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English News

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FEB

'MAIN TERI' TRADITIONAL HEALING STILL WIDELY SOUGHT-AFTER



PENANG, 3 February 2016 – Traditional healing or *Main Teri* performed by traditional healers called Tok Teri is still much sought after by those seeking alternatives to modern treatment.

Main Teri is a form of traditional performance healing which has effectively cured many over the past few centuries and as such, remains relevant especially among Kelantan-Pattani Malay communities even until today.

Che Mohd. Zailani Che Moh, 50, a renowned Tok Teri from Tanah Merah, Kelantan stated that he has been seeing patients almost every day, as many still seek alternative therapy either for themselves or for friends and family members.

"Usually, those who come to consult me have been treated using modern methods yet still have not healed. Some patients are afflicted by 'mystery' ailments to which modern medicine apparently has not yet provided an antidote.

"In such situations I would perform a preliminary 'scan' to ascertain the type of ailments affecting the patients; in most cases these can be attributed to *angin* or overly stressed emotions," he explained.



Che Mohd Zailani was describing his *Tok Teri* experience as a member of a plenary session titled "Traditional Performance Healing Practices" for the Seminar on Preserving Local Wisdom in Traditional Healing organised by the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Local Knowledge Secretariat here today.

The forum was chaired by Universiti Teknologi MARA's renowned performance studies academic Professor Dr. Solehah Ishak and the panel included other content specialists such as Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia's medical doctor Dr. Muhamad Hafiz Hanafi, USM senior lecturer in Performance Studies Dr. A.S. Hardy Shafii and Istana Budaya Production Deputy Director cum *Makyong* expert, Rosnan Abdul Rahman.

Che Mohd. Zailani, better known as Pak Mat Jedok also revealed that he has been involved in *Main Teri* performance healing for the past 28 years during which time he has trained 12 apprentices who will help preserve this traditional heritage.

According to Pak Mat Jedok, this method has proven effective due to its underlying belief system which acknowledges that each human being is born with *angin* or spirits, therefore should these spirits be dulled or stifled, an effective means to revive them is through *Main Teri* which combines elements of spirituality and nature with movement, music, singing and verbal discourse drawing on traditional oral folk literature within a collective communal setting.



"When the patient faces emotional stress and is not their normal self, my duty is to revive the spirits and help the patient regain their zest and vigour, if God permits.

"We can apply the analogy of a bicycle tyre to the patient, where a deflated tube will render the bicycle unable to function but once the tyre is well inflated, it can withstand weight of even up to 100 kg," he quipped.

Rosnan meanwhile concurred that the art of *Main Teri* needs to be continued and preserved for future generations.

"It would be a great loss indeed should the day come when this traditional performance can only be viewed on Youtube or through old video recordings whereas its practitioners have become extinct, as *Makyong* and *Main Teri* are valuable resources of local culture and literature," he stressed.

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