

THE ORPHAN BECAME A CHIEF
Sang Piatu Menjadi Raja

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THE ORPHAN BECAME A CHIEF

The Orphan Learned to Perform Salat (Islamic Daily Prayers)

Once upon a time, an orphaned boy lived with his grandmother in a hut on the field. Since his father and mother passed away about ten years ago, he lived with his grandmother in a bamboo-walled hut on a field located on the hillside in the area of South Bengkulu. The place was located far away from the villages of the people. In the center and several corners of the field, several trees were let to grow for shade. The orphan used the trees to tie up the stake of bamboo propeller which endlessly span, defying the strong wind.

The bamboo hut and field were surrounded by forests covered by many species of large trees of which branches stretched out wide with dense, bushy leaves. The stems of several big trees were overgrown with layered and leveled *kedaka*. Rattan stems grew fertile, sticking out in overlapped position across one tree to another.

Then, at that time, the Orphan turned fifteen year-old. Day by day, he learned to perform *Salat* prayers from his grandmother. He was also taught farming and trading the crops, little by little.

When it comes to trade mathematics, the price of crops per item or each bundle is adjusted to the existing denomination of money at that time. For example, one bundle of vegetables is worth one rupiah, one bundle of cassava is worth five rupiahs, and one durian is worth one rupiah. He could only counted by memorizing the shapes, appearances, and types of denomination. The total price of his products, anyway, never exceeded fifty rupiahs per day.

Learning to Grow Crops

He worked hard at farming on the field with his grandmother. Planting corns, sweet potatoes, cassavas, taros, and vegetables was his work and expertise. He mostly planted vegetable crops, such as tomatoes, chilies, cucumbers, long beans, and onions. To grow vegetables, the field was initially opened by clearing the weeds and the waste straws from rice fields that had been harvested. The straws previously cut with machetes were then collected and stacked into several piles, and then they were dried under the sun.

“Grandma, why do we pile up the straws instead of letting them fly around on the ground?” asked the Orphan in curiosity. His grandmother gently replied, “If we let them fly around, it will be difficult to loosen the soil and build the embankment paths where we can grow vegetables. Later, we will make the dry straws and weeds as the soil cover to keep the soil damp. Moreover, once the

straws decompose, they will be fertilizer that nourishes our plants.”

“Oh, I see, now I understand it, grandma,” said the Orphan while wiping the sweat on his forehead. Then, he continued his work with his grandmother.

The previously-cleared ground was dug up with a fork, for about thirty centimeters deep. The dugout was subsequently moved to its side using a hoe to a place where the embankment was built. The embankment was approximately thirty centimeters high, half a meter wide, and twenty meters long, adapted to the ground tilt of the ground. The pit that was located between on one embankment and another became a path for the Orphan and his grandmother at the time of planting, watering, or eliminating the weed.

“You should not stomp on the loosened soil, okay? The soil shouldn’t become compact,” The grandmother reminded her grandson.

“Why shouldn’t we compact the soil where we plant our vegetables, Grandma?” asked the Orphan once again.

“If the soil is compact, it will be difficult for the rainwater to seep into the soil, thus making it hard the plant roots to spread in searching nutrients in the soil. If the plants are lacking the nutrients from the soil, they have difficulties to grow, leaving

them stunted, or even dying. Dwarf plants won't be able to produce fertile vegetable's leaves or fruits. Now, it's not far different from humans, if they are lazy to eat, they will be thin. If they are lazy to learn, they will only have little knowledge and will not be really smart; in other word stupid. If they are lazy to get to work, their muscles will turn weak, making them get tired quickly while working, and they won't have much skill in working," said the grandmother who was keen to teach life lessons to his grandson.

"*Cacam.....*I agree, Grandma, I do not want be a fool with weak muscle and lazy to work," the Orphan reacted to his grandmother's words.

They chatted while working. They shared their duties, the Orphan dug up the soil using a fork, whilst the grandmother loosened the soil using a hoe. Before planting, the loosened soil was perforated by ten centimeters and given with manure mixed with soil. Afterwards, the soil and manure in each hole for planting were covered with straws and dry grass to keep them damp and avoid erosion from rainwater. After being let sit for about three days, the fertilized soil pits were planted with vegetable seeds that could be removed from the seedbed.

The chili and tomato seeds which had grown for about twenty centimeters in the seedbed were then carefully removed and latterly planted in the provided hole, at distance of half a meter

from each other. As for cucumbers and long beans, they were planted in this way: their seeds were directly planted in the loosened embankment at distance of half a meter.

To make them look good and easy to maintain, each plant species was planted to its respective embankments. Five embankments were intended for tomatoes and chilies, respectively; three embankments for cucumber, and two embankments for long beans. Once the plant grew, particularly the long beans, they must be supported with poles made of bamboo. The bamboo pole was three centimeters wide and half a meter high. The poles were erected exactly next to the plans to spread; one pole for one plant. For cucumbers and tomatoes, the bamboo poles had to be made in pair, on the left and right, but the pole's top end must be tied together with bamboo straps. Cucumbers could spread and survive on bamboo poles, as they had some kind of hanging roots to twist around and contain their stems on the bamboo pole. As for tomatoes, they must be assisted by human in tying the stems to the poles; thus they would not fall off the ground, especially when they began to bear fruit. All the work in treating the plants required patience, agility, and attention. The routines to take care of the plants fostered the Orphan into a responsible boy and nature lover, and it also trained him to increasingly be grateful with the growth of the fertile plants. The changes appeared clearer by day. The flower seeds turned into beautiful flowers, attracting the insects to suck out the honey while pollinating the pistil with

the head of the pistil. Then on, those lovely flowers developed into small vegetables, growing longer and bigger, but some of them failed to grow and fell rotten onto the ground in vain.

In the dry season, he had to water his plants to avoid water shortage, thus keeping them grow fruitfully.

He watered the plants using mountain springs water retrieved using *gerigi* (a bucket made of bamboo). The *gerigi* was half-a-bamboo-segment long, approximately sixty centimeters. The bucket rope was made of a type small of rattan which measured about an index finger, stretching from the bottom to the top to be placed on left or right shoulder.

He could get many types of ropes from the nature, such as rattan, tree roots, dry banana leafs and stems. He was also skillful at creating ropes made of cut and thinly sliced bamboo (green bamboo) just as that of woven material. To carry field products, the Orphan made *beronang* (shoulder basket) himself that was made of woven bamboo or rattan. The shoulder pole was made up of *aur* bamboo (a thick and tough bamboo species), cut for more or less one meter long, then split, smoothed, and finally dried.

Learning to Trade and Live Independently

Aside from cultivating with his grandmother who was also his nanny, the Orphan worked every weekend to sell vegetables and yams. He carried them on his shoulder around the village in the

foothills. He walked around to vend alone. He left home carrying field products, and returning home with few groceries, such as rice, salted fish, and kitchen spices. The remaining money from the trading activity was handed to his grandmother for savings.

When he went for trading, he had to walk to a distant village in the valley and at the other side of the river at the foothill. It was located about five kilometers away from his field on the mountain slope. He passed a path which was overgrown with bushes and big trees on either side. The branches of the big trees were the playground of many kinds of animals. That place was overridden with monkeys, langurs, and orangutans. They jumped around from one branch to another or from one tree to another. Once in a while, the tree animals made loud noise, replying at each other. They lived together with the noisy birds and flew around looking for food.

The Orphan was neither afraid nor discouraged to pass deserted paths as he shouldered his field products to sell. He did all of these to survive with his old grandmother. He kept walking down the hill barefooted and dressed decently. In his trip, he appeared to be silent, but his mind and heart were always talking to himself: "Life is a constant struggle, there's no struggle without sacrifice," he mumbled, encouraging himself.

Along the way, he sometimes took a rest for a moment in a place where he could gaze the foothill as he pleased. As he sat for a

while under a tree, just to take a rest momentarily, the view of the river banks in the valley was so captivating. The vast open rice fields were adorned with shacks and coconut trees waving in the wind.

The farmers indistinctly seemed to be busy working, and so his late father and mother sprung to his mind. He let his trail of memories wander back to his mind and feeling as a child; as if they were still alive; as if the people working on the fields were his own father and mother. They were working together as farm laborers, plowing rice fields, planting rice, weeding and harvesting rice on the fields when the harvest season came. While at the same time, he was playing with the children of other farm laborers.

Going up and down in the shack or cascade was always exciting. Small propeller made of dried coconut leaf that was pierced with rod skewer placed inside a rice straw became their favorite toy. He ran slowly with the propeller in his hands on rice field embankment for it to spin. When the wind blew, he did not need to run. The coconut leaf propeller only needed to be held in hand while sitting towards the wind for it to spin. Another fun game for him was swinging on a rattan rope held up high on a flat tree branch. He sat and his friend gave him a push in turn. As he swayed, they blew trumpets made of rice straw.

Rice fields, shacks, lakes and the trees in the vicinity turned into a playground, learning park, and place to practice and learn about lives. What he heard and saw was kept in his mind, changing it into life experiences that now and then came back to mind, reanimated, and brought about different kinds of feelings. There was a sense of poignancy, sadness, and yearning in particular, for his late mother and father.

These trails of memories, in fact, granted him life spirit and encouragement to be a boy who worked hard, intelligent, and assertiveness to tell right from wrong.

He was not drawn in the memories of his father and mother for too long. He continued his journey, carrying his wares. As he descending the valley, the big trees were getting rarely seen. The land at the foothill became steeper for being overgrown with hordes of bamboo trees. The bamboo groves sticking out; their twigs and leaves from one grove could merge with bamboo from other groves, forming a shady and large cave hallway. The floor of that open field was filled with dry leaves and twigs where the animals played around.

Now and again, the reptiles, such as snakes crossed on the path to chase lizards. A busyness of ferrets frequently played chase, making noise in the bushes. There were also hiding animals that crept over, then ran fast to ambush unaware preys between falling, withered leaves and broken branches. That was the

scenery of the animal's lives in the wilderness usually seen by the Orphan on his way down the hill to the river valley.

The soil of river valley was nearly flat and overgrown with stretch of dark green thatch. When the wind blew, it blew like oceanic wave, one catching up to the other endlessly. That was the beauty of enchanting, naturally-fresh, and free from pollution wilderness. The scenery nearly blended together with never ending green paddy leaf of terrace fields on the hill. The Orphan was used to walking on a rather slippery, sloping ground and winding rice fields. The vast rice fields at the foothill were built in terrace forms.

As far as the eye could see, the fields appeared like giant stairs, some were green, and some nearly turned yellow, marking the beginning of the harvest season. As the valley getting nearer to the river body, the plots of the rice fields even seemed to stretch wider. There were also some plots of rice fields that looked like as wide as a football field. There were also rice fields that were not planted with rice, leaving them flooded like a small lake for a shack, where goldfish, Mozambique tilapia, and gourami bred.

After the harvest season which took place once a year, the paddy fields changed into a stretch of meadow where the cattle ate. The beef cattle and buffalo were let stray, greedily foraging with no end supply of food. The shepherd boys were having fun, singing memory and adoration songs of natural beauty. The lives between

the trees and roar of river water felt fresh and clean; without the dust and roaring, noisy vehicles in the city. There was only beautiful view of color mix and plant diversity in the wild and the wind blowing from the hill downwards the vast, open valley. The natural beauty was blended together with the strains of ballads of regional songs, the heritage from the ancestors of village children. That was the original song of their relatives' routines in the rice fields, the place to learn about lives without the presence books, blackboards, tables, and chairs. The Malayan proverb was right about this: *the nature was becoming a teacher; a smart person was guided by teachings*. All of these were thoroughly felt and experienced by the Orphan.

Among the one terraced paddy field to the other, numerous mounds of land formed small hills. Fruitful and green-leafed coconut trees were planted in between those rocks. In other mounds, there were shady mango, *rambutan*, *durian*, and *langsa* trees.

Between the trees, stood a sack where the farmers took a rest. The Orphan occasionally took a break and greeted the farmers in that sack. In that place, sometimes, after harvesting, the shepherd boys took a shelter and played flute or *serunai*. Some of them did *benandai* (singing) ballads songs of Kaur Regency. This area with beautiful nature was located in Bengkulu Province. It was

bordered by Lampung Province and blue Indian Ocean to the south.

It was inevitable that the feet of the Orphan were smeared by mud, especially in the rainy season, because he carried the burden through the rice fields. He washed off the mud in *aiye* (river) by rubbing it with the shoots of young banana leaf or greenies found in the proximity of that *aiye*. If the mud got too sticky, he rubbed it off with a handful of flat stone until clean.

Later, he swam and dove in that crystal-clear river. He repeatedly swimming, diving, going up, and going down while cleaning his body. At times, he would sunbathe on the rocks, or checked the fish traps he had placed beforehand between the rocks. The fish that got trapped in there were lifted and pierced with a rope in their gill section to make them arranged neatly, and then he brought them home to the hut.

That living habit had shaped the body of Orphan into gallant, hefty, muscular, and fresh appearance. His body was more frequently wrapped in shirt and angle-length dark blue pants, equipped with white belt, while his head was covered with woven bamboo hat. Despite his hard and difficult life, he was always good at maintaining his body hygiene and health. He also smartly behaved and maintained good manner when he went to trade and socialize in Kedurang Village and Padang Guci Village.

Learning to perform Salat with the Honorable Chief

On a day, the Orphan asked permission to his grandmother to learn *Salat* and Quran recital at *Pesirahan Kedurang* (District Level). “Grandma, after going home from trade, I will go to the house of the Honorable Chief in that *pesirahan*, across the *aiye* (river) there. I would like to study *Salat* and Quran recital to enrich those that you have taught me.” The Orphan spoke to himself: “I want to live like the Honorable Chief in *Pesirahan Kedurang*. He surely has good prayers and deeds to ask for the boon from God.” He then told his grandmother. “Grandma, when the people in that village bought our garden products, they gave large sum of money, they are well-dressed and live in beautiful houses on stilts.”

“All right, grandson, but I only have three rupiahs left.” said his grandmother.

“I only ask for one rupiah, Grandma,” replied the Orphan.

Once arriving at the house of the Honorable Chief, he was asked by the Honorable Chief: “What are you doing here, Orphan?”

“Pardon me, your Excellency, I heard that your Excellency teaches congregational prayers and Quran recital. If I may, I would also like to learn prayers and Quran recital with you,” said the hopeful Orphan bravely.

“Of course it can be, as long as you bring money,” answered the Chief.

“Yes, I indeed bring the money, but I’ve only got one rupiah,” answered the Orphan.

“Well, if you only have one rupiah, it means teaching you a phrase will be enough.”

“It is fine, your Excellency,” told the Orphan eagerly.

“If so, repeat after me, Orphan, “*If you don’t want to force it a little,*” said the Chief.

The Orphan repeated the Chief’s words, “*If you don’t want to force it a little.*” The Orphan paused for a moment. He was amazed. Is this a good prayer after performing *Salat*? Then he asked, “Is that your only prayer after performing *Salat*, your Excellency?”

“Yes, that is enough for you. Now memorize it and go home!” Don’t forget, perform *Salat* each time, and recite those prayers,” told the Chief briefly.

The Orphan said goodbye, he then memorized and thought of the message from his Quran recital teacher “*If you don’t want to force it a little.*” Furthermore, he repeated it again, “*If you don’t want to force it a little.*” he muttered to himself.

Coming home from the house of the Honorable Chief, the Orphan diligently performed *Salat* and that prayer despite its limited content. His nanny grandmother secretly eavesdropped on the prayer recited by her grandson after performing *Salat*. His grandmother was surprised to hear that the Orphan recited such prayer after *Salat* session.

“My grandson, is that the only prayer you received from the Honorable Chief?”

“Yes, Grandma, it was only that string of words, The Honorable Chief gave me advice: perform *Salat* diligently every time, memorize, and recite that prayer.

He said the most important thing is to practice it,” answered the Orphan, imitating the way his teacher spoke.

“Yes! Now I understand it. After performing *Salat* and recite that prayer, you must make practices, work, or earnestly make efforts to get something and achieve your dream. If you do it lazily, you must be willing to force yourself with your mind, instead of your emotions. My grandson, we must be able to differentiate emotions from reasoning. Our emotions lie ‘here’, in our hearts, told his grandmother, pointing at the stomach below her chest. “Therefore we often hear that some people are hurt from being offended; some are yearning for their loved ones; a child is longing for his father and mother who have passed away; a sister is yearning for

her brother who lives in the far away village. That is the emotion, hunger, feeling of longing, or desire to play, to have fun.”

“Be careful with our own emotions. Don’t let them overwhelm ourselves as they could beat our minds. How many stories about the crown prince who was going crazy for beautiful *beteri* (princess) in the far away land; how many village children get carried away in their lives for succumbing to laziness; they are being lazy and playing around all day long. They have no desire to learn for their future. They do not want to practice doing beneficial and useful works. They are not capable of feeding the cattle, planting, picking vegetables, nor do they can catch fish in the river. Just think about it thoroughly: What can they do to fill their empty stomach? Laziness in learning may lead to ignorance. Laziness to work may lead to poverty, lack of food, and hunger.”

The Orphan’s grandmother went on to give her advice. “Thereby, be careful with our own feelings. Sometimes our feelings simply wish for the good ones. Weigh your feelings and desires with a healthy state of mind. Our mind lies in the brain, in our heads,” said his grandmother, pointing at the wrinkled forehead above her nearly shut eyes. “The mind is located here. It knows the needs of life and our aspiration. It is the mind that can make good life plans and dreams. To avoid the lusts of excessive feelings and desires, you should perform prayers diligently, prostrating in places of worship. Then, raise your hand in your prayers, asking

for guidance and goodness of life to the Almighty. With plenty of recitations, prayers, and pleads to the Almighty, we will find serenity of mind, our mind will become clear and we will be able to work hard and patiently to achieve the aspiration of a happy life.”

The grandmother’s advice flowed in and got into the soul of her grandson in silence. The Orphan listened carefully, and sometimes nodded his head in agreement. These advices reminded him of his teacher he had not seen for a long time. After a year passed, he began to miss the Honorable Chief; and so his intention came to relearn, study the Quran, perform *Salat* and other useful life teachings.

On the next day, he said goodbye to his grandmother. After his wares were sold out, the Orphan went back to the house of Honorable Chief. “Hey, Orphan, you truly has strong will to learn performing *Salat*,” said the Honorable Chief.

“Of course, I want to study until finish,” replied the Orphan.

“How much money do you bring today, Orphan?” demanded the honorable chief.

“Only one rupiah, your Excellency.”

“Well, last year it was one rupiah, and so is this time around,” said the Honorable Chief.

“Yes, it is how it goes, your Excellency, my grandmother only gave me one rupiah.”

“If so then repeat after me, *“If you don’t want to force it a little; hold it back a little if you want,”* mentioned the Chief. From then on, the Orphan repeated it enthusiastically until he fully memorized it in front of the Chief. Later, he was sent home to his hut on the field to accompany his grandmother who was home alone.

The next day as usual, in the morning, he packed to vend sweet potatoes and cassavas, and few bundles of vegetables that he carried around in his bucket. He went around the village shouting, “Cassavas, cassavas, anyone?” There are few cassavas, bundles of *sensile* (papaya leaves), shoots of ferns!”

“Cassavas, cassavas, anyone?”

Until three in the afternoon, it still felt hot, but not even one person had bought his sweet potatoes or vegetables. He felt thirsty, tired, and desperate. Later, he stopped under a shady banyan tree on the roadside. He then sat, daydreamed while taking a look at his unsold wares. He muttered in his heart, “O God, please help your servant, how difficult it is to vend for money. How hard it is to live without father and mother.” He went on to talk to himself, “Blessed the children in this village

who still have mother and father by their sides.” They should have been more grateful and obeyed their parents.

They should have learned more and diligently read to find knowledge as their life provision in the future as adults. Knowledge shall not come itself without searching and studies. One cannot master self-defense prowess, life skills of farming or trading in the absence of agility or willingness to try them in real life experience. And so the Orphan seemed to pause, but he kept talking to himself. “Leading a life like me, without father and mother, means doing everything alone. The farm vegetables are indeed abundant, but there’s not even *sekanting*/ a cup rice of rice, let alone *secupa*/ six cups of rice, unless there’s money to buy them. Not even one fish to find without effort to catch it using *bubu* (fish trap) placed in the river. When I was little, my mother and father provided everything. Now, I must provide them myself for the sake of my grandmother and my current life in the present and for the better future. As my teacher said, if you don’t feel like doing something, then force yourself to do it a bit more until the laziness turned into passion for hard work.”

When he was daydreaming, from across the street, a little boy screaming for his father, “Father...! Father...!” The boy got separated from his mother who was busy fixing her sandal lace. The little boy chased after his father who walked not far ahead. The Orphan thought about his deceased mother and father. He

imagined if his father was still alive, he wouldn't have to vend in the heat and live with his grandmother in a far way field in the middle of the forest. His imagination went wild, thinking about a happy life with his parents. Then, as he was exhausted, he leaned against the banyan tree and fell asleep. He dreamed of getting diamonds and having a beautiful *beteri* (princess), yet who and where it was remained unclear. His diamonds became the target of evil people. In order to save his diamond and himself from the evil people's chase, he ran in and out of the forest. When he was nearly caught, he jumped and dove in the river. He intended to swim across the river, but he was swept away by the current. He was getting further away from his enemy's chase, but he became more exhausted and attempted to swim downstream. Once getting on the downstream, he felt safe. Later on, on the shallow bottom, he tried to get onto the riverbank. On that riverbank, there sat an incredibly beautiful *beteri*, leaning against the rocks, preparing herself to take a bath. But it such a shame that beautiful *beteri* was surprised, she then screamed and ran as fast as she could. That scream put an end to his dream in broad daylight, right before afternoon prayers time.

The sound of the mosque drum, followed by the people who called for afternoon prayers, was heard loudly from the mosque, not far from where the Orphan fell asleep.

Because of that, he woke up and rubbed his eyes and face. He brought himself to reality by looking forward, to the right, and to the left. He actually did not really want to move from his seat to perform *Salat* in the mosque, but then he recalled what his teacher told him, “*If you don’t want to force it a little; hold it back a little if you want.*” For this reason, he rushed to the mosque to join the prayers. He put his shoulder baskets under the yellow coconut tree on the mosque’s yard. After finished performing *Salat*, he recited the prayer and asked for God’s forgiveness to both of his parents. He did not forget to say what his teacher taught, “*If you don’t want to force it a little; hold it back a little if you want.*” He uttered the words even more often after performing *Salat*. He got to know the words very well, because they had gone through his thoughts and feelings.

That hot day made him become thirsty and hungry even more. He was forced to return to the ablution room just to drink raw water and free his thirst. He was hungry but had no money to buy cooked rice. In a state of hunger, he ultimately peeled a raw cassava, chewed and eaten it as he leaned back against the yellow coconut tree which began to bear fruit. So, this was what meant by his teacher, “*If you want (something), hold it back a little.*”

The person planted this coconut tree must have held themselves back, too. They have to wait patiently, from planting time until its fruits are ready for picking. Not every dream comes true in a

heartbeat. There is time to be patient and make efforts to get it. The village boys who want their dream girls should also hold their desire back until marriage. If they neither have patience nor self-restraint, and even if they dare to get involved in promiscuity, violating the teachings of religion, then they should prepare themselves for *bala*, and they must be subjected to punishment through *customary village cleansing* (customary payment of fines).

From afar, he saw a small stall. He intended to go there just to offer his sweet potatoes. “*Assalamualaikum*, Uncle!” he said gently.

“*Wa alaikum salam*,” please have a sit, do you want to order coffee, tea, or fried bananas?”

“No, Uncle, thank you! I have no money. Instead, I would like to offer these sweet potatoes and vegetables. Perhaps anyone wants to buy them, a bunch of them is only five rupiahs, he said with a soft voice.

“Oh...no, that’s too expensive. It is not shopping time for us yet!” the owner of the stall replied curtly.

“Fine, Uncle, it’s okay, but can I just leave my merchandise here? I need to do something. I must hurry to Kedurang Village.”

“No, you cannot, go to other place!”

He paused briefly, feeling guilty for being sassy. He lost himself in confusion. “Right, I am sorry, Uncle! I’m being too sassy.”

All of a sudden, among the people sitting in the coffee stall, someone stood up saying: “If you want to leave your baskets for a while, then you can do it front of my house, come with me!”

“Thank you Uncle.”

“Excuse me, what is your name, Uncle?”

“My name is Mukhlis, just call me Uncle Ulis, okay!”

He murmured, “That’s a good name, *mukhlis* means sincere person. “Thank you, Uncle, for letting me bothers you.”

“If so, I want to give away these sweet potatoes and vegetables to you, Uncle, I will take these *beronang* and shoulder baskets sometime later. I’m going to learn *Salat* at Honorable Chief in Kedurang Village. Please, give me your blessings, Uncle.”

“Yes, thank you. But these....these are too much for us. Perhaps tomorrow I will share them to my neighbors in need. Hopefully, you get useful knowledge that will be the path for the fortune of your life. May you get a good life partner as well.”

The Orphan sheepishly nodded and said, “Amen.”

Thereafter, the Orphan went to the house of the Honorable Chief to learn *Salat* for the third prayer. This time around, he was not asked about how much money he brought. The teacher, the Honorable Chief, was pleased with the learning sincerity of the Orphan. He was taught with new lesson as additional second lesson of recitation he already memorized and practiced.

“Well, you came late in the afternoon. Let’s start learning immediately. Just repeat after me: *“If you don’t want to force it a little; hold it back a little if you want. Doing a job must be done with confidence. People’s misleading words shall be ignored. You shouldn’t obey them.”* Now, Orphan that’s the recitation. Try to repeat my words. If you already memorized it, please go back home to your hut!” said the Honorable Chief. The Orphan repeated the words for a few times until he finally memorized them, then he returned home to his hut on the field. He did not forget to retrieve his shoulder baskets and *beroang* at Uncle Uli’s house.

Discovering Magical Diamond

Upon arriving at the hut, a middle-aged woman who came out of nowhere suddenly called him. “O, Orphan, do you want to help me bury my child’s body?” asked a mother in a rush. The orphan actually felt lazy to do this, but when he remembered the prayer after performing *Salat*, saying *“If you don’t want to force it a little; he was willing to help that woman. As it was nearly*

nightfall, it began to get dark. The Orphan had to light *damar* (oil lamp for illumination), and went to the child's burial. Digging the ground and burying a dead body in the dark right before nightfall was not an easy work. Darkness, quietness, howls of the animals in the forests, and a bit of fear, all mixed up into one. Over and over again, he remembered his teacher's advice, "*If you don't want to force it a little*"; that memory ultimately set him on fire. Little by little, he worked quietly and patiently. Out of the blue, there was a spectacularly glowing object. "Oh, Orphan, why does this place become so bright? What kind of object that makes it like this? Take a look at it son," said her grandmother.

"I have no idea, Grandma. We better bury this child's body first," said the Orphan. Despite only reciting few words of the prayer as best as he could, the Orphan finally finished burying the child's body.

He also managed to refrain himself from immediately taking a look at the sparkling object. In fact, that was what his teacher taught him: to refrain from sudden desire. We must be smart to choose which is more important to do first and later. We must refrain from buying new clothes, if we have no money. Even if we do have money, we certainly cannot buy new clothes if there is no money left to either buy rice or cooked rice to eat.

If we want to play and have fun with our friends, though there are memory lessons to learn for the exam, we must refrain from

playing first. The ability to refrain, avoid the haste, and work diligently is a part of characteristics of men of honor.

After finished burying the child's corpse, the Orphan approached the brightly sparkling object. The size was about the size of a mango. Furthermore, he carefully took and brought the object to the hut with his grandmother. In the cottage, the object could illuminate the entire grandmother's room that they no longer needed to light *damar* (kerosene wall-lamp). The strange object brightly glowed. Once in a while, the light turned bluish, blinked, and slowly dimmed, then it slowly glowed again just like the light of fireflies.

For almost overnight, the Orphan and his grandmother could not sleep on that Friday night. They safeguarded and watched that magical object in amazement and admiration. When its bright light slowly dimmed and turned into a blue light, the silence turned into intense atmosphere. The blinding light and blue ray of that object brought forth a rigid and slightly frightening mystical circumstance. The Orphan and his grandmother looked at each other, wondering. They looked to their left and right slowly. They saw a flashing silhouette that went through the wall of the hut. The Orphan felt a bit of chill ran up his spine. The atmosphere grew tense even more with the howling and roar of night animals in the forest surrounding the hut. Each sound from the friction of

the hut's boards, the friction of branches, twigs, or leaves in the gust of the wind raised suspicion.

The downpour came, accompanied with strong, lightning and thunder. The increasingly cold air burst into the tiny hut of which bamboo walls were not tightly closed. The shine from the magical stone continued to blink slowly, then dimmed, glowed, and changed into bright blue.

There was a strong wind swirling around the hut. The friction of leaves and branches in the forest, combined with the screeching rattle of friction at the base of bamboo propeller's axle, sounded like screeching noise of a convoy transporting a dead body.

The bamboo propeller's base was as wide as one bamboo segment, tailed back to the end with a dried dragon fruit atop of it. The base of the bamboo segment which held the propeller's wooden axle was inserted to the tip of its bamboo pole for about three or five meters high. That bamboo rod was tied to a tree stump. The propeller's tail stretched straight in line so that it would face the wind.

The louder the wind blew, the louder the propeller would spin and rattle like siren. At times, it would produce pounding sound. The propellers slightly jarred. Their boisterous sound was heard like sirens, marking uproar.

“Grandma, what kind of sound is it?” asked the Orphan, frightened. “It is nothing, that’s the sound of the bamboo propellers you installed on our fields!” responded the Grandmother, calming him down.

Before they even knew it, the night was almost over. The rain and the wind subsided a little, and the throbbing sound of the propeller was no longer heard. At breaking dawn, the grandmother and her grandchildren jointly performed dawn prayers. The magical stone blinked brightly and dimly, but it was no longer daunting. After performing dawn prayers, the grandmother spoke:

“And just like that, the nature constantly gave signs of its transition. From here on, the wind and the rain will gradually go away so that the propellers will freeze as well. They will stand still, soundless, when the wind isn’t blowing hard.

On the contrary, when the wind is blowing from the east, the propeller will face east, yet it will spin according to the strength of the wind. When the wind blows softly, it will spin slowly. But, when the wind blows hard, it will spin fast. In fact, you can see it for yourself, during high-speed wind, the pole will bounce back as if it is about to break. But, to some extent, its resistance against the wind currents will change. Once bouncing, it will jerk from back to front with a little rumbling noise, releasing its power.

Then, it will start to spin again from the beginning slowly, and gradually tighten in line with the rhythm of the wind.

And just like the propeller, at the present time and the future, we shall face life challenges. There is a time we find ourselves in quiet period, without noise, without extraordinary busy activities. Thereafter, there should be a different period of times, especially during the transitional period. The transition from drought to rainy season is commonly characterized by dense clouds hanging heavily in the space.

From here on, the rain will fall, the wind will blow accompanied by lightning and thunderclap.

When the rain stops and the wind subsides, the next day or a few days later, we can see the plants turning green, new grains grow everywhere; birds tweet joyfully, cattle or wild animals excitedly enjoy fresh grass. And that's the outcome of struggle and transition of the nature.

And that is the dawn of new changes in our lives; there should be a full transition period of challenges, full of exams, and we must be able to survive steadily. In the life transition from the womb to the outer life of the womb, the humankind ought to go through an intense laborious process. The transition from infancy, where the only to do is lying down and sleeping, into a baby who can learn to lie on his stomach, crawl, stand and walk, is accomplished by

struggle. When a child learns to walk, they must fall and get up, and sometimes get bleeding wound to get the ability to stand and walk.

In the city, schoolchildren must pass school exam before enrolling to a higher education. The students of religious boarding school must take Quran memory exam to upgrade to more advanced Quran studies or so that their teacher will let them pass on their exams. “Umm, well, are you nearly graduating from the Honorable Chief’s Quran recital lesson?” asked the grandmother with a smile.

“Yes, *Alhamdulillah*, Grandma, although I only learned for three times, every time I took the memory test, I always passed the test, and then I was sent home.”

“Well, *Alhamdulillah*, you quickly memorized it. My grandson is doubtlessly smart. But....but that’s because the lesson only comprises one phrase, and then added with another phrase, why won’t you try to memorize one *Juz Amma* in one day?” the Grandmother jokingly asked.

“Ha, ha, right, Grandma. It will be difficult to do that. Uh, don’t get it wrong, Grandma. Maybe I will memorize it within one day if I sincerely study and keep on learning, and if God wills, then I will be given with convenience.”

“Amen, Amen,” said his grandmother, as she smiled and rubbed her grandson’s back affectionately.

In the afternoon, the Orphan intended to bring the object he found to the district of the Honorable Chief.

“Grandma, I’m going to the house of Honorable Chief,” said the Orphan.

“Don’t do it, son, that magical thing will be taken away by the villagers,” his grandmother replied.

“Take it easy, Grandma, I can take a good care of it because I did not steal from anyone.”

And then, the stone was finally brought to the district of Honorable Chief.

“Arriving at the house of the Honorable Chief, many villagers already gathered there. They were very astonished to see the thing brought by the Orphan, and so was the Honorable Chief. “Hey, Orphan, what kind of thing you bring, it’s eye-blinding?” asked the Chief.

“I do not know the name of this thing, your Excellency,” replied the Orphan. “I obtained this stone after burying the dead body of a child in the hamlet at night.”

“Before you did it, you felt lazy, right? You finished your job to bury the corpse first, and then you approached the light coming out of the rock, didn’t you?” After the Orphan answered with a nod, the Honorable Chief nodded, slightly tilted his head to the right. He vaguely recalled the marriage of his daughter with a gravedigger, but it all happened in a dream. The Orphan said yes, nodding in amazement. How could the Honorable Chief found out about all of these things?

There was a little child jostled through the crowd of people in the Honorable Chief’s house, as the child wanted to see it. “Oh little child, you, what are you trying to see? Just go play out there,”

“Why shouldn’t I? I also want to see the magical diamond belongs to Orphan,” said the child. The child called the object belonged to the Orphan as a magical diamond. Since then, the adults there and the Honorable Child also called the object as magical diamond.

“Well, that’s right. That’s a magical diamond. That’s a magical diamond,” said one of them, convincing everyone who was there. “The Orphan has been blessed for his moral glory and hard work in life.”

“He doesn’t need to vend sweet potatoes anymore,” another person added.

“Yes, it’s true, he doesn’t have to stay on that field in the faraway forest,” another one suggested.

“The Orphan is now a rich man,” told another. “The Orphan paused, but every time someone called and boasted about him, his half-whispering word was heard, “*Alhamdulillah.....Amen,Alhamdulillah.....Amen.*”

In his heart, the Honorable Chief also agreed to it and became more confident with her daughter’s future husband that he learned from his dream.

The Orphan Got Married to A Princess

The Honorable Chief abruptly told the Orphan: “O Orphan, I would like to marry you to *Beteri* (Princess), my only beloved child.

“What? Marry me to a *Beteri*, do poor and awful people like me deserve to marry that beautiful *Beteri*? Isn’t it too much, your Excellency?” answered the Orphan.

“No matter what it is, I shall marry you to my *Beteri*, my beloved daughter,” said the Chief once again.

“Well then, but I have to ask for your permission to go back to my grandmother’s hut first, your Excellency,” said the Orphan.

The Orphan told about the events he experienced in the house of Honorable Chief to his grandmother. He didn't forget to mention the Honorable Chief's wishes to have the Orphan as his son-in-law, and so the Grandmother was very happy. She prostrated in gratitude on the field in front of her hut. But then, she imagined about it for a while.

“What if my grandson becomes the Honorable Chief's son-in-law? Will he still be working in the fields? Who will take care of me in this hut and field? Who will make and replace broken propellers? Who will sell the field products to the city? Well, let it be.” She answered her own questions in her heart.

Shortly afterwards, the Orphan finally got married with *Beteri*. Both of them lived as a husband and wife in the spacious house and yard belonged to the Honorable Chief. The extremely vast rice fields and farmlands that produced rich harvest belonged to the Honorable Chief were everywhere to find.

Despite living in the house of a pious and wealthy Chief, the Orphan continued to work hard and managed the labors of the Chief's rice fields and farmlands. He really loved his family and employees. He was religious and diligently performed joint prayers with the people.

A hut was built for the Orphan's grandmother on a rice field and farmland given by the Honorable Chief to him and his wife. The

grandmother did not want to live in the same house with the Orphan and his wife in the house of the Honorable Chief. “It is far too special,” she thought. She preferred to live on the rice field and farmland not far from the residence of the Orphan. In between his busyness, the Orphan took a rest with his wife in his grandmother’s hut, but sometimes the Orphan met his grandmother alone.

In the meantime, far across the village, the people from Padang Guci Village had been busy talking about the Orphan. They said that the Orphan got a Mother Diamond. “The diamond is a symbol of our unity together. We’re the ones who should have gotten the diamond,” they thought.

Then, they flocked together, carrying half a basket containing small diamonds to the house of the Honorable Chief and the Orphan in Kedurang Village.

“Hey, Orphan, we came from Padang Guci and Kaur to exchange our diamonds with yours,” said one of them.

“I do not want it because I did not steal it from anyone,” he answered.

“You must accept it as you obtained that diamond from the upstream of the river which flowed all the way to the downstream which bordered our villages,” their village head answered. “We

have the intention to make the diamond as our heirloom symbolizing the glory and prosperity of our village.”

A dispute broke between the villagers of Padang Guci and Kaur with the Orphan, the Chief tried to find a way and behaved wisely. “You don’t have to argue. Put it this way, we should place the Orphan’s diamond in the upstream, and your diamonds downstream. Suppose the Mother Diamond approached the little diamonds, it means that the Orphan lost. On the other hand, if the little diamonds approached the Mother Diamond, it means the Orphan won,” said Honorable Chief.

Thereafter, the Chief asked the witness event to be hold in the place of worship. The villagers were told to clean themselves and sit together before watching what would happen to mother diamonds and little diamonds.

After the diamonds were placed in their respective places, the little diamonds apparently moved closer slowly to the Mother Diamond belonged to the Orphan, until they formed a semi-circle. The villagers were hypnotized for watching the diamonds moved simultaneously and stopped altogether, encircling the Mother Diamond. “Hooray.... Hooray...., it means my husband is the winner, Father. The people of Padang Guci and Kaur are defeated according to the agreement. Those little diamonds belong to us now,” told the *Beteri* joyously.

“Yes, this is the proof,” said the Honorable Chief shortly and authoritatively. But then it became quiet again.

The Orphan and the Honorable Chief then became very rich with the Mother Diamond and the Little Diamonds. Some time ago, their relationship was like this: the Honorable Chief was the Orphan’s teacher who turned into his father-in-law; while the Orphan was the Honorable Chief’s student who turned into his son-in-law. The Orphan used to be poor, but then he became a Chief and was very rich.

They were the people who successfully gathered the villagers in and around the place of worship. They had shown wise attitude, melting the hearts of the villagers. It seemed like the villagers were hypnotized when they set their feet in the holy place facing the *Qibla*. It was all began from their attraction to the magical diamond.

The Orphan Became A Chief

Before they were welcomed to return home, the Chief advised, “O my brothers, this incident actually shows that we have won. We are in triumph as we can gather in this place of worship. That Mother Diamond brought to this assembly is our unifier. It has been proven that you come here without being forced by anyone. You see it for yourself, the diamonds you carried were moving towards one direction, to the Mother Diamond belonged to my

son-in-law, the Orphan. Therefore, I shall give you all my advice: These diamonds are not the precious ones, but your clean heart, willingness to keep your promise and get together with me and the Orphan, my future successor, in this assembly are.”

“He has been studying Quran with me for a long time, learning a word or two to get the magical diamond. The miracle actually lies in the knowledge and morals that that transformed into the light of his heart. The prominence of his knowledge is reflected in his speech, and in his polite, assertive attitude and behavior towards others. Before becoming my son-in-law, he lived in a hamlet on the mountain slope. He worked hard, had glorious aspiration, and eventually received the greatest blessing from God Almighty when he obtained this magical diamond.

I hope that all of you are willing to become the witnesses, that with this, I am handing over my authority over this district to him. Make him your leader in your lives so as to create peaceful and harmonious lives within one district consisted of these three sub-districts: Kedurang, Padang Guci, and Kaur. Do you agree?”

“Agree, agree, agree!” they answered concurrently.

Following the agreement, the villagers felt relieved. They returned to their respective villages with great advantage to themselves and their families for the present and the future. The advantage was the agreement of territorial unification between

three sub-districts into one district, led by the young chief: The Orphan.

Not long after, the Honorable Chief passed away and was succeeded by the Orphan as the Chief. The Orphan then became the new Chief who was well-known for his youth, hard work, devotion to elderly, wisdom in making the decisions, and religiosity.