

KABA AND NOVEL AND MINANGKABAU SOCIETY: HISTORY OF IDEAS¹

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It is assumed that a folktale is what we inherit from the past, narrating a remote or an a-historical past event. However, a *kaba*, a traditional Minang(kabau) storytelling², which is generally and generically classified as a folktale³, shows a different picture. Some *kabas* might be inherited from the past as they are available in manuscript form and/or are supposed to be recorded from an oral tradition, relating an event in a-historical past narrated by an anonymous storyteller. However, there are also *kabas* with different character. They are neither inherited from the past nor recorded from the traditional oral tradition. Some appeared, for the first time, in printed form while others were commercially published in audio-cassette – a new kind of orally transmitted storytelling, benefiting the introduction of the new technologies, the printing since 1920s and the audio since 70s – flourishing since 70s – respectively. Although some *kabas* in printed or audio-cassette form might relate events supposed to take place in a remote past, re-narrating the story of old *kabas*, however most of them are relating contemporary or immediate past events. They are no longer author-less as authors' names – in *kabas* in audio-cassette it is replaced by the name of the storyteller – are printed on the cover of the printed *kabas* or on the label of audio cassettes.

Although a *kaba* – its form resembles that of a *pantun* – is formally and stylistically a traditional literature, supposed to be inherited from the oral tradition – it is per-

petuated by *kabas* published in cassette form after an intermezzo with *kabas* in printed form – it however has an ability to express new ideas, relating either the contemporary or the past events. It is then proper to treat it, its history and its "message"⁴ as the history of ideas of Minang intellectuals⁵. As they might also express their idea in Malay or Indonesian novels⁶, we can assume that there is a possible "confrontation" between the idea expressed in *kabas* and that in novels. However, nobody so far thought in that direction as they simply took for granted the presentness of a novel and the pastness of a *kaba*. A *kaba* is simply regarded as belonging to the past, dealing with a past phenomenon. A novel, on the other hand, is regarded as belonging to the present, dealing with a present phenomenon.

However, after rereading and restudying the data I have collected for several years, I found a different picture. It is true that novels only relate contemporary or immediate past events, never an a-historical one. However, only *kabas* which are supposed to be inherited from the past and some *kabas* in printed or audio-cassette form which can be regarded as re-narrating the story inherited from the past, do relate a-historical past events. Most other *kabas* in the printed or in the audio-cassette form, on the contrary, relate a contemporary or immediate past event. Due to that, we might then expect a "confrontation" between the story of a novel and that of a *kaba* as there

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are some *kabas* and novels which can be regarded as relating the same or identical events.

It is quite possible that in composing *Hulubalang Raja* (HR), 'The King's Musketeer' (1934), Nur St. Iskandar used the narrative elements, mostly the plot, of *Hikayat Sutan Manangkerang* (HSM) 'The Story of SM', a *kaba* published by J.L van den Toorn in *Bijdragen Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 10, 1885, (nieuw deel). Although HSM relates an a-historical past event, Iskandar used its narrative element to narrate events related to the arrival of the Dutch power to West Sumatra in the 17th century. He had no difficulty in doing that as both works tell the story of a cruel native tyrant. In HSM, the protagonist himself defeated the tyrant while in HR he was "helped" by the Dutch power⁷. Accordingly, travelling from a *kaba* to a novel the story gets a new flavour, a Dutch one. The novel tells us that a native power holder had to accept the presence of the Dutch power as it would benefit the people who were suffering from the long enduring power struggle between them and the Dutch.

We can also compare *Kaba Sutan Lembak Tuah* (KSLT) 'The Story of SLT' by Sjamsuddin St. Radjo Endah⁸ and *Seng-sara Membawa Nikmat* (SMN) 'Blessing in disguise', a novel by Tulis St. Sati (1928). The protagonist of both works was sent to prison for a crime he did not commit as both were framed by a cruel native power holder, appointed by the Dutch, who hated them. By luck, each protagonist arrived in Jakarta. As the protagonist of SLT had rescued a child of a prominent figure from a dangerous situation⁹, the child's father then helped him by giving him a training so he was later appointed as a civil servant and posted as a sub-sub-district officer in his native district. He sent the cruel native power holder who previously victimised him into prison for manipulating the money entrusted to him. The most important difference between those two works is regarding the protagonist's wife. Midun's wife in SMN is a Sundanese, an outsider, while Lembak's wife in KSLT is a native girl and the marriage was arranged according to a

proper Minang arrangement. SMN can be regarded as advocating a marriage arrangement which is different from the traditional one and this makes it different from KSLT. This can be regarded as the main difference between a novel and a *kaba* in Minang culture. It can be classified – **popularly** – that a novel is a myth of freedom, introducing new ideas into the society, while a *kaba* is a myth of concern, safeguarding the integrity of the society and its system.

We can also compare *Kaba Siti Nurlela* 'The Story of SN' (=KSN), also by Radjo Endah, to *Pertemuan* 'The Meeting' a novel by Abas Pamuntjak n.S. However, before venturing into the main problem, I would like to talk about the publication history of those two works. According to the note Radjo Endah wrote at the end of this *kaba*, he finished writing it on August 11, 1927, the same year with the publication of *Pertemuan*. In case *Pertemuan* was published at the very beginning of 1927, it is possible that Radjo Endah had a chance of reading it and then composed a *kaba* story based on its story. By assuming that Radjo Endah did read *Pertemuan* before composing KSN, it is then quite possible for us to talk about the inter-breeding between a *kaba* and a novel, as can be also seen between *Kaba si Kacak jo si Midun* 'The Story of Kacak and Midun' a *kaba* in cassette form by Bagindo Sukiman (1986), and SMN. Sukiman did not base his *kaba* on KSLT but on SMN. It is quite possible that he might not know the existence of KSLT. He was only familiar with SMN, which was written in Indonesian.

Although both KSN and *Pertemuan* can be regarded as relating the same event, they treat it differently. The protagonist in KSN is Sutan Malano, the male character, not Siti Nurlela¹⁰, the female character. He made a living by trading while Masri in *Pertemuan* was a Dutch government teacher. Masri was the only child of a family while Malano had a sister. Masri was from a well to do family while Malano was from a poor family as his mother's brother lost the family fortune in gambling. In addition to that, there are other differences between those two works.

As he was poor Malano could not afford to marry a girl of good reputation. Nobody

invited him to marry their daughter. He had no choice but to marry Nurlela, a divorcee, abandoned by her old husband. As he was getting prosper, he took her to Medan where he was doing his business. However, she had an affair with another man. Discovering this, Malano divorced her. He later married a young teacher, the daughter of a woman he helped several years ago when her money was snatched by a pickpocket in a railway station. Accordingly, this story line is similar to that of *Pertemuan*. Masri also took his first wife to Medan. And after divorcing her due to her laziness, he married a school teacher, the daughter of a lady several years ago he helped in a railway station as her purse was snatched by a pickpocket.

Although the comparison between KSN and *Pertemuan* might reveal some important elements, however, it is not so important compared to other information I might talk about, especially that of *Kaba Cindue Mato*. However, before going to that *kaba* I would like to talk about other *kabas* first.

There is a similarity between *Kaba Amai Cilako* (=KAC) "The Story of a Cursed-Mother" by (Sjamsoeddin St.) Radjo Endah and *Karena Mentua* (=KM) "Because of a Mother-in-Law", a novel by St. Iskandar. Both works are about a tragic life of a family as it was manipulated by a wicked mother¹¹. Although the printed KAC I am using here was published in 1964, according to the information supplied by Radjo Endah at the end of the book, he finished "writing" it on August 13, 1927¹². It was five year earlier than the publication date of KM which was published by Balai Pustaka in 1932.

Radjo Endah talked about a wicked mother while Iskandar talked about a wicked mother-in-law (of a husband) who caused tragedy to a couple. Iskandar talked in a rather neutral term although he might attach some bad adjectives to the mother-in-law. Radjo Endah, on the other hand, blatantly attached a bad adjective to the mother to the extent of cursing her, saying her "a cursed or a condemned mother". Radjo Endah described her as a bad mother by comparing her children to those

of puppies. Every child had a different father¹³. She forced her daughter to divorce her spouse to enable her to marry her to a much richer spouse. She forced her son to divorce his wife because she did not satisfy her. The family then ends up with a tragedy as her children were not able to resist their mother's manipulation. Radjo Endah saw everything from one's children's point of view. How a bad mother brought tragedy to a family. It is different from Iskandar who saw the problem from point of a view of a son-in-law. The instability of the position of a son-in-law in Minang family life depends on the behaviour of a mother-in-law. The marriage of Marah Adil and Ramlah was never without a problem as Ramlah's mother always interfered with their marriage life, to the extent of forcing her "divorcing" her poor husband as she saw a potential rich husband for her. And it ended with a tragic death of Ramlah¹⁴.

These two stories are important as they express an ideology which runs counter to what might be regarded the ideal position of a mother in Minang society. As they practice the matrilineal system, a mother should then have an honourable position, similar to that of Bundo Kandung in *Kaba Cindue Mato*. One who discredited his/her mother would meet a tragic end as it is the case with Malin Kundang. They also run counter to the image of a mother in *Salah Asuhan* "The Wrong Upbringing" by Abdul Muis (1928). One might come to a conclusion that these two stories deconstruct the mother myth in Minang culture, exposing her ambivalent character. The image of a Minang mother is no longer monolithic. Or we might come to a completely different conclusion, by seeing the phenomenon from an inverted point of view I would like to describe right now.

One has to divorce his wife, or at least is having a tense relation with his wife, due to the interference of either his mother or her mother, mostly her mother as he is staying with her family. It might start with her mother comparing him with her other sons-in-law, especially in terms of richness. She would only respect the rich one and would discredit the poor one. She might do the same thing to her daughters-in-law. As a

matter of fact she is simply manipulating her children's life for her advantage. She would like them to give her material happiness. She feels she has to get something from her sons-in-law and she would also like her son to give her what he has given to his wife. She competes with her daughter-in-law in sharing her son's property. It is then responsible for a bad image attached to a Minang mother. Due to that, they - the Minang mothers and people - really need the legend like Malin Kundang (MK) to prevent their children from disowning them. MK, according to the legend, was cursed becoming a stone as he did not want to acknowledge an old lady who claimed to be his mother as his real mother. He did not believe that she was her real mother. He disowned her. In order to prove to her kinfolds that she was truly MK's mother, the mother then asked the God to change MK into stone. And the God granted her wish¹⁵.

Accordingly, the presence of stories like KAC and KM, deconstructs the idealistic monolithic image of a Minang mother. And it comes from both directions, from the traditional world of *kaba* and the modern world of novel. And as far as the tone is concerned, the traditional one is more vocal as compared to that of the modern one. There is no direct condemnation towards a mother in the novel. In addition to that, a novel prefers to talk about a mother-in-law rather than about a mother. The process does not stop there. It continues with other *kabas*. In this case I would concentrate on the phenomenon found in *Kaba Cindua Mato* (=KCM).

KCM is different from other *kabas*. It is regarded closely related to the history of Pagaruyung, a Minangkabau kingdom. It has a sacred quality imbued with legendary characters: Cindue Mato (CM), Bundo Kanduang (BK), Dang Tuanku (DT) and three mythical animals, Gumarang, the horse, Binuang, the water buffalo, and Kinantan, the cock. KCM has also been regarded as glorifying the Minang people. In discussing KCM, people prefer to talk about the glory of a Minang kingdom by focusing on their legendary genealogy rather than on how it was defeated by a foreign power which forced DT, BK, and Puti Bungsu (PB) to escape by taking a "honourable" way,

ascending to the heaven, patterning after the ascendance of Jesus according to the Islamic tradition - this is also understood as being the symbol of their holiness which I might question later. And as they tend to link it with the history of a Minang kingdom and adat, they really respect KCM. They would condemn the people who "manipulate" it as is the case with Wisran Hadi, a playwright, who distorted those facts in his modern drama supposed to be based on KCM - for a further information on this, please consult Mursal Esten (1992). Due to that, on this occasion, I feel obliged to express my opinion regarding KCM.

Although the story is imbued with many mythical elements, glorifying the genealogy of Pagaruyung rulers, I tend not to regard KCM as glorifying the history of a Minang kingdom. It is, on the contrary, the history of defeat. The story started with the news spread by Langkaneh and Lalat Merah¹⁶ that Imbang Jaya (IJ), the king of Sikalawi, would marry PB, the daughter of Tuanku Rajo Mudo (TRM), DT's mother's brother's, who was engaged to DT since their childhood. IJ succeeded in convincing TRM to let him marrying PB as he told him that DT was now confined to his palace. He was infected with a contagious disease. Nobody saw him outside his palace. To make it effective, he did not allow any traffic between Minangkabau and Tanjung Bungo¹⁷.

The news brought panic to BK and DT. They then formally decided to send CM to Tanjung Ngiang to deliver present to the bride. And the present is *si* Binuang. However, DT also gave CM a secret mission of bringing PB to Pagaruyung. To make a story short, CM returned with PB¹⁸. And this created a problem. Although PB had been engaged to DT since their childhood and PB was DT's ideal marriage partner according to the principle of *mo.br.da.* marriage system, she was however not his wife yet when IJ was preparing his marriage ceremony with PB. DT then had no "legal right" towards PB. The same situation also applied to the relationship between IJ and PB. As the marriage ceremony between IJ and PB had yet to take place - it was disturbed by the presence of CM who created

problem during the ceremony - PB was not legally his wife. At most he could say that she was his fiancée. And CM had every reason to take PB to Pagaruyung. As at that time there was a natural calamity, he was then obliged to take PB with him in order to save her from such a calamity.

Basa Ampek Balai, the adat functionaries comprises of four personalities, with the approval of BK, decided that PB should not be brought to Pagaruyung. She had to stay in Padang Gantiang. Although CM had cheated IJ and had deviated from his official mission, Basa Ampek Balai was not able to punish him. He did not "kidnap" IJ's wife. He only "kidnapped" IJ's fiancée. His mistake was then similar to that had committed as PB was originally DT's fiancée. Basa Ampek Balai did not dare to punish CM as they were afraid that their decision would hurt DT and BK - they then let DT and BK do it. They were not able to do that due to the nature of CM's mistakes. Later, they simply accepted the situation by letting DT marry PB, and at the same time marrying CM to Lenggo Geni, the daughter of one the them.

After several years passing IJ came to Minangkabau to look for the person who was responsible for taking away PB from him. Basa Ampek Balai could not accept his claim as he had no proof to that effect. IJ then got angry and was charged with a court contempt. As he challenged their decision he was then killed in a fighting by one of those adat functionaries. Tiang Bungkok (TB). IJ's father, came to Minangkabau to revenge his son's death. According to BK, as TB is not a king, he was simply an old man looking for his son. CM was then given to him to replace his dead son. But before it took place, "Jibril", an angel, visited DT advising him ascending to heaven, *mi'raj*, together with BK and PB as the world was no longer peaceful.

Later on, TB was killed by CM. On his return, CM acted as a viceroy as he was previously appointed to such a position by DT. After several years had passed and CM had passed away, DT and PB in heaven sent their children, Sultan Ali Dunia (SAD) and Puti Sari Dunia (PSD), to Pagaruyung to govern. SAD was appointed as king and known as Rajo nan Sakti. He got married to Puti Gando Layua from Aceh. The quarrel

with his wife forced him to divorce her and he had to pay heavily for this. He had to cede Agam to Aceh. His action made him unpopular. On his return from Aceh, he was ridiculed by the people, especially by the Agam people who refused to let him pass their village and they only served him rotten food. There is an expression in the text to the effect of saying that the king is stupid. Only later Basa Ampek Balai invited him to return to Pagaruyung.

That is the gist of the KCM of MS 6086, 6087 and 6088, now at the University of Leiden library. And I think I have to add one thing. Similar to DT, SAD did not mix up with the people. He never ventured outside the palace. He did everything his own way without consulting anybody. And this was responsible for the silly mistake he (later) committed.

According to KCM, the tragic history of Minang people and particularly of Pagaruyung started with the love affair between DT and PB. IJ took advantage of the fact that DT never ventured outside the palace. This condition enabled IJ to fabricate story or news that DT was infected with contagious disease. This also enabled him to convince Rajo Mudo to break off PB's engagement to DT and in turn to take him as his son-in-law. DT, BK and PB easily escaped from such a tragic situation by "migrating to heaven". It was the Minang people who suffered and it was simply due to DT's love affair with PB. The same thing happened, at least to Agam people, who had to letting themselves ruled by a foreign ruler when SAD divorced his Achinese wife.

Accordingly, KCM shows two contradictory notes. It starts with praising the honourable genealogy of the ruler, but it ends up with ridiculing it. After reading KCM one might come to a conclusion that nothing substantial and special with that honourable genealogy. It did not benefit DT. He was weak and not able to defend his rights. He did not dare to confront his enemy, he simply ran away. The same thing happened to his son who descended from heaven to rule Pagaruyung. His weakness and stupidity forced him to cede Agam to the Achinese and this made people, at least the Agam people, angry¹⁹.

KCM which starts with an honourable genealogy of Pagaruyung rulers took us to the realm of irrationality, to the extent of saying it is a manifestation of a primitive mentality. However, by ending it with a statement to the effect of ridiculing that honourable genealogy, KCM took us to a contradictory reality, to the realm of rationality. The honourable genealogy is an empty boasting and nothing substantial in it. Due to that, we do not have to believe it and we do not have to be proud of it. We would be very happy with CM only, without DT, who did his best to help people regaining their conscience after their defeat by TB. The additional supplementary ending to those three versions of KCM - the story regarding the descendant of DT's children from heaven to govern Pagaruyung and their failure to carry on their duty - makes them differ from ordinary KCM versions now available in the printed form. Those three versions show how the Minang intellectuals reacted to the irrational legend of the kings of Pagaruyung. To state their disbelief to the respective legend, they created a different ending of KCM as discussed above. Accordingly, those *kabas* are an intellectual and rational manifestation of some Minang intellectuals. We are not supposed to see the "irrational" phenomenon found in those *kabas* from the perspective of primitive mentality so far dominating the study of Minang and Indonesian culture in general. We have to look for intellectual expression which contradicts the presence of some elements which appear irrational, something we usually tend to associate with the primitive mentality. And this statement ends up my discussion.

¹ Although I am here dealing with the materials I am dealing with in my working paper presented in a symposium on Minangkabau society, culture and history held in Amsterdam, April 1981, entitled "Political history and social change in Minangkabau, information from literary works" (published in Lynn Thomas & Franz van Benda-Beckmann (eds.), *Change and Continuity in Minangkabau: Local, Regional and Historical Perspectives on West Sumatra* (1985), I am now approaching it from a new perspective, focusing on the idea I previously ignored and adding the information previously not available

to me - I discovered the "renaissance" of *kaba* in audio-cassette form only in 1985 as can be read in my *A comparison between the Minangkabau and the Riau-Malay folktales: an ideological interpretation*, Teaching and Research Exchange Fellowship Report no.2, Southeast Asia Studies Program (1988). However, in order to get a "comprehensive" view, it is better to read the present paper together the previous one.

² It is a lyrical prose. Its unit can be regarded as a unit of a sentence, rather than a poetic line, although it is (quite) similar to a unit in a *pantun*, a traditional Malay and Minang poetry. Except for its unit, it has no specific form. In the written form, a bigger unit of expression is similar to a paragraph in a prose - it is not a stanza.

³ See my discussion on how a *kaba* has been a victim of a classification in "Kaba as a text", *Masyarakat Indonesia*, (1994:99).

⁴ I have to use the term "message" simply for the sake of convenience. For the same reason, I refrain myself from using the term "ideology".

⁵ In one way or another, they are intellectuals. Their familiarity with many stories and events, and relating one to another or others, makes them different from ordinary people who simply carry on life as it is, without ever thinking about it.

⁶ Novel as a term is relatively new. Before, under the influence of the Dutch literary tradition, it was known as *roman*. Due to that, H.B. Jassin in his *Tifa Penyair dan daerahnya* equated "novel" with *novella*. But in the 1970s, probably under the influence of English literary tradition, it was replaced by *novel*. Different from the phenomenon in the Javanese literature - discussed by George Quinn in *The Novel in Javanese* (1992) - there is no novel tradition in the Minangkabau literary tradition. I a Minang(kaba) writer would like to write a novel, he would do it only in Indonesian. If they want to narrate a story in Minang language, they would write a *kaba*. Due to that, the history of *kaba* is unfinished yet. It is an unfinished (his)story as suggested by the title of my article published in *Tonan Ajia Kenkyu*, (*Southeast Asian Studies*), 32 no.3, Dec. 1994 i.e. "Kaba: an unfinished (his)story".

⁷ The credit then goes to the Dutch people and people who helped a native defeating a corrupt and a cruel native power holder. The native needed the Dutch to defeat a corrupt and a cruel native power holder. The Dutch is, as a matter of fact, benevolent. The native power holders are, on the other hand, the bad elements, who abused the power entrusted to them. And this phenomenon is not limited to HR. We can also find it in some *kabas* published in the 1920s such as *Kaba Bujang Paman* by St. Pamgduan & Dj. M. St. Perpatih (1963, 7th edition), *Kaba si Gadih Ranti dengan si Bujang Saman* by Radjo Endah (1961, 5th edition), *Kaba Sutan Lembak Tuah dengan Siti Rabiatur* by Radjo Endah (1961, 2nd edition), *Kaba Pangulu Kapalo Sitalang* by Darwis St. Sinaro, Dt. Basa Tjaniago & Dj. M. St. Perpatih (1961, reprinted). We can also find it in *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* "Blessing in Disguise", a novel by Tulis St. Sati (1928).

⁸ I have no information regarding the publication history of this *kaba*, although it is quite possible that it was first published in the 1920s or 1930s as most of Radjo Endah's *kabas* were published during that time. At the end of *Kaba Siti Nurlela*, Radjo Endah mentioned that he finished writing it on August, 11, 1927. It was then accordingly reprinted in the 1960s. However, the copies I have with me now were published in 1961 and 1985 respectively. As a matter of fact, it is really important to study the differences among several editions of a particular *kaba*. I suspect that the author made some changes to a particular edition due to the chronological differences.

⁹ Midun in SMN was sent to prison in Padang. After he was released from the prison he save a daughter of a *wedana* – a sub district officer – of Bogor from being raped by her step-father, an Indo, after the death of her mother – her mother divorced her father and then "got married" to the respective Indo. He was able to bring her back to her father. And then, with the help of her father, he was able to secure a post as a civil servant and he then married the girl he had saved. He was later appointed as an assistant *demang* – a sub-sub district officer – in his native district. He later sent the native power holder, who was responsible for sending him to prison although he was innocent, into prison for abusing the power. Lembak Tuah in KLST was to the Jakarta prison. While working outside the pri-

son he was able to rescue the Dutch prison officer from horse-cart which ran wild. After his release, the Dutch officer prepared him to be a civil servant. He was later appointed as an assistant *demang* in his native district and got married to his fiancée from his native village who took refuge in Padang as she was afraid of being forced to marry the wicked native power holder who victimized Lembak. Lembak later sent him to prison as he had mismanaged the government funds.

¹⁰ Usually a *kaba* title will at least include the name of the woman character although she is not the protagonist. As the list will be quite long, it is appropriate to list them here.

¹¹ For the sake of this discussion, I refrain myself from talking about detailed differences between those two works as it needs a discussion by itself. I know, by doing that, I might be rather unsympathetic toward Iskandar, but I cannot help it, at least not at this occasion. Due to that, I have to apologize to him to doing such thing. Especially if it might suggest that sometime Iskandar simply reworked the works of other people as he did it to *Hikayat Sutan Manangerang* by transferring it to *Hulubalang Raja* as I have previously talked about.

¹² In this case I do not deny the possibility that Radjo Endah had made some changes to 1964 edition, especially to suit the new audience. In 1927 there was no *Sekolah Kependidikan Putri*, a middle school preparing girls to be housewives(?). Due to that, we might not expect to find such a school in 1927 edition, but we do find it in 1964 edition. The same thing happens to other *kabas* supposed to be written by Radjo Endah before the second world war and were republished after the war. And it might be related to the characters of a folktale, it always changes itself.

¹³ It is expressed in Minang language as *anak sarupo anak anjing, lain anak lain bapak-nyo*. And this expression is regarded as an insult by the people with a high morality standard.

¹⁴ It is not an isolated phenomenon. Iskandar also wrote *Salah Pilih* "The Wrong Choice", describing a bad behavior of a mother-in-law was voluntarily cooperating her mother's act. We also find such a phenomenon in *Karena Anak Kandung* "For the sake of his own son" by M. Enri. A mother, or a mother-in-law forced her daughter to "divorce"

her husband, who was just jobless, in order to marrying her to a rich man.

¹⁵ Most people, especially the old ones, believe that Malin Kundang was changed into stone as he was cursed by his mother. It then has something to do with the curse rather than with a proof of her ability to give birth to a successful son. But I have a different idea. It has nothing to do with a cure. The mother asked God to change Malin into stone in order to prove to other people that she was a successful mother. She had a successful son although he failed to recognize her as his mother. The legend like this with a different title such as *Nakodo Bincik* "Bincik the ship captain", which might be corrupted into *Kudo Bincik*, "Bincik the horse" is quite popular in Minangkabau, even at locations far away from the sea.

¹⁶ These two names, *Lalat Merah* "a red fly" and *Langkaneh* "a poisonous shrub", are usually used by the Minang people to refer to people with bad characters, who spread rumors and gossips. Sometimes, *Lalat Merah* might change into *Langau Hijau* "green fly" or *Lalat Tuo* "old fly". They are regarded as being responsible for creating any hostile relation among people. And they played the same role in KCM. They were responsible for the hostility between Pagaruyung and Sikalawi. KCM started its story with the news they spread which happened to be overheard by Cindua Mato. In most KCM versions they are simply forgotten. But MS OR 6086, 6087 and 6088 at the library of the University of Leiden, the extended versions of KCM, give a different picture. They were punished to death by Cindua Mato's son.

¹⁷ The story is not without any truth. As a matter of fact, Dang Tuangku, different from Cindua Mato, spent all his time confined within the palace. He almost never ventured outside. And it is, according to the norm among the Minang youths, contrary to what a young people should do. He would be regarded as *bagak di rumah* "he is brave only within his own compound, not or never outside it". Or *anak nan gadang di bawah kangkang induak* "a son who depends on his mother on everything". The expression is, a matter of fact, ridiculing DT. Although he had a honorable genealogy, he was not fit to be a king. He depended on CM to defend his right. It was CM who brought Puti Bungsu to him. The same thing happened to Dang Tuangku's son

who later descended from heaven to govern Pagaruyung – I will talk about it later on.

¹⁸ According to KCM, nothing happened between CM and PB in their journey to Pagaruyung. There was no "love affair" between them. However, Wisran Hadi in his drama supposed to be based on KCM, told us another story. There was something happened between CM and PB. When DT married PB she was no longer a virgin.

¹⁹ Something quite similar to this happened in the story regarding the three sons of Iskandar Zulkarnain or Alexander the Great. They lost the crown they inherited from their father. During their sleep at night, it fell into the sea and could not be recovered. Later, Ceti Bilang Pandai who served them ordered his men to make an exact replica of the respective crown. None of the princes realized that it was only a replica. Sutan Sari Maharajo Dirajo, the youngest, who later became the first Minangkabau king, took the crown for himself while his brother was still slept. Accordingly, the first Minangkabau king who claimed himself to be Iskandar's son, came to Minangkabau with a false (Iskandar's) crown. His disability between the real and the false crown, shows us his stupidity. I have previously discussed this in "Mustiko Adat Alam Minangkabau", a fiction or an account of Minangkabau adat?", David S. Moyer & Henri J.M. Claessen (eds.), *Time Past, Time Present, Time Future: Essays in honour of P.E. de Josselin de Jong* (1988:57)