

Lecturer's Contribution

Forgotten fruits in Malay Pantun

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Many fruits, both the edibles and non-edibles in the Malay traditional ecosystem that exist in our pantuns, have either vanished or are scarce, very likely to the changes of their habitats. The intention of this article is to highlight some of the lesser known ones that were once encoded in our pantuns. Perhaps as you read the *maksud*, you can find the connection between the choice of fruits and their characteristics in the *pembayang*.

<p>Asam paya buahnya kisp, Mari dijual di Batu Pahat; Badan saya tidak bernasib, Diberi baik hendaknya jahat.</p>		<p>Asam paya is a plant that grows in swamps. The alternative name in Malay is asam kelubi. The plant grows in vertical clumps with a maximum height of up to 5 meters. Asam paya flowers come out of the shrubbery of the tree with female and male flowers on the same stalk. The fruit will be formed after pollination and this fruit is hard scaly and very sour in content. The fruits are red and some are yellowish and usually contain 1-2 seeds in them. The contents of the fruit are hard but the ripe asam paya is juicy with a clear white color. The fruits are arranged in a cluster bunch having a size of 3-6 cm in diameter. The fruit is frequently pickled (<i>jeruk</i>) and is used as a tamarind replacement (Anem, 2018).</p>
<p>Berbuah si kundang-lendang, Buah mengkal jatuh ke lubuk; Jangan disentuh tunang orang, Keris pukai makan rusuk.</p>		<p>Kundang, also known as kemior, is a plant whereby the tree has rubber that can cause inflammation if it comes in contact with the skin. The fruit is like a mini mango. Its seed is bright purple in colour. Unripe kundang is sourish while the ripe ones are sweet-sourish. It is usually eaten with the skin. The contents are high in fiber just like mangoes (Faezah, 2021).</p>
<p>Buah durian buah kuini, Mari letak dalam pasu; Duduk diam laki bini, Macam orang tidak bernafsu.</p>		<p>Kuini or kuinin is actually a type of mango also known as fragrant mango. It can be either taken raw or made into sambal kuinin. The flesh is orange to yellow and ranges from sour to sweet. The fruit has a pleasant fragrance but is fibrous (<i>Mangifera odorata</i>, 2021).</p>
<p>Buah pinang dalam celepa, Buah nipah dibuat pengat; Tuan senang jangan lupa, Sudah susah baru beringat.</p>		<p>Nipah is a type of palm plant that grows in the coastal areas of rivers that are easily flooded by the tide that often meets with fresh water where the salinity is low. The nipah tree has a fronded stem consisting of long rosette-shaped leaves at the ends of the branches. Nipah produces a large yellowish branch. The fruit is hard squared, closely arranged to form a round-shaped cluster. The flesh is sweet and suitable for desserts (<i>Nypa fruticans</i>, 2021).</p>
<p>Buah durian masak mengkal, Buah palas dimakan nyamuk; Hari kemudian jangan menyesal, Rupa paras sudah tengok.</p>		<p>The palas plant is from the palm family that grows in clusters in humid and swampy areas. Adult palas plants can reach 6-7 feet. The palas stem has sharp thorns. The leaves have skewers or leaf spines and are used to wrap ketupat pulut. The fruit is small and cherry-like, arranged on a long stalk, green when young and turning orange when ripe and when touched one will experience slight itching (Anem, 2017).</p>
<p>Buah kepayang dari Senggarang, Pergi Separut membuat wajik; Dulu kaya sombong dan garang, Sekarang papa semua mengejek.</p>		<p>Buah kepayang is sometimes called buah keluak or in English, 'football fruit' due to its shape. Its tree is tall, growing in the mangrove forest areas of Southeast Asia. This tree is able to produce large fruit but it is classified as poisonous to humans. However, this fruit can be eaten through the fermentation process (Anem, 2021).</p>

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<p>Buah ketapi kulitnya manis, Patah galah dalam paya; Orang lelaki mulutnya manis, Cakap sepatah jangan percaya.</p> <p>Buah sentul buah kecapi, Buah salak dalam dulang; Jangan pukul jangan dimaki, Kasi talak hantar pulang.</p>		<p>Buah ketapi or kecapi is better known as buah sentul. They grow well in areas with even rainfall. It is a large lush tree that can grow up to tens of meters tall and a stem with a wide diameter. The fruit is ball-shaped, 5-7 cm in diameter, golden yellow and softly hairy. The skin of the fruit is thick and somewhat clayey. The fruit is soft and white like the mangosteen fruit. It tastes sweet-sour and does not break easily from the seeds. Other than being eaten fresh, buah ketapi/kecapi is also pickled. The skin of the fruit can also be eaten raw or cooked as <i>sayur lemak</i> or <i>vegetables cooked in coconut milk</i> (Institut Penyelidikan Perhutanan Malaysia, 2014).</p>
<p>Buah salak di dalam hutan, Buah masak tergantung tinggi; Jika sudah salah buatan, Jangkalan untung bertambah rugi.</p>		<p>Salak is a palm tree native to Indonesia's Java and Sumatra islands. Because of the reddish-brown scaly skin, the fruits are also known as snake fruit. They grow in clusters at the base of the palm. They resemble ripe figs in size and shape, with a unique point. The pulp can be eaten. Pinching the tip of the fruit should cause the skin to slough off and be pulled away, allowing the fruit to be peeled. The centre of the fruit has three lobes, the two largest of which, or sometimes all three, contain a big inedible seed. The lobes resemble huge peeled garlic cloves in appearance and substance. It has a sweet and acidic flavour (Salak, 2021).</p>
<p>Dayang-dayang mandi menyimbur, Mandi menyimbur di pohon kandis; Ayuhai Cik Dayang jangan takbur, Sedangkan burung tunduk menangis.</p>		<p>Kandis is also known as the false mangosteen as its fruit shape looks like the latter. It requires moist habitat, slightly dark and altitude between 0-1,400 above sea level either in valleys to hilly areas. The tree grows vertically with many branches where it also has a height of about 8-15 meters with a stem that has a brownish gray skin color. This plant has white-green flowers with it of the monoecious type that has about 4-10 flowers measuring 1.3 cm in diameter. Young fruits are green when young and turn yellowish when ripe. Usually the size of the fruit is around 5 to 9 cm in diameter which contains as many as 5 seeds. The fruit is sourish and used in dishes such as rendang and curry (Anem, 2020).</p>
<p>Kalau beli buah berangan, Jangan lupa buah kana; Orang kaya jangan diangan, Orang miskin jangan dihina.</p>		<p>Buah berangan is chestnut in English. It is native to temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere. Chestnut trees have a moderate growth rate. Young chestnut bark has a smooth surface, the grooves of the bark of the tree in some species twisted as it ages. It is most commonly eaten grilled or fried in the sand, requiring scoring the fruit first to prevent fruit explosion due to expansion (Buah berangan, 2021).</p>
<p>Orang bertolak di Tanjung Rhu, Sarat memuat buah perpat; Hendaklah banyak mengadap guru, Supaya terang jalan makrifat.</p>		<p>Perpat/perepat is also known as berembang or gedabus. This tree usually grows on beaches and rivers. The fruit is round in shape which is quite flat and the skin is smooth and tastes sour. Young perepat fruit can be made into a vegetable dish or eaten with <i>sambal</i> or chili paste. Fireflies would suck the sweetness of the perpat flowers at night (Lokman, 2019).</p>

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<p>Pokok jering baru berbuah, Mari ambil jual di kedai; Selagi ada biring bertuah, Jalak jangan tunjukkan pandai.</p>		<p>Jering is a tree that belongs to the pea family. The tree grows in primary and secondary forests in humid, mountainous, and undulating terrain, as well as on river banks and requires a high level of rainfall. The tree's fruit is a deep purple pod that is woody, glabrous, and woody. Three to nine round-shaped seeds are found in each pod. When the seed is young, it has a yellow-green seed coat that turns dark brown as it ripens. The ripe fruit then splits apart at the ventral suture. The fruit can be fried, boiled, or roasted, and they can even be eaten raw (Archidendron pauciflorum, 2021).</p>
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* All pantuns above are sourced from Kurik kundi merah saga: Kumpulan pantun lisan. (2015) Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka.

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