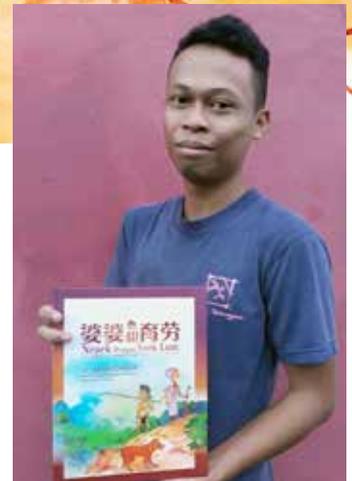
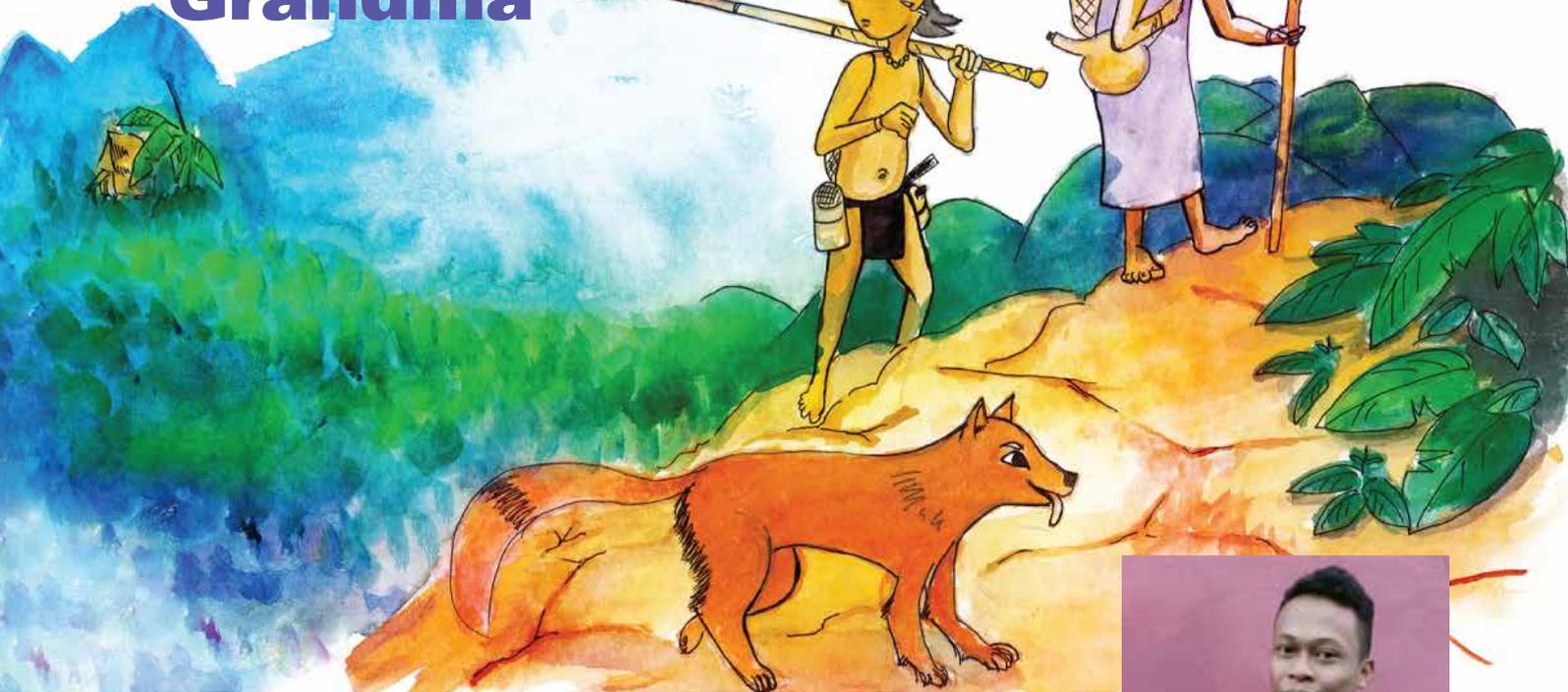


An Adventure with Yeok Luat and Grandma



Saluji



Bah Saluji's maiden work, entitled "*Nenek dan Yeok Luat*," an illustration of a portion of the long oral history of the Semai Orang Asli, undoubtedly connects with the heart.

Like other stories in well written children's books, the illustration touches the soul with a sense of wonder and reaches a deeper place than any 80,000 words novel can ever do.

This is the first published children's book by a Semai author and artist.

The adventure

"*Nenek dan Yeok Luat*," set within the tropical forest in Malaysia's Central Spine, is about the adventure of a 9 year old Semai boy, guided by his grandmother and accompanied by his dog, Cooq Leek.

Bah Saluji drew not only from his boyhood experiences foraging in the forest with his father,

but also from the wealth of his cultural heritage. For generations, stories of similarly intriguing themes were recounted to children. A storyteller would unfold these captivating tales under the moonlight, initiating these children into their co-dependence with the land. This story is now retold with a fresh breath of life under Saluji's colourful brushstrokes.

Painting since the age of 7, Bah Saluji is a self-taught artist, blessed with extraordinarily supportive parents. Bah Sali and Wak Alang provided Bah Saluji the space to paint uninterrupted, and spared him from many chores and errands typically carried out by children in a rural household. Their *kampung* home in Slim River is where Saluji began and completed this book in slightly over a year.

[Kiah-Hui serves with the Orang Asli and marvels at the endless types of delicious dishes made from wild forest plants. You can contact her at kiahhui@malaysiancare.org.



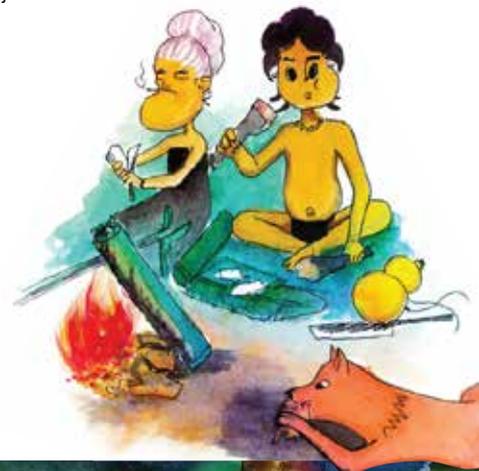
If you would like to join us in promoting the protection of the cultural heritage and rights of the Orang Asli, purchase "Nenek dan Yeok

Luat" at RM25 a copy from Malaysian Care (kiahhui@malaysiancare.org). For bulk purchases, kindly contact the publisher, The Bridge Communication (Whatsapp: 017-2296782).



"The things that are impossible with people are possible with God. This book is unprecedented in history, illustrated and written by an Orang Asli from the Semai tribe. The process of producing the book was both challenging and tedious. By the grace of God, He placed me at a certain place at a certain time to fulfil His purposes in Saluji's life."

– Joyce Tan, a former Malaysian Care staff, is the Chinese text translator for "Nenek dan Yeok Luat". Joyce was shown Saluji's painting during one of her work trip in Slim River in 2015, and subsequently introduced Saluji to the publisher.



Preserving cultural heritage and rights

In celebrating the publication of his first book and in thanksgiving to God for His providence, Saluji shared his desires to continue with a second volume, "Saya ingin sambungkan dengan buku kedua. Cerita pengembaraan dalam hutan ada banyak lagi."

Bah Saluji, now 23, is determined to contribute to the preservation of his unique cultural heritage and the bountiful land he inherited from his forefathers.

With the Orang Asli facing increasing threat in losing their customary land to logging, large agriculture corporations and other forms of encroachment, they are being deprived of clean water, sources of livelihoods, shelters and their unique way of life. Even those who have come out of poverty are being made poor again.

Through his God-given talent and persistent work, Saluji's hope is to safeguard the forest along with its natural resources, and ultimately, to protect the only place he knows and calls home. ■



"You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth."

Psalm 104:14