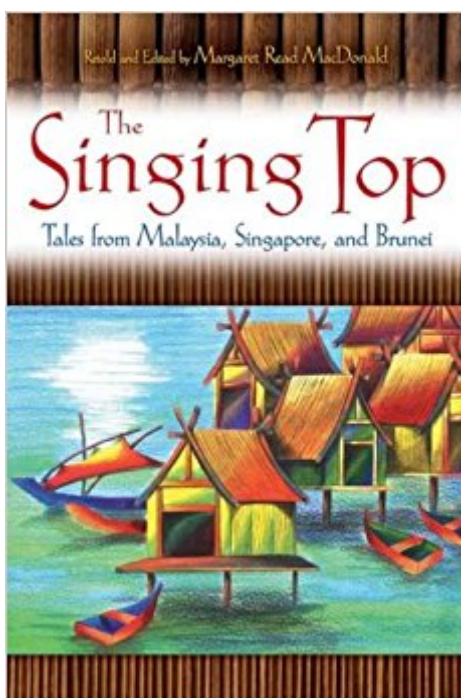


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# The Singing Top: Tales From Malaysia, Singapore, And Brunei (World Folklore (Hardcover))



## Synopsis

Until now, few tales from Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore have made their way into print in English. Renowned folklorist Margaret Read MacDonald has worked with archival material as well as with local storytellers to collect traditional tales from these people, including 15 tales from the ethnic peoples of Borneo. Organized broadly by region, and then by specific groups and themes, this book offers more than 50 tales, including animal tales, stories of magic, trickster tales, humorous stories, place legends, and more. Like other titles in the World Folklore series, it also includes general information about the geography, peoples, and history of the Malay Peninsula and surrounding areas; as well as proverbs, songs and games, color photos, and notes on the stories. All levels.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This fine collection will appeal to tellers, teachers/librarians, and students from upper elementary school to university. It is also a serious and scholarly study of folklore from this area of the Far East. MacDonald offers information about the countries, explanations of the stories, and source materials for further enrichment. Arranged by country and by type of folklore, the tales include traditional motifs: origins, animals, magic, humor, rivalry, tricksters, heroes, morals, manners, adventures, plus myths, legends, proverbs, songs, and games. Most are easy to read and moderately easy to tell. Many characters and stories transcend national borders. For example, Kancil the Mouse Deer, a trickster here, will seem as familiar as Anansi and Brer Rabbit. Yet, the geography of these lands,

open to seas and trade routes from far and wide, lends a unique flavor to these stories.

Unfortunately, the quality of the maps that accompany each selection is disappointing. Otherwise, this is a rich addition. — Judy Sokoll, Florida Storytelling Association, Naples Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"MacDonald, who has more than a passing interest in Southeast Asia and its rich folk traditions, and is no stranger to Southeast Asian culture, has compiled a nice sampling of folktales from all over peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, and Singapore." - Southeast Asian Collection Blog

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"The unusual collection of traditional tales, including proverbs, songs, and games, is the personal work of renowned storyteller MacDonald, who has long assisted in editing other titles in the World Folklore Series. Suitable for all levels, the volume is a good addition to folk and fairy tale collections for young people. An appendix gives notes on the sources of the tales, and the index is detailed." - VOYA

"The book doesn't necessarily fulfill all the scholarly requirements for academic fieldwork, but the tales are documented well and presented in a way that will engage young readers. MacDonald is a fine storyteller herself, and her voluminous publications on storytelling will provide teachers with a wealth of ideas for using this fine collection in the classroom. It's questionable, however, whether or not all of the written texts will appeal to children." - Journal of Folklore Research

"MacDonald does her typical wonderful job of introducing the places where her stories originate. Simple but clear maps are included that enable her to comment on her visits to the region. She also makes clear that she is not inventing the stories but passing along what she heard and giving credit to those who shared with her. This time she also includes photographs of her travels and of some of the storytellers; these photos clearly enhance the stories. The stories covered range from trickster tales and humorous stories to fables and

legends. Although the subtitle of this book mentions 'tales' specifically, this work also includes proverbs and children's songs and games. The appendices add more icing to the cake with source notes, more suggested books, and even a glossary. In all, The Singing Top is a very rich resource for storytellers." - MultiCultural Review

Wonderful collection of Malaysian folktales.

This series includes a number of really interesting volumes on folklore from around the world. I was especially interested in Margaret Read MacDonald's book because so little has been documented from these nations. It's a good presentation. MacDonald lived in this part of the world for years, and she compiled interesting stories and traditions in this book. The overview of the history of each region is a good introduction for adults, and it is clearly written for younger readers. There are some really fascinating stories that will appeal to all ages; one of the more interesting one refers to the putative origins of the Singapore cat. There are also great examples of animal tales and some really good descriptions of children's folk games. These stories are derived and reworked by MacDonald. She knows how to put together this type of volume of stories, but some of them may be too esoteric for younger readers. It's not quite the volume of stories that young readers will likely pick up and peruse on their own. Rather, it would be best to use this book for read-alouds to children.

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