

# A Journey to Nibong City

Story : Yala Local Storytelling Team

Verse Author : Chalong Losakun Illustrations : Suwaibah Jehlaeh





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# สถานีรถไฟยะลา

YALA RAILWAY STATION

Ring ring ring ring! Hurry, get ready!  
The train signals, it is almost here.  
The kids prepare their bags. Khun Khao,  
Mei Li, and Marinee are going to Yala.



A woman's clear, pleasant voice rings out:

“Tupa for sale, twenty baht each!”

Mei Li smiles cheerfully and hands over forty baht.

“Ooh, tupa on the table—they look delicious!”

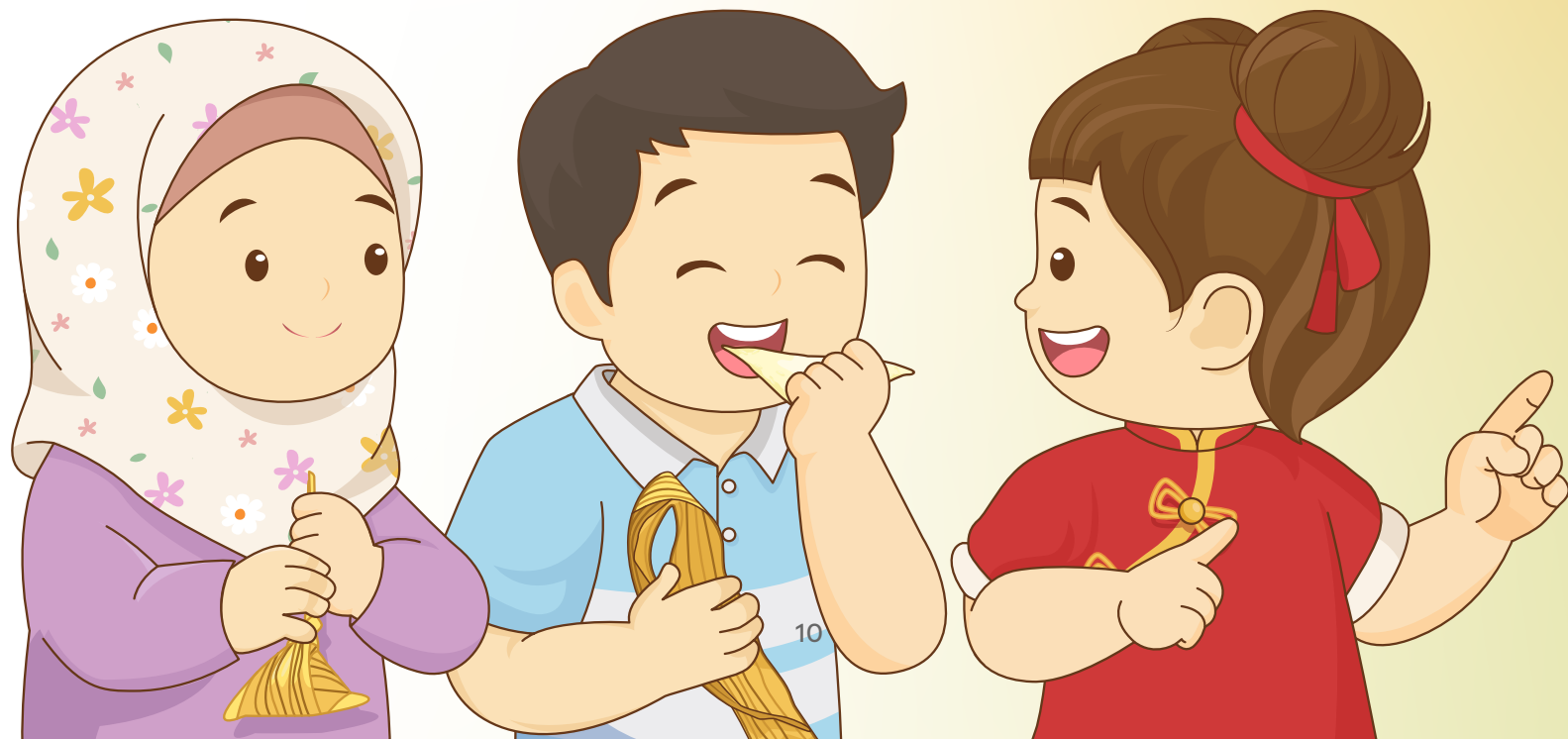





The square in front of the station is full of local rides:  
Tuk-tuks line up in queues, waiting for passengers.  
“Hello, Father Dean!” The kids climb into the car.  
“Salam!” Everyone greets each other.



In the car, Mei Li says,  
“This is almost like zongzi; it looks similar to tupa.”  
Khun Khao says, “Boiled like from my home.”  
Marinee says, “Yes, we do this for festivals!”





An aerial illustration of a city. In the center is a circular park with a blue pond and a white shrine with a golden spire. The park is surrounded by green lawns and trees. A road with cars and a truck circles the park. Outside the park, there are more trees, small houses, and a larger building with a red roof.

The car reaches the City Pillar Shrine,  
a well known place.

“Father told us about this for a long time;  
it’s beautiful and sacred.”

Khun Khao said, “How proud we are.”

# มหกรรมนกเขาชวาเสียงจาเซียน



ณ สวนขวัญเมืองยะลา

At the Suan Kwan Muang garden,  
Mei Li wondered, “Why are there so many people?”  
“Oh, it’s because of the zebra doves.  
They bring them here to compete every year.”  
Father pointed for them to see.

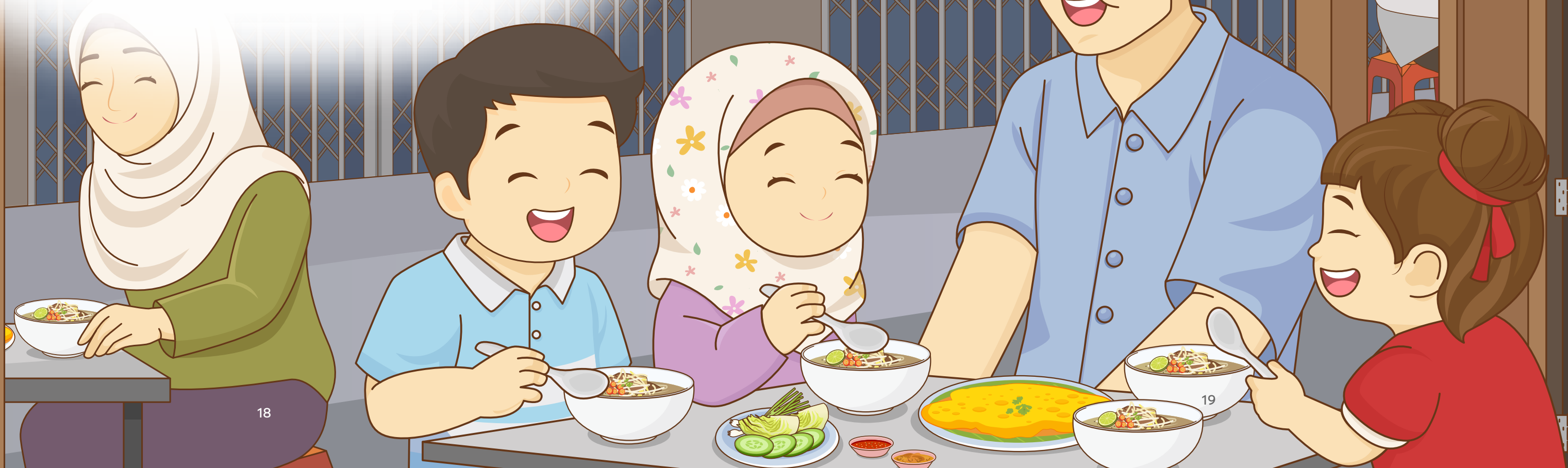




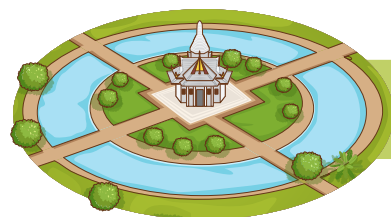
Next, we come to the museum,  
a place that keeps the stories of people long ago.  
In the “Ways of Nibong” room,  
we learn how people lived in the ancient city.  
Then we visit the Science Room,  
a gift from King Rama IX.



“For our meal, Let’s have soup!” they all agreed.  
Marinee has “one serving of insides.”  
Khun Khao has “beef soup.”  
Mei Li is bored and asks for “chicken soup.”  
Father chooses differently; “Fried egg and rice.”  
They eat with joy in Yala,  
happy in the land of Nibong.







## Yala : A Land of Multicultural Harmony

Yala Province is home to Thai people of Malay descent. Historically, they were collectively referred to as Javanese-Malay people, commonly called “Orang Jawi,” though they prefer to call themselves “Orang Naju” and appreciate being called “Naju people” rather than “Jawi people.” On August 2, 1939, during the tenure of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram as Prime Minister, the Prime Minister’s Office issued Announcement No. 3 on State Policy regarding the naming of Thai citizens, designating Malay Muslims as “Thai Islam.” To this day, the Thai government continues to refer to people of Malay descent as Thai people or Thai Muslims.

Beyond this, Thai Buddhists and Thai people of Chinese descent form minority communities living in major towns, particularly in Betong District, which boasts a large and resilient Chinese community that has steadfastly preserved its Chinese identity. Most are Guangxi Chinese, whose ancestors migrated from the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Meanwhile, Thai people of Chinese descent in Yala Municipality are predominantly Hokkien, while Thai Buddhists are densely concentrated within Yala Municipality. However, recent unrest in the three southern border provinces has led to significant migration of Thai-Chinese and Thai Buddhist populations away from the area, including the Chinese communities of Ban Niang in Mueang Yala District and Ban Baeho in Raman District, whose descendants have relocated from their ancestral homes.

Though Yala may be merely a small province at Thailand’s southernmost tip, it possesses an enormous heart, brimming with people of diverse ethnicities, religions, and cultures who coexist harmoniously on foundations of respect, understanding, and mutual interdependence. The call to prayer echoing from mosques mingles with temple bells and the fragrance of incense from Chinese shrines—all woven into the daily rhythm of life that transforms differences into beauty. Yala reflects a living, breathing, growing multicultural society that, despite historical wounds from periods of unrest, continues to believe in the power of goodness, understanding, and education to heal and restore this land to vibrant life once more.

For ultimately, Yala is not merely a territory—it is its people. People with deep cultural roots, hearts full of hope, and the courage to live together in peace.

Yala... is home to diversity and stands as an exemplar of the magnificence that emerges when we embrace one another with open hearts.

*Source: Yala City Supplementary Reader, Revised Edition 2023,  
Department of Education, Yala Municipality*



## End-of-Book Activity

Activity : “Transform the Triangle...into Anything in the World!”

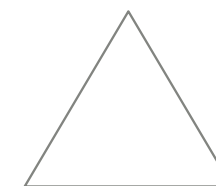
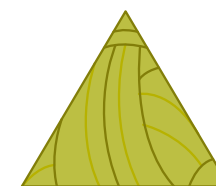
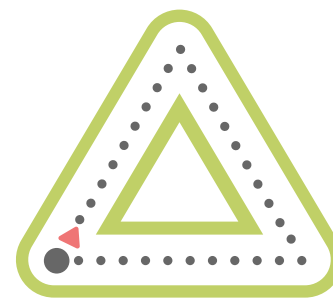
## Imagination Exercise + Basic Drawing Practice

### Instructions for Teachers/Parents

On this worksheet, there will be triangle shapes resembling traditional Thai sticky rice dumplings (khao tom). Have the children use their imagination to “transform the rice dumpling into something else” by drawing additional lines to turn this shape into something new that they want it to become.

### How to Play

- Look at the triangle shapes on the worksheet.
- Use a pencil or pen to draw lines and add details according to your imagination.
- Color it beautifully.



TRIANGLE สามเหลี่ยม SEGI TIGA



### Invitation for Children:

#### “Do you know, kids?

Sticky rice dumplings are shaped like triangles. But if we had a magic pencil...we could transform them into anything in this world!

Just think...if it wasn’t a rice dumpling, it could be...

A towering mountain  
A rocket soaring high  
A fish underwater  
A triangular pillow  
Ice cream

### Tips for Teachers/Parents

Try asking thought-provoking questions like:

“If the rice dumpling could talk, what would it want to transform into?”

“If the rice dumpling went to the beach, what would it become?”

This is a wonderful creative activity that combines cultural elements (Thai khao tom) with imagination and basic drawing skills! The activity encourages children to see familiar shapes in new ways and express their creativity through art.





## A Message from the Luukrieng Group

The picture books on Yala's local knowledge are born from the collective spirit of the people of Yala—government agencies, private organizations, civil society groups, artists, and community members. Many institutions and organizations have played key roles in this collaboration, including the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC), the Bureau of Education Administration of Yala Municipality, Yala Provincial Administrative Organization, Yala Primary Education Service Area Offices 1 and 2, the Yala Provincial Cultural Office, the Yala Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office, the Coordination Centre for Children and Women in Southern Border Provinces, the 953 Peacekeeping Taskforce, the Icon Yala Group, independent illustrators, as well as the local communities within Yala Municipality.

Together, all sectors joined hands to create these picture books for the children of Yala. Stories were drawn from local ways of life, art, culture, wisdom, tourist attractions, learning spaces, significant landmarks, and the province's history. Through a process of brainstorming, discussion, and creative exchange, these ideas were carefully shaped into meaningful picture books.

The outcome is two picture books— A Journey to Nibong City and The Magical Spinning Top. These stories are meant to help Yala's children recognize the beauty and value of their homeland, nurture a sense of cultural pride, and inspire them to share the stories of their birthplace with confidence and deep-rooted connection to their community.

**Wannakanok Poh-itaeda-oh**

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One of the most memorable places from my childhood is Yala Railway Station. I still remember going there with family and friends to welcome my uncle returning from abroad. The moment the train approached the platform was always thrilling, and I can still recall the cry of my uncle selling iced drinks in plastic bags, calling out, "Air Batu, Air Batu!"

Every place in Yala has been a pathway in my journey of growing up. Returning to Yala (Nibong) always brings me warmth. With each line and color, I drew, I tried to capture the excitement, happiness, and imagination of my past. My hope is that every reader who turns the pages of this book will feel the nostalgic charm of Nibong and pass on these stories and memories to others.

The Local Knowledge Picture Book is a core activity of the One Book One City project, implemented across ten provinces by the Thailand Knowledge Park (TK Park). The initiative aims to create a platform for exchanging knowledge in order to produce children's picture books inspired by the intellectual and cultural heritage of each locality.

The project is designed to encourage participation from representatives of all provincial network partners, guided by experts in children's picture book production. The process covers every stage – from generating ideas, outlining stories, writing manuscripts, and illustrating, to publishing – ensuring that each book is not only a genuine source of local pride, but also meets professional quality standards. These books convey embedded local wisdom that can be shared with readers both in Thailand and around the world.

### A Journey to Nibong City

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