

Malayan poetry

Autor(en): [s.n.]

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Der Kreis : eine Monatsschrift = Le Cercle : revue mensuelle**

Band (Jahr): **26 (1958)**

Heft 9

PDF erstellt am: **06.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-569835>

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and here there was no thought of affection or love — bestial lust dictated their actions. Such men, he felt, could not blame prison for their depravity, for they would obviously behave with the same wickedness outside of jail.»

After his release from prison Monare returns to his home village for a period. It is at this time that his son Libe attends the Mountain School of circumcision. We learn that among the Basuto the young girls are also circumcised, although circumcision seems hardly the word for it. «The girls are cut with a blade in their outer sexual organs and a flap of flesh is drawn down to cover that mischievous 'monkey' which can be the source of so much pleasure to uncircumcised girls. The performance of this rite tends to encourage chastity among the women, for a circumcised girl can know little of the joys and passions of physical love . . . It can perhaps be said that the circumcision of women not only denies the girl great pleasure and joy in the sexual act, but must in consequence lessen the happiness and exaltation of the man, and thus shut out any upliftment of the spirit — lying with a woman, then, becomes a selfish rather than a mutual pleasure. Here in the very homeland, in this circumcision of women, lies the seeds of the physical love of man for man, which is brought to flower by living conditions imposed on African mine workers by the white man.»

All these excerpts from *Blanket Boy* are taken from the first quarter of the book and while they display very clearly the social conditions which lead many South African tribesmen into an overtly bisexual, or homosexual, way of life — and that has been the purpose of these quotations — Monare goes on to many adventures and all of them are moving and enlightening. If you would like to know how it comes about that Monare is involved in a ritual murder, of which his beloved Koto is the victim, you must read the book. If you would like to know of Monare's idealistic pact of brotherhood with the young Moslem, Gulam Hussain, you must read the book. And there is so much else besides. For all its naivete, there is much wisdom in it. For all its awkwardnesses of style, it is full of poetry.

Luther Allen

Malayan Poetry

Introduction

The most popular vehicle for the expression of poetic feeling amongst Malays is a versicle which is called in their tongue a pantun — pronounced pun-tone.

Each pantun is an entity which stands alone and is without recognised authorship, being the impromptu production of some forgotten individual under the stress of a passing emotion.

They appear as insets in Malay literature, and are in vogue as emotional assets in the composition of love letters. Whilst they replace song, they have the merit that any verse may be applied to any suitable tune.

The first two lines contain a poetic statement of fact, expressed either as a whole or as two unconnected or very slightly related images and chosen usually at random for the sake of the impending rhyme, or because of some relevancy to the meaning of the final lines.

The subject matter of this introductory couplet may be a natural phenomenon, or a historical or everyday event but, whatever its form, it is no more

than a lightly sketched-in background for the complete picture. The real significance of a pantun lies in the last two lines wherein is expressed the meaning which wanders over the wide field of human emotions.

The immense popularity of the pantun in Malaya both amongst the native and immigrant races, more especially the local-born Chinese, is due to the qualities of brevity, simplicity, and adaptability, all of which make for easy improvisations.

*

Captions, although they do not exist in the Malay originals, have been introduced in order to outline the subject matter of each verse.

REALITY OF DREAMS

Last night, about the moon I dreamt,
And Tumbling nuts of coco-palm.
Last night, with you in dreams I spent
And pillowed lay upon your arm.

Sa-malam sahaya mimpikan bulan,
Nyior gugor dengan tandan-nya
Tidor sa-malam mimpikan tuan,
Rasa-ku tidor di-bantal lengan-nya

SPIRITUAL REUNION

Tonight is the Moslem Sabbath eve,
So light a candle upon the chest.
Caress your pillows, a spell to weave,
That our souls may meet in dreamland
blest.

Malam ini malam jemaat
Passang lilin di-atas peti
Tepok bantal, panggil semangat
Supaya bertemu dalam mimpi.

HEADSTRONG LOVE

Let others be in bracelets dight,
I shall be in anklets dressed.
Tho' many may forbid me quite,
I shall follow love's behest.

Banyak orang bergelang tangan
Sahaya sa-orang bergelang kaki
Banyak orang larang jangan
Sahaya sa-orang turut hati.

HEART'S DELIGHT

Nails stained dark with henna dye
Rose water poured out for ablution
You are the apple of my eye:
A poisoned draught turned healing
potion.

Orang berhinai berhitam kuku,
Mandi di-jirus ayer mawar.
Tuan sa-orang biji matu-ku,
Rachun di-minum jadi penawar.

A LOVESICK PERSON

For seven days — the woodlands
through —
I wander without food or drink;
But one day without sight of you,
And my being seems to shrink.

Tujuh hari dalam hutan,
Ayer ta'minum, nasi ta'makan.
Sa-hari tiada pandang tuan,
Rasa-nya susut tuboh di-badan.

A LONELY LOVER

Fenward the slanting moonbeams
shine,
Where rambai fruit lies on a tray.
No mortal lot like unto mine,
To grieve alone where crowds hold
sway.

Terang bulan chondong ka-paya,
Buah rambai di-dalam dulang.
Tiada orang sa-macham sahaya,
Dudok ramai berchinta sa-orang.

Zur Einführung von Gästen an Klubabenden und am Herbstfest!

Wir freuen uns, wenn an den grossen Veranstaltungen auch bisher noch aussenstehende Kameraden den Weg zu uns finden. Der erhöhte Eintrittspreis hilft uns, die grossen Unkosten ausgleichen. Wir ersuchen jedoch alle Abonnenten, nur solche Kameraden einzuführen, für die sie unbedingt eintreten können, und von denen sie genau wissen, dass es sich um volljährige Gleichfühlende handelt. Flüchtige Bekannte oder Menschen, die man zufällig in den letzten zwei Tagen noch trifft, darf man nicht mit Kameraden zusammenführen, die mit vertrauenswürdigen Menschen zwanglos unter sich sein wollen. Wir bitten alle und ohne Ausnahme um kluge Vorsicht!

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