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Never-Neverland Revisited: Malay Adventure Stories

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Title: Never-neverland revisited : Malay adventure stories : with an annotated edition and translation of the Malay story of Bahram Syah

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2 | *The Story of Bahram Syah*

1

The story is as follows:

This is the story of Prince Bahram Syah, a beautiful story renowned throughout the great states, composed by a wise person for future generations to read.

It is told by the storyteller that there was once a king in the state of Southern Plains named His Royal Highness Sultan Maharaja the Great. His Majesty's kingdom was vast, encompassing twelve great states, each paying tribute annually. Innumerable officials, officers and commoners were within his sovereignty. His reputation for being a just ruler, sparing the feelings of wandering traders and religious students, plus caring for the poor and the oppressed, spread to foreign states, and everybody came to his state to offer their services.

Over the years, the king fathered three very handsome sons. The eldest was called Ghaisyah, the middle one, Aisyah, and the youngest son was called Bahram Syah. He was the most handsome of all; he had a radiant appearance, unequalled in the state. Both his parents were fond of him and loved him very much. They did not allow him to be separated from them, not even for a single day, so was their love for this son. They consigned him to the care of a wise man of religion to learn to recite the Quran and after he had mastered this skill, he was instructed in horseback riding and fighting with all sorts of weapons and swords. Those were the occupations of the young prince. As he grew older his parents loved him more and more.

2 One night, when Sultan Maharaja the Great was sleeping in his palace, he had a dream. In his dream, an old man appeared to him and Sultan Maharaja the Great said, "Oh Lord, who are you?" He replied, "I am a messenger from God and I have come to you."

I have witnessed you accomplish great wealth and splendour, but there still is something you do not possess, and that is an extremely beautiful bird named *Marab* Jalin. When it speaks, gold and silver are scattered from its beak, when it tells a story, diamonds and all sorts of small gems are sprinkled from its eyes, and when it flaps its wings and wags its tail, precious gems of all kinds fly from its nose. Its breast feathers are red like the resin from the dragon's blood plant, and its neck feathers are ruffled. It is the pet of Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, who is the child carried in the folds of Princess Apalu Apala's sarong, and the offspring of His Royal Highness *Marab* Inda Sultan the Magnificent. She lives in the state of Gastu Gasta in the village called The Queen's Field. The mountain is called Field of the Wild Camels, the valley, Slanting Board, on the island called Sinawilan. The estuary goes by the name of Narrow Passage, and the bay is called Smooth Curves." This was what he dreamt.

The king woke up and thought, "Where is this bird?" He then went to sleep again thinking that the man from his dream would appear again, so that he could ask the whereabouts of the bird, and whether he could find it nearby or far away. He slept till dawn and did not get up. The queen came to wake him, but he did not wish to eat or drink and the entire royal household became distressed. His three sons also tried to wake their father, but he still did not want to rise. All the vassal kings, officials and officers came *3a* to the court and waited in the hall for His Majesty, but he did not appear. The vassal kings asked Ghaisyah, "Yes our Lord Ghaisyah, why does His Majesty not come to the audience hall? We wish to request a decree." Ghaisyah answered, "Oh vassal kings and officials, my father is sleeping; he does not even want to eat! Now wait here, so that I may inform my father."

Ghaisyah went into the palace and visited his mother. "What is it that you want?" his mother asked. Paying obeisance, he replied, "Yes my mother, all the vassal kings, officials and officers are anxiously waiting in the audience hall. They are waiting for His Majesty, my father, in order to ask for a decree." His mother replied, "Oh my son, go and wake him, perhaps he wishes to get up now!" Ghaisyah went [to his father] and said respectfully, "Yes my Lord, all vassal kings and officers are anxiously waiting in the audience hall right this moment. They are waiting for His Majesty in order to ask for a decree, since this state's affairs have become complicated. If my Lord will not deal with them, is it then not my Lord's name that will become meaningless to all the other states?" But His Majesty still refused to get up. He did not even wish to speak. He remained silent, swaddled in the bedcovers. His son addressed him several times, but the king did not reply. Ghaisyah left for the audience hall. There, he was greeted by the vassal kings and officials. They asked him, "Where is His Majesty?" Ghaisyah said, "Yes, my Lords, officials and vassal kings, father did not wish to come outside and he did not speak a single word. I conveyed *3b* your message, but he did not react." The vassal kings, officials and officers of the state of Southern Plains, young and old, each retired to their own residence, feeling sad.

The following day, the vassal kings and the officials again came to the court and sat

down in the hall, each according to their rank. When they saw that His Majesty did not appear, the officials became anxious and spoke to Aisyah, “Yes our Lord Aisyah, what does our Lord think about this issue of ours? As His Majesty does not wish to come outside, who can we ask for a decree?” Aisyah replied, “Wait, and I will try to wake [him] right now.” He went into the palace and entered his father’s royal bedroom. He paid his respects and spoke, “Why is it that my Lord sleeps and does not eat and drink? All the headmen, officials and vassal kings are present and awaiting Your Majesty, my father. The state’s affairs have become quite urgent. In the end, you will be the one who will be humiliated.” Then, his father said to him, “Do not speak any more to me!” He would not speak again. The son questioned his father a thousand times, but the king kept silent. Aisyah left the palace and went to the audience hall, where he spoke to the officials and officers, “Oh Lords, the words of His Majesty, my father, are as follows, ‘Come tomorrow and a decree will be issued!’” After the officials and officers had heard Aisyah’s words, they departed and returned *4a* to their own place.

When, on the seventh day, His Majesty’s condition had not changed, the officials and officers went to the audience hall. They saw how everything was the same as before and everyone in the capital grieved. Then they said, “What could it possibly be that His Majesty is concerned about? This state will eventually cease to prosper because of his condition!” The officials paid Bahram Syah a visit and said to him, “Yes our Lord Bahram Syah, what does His Majesty think now about issuing a decree? We are all extremely worried about His Majesty’s affairs.” Bahram Syah answered, “Yes my Lords the officials and vassal kings, now let me try to wake [him]. I share your feelings because it has been seven days and seven nights now that he has lain without eating and drinking, wrapped in covers.” He left the hall and went to the palace to wait upon his father, His Majesty. While paying him homage, he said, “Yes my Lord, what is it that you are concerned about? All the officials are gathered at this moment to wait upon Your Majesty, my father, in order to ask for a decree to settle a disagreement. All officers and headmen are also paying tribute to Your Royal Highness, my father. Please give Your Royal Highness’ judgement on them to the best of your abilities so that the name of Your Royal Highness will prosper, here and in the Hereafter! Is there perhaps something you yearn for? *4b* We, three brothers, are here, are we not? You have gone to great pains to take care of us, night and day, from the time of our youth until now. What else is our purpose, but to help you with your troubles and to seek out that which you lack? However, your parental love cannot be compensated for by us. It is only God, may He be praised and be exalted, who will reward you for it!”

When His Majesty heard his son’s words, he immediately got up and spoke, “What are you saying?” Bahram Syah replied respectfully, “Oh father, the officials and headmen of this state want to ask Your Majesty for a decree. Furthermore, what can it possibly be that you are so concerned about, always sleeping as you do like a person who is no longer mindful of God, may He be praised and be exalted?” He said, “Oh my son and loved one, if I express my desire, you may not be able to fulfil it and my longing is very great indeed.”

Bahram Syah replied, “Yes father, why are you talking like this? What is the use of us, three brothers, if not to die for your sake? Let it be us who take responsibility!”

The king immediately embraced and kissed his son, saying, “Oh my son, the reason I am anxious is that one night, as I dreamt, a messenger from God appeared to me. He said, ‘Oh Sultan Maharaja the Great, I have seen you achieve great grandeur and wealth, but there is still something that you do not possess, a bird named *Marah* Jalin. Its wings sprinkle gold water, its neck feathers are red as dragon’s blood and its breast feathers are ruffled. When it speaks, gold and *sa* silver are scattered from its beak, when it tells a story, diamonds and small gems are sprinkled from its eyes. When it flaps its tail and wings, precious gems, of all kinds, fly from its nose. It is the pet of Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, who is the child carried in the folds of Princess Apalu Apala’s sarong and the offspring of His Royal Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent. Her state is called Gastu Gasta, her village is The Queen’s Field. Her mountain is called Wild Camel, the valley is called Slanting Board, and the island is called Sinawilan. The estuary is called Dew on the Teak, the promontory is called Narrow Passage, and the bay, Smooth Curves.’ That was my dream, oh my son, but this man did not tell me whether this place was nearby or far away and I did not ask him. This is the reason why I have been sleeping for such a long time. I thought that if I went back into that dream of mine the messenger would appear again, and I could perhaps ask him whether this bird could be found nearby or far away and whether its residence was in the East, the West, the South or in the North. That was my dream, oh my son Bahram Syah!”

“Now what do you, three brothers, think of this affair? I do not care which way you act as long as you obtain this bird of my dream. If, by any chance, someone wishes to sell this bird, do not let its price be a concern to you. Should it involve gold and silver, or diamonds and other precious gems, or even the throne of the state of Southern Plains, I will grant it all to [that person], as long as you get that bird!” *sb* While paying obeisance, his son replied, “Yes father, I will humbly accept whatever you say, but please leave for the audience hall now so that the officials and officers will be pleased!”

His Majesty put on his state robes and left for the audience hall, accompanied by Bahram Syah. Once they had arrived at the hall, the officials, officers and vassal kings came running [towards them] to pay obeisance to His Majesty. After this, they sat down, each according to their rank. The officials and officers asked His Majesty about what had happened and he told everything he had dreamt of. The vassal kings were amazed and astonished and said, “From the times of our ancestors until now, we have never seen or even heard [such a thing]!” His Majesty then spoke, “Oh my official, go and summon my sons Ghaisyah and Aisyah!” They arrived and entered the court hall. They paid obeisance and said, “Yes father, what could Your Majesty’s royal word to us, humble ones, be?” His Majesty then spoke with tears in his eyes, and he told his dream from beginning to end to his sons. “If I do not obtain that which I have dreamt about, I will not stay here as king! I will go into exile to look for that bird in all corners of the world. For as long as I live, my

heart will not be freed [from this longing]. Only after I have died [will I be freed from it]. In death, these feelings will no longer be with me.”

After his sons heard their father’s words, *6a* they wept. When His Majesty saw his sons crying and looking up at him in tears, he said, “Oh my sons and my beloveds, why are you crying? Do you love me?” Not one of the sons responded to his words. His Majesty spoke, “Oh my sons, why do you remain silent?” When Bahram Syah saw that his brothers did not say a word, he spoke respectfully, “Yes father, why are you saying something like that? If not out of love for you, why else would we become servants to Your Majesty, father?” His father replied, “If that is how you feel, oh my son, go and look for the object of my desire. Then I will stay here!” His son paid homage and said, “Yes my Lord, Ruler of the world, with the help of God, may He be praised and be exalted, and the royal dignity and prestige of Your Majesty’s throne, we will humbly accept [your word]. With the help of God, may He be praised and be exalted, and with Your Royal Highness’ prayers, we will do what we can to find this bird. Stay firm in your faith, my Lord, and continue to do good! If, by chance, our three lives become jeopardized, do not be worried. If God, may He be exalted, decides to grant something, no creature can obstruct Him. But if God, may He be exalted, refuses, I will never get what I want.”

6b After His Majesty had listened to his son’s words, he spoke, “Oh, my sons, if God, may He be exalted, helps His servant, and one of you will find the bird, I will make him king in this state of Southern Plains. He will reign in the Land of Twelve Streams!” Bahram Syah replied, “Yes Your Royal Highness, please decide on the officials’ issue now, so that they can act accordingly. In the meantime, we commit ourselves to your task.” His Majesty gave a fair judgement concerning those who were seeking justice. When it involved Islamic law, His Majesty made a judgement on the basis of the law of the Book of God. When it involved customary law, he made a judgement on the basis of the state’s traditional law. After His Majesty had judged the cases and after some had lost and some had won, everybody felt joyous, because the disputes had been settled. They took their leave and went home, each to their own place.

Three days later, by the decree of God, may He be exalted, His Majesty asked his three sons, “Oh sons, whatever it is that you intend to do, please act quickly, so that I will be happy. If the Lord helps you and makes it possible for you to find what I long for, I will make one of you heir to this state’s throne. One of you will be given a princess to wed and all my possessions, and one of you will be given the Land of Twelve Streams to rule.” His son Bahram Syah paid homage and said, “Yes father, we will humbly accept *7a* whatever Your Highness commands us to do.” His Majesty immediately ordered the House of Treasures to be opened, and bestowed gold, diamonds, and sets of clothes on each of his children. His Majesty also gave his sons a horse each, complete with tack.

When everything was ready, they kneeled before their parents’ feet, and bowed their head to the ground. Their parents wept, embraced, and kissed their sons. They said, “Yes our sons, we will render you to God, may He be praised and be exalted, who will take

care of you. But whatever you do, do not be careless and forgetful!” Then, the three got on their mounts and took leave of all officials and officers. Everybody felt sad. The state’s inhabitants cried and sorrowed for Bahram Syah. The brothers spurred their horses, and rode through dense jungle. Selamat followed behind them.

For twelve days now, they traveled without rest. After another two hours, they arrived at a clear spot in the lush jungle. Half an hour later, by the decree of God, may He be exalted, they came upon a building. It looked like a summer pavilion. It was very large; its length was a hundred and twenty spans of outstretched arms, its width eighty. Now, to the right of this pavilion, the path branched off. And at the end of this path was a deep well. The rope of the bucket was a hundred and twenty spans of outstretched arms long. Right in the middle of the yard lay the *7b* main path. It was a very nice path; it ran straight and its surface was smooth. It was so long that it seemed without end. The three princes stopped at the pavilion. Selamat fetched some water and cooked the rice. He then tied the horses to a tree-trunk and fed them.

Ghaisyah and Aisyah stayed in the yard and amused themselves in the pavilion. As for Bahram Syah, he entered the pavilion, lay down, and looked up to the roof. There, by the decree of God, may He be exalted, Bahram Syah saw a rolled-up letter. He immediately fetched the letter and read it. It read as follows: “Oh Bahram Syah, follow this path as long as you can and you will come upon a three-forked road. If you take the road to the right, you will travel safely and reach home, likewise the middle road. But nothing is known about the road to the left, named Only God Knows, except for that it has no end.” When he was finished reading, he went to the pavilion to let Ghaisyah and Aisyah read the letter. After they had done so, darkness fell.

The next morning, they spurred their horses and took off. Selamat followed behind them *8a* carrying all their equipment. They traveled on, from one resting place to another and from one stream to another. After they had traveled for about six hours, they found the three-forked road. The three young men stopped at the junction and dismounted. Bahram Syah said, “Yes two older brothers, this must be the three-forked road that was mentioned in the letter! Now, are we going to travel together or do we split up here?” Ghaisyah said, “Oh little brother Bahram Syah, if this is indeed the three-forked road, then let us follow it together.” Bahram Syah said, “What you say is true indeed, but I think it will be quite difficult. As there are three roads, I feel we should split up. This way one of us will succeed for sure, God willing.”

When Ghaisyah and Aisyah heard Bahram Syah’s words, they replied, “Oh little brother, who will take the road called Only God Knows?” Bahram Syah said, “Oh older brothers, one of us has to take this road Only God Knows. Now tell me which road you want to travel!” Ghaisyah spoke, “In that case, I will take the one to the right. It will lead me home safely.” Then Bahram Syah said, “Oh middle brother, which one will you take?” *8b* Aisyah replied, “I will follow the middle road, also because it will take me home safely.” After Bahram Syah had heard the words of both his brothers, he said, “Oh older

and middle brother of mine, let me then follow the road called Only God Knows. It is my fate. If, by chance, God, may He be exalted, helps His servant, and with the prayers of all our forefathers, then what is long will not become short and what is wide will not become narrow.”

After Ghaisyah, Aisyah and Bahram Syah had decided to split up, they cried, because they would part company.

II

And now, by the decree of God, follows the first story.

Spurring his horse, Ghaisyah set off to follow the road to the right. Selamat stayed with Bahram Syah to accompany him on the road Only God Knows. Ghaisyah journeyed without stopping, from one resting place to another, from one plain to another plain, and from one patch of jungle to another.

When he had traveled for about three and a half months, he came upon avast plain. At its centre, he could see many water buffaloes, cows and goats grazing. Ghaisyah thought, “There must be people living here.” He went on for another while, and after he had traveled for an hour, he arrived at the bank of *ga* a wide river. Ghaisyah followed its upper course. He traveled on and reached an inhabited region. He asked the people, “Oh people, what is the name of this state and its ruling caliph?” They answered, “Oh our Lord, this state is called Whirling Sand in the Bay of Dew and our king is His Majesty the King. He is our caliph.” Ghaisyah replied, “Oh my Lords, then take me to him so that I can pay him my respects. They said, “Very well. Please, follow us to the palace!”

They entered the capital and arrived at the palace yard. The prime minister paid homage to his king and spoke, “Yes Your Majesty, there is a man who wants to pay his respects to Your Majesty.” The king spoke, “Of course.” Ghaisyah entered and paid homage. He was immediately welcomed by the king and invited to sit at the king’s right side. His horse was tethered in the centre of the yard.

Then the king said to Ghaisyah, “Oh my brother, where does my Lord come from? I can see that you are a nobleman, but you are traveling alone. Why are you not traveling in the customary way? What is the name of my Lord’s state? And what are the names of your parents? Your looks and behaviour are such that I recognize them as signs of superiority.” Ghaisyah said, “Yes Your Majesty, it is *gb* indeed as Your Majesty says. I came here because I was told to do so by my father, His Royal Highness, from the state of Southern Plains. To begin with, we traveled with three brothers, but later we split up. We are on a quest for the bird *Marab* Jalin. When it speaks, gold and silver are scattered from its beak. When it tells a story, diamonds and small gems are sprinkled from its eyes. And when it flaps its wings and tail, precious gems of all kinds fly from its nose. Its breast feathers are red like the resin from the dragon’s blood plant, and its neck feathers are ruffled. It is the pet of

Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, who is the child carried in the folds of Princess Apalu Apala's sarong, and the offspring of His Royal Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent in the state of Gastu Gasta. Her village is called The Queen's Field, and there is a mountain called Wild Camel, and a valley called Slanting Board, on the island called Sinawilan. The estuary is named Narrow Passage, and the bay is called Smooth Curves." Ghaisyah told the king extensively about his father's dream. He told him about the things that had happened when he and his brothers traveled together: about how they came upon a large pavilion where they had found a letter, and about how they had encountered the junction where they had split up. Ghaisyah told the king everything.

The king expressed his thoughts, "Yes my Lord Ghaisyah, we here have never heard about this bird, from [the time of] our ancestors till now, and we have never heard anything about the state of Gastu Gasta and the Princess. *10a* I tell you this in all honesty. Let me summon all shipmasters and great captains, perhaps there is [one of them] who has heard about that country." The herald immediately summoned all the captains of the large ships, Chinese junks and cargo boats. They came and paid homage to His Majesty. His Majesty spoke, "Oh all captains of the ships, cargo boats and Chinese boats, are there any of you, who are accustomed to traveling by sea, who have been to the state of Gastu Gasta?" They each spoke with respect, "Yes Your Royal Highness, Ruler of the World, we are only now hearing [about it] from Your Royal Highness, how could we have been to that state! And even amongst us here, who are in such great numbers, there is not a person who has heard about it by word of our ancestors, Your Royal Highness." His Majesty [said] to Ghaisyah, "Oh my Lord, what are we going to do now? My Lord has already heard all the words of the captains; you better stay here with me and wait for ships from far away places, so we can ask the crews about the state of Gasta Gastu." He said, "I agree, Your Royal Highness," and he stayed.

For a while, he amused himself night and day in that state. He continually played chess with the dignitaries and the harbour master, losing many times. The gold and the silver and his equipment were all lost and his horse sold. Then, by the decree of God, may He be exalted, Ghaisyah became destitute; his poverty was tremendous in comparison with all other humble servants of God. He could not get food, so he went here and there *10b* looking for someone who was willing to pay him to do some work.

Meanwhile, Ghaisyah was ordered to herd water buffaloes and cows by the merchants and, somewhat later, he was also ordered to herd goats and sheep. As time passed he was ordered to herd ducks and geese. That is how it was, always, with countless tribulations, from month to month, from year to year. Thus was the situation.

III

The story is as follows:

It is told by the storyteller that Aisyah was on his way, spurring his horse, without taking a break. He went from one forest and jungle [to another forest and jungle]. He climbed mountains and descended mountains.

When he had traveled for three months, he came across a plane. A cock crowed and Aisyah thought to himself, "Could there be people living here?" After that, he went on, without a rest. After he had traveled for another half an hour, he came upon a beach. He liked the place and stopped and fed his horse. He lay down and fell asleep. He did not wake up until evening; he lay motionless, as he was weak.

He awoke in the morning, sat for a while and made his way along the beach, spurring his horse. After he had traveled for about two hours, a house was visible; it was white like waves swept up by the wind. He reached the house and rode a bit further. A moment later, he came across a garden abundant with flowers. *11a* Aisyah was surprised to see all these beautiful and diverse things; it was really miraculous how these things were. There were also some narrow streams flowing through the garden's clearings. There were many different kinds of plants, such as dates, grapes and pomegranates and they grew through the gaps of the garden's fences.

After he had ridden for another while, he met a herald. The herald spoke, "Yes my Lord, from where have you traveled to this place?" Aisyah replied, "First let me ask my Lord what the name is of this state." The herald said, "Oh my Lord, this is the state called Piles of Passion, in the valley of the hill named Pillar Peak. The capital is called Silulidan, the port Silulinang, the bay Water Conduits, and the promontory Cleaver Worn Behind the Ear. The island is called Simangkirang, and the name of our king is King Fierce and Fiery. He is a prominent king; he is the ruler and the religious head of state.

After he had heard the words of the herald, Aisyah said, "If that is the case, then take me with you so that I may pay my respects to His Majesty." So they went to see His Majesty and arrived at the courtyard of the palace. His horse was tethered and the herald spoke, while paying homage, "Yes my Lord, there is someone who has just arrived to pay his respects to your Lordship." The king spoke, "Very well, let him come in!" Aisyah entered and paid homage to His Majesty. He was immediately welcomed and was told to sit at His Majesty's left side. Then the king spoke, "Oh my Lord, which state does my Lord come from and where do you want to go to?"

Then Aisyah told [him] *11b* the whole story, about his father who had a dream while sleeping and did not get up, about the search for the bird named *Marah* Jalin and the state of Gastu Gasta, about how they had traveled through the jungle and had come across a large pavilion and a deep well and how they had found a letter in that pavilion, and about the three-forked road they had encountered and how the three brothers were now traveling separately. Aisyah told His Highness King Fierce and Fiery everything, not even the smallest detail was omitted.

When the king heard Aisyah's words, he immediately summoned the captains of the large ships and cargo boats together with the rich merchants. They assembled in the

capital and went to the palace. They paid homage and said, “Have mercy on us, Your Highness.” The king spoke, “Oh great captains, you travel very far, going here and there, and you have seen many things. Have you ever heard something about a bird named *Marah Jalin*? When it speaks, gold and silver are scattered from its beak, when it tells a story, diamonds and small precious stones are sprinkled from its eyes, when it flaps its wings and wags its tail, precious gems are fly from its nose. The wings spray drops of liquid gold, the neck feathers are ruffled, and the breast feathers are as red as dragon’s blood. It is the pet of Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, *12a* who is the child carried in the folds of Princess Apalu Apala’s sarong, the offspring of His Royal Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent of the state of Gastu Gasta. That is the reason why this man came to this place, to look for this bird.” Then the captains and the elders of the state paid their respects and said, “Yes Your Highness, Ruler of the World, though our travels were very long indeed, going here and there to make a living, by God, never have we, your servants, heard anything about a state named Gastu Gasta, my Lord, let alone seen it! Neither have we heard of it by way of our ancestors.”

After that, His Majesty spoke, “Oh my brother Aisyah, what can we say about this problem of yours? It is better that you stay here with me now, and wait for the ships and cargo boats to arrive from faraway states. The season with the favourable winds is due to begin. We can ask the captains about it.” Aisyah answered, “In that case, let me stay here with His Highness.” So he stayed there.

After he had been there for a while, passing his time with idle activities like gambling, interpreting portents, and placing bets, all his gold, silver and splendid clothes, and eventually even his horse, were sold. So Aisyah became enslaved by this king; he was ordered to collect young grass to feed the king’s horse. And this was how Aisyah became enslaved by the king. God knows the Truth.

IV

12b The story is as follows:

In the story of Prince Bahram Syah it is told how he took the road named Only God Knows. He spurred his horse and took off. Selamat followed him. After they had been traveling for about an hour, Bahram Syah thought to himself, “What is the use of taking Selamat with me? Let me tell him to go back home and inform my parents so they will know that we, who were told to travel together, now travel separately.” He got off his horse and said, “Oh Selamat, now please go back home to my parents and tell them what you have seen: that we three are no longer together and that my older brother took the road to the right, which brings him home safely. And tell them that the middle one follows the middle road; he too will reach home safely. And lastly, let them know that I took the road Only God Knows. Take my horse with you as your mount. Ask my parents to

say prayers for me to God, may He be praised and be exalted, so that both this world and the one Hereafter will be perfect!”

After Selamat heard Bahram Syah’s words, he said, “Yes my Lord, but how do you think I feel separating from you, my uncle?” Bahram Syah answered, “Oh my son, there is nothing to worry about, just entrust me to God, may He be praised and be exalted. If not in this world, it is in the Hereafter that we will meet again, that is, if you are mindful [of God]!” Then, crying, Selamat paid his respects to Bahram Syah. Bahram Syah also cried *13a* and they shed tears together. After this, Selamat went home, spurring his horse, and Bahram Syah took off on his own; they went their separate ways.

Bahram Syah walked on without rest. He traveled through patches of jungle and went across hills, ravines, high mountains and deep swamps. He encountered several wild animals, but did not worry, he just handed himself over to God, may He be praised and be exalted, and his parents. He traveled night and day without resting, he just walked. After he had walked for about three months, he came upon the border of a plain of unlimited vastness. This plain was very flat. Bahram Syah was greatly surprised by the immensity of the plain. He walked on and went to the centre of the plain.

One hour later, he became very hungry and thirsty. He looked to his left and right and saw an orange tree. He looked up and by the decree of God, may He be exalted, he saw one single and very ripe orange. There were no other fruit or any blossom. He looked behind him and saw a piece of wood. It was one *hasta* long, as if it had been cut by someone. Bahram Syah took the stick and threw it up; the orange fell before him on the ground. He took the orange and sat down for a while to eat it. He peeled it with his dagger. He ate the first piece of the orange and it tasted very bitter. The second piece tasted very sour. *13b* The third piece tasted very sweet. The fourth piece of the orange was extremely rich. It had many different flavours and it tasted sweet like sugar and coconut cream. Bahram Syah thought to himself, “What could it mean that this orange consists of four parts each with different flavours?” He continued, “This must be the interpretation: first, this undertaking of mine will be very bitter and sour, but, after that, I will benefit from it; the benefits will be abundant and sweet, God, may He be exalted, willing!” After that, Bahram Syah went on without stopping.

Two hours later, he came upon three wells situated alongside each other. They looked very nice. The well to the right contained a lot of clear water. The well to the left also contained much water, but the well in the middle was completely dry. It did not contain even a drop of water, only dust. When the well to the right overflowed, the well in the middle got some water. Bahram Syah pondered upon it in amazement, saying to himself, “As for the meaning of this left and right well, they are like the rich people; and the middle well, it is like the poor and destitute people. When the hearts of the people who give alms are opened by God, the poor people receive the means to stay alive. This relates to all undertakings: when one’s intention is good, *14a* one will receive that which one desires, God willing.” Then Bahram Syah walked on without resting.

Some time later, after he had walked for about two hours, he came across an extremely high hill, which stood isolated like an island [in the middle of the sea]. Its ravines were immensely deep. There were several hundreds of people digging in the ravines; they piled the earth on top of the hill while the pile of earth being dug became lower and lower. Bahram Syah pondered this and asked the people, "Oh my Lords, why are you behaving like this, making higher that which is already high and digging into that which is already low?" They answered, "Oh my Lord, It is by order of God, may He be exalted, that we do this, because we have been disobedient towards our parents. This is our work till the Day of Judgement!" Following this, Bahram Syah sped off without stopping.

A while had passed before Bahram Syah came upon a mudhole in the middle of the plain. Its length was about two spans of outstretched arms, its width about two and a half. Bahram Syah saw that the water in the mudhole formed waves. It was as if the waves reached up into the sky, and when they grew bigger and broke, it sounded like thunder and hurricanes. Bahram Syah was highly amazed seeing this mudhole transforming itself and he thought to himself, "What could it mean that this mudhole has waves just like the sea?" He said to himself, "This mudhole has waves because it is something which has never been seen by a human being, and now, *14b* when God, may He be exalted, wants to show His power, which has never been witnessed before, it may be seen. I hope that it also reveals something about my fate: I am looking for this bird *Marah* Jalin and if God, may He be exalted, wants to show His power, I will acquire it." After this, Bahram Syah went on without stopping.

Sometime later, he came across a wide plain. It was extremely vast and its grass was lush and young. The water buffaloes were large in number; there were thousands of them in the middle of the plain, but they were extremely thin as if they were hungry and thirsty; they had the appearance that they would float away when blown by the wind. Bahram Syah was bewildered seeing the water buffaloes so thin while their food was plentiful. "What could it mean, what could it signify?" Bahram Syah thought to himself, "These water buffaloes are extremely thin, not because of a disease, but because of their own negligence. They are in their corral and are released by their owner around midday and when they arrive in the middle of the plain they see that there are enormous amounts of food, and they then think to themselves, 'Let me just amuse myself a while before eating, since there is plenty of food. What is there to worry about and anyway, the heat is too intense.' So the water buffaloes stay there, in the shade as usual. In the afternoon, their owner comes to drive them back into the corral, leaving them no chance to fill their stomachs with food, and all because of their irresponsibility. *15a* Now, whatever you do, do not be irresponsible!" After that, Bahram Syah walked on without stopping.

After walking for about four hours or so, Bahram Syah came across a small plain. It was short and narrow. There he found lots of water buffaloes, they were in their hundreds. Bahram Syah chased them several times, but they did not pay any attention to him. They took their eating very seriously; they did not even raise their heads. The bodies of these

water buffaloes were fat and fleshy. Bahram Syah was extremely fascinated to see that these water buffaloes were really fat and fleshy while their food was scarce and hard to find. "What could this signify?" He said to himself, "The reason that these water buffaloes are fat and fleshy is that they see that the plain is just small and they think, 'If I do not take eating grass seriously on the plain, the grass will be finished by the other animals.' That is why these water buffaloes are fleshy and fat: because they are mindful and responsible. In the afternoon, they stop eating, and their owner comes to take them home. On the way, they drink water. Hence, whatever the undertaking, it must not be taken lightly. God, may He be exalted, will then grant whatever you wish!" Then, Bahram Syah went on without having a rest.

Some five hours later, Bahram Syah saw a woman *15b* coming towards him. He walked towards her. Behind the woman were a dog and a nanny goat. He thought, "This is the first human being I have met, let me speak with her immediately." Eventually, the woman was beside him; she quickly went to the right-hand side of the road, and Bahram Syah went likewise to the left-hand side. He did not want to address the woman, as she looked so pretty and extremely refined, and the woman did not want to address him. Her radiant glow was dazzling, so much so that one dare not to take a good look at her. Similarly, the woman was unable to look upon Bahram Syah. They were both equally bashful, and so Bahram Syah walked on as did the woman.

Suddenly, noises and barking could be heard coming from the wombs of the dog and the goat. Bahram Syah was bemused and thought, "What could this mean? I did not want to speak to that woman and the woman did not want to speak to me, but rather it was the dog's and the goat's young, still in the wombs, who spoke." Then he said to himself, "The reason that the woman did not want to speak to me was because she was bashful towards me, as I was towards her. We had intended speaking to each other, and that is the reason the dog and the goat spoke by way of their young in their wombs. Moreover, it is not decent for a woman to address a man first; it can only be a man who addresses a woman first." After this, Bahram Syah traveled on without taking a break.

About six hours later, he discerned a huge tree in the distance, so he walked towards it. *16a* A moment later, he arrived there. He saw somebody standing in between the tree's buttresses, looking up to the Lote tree of Finality. Bahram Syah felt bewildered seeing this, and in amazement he thought, "This does not look like one of God's servants, as his behaviour is very different from that of the majority of people." Bahram Syah became very angry on seeing how this person behaved, so he drew his sword while saying, "Oh you crazy and intoxicated person, your behaviour is not at all like that of people living here on earth. Perhaps you are the Devil or Satan or some kind of spirit! If you are really a man, then come over here. Whatever your desires, come to me!" Bahram Syah swayed his sword and came forward in pursuit of the man while he spoke, "Why do you keep on looking upwards and do not respond when a human being is speaking to you?" The man said, "Oh Bahram Syah, why are you speaking like that? I am not the Devil or Satan and I

am not a ghost or some kind of spirit. You must know that I am the one named Angel of Death and that I am the one that knows the most about God's servants and about all that exists in the seven layers of heaven and earth. I know everything by the decree of God, may He be exalted!"

Bahram Syah said, "Oh Angel of Death, do you know about me?" The Angel of Death replied, "I do know about you. Your state is the state of Southern Plains, your father is Sultan Maharaja the Great, your brothers are Ghaisyah and Aisyah, and you are the one that is named Bahram Syah." Bahram Syah said, "Oh Angel of Death, why you are looking upwards; even right this moment, while we are talking, you *166* keep on looking upwards!" The Angel of Death spoke, "Oh Bahram Syah, you must know that when the end of the Children of Adam is near, a leaf from the Lote tree of Finality falls down and they will die." Although Bahram Syah stayed and talked for a while to the Angel of Death, he did not change his behaviour, he kept looking up at the Lote tree of Finality.

Bahram Syah said, "Oh Angel of Death, have a look at how long I will live; how much time have I left?" The Angel of Death answered, "Oh Bahram Syah, I see from the tree that your life is still very long, so do not worry and take heart!" Bahram Syah said, "Oh Angel of Death, do you know the state of Gastu Gasta?" The Angel of Death answered, "Oh Bahram Syah, you must know that in all seven layers of heaven and earth and from east to west and in all quarters of the world, I am the one that knows the most. Like a man who holds a coin in the palm of his hand, so I hold heaven and earth by the decree of God, may He be exalted."

Bahram Syah said, "Oh my Lord Angel of Death, tell me where the state of Gastu Gasta is, in the east or in the west?" The Angel of Death answered, "Oh Bahram Syah, you must know that it is very difficult for you to go to this state called Gastu Gasta. It is very far from here; if you go on foot and walk till the time you have children and grandchildren, you will not even get there. The same if you go by boat. But if you fly like a very swift bird, you can reach it within seven days; that is, if you fly high up in the sky, *17a* as you must cross the Sea of Fire. If you fly level you can make it within three days. The state of Gastu Gasta is situated in the west. How are you planning to get there?" Bahram Syah answered, "Why are you speaking like that? With the consent of God, may He be exalted, the Lord, the Master of all worlds, I can do things even more impossible than this, God, may He be exalted, willing! If our Lord bestows a favour on me, I will fly! I will search for that bird *Marah* Jalin, if God, may He be praised and be exalted, grants me a long life here in this world!" After this, Bahram Syah took his leave and went on without stopping.

Having walked for about seven hours or so, Bahram Syah saw a capital of incredible beauty. He entered the capital and arrived at the courtyard in front of the palace. Bahram Syah was amazed by the exquisite construction of the palace, and drew near. He saw that the courtyard in front of the palace looked like green glass; it was wide and smooth. The door of the palace stood wide open, but nobody was there. Bahram Syah thought to himself, "Let me call out a few times, there may be someone in the house!" So Bahram

Syah shouted a few times, saying, “Oh, is there a human being in the house, or a ghost or Satan? If there is, come out, so I can kill you!”

After the princess heard all this, she approached the door of the palace and spoke to Bahram Syah in a respectful way, “Yes my Lord, I am neither *17b* Satan, nor the Devil; I am a human being. Please, enter the palace immediately and seat yourself on the golden carpet in front of me!” She asked, “Yes my Lord, where are you from and why did you come here? For several years I have been living here and not a single person has ever arrived here, but for you!” Bahram Syah told her about how he had traveled in search of the bird *Marah* Jalin and about his father and his father’s dream; he told the princess everything.

Bahram Syah asked the princess, “Oh Princess, what is the name of this state and who is the one that keeps you company here?” The princess answered, “Oh my Lord, this state is not mine. It is the summer resort of an Islamic spirit named Thunder and Lightning; he is my husband.” Bahram Syah asked, “Why do you have a spirit for a husband and where is he now?” The princess replied, “Yes my Lord, his strength and his power are the reasons I ended up with a spirit for a husband, as I am his captive. My own state is situated in the sky and the name of my father is King of Kings of the Spirits in the Sky and the name of my mother is Princess Royal Moonlight and my name is Princess Goddess in Bondage and our race is that of the Simandam spirits. We were at war with Thunder and Lightning and my father was beaten by him, so I became captive and was brought here.” Bahram Syah said, “Oh Princess, how strong and powerful is this spirit?” The princess answered, “He is really very strong and powerful. He is not here now, as he is defeating the kings of *18a* the spirits, ghosts and fairies, but his soul is here. He has stored it very carefully, in a glass flask, and has wrapped the bottle up in pieces of yellow and blue cloth. He has hung it on some flower stalks.”

Bahram Syah immediately looked up and saw the glass flask. He said, “Oh Princess, what if I want to have a look at the soul of this Islamic spirit?” She answered, “How can we possibly have a look at it; we will both die! If opened only slightly, his body comes to us in a flash.” Bahram Syah said, “Oh Princess, choose what seems right to you: to adhere to this spirit’s religion or to the Islamic faith? Now, if you adhere to this spirit’s religion, you will inevitably end up in hell. If you adhere to the Islamic faith, you will surely enter Heaven.”

When the princess heard these words of Bahram Syah, she thought to herself, “If that is the case, I had better adhere to the Islamic faith,” and she spoke, “Yes my Lord, I will follow you, but we will be killed by this spirit named Thunder and Lightning!” Bahram Syah replied, “Oh Princess, do not tremble with fear because I want to see what no human has seen. And I know that I still have a long life ahead of me, as I have already met the Angel of Death. From him one learns about the power of God, may He be exalted. Now, wait a moment before you take the spirit’s soul!”

He whetted his sword until it was extremely sharp and the princess closed all the

doors of the house; even the wind could not enter. *18b* Bahram Syah drew his sword and prepared himself for the fight. He fixed his gaze on the flask and looked at nothing else. The princess took down the flask with her knees knocking together. She removed the yellow piece of cloth while saying, “Oh my Lord, be careful, or we may come to our end today!” Bahram Syah said, “Oh Princess, do not be afraid and release the soul!” The princess removed the flask’s stopper at once and the soul appeared, like lightning, hotter than fire. It looked white and behaved like a cat jumping into the light [from a dark, secluded spot]. Bahram Syah jumped to the right and then moved to the left. The spirit’s soul was cut through completely and broke into two pieces; its head darted off to the far end of the house and its body shot away to the other side of the house. In an instant Thunder and Lightning fell down from the sky in the middle of the palace yard like a thunderbolt that cleaves the earth. Both Bahram Syah and the princess were shocked; the princess immediately opened the door of the palace and saw Thunder and Lightning’s corpse, which was as big as a mountain. The capital and the yard were completely blocked because of its huge size. Then, the corpse became smaller until it had the size of a human being. Such was the size of the corpse. Bahram Syah was amazed when he saw the spirit’s corpse.

For a while, Bahram Syah stayed with the princess. They had been together for seven days now, but not a single angry word had been exchanged; they spoke words of perfect virtue only. At a certain moment, Bahram Syah said, “Oh Princess, *19a* give me permission to leave as I want to go now to search for the bird; I will leave you behind here for the time being.” The princess answered, “How can I stay behind, for I want to follow you! In life and even in death, I want to be together with you, my friend!” Bahram Syah replied, “How can you stay with me? I do not know where I go to, as I follow the road Only God Knows.”

Bahram Syah quarreled with the princess for a while; she did not want to stay behind and Bahram Syah did not want to take her along, so Bahram Syah said, “Oh Princess, just let me go, God, may He be exalted, willing! Give me about two years to come back here, and I will take you with me, provided that God, may He be exalted, grants me a long life. If I do not do as I have promised, I will renounce God!

When the princess heard Bahram Syah’s words, she felt joyous and said, “Yes my Lord, if you find this bird what will you buy it with?” If Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower wants to sell it, her mother does not want to, and if her mother wants to sell it, her father does not want to. Whether you want to buy it with gold and silver, or even with diamonds and precious gems, they will not sell it, because they already own a lot of gold and silver, and diamonds and precious gems. However, there is something that they do not possess. In my opinion, if you have that, they may want to sell the bird.” Bahram Syah spoke, “What is it that I can use to buy the bird with?” The princess answered, “Yes my Lord, you must know that the object you can buy the bird with is that which is called Magical Stone Jewel of the Queen, which radiates an enormous quantity of light.” He said, “What

if I *rgb* keep this Magical Stone Jewel of the Queen?” The princess answered, “If you really want it, you can.” Bahram Syah spoke, “My heart’s desire to have it is thousandfold.”

Immediately, the princess took the sparkling Magical Stone Jewel of the Queen, put it in a big box, and brought it before Bahram Syah. It was wrapped up in seven pieces of cloth. The first was a piece of black cloth and the light was black. The second was a piece of green cloth and the light was green. The third was a piece of red cloth and the light was red. The fourth was a piece of blue cloth and the light was blue. Then she removed the piece of yellow cloth and the light was yellow. She then removed the sixth piece of cloth of a purple colour and the light was purple. She removed the seventh piece of cloth, a white one, and the light was white. Now all seven wrappings were removed and one could see the shape of the Magical Stone Jewel of the Queen, while it radiated its light. Bahram Syah swooned, fainted and lost consciousness because of the intensity of the Magical Stone’s light.

After this, the princess sprinkled him with rosewater and he regained consciousness. The princess said, “Oh my Lord, the special qualities of this Magical Stone are manifold. You must know that even if it has a thousand different kinds of wrappings, its shape and radiance are thousandfold too, and the same holds for the weight of this Magical Stone. Whether you weigh with a weight of a *batu handah* or a pound or a quarter or *kati*, or even a *pikul* or *bahara*, the stone’s weight will match any weight. Whatever worldly weight is used, even a very light one, the stone’s weight will equal it. That is the Magical Stone’s power.” *20a* Bahram Syah took the Magical Stone and put it in a safe place. Following this, he went off and left the capital.

The princess instantly started to run, following Bahram Syah, while saying, “Yes my Lord, I overlooked something, I forgot something, come back!” Bahram Syah went back to the palace yard. The princess took three hairs from the fontanelle of the spirit’s head. There were three different kinds of hair. She said, “Use these during your travels. You must know that if you want to produce water, or if you desire light, use this white hair together with a spell. And if you want to make fire, then use this red hair together with a spell to cause a fierce fire. And if you desire an intense darkness, then use the black hair with a spell and it will become dark without a fail. Your enemies will see nothing but pitch darkness. Thus, you will not be hampered or hindered when traveling in daytime or in the nighttime.” Bahram Syah took the hairs immediately and put them away in a safe place. He took off and left the capital. He looked behind him and worked magic using the red hair of the spirit and a fierce fire surrounding the capital appeared. The capital and the palace became surrounded by a wall of blazing fire. After this, Bahram Syah went on without resting.

After he had traveled for about eight hours, he could hear the wild noise of waves; it sounded like waves breaking on the reef and the shore. After this, he walked on without stopping. A few moments later, Bahram Syah reached *20b* the seashore. As he had traveled for three days and three nights, he wanted to take a rest there.

He halted under a tree, lay down, fell asleep and dreamt. In his dream, his father Sultan Maharaja the Great appeared to him and spoke as follows: “Oh my son and light of my eyes Bahram Syah, why do I see you sleeping soundly? Know that you must be on your guard during your travels in the future, for you will encounter immense dangers of all kinds and unprecedented troubles. However, they are caused by nothing else but your own behaviour, for troubles do not come out of the blue. Do not be negligent in taking care of yourself! God, may He be exalted, will give you that which you want, so wake up immediately as the day has already started!” Bahram Syah woke up and heard the argus pheasants call, one after the other, and dawn broke. He looked to the left and to the right, but he saw nothing. Bahram Syah shed tears because the encounter with his father in his dream had lasted just as long as it takes to wink an eye.

After this, he thought about this dream and said to himself, “How can father talk like this? Who now is crazy to torture himself?” He sat for a moment and walked on continuously along the shoreline while looking to the sea. Not a single island obstructed his view; there was only the wind and a chain of clouds circling around. Bahram Syah traveled on without taking a break. *21a* Far off he could see a cape that protruded into the sea. On top of it stood a tree that was much bigger than all the other trees. Without a rest, Bahram Syah walked on to have a look at the tree.

After he had walked for one hour, he reached the tree and halted. The next moment, he looked to the sea and saw the beach stretching endlessly in a winding fashion; there was nothing that interrupted it, Only God Knows. Bahram Syah sat down under the tree and thought about how long ago he had left his homeland and how long he had been separated from his parents; till this day, it had been seventeen years.

Bahram Syah was very thirsty and hungry. He looked at the tree and saw a spring rising from underneath the tree; as its water was very clear and tasted extremely nice, he drank it. After he had drunk, he sat down again. After he had sat for about half an hour, he became drowsy as a gentle breeze blew in his face and he laid himself down. And so it was.

V

The story is as follows:

Now the story is told of the incredibly big dragon-snake from the sea. This dragon-snake encircled the Sea of the Double Coconut. On top of the tree there was a garuda's nest. There were two young garudas, a male and a female one, both still small. They were as big as a rogue elephant and were naked as they had not grown feathers yet. Then the dragon-snake emerged out of the sea. *21b* It opened its jaws wide and quickly rushed up the tree, because it wanted to eat the young garudas. Its head almost reached the garudas nest; its navel was at the level of the lowest branch of the tree, while the dragon-snake's

tail was still in the sea. It wanted to devour the young garudas. The birds wanted to flee but could not: they were frightened and overtaken by fear. They used their voices to cause a commotion. Their voices sounded like thunder, while the tree swayed to and fro.

Bahram Syah was startled and awoke. He drew his sword, jumped to his feet, attacked the big dragon-snake and cut it in two. The dragon-snake was dying. Holes appeared in the sand and the water on the shoreline mixed with the shale as the dragon-snake expired. Bahram Syah looked up the tree and said, "Oh spirit, devil, Satan in the tree, who are you? Come down, I will kill you! If you do not come down, I will come up to kill you!"

By the decree of God, may He be exalted, the garudas could speak and they said, "Yes my Lord, member of the human race, we are neither spirits, nor Satan, nor the devil; in fact, we are animals, we are young garudas." Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh garudas, do you want to eat this dragon-snake? It is dead; I killed it." The young garudas spoke, "Oh my Lord, we are not able to fly because the feathers of our wings are not yet fully developed. So how can you say that we have to come down to eat the dragon-snake? We are really hungry and thirsty; our mother has not returned yet from her search for our food." *22a* Bahram Syah said, "Oh my siblings, if you want to eat the dragon-snake, then open your beaks!" And so the young garudas opened their beaks. Bahram Syah cut the dragon-snake up into small pieces and threw them upwards with the tip of his sword. The young garudas caught the pieces with their beak and ate them. Bahram Syah again cut some pieces from the dragon-snake and threw them into the beaks of the young garudas, who ate them. Both young garudas were now satisfied. Lying close together with their stomachs full, they dozed off. Bahram Syah went back to the place where he had sat down.

After the young garudas had slept for some time, they woke up and looked down the tree. They saw Bahram Syah with his bright and shining appearance and said to themselves, "How can we repay this human being for what he did for us? Let us just praise him so that he will like us!" Thus, the young male garuda praised Bahram Syah as follows: "Oh my Lord who is brave and wise, you have no equal in this era!"

After he had praised Bahram Syah, the young female garuda also praised him with the words, "Yes my human Lord, may God, may He be exalted, grant you a long and prosperous life, here and in the Hereafter! So strengthen your faith and increase your benevolence and God will give you whatever you want! Earning a living will be easy!" By the time the young garudas had praised Bahram Syah, it was already late in the afternoon.

The adult garuda returned from her search for food and perched on her branch. The big tree *22b* swayed to and fro and it was as if all the branches and leaves were being blown by a strong wind. She spoke, "Oh my children, sweethearts, light of my eyes, please open your beaks, here is the food I brought you!" Both her children did not make a sound because they had fallen asleep after eating the dragon-snake. The adult garuda was very worried as she thought that they were dead. She began to jump and the sound of her voice was like thunder and lightning and she said, "Oh my children, sweethearts, light of my eyes, are you perhaps dead, eaten by the big dragon-snake from the sea?" The tree moved

violently, as if it was spinning and its roots were severed, so her children were startled and woke up.

When the mother saw that her children were alive, she came down to the nest, saying, “Oh my children and my sweethearts, why did you not answer me for two or three times?” Crying, her two children replied, “Oh our mother, we almost would not have seen each other again because of that big dragon-snake from the sea. It rushed upwards to our place and even wanted to devour our nest; its jaws were wide open, as it wanted to swallow us. Because it is so big, it was as if it wanted to devour us together with the tree, while its tail was still in the sea. But apparently God let us live a little bit longer as a human being appeared. He cut the dragon-snake up and it died subsequently. After that, he cut the dragon-snake into little pieces and gave them to us. So we ate that dragon-snake, a piece each, and we slept soundly because our stomachs were filled. Another piece *23a* of the dragon-snake is still lying on the beach, being hit by the waves.”

The mother’s heart was throbbing after she had heard her children speak and she said, “Oh my two children, you must know that your father died because he was eaten by that dragon-snake. Seven times I have built a nest and the dragon-snake ate all my children. It devoured several eggs and all your siblings!” Her children spoke, “Oh my mother, why do you continue to build nests here? It never yielded anything good! You just do not think straight. You have never succeeded in building a safe construction, even till this day!” Their mother spoke, “Oh my two children, listen! I know right from wrong because I am your mother and I know more than you. The reason I build the nest here is that I have already looked at all the other trees in this world, but there is no tree bigger than ours here. The other trees would not be able to carry and support this nest of mine, so do not say I am wrong!”

Thereupon the adult garuda kept silent for a while and her two children spoke, “Oh our mother, why are you silent? It is true what humans say: ‘If a man’s work is to carve, then when he does not use the chisel, he does not eat.’ And if you grow as old as a mushroom that is not used to prepare a curry with, then you will certainly rot like the mushroom’s stem and be thrown away. That is what you are constantly pursuing!”

After her children had spoken like this, she said, “Oh my children, what are you trying to tell me?” Her children said, “Oh our mother, there is a human who did us a favour and *23b* you have not said a single nice word to repay him! The person who did us a favour is lying under this tree. Please ask him if he is abandoned by his parents or if he lost his way while hunting and ask him which state he is from. We think that he is not just an ordinary man, but a son of a great king, as he shows the signs of all the good qualities. Moreover, his courage and wisdom are unmatched. Please bring him with you to our nest. What could it be that he wants and looks for here?”

As the adult garuda was speaking with her children, Bahram Syah overheard everything. “Invite that man immediately!” So their mother flew to the ground and said, “Oh my son, sweetheart, man who is loyal, wise and of perfect intelligence, and who always

obtains the right virtues, do you want to accept this humble animal as your mother?” Bahram Syah said, “There is nothing wrong with that; if you want to adopt me as your child, then I want it a thousand times more. Besides, it must be my fate!” The garuda spoke, “If you truly want this animal as your mother, then let us go to meet your siblings. Just cling to my feathers!”

Thus, the garuda flew up the tree together with Bahram Syah and perched on her nest. Bahram Syah trembled with fear when he heard the sound of the garuda’s wings, and he pondered upon it. He was astonished to see the size of the garuda’s nest. She had used thousands of uprooted trees, a kind of rattan, brushwood *24a* and undergrowth to make the nest. Bahram Syah measured and determined the nest’s volume and estimated that it must be three *kulak* of rice, and he became silent. The young garudas spoke, “Oh our mother, what can we give our brother? He will die eventually, as he has not eaten a thing!” So their mother flew along the seashore in search of manned boats. By the decree of God, may He be exalted, she found a boat; the garuda seized it, carried it off and devoured its owner. Then she took the complete boat, together with its load, up to her nest and said, “Oh my son, come on and eat!” So Bahram Syah ate and drank. The garuda was quiet for a while and her children said, “Oh our mother, why do you not ask him the reason why he came here and what it is he is looking for?” The garuda spoke, “Oh my son, what can it possibly be that you are looking for, that you came here for? Tell me and your siblings!” With tears in his eyes, Bahram Syah exclaimed, “Oh my mother, brother and sister!” And then he told everything, beginning with his father’s dream and ending with the separation from his brothers. He told the garudas everything.

Bahram Syah said, “Oh my mother, have you ever heard of the state of Gastu Gasta?” The garuda answered, “Oh my son, I have indeed heard of the state of Gastu Gasta, but it is really difficult to get there. You cannot get there on foot or by boat and, moreover, it is situated incredibly far from here. *24b* Unless you fly like a bird, you cannot get to the state of Gastu Gasta.” Bahram Syah said, “Oh my mother, if I go there together with you flying, how long does it take to get there?” The garuda said, ‘Oh my son, listen to me! I have flown to the state of Gastu Gasta before. It is situated in the west, on the other side of the Sea of Fire. To the left of the Sea of Fire, there is the Sea of the Tree with the Double Coconut and to the right are various maelstroms. The Sea of Fire stretches down into the earth. If I ascend and fly high up in the air, it takes seven days. If I fly level, it takes me three days, and if I descend and fly low, we can definitely make it within a single day. However, the sufferings will be immense; it will feel as if you are losing consciousness as the Sea of Fire’s flames are extremely hot. Three times already my breast feathers have been scorched and my skin singed. Such are the torments, oh my son!”

Bahram Syah spoke, “Oh my mother, would you please fly me to the other side of the Sea of Fire?” The garuda replied, “Oh my son, listen to me! Even if I fly level or high in the sky, it is not just the Sea of Fire that causes suffering; the moon and the stars will cause you pain too. There is a lot of turbulence up there and hurricanes and whirlwinds clash

in a way unknown to man, accompanied by flashes of lightning. Besides, it is extremely and unimaginably gloomy.”

After Bahram Syah had been in the garuda’s nest for three days, he told 25a her to fly him [to the state of Gastu Gasta]. She said, “Oh my son, I think it is better that you let me go alone to the state of Gastu Gasta and let me seize Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower and the bird *Marah* Jalin together with the palace and bring them here. Do not go with me, as you will certainly not make it because there are too many dangers involved!” Bahram Syah spoke, “Oh my mother, if that is how you want it, then I am no longer your son! Why do you want to seize the bird *Marah* Jalin and Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower? My father, His Royal Highness, did not order me to torment them, he only ordered me to search for the bird! Now, you must fly me to this state of Gastu Gasta! If not alive, then my corpse!”

The two young garudas spoke, “Oh our mother, you had better do as our brother says. Do not be afraid that he will die. When a request is evil, no one will gain profit from it! Now, we can do something for our brother in return, but when he dies while you fly him or when he falls into the Sea of Fire, make sure that you die with him. In that case, we, Only God Knows, will die too, because we will not get food as we are not able to fly yet. And even if we survive, what is the point of staying alive? We will feel happy about it, as all four of us will be dead at the same time.”

After this, their mother spoke, “Oh my son, if that is how your siblings think about it, give me seven days so I can look for some food for them, as we will leave them behind.” She flew away to look for elephants and she managed to seize 25b seven animals. She brought them back to her nest and her children said, “Oh mother, this food will not suffice for the time we will be alone!” So she flew again and found another seven elephants. She seized them, together with four rhinoceroses and three deer. She went back to her nest and said, “Oh my children, take these as your provisions!” Her children replied, “This will do, we think.” The adult garuda said, “Oh my son Bahram Syah, prepare yourself as we are leaving tomorrow morning! If we are lucky, the conditions will be favourable.”

Night fell and Bahram Syah started to make preparations for the journey. On the back of the adult garuda he made a construction to secure the seven elephants. He looked for a beam to tie the elephants together, whetted his sword, his creese and his dagger, and gathered his provisions. The two young garudas started to cry over Bahram Syah, as they were going to be separated from him; they were convinced that he would die. When Bahram Syah saw how the two young garudas pitied him, he said, “Oh my brother and sister, do not worry about the fact that our ways will part, because, God willing, we will be separated for only one year. I will be back to look for you, my brother and sister, as mother will come and get me. Oh my two siblings, cheer up! I know that my life will be long, because I have spoken with the Angel of Death in the centre of an extremely vast plain!” After the young garudas had heard Bahram Syah’s words, they all three felt happy.

A few moments later, 26a dawn broke. Bahram Syah tied the elephants up at the back

of the adult garuda, using the beam that was holding them together. When Bahram Syah had finished, the garuda went up to her nest and spoke, “Oh my son Bahram Syah, get on my back and hold me tight! Do not forget to take good care of yourself!” Bahram Syah jumped on the back of the garuda and said, “Oh my brother and sister, stay here! I will go!” The garuda’s nest, which could contain three *kulak* of tree buttresses, was completely covered when the adult garuda spread her wings. She flew off and soared around her nest three times.

Flying upwards, high in the sky, she went as fast as lightning. Bahram Syah’s mouth, nose and ears droned and up they went, flying without a rest. It was as if the mountains and the trees were spinning.

A few moments later, they came across a whirlwind. Bahram Syah kept silent and the adult garuda said, “Oh my son, fetch me an elephant, I want to eat!” He fetched an elephant, the garuda devoured it, and they went up again. Bahram Syah looked down and saw the world as big as a tray. Night fell and the garuda flew on without a break.

Dawn broke and they were going higher and higher. They met with a cyclone and the garuda began to rotate now. She flew to the left, to the right and in all other possible directions. Flying, they entered the higher part of the sky and the garuda said, “Oh my son, fetch an *26b* elephant, I want to eat!” Bahram Syah fetched an elephant, which was devoured by the garuda, and they went up again. Bahram Syah looked down and saw the world as big as a bowl. They flew upwards again and encountered a fierce hurricane. The noise produced by the garuda’s wings was extremely loud, like the sound of a lightning strike splitting the earth in two. It was as if Bahram Syah lost consciousness while they kept going higher and higher.

A moment later, they arrived in the green layer of the sky, and the garuda spoke, “Oh my son Bahram Syah, fetch an elephant, I want to eat!” So Bahram Syah fetched an elephant, and the garuda devoured it. She said, “Oh my son Bahram Syah, if we fly high up in the sky, it takes three days to get there. Stay alert there on my back and take good care of yourself. We will fly level now!” The garuda started to fly level and the noise of her wings unfolding resembled that of a hurricane. She kept on flying and they came across a wind named the Changeable Wind. This wind was extremely fierce; should it touch the earth, it would carry off all plants and everything else on the surface of the earth into the sky.

The garuda said, “Oh my son, fetch an elephant, I want to eat!” Bahram Syah fetched an elephant, which was devoured by the garuda. After this, she flew on without a rest. When they had flown for a while, they flew into an air hole and experienced some heavy turbulence. These winds were many times fiercer than the former ones and it was as if Bahram Syah fainted and lost consciousness. The garuda spoke, “Oh my son, fetch an elephant, I want to eat!” Bahram Syah fetched the elephant, which was *27a* devoured by the garuda. Following this, she flapped her wings and took off. They flew on for a while and did not look to the left or to the right; they just flew on level.

The next moment, they met with the wind called *Danglak-Dangli* Purity in Death. Bahram Syah thought to himself, "As long as I have lived on this earth, I have never had to endure something like this." The garuda said, "Oh my son, fetch an elephant, I want to eat!" So Bahram Syah fetched another elephant and the garuda devoured it. They then flew on, without stopping. Somewhat later, the garuda spoke, "Oh my son, it will take three days to get there if we fly level. Stay alert now, and take good care of yourself! Secure all your limbs, stay alert and finish your provisions as we are now going to fly low, across the vast Sea of Fire. It will be almost unbearable, because this flight will be different from the last one; you will lose consciousness and I will not be able to think about you, my son!" Without stopping, the garuda flew on.

After they had flown for some time, the wind became variable. It started to spin round and round and a dense fog appeared. The flying garuda was blown in all directions; first she flew to the left and, after that, to the right. She flew lower and lower and approached the shoreline of the Sea of Fire. The heat was increasing now. The garuda felt very hungry and thirsty and said, "Oh my son Bahram Syah, fetch an elephant, I want to eat!" Bahram Syah drew his sword, cut one elephant in half and grabbed one half of it. The garuda devoured the piece and spoke, "Oh my son, why so little, I am not full yet!" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my mother, there are *27b* different kinds of elephants; there are small ones and big ones." The garuda kept on flying.

The heat of the Sea of Fire was becoming ever more intense; should it ever reach the earth's crust, it would definitely destroy all the trees. A moment later, there was the sound of the cooking Sea of Fire; it sounded like hurricanes and bolts of lightning and like the waves of the Red Sea. After they had flown for another moment, thick clouds of smoke appeared and *b-r-g-wau-b-l angka dua* cooking and *b-r-b-wau-l-h*. The garuda said, "Oh my son, fetch an elephant, I want to eat!" Bahram Syah fetched the other half of the elephant and the garuda devoured it. She said, "Oh my son, why so little? Have we perhaps run out of provisions?" Bahram Syah answered, "There is still some left." The garuda flew on, having almost no strength left.

They encountered air holes, immense fierce hurricanes and whirlwinds; all kinds of storms were raging. At that particular moment, the moon was in conjunction with the stars that day and thus the Sea of Fire was cooking. The waves heaved as if they reached into the sky. A moment later, it became pitch-dark and nothing was visible any more. The garuda said, "Oh my child, drop an elephant, because I am really very hungry and thirsty, I cannot stand it any longer!" Bahram Syah was very worried and spoke, "Oh my mother, wait a moment!" The garuda did her utmost, but she went down. She said, "Oh my son, what will you do now? I have no strength left!" The Sea of Fire became ever hotter and the garuda spoke, "Oh my son, drop an elephant, because I want to eat and my throat is even drier than before!"

Bahram Syah replied, *28a* "Oh my mother, wait for another moment please!" The garuda flew on, but she kept on going down to the surface of the Sea of Fire as she was

feeling weak. After they had flown like this for another while, going down all the time, they almost fell into the Sea of Fire. The tip of both the left and the right wing of the garuda were scorched as if burned, and the breast feathers were singed, and she said, "Oh my son, I tell you that we both are going to die now, so please drop that elephant!" Bahram Syah took the white hair of the spirit king and the garuda spoke, "Oh my son Bahram Syah, I tell you, I cannot hold it any longer now. It seems as if we will both come to our end here, falling into the flaming Sea of Fire. Please give me just a little bit of food!" Bahram Syah immediately sliced off the flesh of the calf of one of his legs with his dagger and said, "Oh my mother, open your mouth, here is a bit of food that was left!" The garuda ate it and swallowed the flesh of Bahram's calf.

Next, Bahram Syah said a charm over the white hair of the spirit named Thunder and Lightning and, at that same moment, the whole world became light again. Then rain began to pour down on the garuda and she regained her strength. She felt joyous and flew playfully through the air, gracefully bending her wings like a dancer and like an eagle defying the wind, her eyes glittering as she looked down.

There was the state of Gastu Gasta; the tips of the garuda's wings nearly hit the beach. She pressed her wings against her body and flew down. One moment later, she reached the beach and landed. At the spot where the garuda hit the ground, rocks *28b* were scattered, dry grass, leaves and twigs were flying about, and grit was being swept away. The garuda said, "Oh my son Bahram Syah, get off my back immediately, we have arrived in the state of Gastu Gasta!" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my mother, wait a minute please!" The garuda said nothing and waited a while, but Bahram Syah did not get off her back, and she asked, "Oh my son Bahram Syah, why are you not getting off my back? Are you hungry or thirsty or are you feeling dizzy, my son?" Bahram Syah answered, "Oh my mother, you must know that when we crossed the Sea of Fire, we ran out of elephants. At that moment, you had no strength left and you were very weak, as you had to endure the pain caused by the heat of the Sea of Fire. I thought, 'If mother dies, we will both die, and if I die, mother will bring my corpse down.' I sliced off the flesh of my left leg's calf and gave it all to you and you swallowed it. How can I get off your back now, as I cannot use my leg."

When the garuda heard Bahram Syah's words, she started to sway and Bahram Syah fell from her back and landed on his buttock, as he was not able to stand. The garuda cried and threw up Bahram Syah's calf. With the permission of God, may He be exalted, the flesh of Bahram Syah's calf came out of her stomach, mixed with the corpses of the elephants. The garuda looked for the flesh of Bahram Syah's calf in between the elephant corpses, *29a* found it, and washed it thoroughly. After that, she put the flesh back on the leg and with the power of God, may He be exalted, it stuck to the leg. There was no sign at all that pointed to what had happened to the leg.

Bahram Syah got up immediately, and the garuda wiped him with her wings and said, "Oh my son Bahram Syah, I want to go home, as your brother and sister have been left

alone for a long time already. If you want to go to the state of Gastu Gasta, follow this road. This is the main road that the people usually take; it does not branch off and it has no end. When you have walked for about half an hour, you will arrive at [the bay called] Smooth Curves. From the beach, you can see the estuary called Dew on the Teak, and if you look towards the sea, you can see the island of Sinawilan. Walking, you will pass some houses and the market. Not long after that, you will come across a two-forked road; the road to the right leads to the state of Gastu Gasta, and the road to the left leads to the Flower Garden of Grandmother Kebayan. But you better first go to the house of Grandmother Kebayan, because the son of this old lady recently died, and you are exactly his height; she will really love you a lot. Now, please take one feather from the top of my head and put it somewhere safe. Whenever you plan to do something and you do not know whether it is good or bad, burn the feather. When it smokes a bit, I will know of your plans immediately. So, take the garuda feather, Bahram Syah, and keep it somewhere safe!" Then, she flew up while saying, "Stay behind, my son, I will depart now!" Bahram Syah and the garuda went their separate ways and Bahram Syah went on, without stopping, from *29b* one patch of jungle to another patch of jungle and from one plain to another plain.

After he had walked for half an hour, he arrived at a beach. Bahram Syah took a break and got a breath of fresh air. He looked along the outstretched beach and he saw the wide estuary called Dew on the Teak. Bahram Syah walked on and, after a while, he arrived at the river mouth. He saw hundreds of big and small boats. The boats were numerous, as it was an extremely busy port. Every day, there were many great merchants buying and selling, and all the different kinds of God's servants came there. Bahram Syah went on, while nobody spoke to him, and he thought to himself, "There is no state bigger than this state of Gastu Gasta!" Without taking a break, he walked on.

He came upon the two-forked road and followed the road to the left, which brought him to the village of Grandmother Kebayan, in the Flower Garden. He admired the beauty of it, as it was really very pretty; the garden contained thousands of different flower bouquets with various kinds of flowers. The demarcation of the garden consisted of seven rows of different crotons, all of the same height, and there were several kinds of fruit, like dates, grapes, raisins and pomegranates. There was nothing the same in this garden.

Bahram Syah walked on and a moment later he arrived in front of Grandmother Kebayan's house. He halted and, after having stood there for a while, he heard different sounds. The *rebab*, *kecapi*, *serunai*, *bangsi* and *sangkadu 30a* sounded very loud, while the parakeets and parrots strutted playfully, displaying their feathers.

Everybody who was in the house was startled. Grandmother Kebayan stood up and looked into her yard. She saw somebody standing in front of her house; he was extremely handsome and had a radiant appearance. He looked exactly like her son Plain of Intoxication. She cried and went outside immediately to see Bahram Syah. Crying bitterly, she

took him on her lap, kissed him and said, “Oh my son, sweetheart, and light of my eyes, you must be alive then!” She continued, “All ladies-in-waiting who are in this palace, decorate the whole place!”

They adorned both the silver and the golden *anjung* of the palace and prepared all kinds of cosmetic powder and cleanser; these were put in a golden washbowl and brought to Bahram Syah’s bathing pool. He bathed using the cleanser and washed his hair, while all the ladies-in-waiting accompanied him. After Bahram Syah had finished bathing, he returned to the palace and went inside immediately. He was seated on a golden carpet and waited on by the entire court. All members of the court who waited on him were pleased and enjoyed themselves while eating and drinking. Grandmother Kebayan grew to love Bahram Syah more and more.

For some time, Bahram Syah amused himself night and day at Grandmother Kebayan’s place. For about seven nights and seven days, he was having a good time there, picking flowers. *30b* That was what he did there. After some time, night fell and Bahram Syah said, “Oh my mother, I have been here with you in this palace for seven days now, but where do these sounds come from that can be heard every day?” His mother answered, “Oh my son, they come from the capital of the state of Gastu Gasta.” Bahram Syah asked, “Oh my mother, what is the name of this state’s king and how many are his vassal states?” Grandmother Kebayan answered, “Oh my son, it is a great king who is fair and generous as well. He is called His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent and the name of his wife is Princess Apalu Apala; they have a daughter named Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower. She is very pretty and has a glowing appearance; she is the one who owns the bird *Marah* Jalin. Its wings sprinkle fluid gold, its breast feathers are ruffled, and the feathers on its neck are red as resin from the dragon’s blood plant. When it speaks, gold and silver are scattered from its beak, and when it tells a story, diamonds and other small gems are sprinkled from its eyes. When it recites poetry or verse, precious gems of all kinds fly from its nose. His vassal states are seventy-seven in number, all complete with officials, officers and subjects. Every Friday, all religious scholars and other learned men of religion, the Islamic head of state and the preacher, all believers of every parish and experts in the Islamic law come together. After they have finished the Friday prayer, they gather and wait on His Majesty and he hands out gifts. After that, they each go home feeling happy. This is the way he always acts, oh my son!”

Bahram Syah spoke, “Oh my mother, I want to take a stroll as I want to see this Majesty’s throne, and I want to try *31a* to see the bird and hear him talking.” Grandmother Kebayan replied, “Oh my son, how can you see the bird? It is not allowed to be seen by a human being; even the wind is not allowed to enter the palace. The capital’s gate has a door that consists of seven layers and it is guarded by watchmen. That is how it always has been and always will be, oh my son!” Bahram Syah said, “If I cannot go there, then let me go to see the people at the market, so I can learn about the customs and habits of the local people.” Grandmother Kebayan replied, “Oh my son and sweetheart, that will

be difficult because there are a lot of fights going on at the market as birds of different feathers gather over there. There are seven market days in this state: on Saturday, there is the market where the princes ride their horses to entertain themselves; at the Sunday market, the children of the noblemen play kickball; on Monday, there is the market where outstanding fighters fight with swords and spears; at the Tuesday market, the children of the highest dignitaries engage in trade; on Wednesday, there is the market where the children of the merchants buy and sell their merchandise; and on Thursday, all subjects gather to wait on His Majesty. That is how it always has been and always will be, oh my son! I have heard several things about these markets; for instance, that people had killed each other or that half of the visitors just disappeared. Therefore, imagine how I feel if you are to go there!”

Night fell and after they had finished eating and drinking, Bahram Syah spoke, “Oh my mother, you must take me to the capital. When I am there, you will see that I do not talk much and that I have my eyes fixed on the floor. I will keep silent and will not say a word, good or bad! If you *31b* do not take me there, I will go by myself!” Grandmother Kebayan replied, “Oh my son, let me think first. We will go in the morning.”

That night, Bahram Syah ordered flowers to be picked in the garden and to be brought to him. He arranged the flowers and the bouquets were very beautiful; there were one hundred and twelve different colours of flowers and they were sparkling. As for the names of the flower arrangements, the first one was called Lantern Spinning to the Left and to the Right Encircled by Burning Candles; the second Cloud Barely Visible in the Rays of the Moon and the Light of the Scattered Stars [...] and the third Cloud Spinning Blown by the Wind and a Gentle Breeze. After Bahram Syah had arranged the flowers, he said, “Oh my mother, here are the bouquets; I want to sell them in the capital.” The pious woman spoke, “Oh my son, in that case we will go there tomorrow, but first let me make you look more like a person of lower descent, like somebody who descends from a very shameful lineage. To attain that, we have to change your appearance. Your name is now no longer Bahram Syah, but Keling Kecateri, and you are of Arab descent. Before I take you there, your clothes must be like those of someone’s servant!” Bahram Syah replied, “That is all right, my mother! Whatever seems good to you, I will not dispute, as you are the one who is allowed to walk in and out the palace.”

The next day, after they had finished eating and drinking, Grandmother Kebayan took some ink and stained Bahram Syah’s cheeks. His whole body was dirty now and covered with stains; he looked really disgusting, and so did his clothes. Grandmother Kebayan took off, carrying her bag with betel and Bahram Syah followed her. *32a* In his left hand he carried the bouquets he had made, and around his head he had folded his worn-out sarong to protect him from the sun and the rain.

After they had walked for some time and had crossed the busy market, the pious woman and Bahram Syah arrived at the capital’s gate. The guards immediately opened the gate; Grandmother Kebayan entered the capital and went inside the palace where

she paid her respects to Princess Apalu Apala. Several ladies-in-waiting were waiting on Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, each according to their task. There was a lady-in-waiting who carried the fan and another one who held the bowl with betel on her lap; the princess was waited upon in many different ways. Keling Kecateri Banu Arab Bardan Kucikak Katulikan stayed in the courtyard and all ladies-in-waiting came to see his bouquets. He was surrounded and chased after by them; half of them wanted to seize his flowers and half of them wanted to ask him for his flowers. He kept silent and looked as if he could burst into tears any moment. Seeing this, the ladies-in-waiting started laughing. The laughing was heard in the palace and Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower spoke, "Who is the person who came here with you?" Grandmother Kebayan answered, "Oh Princess, it is a young boy, called Keling Kecateri Banu Arab Bardan Kucikakan Katulikan; I bought him for four and a half *dirham*. I left him outside." The princess said, "Please, tell him to come here so I can see how big he is." Grandmother Kebayan replied, "Oh Princess, why should I tell him to come here; he looks really disgusting."

Meanwhile, a lady-in-waiting **32b** ran into the *anjung* and said, "O Princess, the companion of Grandmother Kebayan has brought some exquisite flower bouquets with him. The flowers have been arranged in an astonishing fashion and there are one hundred and twelve different kinds of them. I have never seen bouquets like these! We have asked him about the flowers, but he stays silent. He does not speak a single word!" The princess spoke, "Oh My Lady, get this Keling Kecateri here!" When His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent heard the ladies-in-waiting causing commotion, he became angry and spoke, "Ladies-in-waiting, why are you harassing this boy? Do not cast another look at him again! Although I can see that he looks as if he is poor and of low descent; indeed, he looks like a servant, but how can one know his descent? You draw conclusions based on his ugly clothes, but how can one tell his fortune? Perhaps he has even more good fortune than we have! The ways of God, may He be exalted, are unfathomable!"

After Princess Apalu Apalau heard His Majesty's words, she became angry with all the ladies-in-waiting. She summoned Bahram Syah. He entered, anxiously prostrated himself and paid his respects; he looked as if he could cry at any moment. He sat down behind Grandmother Kebayan. Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower took the bouquets out of Bahram Syah's hands and he was shocked; he really looked as if he could burst into tears any moment now, but he kept silent. Bahram Syah said, "Oh my mother, ask for the bird; I want to talk with it!" Grandmother Kebayan became furious and said, "Oh Keling Kecateri Banu Arab Bardan Kucikak Katulikan, do you want to die?" He said nothing **34a** and bowed his head.

The bird *Marah* Jalin flapped its wings, wagged its tail, clicked its nails, and chattered its beak. The bird's beak looked heavenly indeed and its cage was spinning like a top. The princess smiled and said, "Oh my Lady, what did he just say?" Grandmother Kebayan answered, "Oh Princess, don't take any notice of what he says!," and smiled.

A moment later, Bahram Syah slowly spoke, "Oh my mother, ask for the bird! I want

to talk with it.” Grandmother Kebayan turned round, wanting to hit Bahram Syah, and said, “Oh you wicked Keling Kecateri Banu Arab Bardan Kucikan Katulikan, do you want your body to be separated from your soul?” The bird grew ever more pleased and the princess spoke, “Oh my Lady, why are you so angry with this older brother?” Grandmother Kebayan replied, “Why do you call him ‘older brother’? He is just livestock; I bought him at the market for four and a half *dirham*. Please, do not defile your noble family!” Bahram Syah kept silent behind the pious woman, looking as if he would burst into tears.

The next instant Bahram Syah slowly spoke, “Oh my mother, ask for the bird, so I can buy it. Whatever its price may be, I will pay it immediately!” Grandmother Kebayan rose, wanting to give Bahram Syah a blow. Furiously she said, “Oh son of the ghost Singiang-ngiang, who lives in the woods! Son of Bincacak, child of Singiang-ngiang. You maimed Kling! Son of the ghost named Ketumbi who lives under the cornerpole of the house! Son of the ghost who resides in dead tree trunks!” Next she grabbed hold of Bahram Syah’s head and wanted to smack him, but *34b* Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower immediately took hold of Grandmother Kebayan’s hand and said, “Oh my Lady, what did he do wrong, tell me!” Grandmother Kebayan answered, “Oh my child the Princess, how can I not be angry with this cursed wretch! What he says is not decent at all. This boy of mine wants to buy the bird *Marah* Jalin and wants to have a talk with it.” Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower spoke, “It is not proper for you to scorn him like this; if the bird is for sale, he can buy it, and if it is not for sale, he will speak no more. And if my older brother wants to see the bird, what is wrong with that?”

The princess ordered her ladies-in-waiting to fetch a golden tray and place the bird-cage on it. The cage was exquisite and lavishly adorned. The frame of the birdcage consisted of openwork gold and its bars were made of pinchbeck; they were mounted in gold. The bars were interwoven with thick gold wire that consisted of three thinner intertwined wires; the food bowl was encrusted with diamonds and all kinds of small precious stones. The water bowl was made of red and green agate and emerald and various sorts of sapphire were used for the bird’s perch. Both the left and right side of the cage were encrusted with gems of all kinds and they were fringed with pearls; the cage’s cover was made of cloth named Maidens’ Eyes.

After this, Bahram Syah talked with the bird using all the world’s languages; he told the bird everything. The bird immediately put up its beak, spread *35a* its wings, wagged its tail and, while clicking its nails, moved like a dancer on top of the golden tray. Then it started to talk. At that same moment, gold and silver were scattered from its beak. After this, it started to tell stories and diamonds and various kinds of small gems were sprinkled from its eyes. It began to recite poetry and verse and all sorts of precious stones flew from its nose. After this, it recited *pantun* and short poems and from the follicles of its feathers, different kinds of perfumes emerged; they pervaded the air and filled the whole palace. The entire court was awestruck and the guards who watched the gates were flabbergasted;

they had a hard time and shook their heads as they had never seen this bird speaking as it did that day, with the sound of its voice so heavenly. Never before had perfumes, fragrant like ambergris and musk, come out of the bird's body.

Grandmother Kebayan spoke, "Oh Keling Kecateri, what will you buy this bird with? Just try to make a bid!" Bahram Syah replied, "I will make a bid right now!" Grandmother Kebayan said, "Oh you lying cursed wretch, even with the help of your father and mother or from other relatives including your forefathers you can never buy it! Even if you pay for it with all the riches from your state, you will never be able to buy it!"

His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent heard Grandmother Kebayan's voice coming from the audience hall and entered the hall, speaking, "Oh wise young man, if you can afford the bird, I will sell it to you for something that pleases me." Bahram Syah went to His Majesty, taking the bird with him. He paid his respects by *35b* bowing his head to the feet of His Majesty who sat on a golden carpet. His Highness spoke, "Oh wise young man, what did you just say? Is it true that you want to buy the princess' pet bird?" He answered, "Yes, Your Highness." His Majesty spoke, "That is fine with me, but you must pay me with something other than gold or silver or diamonds or gems; it must be something I do not yet possess and you have to get it now!" Bahram Syah paid homage and folded back the waistbelt containing the jewel; it was wrapped up in worn-out cloths. Next, he presented the magic stone Jewel of the Queen, which radiated its light, to His Highness and His Highness spoke, "Oh young man, remove the wrappings, I want to see the stone!" Bahram Syah replied, "Yes, Your Majesty. Please remove the cloth yourself!" His Majesty began unwrapping the magic stone. He first removed the black wrapping and the stone's light was black; second, he removed the red wrapping and it was red; third, he removed the yellow wrapping and the stone's light was yellow; fourth, he removed the blue wrapping and the light was blue; fifth, he removed the green wrapping and the radiance became green; sixth, he removed the purple wrapping and the radiance became purple; seventh, he removed the white wrapping and then a white light appeared. Now, the magic stone Jewel of the Queen was completely visible. The stone dispersed its light and it struck His Majesty's face brightly like the rays of the sun. The king collapsed, fainted and became unconscious because he was struck by the rays of the magic stone Jewel of the Queen.

Bahram Syah sprinkled some rosewater on the faces of His Majesty and the princess. His Majesty regained consciousness and spoke to Grandmother *36a* Kebayan, "Why have you been making a fool of me? Why did you tell me this noble young man was called Keling Kecateri Banu Arab Bardan Kucikak Katulikan? The truth is, that all this time, I knew what was going on and that is why I am really angry with all the ladies-in-waiting of this court, as they have been making a fool of me! But now, listen to me. How fortunate this meeting of your son and my daughter has been! Death will not tear them apart. Let us marry them! The magic stone Jewel of the Queen will be your son's token of betrothal to my daughter and the bird *Marah* Jalin will be my daughter's token of betrothal to

your son. This is what we call the exchange of tokens of betrothal. In three days' time, we will make it public to the inhabitants of this state, so that everyone will know about the betrothal of the two parties."

His Majesty handed the magic stone Jewel of the Queen over to Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower; she took it and kept it in a solid box. The bird *Marah Jalin* was given to Bahram Syah together with the order to take good care of it. After His Majesty had come to an agreement with Grandmother Kebayan and after both parties had mutually affirmed it, Grandmother Kebayan paid her respects and went off to her village called Flower Garden; she took the bird *Marah Jalin* home with her.

Three days later, Bahram Syah said to his mother, "Oh my mother, please go now to His Majesty, the Ruler of the World, and tell him about our token of betrothal. We have bought this bird with our token of betrothal, now tell him to weigh the stone Jewel of the Queen; the value of this stone will be our token of betrothal to them. Next, *36b* ask him if he will postpone the marriage for seven years, as I want to go home and visit my parents first. Perhaps they are still alive so that I can present the bird to them. They were the ones who ordered me to go and search for it." He told Grandmother everything, saying, "Moreover, I want ask his permission to marry. That is what you have to tell His Majesty!" Grandmother Kebayan took off, accompanied by a train of people.

When she had walked for some time, she arrived at the capital of Gastu Gasta. She entered the palace and paid her respects. His Highness *Marah Inda* spoke, "Oh Grandmother Kebayan, what do you want?" She replied, "Have mercy, Your Highness, I have been ordered by my son Bahram Syah to tell you something about our token of betrothal. Please weigh the magic stone Jewel of the Queen and see what its weight is like; that will be our token of betrothal. He also asked if you could postpone the wedding for seven years, because he wants to pay a visit to his parents first. After this visit, he will come back to marry the princess." After His Majesty heard this, he ordered that the stone Jewel of the Queen be fetched and he summoned all merchants and high officials of the state, together with the vassal kings, officials, officers and all other subjects. They came to the palace, paid homage and sat down, each in their own place. His Majesty unwrapped the stone Jewel of the Queen; it was still shining as before. Then Princess Apalu Apala and all the ladies-in-waiting collapsed, fainted and lost consciousness. After this had happened, her daughter sprinkled her with rosewater and Princess Apalu Apala regained consciousness, as did all the ladies-in-waiting. *37a*

Meanwhile, the merchants came in, bringing with them a pair of scales and weights. His Majesty placed the stone Jewel of the Queen on one of the scales and weighed it with the weight of a *busuk* and a *suku*. He then tried to weigh the stone by placing a *tahil* on the scale; he continued with heavier weights up to a *kati*. Finally, he even used a *pikul* and a *bahara*, but the stone matched all the weights. His Majesty was pleased and amazed at the same time when he saw the stone's exceptional qualities, and spoke, "I will accept the stone Jewel of the Queen as Bahram Syah's token of betrothal!" Grandmother Kebayan

took her leave and went back to her village together with all the others who were gathered there.

Three days later, Bahram Syah came to see Grandmother Kebayan and paid his respects; she was startled and said, "What is it that you want?" Afraid and with tears in her eyes she continued, "Have I done something wrong, that you are behaving like this?" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my mother, I will tell you the reason why I feel this way. When I went on this journey, I left my father and my mother behind. You are alone. You don't have a husband. Now, please do not stop loving this foreign wanderer; I want to marry you to this state's prime minister. He is the greatest of all headmen and vassal kings. Love him! He and His Royal Highness are of the same calibre; it is only fitting, therefore, that he should be my father!" Grandmother Kebayan refused to marry the prime minister and kept silent. Bahram Syah *37b* and Grandmother Kebayan started to quarrel; about seven times he urged her to marry the prime minister, but she did not want to be married to him. Bahram Syah said, "Oh my mother, it does not matter, if you do not comply with my request, then stop loving and caring for me now! I will no longer be your son!" When Grandmother Kebayan heard Bahram Syah talking like this, she said, "Oh my son, whatever it is that you want, you must know that I will take care of it."

Next, Bahram Syah informed the king and the state's officials, and three days later, on a propitious day, the prime minister was married to Grandmother Kebayan in the village of Flower Garden. Bahram Syah, the prime minister and Grandmother Kebayan had a party at the palace and Bahram Syah said, "Oh my mother, please let me go home now; let me go accompanied by your prayers, so I will travel safely to my country and back! Now, my parents, go and wait upon His Majesty, as I want to ask him for four or five water buffaloes; tell him to have them prepared all in the same manner; that is, without pepper and salt! After that mother, order one hundred *kulak* of white rice to be boiled. When it is ready, make three piles of it, each consisting of the same quantity of rice. Mix it with the *gulai* and place it on a mat!" That is how it happened.

The prime minister took off and entered the capital. He conveyed Bahram Syah's message in a respectful way to His Majesty. His Majesty started to laugh and said, "What is he going to use it for?" He continued, "Very well then." *38a* He gave orders to do what Bahram Syah had requested. And thus, the headmen went to the middle of the plain at the state's border, to offer their services. However, half of the state's inhabitants said to themselves, "This will lead to nothing at all; if he is indeed going to marry Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, she will definitely be lost!" When the white rice and the *gulai* were ready, it was formed into three piles of the same height.

Next, Bahram Syah gave orders to the officers to convey a message to the inhabitants of the capital and, after that, to those in the villages, using a small gong; the message was as follows: "If something strange happens in the near future, do not be afraid, do not fear and do not ask any questions!" After the message had been spread, Bahram Syah went to the middle of the plain and burnt the tip of the garuda's feather. Shortly there after, the

tip of the feather started to smoke and the garudas appeared; they came down from the sky as fast as a flash of lightning and their bodies covered the sun. They arrived flying in one line, just like they used to do. The sound of their wings was like rolling thunder in the sky; it was an earsplitting noise and the people tried to protect their ears by putting cotton wool in them. Half the population ran away and tried to hide themselves.

The garuda arrived above the plain and cried, “Oh my son Bahram Syah, here I am!” Then she fell down from the sky headfirst, like a ripe areca nut, and alighted on the ground right at the spot where the piles of rice and *gulai* were placed. Bahram Syah spoke, “Oh my mother and my brother and sister, please eat something of the piles of rice and of *38b* the other dishes! How can I ever pay you back for coming here!” The adult garuda replied, “Oh my son, that is exactly how I feel too! We cannot pay you back for what you did for us; the only thing we can do is spread your fame amongst our race, the animals. If not for you, your brother and sister would no longer be alive!” After she had spoken, the garudas began eating; each of them finished one pile. After they had eaten, Bahram Syah said, “Oh my mother, the reason I summoned you is that I want to go back tomorrow, early in the morning.” The garuda replied, “That is fine with me, my son!” Bahram Syah continued, “But first, you and my brother and sister must stay here tonight.”

He went to wait upon the king. Having arrived there, he paid homage and said, “Yes Your Highness, your humble servant will go home, early tomorrow morning, God, may He be exalted, willing. I have an agreement with Your Highness that I will be back within seven years, and if it is all right with Your Highness, I want to ask you for another three water buffaloes as food for the garudas.” His Majesty replied, “There is nothing wrong in that, but please, return quickly, my son!” Bahram Syah said, “Should this humble servant be spared, I will come back quickly to see you, Your Highness.” After Bahram Syah had talked to His Majesty, he took his leave and went back to the village called Flower Garden.

Night fell and Grandmother Kebayan cried as she was going to be separated from Bahram Syah. Bahram Syah said, “Oh my mother, don’t you and father cry; if God keeps me alive, I will come back to see you. *39a* Take heart, my parents, and I beg you, mother, pray for me night and day, morning and evening!” By the time Bahram Syah finished speaking with the prime minister, dawn had broken. After eating and drinking, he took his leave and went to the middle of the plain together with Grandmother Kebayan, the prime minister and all the people. His Highness *Marah* Inda and his royal consort also arrived, escorted by all the vassal kings, officials and commoners. When the water buffaloes were mounted on the garuda’s back, Bahram Syah paid his respects to the princess and all the others and jumped on the back of the young male garuda, while holding the birdcage in his hand.

The young male garuda said, “Now I pay my Lord back for what you did for us!” The next moment, the three garuda’s took off, flying three in a row, and went up into the sky. To protect Bahram Syah against the heat of the Sea of Fire, the adult garuda flew at the bottom of the row, her daughter flew at the top, and the male garuda flew in between.

They flew as fast as lightning and their wings made noise like the sound of the trumpet blown on Judgement Day. They went higher and after about an hour, they encountered the same kinds of winds as they had encountered before, and Bahram Syah felt as though he lost consciousness.

Flying for another while, they passed the Sea of Fire. They turned right and left and then the large tree upon which the nest was build became visible. A moment later, already in the afternoon, they landed on their nest, *39b* while Bahram Syah was still unconscious. They entered the nest and the garudas praised Bahram Syah. In his turn, Bahram Syah praised the garudas, saying, "Oh my mother, brother and sister, I have been here for three days now; let me leave tomorrow!" One of the young garudas spoke, "Oh my brother, let us three accompany you." Bahram Syah replied, "Please, do not go with me, as I have still much to search for. Ask around in every state, but you are not going with me any further than this tree!" The young male garuda said, "Oh my brother, very well then!" Bahram Syah jumped on the garuda's back and took the birdcage with him.

A moment later, Bahram Syah arrived at the bottom of the tree and the garuda alighted. He climbed down to the ground. And that is how it was, Only God Knows.

VI

The story is as follows:

It is told by the storyteller how Bahram Syah went on, without stopping, and how he entered the same forest as he had crossed earlier. He traveled on continuously. On the seventh day, he arrived at the middle of the plain and he could see the ring of blazing fire. After another moment, he reached the outskirts of the capital and whispered a charm over the evil ghost's white hair. Upon this, water fell down and the fire was extinguished. Bahram Syah entered the capital and went to the palace yard.

The princess looked into the yard and saw Bahram Syah approaching and spoke, "I see that you have arrived already, please come in My Lord!" He entered the palace and sat down. The princess spoke, "Oh My Lord, I see that you have the bird *Marah* Jalin with you!" Bahram Syah told her all *40a* that had happened in the state of Gastu Gasta; he told Princess Goddess in Bondage everything.

After Bahram Syah had been there for a while, he said, "Oh Princess, what do you want, to stay here or to come with me?" The princess answered, "What is there to do for me in this lonely and desolate place?" Bahram Syah said, "Prepare yourself, we will leave tomorrow early in the morning!" And thus the Princess started to make preparations for the journey; she fetched some jewels, diamonds and small gems to take with her. Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh Princess, fetch two creeses for me to take with me! Leave everything else behind!" After he had spoken like this, they both departed the next day and traveled without having a rest.

One hour later, Bahram Syah said to the princess, “If we take the road we have traveled before, it will take too much of our time. Let us travel through the forest! Hopefully we will come across an inhabited area soon.” The princess replied, “Whatever My Lord wishes!” They went into the jungle where it was dark and murky. Bahram Syah whispered a charm over the white hair of the ghost called Thunder and Lightning and the next moment it was broad daylight, during the day as well as during the night. Bahram Syah and the princess traveled on without stopping.

When they had traveled for about three nights, they had left the jungle behind them and came across a plain and, somewhat later, a valley. They could now see the outskirts of the state called Pile of Passions. They went on and arrived at a paddy field. The next moment, Bahram Syah looked to his left and saw somebody cutting grass *4ob* and young weeds for horse food. Bahram Syah saw that he looked exactly like his brother Aisyah and said, “Oh my Lord, what are you doing?” The man answered, “Who are you? Don’t you have eyes? You can see I am cutting weeds for horse food and now you are making fun of me just because my body is covered with mud and because you see my tattered piece of cloth. Shut your mouth and speak no more or else we will have a fight!” Bahram Syah said, “Oh my Lord, say no more and come here so we can have a talk.”

Aisyah came to see Bahram Syah immediately. Seeing him, Aisyah started running at once and hugged and embraced him, saying, “You are really here, my younger brother!” Bahram Syah replied, “I am here, older brother, but where is our oldest brother?” Aisyah answered, “Heaven knows, but he is not here with me.” Bahram Syah said, “Why do you behave and look like a tramp and like somebody who has lost his mind?” Aisyah told Bahram Syah everything about his betting and gambling and they both burst into tears.

Next, Bahram Syah spoke, “Let us now go to your Lord’s place.” They took off and entered the capital of the state called Pile of Passions. They went into the hall and paid homage to His Majesty who spoke, “Oh my brother Aisyah, who is that with you?” Aisyah replied, “Oh my Lord, this is my younger brother named Bahram Syah and that is Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower with the bird *Marah* Jalin.” The king spoke *41a*, “Please sit down!” They all three sat down and had a talk with the king.

Night fell and Bahram Syah spoke to the king while paying his respects, “Oh my Lord, have mercy on me. If Your Royal Highness is benevolent and favourably disposed towards this humble servant, then please grant me this brother of mine, so that I can take him back home with me. Whatever he owes you, please tell me what it is so that I can take care of it!” The king replied, “Oh my Lord Bahram Syah, listen! This brother of yours who is named Aisyah owes me indeed, but as he has done nothing wrong to me personally, you can take him with you!”

By the time they had finished their conversation, dawn had already broken. Bahram Syah presented half a *kati* of gold to the king and spoke, “Oh my Lord, here you have some gold as a gift; you can use it for whatever you like.” The king felt extremely embarrassed towards Bahram Syah and he spoke, “Why are you behaving as if you were a stranger to

me? Please, stay here for the night.” Bahram Syah replied, “Very well, Oh Your Majesty.” Then the king ordered that the necessary arrangements be made to entertain Bahram Syah.

The next day, Bahram Syah was entertained by the king according to tradition; there were various delicacies, foods as well as drinks and, in the presence of all the vassal kings and officials, the king asked Bahram Syah to rule the state of Pile of Passions together with him. One day later, Bahram Syah asked permission to depart and took off together with his brother Aisyah and the Princess. Bahram Syah gave his brother Aisyah *41b* one of the creeses and told him to take the bird *Marah Jalin*.

After they had departed, they traveled on continuously. Aisyah said, “Oh my little brother Bahram Syah, if we travel this road, it takes too much time; this is the beginning of the road that leads to the three-forked road.” Bahram Syah replied, “If that is the case, then let us travel through the forest; hopefully we will find our older brother.” And thus they traveled through the jungle. Bahram Syah whispered a charm over Thunder and Lightning’s white hair and the next moment there was light in the forest.

After having traveled without a rest for a while, they arrived at the border of an incredibly vast plain; a number of water buffaloes and cows were busy eating. When they had traveled for another while, they could see the outskirts of the state called Sand Flowing Down Into The Bay of Dew. They went on and came across a narrow stream. A man was running up and down the narrow stream, while holding an immensely long pole. He kept running without a pause at the riverbank, and made a lot of noise cursing himself. Bahram Syah approached the riverbank and saw that there were many ducks and geese in the river. He looked at how the man ran downstream after he had driven the ducks and geese upstream and how he ran upstream after he had driven them downstream. Bahram Syah went a bit closer to the man and observed him: his whole body was covered with mud and even his eyes, which were half-closed, were no longer *42a* visible. All his limbs were totally smeared with mud. Bahram Syah said, “Who are you and what are you doing here?” Ghaisyah replied, “Why are you harassing me; don’t you see the ducks and geese are sprawling? You really don’t have any manners at all!” He grabbed hold of his pole, ready to hit Bahram Syah’s head. But then, he saw Bahram Syah’s face and Bahram Syah saw Ghaisyah’s face and Ghaisyah threw aside the pole he was holding and the three brothers started to weep. Ghaisyah said, “Oh my little brother Bahram Syah, is this Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower and the bird *Marah Jalin*?” Bahram Syah answered, “This is the bird our royal father dreamed about. But what are you doing here?” Ghaisyah informed Aisyah and Bahram Syah about his gambling; he told his two younger brothers everything that had happened. Bahram Syah said, “Oh older brother, let us first go to wait upon your Lord!”

The four of them walked on for a while and the next moment they arrived at the yard in front of the palace. Gaisyah entered the palace and His Majesty the King spoke, “Oh my Lord Ghaisyah, who are those people with you?” Ghaisyah answered, “Oh Your

Highness, these are my two brothers.” His Majesty ordered, “Bring them into the palace!” They went into the palace, paid homage to His Majesty and were welcomed by him. Bahram Syah started to speak in a respectful way to His Majesty, “Oh Your Highness, this humble foreigner begs His Majesty for a favour; I want to ask you to reunite me with this brother of mine for we have been separated a long time. Now, *42b* in case he owes you, please make it known to this humble servant and let me take care of it!” His Majesty replied, “Oh Bahram Syah, why are you talking like this? Until this day, I have never heard him say an improper word towards me and I, in my turn, have never treated him wrongly. Now, because I like you and because you have been good to me, there really is no problem at all!” Bahram Syah said, “This humble servant does Your Highness’ bidding!”

The next day Bahram Syah presented ten *tabil* of gold to the king, and he spoke, “Here is a small gift; please, use it for whatever you like.” The king spoke, “Oh my Lord, please stay here a day or three, if you can!” So, Bahram Syah stayed there. The king ordered preparations to be made for entertaining Bahram Syah and the three brothers feasted together with all the people who were gathered there. After they had finished eating and drinking, the king spoke to the officials, “You all must know about this man Bahram Syah, that I make him my brother and that I will reign the state called Sand Flowing Down Into The Bay of Dew together with him.” The officials replied, “Your Highness’ words are completely right!”

The next day, they all four paid their respects to His Majesty and took off, following the road Ghaisyah had taken before. About twelve nights and days later, they arrived at the three-forked road. They halted for a while and ate and drank, finishing all their provisions. After that, they went on.

About two hours later, *43a* they found the pavilion. They looked at it; it was still the same, it had not changed a bit. The three of them laughed and Ghaisyah said, “Oh my two younger brothers, let us first pause here at the pavilion.” Bahram Syah went up to the pavilion and lay down; he was blown by a gentle breeze. At that same moment, the princess fetched water from the well and cooked some rice. Ghaisyah walked around amusing himself. He said, “Oh younger brother Aisyah, how do you feel about our situation?” Aisyah replied, “Oh older brother, whatever you think, I agree with it.” Ghaisyah continued, “Oh younger brother, listen! We are three brothers and, in my opinion, we are the ones who should receive more respect than Bahram Syah, for we are older than him. But as it stands now, it will definitely be Bahram Syah who receives the most respect when we arrive at our parents’ home, and thus we will be humiliated. Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower will be his wife, as he is the one who found the bird *Marah* Jalin. He will reign as a king and have the princess as his consort.” Aisyah said, “In that case, it will be better if we kill Bahram Syah with our creeses; he will be dead for sure!” Ghaisyah replied, “That won’t work, as the princess will commit suicide if we kill him, and then we will both be lost too! I think we better play a trick on him and take him to the well to bathe. When we arrive at the well, we will take it in turns to bathe while we make him

draw water from the well. As soon as his attention slips for a moment, *43b* we will push him into the deep well. In this way, Bahram Syah will definitely die and we will reach our goal. And if you, younger brother, become a king, I will marry the princess!" Aisyah replied, "Oh older brother, that is the best plan I have ever heard; it is perfect!"

After their discussion, they went to Bahram Syah and said, "Oh little brother Bahram Syah, why are you just lying here? Let us go to the well together to have a bath, so that we can wash away the sweat and dust." Bahram Syah replied, "Whatever seems good to you, my two older brothers!" The three of them went off to the well. Having arrived there, Aisyah spoke, "Oh my little brother Bahram Syah, let us draw water from the well for our older brother first; please, take the bucket!" After Bahram Syah had taken the bucket, he let out its rope. Ghaisyah joined his brother and together they pushed Bahram Syah who fell. They closed off the well with several rocks.

It was his fate that, by the decree of God, may He be exalted, he experienced neither danger, nor harm. By the will of God, may He be praised and be exalted, Bahram Syah did not suffer at all and was able to see clearly at the bottom of the well. At that moment, an immensely bright light radiated from the well, and Ghaisyah and Aisyah felt exalted and laughed as they were thinking, "Bahram has already died! We have reached our goal and there is absolutely nothing that stands in our way or that can hamper us!" Ghaisyah said, "I will be king and you will *44a* take Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, oh Aisyah. As for this bird *Marah* Jalin, let us present it to our royal father now." After they had finished talking, they went back to the big pavilion and saw the princess' sullen face; she refused to speak any longer. The bird *Marah* Jalin's appearance had changed too. Now, the bird sat crouched as if it was ill, its feathers tousled. Ghaisyah spoke, "Oh Princess, let us depart immediately. Bahram Syah earlier said that our state is not far from here." The princess took the bird and the three of them traveled on without a rest.

They came across a plain and after traveling for another while, they found some simple farmers' huts. The farmers and their relatives were amazed and stupefied seeing Ghaisyah and Aisyah arriving there. They decided to accompany Ghaisyah and Aisyah and together they traveled on. After half an hour, they reached a small village. The village chief went to pay his respects to Ghaisyah and Aisyah and, after that, joined the train.

His Majesty was told that Ghaisyah had returned from the search for the bird *Marah* Jalin, that he had won Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, and that he had brought them both with him. His Majesty felt shocked and happy at the same time when he heard his son had come home. He ordered the vassal kings, the officers and all the commoners to welcome his son. The whole palace was decorated.

Ghaisyah and Aisyah arrived together with the princess and they ran to pay homage to their parents. *44b* His Majesty immediately embraced and kissed his two sons and Sultan Maharaja The Great spoke to them, "Oh my sons, where is Bahram Syah?" When Ghaisyah and Aisyah heard their father's words, they told him about the time when they had become separated from each other after they had come across the three-forked road,

and that Bahram Syah had taken the road named Only God Knows. “It has been twenty years since we saw him. We believe he is dead, because of the different dreams we had. I dreamt that we were traveling together with Bahram Syah and that we saw the sun, the moon and all the stars. Shortly after that, all the stars were vanished, gone, without a reason; only the sun and the moon were still visible. At the time of this dream of mine, dawn broke and I woke up; I thought, ‘This dream of mine can refer only to Bahram Syah.’”

When Ghaisyah had told about his dream, Aisyah too paid homage to his father and spoke, “Oh my father, listen to what I have dreamt! One day we were traveling and were feeling very hungry, so Bahram Syah cooked some rice. When the rice was ready, the three of us had a meal. When we had finished eating and drinking, we wanted to cook some more rice and then we saw that only two of the three hearthstones were left. At the time of my dream, day broke and I woke up and thought, ‘This dream can only refer to Bahram Syah.’ This was my dream, my father.”

When His Majesty heard about his sons’ dreams he started to cry, as he thought of Bahram Syah. Respectfully Ghaisyah and Aisyah spoke, *45a* “Oh My Lord, as far as your wish is concerned, we have obtained the bird *Marah* Jalin. This is Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, the child carried in the folds of Princess Apalu Apala’s sarong. She is the daughter of His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent of the state Gastu Gasta. When this bird speaks, gold and silver are scattered from its beak, and when it tells a story, its eyes sprinkle diamonds and small gems. This is what we have brought you; it is exactly like in your dream, it cannot miss. Now, how do you feel about it, our royal father?” His Majesty replied, “Oh my two sons, try to make him speak so I can hear it! Maybe then my heart will be freed from my grief for Bahram Syah.”

After they heard what their father said, they immediately tried to persuade the bird to talk, “Oh bird called *Marah* Jalin, please talk and tell me a story, just like you did earlier, in the state of Gastu Gasta!” But the bird did not make a single sound, and the princess did not say a single word. The bird was sitting crouched with one leg pulled up, with its wings hanging down and its head between its wings. Ghaisyah and Aisyah felt increasingly embarrassed. His Majesty became extremely angry with his two sons and spoke, “What is the matter that the bird won’t speak?”

The next day His Majesty summoned the vassal kings together with the officials. They arrived and spoke, while paying their respects, “What is the reason Your Highness has summoned us all?” His Majesty spoke, “Oh vassal kings and officials, if there is anyone amongst you who knows how to make the bird talk and tell stories, let him take all seven golden carpets!” *45b* After the king had said that, all the vassal kings, officials and officers took their turn in trying to make the bird talk, but the bird did not feel like talking and everybody kept silent. His Majesty summoned all his other subjects and they also tried to persuade the bird to talk, but again, it did not want to talk. The princess did not want to speak either and during the whole time, her face looked sullen.

After some time, Sultan Maharaja the Great sent for an astrologer who came and paid homage to His Majesty. The king spoke, "Oh astrologer, try to see if it is written in the stars whether there is someone who knows how to make that bird speak!" The monk paid his respects and looked at the stars two or three times, while nodding his head. His Majesty said, "Oh monk, why are you nodding?" The monk paid homage and replied, "Oh Your Highness, Ruler of the World, have mercy on me, a thousand times, but I have seen that is in written in the stars that a noble and learned Arab, who, moreover, is of perfect intellect and has a very handsome appearance, is coming this way. He is bringing with him many people of different ranks, from religious scholars and vassal kings to village chiefs; even officers and merchants accompany him! He will arrive in the near future. He is the one who knows and who is able to make the bird *Marah* Jalin talk, and he can also make the princess speak again." His Majesty bestowed a set of beautiful golden clothes on the astrologer.

VII

The story is as follows:

Now the story of Bahram Syah, after he was pushed by his brothers into the well, is told by the storyteller. There was a king in a state called Twin Mangoes. *46a* Its ruler was named Royal King Middy, and his empire was extremely vast. This king happened to hear that Sultan Maharaja the Great of the state Southern Plains possessed a bird named *Marah* Jalin. When it spoke, gold and silver were scattered from its beak and when it told a story, diamonds and all sorts of small gems were sprinkled from its eyes. When it recited a poem, different kinds of gems were scattered from its nose. His Majesty gathered all his officials, officers, vassal kings and numerous other subjects and ordered them to each bring a chicken and golden trays to present the chickens on. When they were all assembled, His Majesty departed, accompanied by his subjects; the train looked like a swarm of bees. They traveled on without a rest; from one plain to another and from one forest to another, they went on without stopping.

Suddenly, they arrived at a pavilion. All the people stopped there to take a short rest. Royal King Middy told his servant Selamat, "Get some water immediately, I want to eat!" Selamat went to the well. When he saw a shining light coming out of the well, he went nearer and saw how the light became more and more intense. It looked exactly like the rays of the sun. He became scared and started to tremble, so he ran back to the pavilion. As they saw Selamat running in their direction, the people became frightened and His Majesty spoke, "Why are you running like this?" Respectfully, Selamat replied *46b*, "Oh Your Highness, Ruler of the World, I have never seen something like this before, Your Highness; there was a light coming out of the well, a beautiful radiating light!" The king spoke, "Oh all my officials, go and look whether it is as he says and if that is not

the case, then let him be punished severely!” The officials took off to the well, trying to outrun each other, and when they saw the well and its shining light, they went back to inform their king, and spoke, while paying homage, “Oh Your Highness, it is indeed as Selamat says, exactly as he says, Oh Your Highness!”

When the king heard what the officials and the officers said, he got up and took off together with all his subjects. Nobody stayed behind. They went to the well together and saw how an intense light emerged from it. The king was stupefied witnessing the power of God, may He be exalted, and spoke, “Oh all you Lords, whoever it is amongst you who is able to go down into that well and ascertain whether there is a ghost or a devil, or whatever it is down there, tell me what it is! The person who manages to do so, will be made royal heir to the throne of the state of Twin Mangoes by me, as I already have turned into an old man who just wishes to perform his obligatory prayers five times a day.”

After His Majesty had spoken, nobody said anything or responded to his words; they just stood silent with their heads bowed. When His Majesty saw that not even one of his subjects reacted and that they were shaking with fear, he spoke to the servant Selamat, “Oh my son, are you prepared to die for my sake? If so, I order you to go down the well to see if there is a ghost or a devil in it! Now, go and have a look! *47a* If you die, I will perform my duties towards you according to custom and if you come back alive, I will make you Maharaja Lela of the state of Twin Mangoes and nobody will thwart you in any way!” Bowing his head towards the ground, Selamat replied, “Oh Your Highness, this humble servant lives only by the grace of God, may He be exalted, and by Your Highness’ care. Your Highness’ benevolence cannot be compensated for; only God, may He be exalted, knows best how to reward you! Now, Your Highness, tell me what to do and I will carry out your orders as long as there is still some life left in this humble servant’s body! If I live, let all the people spread the name of this servant Selamat, so that your deeds will not be in vain!”

Next, His Majesty gave orders to look for the longest pieces of rattan in the forest. The people found lots of it and the pieces were tied together. The rope of the bucket, a hundred and twenty spans of outstretched arms long, was tied to the long piece of rattan, which was another one hundred and twenty spans, so that the people could hold the rope to let Selamat down and to bring him up again.

After this, His Majesty spoke to all the officials, officers and other subjects, “From now on, Selamat will be no longer called thus, but he will have the title of Maharaja Lela. Let us treat him as a Maharaja Lela!” Everyone paid homage and expressed their gratitude towards His Majesty. The king then took a set of golden clothes and gave it to the Maharaja Lela, saying, “Oh my son, wear these clothes as your shroud!” Paying his respects, the Maharaja Lela replied, “Oh Your Highness, I ask Your Excellency’s pardon; if Your Highness wants to *47b* bestow a gift on this humble servant, I want to beg you for your own sarong. If I die, then it will be in Your Highness’ sarong.” His Majesty

immediately took off his clothes and spoke, with tears in his eyes, "Oh my son, here are my clothes!" The Maharaja Lela put the clothes on at once and he burst into tears too. His Majesty's sword was drawn and he also wore His Majesty's creese. He paid his respects to His Majesty and to all the vassal kings and officials, saying, "Oh you Lords, when I have arrived at the bottom of the well and I pull the rope, you must pull me up immediately without hesitating!"

After he had said this, the Maharaja Lela sat down on the beam and he was let down. The vassal kings and all other subjects cried as the Maharaja Lela was let down into the deep well, because they thought that he would die for sure. The rope was let out slowly and about half an hour later, there was only twenty spans of rope left. The lower he went, the more light there was and one moment later, he could see a person sitting on a golden throne, brilliantly shining. The Maharaja Lela asked, "Oh devil or ghost, who are you?" Bahram Syah answered, "Oh you who came here, I am neither ghost, nor devil; I am a human being adhering to the Islamic faith. My brothers are Ghaisyah and Aisyah and my name is Bahram Syah; I am a son of the king of Southern Plains." The Maharaja Lela replied, "Oh my brother Bahram Syah, come and sit here on this piece of wood immediately; sit down with me and brace yourself!" Bahram Syah sat down on the *48a* beam next to the Maharaja Lela. The Maharaja Lela gave the rope a swing so that the upper end of the rope started to move. At this sign, the people began pulling the rope joyfully, accompanied by shouts and cries that sounded like thunder.

The next moment, the Maharaja Lela together with Bahram Syah appeared from the well and Royal King Middy and the vassal kings and officials were amazed and stupefied as they looked at the brightly shining face of Bahram Syah. Bahram Syah paid his respects and His Majesty immediately welcomed and kissed Bahram Syah, while he spoke, "Oh my son, what has happened to you? Who could it be that behaved this treacherous towards my son? Tell me and I will make them pay for sure!" All the people gathered to look at Bahram Syah's appearance and His Majesty spoke, "Let us all go to the big audience hall; there we will discuss it and make a decision!" So everybody came together at the audience hall and His Majesty spoke, "Oh my Lords, I will not go now to the state Soutern Plains to meet with Sultan Maharaja the Great! If God, may He be exalted, lets me live long enough, I will meet with His Majesty at a later date, as I want to take my son Bahram Syah home with me first! I have no offspring of my own and thus it is Bahram Syah who will be my son in this world and in the Hereafter! Know, all you Lords, that he is the one who will be heir to the throne of the state of Twin Mangoes, God willing, as I am already aged!" The offials and officers paid homage, saying, "Have mercy, Your Highness, whatever Your Highness says, we will submit to it!"

After the deliberations, they escorted Bahram Syah as he went back to his place. They then took off and traveled on without a rest. When they had traveled for a while, about seven days or so, they arrived at *48b* the state of Twin Mangoes. Three days later, preparations were made to install King Bahram Syah as the heir to the throne of the state of

Twin Mangoes, to introduce him as such to his subjects, and to install the servant Selamat as the Maharaja Lela. Selamat thus became a brother to Bahram Syah. After the state's officials and officers had gathered to install the crown prince and to confer the title of His Highness Raja Muda on him, his reign was steady, fair and beneficial to the highest degree. When there was a violation of the religious law of Islam, the case was judged in accordance with the laws of the Book of God, and when there was a violation of the customary law, the case was judged in accordance with the local laws of former times. It was all extremely fair. This was how Bahram Syah reigned in the state of Twin Mangoes. The officials praised Bahram Syah, as he was fair and generous.

Some time later, Royal King Middy fell seriously ill and after he had been ill for seven days, he returned to the Mercy of God, may He be exalted. Both his sons, His Highness the viceroy and his brother the Maharaja Lela, cried and, after a while, they started their religious meals over several days. The meals were innumerable and went on without a pause, during the early morning and the late afternoon, and during the evening and the biggest part of the day, while the poor and the needy continuously recited the Quran. This is what His Highness Raja Muda and his brother the Maharaja Lela did. The state's inhabitants said, "How is it possible that His Highness Raja Muda organizes all these meals; they are beyond any description! If he continues like this, he will definitely finish all the possessions that have been left behind by Royal King Middy!" *49a* His Highness Raja Muda spoke, "Oh my Lords, you must know that it is nothing, as the valuable goods that we have used to hold these meals are not the goods that we have acquired ourselves, but the goods of our father and mother! Now let us together finish these goods in a way that is as beneficial as possible!" Now the Maharaja Lela spoke, "Whatever Bahram Syah does, good or bad, it will not be disputed!"

Seven days later, by the decree of God, their mother passed away and returned to the Mercy of God, may He be exalted. Both His Highness Raja Muda and the Maharaja Lela cried and arranged for the same facilities as they had done for their father. By the time the special commemoration meal had begun, the number of goods that was given to the poor and needy as alms had multiplied. They gave away all the gold and the silver and sold all the water buffaloes and goats; the money they got for the water buffaloes and the goats they gave away as alms. After this, they set free all their male and female slaves. The slaves with an evil disposition were sold and this money was given away too. There was nothing left, everything was gone; the only thing left in the palace was His Highness Raja Muda, his brother the Maharaja Lela and a magic all-white fighting rooster that crowed for hours on end. The Raja Muda and the Maharaja Lela were now like the people from the lowest classes: they were poor, had lost both parents and, in the end, were less and less loved by their subjects. But still, if there was an affair that concerned the state's policy, it was the Raja Muda who had the last word. They became destitute and were no longer able to obtain food. Day after day, month after month, *49b* their troubles grew worse.

After a while, Bahram Syah said, "Oh my younger brother the Maharaja Lela, go to

the market where all the people gather and take the white fighting rooster with you! Sell it for whatever they offer to pay for it and use one half of the money to buy rice and the other half to buy fish, tamarind, salt, betel leaves and areca nuts. Make sure that you don't forget to buy something, so we can have another meal in commemoration of our deceased parents." The Maharaja Lela immediately took the white fighting rooster with him to the busy market.

Having arrived at the market, he met a man named Turani who sold all kinds of spices and the Maharaja Lela asked, "Oh Turani, would you like to buy this rooster for two *kupang*?" Turani replied, "I don't have any money on me this moment, but if you want to trade it for these spices, then I will cut the price somewhat; as long as I get my investments back, it is all right." The Maharaja Lela answered, "Oh Turani, if that's what you want, then it is all right with me!" So the rooster was sold by the Maharaja Lela to Turani who took the money home.

While the Maharaja Lela was away at the market to sell the rooster, Bahram Syah lay down and fell asleep. In his dream his father Royal King Middy appeared to him and spoke, "Oh my son Bahram Syah, why did you sell the white fighting rooster, do you want to bring disaster upon yourself? You have to know that in the cloaca of the rooster, a ring is hidden. The ring is the abode of the king of the Islamic ghosts and possesses great supernatural power; its powers are multifarious and so are the colours it displays. As for its size, it has the same size as an ordinary ring, no bigger, no smaller. Whenever you desire something, whatever it is, just take the ring and some incense, and concentrate your thoughts on that which you desire and you will receive it immediately."

When Bahram Syah's dream was finished, he woke up and *soa* looked into the yard. He saw the Maharaja Lela returning from the market, carrying all the groceries, and said to him, "Oh younger brother, have you already sold our rooster?" The Maharaja Lela answered, "Yes, I have already sold it." Bahram Syah then spoke, "Ask for it back! And if it is dead, then bring its carcass here!"

And so the Maharaja Lela went running back to the market. There he found the rooster already killed by Turani, who was now busy plucking it. The Maharaja Lela said, "Oh Turani, give me back my rooster!" Turani replied, "Why should I do that? I want to eat the rooster that you want me to give back. We traded it legally, and now I don't want to give it back anymore!" They started to quarrel and accused each other and, in the end, began to fight. During the struggle, the rooster was snatched from Turani's hands by the Maharaja Lela, who then threw the groceries he had carried on his back in front of Turani and spoke, "Here, take your belongings, oh Turani, you damned wretch!" After this, he went home taking the rooster with him.

When he arrived and entered the house, Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh younger brother, prepare the rooster and make some *gulai*, so that we can have a meal in commemoration of our deceased parents right now!" The Maharaja Lela took his knife and took out the rooster's intestines. When he had washed the meat, he took the cloaca and started to cut

it in two. The knife's blade produced a crunching sound as if it was scratching a gemstone. The Maharaja Lela thought to himself, "Could there be a stone in this rooster?" He inspected the rooster's cloaca and found a multicoloured ring. He turned it over several times on the palm of his hand and then Bahram Syah said, "Oh younger brother, what is that?" The Maharaja Lela *sob* replied, "I don't know." Bahram Syah said, "Let me have a look at it!" The Maharaja Lela showed the ring to Bahram Syah, who immediately grabbed it while he spoke, "Oh younger brother, this is probably just a hard piece of chicken poop." He pretended to throw it away, while he said, "What is the use of this piece of filth?" After this, he put the ring away safely in his waistcloth.

After a while, Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh younger brother, now that our parents have passed away, let us give away everything that still is of any value. Even those things that are nearly worthless, we have to give out as alms to the poor. If we need something, we will have to earn the money for it ourselves!" When the *gulai* was ready, Bahram Syah invited a religious teacher and organized another commemorative meal.

Some time after this, Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh younger brother, I want to leave; you will succeed me as king. Be fair and reign properly. As for the laws that should be applied after my departure, when somebody commits a crime that should be compensated for with gold, let him go after he has paid with rice, when somebody commits a crime that should be compensated for with rice, let him go after he has paid with betel, and when somebody commits a crime that should be compensated for with betel, then let him go after he has paid with words. In this way, your reign will be prosperous!" The Maharaja Lela replied, "Oh Your Highness, but you haven't changed this life for the life in the Hereafter yet!" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my younger brother, when I became king, I was installed by my father during his life too, so now we do as he did, and we act according to his orders! You will succeed me as king! Tomorrow morning, go and summon all the officials, officers and other subjects!"

The next day, the Maharaja Lela summoned all the headman, *SIJA* officials, officers and other subjects of the state of Twin Mangoes and they gathered to install the Maharaja Lela as the successor of the heir-apparent. After this, they returned to their own places. The following day, Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh my younger brother the Maharaja Lela, don't feel sad about separating from me! Take care of the good reputation of our parents' family, do not leave the palace, and when you see something coming to this place, do not speak a single word to it!"

Night fell and the Maharaja Lela slept soundly. Bahram Syah took a burning piece of wood and incensed the ring of the Islamic ghosts' king. The next instant, the ghostly king appeared and spoke, while paying homage, "Oh my Lord Bahram Syah, what is it that you want? I am trembling with fear!" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my brother, what I want is that you bring all my father's former possessions back into this palace; make sure that not a single object is lacking; or, better still, bring even more objects than there were before!" That same moment, everything was returned and there were indeed more things

than before in the palace. When, the next day, the Maharaja Lela saw that the possessions were even more in number than before, he felt extremely happy and loved and feared Bahram Syah even more. Bahram Syah took his leave and went off; he traveled on without stopping.

When he had traveled for three days, he arrived at the big pavilion and halted for a moment. After this, he moved on. Some time later, he arrived at the temporary settlement of the farmers; it was rather crowded at that time. He paused for a moment, made a fire and burned incense over the ring *51b* of the Islamic ghosts' king. Instantly, the ghostly king appeared and spoke, "Oh Your Highness, what is it that my Lord wants? I am trembling with fear!" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my brother, I want you to change my appearance to that of an Arab who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca!" In a wink, his appearance had changed into that of an Arab who just had returned from Mecca; he wore a white cloak and a white turban. He was incredibly handsome and looked very attractive.

He passed the simple huts and every farmer gave him some alms. All the people who gave him alms and who accompanied the *haji* thought to themselves, "This must be the man who knows how to make the bird *Marah Jalin* talk!" They walked on together and entered the capital. The headmen paid their respects and spoke, "Can our Lord make the bird *Marah Jalin* talk?" The *haji* answered, "Just let me give it a try." The headmen accompanied the *haji* to the audience hall and from there the *haji* went to the mosque's yard. The religious men and scholars greeted him and asked, "Oh *Maulana*, can our Lord make the bird *Marah Jalin* talk?" The Arab *haji* replied, "Just let me try it; what can be wrong with that! Where is the bird at this moment?"

Sultan Maharaja the Great heard that the Arab *haji* had arrived, as everybody was yelling and shouting with joy. That moment, the Arab *haji* approached the yard of the audience hall, where Sultan Maharaja the Great was being waited upon by the officials and officers. *52a* Seeing the Arab *haji*, the bird *Marah Jalin* craned its neck, shook out its feathers and wagged its tail. At the same moment, Princess Goddess in Bondage loosened her hair, stretched her fingers and looked to her left and to her right and, after that, straight ahead of her and behind her, as if she wanted to say something.¹ As for Ghaisyah and Aisyah, they were both standing in the audience hall, being waited upon by the vassal kings, officials and officers.

It was late in the afternoon when the Arab *haji* said, "Oh Your Highness, we cannot have this conversation yet; we will have a look at the bird tomorrow, as I want to pray right now!" He went back to the farmers' settlement. All the inhabitants of the capital started to make a commotion as they saw the Arab *haji* depart. Night fell and after a while, when day had broken, Bahram Syah made a fire and burned incense over the ring of the ghosts' king. At that same moment, the ghostly king appeared, "Oh Your Highness, what is it that

¹ The author or copyist erroneously mentions Princess Goddess in Bondage here. The name of the princess who owned the wonder bird is Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower.

Your Highness wants?” Bahram Syah replied, “Oh my brother, what I want is that you give me back my own appearance!” After he had regained his own appearance, he walked along the settlement road. When the inhabitants saw that Bahram Syah had arrived, they flocked to pay homage and bent their heads towards the ground. They all accompanied Bahram Syah to the capital, and the whole train looked like a swarm of bees.

The next moment Sultan Maharaja the Great heard that Bahram Syah had arrived, escorted by a great number of people. He got up and left at once, together with the queen, to welcome their child. They were escorted by all the officials *52b* and officers who were trying to outrun each other. Next, Bahram Syah arrived and kneeled in front of his parents to pay them his respects. His Majesty kissed and embraced him. Ghaisyah and Aisyah were standing in the audience hall when they saw Bahram Syah; they were unpleasantly surprised and fled inland and in different directions. Bahram Syah said, “Catch those damned wretches! They may not be human after all!” Ghaisyah and his brother hid at the house of one of the officials; they kept themselves hidden in the attic, which was built in a high place in the house.

Sultan Maharaja the Great sat down together with his son Bahram Syah and he ordered the officials to send a letter to the vassal kings of the Land of Twelve Streams inviting them to come and listen to the speaking bird *Marah* Jalin, as Bahram Syah had returned from the state of Gastu-Gasta.

The following day, the vassal kings arrived, bringing with them their subjects. They paid homage to His Majesty and His Majesty spoke, “Oh my son Bahram Syah, make the bird talk!” Then Bahram Syah told the bird to speak, “Oh my clever, expert, prudent and wise bird, speak and tell stories just like you did in the presence of His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent, Princess Apalu Apala and Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower in the state of Gastu Gasta!” The bird *Marah* Jalin started to talk in Malay and at that same moment, gold and silver were scattered from its beak, and the wives of the vassal kings struggled with each other for the gold and the silver. Then the bird began to tell stories in the *53a* Arabic language and the bird’s eyes sprinkled diamonds, small gems, and all sorts of precious stones. The female courtiers fought over the riches. Then the bird recited eulogies and poems and all sorts of small gems were scattered from its nose, and the merchants struggled with each other to get hold of them. After this, it recited short four-line poems and verses in every imaginable language and all kinds of different aromatic substances emerged from the follicles of its feathers, ranging from amber and musk to saffron and spikenard. The ladies-in-waiting and governesses struggled with each other over these aromatic substances.

The next moment, Princess Goddess in Bondage appeared from the palace and kneeled in front of Bahram Syah to pay her respects. She spoke, “My Lord has arrived!” Bahram Syah told His Highness Sultan Maharaja the Great about the how he had become separated from his brothers and how he had ransomed them, and how, later on, he was pushed into the the well by his brothers Ghaisyah and Aisyah. He told his father and the

vassal kings everything. The vassal kings were flabbergasted. It is told that they were in the royal presence in the audience hall for a month, listening to the storytelling of Bahram Syah; there were people who felt happy about it and there were others who felt sad about it and all those who listened either laughed or cried.

After seven days of feasting, His Majesty spoke to the officials, “Oh officials, what is our verdict in regard to Ghaisyah and Aisyah? Please make the decision that they are not to be killed by Bahram Syah! I am convinced that *53b* they will be safe if you all look after them!” Paying their respects, the vassal kings replied, “You are right. Whatever Your Highness tells us to do, we will obey!” The vassal kings went to see Bahram Syah at the pleasure grounds and they, together with the officials, paid homage to him and spoke, “Oh our youngest Lord, we are here together by order of your father to ask you for a favour concerning Ghaisyah and Aisyah. This congregation begs you to let them come back here!” After Bahram Syah had heard what the officials had said, he spoke, “Oh you older officials, don’t you worry! If I follow the dictates of my heart in regard to those brothers of mine, I will not deign to look at them, as their behaviour has been improper indeed! Now please go back and say to my parents and the other Lords, ‘How can I oppose the wishes of all you Lords!’ Apart from this, I have a request to my parents and the officials and vassal kings. As for the kings who are vassals of His Royal Highness, my father, in the Land of Twelve Streams, let each of them bring two water buffaloes and let my parents provide sufficient amounts of rice!” The kings and the officials replied, “Oh Your Highness, we will take care of it!” Next, they went back, each to their state.

Seven days later, they gathered to wait upon His Highness Sultan Maharaja the Great. When everything was ready, the vassal kings and officials paid homage to Bahram Syah and said, “Oh Your Highness, we have done *54a* as Your Highness ordered, everything is ready. What does Your Highness wants us to do next?” Bahram Syah replied, “If that is the case, go and look for my two brothers now! When they have arrived here, I will give a verdict.”

The prime minister departed and went to look for Ghaisyah and Aisyah. He arrived at their hiding place and showed them the the royal order stating that he came to invite them to come home, as His Highness and the headmen were waiting for them there. Ghaisyah and Aisyah looked sullen and kept silent and the prime minister said, “Oh my Lords, do not be afraid of your youngest brother, as we, together with His Lordship and the vassal kings, have already decided to forgive you. We have in fact promised to do so. Now please do not offer any resistance and come with me, so that you will stay unharmed.” Ghaisyah and Aisyah replied, “In that case, we will both join you to wait upon His Royal Highness, our father, and our youngest brother Bahram Syah, but do not move from our sides, whether in good or in bad times. You have to stay with us in the presence of Our Lord.” The prime minister spoke, “Oh my Lords, now put your faith in God, may He be praised and be exalted! Before the youngest Lord can kill you two, he will be killed by the officials!” After this they took off, accompanied by the prime minister.

Some time later, they arrived at their father's place and paid their respects to him. Their mother rose, took the hands of her three sons Ghaisyah, Aisyah, and Bahram Syah, *54b* shook hands with them and amused herself with them while feasting. Ghaisyah and Aisyah bowed their head; they were not able to look Bahram Syah straight in the eye. They did not say a single word; it was only Bahram Syah who spoke with his father and the officials. The officials paid homage and spoke, "Oh our youngest Lord, that which you ordered us to get, is ready." Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my father and officials, let us now start feasting for two times seven days, twenty-four hours a day! As for my plans for my youngest brother, let us install him as heir to the throne of His Royal Highness, our father. His Royal Highness is already of age and should perform his obligatory prayers five times a day and live in the mosque. Let us also marry my youngest brother to Princess Goddess in Bondage! That is the name of the princess, so that all you who are gathered here in the audience hall know it! For my oldest brother, I have in mind Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower. She is the jewel of the state of Gastu Gasta and the seventy-seven villages that are reigned by her; my token of betrothal is already in her hand. We have an agreement that I will marry her in seven years' time. Now six years have passed and there is just one year left. The reason that I really want to marry my youngest brother to Princess Goddess in Bondage is that I have seen how his heart longed for her. When we traveled together, I had to witness his passionate love for her and I suffered severely because of it. What can I do, it has the approval of God, may He be exalted! *55a* I marry my oldest brother to Princess Shadow of Iskandar, daughter of the king of Bay of Dew, since I have noticed that she is fairly noble. Summon them now and let us marry them here in my parent's palace without any further delay!"

However, His Highness the Sultan was not very keen on marrying Aisyah to Princess Goddess in Bondage, since he had heard that she was of a very bad disposition. Bahram Syah knew what was on his father's mind and spoke, "Oh my father, if you marry my youngest brother to another princess, the marriage will not last. His future consort must be Princess Goddess in Bondage, for it is their paths that have crossed!" After this statement was made, they began the festivities, which lasted for fourteen days and fourteen nights. Princess Goddess in Bondage was married to Aisyah and Princess Shadow of Iskandar was married to Ghaisyah.

Three days after the festivities had ended, Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh my two older brothers, from now on, whatever customary activity it is that you conduct, if you do not have a proper horse and tack, do not depart! Furthermore, if there is no golden mattress, do not sleep or lie down, my older brothers, however drowsy you might be! And if there are no proper dishes together with everything that should accompany them, then do not eat, however hungry you might be! You should be mindful of these rules of conduct wherever you are, because all the people who are gathered here will see and hear of *55b* everything you do. They will remember the fair as well as the cruel! And although we are full brothers with the same father and mother, I will torture you as if you were a

stranger to me; this is the reason you two should take care!” When Bahram Syah had finished his speech, he spoke, “Oh all officials in the Land of Twelve Streams, you should know that from now on, you should not fight! If you try to settle a conflict by fighting, all the gold will be wasted and the inhabitants of the state will flee. If you, my oldest and my youngest brother, have an argument with the officials in the future, then ask His Royal Highness, our father, for a decree of perfect benefit. Take action together against whoever it is amongst you that does not want to accept the decree of His Royal Highness, our father, and against any person who will not adhere to the customary law. One day I will come back and you will witness the power of God, may He be exalted! I swear that I will change this state into water and destroy it together with everything that belongs to it! Strength lies neither in stone and iron, nor in a broad moat and weapons, but it is in consensus that strength is to be found!” When they heard Bahram Syah’s words, they trembled with fear and started to live according to his rules.

Some time later, Bahram Syah said to his parents and the headmen, “Please, let the officials fetch about three hundred *sukat* of husked rice and let my father and mother find me three water buffaloes. Get it ready within seven days and give orders to prepare the rice and the water buffaloes. Pile the food up into three piles of equal height and place them in the middle of the plain *ṣṭa*, because within seven days I want to go back to the state of Gastu Gasta. Thus, my father, mother and officials, get ready and go to the middle of the plain, and take the rice and the water buffaloes with you!”

After this, Bahram Syah immediately ordered the prime minister to have the following message made public, in the capital as well as outside the capital, “Oh my Lords who have gathered, the order of our youngest Lord reads as follows: ‘Whatever it is that you may see tomorrow, do not tremble with fear and do not talk, just keep silent, men as well as women! Do not let the young children leave their mothers’ sling!’” The next day, the rice and the water buffaloes were ready.

Sultan Maharaja the Great took off escorted by the officials, officers and his sons; they were all crying. One moment later, Bahram Syah set the tip of the garuda’s feather on fire and the small flame started to smoke. That same moment, the adult garuda flew off, looking for her two children, while her two children also flew up in search of their mother. After they had searched for a while, the three of them met and the mother said, “Oh my two children, what could be wrong with your brother? He has summoned me.” Her two children replied, “He summoned us too.” They flew off together as fast as lightning; the noise produced by their wings sounded like thunder.

After they had flown for a while, they arrived above the centre of the plain. The clouds were no longer visible and there was no sunshine, because the wings of the three garudas screened the sun. There was general turmoil, as the people *ṣṭb* believed night had fallen. The next moment, the adult garuda flew downwards headfirst, with its wings pressed against its body, and all the people fell to the ground, face down, covering their ears to protect them from the noise of the garuda’s wings. The wings produced a droning sound,

as if a triton shell was being blown, and the trees snapped and fell down to the ground. The adult garuda cried, “Oh my son Bahram Syah, where are you?” Bahram Syah answered, “Oh my mother, I am here!” The three garudas alighted near the piles of cooked rice and *gulai* and Bahram Syah spoke, “Oh my mother, brother and sister, you must know that now you are in the state of my parents. Protect it, mother, now and in the future!” At that moment, many young children were caught with fear as they saw the garudas’ appearances and heard the noise of their wings. Bahram Syah spoke, “Oh my mother, the reason I contacted my younger siblings, is that I want you to bring me back to the state of Gastu Gasta! But drink and eat something first, all of you!” The garudas each finished one pile of food. “I have made an agreement with His Highness Mara Inda Sultan the Magnificent, and I have only one year left, so please bring me over to his state!” He continued, “Brace yourself! I want to get on your back.” The young male garuda crouched down and Bahram Syah jumped on his back. Next, the three of them flew off. The earth started to tremble and crack and the people became more and more frightened. The garudas flew upwards for a while and then level. After a while, they flew downwards and one moment later, they *57a* reached the big tree that carried their nest. They perched on the tree and the tree began to shake and twist. Bahram Syah dismounted and stepped into the garudas’ nest, and the adult garuda spoke, “Stay here, my children, I will go and look for something to eat!” Bahram Syah replied, “That is fine with me, but please, eat something yourself too when you find something to eat!” The garuda replied, “All right, in three days we will see you off!” She then flew off in search for her food. When she had finished eating, she returned to her nest.

Three days later, the young male garuda said, “Oh my older brother, please get on my back immediately!” Bahram Syah jumped on the garuda’s back and the three garudas took off, flying upwards through the sky. At that moment, there were some light winds and, after a while, they arrived above the Sea of Fire. The Sea of Fire was calm this time; it did not even smoke or boil and its heat had decreased. The next instant, they had already passed the Sea of Fire and, for a moment, they flew around playfully. Then they looked down and searched for the vast plain where Bahram Syah had welcomed them before. And just like before, they could see the plain after they had flown for another while and then they went down headfirst, and alighted in the middle of the plain, outside the capital of Gastu Gasta. Bahram Syah immediately got down. When he had talked with the garudas, the three of them flew off while Bahram Syah stayed behind.

He followed the road leading to one of Gastu Gasta’s villages and after he had walked for a while, he arrived at the village called Flower Garden *57b* where he took a bath. After he had finished bathing, he traveled on.

Grandmother Kebayan had just ordered some female servants to pick flowers. She wanted to make them into bouquets, just like Bahram Syah had done. That day, the prime minister and Grandmother Kebayan missed him dearly; man and wife longed for him and talked over and over again about him, with tears in their eyes. Grandmother Kebayan

said, “How is it possible that our son has not returned yet?” The prime minister replied, “Try to make some bouquets to distract yourself!” The pious woman said, “That’s it! I will make the flowers into bouquets like those my son made for Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower.”

The servants had arrived at the water and wanted to bathe, but then they saw a man in the water who resembled their former master; he looked exactly like him. When Bahram Syah had finished bathing, he yelled, “Whoever wants to bathe, please go ahead now!” When the three female servants saw Bahram Syah’s appearance, they kneeled and bowed their heads to the ground to show reverence for him, and spoke, while shedding tears, “Our Lord is back!” One of the servants went back to tell Grandmother Kebayan. When Grandmother Kebayan saw her running along, she said, “Why are you behaving like this, running like a four-legged animal?” The girl paid her respects and replied, “Our Lord has already returned from the other side of the sea!” Grandmother Kebayan said, “Oh you miserable wretch, what Lord overseas are you talking about?” The girl answered, “Our Lord, the fiancé of Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower!” When Grandmother Kebayan and the old prime minister heard that Bahram Syah had returned, both man and wife ran off to the bank. There they found Bahram Syah. They were overwhelmed with joy and took him back to the house. The whole household was delighted and everybody praised him. They feasted twenty-four hours a day, *58a* with food and drinks and all kinds of fine delicacies.

When Bahram Syah had been in the village Flower Garden for three days, the prime minister and his wife went to see His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent. After they had arrived, they paid homage and spoke, “Oh Your Highness, our son Bahram Syah has returned. Now, please tell us what we have to do for the marriage of your daughter Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower and our son Bahram Syah!” His Majesty spoke, “Oh prime minister and wife, the one we were waiting for was Bahram Syah. He has arrived now, so make preparations to have it made known to all the state’s inhabitants, and gather all officials and vassal kings!” The prime minister paid his respects and went home. His Majesty commanded that the big gong be struck, that all the instruments be played and that the crier’s gong be sounded, upstream as well as downstream, to tell everyone to assemble in the capital, early the next morning.

The following day, early in the morning, the inhabitants and officials of the Land of Twelve Streams gathered and took off, like a swarm of bees. They were myriad, like ants, and there was neither end, nor limit to the long train of people. They went to wait upon Sultan the Magnificent. After the officials had arrived in the capital, the sixty-five kings, together with their armies, arrived too; the kings paid their respects and spoke, “Oh Your Highness, Ruler of the World, what do you want us to do now, as the seventy-seven kings are here. Please, give us your order!” His Majesty replied, “Oh vassal kings and officials, I want to have festivities for fourteen days and *58b* fourteen nights, because I want to marry my daughter Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower to the prime minister’s son.

I hereby entrust the vassal kings and the headmen with everything that concerns this marriage, good and bad. But if something goes wrong, I will still take full responsibility!" The kings and officials who were under His Majesty's sovereignty, replied, "If that is what Your Highness wants us to do, let us do it!" After this, the vassal kings and officials began to make plans.

There was one vassal king amongst them, who was the smartest and he said, "Our Highness has entrusted us, who are gathered here, with this task. Now let us not argue with each other, but let us be full of awe, as His Highness has entrusted us with this task. It is all right; we will carry out the order! Now let us tell Bahram Syah to make a golden cargo ship. We together will build a second one. Then we will sail to the island of Sinawilan and whoever arrives first will become the husband of Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower."

After the vassal kings had finished their deliberations, they went to wait upon His Majesty and, while paying homage, they said, "Oh Your Highness, the vassal kings and the officials want to ask His Majesty what kind of man His Majesty's son-in-law actually is? What are his roots, what is the name of his family, what is the name of his country, and who are his forefathers?" His Highness Sultan the Magnificent spoke, "My son-in-law is the son of Grandmother Kebayan and the prime minister who live in the village called Flower Garden. *59a* My son-in-law's name is Bahram Syah." The kings and officials replied, "Oh Your Highness, as far as we know, the son of Grandmother Kebayan is called Plain of Intoxication, and has already died. The prime minister has married Grandmother Kebayan only recently. As for this Bahram Syah, he is a poor man. Moreover, he is wandering stranger; he does not belong to a higher class than any of us here. If you go through with your plans, you will stand alone; we will stay out of it. But if Your Highness does go ahead with the marriage, then please think about the justice or injustice of your orders. In spite of this, will you now please give your orders to the prime minister and Grandmother Kebayan. Tell Bahram Syah to make a golden cargo ship and to sail to the island of Sinawilan. Whoever arrives first will become the husband of the princess!" His Majesty was worried and felt sad.

He summoned the prime minister and Grandmother Kebayan and when they had arrived and had paid their respects, His Majesty spoke, "Oh prime minister, what shall we do now? The vassal kings and officials want to order your son Bahram Syah to make a golden cargo ship all by himself, while the kings and officials make another one together. When the ships are ready, they want to sail to the island called Sinawilan and whoever arrives first will be the princess' husband." The prime minister and Grandmother Kebayan became worried and went to see Bahram Syah. With tears in his eyes, the prime minister spoke, "Oh my son, what should we do now?" He told him about the plan of the kings and the headmen and that they wanted to order him to make a ship all by himself, a golden ship, and about their other plans. "You will never make it, my son!" Bahram Syah smiled and *59b* said, "Oh father and mother, so now they have changed their minds; why

on earth do all the kings and headmen want to bring humiliation upon me in the middle of the plain? From where do I get gold enough to build a big ship? Just what kind of plan is this? I will never make it. The kings and officials have all completely lost their minds! If it turns out that I cannot marry, then please stay quiet; it does not matter. But in my opinion, these kings and officials are not aware of the power of God, may He be exalted! Now please, let His Highness and father stay quiet!”

The kings and officials immediately summoned hundreds of shipbuilders to work on the ship. They melted thousands of *bahara* of gold and erected hundreds of bellows. They pawned tens of nephews and nieces to the merchants. After the shipbuilders had worked on the golden ship for exactly three day and three nights, the golden ship in full gear was finished. They agreed to sail to the island of Sinawilan early the next morning. Meanwhile, Bahram Syah did not worry at all. Night fell and everybody was sleeping. Bahram Syah took a piece of burning wood and used it to burn incense over the ring of the ghostly king. That same moment, the king appeared, speaking, “Oh my Lord Bahram Syah, what is it that you want? I am trembling with fear!” Bahram Syah replied, “Oh my brother, make me a golden ship in full gear, and make it a better ship than that of the kings and officials!” So, a golden ship was built on the bank of Flower village; it was many times more beautiful than the ship that was built by the kings and their assistants.

At sunrise, the kings *60a* and officials set sail joyfully, while Bahram Syah was still sleeping. One moment later, Bahram Syah woke up and went outside. His Highness *Marah* Inda and the prime minister went to see how things were working out. When they saw the golden ship, they were totally flabbergasted. Bahram Syah entered the ship and set sail to the island of Sinawilan. A moment later, he arrived at the island and left a letter on its shore. After this, he sailed back. The kings and officials had just arrived and were puzzled when they found Bahram Syah’s letter on the island. They looked sullen, as they felt humiliated. They went back and found Bahram Syah having a good time. The kings went home sadly.

The following day, His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent spoke, “Oh kings and officials, what do you think now, as you have lost and Bahram Syah has won.” The vassal kings and officials answered, “Oh Your Highness, we are not satisfied yet! Please tell Bahram Syah this time to build a golden rice barn, all by himself. Let him build it right in the middle of the yard of Flower village, and let him fill it with rice. We will build another golden rice barn together, and we will erect it in the middle of our village. Whoever finishes his rice barn first will become the princess’ husband!” His Majesty felt extremely sad and was worried. He went to Grandmother Kebayan and said, “What shall we do now, as the kings and officials order your son Bahram Syah to build a golden rice barn, all by himself, here in the village Flower Garden. *60b* The kings and officials will build another golden rice barn together, and whoever finishes his rice barn first will become the princess’ husband.” When Bahram Syah heard this, he smiled and said, “Oh my mother, I rack my brains, knowing the kings’ and officials’ decision, but where can we

find gold enough for a golden rice barn, when we were not even able to gather enough gold to build a ship with? You, mother, and His Highness have gone to great pains to help me, borrowing here and there, and even selling your nieces and nephews, which is completely against our custom. Where can I get this rice barn from? If I cannot marry, we will just wait a while. Now, please let His Highness and mother stay quiet!”

The kings and officials were busy searching for gold; half of them sold their slaves and pawned their nieces and nephews to rich merchants downstream. They summoned hundreds of goldsmiths. Half of them worked on the rice barn, while the other half searched for rice to fill the barn with. In the meantime, Bahram Syah did not worry at all; instead, he kept playing chess in one of the pavilions. Night fell and everybody was sleeping. Bahram Syah took a piece of burning wood and burned incense over the ring of the ghostly king. The king appeared at once and spoke, “Oh my Lord Bahram Syah, what is it that my Lord Bahram Syah wants? I am trembling with fear!” Bahram Syah replied, “Oh my brother, build a golden rice barn complete with accessories, here, in the middle of this yard, and make it many times more beautiful than the rice barn of the kings and officials, which is filled with rice! Fill my rice barn with all sorts of diamonds, small gems and with several kinds of precious stones!” In a twinkling of the eye, a golden rice barn *bra* was provided, together with its accessories and its highly unusual content. It was built exactly the way Bahram Syah had in mind. The period of three days that was agreed upon had now passed.

The next day, early in the morning, His Majesty and the prime minister woke up and saw the golden rice barn standing in the yard; it looked splendid. They were delighted and took off running to see the vassal kings and officials. They spoke, “Your rice barn is not even finished yet, while Bahram Syah has everything ready!” The kings and officials tried to outrun each other to see Bahram Syah’s rice barn. From afar, they could see its light shining and their faces looked sullen as they felt embarrassed. They bowed their heads towards the ground and went back home.

After a while, the kings and officials came to wait upon His Majesty and spoke, “Bahram Syah has indeed succeeded in building a golden ship and a golden rice barn, but now we want to ask Bahram Syah to cover with cloth the mountain that is called Soaring Cloud. We, in our turn, will cover up the mountain called Hazy Dew with cloth. Whoever manages to cover the whole mountain will become the princess’ husband.” When His Majesty heard this, he felt worried and said to the prime minister, “What are we to do now? The kings and officials want to order your son Bahram Syah to cover the mountain Soaring Cloud all by himself, while they together will cover *rb* the mountain Hazy Dew. Whoever it is that manages to veil the mountain with cloth, he will marry the princess.” When Bahram Syah heard this, he smiled. “Oh my mother, what kind of decision is this? These kings and officials are talking like old men now! It is you, Your Highness and my father and mother, who I fear and respect, but these seventy-seven kings and their officials are just being unfair!”

Night and day, the seventy-seven officials visited people to ask for their cloth and, in the end, they managed to multiply their stock. Half the kings went downstream to see the rich merchants to borrow all their good clothes, while half the officials went to visit the rich merchants, bringing their slaves along. They pawned hundreds of their nephews and nieces for cloth to cover the mountain Hazy Dew with. As for Bahram Syah, he sat around and strolled through the gardens, picking all kinds of flowers and grapes, pomegranates and raisins. After a while, night fell and everybody slept. Bahram Syah took piece of smouldering wood and burned incense over the ring of the ghostly king. In a wink, the king appeared and spoke, "Oh my Lord, what is it that you want? I am trembling with fear." Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my brother, I want to cover the mountain called Soaring Cloud with cloth, early tomorrow morning." Then, the ghostly king gave Bahram Syah a piece of cloth that fitted into a single fist, and *62a* said, "Here you have a cloth to cover the mountain called Soaring Cloud with tomorrow, early in the morning!" When the kings and officials have gathered and start to climb the mountain called Hazy Dew, you must immediately start to climb to the top of the mountain that is called Soaring Cloud and tie two ends of the cloth to your waist. After this, cast out the cloth, just like somebody who casts out his net. The cloth will unfold all by itself and will be blown by the wind. If the cloth hangs down or does not unfold completely, then let the wind unfurl it!"

The following day, Bahram Syah climbed to the top of the mountain Soaring Cloud. All the people, including the rich merchants, arrived; they wanted to witness the spectacle of the kings, the headmen and Bahram Syah each covering up a mountain with all these pieces of cloth. The dignitaries departed and there were hundreds of unfurled umbrellas and different kinds of musical instruments. It looked as if the mountain had disappeared beneath the masses. There were so many people that together they surrounded both mountains.

Bahram Syah arrived at the mountain top and halted. His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent stood at Bahram Syah's right side, while the prime minister stood behind him. Bahram Syah tied the ends of the cloth to his waist like a man who is going to throw out his net. *62b* The cloth unrolled and went up in the air, looking like a palm blossom snake. A gentle breeze started to blow, and the cloth's folds began to disappear. After this, a whirlwind began to rage; it blew to the left, to the right and forwards and backwards, and made the cloth unfold completely. Then the winds increased, coming from the top of the mountain called Wild Camel, and the cloth veiled and covered both the mountain called Soaring Cloud and the mountain called Hazy Dew. The people were no longer visible. They were all covered, as was the capital of Gasta Gastu and even the village called Flower Garden. The cloth could cover the whole state, but Bahram Syah did not untie it from his waist. Thus, half the cloth was still left, not yet unfurled.

The vassal kings, officials and officers shook their heads in amazement and said, "If this is the case, then God does not want us to have Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus

Flower as a spouse!” The kings and officials started an uproar and one of the kings spoke, “I do not want to suffer a single loss, and I do not want to have debts, but all my possessions are gone and all my servants and slaves are sold, only because of the smartness and shrewdness of these officials! I want them to reimburse all my possessions as they were desperate to marry Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower!” The officials replied, “Oh you despotic king, why do you want to humiliate us here in the middle of this plain? We had come to an agreement earlier. And you 63a were the one who was desperate to marry Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower!”

The vassal kings and the officials started to accuse each other and began to quarrel; they ended up in a big fight. Then the rich merchants said, “Oh kings and officials, calm down first, both parties! If we want to come to a profitable agreement, what then is the use of all these long and short stories about people’s debts. Do not worry, just try to make money again! Even if it seems to go slowly, there will be no problem! Amongst these many officials, there is not a single one that uses his brains! Whatever you say, both you kings and officials cherished the wish to marry Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, if not outwardly, then in your hearts. That is how we, who are gathered here, think about it, while we are trembling with fear for Bahram Syah. And in the future, kings and officials, ask him for whatever goods you want!” After the headmen had heard the words of the rich merchants, they kept silent. In that moment, the kings and officials reproached themselves.

After a while, Bahram Syah’s cloth rolled up by itself and together with Grandmother Kebayan he joyfully went back home to Flower Village. His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent cheered and spoke while laughing, “Oh kings and officials, I have done as you asked; what do you Lords want now from Bahram Syah?” There was not a single person amongst them that replied to His Majesty’s words, and 63b they each went home feeling ashamed.

Three days later, His Majesty summoned all the kings and officials. They came to wait upon the king, and His Majesty spoke, “Oh officials, what do you, who are gathered here, think of marrying my daughter to this Bahram Syah now? He has given you everything you requested, so what shall we do now?” The kings and officials answered, “Oh Your Highness, we still have one request. Let Bahram Syah build a capital in between Gastu Gasta and Flower Village, with a moat protected by a seven-layered stone wall and with everything else that goes with it. After this, let him construct a huge palace in accordance with local custom. And finally, order him to dig a narrow canal that runs through the middle of the capital and the palace yard, and make him connect the canal with the estuary called Dew on the Teak. If our request is not fulfilled, Bahram Syah will not marry Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower!”

When His Majesty heard what the kings and officials said, he became furious and said, “Oh you Lords, how is it possible that you are treating me as if I am a child! Bahram Syah has already fulfilled thousands of different requests from all of you! Now, if Bahram

Syah manages to fulfill your wish, are you prepared to obey him?” The kings replied respectfully, “We will obey, Your Highness, *64a* whatever he says, as long as we get what we want!” His Majesty spoke, “Swear it, all of you! Or do you want to be destroyed by God, may He be exalted, and all your works to be wasted?” So the kings and officials swore it. After this, His Majesty spoke with the prime minister and Bahram Syah and told them about the requests of the kings and officials; he told Bahram Syah everything. Bahram Syah smiled and said, “Oh Your Highness, how can these kings and officials treat us this way? I will suffer humiliation! First I build a golden boat, second, a rice barn, and third, I covered the mountain together with all the kings, headmen and the state’s rich merchants. Moreover, Your Highness and both my parents have been everywhere to look for gold and silver, have borrowed all the golden clothes, and have been to the market to visit the rich merchants to pawn all the nieces and nephews. If they are not redeemed immediately, they will definitely be sold. And now, I am told to build a village and a palace. What kind of human behaviour is this; I better walk away from here and leave this state, so that I will not have to suffer humiliation all day long!” His Majesty said nothing and felt worried. He then went to sleep.

Night fell and everybody, the prime minister included, was asleep. Bahram Syah took a burning piece of wood and burned incense over the ring of the ghostly king. The next moment, the ghost appeared and spoke respectfully, “Oh Your Highness, what is it that you want from me? I am trembling with fear!” Bahram Syah replied, “Oh my brother, make me the most *64b* beautiful capital, together with the most beautiful palace that has ever been seen by a human being from this world! Let there be servants and guards in accordance with local custom, and take great care to make it all perfect! Make a moat together with a seven-layered stone wall, which is plastered with red lead and has alternating gilded and silver-plated pillars. With regard to the palace, make it from gold studded with all kinds of small gems and make its walls from mirrors studded with sapphires and marble. Build forty-four equipped houses around the palace, and after that, also build seventy-seven small houses for the female servants and the governesses against the palace’s fence.

The next day, His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent woke up and was startled as he saw that a state complete with a capital was already built; it offered a very attractive sight. It was as far and as near to the capital of Gastu Gasta as it was to Flower Village; the new capital was situated right in between them. Grandmother Kebayan and the prime minister were completely flabbergasted when they saw the incredible beauty of the capital and its palace. It was because of Bahram Syah’s request that night that the capital, the palace and all the houses were immediately built in accordance with his wishes. Everything was ready and nothing lacked; it was complete. His Majesty went to see it together with the prime minister. After this, the seventy-seven vassal kings and their officials also heard about it and took off together to see this new state. They were all astounded. Next, *65a* the news reached the merchants and the dignitaries. They arrived

and when they saw the capital's beauty, they were shocked and felt humiliated. Then, all the other people, the important ones and the commoners, came to see the capital. They too were amazed and flabbergasted as they witnessed the capital's beauty and, at the same time, Bahram Syah's supernatural powers.

After this, Bahram Syah named the capital In Between Good Plains and its palace Work Of The Intoxicated Gods. The canal that ran through the capital was named Washed and Dried Water Buffalo Sleigh and he gave the walled moat the name Water Dragon Encircling The Whole World. Everybody felt great respect for Bahram Syah. The next moment, His Majesty spoke, "Oh vassal kings and officials, what do you Lords think about marrying my daughter off to Bahram Syah now? If there is anything that you want to ask him for, do it now! Let us go together to see him!" The kings replied respectfully, "Hail to thee, Your Highness, there is nothing that we want; our desires have been satisfied completely. Whatever your Lordship orders, these humble slaves will obey!" Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh seventy-seven kings who are under his Lordship's rule, do as you say, and likewise all the officials who are under your rule! Make the necessary preparations in the state of Gastu Gasta and bring them to a good end! As for the captains, merchants and dignitaries, let them live here with me in the capital called In Between Good Plains. I will reign the state together with my mother. As I am a foreign wanderer here, I will join the other wanderers and captains and merchants who once lived *65b* elsewhere, but now have come to foreign ports and are also called wanderers. It is there that I will decide on matters concerning the state!"

They started the festivities for the marriage of Bahram Syah and Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower; they lasted fourteen days and fourteen nights. Every single form of entertainment was represented and, from both sides, different musical instruments sounded loudly, from *rebab*, *kecapi*, *serunai*, *bangsi*, and *serdam* to *momongan*, *telempong*, *ceracap*, *nafiri*, and the *negara negiri*. The umbrellas with the peacock feathers were unfurled, together with the standards, the flags with the sign of the centipede, and the royal banner. Then, green, yellow and red umbrellas of all kinds and forms were unfolded. Numerous water buffaloes and cows were slaughtered, up to several hundred each day. Day and night, there were festive forms of entertainment which went on and on; the young singers did not even sleep! There was not a single person in the capital of Gastu Gasta and in the capital In Between Good Plains that quarrelled. Everybody just loved one another.

On a propitious day, after exactly fourteen days and fourteen nights, Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower was married to Bahram Syah. Some time after the ceremonies, the inhabitants of the state were ruled by Bahram Syah; his investigations and decisions were of perfect benefit and he was fair and generous. The officials, officers, merchants and religious students were very pleased and went to Bahram Syah's state. The land became more and more densely populated. Thus was the situation. Gods knows what is best and what is true.

VIII

67a The story is as follows:

It is told by the storyteller that, after Bahram Syah and Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower had been courting each other for a while, she became pregnant. When she was seven days pregnant, she yearned to eat the meat of a male *pelanduk*, and also of a male *kijang* and *bengkunang*, and a male *rusa* and *napuh* that were carrying a female young. The officers went into the jungle to hunt together with their hunting dogs.

After a while, they found several male *rusa*; they cut them open but they did not find any young inside their bellies. They caught probably hundreds of *pelanduk*. The officers were amazed and said, "How it is possible that we are not able to find what the princess craves?" Then, all the capital's officers continued their hunt, looking for a male *rusa* that was carrying a female young. After they had hunted for some time, they still had not found a male carrying a young in its belly, and thus all the hunters went back home; half of them had perished and half of them had vanished, who knows where to. In the meantime, the princess' craving for *rusa* increased. The people had been hunting for about seven months, and they still had not found a male *rusa* that was carrying a female young.

By the decree of God, may He be exalted, Bahram Syah summoned his officers, as he wanted to depart for a hunt. There was one of his officers, called Turani, who was ordered every night by Bahram Syah to play the *bangsi* and the *serunai*; he was also ordered to sweep the ground under Bahram Syah's house during the day. These were Turani's tasks. Bahram Syah spoke, 67b "Oh head of the guards, let the guards watch every single gate, as I want to go into the jungle to look for a male deer that is carrying a female young. Whoever it is that wants to enter this capital after my departure, do not open the gate! Even if it is His Highness or my father, do not open the gate, because I have seen in the stars that a disaster will strike us in the future. There are difficult times ahead of us!" After this, Bahram Syah took off, accompanied by both officers and commoners. They entered a patch of jungle and left a patch of jungle. They found tens of animals, but they did not come across a carrying male; they only found carrying females. And this happened the whole time. After the people had accompanied His Majesty for about three months, they went home. Bahram Syah kept on hunting, day by day, month by month, and this was the only thing that Bahram Syah pursued while he was in the jungle.

As for Turani now, he kept on sweeping the ground under the house, without a rest. He descended from Islamic ghosts; his grandmother was a kind of spirit, his mother a goddess, and his father a human being. He knew a lot about magic and lived behind the mountain called Wild Camel, in the swamp with the *mahang* trees, at the foot of a big tree with hanging epiphytes. He lived in the cracks in the dry clay and used a whirlpool as his pond.

Night fell and Turani began to play the flute; he did not use his fingers though, and he removed the plug. He blew on the flute's end, so it did not sound very good, and the

princess said, *68a* “Oh Turani, why does the flute sound this awful?” Turani replied, “Oh my Lady, this flute sounds false, because His Majesty keeps its band in his waistband.² If you want to listen to the sound of my flute, then please go inside and look where it is. The band is spotted and as big as an ordinary ring. Now please go and take it out of His Majesty’s waistband!” Turani immediately lit some fires around him and spoke, “O my Lady, get the band, as the fires are already burning!” The princess unfolded Bahram Syah’s waistband and took out the ring of the ghostly king. She spoke, “Oh Turani, this must be your flute’s band!” Turani replied, “Wait a moment, I will unfold my sarong, so that I can catch it! When I have unfolded my sarong, please drop the band!” Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower dropped the ring on Turani’s sarong. When Turani got the ring, he put out the fires and ran off through a hole in the fence.

The next moment, he burned incense over the ring of the ghostly king and the king appeared, saying, “Oh my Lord, I am trembling with fear!” Turani spoke, “Oh my brother, make me a state in the middle of the sea, complete with a capital, a palace, slaves, subjects and weapons. Build a seven-layered wall with big rocks, because I want to be a mighty king! Bring me there right now!” That same moment, *68b* Turani got everything he had wished for; nothing lacked. And so he reigned as a king on the island and there were quite a few people who came to wait upon him; in fact, there were thousands of them and they looked like a swarm of bees. His kingdom was vast and his reign steady. The name of this island state was Siranjang Petinggangan and there was nobody who was greater than Turani, with his vast kingdom and many subjects. Many ships arrived there to trade, because the harbour had just opened. King Turani became an incredibly rich man. There came no end to the people that came to wait upon Turani night and day, early in the morning and late in the afternoon, and they were always having fun.

Now, the guards of Bahram Syah’s capital were in uproar as Turani had taken to his heels. Several officers searched for him, but they could not find him. Everybody kept silent.

By the decree of God, may He be exalted, the story will now be told of Bahram Syah, of when he went on a hunt to search for a carrying male *kijang* or *pelanduk*. The ones he found were not carrying, and he only found female ones that carried a young in their belly. After Bahram Syah had been in the jungle for some time, Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower gave birth to a son. He was extremely handsome and could not be looked upon directly, as his face radiated brilliantly. The royal drum sounded and was heard by Sultan the Magnificent, Grandmother Kebayan and the prime minister, and by all the vassal kings, the headmen and all the other subjects. The lords wanted to pay their respects to the son of Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower. *69a* When they had arrived in the capital they wanted to enter, but they were not given permission to do so by the officers

² Certain types of flutes from West Sumatra have a rotan ring or band. The form of the band with its knot resembles that of a ring set with a gem.

who were on guard. They were dumbfounded. They then asked the men who watched the gates about the little child, saying, "Is it a boy or a girl?" The guards told them everything about the boy's behaviour and character and they were glad to hear the news.

Now it is told that Bahram Syah kept on walking; he never rested while he was in the jungle. Then he saw a huge tree and walked in towards it. By the time he arrived at the tree, night had already fallen. He took cover in between the tree's buttresses and fell asleep. By the decree of God, may He be exalted, he had a dream. In his dream, Sultan Maharaja the Great appeared and spoke, "Oh my son Bahram Syah, why do I see you sleeping all the time? You must know that you will never find a carrying male *pelanduk*, *kijang*, or *rusa*, because only female animals carry young in their bellies! So look for a female carrying a female young! When you have found it, cut open its belly and take the young home with you, oh my son! By the way, your son is already born; he is more handsome than all the other babies. He is incredibly handsome and his behaviour is truly astonishing, oh my son! Your ring of state has been stolen by Turani. He has taken it with him to the middle of the sea, to his island state named Siranjang Petinggangan. He is there thanks to your ring of state. When you are on your way home, do not give your love to human beings, but *ogb* give it to filthy animals, and whatever you tell them to do, they will obey! Later, God, may He be exalted, willing, you will benefit from this! Oh my son Bahram Syah, now get up, day has already broken!" Bahram Syah woke up when the sun was already shining. He looked to his right and to this left, but he saw nothing except for a lone dog. Apparently, the other hunting dogs had already died.

For a while, he continued his hunt. At one particular moment, he came across a female *kijang* carrying a female young. After he got the young out of its belly, he went home, taking the young *kijang* with him. He went from one forest to another forest and from one plain to another plain. He arrived at the plain where the water buffaloes were eating and from there he went straight home. When he had walked for some time, he arrived at the outskirts of the capital, at a resting place. He saw how tens or hundreds of people walked around the capital, watching the gates, so that nobody could get in or out. Bahram Syah yelled out, "Oh guards, open the gate! I want to enter the capital. I have returned from the hunt. I have brought a young *kijang* from the mother's womb with me and I want to take it to my wife Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, because she really yearns to eat it!" The guards answered, "How can you want to enter the capital? It is forbidden to enter the capital, as our Lord Bahram Syah has not yet returned!" Both sides started to argue as the guards did not *70a* recognize Bahram Syah, because both his appearance and voice had been changed by Turani. It was now Turani who looked like Bahram Syah. Bahram Syah said, "I am Bahram Syah, do you not recognize the son-in-law of His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent? My mother is Grandmother Kebayan and my father is the prime minister. Do you not know of all I have done for this state? Open the gate! I want to get in!" The guards replied, "Wait a moment!" They informed the princess, saying, "Oh our Lady, what do you want to do? There is a man

who wants to enter the capital.” The princess spoke, “No man or woman is getting in as long as our Lord has not returned from his hunt! Chase him away! Do you not remember Turani; even he has been unfaithful, let alone strangers!”

After that, the guards went outside and spoke, “Oh Lord who is outside the capital, you will not enter before our Lord Bahram Syah has returned from his hunt; this is what the princess tells you from the palace!” Bahram Syah replied, “I am Bahram Syah and Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower is my wife! This is the game I brought with me! I will knock down the door of the capital!” The guards spoke, “Oh thief, get away from here! If people like His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent and Grandmother Kebayan with the prime minister and the vassal kings, who wanted to see their youngest grandson a while ago, were not allowed to enter, you who have just returned from a hunt will certainly not be allowed to! You must be the spectre Huntsman! You came from the woods, so go back into the woods! You really look *7ob* like a Gulumbai. Oh cursed wretch, get away from here!” Both parties were at the point of wanting to kill each other. One half of the guards wanted to hit him, while the other half wanted to punch him.

When Bahram Syah saw this, he turned his face towards to the sky, cried, and walked towards the beach. When he had arrived there, he stopped for a moment and thought to himself, “What will I do? If I summon the garuda, the whole capital, including the palace and its guards, will be finished, as the garuda will seize and eat everything! My son and my wife will be gone too, while nobody has done any wrong. I am the one who is to blame; they are just carrying out their promise. I must be patient, because God, may He be exalted, will definitely help His subject in the future. And in that case, everything will work out for the best.” Bahram Syah walked on along the shore.

After he had walked for about two hours, he saw the path that went inland and followed it for a while. A moment later, he came across a field where people were living temporarily. There, he found a small cottage. Bahram Syah stopped, entered the cottage and lay down. He then sat up and looked into the yard of the cottage. He saw a banana tree; its trunk was wrapped in fine fibers. There was one hand of ripe bananas, but only three of them were left, the others had been eaten by animals. Bahram Syah went outside and took a banana. He went back, sat down on *71a* one of the cottage’s steps and started to eat the banana. After he had finished it, he heard a rustle coming from underneath an old cotton tree. He looked and saw a dog that was so scrawny that it seemed as if he would be blown away by the wind. Bahram Syah called the skinny dog, “Oh dog, come here! I want to ask you what you are doing here?” The skinny dog replied, “Oh my Lord, the reason I am here is because my fellow dogs hate me. They refuse to even look at me! When I go out in search of food, the other dogs watch me and attack me. They bite me and wound my feet and my ears. That is the reason I am skinny, I do not get any food!” The dog was a red colour, like the flowers of a *dadap* tree, and its muzzle was black as ink. Bahram Syah spoke, “Oh skinny dog, do you want to come along with me, even if I do not know where I am going to?” The skinny dog answered, “That seems a thousand times

better to me than staying here!” Bahram Syah immediately took the dog with him and they both followed the road leading to the beach.

After they had walked for one hour, they reached the shore. They saw that the tide was out; the beach was broad and the coral was exposed to the sunlight. Bahram Syah walked onto the reef to look for something to eat for the skinny dog, but he could not find a thing. He went back *71b* to the beach and started to dig in the sand, looking for crabs. After he had found some, he gave them to the skinny dog who ate them. By now, Bahram Syah had taken care of the dog for about two months and the dog had grown fat.

Bahram Syah traveled on without a rest, from one cliff to another and from one bay to another. When he had walked for two hours, he came across a path that led inland. He followed the path and walked on. After having walked for another three hours, he arrived at an inhabited area. He came upon a house and halted in its yard. That moment, the dog started to bark and Bahram Syah said, “Oh dog, why are you barking?” Then Bahram Syah saw an old, rolled up mat lying the middle of the yard. He immediately unrolled the mat and found a skinny cat. Bahram Syah asked, “Oh skinny cat, what are you doing here?” The skinny cat answered, “Oh my Lord, the reason I am hiding in this old mat is that when I come out at night to look for food in the house and catch a big mouse, the cats hear the mouse squeak. Upon hearing this, they all enter the house and mob me; half of them pull at the mouse, while the other half pull at me. So I have a hard time because they keep pulling at me, *72a* and when they have seized the mouse, they devour it together. They let me go when they are busy eating the mouse; I go outside and hide myself in this old mat. This is the reason I am skinny, oh my Lord.” When Bahram Syah heard what the cat had said, he spoke, “Oh skinny cat, do you want to come along with me, even if I do not know where I am going to?” The skinny cat replied, “If it pleases you, it pleases me a thousand times more!” The three of them, Bahram Syah together with the dog and the cat, walked on without a rest and throughout the journey Bahram Syah tried to catch grasshoppers and dragonflies as food for the cat.

After traveling for a while, they came across a swamp with *alang-alang* grass. Bahram Syah stopped for a moment to look for a *buruk* bird. After he had captured one, he gave it to the cat and so the cat became fat. They walked on very quickly, without stopping, from one forest to another forest. A moment later, Bahram Syah found some ears of rice that had probably been lost by someone who had wanted to take rice from the field to the village. He took the rice grains from the ear and kept them in his handkerchief. He thought, “If I am hungry, I can husk the rice and eat it.” Then, he walked on without stopping.

When they had walked for three hours, they came upon a house standing near an abandoned field. They halted in the yard. The next instant, Bahram Syah saw how the cat approached an old water buffalo hide, as if it wanted to catch something; its belly was lying flat on the ground and its eyes were wide open, *72b* fixed on the hide. Bahram Syah said, “Oh cat, what do you see? Whatever it is, please do not catch it!” He looked

under the hide and saw a very skinny white mouse; only the tip of its nose was visible. The mouse blinked its eyes a few times when it saw the black cat. Bahram Syah said, “Oh skinny mouse, what are you doing here, and why is your body so feeble? I see only skin and bones; your flesh is gone. What is the reason for this condition of yours?” The skinny mouse answered, “Oh my Lord, it is caused by my own kind, my fellow mice. I live here in this hide and watch the other mice. When they are gone, I leave the hide to look whether there is anything to eat. Three days later, I find a single cob of corn on this abandoned field, which is not very much. Before I can eat even a little bit of corn, the Big Mouse appears; it is many times bigger than the rest of us. It tells my fellow mice to snatch away the cob of corn and together they manage to get it. The Big Mouse captures me and beats me over and over again. After this, it sticks its tail into my nose, so I have difficulty breathing and I start to sneeze. My sufferings are endless and this is the reason my body is thin and my flesh is gone; the only things that are left are skin and bones!” Bahram Syah said, “Oh mouse, do you want to come along with me, *73a* even if I do not know where I am going to?” The skinny mouse answered, “If you want to take me along, I would like that a thousand times more! If I stay here and the Big Mouse and my fellow mice come again on more time to beat me up, I am dead for sure!” Bahram Syah reached out a piece of wood to the mouse and said, “Oh mouse, hang onto this piece of wood so I can carry you!” The mouse took hold of one end of the piece of wood. Bahram Syah offered him some of the rice that was in his handkerchief, saying, “Here, have some rice. Eat it so that you will gain strength!” After this, they traveled on, from one patch of jungle to another patch of jungle and from one river to another river.

After a while, they came across a narrow river. On the bank of the river they saw a man washing meat in a basket. When he was finished, Bahram Syah asked, “Oh my Lord, what are you doing here?” The man answered, “Our village chief wants to organize a commemorative meal for the deceased. Please, come over here so we can go to the village together!” Bahram Syah replied, “Well, if you say so, then let us go!” They went to the village. When they arrived, Bahram Syah entered the house and night fell. The dog, the cat and the mouse each went out to look for food. The dog quickly found some bones and ate them. That night, the learned men of religion recited the *Quran* and the participants of the commemorative meal gave alms.

The next day, after the ceremonial gathering, the four of them, that is Bahram Syah together with the dog, the cat and the mouse, continued their journey. At that time, the three animals were fleshy and *73b* and fat. They were very strong and walked as fast as the wind, without stopping, from one plain to another plain. Then Bahram Syah arrived at a beautiful village. The men and women of this village were wearing clothes made of gold thread. Immediately Bahram Syah asked, “Oh Lords of this village, what are you doing?” The inhabitants of the village answered, “Oh our Lord, today our village chief wants to marry his daughter. Please, come! We can prepare the village chief’s feast together!” Bahram Syah entered the chief’s house; he turned out to be the oldest of all the

youngsters there, and thus knew the most about the youngsters' affairs. After a while, the preparations were finished and Bahram Syah was praised by all those gathered there.

The next day, he walked on again, accompanied by the dog, the cat and the mouse. They went from one plain to another. The mouse no longer had the strength to walk on and the dog said, "Oh my brother the mouse, if you are too weak to walk, ask our master to use his waistband to make a hammock underneath my belly!" Bahram Syah instantly made his waistband into a kind of hammock hanging under the dog's belly. After the hammock was ready, the mouse climbed into the piece of cloth hanging under the dog's belly and they traveled on, without stopping.

When they had traveled for a while, Bahram Syah *74a* came across a banyan tree that was standing in the middle of a vast, flat plain. He saw many people dressed in their official clothes. The officials' children, the children of those who were otherwise employed at the court, together with the children of the highest dignitaries were flying kites and testing their swordsmanship against each other; fighters against fighters. There were numerous people on the plain and they were all amusing themselves. When Bahram Syah arrived there, he asked, "Oh Lords, what is the name of this state and who is the ruler of this capital?" One of them replied, "Oh my Lord, listen! The name of this state is Shaded River and its ruler is His Majesty Encircling the World. This king is loving and affectionate towards wandering strangers and he is exceptionally just and generous." Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh my Lord, I hope that it is possible for you to wait upon His Majesty together with me." The man replied, "That is a very good idea!" Thus Bahram Syah was escorted by the man.

After they had arrived at the palace yard, they went into the palace and paid their respects to His Majesty. His Majesty instantly welcomed Bahram Syah with both hands and festivities were started. When night had fallen and they had drunk and eaten, the king spoke to Bahram Syah, "Please, do not keep traveling; stay here with me, if you like, just in case there might be some affairs of state that need to be handled!" Bahram Syah replied, "Yes Your Highness, as God has made Your Highness' heart capable of loving a stranger like me, I humbly accept Your Highness' offer thousands of times!" Thus the king *74b* of this state called Shaded River adopted Bahram Syah. Bahram Syah took care of the youngsters and children of strangers who came from all four corners of the world, and he became well acquainted with the palace ceremonies and the royal attributes. His Majesty Encircling the World grew to love Bahram Syah more and more, because his administration was like that of the state's harbour master, and the king's excellence and welfare kept increasing.

When Bahram Syah had been with this king for about five years, the king thought to himself, "How can I repay Bahram Syah for his support? Let me find him a noble and faithful wife! I know of a daughter of the head of a fishing village at the estuary, near the beach; her name is Princess Kesumba and Rosewater." The following day, the king spoke to Bahram Syah, "Oh my son Bahram Syah, I have something good to tell you! As I am

looking for a wife for you, would you like to call me ‘father’? The girl I really like is the daughter of the head of a fishing village; her name is Princess Kesumba and Rosewater. Later today I will summon the head of the fishing village and his wife!” Bahram Syah said, “As you wish! How can I thwart such an outstanding order?”

The next day, the head of the fishing village traveled upcountry together with his wife and daughter. Four or five people carried fresh fish for His Majesty Encircling the World to eat. The head and his wife arrived at the king’s palace; they all sat down together and ate, drank and feasted. After they had finished eating and drinking, 75a the king spoke, “Oh head of the fishing village, you and your wife must know that I will be brief. We should marry my son Bahram Syah to your daughter named Princess Kesumba and Rosewater now, while we are still alive! What can we do when we are dead?” The head of the fishing village and his wife replied respectfully, “Oh Your Highness, that seems thousandfold right to us! Whatever Your Highness says, we will obey, as there is no one who equals Your Highness’ son as a husband for our daughter!” After they had spoken, they agreed to marry Bahram Syah to Princess Kesumba and Rosewater. The head of the fishing village went downstream, to his home, to provide for the goods that were needed for the marriage. One month later, Bahram Syah and Princess Kesumba and Rosewater were married.

When they had lived together for a while, Princess Kesumba and Rosewater loved her husband very much and the head of the fishing village grew to love his son-in-law more and more too. To distract herself, Princess Kesumba and Rosewater went to the beach to see the fishing boats return home. So, every day, Bahram Syah and the princess passed their time looking at the fishermen. The fishermen offered several kinds of edible fish to Bahram Syah and Princess Kesumba and Rosewater, like *bawal*, *tenggiri*, *kapas-kapas* and *jumpul*. Half of the fishermen brought them in bundles, while the other half brought them in baskets. These were their daily occupations.

One day, after they had enjoyed themselves and had finished eating and drinking, Bahram Syah left home taking with him three packages of rice to give to the dog, 75b the cat and the mouse. He walked along the road leading to the beach. When he had walked for some time, he came across at a huge *ketapang* tree. He sat down beneath the tree and leaned against its trunk. He gave the three packages of rice to the dog, the cat and the mouse, and said, “Eat one package each!” Then he lay down for a while under the tree and started to talk to himself. He was reminded of his fate and the hardship he had had to endure when he had been in trouble in the estuary Dew on the Teak and said, “If only I possessed this ring that I got from the ghostly king, my fate and my hardship would not be like this! Now, Turani has taken it with him to the island where he lives. On a clear day, one can see the clouds above his island.” After this, Bahram Syah saw that the dog, the cat and the mouse had finished eating and he got up and walked home.

Somewhat later that night, the cat said, “Oh my brother cat and brother mouse, did you by any chance hear what our master said earlier this day?” The cat replied, “In that

case, are you willing to sacrifice your life? Do not stay attached to this world; we cannot repay our master's help in an other way than by giving up our lives! The ring does exist, but is not here. It is there, where you can see the clouds. That is Turani's place. What do you think? Let us try to *76a* swim. If it turns out that, after arriving there, the ring is not there, we will just turn back. Do not let our master know of our plan; if he knows, he will not let us go. We will swim during the night, not during the day." After the dog, the cat and the mouse had discussed it, they each went to look for something to eat.

At the end of the day, the three of them assembled and waited for the darkness to come. After night had fallen, they walked to the beach and started swimming. First in line was the dog, behind the dog swam the cat, and behind the cat, the mouse. When they had swum for about two hours, the dog said, "Oh my two brothers, let us swim on our backs, as I am already exhausted!" So they swam backstroke and swam on without stopping. A moment later, they were still swimming, from one piece of driftwood to the other. While swimming, they were assisted by the east wind, which made several small waterfowl land on the cat's and the dog's head. They caught and ate them and gave some to the mouse too. The mouse devoured the waterfowl. As they had some food now, their strength increased.

After swimming for a while, they reached the island named Siranjang Petinggangan, where Turani reigned as a king. Dawn broke and the dog, the cat and the mouse hid themselves in the few bushes that grew along the edge of the beach. Nobody knew of their presence. They deliberated and the dog spoke, "Who of us will go to have a look in the capital?" The mouse replied, "Oh *76b* my brother, in my opinion, of the three of us, it must be the cat, because there is nothing that will stop him; he can go beneath a house, he can enter a house, he can go to the outer chambers of a house, and he is even allowed to enter the inner chambers of a house. The same is true for my brother the dog, but you must first show the people something that proves your virtuousness, so they will be fond of you and like you. Approach them slowly while you wag your tail. Let your tongue hang out of your muzzle and lower your head till it touches the ground. And if somebody strokes you on the head with his foot, lie down immediately as if you are sleeping and roll over on your back. This is how you should behave, then everybody will love you! As for me, where can I go? Everybody hates mice, that has been our lot since the time of my forefathers. We really have a hard time. We are killed without being guilty of something and then they feed our corpses to the cats. Therefore it is better that I hide."

After this discussion, the cat took off to visit Turani's place. The guards did not bother about the animal; they just smiled when they saw the extremely fat cat. The cat entered Turani's palace and when the ladies-in-waiting spotted him, they caught it and put it on their laps. That moment, the ladies-in-waiting were trying to wrestle the cat from one another and *77a* their ecstatic and chaotic cries were heard by Turani, who spoke, "Oh all you ladies-in-waiting, what is it that you are so excited about all day long?" The ladies-in-waiting replied, "Oh Your Highness, there is a black cat that has arrived here; it is black

as steel and without a single white hair. There is no cat as fine as this one!” Turani said, “Bring the cat here, I want to see it!” The ladies-in-waiting brought the cat in and when Turani saw the cat he took it and put it on his lap, saying, “It is true what you said, there is no other cat as fine as this one!” The black colour of the cat’s pelt shone like liquid. Turani said, “Oh ladies-in-waiting, take good care of this cat, because I am very fond of him!” The ladies-in-waiting fed the cat some cooked rice from Turani’s dish, but it refused to eat it; it did not even look at it. Turani said, “Why does this cat not want to eat?” Then Turani took some cooked rice from his own plate and put it on a mat. The cat started to eat and even licked the mat. The cat was never far from Turani’s palace. It slept all day long and kept nuzzling up against the ladies-in-waiting.

After a while, night fell. When it was past eight o’clock in the evening, and everybody in the palace had finished eating and drinking, the white mouse went to Turani’s palace. It walked to and fro and hissed; it then jumped up into the loft and up onto the racks carrying the pumpkins. When the cat heard the mouse tripping and running to and fro and hissing, *77b* it prepared itself to catch the mouse. Turani laughed when he saw the cat completely engrossed in watching the mouse.

A few moments later, Turani wanted to sleep. The cat went to Turani, who took it on his lap. Turani said, “Oh my cat, stay near me!” He then took the ring of the ghostly king from his waistband, put it in his mouth and went to sleep. The cat saw everything Turani did, and this was how Turani usually kept the ring of the ghostly king. That night, Turani slept soundly. After he had slept for a while, dawn broke and he woke up. He took the ring out of his mouth and placed it in his waistband where he kept it. This was what he always did and the black cat observed all Turani’s actions.

The next moment, the dog entered the capital and it behaved exactly as it had been told to by the mouse. Everyone in the capital become fond of the dog and it was allowed to roam through the capital. It went underneath Turani’s palace to look for bones thrown away by the ladies-in-waiting: the bones of ducks, chickens geese or pigeons that Turani did not want to pick clean. The dog did this during the mornings as well as during *78a* the afternoons; he was always busy looking for bones. The dog was completely absorbed in eating and did not pay attention to anything else. It tore off the meat from the bones and smacked its lips. The black cat heard the noise; it went beneath the palace and saw the dog. The cat went to see the dog and they ate bones together beneath Turani’s palace.

While the dog and the cat were eating, the cat said, “Oh my brother the dog, go now! I will follow you later!” After this, the dog walked to the beach. A few moments later, the cat followed the dog. After a while, they arrived at the spot where they had hidden themselves earlier. The mouse was waiting for them and the three began to deliberate. The cat spoke, “Oh my two brothers, what can we do about our master’s ring? It is true that Turani possesses the ring, but it is very difficult to get hold of it as he keeps the ring in his mouth. During the night he keeps it in his mouth, while during the day he keeps it in his waistband; and I have been with him for five nights! Now, my two brothers, try to think

of a ruse!” After the mouse had heard what the cat had said, it spoke, “Oh my brother, I will be brief. If it is our fate that we fail, we fail, and if it is our fate that we succeed, *78b* we succeed. In the past, I have lived through the moments when the Big Mouse stuck its tail into my nose. I suffered immensely because of it. I sneezed and coughed and all kinds of things flew out of my mouth and nose. Now I suggest that I stick my tail into Turani’s nose to make our master’s ring fly out of Turani’s nose. If I make the ring come out, who will catch the ring when it is launched from his nose?” When the cat heard what the mouse had said, it spoke, “Oh my brother, I will catch the ring after it is launched from Turani’s mouth, but who will run off with me after I have caught the ring, as I do not have the strength to run. I will be caught by the guards!” When the dog heard what cat had said, it said, “Oh my brother, I will be the one that runs off with you, do not worry! In case you get the ring, just wait and see, my brother!”

After the three of them had finished the discussion, the mouse spoke, “If this is our plan, it is perfect, but let us first try out everyone’s part!” The dog replied, “Oh mouse, stick your tail in this crab-hole first, as a test. If the crab comes out of its hole, you will get our master’s ring too!” The mouse said, “Very well! Now, get ready you two, so I can try it!” The cat and the dog *79a* got ready and the mouse stuck its tail into the hole of the crab and jumped up. The crab came out and was caught by the cat and the cat, in turn, was caught by the dog who ran off with the cat as fast as the wind. It was as if the cat lost consciousness as it was carried along by the running dog. The mouse felt exhilarated seeing the keenness of the cat and the dog and it said, “Oh my brothers, I am pleased. We can go to Turani’s palace now!” The cat spoke, “Let us go!” It then took off together with the dog; the mouse followed some time later.

The cat and the dog arrived at Turani’s palace. The cat entered, while the dog stayed beneath the palace, picking clean bones. When Turani saw that the cat had entered, he took it on his lap and stroked it. When night had fallen, the courtiers had their meals and the cat ate with them. Then Turani took the ring out of his waistband and put it in his mouth. He took the cat on his lap and fell asleep.

Now the mouse arrived and entered the palace. The cat heard the mouse coming and went to see the mouse. The cat spoke, “Turani is already asleep now.” The dog was waiting beneath the palace. The mouse brushed its tail a few times over a stone that was used for grinding pepper and went to Turani’s bed. The cat was at Turani’s side and stood ready. The mouse drew near and saw that Turani was sleeping soundly. *79b* It then stuck its tail into Turani’s nostrils. Turani started to sneeze and cough and the ring flew out of his mouth. The ring was caught by the cat who ran off with it. The cat jumped down and was waited for by the dog who then ran off with the cat; it ran as fast as lightning.

Turani sneezed continuously; all kinds of things flew out of his mouth and nose and tears welled up in his eyes. The ladies-in-waiting were in uproar and as they could not see the ring, they went searching for it. When they could not find it, Turani spoke, “It is this cat, and nobody else, that has taken the ring!” Dawn broke and he ordered all the officials

and officers to look for the cat. He said, "If you find it, bring it here!" The officers went looking for the cat, while Turani became more and more sad and regretful about having loved this black cat. The mouse hid itself; it could not leave the palace as the guards were doing their rounds. Night fell and the mouse slowly left the palace. It slipped through a crack in the fence and walked on without stopping.

Next is told about the dog and the cat. After having arrived at their hiding place, they waited for the mouse. When, by nighttime, the mouse had still not come, the dog spoke to the cat, "What can we do for our brother the mouse? Who knows, he may have been killed by the guards!" They were worried, but the next moment, the mouse arrived and the three of them *soa* were happy. Next, they said, "When will we go home?" The mouse spoke, "Let us go now, while it is dark, because many of Turani's officers are looking for us!" The mouse told the others everything about Turani. The three of them looked for food and, after that, walked to the sea and started. They swam on without taking a rest. After they had swum for a while, the mouse said, "Oh my brother the cat, grab hold of me! I cannot swim any longer as I am exhausted!" Thus the mouse clung to the cat and they swam on. Now the cat became tired and felt as if it would drown, and it said to the dog, "Oh my brother, I am extremely tired!" The dog replied, "Let me drag you along!" They swam on, while dog held the ring of the ghostly king in its muzzle.

When they were near the coast, the wind rose and the waves became bigger and bigger. The dog was no longer able to swim as he was exhausted from swimming against a headwind. The dog spoke to the cat, "Oh my brother, I think I will die now!" The cat replied, "I will die too! I am exhausted!" The dog disappeared into the waves a few times and water entered its nose. As the dog could no longer breathe, it opened its muzzle wide. A wave washed over the dog and the ring fell into the sea. When a silver bream saw the shining ring, it caught it and swallowed it. The dog said to the cat, "Oh my brother, let go of me; the ring has fallen!" The cat sadly obeyed and said, "What will we do now?" After a while, the three of them reached the coast and they walked up the beach. Together they cried and the mouse spoke, "What more can we do now, *soa* as we have already been trying for seven days and we still have not been able to render our master a service!" The dog replied, "Oh my brother, I do not want to go back home! Just let me run off into the jungle so that I will die!" The cat spoke, "I do not agree with you. What can we do about it? It simply was not our fate to succeed! Let us go back home and offer something to His Majesty!" The mouse said, "What is it that we can offer? What we could have offered was dropped into the sea! How can we get it back?" Sitting on the beach facing each other and feeling exhausted, hungry and thirsty, they cried together.

Next is told of Bahram Syah. He kept waiting for the dog and the cat, but they did not come. At nighttime, he searched every path and every settlement, and went to the middle of the plain, but he did not find them. He thought to himself, "Where could they have gone to? Or maybe the dog, the cat and the mouse are already dead, taken by a tiger, as they have not come home now for seven days!" Bahram Syah was extremely

sad and walked to the beach. After a while, he arrived at the spot where the dog, the cat and the mouse were. Bahram Syah saw them; he saw that they were very feeble and skinny. They were lying asleep with their heads turned to each other. Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh my brothers, where have you been all this time! I see that you are emaciated and weak." The three of them were startled and paid their respects while they cried. They told him everything that they had done when they had tried to recover the ring: about the swimming and about the ring that was dropped. The dog, the cat and the mouse told everything. Bahram Syah's love and compassion for these animals grew stronger and he spoke, "Oh my brothers, *ṣṭa* this is what God has predestined for us, now let us go home. Do not worry about it any longer; if God has predestined that this ring comes back to us, it will come back!" The four of them walked off. When they arrived home, he gave the dog, the cat and the mouse something to eat.

Some time later, the fishermen were fishing. They caught a lot of fish. They cut some of the finest fishes in half and offered them to Princess Kesumba and Rosewater. Bahram Syah looked at them and saw a silver bream that was much bigger than the others. He said to his wife, "Oh Princess, roast this one for me!" Princess Kesumba and Rosewater took the fish, gutted it and threw away the intestines. Then, she discovered something in the intestines that was as hard and big as a pebble; it looked like a ring on which a multicoloured stone was mounted. She said, "Oh my brother, what is this thing in the fish's intestines that is as hard as stone?" Bahram Syah approached immediately, took the ring and looked at it. He felt great joy and said, "Oh Princess, this looks like a pebble from the beach that has been swallowed by the fish." He pretended to throw it outside, but in fact he had already put it in his waistband. He then went to bed.

Some time later, he took leave of his wife and his father-in-law, the head of the fishing village, paid his respects to His Highness Encircling The World and took off accompanied by the cat, the dog and the mouse. He went to a quiet spot and lit a fire. He took out the ring and burned incense over it. The next moment, the ghostly king appeared and paid his respects. He said, "Oh Your Highness, what do you want from me? I am trembling with fear!" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my brother, wipe out this island together with Turani and *ṣṭb* all his pomp! And give me back my old looks!" The next instant, the island together with everything on it was gone. Bahram Syah traveled on without stopping.

When he had walked for about a month, he reached the outskirts of his state. After he had walked another three hours, he arrived at the capital's gate and ordered it to be opened. He said, "Oh guards, open the gate for me!" The guards recognized Bahram Syah's voice and opened the gate immediately. Thereupon, they paid homage to him. The news was brought to the palace and the princess felt very happy, and so did her son. Bahram Syah entered the capital and went into the palace. Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower paid her respects, as did her son, and Bahram Syah hugged and kissed them. He spoke, "Alas, my son has already grown big! I will never leave you again!" He told Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower about his adventures and she was amazed

and said, “Nobody recognized you when you came here earlier. I asked about you and they said you looked like a Gulambai. That is why they did not let you in!” Bahram Syah said, “That is true. Turani changed my appearance with the help of the ring of the ghostly king.” The princess was astonished. After they finished eating and drinking, night fell and they went to bed.

The next day, His Highness Sultan the Magnificent, Grandmother Kebayan and the prime minister and all the vassal kings received the news that Bahram Syah had returned. His Majesty departed and *82a* the prime minister, the vassal kings, the officers and Grandmother Kebayan accompanied him. When they arrived, Bahram Syah was informed and he went outside to welcome his father, the king. They met and Bahram Syah paid obeisance by bowing towards His Majesty’s feet. His Majesty hugged and kissed him, and so did the prime minister and Grandmother Kebayan. He said, “Oh my son, where have you been all this time? You have grown up already and we were not able to witness it as you did not come home!” Grandmother Kebayan hugged and kissed him again and he shook hands with the vassal kings and the officials. They went into the palace together and sat down each according to his rank. Bahram Syah then told them about when he went hunting, and about Turani and his treason against him. Bahram Syah told them everything, from the beginning to the end. Everybody who was listening was amazed, while half of the audience cried because of Bahram Syah’s manifold ordeals. After this, people served dishes to the council. After they had finished their meal, they chewed betel and rubbed different kinds of aromatic substances onto their skin. They then took their leave and left, each to their own home. His Majesty was very fond his grandson, as was Grandmother Kebayan and the prime minister. But it was his father, Bahram Syah, who loved him the most.

When he grew older, he was entrusted to a specialist to learn how to recite the Quran. After he had mastered the complete Quran, he learned how to recite the other religious works, and when he was finished with this, he was entrusted to another specialist to learn how to fight with weapons and how to ride a horse. The vastness of his knowledge surpassed that of his father’s and with his bearing and inquisitive nature, his good looks and his extreme beauty, he had no equal in that state, as is told *82b* by the storyteller.

When the princess had been pregnant for some time, she delivered a very handsome son in the ninth month of her pregnancy. She felt extremely happy and His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent and the prime minister together with Grandmother Kebayan and all the vassal kings came to pay their respects to Bahram Syah’s son. They feasted while musical instruments were played; the different kinds of instruments and melodies were those prescribed by the customary law in case of a great king becoming a father. In accordance with the customary law, the child was ceremonially bathed and carried around in a procession on a seven-tiered bathing pavilion made from pure gold. Pearls of all colours and forms hung down from the pavilion. They carried the pavilion in procession around the state of Gastu Gasta. When the circumambulation was finished,

everybody went to their own home. Some time later, the boy was given the name Nadir Syah. Nadir Syah grew bigger and bigger and he became increasingly intelligent. He was entrusted to specialists to learn how to recite the Quran, the other religious books and the commentaries and to learn how to fight with weapons. He had already mastered everything and his father and mother were extremely fond of their son.

After a while, Bahram Syah was reminded of his parents in the state of Southern Plains and shed tears. Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower spoke, "Oh older brother, what is it that you are crying for?" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh younger sister, the reason I am crying is because I long for my parents. I have not seen them in fifteen years! That is why I am crying!" Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower said, "If *83a* that is the case, what are you thinking of now?" Bahram Syah said, "I think of going there together with you and my sons, that is, if you like to see my state." The princess answered, "Oh older brother, you do not even have to ask my parents' permission, just take me with you! Even if it means that I will die, I am still happy to accompany you!" Bahram Syah spoke, "In that case, it is better that we do pay your parents a visit." Together they went outside; the ladies-in-waiting went with them. When they arrived at the capital of Gastu Gasta, they entered the city and went into the palace. His Highness *Marah* Inda Sultan the Magnificent saw his children enter and said to them, "Where are the two of you going to? You two look sad!" Bahram Syah paid homage to His Majesty and so did the princess. His Majesty immediately welcomed them by touching their fingers with both his hands and Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh Your Highness, the reason I came here is to ask for your permission to go back to the state of Southern Plains and to take your daughter with me."

When His Majesty heard his son-in-law's request, he kept silent and thought, "Although I want to stop him, I cannot, because his request is sincere; besides, he is the son of a great king." His Majesty spoke, "Oh my son, your request is understandable, but in my heart I want nobody else but my son to replace me as the reigning king *83b* of the seventy-seven vassal states, as I am already old." While paying his respects, Bahram Syah replied, "What you say is true, Your Highness, but it has been a very long time since I left my parents and that is why I ask your permission to leave." His Majesty spoke, "Oh my son, in that case, do not take your oldest son with you, but leave him here with me so that we can install him as king of this state!" Respectfully, Bahram Syah replied, "If that is your order, how can I defy it? I am just a humble servant to Your Highness." Sultan the Magnificent felt joyous when he heard Bahram Syah's words. He told the herald to give orders to inform the seventy-seven vassal kings and all the officials, officers and commoners.

After some time, the vassal kings, officials, officers and all the commoners arrived; they entered the audience hall and paid obeisance to His Majesty and Bahram Syah by kneeling and bowing their heads towards the ground. In response to this His Majesty spoke, "Oh vassal kings and officials, the reason that I have summoned you is that I am already old and want to hand over the reign of this state to my grandson. From now on, his name is Sultan Mengindra Alam, that is, if you all agree." The vassal kings and officials

replied while paying homage, “Oh Your Highness Ruler of the World, what Your Highness says is true, Your Highness is old indeed, and we all happily accept Your Highness’ order.”

On a propitious day, after the deliberations had ended, several water buffaloes and cows were slaughtered as food for the feasting people, and various kinds of *84a* musical instruments were played. Sultan Mengindra Alam was clothed in full ceremonial dress and they placed the ceremonial crown on top of his head. After this, they carried him around the state of Gastu Gasta in a litter. In accordance with the prescriptions of the customary law regarding the installation of great kings, different kinds of musical instruments were played and the royal drum was beaten. Such were the acts of the people. The vassal kings and officials presented His Majesty with water buffaloes and cows. After His Majesty had been carried around in the procession for seven days and seven nights, he entered the audience hall and sat down on the royal throne. All the vassal kings, officials and officers paid their respects and each of them said, “Long live His Highness Ruler of the World!” After this, people served dishes to the council. When they had finished eating and drinking, they chewed betel and rubbed perfumes onto their bodies. Each of them paid homage and asked Sultan Mengindra Alam to be excused. They then went home, each to their own place.

When Sultan Mengindra Alam had been on the throne for some time, ruling with justice and with generosity towards wandering strangers, religious students and officials and officers, Bahram Syah wrote a letter that he wanted to go home. He asked his parents-in-law for permission to leave. His son Sultan He Who Rules The World came to pay his respects to his parents. He cried and his royal parents embraced and kissed him. They were crying too, as they would be separated from their son. Likewise, his younger brother Nadir Syah paid his respects to his grandmother and he embraced his older brother and took him on his lap, crying as if a corpse *84b* was ready to be buried. That was what happened.

The prime minister and Grandmother Kebayan cried loudly, as they would be parted from Bahram Syah, and so did Princess Apalu Apala. That night, when all the preparations were finished and the rice and the *gulai* that would serve as food for the garudas were ready, Bahram Syah took a piece of burning wood and burnt a small part of the garuda feather. The next instant, the garudas arrived; they had flown as fast as lightning. The noise of their wings sounded like the sound of the Trumpet blown on the Last Day. Their wings completely covered the sun. The adult garuda cried, “Oh my son Bahram Syah, where are you, my son?” Bahram Syah replied, “Oh my mother, I am here!” The garuda alighted in the middle of the plain and Bahram Syah said, “Oh my mother, brother and sister, eat something!” The garudas started to eat, and after they had finished eating the male garuda lowered its body. Bahram Syah said, “My son and all the Lords, stay and rule this state properly!” He then jumped onto the back of the young male garuda together with Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower, his son Nadir Syah, the dog, the cat and

the mouse. They flew through the air fast as lightning. They flew on and on and did not stop.

After a while, they arrived above the Sea of Fire which they had to cross. The male garuda flew in the middle, with the adult garuda underneath him and the young female garuda above him in order to protect Bahram Syah and the princess. The princess felt as if she lost consciousness and both Bahram Syah and her son Nadir Syah *85a* grabbed her hand. At that time, the Sea of Fire had calmed down; it was not boiling and its heat had reduced too. Late in the afternoon, after they had flown for a while, they could see the big tree where the garuda had nested. The garudas alighted on their nest. Bahram Syah and Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower climbed down from the back of the male garuda; their son Nadir Syah descended together with the dog, the cat and the mouse. Together they set foot on the garudas' nest. The adult garuda asked to be excused as she wanted to search for food. She flew off, searched for elephants and deer, swooped down and seized them.

After they had been in the garudas' nest for perhaps three days, Bahram Syah started to make preparations for the journey. After this, he jumped onto the back of the young male garuda who flew off with him, without stopping. By the decree of God, may He be exalted, it was already in the afternoon when they had flown for a while and arrived at the plain of the state called Southern Plains. The garuda alighted in the middle of the plain and said, "Oh my brother Bahram Syah, please dismount!" Bahram Syah, the princess and the others came down. Bahram Syah lit a fire and burned incense over the ring of the ghostly king. The next moment, the ghostly king appeared and said, "Yes my Lord Bahram Syah, what is it that you want?" Bahram Syah replied, "Oh my brother, I ask you to make me a litter and a throne of pure gold, together with all the necessary accessories, like no human being has ever set eyes on before! And get water buffaloes and rice for the garuda to eat!" Within an instant, everything was taken care of and the garuda began to eat. When he was finished, he asked Bahram Syah permission to leave and flew off. Next, the princess got on the litter and Bahram Syah ordered that his father and his brothers be informed.

When His Majesty heard *85b* his son had already arrived together with his daughter-in-law and his grandson, he and the queen went to see them, accompanied by the vassal kings, officials, officers, commoners and all kinds of musical instruments. When they arrived outside the capital, they met each other and Bahram Syah paid his respects to his father and mother, followed by Princess Drifting Beach Hibiscus Flower. His Majesty embraced and kissed his son and Bahram Syah shook hands with both his older brothers. The kings were amazed at Bahram Syah's grandeur and supernatural power. The people accompanied him in a procession when he entered the capital and after this, he went into the palace. When he entered the palace, many instruments were played loudly. Princess Goddess In Bondage invited him to sit on the royal dais, and all the ladies-in-waiting and governesses offered him their services. Bahram Syah told of the miseries during his hunt

and of Turani's treason; he told his royal father everything. Everybody was astounded and half of the audience was crying having heard about Bahram Syah's adventures, about the various good and bad things he had experienced. After this, festivities were started that lasted for fourteen days and fourteen nights. His Majesty enjoyed wining and dining, because he was happy that his daughter-in-law and his grandson had come home. Hundreds of water buffaloes and goats were slaughtered to serve as food for the feasting people.

After the festivities had ended, His Majesty grew very fond of his grandson Nadir Syah. After some time, Nadir Syah was old enough and Sultan Maharaja the Great spoke, "Let us install Nadir Syah as the ruling king *86a* of the State of the Twelve Streams!" The vassal kings said, "Whatever Your Highness says, we will obey!" After this order, the people gathered to install Nadir Syah. Bahram Syah took a piece of smouldering wood, burned incense over the ring of the ghostly king and immediately the ghostly king appeared and asked respectfully, "Oh my Lord Bahram Syah, what is it that Your Highness want from me?" Bahram Syah spoke, "Oh my brother, I ask you to build a state complete with a capital and everything else that comes with it! Build it near this state and take care that this state is even more magnificent than the one you built before, as my son Nadir Syah needs a kingdom!" Within a moment, everything was provided for, exactly according to Bahram Syah's wishes. Nothing lacked; there were even gilded vases. Bahram Syah paid homage to his father and spoke, "Oh my father, let us install my son Nadir Syah as king of the new kingdom I created!" His Majesty replied, "Very well!" The vassal kings, officials, officers and commoners, escorted Nadir Syah in a procession to the capital called Multiple Passions, while people played different kinds of musical instruments. After this, people erected the banner of state; it was very beautiful indeed.

When Nadir Syah arrived in the capital, he entered the turquiose audience hall and was seated on the royal throne; he was given the title Sultan Sikandar Alam. The vassal kings paid homage and said, "Long live His Highness Ruler of the World!" When they saw the capital and the palace they were amazed at the variety in its shape and form. No human being had ever seen such things; they looked like things from the world of Gods. There were many different kinds of vases. It was all beyond description. The vassal kings and officials asked permission to leave and paid their respects to Sultan Sikandar Alam. His Majesty's reign over the State of the Twelve Streams was a steady one. He ruled his subjects with justice and was favourably disposed towards traveling strangers and religious students. Sultan Sikandar Alam's fame spread and people from other states came, together with their wives and children. The state of Southern Plains became more and more densely populated, much more so than before, because of the greatness of Bahram Syah and his son Sultan Sikandar Alam. Their dynasty would continue to rule.

Let us not stretch the story any further. It is just a reminder for future generations, so that this story will continue to be used and the good and the bad described in it will be known. That is how it is. God knows the truth!

The end.

87a This story is finished on Tuesday, the twenty second day of the month Zulkhijah in the year 1269.

If it contains errors or mistakes, I beg God, to Whom belongs glory and majesty, for forgiveness, as I am just a wandering stranger who does not know how to write or compose.

Written in Sorkam

