

JENANG PERKASA
Jenang Perkasa

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Language Development and Cultivation Agency
Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia
Jalan Daksinapati Barat IV, Ramangun, Jakarta
Telepon (021) 4706287, 4706288, 4896558, 4894546
Pos-el: badan.bahasa@kemdikbud.go.id
www.badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id

JENANG PERKASA

The Kingdom of Bintan

This is the graceful land they speak of, the land surrounded by a vast and clear, turquoise ocean. The sands are yellowish white like shiny pearls under the sun light, with the sea waves gently breaking on the shore. On one side of the island is a stretching ridge of towering rocks, while the other side is a lush mangrove forest, home to spawning crabs and fish. Along the coast, windswept coconut trees wave their fronds like maidens dancing the *rentak zapin*. Seagulls glide high, cleaving the sky before taking a sudden and quick dive, plucking fish from the water. Look, even eagles and hawks are not willing to miss out. With a loud screech, they spread their majestic wings, flying around the island, and suddenly dipping quickly to grab the emerging fish on the sea surface. Throughout the year, the land is never ... of wind, nor of the warm tropical sunshine and the cool raindrops, giving life to the seeds yet to sprout.

The graceful land was named Bintan, ruled by a king named Batin Lagoi. Batin Lagoi was a man of big stature with a muscular body like a layer of rocks, his skin oily black, his hair long and wavy and left untied. His moustache, which looked like a sickle, grew thickly above his lips and covered part of his upper

lip. His teeth were black but strong as he liked chewing betel leaves. His right and left cheeks were covered by thick hair which joined his thick beard. The other part of his face was no less horrible. Almost all parts of his face were covered by a scar as big as a large centipede, stretching from above his left eyebrow to the lower part of his right chin. The scar had marked the hard life he had been through. He looked even more horrible if we see his sharp eyes which looked like eagle's eyes spying on its prey.

One would guess from his figure that he was a cruel and harsh king. Alas, how often life contradicts guesses! Who fancies behind his horrible look was a gentle and soft-hearted kind of king? He had a mild temper, polite in words and wise in actions. He was considerate in his decisions, knowing well whom to defend and whom to punish. He never punished anyone without enough evidence. He highly upheld the established law of traditions and customs. He did not easily believe a piece of information without verifying it, even if it came from his trustful companions.

Therefore, he often left the palace, took a tour to the villages to see his people's development and welfare. From a glance, one would not believe he was a just and wise king. But we should not judge a book by its cover, anyway. The cover is just a cover, what matters is the content. Sometimes the cover is outwardly fine, but the content is otherwise: dangerous and harmful to others.

Judging people is not like calculating: two plus two equals four. Nay! Like a fine skinned fruit, the inside part may as well be contrary to its outside. It may be full of worms inside with a sour taste. That is why we should not hasten in judging people from their appearance. Batin Lagoi had a horrible outlook, but his inside was wisdom and peace; outwardly horrible, but inwardly angelic. He was far from greed and arrogance. He was more concerned with his people's welfare than his own interest. His stern and hard character was only to uphold the truth and justice and to suppress the wrongdoings. No wonder his people paid their highest respect to him and loved him dearly.

It was a fine late afternoon. White clouds drifted in groups, decorating the horizon with their golden colour, reflecting the light of the sun about to set. Soft breeze gently touched the calm sea, sending small rolls of waves breaking on the shore, marking the end of the ferocious northern season. The Malay Archipelago people experience three seasons annually, the first being the northern season, marked by tumultuous sea, big waves, and strong winds accompanied by occasional storms. As the northern season ends, the western season follows inasmuch as the preceding season, only with less severe waves and storms than those of the northern season. After the two fierce seasons end, then comes the peaceful and calm season, the southern season. In this season the fishermen sail to the farther sea catching fish. The nature is their great teacher, so they really understand the directions, the places

where fish gather, and the way home by looking up the scattered stars in the sky. They made the celestial objects their efficacious compass. This natural compass was even utilized to determine what types of fish are gathering.

Far away under the horizon, as seagulls flew home in flocks, at the same time on the harbour, the fishermen were making preparation to set sails to go out to the sea. Their family members waved their hands with prayers, hoping their beloved ones return safely and soundly with handsome catches. Batin Lagoi observed all this from his house verandah. He was thankful to The Almighty One that he was bestowed such a beautiful and charming land.

“We praise You, O Lord, who has bestowed us a beautiful, charming, and peaceful land,” prayed Batin Lagoi silently.

Batin Lagoi enjoyed his time and felt reluctant to leave his seat where he could enjoy the beautiful nature displayed before him. Moreover, he could spoil himself with the soft breeze soothing his skin pores. Occasionally, he waved his hand to the fishermen who were about to sail and they waved back in return with cheerful smiles. They had a belief that if their king waved his hand to them at the beginning of their work, that was a sign that their work would be blessed, and that they would return with satisfactory result. In the midst of such lofty peace, suddenly he caught the sight of a pair of seagulls flying in front of him, flying low while

screaching cheerfully. Feeling curious where they were heading, Batin Lagoi followed them with his eyesight. They landed on a towering rock, carrying in their beaks some small fish they caught near the harbour. He intently kept watching them, wanting to know what they would do next. Some chirping from inside what appeared to be strong rocks welcomed the pair. Two small birds with young feathers emerged from the rocks, flipping their young wings, they stretched their necks with open mouth. The mother fed them with all love and care. Look, even behind the hard rocks life existed. The seagulls had built their nest in the cleft of the rocks, protected by the strong and hard rocks from the wild predators and the nature's ferocity. What a good lesson to learn from the nature! Batin Lagoi learnt that nothing in the vast creation of God is meaningless. Everything is useful for the survival of the creatures. The small and weak seagulls found shelter behind the hard rocks. Having fed her kids until they got satiated, she covered them with her wings to give them warmth in the cold night. Batin Lagoi was dumbfounded by the sight. He did not even wink. Suddenly he turned gloomy and sad. This really slapped him in the heart, reminding him of his unrealized dreams and arousing within him something impossible to attain. His mind wandered somewhere and left him sad, despite his having obtained everything he had expected: becoming a just and wise king, his people enjoying prosperity in a prosperous kingdom. On top of that, he was loved and respected by all his people. "Ah,

how happy your family are, o seagulls!” he muttered to himself. In the meantime, the day was on its end. The lights had been lit, illuminating the line of houses along the beach slope. And there in the sky, the crescent started to shyly emerge in the dark sky.

In the dim light, Batin Lagoi left his seat. He looked into the clear sea water reflecting his own image. Even without sufficient light, he could see the reflection of his face beginning to wrinkle. His dark and wavy hair was also beginning to turn gray. His well-built body and strong muscles also began to slacken.

Realizing that he was getting older, his worry increased. Growing older scared him not, for that was the destiny of all living creatures. Babies turn into toddlers, toddlers grow into teenagers, and teenagers change into adults. Adults grow old and then leave this mortal world. That is life cycle. Nothing remains forever. All living beings will surely die, and nobody can fight this fate. Such is the power of God The Almighty.

“Excuse me, dear! You look worried. What’s up?” Datin Kelong, his wife, suddenly appeared from the room behind and surprised him with her question. His wife’s voice and her sudden appearance made his heart throb and with that, his daydream vanished into thin air.

“No, no... No, dear! Nothing worries me,” he stuttered as he replied. And he forced a smile, pretending that nothing had

happened. He did not want her to worry about what was worrying him, but his facial expression betrayed him.

“Tell me the truth, dear! I had observed you from a while ago but you were unaware of my presence. Your look tells me you hide something.”

Answering her own question, she paused while taking a deep breath, “I know what is worrying you. I am already old and cannot,” she found it hard to continue and got stuck with her words while tears were rolling on her cheeks, tears of sadness and worry. Batin Lagoi was a man who could not bear to see a woman in tears and in sadness, let alone his own wife. He rose from his seat and embraced his middle-aged wife whom he loved so dearly. He took her head to his broad chest and caressed her head sincerely and lovingly.

“We have been married by the tens of years, yet The Almighty has not entrusted any child to us as the fruit of our love, a child to continue our lineage,” said Batin Lagoi with a heavy voice.

“I don’t mind if you wish to have another wife for the sake of having children,” said his wife. Her head bent and her voice stuttered.

“No! I’ll never do that! Don’t you remember the long and winding way that we have been through? We have been through joys and sorrows, ups and downs.

How could I ever forget that? No, never, dear! Eternal love and affection do not emerge from a temporary desire. Love and affection in the deepest part of our heart are the gift of God the Almighty, which He Himself has placed there.

I cannot do a thing which will hurt your heart. How narrow-minded would a man be if he has the heart to hurt his wife's heart only because she cannot bear a child. The Almighty knows when his servant is ready to take His Trust. To me, the true couple of husband and wife is like one soul in two bodies. If the wife hurts, the husband will also feel the pain, and vice versa. I wish to have you until the end of my life, and it will be a way of unlimited happiness to me. I'd rather not have a child if that is our destiny from the Almighty," said Batin Lagoi convincing his beloved wife. The moon was getting higher in the night sky. The scattered stars twinkled, beautifying the horizon. Fireflies flying hither thither illuminated the night with their faint blue lights. Every now and then, night birds flew quickly after their preys, accompanied by the sound of other night animals. The night wind blew softly. The two humans were still deep in their dreams and thought. Nobody knew how long they had been sitting together, nobody knew how long the stories that they were composing in their thoughts had run. Only when a drop of dew fell on her eyelid did Datin Kelong realize that the night had really been very late.

“Dear! Night has been very late. Let’s go to bed,” Datin Kelong said, reminding her husband.

“Yes, dear, you’re right. The night is indeed getting very late. How quickly time has passed!” said Batin Lagoi taking his wife’s hand into their room.

“Before we lie on the bed, let’s pray and submit ourselves to the Almighty!” he continued as they reached their bed.

“Yes, dear. May God keep our people in peace and prosperity and may we be bestowed a child to survive us,” said his wife softly.

“You’re right, dear. God will never test His servants beyond their capacity. All that have happened cannot possibly happen without His Will. There must be wisdom behind all joys, sorrows, happiness, sadness, pleasure, suffering, richness, and poverty. We only have to observe patience and thankfulness in facing all the ups and downs of life,” said Batin Lagoi.

Indeed, that is how we should live our lives. Nothing is permanent. Neither happiness, nor sadness; neither power and pleasure, nor suffering will remain with us forever. All are bound to change just as a wheel rotates, this time this part is down, and in other time, it will take the upper position. So they lay down submitting themselves to the Almighty. And the songs of the night creatures in a melodious symphony accompanied the journey of time around them.

The End of the Long Waiting

For quite a while, Batin Lagoi contemplated on his dream as to what it could have meant. He had dreamt the same dream for three nights consecutively. He dreamt of a bunch of young coconut leaves fell to his lap. In the beginning he tried to ignore the dream. He tried to see it as a mere flower of sleep, but as he kept dreaming the same dream, he started to take it seriously.

“Elders say that if you see the same dream three times consecutively, it is bound to happen,” muttered Batin Lagoi.

“What could my dream mean? I’m afraid that it means something bad will happen to my kingdom.” He was silent for a while, taking a long and deep breath. Fresh air entered his body through his nostrils, which he then exhaled slowly.

“Could it mean that this kingdom would be invaded by another kingdom, attacked by pirates, or swept by disaster?” he murmured softly.

“Well, I will consult Nek Minah about this,” he continued. So he commanded some of his guards to accompany him to see the person he mentioned. With all his splendours, he set out to see Nek Minah. Actually he could have summoned Nek Minah to come to the palace, but this time he intended to see her himself. Nek Minah, so everyone in the entire country called her, was a well-known person. Nobody in the whole kingdom had never

heard of her name. Besides serving as the kingdom's fortune teller, she was also well known as the medicine woman and midwife for a long time. Now all her hair had turned white. Actually, she had been invited to stay in the palace with all facilities prepared for her by Batin Lagoi. However, she preferred secluding herself in a quiet place, far from all bustles on the estuary of Sebong Bay. The estuary was located in the northern part of the kingdom.

Being far from crowds was peaceful for Nek Minah. In spite of that, she was friendly and loved helping people. On the market day, she would go to the city. Her coming was expected by many people, for they would come to her to get some medication on the market day. She never fixed a tariff by which people had to pay. Whatever amount they gave her, she would willingly accept. She even refused payment from poor people. For her, helping other people was a duty and a source of happiness. She realized that her ability was given by God, which He could take whenever He wished. That is indeed how we should use our ability to benefit many people. Our ability should not make us arrogant and underestimate other people.

Part of the payment that she received from her medication was donated to the orphans and poor people. That is how we should live our lives. We should take lesson from bees. When they build their hives, they cause no twigs to break. When they take the

flower nectars, they harm no flowers. On the contrary, they cause the flowers to pollinate. They only consume good food, the royal jelly. In turn, the honey that they produce is beneficial to human and other beings. They will not harm others unless they are harmed. Another unique characteristic of Nek Minah was that she kept her personal affairs to herself. Therefore, some parts of her life were mysterious to other people. People hardly knew many things about her. Where she got her ability from and who had taught her were some of the mysteries never revealed to anyone. Even her origin was also a mystery. What went around about her was just presumption. One of the guesses about her was that she had an invincible husband, a pirate. However, their marriage had not born any children. For unknown reasons, her husband suddenly disappeared as if he had been swallowed by the earth. Some said that her husband had turned into a genie because he married a genie prince from South China Sea. Some other said that he lived as a hermit to increase his invincibility. Some other even said that her husband disappeared because he was carried by the waves of the northern season when he tried to sail across to Tanah Malaka. Which one was true was known to nobody but Nek Minah herself. She treated and cured almost all sickness, from common sickness such as headache, toothache, stomachache, fever, convulsions, and other common sickness to the heavy ones. For example, when someone got inhibited by a sea ghost, she would make a potion from cooling leaves mixed

with sweet flag leaves and some other leaves from around the place where she lived. At other time, when someone got a fever, she would cast a spell on an egg of chicken or an egg of spearfish. Normally, when the egg was broken, there would be a red spot like blood stain on the egg yolk. Then the egg would be mixed with mixture of several kinds of leaves which had been refined and afterwards smeared on the sick person's body. Normally, after three days, the sick person would regain their health and refresh. Once, a strange disease broke out throughout the whole country. The whole body of the sick persons was covered by red and watery swelling. They also had fever. Nek Minah told them to take bath with the boiled water of castor oil plant leaves. She also raised yellow flags on the corners of the kingdom. Then she smoked it by burning coconut fibres mixed with white incense. Strangely, several days later, all people were healed and the whole country was relieved from the strange disease. Ah, Nek Minah was such a friend of the nature. The nature was her teacher. What a harmonious pattern of life!

The mystery around Nek Minah's life was endless. Beside the above story, another narration about her was no less bewildering. It was narrated that Nek Minah was born when the group of sea elephants made a tunnel from the island of Lingga to the island of Bintan. At that time, the sea water was spinning like spinning tops that no fishermen dared to go to the sea. Perhaps that was the reason why she had magical power. The distance between the

palace of Bintan and Nek Minah's house was quite far, about half a day journey on foot. After crossing Sebong Bay, finally the group of Batin Lagoi arrived at the house of the fortune teller. She seemed to have known about the imminent arrival of Batin Lagoi, for she had made some preparation to welcome him.

"I beg you thousands of pardons! What could have made you come here?" asked Nek Minah offering salutation after replying Batin Lagoi's greeting. "Had it not been a very important matter, you wouldn't have come yourself."

"You're exactly right, grandma," replied Batin Lagoi. For a moment he was silent remembering his dream, followed by silence around them. Only the whisper of winds through the thickness of leaves could still be heard.

"Something has disturbed my mind, grandma," continued he softly.

"Please forgive my unduly mannerism. Would you mind coming into my hut, then? Let us talk about it inside," Nek Minah bowed respectfully and led the way inside.

"With all pleasure, grandma!"

So the king and Nek Minah entered the house while the guards stayed outside on guard. With respect, Nek Minah invited the king to seat himself, so they sat on the bamboo bench in the room.

“Please quench your thirst first, Your Majesty. Forgive me that I can only serve you with water,” so saying, Nek Minah presented a glass of water.

“Thank you, grandma,” replied Batin Lagoi while taking the water. When the water passed down his throat, he could feel the coolness of the water as if it had flowed to all his veins, taking away all his fatigue. Seeing that Batin Lagoi had become calm, Nek Minah continued her words.

“It seemed that you have an urgent matter to discuss with me, Your Majesty?” started Nek Minah.

Batin Lagoi took a deep breath and furrowed his forehead revealing his anxiety.

“That’s true, grandma! I’m anxious anticipating a disaster sweeping our country. I have dreamt for three consecutive nights that a bunch of young coconut leaves fell on my lap. I’m afraid that my dream is a bad omen,” replied the king explaining the worries that had engulfed him, the worries from the dream that he saw. He had experienced some traumas due to dreams which came true. For example, when the villagers were swept by an epidemic, he previously dreamt of his boat broken by the attack of sharks. Likewise, when Wak Atan and Dulah disappeared in the stormy sea, he had dreamt that his boat oar was swallowed by a squid as big as a cooking pot. After listening to the king’s

narration about what worried him, the fortune teller smiled knowingly. Seeing that she smiled happily, Batin Lagoi became curious.

“No need to worry, Your Majesty. According to my vision, you will be entrusted what you have been waiting for,” replied Nek Minah smilingly.

“A trust? What kind of trust, grandma?” asked Batin Lagoi all the more curious. Suddenly his heart beat more rapidly.

“You will get a child, my lord,” replied Neek Minah wisely and calmly. She smiled, revealing her teeth which were still complete, although they had turned blackish. Her teeth became blackish due to her habit of chewing betel leaves.

Perhaps because of her habit of chewing betel leaves, her teeth were still complete despite her old age.

“What? Am I hearing correctly? Or have you told me incorrectly?” asked Batin Lagoi incredulously.

“Yes, you will have a child,” assured the old woman calmly.

“Am I dreaming?” asked Batin Lagoi while slapping both of his cheeks hard because he still could not believe what he heard. “Ouch!” He exclaimed. His both cheeks felt painful, a sign that he was not dreaming after all.

“Grandma?! How is it possible that I will have a child while my wife is as old as I am?” continued he.

“If the Almighty has so wished, nothing is impossible for Him. As His servants, we only have to show our gratefulness and supplicate for His help,” answered Nek Minah calmly.

“This is really like a dream. You’re right to tell me that if the Almighty has willed, nothing is impossible for Him.”

So Batin Lagoi prostrated in thankfulness. He smiled happily. He felt like his heart would burst due to extreme happiness. He kept repeating words of thankfulness to the Almighty. He could not wait any longer to return to the palace and convey the glad tidings to his wife who would surely be very happy on knowing the good news.

“Ah, seagull. I will do the same as what you do. I will feel the happiness like what you feel now, a real happiness for a living creature,” he mumbled while smiling cheerfully. Perhaps this was the sweetest smile that he ever had had in his whole life. After a brief moment, Batin Lagoi took leave. Along the way he kept smiling, and the guards looked at each other, wondering what could have been the reason for the king’s continual smiling. Although they dared not ask the reason, they were also happy for they were sure that the king must have had good news.

“Is it true that I will have a child? Ah, it seems impossible. My wife is already old, and she can’t possibly bear a child,” he argued with himself along the way. Now, once again he felt uncertain, thinking about himself and his wife’s condition, but then he immediately realized the greatness of the Almighty. The prayers that they had supplicated for years would now materialize.

“Yes, Nek Minah is right. If the Almighty has willed, nothing’s impossible,” he continued convincing himself. Normally his legs were swift in his walk, but this time it was different. His legs’ movement was slow. He often groaned because he stumbled over tree branches or twigs scattered on the ground. Ah, this must be because he was still daydreaming of rocking a child in his bosom. What a perfect life listening to their childish wheedles! When Batin Lagoi and his guards were halfway leaving Nek Minah’s house without the slightest feeling of tiredness, suddenly they heard barely audible cry of a baby from the thickness of pandanus clusters growing along the coast. He halted to listen more attentively.

“Ah, I am still daydreaming!” he said incredulously, but when he tried to listen more meticulously, the sound became clearer and louder.

“Guards! Am I dreaming of hearing a baby cry? Listen for yourselves, can you hear?” he asked the guards to convince himself.

“Indeed, you are with us, Your Majesty. You are not dreaming. We also heard the cry of a baby from the pandanus cluster,” replied the leader of the guards while pointing towards the pandanus cluster. Then they listened attentively together. After they were convinced what they heard was really a cry of a baby, they set out to find the source of the cry. The cry became more distinctive, the cry of a baby, which made them surprised, especially Batin Lagoi. He slapped his cheeks hard to make sure he was not dreaming. He even stomped upon pandanus thorns scattered on the ground. When he felt the pain, he groaned. At the same time, he was glad that indeed he was not dreaming.

“What kind of sea ghost would deliver their baby in this pandanus bush?” he muttered as he tried to find where the cry came from. He was not at all scared, for he knew no fear but fear of God.

“Guards! Let’s have an inspection!” commanded he.

“As you order, Your Majesty!” replied the guards. And they found a baby girl lying among the pandanus trees with placenta still uncut. With a shiver, he picked up the crying baby. What a wonder! As soon as he took the baby to his chest, the baby stopped crying. She even smiled at him as if she had found her

real father. He embraced the baby lovingly. That was the first time in his life to feel the warmth of a baby.

Then he ordered the guards to find the parents of the baby, but for a long moment, they could not find anybody nearby.

“Oooy! Whoever you are around this place, go out from your hiding place. Show yourselves to me!” Batin Lagoi shouted at the top of his voice until his voice got husky, but nobody showed up, only the whispers of winds answered, followed by the whispers of the pandanus leaves and the echo of his voice which kept repeating and filled the valleys and hills surrounding the place. Now he was convinced that the baby was really alone. He started prostrating to show his gratefulness to the Almighty One. Finally, his long waiting had come to its end.

“What Nek Minah said was true. Apparently the dream was a good tiding. I thank you, o Almighty!” so saying, he kissed the baby in his arms lovingly. ***

Princess Bintan

It was undescrivable happiness for the aging couple with the presence of the baby girl. Datin Kelong virtually never laid her hands off the baby. The same was with Batin Lagoi, who now found it more enjoyable to stay at the palace. To show their thankfulness, a feast for seven days and seven nights was held. The inherited canon was fired seven times to show that something

of a great importance was taking place in the Kingdom of Bintan. All sorts of games and musical instruments were played. During the feast, nobody went to the sea or to work. Everyone felt the same joy and happiness welcoming the future successor of their current sovereign. The fair skinned, healthy, and energetic baby girl was named Putri Bintan (The Princess of Bintan) with a hope that she would continue to uphold the greatness of the Kingdom of Bintan. Time went by, seasons changed, and the wheel of time rolled along the course of time. The baby girl, who was found in the pandanus cluster, had now turned into a teenage. She was looked after in the manner befitting a princess. She grew up into a beautiful and well-mannered princess. Her beauty and good conduct were the subject of conversation everywhere, not only in Bintan, but also overseas.

So many gentlemen had fallen in love with her, even without having met her: *megats* (noble title inherited through maternal line), princes, even kings. So many of them had proposed to marry her, yet none had succeeded in winning the heart of Putri Bintan. So many envoys had come with precious gifts, but all of them returned empty handed.

As for Batin Lagoi, although he had fully left it to her to choose her own choice because he did not want to dictate her to choose for her future husband, yet he felt worried as she declined every proposal. He worried that those whose proposals were rejected

felt grudge against the kingdom and, as a means of compensation, attacked the Kingdom of Bintan? So Batin Lagoi had taken precaution by strengthening his armada and armed forces. In the meantime, he and his wife had incessantly prayed that their beloved found a perfect match and their country be protected from all calamities so that people would live peacefully and prosperously. One fine afternoon, only scattered white clouds appeared in the sky. The soft breeze felt like silks on the skin, and the birds sang cheerfully, jumping from one branch of the trees to the other ones.

On the beach, where white sands were gently swept by small waves, Putri Bintan was engrossed in her games with the maids, carefully watched by the guards. She was so engrossed in her games that she was unaware that a gang of pirates were spying on her. The pirates were under the command of Megat Sri Rama, whose rejected proposal made him disappointed and ready to take revenge. Neither the maids nor the guards were also aware. Megat Sri Rama was a cruel ruler from Pulau Berhala. He ruled cruelly and never hesitated to kill anyone who disobeyed him. He also imposed high tax on his people that many of them fled from the island as they could not stand the oppression. He had so many concubines that he did not even remember their names. He also directed his armada to rob the passing ships on their waters.

“Maids! Let’s play hide and seek!” invited Putri Bintan.

“Excuse me, my lady. We’d better go home because the afternoon is getting late,” reminded one of the maids who suddenly perceived imminent danger.

“We’re just playing for a little more while,” insisted the prince.

“Well, but we should not play far,” the maids gave in.

“Now close your eyes!” told Putri Bintan to one of the maids, and they started running to hide behind the flowery clusters. So they played hide and seek cheerfully. The pirates waited for the guards to slacken in their watch; however, they were as vigilant as ever.

“I think it is a high time you cast your spell, Datuk,” whispered one of the pirates to his older companion. The one addressed as Datuk (a title or address to a senior or respected male person) resembled Batin Lagoi.

“Come on, Datuk!” the other pirates also urged him.

“OK,” he said while taking out several kinds of flowers and potions. He mumbled something unintelligible, some chants and mantras. Part of his chants and mantras heard:

I invite you, o Maruta

To put Putri Bintan and her guards to sleep

If they walk, make them stand

If they stand, make them sit

If they sit, make them lie down and asleep

With the help of the land ghost and the sea ghost

Puaahhh!

With the last words, he tapped his hand on the ground three times, and soon the princess, her maids and guards were fast asleep. Suddenly the atmosphere turned cooler.

“What an effective mantra!” complimented one of the pirates. The other agreed. Datuk just smiled proudly, and he said to himself, “All my lessons as a hermit on the peak of Mount Lingga have not been in vain, after all.”

“Now take the princess quickly. The sun is going to set soon,” ordered the leader of the gang. Immediately, the gang got out from their hiding places and took away Putri Bintan as quickly as they could. In the meantime, Batin Lagoi was having his meal when he suddenly choked and dropped the cup from his hand. He started to sense something wrong and suddenly he remembered his daughter. He immediately ordered a large number of guards to move to where the princess and the maids had been playing. When the new group of guards arrived at the scene, they were surprised to find the maids and the guards asleep. When the maids and the guards woke up, they were no less surprised. As soon as

they understood the situation, they started searching for the princess at every nook and cranny, but to no avail. The maids started crying, and the guards got confused and worried. A messenger was sent to inform Batin Lagoi.

When the news reached him, he was shocked as if he had been hit by a lightning. His face turned pale and he lost all energy. His wife fell unconscious when she heard what had happened. The news about the disappearance of Putri Bintan was spread to the whole kingdom and everyone was shocked as if a heavy storm had hit the country. They all worried about the princess. Batin Lagoi and his wife lost their appetite and they could not sleep afterwards. They felt like the world had ended. They lost their spirit of life. They would rather lose their own souls than losing their beloved daughter. That was the greatest disaster they ever had had. Such was the effect of the loss that Datin Kelong fell sick. Batin Lagoi issued a royal announcement:

“The king promises a great reward for anyone who can return the princess to the palace. If he were a king, he would be married to the princess; if they were common people, they would be made dignitaries at the palace.”

Megat Pulau Galang

In another kingdom, in the kingdom of Pulau Galang, the ruler was a *megat* who was already old. The old megat had two sons

who were growing up to be teenagers. The name of the first son was Julela, and the second son Jenang Perkasa. The old *megat* ruled justly and wisely. He also educated his two sons well. They were taught mercy towards others, cooperation, appreciation, and many other good characters. As the old *megat* was getting older, he became more forgetful and senile. Therefore, he really wished that his two sons would survive him and ruled the country to its greatness. Recently the health condition of the old *megat* had deteriorated. His body was easily tired. He often sneezed and coughed. The important meetings had been often entrusted to the two princes assisted by Datuk Bendahara (Treasury Minister).

One afternoon he personally summoned Datuk Bendahara. They seemed to have secret discussion. In the *balairung* (the royal reception hall) there were only the two of them. They looked very serious, a sign that what they were discussing was of a great importance. Guards were placed on the entrance.

“Datuk, what do you think if I resign as a *megat*?” asked the *megat*.

“My lord, I am of the same opinion with yours,” replied Datuk Bendahara respectfully.

“In your opinion, who is wiser between my two sons?”

“That’s a hard question to answer, my Lord. Both of them are equally wise. I find it hard to decide. To quote the parable of rice plant, both of them are equally well-filled and steady.”

“So, what do you suggest?”

“My lord, we’d better implement what’s been established by our elders and ancestors. Megat Julela, who is older, should be the new megat, and the younger Megat Jenang Perkasa will assist him. Should Megat Julela have any unavoidable excuse in any affair, then Megat Jenang Perkasa will take over. That is my opinion, my lord,” replied datuk Bendahara.

“Very well indeed.”

“I beg your pardon, my lord,” replied Datuk Bendahara. One day....

“Datuk Bendahara, please summon all dignitaries of the palace!”
odered the old megat.

“At your disposal, my lord,” replied Datuk Bendahara. Then Datuk Bendahara gathered all the dignitaries of the kingdom at the *balairung*, including the two crown princes. The old megat was accompanied by his consort with all splendors on the royal throne. So the royal ceremony started. The whole kingdom was heavily guarded as a sign that the kingdom was having an

extraordinary royal meeting. All people prayed that the meeting would be successful and they would have a just and wise ruler.

“Honorable *datuks*, ministers and all dignitaries! Our kingdom is going through a new start today. Therefore, I request you all to give me a wise and sound counsel,” the old megat paused and coughed, then took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. When he regained calmness, he continued:

“Honorable *datuks* and dignitaries! I am of the opinion that it is a high time for this kingdom to have a new ruler as I have been too old to carry on. What is the opinion of datuk and all dignitaries?” There was a hubbub in the room, everyone whispered or talked softly to those near them, expressing their thoughts. “I request that *datuks* and everyone have a common counsel to unify their opinions!”

So everyone got together in a circle led by Datuk Bendahara. This was a good practice preserved by the old megat.

Although he could make a decision by himself, he involved his dignitaries to give their thoughts and opinions regarding the matter, especially when the matter concerned public affairs. As soon as they had finished, all dignitaries returned to their seats and Datuk reported the result of their counsel to the old megat.

“I beg thousands of your pardons, my lord! We have carried out your order. You are indeed very wise in announcing your decision

to resign and nominate your successor. We are sure that you have nominated the best of the possible choices to be our new leader. He will be as wise as you are. As the saying goes, the fruits fall not far from the tree. We believe that the crown prince will be as great as you are when he assumes the kingship. So we have come to our proposed decision.

We would like to observe what our elders and predecessors have established that when a *megat* resigns or cannot continue to serve his term, then the crown prince will succeed him, and since we have two crown princes, the older will assume the throne and the second will assist him. Therefore, our lord Megat Julela takes the priority to succeed you. In case he is unavoidably unavailable, then our lord Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa will take over to assume the kingship. In running the affairs of the kingdom, our lord Megat Julela will be assisted by our lord Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa. This is our proposed decision. And we return the decision to your consent to decide. And we will hear and obey whatever you decide. We beg you thousands of pardons,” and Datuk Bendahara and all dignitaries paid their royal salute to the old *megat*.

“My opinion is the same as your proposal. That is our tradition that we inherit from our elders and predecessors. Make a copy of this decision and put it in the gazette of the kingdom. Prepare for the coronation ceremony the next full moon.”

“At your disposal, my lord,” saluted Datuk Bendahara, followed by the other staff. Datuk Bendahara and the staff paid their royal salute as a sign of obedience. After a few moments, the king summoned the whole council in the hall and said with a radiant face, “According to the tradition that has passed down from our predecessors, the *megat* who abdicates shall be survived by the crown prince. What is your say, my dear sons, the crown princes?” So saying, the king turned his head to his two sons.

“We hear and we obey your command, dear father,” replied the two princes almost simultaneously and paid their royal salute.

“So the sovereignty over the whole kingdom along with all its subordinates is now entrusted upon the older crown prince, Megat Muda Julela, while Megat Jenang Perkasa will assist him. And in the case Megat Julela has an unavoidable excuse to assume his duties, then Megat Muda Jenag Perkasa will take over with the consent of the *datuks* and the kingdom dignitaries. This is the rule in the Kingdom of Galang,” the king ended his remark. Whatever thoughts may have come to the minds of the two princes, they had been entrusted to continue to rule the kingdom. . ‘In a short time, I’ll be the sovereign in this kingdom,’ thought Megat Julela while smiling proudly. On the other hand, ‘I hope to be able to carry on with this great responsibility,’ thought Jenang Perkasa calmly. As the full moon appeared on the night sky, people from the whole

kingdom gathered at the town square which had previously been decorated for the purpose of the coronation of the new king.

The *megat* had seated himself, accompanied by his consort and the two crown princes. The *datuks* and dignitaries sat in long rows on the right and left sides of the stage. When the appointed time arrived, the *megat* gave a royal speech and crowned the new *megat*, followed by the canon fire seven times to mark the crown succession. Afterwards, the feast for seven days and nights followed.

After assuming the kingship, Megat Julela started to change. He used to be a polite and well-mannered prince, but then he changed into a pompous and easily-angered king. He listened to the advice of the wise ministers no more. This drastical change had started to take place as he appointed Hulubalang (army commander) his adviser. It had been an open secret that Hulubalang was in a long disagreement with Datuk Laksamana (navy admiral) and Datuk Bendahara. However, nobody dared to inquire.

“I beg your pardon, my lord,” whispered Hulubalang one day. “I have some sorts of bad news.”

“What kind of bad news could it be, Hulubalang?” asked Megat Julela.

“I beg your pardon, my lord. I’d rather tell you privately,” requested Hulubalang.

“Is the news so important?”

“Indeed, my lord!”

Megat Julela ordered that everybody leave the room. As everybody had left and only the two of them remained, Hulublang started to cast his net of wickedness.

“I beg your pardon, my lord. According to my agents’ investigation ...,” Hulubalang did not continue his words. He pretended to hesitate.

“What investigation, Hulubalang?” Megat Julela got curious and started to fall into Hulubalang’s trap.

“According to my agents’ investigation, the ministers who are used to giving you useless advices now feel frustrated. And they are conspiring to dethrone you.”

“What? Dethroning me? No way! That cannot and must not happen!” exclaimed Megat Julela clenching his fist. His face turned red. Seeing this, Hulubalang hid his happy smile, feeling sure that the king had fallen into his trap.

“Believe me, my lord!”

“I do believe you. That’s why I appointed you my personal adviser.”

“I beg your pardon, my lord. I cannot appropriately express my gratitude to thank you for this bounty, my lord.”

“Now I assign you to arrest and discharge the rebellious ministers!”

“At your service, my lord,” replied Hulubalang feeling pleased. Now his way towards success was getting smoother. He said silently to himself with a sly smile, ‘Hahaha... Nobody can stop me from ruling this kingdom now!’

“Why are you smiling, Hulubalang?” asked Megat Julela as he saw Hulubalang’s smile.

“I beg your pardon, my lord. There can’t be wiser and more accurate decision, my lord” wheedled Hulubalang. That was how Megat Julela now. He did not hesitate to discharge and imprison those who gave him sincere advice and replaced them with wheedlers. His good characters and manner had now remained a memory of the past. Now he had started to be addicted to getting drunk, partying and philandering. Besides, he imposed high taxes which increased the people’s burdens. And he would not listen to their protests. Instead, the protesters would surely be heavily punished. Nobody dared to challenge his decisions but Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa. And the disagreement between the two had been misused by Hulubalang due to his ambitions to get the positions of Datuk Laksamana and Datuk Bendahara.

Hulubalang had not been satisfied despite having been a trustful advisor of the king, even at times he was given the authority to arrest and discharge the dignitaries whom he did not favor. He felt that he still had a pain in the neck until he could get away with Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa, who was supported by Datuk Bendahara and Datuk Laksamana. And he could not get away with Datuk Bendahara and Datuk Laksamana as long as the old *megat* was still alive. It was the old *megat* who still retained the two dignitaries. The life of the people in the kingdom of Galang turned miserable after Megat Julela became the king, but they could do nothing, because opposing the king would mean death.

‘I have to find ways to get away with those who still dare to challenge me, especially with Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa.

If I have done with Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa, I just have to kick away Datuk Bendahara and Datuk Laksamana, hahaha...’ said Hulubalang to himself as he was sitting on his house verandah one evening.

‘I really have to get away with him before he could warn the king. But how can I do that? The old *megat* is even still alive. Ah, I have to get away with the miserable old man altogether.’ He thought hard of a way to make his plan run smoothly. He looked at the moving cloud while his mind wandered and wondered. He walked back and forth with a tense face as a sign that he was thinking hard.

‘If I can get away with both *megats*, Megat Julela will only be a doll in my hands, hahaha!’ he tried to amuse himself with this thought to escape from the hardness of the problem he was thinking. Finally, he smiled as a sign that he had found a way. ‘Ah, I will indulge Megat Julela with parties and women. After he gets drunk, then I will incite him to finish Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa off. I will tell him that Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa is going to overthrow him. I’ll assign my aide to assassinate the old *megat* in his bed with a creese and hide the blood-stained creese in Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa’s bedroom. I’m sure everyone will believe that Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa is the culprit. Ah, what a clever man I am!’ said he to himself excitedly. He was so excited this time the he hopped and jumped around excitedly like a small child getting a toy from his father. So he started carrying out his plan. At the time he thought proper, he provided some women and strong wines for the king’s party. When the king got drunk, Hulubalang approached him in a hurry. ‘This is a high time to tell the king my plan,’ thought Hulubalang.

“I beg your pardon for interrupting your pleasure, my lord,” said Hulubalang carefully.

“Ah, Hulubalang! Join me in my party,” the king cut Hulubalang’s words.

“I beg your pardon, my lord. I don’t mean to be rude refusing your offer, but ...,” Hulubalang had not been able to finish his

words when the king interrupted, “O come on, man! Let’s enjoy this night!”

“I beg your pardon once again, my lord, but I have an urgent matter to tell you,” said Hulubalang.

“Tell me! Do you want to have another wife? Choose one! Hahaha ...!” the king laughed out loudly while gulping the cup of wine presented to him.

“That’s not the news that I want to convey. There’s something more urgent,” said Hulubalang while winking at one of the king’s concubines flirtatiously.

“Well, then tell me,” so saying, the king gestured everyone in the room to go out. After everyone had left, Hulubalang started working on his wicked plan.

“Promise me, though, that the party will continue after this,” said the king.

“I beg your pardon, my lord. I have been informed that Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa is making preparation to overthrow you,” said Hulubalang in a half whisper.

“What? How insolent! How dares he to challenge me!” shouted Megat Julela. He clenched his teeth and his fist tightly in rage. He raised his clenched fist and his eyes started to get red, a sign that he was very angry.

“Hulubalang! Find a way to finish this criminal off my sight for good!” ordered he, still clenching his fist.

“I’ll make sure your command be carried out in no time, your lord,” said Hulubalang smiling triumphantly.

“I have already made a plan so that no one dares to challenge you and you may rule forever, my lord. Hahaha ...!”

“That’s right. I will rule forever. Hahaha...” said the king sharing the laughter. He took another gulp the cup of wine, and continued, “So what is your plan, Hulubalang?”

With a serious look, Hulubalang whispered his plan to the king. The king was surprised, but then Hulubalang whispered again to convince him. This time, the king nodded his head in agreement.

“You are my best and most reliable aide, Hulubalang,” complimented the king. Hearing the king’s compliment, Hulubalang smiled proudly and stroked his thick moustache. That morning, the kingdom of Galang was in a tumult and upheaval. The old *megat* and his consort were found dead with blood still flowing from their wounds. Somebody had assassinated them the night before. The people were soon in a great sadness and the whole kingdom in sorrow. People moved hither thither, not knowing what to do, while the people at the palace looked anxious and distressed. Only the king and Hulubalang stayed calm, they even looked not in the least perturbed.

“Guards! Search the whole palace. I am sure, the culprit is someone from this palace, an insider,” ordered the king pretended to be concerned with the people’s distress. So his guards pretended to be busy searching here and there, checking every corner. A few moments later, some of the guards returned with a report, that they found a blood-stained creese under Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa’s bed mattress. They presented the blood-stained creese to the king.

“What? Jenang Perkasa’s creese?” shouted the king in a high tone while staring at Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa sharply. Hearing and seeing it, everyone in the room was shocked, especially Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa.

“Jenang?! What have you done? How could you have a heart to do that?” asked the king angrily and pretending to feel sorry.

“That’s impossible. This must be a slander!” Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa defended himself.

“Jenang! What you did was so shameful and ungrateful! I have had this feeling that you’re such an ungrateful child,” the king said angrily while pointing at his brother with his left forefinger.

“Datuk Laksamana! I order you to behead this ungrateful one!” shouted the king. At the same time, Datuk Bendahara and Datuk Laksamana were struck dumb, not believing what they saw that morning.

“Datuk Laksamana! Did you not listen to my order?” asked the king turning to Datuk Laksamana.

“I beg your pardon, my lord. Shouldn’t we carry out a thorough investigation first to find the real assassin?” asked Datuk Laksamana.

“What else should we investigate, Datuk? The evidence is as bright as the day. His stained creese with the blood of beloved father and mother was found under this betrayer’s mattress,” insisted the king.

“I beg your pardon, my lord, but that does not mean that my lord Jenang Perkasa did it,” defended Datuk Laksamana.

“Datuk?! With all these evidences, do you still defend him? Or are you involved in this conspiracy?” the king rebuked and looked sternly at Datuk Laksamana.

“I beg your pardon, my lord, but please don’t accuse me of conspiring without solid proof,” Datuk Laksamana defended himself calmly. He was not in the least nervous because he was innocent.

“Then carry out my command. If you don’t, then I’ll have you beheaded, too!” threatened the king.

‘God! You have tested us with a great test. Strengthen us with Your help. Show us the truth. Only You can lead us. You are the

Best Protector. We have neither might nor power but with You!’ prayed Datuk Laksamana silently. He looked much older due to sadness. The whole kingdom of Galang was in great distress. They lamented over the death of the old *megat* and his consort, the old king that they loved for his justice and wisdom. The distress was even greater because at the same time, Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa would be executed. Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa was really shocked by what had happened. He experienced a series of bad luck, like someone who fell and got struck by the ladder. His parents had been assassinated, and now he became the victim of a slander. Inside, he had not had the slightest fear of death, because he was not guilty, but he could not do anything yet. He just prayed that one day God would show the truth by revealing the real happenings. He believed that no matter how careful one hides a dead body, people will eventually smell it. At one corner of the room, Hulubalang smiled slightly and slyly and stroked his moustache. Meanwhile, Datuk Laksamana carried out the order with a heavy heart. Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa was chained and dragged along the street. His whole body was stained with blood. However, he never let out a cry. Those who saw him felt sorry for him and felt sure that he was not guilty, but they could not do anything to help him. They just prayed, and some of them prayed in tears.

“He can’t be the culprit. He is too good to do that. He is as kind as the deceased old *megat*. This must be a trap,” whispered one of them to his friend.

“I agree with you. He can’t have done that. May God protect him,” agreed his friend in tears.

“Pssst.... Be careful, lest you are heard and meet the same end,” warned another friend. As soon as they arrived at the place of execution at the gorge by the sea, Datuk Laksamana told the people to turn away and leave. Everybody obeyed, for they would not even be able to stand seeing the execution being carried out. When everyone had gone, Datuk Laksamana looked around if anybody was still around.

When he was sure nobody was seeing, suddenly he unchained Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa while weeping. And he embraced the wounded body while whispering in a husky voice, “You must be strong to face this test, my lord.”

“Carry out your duty, Datuk. I am ready for this,” replied Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa submissively.

“No, my lord, I can’t do this to you, because I know you’re innocent,” said Datuk Laksamana while sobbing and embracing him lovingly.

“Thank God you can still see with your inner eyes,” replied Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa.

“Now please leave this country, my lord. I have prepared a boat and some provisions for you.”

“How did you prepare for this?” asked Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa in amazement.

“I had anticipated this, and I have told the faithful guards while they were tying your hands at the palace,” explained Datuk Laksamana with a smile.

“But you will risk your head to be beheaded,” replied Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa anxiously. He was worried about Datuk Laksamana’s safety.

“Don’t worry my lord. I have a thousand ways to deceive them,” replied Datuk Laksamana assuringly. Then he told Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa to change his clothes with the clothes of common people, and he smeared Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa’s clothes with the blood of a sheep.

“Now set sail, my lord. It’s a high time,” said Datuk Laksamana while looking around to make sure nobody was spying on them.

“Thank you, Datuk. May God always protect you and our kingdom,” said Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa while embracing

Datuk Laksamana. They could not help their tears rolling down their cheeks.

The Expelled Megat Muda

Megat Jenang Perkasa was in a difficult situation. Various feelings mixed into one: angry and sad, hatred and longing, it was difficult to describe.

He did not want to leave the land where he had grown up, but he had to face his destiny. God never burdens His servants more than what they can afford.

“O graceful land, one day I shall return, returning to establish truth and justice, returning to serve you,” he said softly while boarding the boat.

“Dear beloved father and mother! One day I will take revenge for this despicable crime, I promise you. May you two rest in peace,” so saying, he waved his hand for the last time at Datuk Laksamana before setting his sail and rowing his boat. With tears still rolling down his cheeks, he left the harbour and the memories of life started coming to his life, from childhood memory to the tragedy which he had just been through. The winds blew in his favor, taking his boat sliding down further away from the shore. He left Galang Island, which got smaller the more he was further away from it until it was no more in sight. Megat Muda Jenang Perkasa drifted about in his boat not knowing where to go. All

around him was only ocean, from one end to the other, only water and the horizon which were so vast. He surrendered to the wind where it would take him and to what island he would be stranded. Time went by and the sun rotated on the horizon. The sun which was so bright was now fading and its scorching ray was now replaced by the light of the moon and the twinkling of stars. The moon and the twinkling stars seemed to share his sadness. To remove his sadness, he hummed some verses of poetry. His melodious voice broke the silence of night, accompanied by the rustling wind and the smashing of waves.

Datuk Laksamana trained with swords. The princess sang, far from madness

O twinkling stars, listen to my words. I am singing out of sadness

Graceful was the kingdom of Galang once. Now ruined by covetous going astray

Accompany me, o twinkling ones. To remove the sadness away

His voice turned weaker and weaker and then faded away. He fell asleep due to fatigue, physically and mentally, blanketed by the twinkling stars. The night wind caressed his skin pores and smashing waves sang him lullaby. In his deep sleep he dreamt as if he had been wide awake. His boat whirled like a spinning top, about to be swallowed by the twirling sea which grew quicker, yet he was not in the least afraid. He surrendered to the will of the

Almighty. He was ready to surrender his soul if that was his destiny to die there and then.

He realized that nobody could prevent death if the call of the Almighty had already arrived. When his boat was on the brink of drowning, suddenly some strange animals, which had trunks like elephants, appeared from the bottom of the sea. With the appearance of the sea elephants, the sea suddenly became calm. They surrounded the boat and Jenang Perkasa prepared himself to anticipate an attack, but the sea elephants looked friendly, so Jenang Perkasa became relaxed.

“My lord, don’t be afraid. We’re not going to harm you,” said the biggest creature approaching Jenang Perkasa while the others surrounded it. It seemed to be their leader.

“Are you talking to me? How can you talk like human?” asked Jenang Perkasa in amazement.

“That’s true, my lord, we’re talking to you. Nothing is impossible if the Almighty has so willed,” answered the leader of the sea elephants. “We know that you are a good person; an honest, just, and wise leader. We also know that you are in a great turmoil. That’s why we come to help you,” so saying, the leader of the elephants took something from behind its trunk.

“Take this rattan stick and utilize it whenever you need it,” said the elephant while handing over the stick, but Jenang Perkasa hesitated to accept it as he was not sure what it was for.

“Forgive my insolence, my dear friend, but what is this stick for?” asked Jenang Perkasa. The elephant smiled and explained, “This is not an ordinary stick. This is from the One in Heaven, and this is from the single rattan growing in Heaven. This rattan stick is an inherited weapon from the ancestors of sea elephants. It is so destined that you will inherit it,” it paused for a moment before it continued, “Now let me explain its use.

Firstly, if the tip is dipped into the sea, the sea water will turn fresh, so that you can drink as you like. Secondly, if you hit this stick to the soles of your feet three times, you’ll be able to walk on the water as you do on land. Thirdly, if you hit an enemy with it, the enemy will get burnt. Nobody can face the invincibility of this weapon. That’s why we have kept guarding this weapon, lest it falls into the hands of an unduly person. Should a wicked person possess this weapon, that’s the sign of the end of the world,” said the leader of the sea elephant while handing over the rattan stick. Jenang Perkasa, on the other hand, was stunned and almost could not believe what he was experiencing. So the magical weapon changed hands.

As soon as the weapon was in the hand of Jenang Perkasa, something strange happened. In the fine weather, suddenly the

sky rumbled. A single bolt of lightning struck Jenang Perkasa, but strangely, Jenang Perkasa did not feel anything.

“This is a sign that you are the right person to inherit the weapon, otherwise your body would have been burnt to ashes by the bolt,” said the sea elephant smilingly.

“Now head south! Your first duty is to save a princess who was kidnapped by Megat Sri Rama, the king of the kingdom of Pulau Berhala. He is a cruel and tyrannical king. Establish justice there because the people have suffered for too long. Now go! God be with you!” it said and then dived to the bottom of the sea, followed by the others. At the same time, Jenang Perkasa woke up from his dream.

“Ah, I have just been dreaming,” muttered Jenang Perkasa rubbing his eyes. He felt his body fresh and all the pains that he had felt from the previous day’s torment gone. He looked at his whole body and found no scars and wounds. His skin was as smooth as ever. Suddenly his hand touched the rattan stick, a stick which was not even as long as half of a grown-up man’s arm length. He looked at the stick for a long time. He almost could not believe his eyes, so he rubbed them again, but the stick was there alright. Now he was convinced that what he had experienced was a dream coming true. So he dipped the tip of the stick into the sea, and voila! What the sea elephant had said was true! The water of the sea around him turned into fresh and sweet water, so Jenang

Perkasa drank from the sea to his satisfaction thankfully. Jenang Perkasa fell in prostration to show his gratefulness.

“I thank you, O my Lord, the Almighty! You have showered me countless bounties! You have given me a test, and You provide me a way out! You have tested me with difficulties, but You have provided much more ease!”

Suddenly he remembered his birthpalce and those people who had taught him kindness and goodness. ‘What Datuk Bendahara and Datuk Laksamana had taught me, that God had created nothing in vain, has been true after all,’ he remembered the two kind men. At the same time, he remembered Megat Julela and his followers, which made him angry.

‘Even animals have mercy for others, how can humans who have been given the intelligence hate each other and bring disasters to others, even to their own parents and brethren like what I have experienced?’

How beautiful and peaceful this life would be if we can love and appreciate one another! Doesn’t human being dream for a life full of peace?’ he contemplated and talked to his own self.

‘Shall I take revenge myself on my own brother? No, no way! I won’t take revenge. Anger repaid with anger will not lead to peace, yet justice must be established. The wrong should be

punished according to their wrongdoings.’ In his contemplation, he remembered what the sea elephant wanted him to do.

‘Ah, I shouldn’t be long in my contemplation. Somebody needs my help at once,’ he said to himself silently. What the sea elephant told him was still vivid in his mind. Therefore, he did everything directed by the sea elephant. Firstly, he looked up the sky to determine his position and which direction he had to take. Then, he hit the rattan stick to the soles of his feet three times, but he hesitated to set his feet on the water. But as he felt that the sea hardened under his feet, he no longer hesitated and became fully convinced. Slowly but steadily, he got down from the boat. And it was true that he could walk on the water just like on the soil. Once again he looked up the sky to find the right direction before he ran southwards. As he was running, he was amazed with his own ability. He could run very quickly like he was flying. He felt his bodyweight very light without any burden. He did not feel any tiredness. He even felt that his feet moved by themselves.

‘How bountiful is God’s gift to me. Hopefully I can use it to establish justice,’ he said to himself while running.

He was not sure how long he had been running. After running for quite a long time as he reckoned, he still had not spotted any inhabited island, yet he was sure that the direction he took was correct. So, he kept running. He chased away all doubts from his heart. Suddenly a question came into his mind: how does the

princess whom he was going to save look like? She must have been suffering until now. Her parents would have been no different. Then his mind tried to imagine how cruel the kidnapper, Megat Sri Rama, could be. Could he be as cruel as Megat Julela?

‘After this mission is accomplished, I have to return to the kingdom of Galang immediately to establish justice. I feel sorry for the suffering people. They should not suffer for too long. I am sure Megat Julela and Hulubalang follow their desire as they wish.

This should be stopped,’ he promised to himself. With this thought, he increased his speed to reach his destination.

The Ruler of Pulau Berhala

The sun had risen from its bed. Its reddish light started to emanate from the east. From the distance, Jenang Perkasa saw a vague small dot, so he ran towards it. The closer he was to the dot, the bigger it became, and finally he saw it was an island.

‘I hope this is Pulau Berhala,’ he thought hopefully. It was not long before he saw, on the northern side of the island, rows of houses around a big and grand house, while on the southern part, the view was a big contrast. The houses were disorganized in slums. Jenang Perkasa predicted that the houses on the north must have belonged to the dignitaries, while the houses on the south were those of the fishermen’s.

'I'd better enter the island through the mangroves,' he set his feet on the eastern side of the island, so his coming would not be known to people. Then he walked along the coast and entered the fishermen's village. As he arrived at the fishermen's village, he was very surprised to see their behaviour. Generally, fishermen are friendly people and like to greet other people, but in this village, the people avoided other people and appeared in fear. When he tried to inquire from a person he met, he even ran away.

'What happens to the people in this village? Why do they appear very frightened?' Jenang Perkasa wondered, asking himself. 'Has my face changed into ghost?'

He touched his face and looked for a pond to see his reflection, but he saw nothing had changed. Not far from the place where he was, he saw an old fisherman whose hair had turned white, repairing his net. He approached him to inquire from him.

"Good morning! Excuse me, Sir. May I ask you?" instead of answering his question, the old man stared at him sharply.

"Morning, too! You must be a stranger here," replied the old man turning his head to the right and left. Before Jenang Perkasa could answer, the old man pulled his hand into an old hut not far from where they had been. Jenang Perkasa had no choice but to follow. After they entered the hut, the old man closed the door.

“What’s the matter, Sir? You and the villagers here seem to be frightened.”

“Pssst...! Don’t talk loudly lest the guards of the *megat* hear you,” replied the fisherman and asked in a very low voice like whispering, “Actually where do you come from?”

“I’m from the kingdom of Galang. I’m just a traveller. Wherever the winds carry me, there I go,” replied Jenang Perkasa. He tried to hide his identity. He did not want anyone to know that he was a *megat*.

“What’s the name of this island?” asked he.

“This is Pulau Berhala,” replied the old fisherman. Jenang Perkasa felt chilled, but he tried to be calm. ‘So I have come to the right place,’ said he to himself silently.

“Excuse me once again, but why do the villagers look frightened?”

The old man took a deep breath. The trace of sadness and suffering appeared on his aging face.

“Son, we live in distress,” he started his story. So he narrated all the sufferings that the people experienced being ruled by a tyrannical king. “Nobody has dared to challenge the king, because if the king comes to know, the challenger would surely be beheaded.”

“That’s outrageous!” said Jenang Perkasa unintentionally.

“Should anyone come to this island without paying a tribute then he would surely be killed. Likewise, someone who provides a shelter for the newcomer would face the same fate. That’s why the villagers ran away when you asked them,” explained the old man.

Now Jenang Perkasa understood why the villagers looked frightened and why the old man quickly took him into the hut.

“Don’t worry about me, Sir. And don’t worry about being known that you have protected me. I’ll be very careful. If you get known, I’m ready to pay it with my life.”

“I don’t worry about myself. I’m already old. I’m ready to die, but what worries me is your safety, my son. You’re still young, and your way is still long.”

“Believe me, sir. God will protect the oppressed people, and their prayers are heard.”

“How wise your words are, my son!”

“Whoever sows wrongdoings and destruction, will surely reap defeat and disgrace. Likewise, whoever sows goodness and kindness, will surely reap victory and real peace.”

Hearing Jenang Perkasa's words, the old man believed that Jenang Perkasa was not an ordinary man. 'Perhaps he is the chosen one that God has sent to save us from the tyranny of Megat Sri Rama,' thought he, so he did not hesitate to tell him everything.

"My son, this afternoon, there's going to be a wedding party for the wedding of Megat Sri Rama and Putri Bintan, a very beautiful princess that he kidnapped from the kingdom of Bintan. Poor princess!" continued the old fisherman. Hearing it, suddenly Jenang Perkasa felt excited. 'Perhaps this very Putri Bintan is the one meant by the sea elephant,' he thought.

"Your look has changed, my son? Are you up to something?" asked the old fisherman suddenly.

"Oh, nothing, sir," he replied a bit nervously. "Now you go home to avoid suspicion. Your family may be worried waiting for your return. If you would allow me, I'd like to have a rest in this hut," requested Jenang Perkasa.

"OK, son. You'd better rest here. I'll come again to visit you."

"I thank you for your kindness, sir. May you, your family, and all the oppressed people be protected by the Almighty!"

"Amen!" said the old man before he left.

The sun was on the zenith of the horizon, the blast of canon was heard along with the sounds of gong in succession. There was a long line of procession on the street. Several strong men carrying a curtained carrier on their shoulders were on the lead. It was a grand carrier shaped like a dragon head with colourful decorations. A group of heavily armed men followed the carrier bearers. Jenang Perkasa peeped through the holes from the sagopalm wall of the hut. Jenang Perkasa guessed that inside the carrier was the kidnapped princess. He let the procession pass the hut. After the procession was at a distance, he sneaked out from the hut, and at the right moment, he mixed with the crowd. To avoid being easily recognized, he wore a wide-brimmed fisherman hat which covered part of his face. He had guessed correctly, for as the procession reached the palace, and the carrier was put down, from the carrier stepped out the princess. Her beautiful face looked deeply sad and heavily burdened. She looked pale and walked as if she was a living corpse.

From inside the palace, Megat Sri Rama walked out laughing. He had a well-built body, but with a big belly, dark skin, and thick moustache stretching under his nose. He looked like a pirate who had just robbed a ship.

‘I have to save the princess quickly,’ Jenang Perkasa said to himself silently, so he waited for the right place and time. When Megat Sri Rama and his guards were drunk and the guarding

slackened, Jenang Perkasa took this golden chance to disguise as a servant and entered the palace. He searched the entire palace to find out where the princess was kept. Outside a decorated door, he heard the sound of sobs. That was the bridal chamber prepared by Megat Sri Rama. In the meantime, Megat Sri Rama was enjoying himself, laughing and dancing, accompanied by music.

“Hahaha I’m going to be a bridegroom soon. Hahaha ...!”

“To your wealth and enjoyment as a new bridegroom, hahaha ...,” replied the *hulubalang*.

“*Hulubalang*, take any woman that you desire, but not Putri Bintan, for she is mine, hahaha....!” said Megat Sri Rama merrily.

“How can I get Putri Bintan if she has been destined for you, my lord,” replied the *hulubalang*.

“You are my intelligent *hulubalang*,” praised Megat Sri Rama.

“Thank you, my lord!”

They had more drinks and became drunker. Meanwhile, in the palace, Jenang Perkasa entered the room. From behind the curtain, he gestured towards the princess.

“Pssst...!”

The princess turned her head towards the source of the hissing sound. She was surprised to find a stranger in the room.

“I beg your pardon, my princess. I have been insolently entering your room. I have no other purpose but to save you from the clutches of Megat Sri Rama,” said Jenang Perkasa in half a whisper. Hearing that somebody was going to save her made her excited, as if life had returned once again to her.

“Who are you?” asked the princess.

“I’m sorry to say that this is not the right time to tell you,” replied Jenang Perkasa. “Excuse me for holding your hand, my princess. Follow me and do not let your hands off me!”

The princess could not understand why she believed the stranger and just followed his order. They sneaked and escaped through the window and left the room secretly. They stepped very carefully because the palace was heavily guarded, although they were drunk in the party. Unfortunately, some guards on duty caught sight of them, and they were soon surrounded by armed guards from all directions. Knowing there had been an intruder, Megat Sri Rama saw red and turned very furious.

“How insolent! How dare you to enter my palace and take my bride! Guards! Arrest him. I’ll punish him heavily!” he gave an order. Without further words, the guards approached and stretched their hands to arrest Jenang Perkasa, but Jenang Perkasa

was not a coward to let himself be captured without a fight. He started moving very quickly and with beautiful manouvres, he played his rattan stick very skillfully. Not a single guard could approach without being hit by the stick and screaming with their bodies burnt before they met their tragic death. Seeing this, the other guards felt their hearts shrink. But they were as afraid with Megat Sri Rama as they were with Jenang Perkasa's stick, so they advanced with the same end. Seeing his guards fell dead with burnt bodies, Megat Sri Rama was all the more furious, but at the same time, he was also scared and admitted that his opponent could not be easily defeated.

'Who is this lad? His manouvres show he is not an ordinary fighter,'

Megat Sri Rama asked himself silently. He ordered five invincible pirates to move forward.

Without waiting for further command, the five pirates started surrounding Jenang Perkasa and started attacking him with their secret and reliable weapons and manouvres. This fight was much more rigorous than the fight against the guards. The five pirates were experienced and tough fighters, so Jenang Perkasa's attacks often missed. His opponents also found that this lad was not an easy fighter to subjugate. Although the fight was initially fierce, but because the pirates were drunk, their attacks became uncontrolled, and after some while, they grew weaker. Jenang

Perkasa took advantage of this moment. One by one, the five pirates were also beaten to death with burnt bodies.

“*Hulubalang*, move in!” Megat Sri Rama ordered the *hulubalang*. *Hulubalang* was not far different from Megat Sri Rama. He was also famous for his cruelty and sadism. He started to exert all his skills and might to win the fight. His hands tightly held his relied weapon, a sword named Lightning Sword. As he started playing his sword, winds started rumbling, breaking everything it struck into pieces. Jenang Perkasa was cornered, but he managed to escape the pressure, and even tried to give a counter attack. As the *hulubalang* was drunk like the five pirates, he could not control himself and his manouvres. At one point, Jenang Perkasa managed to land a deadly blow to his chest and with a loud scream, he felt with smokes emanating from his burnt chest. After a few moments of writhing, his body lay still on the ground, dead. Seeing his *hulubalang* also dead, Megat Sri Rama became more anxious, ‘Will I die in the same manner? No way! I am not a newbie!’ With this thought, Megat Sri Rama took out his most relied weapon.

“Megat Sri Rama! Repent before it is too late!” shouted Jenang Perkasa.

“What? I repent? You do, before I send you to hell!” replied Megat Sri Rama furiously. He walked pompously towards Jenang Perkasa with his most relied weapon, a spear called Bada Sang

Sapurba. As he moved it, lightning struck and the earth trembled. With it, he started attacking Jenang Perkasa. Jenang Perkasa was cornered and forced to retreat and on one point, he slipped and fell. Seeing that, Megat Sri Rama was all the more confident and was sure that he could finish his opponent off in no time.

“Is that all your ability?” asked him arrogantly.

Putri Bintang wanted to move in, but Jenang Perkasa prevented her. “No, my princess. You are no match for him. I will fight him to my end. Just help me with your prayer.”

As Jenang Perkasa was still on the ground, now Megat Sri Rama got more confident, even he started to underestimate Jenang Perkasa’s ability to survive the fight. This was a big mistake. Then, he aimed his spear at Jenang Perkasa’s chest with one mighty thrust.

“Taste this magical spear!” he shouted while assaulting his opponent. So powerful was his thrust that his body was also dragged forward by his own assault. However, just in time, Jenang Perkasa managed to roll aside and get up, and taking the benefit of Megat’s uncontrolled movement, he whipped his weapon against Megat Sri Rama’s unprotected chest, and with a loud scream and chest burning, Megat Sri Rama fell and died instantly.

So ended the life of a tyrannical and cruel king! Jenang Perkasa fell in prostration, thanking the Almighty for His help. Putri Bintan was also delighted to see Jenang Perkasa survived the fight. Her spirit and energy returned. Deep inside her heart, a new hope and a strange but beautiful feeling filled her heart which made her look even more beautiful than ever. Hearing that the king had been killed, the people rushed to the scene to see it for themselves. They shouted in joy and were jubilant over Jenang Perkasa's triumph and to see the tyrannical king lying dead before their eyes. They requested that Jenang Perkasa be their king, but Jenang Perkasa refused their request gently. Instead, he directed them to appoint one new leader from among themselves. So they agreed to pick up Datuk Bendahara, who was exiled at Pulau Hantu (Ghostly Island). He was exiled because he was the wise minister who always stood firm for the sake of his people.

A New Life

The people in the kingdom of Bintan were very happy to welcome the return of Putri Bintan. Batin Lagoi was like having a rebirth, and so was Datin Kelong. There was a merry welcoming ceremony. They did not not only welcome Putri Bintan, but also Jenang Perkasa, the handsome and powerful prince. Putri Bintan's heart had been attached to Jenang Perkasa, and the prince was also in love with her. The people's happiness

increased as Putri Bintan and Jenang Perkasa, at their own accord, were united in a matrimony.

What a perfect match, a handsome prince married a beautiful princess! The wedding party was merrier than the welcoming party. The party took place for seven days and seven nights. Not long afterwards, Batin Lagoi handed over the kingship to Jenang Perkasa, who now had the title Batin, hence Batin Jenang Perkasa. His wife also got a new title. She was now Datin Bintan. Under the ruling of the just and wise Batin Jenang Perkasa, the people of Pulau Bintan lived in more prosperity and security. The traders and envoys from other kingdoms came to Pulau Bintan to trade and establish relationship with Pulau Bintan. The trading port became bustling. It did not take long for Pulau Bintan to become famous and centers for trade and education. The news about the good development of the kingdom of Bintan was heard as far as the kingdom of Galang. The people in the kingdom of Galang, who had not been able to bear the hardship under the tyrannical ruler, sent a messenger to request Jenang Perkasa to return to the kingdom of Galang.

“I beg your pardon, my lord. We request you to return to the kingdom of Galang. The people have suffered for too long,” said the messenger.

Jenang Perkasa embraced the messenger. He poured out his longing for his birthplace, so he promised to return. As the saying

goes, east or west, home is best. His heart melted when he listened to the messenger's narration, so he decided to set the kingdom of Galang in order. After taking leave from his wife and promising to return to Bintan as soon as his mission accomplished, he set out towards the kingdom of Galang. As he arrived at Pulau Galang, he felt a deep sorrow in his heart to see the people's condition in poverty and suffering. With all splendor, he entered the palace. How surprised Hulubalang who was now the new Datuk Laksamana when he saw Jenang Perkasa! The former Datuk Laksamana was exiled to an uninhabited island as they found out that he had not killed Jenang Perkasa. Megat Julela was no less surprised to see Jenang Perkasa return.

“Hulubalang! The time has come for me to take a revenge over my beloved father and mother's death and your oppression to the people,” said Jenang Perkasa in a loud voice.

“Hey! Is this how you enter my house? How disgraceful!” shouted Hulubalang.

“Guards, arrest this intruder!” he ordered the guards.

“What a disgraceful betrayer!” replied Jenang Perkasa.

As they saw the guards of Megat Julela advancing, Jenang Perkasa's guards were also not to be missed out. They took advancing steps to protect their king, but Jenang Perkasa prevented them. He did not want to sacrifice any of his guards.

This was how a responsible leader should behave. In the battle, he would not let his troops take steps before he took the first steps.

“Guards, let me face him,” said Jenang Perkasa. It did not take long before the guards of the kingdom of Galang to fall with burnt bodies. Seeing their comrades’ fate, the others started to retreat, even Hulubalang himself lost his courage. But Jenang Perkasa kept approaching him. With trembling body, he had to face his invincible opponent. He attacked Jenang Perkasa with his sword in frenzy, but he was no match for Jenang Perkasa. After only a few movements, Jenang Perkasa succeeded in seizing his opponent’s weapon, and as quick as a lightning, he stabbed Hulubalang in the heart with Hulubalang’s own creese. Hulubalang fell dead, drenched in blood, with his own creese. Megat Julela was pale with fear. He ran to hide, but wherever he went, Jenang Perkasa followed and found him. So he had nowhere to hide. Finally, he came to Jenang Perkasa to apologize and repent.

“Brother, please forgive me. I have been so far blinded by the provocation of the cursed *hulubalang*. Do you have the heart to kill this powerless brother of yours? If you do, I surrender. This is my destiny,” so saying, he kissed the ground before Jenang Perkasa while lamenting. He dared not to look at the face of Jenang Perkasa.

“I won’t stain my hands with my own brother’s blood, but you deserve the punishment. Therefore, I will send you to the uninhabited island to replace Datuk Laksamana!”

Eventually, Datuk Laksamana was picked up from the uninhabited island to be replaced by Megat Julela. Datuk Laksamana was appointed the deputy of Jenang Perkasa to rule the kingdom of Galang. After establishing the government, he returned to the kingdom of Bintan. Under Datuk Laksamana, the people’s life in the kingdom of Galang gradually got better. Important decisions had to be consulted with and consented by Jenang Perkasa. That was how Jenang Perkasa ruled the two kingdoms.

Batin Jenang Perkasa lived happily with his wife, Putri Bintan, in the kingdom of Bintan. From their marriage, they had three handsome princes: the first was named Mantang, the second Mapoi, and the last Kelong. After the princes attained maturity, Batin Jenang Perkasa divided the territory of Pulau Bintan into three regions for his three sons, including the kingdom of Galang. Batin Mantang ruled the northern region, Batin Mapoi ruled the eastern part, and Batin Kelong ruled the southern part as well as the kingdom of Galang. This is the origin of the names of tribes in Pulau Bintan dan Pulau Galang. Until now, the three tribes are still existent along the coast of Pulau Bintan. When a problem

arises among them, then to solve it, they refer to the ruling established by Batin Jenang Perkasa.