

**KEKE PANAGIAN**

*Keke Panagian*

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**Language Development and Cultivation Agency  
Ministry of Education and Culture  
Republic of Indonesia  
2018**

## **KEKE PANAGIAN**

Translated from  
***Keke Panagian***  
written by Nontje Deisye Wewenggang  
published by  
Language Development and Cultivation Agency  
Ministry of Education and Culture  
in 2016

This translation has been published as the result of the translation program organized  
by The Center for Language Strategy and Diplomacy Development,  
Language Development and Cultivation Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture  
in 2018

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## KEKE PANAGIAN

### A Dream Came True

In a village called Wanua Uner, lived a pair of husband and wife, Pontohroring and Mamalauan, respectively. They had been married for a long time, but they had not got any children. Despite their old age, they still had a hope that one day they would get children. “What are you doing, dear?” Pontohroring asked his wife, Mamalauan, one afternoon.

“Oh.... Look at this! I’m making a shirt for our child. She must look beautiful wearing this,” replied Mamalauan without looking away from the shirt she was sewing.

“How do you know that our child will be a girl?” asked her husband.

“I’ve got a feeling that our child will be a girl, darling. But if our child is a boy, I will make a shirt for a boy, too,” said she. They laughed happily, but then they were silent as if they had been thinking about something.

“Why are you silent? Are you thinking about what I’m thinking?” asked her husband.

“Yes, darling! Hundreds of full moons have passed since we got married. We have done everything to make our dream come true. We have prayed, we have fasted, but our prayers have not been answered. We haven’t got any child yet.”

“We shouldn’t give up our hope, honey. We have to keep praying and trying. God listens to our prayer as long as we don’t give up our hope. You’d better prepare our dinner. I’m going to Tonaas (village head) now. He sent me a message that I should see him this afternoon,” said her husband. Pontohroring went to the house of Tonaas. Mamalauan saw him off at the front door. While looking at her husband, Mamalauan prayed in her heart, ‘Dear God! We have never doubted You, nor will we ever. We believe You will bestow us a child, sooner or later!’

Meanwhile, Pontohroring, who was on his way to Tonaas’ house, met his friend, Lumanau, on the way.

“Hello, Brother Pontohroring!”

“Hello, Brother Lumanau!”

“Where are you going, Brother? You seem to hurry,” said Lumanau.

“Actually, not quite so. I’m going to Tonaas’ house. He sent me a message this morning that I should meet him in his house this afternoon,” replied Pontohroring.

“Well! So we’re going to the same place. I was also told to go to Tonaas’ house this afternoon. There must be something very urgent to discuss. We’d better hurry up, then. Maybe Tonaas has been waiting for us,” said Lumanau.

To keep up the conversation, Pontohroring asked, “I hardly ever see you the last few days, Lumanau. Did you go sailing or...?”

“No, my brother! I went to the next village for medication. Last week, I fell from a tree. I sprained only my wrist, but I went to the next village. I had to stay there for several days so that continual massage could be done. O ya, Pontohroring. The masseur is very skillful. His name is Mondoringin. He can cure various kinds of sickness with massages and potions from herbs. Even his wife can massage a barren woman until she gets pregnant. If you are interested, I can take you there.”

Pontohroring did not reply because they already reached the house of Tonaas. But Lumanau’s narration had occupied his mind afterwards for unknown reasons. Pontohroring was silent most of the time in the meeting. He wanted to get home soon. He had something to tell Mamalauan. Therefore, as soon as the meeting was over, he immediately took leave. As soon as he got home, he met his wife.

“Mom...! Mommy...!”

“What’s up, dear? I am here in the kitchen.”

“Mom! On my way to Tonaas’ house, I met Lumanau on the way. He told me that in the next village there is a pair of husband and wife who have skills for curing many kinds of sicknesses. Lumanau told me that they can even give medication and massages for us to get a baby. If you agree, we can go there tomorrow to see them. Who knows, God answers our prayer through their help,” said Pontohroring enthusiastically. Mamalauan was silent as she was listening to her husband’s words, but her eyes misted over. There was a hope in her teary eyes.

“Do you want to try, honey?” he asked her.

“Yes! Absolutely, dear. I am happy to hear this good news. This time, I have a conviction in my heart that God has showed us this way to answer our prayer,” replied his wife, and looking upwards, she raised her hands in thankfulness, “We thank you, o God!”

“Now, wipe your tears and prepare our dinner. We should pack up tonight for our journey tomorrow morning,” said Pontohroring.

A happy smile appeared on Mamalauan’s lips. She prepared the dinner while humming happily. That night, Mamalauan almost could not get asleep. She could not wait too see the sun rise welcoming the morning. She had a strong faith that God finally answered their prayer that they would get a child.

Therefore, as soon as the roosters crowed once as the sign of the coming of dawn, she immediately rose from her bed to prepare for breakfast and their provisions for the journey. She thanked God profusely. Pontohroring also got up at once. He prepared everything necessary for their journey, including the things needed in case they had to stay there for days. After they completed their preparation, they did not forget to tidy up their house, and then they had their breakfast together.

“Are you ready for this journey, honey?” asked Pontohroring.

“I am not only ready for this journey, but I am also ready to become a mother,” replied his wife smilingly.

“Great, then! Let’s now for the last time check the house and check our provisions we are going to bring, then we leave,” said Pontohroring.

“Don’t forget to take leave from the neighbours and ask them to occasionally watch our house,” said his wife.

“I have told them and they prayed for us,” replied her husband.

“God be praised! Then we don’t need to delay anymore. Let’s get going,” said Mamalauan. After making sure everything was all right, they left for the next village. Their destination was not too far.

After walking for about three hours, they arrived at the village of Wiamou, where Mondoringin, the massaeure, who was well known for his skill in curing sickness through massage and herbal potions, lived with his wife, Laloan. They found no difficulty in finding Mondoringin's house, because everybody in the village knew him.

"Good afternoon," greeted Pontohroring as they arrived at the front of Mondoringin's house.

"Good afternoon," a female voice was heard from inside the house. A woman about Mamalauan's age appeared from inside the house. She was Mondoringin's wife, Laloan.

"Please come in," she said inviting them to enter the house. She was very friendly. After telling Pontohroring and Mamalauan to sit down, she entered a room and went out with some snacks and drinks.

"Please enjoy your drink and this fried banana. After that, if you want to take a shower, there is a bathroom over there, or if you want to take a rest, you are welcome. We are used to getting visitors like you ...."

"Errr... I am Pontohroring, and this is my wife, Mamalauan," interrupted Pontohroring introducing himself and his wife.



“O ya, Mr Pontohroring and Mrs Mamalauan. Please don’t hesitate. Feel at home. When my husband gets home, we’ll have lunch together,” said Laloan.

Pontohroring and Mamalauan were very impressed with the hospitality of their hostess. She acted as if she had been expecting them.

“Errr.... Actually we come here to ...,” Pontohroring was about to tell her the purpose of their coming, but before he could finish his words, their hostess interrupted.

“You don’t need to tell me. I’ve been informed about your coming in my dream. Now take a rest first. You must be very tired. My husband will be home anytime. Later, after we have lunch, we can talk about the purpose of your coming. Now I’ll leave you first. You may take a rest in that room,” so saying, she pointed her hand to the door of a room in the house. Pontohroring and Mamalauan took the time to wash themselves and have a rest for some moments while eating the fried banana and having the drink prepared for them. It was not long before Mondoringin came home.

He was as friendly as his wife. They had lunch together like old friends as if they had known one another for many years. After the meal, they sat on the front veranda and had a conversation.

“So, what do you expect from us? A few days ago, my wife had a dream about your coming. How can we be of any help?” asked Mondoringin opening the conversation.

“My name is Pontohroring, and this is my wife, Mamalauan. We have been married for years now, but we haven’t got any children. We have done all that we have been able to do to get a baby, but so far we haven’t been successful. Yesterday, we heard about you that you could cure various sicknesses. We come here because we believe that God will answer our prayer for children through your help. That’s our expectation,” replied Pontohroring.

“We have to tell you that we are just common human beings like you. Only God can decide what He wants. However, we will go through the phases of medication and massages.

You two should follow the procedures, especially fasting and restraining from certain kinds of foods. And for that purpose, you have to stay here for two to three weeks. How about it?” asked Mondoringin.

Pontohroring and Mamalauan agreed with the requirements explained by Mondoringin. They started to follow the procedures and they stayed at Mondoringin’s house for fifteen days. After going through all phases of the therapy, they were allowed to leave on condition that they would continue consuming the medicines made by Mondoringin’s wife. Days passed, and weeks changed.

Pontohroring and Mamalauan kept praying earnestly with all hopes and followed the procedures of therapy prescribed by Mondoringin. Finally their efforts showed a fruitful result. Their hope to get a child finally turned into a reality. Mamalauan was eventually pregnant.

“Dear! I feel dizzy. For the last two days I have felt like wanting to vomit. Even this morning I vomitted,” complained Mamalauan one day.

“Perhaps you’ve had cold or you’ve been tired due to working too hard. Now, have some rest and don’t work too hard. I’m going to fetch Ma Tua. You’ve got to be checked by her,” said Pontohroring. He immediately went to the house of Ma Tua, his wife’s eldest sister. She could treat light sicknesses.

“Ma Tua, please check Mamalauan. She has often nauseated for the last couple of days and felt dizzy lately,” said Pontohroring telling Ma Tua as soon as he got to her house.

“Hmm... It seems that you will soon get good news. Come on! Let’s go checking what she has,” said Ma Tua.

“What do you mean, Ma Tua?” asked Pontohroring curiously as he followed Ma Tua, who hastened to leave for Pontohroring’s house to check Mamalauan.

“You’ll soon know!” replied she.

When they arrived at the house, Mamalauan was already lying down in the bed. Ma Tua checked her at once.

“Do you feel dizzy and nauseated?” Ma Tua asked Mamalauan checking her pulses.

“Yes, sister, especially in the morning.”

“Congratulation! You’re pregnant, Mamalauan. Now you’ve been pregnant for two weeks. You’d better take care of your pregnancy, especially since you’re not young anymore,” said Ma Tua.

“What do you say, sister? I am pregnant?! What a surprise! Finally I’m going to have a baby. I am sure it’s a baby girl! Thank You, o God!” said Mamalauan happily. Pontohroring was no less happy. He prostrated and thanked God earnestly.

“O Merciful God! Praised be Your Holy Name, o the Owner of my life! Finally You have granted our wish. We thank You, o God! We’ll take care of this gift of Yours to us!”

The following days were happy days to Pontohroring and Mamalauan. He took greater care of his wife. He tried to fulfill all her cravings to his best. After nine months, she gave birth to a cute and healthy baby girl. They named her Keke Panagian. Keke is a tender call for a female child in Minahasa.

## **Keke Panagian's Childhood**

Panagian grew into a beautiful and well-mannered girl. She was greatly loved by her parents. All her desires were fulfilled by her loving parents. She was protected, taken care, and loved by her parents. Not only her parents who loved Keke Panagian, but her uncles, her aunts, and all neighbours also loved her.

Despite the love of all people, she did not turn arrogant and naughty. The reason why she was so loved was because she was so kind, so loving, and so helpful. One day, on the 7<sup>th</sup> birthday of Keke Panagian, it rained heavily. It was still late afternoon, but the day was dark like night due to the clouds and rains. Keke Panagian suddenly disappeared. Her mother could not find her anywhere in the house. At that time, Pontohroring was away to Tonaas' house.

“Keke...! Keke Panagian...! Where are you, dear?” shouted Mamalauan. Repeatedly she shouted her name, but there was no reply. The rain got heavier. Occasionally it was accompanied by thunder. Mamalauan started to feel worried, even scared at the thought that something had happened to Keke Panagian. She ran in the rain to the neighbours' houses, but Keke was not there. She could not hold her tears anymore. Ignoring her soaking body, she ran to her brothers' and sisters' houses, but Keke Panagian was nowhere to be found. Mamalauan was very scared and hopeless. Finally she decided to go to Tonaas' house.

Everyone who was present at Tonaas' house was surprised, especially Pontohroring, looking at Mamalauan's coming with bedraggled body.

"Mommy...! What's up, Mom? Why are you this soaking?" asked Pontohroring welcoming his wife.

"All right! Don't ask her questions yet. Let me take her inside to change clothes first," said Tonaas' wife intending to take Mamalauan inside.

"No, Mam!" Mamalauan refused Tonaas' wife's offer. She disregarded her cold and soaking body. She was in profuse tears. She looked at her husband with all guilty feelings and fear.

"Dear, it's Panagian! Panagian...!" she could not finish her words due to the bursting cry.

"What happens to Panagian?" Pontohroring immediately hugged and comforted his wife.

"Panagian is not home. I've tried to find her everywhere, but she's nowhere to be found," said Mamalauan weeping on her husband's chest. Pontohroring turned pale to hear that. He was shocked. There was a great worry in his eyes.

"Mr Tonaas, excuse me! My daughter's not home in this heavily rained night. I'm really worried. I'm going to look for her," said Pontohroring taking leave from Tonaas.

“Wait! Let’s look for her together. Brothers, let’s look for Keke Panagian together,” Tonaas invited everyone in the meeting.

“Come on. Let’s go!” they replied cooperatively.

“Before we start, may I ask you, Mrs Mamalauan?” asked Tonaas.

“Yes, sure!” replied Mamalauan.

“How could it happen? How did Keke Panagian disappear?”

“Keke was with me in the bedroom, but then I went to the kitchen to prepare for dinner. So Keke played alone in the bedroom, but when I entered the room again, I didn’t see her. I tried to find her everywhere in the house, but I couldn’t find her. I have looked for her at the neighbours’ houses, even at the houses of my brothers’ and sisters’, but she was nowhere to find.”

“All right! Now let’s look for Panagian around Pontohroring’s house first,” said Tonaas, “I’m sure she mustn’t go far from the house.”

So they left for Pontohroring’s house. The rain was still pouring heavily, the night was getting darker, and Mamalauan was still crying. As soon as they reached Pontohroring’s house, they scattered straight away to skirt around the house. Mamalauan immediately entered the house, changed her clothes and prepared hot tea and fried banana for the men who were busy looking for

her daughter in the rainy night. While working, Mamalauan continuously and silently prayed for Keke Panagian, “O God! Protect my daughter! Forgive me who cannot take care of her properly.”

Not long afterwards, the voices of the men who were looking for Keke Panagian were heard and Mamalauan ran outside at once with all hopes.

“Have you found my daughter?”

“Yes, Mam. Here she is. She is fine.”

Pontohroring stepped aside so Mamalauan could see Keke Panagian who was hiding behind him. When Keke Panagian saw her mother, she looked frightened.

“Mom, forgive me, will you?” pleaded Keke Panagian in tears.

Without answering, Mamalauan rushed forward and hugged her daughter, “No, dear. I’m not angry with you. Please stop crying.”

Mamalauan felt something on Keke Panagian’s bosom when she hugged her. Mamalauan released her hug to see what Keke Panagian brought.

“What are you carrying, dear?” she asked curiously.

“This are kittens, Mom,” replied Keke softly.



“All right. Don’t ask her questions yet. Take her inside and change her clothes. She has been wet for long already. Hurry up, Mom. Get her something to warm her body,” Pontohroring reminded his wife. Keke handed over her kittens to her father. Mamalauan took her inside. Pontohroring invited the men inside to enjoy the hot tea and fried banana prepared by his wife. After changing Keke Panagian’s clothes and giving warm drink, Mamalauan took her to join Pontohroring and the men in the living room.

“Nah... Here she is, the pretty girl. Come here,” said Tonaas taking Keke Panagian to his lap.

“Mr Tonaas, where did you find Keke Panagian?” asked Mamalauan curiously.

“We found her near the hut not far from here. She was warming these kittens,” replied Tonaas smiling at Keke Panagian.

“Now you’ve got to tell us why you were at the hut in this rainy night. Were you not afraid at all?” asked Tonaas looking at Keke Panagian in his lap.

“I was playing in the room when I heard the kitten miaowing under the stairs. I went down to see it. I felt pity for it because it was cold. I took it and was about to step up when I heard another one miaowing not far from the stairs. I approcated it to take it, but it ran away. I kept running after it until we reached the hut.

Obviously there was another one in the hut. The rain was getting heavier and there were thunders, so I felt scared to go home.”

Keke stopped her story. Looking at her mother, she ran towards her and embraced her, “Please forgive me, Mom. I was afraid of taking these kittens home, lest you disapproved of it. They have no mother. I feel sorry for them. May they stay here, Mom?” asked Keke Panagian pitifully. Mamalauan was moved by her daughter’s story.

She hugged Keke Panagian and kissed her tenderly, “Of course they may stay here, dear, as long as you take care of them well.”

All the men laughed and felt proud of her kindness, then Tonaas and the other men took leave. Keke Panagian was really a kind girl. She took great care of the kittens. Besides the kittens, she also had a dog which she loved and took great care of. The dog and the kittens were good friends because Keke Panagian trained them to care for one another. Keke Panagian was also loved by her friends. She was always fair when she was playing with her friends. Besides, she was also smart and courageous. One day, when she was eight, she was almost carried away by the strong current in the river when she was trying to help her friend, Keke Wulan. The river in Wanua Uner was clean, but the current was strong, especially after the rain. At that time, Keke Panagian and her friends were playing and swimming while trying to catch small fish on the river bank.

“Come on, Panagian, let’s go to the river,” invited Keke Wulan who was coming with Keke Umboh and Utu Palit.

“I’ll ask Mommy first,” said Keke Panagian meeting her mother in the kitchen, “Mom! May I go to the river with my friends?”

“Yes, you may, but let’s go together. After cooking this fish, I’m also going to the river to wash the clothes.”

“Okay, Mom,” Panagian was happy that her mother allowed her to go to the river. She went to her friends straight away to tell them that her mother permitted her to go to the river, “Friends! We may go to the river, but with my mother. By chance, my mother is also going to the river after cooking. So, let’s play here first!”

So they were playng while waiting. After a few moments, they left together to the river with Mamalauan.

“I am going to wash clothes. You children should play only on the edge on the river, don’t go to the middle. Will you promise me, kids?” Mamalauan reminded them.

“We give you our promise, Aunty,” they said happily, “Come on, friends. There are many small fish around here. Let’s catch them. Let’s compete aand see who catches the most fish!” Utu Palit shouted enthusiastically, followed by the others.

“Remember kids! Don’t go to the middle!” Mamalauan reminded again.

“Yes, Mom!” said Keke Panagian.

“Yes, Aunty!” said the others.

Keke Panagian was very happy. They sprinkled water on one another while laughing happily. After that they caught fish with the one end of their cloth tied to their hips while the other end was used to catch fish like a net. Without realizing it, Keke Wulan was separated a bit far from the others. Suddenly she slipped to the deeper part of the river with a stronger current.

“Help! Help!” cried Keke Wulan while being carried away by the current. She tried to hold the rocks emerging on the surface of the river, but they were slippery, so Keke Wulan was carried farther by the current. Mamalauan, Panagian, and the others were surprised and they stopped their activities and tried to help Keke Wulan. Suddenly, they saw Panagian plung to the river trying to help Keke Wulan.

“Panagian, what are you doing?” asked Mamalauan starting to panic, “O God! Protect the children!”

Keke Panagian did not reply because she was too busy helping Keke Wulan, and she succeeded in catching Keke Wulan’s hand. Mamalauan took a breath of relief. She then grabbed a piece of wood lying close to her and ran on the river bank towards the spot where Keke Panagian and Keke Wulan could easily catch the wood.

“Panagian! Come on, dear! Swim to the river bank, then grab this wood. Come on, dear. You must be able,” encouraged Mamalauan. Panagian held Wulan’s hand and struggled to swim against the stream. They tried to swim to the river bank, while Mamalauan and the other children kept following them from the river bank. Several times they tried to grab the piece of wood but they failed. Suddenly Mamalauan saw a tree root stretched towards the middle of the river.

“Look, Keke! There’s a root near you. Grab it, dear!”

Panagian and Wulan managed to seize and hold the root so that they were not carried by the current anymore. The Mamalauan stretched the wood which Panagian and Wulan grabbed successfully, then they were pulled to the river bank.

As soon as they came to the river bank, Mamalauan hugged them tightly and took them home. She was still trembling due to anxiety but she was very proud with her daughter that she had the courage to help other people despite the potential danger for herself.

“Mom, you won’t tell Daddy about this, will you?” said Keke Panagian.

“I won’t, but you have to promise you won’t play in the river again. And you, Panagian, if you wish to help your friends, you have to make sure you don’t put yourself in danger. If you are

unsafe, how can you save others? Do you hear that?” Mamalauan picked up the washings and took the children home. After the incident when Panagian helped the kittens in the rainy night and the incident in the river, Keke Panagian was observed more closely. Pontohroring and Mamalauan never left Panagian alone anymore. She was not even permitted to go out of the house. If she wanted to play with her friends, her mother would call her friends to play with Keke around the house. She could not go out of the house because her parents were afraid something bad would happen to her. Her parents’ restriction was even tighter as she grew up into a teenager. She could not play out of the house, let alone at night.

### **The Thanksgiving Party**

In Wanua Uner, the village where Keke Panagian and her family lived, there was a tradition to have a thanksgiving party every time after they had a harvest. The party was a form of showing gratefulness to God the Almighty who had bestowed all the people of the village His blessing.

The party was held every time they finished harvesting their crops. The people would gather on the field at the night of full moon. They would dance *maengket* for the whole night. One day, when Keke Panagian was in her teenage, after harvesting rice, Tonaas told the *palakat* (crier) to convey the announcement to the whole people of the village. The crier then went around the

village tapping the *tetengkoren*. At certain places, he would cry the announcement loudly.

“*Luminga-linga palakat* (Listen to the announcement)! To all people of Wanua Uner, the thanksgiving party will be held this month, at the night of full moon. This time, the party will be merrier because the harvest is very successful this time. All people are expected to provide all types of cakes and gather on the field.

That’s the announcement! *Luminga-linga palakat!*” In this way, the crier moved from one place to another announcing Tonaas’ message.

All people were happy to hear the announcement, including Keke Panagian. Generally, during thanksgiving, the people would prepare special dishes. Relatives from other villages would come to visit them and share the happiness. They would visit one another and share their foods. At night, everybody would gather on the field and dance *maengket* together. The teenagers and youths of the village were very happy to hear the announcement. They started to plan what programs they would have beside the *maengket* dance, what clothes they would wear and so on. Keke Panagian was no exception. She had a strong desire to take part in the thanksgiving party this time. When she was younger, her father took her once to a thanksgiving party. She was very happy to see the *maengket* dancers singing while dancing the same

dance, accompanied by drum. At that time, she thought that when she grew up, she would like to dance *maengket*, too.

‘Perhaps this is the time I can dance *maengket*,’ thought Kekek Panagian.

The next day, Keke Panagian was visited by her friends: Keke Wulan, Keke Umboh, and Utu palit. They were her childhood playmates.

“Good day, Aunty! Is Panagian home?”

“Good day, girls! Please come in. Panagian is upstairs. By chance, I am going to wash clothes in the river. You accompany Panagian first, won’t you?” said Mamalauan.

“All right, Aunty,” they replied as they ascended the stairs.

Since they were little children, they had been used to being in the house, so they went up the house straight away. They found Keke Panagian alone daydreaming on the veranda.

“Hey! What are you up to?” Utu Palit surprised Panagian, “A girl shouldn’t be daydreaming. Otherwise, she’ll be a laughing stock for house lizards. Look at those house lizards, they are laughing at you while hiding, hehehe ...,” Utu Palit teased Keke Panagian who was daydreaming. Panagian was surprised and her cheeks turned red in embarrassment. The four of them laughed cheerfully.



“I can’t wait for the night of full moon. This is the first time we are allowed to dance *maengket*, isn’t it?” Keke Wulan started the conversation.

“Neither can I. My mother has made a special shirt for me for the thanksgiving party,” Keke Umboh added, not wanting to be outdone.

“Panagian, you’re very good at plaiting hair. For the tahnksiving party, will you plait my hair, please!” pleaded Keke Umboh.

“I want to my hair to get plaited, too. Panagian, will you plait our hairs?”

“Me, too. OK?” Utu Palit provoked a laughter again.

“Panagian, you have looked gloomy ever since we came here. Although you laugh with us, but I can sense that you’re not really with us. Are you thinking about something?” Utu Palit asked with a serious look.

“Ah, nothing at all,” replied Panagian avoided their question.

“That’s true. Normally, when we get together, you’re the most cheerful, Panagian. Why have we seen you just smile and keep silent? You haven’t told us about your preparation and feeling about the thanksgiving party,” said Keke Wulan.

“Have you got any problem, Panagian? Come on, tell us. Aren’t we your friends? We’ve been friends from childhood. Maybe we can be of any help,” added Keke Umboh.

“Well, my dear friends. I do have a little problem. I might not be allowed to attend the thanksgiving party. You know my parents very well. Since I disappeared the night I saved the kittens, I had been closely watched and could not go out of the house freely. After I turned twelve, the restriction got stricter, especially at night time. Nonetheless, I really want to join the thanksgiving party.”

Everyone was silent. The cheerfulness suddenly turned gloomy. Keke Panagian started to shed tears, her friends were also sad. They could not imagine enjoying themselves in the thanksgiving party without Keke Panagian, their best friend, because it was Panagian who was always the merrymaker.

“Try to get your father’s permission. Who knows he will understand and allow you to join the party,” advised Utu Palit.

“I’ve been thinking it over for days, but I have no courage to do it,” replied Panagian sadly. She was really sad. She knew that her parents just would not let her. She was not allowed to go the neighbours’ house, let alone to the field.

“You know, we have planned to make you our dance leader,” said Keke Umboh. She looked regretful as she realized her plan would be void.

They were all silent, busy with their own thoughts until Panagian’s mother returned from the river.

“Hey, girls. What’s up? Why are you all silent? Panagian, why didn’t you make some drinks for your friends? Normally you would have messed up the kitchen. Why are you all unexcited this time?” Mamalauan was surprised to see the four friends were unusually unenthusiastic.

“Errr... Aunty...,” Utu Palit tried to break the silence.

“Well, Mom, it’s nothing,” interrupted Keke Panagian.

“Come on, Panagian. Talk to your mother. Who knows your mother can talk it over with your father,” Keke Wulan encouraged Keke Panagian.

“Yes, dear. What’s the matter?” said Mamalauan interestedly. She took a seat among the girls.

“All right, friends. Let me talk it over with my mother. Now we’d better go to the kitchen to make *kolak*. What about that?” said Panagian.

“Ok,” the girls all agreed and rushed to the kitchen. They left Mamalauan alone who was still wondering, but then she smiled proudly of them. She joined them in the kitchen. That night, Pontohroring went to Tonaas’ house. Mamalauan saw Panagian sitting pensively at the veranda. She looked gloomy. Actually she had perceived some changes for the last few days in Panagian’s attitude.

“Keke Panagian, my dear daughter. I have seen you gloomy for the last few days. What’s the matter, dear?” asked Mamalauan.

Keke Panagian looked deeply into her mother’s eyes, wondering if her mother could help.

“Mom! I have a wish, but I am not sure if Daddy and Mommy are willing to fulfill it,” said Keke Panagian.

“Tell me, dear. We have never disappointed you so far, so why should we now?” encouraged Mamalauan.

“But this time, my wish is not as usual, Mom.”

“Do tell me. I’ll think it over.”

Keke Panagian placed her head on her mother's bosom, "Mom. Thanksgiving party is just around the corner. All my friends have prepared themselves for the party, even their mothers have made special clothes for it. I really want to join, too. May I, Mom?"

Mamalauan was surprised to hear Panagian's request. After a moment of silence, she said, "My dear daughter. To me, I don't see why you shouldn't go, but with your father, it's different. You know him, don't you?" she took a deep breath, then continued, "But you can ask him yourself, who knows he approves your request this time. I'll tell him myself. Now go to sleep. I have sewn new clothes for you. Tomorrow you'll wear new ones."

Keke Panagian gave her mother a kiss on the cheek and went to bed. That night she found it hard to sleep. She was wondering what her father will decide for her, what she would do if her father did not approve of her going to the thanksgiving party. The next day, as she could not sleep the night before, from early morning, Panagian had helped her mother in the kitchen. They were busy preparing for the thanksgiving party the following day.

"Dear! Will you catch some of our chickens? I am going to buy meat from Mr Watulingas. I heard he had slaughtered a couple of pigs to be retailed," said Mamalauan to her husband.

"OK, Mom. Don't you need some vegetables, too?"

“Yes, sure. Please pick some cassava leaves and also *pangi* leaves,” she said before leaving. That day, they were busy preparing everything for the party the next day. By late afternoon, they had finished everything.

So Pontohroring took his time to relax on the veranda while his wife served him a cup of coffee and a plate of fried banana. Keke Panagian preferred staying in her room.

Mamalauan joined her husband on the veranda and sat together having their coffee and snacks on the veranda.

“Honey, our daughter is now a teenager. She needs to socialize with her teenage fellows. I suggest she be allowed to join the night of thanksgiving party on the field,” said Mamalauan carefully opening the conversation. Pontohroring did not answer at once. He looked thoughtful as he took and sip his coffee.

“She is indeed a teenager, but she is still too young. She can easily catch cold and get sick. I think, this year, Panagian shall not join the thanksgiving party, but we’ll see next year,” he replied. Keke Panagian eavesdropped her parents’ conversation. Hearing her father’s words, she felt deeply disappointed. She wanted to cry as she knew her dream to join the party was not approved. She ran to her room and cried. She really could not understand why she could not join the party like her friends. Are her parents not going to be there, too?

“Keke... Come on, dear. Let’s have dinner,” her mother’s voice surprised her. Her mother was already in her room.

“Hmmm... I am still full, Mom. I just want to rest,” replied Keke Panagian.

“Did you hear our conversation?” Mamalauan approached her daughter and embraced her. She tried to comfort her, “Don’t be sad, dear. You have to wait until next year.”

“But, Mom .... What if next year Dad still doesn’t allow me?”

“That’s still far away, dear. Try to talk to your father later.”

“I don’t see why I can’t join like my other friends. Don’t you, Mom and Dad, trust me? Don’t you believe I will take good care of myself and will not disappoint you?”

“It’s nothing like that, dear. But.... Well, I hope you obey your father. Now let’s eat first. If you don’t eat, your father will be suspicious.”

With a heavy heart, Keke Panagian followed her mother to the dining room. Her father was already waiting there. Keke Panagian was mostly silent during the meal.

## **Panagian Disobeyed Her Parents**

That night, Panagian was very restless. On the following day, the thanksgiving party would be held, but she had not got her parents' approval to attend it.

She thought hard how to persuade her father to allow her. She really wished she could join the party. Keke Panagian woke up very early that day. As usual, she helped her mother. Today was the day which Tonaas designated to hold the thanksgiving party. Everyone in Kampung Wanua Uher was busy cooking, cleaning the house, and making other preparations because people from other villages, near or far, would also come. Keke Panagian worked more diligently than usual. She wanted to impress her father and permit her to go to the field for the party. She was determined to ask for permission one more time from her father. That day, Wanua Uner village was crowded. A lot of guests came to join the thanksgiving. The house of Keke Panagian was no different. For Panagian, the day passed very slowly. She could not wait for the night to come with the people's party on the field. She doubted whether her father would change his mind or not. Finally the sun set and was replaced by the moon. The guests had returned to their villages. Keke Panagian's house had also been quiet. Keke Panagian took a shower and prepared for the party on the field, although she had not got permission. She dressed up in the new clothes sewn by her mother. She applied a little make up.



It was about half past six in the evening, just as the moon appeared in its beautiful form. Panagian met her parents who were sitting on the veranda.

Panagian encouraged herself to ask for permission, “Dad, I have something to say.”

“Wow! My daughter is very beautiful. Is it new clothes?” Pontohroring complimented his daughter while looking at his wife, “OK, what is it that you want to say?”

“But please don’t be angry ....”

“Why should I be angry? Come on, tell me!”

“May I go to the field to join the thanksgiving party?” she asked carefully.

“Oh, about that one! Listen, dear. Your mommy and I talked it over last night. We decided that you may not join the party yet. Later when you grow up older you may join. The weather outside is very cold. I don’t want you to get sick.”

“But, Dad ....?!”

“No more buts, dear. Don’t argue. You’d better go to your room and sleep.”

“Keke Panagian was very sad. She entered her room and wept with all her heart while praying:

“O God the Merciful. I am very sad. I really want to go to the field. I want to take part in the thanksgiving party and join my friends. I wish You could show me a way....!”

Keke Panagian repeated her prayer over and over again, hoping something miraculous would happen. Suddenly, something miraculous really happened. From the cracks of her room’s wall, she could see a very bright light outside her house. She was surprised as well as frightened and, at the same time, curious, what kind of light it was outside. She opened her window slowly and was surprised to see what she saw. In front of her was a road towards the field where the party was held. From the window of her room, she could see the field with the crowd of people. The people had gathered. She could even see her friends there, Keke Wulan, Keke Umboh and Utu Palit chatting and joking with their other friends. She was pensive and sad she could not join them. Her surprise at what she had seen had not even gone when she heard a voice, “Panagian! Get up! If you really want to go to the field, go through this road!”

She was very happy with that. She forgot her parents’ objection. Her mind and desire were directed to the festivity on the field. Without further question, Panagian stepped up the stairs leading to the road to the field. When she arrived at the field, everyone on

the field was silent for a moment. They could not believe that Panagian was actually joining them on the field through an illuminated road. They were like bewitched. After some moments, the stairs and the light disappeared. Only Keke Panagian was there. As they saw her, they all cheered because she was famous in the village for her kindness, her intelligence, and her beauty. Besides, the people of Wanua Uner were surprised to see her miraculous appearance. They thought that Panagian was really coming from heaven. Based on the proposals of the elders of the village, Tonaas appointed Panagian the leader of *maengket* dance which was a part of the party.

Tonaas started the ceremony. He walked towards a stone in the middle of the field. He stepped up to the stone and started reciting the prayer which was followed by everyone present on the field.

“O God the Almighty,” Tonaas started the ceremony.

“O God the Almighty,” everyone repeated.

“Look at us who appear before You,” Tonaas continued.

“Look at us who appear before You,” the people repeated.

“To thank you for the good harvest!”

“To thank you for the good harvest!”

“*Sa si Empung Wailan minalimi bene laker, e owey...* “

(He is the God who gives us abundant rice.)

That was the voice of Panagian. She sang the song of *maengket* accompanied by the sound of drum. The people continued her sentence with the next sentence of the *maengket* song and formed a circle tidily. Then they started dancing. It was a miracle that although she had never danced *maengket* before, (for she was never allowed to go out into the field), Keke Panagian could lead the *maengket* dance naturally. She danced beautifully. Everyone on the field danced and partied until the midnight. As the midnight came, one by one the people went home, including Keke Panagian. As she arrived at the frontyard, then she realized that she had disobeyed her parents. She regretted it and became very afraid of her father's anger, but she had to be home. She knew that she had to be responsible for what she had done. She made up her mind to face her father's anger. She saw that the door was still closed and the stairs were still lifted. The Minahasanese house in the past used to have two stairs which used to be lifted at night to avoid wild animals. The lower part of the house used to be the place for domestic animals kept by the family. That night, Panagian could not get into the house. What she could do was calling her parents, requesting for the stairs to be lowered and be permitted to enter the house.

“Mommy... Daddy ... This is Keke, your beloved daughter. I am very sorry for having disobeyed you. I am sorry for having gone

to the field without your permission. I am ready to be punished, but please lower the stairs and let me in. I am getting cold here outside,” shouted she.

“Go away! We don’t know you. We have no place here for a disobedient child like you,” replied her father.

“But I am Keke Panagian, your beloved daughter. Mommy! Why are you silent? Please feel pity on me,” pleaded she.

“No! We don’t love you anymore. Go away!” replied her enraged father. She could hear her mother crying.

“Daddy ...! Mommy...! Are you that angry with me? Can’t you forgive me? I promise I won’t disobey you again. Please forgive me,” lamented Keke Panagian, but her father was not in the least perturbed.

“All right. I’m willing to go as you told me, but where shall I go? If I am not accepted on the earth, where else shall I go?” lamented Panagian pitifully. She requested repeatedly, but there was no answer from her parents.

“All right. If that’s what you want, I’ll go. Forgive me,” said Keke Panagian.

On that cold midnight, Keke Panagian went to the house of her mother’s sister alone. Keke Panagian who was not used to going out of the house was really scared. She met no one on the road.

Everywhere it was quiet and dark because the road lights had been put out. Her spine chilled. The sound of night birds and night animals added up to her fear. Tears rolled down her cheeks remembering her fault, her father's anger, her mother's powerlessness, and her loneliness on that dark night. When she arrived at the house of her mother's sister, Panagian called her aunt and pleaded, "Ma Tua... Pa Tua... Aunty... Uncle... This is Keke Panagian, let me in... I am cold out here!"

Her uncle and aunt were shocked to hear her voice calling at such time of the night.

"Keke! What have you been doing? Why are you loitering at this time of night?" asked her aunt, "Pa... Please lower the stairs."

As soon as the stairs were lowered, her aunt went down to meet Panagian.

"Ma Tua! May I spend the night here? I was punished by my father, I was not allowed to enter the house for disobeying him."

"How did you disobey your father, Keke?"

"Actually I was not permitted to go the party on the field, but there was a voice telling me to go through the stairs which suddenly appeared outside my window."

Her aunt felt sorry for her, but she could not do anything, "We're very sorry, Keke. If your father punishes you, we dare not

interfere. Go back home, sleep under the house. As your father gets up and sees you sleep there, perhaps his anger will go away.”

“But, Ma Tua, under the house there are the domestic animals. Do you have the heart to tell me to sleep with the animals?”

“I know, Keke, but please try to go back home. Who knows your father has changed his mind. Beg his pardon once again. Take this cloth to cover your head and your body to protect you from coldness. Go back home, dear!”

“All right, Ma Tua. I am leaving now. Forgive me for disturbing you.”

Keke Panagian left with a very broken heart. She was rejected by all. She used to be loved by everyone, now nobody loved her the way they had used to. She was really hopeless and did not know where to go. She walked aimlessly following her feet. Finally she arrived at the field where they had danced a few hours before.

### **The Regret**

Keke Panagian, due to her disobedience, was expelled by her parents and rejected by her relatives. She had no desire, but her feet carried her to the field where she was dancing earlier that night. She was alone. She had no mother who used to show her love to her, no father who used to give her protection, no relatives and friends to share her joys and sorrows. She was hopeless. She

sat alone on the stone where Tonaas led the thanksgiving ceremony in the middle of the field. The stone was called Batu Tumotoa. She cried lamenting her fate. She regretted having disobeyed her parents. She never expected it would turn out that way. She never thought her parents and her relatives would have the heart to do that to her. However, Panagian did not realize that she was being followed by many people secretly. They were her own parents, her uncle and her aunt, her friends: Keke Wulan, Keke Umboh, Utu Palit, and even Tonaas of Wanua Uner. Keke Panagian did not know that. She was carried away by her regret and sorrow.

“Mommy, Daddy, Ma Tua, Pa Tua, where are you? Where is your love that you used to give me? Isn’t it the first time I do a mistake? Isn’t it the first time I disobey you? Why is your punishment this heavy to me? Don’t you have forgiveness for Keke Panagian? Wulan, Umboh, Utu Palit, where are you?”

Keke Panagian wept in loneliness in the darkness of the night in the middle of the silent field. The winds seemed to stop blowing, the moon hid behind the clouds as if it had felt too sorry to see Keke Panagian’s sorrow, the night birds and animals had also been silent. The night and everything else seemed to direct their attention towards Keke Panagian’s lamentation, even those who followed her behind their hiding places were also carried by sadness, they were silent and fixed on their places. Mamalauan,



Ma Tua, and Keke Panagian's friends started to shed their tears. They were called by Mamalauan and Pontohroring to follow Panagian, to see her undergo the punishment.

"Dad, I can't bear to see my daughter's suffering. Please stop this. Panagian has admitted her mistake. Come on, Dad! Allow me to hug her and take her home. She can get sick if she is in that condition longer," asked Mamalauan persuading her husband.

"A little bit more, Mom. Panagian has to really be aware of her mistake so that she'll never do the same mistake, never disobey us again. Be strong! This is for her own sake," whispered Pontohroring to his wife while fixing his look at his daughter in anticipation of anything dangerous happening to her.

"Yes, Mamalauan. We're all here. Nothing bad will happen to Panagian," said Tonaas confirming. From their hiding places, they kept watching and listening to Keke Panagian's lamentation.

"Who is willing to accept a child who has been expelled by her own father and mother? Who will lower their stairs, open their doors, and accept the child who has disobeyed her parents? O God the Almighty, I have come to you to sincerely confess my sins. I am now alone. Have mercy on me, help me, o God. Please accept my confession," Panagian's lamentation was getting more sorrowful. All of a sudden, another miracle took place. A very bright light surrounded the field. A stair descended from heaven.

Keke Panagian was surprised, and all those who followed her were also silent in amazement. Suddenly, a voice was heard, “Panagian, ascend the stairs. The door has been opened for you. You are welcome at my house.” Panagian followed the voice. She stepped up the stairs slowly, and the stairs were lifted slowly. Tonaas,

Panagian’s parents, relatives, and friends were startled and realized that Panagian was leaving them. They rushed from their hiding places towards Panagian.

“Panagian ..., Keke Panagian ... Step down, dear. This is Mommy, this is Daddy, we forgive you. Step down, dear! Let’s go home, dear...!”

“Mommy, Daddy, thank you for forgiving me, but I can’t step down anymore. Let me go.”

“Panagian, we’re your friends. Please don’t leave us, Panagian. We’ll play together. This is Utu Palit. She promises, whatever you tell her to do, she’ll do it, won’t you Utu?” shouted Keke Umboh.

“Yes, Panagian. Tell me to do whatever you wish, but please step down the stairs. You can fall if you step up to high. Come on, my friend, step down!” shouted Utu Palit requesting Panagian to step down the stairs. Meanwhile, Keke Wulan cried out with all her heart. She did not know what to say in such a situation.

At that time, roosters started to crow. Many people of the village had woken up. They ran to the field as they saw the bright light. They were surprised to see Panagian on the stairs lifting up slowly. “Come on, Dad! You said nothing bad would happen to our daughter. Now tell her to descend, tell her to descend...!”

Oh my God! Please don't take my daughter yet ...!”

Mamalauan cried out with all her heart, “Keke ... please step down, dear! Do you have the heart to leave your Mommy and Daddy?”

“Don't cry, Mom! Let me go willingly. From now on, I won't get you into trouble anymore. There won't be a disobedient daughter anymore.”

“My dear! Don't talk that way, dear! I promise, I won't restrict you to play with your friends anymore, but please step down the stairs, dear! Your mommy and daddy can't live without you, dear!” said Pontohroring.

“Thank you, Daddy! Finally I have your trust. But unfortunately, I can't descend anymore. I'll leave happily. Please love one another. I really love you all. I am leaving, Mommy, Daddy, everyone. I am leaving to meet God. Good bye, every one!” The parents and the relatives of Panagian really regretted their attitude towards Panagian, even all people who saw what was happening cried out with all their hearts seeing Panagian's departure, the

departure of a beautiful and kind girl whose only one mistake was such unpardonable mistake to her parents and relatives.

Mamalauan and Pontohroring, the parents of Panagian, suddenly collapsed and died on the spot due to their heavy suffering. Tonaas panicked. Immediately he had *tetengkoren* sounded as a sign that Wanua Uner village was in mourning. Tonaas gathered all people on the field. Those who did not know what was happening were surprised to see people crying while looking up the sky. Meanwhile, Pontohroring and Mamalauan lay lifelessly. Their relatives cried by their dead bodies. Tonaas stepped forward before everybody.

“O beloved people of Wanua Uner! Today we’re in mourning. Nobody shall go with hoes on their shoulders, let alone hoeing. Nobody shall wash clothes in the river. Nobody should grind rice. Today, all of us should wear mourning clothes,” Tonaas paused for a moment, containing something in his heart.

“O people of Wanua Uner!” continued Tonaas, “Today, Pontohroring’s family have undergone a calamity. Panagian has been taken by the Almighty in an unusual way. She was taken with miraculous stairs. Pontohroring and Mamalauan could’t stand being left by their beloved daughter. They have died suddenly before us here,” Tonaas paused again. The people started to cry in lamentation.

“From now on, as the *tonaas* in this village, I would like to emphasize that all parents should fairly treat their children. They should listen to their children. On the other hand, the children should obey their parents. They should not disobey their parents. What happens today should be an important lesson for all of us. Do you understand?”

“Yes, we do!” replied all the gathering people together.

“All right. Now, we will prepare the burial of our brother and sister here. I want the young among you to dig two pits in our cemetery for the two deceased, while the old ones will build a stage in front of Pontohroring’s house. Please also prepare two coffins for the deceased. I want the women to prepare food and cakes. We also have to be ready to worship God and ask for His forgiveness,” Tonaas directed the people of Wanua Uner to do all the necessary things which all people did accordingly.

In the heaven, Panagian was not exempted from punishment. It was narrated that as she arrived at the door of heaven, she was asked by the ruler of the heaven.

“Keke Panagian, do you love your parents?”

“Yes, sure. I do love them.”

“Then why did you disobey them?”

“I beg your pardon! I had no intention to disobey. Honestly, I wanted to go to the field. But everything had happened as it had happened. I could not control myself because the way to the party was already in front of me. Please forgive me!”

“I forgive you, but I will change your form. You cannot stay here in your current form. What form do you want to take, Panagian?”

“If that is Your decree, my Lord, I will not argue. I only have one request, make me stars in the sky so that my relatives and my friends may find me every night.”

“Your request is granted, Panagian!”

Immediately, Panagian’s body miraculously turned into stars. Every night, Keke Panagian’s friends can look up the stars if they missed Panagian. The people of Wanua Uner also believed that every full moon, Panagian enjoys thanksgiving party through the moonlight.