

**Stories**

**of**

**Jah**

**Lemon**

part twenty four

**Tale of Muhammed Jeruk**

Celebrating Citrus in Indonesia

**Natty Mark Samuels**

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# Dedication

to

**Marley Martin**

as he steps out on his journey into belief, history and culture.

# Tale of Muhammed Jeruk

Muhammed Jeruk wakes on a East Java morning and facing in the direction he has faced all his life, he gives thanks for the song of the morning: the melody of the waterfall and the rhythm of the river.

Jeruk is not his real name; but because of his on-going passion for his lifetime cultivation of oranges, tangarines, pomelos, limes and lemons, they've given him the name jeruk: for keruk is the generic Indonesian term for citrus. Although a native of East Java, he is known in the other citrus growing regions of his homeland, such as West Kalimantan, North and West Sumatera and Bali.

Across the stream he goes, then up a hillside path, to the place he likes to be. Taking a large basket from his wooden lean-to of shade, he walks up a little further, to the destination of orange, green and yellow. Surrounded by quietness and aroma, he takes a few moments here and there, to continue with his collection of writings: celebrating citrus in Indonesia, with the rest of the world. Something accessible to all; for the youth as well as the adult, the unlettered as well as the academic: because Indonesia is beautiful.

He sits pondering his country that that gave the world nutmeg and cloves. He's happy in the knowledge that in the cuisine of his homeland, there is much use of coconut, peanuts and citrus: three of his favourite things from Creation.

## Bumbu Lime

Dear Reader, let me ask you,  
Have you ever heard of Bumbu?

Coconut and ketchup,  
Chilli powder and garlic,  
Sea salt and the juice of a lime.

Do you know the cuisine of Asia?  
That we enjoy bumbu in Indonesia.

## A Topping with Lemon

### 1<sup>st</sup> Voice

In the time of topping,  
The moments to sprinkle,  
What will you scatter over rice?

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Voice

Something with peanut and coconut.  
So I'll crush some garlic,  
And chop the onion.  
Add cumin, corinader  
And the juice of a lemon:  
For a topping with peanut and coconut.

## **A Flavouring with Citrus**

Come let us talk of flavouring,  
When making rice in coconut milk.

We'll speak of curry leaf,  
Lemongrass,  
The rind of lemon or lime.

Come let us talk of drizzle and dressing,  
So our taste buds can celebrate the choices we make.

## **Pancake Citrus**

Sea salt,  
Cinnamon,  
Milk and pancake butter.  
Peanut oil,  
Coconut  
Eggs and wholewheat flour:  
And the choice of lime or lemon juice.

## **A Sambal With Lime**

When thinking of another dressing,  
Will you consider Coconut Sambal?

Fresh red chilli,  
Onion, sea salt;  
A sauce called tamari.  
And with juice from a lime,  
No need to dilly-dally.

In your time to think of embellishment,  
There'll be the thought of Coconut Sambal.

## **A Tea with Lemon**

In the call for leaves, bring those of lemon balm and mint. At the request for spices, let there be cinnamon, cloves and ginger. Lemon and tangerine shall be there, when members of the Rutaceae family are needed, as will water and syrup, when someone asks for a Lemon, Spice and Herb Iced Tea.

He likes to sit and watch life on the river.

The man wading out into the ankle deep water, to wash his face. The woman further down at the bank, washing her clothes, her little ones bobbing in the water next to her. The man washing his cow, while nearby, children jump and splash.

## Of Citrus and Other Fruits

Fling them all in! No need to be hesitant! Grapefruit, oranges, mangos and red grapes; green chillis, peanuts, fish sauce and brown sugar, with the addition of lime or lemon juice. Yes, don't be shy; bring them all together, mix them in a bowl, to make a Rujak Indonesian Fruit Salad and Tangy Peanut Citrus Sauce.

### Homeland Citrus

**Voice:** He knows all the cultivars,  
The tangarine ones.

**Voices:** Kintamani and Banjar

**Voice:** Mandarin varieties

**Voices:** Tejakula and Mandura

**Voice:** Of pomelo and orange

**Voices:** Lemon, lime and satsuma

**All Voices:** And Huanglongbing shall never defeat him.

### Jeruk Jamboree

An old man sits,  
In a Green Jamboree.  
There is grey in his beard,  
Bit it's a new reverie.

After his day of work and writing, The Citrus Man of East Java, as he did on his way to the grove, bids peace to everyone he meets on his return journey: and the wish of peace is returned. To the green shawled elderly woman, slowly stepping; to the group of blue covered schoolgirls, buzzing with life and the talk of lessons; to the two youth, who hail him from their moving scooter; to the bending man, working in a rice field.

In the yellow purple magnificence of the sunset, he trods home. But he cannot resist stopping awhile, at the river of the morning song. From one part of the Green Jamboree to another. He sits on the grey rock, letting his feet know the pleasure of the cool, green water, while watching the little cascade. As well as the reflection of the trees on the water, there is an echo of tranquility. Just the purple heron and he, enjoying the place where lovers like to sit and individuals come for respite. How can he pass this place and not give thanks for the blessings it gives? How many prayers of gratitude, has he offered from this very spot?

His grand daughter came home the other weekend, from university in Jakarta, talking of something called Extinction Rebellion. The ancestors have begun to call, so he will be greeting them sooner rather than later. Sad to think that a places such as this, around the world, continue to be threatened by human excess; sad to think that green is at the mercy of greed. All he knows, is that until his dying days, he will continue to cultivate jeruk: offering colour, health and joy to his fellow citizens and offering thanks to the Creator. Continuing his journey he says "Asalaam Alaikum to every one he meets - and the rely comes back, "Valaikum Asalaam."

# Sources

**Oriental Vegetarian Cooking – Gail Duff – *Thorsons Publishing Group, 1986.***

**Lemon Spice and Herb Iced Tea – *Noble House.***

**PAPER 4: CITRUS VARIETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN INDONESIA : VARIETIES,  
PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION VIRUSES FREE OF CITRUS NURSERY STOCKS**

Arry Supriyanto 1, Muhammad Taufik 1, Ratule & Muhammad Syakir 2

**1. *Indonesian Citrus and Subtropical Fruit Research Institute, Jawa Timur.***

**2. *Agency for Agricultural Research and Development, Jakarta***

**Rujak Indonesian Fruit Salad and Tangy Peanut Citrus Sauce  
BecR2400 - *Genius Kitchen***