

27/08/1998

Recite pantun to children, mothers urged

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Mothers should recite Malay pantuns when raising children as they depict eloquently a mother's love and sacrifice.

To keep themselves abreast with the current advances in science and technology, they should use songs as a medium via cassettes, CD-ROMs and others when reciting pantun.

Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali said this today, adding that Malay pantuns which had as their theme mothers and their sacrificial love were widely recited.

"A mother's love knows no bounds and even then parents and the elderly are taken for granted by children," she said before presenting prizes to winners of the 1997 International Sayembara Mengarang Pantun at Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka.

"There are many forms of Malay pantuns which are couched in an economical and compact language.

"Pantuns can be used to teach and exhort and this in turn will keep the spirit of pantun alive in a rapidly changing world," said Dr Siti Hasmah, who is the competition's patron.

She urged Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka to create a homepage on pantun and its history on the Internet.

"This would make it easy for lovers of pantun and researchers worldwide to analyse the pantun which depicts the values of the Malays in Malaysia.

"Pantun is a branch of classical Malay literature. It reveals the Malays' high moral values and the beauty of the language while the message can be used as a guide to life."

Dr Siti Hasmah, the wife of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said publishers should not use the economic problem as an excuse to stop publishing literary works be they pantun, poetry, short stories, novels or essays.

She also launched the book Permata Timur which is a compilation of the nine winning entries of the pantun competition.

A total of 372 applications were received from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Pakistan and the Netherlands.

There were three winners of the special awards category who each received RM3,000. They were Abdul Halim Salleh from Alor Star, Prof Taha Abd Kadir from Serdang and Mariah Jamaludin from Penang.

Selected awards were given to Mohd Amran Daud, Mohd Farid Jafri and Muda @ Daud Yusof who received RM1,000 each.

Consolation prizes of RM500 were won by Siti Aida Mohamad, Siti Aminah Yusoff and Yayha Samah.

The pantun competition was the brainchild of the Comparative Literature Association Malaysia.

The main objective of the competition is to revive the era of pantun in a modern society and to inspire writers in Malaysia and worldwide to create pantuns.

The competition was sponsored by Gapurna Sdn Bhd and the New Straits Times Press Malaysia Bhd.

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