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## THE SYAIR TABUT OF ENCIK ALI

### A Malay account of Muharram at Singapore, 1864

Transcribed and translated by

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#### ABSTRACT

This is an annotated transcription and translation of the *Syair Tabut* (Poem of the Tomb Effigies) of Encik Ali, a Malay-language, Jawi-script *syair* account of the Muharram commemorations of 1864 at Singapore. The only known part lithograph and part manuscript of this text, on which this edition is based, is held in the library of Leiden University, shelfmark Kl. 191. For a full discussion of this *Syair*, see the accompanying article Lunn and Byl (2017).

#### KEYWORDS

Malay; Muharram; Singapore; *Syair Tabut*

#### A note on our translation and transcription

We have opted to leave several terms untranslated throughout the *Syair*. These are:

- *tabut* (طابوّة/طابوّة *tabūt* (طابوّة/طابوّة *tābūt*) ‘Arab. The Ark of the Covenant; (Penang only) a Hindu image or processional emblem, = (Singapore) *kudu*’ (Wilkinson 1903: 146). Specifically, it refers to the effigies constructed to represent the tombs of the imams Hasan and Hussein which are paraded during Muharram, known in Sumatra as *tabuik*, in South Asia as *ta‘ziah* (تعزیه) (though the use of *tabut* in South Asia is also attested [De Tassy 1995: 53; Sharif 1975: 164], as well as the well known denunciation of Hindu involvement in *tabut* processions by Bal Gangadhar Tilak in the context of the 1894 Ganpati processions [see Cashman 1975: 78, 83–4, citing Bombay Judicial Proceedings]), and in the West Indies as *tadjah*;

- *kudu* (كودو/*kūdū*) ‘II. (Singapore.) A Kling idol’ (Wilkinson 1903: 546). See *tabut* above. Ali uses this apparently specifically Singaporean term interchangeably with *tabut* to refer to the *ta’ziah*. Wilkinson provides no etymology for the term, and nothing is immediately obvious, though the Tamil உரு *uru* as image or idol (Winslow 1862: 65) seems a possibility. Further hints of phonetic imprecision come from Hamilton (1922: 95), who stated some two decades later that while *tabut* was used in ‘Penang Malay’, the Singapore equivalent was ‘*rudu*’, again for ‘Kling idol’; this said, at times (e.g. q. 129a), it may refer to the bearers of the effigy;
- *fakir* (فقير/*faqīr*) a mendicant, or Muslim religious ascetic; it is used by Ali almost exclusively to refer to himself, which is a standard Malay literary trope (the only exceptions are in q. 17d and q. 22b, when he refers to other fakirs; see the note to q. 18b for Ja’far Sharif’s description of Muharram fakirs in South India). Encik Ali also refers to himself as *darwish*/‘dervish’ at several points, in a similarly standard move;
- *bibadal* (بيبادل/*bībādal*) this Persian/Urdu term means ‘without equal/compare; peerless’: see Platts (1884: 201) *bebadal*, s.v. ‘be’; Steingass (1963: 214) s.v. *bī-badal*. In Ali’s *syair*, it seems to refer to a specific individual, or peerless one, connected with the *tabut* party from Kampung Bengkulu; that said, and in a similar way to *kudu*, it can seem perhaps to refer to the effigy itself (e.g. q. 89a). Having encountered no other occurrences of this term in other contemporary Malay texts, and being somewhat unsure of Ali’s specific usage, we find the ambiguity of its untranslatability useful as well as humbling;
- *ringin* (ريغين/*rīngīn*) We are deeply unsure as to the meaning of this word in the context of the *syair*. The closest meaning is *ringin* as a variant of *beringin*, or banyan tree, which has long associations with authority and leadership. That said, while at points the word could refer to an individual or leader, at others it suggests a group or body of men. See the fuller discussion in our accompanying article (Lunn and Byl 2017: XXX).

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For a discussion of the terms *gīrūh* (كيره) and *jūgī* (جوگي) which, while translated here as ‘squadron’ and ‘battalion’, somewhat interchangeably, have specific Indian/South Asian

etymologies and transmissions, as well as particular importance for this *syair*, see also Lunn and Byl (2017: XXX–XXX).

While we were aiming for a more or less literal translation, at times we have certainly taken some liberties with the original text to give a readable sense for the non-Malay reader; no doubt, this opens up room for other interpretations. Where we have felt that elements of a quatrain or aspects of our translation merit some comment or clarification, or when we have left terms other than those listed above untranslated, the quatrain number is marked with an asterisk, and our notes are at the end of the text.

For transcribing the Jawi text, we have not opted for a precise, diacritic-laden transliteration from the Jawi: if a word is present in current standard Malay, we give its standard roman form (hence: *fakir* rather than *faqīr*, *kisah* rather than *qiṣṣah*, etc.); if not, we give a standardised transcription in the main text, using diacritics in our endnotes, along with Jawi, where pertinent. We have also chosen to spell out fully duplications denoted by the scribe with ‘٢’ rather than use ‘2’. Where we have conjectured possible readings of unclear text, this is enclosed by <>; where the text is particularly indecipherable, an ellipsis or any attempted reading of the script is enclosed by > <. We use the same marking in our translation where it is particularly tenuous or incomplete.<sup>1</sup>

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 1  | <i>Dengarkan tuan suatu kisah<br/>Bulan Muharram empunya termasa<br/>Syair dikarang melempar jasa<br/>Dengarkan juga dewa angkasa</i>  | Hear, sir, a story about<br>A festival of the month of Muharram<br>A poem written as a service –<br>God of the sky, listen as well  |
| 2  | <i>Fakir nan bebal bukannya ahli<br/>Fakir bernama Enchik Ali<br/>Bantuan Sheikh Muhammad Ali<br/>Putera oleh anak Benggali</i>        | From an ignorant <i>fakir</i> , not an expert<br>A <i>fakir</i> named Mister Ali<br>Assistant to Sheikh Muhammad Ali<br>Son of one of Bengali descent                               |
| 3  | <i>Fakir Ali anak Bangkahulu<br/>Mengarang syair ceritera kudu<br/>Rencananya janggal banyak terlalu<br/>Pinta dibaiki tuan selalu</i> | Ali the <i>fakir</i> is a son of Bengkulu<br>Writing into a poem a story of <i>kudu</i><br>His narrative is exceedingly awkward<br>He hopes the listener will improve it as it goes |
| 4* | <i>Enchik Muhammad Hassan pendita jauhari</i>  | Mister Muhammad Hassan is a religious scholar   |

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<sup>1</sup> Readers may consult a facsimile of the *Syair*, available as an online resource on *Indonesia and the Malay World's* webpage at <xxxx >

- Kertas dihampar seraya dimustari*  
*Membentang nasihat dengan gemari*  
*Menurunkan syair suatu peri*  
The paper was spread and the auspicious time fixed  
He loves preaching, spreading advice  
Setting down a story in poetry
- 5 *Al-kisah tuan dengarkan*  
*Rencananya tabut kami uraikan*  
*Barang dilihat kami wartakan*  
*Sekadar peringatan kami pohonkan*  
Sir, do hear the tale  
And we will recount the narrative of the *tabut*  
All that we witnessed, we will report  
Wishing it to serve as an example
- 6 *Kami nan bodoh tambahan muda*  
*Mengarang syair penglipur gundah*  
*Bukannya ahli bijak pun tiada*  
*Kiasan rencana fakir bermadah*  
We, not only ignorant but young as well,  
Compose a poem to ease sadness  
Not expert – not even wise –  
The *fakir* recites the tale as parable
- 7\* *Demi terbit bulan Muharram*  
*Masyawatlah sekalian anak Baharam*  
*Kudu perbuat rebana berderam*  
*Bunyinya laksana harimau menderam*  
At the rising of the moon of Muharram  
All the people of Baharam gathered together  
They built the *kudu* and beat the frame drum  
With its sound like the roar of a tiger
- 8 *Ada yang menyerikan juginya*  
*Ada pula melengkapkan giruhnya*  
*Masing-masing perbuat permainannya*  
*Riuh rendah bunyi bahananya*  
There were those making their squadron radiant  
And those putting the final touches on their regiment  
Everyone made their own entertainments:  
Uproar, the noise of the din.
- 9 *Akan jugi giruh maktabar*  
*Merekalah dahulu yang keluar*  
*Sepanjang jalan berbanjar-banjar*  
*Ada yang menuju ke rumah saudagar*  
The exalted squads and battalions  
They would be the ones who issued forth first  
All along the road the people stood in lines  
Some going towards the merchant's house
- 10\* *Demikianlah hal sekalian permainan*  
*Kiasnya juga kami khabarkan*  
*Jika ghalat tuan mengapakan*  
*Aturan yang janggal tuan sajakkan*  
Such was the case in all the performances  
We will also report the lessons learnt  
If there are mistakes, sir, do something about them  
If the rhymes are awkward, sir, improve them
- 11\* *Malam kesepuluh demi kelihatan*  
*Habis dihias labu dan pekan*  
*Tunggul panji-panji pun didirikan*  
*Pangkat nan kudu pun dikenakan*  
On the tenth night it was seen at once  
That bay and market were awash in decoration  
The poles and flags were raised  
And the order of the *kudu* determined
- 12\* *Cahaya masal teranglah amat*  
*Tasa dipalu teramat sangat*  
*Salli Allah ali Muhammad*  
*Habis berkampung sekaliannya umat*  
The light of the multitude shone so brightly  
The drum was beaten with utmost force  
Bless Allah and the household of Muhammad!  
The believers all gathered together in a crowd
- 13\* *Meriam berbunyi pukul delapan*  
*Kudu borak pun kelihatan*  
*Enchik Miskin orangnya sopan*  
*Membuat kudu sangatlah tampan*  
The cannon sounded just at eight o'clock  
And the *kudu* of the *buraq* became visible  
Mister Miskin of the polite manners  
Fashioned the very fine *kudu*
- 14\* *Di rumah rajab ia terhenti*  
*Tabut kedua ia ternanti*  
*Rajab itu <benak/nek> >b-kh-t-i?/m-n-h-t-i?<*  
*Kudunya pun sudahlah pasti*  
It stopped at the house of honour  
To wait for the second *tabut*  
>Honour ... mind<  
The *kudu* was all in readiness
- 15 *Sekonyong-konyong tampak kelihatan*  
All of a sudden there was clearly seen

- Terang benderang sebelah selatan  
Bendera merah kibaran bukan buatan  
Tempik dan sorak bersahut-sahutan*
- 16\* *Itulah dia bendera merah  
Orang Dubi sangat gembira  
Mereka berseru tiada terkira  
Mememat lawannya dengan amarah*
- 17\* *Adalah pula suatu pasukan  
Panji-panji putih ia dirikan  
Bahasa Benggali giruh dinamakan  
Merekalah fakir Halaq al-Manan*
- 18\* *Gagahnya mereka tiada terperi  
Singgahlah durinya Malik al-Bahri  
Di tengah jalan mereka berdiri  
Menantikan ringin kelak hampiri*
- 19\* *Demi merinyu melihat lakunya  
Mereka tiada membilang lawannya  
Disuruh berjalan dengan segeranya  
Dihadapan ringin nan angkatannya*
- 20\* *Ringin melihat sangatlah marah  
Seraya berseru bibadal barua  
Disahut bibadal dengan segera  
Kamu nan Dubi daku Tok Betara*
- 21 *Nabi Muhammad empunya syafa'at  
Tabut kedua nan terangkat  
Bunyi-bunyian dipalu teramat sangat  
Keluar pintu dengannya bangat*
- 22 *Dengar tuan fakir khabarkan  
Kudu nan buyung fakir saingkan  
Kisah nan itu fakir ringkaskan  
Barang maklum tuan dengarkan*
- 23 *Pasukan budak tiada terkira  
Berjalan dahulu dengan gembira  
Sambil berseru ringin barua  
Tersemput-semput dengan amarah*
- 24\* *Adalah pula suatu pahlawan  
Gagah berani tiada terlawan  
Jika bagai Indra bangsawan  
Sukar menentang panglima artawan*
- 25 *Pasukan kedua dengarkan tuan  
Ikatan perangnya bernama sampan  
Tiga buah pilang diperbuatkan  
Tembur biola ia palukan*
- 26 *Suku Pulau Pinang sampan pertama*
- A brilliant light in the south  
The red flags were waving wildly  
Shouts and cheers were exchanged
- There it is! The red flag!  
The Dhobies were very glad  
Without a doubt, they were really shouting  
Tiring their opponents with angry passion
- A battalion was there as well  
They hoisted their white flags  
It was called a *giruh* in Bengali  
And they were the *fakirs* of Halqah al-Mannan
- Their toughness was beyond all telling  
And Malik al-Bahri forgot his troubles  
They stood in the middle of the road  
Waiting for the *ringin* to approach
- At that time the inspector was watching their actions  
They didn't even count their opponents  
They were told to move immediately  
As they were now face to face with the the *ringin*
- The *ringin* looked very angry  
And [they] shouted, 'the *bibidal* is a pimp!'  
The *bibadal* responded immediately:  
'You are a Dhoby; I am the *Tok Betara*'
- Through the blessed help of the Prophet Muhammad  
The second *tabut* was lifted up  
The music was played with terrible force  
And burst out of the door
- Hear, oh sir, this *fakir* narrate  
And stage for you the match of the youths' *kudus*  
This *fakir* will summarise the story  
Whatever I tell you, sir, listen to it
- Teams of countless youths  
Happily moved along at the front  
They kept shouting 'the *ringin* is a pimp!'  
With anger bursting through
- And there was a warrior  
Strong, brave and unbeatable  
Even an Indra Bangsawan  
Would find it hard to fight the wealthy commander
- The second team, listen, sir,  
Was a battle group named 'boat'  
They had made three wooden poles  
And they played the drum and violin
- The people from Penang were in the first boat

- Mereka menari sangat utama  
Biola digesek orang Burma  
Ia nan juga jadi panglima*
- 27 *Lancang kedua kumpulan Kling  
Hitam berkilat bagai japarling  
Cerdik mereka bagaikan maling  
Menang Musa tiada berpaling*
- 28\* *Dengarkan pula suatu peri  
Lancang yang akhir sangat bahari  
Gendang serunai rebab nafiri  
Dipalu mereka tiada terperi*
- 29 *Itulah pasukan anak Bangkahulu  
Elok majelis sangat terlalu  
Biola digesek tambur dipalu  
Seraya berseloka berbagai lagu*
- 30 *Seorang gagah lagi sakti  
Tubuhnya hitam sangatlah pati  
Ialah menjadi panglima Ranti  
Barang melihat dihentak hati*
- 31 *Suaranya besar teramat sangat  
Sekalian menang memberi dahsyat  
Ayuh ya tuan dengarkan sejabat  
Kisahny kudu fakir beribwayat*
- 32\* *Angkatan ketiga jugi nan itu  
Budak berdua menarilah tentu  
Biduanda bernyanyi sangatlah mutu  
Merduanya bagai buluh di perindu*
- 33 *Seorang Siam menggesek biola  
Terlalulah elok Subhanallah  
Paras nan bagai intan kemala  
Sayang sedikit sudah tercelah*
- 34\* *Seorang Kling konon ketuanya  
Peranakkan Melayu serjuginya  
Warna nan kawi akan pakaiannya  
Saf sakhlat posyak penarinya*
- 35\* *Subhanallah ajaib sekali  
Anak malah menjamah Benggali  
Lagu Jawi mereka tinggali  
Bahasa Benggali mereka wakili*
- 36\* *Hairan tercengang rasa ku tuan  
Menang suara sekalian biduan  
Berbait gerindam sangat siluan  
Tukang biola mabuk cendawan*
- And they danced with the finest skill  
The violin was played by a Burmese  
He too had become a general
- The second boat was the Kling team  
Shining black like starling birds  
They were cunning like thieves  
Musa won without looking back
- Now hear the story of  
The last boat, very seaworthy  
Drum, shawm, bowed lute and trumpet  
How they played them all is beyond telling
- That troop was the sons of Bengkulu  
They were astoundingly handsome  
The violin was bowed and the drum beaten  
Followed by sung poetry to a variety of tunes
- A brave and spiritually powerful person  
His body was the essence of black  
He became the general of Ranti  
The heart of anyone who saw him was struck
- His voice was incredibly loud  
Even as he won he inspired terror and awe  
Come on sir, hear as well  
The story of the *kudu* which this *fakir* narrates
- As for the third squadron, in that group  
Two young boys danced  
And a court singer sang exceedingly well  
With the melodiousness of wind over bamboo
- A Siamese played the violin  
Glorious is God! it was too beautiful  
His visage was like a shining diamond  
A pity, a small part of it had a flaw
- The leader was said to be a Kling  
And all in the squadron were mixed-Malay  
They were clothed in red-brown colour  
The dancers were clothed in white and scarlet cloth
- Praise be to God! Amazing!  
The children actually touched the Bengalis  
They left out the Jawi song  
Exhibiting the Bengali language
- Sir, I was struck with awe  
All the singers were peerless  
The rhyming of the couplets was very demure  
The violin player was intoxicated by mushrooms

- 37 *Tuan nan jangan syak di hati  
Fakir berdua telah amati  
Seorang gemuk cenderawati  
Darvish nan za'if sangat apiti* Sir, let there be no doubt in your heart  
The *fakir* has observed both  
A plump and fair lady  
Completely crushed this frail dervish
- 38\* *Giruh nan itu pasukan keempat  
Membuang matagi terlompat-lompat  
Pakaian putih mereka nan sifat  
Seorang Kling memwaripi tempat* That squad was the fourth  
Tossing the effigy around  
Their white clothes showed their quality  
A Kling enlivened the place
- 39 *Giruh nan itu suatu permainan  
Rajin bermain bukan buatan  
Ke kiri digoyang bersahut-sahutan  
Bertempik bagai punggung di hutan* That squad was a game  
that they played like serious business  
They swayed altogether to the left  
Calling back and forth like owls in the forest
- 40\* *<Olahan/Olehnya> seorang bersuara  
Membilang adalat tidak terkira  
Tengking herdik bagaikan marah  
Memberi sekalian hati gembira* And there was person making a speech  
<Considering justice without number>  
Scolding and shouting as if in anger  
Making everyone glad
- 41\* *Berdua pula bermain mataki  
Elok majelis tidak terperi  
Bagai merak mengigil diri  
Seketika ke kanan sebentar ke kiri* Two of them were performing with the effigy  
It was beautiful and charming beyond telling  
Like a peacock ruffling itself  
A moment to the right, then a while to the left
- 42\* *Berdua konon khalifahnya  
Seorang peranakan menjadi ketuanya  
Ke sana sini derma dipohonnya  
Demikianlah hal konon permainannya* They both acted as *khalifahs*  
A man of mixed parentage became the leader  
He asked for donations here and there  
That's the way it's said to have happened
- 43\* *Ama ba'adu kemudian direndanya  
Tabut ketiga sama eloknya  
Kudu nan borak sama tengahnya  
Kudu kedua akan pengiringnya* As for what comes next, let's detail the rest  
The third *tabut* was equally lovely  
The *kudu* of the Buraq was in the middle  
The second *kudu* accompanied it
- 44 *Ketua masing-masing kudu nan itu  
Terlari-lari tiada bertentu  
Jika terjumpa kereta di situ  
Seraya dipukul melempar batu* Each of the leaders of the *kudus*  
Ran around without any direction  
If they came across the cart there  
It would be beaten and pelted with stones
- 45 *Adapun akan tabut nan ringin  
Laksana ayam beroleh dingin  
Misal nan gula ditiup angin  
Haram sekali tiada ku ingin* And then there was the *tabut* of the *ringin*  
Like a chicken in the cold  
Imagine sugar blown by the wind  
It's totally forbidden; I have no desire for it
- 46 *Akan jugi dan giruhnya  
Ke Singapura didapatkannya  
Oleh yang demikian sunyi kudunya  
Tambahhan minyak kekurangan padanya* The squadron and the battalion  
Were heading towards Singapore  
That is why their *kudu* were so quiet  
Although they were short of oil
- 47 *Permainan di sana itulah tuan  
Budak-budak bertempik bagai haiwan  
Minta bibadal dia bangsawan  
Sumpah seranah tiada ketahuan* That was how it was over there, sir:  
Boys were shouting like animals  
Asking the *bibadal* to be noble [?]  
Swearing and cursing, out of their minds

- 48 *Dastar mereka kain nan merah  
Ia bertempik tiada berkira  
Tabak kecuali Dubi angkara  
Gemar sekali membuat pura* Their headcloths were made of red cloth  
They were shouting without care  
With the exception of the brutal Dhoby *tabut* party  
They really like to put on airs
- 49 *Masing-masing mereka memegang kayu  
Hendak memukul anak Melayu  
Tengking herdik mendayu-dayu  
Laksana pohon dipuput bayu* Each of them held a wooden stick  
And wanted to beat the Malay boys  
Carrying on upbraiding and shouting  
Like a tree blown down by the wind
- 50 *Angkatan kedua ikan diperbuatkan  
Itulah mereka memainkan  
Dalam rangkanya dian dipasangkan  
Gilang gemilang warnanya ikan* The second group made a fish  
That was the subject of their masquerade  
Inside its frame a lantern was lit  
The fish's colours dazzled and sparkled
- 51\* *Setelah itu baharulah kudu  
Elok majelis sangat terlalu  
Seri ba[ha]ri tabut Bangkahulu  
Gagah berani tiada mendahulu* And after that came the *kudu*  
Its beauty was very fine  
Shining with nobility, the *tabut* of Bengkulu  
Brave and tough without precedent
- 52 *Itupun tiada boleh dikata  
Sudah adat dengan perintah  
Bibadal dahulu warta  
Kompeni Inggeris empunya titah* Indeed, they were not allowed to speak  
This was long the custom backed by law  
The *bibadal* said first  
'By order of the English Company
- 53\* *Jika kedua hendak berkuasa  
Sama juga keduanya rias[a]  
Kompeni juga yang sangat terasa  
Dipuput ribut masakan merasa* If both want to be in charge  
Both must be equally adorned'  
The Company's presence was very much felt  
Even a strong wind would not make them anxious
- 54 *Tapi jika Kampung Bangkahulu  
Dubi jua beroleh malu  
Di mana bertemu beroleh palu  
Makar dibuat anak Melayu* But if it were to be Kampung Bengkulu  
The Dhobies would begin to feel shame  
Wherever they met they'd get punched  
The Malays would play tricks
- 55 *Shahadan dengarkan tuan  
Akan ceritera perarakan  
Di tepi laut dikelilingkan  
Bunga api pun dipasangkan* Then sir, do hear,  
The story of the procession  
At the seaside they would carry it around  
The fireworks were then set off
- 56 *Apabila di Kampung Gelam sampai nan kudu  
Mereka menta sangat terlalu  
Shar Khan hendak dipalu  
Kerana ketuanya diam di situ* When the *kudu* reached Kampung Gelam  
Their excitement was beyond bounds  
Shar Khan was sure to be beaten  
Because his leader lived there
- 57 *Ayuh ya encik-encik dengarkan tuan  
Akan hal sekalian perempuan  
Hilang malu lupanya nan sopan  
Lenyaplah budi akal pengetahuan* Now come on, sirs, and listen  
To something about the women  
Modesty was lost, courtesy forgotten  
Mind, thought and knowledge disappeared
- 58 *Di antara laki-laki ia menyamar  
Selendang pelangi terkibar-kibar  
Tempuh menempuh tiada gentar  
Nyiur gading dipegang tiada nan gusar* They were disguised amongst the men  
With rainbow scarves set flying  
Fearlessly moving amidst the crush  
Their white coconuts grasped, and they didn't mind



- 59 *Sahabat fakir ia langgari*  
*Aduh tuan ia berperi*  
*Tiada sengaja gerangan diri*  
*Janganlah murka dia bestari*  
This *fakir*'s friend was knocked over  
'Oh sir,' she said  
'I did not do it on purpose  
Don't get angry'; she was polite
- 60 *Perempuan rakyat banyak tiada terperi*  
*Sepanjang jalan terdiri*  
*Ke tepi pantai sampan dicari*  
*Berteriak bagai dewa dan pari*  
I won't talk about the ordinary women  
Standing all along the road  
Up to the beach to spy out the boats  
Shouting like gods and spirits
- 61 *Pakaian berbagai-bagai dengarkan tuan*  
*Rupa sama tiada ketahuan*  
*Bau nan harum bagai cendawan*  
*Demikianlah halnya wahai bangsawan*  
Hear sir, about their different types of clothing  
No two of them alike in appearance  
So sweet smelling like mushrooms  
This was how it was, oh noble ones
- 62 *Kain atlas akan bajunya*  
*Terendak akan tudungnya*  
*Penyapu lantai ikatan kainnya*  
*Panca logam akan jalannya*  
Their dresses was made of satin cloth  
Sun hats covered their heads  
They tied their lengths of cloth in a broom fold  
Processing along in a riot of colour
- 63 *Hai tuan dengarkan*  
*Perarakan siang fakir tamatkan*  
*Qasad nan siang darwish khabarkan*  
*Kepada tuan pinta dicamkan*  
Oh sirs, listen  
The *fakir* tells of the day's processions  
The dervish will tell of the purpose of the day  
It is for you, sir, to please rectify
- 64 *Bintang nan pun belum padam cahayanya*  
*Margasatwa pun belum mencari mangsanya*  
*Tunggul panji-panji pun didirikan*  
*Laksana berperang pula rupanya*  
The star had yet to dim its light  
When the bird began to search for its prey  
The poles and flags were erected  
And now it looked like war
- 65\* *Tasa nan berbunyi berderam*  
*Barang menang naiklah geram*  
*Sekalian nona anak Baharam*  
*Memasak tiada bergaram*  
The drum began to beat loudly  
Whoever won increased in anger  
All the young girls of the people of Baharam  
Cooking without salt
- 66\* *Oleh hati tiada ketahuan*  
*Tambahan kurnia tiada kelihatan*  
*Puwada nan di dalam silu-siluan*  
*Kelam kabutlah barang perbuatan*  
For a heart that does not know its mind  
Even a new gift goes unnoticed  
The ceremonial floor cloth was coyly hiding inside  
Whatever they did was in a dark haze
- 67\* *Permainan banyak sangat terlalu*  
*Sepanjang jalan bertalu-talu*  
*Dengar tuan bulang nan ulu*  
*Akan sekalian perawan yang malu*  
There were so many performances  
Making a lot of noise along the length of the road  
Hear, sirs, about the dear ones  
About the shy maidens
- 68 *Dinding nan habis dikoreknya*  
*Akan permainan hendak dilihatnya*  
*Bondanya datang lalu dipukulnya*  
*Karena nasi hangus rupanya*  
The wall was utterly filled with holes  
Because they wanted to see the games  
Their mothers came and beat them  
Because their rice had burnt
- 69\* *Lauk hangus nasi nan mentah*  
*Oleh mendengar bunyinya kontah*  
*Hati nan gundah tiada terkata*  
*Sayangnya mereka di dalam perintah*  
The dishes burned while the rice was left raw  
Just from hearing the sound of the gossip  
Their hearts became unbearably excited  
A pity they were bound to duty

- 70 *Jugi dan giruh sepanjang jalan  
Bermainlah ia ayuhai tuan  
Seluruh rumah mereka berkenalan  
Teranglah alam disinan bulan*  
The squads and the battalion along the road  
Please play [for us], sirs  
They became acquainted with all of the households  
The earth brightens illuminated by the moon
- 71 *Luput riwayat terbit cerita  
Kisahny tabut fakir berkata  
Ayuh ya tuan dengar berita  
Perarakan siang empunya warta*  
One story ends and another begins  
The *fakir* tells the tale of the *tabut*  
Come then, sir, and hear the news  
The report on the midday procession
- 72 *Adapun akan nona bayaperi  
Akan keretanya disuruh cari  
Demi kenaikan telah terperi  
Baharu hati rasa gemari*  
And then there was a female merchant  
Told to go look for her cart  
As soon as the vehicle < ... >  
Only then was her heart happy
- 73 *Selipar dipakai syal dicapai  
Naik kereta duduk mengintai  
Ada yang separuh ke tepi pantai  
Nantikan kuda kelak nan sampai*  
She wore sandals and clasped a shawl  
And got into the cart, then sat there peeping  
Half of them went to the shore  
Waiting for the horse that would soon arrive
- 74 *Pukul dua belas meriam ditembakkan  
Kudunya mereka di siapkan  
Sekalian kuli dikumpulkan  
Tabutnya ringin dahulu diangkatkan*  
At twelve o'clock the cannon was fired  
And they made the *kudus* ready  
All the workers were gathered together  
The *ringin's tabut* was the first to be raised aloft
- 75 *Kudunya ringin telah kelihatan  
Elok majelis bukan buatan  
Akan orangnya sangat berpatutan  
Melihat bibadal sangat ketakutan*  
The *ringin's kudu* was visible  
Its beauty and elegance were unmistakable  
And the people were very comely  
In throes of awe they watched the *bibadal*
- 76 *Ringin berjalan di Kampung Bangkahulu  
Sekalian yang gagah berjalan dahulu  
Pusta bibadal sangat terlalu  
Orang melihat pun bertalu-talu*  
The *ringin* walked in Kampung Bengkulu  
And all the strong men walked in front  
The *bibadal's* boat was something to behold  
There were endless people watching
- 77 *Kepada merinyu bibadal dapatkan  
Kudu ketiga disuruh angkatkan  
Perintahnya itu mereka turutkan  
Tabut ketiga mereka arakkan*  
The *bibadal* approached the inspector  
He ordered them to hoist the third *kudu*  
They followed his orders  
And carried the third *tabut*
- 78 *Bendera putih orang mulia  
Berjalan dahulu suka ria  
Panji-panji yang merah tiada berdaya  
Hendak dahulu tiada upaya*  
The white flag of the splendid people  
Was moving ahead joyously  
The red flags were exhausted  
Incapable of being in front
- 79 *Ajaib fakir tiada terperi  
Habishlah berhimpun isi negeri  
Rumah tangga anak isteri  
Tiada diendahkan dia bahari*  
Miraculous! beyond the *fakir's* telling  
The gathering emptied out the entire district  
Households, children and wives  
Were ignored, O nobles
- 80 *Khalayak berjalan tiada terkira  
Bertempik melompat dengan gembira  
Habishlah labu naik ke udara  
Dengarkan tuan fakir bersuara*  
Countless people walking  
Shouting and jumping in joy  
The entire bay went up into the sky  
Listen sir, to the *fakir's* voice

- 81 *Perarakan siang sebagai silam  
Tiada fakir berpanjang kalam  
Ayuh ya Tuhan Khaliq al-Alam  
Mumin berperang dengan Islam*
- The procession made the day seem like night  
The *fakir* will not write much longer  
Come then God, Creator of the World  
The Believers are fighting for Islam
- 82 *Suatu lagi dengarkan tuan  
Akan hal perempuan berjalan  
Di bawah kudu berhimpun artawan  
Itulah pula orang bangsawan*
- Sir, hear another one  
About the ways that women walk  
Below the *kudu* the wealthy congregate  
Those are the people of noble birth
- 83 *Demikianlah hal perarakan silam  
Mencari terang cuaca yang kelam  
Pukul dua belas tengah malam  
Suramlah rupa cahaya nilam*
- This is the story of the evening's procession  
Looking for light in gloomy weather  
Twelve o'clock at night  
The light of the diamond was dimmed
- 84 *Setelah kudu dimasukkannya  
Mereka sekalian pulang ke rumahnya  
Masing-masing pasukan pertempatnya  
Baharu terkenang anak isterinya*
- After the *kudu* was brought inside  
Everybody went home to their houses  
Each troop in their proper place  
Only then did they remember their wives and children
- 85 *Al-kisah dengarkan tuan  
Hal Singapura fakir khabarkan  
Huru hara tiada ketahuan  
Sebagai orang mabuk cendawan*
- Sir, hear the story  
The *fakir* is telling about Singapore  
There was untold chaos  
As when a person is intoxicated with mushrooms
- 86 *Fakir nan tiada ke Singapura  
Takutlah fakir mem[b]uat pura  
Oleh menang mereka bercura  
Entah pun benar entah angkara*
- This *fakir* didn't go to Singapore  
and so is afraid of telling a lie  
After winning they made jokes  
Who knows if they are true or false
- 87 *Pada malam sepuluh nan hari  
Kudu ringin dikeluاري  
Elok majelis tiada terperi  
Bibadal jua menyesal diri*
- On the night of the tenth day  
The *ringin's kudu* was taken out  
It was beautiful beyond telling  
The *bibadal* also felt repentant
- 88\* *Di jalan bibadal diarakkan  
Kampung Susu fakir namakan  
Tabut bibadal ia tanggalkan  
Berjalan dahulu ia niatkan*
- The *bibadal* paraded on the street  
That the *fakir* calls Kampung Susu  
The *bibadal's tabut* was detached  
He wished to move it first
- 89 *Demi bibadal sudahlah lepas  
Ringin nan itu datang merampas  
Masyur Khan mereka habis dipapas  
Laksana jerat sudahlah bingkas*
- As soon as the *bibadal* was released  
The *ringin* came and took it  
Their own Masyur Khan was utterly robbed  
Like an empty trap that has been sprung
- 90 *Duit andil pelita tembaga  
Pajoh emas serbanika  
Sekalian itu disamun belaka  
Tiada sekali menakut mereka*
- The charity money and brass lamps  
Guzzling up all sorts of gold  
All of it was robbed in its entirety  
But it did not faze them
- 91 *Ayuhai tuan lihat termasa  
Shar Khan bibadal telah binasa  
Merinyu seorang empunya jasa  
Kepada ringin diberi sentosa*
- Come on, sir, and see what happened  
The *bibadal* of Shar Khan was utterly destroyed  
One of the inspectors was responsible  
While he left the *ringin* in peace

- 92 *Gagahnya ringin bukan buatan  
Mengharu bibadal bagi Syaitan  
Fakir pula barulah ketakutan  
Rasa nan hendak lari ke hutan* The strength of the *ringin* was beyond question  
He fought the *bibadal* like the Devil  
It was then that this *fakir* was afraid  
And felt like running into the jungle
- 93 *Halnya bibadal tuan dengarkan  
Dari atas rumah batu dilemparkan  
Merinyu seorang mereka tujukan  
Kena di bahunya lalu direjamkan* Sir, listen to what happened with the *bibadal*  
Stones were thrown from top of the houses  
They were aiming at the single inspector  
And hit his shoulder, and carried on stoning him
- 94 *Sebuah batu kena padanya  
Pedang dipegang dihunuskannya  
Kepada ringin lalu dititahnya  
Memukul bibadal yang disuruhnya* One stone hit him  
And he grabbed and unsheathed his sword  
He then commanded the *ringin*  
To hit the *bibadal* was what he ordered
- 95 *Merinyu itu sangatlah garang  
Ke rumah bibadal disuruhnya serang  
Oleh malam terang benderang  
Kelihatanlah bagai orang berperang* The inspector was very fierce  
He ordered the attack of the *bibadal*'s house  
By the bright night  
It looked as if people were at war
- 96 *Ajaib sekali subhanallah  
Laksana berperang sabilillah  
Merinyu seorang empunya olah  
Maka mereka hendak beralah* Praise to God! it was a wonder  
As if in battle in the way of Allah  
It was all the doing of the inspector  
So that they willingly surrendered
- 97\* *Beberapa orang dipukulnya  
Kemudian pula lalu ditangkapnya  
Kepada mata-mata diserahkan  
Kira-kira seratus perbilangannya* He beat up a few people  
In the end they were all arrested  
He turned them over to the policemen  
In total, around a hundred
- 98 *Sekalian itu bibadal belaka  
Merinyu seorang empunya jenaka  
Haram sekali tiada disangka  
Suap diambil berhati suka* Every single one of them was of the *bibadal*'s party  
The inspector alone was having fun  
The situation unexpectedly took an illegal turn  
Bribes were taken with delight
- 99 *Tua dan tempang sekaliannya itu  
Orang melihat permainan kudu  
Mereka sekalian ditangkapnya tentu  
Ajaib pula fakir di situ* Both the old and the disabled  
The people who watched the play of the *kudu*  
All of them were surely arrested  
The *fakir* felt astonished
- 100 *Demikianlah zalim diperbuatnya  
Di pasiban agong ditutupnya  
Perarakan kudu pun ditahannya  
Ringin Jawa yang dikejarnya* What he did was really cruel  
He held them at the main station  
He halted the *kudu* procession  
And chased the Javanese *ringin*
- 101 *Setelah selesai pergaduhan  
Mereka itu bersunguh bagai tabuhan  
Ya Allah ayuhai Tuhan  
Orang menganiyaya tiada tertahan* After the brawl ended  
They were buzzing like hornets  
Oh Allah, woe is me, oh God!  
No one could stand their tyranny
- 102 *Halnya bibadal tuan dengarkan  
Shar Khan ringin pula dipecahkan  
Kisah nan itu fakir ringkaskan  
Entah pun ia entah pun bukan* Hear sir the condition of the *bibadal*  
Both Shar Khan and the *ringin* were broken  
The *fakir* summarises the story  
Unsure if it's true or false

- 103 *Qudrat Tuhan Khaliq al-Alam*  
*Tamatlah ceritera perarakan silam*  
*Pukul nan dua tengah malam*  
*Tabut nan sudah masuk ke dalam*  
Power of God Creator of the World  
Here ends the story of the evening's processions  
Two o'clock at night  
The *tabut* had moved inside
- 104 *Setelah itu dengarkan warta*  
*Kelam kabut larinya kereta*  
*Kuda nan penat saisan berbantah*  
*Tuan yang naik keras perintah*  
Listen to what happened after that  
The cart moved chaotically  
The horses were tired and the driver cross  
The gentleman riding on top giving harsh orders
- 105 *Sebermula tuan dengarkan*  
*Rencana yang lain fakir uraikan*  
*Khabaran orang fakir wartakan*  
*Entah ia entah pun bukan*  
Hear sir, thus it began  
The *fakir* describes the other narrative  
I am now reporting hearsay  
Unsure whether it is true or not
- 106 *Singapura empunya kisah*  
*Di Teluk Ayer sangat termasa*  
*Berebut kudu penglempar jasa*  
*Mereka berkelahi sangat kuasa*  
Now for a tale of Singapore  
What happened at Telok Ayer was really something  
Jostling the *kudu* to gain position  
They began quarrelling fiercely
- 107 *Setelah berbunyi pukul dua*  
*Datanglah merinyu mencari ketua*  
*Tabut kedua disuruhnya bawa*  
*Engganlah bibadal takut kecewa*  
After two o'clock sounded  
The inspector arrived looking for the leader  
He ordered the second *tabut* to be carried  
The *bibadal* refused, afraid of being hurt
- 108 *Ketua berkata ayuhai tuan*  
*Tabut yang satu belum ketahuan*  
*Jika ia keluar kami berkawan*  
*Pinta dititahkan dia bangsawan*  
The leader said, 'Come on sir,  
Nobody knows where the first *tabut* is  
If the *kudu* comes out, we would be friendly  
I'm begging you to do as ordered by this noble man'
- 109 *Kembalilah merinyu dengan sangat*  
*Kudu yang satu dikerahnya sangat*  
*Akan mereka tiada sabahat*  
*Takut dipalu ringin yang jahat*  
The inspector quickly returned  
The first *kudu* was asked to move  
Between them there was no conspiracy  
They were afraid of being beaten by the bad *ringin*
- 110 *Marahlah merinyu bukan buatan*  
*Kudu ringin disuruh angkatkan*  
*Perintahnya itu mereka kabulkan*  
*Ke Kampung Susu kudu diarakkan*  
The inspector was really very angry  
The *kudu* of the *ringin* was ordered to be carried away  
They followed his orders  
and paraded the *kudu* towards Kampung Susu
- 111 *Demi sampai kudu di situ*  
*Akan bibadal direjamnya batu*  
*Kain minyak bernyalalah tentu*  
*Seraya dilempar ke kudu nan itu*  
Just as the *kudu* reached the place  
They threw rocks at the *bibadal*  
An oiled cloth was lit on fire  
And then they threw it at the *kudu*
- 112 *Api nan itu mereka padamkan*  
*Kepada merinyu mereka sampaikan*  
*Gusarnya merinyu tiada terperikan*  
*Memukul bibadal ia titahkan*  
They put out the fire  
And sent word to the inspector  
The inspector was angered beyond telling  
He ordered the beating of the *bibadal*
- 113 *Ajaib fakir Subhanallah*  
*Mumin dengan Islam bersabilillah*  
*Kepada maksiat mereka beralah*  
*Gemarlaha pula perbuat olah*  
Dear God! the *fakir* was in awe  
The Believers fought for Islam in the cause of Allah  
They gave in to wickedness  
And did whatever they pleased

- 114\* *Berkelahi nan itu laksana perang  
Sebagai ayam naik gembirang  
Pulang ke rumah baharulah girang  
Baharulah sesal mereka menyerang*
- The skirmishing was like a war  
Fired up like cocks eager to fight  
Only when returning home, happy,  
Did they regret their attacks
- 115 *Kisah nan itu fakir ringkaskan  
Barang maklum tuan bacakan  
Sekadar kias darvish rencanakan  
Akan peringatan gharib pohonkan*
- The *fakir* summarises the story  
For you to comprehend and read  
The dervish recounts it as but a tale of instruction,  
This *gharib* begs you to take it as a memorial
- 116\* *Takutlah fakir berbuat pura  
Kerana tidak ke Singapura  
Sekadar menang orang bercura  
Mohonlah fakir membuat angkara*
- The *fakir* is afraid of fabrication  
As he did not go to Singapore  
Even as they won, people were jesting  
Asking me to commit a wrongdoing
- 117 *Ajaib fakir bukan buatan  
Mereka berkelahi sebagai Syaitan  
Merinyu seorang empunya hasutan  
Maka demikian jadi perbuatan*
- The *fakir* was truly amazed  
They were quarrelling like the Devil  
The inspector himself provoked them  
And that is why it turned into a scene
- 118 *Kedua pihak sama beraninya  
Kompeni Inggeris tiada diendahnya  
Palu memalu sama keduanya  
Ditangkap Kompeni seraya ditutupnya*
- Both sides were equally brave  
They ignored the English Company  
Both were beating each other  
And were caught by the Company and arrested
- 119 *Tabut Bangkahulu empunya kisah  
Mengarak kudu dengan termasa  
Kudu ringin putuslah asa  
Hendak mendahului tiada kuasa*
- The story of the Bengkulu *tabut*  
Is of a *kudu* paraded with joy  
But the *ringin*'s *kudu* party was without hope  
Without energy left to lead
- 120 *Akan permainan jangan dikata  
Sebagai <sehari?> malam empunya warta  
Ramainya khalayak tiada terderita  
Melihat perarak usungan dewata*
- The game was beyond words  
Like the story of the night  
The crush of people was unbearable  
Watching the carrying of the vehicle of the gods
- 121\* *Akan sekalian muda teruna  
Memakai pakaian sangat sempurna  
Parasnya bagai Ratu Ranjuna  
Perawan melihat gundah gulana*
- All the young people  
Wearing really dashing clothes  
Looking like Prince Arjuna  
The maidens watching anxiously
- 122\* *Orang Boyan elok terlalu  
Bersifat bagai Raden Kalu  
Ya(i)tu salah pula anak Bangkahulu  
Cacat sedikit orang nan hulu*
- The people of Bawean were so good looking  
Looking like Raden Kalu  
The one from Bengkulu was a little off  
The person from the interior had a flaw
- 123\* *Susunan Belacan dastarnya  
Muncung Melayang ikatan kainnya  
Pencawarna akan salurnya  
Payung Sitin akan naungannya*
- His headgear was called 'Shrimp Paste Arrangement'  
His knot was called 'Floating Snout'  
Multicoloured were his trousers  
'Satin Umbrella' was his shade
- 124 *Setelah itu dengarkan tuan  
Pukul nan empat sudahkah tuan  
Mereka berjalan silu-siluan  
Terkenang syahidun yang bangsawan*
- After that, listen sir,  
It was already four o'clock  
Everyone was walking with reserve  
In remembrance of the noble Martyrs

- 125 *Ke tepi sungai sampailah tabut  
Berlari kereta kelam nan kabut  
Laksana turun taufan dan ribut  
Fakir melihat berasa takut*  
The *tabut* reached the river bank  
Moving in a chaotic manner  
A wind whipped up and a storm came down  
The *fakir* looked on anxiously
- 126\* *Ke tepi sungai kudu diletakkan  
Akan yang syahid Fatihah dibacakan  
Demi tamat kudu ditolakkan  
Demikianlah hal riyal dihabiskan*  
The *kudu* was placed on the river bank  
The *Fatihah* was read for the Martyrs  
As soon as it finished, the *kudu* was pushed out  
And this was the way the money was spent
- 127 *Kudu nan ringin demikian juga  
Ke dalam sungai dibuang belaka  
Akan giruh jugi jenaka  
Mereka nan mandi menolak celaka*  
The *kudu* of the *ringin* and everything with it  
was simply tossed into the river  
The squadron joked with the battalion  
They bathed to avoid any misfortune
- 128\* *Setelah selesailah sekaliannya  
Pulanglah melayang-layang ke tempatnya  
Akan sungai-sungai rupanya  
Hanya sekalian banyak lautannya*  
After it was finished, everyone  
Returned, floating, to their places  
In the end all rivers  
Only come together in many oceans
- 129 *Kudu ketika tuan dengarkan  
Kepada yang membaca fakir mema'lumkan  
Juwita bulan mereka perbuatkan  
Cerita hati mereka sampaikan*  
Hear, sirs, about the *kudu* at that moment  
The *fakir* explains to those who read  
They made the month precious  
They told stories of the heart
- 130 *Kalian dengarkan cura  
Kisah nan tabut di Singapura  
Setelah selesai huru nan hara  
Diarak keluar orang segera*  
You must hear of a jest  
The story of the *tabut* in Singapore  
After the riots and chaos ended  
Everyone were swiftly paraded out
- 131 *Ceriteranya itu telah mazkur  
Dibunyi berbangkit kelam kabur  
Tunduk fakir seraya terpekur  
Itu karangan di sebelah timur*  
The story has already been told  
At its sounding a state of confusion arose  
The humble *fakir* was plunged deep in thought  
The composition is from the East
- 132\* *Darvish tercengang sangat heran  
Bibadal jua sangat sukar  
Kudu mahu setelah ia tahankan  
Ke arah ketuanya telah ditutupkan*  
The dervish was deeply astonished  
The *bibadal* too was in real difficulty  
The *kudu* will be put away  
In the area of the leader
- 133 *Tabarakallah sangatlah cengang  
Habis berhimpun sekalian bujang  
Dilaksana orang akan bersombong  
Ke kudu ringin orang yang bajang*  
Blessed is Allah! Awestruck,  
All of the single men gathered  
Like people acting arrogantly  
The *ringin* of men like evil spirits went towards the *kudu*
- 134 *Kira-kira seribu nona bilangannya  
Kling Melayu kesemuanya  
Masing-masing memegang kayu di tangannya  
Laksana berperang pula rupanya*  
It was about a thousand young women in total  
They were a mixture of Klings and Malays  
Everyone held a piece of wood in their hand  
It looked as if they were going to war
- 135 *Dengar juga dia nurani  
Ramailah ringin tahan-tahani  
Lima orang merinyu Kompeni  
Dengan perang mereka layani*  
Hear this, too, about the radiant ones  
Many of the *ringin* were able to withstand them  
Five inspectors of the Company  
They acted with aggression

- 136 *Ke tepi sungai berhentilah kudu  
Fatimah dibaca dengan merdu  
Sekalian mereka lakun sedu  
Rupanya bagai perempuan yang rindu*  
The *kudu* stopped by the river bank  
The Fatima was read melodiously  
All of them sobbing  
Like a woman full of longing
- 137 *Ayuhhai dayang dia awang  
Kudu pusing tiada buang  
Banyak sudah habis nan wang  
Ke Singapura mereka nan pulang*  
Come on you ladies and youths  
The *kudu* was carried around, nothing was tossed  
A lot of money had been spent  
They returned to Singapore
- 138\* *Hati tuan dengarkan  
Di Kampung Bangkahulu mereka perbuatkan  
Akan ringin yang ketinggalan  
Habis dipalu dia taulan*  
Let your heart listen, sir,  
This all happened in Kampung Bengkulu  
The *ringin* that was left behind  
Was beaten up by their comrades
- 139\* *Garangnya mereka tiada terkira  
Jangan orang berdasar merah  
Memukul mereka dengan gembira  
Merampas sarban dengan segera*  
They were so unspeakably fierce  
What's more, the people with red head-cloths!  
Deal them blows with gusto  
Confiscate their turbans immediately
- 140 *Engganlah ringin jalan ke situ  
Pengikat kaki diutas tentu  
Empunya akan serinya itu  
Takut dipalu mereka itu*  
The *ringin* refused to go there  
His leg laces were securely fastened  
The one who was radiant  
Was afraid of being beaten by them
- 141 *Banyaklah ringin berawal palu  
Daripada anak Bangkahulu  
Lamun sahaja nan lalu  
Dapat tiada beroleh malu*  
The *ringins* were the ones who started beating  
Rather than the people of Bengkulu  
If anyone were to have passed  
They would surely be ashamed
- 142 *Setelah selesai sekaliannya  
Lalulah pulang masing-masing ke rumahnya  
Sekalian kota mengantar tuannya  
Pukul enam akan waktunya*  
After everything had finished  
Then each of them went home  
The whole town escorted their leader  
The time was six o'clock
- 143 *Akan seorang ditutupan  
Sekalian habis hakim lepaskan  
Ringin berdua ini belenggukan  
Dikurungnya <disitu/disana?> ia masukkan*  
As soon as a person was locked up  
Without exception all were released by the judge  
These two *ringins* were put in fetters  
He imprisoned them there
- 144 *Syair kudu tamatlah sudah  
Mengarang dia sangatlah gundah  
Jika janggal tua dan muda[h]  
Memohonkan maaf di dalam dada*  
The poem of the *kudu* is now finished  
It was composed with great turmoil  
If it is awkward, old and young,  
I apologise from the heart
- 145 *Hijrah Nabi sudahlah mutu  
Seribu dua ratus lapan puluh satu  
Malam tentu >...< >...<  
Syair ditamatkan dagang piatu*  
Since the blessed hijrah of the Prophet  
One thousand two hundred eighty-one  
<The evening .... surely>  
The poem is ended by a desolate stranger
- 146 *Tamatlah syair dengan sempurna  
Kalam ditekan <dijuang?> pun <lena?>  
Kertas nan putih cacar >p-u-h< nana  
<Meskilah?> kudrat Tuhan yang ghana*  
The poem ends perfectly  
The pen is pressed >...<  
The white paper is scratched >...<  
Although a cheap and lowly effort



## Notes to the quatrains

- 4 b The verb *mustari*, a divinatory action, draws on the Malay word for the planet Jupiter, *Mushtari*, which in turn comes from the Arabic المشتري . When auspiciousness is noted in Malay poetry it usually occurs in the introductory stanzas, together with information about the date of composition and the identities of the author and scribe. Although such attention to astrology has deep roots in both the Hindu-Buddhist ritual cultures of the Malay world and in Islamic literature, the convention was also strong in 19th-century Malay print culture: Jan van der Putten (1997: 721, 732) refers to the printing of a ‘chart with astrological calculations, the *Saat Musytari* (Auspicious Times),’ by a Riau lithograph press in 1856, and again in the mid 1890s as a foldout in a mosque almanac. It is fitting, then, that a religious scholar like Hassan Muhammad is the custodian of this specialised knowledge.
- 7 b We read the opening of this line as *masyawaratlah*, suggesting ‘taking counsel; a conference’ (Wilkinson 1903: 648). *Anaq bahāram*, here and in q. 65c, perhaps refers to Baharampur, a cantonment in Bengal, north of Calcutta. As Rosie Llewellyn-Jones (2007: 30) notes, it was established by the East India Company as a military station in 1763, and was the headquarters of the 19th Bengal Native Infantry, among the first regiments to mutiny in 1857. See Rajesh Rai (2004) for the centrality of the Bengal Native Infantry to early and enduring patterns of migration of north Indians to Singapore and the Straits prior to their 1827 replacement by detachments from Madras, and the locus of ‘Hindustani’ settlers in and around Bencoolen Street, Dhoby Ghaut, and Bras Basah.
- 10 d Here *sajakkan* urges the listener/reader to, literally, make the rhymes rhyme.
- 11 b The ‘tenth night’, or *Ashura*, refers to the culmination of the Muharram commemorations. In this case, 10 Muharram 1281 AH equates to 15 June 1864 AD (for the dating of the event and the *Syair*, see q. 145b).
- 12 b The *tasa* (or *tassa*) here is a small single-headed earthenware drum played with a pair of wooden sticks; see Kartomi (1986: 147–8; 2012: 79–80). Both the drum and the word are of Indian origin (see Kartomi *idem.*; also Sharif 1975: figure 6). Although Sharif does not explicitly associate the drum with Muharram, its use in south Indian versions of the processions is recorded in paintings, e.g. the Muharram scroll c.1840 (Butler-Wheelhouse 2016: cat. 38); see too the detailed study by Richard Wolf (2015) of the *tasa*’s use in transnational Muharram rituals dating back to the colonial era. Its use is attested in the *tabuik* festivals of Pariaman and Bengkulu (Kartomi, *ibid*; Mason 2016: 77). Interestingly, Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings (2010: 1002, s.v. ‘*tasa*’) list the word in their Indonesian dictionary as being Minangkabau, which likely indicates its entry into Indonesia and the Malay world via Sumatra, as well as that of the *tabut* commemorations. See also q. 65a.
- c This seems to be a shortened (or corrupted?) version of the Shi’a *Salawat* or blessings on the Prophet Muhammad. The full or correct version would read ‘*Allahumma ṣalli ‘ala Muḥammad wa ali Muḥammad*’ (O Allah, bless Muhammad and the household of Muhammad).

- 13 b The reference to *kudu borak* describes the effigies of the creature that carried Muhammad to heaven, representations of which feature in Muharram processions in India (Sharif 1975:156–7, 166), Sumatra (Feener 2015: 192), and here in Singapore. Wilkinson (1903: 127–8) provides pertinent observations, s.v. *borak*: ‘II. [Ar. براق: the animal upon which Muhammad made his journey to heaven] A mysterious flying animal endowed with supernatural powers. ... The animal *al-burāk* proper, of Muhammadan tradition, is believed by Malays to have had the face of a man, the body of a horse, and the tail and wings of a bird, while the Muhammadan confession of faith was marked in the colouring on its side.’ We may note that this configuration applies to Indian understandings of the *burāq* (see Sharif, *ibid.*). See also q. 43c.
- 14 a In an admittedly tenuous fashion, we read *rumah rajab* as ‘house of honour’. Rajab is the seventh month of the Islamic calendar, connected etymologically to the verb ‘to honour’ or ‘to respect’. Sharif (1975: 157, and figure 2) makes reference to an alternative kind of effigy which he calls the *shāhniṣhīn* or *dādmahal*. Garcin de Tassy (1995: 150) translates this former term, somewhat curiously, as ‘room of honour’ (this is not a mistranslation on the part of Waseem: the original French reads ‘*salle d’honneur*’. There may also be a connection to the term ‘Symbol House’, which appears several times in the testimony of the ‘Police Conspiracy Case’ and refers to the building in which an effigy was constructed or stored (see Lunn and Byl 2017: XXX).
- 16 b We leave Ali’s *orang dubi*, and other occurrences of the term, untranslated: that is, it could indeed refer directly to people as ‘dhobies’, or washermen; it could also mean the people of Dhoby Ghaut/Kampung Dhobi, which, as Savage and Yeoh (2013: 102–3) note, was an area populated by Indians, ‘Bengali and Madrasi’, and that ‘the whole area was associated with laundry activities’. Whether occupational or geographical, the terms are thus linked. See our longer discussion of the geography of the *Syair* in Lunn and Byl 2017: XXX.
- 17 c ‘Bengali’, as Rajesh Rai (2004: 1, 3–4) demonstrates, was an ambiguous term, not necessarily referring to the people or language of Bengal, but also used for upper India generally. Here, we might read it as equivalent to the linguistic term ‘Hindustani’. See also q. 35.
- d *Halqah al-mannan* (حالق المنان), lit. ‘the assembly of the bestower’. *Al-mannan* is one of the names of Allah; this presumably references a Muslim group of some description, though we have been unable to trace reliable references to what it might have been.
- 18 b Sharif (1975: 168–9, 174) makes reference to a figure who may be cognate with this ‘*Maliq al-Bahārī*’: ‘During the [Muharram] festival many persons adopt the garb and mode of life of Faqīrs ... [and] form a band ... The Baglā or Bagulā represent paddy birds. Ten or twelve men, all of the same height, smear their bodies all over with cowdung ashes, wear white paper caps on their heads, and loin cloths ... One of them calls himself Bhīrī or Bahrī Shāh, “King hawk”, and dashes at the paddy-birds, who escape and hide in the crowd ...’. His (Sharif 1975: 183, 185) observations on the end of the Ashura commemorations are also apposite: ‘Those who have acted as Faqīrs during the festival now lay aside the garb of mendicants and wash themselves and their ornaments. The members of every band ... offer the Fātiha over sweetmeats, give some to their leaders, and eat the rest themselves. ... The rites observed in southern India, of

- which the above is mainly an account, differ greatly from the distinctive mourning observances in the north, where no buffoonery such as that of the Muharram Faqīrs takes place.’. However, this masquerading was not in fact restricted to the south.
- 19 a We translate *merinyu* as ‘inspector’ although any kind of police officer might suffice, and Wilkinson (1903: 646) gives it specifically as ‘[Port. *marinho*] A forest ranger of the Land Office; = (in Penang) *dato’ kayu*’, evidence from other contemporary accounts leads us to believe officers of at least that rank were involved in the dispute (see Lunn and Byl 2017: XXX).
- 20 b *Barua* has entered modern Malay as a term of abuse, and Indonesian as ‘pimp, madam’ (Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2010: s.v. *barua*). The word’s origins are Indian, though it has a wide semantic range in Hindi/Urdu: ‘बोरुआ, भड़वा *baṛu’ā* भड़वा *bhaṛwā*, ‘One who lives on the earnings of a prostitute; pimp, procurer, panderer; attendant on a dancing girl (who beats the *mridang*, and assists her in the chorus when she is singing); blackguard; fool, blockhead’ (Platts 1884: s.v. *baṛu’ā*). In the testimony of the ‘Police Conspiracy Case’ (see Lunn and Byl 2017: XXX), a witness named ‘Raw Jannie’ [sic], a ‘Ghaut Sarang’ (fighting man?) or member of the White Flag society, was accused under cross-examination of keeping a ‘house of ill fame’ (*Singapore Free Press*, 10 May 1866, p. 5); while he denied this (‘I kept a beer house in a house where prostitutes were kept’), we may note the insult here is being made by Red Flag members against the *bibadal* of the White Flag. The term is explicitly linked to music, used for instrumental accompanists who acted as managers and were the *mridangam* players for troupes of Hindustani courtesans as early as the 1820s; additionally, north Indian courtesans or *nautch* girls and male musicians are documented in the Straits Settlements from the 1830s, see Schofield (unpublished) on James Skinner’s *Tashrīḥ al-aqwām*.
- d Tok Betara Guru is the Malay name for the Hindu god Shiva, the supremely potent deity of much of island Southeast Asia. Beyond his theological attributes, preserved in the *hikayat* literature, the god is widely considered to be the founder of good magic and mythological lineages, and is found in Sumatran Batak religious ceremonies, the Javanese *wayang* theatre, the Bugis epic *Il Galigo*, and in early colonial accounts of the Philippines. As such, his significance, though rooted in Indic traditions, is connected to local power, as attested by his persistent presence here, even within an Islamic festival. Philologist and colonial administrator W.W. Skeat quotes Malay magicians who consider Betara Guru ‘a spirit so powerful that he could restore the dead back to life; and to him all prayers are addressed.’ (Skeat 1965: 86–7). See also Wilkinson (1903: 91, s.v. *bětara*).
- 28 c We might also compare this *nobat*-like ensemble with that in Ahmad Rijaluddin’s brief but rich description of Muharram at Calcutta in 1810, incorporating ‘*gendang serunai nobat nafiri suling bangsi sangatlah ...*’ (Skinner 1982: 72–3).
- 32 d More specifically, according to Wilkinson (1903: 134, s.v. *buloh*), ‘*Buloh pěrindu*: the Malay Æolian harp, an instrument made of a tube of bamboo open throughout but with a string drawn across one end of it ... a simile for a sweet plaintive voice’. Kartomi (2012: 60) notes the relationship between this specific form of bamboo and shamanistic love magic in the Minangkabau south coast region of west Sumatra.

- 34 c–d In his study of Javanese Islamisation, M.C. Ricklefs (2012: 16–17) draws attention to the mid 19th-century emergence of a distinction between *putihan* (the ‘white ones’) and *abangan*, ‘the red (or brown) ones’, along lines of devout and nominal or non-observant Muslims. See our discussion of Red/White divisions in Lunn and Byl (2017: XXX–XXX).
- We take *posyak* to be derived from the Persian for cloth/raiment/attire (Steingass 1963: 260, s.v. *pošāk*, *poš*). *Sakhlat* as ‘broadcloth’ is well attested in the *Hikayat Abdullah* (see Wilkinson 1903: s.v. ‘*sakhlat*’, 373 and ‘*saḳalāt*’, 391); a much more recent Indonesian dictionary gives *sekelat* as a Persian derivation for specifically scarlet cloth (Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2010: 891). For the possible use of such cloths, see Lunn and Byl (2017), particularly figure 2, and note to q. 66c.
- 35 b/d On ‘Benggali’, see note to q. 17c. In a similar vein, ‘Jawi’ here could refer to either Malay or Jawi Peranakan (i.e. mixed-race) communities.
- 36 c See Wilkinson (1903: 566) on the Tamil/Sanskrit origins of *gerindam*: ‘I. [Tamil *kirandam*; Skr. *grantha*.] A smart saying or apposite quotation; a tag of proverbial poetry; a clever but not original remark’.
- d ‘Intoxicated by mushrooms’ as a metaphor for being in love. See also q. 85d. Taken together with *silu-siluan* of the previous half line (‘coy/demure’), we get an enhanced sense of romantic sentiment.
- 37 d The Jawi reads *za’īf* / ‘*dha’īf* (ضعيف); modern Malay/Indonesian *daif*.
- 38 b For *matagī* (متگی), we rely in part on the *Kamus Bahasa Melayu Nusantara* (2003), s.v. *matakao*: ‘*matakao gambar binatang yg digantungkan dan diletakkan di tengah-tengah tanaman tertentu sbg tanda penolak secara ghaib thd haiwan-haiwan yg sebenarnya (kebiasaan di Pulau Mentawai, sebelah barat Sumatera)*’. ‘Scarecrow’ could thus also be a close approximation in terms of function, but the use here in the Muharram procession suggests a more generic (animal) ‘effigy’. Note the Sumatran origin of the term, and Ali’s own Sumatran descent (q. 3a). For figures of animals in Muharram processions in Sumatra, see Feener 1999: 96 (on fish and birds) and n. 44 (on elephants and tigers), or Feener 2015: 193. See q. 50 here for a fish preceding one of the *kudu*. We might also note the Arabic-derived Persian and Urdu term *mattaki*, in the sense of ‘propped, supported’, found in Steingass (1963) and Platts (1884) respectively.
- d See Wilkinson (1903: 677, s.v. وارث *warip*), ‘Alive = *urip*’. Ali’s construction of *memwaripi*, if we read it correctly, appears to be unusual.
- 40 b We are unsure of this translation. Another possibility could treat the *adalat* as a rather different kind of noun: e.g. ‘The *adalat* was unable to count them’. Ja’far Sharif (1975: 170) makes reference to a figure in the bands of fakirs in the *tabut* processions whom he terms ‘the ‘Adālat Shāh’, the ‘lawgiver’, who is the director of movements or quartermaster’, who serves under the *sarguroh* (see Lunn and Byl 2017, n. 18) alongside a ‘Khalīfā, who is second in command, like a Wazīr to a King, ... Bhandārī Shāh, ... Iznī Shāh, ... Kotwāl, ... Dost, ... Al-hukm-i-lillāh, ... Amr-i-lillāh, [and] ... Naqību-l-fuqarā’.
- 41 c See Wilkinson (1903: 69, s.v. ایگل *igal*): ‘Spreading the tail – of a peacock ... *Mēraḳ mēngigal*: the peacock spreading its tail’.
- 42 a See note to q. 40b.

- 43 c See note to q. 13b.
- 53 d The line is ambiguous. Our translation relies on reading (ريبوه) *rībūh* as *rībūt*, while there is some ambiguity around *māras* as ‘fear’ or (as in Wilkinson 1903) ‘anger’.
- 65 a See note to q. 12b.
- 66 c *Puwada* (فوادا) here seems to be equivalent to what Wilkinson (1903: 476) gives as the Tamil-derived *puwadai*: ‘[Tam. *pāwādei*] Cloth laid down at a burial or wedding for the procession or guests to pass over’. See Lunn and Byl (2017: figure 2) in for a near contemporary image of a *tabut* procession walking on an apparently ceremonial cloth, painted by E. Schlitter at Singapore in 1858.
- 67 c Wilkinson (1903: 132, s.v. *bulung*) notes that *bulung ulu* is ‘the head-cloth of a *raja*, often used as a term of endearment’. Perhaps it might also be a term of respect.
- 69 b Wilkinson (1903: 537) gives the following for *konta* (s.v. كنت): ‘I. [Port. *conta*.] A reckoning, an account. II. (Singapore.) A tale-bearer, a scandal-monger.’ The Portuguese origins and specifically Singaporean sense of the term seem noteworthy.
- 85 d See note to q. 36d.
- 88 b ‘*Kampung Susu*’ refers to Cross Street; as Savage and Yeoh (2013: 95) remind us, the area was dominated by Indian communities at least until the 1920s.
- 97 c See Wilkinson (1903: 632), s.v. *mata*. He distinguishes between the meaning of the term in Malay states (‘a minor official’) and English territories (‘a policeman’).
- 114 b The final *ng* of *gembirang* appears purely for the sake of the rhyme.
- 116 d What we give as *membuat* appears to be written ممبايت /M-M-B-A-Y-T in the manuscript.
- 121 c ‘*Ratu Ranjuna*’ has a particularly Javanese association, according to Wilkinson (1903: 311, s.v. *ratu*): ‘Jav. A title given in Java to persons of either sex when of direct royal descent. The title is not used colloquially by Malays when speaking of their own princes, but it occurs in literature, and is sometimes applied to foreign rulers.’ Its use here, for the mythological Hindu prince Arjuna of the Mahabharata, thus seems appropriate.
- 122 a That is, people from Pulau Bawean, an island north of Java. See Kampung Boyan, former name for the area south of Kampung Kapor, on the Rochor river between Jalan Besar and Syed Alwi road (Savage and Yeoh 2013: 198). There is also reference in the testimony of the ‘Police Conspiracy Case’ (see Lunn and Byl 2017: XXX) to *boyans* carrying (or letting down) a *tabut* (*Singapore Free Press*, 10 May 1866, Supplement, p. 5).
- 123 In traditional Malay dressing, names are given to types of knotting of headgears (*dastar* or *tengkolok*) and the accompanying *samping* or skirt-like sarong worn by men. The last line’s ‘satin umbrella’ endows the quatrain with a royal tone, as elements of kingly regalia are also given proper names; however, the first couplet provides a farcical inversion of this custom in its reference to ‘shrimp paste arrangement,’ a distinctly homely reference. Notably, the Malay troupe from Bengkulu enables this playful yet learned subversion of customs: see too the almost regal description of that group and their *nobat* ensemble, in quatrains 28–9. And yet the ensemble’s use to play for this

masquerade of commoners again subverts the normal kingly prerogative of the reference. Finally, we note that a possible reason for the Malay references being a bit ‘off’ is provided in quatrain 122c-d: the upland origins of the troupe might explain the bungled execution of Malay expectation. Since the troupe likely hails from the urban Kampung Bengkulu, however, this too can be taken as a self-deprecatory conceit that only enhances the wit of the poet and the fun of the listener.

- 126 b The Fatiha is the first chapter of the Qur’an, read in the daily prayers and also in honour of the dead.
- 128 NB. from this point on, the final section of the *Syair* is handwritten in an exceedingly poor hand, distinct from the foregoing lithographed text. For a discussion of the physical copy see Lunn and Byl (2017: XXX–XXX).
- 132 a *Darvish* is our reading of possibly defective Jawi, which appears to read ‘دورش/*dūrish*?/D-W-R-SH’.
- 138 d Note the Tamil derivation of *taulan*: ‘A friend; a comrade’ (Wilkinson 1903: 203), citing the *Hikayat Abdullah*.
- 139 c We read *memukul* here for what appears to be *mepukul* in the Jawi.

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