

DALEM BONCEL

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DALEM BONCEL

Bungbulang, Dalem Boncel's Birth Place

Bungbulang Village is located on the south part of Garut Regency, close to the Indian Ocean. Bungbulang village has beautiful scenery. In fact, Garut Regency is famous for its beautiful nature. When creating Garut, God must have been smiling. Garut Regency is comprised of flatlands and mountains, as well as a stretch of beach on its southern part. Natural resources are plenty in Garut, from its fields and sea.

In the early 18th century, Bungbulang Village had a very small population, most of whom lived on high lands. Bungbulang Village was separated into two main areas, the highland and the coastal areas. At the time, the coast of Bungbulang Village was not a trading route. That was why the people lived far from the coasts.

Bungbulang Village was a poor and quite isolated village. There were only less than twenty houses in it and most of them were simple wooden houses built on stilts. Only four big concrete houses were in the village, owned by the rich merchants and landlords.

Among the people in Bungbulang Village, there lived a poor

couple with their son. The father worked as farmer for hire and his wife stayed home to take care of the house. Their son was a teenager named Boncel. They were very poor. It was not every day that they had something to eat. The family depended solely on the father's wage, which was not much at all. Thus, Boncel tried to help by working as grass gatherer. The grass was for cattle's food.

It was a fortunate accident that Boncel became a grass gatherer. His father had once owed money to one of the merchants in the village. Since the family had never been able to pay, the merchant suggested another way to settle the debt. He wanted Boncel to work for him, gathering grass for his cattle every day. Since then, the other merchants had also asked Boncel to gather grass for their cattle.

One afternoon, the air was hot. Boncel decided to take a rest from cutting grass for a while. He sat under a Kapok tree and daydreamed. He thought about how his life could change. Boncel would like to be a merchant. He wanted to have a lot of money and gain respect from other people.

However, it was almost impossible. He was just a grass gatherer, after all. That was when Boncel decided that he should leave the village and find job elsewhere.

The sun had just arisen in the east. Boncel finished packing the

few clothes he owned and said goodbye to his parents. He was going to travel, searching for a better living. His father and mother were devastated when he told them his plan.

“If you leave, you will take care of us?” his father asked.

“Yes, who will help me fetching water from the river, Son?” his mother added.

“Mother, Father, I have made my mind to leave this poor village. Maybe destiny has something in store for me somewhere else. I will never be anything if I stay here.”

“Very well, if you insist.” Boncel’s parents knew there was nothing they could do but let him go.

“Be careful, Son. Take care of yourself,” his mother said, waving goodbye. Tears streamed on her face.

Boncel left the village and his parents.

Boncel brought very few provisions with him, just a couple of clothes and some food. He walked without any particular direction in mind. All he knew was that he had to go far from his village. His dreams and hopes to change his life were the only motivation that kept him moving.

After crossing several rivers and valleys, Boncel arrived in a forest. It did not seem too dense, and not too scary. Beyond the

trees at the edge of the forest, Boncel could glimpse some fields. Apparently, some people had opened the forest to plant their crops. They had also built small huts on the fields as a place to rest after a day's hard work.

Boncel decided to stop near a field to give his legs a chance to rest. A few minutes after he sat down, Boncel heard dogs barking. The sound was getting closer and closer to him. When a pack of dogs ran in front of him, barking loudly, Boncel jumped back.

“Yeehaaa... Shoo... Shoo.”

A man on a horse back stopped behind the dogs. He jumped down from his horse and shoed the dogs away.

When they had run away, the man looked at Boncel and greeted him.

“Young man, who are you?”

“My name is Boncel, *Juragan*.”

Juragan meant ‘master’, but in this case, Boncel used it as a way of respectfully addressing the older man. It was more like he called the man ‘Sir’.

“What are you doing sitting there all alone?”

“I’m just resting my legs, *Juragan*. Is it okay?” Boncel asked for

the man's permission. He suspected that the man was the owner of the field.

“Be my guest. Whence do you come and where are you going, if you don't mind me asking?”

When Boncel did not reply immediately, the man asked him again, “This is Cidaun Village. Where are you from and where are you going, young man?”

“I travelled from Bungbulang Village in search for a job, *Juragan*; any job at all.”

“Why, is there no job in your village?”

“Well, Bungbulang is a small village, *Juragan*. There are not many people, fields, nor farms there, which means that there are not many jobs available,” Boncel explained.

“What did you do before you leave the village?”

“Nothing much. I just helped my father. He is a farmer for hire.”

“Hmm... and what exactly did you do?”

“I cut and gathered grass for cattle feed, *Gan*.”

“Well, you are in luck. I am in need of a grass gatherer. My horses eat a lot of grass every day. Do you want to work for me?”

Boncel considered the offer. He had been walking for more than a week and had not had much luck finding work. His legs and his body were tired. Besides, it had been two days since the last time he ate.

“Alright, *Juragan*. I will gather grass for you.” Boncel accepted the job offer.

The man was none other than Ki Paninggaran, an expert hunter. He owned several horses and hounds to help him hunting.

Ki Paninggaran earned his living by teaching martial arts. He was famous and highly respected as martial arts master in Cidaun Village. His dozens of pupils came from various villages all over Parahyangan Land. Although he loved hunting, he had not been able to do it as often as he would like lately. He only hunted three times in a month.

Thus, Boncel began his new job. Every day, he gathered grass from the nearby fields and forest for Ki Panginggaran. His master owned ten horses, which meant that Boncel had to gather a lot of grass every day.

Boncel had been living in the forest for a week and he had begun to feel bored. He thought, “This is tedious. I have left my village to find better work and change my life. Yet, I am still a grass gatherer. I suppose it’s time I move on and find another work.”

One day, Boncel went to see Ki Paninggaran to quit his job.

“I’m sorry, *Juragan*, I cannot stay here for too long. It is time I continue my travel. So, I have to quit working for you.”

“Why are you quitting? Is it the job?” Ki Paninggaran was confused.

“No, *Juragan*. I love it here. I like working with you. However, I left my village to find a better life and gathering grass is exactly what I did back there. I would like to find better job, *Juragan*,” Boncel explained.

“Very well, then. I cannot keep you from doing what you want. Here is your wage for this past week. It’s not much, but I hope it can help you finding a better live.”

“Thank you, *Juragan*. I will take my leave.”

“Very well, take care, Boy.”

“I will, *Juragan*. Thank you very much.”

Kadaleman Caringin

Caringin is a village in Pandeglang Regency, Banten.

Based on Ancient Banten history, it is called Caringin Village because there was an enormous banyan tree there. In Sundanese, banyan tree is called ‘Caringin’. Ancient Banten history also

mentioned that Caringin Village was the capital of Caringin *Kadipaten* (now Pandeglang Regency). Caringin *Kadipaten* was an important region and was famous for its cocoa, pepper, and coffee beans. These produces were the main commodities of VOC's (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or Dutch East India Company) trading.

Boncel left Cidaun Village, Cianjur with some money from Ki Paninggaran. He continued his journey over mountains, forests, and coasts until he arrived at a hill. From atop the hill, he saw a vast village with vast rice farms. It seemed that it was a prosper village. The houses were big and beautiful, the yards and fields were lush with flowers and fruit trees. The land was very fertile. Boncel quickly ran down the hill to get to the village. It was Caringin Village, the capital of Caringin *Kadipaten* (Regency).

It was late at night when Boncel arrived. He took a rest in a villager's yard. Boncel did not know that it was the house of a village secretary. The next morning, the owner of the house opened his front door and was surprised seeing a young man sleeping soundly in his yard.

“Hey! Wake up. . . wake up!” Mr. Village Secretary tried to wake Boncel up. Boncel was startled and opened his eyes.

“I beg your pardon, *Juragan*. I had no place to stay and I had to sleep in your yard.”

“Who are you? Where are you from?”

“My name is Boncel, from Bungbulang Village, *Juragan*.”

“Why do you come here, young man?”

“I’m trying to find a better life, *Juragan*. Maybe there is a job for me in this village,” Boncel explained. He prayed in his heart that this man would give him a job.

“What skills do you have?” Mr. Village Secretary asked.

“So far, all I did was cutting and gathering grass, *Juragan*.”

“Hmm. . . very well. You can work for me. You can gather grass for my horses and take my son to school. What do you say?”

“Of course I will do it, *Juragan*.”

Since that day, Boncel worked for the Secretary of Caringin Village. In the morning, he took his master’s son to school. After that, he went straight to the fields and nearby forest to gather grass.

A few weeks of taking the boy to school had made Boncel very close to him. Sometimes, when he had done gathering grass for the day, Boncel accompanied the boy to play. One afternoon, Boncel had a conversation with the boy.

“*Juragan Anom*, what do you like to play now?” Boncel called

him *Juragan Anom*, which meant ‘Young Master’.

“*Mang Boncel*, I want to fly a kite.” The boy called him *Mang*, literally meant ‘uncle’, which was a common address for older man.

“Yes, *Juragan*.”

“Oh, please, don’t call me *juragan, Mang*.”

“What should I call you, then? *Aden*?”

“Not that either. I’m just a normal boy, not a noble.”

“What about, *Den Acep*?”

“Hmm. . . Is it appropriate for young kid like me?”

“Of course it is. You are *menak* (aristocratic) and *kasep* (handsome).”

“Ha... ha... Yes, very well. You can call me *Den Acep*. Could you make me a kite, *Mang*?”

“Yes, *Den Acep*.”

In the evening, Boncel often accompanied his master’s boy studying. Boncel took the opportunity to also learn reading and writing with him.

“*Den Acep*, may I study with you?” Boncel asked the boy, a little

embarrassed.

“Sure. What do you want to learn, *Mang*?”

“I would like to be able to read and write, *Den*.”

“Can’t you read and write?”

“No, I can’t.”

“Well, let’s study together then.”

Thus, every evening Boncel studied with his master’s son.

Days went by, Boncel had become very good at writing and reading.

At noon, when he had done gathering grass and it was not time yet to pick up his master’s son from school, Boncel spent his time in the stable, polishing his writing skill. One day, he had an idea to write the horses’ names on their stalls. He practiced reading and writing by carving the horses names on each stall.

One day, the village secretary visited his stable. The writings on the stalls caught his attention. He read “Jalu’s stall”, “Gagah’s stall”, and many others. At first, he thought it was his son who wrote those names, because they were not written neatly. It was almost like a child’s writing. Mr. Village Secretary then called his son to talk about it.

“My Son, did you write the horses’ names on the stalls?”

“No, I didn’t, Father. It was *Mang* Boncel.”

“Oh, really? I didn’t know he could write.” Mr. Village Secretary was surprised.

“Of course he can, Father. He had been learning with me every night,” the boy explained.

That night, his master called Boncel.

“Come here, young man. Sit. There’s something I need to talk to you.”

“Yes, *Juragan*. I am ready to receive your command,” Boncel knelt in front of Mr. Village Secretary. His heart was beating hard. He was nervous because he did not know why he was called.

“I saw the writings on the stalls. Is it you who wrote the horses’ names there?”

“Yes, *Juragan*. I did. Please forgive me for not asking for your permission first.” Boncel was afraid he would lose his job.

“It’s alright. Your writing is nice, I like it. I never knew you are this creative. Well, if I offer you a job as my secretary, what do you say?”

“I beg your pardon, *Juragan*, what? Your secretary?” Boncel was confused and taken aback by that offer.

“Yes, my secretary. I would like to appoint you as my secretary, helping me handling governmental matters in this village. What do you say?”

“Yes, *Juragan*. I’d like that. I’d like that very much. Thank you, *Juragan*,” Boncel nodded his head eagerly and then bowed to show his gratitude.

That was the day Boncel officially worked at Caringin Village’s government office. All tasks his superior gave him were completed to perfection, or as perfect as Boncel could. Boncel was very serious and very diligent in performing his tasks. He knew he could not screw this opportunity.

At first, Boncel’s task was only to send letters. Over time, Mr. Village Secretary taught him how to compose a good official letter. He also helped with other errands in the office. Boncel became the village secretary’s right hand man because he always finished all jobs with flying colors.

Raden Tumenggung Wiradijaya

As Mr. Village Secretary’s career grew, Boncel’s career also soared. He became more and more skillful every day. Seeing how good and diligent Boncel was, Mr. Village Secretary, who had

been promoted to be Village Chief, appointed Boncel to take his place as the village secretary. Good fortune seemed to favor Boncel. After becoming the village secretary, his career grew rapidly. Soon, he was the village's chief of barns, then he became *patih* (vice regent), and finally he was the successor to be *dalem* in Caringin Regency. His former master had held the position of *dalem* (regent) for a few years. When he passed away, Boncel was appointed to take his position.

In Sundanese history, before Mataram Kingdom ruled the Sunda Land, one could only be a *dalem* or regent when he had mastered *kabuyutan* (sacred places of Sunda). He usually spent a long time in *kabuyutan* to gain supernatural powers and become unbeatable in battles.

When Mataram Kingdom ruled, a *dalem* was appointed based on blood lineage. The practice continued until after Mataram's reign was over. At the time of this story, a *dalem* had to be a *menak*, born to a noble family.

A *dalem* in 18th century held great powers and dominance. He collected taxes of people's crops and ruled his regency with many subordinates and personal guards. A *dalem* was the master of his people. No one could say no to a *dalem* if they did not wish to die. That was how went in those days.

It was truly extraordinary that Boncel was appointed as a *dalem*.

He was not a *menak*, he had no noble blood in his veins. He also did not master *Kabuyutan* Caringin. Boncel was very happy and content that he was appointed to rule Caringin. The people gave him the title of Raden Tumenggung Wiradijaya. They had so much respect towards *Dalem* Boncel. Not many people knew his origin, except a handful of people who had known him since his days as a grass gatherer and stable boy.

Boncel's dream and wish to have a better life had come true. He was now sitting on the throne of a regent. He was the *Dalem* of *Kadipaten* Caringin. He lived in a huge house with vast front and backyard.

In front of *Dalem* Boncel's house, there were many pillars upon which various birds in beautiful cages hang. Each of the birds had beautiful voice and captivating feathers. Anyone who had the opportunity to visit the house always admired the beautiful birds. On the yards beside his house, Boncel told his gardeners to plant many kinds of flowers, all with stunning colors and sweet smell. Meanwhile, numerous kinds of fruit tree were planted in his backyard, surrounding a vast fish pool. *Dalem* Boncel now lived in prosperity. There was nothing that he did not have. There was nothing he could not get.

Under the administration of *Dalem* Boncel, *Kadipaten* Caringin rapidly grew. The people lived happily and prospered. In fact, the Port of Caringin became one of the most notable international

trading port, where VOC's trading ships made berth. The power and prosperity of *Kadipaten* Caringin and its Regent was known all over Parahyangan Land, including Bungbulang Village, the birthplace of *Dalem* Boncel.

Meanwhile in Bungbulang Village, Boncel's parents were still the same. His father was still a farmer for hire, working other people's fields and farms.

His mother still stayed home and did some errands for the neighbors. They were still very poor. In his old age, Boncel's father became ill that he could not go to the fields every day. When he could not work, Boncel's mother would go to the nearby forest to collect leaves or wild plants to eat. Sometimes, when she could not find anything edible in the forest, she would have to ask some food to their neighbors.

One day, they talked about their long lost son. Boncel had gone for so long and had never come home once.

"It has been ten years since Boncel left, hasn't it, Father?" Boncel's mother started the conversation.

"Yes, Mother. There is no news at all about him. I wonder what he is doing now."

"Is he even alive, Father?" Boncel's mother asked sadly. Her eyes began to get teary.

“Let’s just pray that he is well and doing okay, Mother,” Boncel’s father said.

“Well, I pray for him every day, Father. Every time I perform *salat*, I pray for him and his return.” Tears had streamed down her face now.

“Come on, Mother. Be patient. Have faith in God’s plan,” Boncel’s father tried to comfort her, stroking her back softly. “One day he will come home,” he said optimistically.

“Yes, Father. I really would like to go and search for him. But where could we go? We had no idea of his whereabouts,” Boncel’s mother said.

“Oh, God, please give us a chance to see our son again,” she continued.

“Amen.” Boncel’s father bowed his head. His heart was heavy with sadness.

The next morning, Boncel’s father prepared to go to the fields as usual.

“Mother, I’m leaving,” he told his wife.

Boncel’s mother quickly came out of the kitchen, “Yes, Father. Here are some steamed cassava and water for you. I cannot take it to the field today.”

“Why not?”

“I was asked to help washing dishes at Mrs. Neneng’s daughter’s wedding reception. Who knows she gives us some *berkat* (complimentary food given to guests) from the party.”

“Mother, don’t be like that. We cannot help people with an expectation for something in return. We have to do it sincerely,” Boncel’s father reminded her.

“Yes, Father. I know.”

Then, Boncel’s father went to the fields, bringing his provisions with him; some steamed cassava and a *kendi* (clay pot) filled with water.

When the sun was at its zenith, Boncel’s father rested in a hut. His hands and feet were dirty with mud. He washed them at a nearby water stream before sitting in the hut. He began to open his provisions and enjoy the steamed cassava.

When he was eating, a trader passed by and stopped at the hut.

“*Punten* (excuse me), may I join you and rest here, Sir? *Assalamualaikum, punten,*” he greeted Boncel’s father.

“*Walaikum salam.* Please come and sit with me,” Boncel’s father welcomed the trader.

“Where are you from, Son?” Boncel’s father asked, making a small talk.

“I’m from Bojong Village, Sir.”

“How long have you been living there?”

“No, Sir. I don’t live in Bojong Village. What I meant is I arrived here from Bojong Village. I originally came from *Kadipaten Caringin*,” the trader replied.

“Where is it?”

“In Banten, Sir.”

“Wow, you have gone far. What do you sell, by the way?”

“I bring coffee beans, peppers, and an assortment of other things.”

“And yes, *Kadipaten Caringin*, Banten, is far away from here,” he added.

“How long does it take to walk from there to here?”

“I think it’ll be around a month, Sir,” the trader said.

“So you have walked for a month?”

“Ha... ha... ha... No, Sir. I came with a ferry that sailed past this

region.”

“Oh, I see.” Boncel’s father nodded.

“What’s the specialty of *Kadipaten* Caringin, Son?” Boncel’s father asked again.

“Mainly coffee, Sir. Caringin’s coffee is famous. Ever since *Dalem* Boncel ruled the Regency, coffee plantation has grown so much.”

“Who is this *Dalem* Boncel you are talking about?” Boncel’s father could not help but think about his long lost son.

“He is the current regent of *Kadipaten* Caringin,” the trader said.

Boncel’s father fell silent. His mind was full of questions, wondering if *Dalem* Boncel was truly his son. After a while, he asked another question to the trader.

“Can you tell me what he is like?”

“He is short and sturdy, and had a dark skin,” the trader replied.

“Tell me this, does he have a black spot on his face?” Boncel’s father could not hide his curiosity.

“Yes, Sir, on his right cheek. How do you know?”

Boncel’s father’s heart skipped a beat. He thought, “He must be

my son. He must have succeeded after all this time.”

He then leaped out of the hut and ran home, leaving the confused trader behind.

As soon as he arrived, Boncel’s father called his wife.

“Mother, Mother . . . come here, quick!” He yelled, out of breath.

He forgot that Boncel’s mother was at a neighbor’s, lending a hand in a wedding reception.

Seeing that his wife was not at home, Boncel’s father slumped on the floor, trying to catch his breath. Only then that he realized where his wife was. His first impulse was to go after his wife, but he restrained himself. It was not decent to crash a party. Boncel’s father decided to wait for his wife at home.

It was not until the dusk that Boncel’s mother came home. Her hands were full with bags of food. As soon as she saw a hoe by the front door, she knew her husband was home.

“*Assalamualaikum*, Father!”

“*Walaikum salam*. Come here, Mother. Sit down. There something I need to tell you.” Boncel’s father eagerly took his wife’s hand and got her to sit down.

“What is it, Father? Hold that thought, let me put these away

first.”

“Just sit down first. It’s about Boncel.”

“What? Boncel? What about Boncel, Father?”

Boncel’s mother was startled hearing her son’s name. She threw away all the bags on the floor and quickly sat down.

“When I was in the field, a trader passed by and rested in the hut. He said he came from *Kadipaten* Caringin.”

“Who is he? What does he have to do with Boncel?”

“It’s not important who he is. The point is, he told me that the current regent of *Kadipaten* Caringin was called *Dalem* Boncel.”

“What? Boncel, our son is a *dalem*? Where did you say he lives?” Boncel’s mother was curious. It was the first time they both heard about Boncel in so many years.

“I don’t know if he is our son or not. Just let me finish the story, okay.”

“Yes, *punten*, Father. This is such a surprise,” Boncel’s mother apologized.

“So, here is the story. The trader came from *Kadipaten* Caringin. It is in Banten. He said, *Kadipaten* Caringin was now ruled by a nobleman called *Dalem* Boncel.”

“*Dalem* Boncel? Come on, Father. How can he be our son? It must not be him. He is not a nobleman.”

“I initially thought so. How could Boncel be a regent? However, I questioned the man about *Dalem* Boncel’s appearance.”

“Well, what did he say?”

“*Dalem* Boncel fits our son’s profile, even the black spot on his right cheek.”

“Is this true, Father? Is our son a *dalem*?” Boncel’s mother sobbed. She missed her son so much.

“Oh, my God. Father, Boncel is alive. Our son is alive.”

“Yes, Mother. I think we have to go there to make sure.”

“Let’s leave tomorrow. With the first light of dawn,” Boncel’s mother said. Then she added, “Wait a minute, Father. Do you know where Banten is? Is it far?”

“The trader said it would take about a month walking.”

“It’s so far away. Can we make it?” Doubt crept in Boncel’s mother’s mind. It was not a short distance to take on foot.

“It is. But I miss Boncel, Mother,” said Boncel’s father softly.

“So do I Father. Well then, let’s just try to get there.”

They finally made up their mind to go to *Kadipaten* Caringin. Their yearning for their son overcame their doubt.

The very next morning, Boncel's parents left Bungbulang Village. They headed towards *Kadipaten* Caringin to find their son. They brought all the food they had and some money they had borrowed from the neighbors.

Day by day, Boncel's parents walked on, passing every village. They did not dare to go through the forests. They could not risk getting lost. Going through the villages, they would have a chance to ask other people for directions.

Long story short, Boncel's father arrived in *Kadipaten* Caringin. They were in a very poor and pitiful state by the time they entered the regency's gate. Their clothes were tattered. Their bodies were dirty, and their faces wore a ragged expression. As soon as they passed the sign that said '*Kadipaten* Caringin's border', they asked a local man to make sure they had made it.

"*Punten*, is this *Kadipaten* Caringin?" Boncel's father asked politely.

"It is, Sir."

"May I ask another question? If I want to go to *Dalem* Boncel's residence, which way should I take?"

"*Dalem* Boncel's? It is about five kilometers from here, Sir. Just

follow this road to the city square. On the south side of the square, you'll see a huge building. That is where *Dalem* Boncel lives, Sir," the man explained.

Boncel's parents followed the direction to the city square. Half an hour later, they arrived at the gate of *Dalem* Boncel's house. Two guards stopped them.

"Hey, old people! Who are you? Where are you from and why do you come here?" The guard asked with a stern face.

"I beg your pardon, Sir. We came from Bungbulang Village to see *Dalem* Boncel."

"Who are you? What is your business with *Dalem* Boncel?" the guard asked again.

"We are his parents. We have not seen him for years," Boncel's father replied.

"Very well. Wait here!" One of the guards walked inside to report to *Dalem* Boncel.

At the time, *Dalem* Boncel was sitting on a plush chair on his terrace. He was looking over the city, enjoying the view. There was a knock on the door and his guard asked permission to see him.

"Excuse me, *Juragan Dalem* Boncel. You have visitors," the

guard reported.

“Come in!” Boncel replied.

“Who are they?” he asked when the guard entered.

“They come from Bungbulang Village, claiming to be your parents, *Juragan*,” the guard said.

Dalem Boncel was taken aback. He stood up and walked towards a window, trying to see the visitors outside. He thought, “They might be my parents. But if I admit it, what would people say? They look so poor. My people will see that I am not a *menak* and I will lose their respect.”

For a moment, *Dalem* Boncel was deep in thought. There was a great struggle within his heart. He did not know what to decide.

“*Juragan*. . .” the guard called carefully.

“Eh... emm, I have no parents. They had passed away years ago. Tell those people to get lost.” *Dalem* Boncel instructed his guard.

The guard quickly went back to the gate.

“Hey, you! How dare you claim to be *Dalem* Boncel’s parents?” He barked and pointed at Boncel’s parents’ faces.

“I beg your pardon, Kind Sir. We are his parents. We did not make this up.” Boncel’s father replied meekly.

“Just go home. *Dalem* Boncel’s parents had passed away.”

“Oh, my God. We are his parents. We are!” Boncel’s father tried to convince the guard.

“What is the proof, huh?”

“I can tell you what he looks like,” Boncel’s father said.

“Anyone who knows *Dalem* Boncel can do that. Let’s see if you do know!”

“Boncel, our son is short and sturdy. There is a black spot on his right cheek,” Boncel’s father described him. The guard was a little surprised that he knew all that.

“We have not seen him for years. Please let us in. We miss him so much. We just want to see him,” Boncel’s mother begged. Tears filled her eyes.

“Well, *Dalem* Boncel does not want to see you. Now, go!” The guard told them.

Boncel’s father ran through the gate and the guards. The guards were surprised and reacted a little too late.

“Stop! Stop right there! You can’t just burst into *Dalem* Boncel’s house.”

“We will not leave until we see *Dalem* Boncel.”

“Fine. Wait here.”

The guard went inside again to report that the visitors refused to leave. Meanwhile, the other guard tried to keep Boncel’s parents from getting in.

Hearing that his parents did not budge, Boncel finally went out to see them. Now he could see with his own eyes how poor his parents looked. They looked so old and clearly had suffered a lot of hardship.

“Boncel, . . . Boncel, . . . My son!”

Boncel’s mother ran towards her son, following her husband.

The guards let them go. They pitied the old couple.

Boncel’s parents finally stood in front of their son. Boncel’s mother ran towards him, trying to embrace *Dalem* Boncel. She cried, “My son . . . My beloved son. Oh, I miss you so much!”

Dalem Boncel stepped back and turned his head away, trying to get away from his mother.

“Guards!” *Dalem* Boncel called coldly.

“Yes, *Juragan*.” The guards ran towards *Dalem* Boncel.

“I told you that my parents have passed away. Kick them out!” *Dalem* Boncel yelled. His face was beet red, either from anger or

embarrassment.

The guards quickly obeyed and took the old couple by force. Boncel's mother cried hysterically, "Boncel . . . Boncel, my son. I am your mother. Don't you recognize me?"

"Boncel, how could you do this to us, your parents?" Boncel's father called.

Dalem Boncel did not respond at all. He turned his back and went to his room. He stayed there until the evening.

Boncel's parents were dismayed. They were very disappointed. They decided that it was best for them to return to Bungbulang Village. Their hearts were heavy with sadness. All the way home, Boncel's mother did not stop crying. Boncel's father was mad, sad, and embarrassed that his son turned out to be like that.

They arrived in Bungbulang Village with a worse state than before. Their sadness, regret, and disappointment broke their heart. They fell ill and passed away; Boncel's mother first, followed by his father a year later.

Meanwhile, *Dalem* Boncel began to regret what he had done. A week after his parents left, he thought hard about it. Deep in his heart, he missed them too. However, he was embarrassed and afraid to lose his position. He thought, "Why did I do that? How could I have the heart to kick them out? They have raised me

well, even when they were so poor. They have taught me to live. It was because of their prayers that I succeed.”

Dalem Boncel’s heart was filled with regret. He remembered how his mother had told him bedtime stories about kings and heroes. It was those stories that had inspired him to fight for a better life.

He remembered how poor his parents had looked. His father’s voice calling him still echoed in his head. Boncel was so sad. Years passed by and Boncel was consumed by his regret until he came down with a strange illness. All his body was itchy and his skin peeled off in patches. Numerous healers from all over the land were called to his house but no one could heal him.

One night, *Dalem Boncel* dreamed about his parents. He saw them crying and a disembodied voice called him.

“Oh, Boncel, you ungrateful child. You rejected your own parents, dismissed them like they were nothing. Look at them now, crying their hearts out.”

Dalem Boncel finally realized his mistake. What he suffered might be a punishment from God for what he had done to his parents. *Dalem Boncel* decided to go to Bungbulang Village and see his parents. He instructed his guards and servants to prepare the provisions for the journey. He told them to prepare various invaluable gifts. He wanted to apologize to his parents.

It took them two weeks to reach Bungbulang Village on horseback. When he arrived, *Dalem* Boncel was shocked to find that his parents had passed away. He then went to their graves.

“Mother . . . Father . . .” Boncel knelt on the ground, crying, “Mother, Father, please forgive your ungrateful son.”

“I am a worthless man. I had kicked you out of my house.” Boncel cried and cried all afternoon.

Every day, Boncel visited his parents’ graves and cried, begging for forgiveness. However, it was all in vain because they had gone from this world. Boncel refused to return to *Kadipaten* Caringin. He stayed in Bungbulang Village until he died of the strange disease, the itch that could not be healed.

That was a story of a man who forgot his origin. He forgot where he came from and who his parents were. Wealth and position had blinded him. No matter how much he regretted it, he could not turn back time.

History recorded that *Dalem* Boncel ruled in *Kadipaten* Caringin from 1840 to 1849. It also recorded that in 1883, the Krakatoa erupted and destroyed *Kadipaten* Caringin. The whole area was devastated and the capital was relocated to Pandeglang. The name was also changed into Pandeglang Regency.