

Hang Tuah: Beyond the Black and White

Written by straits-mongrel

Sunday, 27 September 2009 08:52 - Last Updated Sunday, 27 September 2009 16:04



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Enter Hang Tuah the Warrior - the one we know from the primary school texts and media. The ever-reliable Budak Raja, who with Tamingsari in hand, killed his best friend Jebat in an epic battle in the royal court. It is the ultimate show of loyalty to King and Country, and nationalist themes constantly remind us of it.

Yet it is but half the story. A Hang Tuah in black and white, malnourished if consumed only in itself.

Historian Farish Noor wants you to know that there's the other side to Hang Tuah which needs to be given its full colour. The other side which, the historian argues, defines the complete Malay if not Malaysian.

Drawing largely from Kassim Ahmad's 1962 magnum opus of the Hikayat Hang Tuah (two volumes, 523 pages), Farish delved into the complex life of the folk hero on Saturday at the [An nexa Gallery](#). It was the eighth of his Other Malaysia series of lectures.

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In front of a capacity-filled audience, the Hang Tuah of the hikayat was given a rendering beyond the abridged versions. One that showed the figure as a multi-layered personality transitioning from palace brawn to cultural bridge.

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Earthquake, which killed more than 60 people and injured about

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Hang Tuah and the Helms. The real story is stirring lives and legends in the islands of Southeast Asia.

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