TALES FROM THE PADDY FIELDS:
Southeast Asian Folktales on Rice Culture

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“TALES FROM THE PADDY FIELDS” :
SOUTHEAST ASIAN FOLKTALES ON RICE CULTURE
Tales from the Paddy Fields Southeast Asian Folktales on Rice Culture

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SEAMEO SPAFA has been collaborating with Thai universities and institutions in organizing Thailand’s International Storytelling Festival on a yearly basis since 2013. These events have brought together storytellers and story-lovers young and old from many countries, specifically from across Southeast Asia, where the rich diversity of communities express a sense of shared identity through long history of intercultural exchange and various day-to-day activities and beliefs. Among these many shared expressions is the importance of rice. From growth, harvest to consumption, this special grain has come to set the pace for the rhythm of daily life, and with this comes a myriad of beliefs, rituals and, of course, stories that reveal the vibrant imagination and spiritual identity of the peoples of Southeast Asia. The documentation, preservation and transmission of this richly diverse heritage is of the utmost importance in this era of modernization and globalization. It is in this spirit that SEAMEO SPAFA organized an event on the Spiritual Dimensions of Rice Culture in Southeast Asia in 2015, bringing together over 700 researchers, performers and members of the general public on a shared platform. A common thread that emerged from this event was the abundance of tales involving rice, ranging from everyday farm life to the mythical world of the supernatural, and thus were planted the seeds for the making of this book. The objective is to produce a resource that is both educational and entertaining for people of all ages and backgrounds to promote and increase appreciation for traditional ways of life and values. In sharing these special folktales on rice culture, we hope to further contribute to the promotion of cultural diversity and shared heritage in the Southeast Asian region.

SEAMEO SPAFA
Folktale from Brunei Darussalam
Adai-adainya indong dayang anding
anding si dayang indong
Adai-adainya indong dayang anding
anding si dayang indong²

This is the song that used to be sung by Tugal’s grandfather before he put him to sleep.

To share this story, we have to go back to a long, long time ago in Brunei. There was an orphan whose name was called Tugal. Tugal was a young boy who lived with his grandfather near the beach.

However they were having a very difficult life. His grandfather was only a fisherman.

He owned a small boat and a piece of fishing net only.

With the fish they caught, they could only eat it with heart of palm tree.

No matter how hard their life was, his grandfather would sing this song to put him to sleep.

And reminded him: “No matter how difficult your life will be, never give up, as success is waiting for you!”

Adai-adainya indong dayang anding
anding si dayang indong
Adai-adainya indong dayang anding
anding si dayang indong

After his grandfather passed away, he never forget his grandfather’s advice.

Every day early morning, he would carry one piece of
fishing net and row his boat to the sea to catch fish. Even though his net has been empty for continuous few days, he will never give up.

One morning, Tugal went fishing as usual. Suddenly, he felt his fishing net get stuck. “Oh no! This is the only net that I have, I can’t live without it!” He pulled, and pulled, and pulled. It didn’t work.

He pulled, and pulled, and pulled. It didn’t work.

He pulled, and pulled, and pulled. It still didn’t work.

“May I should just dive into the sea, who knows if my luck is there?” When he opened his eyes, he could not believe what he saw. He had landed on the roof of a building, and his fishing net was just stuck on it. He was so shocked and scared.

He climbed down slowly and that building was actually a castle! There was a beautiful garden and big paddy field. The most interesting was, he was surrounded by a fragrant smell.

“Hello my dear cucu grandchild!!!” Tugal heard a voice of a lady from the back. He was surprised to see there was an old grandmother escorted by two fish-headed men. “Don’t be scared my cucu, grandchild. Let me bring you to my castle.” “You must be hungry. Come! Eat this rice!” said the old lady. “Rice?” Tugal puzzled as he had never heard that name before. “What is rice?, grandmother” “What does it made from?” “Of course from paddy!” answered the old lady by pointing to the paddy field which looked golden in colour.
“Emm, cucu grandchild do you like to eat fish?”
“No! no! no!” replied Tugal
“Really?”
“Well, yes” said Tugal

Actually the old lady was the Ruler of the Fish.
She brought Tugal to walk around, showed him the golden paddy.
She even taught him how to harvest, husk the paddy and cook it into rice.
Now Tugal knew where rice came from.

It’s time to go back.
He sought permission from the old lady.
Once he reached the water surface, his boat and net were still there.
He was not sure if he was dreaming or not, because he had spent a long time in the castle.
But everything in his world remained unchanged.

Tugal quickly rowed back home.

Actually before he left, he had hidden two pieces of paddy seed under his tongue.
He quickly planted it in the ground.
After a while it grew more and more and more paddy plants.
When the paddy was ripe, he harvested it and made it into his daily meal.

Since then, people in Brunei knew about paddy.
Some people even called it with the name “Si Tugal Paddy” or “Tugal Paddy”

All because Tugal believed in his grandfather’s advise: “No matter how difficult your life will be, never give up, as success is waiting for you!”

Adai-adainya indong dayang anding si dayang indong
Adai-adainya indong dayang anding si dayang indong
Folktale from CAMBODIA
Long long time ago, the humans did not need to transplant, to harvest, and to transport the rice. It grew by itself everywhere. When it was ripe, rice with no husk, flew into the barn of humans by itself. One day, a wicked woman slapped the rice with a board, because she was annoyed with the noise of the rice flying into her house. So it made the rice afraid and the rice ran to hide in a deep cleft of the rock.

Humans were worried about losing the rice and did not know where to find it to persuade it to come back. They held a discussion to select someone to do the mission. Being sympathetic to all humans, a fish, bronze featherback, volunteered to do this job. She tried to swim and advance slowly into the cleft of the rock. Finally, she found the rice that was hiding deep in the cleft.

She persuaded the rice to go back in order to save the human lives. The rice agreed with the fish to go back by posing some conditions. From now on, the rice would not fly into the barn and would not grow on its own as before. If one needed the rice, one must transplant it, and the rice would grow well in only the rainy season.

The fish came back and brought the good news to the humans. They were very happy to get the news. After the mission, the bronze featherback was shaped as flat as the cleft, because of trying to advance into the tight gap of the rocks. In some areas of Cambodia, smoked bronze featherback fish were a part of the offering in the rice ritual ceremony.
Once upon a time, there was two men carrying baskets of rice seed to sow. A man was carrying baskets of long term rice, and another carrying short term rice. They came from different places. They met each other in the middle of a wooden bridge. Neither of them would give way, then there was a quarrel. A fight occurred that caused their rice to be spread.

They went to the court for justice. But the lower court could not solve it for them. So they went to the supreme-court. But the problem could not be solved. They went to the king. The king asked, “Who was carrying the long term rice and who was carrying the short term rice?” After getting the answers, the solution from the king was that the one carrying short term rice wins, since it grows fast that could solve the need of starvation. As for the one with long term rice, he lost, since the seed needs a long time to grow.

The two of them agreed with the royal solution, then they went back to their home.
Folktale from INDONESIA
Though heaven, abode of gods and goddesses was very far from earth but humans were often traveled up there. Likewise, the gods almost every day set foot on earth.

One day a handsome young man traveled to heaven. He intended to stay a few days there for enjoying and experiencing the beauty of heaven. Eventually he became acquainted with a beautiful goddess named Dewi Sri, the goddess of rice.

When he was having dinner with Dewi Sri and other gods, the handsome young man was astonished at the strange food. After eating that food, he really - really felt good.

“What is that food, Dewi Sri? I have never tasted such delicious food” said the handsome young man.

“That is rice! The seeds are planted in the fields.

After harvest, the grain processed into rice” replied Dewi Sri.

Since Dewi Sri, goddess of rice was an expert in the field of rice, she then gladly explained more about how to cultivate rice well to her new friend.

It was the young man’s great desire to have the rice seeds. One night when all the gods and goddesses had fallen asleep, he secretly took a sack of rice seeds, and brought it to the earth.

Arriving on Earth, he invited his friends to work together to loosen the soil, then did hoeing, plowing, harrowing, irrigating and planting the rice seeds. After months, the rice plants were grown well. Then the green grains pulled out, then turned into golden yellow. Once the time came, they harvested the rice and cooked it into the delicious foods.

The Origin of Rice
One day a God came to Dewi Sri. He reported something important to her. “Dewi Sri, yesterday I went to the earth. I suspect, lest the handsome young man who did not say goodbye to us some time ago has stolen our rice. Now the earth’s surface was green, and I saw the man feasting on rice. Dewi Sri was so suspicious. Then she went down to the earth. The report of that god was indeed true. Earth’s surface was full expanse of yellowish green rice. Having met the young man, Dewi Sri was so angry. “O, young man! You are really a thief! You reply my friendly attitude with a crime! Feel the sentence later!”

The handsome young man immediately kneeled, worshiped before Dewi Sri many times and said “Punish me Goddess! I have stolen the rice, because humans are in need of healthy and tasty foods. The rice was planted and maintained properly for the welfare of mankind.

After hearing the explanation of the young man, the anger of Dewi Sri subsided and she said “All right! Because you have admitted your guilt, and you charitable the rice to human welfare, then the sentence I abort. But you and your friends and your descendants later have to cherish and maintain the rice with the best. If you are negligent, then I will punish you by removing the rats that will gnaw the rice until the end.”

“Yes, we promise, goddess! Now, please accept our gratitude and thanks, Dewi Sri!” said the young man and his friends. “We will never forget your kindness. We will always commemorate the rice with honors and gratitude sincere” added them.

Since then, the people on earth were fond of rice farming. After harvest, they always performed rituals to pay homage to Dewi Sri, the goddess of rice for the blessing of abundant rice harvest. Such tradition is still carried out today in several regions in Indonesia such as Jawa, Bali and others.
The Gift of Young Rice


(Song: ‘I Nini Mapitutur’)

The Grandmother told a story
Once upon a time in a dream land
Man and the animal
Fought and quarreled each other

You know who is the winner?
The story was continued
The truth was the commitment
Karmaphala should be the way of life

Please hear it well
Please appreciate it well

When the mother put the baby sister in her cradle, the mother sang the lullaby. Suwiti was very glad to hear the lullaby and she also sang the song with the mother.

When the father returning from the field, Suwiti ran to greet him and told him, “Father, I can sing the lullaby song for my baby sister.”

“Thanks, my dear. This is the young rice, the gift for you.”
Suwiti was very happy receiving the gift of young rice.

“Thanks, my father.”

“You are welcome, my child.”

That went on every day. Father, mother, Suwiti and the baby were very happy. The happiest of all was Suwiti, for she loved the gift of young rice that her father brought her each day from the fields.

Once upon a time in a village of Aceh, Indonesia lived a little girl. Her name is Suwiti. She was always happy lived with the father and mother, and with the baby sister. The father worked in the rice field and the mother took care Suwiti and the baby sister.
But sadly, one day the father fell ill and died. Now the young mother had to work in the rice field all by herself. She left home early every morning to work hard in the field.

Before she left the house, she would say to Suwiti.

“Dear my child! Take care of your sister in the cradle, fetch some water to fill the water jar, and cook some rice!”

“Yes, mother, but please bring me a gift of young rice,” requested Suwiti.

“Of course, my dear! I bring you the gift of young rice after working today,” promised the young mother.

After the mother was out of sight, Suwiti bathed her sister, fed her and put her baby sister in the cradle. She rocked the cradle back and forth, singing a lullaby.

(The Song)
Don’t weep, my dear sister
Wait and wait for the mother, who leave from home early in the morning

Mother worked hard for our food
Don’t weep my dear, I love you
We are all happy, because the song join us together
We are all happy, because the bird singing together with us
Don’t weep my dear, I love you

When her baby sister fell asleep, Suwiti would go to fetch water from the well and fill the jar to brim. Then she would cook a pot of rice.

The young mother had worked very hard in the rice field. When the sun went down, she hurried home. She found her beloved Suwiti Sitting in front of the house.

“Where is my young rice, Mother?”
“Forgive me! I worked so hard. I forget it. Tomorrow I will bring the young rice for you.”

The next day, early in the morning before leaving to the rice field, the hard-working woman said to her
child.

"Dear my child! Take care your sister in her cradle. Fetch some water to fill the water jar, and cook some rice!"

"Yes, mother! But please don’t forget to bring the young rice."

"Of course, my dear!"

Again the woman worked very hard to harvesting rice.

At dusk, she went home. She saw her beloved child sitting in front of the house again.

"Where is my young rice, Mother?"

"Forgive me! I worked too hard. I forget. Tomorrow I will bring your young rice."

It had been twice that the young mother forgot to pick the young rice for her child.

Then a third time, she forgot again. She saw her beloved child sitting in front of the house patiently. But all she could do was to apologize to her child again.

On the fourth day, early in the morning, before leaving to the rice field, the hard-working woman said to her child.

"Dear my child! Take care your sister in her cradle. Fetch some water to fill the water jar, and cook some rice!"

"Yes, Mother! But please don’t forget to bring the young rice."

"Of course, my dear!"

On the fourth day, the child was in a daydream at her house. She loved to eat the young rice very much. She imagined that she was a bird.

She would fly to the rice field to remind her mother to bring the gift of young rice.

At dusk that day, the young mother heard a bird flying over her head in the rice field. It sang

"Priiiit..., priiiit.....! Don’t forget, Mother, don’t forget the gift of young rice! Priiiit....priiiit....!"
The young mother remembered her promise. She took some young rice, and rushed home to see her child.

But that evening Suwiti didn’t wait in front of the house. The mother called her several times.

“My dear child. I bring you young rice.” No answer.

“Come to your Mama now. Come to get the gift of young rice, my dear.”
She called looking around for her child.
Since there was no answer, the mother called again her child.

“My dear child, I bring you the young rice.”
Suddenly, she saw a bird sitting on the roof of her house, calling

“Priiiit….priiiit…..! I am turned into a bird, Mother, priiiit..., priiiit..., I am turned into a bird, Mother.

“Oh NO! What has happened to my child?”
Cried the young mother. “I’m so sorry that I forgot the gift of young rice for you, my dear child.”

She entered the kitchen. “The rice is cooked.” Hue, hue, hue....

She looked at the water jar. “The jar is filled with water.” Hue, hue, hue.....
She looked at the cradle. “My youngest child is well taken care of. She is sleeping so soundly.”
Hue, hue, hue......

“A gift of young rice is so small and easy to find, but I forgot. I am so sorry.” Hue, hue, hue.....

“A gift of young rice may be small for me, but it is big for my child.” Hue, hue, hue....

“Don’t cry, dear Mother,” called the little bird. “But please remind all parents that a small thing to them might be a big thing for their child.”
There was a good farmer called Father Poleng. He took a good care of his rice fields. And because of that, he always had lots of good rice.

He was ploughing his rice fields with his cows one morning. When it was almost noon, and the sun was high in the sky, Father Poleng sat down to rest and to eat his lunch. While he was eating, an ant crawled up and ate some of his rice. Poleng got angry and without thinking he cursed the ant. Then a voice spoke from heaven.

"Father Poleng" said the voice, "Do not refuse those who ask. Even an ant, a creature who cannot grow rice, is worthy of help."

Father Poleng thought and thought, and realize that people and creatures of all kinds who need rice deserve to be helped. And with a pure heart, he gave all his rice to the ant. Then he went back to work, hungry but satisfied at heart.

After that day, every day, Father Poleng liked to give rice to anyone or any animals who needed it.

One night, Father Poleng was sleeping alone in his hut in the rice fields. The God Indra descended in all his glory, wearing a beautiful shining jewel. Father Poleng woke up startled, and he saw the bright light burning over his hut.

Then a voice said, "Father Poleng, do not be frightened. I am Indra who spoke to you when you cursed the ant. I noticed your charity in giving the ant rice and going hungry yourself. I have now come here to reward you, I want to take you to heaven."

Father Poleng, after writing a letter to his family, went with God Indra to heaven. There he became the servant of the Gods.
Next morning, Father Poleng’s son, called Young Poleng, arrived at the hut only to find his father gone. He looked for him in the rice fields, but without luck. Young Poleng went home to urge his relatives to join in the search for his father. They searched all the streams and fields but did not find him. Then, thinking that he might have come back in the meantime, they all returned to the hut.

There they noticed the letter which read, “Your father has left you and will not return again. I have been taken by God Indra to heaven.”

After Young Poleng read the letter, everyone looked at it. True enough, it was Father Poleng’s hand writing. Young Poleng and his relatives were all happy that Father Poleng had gone to heaven.

Day after day, Young Poleng continued his Father’s work, working on the fields. Young Poleng was also a good farmer, he also took good care of the rice fields.

Several days later Young Poleng thought to himself, “Now that Father Poleng is in heaven, we must burn the bones of Grandfather Poleng so that he too can go to heaven.” In Bali people follow the Hindu practice of burning the dead to free the soul so that it can fly to heaven, it is called ngaben.

Young Poleng asked a priest to pick a suitable day. He also told the priest that he wanted to hold a large ngaben ceremony fit for a king. But the priest said, “No, it is wrong for you to hold such a ceremony. The Polengs are ordinary and humble people, not kings.” Then Young Poleng said, “Never mind, if the Gods are offended, I’ll bear all the responsibility.”

When the day arrived, the bones of Grandfather Poleng were cremated like those of a king, with a royal cremation tower and the best cloths.

Later, around midnight, Young Poleng went by himself to the graveyard carrying an offering to the God of Death. Soon there appeared a tall man with a long
beard, who with a large stick was beating an old man. The old man groaned with pain as the stick came down upon his back. When he saw that the old man being beaten was the spirit of his dead grandfather, Young Poleng became very angry. He went up to the tall man and pulled strongly at his beard.

The tall man was startled, and looking down he said, “Who is that? What are you doing here? How dare you pull my beard!”

“I am the grandson of the old man you are beating.” Answered Young Poleng, “What has my grandfather done that he should be beaten?”

“I am Jogormanik,” said the tall man. “I hold power over all the spirits. I also decide who goes to heaven and who goes to hell. The reason your grandfather is being beaten is that you held an elaborate and royal ngaben cremation ceremony. You should not have. It is only right that your grandfather be sent to hell.”

“No!” cried Young Poleng. “If my grandfather is to be sent to hell, it must be with God Indra’s permission.”

“Then,” said Jogormanik, “let us go to heaven.” So the three of them travelled to heaven. When they arrived Young Poleng found Father Poleng and explained the whole matter to him. When he understood, Father Poleng went before the God Indra and asked that his father not be sent to hell.

“Jogormanik,” said God Indra, “It is not right for you to punish the spirit of Grandfather Poleng, because Father Poleng and Young Poleng have done many good deeds. They are good farmers. I invite Grandfather Poleng’s spirit to live here together with Father Poleng. You, Young Poleng, may return again to the world. I grant you every happiness, but remember always do what is good, so that when you die your spirit may come here to be with your father and grandfather.”

Then, Young Poleng arrived home and told his family, relatives and fellow villagers all about his journey. Young Poleng was loved and respected by everyone, for he was the only one among the living who had visited heaven. Young Poleng the good farmer.
In the past, humans on earth were very stupid. The Lord Guru, who lived in the paradise, asked the gods to teach them. Then the gods came to the earth. Some taught industry, art, attitude, and agriculture.

In agriculture, they were taught to cultivate land, plow land, plant, store, and harvest.

One day a human asked a question to the god of agriculture. “Forgive me, my Lord. Would you send us seeds. Honestly, we do not have interest again in eating cassava and sweet potato.”

The request was fulfilled by the Lord Guru. The Lord ordered the goddess Sri to prepare the human’s need. The goddess Sri then sent four of her beloved birds to take the seeds to the earth. The seeds were kept in the craw of each bird. The turtledove brought the white seeds of rice, the black pigeon brought the black seeds of rice, the sugem bird brought the red seeds, and the puter bird brought the yellow seeds. Before giving the seeds to the humans, those four birds stayed for a while in a branch of a tree. Five brother hunters passed under the tree and they had intention to shoot the birds. Among them, it was the younger one who was expert in shooting. He then shot the arrow. Tar...tar...tar...tar...! The arrow was able to hit directly the craw of the birds. When the craw of the puter bird fell on the ground, there was a fragrance and delicious smell. The fragrance and delicious smell was from the yellow seeds of rice on the ground. The five hunters raced to eat the seeds till it was all gone. Nyam...nyam...nyam..., they said while throwing the skins of the seeds.

That is the reason why to this day people are not able to have yellow rice. They only produce white, black and red rice. However, they still have the desire to have and enjoy the yellow rice. They believed that the saffron grew from the skin of the yellow rice seed that was eaten by the five hunters. The skins of the seeds that they threw down grew as saffron.
Folktale from LAO PDR
Long time ago farmers who lived along the Mekong River and the Golden Peninsular planted rice for their main staple. They planted both glutinous rice and regular rice. Rice planting has been considered a stable occupation for thousands of years. There is a story of the origin of the young rice called Khao Mao and Khao Hang. It explains why farmers made the young rice to eat before the actual harvest season.

Long time ago, many thousands of years ago, heaven and earth were very close. The people on earth could communicate with Phya Thaen, the high god. Whenever they were in trouble, they would call for help from Phya Thaen.

Once there was a terrible drought and famine everywhere on earth. The land and the trees were all dried up. There was not a drop of rain anywhere. The people were in deep trouble because they could not begin their rice planting as there was no water. So, the people held a ceremony to call for help from Phya Thaen by presenting all kinds of tributes and gifts. After the ceremony was over, thunders roared before the rain began to come. Amidst the rain, the people saw light shining down on earth with a powerful voice.

“I see that you all are in trouble. I will help you with some conditions in return,” came that voice. The farmers all put their palms together to pay homage to Phaya Thaen. They all spoke out in unison, “Yes, Yes, your humble servants agreed to fulfil the conditions.”

Phya Thaen continued to speak, “Listen carefully all. After you planted your rice seeds for 3–4 months, I will come to taste your rice.”
After so saying, Phya Thaen disappeared before the people had any chance of reply. After 3 months, the rice plants became rich green. The rice began to produce young rice, but the people were worried because they knew that Phya Thaen would come to taste the rice. So, the people began to complain, “When will the rice be ripe?”

Just then, the gust of wind and rain came with the appearance of Phya Thaen right in front of the people. He spoke: “I am here to get what I asked for.” “I want to taste your rice.”

The farmers put their palms together and explained. “The rice is not ready for harvest yet, my lord.” “I want to taste your rice now,” insisted Phya Thaen. The farmers looked at each other’s face, not knowing what to do. In the crowd, there was a widow who did not plant the rice. She had an idea. “If my lord, Phya Thaen wants to taste the rice, could you please wait until after sun set, Sire?”

“Yes, I will wait to taste your rice.” Replied Phya Thaen. The widow hurriedly went home to ask the kitchen spirit who dwelled in the stove what to do. “Help me, please. I will tell you the entire story” said the widow as she began telling the entire story.

After listening to the story, the kitchen spirit said, “That’s not difficult. Go and tell the farmers to harvest the rice in the field, but make sure that they harvest only the glutinous rice.”

The farmers went to search for the glutinous rice plants with heavy rice grains on the stalks. The widow led the farmers to take the rice grains from the stalks. They got a basket full of the young rice grains. They roasted the rice grains, pounded and roasted them with a mortar and a pestle, and winnowed the rice to get rid of the chaff. What’s left was green rice; some were full and some were not. They chose the nice and full green rice to
offer to Phya Thaen. After tasting the green rice, Phya Thaen truly enjoyed it. He almost finished everything, but then he stopped. He thought to himself: “I should leave some of the rice for people to taste. They should know how good this rice is.” “Ha, ha, the rice is so tasty.”

After eating, Phya Thaen turned to the people, “In ONE month, I will come to taste your rice again,” said Phya Thaen as he disappeared into the sky again. The people began to worry again because it would take two more months before the rice was ready for harvest. The widow could see how troubled the people were so she said to them, “When the time comes, I will come to help you again. Just be sure to save one plot of glutinous rice for me.”

Just before the visit of Phya Thaen, the widow again went to consult with the kitchen spirit. Then, she went to join the other people to prepare for the arrival of Phya Thaen. At that time the rice was almost ripe but it was not ready for harvest. It would take one more month for the rice to be ready.

The widow told the people to harvest the glutinous rice to have 2 basket full of grains. She led them to roast the rice over the fire until they were all cooked. After the people pounded the roasted rice in a mortar and pestle, they winnowed the rice to get rid of the chaff. Then, she instructed the people to wash the rice with water and soak it for as long as 10 sets of breathing, inhaling and exhaling. After that they would drain the water and steam the rice. Not long after that the rice would release a fragrant smell from the steamer. The fragrance went directly to Phya Thaen’s nose. It was so fragrant that he could hardly wait. He called out . . .

“Oh this is so heavenly fragrant. Give me that rice to taste now.”

The people gave him the cooked rice. After eating he said, “Oh so delicious; this is more delicious than the
other rice that you gave me. Oh, so delicious. . . . ”
The rice that was presented to Phya Thaen was called Khao Hang (khao= rice; hang=the special kind of stove dug up to steam this kind of rice). This rice is not quite ready for harvest; so the flour inside the grain was still very soft.

Because Phya Thaen asked to taste the rice before harvest at different times, the two kinds of rice came to be produced as Khao Mao and Khao Hang to present to Phya Thaen. And from this story came a custom passed on to the next generations. Since then, the farmers came to know how to produce the two kinds of rice. Then the two kinds of rice were developed and changed to become khao tom, (sticky rice wrapped tightly with banana leaves and boiled in hot water, and other kinds of desserts. These desserts were used in the food offering ceremony for Phya Thaen. There has also been a ceremony to thank the kitchen spirit, as the kitchen spirit was the one who revealed the secrets of how to make Khao Mao and Khao Hang. This ceremony will take place in the 9th lunar month each year.
Once upon a time, there was a large range of mountains far away where the Lagae tribe lived. In this tribe when the young people would court, the young men would stand on a mortar and stick their hands through a small window of the room where the young ladies slept. The young ladies would feel the hands of the young men and if they liked what they felt, they would start to have a conversation. When a girl found a young man she wanted to marry she would consult with her parents or someone else in her family first.

There was a family in this village that had a daughter. The people in this tribe usually arranged marriages for their children before the children were born, but this family did not have a marriage arranged for their daughter yet. There was a lazy man in the village who thought this would be a good opportunity for him to get the daughter of the family to be his wife. But he knew he had a problem – he was lazy and everyone scorned him because of it. For a long time the lazy man tried to find a way to court the girl.

One day he followed the girl when she went to the field with her family to work. However, when he got to the field, he was feeling lazy and sleepy. He climbed into a tree and fell asleep. When he woke up, it was a lunch time. The girl and her parents were sitting under the tree having lunch together. While they were eating, the parents told her to be careful in choosing a husband. The father said, “Don’t choose a man who has skin disease, because when he cuts grass and weeds he will feel itchy. In the evening, he will tell you to scratch his back for him. Do not get a short husband because he cannot help you cross the river because he is too short.
Don’t marry a man who likes to drink because he will order you to work for him. You must choose a tall and strong man because he can carry logs and will work hard. You will know when you touch his hands. If his hand is rough it means that he works hard.

The lazy man remembered the parent’s words and on the way home he began to think of ways to make sure that the girl would love him. He decided that if he ate sticky rice and didn’t wash his hands when he was done, this would make his hands rough. So before he went to the girl’s house he ate rice, but didn’t wash his hands. When he stuck his hand into the girl’s room, the girl felt his hand and was very happy. She knew that she had found the perfect husband, so she agreed to let him court her. She told her father that she had found the right man. Her father allowed her to marry the lazy man because he thought that the man was well qualified. The parents were not careful enough so they got a lazy son-in-law.
Folktale from MALAYSIA
Long time ago, Kadazandusun people were said to live in a very fertile valley.
One day a strange incident happened. There was a stone growing in the valley.
The stone had grown bigger...bigger and bigger.
The weather was getting hotter...hotter and hotter.
The land became drier...drier and drier.
Plants and animals were dying and people were suffering.
One night, when everybody was sleeping, they heard a voice in their dream.
“Listen here, all of you will be in trouble!”
“How can we stop this?”
“Only if you sacrifice a young, beautiful and kind hearted girl!”
Next day morning, all the villagers found out they had the same dream.
This dream went on for several nights.
Tok Ketua the chief of the village called for a meeting.

“We should find the girl to save everybody!”
“Yes! Yes! Yes!”
“But who?”

At once everyone was silent and didn’t know what to do.
Kinomulok, the daughter of Tok Ketua chief of the village heard this.
And she went to the stone quietly.
She felt sad to see all the villagers suffering.
“You there! I am here to offer myself to you! Please stop the disaster!”
Suddenly, the sky turned dark, a strong wind started to blow.
Lightning suddenly struck from the sky and hit Kinomulok.
Kinomulok burst into pieces.

Her blood turned into paddy, her teeth turned into corn and her flesh into cucumbers.
That night, all the villagers dreamt of Kinomulok.
“My dear friends, you may plant the paddy seed to gain food. Every year after the harvest, offer me 7 stalks of paddy.”
“Plant the corn and cucumbers too.”

Since then Kadazandusun people had paddy, corn and cucumber as their food source.
It was said the stone stopped growing.
It was now known as Mount Kinabalu.
Kinomulok transformed into a Bambarayon who also the spirit of the paddy.
Bambarayon is also the name of a sparrow which never eats paddy.
Kadazandusun people even mimic Bambarayon’s flying movement in their dance called Sumazau.
The Legend of Ulik Mayang Dance

Retold by Ng Kok Keong

Ulik mayang ku ulik
I entreat the Mayang
Ulik dengan jala jemala
Entreat with shining nets
Ulik mayang diulik
Entreat the Mayang
Ulik dengan tuannya puteri
Singing with her highness the princess

The Ulek Mayang song which accompanies the Ulek Mayang dance narrates the story which unfolds.

Long time ago, Awang and a group of fishermen went off to the sea to catch fish.

They row and row and row the boat with joy.
They row and row and row the boat with laughter
They row and row and row the boat with hope to get lots of fish.

Suddenly the wind blew stronger, the sky turned darker, the dark cloud became thicker.
The wave turned into big monster, with fierce and scary face, sharp teeth and sharp claws.
Trying to kill the fishermen.
The fishermen fought so hard with the monster.
They used their net.
They used their paddle.
They used their empty hands.
Finally the boat capsized, all of them fell into the sea.

After a while, all of their bodies were washed to the seashore.

1 Ulek Mayang (Jawi: ڠيام قلوا) is a Malay traditional dance from the state of Terengganu in Malaysia. Mayang is a coconut-palm blossom used to chase away spirits. It is a ritualistic dance performed to appease or invoke the spirits of the sea and is always accompanied by a unique song also called Ulek Mayang. A traditional orchestra comprising drums, gong, violin and accordion accompanies the dance. Mayang is a coconut-palm blossom used to chase away spirits.
One after another fishermen woke up.
But only Awang could not awake.

They got the bomoh or shamans to cure Awang.
The bomoh did the summons and found that Awan’s spirit was trapped in another supernatural world.
Actually the Princess Mayang Sari the youngest princess from the world of ocean tested all the fishermen.
“Let go this man’s spirit!”
“No way!” said the princess.
“Let him go!”
“No way!”
Both of them were having a fight.

The princess got another sister to help.
Followed by another two.
Followed by another two.
Six princesses were now fighting with the bomoh (shaman).
The flight was getting worst, until the earth and sea were shaking.

Finally the eldest princess who was prettiest, smartest and strongest appeared.
“What’s happening here?”
“Er…” all the princesses stood there silently.
“Your highness princess, I am the bomoh from the human word, begging your permission to release Awang’s spirit!”
Now the eldest princess knew what had happened. All because of her naughty sisters that caused the trouble.

“Biarkan yang laut pulang ke laut, dan yang darat pulang ke darat.”
Which meant
“Let those from the seas go back to the seas”
“Those from the lands go back to the lands.” said the princess.

Finally Awang woke up.
To show appreciation to the first princess, since then villagers who stay near the beach will prepare coloured rice and put it on the beach and offer to the princess, or the spirit of the sea 2.

2 This practice continued until the Islamic revival movement of recent decades.
There was an arrogant boy. He used to look down on people and he liked being treated as superior. He was the son of very rich farmer. The boy was not kind to employees who were working on his father’s paddy farm because he thought that he was superior to those people.

One evening of harvest season, the arrogant boy and his father walked in the paddy-field. The field was yellowish gold because it was harvest season. The boy said, “My father, some ears of paddy stand vertically and some bend down. I think the paddies that bend down are paying respect to the paddies that stand upright. I would like to be these standing paddy ears. I would like to be bowed too by the people.”

Father replied, “Well, my boy, can you open the husks of the standing proud paddies?” Then the boy opened the husks and he found very few rice grains. Some standing paddies had no rice. “Can you open the paddies that bend down?” father asked. The boy removed the cover of paddies and he got very good quality rice with full nutrition.

“My boy, wise people are never arrogant. They treat every human with respect. Being humble is a manner of a learned person”, father said. Arrogant boy understood what he should be proud of. This is inside fullness.
This is a popular Igorot story. Igorot is one of the indigenous communities in the mountain province.
One day mother was pounding out rice to cook for supper...
Bog bog bog shhh, bog bog bog shhhh bog bog bog shhh...
She repeatedly did the pounding of the rice.
Bog bog bog shhh, bog bog bog shhhh bog bog bog shhh...
Her little girl ran up to her and cried:
“Oh, Mother, give me some of the raw rice to eat.”
“No,” said the mother, “it is not good for you to eat until it is cooked. Wait for supper.”
But the little girl persisted until the mother, out of patience, cried:
“Be still. It is not good for you to talk so much!”
The mother went on with the pounding.
Bog bog bog shhh, bog bog bog shhhh bog bog bog shhh...
When she had finished pounding the rice, the woman poured it into a rice winnower and tossed it many times into the air.
Toss, toss, toss blow... Toss, toss, toss blow... Toss, toss, toss, blow...
As soon as the chaff was removed she emptied the rice into her basket and covered it with the winnower. Then she took the jar upon her head, and started for the spring to get water.
Now the little girl was fond of going to the spring with her mother, for she loved to play in the cool water while her mother filled the jars. But this time she did not go, and as soon as the woman was out of sight, she ran to the basket of rice. She reached down to take a handful of the grain. The cover slipped so that she fell, and was covered up in the basket.
When the mother returned to the house, she heard a bird crying, “King, king, nik! nik! nik!” She listened carefully, and as the sound seemed to come from the basket, she removed the cover. To her surprise, out hopped a little brown rice bird, and as it flew away it kept calling back:
“Goodbye, Mother; goodbye, Mother. You would not give me any rice to eat.”
The lesson of the story: Uncooked rice is for birds not for little girls. Always listen to your mother, for mother knows best.
A son was once born to a very poor couple.
Unfortunately this boy had an unusual appetite.
"Father, mother, I am hungry. Do you have anything for me to eat?"
"Here you are a pot of sticky rice."
"Here you are a jar of salted fish."
His mother brought him a pot of sticky rice and his father brought him a jar of salted fish!
"Hmm, this is good. Thank you Father; thank you Mother."
"Oh, it’s gone. Can I have some more?"
"Yes, son.” “Yes, son.”
His mother brought him yet another pot of sticky rice and his father brought him yet another jar of salted fish!
Will the boy be satisfied with three, four, five, or six pots of sticky rice and six jars of salted fish? Let’s see what will happen after the seventh serving
"Here you are the seventh serving!"
"Hmm, this is good. Thank you Father; thank you Mother."
"I am full."
"Seven pots of sticky rice, Chet Huat!"
"Seven jars of salted fish! Chet Hai!"
"Yes, that’s my name, “Chet Huat Chet Hai!”
Since then the boy was called “Chet Huat Chet Hai,” the boy who eats seven pots of sticky rice and seven jars of salted fish.

“Mother, Father, can I go to take a nap?”
“Yes, go ahead.”

“I am so hungry. Let’s find something to eat.”
“Oh, no, there’s nothing left. He ate it all.”
“What shall we do?”
The parents became poorer and poorer, but they did not give up trying to find enough food to feed Chet Huat Chet Hai.

“Oh, why don’t you take him to find forest food?”
“That’s a good idea. . . . Chet Huat Chet Hai, come here, son.”
“Yes, Father.”
“Today, I will take you to the forest to find forest food.”
“Oh, that sounds like fun. Let’s go.”
So the father and son went to the forest.

As they were walking, they saw many big tall trees.
“Look at all those big tall trees. Look, Father, that tree is dead standing.”
The father spoke to Chet Huat Chet Hai.
“Son, I will cut this tree down. If not, it might fall and harm people and animals. Don’t come near.”
“All right, Father.”

“Pok, pok, pok, here it goes!”
The tree fell on Chet Huat Chet Hai!
The father looked around and did not see Chet Huat Chet Hai.
“Oh, no, Chet Huat Chet Hai, where are you?”
The father felt certain that Chet Huat Chet Hai would be crushed by the falling tree. Then saying a prayer for his dead son, he turned and walked sadly home.

Oh, look, Chet Huat Chet Hai is not dead. The tree is moving.
“Father, Father, where shall I put the tree?”
“There, there. Oh, my son, you are still alive. Are you all right?”
“Yes, Father. I am strong.”
“Then we can continue our journey.”

As they continued walking they saw many large and small wild animals.
“Look, Father, those birds are pretty.”
“Look, Father, those monkeys are cute. Can I take one home?”
“Oh, no, son. We must leave wild animals in the forest.
But if we find a wild horse, we can take one home.”

As they were walking, a tiger approached and Chet Huat Chet Hai thought it was a wild horse!”
So, he ran to the tiger, wrestled it to the ground, jumped onto its back and rode it home.
“Father, where do you want me to put the new horse?”
His terrified parents told him, “No, Chet Huat Chet Hai, it’s not a horse. Turn it loose!”
So, Chet Huat Chet Hai had to take the “horse” back to the forest.

“Oh, he is so strong. He could catch a tiger.”
“Yes, he could carry a huge tree.”

Chet Huat Chet Hai was well-known for his strength.
One day, a soldier came to make an announcement that a giant invaded the city and ate one of the people each day.

Nobody could conquer the giant. So, if anyone could conquer the giant the king would give his daughter and kingdom.

“Oh, Father, Mother, Can I go to fight the giant? We might be lucky.”
“Oh, no, Chet Huat Chet Hai, you cannot do that. It is dangerous. The giant might eat you.”
“Don’t worry Father, Mother, I am strong.”
“What do you think? He IS unusually strong.”
“Yes, he is. Why don’t we let him try?”

At last, the parents decided to let Chet Huat Chet Hai go on a long journey.
“Be careful, Son.”
“Take care of yourself.”

So off went Chet Huat Chet Hai.
“Yok yang yai, yai yang lila
hoa si pha kan pai su yak diew ni” (2)

Chet Huat Chet Hai hadn’t gone far when he heard a loud rumbling noise.
Here came a man pulling 100 carts full of bricks!
“Good Day! Why are you carrying those carts like that?
Aren’t they heavy?”
“No, not at all. I am so strong that I can carry one hundred carts at a time. So, people here call me “KwianRoi Lem, One Hundred Carts” “How about you? What’s your name? And where are you heading to?”

“My name is Chet Huat Chet Hai. I am going to fight the giant”
“Fight giants? That sounds like fun. Can I go with you?”

“Certainly, come along.” So off went the two friends.

“Yok yang yai, yai yang lila
hoa si pha kan pai su yak diew ni” (1)

But they had not gone far when they heard a loud crashing noise.
Here came a man pulling 100 bamboos!
“Good Day! Why are you pulling bamboos like that?
Aren’t they heavy?
“No, not at all. I am so strong that I can pull one hundred bamboos at a time. So, people here call me “Phai Roi Ko, One Hundred Bamboos” “How about you? What’s your name? And where are you heading to?”

“My name is Chet Huat Chet Hai.”
“My name is Kwian Roi Lem.”
“We are going to fight the giant!”
“Fight giants? That sounds like fun. Can I go with you?”
“Certainly, come along.” So off went the three friends.
“Yok yang yai, yai yang lila
hoa si pha kan pai su yak diew ni”

They hadn’t gone far when they heard a loud chopping noise.
Here was a woodsman . . . but he was cutting the trees down without an axe.
He was using his HEAD to chop them down!
“Good Day!
Why are you chopping trees like that?
Doesn’t that hurt?”
“No, not at all. I am so strong that I can cut trees with my head!
So people call me Huo Tok Li, a Hard Head. How about you?
What is your name? And where are you heading to?
My name is Chet Huat Chet Hai.
My name is Kwian Roi Lem.
My name is Phai Roi Ko.
We are going to fight the giant!”
“That sounds like fun. I like to fight giants!

Can I go with you?”
“Certainly, come along.” So off went the four friends.

So on the four friends traveled.
For two days they had no food to eat.
So they began to dig for some food in the ground.

Suddenly they discovered a giant chingrit bug!

Why don’t you three pull it out? said Chet Huat Chet Hai.
“One, two, three, pull . . .”
but in those days the chingrit were as big as elephants!
They were very strong and kicked hard.
None of the three friends could hold one.
“Now it’s my turn,” said Chet Huat Chet Hai.
“One, two, three, pull . . .”

Chet Huat Chet Hai was stronger than the Chingrit.
He pulled it right out of it’s hole.
“Yeah!”
“Oh, no, it’s raw. We cannot eat it.”
“Let’s look for some fire.”
They saw a light in the distance;
“Kwian Roi Lem, why don’t you go. The owner must have some fire.”
So, Chet Huat Chet Hai sent Kwian Roi Lem.
But, he did not know that it was the home of an evil spirit.
This evil spirit had a huge weaving of sticky silken strands.
Whenever a stranger neared, she drew him in and bound him tight in her silken threads.

Kwian Roi Lem approached, “Knock, knock, knock, anyone home?”
“Yes, I am home.”
“Can I borrow some fire?”
“Yes, come a little closer, dear.
I will lend you some fire,” said the evil spirit.

As soon as he was near enough she threw her silken threads over him and tied him up.
Even such a strong man as Kwian Roi Lem was helpless against her magic.
After a while Chet Huat Chet Hai sent Phai Roi Ko to see what had happened to their friend.
“Knock, knock, knock, anyone home?”
“Yes, I am home.”
“Can I borrow some fire?”
“Yes, come a little closer, dear.
I will lend you some fire,” said the evil spirit.

And Phai Roi Ko joined his friends in the sticky mess.

At last Chet Huat Chet Hai sent Hou Tok Li to borrow some fire,
while he tip-toed behind to see what happened to his friends.
“Knock, knock, knock, anyone home?”
“Yes, I am home.”
“Can I borrow some fire?”
“Yes, come a little closer, dear.
I will lend you some fire,” said the evil spirit. And Huo Tok Li joined his friends in the sticky mess.

“Now, I know what happened to my friends. I will help my friends now.”
“Knock, knock, knock, anyone home?”
“Yes, I am home.”
“Have you seen my three friends?”
“Friends, yes, they are playing in here!” said the evil spirit. “Come on in.”

But Chet Huat Chet Hai was not to be tricked so easily.
He saw at a glance what had happened and when she threw her sticky threads he was ready.
He nimbly jumped aside, pounced on the evil spirit, wrestled her to the ground, and wrapped her in her own sticky threads!
Then he looked about for her magic implements.
“Oh, what is this? Let me try to use it.”
He pointed one end toward the evil spirit.
“No, poof!” He pointed the other end to the evil spirit.
That was the end of her. “Ah, this is a magic stick. I will help my friends now.”

Then he pointed the life end toward each of his three companions in turn and helped to untangle them from the sticky silken mess.
Then the four gathered coals from the fire and hurried back to cook their dinner!

Next morning they were off to find the giant.
It wasn't long until they reached a town where everyone was huddled together in terror.
“A giant comes everyday to eat one of us. He is so powerful that no one can conquer him.”
“Ha!” laughed Chet Huat Chet Hai.
“He hasn't met US yet!”

And when the giant came stomping down the hill,
drooling for his meal, the four companions attacked. Chet Huat Chet Hai leaped onto the giant and held him fast.
Huo Tok Li used his hard head to chop the giant in two!
Phai Roi Ko and Kwain Roi Lem pulled the giant's arms and legs off as if they were a mere cartload of bricks!

“Ya, we did it!”

Then the King called the four friends to claim a reward. The four friends decided that Chet Huat Chet Hai should marry the princess and be king. And Huo Tok Li, Phai Roi Ko, and Kwian Roi Lem each took an important position in the kingdom.

Then Chet Huat Chet Hai sent for his parents. “Dear Father and Mother, you need not worry about feeding me anymore. I rule my own kingdom and have all I need to eat.

You took care of me for so many years. Now it is my turn to take care of you!”

And so ends this happy tale of the boy who ate 7 pots of sticky rice and 7 jars of salted fish!

Chet Huat Chet Hai!
Once, a farmer raised a pig and a dog to help him work.

One day he had to go to town, so he told his pig and dog:

“Now, I have to go to town. You two must go to plough the field and try to finish before I come back home.”

“Yes, Father.” Dog and Pig said.

Pig and Dog went to the field. Once they arrived at the field, the dog said: “This is a big field. Why don’t I do half and you do the other half? And Pig why don’t you go first. When you finish, let me know.”

Dog then took a rest and Pig began ploughing the field diligently. Oink, oink, oink... When he finished his half, he called out to Dog:

“Dog, I’ve finished my half. It’s your turn now.”

“Oh, Pig, can you go on ploughing the field? I have a headache.”

Dog went on sleeping and Pig continued ploughing the field until he almost finished the dog’s half. So, he called, “Dog, I almost finished your half. How are you doing?”

“Oh, Pig, I have a stomach ache. Can you plough a little more?”

So, Pig continued ploughing the field until he finished ploughing the entire field. So, he came to the dog. “Dog, I have finished everything. How are you?”

“Finished? Finished everything? Oh, I feel fine now. Why don’t you take your nap? I will do a little exercise.”

So, Pig took a nap and Dog ran around all over the field until sunset. Then he came to the pig.
“Pig, wake up and let’s go home before dark.”
When they got home, the farmer asked:
“Have you finished ploughing the field?”
“Yes.” The pig said.
“I did all the work, Father. I feel ache and pain all over,” the dog said.
“What? I did all the work myself,” the pig said.
“Dog did not do anything. He just fell asleep all day.”
“No, I did all the work myself; Pig went to sleep until I woke him up.”
Pig and Dog began to quarrel. The farmer became annoyed so,
he said: “Don’t fight. Now, let’s go to the field and prove who did the most work. Whoever worked will have left footprints in the ground.”

So, they all went to the field.
“Look, Father, look at my footprints,” Dog said.
“There were Dog’s footprints everywhere.”
“Pig, where are your footprints?”
“Where is my footprint?” Pig said sadly.

“I can see Dog’s footprints everywhere. Pig, you are lazy and you lied. From now on you must eat bran and stay in the mud.
Dog, you are diligent, now you can eat rice and whatever I eat and stay in the house with me.

Since then, the pig eats bran and stays in the mud and the dog eats rice and stays in the house.
Once the human lived happily. Every day they would sing and dance to the wonderful and fun music. They were happy because they did not have to work in the field, planting rice at all.

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Come every one, come to dance
We dance to celebrate for rice has come
Flying from the rice fields to our store houses
Without any effort on our side.

The rice field was taken care of by Mae Phosop, the rice goddess. When the rice was ripe they would fly to the rice granaries of the people on their own. In those days a rice grain was as big as a coconut or a watermelon. However the people had to prepare rice granaries and clean them before the rice was ripe. Once they had done that, they did not have to do anything more.

Now in those days there was a widow who was married to seven men and each of them died. So, she had to live by herself. There were many things for her to take care of in her household. One day, it was the time that the rice was ripe. She was so busy cleaning and fixing the rice granary, but it was not finished.

“Oh, I am so tired working around here all by myself. I haven’t finished cleaning the rice granary yet.” She said looking around feeling very worried.

“I hope I can finish before the rice grans fly in . . .” But she did not even finish her sentence when all of a sudden the huge rice grains flew to her granary, but could not enter it. They were banging against the door of the granary, making loud noises.
“Oh no, stop. Stop. I haven’t finished cleaning and fixing the rice granary yet. Can’t you wait another day?”
But the rice grains did not listen to her. They kept on flying around her house. Some flew to the ground under her house on stilts. Some more flew to every corner of her house.

She became so angry, yelling, “Stop, stop, if you don’t stop flying everywhere, I will beat you up.”
But the rice did not listen to her.
She picked up a stick and beat all the huge rice grains until they were split into small grains. Since then, the rice grains became as small as our rice grains today.
The rice goddess, Mae Phosop who was watching what happened to her rice became very frightened.
“Oh No! What happened to my rice? They all became small grains. I cannot stay around here.” So Mae Phosop flew away to stay in the forest near a holy man’s abode and she did not return to the rice field again.

Once Mae Phosop was not in the rice fields, nothing grew and the people faced starvation and famine for one thousand years. Many fell ill and died.
There was an old couple, Puu Yoe and Ya Yoe (Grandpa Yoe and Grandma Yoe), who heard that Mae Phosop was living near the holy man. They decided to go on a journey to search for Mae Phosop. They were so weak and tired when they arrived at the holy man’s abode. They begged the holy man to ask Mae Phosop for help.
“Please Reverend Holy man, please ask Mae Phosop to return to the rice fields to take care of rice once again.”
The holy man went to speak to Mae Phosop.
“Phosop, I think you should return to the rice fields. The people are in trouble.”
“No, I will not return,” said Mae Phosop with determination. “The people did not feel grateful for what I did for them. They beat up my rice until they become so small. I am afraid they will kill me.” Explained Mae Phosop.
The holy man insisted that she help the old couple.
“But you can see that this aged couple have come a long way to ask you for help. Please be kind. At least if you don’t want to go back to the fields, give them some rice seeds to plant.

Finally she agreed to give some rice seeds for planting.

The couple was delighted. They took the grains to plant and worked diligently in the rice fields for many months.

But the plants yielded no rice grains, only rice chaff.

“Grandpa Yoe, I don’t think rice will grow and yield any crops without Mae Phosop taking care of the fields,” said the Grandma Yoe.

“I agree. We have to ask the holy man and see what we can do to bring Mae Phosop back to the rice fields again,” replied Grandpa Yoe.

So the couple went back to ask the holy man for help again. The holy man again asked for help, but Mae Phosop still refused to return to the rice fields.

“Phosop, the rice seeds that you gave to the old couple did not yield any crop. You need to return to the field to help them,” said the holy man.

“I feel sorry for them, but if I go back to the field, how can I be sure that the humans would not mistreat me and my rice again?” asked Mae Phosop.

“I will instruct the people what to do and to be respectful of you and the rice,” said the holy man.

“If you give them instructions, I agree to go to the field with them. But please let them know that whenever they mistreat me and my rice again, they will not have a good crop,” proposed Mae Phosop.

To the old couple the holy man said, “Now Grandpa Yoe and Grandma Yoe you must be respectful and treat Mae Phosop well. And you must teach your children and ask the children to pass on this respect.”

“We promise. We will do anything if only she returns to the rice fields with us.” Said the old couple.

“Wait, there is more. You must hold a ceremony to ask for forgiveness and blessings from Mae Phosop because in the process of planting rice, you may have to cut the rice, to thresh the rice, and to mill the rice.”
“We will have a ceremony to ask for Mae Phosop’s forgiveness every year before we cut, thresh, and mill the rice,” promised the couple. “Is there anything else, we need to know?” asked the couple.

And the holy man continued giving instructions. “After harvest, you must have a ceremony called Bun Khun Lan to thank Mae Phosop for yielding good crops.”

“We promise to have Bun Khun Lan every year.”

With that last promise, Mae Phosop went to the rice fields with the old couple. They planted the rice seeds and they treated the rice with respect. They got a very good crop. So, they gave the rice seeds to other people with instructions on how to plant and how to hold the ceremony.

When, the people hold ceremonies relating to rice, they always invite Pu Yoe Ya Yoe to join the ceremony, for they were the ones who gave the rice seeds and taught the people how to treat Mae Phosop with respect.

And during the ceremony people always call, “มาเยอ” (ma yoe) which means, “Please come Grandpa and Grandma Yoe” to witness our respects for Mae Phosop.
Nai Dee was a rich farmer.  His rice fields stretched in all directions.  But Nai Dee did not approve of his new son-in-law, Thid Kham.  Thid Kham was a very pious man.  He had spent many years in the monkshood and still retained his pious nature.  One day as the father-in-law and his new son-in-law were walking Nai Dee began to brag.  “Look at all of these fields!  All of this is mine!  The rice is just being planted now, but when the harvest comes I will be a very rich man.”  Thid Kham looked over the rice field and spoke cautiously.  “Father-in-law this is not certain.  The rice grows well now, but a flood might come and spoil the crop.  Remember what the Lord Buddha has said, “Dai dai nai lok luan anijang; nothing is certain.”  The father-in-law did not like to hear this.  He scowled but kept silent.  Some weeks later the two walked again in the fields.  “See Thid Kham.  There was no flood.  The rice is blooming now.  There is sure to be a good harvest!”  But Thid Kham still was cautious.  “This is not certain, father-in-law.  Yes, the rice is blooming.  But insects might come and eat the rice before it can be harvested.  Remember what the Lord Buddha has said, “Dai dai nai lok luan anijang; nothing is certain.”  His father-in-law was furious to hear these words from his son-in-law.  He waited until the rice was hanging heavy and ripe on its stalks.  Then he walked with Thid Kham to the fields again.  “Now will you stop your foolish saying.  See, the rice is ripe.  Floods did not come.  Insects did not come.  This is certain.  I am a rich man.”
“I do not believe this is certain, father-in-law. I can see that the grain is ripe. But it is not harvested yet. Fire might sweep through the fields and burn it all. No, you must remember the words of the Lord Buddha.

“Dai dai nai lok luan anijang; nothing is certain.” The father-in-law could hardly keep his temper. As soon as the rice was harvested and stored in the granaries he brought Thid Kham to see.

“Now LOOK. There was no flood, no insects, no fire. This is now a certain thing. You can see for yourself!” But still Thid Kham hesitated.

“Yes, I can see the rice. But still mice may come and eat it.” I must repeat the words of the Lord Buddha,

“Dai dai nai lok luan anijang; nothing is certain.” Thid Kham lifted the rice to his mouth. He was just about to taste it. But he paused.

“Father-in-law, I can see that the rice did grow, it did ripen, it was harvested and stored. All this is true. Still I must repeat the words of the Lord Buddha to you.

“Dai dai nai lok luan anijang; nothing is certain.”

The father-in-law could control his anger no longer. He reached out his hand and slapped the bowl of rice from Thid Kham’s hand.

“Then leave my table! You will never stop with this foolish saying!” Thid Kham slowly picked up the rice bowl from the floor and looked at his father-in-law.

“But you can see for yourself the wisdom of our Lord Buddha’s words, “ said Thid Kham.

“The rice was planted, it grew, it bloomed, it ripened, it was harvested, it was stored, it was cooked, and was almost in my mouth. And yet it was lost to me.

Surely no one here can doubt the truth of this saying,

“Dai dai nai lok luan anijang. Nothing is certain.” And at last his father-in-law was silent.

“It is true. Dai dai nai lok luan anijang. Nothing is certain.”
Folktale from VIETNAM
Emperor Hung-Vuong had many sons. Some pursued literary careers. Others excelled in materials arts. The youngest prince named Tiet-Lieu, however, loved neither. Instead, he and his wife and their children chose the countryside where they farmed the land. One day, toward the end of the year, the emperor met with all his sons. He told them whoever brought him the most special and unusual food would be made the new emperor. Almost immediately, the princes left for their homes and started looking for the most delicious food to offer the emperor. Some went hunting in the forests and brought home birds and animals which they prepared into the most palatable dishes. Some others sailed out to the open sea, trying to catch fish, lobsters and other much loved sea food. Neither the rough sea nor the violent weather could stop them from looking for the best gifts to please the emperor.

In his search, Tiet-Lieu went back to the countryside. He saw that the rice in his paddy fields was ripe and ready to be harvested. Walking by a glutinous rice field, he picked some golden grains on a long stalk. He brought them close to his nose and he could smell a delicate aroma.

His entire family then set out to harvest the rice, Tiet-Lieu himself ground the glutinous rice grains into fine flour. His wife mixed it with water into a soft paste. His children helped by building a fire and wrapping the cakes with leaves. In no time, they finished, and in front of them lay two kinds of cakes: one was round and the other was square in shape. The round cake was made with glutinous rice dough and was called “banh day” by Tiet-Lieu. He named the square shaped cake “banh chung” which he made with rice, green beans wrapped in leaves. Everybody was extremely happy with the new kind of cakes.
On the first day of Spring, the princes took the gifts of their labor and love to the emperor. Once carried a delicious dish of steamed fish and mushrooms. Another brought with him a roasted peacock and some lobsters. All the food was beautifully cooked. When it was Tiet-Lieu’s turn to present his gifts, he carried the “banh chung” and his wife carried the “banh day” to the emperor. Seeing Tiet-Lieu’s simple offerings, other princes sneered at them. But after tasting all the food brought to court by his sons, the emperor decided that the first prize should be awarded to Tiet-Lieu.

The emperor then said that his youngest son’s gifts were not only the purest, but also the most meaningful because Tiet-Lieu had used nothing except rice which was the basic foodstuff of the people to make them. The emperor gave up the throne and make Tiet-Lieu the new emperor. All the other princes bowed to show respect and congratulated the new emperor.
The Legend of Rice-Seed
Translated by Nguyen Anh Dan. Revised by Ton Nu Nha Dien

Once upon a time, a mother and son lived in a small house together. The father had gone away. Therefore, the mother loved and pampered the son so much. She worked so hard day by day to bring him up. Her biggest wish was the son would become grateful to his mother. She always gave him the best things.

However, because of her pampered-behaviour, the son gradually became a bad boy. He did not love her as she loved him. One day, the mother got seriously sick and perhaps could not overcome it, consequently she called her son and made a careful recommendation to him before dying.

“On the day that I pass away, there will be a small yellow seed which appears in my lying position. You should take it into a soil vessel, pouring water and then bringing it to the King in the palace. You will receive much gold and money”, said the mother. Subsequently, she died and so, strangely, there was a small yellow seed behind her position. The son followed her recommendation and put the yellow seed into a soil vessel, pouring water and bringing it to the palace.

The distance between his house to the palace was so far, it took 6 to 7 months to finish his trip. All food and water was eaten and drunk empty by him. Because of hunger and thirst and he really ran out of money. He resigned himself to beg for each-day-to-day meal and ask for sleeping. At this time, he suddenly realized the great credit to his poor mother for raising him in the past. As a result, he felt so regretful because he had not been grateful to his mother.
Finally, he came to the capital city. Magically, inside of his pot appeared one kind of plant with a great number of yellow seeds. From these seeds came out a smooth aroma. The strange seed was cooked by him and it’s taste was so delicious.

He decided to not make any exchanges with the King and went back to his village. He took the yellow seed and gave it to every villager to taste it. Afterwards, they began to cultivate this kind of plant. And from that time, human beings had paddy-grain.
Long, long time ago, grain-rice was so easy to find and take. In that time, rice plants grew up by water of heaven. Paddy-grain was as big as watermelon or coconut. When the rice plant was full of ripened-seeds, these seeds automatically rolled from the paddy to human's house, all they needed to do was come to their yard gate to pick the seed up and save in their baskets.

There was a woman who was both lazy and careless, besides, she was deep into gambling. One day, at harvest time, the full paddy-grains rolled themselves to the yard of her house, but there was no body to welcome it. The idle woman came back to her house and saw the scene, she was so angry and took her dirty broom immediately to drive the pure paddy-grain away. Furthermore, she used her dirty broomstick to beat some paddy-grains into fragments.

The paddy-grain was so full of pain and hatred at the woman that it made a curse: from this time, human must pay a high cost for their meals. To get the ripened paddy-grain, they will have to work hard in their paddies over several months with a great deal of worry about the weather, climate, soil and water.

Also from that time, the paddy-grain was not as big as a watermelon or coconut any more but it was as small as the today paddy-grain.
Once upon a time, two brothers who had lost their parents lived together. The elder brother was diligent but the younger brother was not. One day, the old one told his brother:
“My dear brother, our parents left us some property but if we do not work hard we will be poverty-stricken soon. Thus, tomorrow we should separate and go somewhere to find a job until we are prosperous. We will return and meet again”. His younger brother agreed.

The next morning, they said goodbye and each one chose his own way. The elder brother came to a village and saw a yellow ripened rice paddy. There were a lot of people who were harvesting rice. He went down to help them. The elder brother did the job so quickly and well, that the farmer was pleased and gave him some sheaves of rice. He thanked the farmer and took his rice to exchange for grain-rice.

Later then, he continued his trip until saw a cotton field full of white cotton. There were many people who were picking cotton under strong sunlight. The elder brother went down to help them, which made the farmer so happy. After finishing their work, the farmer gave him some cotton. He thanked the farmer and took his cotton to exchange for clothes.

He continued his trip until saw an old man who had white hair and red skin. Seeing him, the old man said: “I have a very valuable pumpkin plant that nearly died because of no water. I want you to help me with watering to save it”.

The elder brother accepted his request and came to his pumpkin field. Actually, there was a withered pumpkin plant on the field. He hastened to take two pails to get water. The road to the spring was far and rough but the elder brother was still industrious to get water and try to save the pumpkin plant. Three months later, the pumpkin plant gradually recovered,
blossomed and grew fruit. These pumpkins grew up so fast that after several days they were as big as a grain basket. One day, when the elder brother was carrying water with his shoulder pole, the old man told him:
“You have worked so hard to water my pumpkin plant and save it. To repay my gratitude for your contribution, I give you the biggest pumpkin”.

He thanked the old man and bent down to pick his award, however, when he looked up the old man was not there anymore. He felt so surprised. Afterwards, he took his knife and split the pumpkin. He saw much gold inside the fruit. He knew that was the present which had been given him by the fairy, he took it all and went back to his village.

The younger brother, after departing from his house, also saw a yellow ripened rice paddy. The farmer asked him to help harvest the rice.
“Harvesting rice one needs to bend down which makes my back hurts”, said the younger brother.

He replied like that and went away. The farmer followed him with their eyes and reprimanded:
“What an idle man he is!”

The younger brother also saw a cotton field full of white cotton. The farmer asked him to help picking their cotton.
“Picking cotton makes my hands hurt. I cannot do it”, he replied.

He walked on until he met an old man who needed his help to water and save his pumpkin plant. The younger brother declined his request.
“What an idle man he is!”, reprimanded the old man.

He did not want to do anything, as a result, people gave him no rice, no cotton. He had no rice to eat, no clothes to wear. Due to of hunger and thirst, he came to the old man to beg a pumpkin to eat. The old man gave him an ugly pumpkin which split out full of soil inside. He was too ashamed, so that he did not care to back his house to see his brother.
The elder brother waited for a long time but did not see his brother back, hence, he came to find his younger brother. He saw his younger brother who had nearly died because of hunger and thirst lying beside a pumpkin field. The elder brother took his brother back their house, and then gave him food, water and clothes. The younger brother gradually recovered and told his brother about his saying no to harvesting rice, picking cotton and watering the pumpkin. “Because you are too lazy, you so nearly died of hunger. If you are diligent you will be happy like the others”, advised the elder brother.

Listening to his brother’s recommendation, the younger brother was so regretful. From that time, the younger brother worked so hard. The two brothers lived happily together.