

Stories from the Morning of the World



Vern Cork
Jennie Evans

Stories from the Morning of the World

Folk Tales from Bali

Vern Cork and Jennie Evans

illustrated by Nyoman Wisnu

Range 3 Fiction

M

© Text Vern Cork and Jennie Evans 1979

© Illustrations The Macmillan Press Ltd 1979

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form
or by any means, without permission.

First published 1979

Published by

THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

London and Basingstoke

Companies and representatives throughout the world

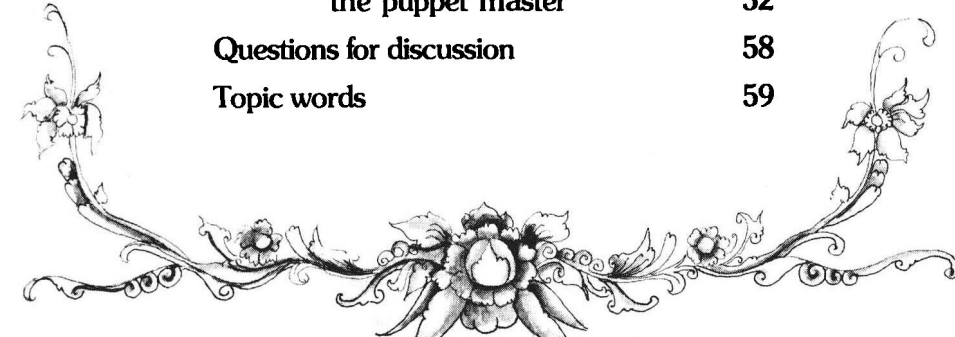
ISBN 0 333 24892 9

Printed in Hong Kong



Contents

1 Why Bali is an island	1
2 Rajapala	8
3 The origin of Lake Batur	14
4 A father's advice	19
5 The unhappy dog	20
6 The place for old people	22
7 The king who lost his head	26
8 Mrs Poor and Mrs Rich	30
9 Jayaprana	32
10 Pan Balang Tamak and the robbers	38
11 The wise farmer	42
12 The queen who became a mouse	44
13 The origin of rice	48
14 Wayan Anteban the puppet master	52
Questions for discussion	58
Topic words	59



1

Why Bali is an island

Long ago, in Java, lived a Brahman whose name was Sidi Mantra. His name shows that he was a priest, and every day he prayed to the god Siwa.

He was a good man, and the god Siwa blessed him greatly. He gave Sidi Mantra a beautiful wife and plenty of money.

But Sidi Mantra was not completely happy because, after several years of marriage, he still had no son. For many months he went to the temple and prayed to Siwa. He often stayed there alone without food and said *mantras* for many days, because he wanted a son so much.

At last Siwa gave him a son named Manik Angkeran. Manik Angkeran was a lovely child. He was good-looking, clever and always happy. But as he grew up, his parents began to worry about him.

He used to go and watch the men gambling. Soon he began to make bets himself. He did not win very often, and when he lost he still went on betting heavily. He began to ask his father for money to pay his debts.

Sidi Mantra tried to talk to his son, but Manik Angkeran would not listen. Very quickly he spent all of his father's money and soon he began to borrow money from other people. These people were not as kind as his father, and soon they began to ask for their money back. When Manik Angkeran could not pay them they became very

unpleasant.

'Father,' he said one day, 'I am afraid of these people. If I don't pay them soon I'm sure they will kill me.'

Sidi Mantra loved his son very much, and so he went to the temple and prayed to the gods. 'How can I help my son?' he asked. 'Please tell me.' After several days the gods answered his prayers.

They told him to travel to the East for many days until he came to a great mountain, Mount Agung. Many gods lived in the mountain, which was full of gold and silver and jewels of many kinds. It was guarded by the dragon Basuki.

So Sidi Mantra started out on his long journey. He crossed many mountains and went through forests full of wild animals. At last he reached Mount Agung.

At the top of the mountain he fell to his knees and began to pray. He rang his priest's bell, and said the *mantras* again and again. At last the dragon Basuki heard him.

'I hear your priest's bell,' said the dragon in a voice that seemed to come from the mountain itself.

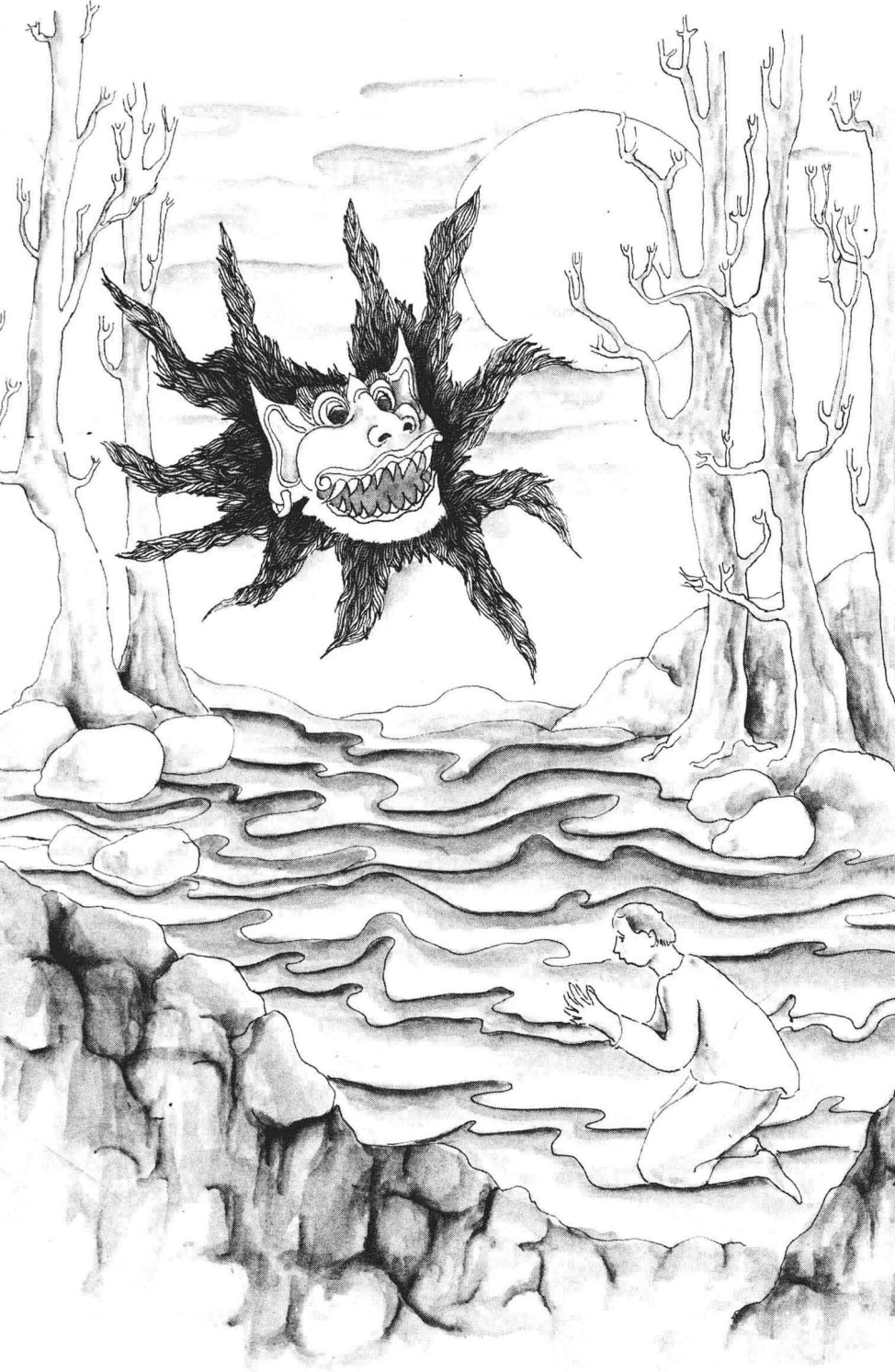
'I hear your *mantras*. Why are you calling me?'

'I have come to ask you to help my only son,' said Sidi Mantra. Then he told the dragon the whole sad story.

Basuki felt sorry for Sidi Mantra. He shook his body so that gold and jewels fell from his scales, and said,

'Take gold. Take silver. Take jewels of many colours. Take as much as you can carry, and may the gods protect you on your journey home.'

Sidi Mantra thanked the dragon a thousand times and started for home. There was plenty of gold, silver and jewels—enough to pay all Manik Angkeran's debts.



Still Manik Angkeran did not learn his lesson. He did not stop betting, and soon he lost all the money. Again he began to borrow heavily, and again people became angry when he did not pay his debts.

So again Sidi Mantra made the long journey to Mount Agung. It took him many long days and nights, but at last he reached the mountain. He prayed and rang his little bell gently until he heard the dragon's great voice.

'Sidi Mantra!'

In a small voice Sidi Mantra asked the dragon for more gold to pay his son's debts.

'Yes, I will give you gold,' said the dragon. 'I will give you jewels. But if you love your son, you must teach him not to gamble. Go in peace but do not return.'

Basuki shook some gold and jewels from his scales and vanished. Sidi Mantra picked up the gold and jewels and slowly went back home. He was old and tired and the journey was difficult. It seemed to be a very long time before he saw his own house again. Manik Angkeran was waiting for him.

'Have you got the gold?' he asked. 'Where did you get it?'

But Sidi Mantra would not tell him about the dragon at Mount Agung, and Manik Angkeran soon lost all the gold. Every day he asked his father about the gold and jewels. But his father would never tell him any more than he already knew. Nobody else could tell him anything either. They only knew that Sidi Mantra used to travel East, and that he always took his priest's bell with him.

One night, Manik Angkeran waited until his father was asleep. Silently he took the little bell and left the house. He started to walk East.

The journey was long and hard and Manik Angkeran was soon very tired. But he walked on and on. He kept his face to the East and he rang the little bell quite often. He did not know what the bell was for, but he guessed that it must be important. At last he reached Mount Agung.

He rang the bell noisily and soon the dragon Basuki came out of the mountain.

'Who are you?' he asked angrily, 'and why have you woken me?'

Manik Angkeran felt very small and frightened as he looked up at the great dragon, but he told his sad story. He told it in such a way that the dragon began to feel sorry for him.

'I will help you,' said Basuki. Manik Angkeran smiled. He was looking at the gold and jewels which covered the dragon. Then Basuki went on,

'I should not give you gold,

I should not give you jewels.

My gold and my jewels have
only made you suffer.

No. I will give you words.

Listen to my words.

They are worth more than gold and silver.

Everything you do in this world will have its result.

If you do wrong, you will suffer.

If you do good, you will live happily.

This is the law of *Karma*.

Live by this law.

Live a good life and you will be happy.'

As the dragon turned and went back into the mountain, Manik promised to be good for the rest of his life. He promised never to gamble again. He promised never to

borrow money again. He promised . . . and suddenly he noticed the end of Basuki's tail. The dragon was inside the mountain, but the end of his tail was not. It shone with gold and jewels among the rocks.

Manik Angkeran forgot his promises. He was carrying a long knife called a *keris*. Quickly he took it out and cut off the end of Basuki's tail. He picked up all the gold and jewels he could carry and started to run away home.

He did not get very far, because the dragon was very angry! 'My tail!' he cried. 'You've cut off my tail!' How it hurt!

Out he came from his mountain. He looked from side to side but Manik Angkeran was out of sight. Only the marks of his feet remained.

Basuki was a dragon with great magic powers. With his long tongue he just licked Manik Angkeran's foot-steps. Suddenly there was a little cloud of smoke, and Manik Angkeran became nothing more than a heap of ashes.

Basuki returned to the mountain and found Sidi Mantra there.

'Oh Basuki,' he said, 'my priest's bell has gone and my son has gone. Manik Angkeran must have come here, but I can't find him. What has happened to him?'

The dragon Basuki told the story of how he lost his tail and how he destroyed Manik Angkeran, and Sidi Mantra began to cry. His grief was so great that he saw no reason to live, now that his only son was dead.

'Oh, what must I do to get my son back?' he cried.

The dragon was very sad to see Sidi Mantra's grief. He wanted to help him, but he also wanted to have the end of his tail back. After all, he only had one tail!

So Sidi Mantra said the magic *mantras*, and with the

help of the gods the dragon's tail became whole again. As soon as he had his tail back, Basuki brought Manik Angkeran back to life again.

Sidi Mantra knew that his son must not come back home with him, and his son had to agree. Before Sidi Mantra left him, he gave his son much good advice.

Then he said, 'Thank you' a thousand times to the dragon and set out for home. On the way he crossed a very narrow piece of land. There he turned round and drew a line with his stick, and said some magic *mantras* at the same time.

At once the sea water began to run along this line. More and more water ran across. It separated the land where Manik Angkeran stood from the island of Java.

These waters are now named the Straits of Bali and of course the island where Manik Angkeran stayed, is Bali.

2

Rajapala

Once there was a young man named Rajapala. He lived in the mountains on the island of Bali. Rajapala greatly loved beauty, and of course Bali is famous for its beauty. Everyday, Rajapala used to work in the garden near his house. He wanted to make it as lovely as possible. He made a pool in it, because a garden with a pool is very beautiful.

It was so quiet and peaceful! People often came to visit it. From it they could see Mount Agung, the highest mountain in Bali. Mount Agung is the home of the Balinese gods, and so it is not surprising that the angels soon discovered Rajapala's garden.

One night when the moon was big and silver, an angel named Supraba was flying over the garden. The water shone in the moonlight. Supraba flew closer. Even the flowers shone like silver in the moonlight. She flew up to the heavens and called out to her friends. They too loved the garden when they saw it. The water looked fresh and clear and they all wanted to swim in it.

The angels left their clothes under some trees by the pool and they played happily together in the water. Then they picked some of the silver flowers which grew in the garden and put them in their hair. Just before the sun came up, they put on their clothes again and flew back to the heavens.

In the morning Rajapala came to his garden. He began to work, and then he noticed something. 'It's very strange,' he thought, 'some of my flowers have gone. Who has picked them?'

The next night the angels visited the garden again, and the next night, and the next. Every night they played and swam in the pool, and enjoyed themselves. Every night they picked the flowers, and every morning Rajapala said to himself, 'Who is picking my flowers?'

So one night, he finished his work as usual, but he did not go home. He hid himself among the trees by the pool and waited. Sure enough, as soon as the sun went down the angels came. Rajapala thought he was dreaming. He bit his little finger. It hurt. No, he was not dreaming.

Then one of the angels began to sing. It was Supraba. Her voice was clear and sweet. She looked beautiful in the moonlight. She was tall and fair and her black hair was long and thick.

Rajapala fell deeply in love. He knew she must stay. He must make her stay. But how? Then he thought of something. An angel cannot enter the heavens without her magic clothes. He must hide her clothes! Quickly and quietly he took them. He ran home and hid them under the rice in his hut. Then he went silently back to his garden and watched the angels again.

He watched them all night and, as usual, just before dawn they began to put on their clothes. Supraba's clothes were not there, of course. She looked for them everywhere but they had gone. The sun rose and the other angels had to fly back to the heavens. Poor Supraba was all alone. She sat down under a tree and covered her face with her hands and cried. Still Rajapala watched her. Some little flowers



fell down from the tree onto her hair, and Rajapala fell more and more in love with her.

'Who has taken my clothes?' cried Supraba. 'Without them I can't return to the heavens.'

When Rajapala heard this he came out of his hiding place. Supraba jumped up. 'Oh!' she cried, 'Who are you? Did you take my clothes?'

Rajapala smiled. He pretended that he did not understand. 'My lady,' he said gently, 'have you lost your clothes? Come with me and I will give you something to wear, but first, tell me your name.'

'My name is Supraba,' she replied, 'but please, give me back my own clothes. You've taken them, I'm sure. Give them back and I'll make you rich.'

Rajapala just smiled and said, 'The gods must want you to stay with me. Your clothes have gone, so you must stay with me. You must not fight the gods. Come on, come home with me.'

Supraba said nothing. She was thinking. 'What can I do?' she thought. 'Perhaps the gods do want me to stay. They have decided that I must stay with this man.'

So she stayed with him. They were not rich but they enjoyed their simple life. Rajapala still worked in his garden every day, but the other angels did not dare to come there again.

Then a son was born and they called him Durma. Supraba was happy. She loved her husband and son very much, and they loved her.

Every evening Rajapala came back from the garden, and Supraba gave him a good rice dinner. But Rajapala noticed something strange. Supraba never pounded the rice, although all the other women had to pound rice every day.

There was another strange thing too. The heap of rice in his hut always stayed the same size. It never got smaller. Sometimes Rajapala worried about these things, but he was happy with his beautiful wife and his healthy son, and usually he did not think about them at all.

Then, one morning, Rajapala woke up late. He got up and Supraba was already cooking. She looked tired, so he said, 'You go back to bed. I'll watch the rice while you sleep. Go and rest.'

'All right, I will,' said Supraba. 'but please don't take the lid off the cooking pot. This is very important. You mustn't look into the pot.'

Of course this made Rajapala very curious. He looked at the pot and again he heard his wife's words, 'Don't take the lid off.' He looked at the pot again and thought to himself, 'Why not?'

'I'll just have a quick look. She'll never know.' He put his hand on the lid.

'No, I mustn't,' he said to himself, but in the end he did.

There was only one piece of rice inside.

'Oh dear! What have I done?' he thought. He quickly put the lid on again, but he knew it was magic rice. 'What will happen now that I know Supraba's secret?' he asked himself.

He waited for Supraba to wake up and then he went out to his garden. He did not tell her about the rice.

When he came back in the evening, Supraba was very sad.

'What's the matter?' asked Rajapala.

'Did you take the lid off the cooking pot this morning?' she said.

Rajapala looked at the floor. 'Yes,' he said very quietly.

‘What have I done?’

‘The rice didn’t cook today. It will never cook again, so now I must start pounding the rice like the other women.’

The heap of rice in the hut became smaller and smaller every day. Of course Supraba’s angel clothes were still under the rice. At last the rice was all gone and so she discovered them.

Now she could fly back to join the other angels. But she had a husband and a son, too. What should she do? She sat in the kitchen, and thought for a long time. Then she put on her magic clothes and went into the garden. She took Durma with her and put him in Rajapala’s arms.

‘Husband,’ she said, ‘I love you and Durma very much, but my real home is in the sky. I must go. I cannot stay with you.’

Sadly, she kissed them both goodbye. Rajapala was very unhappy. He could not speak. He could not cry out, ‘Please stay!’

Slowly Supraba flew up to the heavens. Silently Rajapala watched her go. For a long time he looked into the sky. When the sun went down and darkness came, father and son were still watching and waiting, but Supraba never came back.