

# Kukuh, Bijak and the Durian Dealer



**Kim M. Lee**



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## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to my dear grandchildren  
Keanu, Quentin and Duncan



*"Beautify your tongues, O people, with truthfulness, and adorn your souls with the ornament of honesty."*

*"Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path."*

Baha'u'llah

*Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*

## **ABOUT THE STORY**

In my childhood days in the rural areas in Malaysia, it was common for home owners to grow fruit trees such as durian, rambutan, mangosteen, banana or langsung in their backyards. They sold these fruits in front of their houses. Fruit dealers cycled or drove to these places to buy the fruits. In turn they sold them in markets for a profit.

The durian dealer in this book bought mainly durians for that purpose.

It was intriguing to witness monkeys playing and eating fruits up in trees by roadsides or in forests.

Kukuh, Bijak and their friends up in some durian trees watching the traffic flow was a normal scenario in rural Malaysia.

The durian is a big fruit, generally the size of a man's head. It is oval in shape, thorny and green in colour. There are three or four sections in the fruit. Each section has two to three seeds of various sizes, covered with sweet, cheesy-coloured, custard-like flesh. As the smell is quite strong, most people won't taste it the first time they see it. However, many people can't resist it once they've tasted it. Durians always ripen on trees, later drop on the ground.

Durians are found in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and other tropical countries. They all look quite similar. The taste could be a bit different and so is the smell. The durians sold in Woolworths or in Asian provision shops are from Thailand. The smell is lighter compared to the Malaysian fruit.

Kukuh means strong in Malay or Indonesian. Bijak is wise. Durian is thorny fruit.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Many thanks and appreciation to the Society of Women Writers of Western Australia (SWWWA) for the support and guidance.

My appreciation extends to my family and the Baha'i community for their support and encouragement.

Special thanks to June Rosemary Cornock, a friend, for her kind assistance and sharing information.



# Kukuh, Bijak and the Durian Dealer



Kukuh, Bijak and some of their friends climbed the huge trees to pick some durians. None of them were ripe. They were amused as they watched the traffic flow.





“Look, Bijak, a human is pedalling a tricycle filled with sweet-smelling durians,” cried Kukuh.

“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! I can’t wait to have some,” screeched Bijak.





The man pedalled with difficulty yet there was room for more durians. “This tasty fruit should fetch quite a sum of money if I could sell it at the market,” he said. Glancing around, he looked for a perfect spot to rest. He parked his vehicle under a big tree.





“I should rest before I look for more durians,” he grunted.

Taking off his straw hat, he fanned himself.





“This tree trunk looks comfortable, I’ll lean against it for a while...”  
said the durian dealer.





“Ngrrrrrr sh! Ngrrrrrr sh! Ngrrrrrr sh!”

Quietly Kuku, Bijak and their friends watched the man snoring.



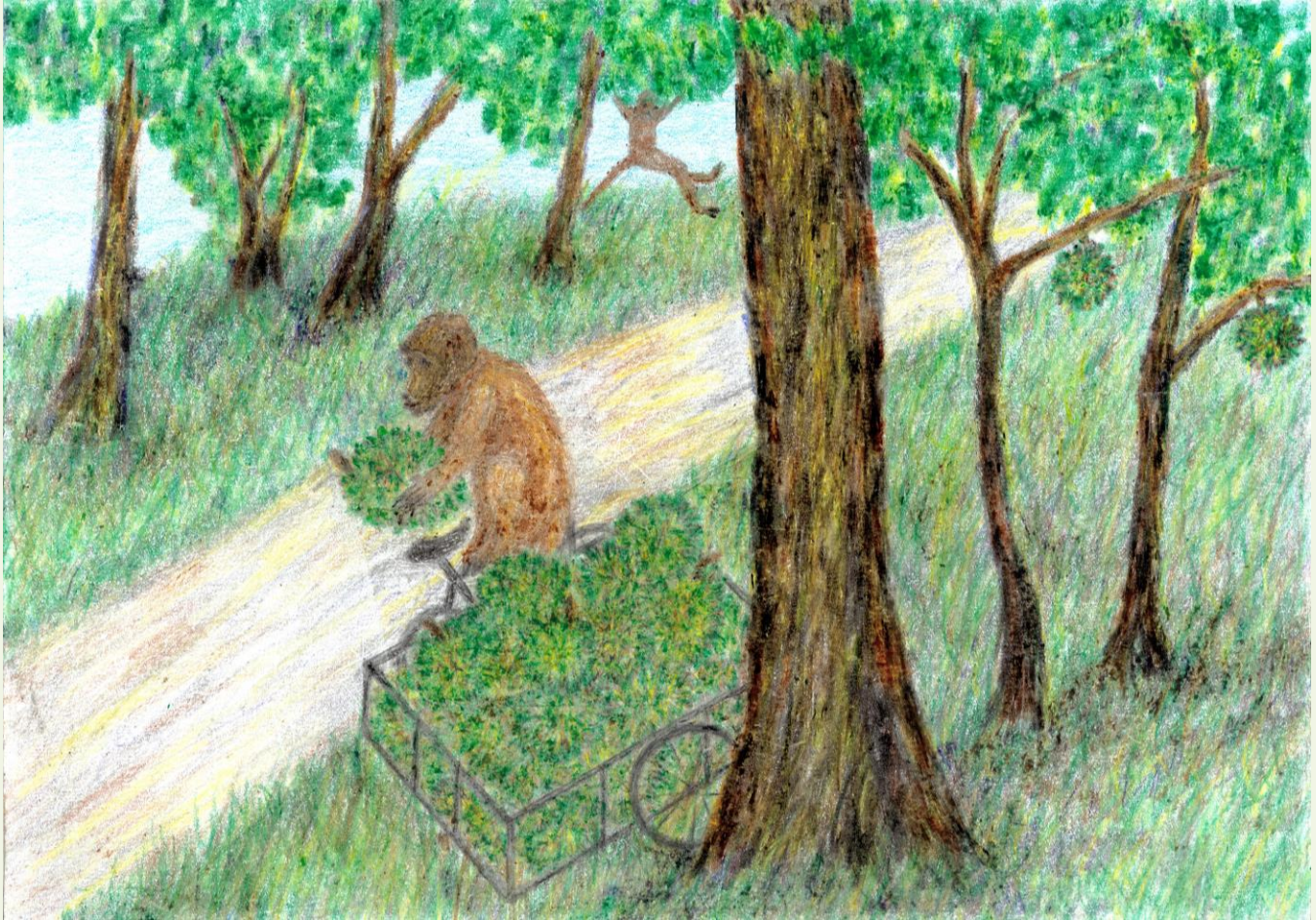


Kukuh put his forefinger to his lips and whispered, “Sh! Sh!” as he jumped down.





Kukuh inspected the cart load of his favourite fruit. Sniffing, he went around the tricycle making his choice.





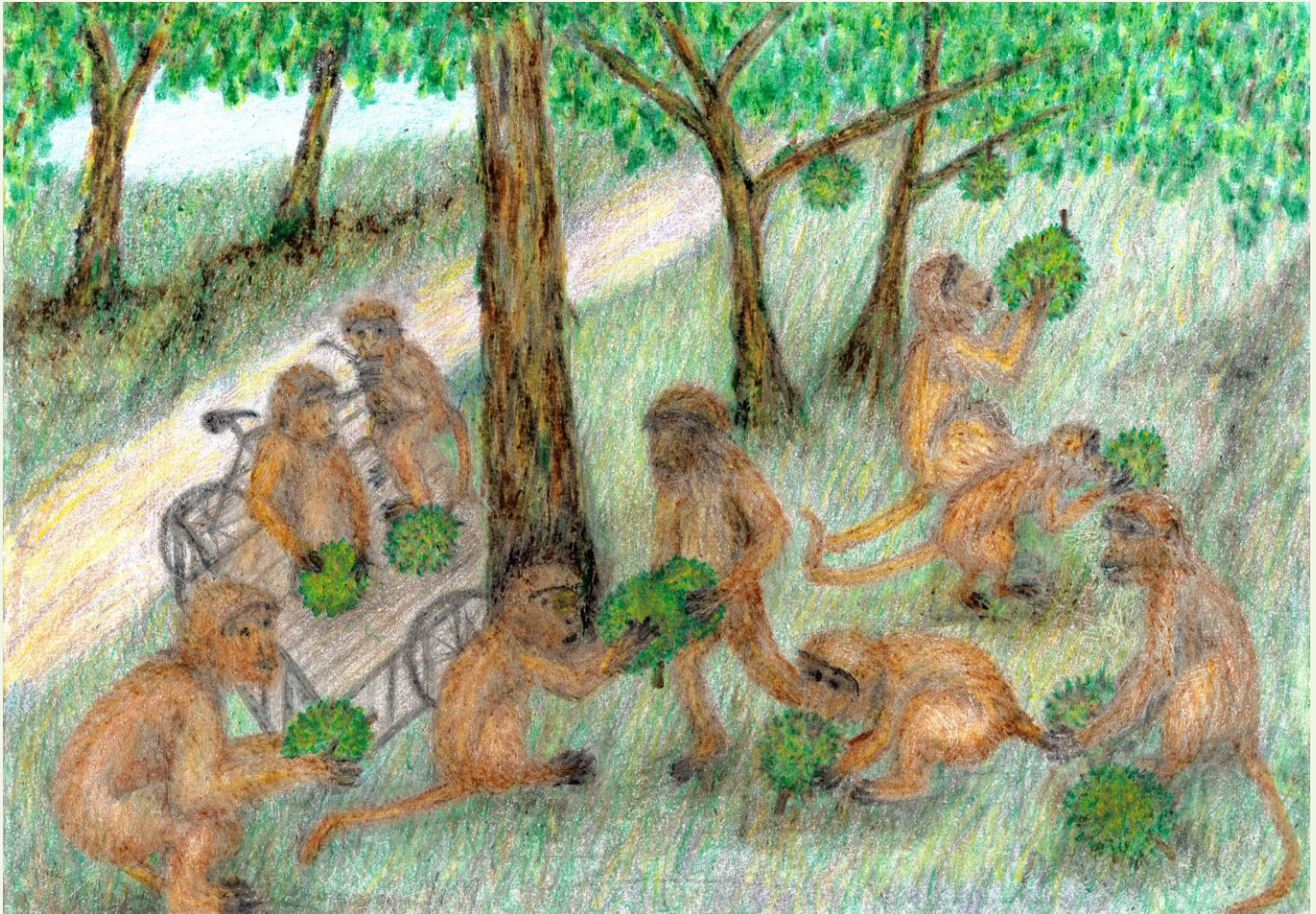
Kukuh looked at Bijak and the rest of his friends up in the trees. He waved to Bijak as she jumped down.





Kukuh signalled to all of them. “Come and join us!”

Quickly they emptied the cart.





Soon they were all up in the trees again. “It smells good, like..., vanilla,” said one monkey.

“It tastes like custard,” said another.

“I can’t open mine, I need help,” cried one of the small monkeys trying to bite off the thorns to taste the creamy sweet flesh.





“Ngrrrrrr sh! Ngrrrrrr sh! Ngrrrrrr sh!” the durian dealer snored.

‘Thud.’ A big, oval, thorny durian landed at the sleeping man’s side.





“I must be dreaming,” said the durian dealer. “It’s a fine big durian. I’m really lucky it didn’t land on my head!” He jumped up and glanced around.





“Ooh! Ooh! Ooh! My durians! My durians! Where are my durians? What happened to them? Who stole my durians?” he shouted at the top of his voice. Kukuh and his friends watched with amusement.

“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k!” screeched some monkeys.





The man heard the strange sounds coming from the trees above. Looking up he saw many monkeys, each holding a durian. He was dazed for a moment then glared at the animals, shouting again at the top of his voice, “You cheeky monkeys!”

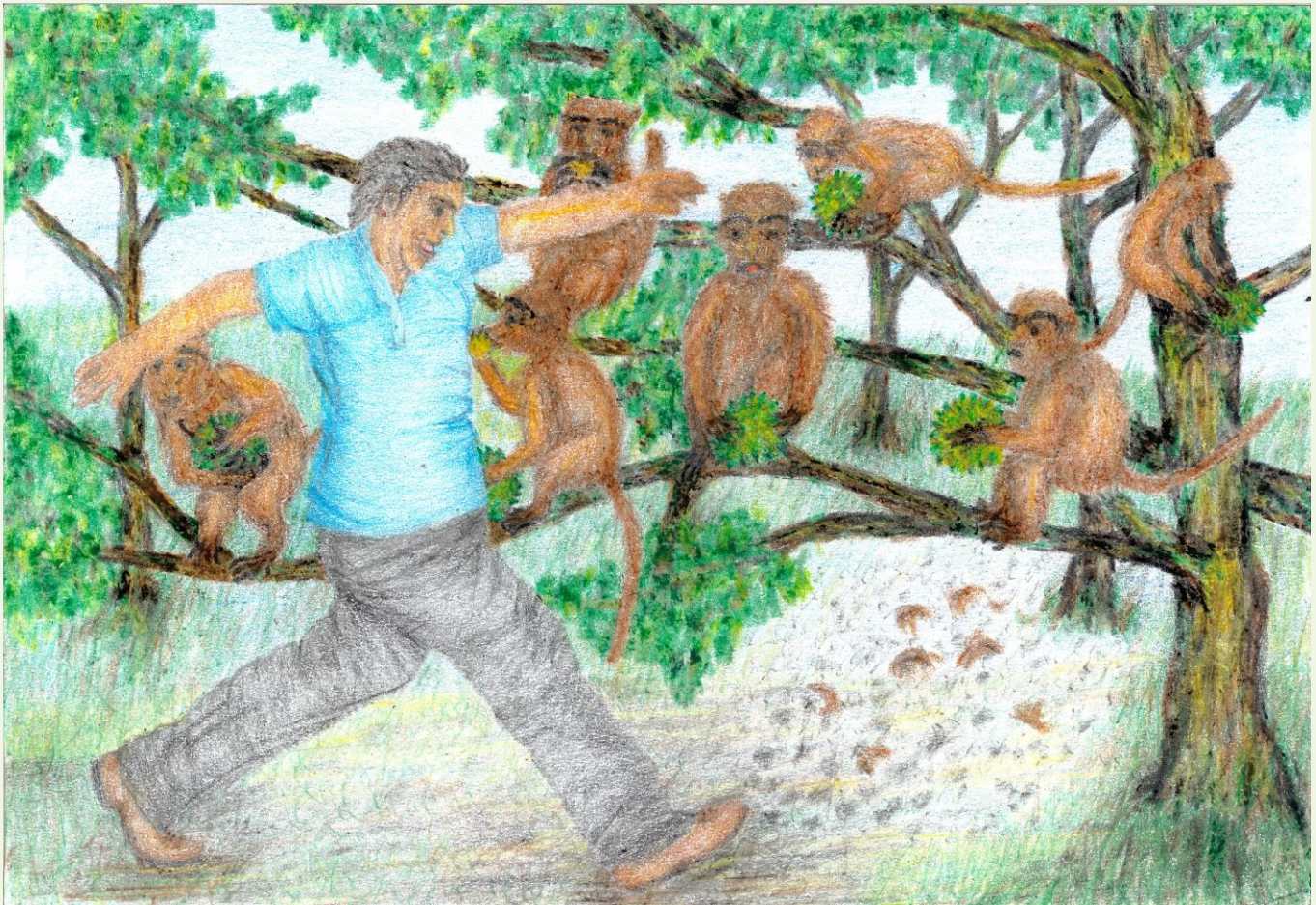
“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k!” shrieked the monkeys.





“I want my durians. Give me my durians, those durians are mine! You naughty monkeys, return my durians, all of them! Give me my durians! N-o-w!” he bellowed. Throwing up his hands, he kicked up some sand with dried leaves from the ground.

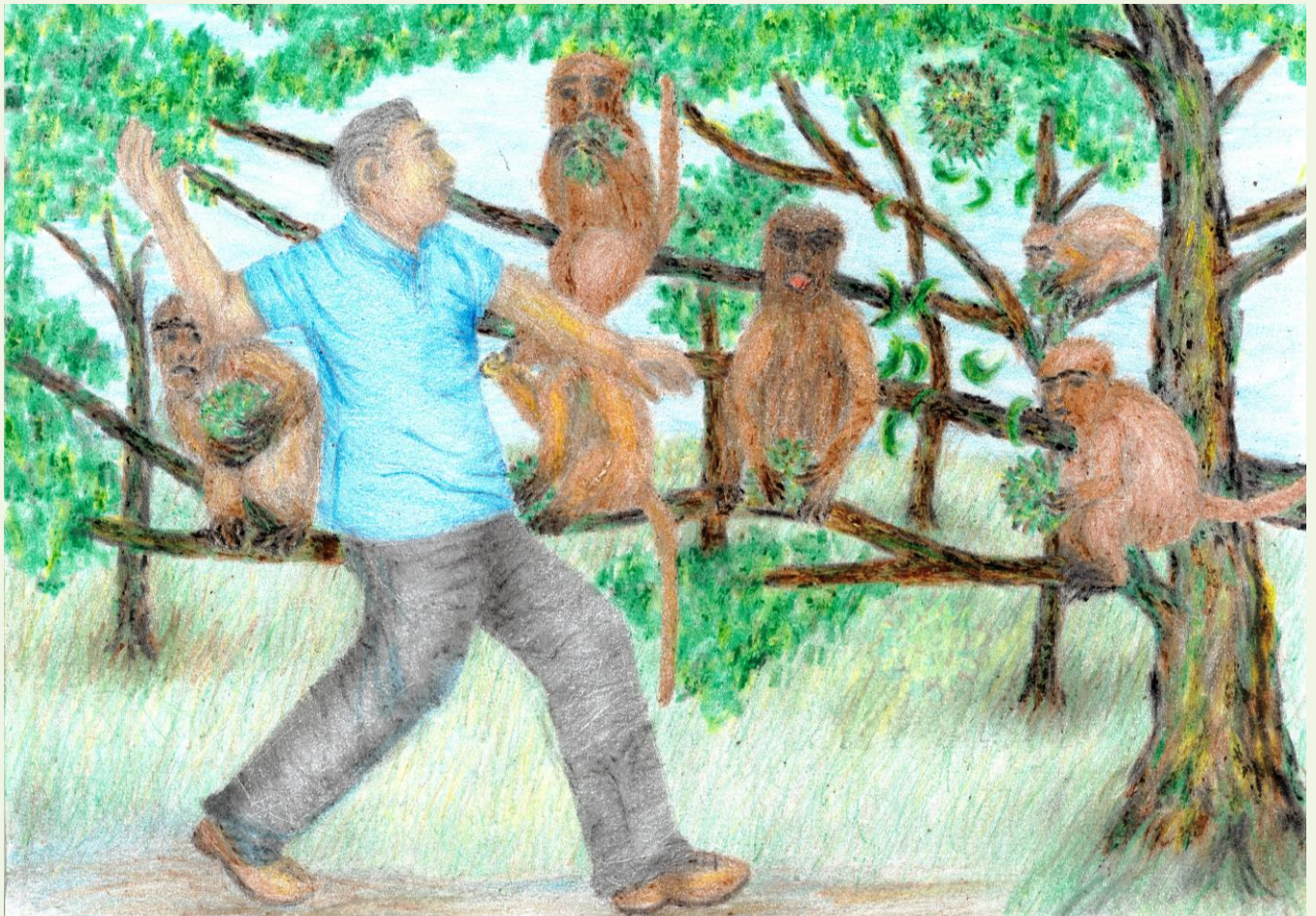
“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k!” the monkeys screeched.





The man picked up the durian from the ground and flung it up into the trees. It landed in the branches bringing down some leaves.

“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k!” screamed the monkeys.





‘Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud!’ Durians dropped everywhere. The durian dealer dodged left and right, backwards and forwards. He held both hands over his head and sheltered behind trees... Then silence...!

“Good Heavens!” sighed the man. “Thank goodness my head is safe, without a scratch! I might have landed in hospital!”





“My chance has come,” said the man, swiftly picking up every durian and loading them into his cart.

“What’s he doing?” asked a tiny monkey.

Kukuh, Bijak and their friends fixed their eyes on the human.





“He has taken our durians. We can’t let him do that,” said another monkey.

The durian dealer quickly jumped on the tricycle and pedalled down the road.





“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k!” cried Kukuh jumping down from the tree.

Bijak and some of the monkeys followed and they ran after the man.

Using their hands and tails, other monkeys swung from tree to tree chasing him.





The durian dealer swung his head round, watching the monkeys behind him. “You can’t catch me! You can’t catch me!” he sang.

Kukuh and his friends jumped along the ground. Others leapt from tree to tree trying to grab the fruit. Some stayed behind in the trees.





“You silly monkeys. You’ll never get my durians!” shouted the durian dealer. “Those durians are mine! You foolish monkeys, catch me if you can! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Hee! Hee! Hee! Hee!”





“Come on, move faster. We’ll soon get the durians!” shouted Kukuh.

“Stop! Stop chasing the human!” yelled Bijak.

“We’ve lost our durians,” wailed Kukuh.

The monkeys stopped chasing the man.

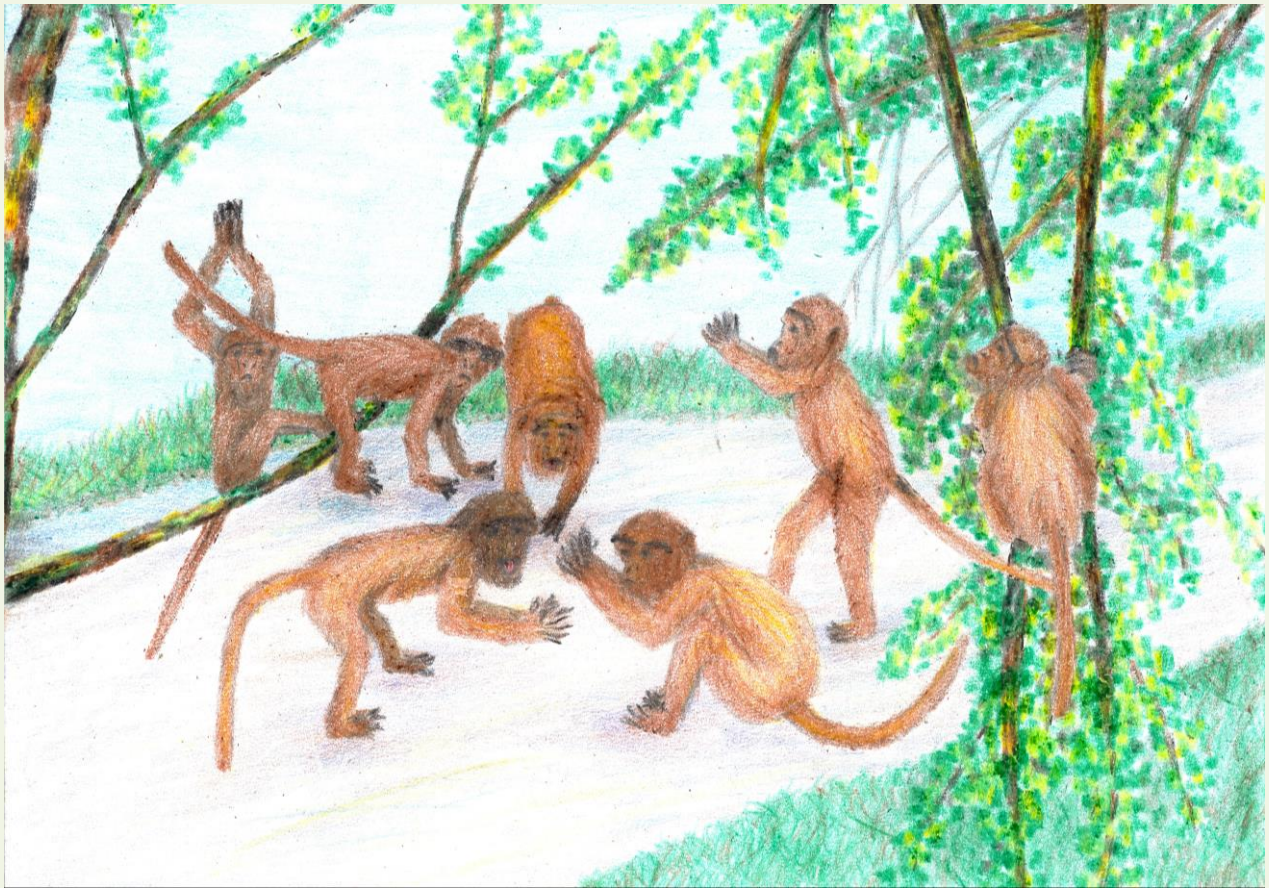




“Kukuh,” said Bijak, “the durians are his. They aren’t ours. I’m glad the human got his durians back. We shouldn’t have taken them.”

“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! You’re right, Bijak. I’m glad it ended this way,” agreed Kukuh. “We still have some durians in the trees.”

“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k!” shrieked his friends clapping.





Kukuh, Bijak and their friends jumped back up in to the trees to eat the durians.

“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k,” screeched Kukuh. “You crooks have been enjoying the durians while we chased the human?”

“E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! E-e-e-e-k! The durians are really tasty. We love eating them,” said the monkeys.

“The durians aren’t all yours, you shouldn’t have eaten them!” cried Kukuh.



## DISCUSSION EXERCISE:

After reading the story of *Kukuh, Bijak and the Durian Dealer*, answer the following questions. Write the answers in the space below.

1. Why were Kukuh, Bijak and their friends up in the trees?

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2. What was in the man's tricycle?

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3. What did the monkeys do while the durian dealer slept?

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4. Why did Bijak stop her friends from taking the durians from the durian dealer?

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5. What do you think of Kukuh in the story?

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6. What do you think of Bijak in the story?

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## **SUGGESTED ANSWERS**

They were up in the trees trying to get some durians.

Durians were in his tricycle.

The monkeys took all his durians.

Bijak stopped her friends from taking the durians because they belonged to the durian dealer.

Kukuh was a strong leader but he and his friends shouldn't have stolen the durians from the durian dealer.

Bijak was honest and she showed justice in dealing with her friends and the durian dealer.



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

A retired teacher, and a grandmother, Kim Lee enjoys writing and illustrating children's picture books, especially when there is a lesson for children to learn.



## ROLE PLAY

Draw mask on cardboard to fit face and cut out for role play

