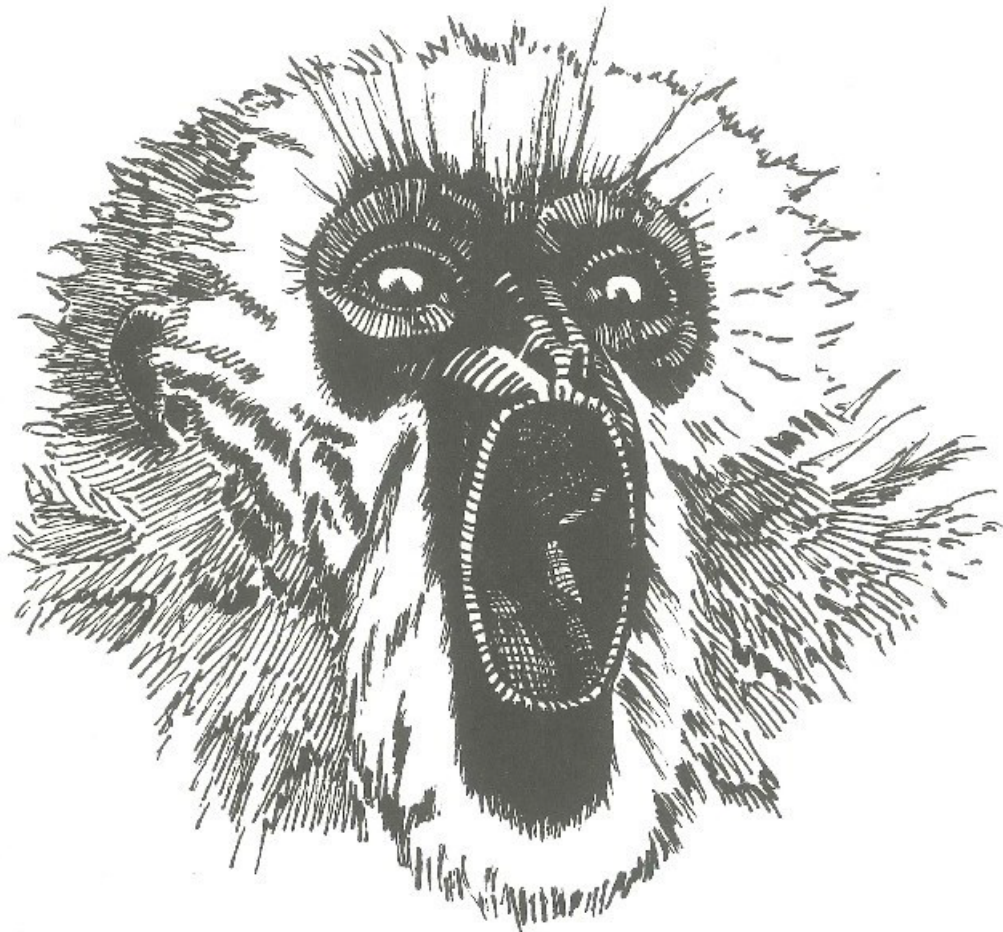


GIBBON STORIES, MYTHS AND LEGENDS FROM INDONESIA

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LINKS TO VIDEOS OF GIBBON SONG IN CONTEMPORARY ART

“Songs of Emzara” by ‘Dangerous Song’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMls8ewTgFs>

JAVA

Source: Rahayu Oktaviani, Yayasan KIARA

A short story about Javan Gibbons from local people around Mount Halimun.

The locals say if a Javan Gibbon sings, it means the gibbon is thirsty and because she cannot go down to the forest floor and river to drink, she will sing and ask the sky to cause the rain to fall so she can drink from it.

Source Arif Setiawan, SwaraOwa

Video Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKlr53eVCFs&feature=youtu.be>

Source: Hery Wijayanto

A family journey to Linggo Asri Forest and Petungkriyono Forest in Pekalongan Region, Central Java on 2008. I was very surprised when one of my colleagues told me that some families of Javan gibbon still exist in those small forest. To confirm that very interesting information, me and my small team (me, my wife and my children Dian, Andi and Dani) have observed the small forest. The forest is about 230 km away from my town.

I remember, we were arrived at night (8 or 9 pm), after struggling to drive my car breaking through the dark fog of Dieng Mountain. We were checked in to the small home stay directly at that night and fall in sleep, until my alarm rung at 3 am.

We were preparing for tracking to the forest to meet the Javan gibbon families in those small forest. Actually, it was not real forest because the area where the Javan gibbon live was so narrow, about 200 m wide and about 4 km length, surrounding by many villages and pine plantation.

At 3.30 am we were reached the forest. No vocalization yet. The forest was so dark and cold with very high humidity, just like other tropical forest. We only can waiting at that time, just sitting on the ground in small patch, until all of us very surprised because the first vocalization was very close with us, came from one Javan gibbon family, male and female with one baby and one sub adult.

After the first vocalization, the other vocalization from other Javan gibbon families were heard from the distance with difference points. We were trying to identify how many families they were. After 10 - 15 minutes vocalization, we knew, there were 7 families of Javan gibbon at those small forest. My worries suddenly come, how long will they survive and exist in those very endangered area.

However, good news was come on 2012, one of my colleague Wawan was manage the Javan gibbon in Petungkriyono forest (about 5000 ha) with local people. He builds a mutual collaboration with local people to conserve the gibbon. There are many coffee trees in the forest. Local people can harvest the coffee and processing it into coffee

powder. Wawan as the NGO in gibbon conservation help the coffee farmers to manage the marketing.

Until now, the coffee have been exported to some countries and the gibbon still exist which is guarding by the local people. The coffee's name is Owa Coffee. Owa is local name for gibbon.

Note.

1. Javan gibbon in Central Java: *Hylobates molloch*

KALIMANTAN

Source: Susan M Cheyne, Borneo Nature Foundation.

How Gibbons Got Their Song

A long time ago there was a beautiful young woman who lived in a village. She was happy and would enjoy going into the forest to collect fruits. A much older man came to her and made her his wife, at first, he was kind and thoughtful, but after some time he showed his anger and he became mean. The young woman would seek solace in her trips into the forest.

One day the young woman met a hunter from another village, and they came to talk to each other and share their stories. And the woman returned to her husband a little happier. The next day she spent longer in the forest so she could seek out the handsome hunter.

As the weeks went by, the woman and the hunter would spend longer and longer together in the forest. But the husband because suspicious and he gathered his cronies and the next morning, the followed the young woman. And sure enough, she met the hunter. And the husband and his friends set upon the young couple and chased them. In the confusion the couple became separated. They ran and ran, calling desperately for each other. As the husband and his mod close in, the Great Forest Spirit took pity on the couple and lifted them up into the trees. They were given long arms so they could swing between the trees, and the Great Forest Spirit gave them each a wonderful voice. So the couple became gibbons, and with their new songs, they would always be able to find each other every morning.

Dayak Ransa Story : *Hylobates albibarbis* (owa kelempiau)

Story Source: Alfonsus Ide Krisma - YIARI

Story Writer: Hulwia Malik - YIARI

Once upon a time, there was a resident who was so ill that he could not move at all. At that time, everyone in the village was out in the fields. As a result, no one knows about the

illness the person is suffering from.

Meanwhile, a kelimpiau gibbon looked at him with pity and intended to help. This skill then transformed itself into a human and went to the sick person's house and helped care for him. The kelempiau in human form then gave him two leaves and suggested that they be eaten.

After the sick man ate the leaves, Kelempiau told him that tonight he and his friends would perform a healing ritual in the forest near the house. The Kelempiau asked the sick man not to watch the ritual process, and he agreed.

Then, Kelempiau returned to his original form and revealed his true identity. He advised sick people not to kill or eat kelimpiau after recovering. Kelempiau promised not to disturb humans or damage their gardens and fields. The sick person agreed to the request.

Night falls, the kelempiau perform the 'belian' ritual with voices shouting to each other until morning. Once the ceremony is completed, the sick person suddenly recovers completely and even has a long life. The Dayak Ransa community believes that the descendants of these people are prohibited from killing or consuming kelempiau, and they are also given the ability to become belian, namely shaman healers.

Note: The Ransa Dayak people call the white-bearded gibbon (*Hylobates albibarbis*) by the local name kelempiau gibbon. The Ransa Dayak tribe is one of the many Dayak tribes in Kalimantan. The Dayak Ransa tribe is located and lives in Menukung District, Melawi Regency, West Kalimantan.

The Story of Batu Lapis Village : *Hylobates albibarbis* (owa kelempiau)

Source : Sipanur Deka (Kepala Adat/Pati - Tokoh Masyarakat Daya Bihak di Batu Lapis) & Alfonsus Ide Krisma (YIARI)

Story Writer : Hulwia Malik & Elvyra Aprillia (YIARI)

In Batu Lapis Village, located in Hulu Sungai District, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan, there is a story that is respected by the Dayak Bihak tribe. This story is known as Mambang Baik Budi, which tells the story of a man who was known for his kind heart towards the animals in the forest. In this legend, the Kelempiau Gibbon, a highly respected animal, has a sacred role. People believe that the Kelempiau Gibbon is the incarnation of a human who has a noble and kind soul, so he is considered a symbol of goodness and harmony with nature.

The Kelempiau Gibbon is not only seen as an ordinary animal, but as a spiritual creature that functions as a guardian of nature. People believe that the Kelempiau Gibbon can help carry the spirits of deceased people to *sembayan Tujuh* (heaven) by holding them on their laps. This philosophy underlines the importance of the relationship between humans and nature, and shows people's gratitude towards animals that are considered to have spiritual powers.

When someone dies, the Dayak Bihak community holds a traditional death ceremony that is rich in ritual and symbolism. This ceremony is not only a tribute to the person who has

died, but also as an expression of love for the family left behind. The procession is accompanied by traditional music, which creates a solemn atmosphere. Dances performed by village youth, including the Bukung Tembaluy Dance, depict the devotion of the animals in the forest. They dress up to resemble Kelempiau Gibbons, and through this dance, they express their gratitude to the kind people who have given them love during their lives.



The Bukung Tembaluy dance is performed by the youth of Batu Lapis village, they dress up to resemble orangutans. Photo : Muffidz Ma'sum - YIARI

After the dance ends with wisdom, the bereaved family takes the body to its final resting place. Burials are carried out with bamboo grave covers, which symbolize the home of the deceased. This reflects the belief that people who have left still have a place in this world. Apart from that, a wooden statue carved to resemble the Kelempiau Gibbon was also placed in the grave. This statue functions as a symbol of the animal that will deliver the spirit from the corpse to Sembayan Seven, thus maintaining the spiritual connection between the human and natural worlds.



The grave cover is made from bamboo, as well as wooden carvings in the shape of kelempiau. Photo : Elvyra Aprillia - YIARI

The Dayak Bihak community has strict taboos against the Kelempiau Gibbon. They believe that gibbons are healing animals and they are descendants of gibbons so these animals should not be killed or eaten. Violation of this taboo is believed to bring disaster or difficulty. This belief reflects their cultural values in preserving nature, and shows how important it is to respect other living creatures that contribute to the balance of the ecosystem.

Note: The Dayak Bihak community in Batu Lapis calls the white-bearded gibbon (*Hylobates albibarbis*) by the local name tempio or kelempiau gibbon.

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