

A BIRD'S - EYE VIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
MODERN MALAY LITERATURE

1921 - 1941

Drs. Li Chuan Siu



a bird's-eye view of the development
of modern malay literature
1921 — 1941

Front Cover:

Tan Sri Dr. Haji Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad (Za'ba)

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW
OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN
MALAY LITERATURE, 1921—1941

BY

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2. **Ikhtisar Sejarah Pergerakan dan Kesusasteraan Melayu Modern, 1945 — 1965**, pp. 552 (Pustaka Antara, Kuala Lumpur, 1967), M\$ 10.00
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FOREWORD

As the title suggests, this book is compiled in a generalised form. We believe in this way we can instill and/or further encourage the interest of the study of modern Malay literature – incidentally the national literature of Malaysia – in its development over the years 1921 to 1941.

Internationally we hope that this book would be of some use to students of modern Malay literature, especially those in Europe, America and Australia, whose interest in this field has lately been in active growth.

This book is also obtainable in Malay, entitled **Ikhtisar Sejarah Kesusasteraan Melayu Baru, 1830 — 1945**, in which **Drs. Li Chuan Siu** has written in greater width and depth. This Malay book is also published by **Pustaka Antara**.

It is to be regretted that not all photographs of the writers under discussion are available. We would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Omar Basri and Mr. Abdullah Ismail and to some of the writers, who are still alive, for their assistance in collecting all available photographs printed in this booklet.

Kuala Lumpur
April, 1970.

Pustaka Antara

THE AUTHOR

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8. In June, 1964 he moved to Sydney and is now Senior Lecturer in Indonesian & Malayan Studies at the University of Sydney.



DRS. LI CHUAN SIU

P R E F A C E

Interest in the study of modern Malay literature has arisen only recently, that is, as a result of the political upheaval in Malaya which paved the way for her independence and the formation of Malaysia after World War II. Thus, works on this subject in English are still scanty. Not only many non-Malay speaking people in Malaysia and Singapore are unaware of the development of modern Malay literature, but also many Australian students in Indonesian and Malaysian Studies are merely interested in Indonesian literature.

The purpose of this small book is nothing more than to give a bird's-eye view of the subject in order to arouse their interest and to help them to look for proper reading material in the field of modern Malay literature circa 1921—1941. Hence, this booklet has not been written as an academic treatise but rather as an introduction for popular reading in the subject concerned.

For those who would like to further their study in this field, I should like to advise them to read the books listed in the Bibliography (on which the writing of some parts of this booklet is based) and to look for the original novels, short stories, verses, etc. mentioned in this booklet; and for those who would like to know the development of modern Malay literature after 1941, I should like to recommend my work in this field entitled **Ikhtisar Sejarah Pergerakan dan Kesusasteraan Melayu Modern, 1945—1965**, which has recently been published by the Pustaka Antara in Kuala Lumpur.

LI CHUAN SIU

Sydney, October 2, 1969.

CHAPTER I

THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN MALAY LITERATURE, 1921 — 1941

There had been an enormous output of Malay publication between the end of the First World War and the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941. Of these publications, some are Malay novels which are either translated or adapted from the Arabic or English languages, and from some Arabic translations of French works; some are novelettes which depict the city life of the Malays. No one had attempted describing the country life of the Malay folk in the novels, but the delineation of this aspect of life was occasionally found in the short stories which appeared in some newspapers and magazines. Besides, there are collections of essays, books on Islam, sporadic writing of modern verses, books on grammar, dictionaries and biographies of great people in the world.

Because of the outpouring of the novels and novelettes, Malay classical books in the Malay bookshops were rarely selected by the book hunters. These new books, however, always contain the monotonous formula of didactic elements. Their themes, as a rule, are confined to love and marriage (including forced marriage) and their language is mostly poorly written. The printing and binding of these books are usually roughly done. They are thin books, rarely exceeding one hundred pages. From this we can understand that the purchasing power of Malay readers was very limited.

Nevertheless, if we look into the number of Malay publishers and their publications in the light of the literate Malay population of that period, we can conclude that

since the end of the First World War the Malays have taken a keener interest in literary activities than their predecessors. The reasons for this may be summed up as follows:

(A) **The Promotions of the Malay Scholars and Journalism:**

Some Malays who had done further studies in Egypt or Mecca were well versed in the Arabic language. Most of them were engaged in newspapers, magazines, writing, or publication works after their return to Malaya to promote the reform movement of Islam. Besides, there were other Malays who could read Arabic books and magazines through self-study; they were also engaged in the same activities. Their effective writings exerted a great impact on a considerable number of young and promising Malay teachers, students as well as reporters who in turn took to writing. In this way a fresh current of ideas was slowly coming, and as it advanced a new type of writing emerged.

(B) **The Promotion of the Colonial Government:**

In 1924, the British colonial government set up the **Malay Translation Bureau** (Pejabat Karang-Mengarang) under the control of Mr. O. T. Dussek, then principal of the Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College in Tanjong Malim, Perak, and Enche' Za'ba (now Dr. Za'ba), then a teacher in the above College, was appointed Chief Translator. Apart from publishing textbooks for Malay schools, the Bureau also issued some literary works, mostly translations from light English literature.

Za'ba, whose full name is Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad, is a renowned scholar of Malay language and literature. He enjoys a high reputation in learned Malay circles. His two books, **The Guide To Malay Language and Literature** (Pelita Bahasa Melayu) in three volumes and **Methods of Malay Composition** (Ilmu Mengarang Melayu) are well received and regarded as authoritative master-pieces. He wrote a great deal, in both Malay and English, but the majority of his writings has yet to appear in book form. In 1939 and 1941, he wrote two articles in English regarding the developments of modern Malay language and literature which have been published in the **Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society** (JMBRAS), Vol. XVII, Part III, 1939, entitled **Modern Developments**, and in Vol. XIX, Part I, 1941, entitled **Recent Malay Literature**. They are very valuable and deserve our attention.

The **Translation Bureau** was to fulfil the two functions below:

- (1) To publish text-books such as Readers, Grammar and Composition, History, Geography, Arithmetic, Hygiene, Physical Drill, Hand-work, etc. for the Malay schools. Up to the end of 1941, it had altogether published forty-eight kinds of text-books, all in romanized Malay (huruf Rumi), known as **The Malay School Series**.

- (2) To publish simplified literary books such as Fairy Tales, Stories, Novels, Plays and Travel Books with a view to providing students with supplementary readings and the Malay reading public with entertainment. Most of these books are translations from light English literature. Up to the end of 1941, it had published a total of forty books which are written in Arabic script (huruf Jawi) and known as **The Malay Home Library Series**.

All the above-mentioned books are in the range of about 150 pages to about 300 pages. They are well written and are cheaper in price than those published by private publishing houses. They, therefore, could compete with them, and this seemed to have led Syed Sheikh, a well-known Islamic reformist, writer, journalist and publisher at that time, to leave off novel writing after 1931.

(C) **The Promotion of Some Indonesians:**

In the year 1930, an Indonesian by the name of Haji Kassim Bakri arrived in Singapore. With the help and co-operation of the local Malays, he published a periodical known as **The Temasek Monthly**. It was said that the main purpose of his coming to Singapore was to continue the struggle led by Ir. Sukarno who was then under detention by the Dutch Government since 1929. The articles in the above periodical, most of them propogating nationalism, are written in lucid modern Malay language. Unfortunately, the

periodical had to be terminated after its fifth issue on account of the departure of its founder to Sumatra. Nevertheless, the periodical had given great impetus to the development of the modern Malay language and literature. Since then, many students in the Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College in Tanjong Malim, Perak, and in the Technical College (= Trade School) in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, began to have a strong taste for the modern Malay language and literature. They usually read periodicals imported from Indonesia, such as **The New Writers** (Pujangga Baru), **The Eastern Star** (Bintang Timur), **The Star of Indonesia** (Bindang Hindia), etc. They were also well acquainted with the Indonesian literature, mostly published by Balai Pustaka (Dutch Government Vernacular Publishing House) in Djakarta, such as **Torment and Sorrow** (Azab dan Sengsara), **Madam Nurbaya** (Siti Nurbaja), **A Wrong Upbringing** (Salah Asuhan), **Under Sails** (Lajar Terkembang), etc. It is necessary to mention here that after the disastrous failure of the 1926—27 Communist uprisings in Java and Sumatra, some Indonesian revolutionaries had escaped to Malaya from the above two Indonesian islands. They seemed to have been in contact with some **student teachers** (guru2 pelateh) at the Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College and had encouraged them to organize a nationalist political party. Consequently, early in 1930, Ibrahim Ya'acob, a student teacher at the above College, together with some 35 students, formed an organization called **Young**

Malay (Belia Malaya) on the model of similar youth organizations in Java and Sumatra, such as **Jong Sumatranen Bond** (Young Sumatran Union), **Jong Java** (Young Java), etc. For most of its members, **Belia Malaya** was no more than a cultural and welfare association, mainly aiming at the unification and joint advancement of the Malay and Indonesian languages; therefore when most of them graduated in 1931, the organization seems to have died.

But a few of its more progressive members did join Ir. Sukarno's **Indonesian National Party** (Partai Nasional Indonesia) and subscribed to the Party's newspaper, **The People's Thought** (Pikiran Rakjat); and after they graduated, together with some graduates of other Colleges, they formed a radical political party called **The Union of Malay Youths** (Kesatuan Melayu Muda). This happened in Kuala Lumpur in 1937. Its important leaders were Ibrahim Ya'acob and Ishak Haji Muhammad (a graduate of the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar, Perak).

(D) **The Promotion of the Pen-Pal Club:**

The Malay newspapers and magazines played a key role in promoting the development of the Malay language and literature. As a result of the unceasing publicity made by the **Brother** (Saudara), a bi-weekly of Penang, **The Malayan Pen-Pal Club** (Persaudaraan Sahabat Pena Malaya) was founded on April 15, 1934. Its aim and object were to develop Malay language and

literature and to promote friendship and understanding among its members. Its branches spread throughout Malaya, even to Brunei and Sarawak. The Club published a monthly and some annual reports. It had a membership of over twelve thousand people.

As a result of the various factors given above, Malaya has produced quite a number of new writers. But, the writers who enjoy a high reputation in the realm of literature are either those who had gone to receive an Arabic education in Egypt or Mecca, or those who had mastered the Arabic or English language after graduating from Malay schools. Although quite a number of Malay teachers who are the graduates of **The Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College** in Tanjong Malim, Perak, took up writing in their spare time, few succeeded as recognized writers.

According to Za'ba, the expert on Malay language and literature, only those Malays who were able to appreciate the literature of other countries, could acquire the necessary literary knowledge and therefore be enlightened enough to take up worthy literary professions. However, the strange sentence constructions of the foreign languages, especially the Arabic language, are usually found in the writings of those reputed writers. We find the language tasteless and clumsy. This is because they were so well versed in the foreign language that they were modified by the pattern of thought of that language.

CHAPTER II

PROMINENT MALAY WRITERS AND THEIR WORKS (1921 — 1941)

In regard to the prominent writers and their works of the period under discussion (1921 — 1941), according to my opinion, the following twelve men of letters deserve our attention:

1 SYED SHEIKH BIN AHMAD AL-HADI (1867 — 1934):

He was a pioneer of modern Malay novelists and was born in Malacca, in 1867. His father was an Arab and his mother a Malay. As a boy he received his primary education in a Malay religious school in Malacca. He was an adopted child and student of Raja Ali Kelana of Riau. Later, he went to Egypt for further studies, under the guidance of the outstanding Moslem scholar and reformist, Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (1849 — 1908) of Cairo.

In July 1906, he became one of the promoters of **The Leader** (Al-Imam), a Moslem monthly magazine published in Singapore. He, at the same time, established in Singapore the first Arabic school named **Madrasat ul-Iqbal**. After undergoing a series of difficulties and setbacks, the above magazine stopped publication in January, 1909.

Then he took up appointment as a lawyer at the religious court in Johore (1909 — 1915). As he was a Syed (an offspring of the Prophet Muhammad) and, at the same time, well versed in Islam and in Arabic language, he was highly respected in Malay aristocratic society. His seniors and close friends in the southern part of the Malay Peninsula liked to call him a **Young Gentleman** (Wan Anum).



SYED SHEIKH BIN AHMAD AL-HADI



HARUN AMINURRASHID

In 1915, he resigned from the above post and returned to Malacca where again he ran an Arabic school known as **Madrasat ul-Hadi** from 1915 to 1917.

Not long afterwards, he moved to Penang where he helped the local Malays to erect an Arabic school called **Madrasat ul-Mashhor** of which he was appointed headmaster. The idea of writing a history of Islam in the Malay language dawned on him while he was teaching at that school. This led him to devote himself to a literary career. Although he was only well versed in the Arabic and Malay languages, he was very eloquent and had some new ideas regarding Islam.

In 1922, he published his first 250-page book called **The History of Islam** (Al-Tarikh al-Islami) which, as he originally planned, was to consist of twenty volumes. But the demand for the first volume was rather disappointing. He had to re-adjust the situation. Besides continuing to write religious books, he, therefore, resorted to writing love and adventure books for money in order to tackle his financial difficulty.

His attempt was successful. During 1925 and 1926 he published his first love-story known as **The Story of the Loyalty of a Beloved to Her Lover** or **The Story of Faridah Hanum** (Hikayat Setia 'Ashek kapada Ma'ashok-nya or Hikayat Faridah Hanum). It comprises two volumes, all in **Jawi**, each volume contains about two hundred and fifty pages, also inserted are many sensual pictures. (This book was re-printed in **Rumi** in one volume of 335 pages by Pustaka Antara in Kuala Lumpur in 1964). After the appearance of this book in the middle of the 1920s, there was a considerable uproar in the Malay community in both Singapore and Malaya. Without exception, all the literate

Malays possessed a copy of the book. The writer was then an aged man (60 years old) and was a great scholar of Islam. Because of this, most of the conservative Moslems looked upon this book with disappointment and contempt. The writer, however, ignored the disapproval, as all he wanted was money in order to make up the loss in the printing of his religious books. A summary of its content is as follows:

Hikayat Faridah Hanum or **Hikayat Setia 'Ashok kapada Ma'ashok-nya** is a love-story between two young Egyptians of well-to-do families. The story takes place in Cairo (Egypt) in May, 1894. The young man is called Shafik Afandi, a university graduate (holder of the degree of **Al-Baqaluria** or B. A.), while the young lady, Faridah Hanum, is a highly educated girl who is well versed in Islamic theology and worldly knowledge; besides this, she is also proficient in French language and literature. She has definite opinions about the role of women — they should be more than horses of burden waiting for their masters to ride on them. She often quotes the saying of the Prophet which reads: 'Menuntut 'ilmu itu ferdhu di-atas sakalian laki2 dan sakalian perempuan.' (To pursue knowledge is necessary for all men and women). She believes that boys and girls should be well educated so that they become good citizens who love their fatherland and are well equipped with good training to serve their nation so that it will become progressive, prosperous and great.

Shafik Afandi and Faridah fall in love with each other at first sight. But because her parents are conservative, they can meet and write letters to each other only secretly with the help of their servants. Their love is very pure, i.e., no sexual intercourse before marriage to be indulged

in by the pair, and the climax of their affair is merely Shafik's kissing of Faridah's hair and forehead.

But Faridah's parents force her to marry her cousin, Badaruddin Afandi, since his parents were the first to ask for Faridah's hand in marriage on behalf of their son. Faridah, however, is able to make her husband promise not to touch her for three months.

Meanwhile, Shafik Afandi, disappointed, joins the Egyptian army and is sent to the battlefield in the Sudan. When the war is over, and he has been promoted to the rank of captain, he resigns, and returns to his parents' home in Cairo. While holidaying in Alexandria, his lodging happens, by chance, to be situated next to the home of Faridah and her husband. Faridah writes to him, telling him that she wants a divorce from her husband because she doesn't love him and is bored and distressed by his continual drinking. She adds that they have been married for only 70 days and that she is still a virgin.

Shafik disguises himself and threatens Badaruddin Afandi that his wife's lover will kill him unless he gives her a divorce. Badaruddin takes heed of this warning, and divorces her with "talak satu". After she is divorced she returns to her parents' home in Cairo, and when Shafik's parents propose to her parents asking for her hand in marriage on behalf of their son, it is accepted. Three months later, their marriage ceremony is held joyfully. On the 8th night after their wedding ceremony, the marriage is consummated, and indeed Shafik finds that she is still a pure virgin as she had said.

An event after Faridah's marriage shows her determination to fight for the emancipation of Egyptian women and also shows her knowledge of Islamic laws. Her father

intends to retire and wishes to divide up his estate between his two children, Faridah and her brother (Dr. Muhammad Afandi, a general practitioner). This develops into a polite argument. Her brother wants the estate to be divided equally between his sister and himself. Shafik Afandi says that it should all go to the doctor, because Shafik and his wife have just received an inheritance from Shafik's father. But Faridah, supported by Shafik's father, disagrees with them and says that Dr. Muhammad should get two parts and Faridah the other 1/3. This is in accordance with the Moslem laws, because the brother should look after his sister in the event of her being divorced by her husband.

With her part of the estate, amounting to more than one million pounds, Faridah sets up an Educational Foundation and asks her father-in-law to take charge of it. They build many new schools for girls and donate money to already existing ones. At first such actions are looked on with horror by the conservative Egyptians. Then gradually the success of their efforts encourages others to participate in the worthy cause. Such activities as these do much to boost the cause of the "emancipation for women" in Egypt. Organisations for women are set up by the graduates of these schools; newspapers and magazines are also published. They often send representatives to attend world-wide women congresses. So a new era for modern women emerges in Egypt.

This modern novel was based upon an Egyptian love-story written in the Arabic language. The writer's success lay in the liveliness and freshness of the content of the book unprecedented by an Malay book in Malaya. But the background is the city of Cairo in 1894 and all the characters are Egyptians. During the period between 1927 and 1929, he published four more story books which were not so

successful as their predecessor. In recognizing his contribution to Malay literature, he has been called the **Father of Modern Malay Novel** by some Malay writers. This title, however, calls for further consideration and reappraisal, because although his novels are modern, the contents are alien.

In September 1926, Syed Sheikh founded another monthly magazine in Penang called **The Brotherhood** (Al-Ikhwan). In 1927, he established a publishing house known as The Jelutong Press. Again in September 1928, he published a weekly newspaper under the title of **Brother** (Saudara), which was changed to bi-weekly after January 1932, and which carried local and foreign news, social criticism, detective stories, etc. His long series of detective stories under the heading of **The Story of Rokambul, the Detective** (Cherita Rokambul) which was partly re-written and partly translated from Arabic translations of French detective stories, was warmly welcome by the readers. He died in February 1934 after publishing seven detective stories each of which consists of more than four hundred pages.

List of Syed Sheikh's Important Works:

- 1922: **Al-Tarikh al-Islami** (The History of Islam).
 1925: **Hikayat Setia 'Ashok kapada Ma'ashok-nya or Hikayat Faridah Hanum** (The Story of the Loyalty of a Beloved to Her Lover or The Story of Faridah Hanum), Volume I.
 1926: *Idem*, Volume II.
 1927: **Tafsir Juz 'Amma** (Translation of Chapter 30 of the **Kuran** with notes).

- 1928: **Taman Chinta Berahi** (The Garden of Passionate Longing).
Tafsir al-Fatihah (Translation of Chapter 1 of **Kuran** with notes).
- 1929: **Hikayat Anak Dara Ghassan** (The Story of Miss Ghassan).
Hikayat Chermin Kehidupan (The Story of the Reflection of Life).
Hikayat Puteri Nur ul-'Ain (The Story of Princess Nur ul-'Ain).
- 1931: **Kitab Ugama Islam dan 'Akal** (a treatise on Islam).

2. AHMAD BIN MUHAMMAD RASHID TALU(1889 — 1939):
 He was the actual creator of the modern Malay novel and was born in Pulau Pinang, in 1889. But because of the popularity of Syed Sheikh bin Ahmad al-Hadi, he was overshadowed and became less well-known. His first novel, **A True Friend** (Kawan Benar), was published in 1927, just two years after the publication of Syed Sheikh's **Hikayat Faridah Hanum** (Volume I). This novel uses Malaya (not Egypt) as its background, and the main characters in it are all Malay people. Its theme is about the conflict between husband and wife whose marriage was based on love. A young man called Abdul Bar, married a Malay girl, Siti Ramlah, as a result of **falling in love at first sight**. Three years later, their first baby, a boy, was born. Since then the husband changes his way of life: spending the evening away from home and takes another woman, Siti Zainab, as his mistress (= gula-gula). Fortunately, his faithful or true friend, Ya'acob, is able to expose the unfaithful behaviour of the **gula-gula** who always has sexual affairs with another man. Finally Abdul Bar is aware of his unfaithfulness to his wife, he asks for forgiveness from her, and they are reconciled.

His master-piece is a novel called **Is That Salmah?** (Ia-kah Salmah?) This novel was published in serial of 7 volumes in 1928, altogether consisting of 648 pages. The theme is about the emancipation of Malay women. A summary of its content is as follows:

A Malay girl called Salmah, received an English education and passed the **Junior Cambridge** examination. She always wears western dress and is very free in going everywhere alone. This is contrary to Malay customs at that time, so she is often criticized and slandered by the conservative Malay people. But Salmah doesn't care a fig about it, because she is convinced that the Malay world is changing, the new era of emancipation is dawning.

In a road accident she is wounded. A young Malay, Bakar, comes to her assistance. They become good friends. When Bakar's uncle and future father-in-law, Malikon, knows about their friendship, he misunderstands Bakar and throws him out of his house (Bakar was staying with him before this incident). Now Bakar becomes a wanderer and goes to Singapore to earn his living. When Salmah hears of this, she visits Bakar's uncle and explains the sincerity of her friendship with Bakar. The old man is regretful and is very sympathetic to her. After he learns that Salmah's father has been away from home for 15 years, without paying alimony to her mother, he takes Salmah as his adopted daughter.

Salmah's father, Hussain, comes to Singapore after working for 15 years in North Borneo. Bakar is employed by Hussain in this Lion's City. Later, Hussain hears that his wife is still in Alor Star, Kedah, so he goes there to visit his wife, and through the introduction of his daughter, Salmah, he becomes acquainted with Malikon. Finally they decide to meet Bakar in Singapore.

In the meantime, Bakar is disappointed and sad after hearing that his fiancée, Nahriah (daughter of his uncle, Malikon), has died in a road accident. So he wanders to Kota Bahru, Kelantan. But the news of Nahriah's death is not true, she has survived her wounds. Finally her brother (Zaini), succeeds in finding Bakar and is able to persuade him to return to Ulu Yam, where his marriage ceremony with Nahriah will be held.

As for our heroine, Salmah, she is finally married to Zaini, because they have been in love with each other since their first meeting in Malikon's home.

The theme of the emancipation of women in **Ia-kah Salmah** is more progressive than that is depicted in Syed Sheikh's **Hikayat Faridah Hanum**. In the former, Ahmad bin Muhammad Rashid Talu was able to put forward this theme by depicting the behaviour and actions of Salmah, who is very dynamic, as a symbol of the emancipation of modern Malay women. But in the latter, Syed Sheikh put forward many things, such as purity in love before marriage, the excellent teaching in Islam, reformation in Islam, education for girls, nationalism, emancipation of women, etc. Thus emancipation of women is just a portion of the mixed theme. In **Hikayat Faridah Hanum**, the main characters, Shafik Afandi and Miss Faridah, can only meet each other secretly, whereas in **Ia-kah Salmah**, the main character (Salmah) is free to meet anyone she likes openly. Besides this, Syed Sheikh was also bold in describing the first sexual intercourse vividly on the 8th night after the marriage ceremony of Shafik Afandi and Faridah Hanum.

Ahmad bin Muhammad Rashid Talu's works are plentiful, and some of them have been left unfinished. The most important ones are as follows:

- 1927: **Kawan Benar** (A True Friend).
 1928: **Ia-kah Salmah?** (Is That Salmah?).
 1929: **Dua Belas Kali Sengsara** (Suffering for Twelve Times).
 1930: **Siapa Jahat** atau **Dato Chenchano** (Who is Wicked or Sir Chenchano).
 ? : **Siapa-kah Jodoh-nya?** (Who is the Marriage Partner?).
 ? : **Rahmah binti Abdullah** (Rahmah the Daughter of Abdullah).
 ? : **Apa Sudah Jadi?** (What Has Happened?).
 ? : **Perangkap Hitam** (The Black Trap).
 ? : **Godaan Yang Dahshat** (The Horrifying Temptation).
 ? : **Sa-malam di-Pulau Pinang** atau **Kechulin Dato** (One Night in Pulau Pinang or Sir Kechulin).
 ? : **Ukor Baju Di-Badan Sendiri** (Fit the Coat on Your Own Person = Judge Others as You would Judge Yourself).

It is a pity that up to now only the first three of the above books have been kept by the **Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka** (Institute for Language and Publication) in Kuala Lumpur. We should pay homage to Pustaka Antara in Kuala Lumpur which has published Syed Sheikh's **Hikayat Faridah Hanum** in romanized script. This could help students in Modern Malay Literature to study the content, the plot, the style, etc. in this famous novel. But I wonder why hitherto no Malay publisher has attempted to re-print Rashid Talu's literary works. Oxford University Press in Kuala Lumpur has recently announced that it will re-print **Ia-kah Salmah** in the near future. (See **Berita Oxford**; No. 18, May 1968, p. 19) This, of course, is good news.

3. HAJI ABDUL RAHIM KAJAI (1894 — 1943):

He was a pioneer of Malay short story, and was born in Setapak of Kuala Lumpur. His father was a native of Minangkabau. He completed his primary education at a Malay school at Setapak in 1906. From 1906 to 1909 he studied Moslem theology and Arabic language in Mecca. Then he worked as a compositor in Kuala Lumpur and later in Singapore from 1909 to 1912. He departed for Mecca again in 1913. He started contributing articles for **Utusan Melayu** (The Malay Herald: the Malay edition of the **Singapore Free Press**, published from 1907 to 1921; but from 1918 on it was taken over by a group of Moslem businessmen) after his return to Malaya in 1917. He left for Mecca once again in 1924 and returned in 1927. Then he lived in Kuala Lumpur and was the special correspondent of **Saudara**, a bi-weekly newspaper of Penang. In 1930, he was appointed by Syed Sheikh as a sub-editor of the above bi-weekly, and under the encouragement of the latter, he published his first long novel, **The Story of Dhu'l-Ruhain** or **The Owner of Two Lives** (Cheritera Dhu'l-Ruhain), in instalments, during 1930 and 1931. The book consists of 540 pages. It is also rewritten and translated from an Arabic love-story. As a literary work, it has little merit.

After the publication of his long novel, he left Penang for Kuala Lumpur where he edited a bi-weekly called **Majlis** (Assembly). In 1936, he moved to Singapore where he edited **Warta Malaya** (The News of Malaya), a daily newspaper, and also **Warta Ahad** (The Sunday News), and **Warta Jenaka** (The Comical News), all were weekly magazines. After that, he started writing short stories for these two magazines. He depicted the ordinary life of the Malay society and never again based his writings on Arabic sources.



HAJI ABDUL RAHIM KAJAI

In 1939, he resigned from the three posts mentioned above and became the editor of a newly established nationalist paper, the **Utusan Melayu** (published from 25-5-1939) and edited **Utusan Zaman** (The Herald of the Day), a weekly magazine, as well as **Mustika** (Jewel), a monthly.

Kajai wrote a great number of short stories (cherita pendek) which were to be found in the magazines closely connected with him. According to our knowledge, he had altogether published 48 short stories. In recognition of his contribution to the development of the Malay short stories for which he had laid an influential foundation, he has been called the **Father of Malay Short Stories** by Malay writers in general.

He died of illness in Singapore on the fifth of December, 1943. His short stories were collected and published in the following books by the **Qalam** and the **Geliga** of Singapore:

- 1) **Pa' Lachok** or **Father Lachok** (Qalam).
- 2) **Telatah Kajai** or **The Activity of Kajai** (Qalam).
- 3) **Pustaka Kajai** or **The Book of Kajai** (Qalam).
- 4) **Banyak Udang Banyak Garam** or **Many Prawns and Much Salt** (Geliga).

4. HAJI AHMAD BIN ISMAIL (1899 — 1969):

He was born in Kota Bahru, Kelantan, on 3-8-1899. In 1915, he left the Government Malay School when only in Standard II, with the words "for laziness" recorded against his name. Then he entered a private English school run by a Ceylonese teacher, but left this school after 8 months. His knowledge of Arabic was mostly acquired by self-study and by associating with friends versed in it. With the help of **Arabic-English** and **English-Arabic** dic-



HAJI AHMAD BIN ISMAIL

tionaries, gradually he managed to do rough translations from Arabic into Malay. Inspired by the famous Kelantanese religious teacher and ascetic called Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf Kenali (1870 — 1933), who had studied for over 20 years in Mecca and for a brief period in Cairo, Ahmad bin Ismail became a voracious reader of all new publications from the Middle East, especially from Cairo.

With the collaboration of two friends, in June 1923, he edited a short-lived monthly journal, **The Guidance** (Al-Hedayah). This publication was not successful and had to be stopped in March, 1926. But this failure made him turn his efforts to the establishment of a printing press called The Asasiyyah Press. In this way he was able to publish Malay books, either translated or adapted from some of the latest Arabic works likely to be popular and of educational value to the Malays. His style is somewhat influenced by Arabic, but not at the expense of idiom and perspicuity. Some of his books can be considered as a valuable contribution to modern Malay literature.

From 1-4-1934 to the end of 1941 he edited a magazine, **The Wisdom** (Al-Hikmah), first published thrice-monthly until 1936, then from 1937 to the end of 1941 as a weekly. Each issue was illustrated and well supplied with articles, comments on current events and serial stories.

List of Haji Ahmad Ismail's Works:

- 1929: **Tut-Ankh-Amun or Tutankhamen:** Describing in 320 pages the royal ceremonies and customs of ancient Egypt and the life of the Copts.
- Chogan Setia** (Emblem of Loyalty): This is a patriotic love story of 430 pages, centring round a prince and a princess of the Ottoman house who, loyal to their King and fatherland, fought for the

progress of Turkey against the blunders and intrigues of Enver Pasha after World War I, and thereby paved the way for the expression of the new spirit personified later by Mustapha Kamal (1881 — 1938) who, in 1923 became the first President of the Turkish Republic.

- 1930: **Pahlawan Perkasehan dan Peperangan** (Love and War Heroes): A love story of Turkey (135 pages) with episodes depicting her moral and cultural conditions, her administrative system under the old regime, her wars in Tripoli and the Balkans, the heroic defence of Gallipoli and the victory of Smyrna ending with the establishment of Angora as the new capital of a new government under Mustapha Kamal and the failure of European scheming against Turkish integrity.
- 1931: **Selamat Tinggal Ayohai Timor** (Farewell, The East): This novel depicts how the Turks abolished the Caliphate, how Bolshevik Russia was working for the undoing of Eastern Nations, and how the reform movement represented by Mustapha Kamal and his group forged its way among the people.
Tarikh Perjalanan Mustapha Kamal Pasha (The History of Mustapha Kamal Pasha's Struggle): This is a biography of Mustapha Kamal Pasha.
- 1932: **Puteri Mesir dengan Pahlawan Raja Rum** (The Princess of Egypt and the Roman Warrior): This is a long historical novel (551 pages), narrating the conquest of Egypt and Alexandria by the Moslem general 'Amru bin 'As in the early days of Islam and depicting the conditions of life among the Arabs, the Copts and the Romans in those days.

- 1933: **Penyuloh Bahgia dan Sejahtera** (A Guide to Happiness and Peace): This book gives general guidance as to the secrets of success in life.
- Kumpulan Kala** (The Scorpion Gang): This is a story of crime and detection with English and French backgrounds.
- Bayang Hitam** (The Black Shadow): This is another crime story depicting the rivalry between a noble-hearted thief and a despicable robber with scenes laid in London.
- 1934: **Tikaman Bahasa** (Stabbing with Words): This is a collection of Malay proverbs and pithy quotations that have become proverbial, with explanation in Malay. This book was compiled by a Malay linguist called **Muhammad Adnan bin Muhammad Arifin** in Kelantan, but it was edited by Ahmad bin Ismail.
- 1935: **Zarina dan Rasputin** (The Czarina and Grigory E. Rasputin): This is a story of the notorious Russian monk and his hold on the Czar and Czarina of Russia during 1907 — 1916.
- 1937: **Kerana Mahkota** (Because of the Crown): This is an adapted novel and the only outstanding book among others published by Ahmad bin Ismail after 1935.

5. HARUN AMINURRASHID (1907 —):

He was born in Singapore, in 1907. After graduating from a Malay primary school, he worked as an assistant teacher in the Lion's City. From 1924 to 1929 he studied in the Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College at Tanjong

Malim, Perak. He passed his final examination with high distinction, so he was immediately appointed as a teacher in the above College. He often wrote articles which were published in Malay newspapers and magazines. In 1930, his first novelette, **The Jasmine of Kuala Lumpur** (Melor Kuala Lumpur) was published in **Jawi** script. It contains 110 pages and depicts a pure love story of a Malay young man (Sulaiman) and a Malay young girl (Nurisa). Its summary is as follows:

Sulaiman, after graduating from a Malay primary school, worked as a clerk and salesman in a Malay shop owned by Muhammad Ja'afar in Kuala Lumpur. This Malay merchant has a beautiful and clever daughter by the name of Nurisa. The old man wants Nurisa to be married to his nephew called Hashim, who was the previous class-mate of Sulaiman. Hashim's parents are well-to-do people and they wish their son to become a doctor, so they send him to study medicine at the King Edward College of Medicine in Singapore.

Sulaiman secretly falls in love with Nurisa who, in turn, is greatly attracted by the good behaviour, diligence and good looks of the young man. Nurisa is also interested in reading Indonesian novels which, among other things, often depict the danger of forced marriage. After Nurisa becomes engaged to Hashim, Sulaiman is frustrated and resigns from his job. He goes to Germany to study.

In the meantime, Hashim realizes that Nurisa loves Sulaiman, his good friend and former class-mate. Consequently, he and Nurisa request the old man to break off their engagement. Muhammad Ja'afar is an educated Malay, he understands fully the danger of forced marriage, so he approves of their request.

The happy ending of this novelette is not described fully by the author. He only says: "Concerning Sulaiman and Nurisa, although far separated from each other, one in the West, and the other in the East, but if the time comes, they will surely meet again."

Melor Kuala Lumpur was less popular at that time if compared with the novels of Syed Sheikh, and it was printed in a limited edition, so it soon became out of print; but it was re-printed in romanized script in 1962 by the Pustaka Melayu in Singapore. In a sense, it is important for the student of modern Malay literature, especially when studying the life and works of its author, for Harun Aminurrashid is now considered as a veteran in the field of history of the development of modern Malay literature in Singapore and Malaysia.

Harun is also a nationalist. In 1938, he gave a speech to the students of the College concerning the glory of the Malays in ancient times and the rise of national awareness of the young Malays. They were so excited that they decided to show their feelings of nationalism by marching through the College grounds and singing some songs which contained elements of nationalism.

As a result of this, Harun was considered dangerous by the Authorities of the Education Department and was moved to Brunei to become the Superintendent of Malay Education in that remote country. This happened in 1939. I shall describe his activities in Brunei during the Japanese occupation and those in Singapore after World War II in my future writing.

6. AHMAD NAWAWI BIN MUHAMMAD ALI (1904 —):

He was born in Batu Gajah, Perak, in 1904. After graduating from a local Malay Primary School, he studied

Arabic in the **Madrasat ul-Mashor**, which was founded by Syed Sheikh bin Ahmad Al-Hadi in about 1917. He left this school after 2½ years. His further progress in Arabic was acquired from self-study. He seems to have specialised in translating works from Arabic into Malay, such as the adventures of the famous jungle character, **Tarzan of the Apes** (Tarzan or Mawas Puteh). He was considered as a religious reformist and his three works on religion were refused permits for publication by the religious authorities of Perak.

Besides publishing story books, he also edited two short-lived periodicals: (1) a weekly newspaper called **A Guide for the Youths** (Panduan Teruna), started in Ipoh on 21-2-1930; (2) a fortnightly called **Entertainment** (Majallah Penghiboran), started on 1-4-1936. In these two periodicals he published, besides articles and curious notes and gleanings, a regular series of short stories as well as biographies on Moslem authors, thinkers and other celebrities during the glorious days of Islam.

His style is direct and simple and his Malay is comparatively free from Arabism. But his language is mainly prosaic as verses are seldom found even in his love-stories.

List of Ahmad Nawawi's Important Works:

- 1927: **Al-Farnus, fi Mukhtasar il-Kamus:** This is a simple Arabic-Malay Dictionary.
- Cherita Puteri Palsu** (A Wicked Lady): This is a story of a beautiful Russian woman who attracts the attention of an Indian prince and plays her guiles on him.
- 1928: **Cherita Amir Fadzu'llah:** This is a story of loyalty and devotion to parents and relatives.
- 1930: **Ja'afar al-Barmaki:** This is the story of the well-known mysterious episodes in Islamic history relat-

ing the strange marriage of Princess Abbasah (sister of Harun al-Rashid) ending in tragedy.

- 1932: **Warith** (The Heir): This is a story of a young Egyptian who dreams of the wealth he is to inherit and is later deceived by an actress.
- 1933: **Tarzan** atau **Mawas Puteh** (Tarzan or The White Ape): Issued in 5 parts, totalling 453 pages.

List of some of his unfinished works:

- 1934: **Korban Pesona** (The Victim of Slander): Only 300 pages have appeared, depicting the sufferings of a mother accused of having illicit love affairs.
- 1935: **Tarzan Kembali ka-Benua Afrika** (The Return of Tarzan to Africa): This is a continuation of his **Tarzan, the White Ape**; only 551 pages have appeared.
- 1937: **Pertemuan Jodoh** (The Destined Marriage Partners): This tells the story of a young Egyptian who was separated from his sweetheart by the guiles of a jealous rival; then he sailed to Europe and in the end triumphed over his rival. Only two parts have appeared.
- 1938: **Anak Dara Koraish** (Miss Koraish): This is an historical novel, based on Islamic history, narrating the troublous situations during the rule of the third Caliph (Othman), culminating in his assassination, with a love story worked into the scene. Only 200 pages have appeared.
- 1939: **Andalus** (Andalusia): Depicting the conquest of Andalusia by the Moslems under **General Tariq bin Ziyad** whose name survives in "**Gibraltar**", a corruption of "**Jabal Tariq**" which means "The Great Stone Mountain", where the General and his

troops landed in 711 A. D. Only two parts have appeared.

7. **ABDULLAH BIN SIDEK** (1913 —):

He was born in Segamat, Johore, in March, 1913. After graduating from a Malay Primary School in that town in 1928, he studied in a Malay Training College in Johore Bahru. When this College was closed in 1929, he moved to Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College in Tanjong Malim and studied there until he graduated in 1931.

From 1932 until now he has been teaching in various Malay schools in Johore, either as a teacher or head-master. When he was studying in Tanjong Malim, he liked to read Indonesian books and magazines, which were available in the Library of the said College. He spent all his spare time in the Library and was therefore appointed as an assistant librarian. In 1931, when he was in Form III (the highest form in the above College), he was able to complete the writing of his first novelette entitled **The Futile Love** (*Berchinta Yang Ta' Berfaedah*) which was published in 1932 by the United Press in Pulau Pinang.

His second novelette, entitled **The Suffering of a Prince** (*Penanggungan Sa-orang Putera Raja*), was published by the Muhammadiyah Press in Muar, Johore. Thereafter he managed to print his later works at his own expense. From 1932 to 1941 he published no less than 12 novelettes. After World War II, he wrote some more stories.

Abdullah bin Sidek wrote some short stories too, mostly published in Malay newspapers and magazines, such as **Lembaga Malaya, Bulan Melayu, Hiboran**, etc. Sometimes he also wrote articles which were published in some Malay periodicals, such as **Al-Hikmah, Idaman, Majallah Guru**, etc.



ABDULLAH BIN SIDEK

Although Abdullah bin Sidek read many Indonesian publications, his style is in good Peninsular Malay, not Indonesianized or Anglicized, and is far from Arabic influence. His theme revolves around love, forced marriage, tragedy in modern marriage, etc. He favoured the concept of purity of love before marriage. He was also sympathetic to the nationalist struggle of the Indonesians, and he seemed to have been influenced by Pan-Indonesianism. This can be seen from his novelette, **The Stolen Soul** (Semangat Yang Terchuri), published in 1940. The background of this story is **Betawi** (now Djakarta) and **Papua** (now Irian Barat). The main characters in this book are all Indonesian people whom he mentions as Malays, and when a young Papuan, Tara, goes to Betawi, he prefers to learn Malay to Dutch.

Abdullah bin Sidek is also a Malay nationalist who suggests that Malay youths should try to be economically independent, not just hoping to get a job from the Colonial Government. In his novelette, **Let's Struggle** (Mari Kita Berjuang), published in 1941, he tries to show the progress that can be achieved by rolling up one's sleeves, and by co-operative effort. Consequently, a dedicated group of unemployed Malay young men in Muar, Johore, successfully turns a tract of jungle into a piece of cultivated land.

List of Abdullah bin Sidek's Works:

- 1932: **Berchinta Yang Ta' Berfaedah** (The Futile Love).
 1934: **Penanggungan Sa-orang Putera Raja** (The sufferings of a Prince).
 1937: **Siapa-kah Pembunuh-nya?** (Who is the Murderer?)
 1938: **Duri Perkahwinan** (The Thorn of Marriage).
 1939: **Manusia Yang Buas** (A Savage).
Pertemuan Yang Bahagia (A Lucky Meeting).
Iblis Rumah Tangga (A Devil in a Household).

- 1940: **Gelombang Hidup** (The Waves of life).
Nasib Hasnah (The Fate of Hasnah).
Semangat Yang Terchuri (The Stolen Soul).
- 1941: **Gadis Hulu Muar** (The Girl of the Upper Waters of Muar River).
Mari Kita Berjuang (Let's Struggle).

8. RAJA MANSOR BIN RAJA ABDUL-KADIR (? — 1946):

He was born in Gebang, Tanjong Pura, Langkat in Sumatra, and died at Sultan Selangor Palace in Klang, in 1946. His father was Tengku Jaya of Perak. His real name was Tengku Rolam Mahyuddin bin Tengku Jaya, so Raja Mansor was his pen-name in Malay. After graduating from a Dutch-Indonesian Primary School (H. I. S.) in Langkat, he became a merchant, but his business didn't give him any prospects, so in 1930 he became the editor of a Malay daily called **The Deli News** (Perwarta Deli). In 1933, he was appointed editor of a **Dutch daily**, the **Deli Courant** (The Deli Newspaper). The above papers were all published in Medan, Sumatra. He married a **relative** of the Sultan of Langkat. His idea of nationalism was contrary to the policy of the Dutch government and was disliked by the Sultan, so in 1934 he moved to Ipoh in Perak, Malaya. In Ipoh he was welcome by his relative, a wealthy Malay called Tengku Abdullah, who, in December 1937, gave him financial support to publish a weekly called **The News of Kinta** (Warta Kinta). The word "Kinta" is a district name in Perak.

The weekly **Warta Kinta** had to be stopped in May 1938, owing to some difficulties, but it was able to be revived as a daily from September 1939 to December 1941.

Between 1935 — 1936, Raja Mansor wrote more than a dozen novelettes, mostly humorous but rather erotic love stories as one would expect from such titles as, **The Kenanga**

Flower from Kinta (Kembang Kenanga dari Kinta), **Married Seven Times** (Tujuh Kali Beristeri), **The Passionate Longing of a Writer** (Chinta Berahi Sa-orang Pengarang), etc. But one of his novelettes, called **One Kiss and Three Boxes-on-the-ears** (Satu Kali Chium Tiga Kali Tempeleng) does tell us a serious story of a man from Aceh, Sumatra, who has to flee to Malaya for misappropriating Government money, and while in Malaya, he suffers three misfortunes (hence the three slaps) and finally finds happiness, when he marries his beautiful cousin (hence the kiss). This story is somewhat similar to his own sufferings, fleeing to Malaya from Sumatra and marrying a girl in Ipoh, but not because he had misappropriated Government money, for he moved to Malaya to evade the watching eyes of the Dutch Government and those of the Sultan of Langkat. Raja Mansor also wrote many short stories which were published in his **Warta Kinta**, and sometimes he wrote articles concerning the Malay language.

Mention should be made that the erotic tone of his stories and the Indonesian style of his Malay were much criticized. The spelling in his books shows his lack of acquaintance with the **Jawi** spelling system in Malaya, and his boasting of being a **versatile journalist** as well as of **having received a higher standard of education in Indonesia** which was based on a better system than that of the Malay school in Malaya, was frequently jibed at in the Malay newspapers.

List of Raja Mansor's novelettes:

- 1935: **Kembang Kenanga dari Kinta** (The Kenanga Flower from Kinta).
Tujuh Kali Beristeri (Married Seven Times).
Bidadari Tanah Melayu (The Nymph of Malaya).

Chinta Berahi-nya Sa-orang Pengarang (The Passionate Longing of a Writer).

Perawan Yang Di-mimpikan (The Girl of his Dream).

Dua Perawan dari Selangor (Two Girls from Selangor).

1936: **Satu Kali Chium Tiga Kali Tempeleng** (One Kiss and Three Boxes-on-the-ears).

Di-gila Bantal Pelok (Mad After a 'Dutch wife' — "Dutch wife" means a pillow embraced for coolness in the tropics. Here it is used figuratively for a beautiful woman).

Suami Yang Di-beli (A Bought Husband).

Panglima Ratu (Captain Ratu).

Pak Bolgah Raja Batak Karo (Pak Bolgah, The Batak Karo Chief).

Sembilan Belas Tahun Di-dalam Gelap (Nineteen Years in the Darkness).

Tuan Kadhi Mengambil China Buta (The Moslim Registrar Engages A Marriage Intermediary—under Islamic law, a man who divorces himself irrevocably by uttering the three revocations "talak, talak, talak" may not re-marry the same wife unless she has been married and divorced by someone else. This practice of engaging an intermediary to perform this marriage and divorce, is known in Malaya and Indonesia as mengambil "**chinabuta**" which, according to Winstedt, means "the divider" (derived from Sanskrit), but popularly translated literally as "a blind Chinaman").

9. SHAMSUDDIN SALLEH (1905 —):

He was born in Kota Betong near the Siak River in Central Sumatra, Indonesia. First he was educated in a Malay Primary School in Pekan Baru, Central Sumatra, then he moved to study in a Dutch-Malay School there. In 1926, he worked as a clerk in the Office of the Royal Department of Justice in Pekan Baru, Central Sumatra, but left his job soon afterward because he was suspected of joining the nationalist movement of the Indonesians. In 1927 he moved to Malaya and found a job in a Dutch rubber factory in Singapore. In 1930, he became acquainted with an Indian official in the Political Intelligence Bureau in Singapore and found a job in it as a "Travelling Secret Checker". From 1930 to 1935, he travelled on duty throughout the whole of Malaya and the whole of Siam, Burma, Sumatra, Java and the Philippines to investigate the secret activities of the Communists. In 1932, he married a girl in Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan. In 1936, after resigning from his job as a "travelling secret checker", he became the manager of the Ipoh Malay Press in Ipoh, Perak. From 1936 to 1941, he wrote no less than 50 novelettes and many short stories. He is also well-known as a writer of Malay verses (*sha'er* and *pantun*). Many of his *sha'er* were used as teaching materials in Malay schools.

When the Japanese occupied Malaya, he was given a job and was brought to a place where many people were beheaded. He was sick of the cruelty of the Japanese and ran away from his new job a week later. Then he joined the guerilla in the jungles until the return of the British in 1945. When he learned that the Indonesian people were fighting the Dutch to maintain their newly formed Republic, he returned to Sumatra and joined the Indonesian guerilla as a lieutenant. After the Round Table Conference between



SHAMSUDDIN SALLEH

the Dutch and the Indonesians in Holland, at the end of 1949, where the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia was given *de jure* recognition by the Dutch Government, he was appointed the **Acting District Officer** (Pemangku Wedana) in Kampar, Central Sumatra, thereafter he was transferred to Pulau Tujoh in the Riau Archipelago, Indonesia.

In August 1962, he resigned from the above post and settled down in Gentam, a village in Kuala Pilah in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. I think he now regards himself as a son of Malaysia.

His novelettes before World War II are mostly based on the secret activities of the Communist propagandists or on the political and nationalist movements in the Netherlands East Indies, with love worked into them as the leavening ingredient. Some of them have a strong touch of patriotism, but always with a sneer at the **Communists** (Kaum Merah). His language and style have the smack of Indonesian Malay, but are simple and clear. The plot of his stories often lack naturalness and spontaneity, the details are sometimes unconvincing, and the love scenes are often too prosaic or fantastic.

List of Shamsuddin Salleh's Important Works:

1936: **Kasih Berbalas** (Lover and Beloved): Narrating a love story between two English-educated Malay youths and their cousins. The scenes take place in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, with a beautiful Chinese girl and a Chinese Secret Society worked into them.

Hidup Yang Derhaka (A Treacherous Life): Appears in two parts (altogether 160 pages), narrating the adventures of Aminah, a beautiful Indonesian

woman spy in the service of the Dutch Colonial Government, who marries a revolutionary Indonesian editor of a newspaper in Semarang, Central Java, to obtain his secrets. Then they move first to Singapore, and later to Bangkok. She is successful in reporting to the above Government the names of her husband's co-workers and their activities in Indonesia. As a result of this, many of the revolutionaries are arrested. But her own sister knows her secret mission and exposes her treacherous activities in front of her husband and friends, and this causes her death.

Siasat Yang Dahshat (A Dreadful Policy): This is a love story between two Indonesian students at the College of Law in Batavia (now **Djakarta**) and an Indonesian female student at the College of Medicine, also in Batavia. It contains strong nationalist elements, ending in the lovers' banishment to Boven Digul (now Tanah Merah in Irian Barat).

1937: **Bingkisan Rahasia** (The Secret Gift): This is a story of a secret service mingled with love, with the scenes laid in Singapore and Bangkok.

Pemimpin Sulit (A Secret Leader): This book narrates how a young Malay from Java, who is working for a Belgian firm of jewellers in Singapore, falls under the spell of a pretty and fascinating female Communist agent. The scenes are laid in Singapore, Shanghai (China) and the Philippines.

Puteri Laut Selatan (The Nymph of the South Seas): This is a story based on an old folk-tale of Central Java (Djokjakarta and Surakarta). It records the

superstitious belief of the Javanese concerning the supernatural power of the Nymph.

Semangat Muda (The Young Souls): This is a love-story interwoven with the description of new religious movements in the Netherlands East Indies.

Pertandingan Sokma (The Competition of Souls): This is a story concerning the rivalry between Islamic and Christian propaganda in Java with love scenes of two College students interwoven into it.

Korban Poligami (The Victim of Polygamy): This is a story which illustrates the influence of Western culture or "modernity" among Malays. The scenes are laid in Singapore and Batavia.

Yang di-Pertuan Gadis Sumatra (Her Highness the Princess of Sumatra): This book contains semi-historical tales of the royal house of Minangkabau, Central Sumatra. It is a kind of a study of human character.

1938: **Pelarian Yang Cherdek** (A Cunning Refugee): This depicts the story of a political refugee from the Netherlands East Indies. He is successful in reaching the Philippines safely through his wiles and cunning. The scenes shift between Singapore, Bangkok and Manila.

Umat Melayu dengan Masharakat (The Malays and Society): This is a kind of historical book, describing the Malays' contacts with foreign races during the last 2000 years, with prospects of the future.

1939: **Tiga Bulan Dalam Penjara** (Three Months in Goal): This is a story of the nationalist movement in the Netherlands East Indies with love affairs between

the Indonesian mistress of a Dutch businessman and his clerk. The scenes are laid in Sumatra (Bengkalis and Medan).

Chemburu Buta (A Blind Jealousy): This story depicts the unreasoning jealousy of certain fantastic women. The ending is very amusing.

Kesetiaan Perempuan (The Faithfulness of Women): This is a story about women's ways towards their husbands.

10. **ABDUL SAMAD BIN AHMAD** (1913 —):

He was born in Bukit Raja, Klang (Selangor), in 1913. He first attended the Malay Primary School in Port Swettenham, then he studied in the Anglo-Chinese School in that town, later he moved to a High School there. When he was still in the Malay Primary School, he had already started writing articles which he sent to the Malay newspapers, but only a few of them were published. He left school in 1932 and worked as an assistant in **Majlis** (Assembly), a vernacular bi-weekly, published in Kuala Lumpur, under the editorship of Haji Abdul Rahim Kajai. A few months later, his father, who was a Forest Ranger at Port Swettenham, died and he was stricken with grief, not knowing what to do as he had left his job.

At last, he found consolation by translating and writing literary works. In 1936, his first book entitled **Abraham Lincoln**, a translation from an English work, appeared. In the same year, he published two books:

(1) **Love is a Dangerous Thing** (Chinta itu Berbahaya atau Rohani Arifin), a novelette which was highly praised by the Malay newspapers at that time, depicting the all-consuming nature of sexual love and the danger of evading it once it has taken root and been reciprocated; his aim



ABDUL SAMAD AHMAD

is to warn the Malay parents of the importance of exercising tact and precaution in bringing up their girl children, so that they can evade the bad influence of misunderstanding the meaning of modernity caused by contact with Western culture.

(2) **The Story of the Opening and the Closing of a Magic Rock** (Cherita Batu Belah Batu Bertangkup), a well-known Malay folk-tale for children with the underlying idea of impressing upon them the duty of filial love and devotion towards their parents, written in literary form with appropriate songs.

But at the end of 1937, just after his third book was re-printed, his mother died, and this upset him again. Consequently, he gave up writing and planned to travel to distant countries by joining the Malay operas. To prepare himself for this job, he joined an amateur dramatic Society in his native town (Port Swettenham), there he was elected Honorary Stage Director and wrote several short plays for the Society, based on Malay historical events. But before long World War II broke out in 1939 and was succeeded by the Pacific War which broke out in 1941. These, of course, prevented him from going abroad.

He has a fairly good power of description and a lively sense of dramatic effect. His stories are full of exciting and dramatic situations, and his portrayal of natural scenes is well-drawn. Although his style is vigorous and dignified, it is somewhat anglicised and sometimes long-winded. Moreover, the didactic elements of moral and religious digressions in the midst of his narrative, cause the loss of much of the entertaining effect in his stories.

List of Abdul Samad bin Ahmad's Important Works:

- 1937: **Abraham Lincoln.**
Chinta itu Bahaya atau **Rohani 'Arifin** (Love is a Dangerous Thing or The Wise Soul).
Cherita Batu Belah Batu Bertangkup (The Story of the Opening and Closing of a Magic Rock).
- 1936: **Kenang-Kenangan Selangor** (Memories of Selangor): These are the memories of Wan Muhammad Amin bin Wan Muhammad Sa'ad, who was a court official to Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah of Selangor. He died in February, 1931. The works were edited by Abdul Samad and were published in 1937. This book constitutes the only known Malay account of life in Selangor at the close of the 19th century. It contains valuable reminiscences of the stirring events in Selangor in the troublous days prior to British intervention and the peace that followed, with record of the court customs and ceremonies observed at the coronation of Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah in 1903.
- Setia itu Java** (Faithfulness is the Way to Success): This is a love-story with many exciting and pathetic scenes which is didactic in character, for it is meant for giving example to young people of both sexes. It tells the story of a young Malay who rescues a Javanese girl from the brutal attack by an Indian ruffian. The girl is watching a circus show with her parents. Suddenly a thunderstorm breaks out and spoils the peaceful night—a performing lion escapes and causes a stampede in the circus show. Then the girl is snatched away by the Indian and is on the point of being raped, when the young Malay

comes to her rescues. They both fall in love with each other and after solemn declarations of love and gratitude between them to be consummated by marriage, the young Malay takes her back to her wailing parents. But he loses her some months later as she is brought back to Batavia by her parents. After some years, the couple meets again unexpectedly as actor and actress on the stage of a Malay opera in Singapore and gets married.

Pantun Bunga Rampai (An Anthology of Pantun): This is a collection of some 500 Malay pantun, old and new, supplied by a number of pantun enthusiasts throughout Malaya, which were then selected and compiled by Abdul Samad.

11. ISHAK BIN HAJI MUHAMMAD (1910 —):

He was born in Kampong Saguntang, Temerloh (Pahang), on 10-11-1910. His real name is Awang bin Haji Muhammad. He attended a local Malay school for 4 years. Owing to his intellectual ability, he was then awarded a scholarship to the Government English School in Kuala Lipis, the capital city of the State of Pahang. In 1929, he passed his **Senior Cambridge Examination** and was recommended for the M. A. S. (Malay Administrative Service), but had to sit for the Malaya-wide competitive examination. After coming second in it, he was sent to the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, for training.

During 1930, while studying in the above College, he felt ill-at-ease and was sick of associating with the greater part of the students of the College, for he was of peasant origins, whereas they were of royal or high-born families. At this stage, he began to question himself about the course his life was taking.



ISHAK HAJI MUHAMMAD

At the beginning of 1931, just after graduating from the College, he was appointed a trainee official in his native state, first in Temerloh, then in Bentong, and finally in Rembau in the State of Negeri Sembilan. After one year in officialdom, he found that he was not interested in administrative work and disliked the false distance between himself and his people created by the colonial government. He was frustrated and resigned from his post, spending the next few months wandering round the western states of Malaya, in order to get in touch with the commoners and to understand their sufferings and expectations.

At that time Mr. T. S. Adams was the British Resident of Selangor. He was noted for his strong Malay sympathies and was successful in persuading Ishak to return to the M. A. S. in 1932 by appointing him a third class magistrate in Kuala Lumpur. He was often given advice to maintain his status in life, to behave like officers and gentlemen, not to join a cheap club, not to patronize the cheap seats in a cinema and should make a good marriage (marry a daughter of the Malay nobility only), etc. Consequently, Ishak felt more and more that he was being "indoctrinated", being forced to change his personality to become one of the ruling class. But Ishak is a nationalist who has been influenced by the Indonesian Nationalist movement. He became increasingly interested in the literary renaissance manifested by the Indonesian writers through reading all the Indonesian books and periodicals he could lay his hands on. As a result of this, he became cynical and questioned himself on the reason for British presence and intervention in Malaya, and he realized that the colonial bureaucracy and the Malay aristocracy were one, mutually parasitic upon the commoners and the rich natural resources of Malaya. He, therefore, decided to leave the M. A. S.

for good and to devote the rest of his life to writing, aiming at awakening the Malays to realize their own position in their own fatherland. Finally, in August 1933, he resigned from the above post without hankering after the high salary in officialdom.

During the next few years Ishak spent much of his time travelling around Malaya with the purpose of studying the conditions of the Malays. He then wrote articles concerning his experience in the Malay villages and towns which were published in the vernacular press, especially in **The News of Malaya** (Warta Malaya). He became a member of the editorial staff of the above paper in 1937. In the same year he published his satirical novelette **The Son of the Tahan Mountain** (Putera Gunong Tahan: the Tahan Mountain is in the State of Pahang, 7186 feet high); this was succeeded in 1941 by another novelette entitled **The Son of Mat Lela, the Mad Man** (Anak Mat Lela Gila). He tried to arouse nationalist feelings in his readers with the above satirical novelettes. His nationalist theme is disguised by way of the folk-tale approach, but his satire was too thin and crude. The echo from the readers was too weak as most of the Malays were contented with their peaceful life under the colonial rule and were loyal to their sultans. Generally speaking, the struggle for nationalism in Malay before World War II meant more the struggle against Chinese and Indian domination in the economy of Malaya than the struggle against colonial rule. Moreover, literary activities in Malaya were individual and less organised and without any definite schools of thought, if compared with those of the Indonesians.

In about May 1937, Ishak assisted Ibrahim Ya'acob and other to form a political party called **The Union of Malay Youths** (Kesatuan Melayu Muda) in Kuala Lumpur.

Its main aim was to get a closer cultural association between Malaya and Indonesia and to create "nationalist feelings" among the Malays and to stop the Malays being exploited by other races in Malaya, although two or three years later it became a radical political party and when the Pacific War broke out on 8-12-41, many of its leaders and members were arrested by the British. Ishak was, of course, one of the 150 detainees.

Mention should be made that in May 1939, Ishak was one of the promoters of a newly established **Utusan Melayu Press**, which published the nationalist daily called **Utusan Melayu**. He was the man who approached Haji Abdul Rahim Kajai, then a first-rate editor in Malay journalism, to run the **Utusan Melayu**. At that time both of them worked in the **Warta Malaya**. After **Utusan Melayu Press** came into being, both of them resigned from **Warta Malaya** to run the **Utusan Melayu**. Ishak also wrote many short stories which were published in some vernacular weekly magazines, such as **Warta Ahad**, **Warta Jenaka** and **Utusan Zaman**. Most of them are didactic in character aiming at arousing the nationalist feelings in their readers.

List of Ishak's important novelettes:

- 1937: **Putera Gunong Tahan** (The Son of the Tahan Mountain): This is a fantastic story which contains satirical elements towards the British colonial rule in Malaya. The story depicts the adventures of two British wanderers who are climbing the Tahan Mountain. They get lost and meet a spirit who is in charge of the Mountain. From the conversation among the three of them we learn the opinion of the spirit who criticizes and hints at the unwanted presence of the British in Malaya. It also

portrays the life of the **Sakai** (pagan Mon-speaking aborigines of Indonesian race who live in the jungles of Malaya), who are free from colonialism. The purpose of Ishak in this novelette is to exhort the Malays to nationalist awareness, so that they realize their duties towards their own fatherland, their nation, religion and customs. They should be aware of the danger of modernity which kills their own culture.

- 1941: **Anak Mat Lela Gila** (The Son of Mat Lela, the Mad Man): This novelette was printed in **Jawi** script in 1941 by The Annies Printing Works in Johore Bahru. In 1960 and 1961 it was re-printed in **Rumi** script by the Federal Publications Ltd. in Kuala Lumpur. It narrates the life of a Malay called **Bulat** from childhood until he becomes an adult. His mother, called Siti Kalsom, was first engaged to an elderly but wealthy Malay. Later on she was acquainted with a smart and healthy young Malay called **Ja'afar Sidek**. They fall in love with each other and marry secretly. Then her husband kills his rival and flees to Sumatra.

Meanwhile, Siti Kalsom becomes pregnant. She flees from her parents's home and gives birth to a child (a boy), whom she leaves in the hut of Mat Lela, which is situated in the middle of a quiet forest. Mat Lela is a wise middle-aged man, but his queer behaviour makes people think that he is mad. He adopts the child whom he names **Bulat**.

After a few months, **Bulat** is stolen and brought up by Mr. Johari and his wife, **Permai**, who are

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seen in these Highlands, e.g., the aliens cultivate two or three thousand acres of land for planting tea, but our people are satisfied with having planted just one tree, they don't want to plant more trees. They think that they can buy tea easily in the shops, so why should they trouble themselves? One more example: the non-Malays plant brinjal (=egg-plant) in thirty or forty acres of land, but we are satisfied with having planted three or four pieces of brinjal . . .”

After studying for three years under Alang, Bulat wanders round Malaya as a hawker of tooth-ache medicine and finally as a singer. When he arrives in Singapore, his talent attracts the attention of an opera manager who employs him as a singer. One day he meets his foster parents (Johari is already reconciled with his wife, Permai) who come to Singapore with their daughter, Siti Khadijah. They are waiting for the ship which would take them to Mecca.

Finally Bulat meets his own parents as his father has returned from Sumatra and has met his mother in Singapore.

It seems that Bulat falls in love with the daughter of his foster parents, and that she falls in love with him, too. His own parents, knowing this, decide to go to Mecca with Bulat in another ship.

12. MUHAMMAD YASIN MA'AMOR (? —):

He was born in Selangor and graduated from the Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College at Tanjong Malim in 1931. While still at College, he published his first



MUHAMMAD YASIN MA'AMOR

novelette **Happiness and Sorrow** (Suka dan Duka). It is a love story between two young people who have been neighbours and friends since their school days. The story ends tragically for the girl as she is forced by her parents to marry a religious teacher of 60 with three other wives.

It seems that Muhammad Yasin Ma'amor was greatly influenced by the literary renaissance in Indonesia, for from 1934 on he wrote a number of new verse (sajak), which he published in a monthly called **The Teachers' Magazine** (Majallah Guru: the journal of the Association of Malay Teachers, started in November, 1924), which he edited from 1932 to 1938. The poems were published under his pen-name **The Owl** (Punggok). He is, therefore, considered as a pioneer in modern Malay poetry. But most of his verses are romantic and melancholic in nature, and idealistic in view. Let me quote three of them:

KELOH - KESAH

Waktu senja burung terbang
 Waktu adinda bersedeh chita
 Hanchor dan lebor di-kalbu abang
 Sedehkan adek panah dewata.

Waktu dinihari malam yang sunyi
 Waktu kanak2 kehilangan ibu
 Abang meratap berbagai bunyi
 Merindukan adek bernyala di-kalbu.

Waktu suboh menyingsing di-angkasa
 Waktu taboh ber-sahut2an
 Abang termimpi berbagai rasa
 Adek di-sangka hanyut di-lautan.

Waktu kabut menyambut siang
 Waktu makhluk bangun bekerja
 Abang terlalai waktu sembahyang
 'Ashekkan adinda intan durja.

(From **Majallah Guru**, No. 3, 1934)

SELALU MERAYU

Ayohai rindu-nya
 Wahai sedeh-nya
 Beta tanggongkan
 Hati yang sayu
 Kalbu yang pilu
 Daku tangiskan daku angankan!

(From **Majallah Guru**, No. 3, 1934)

PUJOKAN HATI

Tenang, hati-ku tenang!
 Tahankan tangis ratap-mu,
 Istimewa keloh-kesah-mu,
 Membuat 'akal-ku tenggelam berenang.

Bersih, otak-ku bersih!
 Usah di-mimpi yang jauh maseh
 Walau pun kata "Oh.....kaseh"
 Rosak jantung-ku pertemuan seliseh.

Megun-lah dan hening-lah!
 Jangan kamu bersedeh helah,
 Kerana . . . godaan-mu-lah
 Maka hempedu-ku hanchor berbelah.

Terdiam hati-ku ka-langit mengarah,
Di-chuacha kamar chahaya gemilang
'Ku dengar bisek adek Sairah,
Sedeh-ku berkobar ta' mahu hilang.

Untong-lah hati-ku menurut kata!
Sunyi senyap ia segera,
Baharu selesa segala anggota,
Belayar-lah hati di-lautan rindu.....!

(From **Majallah Guru**, No. 3, 1934)

I don't think that it is necessary to give the translation in English of the above poems, as, in my opinion, poems should be appreciated in their original text.

As a conclusion of this booklet, I should like to mention that there are, of course, many other writers who are not included in the above list. It is not because they are not important, but mainly because this booklet is just a bird's-eye view. For those who would like to further their study in this field, I should like to recommend the books (on which some parts of this booklet are based) listed in the Bibliography.

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