

## LEGITIMACY OF HANG JEBAT AS A HERO: LET THE *HIKAYAT* TELL THE REAL STORY

Mohamed Anwar Omar Din\*, Zulayti Zakaria, Wan Ahmad Fauzi Wan Hashim, Nazir Ibrahim and Junaidi Abu Bakar

---

**Abstract:** The dissemination of Hang Jebat as a Malay hero is quite rampant. This paper investigates the legitimacy of celebrating Hang Jebat as a Malay hero by unfolding the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, the authentic source on Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat, as its main reference. This paper undertaken an eagle eye explore on some of those published discussions that celebrated Hang Jebat as a Malay hero, and raise the question in what part of the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* that shows, or at least could be interpreted, as Hang Jebat is a hero? Although the inquiry of this paper might be seemed as a simple and straight forward mode of 'question and answer,' it reveals the fact that those who celebrating Hang Jebat as a hero—including the general public, the critics, reviewers, writers, entertainment directors, educators, politicians, even high ranking scholars—do not aware their arguments do not based on authentic source, instead, they are on what they have watched from the films (cinema) or plays of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat mostly created in the 1950s-1960s. We display the statements in the *Hikayat* itself as evidence that the notion of Hang Jebat as a hero is totally does not based on authentic source, the *Hikayat*. Furthermore, we argue that the resurgent of Hang Jebat as a hero is not by virtue of he is a true hero, instead, it is an *ideologically blinkered* and *wishful thinking* manipulations.

### INTRODUCTION

For ages, it had been Hang Tuah who has been celebrated by the Malays as their hero, not Hang Jebat. Their appreciation is concordance with its legitimate source, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. However, since 1950s-1960s, with the emergence of modern entertainments, namely, *bangsawan*, film (cinema), plays (theaters), dances, short stories, musicals, television and comics, which juxtaposed with the raise of socialistic ideal in this country, there had been a dramatic u-turn. Since then, for decades till today, almost all walks of life - whether they are the general public (populaces) or the critics, reviewers, writers, entertainment directors, educators, politicians, even scholars—have become undecided of who is the real hero of the Malays: is it Hang Tuah or Hang Jebat? For example, as Alatas quoting Syed Hussein Alatas says:

Every Malaysian schoolchild knows that Hang Tuah did not fight for the truth owing to his blind loyalty to a tyrannical king and not Hang Jebat who stands for truth, justice and loyalty (cited in Alatas, 2009: 37).

Actually, the undecided or uncertainty of who is the Malay hero has been going on since 1960s. For instance, a contemporary film reviewer of the 1960s wrote

---

\* *Address for Communication (Corresponding Author):* Mohamed Anwar Omar Din, Professor of History, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia. *E-mail:* odmanwar@unisza.edu.my

in *The Straits Times* dated 22 March 1961, the most readable newspaper of the times:

The Cathay-Keris film “Hang Jebat” which has been playing to packed houses during the Muslim festival season is based on a story about two of Malay’s five bravest warriors with 14<sup>th</sup> century Malacca as the background. The film attempts to help Malay movie-goers to make up their minds on the long-standing controversy as to who is the real hero—Hang Tuah or Hang Jebat, but many will come away undecided.

Evidently, what had been observed in the 1960s by contemporary reviewer is definitely true as it is still a phenomenon in this day. The films, and also the plays, have really helped the audiences in general to become confuse and mixed-up, and eventually could not decide who is their (the Malay’s) hero, by intimidating their minds that Hang Tuah’s character is incompetence to be a hero because his blind loyalty to the injustice raja *Hikayat* murdered his own friend, Hang Jebat, even though take avenged against that injustice. Harper (2001: 285) in his comments to those critics on Hang Tuah says since 1950s it “began to question the traditional image of the Malay hero—that of the stormy absolutist Hang Tuah—and rehabilitate the leadership of his rival, Hang Jebat—the rebel. Observers (including Putten & Barnard, 2010: 266; Harper, 2001: 285; Heidi, 2002; Gaik Cheng Khoo & Khoo Gaik Cheng, 2006: 29) reckon that the turning point and the most influential factors that have left permanent impact on the mind of the people till today are a film entitled “Hang Jebat” produced by Cathay Keris Organisation in 1961 and a play (theater) *Matinya Seorang Pahlawan* (The Death of a Warrior) created by Usman Awang in the 1960s (Usman Awang, 1987). Putten & Barnard (2010: 266), for instance, allude that the story of Hang Tuah has been many artistic reinterpretation. The 1958 radio play *Tragedi Hang Tuah* (later retittle *Hang Jebat Menderhaka* and produced as a stage play) by Ali Aziz, is considered a turning point for the shift towards Jebat as hero in the struggle against the old forces obstructing the full development of an independent Malay nation. The shift was further refined in Usman Awang’s *Matinya Seorang Pahlawan* in 1961, which was frequent staged to boost patriotic feelings in the new-born nation. About two decades later the tale inspired three playwrights in compiling absurdist plays which featured Jebat as champion of the underprivileged in Malaysian society.

The play *Matinya Seorang Pahlawan* (The Death of a Warrior) by Usman Awang has strengthened the minds of the people to become undecided who is the hero. The play presents Hang Jebat as an un-ambivalent figure who despises the blind loyalty of Hang Tuah and the injustice perpetrated of the raja (Heidi, 2002). The evident of a great impact of the play on the minds of people is illustrated by their constant enunciation of the phrase “A just king is a king to be venerated, a despotic king is a king to be repudiated” (*Raja adil raja disembah, raja zalim raja*

*disanggah*). Initially, this phrase came into being from a play created by Usman Awang (*Matinya Seorang Pahlawan*) in the 1960s, however, it has been perceived by many people as of Hang Tuah words in the classical texts.

Our observations on the performances as well as scrutinize through out the critics on Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat, reveal that since 1950s-1960s onward to our time, there is hardly any performance and critics that portrayed Hang Tuah been celebrated as the hero. Instead, they are of mixed and undecided. Some quarters portraying Hang Jebat who has replaced Hang Tuah as the hero. The best example of this is Kassim Ahmad (1966: 37):

Jebat was not a hero in his era. But, what he had done contained so many heroism elements. Jebat was a revolutioner. He rebelled to fight against the structure of feudal community. He was the one who brought a new era, an era which totally different from the previous one. It was an era, in which if it compared to the previous one, of a step ahead of the democracy stage from the absolute power of the rajas. His democracy foundation could only apply in the condition of his era. Hence, he is a national revolutioner in his way of thought. Therefore, we could call him as an apostle and the warrior of the Malay nationalism. (Kassim Ahmad, 1966: 37).

Then, there are some quarters who are more inclined to celebrate the Bendahara as the real hero. Their argument is based the virtue of the Bendahara's move to have not executed Hang Tuah even though it was against the raja desire. Furthermore, there are also some quarters that questioned the aptness of these feudal warriors being remembered as heroes, as they merely entertained the whims and fancies of tyrannical rulers without any regard for the Islamic injunctions and teaching that Melaka claims to have been promoting in the first place (Shaharuddin Maaruf, 1984: 30). There are still other quarters which do not celebrate both, neither Hang Tuah nor Hang Jebat, as the hero (Alatas 2007: 37, cited from Syed Hussein Alatas).

Currently, in our own life time, with the introduction of internet (Facebook and Twitter) where even a 'square minded person' writes history, the undecided and confusion minds about the Malay hero become rampant. There are various stories and interpretations on Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat.

Our arguments are totally based on the classical text of *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (edited by Kassim Ahmad, 1964). This is owing to the fact that this *Hikayat* is the most legitimate source to appraisal the truth about who is the Malay hero. We aware of the other sources, namely, *Sejarah Melayu* and local folk stories as collected by Muhammad Hj. Salleh (2012) at few places in southern Sumatera, Melaka and Riau-Lingga islands, however, this paper refers *Hikayat Hang Tuah* based on fact that it is widely read by many people in comparison with other sources when dealing with duel of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat. Hence, as it is based on the well

known text, the arguments in this paper will not give rise suspicion of been based on invalid facts. The phrase “Let the *Hikayat* tells the real story” in the title of this paper is in the sense that this paper will disseminate what is the legitimate of real story as stated in the *Hikayat* itself.

### **The Legitimate Story**

The *Hikayat* narrates that Hang Tuah was defamed twice, not just one time as commonly presented in the movies and conventionally advocated by the critics and general public. It is important to stress that the incident of the first time Hang Tuah was defamed is missing in the movies and critics whereas the information during the time of Hang Tuah was defamed is very crucial because it lays a strong foundation to scrutinize and evaluate the whole issue of Hang Jebat’s and Hang Tuah’s heroism. For instance, the *Hikayat* narrates that when Hang Tuah was first defamed, there was nothing happened. Hang Jebat did not revoke. At that time he did not posses the Keris Taming Sari. The duel of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat occurred only during the second time Hang Tuah was defamed. Why then Hang Jebat did that? If he was a person who defense justice of Hang Tuah, he should had done that at the first stage. Without further ado, we present the real epic of Hang Tuah-Hang Jebat from its own, genuine and authentic source, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*.

### **The Beginning**

The epic of Hang Tuah-Hang Jebat began with Hang Tuah, Hang Jebat, Hang Kasturi, Hang Lekir and Hang Lekiu at their early childhood had unionizing to be faithful friends. They were adopted by the Bendahara for saving his life from a mad Javanese. The five friends sworn that they are half-blood brothers. Then, at their adult age, they were employed by the raja as best men in the palace. Hang Tuah was prominent among the five. He had proven his ability as a unbeatable warrior during he and his four friends escorting the raja visiting Java. Hang Tuah had beaten all the Javanese warriors. They visited Java for few times. In one of their visits, Hang Tuah managed to get the Keris Taming Sari from one of a Javanese warrior. It was a keris which had spiritual power; who ever posses it will become invulnerable. For his excellent, Hang Tuah was favorite by the raja. He was appointed as a Laksamana (Admiral) of Melaka.

### **First Defamed**

The *Hikayat* (1964: 192-194) narrates that due to his acquaint with the raja had brought jealousy among the palace officials. Conspiracy, lead by Patih Kerma Wijaya, was set up to depose Hang Tuah. Patih Kerma Wijaya cunningly uttered slander words to the raja that Hang Tuah was having adultery (*bermukah*) with the most adorable concubine of the raja. Upon hearing the slander words, the raja was

very wrath and hastily, and without investigation he ordered the Bendahara (Tun Utama) to execute death penalty to Hang Tuah. Hang Tuah accepted the raja's degree with whole heart, without a slight hesitation. He also gave the Keris Taming Sari to the Bendahara:

As the Laksamana (Admiral/Hang Tuah) heard what the Bendahara had said (that the raja had sentenced him to death), he drawn his keris (Keris Taming Sari) from his waistline, then hand over to the Bendahara, and said, "Thank God! This Tuah would not have two or three kings, but only one, the raja of Melaka alone. Please Datuk, delivered His Highness' order on me with all possible. (Hikayat, 1964: 193)

However, the Bendahara has no heart to accomplish the raja's degree. So, he ordered Hang Tuah to refuge to anywhere else. After he handed over the Keris Taming Sari to the Bendahara, Hang Tuah had chosen to asylum in Inderapura (present Pahang) with a single aim: to find a way how to make the raja of Melaka happy. This could be achieved by bringing home Tun Teja, the princess of Inderapura raja to Melaka, whom the raja of Melaka had prolong desired to marry her (*Hikayat*, 1964: 232). He anticipated with a hope that by working up to this aim, he could regain the favour from the raja's heart as before.

Hang Tuah stayed at Indrapura for seven months and no one knew he was still alive (*Hikayat*, 1964: 232). Importantly, nothing in the *Hikayat* that says Hang Jebat knew about Hang Tuah still alive, was not executed by the Bendahara, and now living in Inderapura.

Hang Tuah conducted all sorts of tricks to lure Tun Teja's agreement to marry the raja of Melaka, including spelled the love charms. Eventually, with the helps of the old handmaiden of Tun Teja, Hang Tuah succeeded to bring Tun Teja to Melaka to be married by the raja. The raja honored him with precious presents as though nothing had happened to Hang Tuah. Hang Tuah regain the raja's favour.

### **Second Defamed**

The *Hikayat* (1964: 321-325) narrates that, not long after he was first defamed, Hang Tuah was again defamed, for the second time, by the same group of people—the palace officials lead by Patih Kerma Wijaya. As to avoid to be deemed as manipulating the epic, this paper describes the epic of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat duel by rendering directly to what been stated in the *Hikayat*. The *Hikayat* narrates:

Melaka was in peace, tranquil and prosperous since Hang Tuah was appointed as the Laksamana (Admiral). The raja profoundly honoured his favoritism to Laksamana; what ever he wanted the raja never unfulfilled. All the officials are jealous, only Bendahara and Temenggong have never

faded to love him. All the officials and the royal kinsfolks set a conspiracy to defame him (Hikayat, 1964: 323)

The Hikayat (1964: 324-325) goes to narrate: Patih Kerma Wijaya used the same modus operandi as he had done before to defame Hang Tuah; uttered slander words to the raja that Hang Tuah was committing adultery with one of the concubines in the palace. And again, the raja was so incensed, and hastily, without any investigation, passed death sentence to Hang Tuah. He called the Bendahara and the Bendahara immediately came, but had yet he managed to sit the raja swiftly commanded him, “You Bendahara, do not waste time, promptly dump Si Tuah! He betrayed me” (Hikayat, 1964: 324-325). Then, in no time, the Bendahara went out to deliverer the royal degree to Hang Tuah. At that time Hang Tuah and his family were catching fish in a stream at the upper river of Melaka. Hang Jebat and Hang Kasturi were the persons who were in charged by the Bendahara to tell Hang Tuah about the raja’s degree. Upon getting the message brought by Hang Jebat, Hang Tuah hurried back to the Bendahara. And just like the former, Hang Tuah received the death sentence with all his open will, and fully rejoice. Then, while Hang Tuah and the Bendahara were talking, Hang Jebat and Hang Kasturi came in again to deliver another royal degree that said the raja ordered Hang Tuah to hand over the Keris Taming Sari to Hang Jebat (Hikayat, 1964: 327). The Hikayat narrates that Hang Jebat and Hang Kasturi were both weeping, then hugging and kissing Hang Tuah.

Then, Hang Jebat returned to the palace and he handed over the Keris Taming Sari to the raja. To Hang Jebat’s astonishment, the raja granted the keris to him. The Hikayat (1964: 327) narrates:

So, the raja asked, “Where is the keris?” Hang Jebat answered, “Long Live My Majesty!” Then, the raja granted the keris (Taming Sari) to him.

The *Hikayat* (1964: 327-328) repeatedly emphasis that the raja bestowed the Keris Taming Sari to Hang Jebat, and Hang Jebat was extremely happy with that:

So, the raja gave his command, “I award the keris (Taming Sari) to you, Hang Jebat.” As he heard that, Hang Jebat extremely rejoice to have possessed the keris, and his heart spontaneously beeping, “finally then, it is me to become the Admiral!”

Then, the story in the *Hikayat* returned to the place where the Bendahara supposed to execute Hang Tuah. Similarly to what had happened during the first defamation, the Bendahara did not pursue the degree of the raja to execute Hang Tuah, instead, he sent Hang Tuah to his orchard at upper river of Melaka, at the

distance of seven days and seven nights walk from Melaka. In the orchard, there was Syeikh Mansor, a respectable religious teacher. Almost instantly, Hang Tuah became the most favorable student of the Syeikh.

Then, the *Hikayat* (1964: 329-329) narrates the incidents in the palace. After Hang Tuah was sentenced to death, the raja became extremely intimated with Hang Jebat. The raja asked Hang Jebat to stay with him in the palace and enjoy the whole luxurious life in the palace. *Hikayat* (1964: 328-329) narrates:

Thereupon, Hang Jebat has always stayed in the palace, no longer returned home. He partying with all the handmaidens and concubines in royal palace which was always attended with all kinds of music and dance.

Then, the *Hikayat* narrates the other idiocy anomalies about the raja and Hang Jebat: The raja requested Hang Jebat to recite tales—a task usually done by special court reciter called *biduan*. The *Hikayat* relates that the raja was so fascinated and imbued with the voice of Hang Jebat. It was very sharp, penetrating, sweet and melodious. Because of that, the raja had often felt asleep on the lap of Hang Jebat (*Hikayat*, 1964: 328-329). Hang Jebat's voice had also attracted the whole of handmaidens and concubines in the palace:

So it was requested by the raja to recite the tales as Hang Jebat was very good in various languages. So Hang Jebat recited the tales. His voice was extremely sharp as well as penetrating sweet melodious. Even all the concubines, retinues and handmaidens of the raja piping through wall's holes to see he reciting the tales. All those concubines eagerly fall in amatory love to Hang Jebat. The raja extremely enjoying Hang Jebat's voice reciting the tales. His voice was so sweet resembling the melodious sound of love charm flute (buluh perindu = Latin, bambusa magica ridl) due to the ability of Hang Jebat expressing various kind of voices, and all the listeners descent into dolour and nostalgia. Anyone who listened to it cannot help from falling in love. So the raja felt asleep on the lab of Hang Jebat. Hang Jebat halted his reciting, then he sang cradle-songs; it was extremely melodious. So the raja felt into a deep sleep on Hang Jebat's lap. (*Hikayat*, 1964: 328-329).

Hang Jebat was appointed as a junior Bendahara (or a junior Prime Minister). The raja himself had also encouraged Hang Jebat to transgress and violate all royal palace rules. All *the do's and the don'ts* of the Malay raja's protocols and traditions were violated by Hang Jebat without a slight encroachment by the raja. For instance, the *Hikayat* (1964: 330) narrates:

After he finished his meal, the raja ordered all the handmaidens, "Go and call junior Bendahara to come in." All the handmaidens went out to call Hang Jebat. Then, Hang Jebat came in. He sat on the spot where the raja

had sited. Then, the course of meal was served to Hang Jebat. Then, Hang Jebat ate the meal by standing on his knee. As Hang Jebat finished his meal, the raja commanded the handmaidens to take the betel case (puan) belongs to Tun Teja and to set forth before Hang Jebat. So Hang Jebat ate the betel from the case of Tun Teja.

As evidence in all the classical Malay writings, including the *Malay Annals* (*Sejarah Melayu*), *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, *Hikayat Raja Siak*, *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* ect., all deeds of Hang Jebat are *taboo*, forbidden among ordinary people. Amazingly, all those transgressing and violated acts of Hang Jebat were done with the consents, in fact, by the conspiracy, of the raja himself.

Furthermore, the *Hikayat* (1964: 332) narrates that after Hang Tuah was executed, the raja promoted Hang Jebat as a Bendahara (full Prime Minister), styled as 'Paduka Raja,' the highest rank among the ordinary people. Essentially, the Malay royal traditions, should there is an absence of the raja in the country — such as visiting other countries—the Bendahara will take in charge of the country. Hence, if this happened, Hang Jebat would be sitting at the highest rank for the entire Malay kingdom. Another should be noticed, the raja appointed Hang Jebat as the Bendahara at the time when the existing Bendahara was still alive and active. Historically, in the Malay traditions, as stated in those Malay classical writings as well as in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* itself (1964: 350-351), from time immemorial, the post of the Bendahara was only awarded to the royal-house's blood who originated from Bukit Seguntang. In practice, the Bendahara is the uncle of the raja.

Then, the *Hikayat* (1964: 333) narrates Hang Jebat live in frivolous life in the palace, amusing and dissipation himself with the concubines and handmaidens. Quite unusual, Hang Jebat had sexual intercourses with all the handmaidens and concubines (numbered 700) in palace, including with the most beloved concubine of the raja:

So Hang Jebat had sexual intercourses with all the handmaidens, and he knew that nobody brave enough to admonish him. Then, he had sexual intercourse with the singer of the raja, and yet no single official brave enough to admonish him. So, Hang Jebat had sexual intercourse with the most beloved concubine of the raja, and yet no nobody dare to say anything to him. So, Hang Jebat live and had meals in the palace which were attainted by roistering ballad. (*Hikayat*, 1964: 333)

On the advice of the queen, Tun Teja, the raja and the royal house decided to leave the palace and stay at Bendahara's house. Hang Jebat watched the raja and the queen living the palace (*Hikayat*, 1964: 336). The *Hikayat* (1964: 336) narrates that at the very first moment, when the raja and queen left the palace, Hang Jebat had already began to live in the way the raja live:



So, it is a day light. Hang Jebat watched the raja and his family retreating from the palace. So Hang Jebat extremely rejoiced, then he sat on the golden dais (peterana) — the sit was reserved for the raja only. Then the four singers sang. Then, Hang Jebat took bath in the golden pot, the place where only the raja took bath. He worn fragrance and commanded the handmaidens to take the attires case belongs to the raja. He took the interlaced golden garments of the raja and worn it. He also wore the dress of the raja which was weaved with wool of sheep. He worn the golden gem head gear of the raja.

When everything was ready, Hang Jebat then sat on the golden dais. Than the meal were served. Hang Jebat ate the way the raja ate. His manners too are the same. After he finished his meal, he slept on the place where the raja slept. (Hikayat, 1964: 336)

The *Hikayat* (1964: 336) narrates that the Hang Jebat's vicious behaviors became more rampant and unstoppable. There were attempts to suppress Hang Jebat but all failed. The first to attempt was Patih Kerma Wijaya who lead thousand of warriors to surround the palace. Upon seeing those warriors came closer to the palace, Hang Jebat ran *amuk* and easily chased them out. Patih Kerma Wijaya, as seeing all his men were defeated by Hang Jebat, returned to the raja.

### HANG JEBAT GIVES HIS OWN REASONS WHY HE REVOKED

The second attempt to suppress Hang Jebat was done by Hang Kasturi, accompanied by Hang Lekiu and Hang Lekir. They were escorted by warriors. The warriors had tried to enter the palace, but, seeing them, Hang Jebat came out and drove them away. Now, Hang Jebat met face to face with Hang Kasturi and his companions. But he did not pursue his *amuk*. Hang Jebat said he was not going to fight with them because they were brothers to him, and Hang Jebat gave the reason why he revoked:

*The reason why I do this is because the Laksamana (Hang Tuah) has not existed in this world anymore. It is the blood of Laksamana that I take revenge to the raja and all the officials who are jealous of him.* (Hikayat, 1964: 339).

Then, Hang Jebat walked back into the palace. He continued his frivolous live, amusing and dissipation himself with the concubines and handmaidens as if nothing had happened.

The third attempt was done by the Temenggong, accompanied by Bendahara and Tun Bija Sura. They were also escorted by warriors. When they came closer to the palace, the warriors were driven away by Hang Jebat. Hang Jebat came face to face with Temenggong, and behind him the Bendahara (also called Tun Utama) and Tun Bija Sura. And again, Hang Jebat said he was not going to fight with them

because they, especially the Bendahara, were always good to him and to Hang Tuah. In fact, the Bendahara had adopted them as his own children. Then, Hang Jebat told them the reason why he revoked:

Hang Jebat then laughs and says, “Hei Temenggong and Tun Utama (the Bendahara) and Tun Bija Sura, it is fortunate you are old warriors in this Melaka soil; after all it is not you who are jealous to Laksamana and slandered him. Should it were you who are jealous and slandered Laksamana, I will give you ashamed too, I will chase you like a herb of goat. But you love Laksamana; what can I do? Why then Patih Kerma Wijaya and all the officials who are jealous and slandered Laksamana are not being ordered to kill me? Hei Temenggong, you can return now and tell Our Highness to order Patih Kerma Wijaya and all the officials who are jealous to Laksamana to come and kill this traitorous, Hang Jebat, **so that I could pay back the Laksamana blood.** As Temenggong heard Hang Jebat’s words as so, he then astonished in his heart, “If it is as Si Jebat has said then actually he just wants to take revenge of Laksamana death.”

(Hikayat, 1964: 341)

Then, Hang Jebat walked back into the palace. He continued his frivolous live, amusing and dissipation himself with the concubines and handmaidens. Temenggong, Bendahara and Tun Bija Sura returned to the raja. The Temenggong told the raja and to the Bendahara as well as of what Hang Jebat had told him:

All matters were represented to the raja and to the Bendahara. Once the raja heard what Temenggong had presented, the raja instantly recalled Laksamana. Then the raja wrathfully summoned to all those officials who are jealous to Laksamana, “Hei all of you who are jealous of Laksamana! You should go and kill your farther, that Si Jebat. All of you will know your death. If Si Jebat does not die, I will kill all of you (Hikayat, 1964: 342).

The raja began to regret, longing for Hang Tuah. Then, the Bendahara told the raja that Hang Tuah was still alive. The raja instantly pardoned Hang Tuah and he was brought before the raja. Hang Tuah asked for Keris Taming Sari. The raja replied, unfortunately, he had given it to Hang Jebat. As for its substitute, the raja said there was an ancient keris originated from the Old Malay Kingdom at Bukit Seguntang, and that time it was kept in the palace. Hang Kasturi was asked to go into the palace to take the keris. Hang Kasturi went into the palace, and he was allowed by Hang Jebat to take the keris. After succeeding taken out the keris, he brought it to Hang Tuah. However, Hang Tuah said, the keris could not kill Hang Jebat. But, he reluctantly, took the keris due to that was the only keris which was better than others.

After everything was ready, Hang Tuah went to the palace. The following paragraphs are incidents which brought to the duel of Hang Tuah-Hang Jebat as stated in the Hikayat. They end up with the death of Hang Jebat in the hand of Hang Tuah (1964: 355-356):

Then Laksamana Hang Tuah shouted, "Hei the traitorous Si Jebat! You are brave when only there is no fight! Now come down from the palace, we fight one to one." Then, his voice was overheard by Hang Jebat. He recognized the voice of the Laksamana. Hang Jebat steps up the pavilion. He saw the Laksamana standing at the middle of the yard. Hang Jebat's heart shivering nervous; he wonders in his heart, "Hang Tuah has died, killed by the Bendahara, now the Laksamana not exist in this world, then who is this who come here just like the Laksamana. His manners and his behavior are also just like the Laksamana. If my puffy eyes are not confusing, then my vision is not right." The Laksamana watched Hang Jebat opened the palace's door, so he rolled up his shirt sleeves. The Laksamana said, "Cih, traitorous Si Jebat! You will die by me!" By a sudden Hang Jebat closed the palace's door and said, "who are you who come to duel with me, and what is your name?" Then, the Laksamana says, "Hei traitorous Si Jebat, are you afraid of my question? I am the Laksamana, just returned from learning at the upper river of Melaka." Then, Jebat answers, "Hei, Laksamana, I do not afraid of you. I heard you was killed by the Bendahara; that is why I am wondering." Then, the Laksamana said, "I am Hang Tuah, being commanded by His Highness to kill you because I still alive, I was hidden by the Bendahara at the upper river of Melaka." As Hang Jebat heard the Laksamana's words as so, he felt strange and said, "**Hei, Orang Kaya Laksamana (Admiral, the Lord), it is because of you that I do this task.** To my mind you do not exist in this world anymore. If I have known you still alive I swear to Allah swt and His Apostle that I would not do anything like this." The Laksamana said, "Hei Si Jebat are you regret?" Then, Hang Jebat said, "Hei Laksamana I never regret and afraid to die as I have known that my death is in your hand, how can I get wrong? But, you can see the pierces of this traitorous Si Jebat; forty days people of Melaka throwing corpses in the country of Melaka and suffering smell of rotten corpses. Once you do evil, do not ever do it arbitrary; I have done it earnestly." Then, the Laksamana shouted, "Hei. Si Jebat, that is a misleading vision. You have betrayed your owner, how big is your sin to Allah swt which you cannot bare during the hereafter. Now you have killed thousand of innocent people, is your words to tell the truth?" Hang Jebat said, "What can I do? All these are of their own will too; it is not my power to do that, so that my name will get famous through out the countries."

Then, Hang Jebat said, "I have no dignity to go down this palace to fight with you because you are the most glorified warrior and reputable as well as. I can not take it easy like the way I had fought previously, and to me you are my elder brother, and so it is not good for me to go down there. If you want to fight with me, come up here." Said the Laksamana, "Then, open the door." Said Hang Jebat, "Wait for a while, I want to prepare my keris." Hang Jebat closed the door. After he had done that, Hang Jebat drawn his keris and stabbed all the ladies in palace which were all together seven hundred, no single person is spared. The blood of the ladies flowed down the palace like rain. The Laksamana called, "Hei, Si Jebat what have you done? How sinful you are." Hang Jebat shouted back, "This is the most perfect job. Once you do evil, do not ever do it arbitrary just like the Malay proverb says, "The onion spoiled afflicted by its own bouquet." Hang Tuah said, "Hei Si Jebat, just open up the door promptly."

Then, after some exchanged of words, the *Hikayat* narrates the duel began. It was a long earnest duel but as a whole it had been a fair one of no both sides. Hang Tuah could not kill Hang Jebat even though he had stabbed him many times because the Keris Taming Sari was in the hand of Hang Jebat. At last Hang Tuah managed to snatch the Keris Taming Sari from Hang Jebat. Hang Tuah gave his another keris to Hang Jebat, and the duel continued. Finally, Hang Tuah managed to stab Hang Jebat. He left the wounded Hang Jebat in the palace. As Hang Tuah had gone home, Hang Jebat ran *amuk* in the streets and market place, he killed as many people he can who ever he met in the streets. Finally, he fell on Hang Tuah's lap, and died.

In the above passages, Hang Jebat gave the reason *why* he revoked. As to make it an important point here, he said he revoked because he wanted to take revenge of the injustice of the raja and all the officials who were jealous of Hang Tuah. However, although it may sound convincing, the reason given by Hang Jebat should not be taken for granted because it does not carry any truth. There are strong evidence that it was his fraudulent excuses just to cover up the crimes he had done. He go on pursuing his mulpractices because how knows that somehow he will be punished for his wrong doing in the palace, especially acting as a raja and having sexual intercourses with concubines and handmaidens of the raja. That is why he said "Sepala-pala jahat jangan kepalang; kuperbuat sungguh-sungguh" (If I am really to do evil, I will not do it half-heartedly). It is worth to mention the spurious words of Hang Jebat were already noticed by prominent scholars in Malay classical literature, for instance, Teeuw and Parnickel (1976: 412) exerts:

Teeuw does not wish to believe one word of Hang Jebat's and describes him as a man "who, feeling his impunity and pursuing his own interests, deliberately violates binding laws, and then, seeing that he cannot avoid punishment, decides to go on with his crimes to the end." In this work we

are concerned with concrete Malay standards: obedience to the prince with all the consequences which follow thereupon, a basic principle of Malay society. But those standards apply not only to some specific, and in this case feudal and therefore, perhaps, in our eyes reprehensible, society. The artistic force of this work lies, above all, in the fact that those binding standards have a considerably more universal character, and in this connection Hang Jebat is an offender in the broadest sense of the word. His conduct is, even from a western point of view extremely bad. He is *durhaka* in the true sense of that word: *drohaka*, 'a public enemy,' 'a socially harmful man.'

Perhaps, some quarters may argue that the statements given by Teeuw and Parnickel in the above quotation as exaggerations. However, evidences from our own perusal on the text of the *Hikayat* confirmed what Teeuw and Parnickel had said. They are both absolutely true. Our conviction is proven by two major factors: Firstly, there is no statement in the *Hikayat* that could be used to support the reason given by Hang Jebat. Instead, as should be seriously noticed, the phrase "It is the blood of Laksamana that I take revenge to the raja and all the officials who are jealous of him" come out from the mouth or dialogues of Hang Jebat only. It is not through the descriptions of the author of the *Hikayat*. It is also not through monologues. Secondly, the reason given by Hang Jebat is totally contradict with *circumstantial evidences*.

### **Not Supported by Any Statement**

Hang Jebat's phrase—"It is the blood of Laksamana that I take revenge to the raja and all the officials who are jealous of him" in three quotations above—should not be taken as a telling the truth, instead, it should be taken as just his fraudulent excuses. This is because one could notice that it was only stated in three dialogues of Hang Jebat. They are Hang Jebat's words to Hang Kasturi, Temenggong and Hang Tuah himself. This is no other statement in the entire *Hikayat* which carried the same meaning of that. It is stated in the dialogues of Hang Jebat only. It is also not in the description of the author of the *Hikayat*, and most importantly it is not through monologues of himself. These forms of expressions, especially through monologues, have great significant in term of telling the truth.

Essentially, whether in literature, psychological or logical minds, monologue is a channel of expressing of what really contained in the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention of a person within his/her own self (Cettl, 2010: 5-6). Thus, as compare to dialogue, the words expressed through monologue reveal and uncover the truth in the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention because they came directly from them—the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention—of the person in concerned. Cettl (2010: 5):

The monologue is one of the established traditions in theatrical drama. From the Greeks to the present day, the monologue has functioned as the sole means of insight into a character's psyche. The monologue is a direct representation of their mind. In theatrical drama, the monologue is a sublime expression: an affirmation of self. It is through the monologue that the character speaking actualizing himself/herself. And, it is essentially a form of self-talk.

In other words, the words expressed through monologue are sincere, hence, telling the truth because they are the inner communication of the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention within one's self. If a character in the text expressed his/her words through monologue, that means he/her expressed what really contained in his/her mind, emotion, knowledge and intention. Monologue could never tell lie because there is no reason to do so. In the communication through monologue, one is in charge of his/her self. Besides, there is no motif to tell lie because monologue means inner communication to one own self. In the case of Hang Jebat there is nothing to affiliate with his inner elements with complex psychological factors that his monologue will also telling lie.

On the contrary, dialogue is a channel of communication between one person to other person. It is an external communication of between one self with the other persons which have certain motifs. Dialogue is done for many reasons such as to disseminate information, to persuade, to manipulate, to speculate, to convince and so forth. Without motif there is no reason to have a dialogue or to talk with other person at all. This means that the one who gave dialogue is not totally in charge of what to be said. Then, as it has motif, there is always potential for him/her to tell lie, to manipulate and to speculate.

Of course, the degree of sincerity, honest and trustworthy are very much depend on context. However, in the context of Hang Jebat, there are many reasons for him to use dialogue as a channel to lie as to cover up his wrong did. For example, he had sex-intercourse with so many ladies in the palace. He killed all the ladies who he had satisfied his sexual desire. Most importantly, he is a traitor to the raja.

On that basis, words expressed through dialogue do not necessarily reveal or uncover the truth in the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention because they do not came directly from the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention, instead, they are being filtered by the attributes of the people encountered the person who expressed them (through dialogue). Words expressed through dialogues do not necessarily reveal or uncover the truth in the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention of the person who expressed them because they do not express the true mind, emotion, knowledge and intention directly from them the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention. This is because—as the means to communicate, to configure perception,

understanding, knowledge, and to distribute facts and certain attributes—they have to suit the people encountered the person.

In the case Hang Jebat, all the phrases that said “It is the blood of Laksamana that I take revenge to the raja and all the officials who are jealous of him” in the above quotations are expressed through dialogues. Hence, they do not necessarily reveal or uncover the truth in the mind, emotion, knowledge and intention of Hang Jebat because they do not come directly from them—the minds, emotion, knowledge and intention. Instead, they are the words in the form of dialogue that Hang Jebat himself said to three groups of people: Hang Kasturi (accompanied by Hang Lekiu and Hang Lekir), Temenggong (accompanied by Bendahara and Tun Bija Sura) and Hang Tuah.

To those people, Hang Jebat said that his revoke is to take revenge on the injustice raja and all the officials who were jealous of Hang Tuah and also who had put Hang Tuah on death sentence. As argued, his words should not be taken as a truth, instead, it is just his fraudulent excuses, because Hang Jebat expressed them to suit the ears of those people who were too close to him. This is evidence from the fact that Hang Jebat did not express the words to other people except to the three groups mentioned above

Each of the dialogue was expressed when Hang Jebat under great pressure as he is facing the people who are very close to his heart, deemed to be to close to his bone. In the first instance, it was of what Hang Jebat has said to Hang Kasturi, Hang Lekiu and Hang Lekir. In the second instance, it was of what Hang Tuah has said to Temenggong, and the third instance, it was of what Hang Jebat has said to Hang Tuah. He has to say that words as excuse because that is the only way he could escape from the depression situation since those three groups of people who approached him were his closest human being.

There is one more question needs to be crucially clarified: In his dialogue with Hang Tuah, Hang Jebat said that he “sworn in the name of Allah swt and His Apostle that he would not do what he had done if he knew Hang Tuah was alive.”

“Hei, Orang Kaya Laksamana it is because of you that I did this task. To my mind you do not exist in this world anymore. If I have known you still alive I swear to Allah swt and His Apostle that I would not do the task like this.”

What does the statement mean? This phrase could be interpreted in two perspectives. It could be interpreted as if Hang Tuah was not executed by the Raja, Hang Jebat will not revoke and did not do what he had done. This means Hang Jebat revoked was to take revenge on the injustice raja and the officials.

It could also be interpreted as, hitherto, Hang Jebat believed that there was no people who could kill him except Hang Tuah. Then, after Hang Tuah had died (executed by the raja), there was no body who could kill him. So, he could do

whatever he wanted to do. However, finally Hang Jebat knew actually Hang Tuah was still alive, thus, the phrase “If I have known you still alive I swear to Allah swt and His Apostle that I would not do the task like this” means “absolutely” he will not do of what he had done because if he did that there is someone (that is Hang Tuah) who will kill him.

But, if we extent the scrutiny on text, the meaning of that phrase is inclined to latter perspective. The phrase “In the name of God” here means “absolutely” is quite clear if it read together with the other sentence that immediately follow it: “Hang Jebat said, “Hei Laksamana I never regret and afraid to die as I have known that my death is in your hand, how can I get wrong?”

Thus, if one takes the latter interpretation, then, Hang Jebat sworn was actually a fraudulent claim. Although it may sound convincing—as he pronounced the name of Allah swt and His Apostle that I would not do the task like this”—these words of Hang Jebat should also not be taken for granted because it does not carry any truth. What Hang Jebat had claimed are fraudulent could be supported by **circumstantial evidence** as in the following section.

### **Totally Against Circumstantial Evidences**

It is again crystals clear that Hang Jebat’s phrase— “It is the blood of Laksamana that I take revenge to the raja and all the officials who are jealous of him” in the three quotations above—should not be taken as telling the truth, instead, it should be taken as just his fraudulent excuses, because it is totally contradict with circumstantial evidences as follow:

- Hang Jebat did not revoke when Hang Tuah was first defamed. There is no clue in the *Hikayat* that shown Hang Jebat knows that Hang Tuah still alive at that time and living in self-exile in Indepura. What is obvious, at that time the Keris Taming Sari was in the hand of the Bendahara. If he sincerely revoked for the sake of injustice of the raja on Hang Tuah, he should has done that at that time regardless he had the Keris Taming Sari with him or not and also regardless he been appointed as a Laksamana or not, but, in what really happened, he did not do that. The only logical explanation we could offer on this matter is of what Teeuw had stated in the above quotation: he revoked to “pursuing his own interests.’
- Hang Jebat only revoke when Hang Tuah was secondly defamed. What is obvious, at the second time Hang Tuah was defamed, the Keris Taming Sari was in his (Hang Jebat’s) hand as the raja has taken it from Hang Tuah and awarded it to him. As well stated in the *Hikayat*, who ever hold the Keris Taming Sari, he/she will be invulnerable. As also stated in the *Hikayat*, Hang Jebat knows that the only person who can kill him is Hang Tuah. Now, at that time, Hang Tuah (as he believed) had not exist in this world



anymore as he was executed by the Bendahara under the command of the raja. The revoke was to “pursuing his own interests” is clearly evidence for the fact that— after Hang Tuah was not exist anymore—as soon as he was appointed as the Laksamana and been the raja’s favorite, he did not go home anymore and stayed at palace, enjoying (*Hikayat*, 1964: 330-333).

- Hang Jebat did not do anything after Hang Tuah was sentenced to death for the second time whereas he had all opportunities to do so. When the raja summoned death sentence to him, Hang Tuah was catching fish with his family in the upper river of Melaka. It was Hang Jebat who brought the verdict of the raja to Hang Tuah—at the upper river of Melaka. He was also the person who took Hang Tuah back to the Bendahara to be executed. However, Hang Jebat did do anything to save Hang Tuah from the injustice sentence. He did not give any single notion to persuade Hang Tuah to run away, in fact, he did not mention it to Hang Tuah, instead, he was the one who brought Hang Tuah to be executed. If he truly sincere to take revenge for Hang Tuah, why then he did not anything to save Hang Tuah from injustice sentence? The only logical reason one could give is that he really wished Hang Tuah been executed so that will be no one who could kill him. As been stated elsewhere in the *Hikayat*, Hang Jebat will not die should he is killed by other person. He will die if only he is killed by Hang Tuah.
- Hang Jebat’s revoke was to “pursuing his own interests’ is evidence in his statement when he was arguing with Hang Kasturi. Hang Kasturi gave comments about Hang Jebat’s attitude as very bad compare to Hang Tuah. Hang Jebat, then, asked Hang Kasturi, “Why do you, my lord, say so? It is possible that Laksamana and only he alone is a knight and no one else is? When he is not around, it is Si Jebat who replaces him and confronts His Majesty’s enemies and foes” (*Hikayat Hang Tuah*, 1964: 333; See also the translation to English by Muhammad Hj. Salleh, 2012: 328). His statement here tells his attention of his quite an ambitious person to gain status.
- Hang Jebat’s revoked was to “pursuing his own interests’ is evidence in his statement when he was awarded the Keris Taming Sari by the raja. The *Hikayat* (1964: 327-328) stated that “Hang Jebat extremely rejoice to have possessed the keris, and his heart spontaneously beeping, “finally then, it is me to become the Admiral!”
- Hang Jebat did not mention a single word about Hang Tuah after he was awarded Keris Taming Sari and been appointed as a Admiral (Laksamana) by the raja. Instead, Hang Jebat was very enthusiasm staying in the palace, had not going home anymore. He lived rejoice with the concubines and handmaidens.

- Hang Jebat did not do anything neither to the raja nor to Patih Kerma Wijaya whereas during his stay in the palace he had plenty of time and totally free to do whatever he wished to do. Instead, as mentioned above, he did not even mention about Patih Kerma Wijaya. Furthermore, when the raja and the royal-house whole were living the palace to go to the Bendahara's house, he just watching them without taking any action. This definitely does not show something that can be judged as he had any attention to revoke as avenge on the injustice of the raja and the officials.
- Hang Jebat's revoke did not been supported by Hang Kasturi, Hang Lekir and Hang Lekiu whereas they had declared that they were half-blood brothers. The absence of their supports implicitly reveal that the revoke was of Hang Jebat's business *per se*.
- Last but not least, Hang Jebat could not set up collision with his half-blood brothers, Hang Kasturi, Hang Lekir and Hang Lekiu to join his revoke against the raja to take revenge of the injustice of the raja and all the officials to Hang Tuah. Instead, he quarreled with all of them as though they were enemies of him, and *via-versa*

## CONCLUSION

We stress that the celebration of Hang Jebat as a Malay hero is not legitimate move because it is totally contradiction with its legitimate source, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. Hence, when someone like Kassim Ahmad celebrates "Hang Tuah as a national epic" then that should be taken as legitimate move, instead, it is an *ideologically blinkered* and *wishful thinking* manipulations the leftist factions. They are all newly invented stories by the people behind the *bangsawan*, film (cinema), plays (theaters), dances, short stories, musicals, television and comics. Perhaps, many people think that those people, including the general public (populaces) or the critics, reviewers, writers, entertainment directors, educators, politicians, even scholars, who are writings and talkings about Hang Jebat as a Malay hero read the *Hikayat*, however, the truth is they do not. We definitely sure about this—that they do not read the text at all—based on the fact that the stories they are writing and talking are totally different from what real story as stated in the *Hikayat*. We are also absolutely sure that of what they write and talk they take it or heard from the *bangsawan*, film (cinema), plays (theaters), dances, short stories, musicals, television and comics. This is noticeable from the levels of their knowledge about the story of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat, they extremely shallow. An immediate example, they say that the phrase "A just king is a king to be venerated, a despotic king is a king to be repudiated" (*Raja yang adil raja disembah, raja yang zalim raja yang disanggah*) as Hang Jebat word derived from its authentic source, whereas even junior school students know it was coined by Usman Awang in the 1960s in his play *Matinya Seorang Pahlawan*. The

shallowness of their thought and knowledge clearly demonstrated of what they are writing and talking are very much tally with the stories in the *bangsawan*, film (cinema), plays (theaters), dances, short stories, musicals, television and comics. We are amazed with these people because even though they are ‘slow learners,’ they still very brave to down-grading Hang Tuah as a Malay hero by giving wrong claims that Hang Tuah lost sight of the nobility of his friend’s acts which no one can see how such blind obedience can be admirable, instead, they say that Hang Tuah as a slave to the whims of his lord even when the raja had committed wrong. They are also brave enough to say implicitly that the Malay raja as injustice tyrant feudal which opposing democracy, in fact, they say indirectly that the Malay raja hopelessly feudalistic mindset. We believe that the people who claim Hang Jebat as the hero are the people who have been taught to think critically. However, that is still insufficient to give them credit as intelligent people. This is the only way that could save them from not to be dumped as what the Kelantanese say “bodoh sombong” (arrogant dumb) or “cerdik tidak boleh ditumpang, bodoh tidak boleh diajar” (Intelligent but useless, dump but cannot be thought). Our discussions support what being said by Teeuw and Parnickel that there is not a single word of what Hang Jebat had said—“It is the blood of Laksamana that I take revenge to the raja and all the officials who are jealous of him”—should be taken as telling the truth. They are absolutely true. Our supports are based on two major factors: Hang Jebat’s words came out from the mouth or dialogues of Hang Jebat only, not through descriptions of the author of the *Hikayat* and also not through monologues; and the reason given by Hang Jebat is totally contradict with *circumstantial evidences*. There are only reason why some quarters keep articulating Hang Jebat as the Malay hero: Firstly, they never read the *Hikayat* itself; Secondly, they have hidden agendas to humiliate the Malay institutions, especially Malay Sultanate.

### Reference

- Alatas, M. (2009). *Quaderni della Sezione Linguistica del Dipartimento di Studi su Mutamento Sociale, Istituzioni Giuridiche e Comunicazione* (its contents in English). Heteroglossia: Università degli Studi di Macerata.
- Cettl, R. (2010). *Sensational Movie Monologues*. Adelaide: Wider Screenings TM.
- Heide, William van der (2002). *Malaysian Cinema, Asian Film: Border Crossings and National Cultures*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.
- Hikayat Hang Tuah*. (1964, Edition). Edited by Diselenggarakan oleh Kassim Ahmad. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Kassim Ahmad (1966). *Characterization in Hikayat Hang Tuah: a general survey of character-portrayal and analysis and interpretation of the character of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Muhammad Hj. Salleh (2012). *Hang Tuah dalam Hayat Lisan di Air dan Daratan*. In Halimah Mohamed Ali & Mohamad Luthfi Abdul Rahman (Edtrs). *Sastera dalam Budaya dan Media*. Pulau Pinang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia. Hlm.: 1-29.

Shaharuddin Maaruf (1984). *Concept of a hero in Malay society*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

*The Epic of Hang Tuah* (Translated by Muhammad Haji Salleh). 2012. Kuala Lumpur: Institut Terjemahan Negara Malaysia.

*The Straits Times*. "Hang Jebat in cinema." dated 22 March 1961

Usman Awang (1987). "Matinya Seorang Pahlawan." In *Drama-drama Pilihan*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.