



Photo: Claire Holt, 1938.

SOME NOTES ON THE KABA TJINDUA MATO: AN EXAMPLE
OF MINANGKABAU TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

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In 1923, when the Normal School in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, the famous Sekolah Radja, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, the highlight of the festivities was a performance of the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* (*The Epic of Tjindua Mato*). The committee, comprising both local notables and high Dutch officials, hoped to demonstrate that the Sekolah Radja had its own special place in Minangkabau.¹ This epic was also cited frequently by the Minangkabau *perantau* ("expatriate") intellectuals in Java during their 1924 campaign to establish a powerful Minangkabau regional council (*Minangkabauraad*). Abdul Muis, a leader of the movement and the author of the play, said in his introduction that from this epic, "It can be clearly seen that democracy in Minangkabau has been known since time immemorial."

These are but two examples of the popularity of the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* in Minangkabau. The only kaba that can compete with it is the *Kaba Sabai nan Aluih*, the story of a daring young woman.² Both epics show the important role of the woman in Minangkabau society, but in the *Tjindua Mato* epic, the woman is the source of wisdom, whereas in the latter kaba she is more a doer than a thinker. Another famous kaba which also centers on the figure of a woman of wisdom is the *Kaba Rantjak Dilabuah*, which has been beautifully translated into English by Professor Johns.³

The persistent popularity of the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* in Minangkabau is demonstrated not only by its central position in the school festivities mentioned above, but also by the numerous

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1. On the Sekolah Radja or Kweekschool, see: K. A. James, "De Opleiding der Inlandsche Hoofden op de Buitenbezittingen," Indische Gids, I (1908), pp. 16-22.
 2. The Indonesian version of the *Kaba Sabai nan Aluih* was written by Tulis St. Sati (Djakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1956). A play based on this epic was written by A. K. Gani, the nationalist leader of the 1930's. See also: Ph. S. van Ronkel, "Het Verhaal van den ondankbare: Kaba Sabaj nan Aloeih," Tijdschrift Bataviaasch Genootschap (TBG), LVI (1914), pp. 197-232.
 3. A. Johns, The Kaba Rantjak Dilabuah: A Specimen of Traditional Literature of Central Sumatra (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1958).

published editions of the Kaba. The oldest edition available to me is van der Toorn's "Tjindur Mato, Minangkabausch-Maleische Legende," in *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, XLV (1891). This edition includes only one-third of the whole story. Van der Toorn, who also translated this portion into Dutch, said in his introduction that he included only 150 pages out of the approximately 500 pages of the original manuscript. He also used four other manuscripts as comparisons. In 1904, a certain Datuk Garang, who came from Tanah Datar (a regency in West Sumatra), published a complete edition of the Kaba in Malaya. This edition is similar to van der Toorn's and is written in Arabic characters (Djawi). These are the oldest editions, although to my knowledge at least seven more published versions of this Kaba exist.⁴

Kaba is derived from an Arabic word, *achbar*, which roughly translated means message, or news. In Minangkabau traditional literature, *kaba* is sometimes mentioned as *tjurito* or *tjarito* (Indonesian: *tjerita*), meaning story. *Kaba* and *tambo* (annals, the traditional historiography) are the two most important types of Minangkabau prose literature. *Tambo* generally treat the gradual development of the Minangkabau World (*alam Minangkabau*) and its adat. It is in the *tambo*, for example, that one usually finds the explanation that the kings of Minangkabau were the descendants of Alexander the Great (Iskandar Zulkarnain), that Minangkabau adat was first formulated by two adat-givers, Datuk

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4. Datuk Garang's edition is based on the manuscript belonging to a tuanku-laras (district chief) family in eastern Minangkabau. On its first page is a stylized flower with the inscription "Sulthan Biladi, Simaharadja Diradja ibn Sulthan Iskandar Dzulkarnain Chalifatullah fil Alamsjah (Sultan Biladi, King of Kings, the Son of Alexander with Two Horns, Representative of God and the King of the World)." The other two editions are: Datuk Sangguno Diradjo (Bukittinggi, 1923), 2 vols.; Datuk Sango Batuah (Pajakumbuh: Limbago, 1938)--both written in Minangkabau with Arabic characters. A shorter edition in Minangkabau but using Latin script is: St. Radjo Endah, Kaba Tjindua Mato (Bukittinggi: Pustaka Indah, 1960). There are also two plays in Indonesian: Abdul Muis, Tjindua Mato (Weltevreden: Evolutie, 1924) and one by an anonymous author, Tjendera Mato (Padang: n.p., 1925) which includes a summary in Dutch; and two prose versions: A. Dt. Madjoindo, Tjindur Mata (Djakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1958) and Datuk Mangulak Basa (Bukittinggi: Tsamaratulichwan, 1930?). A much shorter version was published by Sutan R. Mas'ud, Panglima Chindur Mato: Hikayat Perang Minangkabau Menegakkan Kebenaran Hukum dari Angkatan Kedzaliman (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1962).

Ketemangungan and Datuk Perpatih nan Sabatang.⁵

As a rule, a kaba does not deal with the genesis of adat, but rather with the ideal conduct of life in accordance with adat. It recounts an orderly structured society, sometimes disturbed by the "villains" of the kaba. References to the origin of the ordered society serve to support the sacred character of the adat ideals rather than provide the main focus for the narration. Whereas a tambo related the tradition of the emergence of the ideal world of Minangkabau, a kaba is sometimes a mixture of the ideal universal conception and local traditions. It can be purely a work of literature or a legend about a local hero. The *Kaba Magek Djabang*, for example, narrates a local tradition about the adventures of a west coast aristocrat in Tiku-Pariaman. Traditionally, the kaba was narrated by a traveling storyteller, who, after burning incense and murmuring *mantras* (incantations), would sing the story to the accompaniment of his *rabab* (two-stringed violin).

Unlike most kabas, the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* is not based on a local tradition, but rather relates the tradition of Minangkabau royalty. It could also be considered as a tambo in the sense that the major figures in the Kaba also narrate the development of Minangkabau and its adat. It is a state myth *par excellence* and a standard reference work for Minangkabau adat theoreticians and guardians. Minangkabau themselves usually regard its contents as the description of their glorious days and thus an investigation into the historicity of the major figures would undoubtedly be very important.⁶ But in this particular account, I will try instead to interpret some aspects of the world-view of the Minangkabau as reflected in this Kaba. What is the Kaba's concept of the world? How do the Minangkabau, as reflected in this Kaba, look at themselves? Almost all books on Minangkabau adat written by indigenous adat theoreticians are to some extent based on the *Kaba Tjindua Mato*, as are a consider-

5. On the tambo see: "Legende van de afkomst der Sumatranen en van hunne instellingen," *Tijdschrift Nederlandsch-Indië*, 21, i (1859); Datuk Sangguno Diradjo, *Kitab Tjurai Paparan Adat Alam Minangkabau* (Fort de Kock: Geb, Lie, 1919).

6. One can find many illustrations of the people's belief in the characters as historical figures. For example, in 1933, a prominent political figure in Minangkabau said in a speech that if Indonesia were independent, the President would have to be a Dang Tuanku, a major figure of the *Kaba Tjindua Mato*. In the *Djakarta Times* (November 12, 1968), there appeared a report about a young widow in Pekan Baru who had reportedly been hunted by twelve spirits, among which were those of Umar ibn Chattab (the second Caliph) and Bundo Kandang, central figure of the Kaba.

able number of adat sayings. Thus the above questions also concern the general issues of Minangkabau adat philosophy.

Similar to all other Minangkabau kaba, the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* begins with the ceremonial apology:

We ask for a thousand pardons
 Forgive us, Bundo Kanduang
 Forgive us, Dang Tuanku
 We are repeating other people's stories
 Their lies are not our responsibility.

Long ago there lived in Pagarrujung, the traditional Minangkabau capital, a queen, Bundo Kanduang (lit. Real Mother), who stood by herself, created together with this universe (*samo tadjadi djo glamko*). She was "the counterpart of the King of *Benua Ruhum*,⁷ the counterpart of the King of China and the counterpart of the King of the Sea."

One day Bundo Kanduang asked Kembang Bendahari, her loyal lady-in-waiting, to wake up her son Dang Tuanku, who was sleeping in the *andjuang* (annex) of the palace. But Kembang Bendahari refused because Dang Tuanku was sacred: ". . . remembering him, the heart will melt, mentioning [his] name, the tongue will be struck dumb, looking at [his] eyes, [your] eyes become blind." Dang Tuanku, was, in fact, the King of the World (*Radjo Alam*). Awakening him herself, Bundo Kanduang told him that the Bendahara, one of Minangkabau's four chief ministers (members of the *Basa Ampek Balai*) was holding a *gelanggang*⁸ in his *nagari*, Sungai Tarab, in order to select a husband for his daughter.

Since the *gelanggang* would be visited by many princes, *marahs* and *sutans* (titles for west coast nobility), and sons of "the great men," Dang Tuanku and Tjindua Mato should also participate in it. Bundo Kanduang instructed Dang Tuanku to inquire whether the Bendahara would accept Tjindua Mato as the husband of his daughter, Puti Lenggo Geni. Having first received instruction on Minangkabau adat from Bundo Kanduang, Dang Tuanku, Tjindua Mato and their retinue set off for Sungai

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7. This may be a reference to the old Eastern Rome, Constantinople, but is usually believed to refer to "Turkey."
8. *Gelanggang* is an arena for cock-fighting. In Minangkabau tradition, every *nagari* should have at least a *balai* (council hall), a mosque, a public bathing place, a road and a *gelanggang*. During the Padri War, the *gelanggang* was abolished by the puritan movement. Seeking a son-in-law by holding a *gelanggang* was very common throughout the Malay world. P. E. de Josselin de Jong, *Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1952), pp. 73-9.

Tarab. All along the way people fell entranced at the sight of the royal entourage.⁹

In Sungai Tarab, they were welcomed by the Bendahara. Dang Tuanku, after the opening courtesies, asked whether the Bendahara was willing to accept "the poor and uneducated" Tjindua Mato as his son-in-law. Tjindua Mato being in fact the model of an ideal son-in-law, the proposal was quickly accepted. Dang Tuanku then engaged the Bendahara, who served as the authority on adat matters for the Basa Ampek Balai, in a discussion about Minangkabau adat ideals and whether any alterations in the ancestral adat had occurred. According to the Bendahara, however, the principles handed down by the adat-givers Datuk Ketemanggungan and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang remained unchanged.

Meanwhile, Tjindua Mato had overheard gossip in the market place to the effect that Dang Tuanku's fiancée Puti Bungsu was to be married to Imbang Djajo, the King of Sungai Ngiang, a nagari in the eastern *rantau* (frontier territory). According to the rumors, news had spread in the eastern area that Dang Tuanku was living in isolation because he suffered from a disgraceful disease. Puti Bungsu was the daughter of Radjo Mudo, brother of Bundo Kandung, who ruled as the representative of Pagarrujung in Sikalawi, neighbor of Sungai Ngiang. Discovering that these tales were being circulated by Imbang Djajo's agents, Tjindua Mato hurriedly urged Dang Tuanku to take his leave from the Bendahara and return to Pagarrujung; such gossip was an insult to the King of the World.

In Pagarrujung, Tjindua Mato told Dang Tuanku and Bundo Kandung what he had heard in the market. Bundo Kandung reacted strongly, but before doing anything, she first had to consult the Council of Ministers (Basa Ampek Balai). At the subsequent meeting, the ministers tried to mediate between Bundo Kandung, who could not accept the insult from her brother, and Dang Tuanku, supported by Tjindua Mato, who argued for temperance.

Dang Tuanku counseled:

The hothead [means that one] lacks *iman*
Losing one's temper [means] losing one's mind

The meeting ended with an agreement that Tjindua Mato should go as the representative of Bundo Kandung and Dang Tuanku to Sikalawi,

9. This is a common cliché of classical Malay literature, seen also in the Hikayat Hang Tuah, about the legendary hero of the Malacca Sultanate, which was influenced by the Islamic story of Nabi Jusuf. See: R. O. Winstedt, "A History of Malay Literature," JRASMB, 17, iii (1939), pp. 44-48. In the Kaba Tjindua Mato, the "people forget God upon hearing the bell of Sigumarang (the magic royal horse)."

bringing with him Sibinuang, the magic water buffalo, as a wedding gift for Puti Bungsu. Unknown to the rest, Dang Tuanku and Tjindua Mato had made a plan of their own.

Riding the magic horse, Sigumarang, and accompanied by Sibinuang, Tjindua Mato went to Sikalawi. At the eastern frontier, by the hill of Tambun Tulang, he came upon scattered human skulls. After he had recited several mantras, and "thanks to the sacredness of Dang Tuanku," the skulls were able to tell Tjindua Mato their story. They had been traveling merchants who usually passed by the hill; they had been murdered by bandits from Tambun Tulang and they urged Tjindua Mato not to continue his journey. Tjindua Mato was adamant. Shortly thereafter, he was himself attacked, but with the help of Sibinuang, he defeated the bandits. They told Tjindua Mato that Imbang Djajo, the King of Sungai Ngiang, employed them not only in order to enrich himself, but also to sever communications between Pagarrujung and the eastern rantau, thus ensuring his plan to marry Puti Bungsu.¹⁰

Tjindua Mato's arrival brought joy to the family of Radjo Mudo, saddened at the news about Dang Tuanku's disgraceful disease. Tjindua Mato's attendance was considered as proof of Bundo Kandung's blessing on the forthcoming marriage.

By acting as one possessed by evil spirits, Tjindua Mato managed to gain a private meeting with Puti Bungsu without arousing her family's suspicion. They believed she was the only one who could possibly calm him. Tjindua Mato told her that Dang Tuanku had sent him to take her to Pagarrujung because she had been destined to marry Dang Tuanku. During the marriage feast, while Imbang Djajo was engrossed in his role as the would-be groom, Tjindua Mato performed certain miracles and during the resultant confusion, he kidnapped Puti Bungsu. He took her to Padang Gantiang, the seat of Tuan Kadhi, court minister for religious affairs.

By kidnapping Puti Bungsu, Tjindua Mato had in fact violated the law himself and moreover had transgressed his duties as the representative of Pagarrujung. Tuan Kadhi, therefore, summoned his colleagues to discuss Tjindua Mato's offenses, but at the meeting, Tjindua Mato refused to give any explanations for his actions.

The Basa Ampek Balai summoned Bundo Kandung, who was naturally enraged at Tjindua Mato's behavior, but still he refused to answer. The four ministers at last decided to consult the wiser Kings of the Two Seats (*Radjo Duo Selo*), namely the King of Adat (*Radjo Adat*) and the King of Religion (*Radjo Ibadat*). Both of these, knowing the true background to the

10. Van der Toorn's edition ends here.

affair, smilingly told the Four Ministers to leave the decision to Dang Tuanku, the King of the World.

In the subsequent meeting, a debate occurred between Bundo Kandung, who held to a formalistic insistence on preserving the *adat radjo-radjo* (the royal custom), and her son, who argued for an investigation into the reasons behind the actions. Imbang Djajo had insulted Dang Tuanku by trying to marry the latter's fiancée and by fabricating stories about him. Now it was Imbang Djajo's turn to be insulted; his future wife was kidnapped. Imbang Djajo, furthermore, had also employed bandits to enrich himself and to cut off communication between Minangkabau and her eastern rantau. Should, then, Tjindua Mato be punished, since he was only a tool in observing the ancient tradition that the "debt of shame should be paid by shame" (*utang malu dibaia malu*).

Tjindua Mato was acquitted, and the meeting turned to a discussion about the forthcoming marriage between Tjindua Mato and Puti Lenggo Geni, and also that between Dang Tuanku and Puti Bungsu. After suitable preparation, the royal marriages were held at Pagarrujung accompanied by a huge feast attended by many princes and kings from all the regions on the Island of Pertja (Sumatra).

In the meantime, Imbang Djajo, having been insulted by Tjindua Mato, prepared for war with Pagarrujung. He subsequently attacked the royal nagari, and, employing his weapon the *tjamin taruih* (magic mirror), he destroyed part of Pagarrujung. The mirror was eventually broken by Tjindua Mato's arrow. While Imbang Djajo was engaged in reinforcing his troops, Bundo Kandung and Dang Tuanku urged Tjindua Mato to escape to Indrapura, a region in the western rantau, thus ending Imbang Djajo's excuse for warring with Pagarrujung.¹¹

Frustrated in his attempt to avenge himself, Imbang Djajo appealed to the Kings of the Two Seats. At a meeting presided over by the Two Kings and attended also by the Four Ministers, Imbang Djajo charged that a member of the royal family had humiliated him--indeed, an inexcusable offense. But the kings asked: who began the humiliations; what was the proof (*tando beti*) for Imbang Djajo's accusation? Any accusation against the royal family without adequate evidence was a grave matter. The council eventually found Imbang Djajo himself guilty of betraying

11. The royal house of Indrapura subsequently claimed it was the legitimate heir of Tjindua Mato. In the early nineteenth century, the Sultan of Indrapura asserted that he was "the true representative of the first family of Minang Cabow," see P. H. van der Kemp, Sumatra's Westkust naar aanleiding van Londensch tractaat van 13 Augustus 1814 (Den Haag: n.p., 1894), pp. 273-4.

the adat radjo-radjo and the Radjo Duo Selo thereupon sentenced him to death.

Imbang Djajo's father, the invulnerable Tiang Bungkuak, on learning that his son had been executed by the Two Kings, began immediately to prepare for revenge. Tjindua Mato returned from Indrapura, and Dang Tuanku commanded him to fight against Tiang Bungkuak. But if Tjindua Mato could not kill him, he should agree to serve Tiang Bungkuak as a slave in order to spare the sacred palace of Pagarrujung.

One night, while awaiting the attack, Dang Tuanku dreamed that an angel descended from heaven and told him that he, Bundo Kandung and Puti Bungsu should leave this world of pestilence and commotion. The next morning Dang Tuanku described his dream to Bundo Kandung and the Four Ministers. Realizing that their appointed day had come, they installed Tjindua Mato as the Radjo Mudo, or Viceroy, for the kingdom.

Tjindua Mato awaited Tiang Bungkuak outside Pagarrujung, but in the ensuing battle he could not kill him and so submitted to the invulnerable warrior. At that same moment a boat was seen flying across the sky carrying the royal family to the unknown land.

Tjindua Mato accompanied Tiang Bungkuak to Sungai Ngiang as his trusted slave. One day, while Tiang Bungkuak was taking a nap, Tjindua Mato cast a spell upon him. While entranced, Tiang Bungkuak revealed that he could only be killed by his ancestral bent kris (*karih bungkuak*) which was hidden above the central pillar of the house. Tjindua Mato stole the kris and then provoked Tiang Bungkuak into a fight during which he killed him with the kris.

After Tiang Bungkuak's death, the local notables selected Tjindua Mato as king of Sungai Ngiang. Later he was also appointed king of Sikalawi upon the abdication of Radjo Mudo, father of Puti Bungsu. Tjindua Mato then married Puti Bungsu's younger sister, Reno Bulan. From this marriage, Tjindua Mato had a daughter and a son who was first named Sutan Lembang Alam but later, after he succeeded Tjindua Mato as the King of Sungai Ngiang-Sikalawi, was called Sutan Makrullah.

After spending some time in the eastern rantau, Tjindua Mato returned to Pagarrujung to join his first wife, Puti Lenggo Geni, and to rule as Viceroy of Minangkabau. From this marriage he had a son, Sutan Lenggang Alam.¹²

12. Most of the above-mentioned editions end here. The rest of the story is based on the accounts by Datuk Sangguno Diradjo and Datuk Garang.

By the end of his reign, Tjindua Mato was the sole ruler of Minangkabau. The Kings of the Two Seats and the Four Ministers had all passed away. Tjindua Mato fell sick and saw a vision of Dang Tuanku, who told him that after his death a *nuri*, a magic parrot, would come to announce the arrival of a new king. When Tjindua Mato died, therefore, he left his son as caretaker of Minangkabau.

In the meantime, in the Seventh Heaven (*langik katudjuah*), to which the royal family had gone after ascending from Pagarrujung, Bundo Kandung had passed away and entered Paradise (*sarugo*). Puti Bungsu had given birth to a son and a daughter. On the seventh day, after the children were given their ritual bath in the Mahajat River, a parrot was waiting for them at the palace. The parrot told the royal family that she had brought names from Paradise for both son and daughter; the son was to be named Sutan Alam Dunia and the daughter Puti Sri Dunia. The parrot also told the parents that the place of the children would not be in heaven but on earth, because "now Tjindua Mato was already dead," and there was no king in the Minangkabau World "to whom people could come for justice."

After reaching the appropriate age, the children and the *nuri* were put into a glass *karando* (case). Dang Tuanku advised his children and then an angel flew the glass *karando* to Pagarrujung.

Shortly after their arrival, the institution of the Four Ministers and the *Angku Gadang* (commander-in-chief) were re-established. Sutan Lenggang Alam, son of Tjindua Mato, was appointed as the new Bendahara and the sons of the former Two Kings were appointed to succeed their fathers. Sutan Alam Dunia was crowned as the Radjo Alam, with the title of Radjo nan Sati.

After some time on the throne, the new king went to Atjeh to marry the Atjehnese princess. From Pagarrujung, the royal entourage took the land road until they reached Natal and there boarded the royal boat. The king spent several years in the palace of his father-in-law. Then he divorced his wife, but without paying in full the prescribed marriage gift. The King of Atjeh furiously demanded compensation. The Four Ministers of Minangkabau acknowledged the claim and punished the king by forcing him to surrender the western rantau, the Tiku-Pariaman area, to the king of Atjeh.

In accordance with Dang Tuanku's wishes, Puti Sri Dunia was made the Queen of Rao, the northern part of Minangkabau. Thus the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* ends.

The *Kaba Tjindua Mato* closes with the loss of the western coast of Minangkabau rantau territory to the Atjehnese Sultanate. Historically, this event occurred in the first quarter of the

seventeenth century during the reign of the famous Atjehnese ruler, Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636).¹³ The Kaba could historically represent, therefore, an idealized picture of sixteenth-century Minangkabau. The time span of the Kaba is no more than two generations, beginning with Dang Tuanku, followed by Tjindua Mato and ending with the "blunder" of Dang Tuanku's son and the institution of his daughter as the Queen of Rao.

The references to Islam provide another clue to the historical period being described. According to the Kaba, Minangkabau had already absorbed Islam into its political and social structure as seen, for example, in the institution of the Kings of the Three Seats. The earliest European reference to the Three Kings of Minangkabau is contained in Tome Pires' account. According to this early sixteenth-century Portuguese traveler, these kings were always fighting with each other; "the first [king], they say, has been a Mohammedan for a short time--almost fifteen years; the other [two], they say, are still heathens."¹⁴ Tiku and Pariaman, "the key to the land of Minangkabau" were also still "heathens."¹⁵ Other early sixteenth-century Portuguese accounts report that the rulers of Minangkabau were still heathens."¹⁶

Early seventeenth-century reports on Minangkabau indicate that the process of Islamization had developed considerably. Despite scanty knowledge about Minangkabau in the sixteenth century, one can assume that it was a crucial period in the history of the region, for it included the early institutional-

13. Das Gupta suggests that the conquest of the West Coast took place between 1607 and 1613. Arun Kumar Das Gupta, "Acheh in Indonesian Trade and Politics: 1600-1641" (Cornell University: Ph.D. thesis, 1962), pp. 91-2. Probably the actual political power which the Atjehnese exercised on the coast, especially over the major pepper ports Tiku and Pariaman, was only minimal until 1620. In 1617, for example, the Dutch East India Company reportedly aided the "king" of Tiku in his struggle against the Atjehnese. H. Kroeskamp, De Westkust en Minangkabau (Leiden: Dissertation, 1931), p. 23.

14. A. Cortesao, ed. and trans., The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires . . . 1512-1515 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944), p. 164.

15. Ibid., p. 161.

16. In 1514, the Portuguese, who had just conquered Malacca, tried to enter the Minangkabau heartland from the eastern coast in order to meet "the illustrious king" of Minangkabau. F. M. Schnitger, Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), p. 55.

zation of Islam within the social fabric of Minangkabau.¹⁷

The exact date of the Kaba is difficult to determine. Like most traditional kabas, it has undergone continuous change over time. Interpolations made by the copyists are very common. The Kaba itself perhaps represents an oral tradition which was later formulated into a unified body of kaba in written form. It might have been first conceived by one, or more, of the adat formulators who belonged to one of the early mystic schools found in Minangkabau.¹⁸

Despite the differing nuances which exist among the several earlier editions of the Kaba, on the whole they contain the same basic ideas.¹⁹ In order to date the Kaba itself, one must also interpret these basic ideas. Leaving aside the accuracy of the Kaba concerning the loss of the west coast territory to Atjeh, the Kaba need not refer to the second half of the sixteenth century; it could be a model for the Minangkabau state of the seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Court life as depicted in the Kaba, for example, was similar to that witnessed in 1684 by Tomas Dias, the first European to enter the Minangkabau heartland. Although he did not mention the institution of the Three Kings, Dias had apparently visited one of the three centers, Buo, the seat of the King of Adat.²⁰ Arguing against this

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17. One tradition concerning the Islamization of Minangkabau relates that it resulted from a sort of intellectual encounter between the representatives of the Minangkabau monarchy and the Islamic "missionaries" at Bukit Marapalam, a hill between Pagarrujung and Lintau. The version of this tradition usually cited by Minangkabau adat theoreticians, as opposed to the tradition accepted by the religious leadership, states that these "missionaries" were the followers of a certain Sjech Pandjang Djanggut (long beard), "whose mosque leant to the West," and who came from Siak, the eastern outlet. See the writings of Datoek Soetan Maharadja which appeared in Oetoesan Melajoe, between 1912 and 1921; and a short account written by his disciple, Datoek M. Alam, "Agama Islam di Minangkabau," Pandji Islam, 22 (June 2, 1941), pp. 9120-1.
18. Hamka, Dari Perbendaharaan Lama (Medan: Madju, 1963), pp. 154-157.
19. The discussion on the Kaba in this paper is based on the edition of van der Toorn (1891); most of the quotations are taken from this edition and that of Datuk Garang (1904) and Datuk Sangguno Diradjo (1923). The most recent editions in general have been edited to conform with orthodox Islam.
20. The Dutch governor in Malacca had sent Dias "to negotiate with the highland Manicabers." The reception given Dias suggests that in relations with the outside world each

date for the Kaba, however, is its utter lack of animosity against Atjeh. At least until the third quarter of the seventeenth century, Minangkabau maintained an extremely anti-Atjeh-nese attitude--both among the coastal chiefs and the king in the interior.²¹

Tentatively, one can conclude that the Kaba reached its present form no earlier than the latter seventeenth or early eighteenth century. This hypothesis is supported by the dominant social principle expressed in the Kaba, "adat is based on *sarak* (Islamic law), *sarak* is based on adat." Within the context of the Minangkabau tradition of aphorisms, the Kaba thus belongs to the second stage of Islamization.²² During this period, the Minangkabau ulama began reformulating the adat in order to rationalize the new situation created by the absorption of Islam. This dates from the spread of religious centers in the interior of Minangkabau in the late seventeenth century.²³ The mystic elements in the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* are understandable if, as seems likely, it was written or formulated by these Minangkabau mystic teachers.²⁴

king of Minangkabau acted independently. F. de Haan, "Naar Midden Sumatra in 1684," *TBG*, XXXIX (1897), pp. 327-366. Marsden reported that "each of them [the kings] in the preamble of his letters assumes the royal titles without any allusions to competitors." Marsden, The History of Sumatra (London, 1811), p. 338.

21. Kroeskamp, De Westkust, passim.
22. Looking at Minangkabau aphorisms on the relation between religion and adat, one can trace the nature of Islamization. The oldest aphorism states, "adat is based on *alur* [propriety], *sarak* is based on *dalil* [religious law]," implying that adat and *sarak* merely coexist. The second stage, "adat is based on *sarak*, *sarak* is based on adat," assumes both adat and religion are one inseparable component. The latest aphorism, now officially accepted by all elements in Minangkabau, "adat is based on *sarak*, *sarak* is based on *Kitabullah* [Quran]," means that adat is simply the application of religious duties. See my article: "Adat and Islam: an Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau," Indonesia, 2 (October 1966), pp. 1-24.
23. Ph. S. van Ronkel, "Het Heiligdom te Oelakan," *TBG*, LVI (1914), esp. p. 294; Mahmud Junus, Sedjarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia (Djakarta: Pustaka Mahmudiah, 1960), pp. 15-22.
24. In 1917, the founder of the first adat party in Minangkabau, Datuk Sutan Maharadja, during his struggle against the Islamic modernist movement, pointed out that Minangkabau adat and *tasauf* (mysticism) are two components of one noble Weltanschauung: "Theosofie dan S.A.A.M.," Oetoesan Melajoe, June 11, 1917.

The *Kaba Tjindua Mato* describes an orderly, balanced world where every aspect of life is arranged according to certain principles. Tragedy occurred because the protagonists ignored these principles; in the end they were destroyed or humiliated--Imbang Djajo lost his life and the son of Dang Tuanku had to surrender the western stretch of the rantau. The plot of the Kaba emphasizes the importance of balance and harmony in life and temperance in behavior. The Kaba also demonstrates the ideal political and social structure of Minangkabau in operation, with consultation as the key factor in making decisions. Thus the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* is not simply a state myth but also the ideal model for the Minangkabau monarchy. To a certain extent, the Kaba belongs to the tradition of the *Sedjarah Melaju* (*The Malay Annals*), which also purported to give guidance to the royal family.²⁵

The Kaba describes the geography of the Minangkabau World and its neighbors. No less than 111 nagaris are listed in the Kaba. Each part of the royal costume of Dang Tuanku, for example, comes from one of the several important neighbors of Minangkabau, and that of Tjindua Mato from the several kingdoms which were tributaries of Minangkabau. But what is the Minangkabau World? The Kaba says that Bundo Kanduang was "created together with her world." Her world was Minangkabau, one of the four parts of the greater Universe (*sapiah balahan ampek djurai*) --"benua Ruhum," "benua China" and the unknown world, the Kingdom of the Sea. The rulers of the three known areas were all descendants of Iskandar Zulkarnain.

The Minangkabau World consisted of two parts--the center, called the *luhaks*, and the peripheries, or rantau regions, ruled by representatives of the royal family called radjo. The Kaba distinguishes between the Koto-Piliang and Bodi-Tjaniago political systems which divide the Minangkabau world into two *laras*. Each *laras* has its own adat center. Sungai Tarab, the seat of the Bendahara was the adat center for Koto-Piliang, and Lima Kaum for Bodi-Tjaniago. The adat center for the whole Minangkabau world was Pariangan-Padang Pandjang, the place from which the Minangkabau people originated and where their adat was formulated.²⁶

The Kaba describes community settlement patterns. Since the ancient times, tradition states, only four types of settle-

25. See, for example: Josselin de Jong, "The Character of the Malay Annals," in John Bastin and R. Rolvink, eds., Malayan and Indonesian Studies (Oxford: University Press, 1964), pp. 235-41.

26. On the question of this adat division: Achmad Datuk Batuah and A. Dt. Madjoindo, Tambo Minangkabau (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1956); W. J. Lyeds, "Larassen in Minangkabau," Koloniale Studiën, X (1926), pp. 387-416.

ments have existed on the "Island of Gold" (*pulau Ameh ko*)--the *taratak*, the *dusun*, the *koto* and the *nagari*. The *taratak* was only an isolated settlement consisting of several huts, the *dusun* and the *koto* were slightly larger until at the other extreme one finds the *nagari*, a fully developed community with its council hall, sports field, etc.²⁷ Bundo Kandung divided the *nagari* population into eight kinds of people--*penghulu* (family chiefs), *kadi* (religious judges), *manti* (clerks), *urang kajo* (notables), *urang saudagar* (merchants), *utusan dan pandito* (messengers and religious officials), *hulubalang nan barani* (brave warriors) and *handiko dikampung* (kampung heads). Each had specific virtues and qualifications; for example, a *penghulu* should be knowledgeable, just, rich and honest; the *hulubalang* should be brave and careful.

The most important part of the *Kaba* deals with the ideal mode of conduct, the notion of appropriateness and propriety (*alur dan patuik*) within the social order. Appropriateness is the ability to behave correctly and to find one's proper place; "the nephew should rely on the judgment (*beradjo*) of the uncle, the uncle on the *penghulu* and the *penghulu* on the *kato mufakat* (consensus of mind)." This consensus should also be based on the notion of *alur dan patuik* which are self-evident because identical with social as well as cosmic order. Dang Tuanku asserts that "if a *nagari* has no order, [it means] *sarak* is weak, the king is tyrannical, the subjects are not loyal, the *kampung*s are deserted, the market is quiet, *adat* and *limbago* [custom] are not observed." Without order, which is manifested in the realization of the sense of appropriateness, society is in chaos. Order means that one should realize "that the beginning *is* the beginning, not the end; that the soul is the soul, not the body; that *sarak* is *sarak*, *adat* is *adat* . . . [but in the end] only with these two [adat and *sarak*] can [appropriateness] be achieved. For *adat* is based on *sarak*, *sarak* is based on *adat*."

In order to realize these, man is provided with *akal*, the ability to reason. Man should be guided by his *akal* not simply in perceiving the overt phenomena and determining what is possible and what is not, but also what is proper and what is not. It is *akal* that can pinpoint the convergence of propriety and possibility (*patuik* and *mungkin*). Something which is possible according to one's own *akal*, may not be proper for one's community.²⁸ Thus *akal* should be also accompanied by a sense of

27. See: A. M. Datuk Maruhum Batuah and H. D. Bagindo Tanameh, Hukum Adat dan Adat Minangkabau (Djakarta: Pusaka Aseli, 1956), pp. 58-60.

28. Examples of this manner of reasoning are:
 It is possible to make a ricefield in another person's yard, but is it proper?
 It is proper to make it on the top of the mountain, but

responsibility; without this "the clever will make a fool of the stupid."

Only the *budiman*, man of wisdom, "knows propriety, [is an] expert in discussing matters, wise with perfect akal." The perfect akal of a budiman is accompanied by *iman*, the full recognition of the existence of a Supernatural Power, God. Iman serves not only as the controlling agent but also to sharpen the ability of akal. Thus perfect akal not only can perceive the overt phenomena and the covert essence of reality but also has the potential to manipulate reality itself. Thus "akal can move backward instead of forward, folding instead of unfolding," "hiding under the light," "hiding in the middle of the koto," "chopping off something without cutting it."²⁹

In itself, then, akal can identify the contrasting elements in reality, such as bad and good, the beginning and the end, body and soul, yes and no, being and non-being.³⁰ But as an active element, akal must involve also the notion of the convergence of probability and propriety, and leads to relativism in the Minangkabau system of logic. An individual can perceive probability by himself, but the notion of propriety must take into account the akal of another. This kind of relativism is also reflected in the place of the individual in society. The social relationship in which he is presently involved determines his role.

Akal and iman, according to the Kaba, also direct *hawa nafsu*, impulse. Again and again Dang Tuanku reminds his mother,

is it possible?

Some Minangkabau adat theoreticians also hold that akal should be guided by the awareness of natural law. Before Islam came, according to this theory, Minangkabau social order was based on the law of reason (akal) and that of nature. See, for example, M. Nasrun, Dasar Falsafah Adat Minangkabau (Djakarta: Pasaman, 1957).

29. The belief in the ability of akal to manipulate nature with the support of strong iman can lead to the negation of natural law. If God is willing, "nature leaves no trace" (alam indak babakeh). You cannot die if God does not want you to die, even though the enemy has shot you. This forms the basis for ilmu kebal, the knowledge of invulnerability. Ph. S. van Ronkel, Rapport betreffende de Godsdienstige verschijnselen ter Sumatra's Westkust (Verbaal, April 4, 1916, No. 54), Bijlage V. Also Hamka, Ajahku (Djakarta: Djajamurni, 1962), pp. 84-9. Belief in this ilmu was especially prevalent during the anti-tax rebellion in 1908.
30. On this see: Datuk Sangguno Diradjo, Kitab Tjoerai, p. 67; and also Batuah and Madjoindo, Tambo Minangkabau, pp. 133-135.

Bundo Kanduang, about her own advice to use akal in directing nafsu. After learning that Dang Tuanku had been slandered, Bundo Kanduang, in a rage, wanted to take immediate revenge. Although she was right, Dang Tuanku cautioned her to use more akal. Tjindua Mato betrayed the adat radjo-radjo when he kidnapped Puti Bungsu, the would-be bride of Imbang Djajo; Bundo Kanduang with her strong sense of justice almost followed her nafsu and punished Tjindua Mato. Again Dang Tuanku proposed that she use akal to consider the matter more thoroughly.

Naturally, not everyone possesses the same quality of akal and iman. Bundo Kanduang in her advice to Dang Tuanku divided human beings into six categories. The first is *urang* (man) *an sich*, merely an existential being. Next in order is *urang urang*, "like a picture or statue," whose existence is felt but he himself is blind and mute to his surroundings. The third, *tampun urang*, is an illusory human being. Like looking at someone from a distance, his human form is clear but his face is unknown. The fourth is *angkuah-angkuah urang*, who is like "a swing; only when [you] move it, does it move," a passive subject without any initiative whatsoever. The fifth is the *urang* "who knows what is good and what is bad, what is high and what is low." Finally, the sixth is the *sabana urang*, the true human being, "who knows what is soul and what is body, knows [the distinction] between creature and God . . . between the beginning and the end . . . what is right and wrong . . . *halal* [permitted] and *fardhu* [obligatory],³¹ . . . order and code."

The first paragraphs of the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* are devoted to the exaltation of Bundo Kanduang. She was the queen whose position "was neither purchased nor asked for," the original queen (*radjo usali*) who "stood by herself, created together with the universe" (Minangkabau). She gave Dang Tuanku his adat education, but in spite of her function as a source of wisdom, Bundo Kanduang could not make any decisions. She was neither the authority on adat, which was under the jurisdiction of the Radjo Adat and the Bendahara, nor the expert on sarak, which was under the Radja Ibadat and the Tuan Kadhi. Bundo Kanduang was powerless because she held no official position in the hierarchy of the Minangkabau political system. Yet her consent was required for anything which was decided by the Kings of the Two Seats and the Four Ministers. By herself, Bundo Kanduang was only a potentiality which had to be manifested through the men of wisdom. She stood by herself; when she left the profane world and ascended to the Seventh Heaven, she had already given the ancestral wisdom and was, in fact, the symbol of truth itself. Truth

31. These are two of the five Islamic standards of conduct as described in: H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (London/New York: Oxford, 1953), pp. 100-101.

also stood by itself, yet was powerless without a human attempt to activate it.³²

Bundo Kandung's importance then stems especially from her function as the "intermediary" between the concept of truth itself and Dang Tuanku, who had the ability to manifest that concept, and also between the divine conception and the royal house of Minangkabau. At one point, Bundo Kandung told Dang Tuanku and Tjindua Mato that her unchallenged wisdom had come only after she had given birth to Dang Tuanku. She began to conceive her son because of her excessive hawa nafsu which yearned after impossibilities. She longed for the tongue of a crocodile and especially the ivory coconut (*njiua gadiang*). She instructed Si Salamaik, "the real father of Tjindua Mato," to look for the ivory coconut. After three months of exploration including many adventures, the coconut was found. Bundo Kandung shared the coconut with Kembang Bendahari, the wife of Si Salamaik. After drinking it, both women became pregnant.³³

One afternoon, Bundo Kandung suddenly fell asleep and dreamed that the possessor of the Ka'ba Allah of Mecca came to her. He was an old man with a long beard, resplendent body, and fragrant smell, wearing a white robe and white headcloth. He spoke to her: "Do not just sleep, *Puti* [princess]. You are now conceiving *dang mustika* [the jewel], whose name is Kamala Sati [the Sacred Precious One]. [If] he is burned, [he] will not be scorched. If he is soaked, [he] will not get wet. . . . After his birth he will be the Substitute of Allah in the world [*ganti Allah di dunia*], a living sacred man, the king to whom homage is due morning and afternoon. . . . He is the king in his world [*saalamnjo*], in this Minangkabau World, in this Island of Pertja." The old man also instructed Bundo Kandung on the care of the boy after he was born. He was to be called "Sutan Rumandung, the counterpart of the Emperor [*maharadjo*] of Benua Ruhum, the counterpart of the Emperor of China, the counterpart of the King of the Sea."

Dang Tuanku, then, had no human father. He was a son of Indo Djati, the ancient Minangkabau idea of divine conception. Despite his divine origin, however, Dang Tuanku also experienced the process of becoming, from the mother's son to a mature and

32. Cf. Batuah and Madjoindo, *Tambo Minangkabau*, p. 40; and also "Artikelen van Datoek Soetan Maharadja in de Oetoesan Melajoe, 1911-1913," *Adatrechtbundel*, 27 (1928), pp. 291 ff.

33. Cynics sometimes interpret this incident as a "scandal in the palace," which occurred during the "glorious day of Minangkabau." But this interpretation has meaning only if Tjindua Mato is considered to be the symbolic history of Minangkabau.

sacred personality. This process took place despite his already-recognized position as the King of the World.

Tjindua Mato, the hero of the Kaba, was more human than either Bundo Kandung or Dang Tuanku. He could be reckless as well as cunning; he could perform miracles, but this ability derived from "the sacredness of Dang Tuanku." In a sense, Tjindua Mato acted as the executor for Dang Tuanku's wishes. Dang Tuanku, for example, planned the kidnapping of Puti Bungsu, but it was Tjindua Mato who carried it out. More than this even, they were "two bodies with one soul" (*tubuah duo njawonjo satu*). Before Tjindua Mato went to Sikalawi, Dang Tuanku gave him several magic weapons and said that although he would be away, "your soul, my brother, stays with me." Again, when Dang Tuanku bade farewell to Tjindua Mato before going to the Seventh Heaven, he said:

If we part from each other
 We always have one word
 We are two persons with one soul
 If I miss you
 I will see [you] in the *alam chaib* [the invisible world]
 If you miss me
 Imagine you are looking at my body
 So I can manifest myself
 Physically [*pado zahir*] you are the ruler
 In spiritual reality it is I.

Tjindua Mato then was on the one hand his own personality and on the other the physical manifestation of Dang Tuanku's inner self. He was partly human, for he had a human father, and partly divine, for his mother began to conceive him when she shared the sacred coconut with Bundo Kandung.

As noted previously, Bundo Kandung was herself divinely originated, and Dang Tuanku was the son of the divine conception; thus they were both human manifestations of the same Principle. But as the plot of the Kaba relates, Bundo Kandung remained "virgin"; she had no consort, for no human being was a match for her. The Emperor of Benua Ruhum and the Emperor of China had tried, but each died before a marriage took place.

We find at the same time the gradual humanization of the supposedly divine manifestations. Dang Tuanku and Tjindua Mato originated from the same Principle, but the former was also superior, that is more divine than the latter. This humanization process continued into the second generation. The children of Dang Tuanku were more human because Puti Bungsu was a child of human parents. Tjindua Mato's children were also much less divine than their father. Dang Tuanku's son was human enough to commit a tragic mistake which caused humiliation for Minangkabau; although the monarchy itself remained intact, it was no longer the Substitute of Allah.

The core ideas of the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* reflect similar patterns in the literature of traditional Southeast Asia. Bundo Kandung as the mother figure thus not only can be interpreted as the persistent symbol of Minangkabau matrilineal society³⁴ within the patriarchal royal family,³⁵ but also can be considered as the more general basis of legitimacy for the kingdom. Tjindua Mato, despite his commoner origin, was appointed the Viceroy of Minangkabau because his mother had shared the same coconut with Bundo Kandung. Although the origins of the first Kings of the Two Seats and the Four Ministers are unknown, their sons' positions were legitimized by the grandchild of Bundo Kandung. The concept of the mother figure, as has been pointed out by Schrieke and Berg, is also important in Java.³⁶

The notion of the king as the manifestation of God on Earth --Dang Tuanku as the "Substitute of Allah in the World"--is also a very common theme in the political systems of traditional Southeast Asia.³⁷ One can interpret the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* then as an attempt to humanize the concept of kingship. Tjindua Mato himself thus becomes a key transitional figure in the humanization process. The relatively more human children of Dang Tuanku need assistance from a divine being, an angel, to transport them to earth.

The theme of the Kaba bears a striking resemblance to that of the Minangkabau tambo. Bundo Kandung by herself possesses only the potentiality of wisdom, which had to be made manifest through the "policies" of Dang Tuanku and the adventures of Tjindua Mato. The tambo adat states:

When nothing was existent, the universe did not exist,
Neither earth nor sky existed,
Adat had already existed.

34. Cf. the ancestress myth of Negeri Sembilan as reported in R. O. Winstedt, The Malays, a Cultural History (London: Hutchinsons, 1960), pp. 56-57.

35. "The Radjo as a whole stood outside the people," C. Westenenk, "Opstellen van Minangkabau," TBG, 55 (1913), p. 239. A good discussion of the position of the royal family is contained in P. E. de Josselin de Jong, Minangkabau and Negeri Sembilan, pp. 95-113.

36. C. C. Berg, "Javaansch Geschiedschrijving," in F. W. Stapel, ed., Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indië (Den Haag: Joost van den Vondel, 1939), II; B. Schrieke, Indonesian Sociological Studies (Bandung/The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1956), II, pp. 70-74.

37. See: Robert Heine-Geldern, Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1956).

This is "adat which is truly adat" (*adaik nan sabana adaik*). But it is only a potentiality. Its manifestation as an elaborate code came only through the adventures, explorations and tragic incidents of Datuk Ketemanggungan and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, the two legendary adat givers, half-brothers from the same mother. The father of the older, Datuk Ketemanggungan, was a radjo; whereas Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang was only the son of a commoner. While Datuk Ketemanggungan spent most of his life in Minangkabau, Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang was the prototype of the Minangkabau perantau adventurer. By analogy then, if Dang Tuanku represented the divine conception of kingship, Tjindua Mato, who also can be considered as his half-brother, was a transitional figure toward its more human conception. Datuk Ketemanggungan and his laras of Koto-Piliang represented the authoritarian tradition in Minangkabau political life, while Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and the laras of Bodi-Tjaniago was the more democratic. Yet both belonged to the same world; they existed as one total unity. But, unlike the relationship between Dang Tuanku and Tjindua Mato in which the latter is to some degree inferior to the former, the traditions of Koto-Piliang and Bodi-Tjaniago, according to the tambo, are of equal status.

In spite of the seeming erosion of its divine character, the kingship retained a certain sacred character vis-a-vis the mundane world. The new king had after all descended from the mystical world, the Seventh Heaven. But his mystical world comprised, in fact, only a holier counterpart of the temporal realm. Death and life still occurred; it was not the Eternal World. Bundo Kanduang, on the other hand, had entered the Eternal World from the Seventh Heaven.³⁸

The Islamic-Malay character of the *Kaba Tjindua Mato* appears from its structure. Each crucial stage is usually preceded by a visionary dream by its major figure. The birth of Dang Tuanku is preceded by Bundo Kanduang's dream about the appearance of the "possessor of Ka'baAllah." Before Tjindua

38. The conception of heaven as simply a holier and happier place than the temporal world exists also in the Atjehnese literary tradition. The Minangkabau version of the Atjehnese Hikajat Malin Deman, a love story between an earthly prince and a heavenly princess became so popular that a counter-kaba was written during the Padri Period. This counter-kaba, the Hikajat Putri Balukih, The Story of the Princess of Balkis (queen of King Solomon), challenged the Hikajat Malin Deman because "it was not based on the hadith" (prophetic traditions). See: D. Gerth van Wijk, ed. and trans., "De Geschiedenis van Prinses Balkis: een Maleische vertelling," Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, XLI (1881), pp. I-II. Several minor Minangkabau kabas also contain a similar conception of heaven, such as the Kaba Puti Talajang.

Mato went to Sikalawi to attend the ill-fated marriage of Puti Bungsu, Bundo Kandung had a symbolic dream. Unlike the first dream, which was clear and foretold the arrival of the sacred King of the World, the second dream was fragmented. It was, in fact, an allegory of the future war and destruction. The third crucial part of the Kaba is the ascension of the royal family to the Seventh Heaven. On this occasion, Dang Tuanku had a clear vision of an angel visiting him. Before his death, Tjindua Mato saw the image of Dang Tuanku, who told him about the arrival of his (Dang Tuanku's) children to assure the legitimate continuity of the Minangkabau monarchy.³⁹

The use of dreams to provide the transition from one stage to another indicates the crucial role of Providence in life and also the need for divine sanction to legitimize the new rulers. Although the Kaba recognizes the overwhelming importance of the Supernatural Power in determining human action, it does not present a clear conception about the nature of the relationship between God and man. Bundo Kandung and Dang Tuanku cannot be considered as the creations of God. They came from the essence of God; they were, therefore, emanations rather than the creations of God. Both Dang Tuanku and Bundo Kandung spoke on occasion about the use of akal to understand the difference between the "Creator" and the "creature." A crucial distinction exists between the royal family, who were the emanation of the essence of God, and the others, who were God's creations. The royal family was not necessarily God, but through them God expressed some of his realities.⁴⁰ It was a cognitive rather than an

39. Dreams play a significant role generally in Islamic literary and philosophical traditions. See: Duncan Black MacDonald, The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam (Beyrouth: Khayat Oriental Reprints, 1965), pp. 70-94; G. E. von Gruenebaum and Roger Caillois, eds., The Dream and Human Societies (Berkeley: University of California, 1966), esp. pp. 3-21, 351-379.

In Minangkabau local traditions, dreams also play an important role, as, for example, in the legend of a holy man, Tuanku Imam of Kota Gadang, whose coming was foretold in the dream of one of the villagers. He dreamed that an "old man with a white and long beard" came to tell him about the divine origin of the future Tuanku Imam, who like Dang Tuanku was the son of Indo Djati. D. Gerth van Wijk, "Een Minangkabausch Heilige," TBG, XXIV (1877), pp. 224-232.

Undoubtedly the most famous dream in the Malay literary tradition is the dream of Merah Silu in the Hikayat Radja-Radja Pasai. In his dream, he met the Prophet and the next morning when he awoke, he could easily recite the Quran. So, according to the Hikajat, the first Moslem kingdom was established in Sumatra.

40. R. A. Nicholson, The Mystics of Islam (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1914), pp. 148-168.

existential unity.⁴¹

In addition to the clearly mystic character of the Kaba, it also stressed the institutionalization of sarak (religious law) in the political structure of Minangkabau. There were a king and ministers in charge of religion. In individual behavior, one finds more stress on the maintenance of harmony between one's own life and the cosmic order; in social life, the ideal is a working harmony between adat and sarak. These all tended to overlap one another.

Whether or not the Kaba is a disguised internal history of the Minangkabau monarchy or the narration of actual historic events is immaterial. The *Kaba Tjindua Mato* serves as the state myth for the Minangkabau. It can be either a transformation of a work "of fiction" into a myth, or the metamorphosis of historical figures.⁴² The *Kaba Tjindua Mato* not only attempts "to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction,"⁴³ such as that between adat and Islam, but also to give a mythical sanction to the model.

41. Louis Massignon, "Al-Hallaj" in M. M. Sharif, ed., A History of Muslim Philosophy (Weisbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1963), Vol. I, pp. 347-348.

42. Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History: The Myth of Eternal Return (New York: Harper, 1959), pp. 34-48.

43. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 229.