

## L I T E R A T U R E

The old Minangkabau literature is not written. Several types which are famous because of their usage are still in use in everyday life, like the "Pepatah - petitih" (wise sayings), the "pantun" and the "talibun" (this consists of several sentences where the first half does not bear any relationship to the second in meaning, except just the rhythm).

This is an example :

*kaluak paku kacang balimbiang  
tampuruang lenggang - lenggangkan  
anak dipangku, kamanakan dibimbiang  
urang kampuang dipatenggangkan*

The implication of this "pantun" is "Take your son in your lap, and guide your cousin and see to it that relatives far and near in the village could be helped." (kamanakan = cousin, anak = child, urang kampung = the people in the village).

To go more deeply into the essence of the "pepatah-petitih" it is better to take an example of the following type :

*"Nan kuriak kundi, nan merah sago"*  
(followed by : *"Nan baiak budi, nan indah baso"*).

The objective of this "pepatah - petitih" is that the people should be just and fair, truthful in speaking. In case one tells something untrue, others will find out more about it. The implication is that people are forbidden to cheat.

Based on the custom, there are two types of literature that are commonly practiced by the Minangkabau people, even if they live far away outside Minangkabau itself, like in Medan, in Jakarta, Palembang and so on. Whenever they hold a customary ceremony, such as those in wedding parties, they are sure to use "panitahan," a tradition held before and after a party.

The "panitahan" is said as follows

When food is served in front of the guests to be eaten, the maternal uncle as the chief in the family, opens the speech and discusses in dialogue with anybody which are supposed to be included in the discussion according to the custom.

This often takes some periods after he banquet is started. The same is true after eating, a moment before the guests leave the house.