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# That mighty *pantun* river and its tributaries

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## ABSTRACT

Known as *pantun* to the Malays in Brunei, Malaysia, Pattani, Riau, Singapore, and Southern Phillipines, it is called *peparikan* to the Javanese, *sesindiran* to the Sundanese and many other different names in different ethnic groups in the different parts of the Indo-Malay world, which is made up of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Pattani in southern Thailand, and Mindanao in the southern Philippines. In almost every settlement that sprang up along the major rivers and tributaries in the Indo-Malay world, the *pantun* blend well with their natural and cultural surroundings. In this article, the geographical extent of the *pantun* family in the Indo-Malay world is likened to a mighty river that has a complex network of tributaries all over the Indo-Malay world. Within the Indo-Malay world, it is the movement of the peoples help the spread of *pantun* from one area to the other and makes it an art form of immensely rich and intricate as can be seen from the examples given.

## KEYWORDS

*Pantun*, oral poetry, Indo-Malay identity, *pantun* distribution, Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824.

## ONE BIG FAMILY NETWORK

*Pantun* emerged somewhere in the Indo-Malay world long before the arrival of Hinduism some 1,500 years before Islam came to the area in the thirteenth century. As a form of oral poetry, *pantun* were originally composed and transmitted without being written down. Following the disappearance of oral culture, more and more *pantun* are now composed and transmitted not only in written, but also in printed and even in digital forms. This leads to a situation where written versions of *pantun* not only influence their memorized versions,

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