



Who Will Get the Rice Cake?

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 The Asia Foundation



The village of *Mamburungan* will have a rice cake celebration tomorrow. Sinan and her mother are preparing *imbiuku rice cakes*.



First, the palm leaves are woven into casings for the rice cakes.

Next, the casings are filled with sticky rice.

Then they are boiled in coconut milk.



Sinan and her mother bring their imbiuku in woven baskets, called *gegantang*. The celebration is by the beach. Sinan's friends are already there. Each family brings homemade imbiuku.



They hand over their imbiuku to the village chief's wife.

The village chief's wife is Uli's mother. Uli helps her to collect the imbiuku.

Everyone gets to pick the rice cakes.

But no one may pick their own.



Sinan eyes the numerous imbiuku on the mat. There's one with a long-tailed-bird-shaped casing.

The village chief's wife made it using black sticky rice.

Sinan wants to pick that special one.



Sinan hurries over to the children's mat.
Sinan thinks of the rice cake with the long-tailed-bird-shaped casing.
How can she get it?
Hmmm ... she can use this stalk of *perepat* leaves.



Sinan and her friends play catch and wait for the celebration to start.

Sinan is careful that her perepat leaves remain whole.

She has a plan.



The prayers start.

Sinan and her friends rush to sit.

All the imbiuku in front of them look delicious.

But they have to be patient.



There's the long-tailed-bird-shaped one.

Sinan has to get it!

Eh, why is Ruman gazing at it?

Does he want to pick that one too?



Sinan covers it with her perepat leaves.
Ruman will not be able to see it.



Oh no, Ruman moves to sit closer.
Now he is in front of Sinan.
Sinan stays alert.



The prayers end.
Everyone hurries to pick the rice cakes.
The children rush to get the ones they desire most.
Aha! Sinan grabs her perepat leaves and the rice cake below.



Sinan quickly lifts the perepat leaves.
Oh no! This is a different imbiuku!
Sinan does not get the one with the long-
tailed-bird-shaped casing.



Sinan looks for that imbiuku.
It is not on the mat.
Does Ruman have it?



Ruman has picked a lot of rice cakes.
He cannot carry them all.
The rice cakes fall.
The long-tailed-bird-shaped one is not among
them.



At that moment, someone taps Sinan's shoulder.

Uli offers her a rice cake with a long-tailed-bird-shaped casing.

Uli has picked the imbiuku made by her mother.

That is why Uli offers it to Sinan.



The celebration ends.

Everyone goes home with a full *gegantang*.

Sinan is happy to get the one with the long-tailed-bird-shaped casing.



At home, Sinan enjoys her imbiuku with her mother.

Hopefully, next year Sinan can make her own long-tailed-bird-shaped imbiuku.



Wonderful Words

This story is inspired by the traditional Tolak Bala ceremony of the Tidung tribe of North Kalimantan in Indonesia. The ceremony is conducted on the first and last Wednesday of the Muslim calendar. Villagers prepare **imbiuku** rice cakes that are made of rice or sticky rice cooked with coconut milk.

During the celebration, imbiuku rice cakes are exchanged. Usually, everyone rushes to get

the best ones.

Mamburungan – A village in the district of East Tarakan, located in North Kalimantan Province, in Indonesia, a country in Southeast Asia

gegantang - a woven basket used as a container

perepat – a plant that grows on wetlands



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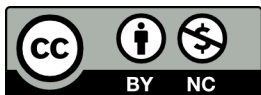
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Original Story

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