince. Moreover, you looked to skinny and dirty." The other joined in.

"Now, listen to me carefully!" The prince spoke in a wise tone. "As long as this catastrophe is not over yet, you may not collect taxes from people. Instead, we should help the needy people.

"Do not do this again!" The prince gave them order.

"But, Prince. The queen has given this order." The guardmen made an explanation almost in unison.

Upon hearing those words, the prince fell silent and looked down. His heart was broken to find that his mother's character had not changed. His mother had worshipped material goods. He recalled his relationship with a girl ten years ago. His mother forbade it because the girl came from a poor family. He felt a slight feeling of longing when he remembered her, but it was only a memory.

"Now, you must help me. We will build a ship and sail to north." The prince gave an order.

Finally, Prince Jaka Lombang decided to travel across the sea to go to an island. With the help from his guards, he made a ship and equipped it with a sail. He sailed from one island to another. Eventually, he arrived at an island called Nusa Udang that was located in the far north of Madura

Island. In this island, Prince Jaka Lombang met a beautiful lady. According to the guidance he got from his meditation, he needed to ask the lady for a favor to stop the famine that happened to his people.

"Welcome, Prince!" The lady tenderly greeted Prince Jaka Lombang.

Upon seeing the lady, the prince was shocked. He felt that the lady was familiar, but he did not know where she was. He remembered a humble beautiful face of girl he once loved.

"Are not you Radina, the girl whom I fell in love with?" The prince asked the lady, hoping that she was his lost sweetheart.

"No, my Prince. I am not Radina anymore. Radina has gone. I am Princess Cemara, the ruler of this Island of Nusa Udang." The princess softly replied.

"Please come, Prince! I know that you need. I will help you." She spoke gently.

Next, the prince gave Prince Jaka Lombang a package.

"You are truly kind, Princess." The Prince emotionally spoke while receiving the package. "But how can you help me, while all the king's officers failed?" The prince asked doubtfully.

"Go home, my Prince. Your father is waiting for you. Open the package and plant it on the beach. May God help you!" The princess said.

Witnessed by his father and all the officers, Prince Jaka Lombang did what Princess Cemara told him. He tremblingly opened the package that actually packed cuts of hair and fingernails. Prince Jaka Lombang was stunned. He did not know what the package meant for, but he buried the package right away on a place not far from the beach.

The next day, a miracle happened. From where the package was buried, *Cemara* 'pine tree' had grown. Strangely, the shape of the pine tree's leaves resembled a line of shrimp that were dancing in the wind. From day to day, more pine trees grew. The place became a rich forest of palm trees. At the same time, fishermen were able to catch fish again as if the fish and shrimps were back to the place.

The fishermen thus were happy to catch many fish again. People had their happy and prosperous lives back. The admired Prince Jaka Lombang. The king was so touched when he knew that Princess Cemara, the princess who helped the prince out, was actually the peasant girl, Radina. To honor Princess Cemara's kindness, the king named the pine tree Cemara Udang and the beach Lombang.

Today, people of Madurese are so proud of the beauty of Lombang Beach. The blue and clear seawater allows the fishermen's boats to pass by. The clean beach has unique white sand and a forest of rare horsetail casuarina trees.



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