

## A Visual Analysis of the Hanuman Kera Putih Puppet in *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*

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Received 08 November, 2019; Accepted 26 December, 2019; Published 31 December, 2019.

### Abstract

This article focuses on Hanuman as one of the most important and interesting characters from the *Ramayana* as performed in *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, the principal form of Malaysian shadow play, in which tradition he is renamed Hanuman Kera Putih. From the very beginning of his life and career as a character in local versions of the *Ramayana* such as *Hikayat Seri Rama* and *Hikayat Maharaja Wana*, to the form of a skin puppet, Hanuman Kera Putih has developed in intriguing ways. This article traces some of his critical adventures and, more particularly, those elements that have gone into the design of the puppet representing him, in relation to regional as well as local aesthetic principles.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, Hanuman, *Ramayana*, Shadow Play Puppet Designs.

### Introduction

*Wayang Kulit Kelantan* is the principal form of shadow play in Malaysia. Its main source of dramatic repertoire is *Hikayat Maharaja Wana*, a local folk oral version of the Indian epic *Ramayana*, which differs considerably from the Indian as well as the Indonesian-Malay literary and classical version, *Hikayat Seri Rama*. Overall, both these versions show striking shifts away from the best-known Indian versions of the epic, those of Valmiki (c. 5<sup>th</sup> century), Kamban (c. 12<sup>th</sup> century), and Tulsidas (c. 16<sup>th</sup> century). Such variations are also seen in other Southeast Asian versions of the epic, such as the Thai *Ramakien*, the Indonesian *Ramayana Kekawin* and the Cambodian *Reamker*, which have provided inspiration as well as dramatic source materials for much of the region's traditional folk and classical theatre genres, such as the Javanese and Balinese shadow play (*Wayang Kulit*), and dance-theatre forms, such as *Wayang*

*Wong* and the Thai *Khon* court theatre as well as the southern Thai shadow play (*Nang Talung*). In this respect then, there are certain commonalities between the Southeast Asian versions of the epic.

In discussing *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* as theatre then, the possibility of borrowings or influences from other regional cultural expressions needs to be kept squarely in mind. Beside actual details from variant versions of the *Ramayana*, an important consideration is the fact that puppeteers (*dalang*) have traditionally resorted to improvisation upon scenarios rather than depend upon fixed scripts in the development of their performances and characters, thus adding local colour, for instance, through indigenous comic figures not associated directly with the epic itself. In the same manner, puppet makers have been inspired to make use of a diversity of visual resources so readily available in their own environment.

It is noteworthy that there has always been a great deal of cross-over of cultural forms across present day national boundaries. This has had a considerable impact, particularly on the theatre forms of the northern Malay peninsula. *Wayang Kulit Gedek*, active in Kedah was, in fact, developed as a Malay variant of the southern Thai *Nang Talung*, while *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* has been active on both sides of the international border between Peninsular Malaysia and Southern Thailand (Ghulam-Sarwar, 1994, pp. 282-287).

When it comes to the Kelantan shadow play, the puppeteers have used the folk rather than the classical version of the *Ramayana* for the development of their repertoire through free improvisation. With a simplification of the story-line many of the details in the plot of the Rama story have been reduced or altogether eliminated. This is also the case with Hindu elements characteristic of the major Indian versions of the *Ramayana*. Most importantly the origins of the principal characters, Seri Rama, Maharaja Wana and Laksamana, have been retold to explain their abandonment of the Sky country (*Kayangan*) to be born on earth. Rama and Sita, for instance are not reincarnations of the god Vishnu and the goddess Lakshmi, but of Dewa Berembun and Siti Andang Dewi, and Rawana is a reincarnation of a demon character named Bota Serajuk. This in the development of events and characters there has been a substantial shift from the classical Indian versions of the epic, at times paralleling the versions in neighbouring countries, Thailand in particular.

One of the most interesting features of the *Ramayana* as known and used in Southeast Asian arts, is the presence of a number of hybrid characters. Hanuman Kera Putih is one outstanding example. His importance lies, in part, with the fact that, in comparison with the original character in Indian sources, his transformation in Southeast Asia and in Kelantan is both highly significant as well as dramatic. In the Kelantan shadow play Hanuman Kera Putih (literally Hanuman the White Ape) is, in fact the son of Seri Rama and Siti Dewi. Once Seri Rama recognises this, Hanuman's involvement in the rescue of Siti Dewi gathers considerable significance. His loyalty and devotion to Seri Rama and Siti Dewi then take on a much greater meaning than in traditional Indian versions of the story. The other element related to Hanuman's character, something which in many ways is strikingly original to northern Southeast Asian versions of the *Ramayana* when used in performing arts, including the Kelantan shadow play, is Hanuman's "romantic" nature, which leads to his many affairs and his progeny of in-

teresting hybrid sons who play significant roles in the development of events. Among these, the most notable figure is his son with the fish princess known as Suvanna Matcha in Thailand and as Tuan Puteri Ikan in the Kelantan shadow play. Tuan Puteri Ikan becomes the mother of a powerful son, Hanuman Ikan. With the princess Tuan Puteri Bongsu of Lanka, Hanuman has another famous son, Hanuman Bongsu. In *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* both of these powerful sons of Hanuman play important roles, assisting Hanuman Kera Putih in the great war between Seri Rama and Maharaja Wana. The absence of such figures in the established Indian versions of the *Ramayana*, suggests possible local folk origins, possibly within mainland Southeast Asia. Their inclusion into traditional performing arts alongside Hanuman himself gives them legitimacy as well as considerable vibrancy. While their presence is almost integral in the Kelantan shadow play, Hanuman himself gains prominence as a major figure in the Thai *Khon* dance theatre form, while Suvanna Matcha also finds an important place in Thai visual arts.

Because *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* is an oral tradition-based folk theatre form passed down from generation to generation through apprenticeship, knowledge and information about this art form has limited dissemination. Therefore, for this article, the researchers gathered information mainly from the puppeteers and puppet-makers in Kelantan. Sometimes the informants have different views and opinions regarding these matters.

### Characterisation

The Indian epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* mention Hanuman as the son of Vayu, the Wind God, and Anjani, an apsara. A deity in his own right, he is renowned as a celibate ascetic (Illes, 2009, pp. 462 & 463). Hanuman, therefore, has divine origins and superhuman powers. Significant changes, however, were brought into his origin story in *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, where Hanuman Kera Putih is the son of Seri Rama and Siti Dewi who becomes pregnant when both of them are transformed into monkeys following a dip in a magic pond. Laksamana transfers the foetus to Dewi Anjani, daughter of a sage (Maharisi), through her mouth. Born as a little monkey, he is named Kera Beleh. Following some early adventures, Kera Beleh is transformed by the Sun god, Dewa Surya, into an immensely powerful figure, with great strength; he is also renamed Hanuman Kera Putih (or Hanuman the white ape) (Ghulam-Sarwar, 2017, pp. 77-78). Among *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppeteers, Hanuman's full name is Hanuman Kera Putih Hulubalang Bersenu Orang Mulia Raya Cempedak Bidandari Sakma Bاندaya (Zahari, 2013, p. 63). This is often shortened to Hanuman Kera Putih. He is described in the following terms:

... as having a form as vast as a mountain, a tail that swept the sky like a comet, and eyes that flashed like forest fires... Hanuman could leap into infinite space and course through the air like a winged Garuda, even as a child—mistaking the rising sun for a fruit on a tree—he sprang three hundred leagues to clutch it. He had the power of assuming any shape and size, so that when the malignant cobra strove to swallow him, he swelled himself until he extended its jaws a hundred leagues from ear to ear, then causing himself to shrink to the size of a thumb, he crept into its jaws and escape through its ears. (Ball, 1859, 1927, 2004, p. 124)

As another author says, “Hanuman ... possess[es] a heart of gold, albeit also being ill-tempered” (Zahari, 2013, p. 64). He also possesses the qualities of strength, loyalty, courageous and intelligence, as well as the ability to fly, expand or shrink his size to outwit his enemies (Ball, 1859, 1927, 2004, p. 124). While essentially retaining some of the highly dramatic qualities of the character indicated in these descriptions, the character developed by the puppeteers in Kelantan is no less dramatic, but also highly original.

Not all characters from the principal Indian versions of the Ramayana find a place in *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*. The focus is on the principal characters from the two opposing camps led respectively by Seri Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, or Rawana, the ogre king. Apart from Rama and his brothers, to another noble family belongs Siti Dewi, the adopted daughter of a sage, Maharisi Mata Api. Then there are the demons with Maharaja Wana as their chief. Another very highly important group are the monkey kings and generals, the principal ones being Raja Bali, Raja Sagariva and Hanuman Kera Putih. A number of figures invented by puppeteers include birds, animals and sea creatures, all of whom play secondary roles in the epics performed by the puppeteers (*tok dalang*). A final, rather intriguing list includes hybrid figures, invented by the puppeteers. These include the “wives” and children of Maharaja Wana and those of Hanuman Kera Putih.

Following his birth, Hanuman goes up to the skies. Burnt by the Sun god, he is revived, given his name and identity, as well as his immense power and qualities. He is then sent off by the Sun god to the forest kingdom of *Pakian Setajuk Bunga* ruled by Raja Bali, where he meets Seri Rama and Laksamana. Seri Rama acknowledges his relationship with Hanuman Kera Putih by sharing a meal on a banana leaf. With that Hanuman joins Seri Rama in the quest for Siti Dewi’s rescue. He plays a pivotal role in the final battle between Seri Rama and Maharaja Wana in Siti Dewi’s rescue.

In *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* then, unlike other versions of the *Ramayana* within the region, Hanuman Kera Putih is a hybrid figure. Hanuman’s adventures in *Hikayat Seri Rama* and *Hikayat Maharaja Wana* are more or less parallel those known in the Indian epic, although with certain adaptations and variations. The puppeteers, however, have taken greater liberties with the plot through their own improvisations.

Among Hanuman’s adventures are the romantic interludes with several different species of creatures. The most important of these are with the Fish Princess, Tuan Puteri Ikan, with whom he has a son named Hanuman Ikan;<sup>2</sup> and with Tuan Puteri Iлека Sari, daughter of Mah Babu Sanam, who gives birth to another son named Hanuman Bongsu.<sup>3</sup> These secondary characters play important roles in the final battles of the epic as well as in later episodes invented by *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppeteers specifically for them (Ghulam-Sarwar, 2017, pp. 77-79). These, however, will not be further discussed in this paper as Hanuman’s “marriages” and his progeny which are particularly prominent in Malaysia and Thailand, remain at present a preliminary and tentative investigation.

## Visual Analysis

A total set of *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppets consists of approximately 65 figures. Of these, the most important characters are classified into three categories: the first category includes Seri Rama, Siti Dewi, Laksamana, and Hanuman; the second category includes Maharaja Wana, and Mah Babu Sanam; and to the third category includes the comic figures Pak Dogol and Wak Long. Others represent secondary characters such as ogres, soldiers, comic figures, female attendants and monkeys. A set also comprises some accessories, including the all-important symbolic figure of the world tree (*pohon beringin*), with which performances open and close. It is interesting that the *pohon beringin* is a standard figure in Indonesian forms of shadow play and in non-shadow styles that developed following it. Its presence in *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* clearly indicates a borrowing from Indonesia (Ghulam-Sarwar, 1997, p. 10).

All puppets and additional items such as stage properties are made of cow or goat hide with designs perforated into the skin. The cut-out figures are then painted in translucent colours using “magic ink”, known nowadays as permanent coloured markers. The translucency of colours on the puppets can be seen on the shadow of the puppet figures projected onto the white screen (*kelir*) during a *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* show, presenting a multitude of colours which appeal to the audience.

Each puppet figure differs in terms of style and qualities depending on the interpretation and preference of each individual *dalang* or puppet maker. A number of puppet figures in the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* clearly reflect influences of concepts, aesthetics, symbolism, and iconography from India, Thailand, Indonesia (Java), as well as indigenous Malay elements from Kelantan (Ghulam-Sarwar, 1997, p. 18). For example, the shapes of the puppets representing principal characters such as Seri Rama and Siti Dewi reflect Indian characteristics in their facial features and figures, while Maharaja Wana reflects a combination of Thai and Javanese features. In terms of attire and costume, both Seri Rama and Maharaja Wana are portrayed in Thai fashion with identifiable pinnacle crown, chest cloth and trousers, while Siti Dewi shows a combination of Indian facial features, with Javanese motifs and Kelantanese Malay style of dressing and *sanggul* hairstyle (Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Seri Rama, Siti Dewi, Maharaja Wana. These puppets were made by the famous late *dalang* Pak Hamzah. Note the puppets portray influences from different traditions or cultures from the India and Southeast Asian regions (Photograph by Wong, 2016).

Hanuman Kera Putih is one of the more popular characters in *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, especially when it comes to the battle scenes in the story and performance. The symbolism of the Hanuman puppet design will be analysed in terms of form, texture (motifs), and colour. The visual analysis will also highlight the influence of foreign cultures in particular Indian, Thai and Javanese, as well as the syncretism of cultural design elements with local cultural motifs.

### **i) Form**

Hanuman Kera Putih, in the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, is portrayed as a hybrid form between monkey and human being – the face and body of a monkey and the attributes of a human being, according to most versions of the *Ramayana*. He is generally represented in a puppet form that resembles those of a monkey with a wide mouth with sharp fangs, big round eyes, prominent nose, body of a monkey or ape, five sharp claws on each hand and foot, and a long tail. His more “human” aspects are visible in the puppet by his upright stance and posture, the attire and accessories he wears, and the sword he holds in his left hand. Hanuman has, in fact, very refined attributes or traits, which contrast strongly with his physical appearance.

Hanuman has a large body structure and solid body mass in contrast to refined (*halus*) figures such as the prince Seri Rama. Hanuman’s rough or coarse (*kasar*) visual characteristics fit in with Thai aesthetics, particularly his posture and facial features, as well as his traditional Thai style of dressing. All these characteristics are almost identical to

his portrayal in Thailand's *Nang Yai* and *Nang Ta Lung* shadow plays, as well as Cambodia's *Sbek Thom* (Figure 2). While he is classified as a refined (*halus*) character, his facial features and physical structure do not seem to conform to the visual qualities of refinement, but appear to be rather coarse (*kasar*) in his physical appearance, resembling those of the ogres and demons. To appreciate this situation, one has to keep in mind his birth as well as his internal qualities, which indicate his nobility and his refinement, something evident throughout the epic through his conduct. The local puppeteers as well as puppet makers have thus incorporated these elements respectively into his external and internal qualities.

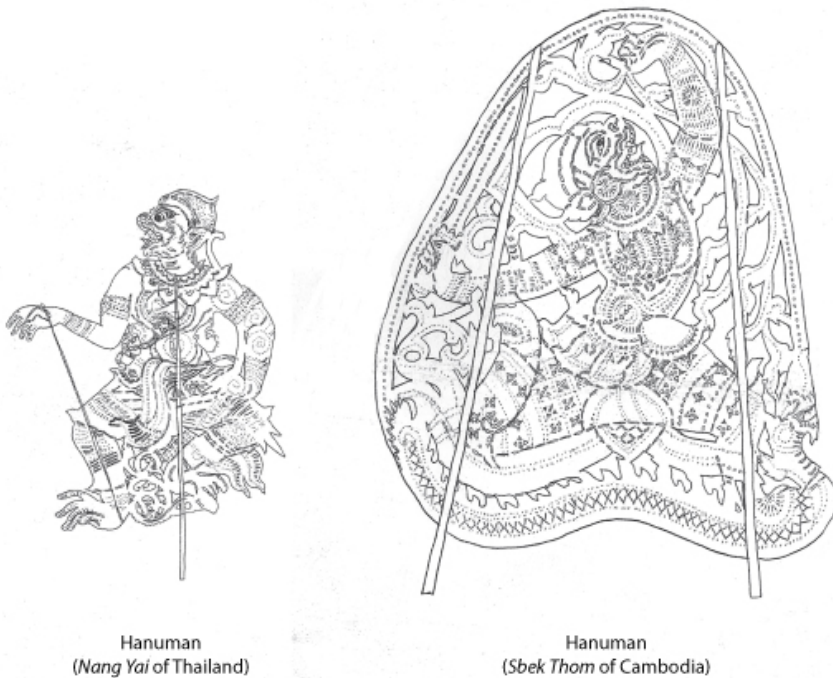


Figure 2. Outline drawings of Hanuman puppets from the Southeast Asian region. (Left) Hanuman puppet of Thailand's *Nang Yai* shadow play, based on an illustration in Broman, S. (1996) *Shadow of Life: Nang Talung. Thai Popular Shadow Theatre*. (Right) Hanuman puppet of Cambodia's *Sbek Thom* shadow play, based on an illustration in Pech Tum Kravel. (1995) *Sbek Thom: Khmer Shadow Theater* (Drawings by Wong, 2019).

## ii) Texture (Motif)

Of Seri Rama and Hanuman, there are common Thai elements in the costuming and ornaments, such as the chest cloth and traditional Thai trousers, as well as accessories such as armlets, bracelets and anklets with bells (Figure 3). As mentioned earlier, Hanuman's traditional Thai style of dressing is similar to those depicted in Thailand's *Nang Yai* and *Nang Ta Lung* shadow plays, and Cambodia's *Sbek Thom*. These motifs

and designs are reminiscing as well of Hindu and Malay aesthetics. The motif and pattern design on Hanuman's chest cloth, trousers and accessories are often derived from a combination of Thai and Kelantanese motifs, for example, the former, *bunga Siam* and the latter, *bunga petola*. Variations of these motifs include repetitive patterns that occupy the entire surface area of the trousers, so much so that they appear heavily ornamented and with kitsch-like effect. These highly intricate motifs and patterns are also found on other *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppets of specific principal characters such as Seri Rama, Siti Dewi, Laksamana, and Maharaja Wana. The motifs are normally incised and carved-out from the leather so that the intricacy and beauty of these patterns of these shadow play puppets will be projected on the screen (*kelir*) during the *wayang* performance, giving the figure a richer appearance than merely a simple form of a character.

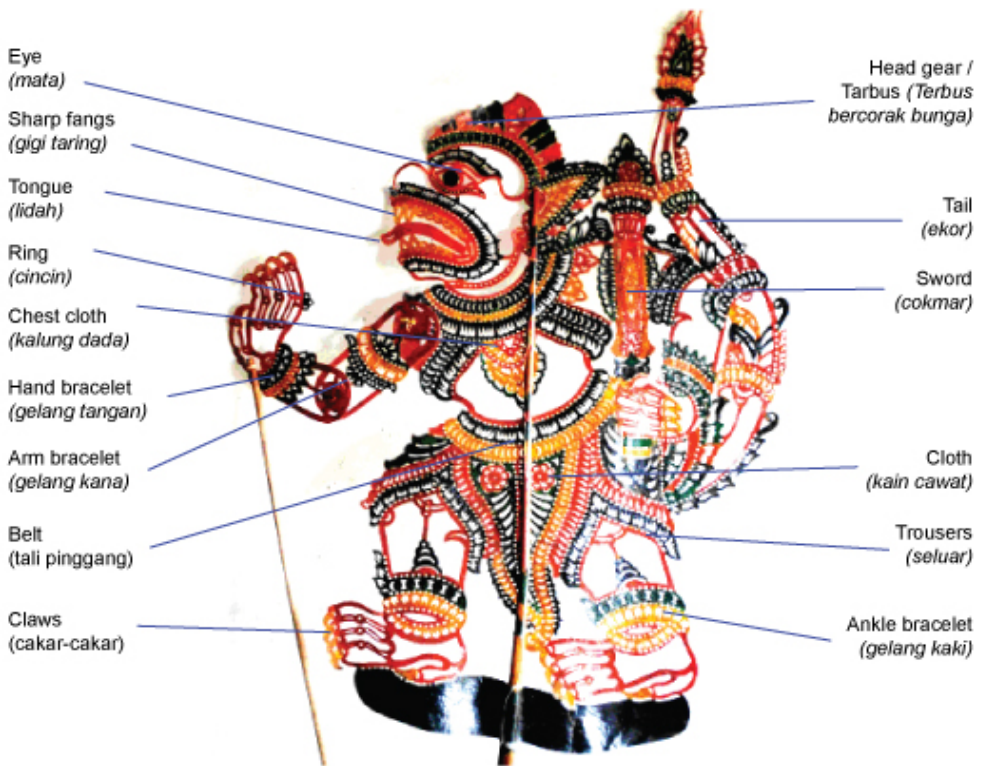


Figure 3. Hanuman's visual features in the Kelantanese-Malay terminologies as cited by the late *dalang* Pak Yusoff (Photograph by Wong, 2016).

### iii) Colour

Hanuman Kera Putih, literally means Hanuman the White Ape. As his name suggests, he is usually white colour in the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppet. However, different



portrayals of the Hanuman character can be seen in the puppets designed by different *dalang* (puppeteers) or puppet-makers (Figures 4 to 6). Depending on the preference and interpretation of the *dalang* or his puppet-maker, or in order to depict the Hanuman's state of being in the story, Hanuman can be painted entirely in dark red colour to show his ferocity, or half-red and half-white based on the creativity of the puppet maker, a rather unconventional practice among Kelantanese puppet-makers. Traditionally, according to the Indian iconography, Hanuman is described as being orange or red colour,<sup>4</sup> in contrast to the white colour portrayed in the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppet. This is because the character Hanuman—as adopted in Thai *Ramakien* story, similar to Malaysia's *Hikayat Maharaja Wana*—is based on a real creature Hanuman langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*) which is found in India, a leaf-eating monkey, shy and withdrawn inhabitants of the tree-tops (Taylor, 1994, p. 38). These leaf-eating monkeys are usually ranging from grey to brown in colour.<sup>5</sup> This range of colour in the natural coat of the monkey is similar to that seen in white Hanuman puppets and masks as well as various art forms in other Southeast Asian traditional theatre art forms. The colour white is posited to be a symbol of purity, loyalty, faithfulness, sincerity, courage, wisdom and truth, hence reflected in Hanuman's name and character (Interview with Pak Nasir,<sup>6</sup> February 2017).

Only a few major puppets representing certain principal characters are portrayed in a specific colour based on Indian aesthetic principles and religious symbolism: green or blue-green for Seri Rama; yellow or gold for Siti Dewi; light red or pink for Lakshmana; red and black for Maharaja Wana; yellow for Sirat Maharaja; black for Pak Dogol; dark red for Wak Long; and, white for Hanuman. Among the principal characters, the sage Maharisi Mata Api is always portrayed with normal human features and natural skin colour. According to Pak Nasir, based on his knowledge, the rest of the puppets do not conform to a fixed or consistent colour scheme. In other words, there does not seem to be a fixed rules, or colouring system for the design of *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppets in Malaysia that could compare to the concept of *wanda*<sup>7</sup> in Indonesia's puppetry. In the case of Kelantan, then, a *dalang* or puppet-maker has the option not to conform to specific colours for puppets representing non-essential secondary characters, such as the sages, monkey soldiers, ogres, demons, gins, fairies, as well as sea or hybrid creatures.

### Visual Comparisons

The following illustrations (Figures 4 to 6) show three Hanuman puppet designs that appear to be similar yet are different from one another. They were made by three different puppeteers or puppet-makers in Kelantan. They are the reputable late Pak Hamzah bin Awang Amat<sup>8</sup>, the late Pak Yusoff bin Mamat<sup>9</sup>, and Pak Muhammad Dain bin Othman.<sup>10</sup> On the surface and at first glance, these three Hanuman puppet figures appear to be quite similar. But on closer inspection there are in fact several differences between them. The design of these Hanuman puppets in terms of form, shape, size, proportion, physical characteristics and features are generally maintained and consistent. However, the more obvious differences are evident in the colours, texture (motifs, patterns and ornamentation), and style (chest cloth, head gear, trousers, accessories, weapon).

The Hanuman puppet made by the late *dalang* Pak Yusoff (Figure 4) appears to be white, but in fact the leather is carved out in an inverse manner, therefore the areas that indicate Hanuman's white-colour "flesh" (positive space) has become void, while the outlines of his figure and form are leather left intact. Pak Yusoff intended these characteristics, since he deliberately carved out these sections leaving only the skeletal form and outline of the entire figure. By doing so, there is an almost see-through and translucent shadow effect when placed against the white screen (*kelir*) during the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* performance. This is quite a unique design approach by Pak Yusoff as such designs are rarely attempted for a principal puppet by other *Wayang Kulit Kelantan dalang* or puppet-maker. This is because it is more time consuming and harder to carve on leather, compared to the common design approach as seen in the two other Hanuman puppets shown here (Figures 5 and 6) where the positive space ("flesh" area) is left intact on the leather while the negative space (motifs, patterns and outlines) are carved out.

Another unique visual aspect of this puppet is the design of the two clawed-feet in Pak Yusoff's Hanuman where we can see the first claw of both feet being inverted, that is facing inwards and aligned with the other four claws. This is a unique design approach not commonly employed by Kelantanese *dalang*, as seen in the two other Hanuman puppets (Figs. 4 and 5). In these puppets, the first claw faces outwards instead, which is a more common design approach for Hanuman puppets in *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*. According to Pak Yusoff, he only wanted to make his Hanuman puppet look "special" and "unique" (Interview with Pak Yusoff, April 2017).

The colours on these three Hanuman puppets vary too. The Hanuman puppet by Pak Yusoff (Figure 4) is obviously white, or clear, which is an accurate representation of his name. However, and interestingly, the Hanuman puppet by Pak Dain (Figure 5) is entirely red in colour but for his black tail, whereas the Hanuman puppet by Pak Hamzah (Figure 6) is half-red on his upper torso and half-white for his lower torso, four limbs and tail. According to Pak Dain, his intention is to portray Hanuman's fury and ferocious state when engaged in battle with Maharaja Wana's army during the narration of the particular section in the story or repertoire (Interview with Pak Dain, February 2016). The Hanuman puppet made by the late Pak Hamzah, on the other hand, is also intended by the *dalang* to show the ferocity of Hanuman when confronting his enemies and battling with Maharaja Wana's army. However, according to Pak Rahim, Pak Hamzah chose to retain some of Hanuman's "original" colour to keep his identity as "Kera Putih" or "white ape". Having said that, on the puppet itself, a light yellowish-white is used (Interview with Pak Rahim, October 2016).

In terms of style, the clothing, accessories and weapons shown on these three Hanuman puppets are different from one another. Note the variations of Hanuman's chest cloth, trousers, accessories (leaf-ear, armllets, bracelets and anklets), tip of the tail, and sword which he holds in his left hand. Each style is unique, an expression of each *dalang* or puppet-maker. The texture (motifs, patterns and ornamentation) are different as well. A particular motif or pattern is repeated throughout the puppet, and each puppet displays different motif and pattern designs based on individual preference and influences the *dalang* feels appropriate to be used.

A visual comparison of these three Hanuman Kera Putih puppets reveals that the three *dalang* have different preferences and usages of colour, texture, and style in puppet design, although the basic physical characteristics and features of Hanuman are still maintained. Each *dalang* or puppet-maker has a unique approach and treatment of his puppet design of Hanuman based on his intentions—Pak Yusoff carving out Hanuman’s “flesh” area instead of the outlines; Pak Dain painting the full figure in red to show Hanuman’s ferocity during battles; Pak Hamzah painting Hanuman half-red and half-white to show his fierceness but retaining his “original” white colour as reflected in his name.



*Figure 4.* A Hanuman puppet made by the late *dalang* Pak Yusoff. The Hanuman puppet is intended to be portrayed as white in colour, but Pak Yusoff instead carved this particular Hanuman puppet in an inverse manner, leaving only the skeletal form and outline of the entire figure, thus portraying an almost see-through and translucent effect when placed against the white screen during the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* performance (Photograph by Wong, 2015).



*Figure 5.* A different Hanuman puppet design made by the *dalang* Pak Dain still active in the local Malay shadow play scene. This Hanuman puppet is painted entirely in red colour, but with a black-colour tail. This is due the *dalang*'s intention to portray Hanuman in a fury and ferocious state when engaged in battle with Maharaja Wana's army, which this puppet will be used by the *dalang* when narrating that section of the story or repertoire (Photograph by Wong, 2016).



*Figure 6.* Another different design of the Hanuman puppet made by the famous late *dalang* Pak Hamzah. This Hanuman puppet is painted half red and half white – red face and upper torso, off-white or light yellowish-white coloured limbs, as well as an orange-coloured tail. Note the difference in motifs and patterns on his Thai-style trousers, as well as the fifth claw of his two feet is faced in opposite direction from the other claws (Photograph by Wong, 2016).

## Conclusion

Hanuman Kera Putih, or Hanuman, is a popular character from the famous epic, *Ramayana*, with his story highly and widely regarded in religion, literature, performing arts, and folklore in Southeast Asia. The visual portrayals of this figure in various regional forms of puppets or masks resemble each other closely. They depict a hybrid character of a monkey with human attributes of courage and intelligence. The Hanuman puppet in *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, is of a refined character, in whom are combined the coarse physical form of a monkey, and the refined human attributes within. While some of the details are local, his portrayal as a character in Southeast Asian countries clearly establishes his hybridity through syncretism of elements from Indian, Thai, Javanese and Kelantan cultures.

The Hanuman puppet, as with the rest of the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* figures, is the creation of the craftsman and therefore subjected to his creativity and expression based on individual preference or interpretation of the character. Overall, while the basic form and features of the character are adhered to and maintained, the craftsman's creativity can be seen through its design, colour, texture (motif) and style. Such transformation in the design is inevitable, as demonstrated in the puppets made over the years by different generation of *dalang* such as Pak Awang Lah in the 1960's and Pak Hamzah in the 1970's. *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* being a folk theatre form, its dramatic content being transmitted orally, and the art of puppet-making similarly handed down from one craftsman to another, both the arts of performance and the making of puppets are likely to see further development and continuing changes in the decades to come, with all manner of challenges.

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<sup>1</sup>This paper has been based on field research and observation of *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* performances conducted between the years 2016 and 2017. It developed out of interviews with several notable *dalang* or puppeteers in Kelantan.

<sup>2</sup>Hanuman Ikan is the son of Hanuman Kera Putih and Tuan Puteri Ikan, a fish princess whom Hanuman encounters in the ocean during attempts to build the bridge to Langkapuri. Appearing in Indian as well as Thai versions of the epic, he is known there respectively as Makhardhwaja (Dua, 2009, p. 88) and Machanu (Cadet, 1971, p. 178). Hanuman Ikan has an ape's body and a fish tail, a combination of features from both his parents, Hanuman Kera Putih and Puteri Ikan (Ghulam-Sarwar, 2017, pp. 97 & 109).

<sup>3</sup> Hanuman Bongsu, Hanuman Kera Putih's other son with Tuan Puteri Bongsu or Iлека Sari, daughter of Mah Babu Sanam, and ascetic and brother to Rawana, but later became Seri Rama's astrologer. Hanuman Kera Putih marries Tuan Puteri Iлека Sari following the death of her husband Mah Inderajit in the final great battles between Seri Rama and Maharaja Wana. After birth, Hanuman Bongsu was instructed by his mother to go to Siusia Mendarapura in search of his grandfather Seri Rama when Langkapuri was attacked by Maharajawana's sons, Setagar Wana and Sepedang Wana, with the support of Maharaja Bota Indra. Unable to find Sertapura, he saw Hanuman Kera Putih practising asceticism and engaged in a battle with him, who later introduced himself to Hanuman Bongsu by showing him the star in his mouth. Hanuman Kera Putih brought his son to Seri Rama, who brought an army to Langkapuri and finally killed Maharajawana Wana's two sons, as well as restored Mah Babu Sanam to life with *malajaya* flower, then continued to rule Langkapuri with Hanuman Bongsu assisting him (Ghulam-Sarwar, 2017, pp. 70 & 99).

<sup>4</sup> "Hanuman's monkey face and complexion are described in various texts, suggesting colour from bright white, golden yellow or copper red and usually is compared to sunlight." Quoted in Nagar, S. (2004). *Hanuman Through The Ages*. Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, p. 241. Cited in Nugent, C. (2006) "Iconography of Hanuman" article on Mahavidya.ca online.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Fleagle, J. G. (1988). *Primate Adaptation and Evolution*. Academic Press. Cited in "Hanuman langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*)" article on theprimata.com (online).

<sup>6</sup> An interview was done with Pak Nasir, or Che Aziz bin Che Mat, a notable puppet maker from Wakaf Bharu, Kelantan, in February 2017. He was an apprentice of the late dalang Pak Hamzah bin Awang during the 1990s.

<sup>7</sup>*Wanda* means overall appearance of a puppet, in particular the puppet's colouring, dress, ornamentation, as well as the character's mood, emotional state or status at any point of the performance (Irvine, 1996, p. 341). For example, in the Javanese *Wayang Kulit Purwa*, certain characters are represented by multiple puppets in different forms and colours to indicate specific situations or moods.

<sup>8</sup>An interview was done with Pak Rahim bin Hamzah, son of the reputable late Pak Hamzah bin Awang Amat and also a puppeteer from Tumpat district, Kelantan, in October 2016. Observational studies and photography were made of the late Pak Hamzah's remaining *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppets collection including this Hanuman puppet which is currently in the custody of Pak Rahim.

<sup>9</sup>Another interview was done with the late Pak Yusoff bin Mamat, from Kampung Laut, Kelantan, in April 2017, before he passed away recently in March 2019. The authors photographed his collection of *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* puppets which included a Hanuman puppet which is interestingly carved in an inversed manner with a highly skilled technique.

<sup>10</sup>An interview was done with Pak Muhammad Dain bin Othman, from Tumpat, Kelantan, in February 2016. The authors photographed this Hanuman puppet figure portrayed entirely in red colour.

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