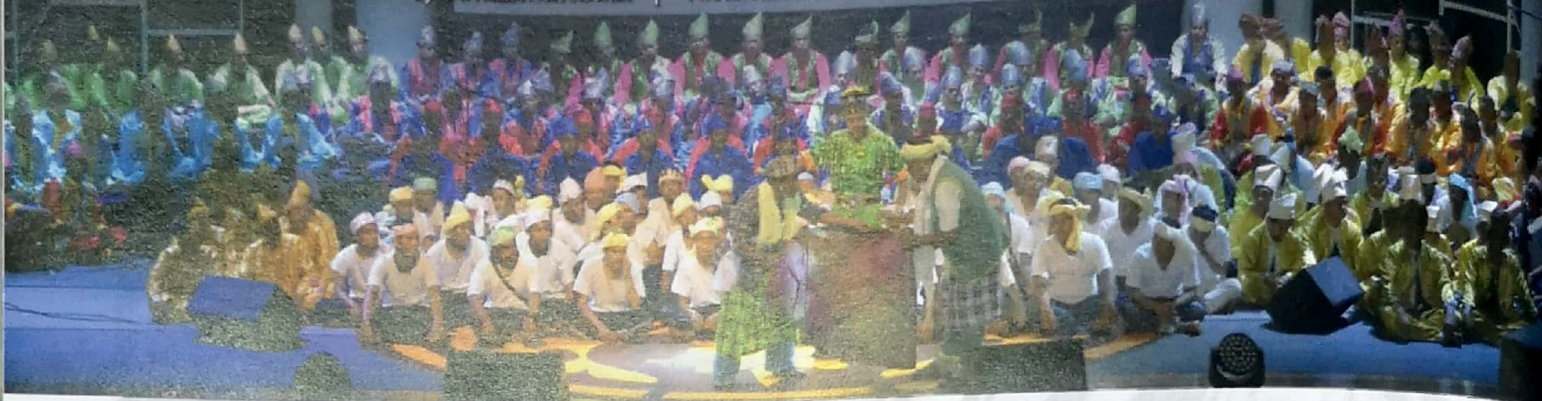


# KELANTAN ARTS

## REQUIREMENT OF REBRANDING AND REFINING

By: Dr. Ruzanifah Kosnin | Photo: Jabatan Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negeri Kelantan



Kelantan is a land of colorful traditions and scenic beauty. Not only known for its natural attractions, cuisines and shopping heaven, it is also known as the birthplace of some ancient Malay cultural arts in Malaysia such as wayang kulit (shadow puppet show), mak yong, menora, dikir barat and others. Some of the cultural arts such as mak yong is recognized by UNESCO as Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005.

Wayang kulit is a unique form of theatre that uses the principle of light and shadow to bring its characters to life, depicted by intricate beautiful hand-crafted puppets. The master puppeteer (Tok Dalang), is the only one responsible to make the show alive by controlling the movements of the puppets and provide each one of them with different voices, and at times, to sing.

Mak yong is another ancient Malay theatre that combines acting, vocal and instrumental music, gestures and elaborate costumes. Experts believed that mak yong appeared well before Islam came to the country. It was performed as a royal theatre under the direct patronage of the Kelantan Sultanate until the 1920s.

Later on, the tradition was preserved in a rural context without forsaking the numerous refinements acquired at court, such as its sophisticated costume design. A typical mak yong performance will start with an offering followed by dances, acting and music as well as improvised monologues and dialogues. A single story can be presented over several consecutive nights in a series of three-hour performances.

### Kelantan Entertainment Control Enactment

In 1990, when Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) came into power in Kelantan, it introduced new political idea for an Islamic State by introducing philosophy of Islamic administration with the slogan of Membangun Bersama Islam (Developing with Islam). Several Islamic reforms in various administrative sectors had been implemented including cultural and entertainment sector.

Due to the claims that wayang kulit, mak yong, menora, main puteri and several other ancient performing arts contain elements contrary to Islam, the staging of these arts were prohibited in the state. According to Prof Mohd Taib Osman, mak yong, wayang wulit, menora and main puteri contain elements from pre-Islamic belief such as Hinduism and Buddhism. The Malay community during that time were strong in believing the unseen, whether it was being recognized in Islam or what was inherited.

Later on, Kelantan state government approved the State Entertainment Control Enactment 1998 to incorporate the value of Islam in every performance as well as to avoid the practice of superstition such as rituals of worshipping the spirit in performing arts. To ensure continuous survival of these arts, some of the performances had gone through transformation or being performed outside of Kelantan.



Art performances of Menora.



For example, wayang kulit in Kelantan today has emerged from the traditional tale of Hikayat Sri Rama - the Malay adaptation of the epic Hindu Ramayana - to the stories based on local folklore, history, popular comedies, current issues and secular tales. Whereas mak yong, although limited in number, has continuously been performed outside of Kelantan. An example is mak yong Raja Besar Maha Gading which was performed at Istana Budaya in October 2019, a story based on ancient Malay folk tales with royal characters, divinities and clowns.

In recent development, the ban on mak yong has been lifted and the Deputy Chief Minister of Kelantan, Dato' Mohd Amar Abdullah in response to that said that those who wish to stage the dance can only do so if it is on par with the shariah requirements and guidelines.

That includes making it compulsory for mak yong performers to observe their aurat. Similarly, guidelines are also imposed upon wayang kulit and other traditional artistic Malay art performances by ensuring that only Islamic-related performances are performed to the audience. With the uplift of the ban, the state government called for artists to perform their arts creatively and most importantly, in line with the Islamic guidelines.

#### **Islamic elements in traditional performing arts (Wayang kulit)**

Professor Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof highlighted the significant element of Islamic culture that have shaped Indonesian and Malay traditional theatre. Instead of becoming obsolete and extinct, wayang kulit was resurrected from extinction and became greatly popular and was known as "the most artistic transformation" that is in line with Islamic values.

The connection of Islamic learning with the performance of wayang kulit Java through the language has been studied by Ferdi in 2017. His findings showed that the wayang kulit scripts contains various Islamic values and wisdoms.

#### **The Islamisation Process**

According to Professor Ghulam, in order for the local performing arts to be suitable for the Muslim audience as well as being acceptable by the non-Muslims at that time, Sunan Kalijaga made alterations to the wayang kulit and other performances through various ways. The transformation process can be divided into four ways; through physical changes to the figures of the characters, reinterpretation of traditional plots, the creation of new story and lastly making the performance available to Javanese Muslim communities.

Consequently, the transformation process of the traditional theatre turned to serve as a vehicle for propagation (dakwah) of Islam. It is to be noted that the transformation represents a fusion of indigenous (peribumi) elements with those from Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The first transformation is through the change of the puppets' figures by altering the puppet shapes and colors according to their characters that capture their psychological or emotional states.

The second way of transforming the arts by reinterpreting the traditional plot to suit Islam so that the shadow play is acceptable by the Muslim community. The interpretation given by the nine saints to the wayang kulit is particularly interesting. The wayang kulit show is seen as a symbol that reflects "image of law" or shari'ah. "The wayang reflects all humanity, the puppeteer (dalang) corresponds to Allah, Creator of universe."



Art performances & attire of Mak Yong



Another element where shadow play has a direct connection with Islam is by the invention of new stories using materials derived from Islamic legends or history. One noteworthy shadow play is Wayang Kulit Menak, created to represent the life of Amir Hamza, a maternal uncle of Prophet Muhammad, known in Java as Wong Agung Menak (The Great Amir Hamza). The process of Islamisation of wayang kulit in Java can be an excellent example of how cultural arts in Kelantan can be popularized again.

### Way Forward

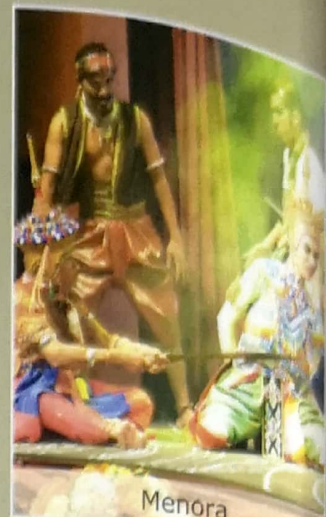
Arts and cultural activities have long been considered as important elements that spur not only tourism industry but also educational platform and excellent medium for propagating values and religion especially Islam.

Therefore, performing artists should take the initiative to incorporate Islamic values into their artistic activities. Whereas the enforcement authority needs to evaluate the arts activities in a broader context in religious reasoning by taking into account how the previous craftsmen such as the nine saints especially Sunan Kalijaga made improvements and reinterpretation to local performing arts in a prudent, gentle and highly effective way of preaching.

Awareness and knowledge on the origins, development and philosophical meaning behind these ancient artistic performances will provide better understanding and evaluation. By doing so, the audience can see the beauty and perfection of Islam behind these art performances.



Dikir barat



Menora



Mak yong



Wayang kulit



**WAW MDP SERVICES SDN. BHD.**

**We provide the following consultancy services**

- **ARCHITECTURE**
- **ENGINEERING (civil structure, mechanical & electrical)**
- **QUANTITY SURVEYING**

**WAW MDP SERVICES SDN. BHD.**

TINGKAT SATU, LOT 195, JALAN KUALA KRAI, 15050 KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN  
 TEL: +609-747 4819 EMAIL: wawmdp@gmail.com





MAJALAH KORPORAT PERBADANAN MENTERI BESAR KELANTAN

# QADDAH



### FOKUS

PERSEDIAAN MENTAL & SPIRITUAL PIMPINAN NEGERI KELANTAN MENGHARUNGI 2020



### PEMIMPIN

YB DATO' SR. HJ. AZAMI



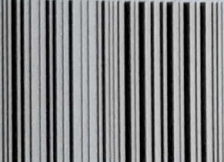
### DESTINASI

PASAR TERAPUNG, PENGKALAN DATU

# KELANTAN 2020 MENGHARUNGI

MEMBANGUN BERSAMA ISLAM - KELANTAN MENERAJUI PERUBAHAN

ISSN 2289-5418



9 772289 541000



# AHLI JAWATANKUASA EDITORIAL QIADAH EDISI KE-22

**Ketua Editor**  
**Hj. Abdul Rashid Mohd Yusoff**  
Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Kumpulan  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Timbalan Ketua Editor**  
**Wan Mohd Husni Wan Osman**  
Ketua Pegawai Operasi  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Setiausaha Jawatankuasa Editorial**  
**Zamakhshari Muhammad**  
Pengurus Kanan Pemasaran & Komunikasi Korporat Kumpulan  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Jawatankuasa Editorial**  
**Dr. Wan Nik Wan Yusoff**  
Pengaruh Pusat Kajian Strategik

**Mohd Asri Mat Daud**  
Setiausaha Politik Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Mohd Khairul Padli Badulidin**  
Setiausaha Akhbar Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Zuraidah Husin**  
Pengurus Kanan Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Hj. Mahadi Mokhtar**  
Pengurus Kanan Pembangunan Korporat  
Kelantan Utilities Mubaarakan Holdings Sdn. Bhd.

**Mohd Haikal Rozaini**  
Eksekutif Komunikasi Korporat  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Muhammad Najid Abdullah**  
Eksekutif Latihan Modal Insan  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Penyelaras Editorial**  
**Shariah Derahman**  
Pegawai Komunikasi Korporat  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Pembantu Penyelaras Editorial**  
**Siti Norazami Mohamed Anuar**  
Pegawai Komunikasi Korporat  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Pengarang**  
**Norzana Razaly (Zanazanzaly)**

**Penulis Bersama**  
Dr. Wan Adi Wan Yusoff • Dr. Samhani Ismail • Dr. Ruzanifah Koesni  
Nik Bahrum Nik Abdullah • Norzainah Nordin • A. Ubaidillah Alias  
Wan Noor Aziezan Baharuddin • Nik Fauziah Nik Hussin  
Ramli Abdul Halim • Muhammad Najid Abdullah • Shariah Derahman  
Wan Mohd Sharafi Wan Mustafa • Muhna Abdullah  
• Noorleyne Hamzah • Siti Norazami Mohamed Anuar • Yusri Yaakub  
Marzuki Mohd Noor El-Feringhati

**Pereka Grafik & Reka Petak**  
**Mohd Haikal Rozaini**  
Eksekutif Komunikasi Korporat  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Shariah Derahman**  
Pegawai Komunikasi Korporat  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Mustaqim Isa**  
Pembantu Tadbir Komunikasi Korporat  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Jurugambar**  
**Ahmad Nai'me Muhammad**  
Pegawai Komunikasi Korporat  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Jurugambar Bersama**  
Unit Komunikasi Menteri Besar (UKMB) • Mustaqim Isa  
• Mohd Faisal Othman • Muhd Asyraf Mad Razali

**Pengiklanan, Pemasaran & Promosi**  
**Jabatan Pemasaran**  
Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan

**Diterbitkan oleh**  
**Perbadanan Menteri Besar Kelantan**  
Tingkat 6, Bangunan PMBK, Jalan Kuala Krai,  
15150 Kota Bharu, Kelantan.  
Tel: 09-747 4082 Faks: 09-747 7815  
Laman portal: [www.pmbk.gov.my](http://www.pmbk.gov.my)

**Dicetak oleh**  
**Dinamik Restu Solutions Sdn. Bhd.**  
PT361, Tingkat Bawah, Belakang Tesco Kota Bharu,  
15050 Kota Bharu,  
Kelantan. Tel: 013-958 7478

Jutaan terima kasih diucapkan kepada semua yang terlibat sama ada secara langsung ataupun tidak langsung dalam penerbitan dan pengedaran majalah ini.

Hak cipta majalah korporat PMBK (Qiadah) dan kandungannya yang termasuk maklumat, teks, imej, grafik, logo, dan susunannya serta bahan-bahannya adalah hak milik PMBK. Tiada mana-mana bahagian paparan ini boleh diubah, disalin, diedar, disiarkan, dipamerkan, diterbitkan semula, dilesenkan, dipindah, disimpan, dijual atau mencipta karya terbitan daripada mana-mana maklumat atau bahagian paparan dalam majalah, serta diuruskan bagi tujuan komersial dalam apa bentuk sekali pun tanpa mendapat kebenaran secara bertulis yang jelas terlebih dahulu daripada PMBK.

