

**THE BLACK SNAKE OF TENGANAN HILL**  
*Ular Hitam Bukit Tenganan*

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**Language Development and Cultivation Agency  
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## THE BLACK SNAKE OF TENGANAN HILL

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Advisory Board	Dadang Sunendar Emi Emilia Gufran Ali Ibrahim
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Language Development and Cultivation Agency  
Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia  
Jalan Daksinapati Barat IV, Rawamangun, Jakarta  
Telepon (021) 4706287, 4706288, 4896558, 4894546  
Pos-el: badan.bahasa@kemdikbud.go.id  
www.badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id

# Ular Hitam

# Bukit Tenganan

Cerita Rakyat dari Bali

Ditulis oleh  
**Cokorda Istri Sukrawati**

# Ular Hitam Bukit Tenganan

Cerita Rakyat dari Bali

Penulis : Cokorda Istri Sukrawati

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1. KESUSASTRAAN RAKYAT-BALI
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## Foreword

Literature work is not only series of word but it also talks about life, both realistically and idealistically of human. If it is realistic, the literature work usually contains life experiences, good model, and wisdom which have been added various style and imagination along with it. Meanwhile, if it idealistic, the literature work contains moral lecture, good character, advices, philosophical symbols, culture and other things related to human life. The life itself is very diverse, varies, and full of various problems and conflicts faced by humans. The diversity in humans life also affects to the diversity of literature work because the contents are inseparable from civilized and dignified humans life.

The literature works that dealing with life utilizes language as medium of deliverance and imaginative art as its *cultural land*. On the basis of the language medium and imaginative art, literature is multidimensional and multi-interpretative. Using language medium, imaginative art and cultural dimension, literature deliver messages to be reviewed or analyzed from various perspectives. The outcome of that perspective depends greatly on who is reviewing and analyzing with various socio-cultural and knowledge background. There is a time when a literary reviewer reviews from the point of view of metaphor, myth, symbol, power, ideology, economy, politics, and culture can be refuted by other reviewers who see from perspective of sound, referent, or irony. Even so, Heraclitus said, "However opposite they work together and from different directions, the most beautiful harmony emerges".

There are many lessons that we can get from reading literature, one of which is reading folktales that are adapted or reprocessed into children's stories. The results of reading literature always inspire and motivate readers to be creative in

finding something new. Reading literature can trigger further imagination, open enlightenment, and add insights. For this reason, we express our gratitude for the processors for the story. We also express our appreciation and gratitude to the Head of the Coaching Center, Head of the Learning Division, and Head of the Subdivision of Modules and Teaching Materials and staffs for all the efforts and hard works carried out until the realization of this book.

Hopefully this storybook is not only useful as a reading material for students and the community to foster a culture of literacy through the National Literacy Movement program, but also useful as an enrichment of our knowledge of past life that can be utilized in addressing current and future life developments.

Jakarta, June 2016

Regards,  
Prof. Dr. Dadang Sunendar, M. Hum.

## **Preface**

Gratitude is delivered to the Almighty God because finally this story can be read by students and lovers of literature throughout Indonesia. Hope this story can stay sustainable. Bali is indeed rich in culture, especially about folklore (legend and fairy tales). All of them must be passed on to next generations who will continue the nation's development.

A folktale will slowly disappear if it is not preserved. So, the authors hope the existence of this story can be useful as a release thirst in this long dry season. The author realizes, this writing has many weaknesses. Therefore, the author hopes critics and suggestions for future improvement.

Cokorda Istri Sukrawati

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## **THE BLACK SNAKE OF TENGANAN HILL**

### **Becoming an Orphan**

Once upon a time, there lived a boy in Sangkan Gunung Village. He was called I Tundung. When he was six, his father passed away. Since then, he lived only with his mother who loved him very much. Wherever she went, I Tundung was always there. They were inseparable. After he lost his father, I Tundung grew up under his mother's compassionate care.

One day, his mother took I Tundung to the market. On the way there, he saw a boy his age was walking with both parents holding his hands. I Tundung could not help but remembering his father. He stopped walking and looked up at his mother.

“Mother, where is Father?” I Tundung asked his mother.

“Your father has gone to heaven. He is with God, now,” his mother said softly, tears filled her eyes. She knelt in front of I Tundung and held him in a tight embrace. She was speechless. There was so much she could not say. Little Tundung fell silent in his mother's arms. He wiped the tears on his mother's cheeks with his little fingers. Not to make I Tundung even sadder, his mother then tried to change the topic. She held his hand tightly and walked quickly to the market.



Since his husband passed away, I Tundung's mother took over his husband's job. She worked on the fields of their neighbors every day in his stead. They would pay her wage after harvest. She used all the money she earned to satisfy her family's daily needs until she received the next wage. She worked on the fields after she finished her chores at home.

Time flew so fast. Four years after her husband passed away, I Tundung's mother began to feel the toll of her hard work. She frequently fell ill and could not go to the field. Tundung tried to help as much as he could. He did all the household chores, from making up his bed, sweeping the floor and the yard, fetching water from nearby well, to gather vegetables from a patch of field behind their hut.

One day, the mother, who was laying weakly on her bed, called I Tundung.

“Dung, Dung,. . ., please get me some water. I'm so thirsty!”

“Yes, Mother!” I Tundung said. He quickly ran to the kitchen and put down the vegetables he had just picked. I Tundung poured a glass of water and brought it to his mother.

“Here's the water, Mother. Drink up,” he said. He held out his hand and touched his mother's forehead. He was taken aback because she was burning up. I Tundung hugged his mother.

“Mother, you are burning up. You have a fever. Hang on, Mother, you’ll make it through,” I Tundung said. He then went to the next door neighbor to inform them about his mother.

“Mr. Wayan, Mrs.Wayan, please help my mother. She has a fever and is burning up as we speak,” I Tundung said urgently. His voice was filled with concern.

“Alright, Dung. Calm yourself. Everything is going to be fine,” Mrs. Wayan consoled him. She immediately went to Tundung’s house. Mr. Wayan followed close behind her, taking traditional ointment they usually used to treat fever.

Once they were in the house, Mr. Wayan handed the ointment to his wife. Mrs. Wayan applied it on Tundung’s Mother’s forehead.

“Madam, this ointment usually works. Hopefully it will reduce your fever. Get well soon, Tundung needs you,” Mrs. Wayan said softly, massaging Tundung’s Mother’s arms.

Soon, Tundung’s Mother fell asleep. Mr. Wayan and his wife returned to their home. Meanwhile, I Tundung waited on his mother. He cried with worries. At one point, his mother woke up. Her hand moved to find Tundung’s. She held Tundung’s hand tightly.

“Dung, I have no strength left. I’m going to see your father. You have to be strong, Son. You are my pride. Be a good boy and be

nice to others, okay. You will need their help. Remember, Son, you have to respect others to gain their respect.” As soon as she said those words, her hand went limp and her eyes closed.

Seeing that her mother suddenly stopped talking, I Tundung patted her cheeks and called her. He was afraid that the worst had happened.

“Mother! Mother! Please wake up. Open your eyes, Mother!”

His mother did not move. No matter how hard Tundung shook her body, she did not respond at all. I Tundung wailed loudly. The neighbors heard him and came to the house immediately. They were shocked to see Tundung crying beside his lifeless mother. Mrs. Wayan, their closest neighbor, approached them and checked on Tundung’s Mother. She shook her head and spoke with sadness.

“She is gone... Dung, your mother has passed away.”

Mrs.Wayan then informed everyone that Tundung’s Mother had passed away. Everyone was sad because she had been a good neighbor. They took turn to console I Tundung, who was crying buckets of tears beside his mother’s body.

The people in the village immediately worked to prepare for her funeral. Tundung’s Mother was buried in the local cemetery. The whole village attended her funeral.

Three days later, Tundung was still in grief. He sat alone in his house, thinking about his parents. I Tundung realized that he was all alone, now. He was an orphan.

## **Tundung's Travel**

Ever since both of his parents died, I Tundung lived alone in his hut. He had no family and no money. One day, I Tundung sat in front of the hut, watching the full moon shone brightly among the stars. I Tundung smiled. Seeing how beautiful the world was, he felt a ray of hope in his heart. He decided that he could not give up. Tundung then thought about what he had to do to have a better life. He prayed all night that God would show him the way.

A few days later, before he went to bed, I Tundung made up his mind to leave his village. He felt that it would be better for him. Finding works in new environment might help him forget his sadness. The following morning, Tundung packed his few belongings and said farewell to his neighbors, particularly Mr. Wayan's family. They had helped I Tundung since the day his mother passed away. Mr. Wayan knew he could not and should not help Tundung forever. The boy had to learn to fend for himself. Mr. Wayan and his family waved goodbye to Tundung, who soon became a little speck in the distance.

I Tundung had been wandering for weeks when he arrived in a village. This village was different from other villages he had passed. It was isolated, far away from neighboring villages. It was like a fortress, surrounded by walls of thorny bushes and trees.

“Wow... this is like a fortress! What village is it?” I Tundung

wondered. He was astonished, but he knew better than parading his astonishment. He stopped about twenty feet from the village and watched it in amazement.

The sun was high in the sky. It was almost midday. Around I Tundung, the dense leaves threw shades on the ground, protecting everything from the hot sun. I Tundung was starving. It had been a few days since the last time he had a decent meal. He sat down on the ground, holding his empty stomach. I Tundung was used to being hungry. During his travel, it was not every day that he could find something to eat. He hoped that he could ask for some meals from the people in this village. He would do any job in exchange for some food. He had the skills to cultivate fields or fixing roofs. He hoped the people would give him some work so he could eat.

To enter the village, one had to go through a gate. It was the only way in and out of the village. It was built specially for the villagers. Anyone who was not from the village could not enter freely. The gate was wide enough for two men to walk side by side. It was quite tall and its doors were made from old, dry bamboo planks. It was a sturdy gate.

I Tundung stood up and walked towards the gate. He stopped right in front of it, did not dare to walk a step further. Considering the sturdy looking gate, he was certain that not anyone could get in the village. He looked at the tall gate. It was more than twice



his height. He had to look up and craned his neck a little to see its top. He hoped that someone would get in or out soon, so that he could ask them about the village.

While he was deep in thought, a hand landed on his shoulder.

“What are you doing here, Boy? I suspect that you are not from the village,” the man said. I Tundung was startled. He turned around and looked at the man behind him. He was a middle aged man, just a little taller than I Tundung himself. He looked like he was around his fifties. He was wearing a hat made from woven palm leaves. That kind of hat was called *klangsah*. It was a little worn. Apparently the man had often worn it under any weather. The man was bare-chested, which was common in villages at the time. The only other article of clothing he wore was a long worn out cloth that he wrapped on his hip, hanging down to his ankles.

“I’m sorry... Sir,” I Tundung stammered. The man had really taken him by surprise.

“What’s your name and where did you come from, Boy? Where are you going?” the man asked in a friendly tone, even though he was clearly on guard.

“My... My name is I Tundung. I came from Sangkan Gunung Village,” I Tundung said, trying to calm his heart. He rubbed his eyes and looked at the man more clearly.

“Sangkan Gunung Village? I’ve never heard of it. Why are you standing here?” the man asked. “Come on in,” he said before I Tundung had a chance to answer. The man wrapped his arm around I Tundung’s shoulder and walked with him through the gate. He then invited Tundung to join him sitting on the grass under a Teak tree at the northern edge of the village. The man put down the hoe he had been carrying on his shoulder.

“I’ve been watching you for a while,” he said once they were sitting down. “You look confused.”

“Yes, Sir, I am. I am an orphan and have nowhere to live. My parents passed away from some illness. It has been six months since I left my village. I left because I want to find a better life. I need a job. I could not stay in my village because my family was poor and there was not much to do there,” I Tundung explained.

“You are an orphan?” the man asked curiously.

“I am,” I Tundung said. They both said nothing for a while. The village was quiet at this time of day. All the villagers were working in their fields.

“My name is Ki Pasek Tenganan. I am the chief of elders in this village,” the man broke the silence. He was a charismatic man. Even though he was not tall, he was muscular. His dark skin was clean and well-kept. He had a sharp look in his eyes, yet it felt kind and calming to I Tundung. He was the opposite of what I



Tundung looked like. The boy was skinny.

“It is nice to meet you, Sir. What is this village called?”

“This is Tenganan Village. Haven’t you heard of it?” Ki Pasek Tenganan said. I Tundung shook his head.

“I’ve never heard of Tenganan Village before. This is the first time I hear about it,” I Tundung said weakly. He threw a quick glance to his surroundings, taking in the view of the village.

From where they were sitting, I Tundung looked south. He saw neat rows of houses in the village. The roofs were made of *ambengan*, dried long grass that were tied together in a neat bunch. In the center of the village, there was a big building that the people called *wantilan*. On the south side of the building, there were several wide and long public halls. They were built quite high from the ground. The halls were sturdy brick buildings. The rectangular halls had no walls. There were only columns on each corner, supporting the roof made of palm fibers. The foundation was made from big rocks and boulders, topped with dark red bricks. On the bricks were laid thick planks from selected woods.

There were two long roads stretching from the north to the south of the village. They were around four hundred meters long, on the right and left sides of the village. On both sides of each road, the houses stood in neat rows. The houses were in the traditional style

of Tenganan Village.

“This is an ancient village. Its culture and traditions are different from those of other villages around here,” Ki Pasek Tenganan explained. I Tundung did not completely understand what the man was talking about. He just looked at him blankly, trying to remember everything.

“You look so weak. Have you eaten anything?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked. I Tundung did not immediately reply, even though he had been starving for days. He felt did not want to beg for food.

“Since three days ago, I only ate leaves and drank water from the river,” I Tundung said weakly. His stomach hurt. He was used to being hungry but it was too much this time. He doubled up on the ground, clutching his stomach.

“Oh, poor boy,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said.

“Come on, let’s walk a little more. Can you hold it in for a few more minutes? I’m taking you to my house,” he added.

Ki Pasek Tenganan stood up and turned to look at I Tundung.

“Can you walk?” he asked.

“Yes, I think I can,” I Tundung forced himself to stand. He took a deep breath before following Ki Pasek Tenganan.

At his house, Ki Pasek Tenganan called his wife, who immediately came out from the kitchen.

“Have you finished cooking lunch?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked his wife.

“I just need to fry the peanuts and the lunch will be ready,” his wife replied shortly.

“Let me introduce you to someone. This is I Tundung,” Ki Pasek Tenganan introduced his wife to I Tundung. She was wondering why her husband brought home a skinny boy that they had never known before. The boy looked pale.

“Who is he?” she asked.

“I’ll explain later. He needs something to eat. Could you bring him some food, please?” Ki Pasek Tenganan said. He then invited I Tundung to sit on a bamboo bench. I Tundung felt shy, being treated respectfully by a prominent figure of Tenganan Village.

“It’s alright, Sir. I’ll just sit on the floor,” I Tundung said.

“No... Don’t be shy. Make yourself at home. Come on, sit over here,” Ki Pasek Tenganan insisted. I Tundung obeyed him and sat on the bamboo bench in front of his host.

They made small talks until Ki Pasek Tenganan’s wife came with the food. She served a basket of warm rice, green beans with

grated coconut, chili paste, fried peanuts, and roasted fish wrapped in banana leaf. he left the room and returned with a jug of water and some plates. The meal was mouthwatering, especially for I Tundung who had not eaten for days.

“Thank you, Wife. These look delicious,” Ki Pasek Tenganan praised his wife. He then welcomed I Tundung to eat. I Tundung got a plate and filled it with the delicious food. He ate with the family.

“Go on, have a second serving,” Ki Paek Tenganan offered. From the corner of his eyes, he could see I Tundung ate vigorously. He was clearly starving. Ki Pasek Tenganan could not help but feeling sorry for him.

“Thank you very much, Sir. I think I will,” I Tundung said and refilled his plate with rice and green beans.

“Have some fish, too,” Ki Pasek said. Since I Tundung did not take any, Ki Pasek took some and put it in I Tundung’s plate. I Tundung ate it gladly, even though he was shy about it.

“Thank you very much, Sir,” I Tundung thanked his host sincerely.

I Tundung was touched because Ki Pasek had treated him very kindly. While chewing his food, I Tundung thought, “How can I repay their kindness? Oh, God, please bless them with happiness

and health. Please reward them for their kindness towards me.”

By the time I Tundung finished his meal, his plate was clean. He was content. Colors returned to his face. He smiled and said, “Thank you very much for the food, Sir. I don’ know how to repay your kindness.”

“He he... is it delicious?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked. I Tundung smiled. Although he said nothing, his bright smile was enough for Ki Pasek to know that I Tundung was happy.

“Now, tell me your story. Why and how did you come here?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked.

“I don’t know, Sir. I just followed my feet. I just walked and walked, one step at a time, one foot in front of the other, and I arrived at the gate,” I Tundung said. There was a hint of sadness in his voice.

“Well, where will you go next?” Ki Pasek Tenganan tried to find out more about his guest.

“I have no idea.”

“What is it that you are looking for, Boy?” Ki Pasek probed further.

“I have nobody else, Sir. I left my village to find job and experience. That’s all I want. I want to earn my own living,” I



Tundung said. “Do you have a job for me, Sir?” he added.

“A job?”

“Yes, Sir. I want to work.”

“You are still a boy. What sort of job can you do?”

“I can cultivate fields,” I Tundung said confidently.

“Can you?”

“Yes, Sir. I also can do construction works,” I Tundung added.

“Where did you learn all that?”

“From my neighbors. They used to take me with them to work on construction sites. My farming skills are from my mother.”

“Hmm... Very well. Do you want to stay here for a while? I’ll give you some work,” Ki Pasek Tangenan said.

“Of course I do. I’ll be glad to,” I Tundung accepted the offer.

“I want you to cultivate my field on Kanginan Hill. It was not too far from here,” Ki Pasek Tenganan explained.

“Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity, Sir. I really appreciate it,” I Tundung said sincerely. “Can I see the field now?” he asked. He could not wait to start working.

“Sure! I’ll take you there,” Ki Pasek Tenganan stood up. He then went to the back of his house. I Tundung was left alone.

I Tundung looked around the house. This was a traditional house of Tenganan Village. Every room was under one roof, except for the kitchen which was separated. It was cool inside the house. The sun rays entered the room through the gaps above the walls. It was a simple house. The walls were made from clay. Part of the bedroom walls was made from woven bamboo and planks. An altar was built near the entrance. The people of Tenganan Village worshiped God Indra, one of the gods in Hindu belief system. Their worship rituals were a little different from how Bali people usually worshipped their gods. At certain time of the year, the people of Tenganan held *Ngusaba* ceremony. It was a religious ceremony to prevent disasters and calamities. Another difference between Tenganan Village and other villages in Bali was their governmental system. However, Tenganan people spoke the same language with other people in Bali.

“Let’s go, Boy,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said, pulling I Tundung from his reverie. Ki Pasek brought some tools, including a hoe and a scythe.

They walked side by side towards Kanginan Hill. They took the village road to the eastern end of the village.

By that time, the sun had gone down in the west sky. The village



was still quiet. Several villagers were walking on the road, returning from their fields. Children played games with stones in front of their houses. Villagers who passed Ki Pasek Tenganan greeted him warmly.

“Where are you going, *Jero* Pasek?” an old man asked. He was returning from his field. A bunch of coconuts were on his shoulder. He addressed Ki Pasek with the title *Jero*, indicating that he respected Ki Pasek.

“We’re going to Kanginan Hill,” Ki Pasek Tenganan replied.

After walking for about five thousand steps, they arrived at the foot of Kanginan Hill. I Tundung was excited. He walked with such a gait that showed how happy he was. Sweat glistened on his forehead. He wiped it with the end of his cloth.

“This is Kanginan Hill. That field with the fence is my land. Let’s go there,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said.

The field was quite vast, about two hectares in area. It was rectangular, stretching from the north to the south. Big trees grew here and there in the field. There were Teak, Jackfruit, Durian, and Langseh trees. There were several Kapok tree as well. On the southern end of the field there was a *Pulai* tree. This tall tree was considered sacred in Bali culture because the wood was often used to make *barong* or *rangda* masks for cultural ceremonies.

Ki Pasek took I Tundung to a hut in the middle of the field. This kind of hut was called *rompok*. It consisted of a room and a veranda. There was a bamboo bench inside for sitting down or sleeping. Its roof was made of bales of hays, stacked in such a way to protect the inhabitant from the sun and rain. Its walls were made of woven bamboo and *klangsah* (woven coconut leaves).

“I give this field for you to cultivate. Do whatever you think will be good,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said when they had sat on the veranda. “From now on, you can stay here. I will come every day to bring you some food,” Ki Pasek Tenganan explained his plan.

“Yes, Sir. Thank you very much for trusting me,” I Tundung said. He then stood up and took the tools they brought from Ki Pasek’s home. He looked around, judging what should be done first. Then he found what he should do.

In front of the hut were wild bushes and grass. He would cut them down. “Those long grasses are old enough to cut and woven to make roofs,” he thought. He immediately got to work. He cut the grass and bushes expertly. In just a few moments, a tall pile of grass was stacked behind him. Ki Pasek Tenganan watched I Tundung worked from the hut. He saw how diligent and efficient I Tundung worked. Because he was tired, Ki Pasek Tenganan fell asleep on the bamboo bench.

I Tundung worked tirelessly. As soon as he had cut enough grass,

he tied them into one big pile. Each pile was as wide as his reach. By the time the sun went down, he had cut seven piles of grass. He then stopped working and looked at the direction of the hut. He saw Ki Pasek Tenganan still laying down on the bench. I Tundung approached him and tried to wake him up.

“Sir, wake up, Sir,” I Tundung called, shaking Ki Pasek’s leg.

“Yes, what is it?” Ki Pasek asked, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

“It’s almost dark. Aren’t you supposed to go home?” I Tundung asked.

“Yes, you’re right. I have to head home now,” Ki Pasek said.

“I’m sorry I fell asleep,” he added. Ki Pasek Tenganan then got up and walked out of the hut. He saw the orange rays in the sky. He then looked at the piles of grass that I Tundung had cut while he was sleeping.

“I’m sorry I can only cut that few, Sir,” I Tundung said. Ki Pasek Tenganan reached for I Tundung’s shoulders and embraced him.

“You work so fast and efficient, Boy,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said, patting I Tundung on the back. “I’m glad that you are as good as you said you were. You did a good job today,” he added. I Tundung looked down humbly.

“What are you going to do next?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked.

“I’ll cut all the grass before I tilt the soil. I’m going to plant some corn, cassava, and banana trees there,” I Tundung said confidently.

“Well... well... I’m glad to hear it,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said. He was satisfied.

“I’ll weave the grass into roofs later,” I Tundung added.

“Very well, Boy. Do whatever you deem good. I trust you. I’m going home now. I’ll come back tomorrow with some food for you. There is a stream over there. The water is clear and clean. You can take a bath there and boil the water for drink,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said.

“Yes, Sir. Thank you very much,” I Tundung thanked his savior sincerely.

Ki Pasek Tenganan then walked home, leaving I Tundung in the field on Kanginan Hill. I Tundung watched Ki Pasek getting farther and farther, until he disappeared in the distance.

At home, Ki Pasek Tenganan’s wife welcomed her husband. She asked a lot of questions about I Tundung. Ki Pasek Tenganan explained everything.

“Hmm... I see. Let’s hope he likes working for us,” Ki Pasek

Tenganan's wife said.

At the foot of Kanginan Hill, I Tundung went to the small river that Ki Pasek Tenganan had showed him. He was going to take a bath because his body felt hot and itchy after working all afternoon. He met several people on the stream. They were going to take a bath too. I Tundung introduced himself politely to them. They were villagers from Tenganan Village, but they lived in their fields. They stayed in the fields mainly to keep watch on their crops until harvest time.

Days and weeks passed by. I Tundung had been living in the hut on the field at the foot of Kanginan Hill for three months. The corns that he planted on his first days cultivating the fields had grown tall. The cobs had begun to sprout. Cassava and banana that he planted had also grown tall. There was no empty spot on the field that he had not used to plant trees and crops. I Tundung also planted teak trees that thrived in the field. In just a few months, I Tundung had managed to turn the barren land into a lush field. Many people came to see how I Tundung cultivated the field. They wanted to know his secrets.

The time for harvesting the corns came. Ki Pasek Tenganan and his wife were satisfied because their harvest was abundant. The cassava tubers they harvested were big, bigger than usual. This good harvest made them love I Tundung even more.





In just four months, I Tundung became famous among the villagers of Tenganan. Many people came to ask for his help. They wanted him to cultivate their fields like he had done Ki Pasek Tenganan's. I Tundung gladly helped them after he got permission from Ki Pasek Tenganan.

He cultivated quite a lot of fields. Since he was diligent and capable, the people of Tenganan Village loved him. In addition to cultivating their land, the villagers also asked I Tundung to repair their houses. I Tundung always did his best to repair the houses. Everyone who had asked for his help was always satisfied. I Tundung never asked for money as the payment for his works. He only asked for some food. His skinny body became more and more muscular every day.

Time flew. I Tundung had lived in Tenganan Village for two years now. He never hesitated to help the villagers. He also prayed piously. Every morning and afternoon, he went to *pura* (Balinese temple or shrine) that people built under the *Pulai* tree on the southern end of Ki Pasek's field. The temple was called Pura Naga Sundung.

At night, when he was alone in the hut, he often prayed to God for a direction. He also prayed that his parents were given a place in nirvana. He also asked for strength to face any difficulties in life.

## **Turning into A Snake**

Nobody could run away from his fate. One morning, I Tundung woke up and went to the stream to cleanse himself. After that, he prayed in the temple as usual. Then, he went to check the plants and crops in the field. He knew all plants that he had planted there. He knew exactly which tree was blossoming and which was ready for harvest. He reported this to Ki Pasek Tenganan every afternoon. Ki Pasek Tenganan always visited I Tundung in the field every day. He was very satisfied with I Tundung's work. He now was able to fulfill his daily needs, as well as requirements for ceremonies, easily. The produce from his fields, which I Tundung cultivated, was always abundant. In fact, Ki Pasek Tenganan was now able to share some of his harvest to other villagers.

Ki Pasek Tenganan was known as a wealthy man in his village. However, he was always humble, wearing similar attire as other people. He only wore clothes that reflected his wealth on special occasions, such as in Ngusaba ceremony or other rituals. On such occasions, he and his family members would wear luxurious and beautiful clothes, complete with gold accessories.

One morning, when I Tundung was checking the plants on the northern end of the field, he found a banana tree had been cut down. The bananas, which had been hanging beautifully on their stalk the day before, were gone. Upon closer inspection, he found cut marks on the remaining stalk. I Tundung was concerned. He

wondered, “Who had done this to me?”

I Tundung checked other parts of the fields. On the east side, he found another banana tree being cut down. The bananas were also gone.

“Oh, God, what is going on, here? Ki Pasek would be furious if he found out I had lost his fruits,” I Tundung thought.

That afternoon, Ki Pasek Tenganan came to the field, bringing some food for I Tundung. I Tundung quickly made his report regarding the missing bananas.

“How come?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked. He could not believe it. There had been no theft in the area for a long time.

“I don’t know, Sir,” I Tundung replied honestly.

I Tundung then took Ki Pasek Tenganan to the fallen banana trees and showed him what he had found. Ki Pasek Tenganan checked the surrounding areas.

However, he did not find anything suspicious.

“Well, what’s done is done. There’s nothing we can do but being more careful. You have to be more vigilant from now on, Boy. Watch the field and do not let your guard down,” Ki Pasek said, throwing a glance around his vast field.

“Don’t be sad, Tundung. It’s not your fault. There might be someone who dislikes us and decided to steal our fruits. Just be careful and take care of yourself, alright,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said before leaving I Tundung and returned home.

I Tundung returned to his works. Now his workload was considerably lighter. He only needed to weed the field, cut some grass, and tilt some parts of the field. He also applied some fertilizers on some plants that needed them.

I Tundung then did his routine check. The Jackfruit tree on the west side of the field bore a lot of fruits. Some of the jackfruits were almost ripe.

Banana trees lined up neatly in every side of the field, forming long lines stretching from the east to west and from the north to south. Seeing all these always made I Tundung happy. His hard works had paid off. However, every time he thought about the missing bananas, he felt a pang of sadness. He did not want Ki Pasek to lose his trust on him. Thus, I Tundung planned to stay awake all night to guard the field.

Night came. As it was getting late and darker, I Tundung slipped among the trees, walking stealthily like a civet. He was sure he would be able to catch the thief if they came again. However, when he arrived at the west side of the field, he was devastated. A lot of jackfruits were no longer there. Only the unripe and the

small ones were left. I Tundung was furious. He looked around, trying to find anything that might point to the thief. However, he found nothing suspicious. There was no trace of the thief at all.

“I am doomed,” he muttered. He quickly went to the other side of the field. On the east side, he found a *bayur* tree fell down. Someone had cut it. “How could this happen? A tree this big falling down and I did not hear anything?” I Tundung was worried. He wanted to report this incident immediately to Ki Pasek. However, he realized that it was in the middle of the night and Ki Pasek would be sleeping in his house. I Tundung did not want to bother him. He decided to report it in the morning.

As the first light shone in the east, he went to Ki Pasek Tenganan’s house.

“What happened, Dung? It’s not common for you to come here this early,” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked.

I Tundung immediately made his report, even though he was struggling to catch his breath.

“It happened again?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked. He could not believe his ears. I Tundung said nothing. He waited for Ki Pasek’s instruction.

“Let’s go to the field. I need to see it with my own eyes!” Ki Pasek Tenganan’s voice rose a little.

They went to the field immediately. Ki Pasek Tenganan checked everything carefully. He found that there were many fruits and plants had been stolen.

“Tundung, I give you one more chance to keep this field safe. If another theft happens, I will hold you responsible,” Ki Pasek Tenganan said.

“Yes, Sir. I’m sorry. I honestly don’t know what happened,” I Tundung said sadly. Ki Pasek Tenganan then left him without saying anything.

I Tundung slumped on the ground. He could only regret his bad luck. “Why did God give me such an ordeal? What has I done wrong?” he kept thinking. However, he soon picked himself up. He could not wallow in sadness forever. He worked and worked all day, until the night fell. After cleansing himself, he prayed on Pura Naga Sundung.

I Tundung brought some flowers, water, and simple offerings. He began to pray sincerely. He told God all his woes and bad luck. He also wondered why he had to undergo such an ordeal, even though he had worked hard and prayed every day. He prayed to God for the strength to go through this hard time in his life. He prayed that the thief would be caught soon, even if it was a spirit from another world.

By midnight, a gust of wind flowed from the top of *Pulai* tree

above Pura Naga Sundung and swirled around I Tundung who was deep in his prayers. I Tundung felt a weird sensation in his heart. He tried to calm himself and get a grip on his emotion.

“What do you want, Boy?” a voice whispered in his ears. It was so soft, almost like a hiss.

“I want to catch the thief that had been stealing from our field,” I Tundung said in his prayers.

“You shall catch him. But there is a price for it,” the hissing voice said.

“What is it?”

“You have to be a snake, like me,” the voice hissed. I Tundung considered it for a moment.

“Be a snake?” I Tundung asked.

“Yesss. Will you be a snake?”

I Tundung fell silent. He would give anything to catch the thief and regain his good reputation in Ki Pasek’s eyes. After deliberating for a while, he finally gave his answer.

“Yes, I will do it,” I Tundung said with such a resolution in his voice.





“Very well. As soon as you turn into a snake, you will be able to catch the thief,” the giant snake said.

It was a mystical snake called Naga Sundung, the spirit that lived in Pura Naga Sundung.

“After I become a snake, can I return to my human body?” I Tundung asked.

“Yes, of course you can. You will return to your body when there is a total eclipse,” the snake said before vanishing into thin air.

I Tundung felt something happening to his body. At first, he felt like a fire and had bitten his big toe. Then he felt his whole body burning. Scales began to emerge on his skin. His feet melted into a smooth tail of a snake. The change gradually crawled up his body until he finally turned into a snake.

I Tundung looked at his body. “I am a snake, now. A black snake,” he thought.

He then cried loudly, “Father... Mother...! I have turned into a black snake! I am the Black Snake of Tenganan Hill!”

However, all that escaped from his mouth was a long hiss. The black snake then slithered around the field, trying to find and catch the thief that had been stealing from the field.

The sky above the hill suddenly turned dark. Thunder clapped and lightning flashed. In a blink of an eye, rain poured heavily over the hill. The Black Snake of Tenganan Hill returned to the temple. He coiled under the *Pulai* tree behind the temple.



The following morning, Ki Pasek Tenganan came to the field to check on I Tundung. The ground was still wet after the heavy rain the night before. The trees and plants were unmoving. Everything was so quiet. Not even birds were heard. Ki Pasek Tenganan sensed that there was something wrong. But he quickly dismissed the feeling. He kept walking into the field. Usually, I Tundung would come to him, but he did not see I Tundung anywhere this morning.

“He’s probably working on something. Or he might be ill in the hut,” Ki Pasek Tenganan thought. He quickly walked to the hut and checked. However, he found no one there. He wondered where I Tundung was.

Ki Pasek Tenganan stepped out of the hut and walked towards the trees. He did not see any footprint on the wet ground. “Has I Tundung left? Was he so offended and angry that he left the field?” he kept wondering. Ki Pasek Tenganan called I Tundung loudly.

“Tunduuung, Tunduuung, where are you?” Ki Pasek Tenganan called with his booming voice again and again. The Black Snake heard someone calling I Tundung. Thinking that he was called, the Black Snake slithered towards Ki Pasek Tenganan, hissing constantly.

Ki Pasek Tenganan was startled when he saw a huge snake

slithering around his feet. He almost cried and fainted.

“I am Tundung, Sir,” the Black Snake hissed.

“Are you? Are you truly I Tundung?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked, still a little wary. “Please don’t kill me,” he continued.

“I will never harm you, Sir. There’s no reason to fear me,” the Black Snake hissed again.

“Thank you. How come did you transform into a snake?” Ki Pasek Tenganan asked, suppressing his fear.

I Tundung then told him what had happened.

“Poor you. I’m sorry, Tundung. I should not have gotten mad at you.” Ki Pasek Tenganan could not contain himself. He felt sorry for I Tundung.

“Return to your human body, Tundung. I will adopt you as my own son. I promise,” Ki Pasek Tenganan continued.

“I thank you very much, Sir. I am deeply grateful that you have helped me so much. I don’t know how to repay your kindness,” the Black Snake hissed. Ki Pasek Tenganan felt sorry for I Tundung. He stroked the snake’s long body and embraced it. The Black Snake kept still in Ki Pasek’s arms. Only its forked tongue that slithered in and out of its mouth.

At first, not many people knew about the Black Snake. However, the news soon spread all over the village. It even spread to nearby villages. Some people found it hard to believe that a boy had turned into a black snake, but those who knew I Tundung and Ki Pasek Tenganan knew that the old man would never lie. Since then, I Tundung was known as the Black Snake of Tenganan Hill.

Since I Tundung turned into a snake, Tenganan Village and Kanginan Hill became a safe place. There had been no theft anymore in the area. The villagers worked on their fields without fear.

They felt secure because they believed that the Black Snake guarded their village from people or spirits who had bad intention towards them.

One day, a man was gathering firewood in Tenganan Hill. He cut down some big trees on the hill. One of the trees fell down and crushed the Black Snake's eggs. The man was called I Seken. After cutting the logs into small pieces, he brought them home.

The Black Snake of Tenganan Hill found out that its eggs had been destroyed. It was furious. He followed I Seken's trail to his house. I Seken had just arrived home when the snake caught up with him. The Black Snake slithered in front of him, blocking his entrance. It raised its long body and was ready to swallow I Seken



whole. I Seken was so terrified. He screamed and ran towards the village hall.

“There’s a snake! Help me! There’s a big snake!” he cried as loud as he could. The people who heard him immediately raised the alarm. The villagers gathered with weapons in their hands. They were going to kill the Black Snake. However, before they could even attack the Black Snake, thousands of small snakes appeared from all over the place. Everyone panicked and ran away, trying to save themselves.

Hearing the commotion, Ki Pasek Tenganan quickly went out of his house. When he saw the Black Snake he ran towards it. Ki Pasek Tenganan then asked I Tundung to forgive I Seken who had cut the tree and accidentally crushed the Black Snake’s eggs. The Black Snake obeyed Ki Pasek. The snakes returned to Kaningan Hill. The Black Snake and its army of little snakes were believed to guard Pura Naga Sundung in Tenganan Hill even to this day.



## **The Author**

Nama lengkap : Dra. Cokorda Istri Sukrawati, M.Hum.

Pos-el : cokordaistrisukrawati@gmail.com

Akun Facebook : Sukrawati Cokorda

Alamat kantor : Jalan Trengguli I Nomor 34 Denpasar Timur,  
Bali 80238

Bidang keahlian : Sastra

### **Riwayat pekerjaan/profesi (10 tahun terakhir):**

1994–2016 : Peneliti Madya, Balai Bahasa Bali

### **Riwayat Pendidikan Tinggi dan Tahun Belajar:**

1. S-2 Ilmu Linguistik, Konsentrasi Wacana Sastra, Universitas Udayana (2006—2011)
2. S-1 Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Daerah, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Udayana (1981—1987)

### **Judul Penelitian dan Tahun Terbit (10 tahun terakhir):**

1. Pengaruh Globalisasi terhadap Perkembangan Kesusastraan Bali (2015)
2. Religiositas dalam Cerita I Kecut sebagai Upaya Penguatan Karakter Bangsa (2015)
3. Nilai Edukatif Cerita Be Jeleg Tresna Telaga: Memperkuat Pendidikan Karakter Bangsa (2014)

4. Konfigurasi Heroik dalam Cerita I Bagus Diarsa: sebuah Kajian Sosiologi Sastra (2014)
5. Motif Kecerdikan dalam Cerita Rakyat Bali (2013)
6. Analisis Struktur dan Fungsi Geguritan Japatuan (2012)
7. Geguritan Ceker Cipak: Analisis Struktur dan Sosiologi (2012)
8. Geguritan Candrabanu Karya Anak Agung Istri Biyang Agung: Kajian Kritik Sastra Feminis (2011)

**Informasi Lain:**

Cokorda Istri Sukrawati dilahirkan di Desa Singapadu, Kecamatan Sukawati, Kabupaten Gianyar, 12 Juni 1960. Tahun 2013—sekarang menjadi Dewan Penyunting Aksara Jurnal Kebahasaan dan Kesastraan Balai Bahasa Bali. Aktif dalam kegiatan kesastraan di Bali dan menjadi pembicara pada seminar nasional ataupun internasional kebahasaan dan kesastraan.

## **The Editor**

Nama : Drs. Suladi, M.Pd.  
Pos-el : suladi1007@yahoo.co.id  
Bidang Keahlian : Penyuntingan

### **Riwayat Pekerjaan:**

1. Bidang Bahasa di Pusat Bahasa, Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (1993—2000)
2. Subbidang Peningkatan Mutu Bidang Pemasarakatan (2000—2004)
3. Subbidang Kodifikasi Bidang Pengembangan (2004—2009)
4. Subbidang Pengendalian Pusbinmas (2010—2013)
5. Kepala Subbidang Informasi Pusbanglin (2013— 2014)
6. Kepala Subbidang Penyuluhan (2014—sekarang)

### **Riwayat Pendidikan:**

1. S-1 Fakultas Sastra Undip (1990)
2. S-2 Pendidikan Bahasa UNJ (2008) Informasi Lain:  
Lahir di Sukoharjo, 10 Juli 1963

### **Informasi Lain:**

Lahir di Sukoharjo, 10 Juli 1963