

## OF SHIPS AND SHOES

If you have seen the leather puppets used for *wayang* performances in Java and Bali, you have probably noticed that they are different. The Javanese puppets are more stylized in shape. And if you compare the puppets of the gods, you will see that the Javanese puppets wear shoes. Balinese puppets are all barefoot.

Javanese attribute the stylized shape of their *wayang* puppets (compared to the more squat, realistic Balinese ones) to the coming of Islam. One of the nine Muslim saints credited with introducing Islam to Java, Sunan Kalijaga, is said to have altered the Javanese puppets to make them more acceptable to Islam's injunction against the depiction of the human form.

But what about the shoes?

Among the Javanese *wayang* puppets, with few exceptions, only gods and holy men wear shoes. And the word for their footwear, in both Javanese and Indonesian, is *sepatu*, from the Portuguese word *cepatu*.

The Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean in the early 16th century, around the same time that Sunan Kalijaga is said to have been spreading Islam in Java. The Portuguese defeated the Sultanate of Malacca (on the Malay peninsula) in 1511 and established themselves there until their defeat by the Dutch in 1641. They set up trading posts in the region (including in Ambon, Ternate and Tidore) and built a commercial network, establishing control of the lucrative spice trade. The Portuguese language became, alongside Malay, a contact language, particularly for linguistic communication involving Europeans. Even when the Portuguese were driven from the archipelago by the Dutch in early 17th century, their language lived on. In Batavia (Jakarta), Portuguese was widely used until the late 18th century, spoken not only by slaves from the Indian subcontinent and their descendants, but also between Europeans who did not speak each other's languages and between Europeans and non-Indonesian Asians.

The Portuguese introduced new things from Europe, and new words for them, including *cepatu*, shoes. This does not mean there was no footwear prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, but that European shoes looked different enough (enclosing the feet) to have a special name, and, we would presume from the fact that the gods in Javanese *wayang* wear them, *sepatu* were visibly related to power.

Now it could be that the Javanese *wayang* gods' new footwear was not European but Arab in style. This would fit with Javanese stories about changes in *wayang* shape being linked to the coming of Islam and explain why the Balinese gods stayed barefoot. But the shoes the Javanese *wayang* puppets wear are also simi-

lar to the style of Portuguese and Italian shoes of the early 16th century. So perhaps the great saint Sunan Kalijaga was making a subtle subversive statement by putting the Hindu gods and holy men in shoes (like the medieval sculptors in Europe did when they tinkered with cathedral carvings). There is certainly mockery in the fact that some ogres wear shoes too, and the clown figure Petruk wears them when he becomes king, fancying himself powerful. Anyway, whatever was going on, the word for their shoes, *sepatu*, is not Arabic, it is Portuguese.

The Portuguese and Portuguese-speaking Europeans brought much more than shoes. They introduced new things for which the Portuguese names stuck, like *almari/lemari* (cupboard), *bendera* (flag), *garpu* (fork), *gereja* (church), *sekolah* (school), *Natal* (Christmas), *Paskah* (Easter), *jendela* (win-



JENNIFER LINDSAY\*



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dow), *keju* (cheese), *mentega* (butter), *terigu* (wheat flour), *peluru* (bullet), *serdadu* (soldier), *kereta* (from *careta* for cart or carriage), *renda* (lace), *paderi* (priest) and *tinta* (ink). Some commodities were introduced from other parts of the Portuguese trading empire along with their names, like pineapple (*nanas*), papaya (*papaya*) and tobacco (*tembakau*). A chilling and lasting Portuguese word introduced into Malay/Indonesian is the word for executioner: *algojo*.

Portuguese nautical terms also entered Malay—many of which are archaic now (as they are in English), like *galias* (gal- leon), *armada* (fleet), *gawai* (topsail), *gali* (galley), *palka* (hold),

*ganco* (boathook) and many other words for the parts of a ship. There are also words intrinsic to a sailor's life, like *kartu* (play- ing cards), *biola* (violin), *pipa* (pipe), *bola* (ball), *cepiaw* (sailor's cap) and the word for a party or celebration, *pesta*.

Executioners wearing shoes. Cheese-eating traders selling pineapple and tobacco. Soldiers wearing shoes, waving flags and firing bullets. Priests wearing shoes and lace at church and school. Violin-playing sailors having Christmas parties. All im- ages of foreignness and power. The adopted words name cul- tural innovations from Europe rather than enduring concepts, as with many borrowings from Arabic and Sanskrit. The num- ber of Portuguese borrowings in Indonesian and Malay is not extensive. Still, I wonder why these particular European inno- vations kept the Portuguese word, and were not later renamed with Dutch or even local words.

Actually, the further east you go in Indonesia, the more Por- tuguese words you find in local use that have not been replaced with Malay, Arabic or Dutch words. The Indonesian linguist Paramita Abdurahman listed (in 1972) about 200 Portuguese words in Ambonese Malay. The words *nona* or *noni* for young girl, or 'miss', for instance, which used to be more common fur- ther west in the archipelago (but are now usually replaced by the Malay word *gadis*) still mark Eastern Indonesian speech (as in the popular song, *Nona dari Ambon*). In Eastern Indonesia, the word for 'chair' is often *kadera*, rather than the Ar- abic word *kursi*. The word for 'rabbit' is often *terwé- lu* (or *kowélu*) rather than the Dutch word *kelinci*; oven is *ferno* rather than the Dutch-derived *open*; and cucumber is *papinyu* rather than the Malay word *mentimun*. And there are some colorful words not found elsewhere, like *panoso*, (from *fanhoso*) used in the Minahassa area, meaning to have a clogged nose.

So back to shoes. Today in Indonesia shoes are *sepatu*, but in Malaysia they are *kasut*, the Malay word. Indonesian dictionaries also list *kasut*, but the word is not commonly used be- yond Sumatra. An Indonesian alternative is *alas kaki*, which literally means something on the base of the foot, and thus 'footware', but can also mean 'foot- rest'. *Kasut* just didn't move east and make it into common Indonesian use. The Portuguese have long gone, but their word was the one that stuck east of the Malay peninsula. Even for Ja- vanese wayang puppets of Hindu gods attributed to a Muslim saint.

\*JENNIFER LINDSAY IS A YOGYAKARTA- AND SYDNEY-BASED WRITER.