

## MAK YONG: THE ANCIENT MALAY DANCE-THEATRE

GHULAM-SARWAR YOUSOF

*Mak Yong* is an ancient Malay dance-theatre form incorporating the elements of ritual, stylized dance and acting, vocal and instrumental music, story, song, formal as well as improvised spoken text. It is principally performed in the two provinces of Patani in southern Thailand and Kelantan, Malaysia, on the east coast of the Malay peninsula.<sup>1</sup> To a lesser extent *Mak Yong* also flourishes in the Rhiau Islands of Indonesia. Two other places associated with *Mak Yong* performances are Kedah on the west coast of the Malay peninsula and northern Sumatra, particularly Serdang, to which Malaysian troupes are reputed to have once travelled and even for a duration established *Mak Yong* under royal patronage.<sup>2</sup>

### History

Myths and legends still current in Kelantanese villages support a strong belief that *Mak Yong*, like many other theatre genres of the of the region, had divine origination or inspiration. The ancient Javanese deity, Semar and his son, Turas, are credited with being its first mythical founders and performers. Other theories link *Mak Yong* with Mak Hiang, the spirit of the rice, *semangat padi*, identified with Dewi Sri, the Hindu-Javanese harvest goddess.<sup>3</sup> *Mak Yong* is thus regarded as a celebration of nature and natural phenomena, an idea eloquently expressed in the lyrics of *Lagu Menghadap Rebab*, the dance with which all *Mak Yong* performances commence.<sup>4</sup>

Yet again, to give it an Islamic colouring, *Mak Yong* is often-times described as having derived directly from Adam (Nabi Adam), the primeval human progenitor, through a host of spirits and mythical

---

<sup>1</sup>The exact status of *Mak Yong* in the Patani area is not yet clear as no research has been done in that area up to the present.

<sup>2</sup>The present writer has conducted research in both the Rhiau Islands and in north Sumatra, and the results will be published soon. There is today no *Mak Yong* in north Sumatra, that genre having in fact died out at the time of Indonesian independence in 1946 and the removal of the royalty. In Rhiau Islands folk *Mak Yong* continues to be performed by very old actors and actresses but it is certainly on the way to extinction.

<sup>3</sup>Mubin Sheppard, "Ma'yong, the Malay Dance Drama," in *Tenggara* 5, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup>The lyrics in this song describe preparations being made by the *Pak Yong* or leading male performer. The song is also, like the *Menghadap Rebab* dance intended to invoke spirits and to continue the spiritual preparations made by special rituals that are used for the opening of the theatre.

heroes. This results in its being interpreted in symbolical and mystical terms often couched in Sufi vocabulary.

*Mak Yong's* roots probably sink deep into animism as well as into shamanism. Some of the deeper spiritual meanings attached to *Mak Yong* and some of the symbolism operating within it certainly performed from time immemorial in the villages on the east coast of the Malay peninsula, is still seen today side-by-side with *Mak Yong* intended for entertainment *per se*. This is probably a survival of an earlier phase when ritual and healing were *Mak Yong's* principal functions. Ritual *Mak Yong*, alone or in combination with the shamanistic *Main Puteri*, continues to serve as a vehicle of exorcism or healing through a patient's active participation in a dramatic performance or, alternatively, through emotional and psychological involvement leading to release.

Historically *Mak Yong* seems to have had a continuous existence since its inception and consolidation as a theatre genre principally as a folk theatre operating in a ritual context while simultaneously providing entertainment. During the early decades of the twentieth century, *Mak Yong* was for a short duration, instituted as a form of court entertainment in Kelantan. The support thus received enabled it to develop into a refined art while continuing its erstwhile function as folk and ritual theatre. The palace period saw certain innovations including the practice of using female performers to play the principal male role (*Pak Yong*). Court support, however, ended with the demise of *Mak Yong's* principal patron, Tengku Temenggong Ghaffar, a member of Kelantan royalty. Performers who briefly received royal wages soon rejoined their rural companions, once again continuing to perform in the mainstream.

The 1970's saw a revitalisation of *Mak Yong* and its promotion as commercial theatre with the establishment of the Seri Temenggong Group of Kelantan under the charge of Khatijah Awang, herself a scion of artistic forbears. Despite current economic and other problems, Seri Temenggong remains the best known of all present day *Mak Yong* troupes, of which there are very few. The future of *Mak Yong* remains at best uncertain and like much of traditional theatre in Southeast Asia, its survival is dependent upon the energies of a handful of performers and enthusiasts.

#### Conventions

All *Mak Yong* performances are guided by certain basic conventions. The building of a theatre (*panggung* or *bansal*) must conform to certain principles of design and alignment. It is usually built of *attap* and bamboo, with a size of about twelve feet by sixteen, and is

open on all sides. Traditionally, the structure must not be raised above the ground, so that performers are on the mat-covered floor, and it must be placed so that the longer dimensions are aligned east-west. Present day *panggung*, often larger, are generally elevated three to five feet above ground to allow for maximum visibility. Traditional *bansals* continue to be used only for ritual or *Main Puteri* performances.

The orchestra is so arranged that the *rebab*-player, its principal musician, sits on the *panggung's* eastern side close to the central post (*tiang seri*). This allows the actresses to face east during the *Menghadap Rebab* dance, thus observing an ancient custom. Other conventions relate to the starting off of the orchestra and precautions and prohibitions that need to be observed in handling the instruments, some of which, regarded as the homes or vehicles of spirits, thereby become sacred.

In Kelantan today, female performers play the *Pak Yong* role, a practice, as already noted, begun in the early decades of the present century. Men play the comic roles (*Peran*) and a host of other supporting roles. Most of the action takes place at stage-centre, this acting area being described as the *gelenggang*. All performers remain on stage throughout the performances. They are, nevertheless, presumed to be off-stage when seated in the non-acting areas on the sides of the stage, often leaning against bamboo supports and indulging in a host of non-theatre-related activities including smoking, chewing betel-leaves or drinking coffee, and assuming their specific roles or characters almost instantly when necessary. In their off-stage positions all female performers function as members of the chorus (*jung dondang*).

As a rule few stage or hand properties are used, and these are generally multi-functional. The properties are, for the *Pak Yong*, a few strands of bamboo tied together into a wand (*rotan bera*) as well as a *keris*; and for the *Perans* wooden swords (*goloks*). Other such simple properties may be used by other performers. All basic information related to time and place regarding action is enshrined within the dialogue and song-texts. The longer of the songs are accompanied by circular dances serving a multitude of purposes including that of scene-changing.

A formal opening-of-the-theatre (*buka panggung*) ceremony and a similar one to close the theatre (*tutup panggung*) are mandatory. The former, like the *Poorvaranga* in Indian classical and folk theatre, serves the function of invoking a host of invisible beings (spirits or minor gods) and of offering them sacrifices as well as extending invitations to them with a view to gaining their goodwill and ensuring

protection for performers and audience members alike. The *tutup panggung* serves as a means of 'release' or sending off the invisible host and of expressing gratitude to them for their cooperation in ensuring a successful performance, without mishaps. *Mak Yong* is thus a sacred art, requiring special care. Actors and actresses are assumed, during performances, and particularly so during trance-sessions that are featured in ritual *Mak Yong*, to be re-enacting the deeds of the gods, the principal characters in the *Mak Yong's* repertoire of stories.

A typical performance may take several nights, commencing about eight-thirty in the evening and ending well after midnight. One-night performances, however, are not uncommon, and performers are often able to make adjustments to cut performance-time. In exorcism performances of *Main Puteri-Mak Yong* or other healing performances, however, it is a common practice to devote the first night to *Main Puteri* for diagnostic purposes, and to have *Mak Yong* on subsequent nights. Traditionally, the longest of *Mak Yong* stories, *Anak Raja Gondang* took forty nights to complete, while shorter ones lasted a good twenty nights. As a matter of practice, all performances begin with the emplacement of musical instruments and musicians in specially designated positions prior to the *buka panggung* rituals in conformity with traditional observances thereby allowing actresses in their opening dance to face both the *rebab*-player and the east, directing their salutations to the orchestra and the direction of the rising sun.

Staging arrangements for spiritual performances, though complicated by a host of additional items of paraphernalia, more or less conform with the arrangements for non-ritual *Mak Yong*. Such spiritual performances are, further, characterised by a great measure of informality and audience involvement particularly during trance sessions such as the *Lupa Mayang* (Palm-Blossom Trance) when, due principally to involuntary trance-states, control becomes altogether impossible, perhaps even unnecessary so as not to defeat the very purpose of the performances. During such performances the 'sacred area' often extends physically to include stretches of ground the *panggung*.

### Repertoire

The *Mak Yong* repertoire went through several phases of expansion, beginning with one basic story, *Dewa Muda*, which is regarded also as the story which explains *Mak Yong* origins (*cerita asal*), and reaching a classical repertoire of twelve stories.<sup>5</sup> Additional tales have

<sup>5</sup> The *Dewa Muda* story is given in synopsis form in Appendix A. See page 118.

also, on and off, been borrowed from other coregional theatre genres such as *Wayang Kulit Siam*, *Wayang Kulit Melayu*, *Menora* or *Nora Chatri* and *Bangsawan*. Despite the general agreement that *Mak Yong* has twelve authentic stories, there is no complete agreement on the twelve titles which constitute *Mak Yong* repertoire due to a host of problems including possible alternative titles and the use of titles to indicate 'cycles' of stories rather than individual tales.

Based upon extensive consultations with leading *Mak Yong* personalities, the following list has been compiled as a possible complete 'authentic' *Mak Yong* repertoire:

1. *Dewa Muda*;
2. *Dewa Pechil* (with *Dewa Samadaru* as a variant title/version);
3. *Dewa Sakti* (or *Rajah Sakti*);
4. *Dewa Indera-Indera Dewa*;
5. *Dewa Panah* (or *Anak Rajah Panah*);
6. *Anak Raja Gondang* (The trilogy incorporating this play, *Bongsu Sakti* and *Bijak Laksana*);
7. *Gading Bertimang*;
8. *Raja Tangkai Hati*;
9. *Raja Muda Lakleng*;
10. *Raja Muda Lembek*;
11. *Raja Besar Dalam Negeri Ho Gading*;
12. *Bedara Muda*.

In the Kelantanese mind, all these stories are associated with gods (*Dewa-Dewa*). They deal with the adventures of gods or mythical princess (themselves the progeny of gods) and include supernatural events, so that they may be adequately described as romances or sagas.

It has not yet been possible to link these stories with the major south or southeast Asian cycles such as Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, or the *Panchatantra* from India or the Indonesian *Panji* cycle. Attempts at linking them with or seeking possible derivatives from Middle Eastern and Persian cycles such as *The One Thousand and One Nights* and the *Shah-Namah* have revealed nothing. There is perhaps only one exception to all these. *Anak Raja Gondang* (*The Conch-Shell Prince*) which, apart from Malaysia is also known in Cambodia, Thailand, and Tibet, is derived from the *Suvarnasangkha Jataka* (*The Golden Shell Jataka*), one of the extra-canonical Jatakas that probably got written down for the first time in Thailand.

Some Kelantanese *Mak Yong* performers believe that *Dewa Muda*, and *Dewa Pechil* derive from possible Javanese sources. The prince,

*Dewa Muda*, is often identified with Raden Panji or Ino Kertapati, the hero of the medieval Javanese Panji romance.

### Roles

The *Mak Yong* roles are enacted by a cast of between eight and ten performers in a ritual or rural performance and by about twenty to twenty-five performers for a more sophisticated one. In either case there is considerable flexibility and the number of performers depends upon the story selected. The numbers mentioned do not include musicians. The roles are as follows: 1. *Pak Yong*, the male lead; 2. *Mak Yong*, the female lead; 3. *Peran* or *Pengasuh*, the male attendant; 4. *Inang*, the female attendant or duenna; 5. *Tok Wak*, the Old Man; 6. *Dewa-Dewa*, the Gods and spirits; 7. *Jin* and *Gergasi*, the Genies and Ogres; 8. *Orang Darat*, the Villagers and 9. *Burung* and *Binatang*, the Birds and Animals.

*Pak Yong*, the male lead role, is generally played by females in Kelantan. There may be more than one *Pak Yong* in a performance, depending upon the story. He is always the *Raja* (King) or *Raja Muda* (Prince), and when both these roles are used, the *Pak Yong* role is divided into *Pak Yong Tua* and *Pak Yong*, with the former, or elder *Pak Yong* playing the Raja and the latter playing the prince. The *Pak Yong* role is central to the genre.

The *Mak Yong* is the leading female role, and is always played by females. Like the previous role, the *Mak Yong* is sometimes divided into *Mak Yong* (playing a queen) and *Puteri Mak Yong* (playing a princess). There may be several *Mak Yong* roles in a single performance.

Although generally regarded as a 'comic' role, the *Peran* is considerably more than a mere clown. Unlike the clowns in *Sandiwara* or *Bangsawan*, the *Perans* have the stature and importance of Shakespeare's 'wise fools' or the *Vidushaka* of classical Sanskrit theatre. The *Peran Tua* is infinitely more important than the *Peran Muda*, particularly in spiritual performances. They are addressed as *Awang Pengasuh* a name indicating their roles as a Raja's attendants, guardians, protectors and companions.

In more ways than one, the *Incng's* functions parallel those of the *Peran*. She serves as the attendant to a Queen or a companion to a princess. The role is divisible into several sub-categories. Of all these, the *Inang Bongsu* (or youngest *Inang*) is the most important. Her functions parallel those of the *Peran Tua*.

The *Tok Wak* (Old Man) role is an interesting one encompassing several very important characters such as the royal astrologer or for-

tune teller, the royal executioner, and various types of royal craftsmen. Of this fairly wide group of functionaries, the *Tok Wak Nujum* (Royal astrology) is the most important.

To the next group, *Dewa-Dewa* or *Dewa-Dewi* belong all benevolent gods, goddesses and spirits. These roles are generally handled by men. The *Dewa-Dewa* play the important role of the Fates, intervening in human affairs or human destiny to bring about a balance when human judgment has erred or when the malicious influence of ogres or genies threatens human characters.

The Jins and Ogres are clearly portrayed as evil, though once in a while one encounters an exception. Evil is ever present in *Mak Yong*, as in most traditional theatre of Southeast Asia. It devolves upon the hero to subdue or destroy it if necessary with the help of benevolent supernatural forces. In the symbolic presentation of good as well as evil supernatural beings, there are clearly marked Javanese as well as Islamic elements. Most of the *Mak Yong* ogres bear close resemblance to the *kasar* (coarse) figures in Javanese *Wayang*.

The final two categories of *Mak Yong* characters need little explanation.

#### The Use of Music and Dance

The *Mak Yong* orchestra consists of three instruments: the three-stringed *rebab* or spiked fiddle; a pair of double-headed barrel drums (*gendang*); and a pair of hanging gongs (*twak-tawak* or *tetawak*). Of these, the *rebab* is the most important, and the *rebab*-player is normally considered the leader of a *Mak Yong* orchestra. Part of the instrument's prestige derives also from its supernatural importance, something universally accepted in *Mak Yong*. Customarily, the *tetawak* are hung on the north-eastern corner of a *panggung*, their knobs facing each other, and the *gong ibu*, with its offerings hanging inside, pointed centre-stage. Apart from these standard instruments, the *serunai* double-reed oboe and the *canang* or inverted gongs are sometimes used, particularly in certain pieces such as the *Tari Ragam* and the *Lagu Berjalan*, both of which are not important *Mak Yong* pieces and seem to have been borrowed from the Thai *Menora* dance-theatre form.

The longer pieces of the *Mak Yong* repertoire, according to contextual usage, may be classified as follows:

1. *Lagu Menghadap Rebab*, the semi-ritualistic opening piece;
2. Pieces intended for giving instruction or conveying a message;
3. Pieces for walking or travel situations;
4. The *Mengulit* or Lullaby tunes;

5. Pieces for lamentation situations;
6. Pieces accompanying special activities such as those undertaken by specialised craftsmen;
7. The *Lagu Sedayong Pak Yong*, a special piece with specific functions, including magical transformations.

All thirty-five or so *Mak Yong* pieces, many of which are no longer performed, fit into these categories.

Dances in *Mak Yong*, apart from the *Menghadap Rebab*, show little variety. They are, for female dancers, basically slow and circular, with musical and choric vocal accompaniment. The male performers, such as *Tok Wak* and the *Perans*, on the other hand, have more complicated stylised dances incorporating various *tapaks* (steps), *kirats* (turns) and *langkahs* which represent complete movement-sequences ending up in specific poses. In other situations *langkahs* lead directly into the action without intermediary poses.

Hand gestures, known as *ibu tari*, are used. Their names and functions, however, are not precisely defined. Some bear close resemblance to Indian *mudras* but do not possess the same symbolic value as their Indian counterparts. The *pataka* gesture, for instance, gets profusely used and is often embellished with the fluttering of fingers. The only clearly defined *mudra*-like gesture is the *anjali*, known in *Mak Yong* as the *sembah* or salutation gesture. It is found also in other Malay dances, such as those in *Joget Gamelan* and in ceremonial usage.

As a general rule, hand gestures and the movements of arms, feet and body combine into complete sets or sequences identifying character- or role-types, and providing character-related or character-distinguishing movements. One way in which characters are traditionally classified is by regarding them as refined (*halus*) or coarse (*kasar*), their refinement or coarseness emanating, apart from movements and physical poses, through a host of other characteristics including dialogue styles, make-up and conduct.

The finest elaboration in *Mak Yong* dance is to be seen in the *Menghadap Rebab*, which combines *ibu tari*, *kirats* and *tapaks* with a subtle swaying of the torso enabling the dancers to weave a fantasy of movement. The individual elements are not identified as such for it is the totality of pattern that constitutes the essence of his dance, a symbolic mimesis of nature and natural phenomena replete with bird, animal and plant imagery overlaid with *adat*, the age-old code of courtly manners.

#### Performance Structure

As in most indigenous traditional theatre performances of Kelantan, *Mak Yong* performances are preceded by a series of elaborate

rituals known collectively as the *buka panggung*. These follow the preparation of the stage (*bansal*), the placing of the instruments in their respective positions, the stationing of the musicians, the preparation of the offerings (*bahan-bahan kenduri*). Once these preparations have been completed, a *bomoh* or *pawang*, who could be a senior member of a troupe, conducts the rituals which in effect consist of several interlinked ceremonies: the *baca kenduri* or reading of appropriate incantations; the *buka alat-alat muzik* or starting off of musical instruments; and the *buka panggung* as such in which the theatre is ritually consecrated and opened. A salutation song (*lagu bertabek*), musical prelude (*lagu-lagu permulaan*) and an entry piece (*lagu sang Pak Yong turun*) follow. The final one brings the actresses onto the stage for the *Menghadap Rebab*. The ritual preliminaries thus completed, the story can now begin.

This is usually the procedure observed on opening nights. Subsequent nights do not require the *buka panggung*, though other preliminaries are maintained.

The *Menghadap Rebab* leads on into several other musical pieces sung to the accompaniment of dances performed either in groups or solo. The upshot of the entire sequence is that the Raja (*Pak Yong*), having bid farewell to his wives (if any) and other ladies of the palace, sets out to seek his companion, the *Peran Tua*. The *Peran Tua*, then, upon instructions from his master, visits the *Peran Muda* so that both of them can appear before the Raja. When both of them finally arrive at court and kneel before the Raja in humble salutation, the Raja introduces himself, indicating his true identity, for as a matter of tradition, up to this point the story has not begun and thus the *Pak Yong* has not been identified in terms of his name or his country. The preceding activities are part of an elaborate introduction to the entire dramatic sequence that is to follow.

At this point the story begins to unfold, with the Raja, now given a name, indicating the reason for his invitation to the *Perans*. Often the Raja wishes to have a dream interpreted, as in *Dewa Muda* or wishes to go on a journey as in *Raja Tangkai Hati*, or even to go hunting as in *Anak Raja Gondang*. The plot then begins to unravel. The second and subsequent nights continue the story, starting off each time from the point where the previous night's events stopped. On the final night, having concluded the story, the *panggung* is ritually closed with a ceremony rather simple compared to the *buka panggung*. The spirits, who are assumed to have been present during the period of performance since their first arrival, are thanked for their benevolence, and for not having caused harm to audience and performers alike.

Thus concludes a *Mak Yong* performance, much in the manner in which it has for countless centuries on the east coast of the Malay peninsula, for *Mak Yong*, according to present evidence, is probably the oldest and purest of all traditional Malay theatre forms, a fascinating arabesque of music, dance and theatre, traditional in structure and yet, in spirit, intensely modern.

## APPENDIX

SYNOPSIS OF *DEWA MUDA**Episode 1*

Dewa Muda wakes up from a dream, and tells his *pengasuh* (attendants) that in the dream an old man (or woman) appeared to him. This person asked the prince to go into the ancestral forest (*alas pesaka*) to hunt for a white deer with golden horns. The image of the deer has appeared to him in his dream. Upon suddenly awakening, the prince looked around him. It was then he realised it had all been a dream. *Dewa Muda* asks his two *pengasuh* if they can make anything of his dream. Even the *peran tua* is unable to do so. They are then sent to summon the royal astrologer (*wak rujum*) who, upon arrival and being informed of the dream, provides *Dewa Muda* with an interpretation. The interpretation is not announced, but *Dewa Muda* is told that he must carry out the instructions of the person who appeared in his dream. Failure to do so could lead to calamity either to the prince himself or to the country of Seluruh Tanah Jawa.

Preparations are made for the entry into the forest.

*Episode 2: The Entry into the Forest*

*Dewa Muda* leaves for the forest with his entourage. The spirits of the forests are propitiated and offerings made to them. The two *pengasuh* go ahead to look for the white deer, and the hunt begins as soon as the deer is cited. Mysteriously the deer disappears as the prince follows it. The hunting dogs sent after the deer also disappear. *Dewa Muda* and his attendants are lost in the forest, separated from other members of their company. They look for water. *Dewa Muda* goes to a pond they discover for his bath, and in it he finds a seven-petaled flower. On the petals there is a message: "If you wish to find me, come up into the skies."

*Dewa Muda* gets a violent urge to go up into the heavens. The *pengasuh* advise him that this is not really possible, since he has no wings and is not a bird. Their immediate problem is to find a way out of the forest. The *peran tua* advises *Dewa Muda* to make a vow (*niyat*). *Dewa Muda* makes the vow: if he successfully returns to the palace of his mother, Tuan Puteri Selindungan Bulan, he will fly a golden kite. The forest brightens immediately upon the completion of *Dewa Muda's* utterance. They meet their companions and the homeward journey begins. Upon *Dewa Muda's* enquiry, the *peran tua* informs the prince of the existence of a golden kite which once belonged to *Dewa Muda's* father, Tuk Raja Jawa, and now in the keep-

ing of his mother. They plan a ruse to acquire the kite from Tuan Puteri Selindugan Bulan. Dewa Muda performs his purification rites at a pond in Taman Banjaran Sari park. The prince and his companions return home.

*Episode 3: The Flight to the Heavens*

Dewa Muda's ruse to acquire the kite works. The kite is repaired and taken to the wide open fields (*padang luas sajauhana padang*). The prince seeks the assistance from a spirit of the skies, Awang Sejambul Lebat, to fly the kite into the heavens. They are both delighted, hearing the sound made by the kite, as it hangs, suspended in the skies. When it is time to bring the kite down they discover that it is stuck; it will move neither higher nor lower. Dewa Muda weeps. He gets a strong urge to go up into the skies to get it and will not go home without the ancestral kite. Awang Sejambul Lebat, failing to dissuade the prince from the mission, finally agrees to help the prince go up into the skies. There is one condition, however. Dewa Muda must promise that he will fight all ogres they encounter. The ogres are heard, but not seen. Dewa Muda, frightened, wants to give up the journey to the skies and return to earth, but Awang Sejambul Lebat will not allow that. He chastises Dewa Muda for his cowardice. They enter into a heavenly garden, eat the fruits in it, and go to sleep.

*Episode 4: Meeting with the Sky-Princess*

Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas and her attendants (*inang*) decide to go into their garden to pick flowers and to eat fruits. They discover Dewa Muda and Awang Sejambul Lebat. The two sleepers are awakened and some argument ensues between the youngest attendant (*inang bongsu*) of Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas and the two intruders regarding the theft of fruits. The sky-princess and Dewa Muda fall in love. As a sign of hospitality, the sky-princess offers Dewa Muda betel leaves which the *inang* fetch. Dewa Muda eats the first, which he finds is sweet; proceeds to the second which is bitter; and finally eats the third which causes him to be drowsy. He goes to sleep. The *inang bongsu* takes his *keris* as a compensation for the fruit eaten by Dewa Muda and Awang Sejambul Lebat. Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas and the *inang* return to their palace.

*Episode 5: Death of Dewa Muda*

Dewa Muda, awakening, finds his *keris* missing. Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas, having obtained the prince's *keris* from the *inang bongsu*, comes to meet Dewa Muda on the pretext of wanting to return his weapon. She invites Dewa Muda to her room and takes him in with

her in the shape of a white flower that she puts in her hair. Once inside the palace, the prince returns to his normal shape. The princess instructs *inang bongsu* to bring more food than usual for her, saying she would like to feast the spirits of the palace (*hantu anjung*). *Inang bongsu* obeys but gets suspicious when the princess does not allow her to enter her room with the food. Later, she peeps through the key-hole and discovers the truth. She notices that Dewa Muda leaves the palace as a white mouse every time he has been in the palace with Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas. One day she places an arrow at the window, and Dewa Muda is pierced by it. He is transformed into his real shape, and lamenting, crawls to seek Awang Sejambul Lebat.

Awang Sejambul Lebat knows that this is the doing of *Inang Bongsu*, but is quite helpless. He brings Dewa Muda down to earth and leaves the dead prince with his mother, Tuan Puteri Selindungan Bulan, indicating that only a certain shaman (*bomoh*) can bring the prince back to life. This *bomoh*, he says, will seek the prince out. Awang Sejambul Lebat returns to the heavens.

#### *Episode 8: Dewa Muda's Revival*

The search for a *bomoh* begins. When all seems to have failed, Tuan Puteri Selindungan Bulan orders the body of Dewa Muda to be placed in a coffin. Soon it is on its way to the lying-in-state. Along the way, the royal attendants in charge of the procession meet two persons who appear to be hermaphrodites and claim to be *bomoh*. When asked if they can revive the dead prince, they answer that they can only try, giving no guarantee. They are invited to make the effort. For the attempted revival all other persons are sent away to wait at some distance. The healing ritual starts, and soon Dewa Muda begins to revive. The two *bomoh* leave before Dewa Muda is fully conscious. A message is written for him on the blade of his keris which is placed under his pillow. Dewa Muda awakens, as if from a long sleep, discovers the *keris* and reads the inscription: "If you wish to see me, come up to the skies." He realises that he has been visited by Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas. He gets a mad desire to go up into the skies.

#### *Episode 7: Dewa Muda's Return Flight to the Heavens*

Dewa Muda summons Awang Sejambul Lebat. In his form as "the Green Horse, Manifestation of the Gods" Awang Sejambul Lebat carries Dewa Muda into the heavens. On earth, Tuan Puteri Selindungan Bulan is informed of Dewa Muda's revival and flight into the heavens. Dewa Muda, upon reaching the heavens, meets Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas in the garden as before.

There are two major versions of the ending of *Dewa Muda*:

1. Dewa Muda and Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas marry. Dewa Muda spends half his time in the skies with her and the other half on earth with his mother Tuan Puteri Selindungan Bulan.
2. Dewa Muda proposes marriage and Tuan Puteri Ratna Mas accepts. Before they can proceed any further, however, a heavenly voice prohibits them from marrying. They are both the children of the same father, a god. They part from each other. Dewa Muda returns to earth and is reunited with his mother.