



Agigimpong: About a girl who did not want to marry

Once upon a time a boy and a girl were betrothed in their childhood, as still is the custom among traditional *Agabang* in Indonesia. But when they grew up and the time came for them to marry, the girl found out that she did not love the man and the idea of marriage was distasteful to her. However, she did not dare saying anything to her fiancé and father, because she was a good girl, hardworking, well-educated and well versed in the *Adat*, the customs and traditions that they were introduced. For a long time she thought about it and finally she decided to weave a pattern that might give a hint to the family. And so, she invented a new pattern, wove it into a carrying basket and gave it to her father in law. He did not understand why he got the basket. The pattern was unknown to him, and he could not read the message. He showed it to his wife and asked her for her opinion. She looked at the basket and said:

“I think it means that she does not want to live with our son.” They had discovered that the strange new pattern reminded them of the young women pattern *Sinumandak*, the difficult test

piece that a girl needs to master before she can marry and bring it on a big mat as a dowry in marriage.

But where the lines should meet harmoniously, they turned away from each other. That must be the sign that the two fiancé cannot get along. “But we want to send the basket back and see if it comes back to us.” So, they sent it back, and soon the girl sent the basket to them again. After the third time, they realized that the basket contained a message. The girl would not marry their son. But she was willing to give the dowry back, which had already been received by her family. The girl had apparently braided a proposal to solve the problem in the pattern. The long winding line and the small isolated shapes must be the way how to return to the young man the valuable artifacts such as gongs, big ancient jugs and the pearls and recover all what his family had paid at the betrothal.

This solution is still considered the law of *Agabag* people. “*Agigimpong*”, when an engagement or marriage is dissolved by the willing of a woman.^[1]

[1] Video: Agabag Women of North Kalimantan: The message of the patterns «Sinumandak» and «Agigimpong» Margrit & Adrian Linder.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evwrpWYb4wc>