

The Collection and Rewriting of Captivating Folklores in the Indo-Malay World as Part of World Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

Many of the thousand folktales that originated in the Indo-Malay World are time-tested masterpieces now after centuries of development, growth and adaptation. Some of them represent the finest, cleverest, and the most touching ones that are admired for their beauty, wisdom, education and value. Among them are the well-known and favorite Malim Kundang, also called Si Tanggang, and Puteri Gunung Ledang. The former is about an ungrateful son, who was turned into stone after refusing to acknowledge her poor, old and haggard mother who came to him, while the latter is on refusal of a beautiful princess from Gunung Ledang to marry a powerful Sultan in Malacca with her seven "unfulfillable" conditions. The imagination, creativity and mental power that go into the creation of these stories are comparable to that of Grimm brothers, Walter Anderson and other genius folklorists and story tellers that we can find in the world. This paper attends to discuss the motive, creativity, dream and obsession of folktale "composers" and editors, in the past and the present, in collecting, composing and reproducing some of the best folklores available and bring them to their audience. It is in this way that these favorite stories, refreshed by every new generation, with their unique styles, perspectives and tastes, have lived on as a part of world cultural heritage, written and adapted in numerous books, theater performances, songs, music and movies, from time to time. They are the cream and witness, and therefore, the best representative of the Indo-Malay World's authorship, creativity and ingenuity.

Key words: orality, Malim Kundang, Puteri Gunung Ledang, Indo-Malay World

ABSTRAK

Banyak daripada ribuan cerita rakyat yang lahir di alam Indo-Melayu adalah karya agung yang sudah melalui ujian masa dalam sejarah pertumbuhan, perkembangan dan adaptasi masing-masing selepas berkurun-kurun lamanya. Sesetengahnya memang mewakili karya yang paling baik, yang paling pintar dan juga yang paling menarik, maka dikagumi kerana keindahan, kerarifan, pendidikan dan nilainya. Antara contoh yang paling dikenali tidak lain daripada Malim Kundang, juga disebut sebagai Si Tanggang dan Puteri Gunung Ledang. Sekiranya cerita yang pertama itu adalah tentang seorang anak yang tidak tahu berterima kasih, lantaran bertukar menjadi batu setelah enggan mengakui emaknya yang miskin dan hodoh yang datang mencarinya, maka cerita yang kedua pula adalah tentang penolakan Puteri Gunung yang jelita untuk berkahwin dengan raja Melaka yang berkuasa besar dengan tujuh syarat yang mustahil dipenuhi. Daya khayalan, kreativiti dan kuasa mental yang terlibat dalam penciptaan cerita-cerita itu adalah setanding dengan cerita rakyat yang sudah dikumpulkan adik beradik Grimm, Walter Anderson and juga tukang cerita rakyat yang berbakat yang lain yang kita jumpai di dunia ini. Makalah ini cuba memperkatakan motif, kreativiti, impian dan obsesi "pengumpul" dan "editor" cerita rakyat masa dahulu dan masa kini dalam mengumpul, mengarang dan menerbitkan semula sesetengah cerita rakyat yang paling unggul untuk tatapan khalayak umum. Dengan berbuat demikianlah cerita rakyat yang popular itu dapat diperbaharui dari satu generasi ke satu generasi lain dengan menunjukkan gaya, perspektif dan cita rasa mereka yang tersendiri, lantaran menjadikan cerita itu sebahagian daripada warisan budaya dunia, maka sudah ditulis atau diadaptasikan dalam pelbagai bentuk, tidak kira sama ada buku, teater, pertunjukan, lagu, musik atau wayang dari semasa ke semasa. Kesemua cerita itu adalah inti pati dan saksi, maka adalah perwakilan yang paling baik tentang pengarang, kreativiti dan juga kepintaran tukang cerita dari alam Indo-Melayu.

Kata kunci: kelisanan, cerita rakyat, Malim Kundang, Puteri Gunung Ledang, alam Indo-Melayu

THE IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING

Storytelling has been around since time immemorial. It fulfills our needs as human beings to cast our experiences, imagination and explanation of things

and events in narrative form. Our ancestors had probably gathered around especially in the evening after a day of hard work in the field or at sea to exchange and share and at the same time expressed their fears, beliefs and hopes orally. This long tradition

of storytelling is evident in our ancient fable, folklore, mythology and oral history. Looking back, we note that community storytelling had offered the security of explanation on how life and its many forms began and why things happened as they were as a form of entertainment, education and enchantment. One theory explaining the birth and development of these early tales is our ancestors used to create what we called as myths, legends and folklores to explain natural occurrences (Ong 1982). Incidentally, they assigned superhuman qualities to a certain ordinary people, thus originating the hero tales, like Hang Tuah in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. Over the centuries, they used to combine stories, poetry, music, and dance to add spices to these stories as an education and entertainment package. In the process, the bond of individuals in these communities were strengthened and maintained through stories that connected the present, the past and the future.

It is believed that storytelling predates writing. The earliest form of storytelling was primarily oral combined with gestures and expressions (Ong 1982) as the stories were then told using a combination of oral narrative, music and dance, which brought understanding and meaning of human existence through remembrance and enactment of stories. With the advent of writing, more and more of these stories were recorded, transcribed, and shared over a wider area of the world and thus became part of world cultural heritage. Interestingly, many of these ancient oral stories continue to be committed to memory and passed from generation to generation, despite the increasing popularity of written and televised and digital media in the 21st Century. Until now, storytelling has been used to teach ethics, values, cultural norms and differences and also as a means for sharing and interpreting experiences (Philipps 1986). This is so as learning and education are found to be most effective when they take place in social environments that provide authentic social cues about how knowledge is to be applied in the storytelling in the early days by combining stories, poetry, music and dance. It is in this way that stories provide a tool to transfer knowledge in its natural social context.

Storytelling was natural for someone who excelled at it. They became entertainers, educators, cultural advisors and historians, called *tukang cerita*, *empunya cerita*, *bomoh*, *dukun*, *selampit* and many others in the Indo-Malay world (Muhammad Haji Salleh 1980). In the west storytellers could be seen in the market places and were honoured

members of royal courts in the Middle Ages. A Medieval storyteller, called a minstrel, was expected to know all the current tales. They were traveling from place to place, gathering news and learning favorite stories. As they used to exchanged and changed stories so much that it is difficult to trace the origins of many stories. Many of them used to tell stories to lords or ladies at a moment's notice, and to play on at least one or two musical instruments in the court. According to some writers there were 426 minstrels employed at the wedding of Princess Margaret of England in 1290. Two of the storytellers of the court of King Edward I were two women who performed under the names of Matill Makejoye and Pearl in the Egg (Ong 1982). It is through them that the history, culture and wisdom of Indo-Malay world was handed down from generation to generation. They carried within them almost all the elements of Malay culture, language and civilisation as belonged to everybody collectively from all social classes and could be shared by everybody in any situation. Malay literature and language perhaps would never have been what it is without them, either myths, legends, fables or the others (Knappert 1999).

MORE THAN INFORMATION, ENTERTAINMENT AND EDUCATION

Human beings like to make and listen to stories. Both individually and socially, we often tend to think and remember facts in story form. Once engaged in a story, we are able to imagine new perspectives, visualize new possibilities and seek solution to problems because stories often have multiple layers of meanings. Interestingly, sharing story can create lasting personal connections, promote innovative problem solving, and foster a shared understanding regarding ourselves (Amin Sweeney 1987). One reason explaining stories sources of information, entertainment and education is originally oral storytelling has been used successfully and extensively as such, in addition to cultural preservation, and to instill moral values (Philipps 1988). Besides the point that our ancestors created myths to explain natural occurrences, and assigned superhuman qualities to ordinary people, thus originating the hero tale, they also managed conflicts and solved problems through narratives metaphorically in what we understand as fairytales, folktales, mythology, legends, fables etc. This is so as direct action and confrontation with the authority

was often impossible in feudal Malay society with the rulers who had absolute power (Milner 1982). Thus, we have the story of *Puteri Gunung Ledang* which was never intended as children story, but criticising certain Malay rulers, indirectly. Similarly with the story of a boy who came up with the idea of repelling the attack of sword fish in Singapore in *Cerita Ikan Todak* in *Sejarah Melayu*. This story criticised the incapable high-ranking officials putting to death a boy with brilliant ideas in solving a defense problem. Equally stimulating are the stories of *Pak Pandir*, *Pak Kadok*, *Pak Belalang*, *Si Luncai dengan Labu-Labu*, *Mat Jenin* and many more (Othman Putih 2006; Zakaria Hitam 1996).

All these tales have not only high moral value, but also are social criticism, and so, they do reflect certain inherent cultural qualities in Malay feudal society with rulers constantly emphasizing conformity and loyalty. To deviate and to criticize rulers is considered wrong and punishable. Thus, many conscious authors have transformed problems, anger, dissatisfaction, grievances, requests and complaints into sarcastic stories in solving the conflicts and addressing the complex-and-sensitive issues indirectly in legends, myths and folktales, for instance, interwoven with metaphors, *peribahasa*, *pantun* and *syair* (Muhammad Haji Salleh 1980). There are good reasons to be so. This is partly due to the convention and tradition of Malay authorship (Ding 1999) and partly as security reasons for the authors as explained earlier. The 9th Century fictional storyteller Scheherazade of 1001 Nights, was known to have saved herself from execution by telling tales, is one example illustrating the value placed on storytelling in the old days. Centuries before Scheherazade the power of storytelling is reflected by Vyasa at the beginning of the Indian epic, *Mahabharata*, who says, "If you listen carefully, at the end you'll be someone else." More importantly is the point that these stories are not only that they are accepted and close to the community, but also that they show flashes of the creativity of the Malay authors. We know that not all stories and information, whether practical or moral, could be disseminated explicitly or directly, but implicitly or indirectly in suggestion. In this way, all the parties are entertained, with their imagination stretched and their clashes avoided. This is yet another important function of "folklores" in building solidarity and togetherness considering that majority of the people in the community, including rulers, preferred stories, instead of arguments (Amin Sweeney 1987). One important

point is almost all the legends, folktales and fables are didactic in nature. Therefore, storytelling has been widely used to address educational objectives, like bridging understanding that allows for the values of "self" and "community" to connect in the sense that traditional story has the power to reach out and touch each individual in a different way. It is also in this way that favourite story can act as a catalyst in commencing the process of solving emotional problem, giving enlightenment, preserving culture, binding families or communities, by generating the healing power of laughter in the education process (Farish Noor 2005).

So far, *Puteri Gunung Ledang* and *Malim Kundang*, could be considered by many literary critics to be among the greatest folklores of all time. They are greatly appreciated in the sense that there are many contemporary references to the stories in terms of affection, imagination and moral ideals and influence that grew with time as we march toward democracy system of government (Zakaria Hitam 1996; Mir Hassan & Pawang Ana 2007). The legend of *Puteri Gunung Ledang* revolves around a princess who lived on Gunung Ledang in Johor, Malaysia. After hearing of her beauty, Sultan Mahmud in Malacca wanted to marry her. But, the beautiful princess set seven conditions for the marriage. They are a bridge made of gold built from Malacca to Gunung Ledang, another bridge made of silver from Gunung Ledang to Malacca, seven barrels (*dulang*) of tears from virgin girls, seven jars (*tempayan*) of young betel nut juice, seven trays of the hearts of germs, and a bowl of blood from his son. These conditions can be described as impossible by normal standard. They are all considered to be extremely daring and bizarre from a princess who refused indirectly to marry the Sultan. She knew that the sultan will be unable to fulfill any of her requests, especially the last one: the blood from the Sultan's son, who is the only descendant left to rule Malacca next. To fulfill them, the sultan would be ruining his kingdom. The imagination, creativity and mental power of the author that went into the creation of this marvelous legend were comparable to the stories collected and edited by Grimm brothers, Walter Anderson and other genius folklorists and story tellers that we can find in the world. This great literary work indirectly reveals a battle of wits of *Puteri Gunung Ledang* on one side and frustrations on the proud sultan who was humiliated but not too blind to realize that the conditions were the princess's way of turning down his proposal. The former is in

fact helpless physically in defending herself, but her imagination and wits save her day. Through this story we see the talented Malay authors can produce world class literature of remarkable creativity.

Many other Malay folktales also feature morality prominently. One of them is *Si Tenggang*, given many different names in different places. It is not only used as a mean to teach children the importance of respect of elders, but also to teach them to have value for inter-connectedness which is vital to develop good social and family values. These values, learned through storytelling, help to guide the future generation and aid in identity formation. The legend of *Si Tenggang* began in the jungle. His daily chore was to accompany his father to sharpen his skills in hunting, building traps and shelter. He learned fast and could hunt stealthily under the cover of the darkness like a black panther and could sniff danger from a great distance. One day, he built a boat. With the approval of his mother, he sailed off to foreign lands. There he prospered, and assumed the status of royalty and eventually won the hand of a local princess. After a time of blissful marriage, *Si Tenggang* now known as Nakhoda Tenggang, sailed again to far off lands accompanied by his crew and his wife. But, *Si Tenggang* had forgotten about his humble origins and his mother. After a time at sea, *Si Tenggang* stopped at a tiny harbour carved into the edges of a thick jungle. The whole village turned up to greet the handsome captain and his beautiful wife. As things were, his mother recognised her long-lost son and called out to him. Not willing to reveal his origins and be ridiculed by his crew and wife, *Si Tenggang* ordered the villagers to remove the 'mad woman' from his sight. On hearing his commands, *Si Tenggang's* mother sadly cursed. Soon, the dark clouds appeared and blackened the sky and the waves rose to great heights. Shocked by the strange phenomenon, the villagers turned to the ship's direction and saw the ship, *Si Tenggang*, his wife and the entire crew turned into stone! The moral of the story was *Si Tenggang's* sin for not acknowledging his mother was inhuman and unnatural; punishable only by eternal suspension, forever sealed in the cliff of the limestone hills as a warning and a lesson to others. This popular story of ungrateful son has passed from one generation to the next (Philips 1988; Umar Junus 1989). This story like the legend of *Puteri Gunung Ledang* can hit us like a thousand bullets. But, in recent years, educators have been debating the value and influence of stories, especially those that include brutality and

violence. They believe that children should be shielded from cruelty in any form. Thus, children books with a happy ending are fine.

AUTHORSHIP AND CREATIVITY

It is mentioned earlier that storytelling is natural for someone who excels at it. That fellow eventually becomes entertainer, educator, cultural advisor and historian for the community after gaining much experience, wisdom and age. Thus, it is not wrong also to say that the earliest history of a nation has been handed down through storytellers from generation to generation. The importance of these stories and storytellers throughout human history is evidenced by our reverence and respect afforded to storytellers called *tukang cerita*, *penglipur lara*, *tok selampit* and many more and the stories as *sastra rakyat* in the Malay World (Harun Mat Piah 2003; Muhammad Haji Salleh 1980). The former are marvelous authors, and their view of things and events told is some kind of social therapy, hope of resurrection and beauty which all together is a joy forever. They touch many souls and certainly possess great intelligence and remarkable abilities. They were authoritative figures, narrating and writing with a strong voice. Their conventional life and compromising idealism made them beloved to all posterity. Their reputation ensured the survival of their previously unpublished works (Ding 1999).

Traits often associated with their remarkable achievement as talented or genius authors or storytellers would include strong individuality, lofty imagination, and innovative drive. They are gifted, possessing a superior talent traditionally understood to denote an exceptional natural capacity. Like mathematical genius, folklorists are literary geniuses who have poetic genius, philosophical (visionary) bent amongst others. They were sensitive, perfectionist, and dared to question authority and willing to take risk in their novel and original ways (Muhammad Haji Salleh 1980). They were very passionate about their work. Their openness and sensitivity often exposed them to suffering and humility in one way or the other. Not less important is that they have crisp, clear-eyed vision and understanding of things and issues in which they build their story and image on the basis of their unique imagination and creativity with tremendous energy. Without these qualities in their varying proportion, it is hard for anyone to be creative and be able to express interesting, stimulating

and unusual thoughts. As their perceptions are fresh, they can make important discoveries, connecting things that may appear unrelated based on their insightful judgments. They are among the individuals who have changed the world in some important ways like Leonardo, Edison, Picasso, Einstein, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. Whether known or anonymous, they were prominent Malay “authors”, if not among the greatest, comparable to Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Shakespeare, Milton, Burns, Wordsworth, Béranger, Hugo or Baudelaire in the sense that their stories are rich with elements of poetic tradition, fantastic imagery and the use of metaphor, symbols and persona which demonstrated their technical virtuosity, high reasoning ability, creativity, curiosity, large vocabulary and excellent memory.

Writing and storytelling is an art, a skill and not everybody can be a good story writer or storyteller. The truth is that all great story writer and teller make their works for everyone. They claim the whole world with the endless variety of human experience as their subjects and want the whole world as audience. In this, they were successful in the sense that people from every background - different races, cultures, men and women love their works. We think of the legends of *Puteri Gunung Ledang* and *Si Tenggang*, among many other famous and favorite folklores and either read them or listen to them for pleasure, entertainment, education, information and value. They are enjoyable, beautiful, true and meaningful. Though knowing their “authors” is important, it is more interesting to know how our “ancient” folklores came into being. These “authors” were born with the gift of story- telling and writing. Telling and writing stories came to them like breathing. They wanted to write to entertain and to move people (Ong 1982). As very few works of creative excellence can be produced with a single stroke of brilliance, inspiration or in a frenzy of rapid activity, we believe that they were so through gradual improvements, alterations and refinements. This is so in how human beings improve transportation which is a very complex technology, involving many parts, materials, skills and engineering. Over the centuries, different methods of transportation have been invented to move people from one place to another and now from one planet to the other. It probably began with walking using legs, then we built road, cart, boat, used power from the wind, ox and horse, followed by the invention of wagon, train, car and now the airplane. Is the jet plane now the best and the last invention? It is certainly not.

We know many of Malay folklores are collected from Malay community (Mahyuddin 2008; Othman Puteh 2006; Knappert 1999; Zakaria Hitam 1996 & Zalina Abdul Aziz 2011, 2012) the way Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm brothers collected their stories that had been told orally in Germany in the 1800s, Hans Christian Andersen adapted folktales he heard from oral storytellers in Denmark, Peter Asbjornsen and Jorgen Moe collected Norwegian folk tales, and Joseph Jacobs recorded collections of folktales of England, Scotland and Wales. They did not publish them as they found them but edited them in accordance with their perspectives, understanding and values. They are credited with the responsibility of editing and rewriting the tales. The process of editing included re-composing the tales in a stylistically familiar manner, by adding dialogue, removing pieces, improving the plots with some of the folktales in the Malay world have been incorporated with new psychological motifs and new elements which were often strongly didactic to serve educational purposes. In other words, many of the tales have been reshaped, expanded and added details (Ding 1999). In this way, many of them have grown to be twice their original length, or otherwise. Interestingly, the newly interpreted, modified, rewritten works are regarded as trademarks of the new “authors”, though many changes have been made – such as the wicked mother in *Snow White* and *Hansel and Gretel* and the sexual scenes in *Rapunzel* through the editions.

But, Amin Sweeney (1980, 1987) notes that the creativity of the storytellers in the Malay world also lies in their flexibility in presenting the tales orally in the sense that they could bring in their own personality and character to the familiar stories. Not considering anything outside the narrative as extraneous, they chose to enhance their stories with the addition of visual and audio tools, specific actions and creative strategies and devices, like *pantun* and *syair*. They find time to rest at the appropriate times in the long hours of performance. By doing so, they allow the story to develop and “mature” through their interaction with the audience. In this way, as Philips (1988) argues that they allow the story to change, in the way a living organism changes, according to the circumstances and community that finds itself in. Perhaps this is the element which makes both the story tellers and the audience not passive after all. This relationship is very special. This means that everyone is creative in one way or the other because both the storytellers

and audience are constantly changing the stories and other ideas about everything in the stories. Looking back, creativity is no longer confined to creating something new. It is more to do with developing something new, in one way or the other and in one form or the other, including reproducing the beautiful in book, cartoon, comics, radio, drama, music and many others, so long as they can be accepted by the different audience at different time and place (Farish Noor 2005; Muhammad Haji Salleh 1980). One good example is the adaptation of *Puteri Gunung Ledang* in theater, musical play, film, dance, movies and others. It is believed that when we make changes, we have made the tales better than before. The acceptance and approval means that we and many others as audience are happy with the new version of the old tales.

We give credit to these “story masters” for reorganizing the stories in sequence. To do that they have to capture, sketch, design and edit mentally and visually the intricate stories and scenes to make an impact in education, entertaining and informing. In the process, certain “elements” are added, and also subtracted, from one edition to the next to help build suspense and hold the interest of illiterate audience and children (Ong 1982). All the children story books have to be extensively illustrated. Some changes were made in light of unfavorable reviews, particularly from those who objected that not all the tales were suitable because of scenes of violence, brutality and sex. Anyway, we have to acknowledge that folklore was never the result of impromptu composition. The importance of these stories and storytellers throughout human history is evidenced by our reverence and respect to them. Whether known or otherwise, they were great, and had exerted great influences over the centuries. Otherwise, these tales would not have survived as memorable tales until today. Reading and hearing them again and again, we have become a better man (Amin Sweeney 1980).

This simply means that creativity has many aspects. Among them is one’s ability to combine existing or previously uncombined elements or objects in different manners. This is of course an alternative way of looking at it as one’s ability to generate novel, useful ideas which would certainly require unique imagination, rich experience, special talent and fresh vision which are basically lacking and missing in other people. This is one reason not everybody can be a good story teller as Muhammad Haji Salleh (1980) has argued. Again creativity

involves two processes: thinking and producing. Therefore, one can be imaginative, but not creative if he or she has ideas only, and cannot turn his or her imaginative ideas into reality. Thus, creative personalities, whether engineers, musicians, artists, song writers and folklorists would display some common characteristics: energetic, dare to take risk, and believe that there is solution to every problem.

In the past, oral storytelling is an inherited tradition and the most personal and intimate form of storytelling. Both the storyteller and the audience are physically close. They were drawn psychically closer through the story connection. This is so as both parties reveal and share. This intimacy and connection was deepened by the flexibility of oral storytelling which allowed the tales to be mould and changed according to the needs of the audience and the location and its environment (Amin Sweeney 1980, 1987). As explained earlier, in this process, the audience who were familiar with the tales could also experience the immediacy of a creative process taking place in their presence and they inevitably experience the empowerment of being a part of that creative process (Muhammad Haji Salleh 1980).

MALAY FOLKTALES AS PART OF WORLD HERITAGE

For centuries, Malay “authors” in their different capacities have not only produced thousands of folktales, myths and legends of unsurpassed beauty, deep meaning, mysterious twist and rich imagination, but also have developed a convention of authorship that is uniquely theirs. As it is, they have directly and indirectly enriched the community knowledge, improved the quality of community life and shaped the character and individuality of the Malays over the centuries. Thus, it is also in the Malay folklores we can use them sources of information on things about the Malays (Umar Junus 1989).

We have been repeatedly reminded that the culture of the Malay people must be understood in the context of their long history, marked by wide international contacts. But, the latter would easily place it under the stress of outside influences. Nevertheless such tales as *Si Tanggang* and *Puteri Gunung Ledang* are just two of hundred of other original Malay folklores, including Pak Pandir, Pak Kaduk and Pak Belalang. This is proof that Malay world clearly has its own established culture long before Hinduism found its way into the region, with

the ensuing development of Indianized kingdoms from AD 100 and onwards until the 13th Century (Farish 2005). Malay folklore tradition, either with or without Malay royal patronage, that had developed undisturbed since time immemorial has enjoyed a solid tradition over thousands of years. It was enriched with the coming of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. As part of world cultural heritage, Malay folklorists have continued to support the production of such works until today when many old folktales have been rewritten for the first time. Among the recent examples are *Srikandi* and *Hikayat* by Zalina Abdul Aziz (2011, 2012). That means too for centuries Malay authors, whether known or anonymous, had carried on the tradition of collecting and rewriting interesting, useful, entertaining, informative folktales, thus passed on some of the best and most representative folklores in books, while others in other forms, including *wayang* performances. This includes the 1979 autobiographical *The Travel Journals of Si Tenggang II*, one of the major poetical collections of the Malaysian Laureate Muhammad Haji Salleh (1979), uses the story as a metaphor for the general experience of moving away from one's cultural roots. Whether named or anonymous, they must be among the most skilful and highly respected authors for being able to display their best creativity in story telling and the language usage.

The legend *Si Tenggang* and called *Malin Kundang* in Indonesia is well-known in the Malay world. As we generally know, it is about merited punishment of retribution on an ungrateful son, a sailor from a poor family. He sneaked onto a trading ship, eventually becoming rich, marrying a princess, and acquiring his own galleon. On his return to his home village, he feels ashamed of his humble origins and refuses to recognise his old mother who curses him, and he and his ship are turned to stone. The story *Malin Kundang* in Indonesia is based in West Sumatra. Air Manis, a beach near Padang, has a rock formation called Batu Malin Kundang. It is said to be the remains of his ship. Another Indonesian folk story which is alike is the legend of *Sampuraga*. This legend is based in Belantikan Hulu, a remote area along the river Lamandau in Indonesia. It has a rock formation called Bukit Sampuraga which is believed to be the ruins of his ship. A variance of *Si Tenggang* is called *Charitra Megat Sajobang*. All these mean that it has already acquired a status as folklore stories (Phillips 1988). In Brunei, the story is *Nakhoda Manis* and is associated with a prow-

like rock, Jong Batu, in the Brunei River. Back to Malaysia, the story *Si Tenggang*, or *Si Tenggang* is also associated with the Batu Caves (in Kuala Lumpur) as some chambers of it are said to resemble cabins in Tenggang's ship. Another version of the legend is that Tenggang is mentioned as an *orang asli* from the Temuan tribe. He was abducted by slave traders. He later assimilated himself into Malay society and refused to recognize his poor parents.

Together with the legend of *Puteri Gunung Ledang*, and many others, these beautiful and meaningful folktales spread, though not as popular as *Cinderella*, *The Frog Prince*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Rapunzel* and *Snow White* for instance, in the West. They have become our favorite and even household tales following their popular themes have been turned into dramatic cartoons, inspiring films, romantic dramas, ever-green songs and memorable literature all over the world. Similarly the translation of some of the Grimm Brothers' folktales in nearly all the languages in the world and their adaptation into children book under *Lady Bird series* and cartoons by Walt Disney are proof of their popularity, despite the cruelty and violence in some of them. Their popularity grew with each edition, adaptation and translation. Can we do something similar to revive our interest in our local folktales? Certainly the success stories in the West have inspired us in many ways. As it is, we have seen more and more of our local appealing folktales appearing in CD and colourful children books now after rewriting them with modifications in respond to the current market appeals all over the world as the work of the Brothers Grimm have influenced other collectors in the sense of inspiring them to collect tales and bringing them to modern to satisfy the needs of children and adult hungry for stimulating stories. Among those influenced in the spirit of modern romantic nationalism are the Russian Alexander Afanasyev, the Norwegians Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, the English Joseph Jacobs, and Jeremiah Curtin, an American who used to collect and edit Irish tales. Versions of these tales may differ from time to time and region to region, they are the bits and pieces of world literature with its foundation rooted deeply in the different folklores from all over the world. It is here that we see the potential of the legends of *Puteri Gunung Ledang* and *Si Tenggang* to be part of world literature after they have been integrated creatively as such.

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