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Ashura in the Malay-Indonesian World: The Ten Days of Muḥarram in Sumatra as Depicted by Nineteenth-Century Dutch Scholars

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ABSTRACT: There has been a dearth of studies in English on customs pertaining to the commemoration of the household of Muḥammad in Southeast Asia and the Malay-Indonesian world in the nineteenth century. This article aims to draw the attention of readers to an observation/report on the ten days of Muḥarram in Sumatra, Indonesia presented by nineteenth-century Dutch scholars. This work can be seen as a starting point for other researchers interested in investigating how Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Southeast Asian religious cultures and rituals are interlinked. In addition to describing the background and literature of the tāḥūt festival in Muḥarram and Dutch scholars’ observations, the English version of a Dutch article by Oscar Lewis Helfrich and his colleagues in 1888 is presented. It ends with a final word as well as a list of works on the tāḥūt in the Malay-Indonesian world.

KEYWORDS: Muḥarram; Ashura; Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī; Sumatra; Helfrich, Oscar Lewis; tāḥūt
An introduction to the tabūt festival

The tabūt festival is a popular cultural event in Sumatra, Indonesia which is recorded in Malay history and is found in literary works such as Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah (‘The Story of Muḥammad Hanafiyyah’), Hikayat Tabut (‘The Story of the Tabūt’), Cerita/dari/Tabut (‘The Tale of the Tābūt’), Hikayat Hasan dan Husein (‘The Story of Hasan and Ḫūsain’), and Hikayat Perinta Negeri Benggala (‘An Account of the State/Capital of Bengal’) by Ahmad Rijal al-Din. Moreover, Hikayat Hasan Husein Tatkala Akan Mati (‘Ḥasan and Ḫūsain before death’) [Ml.685], preserved in the Museum Pusat Jakarta, talks about the death of Ḫūsain and Ḫusayn – the two grandsons of the Prophet Muḥammad from Fāṭimah and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib – as two brothers, the older who was poisoned and the younger who was killed by [Raja] Yazid’s forces in Karbala. The Hikayat Hasan Husein Tatkala Kanak-Kanak (‘Ḥasan and Ḫūsain’s Childhood’) [Ml. 686] also relates the Battle of Karbala. The tabūt festival was observed in several regions of Indonesia and the Malay world. Gradually, it was abandoned, and it persists only in Bengkulu (as ‘ṭabūt’) and Pariaman, West Sumatra (as ‘ṭabuik’)³.

A review of the relevant literature demonstrates that one of the first studies pertaining to the death of Ḫusayn and his companions in the Malay-Indonesian world was published in Dutch in 1888 by Oscar Lewis Helfrich (1860-1958) entitled ‘Het Hasan-Hosein of Taboet-feest te Bengkulu’. After a century, the tabūt festival in Bengkulu was aptly analysed by Michael Feener in 1999. In this regard, Feener says,

[C]ommonly the Arabic word tabūt is defined simply as: ‘box, case,…casket, or coffin…’ And indeed in other places where processional Muharram observances are held, such as in Pakistan, the word is used to refer to coffins representing those of Husayn and sometimes also other martyrs of Karbala.

To develop the meaning of tabūt in the context of Bengkulu, Feener (and ourselves) employs the definition presented in Yule and Burnell’s glossary of Anglo-Indian terms: ‘Taboot, s. The name applied in India to a kind of shrine, or model of a Mahommedan Mausoleum, of flimsy material, intended to represent the tomb of Husain at Kerbela, which is carried in procession during the Moharram.’ The term tabūt is also
repeated under the entry for ta'ziyah: ‘In India the word is applied to the taboot, or representations, in flimsy material, of the tombs of Hussein and Hassan which are carried about in the Muharram processions [...]. The word has been carried to the W. Indies by the Coolies [...]’.

This term, as rooted in India, is aptly introduced in a well-known nineteenth century work, *Qanoon-e-Islam or the Customs of the Moosulmans of India*, in which it is said that:

> [T]he taboot alias tazeea (or bier) is a framework of bamboo in the shape of a mausoleum, (intended to represent the one at the plain of Karbulla erected over the remains of Hosein) made with a sort of net-work of paper nicely clipped (sometimes with plates of mica on the black) and pasted to it.

On this subject, according to Zulkifli,

Snouck Hurgronje provides us with an interesting account of the ceremonies related to Ashura festivals held in Aceh, as well as in Bengkulu and Pariaman at the end of the 19th century. He suggests that this celebration originated during one of two waves of Shi‘i influence in Indonesia in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, at a time when the British brought in Sipahis (Sepoys) from India.

Although the cultural impact of the Battle of Karbala in India has been well documented in Indian literature, the contribution of Helfrich and his colleagues was to trace the spread of commemorations of the battle from India to Bengkulu at the hands of Shaykh Burhan al-Din (Syek Burhanuddin), known as Imam Senggolo, and from Bengkulu to Pariaman at the hands of Kadar Ali. Furthermore, ‘informants in Aceh indicate that discharged sepoys brought tabūt with them when they sailed from Bengkulu to Kuta Raja and Sigli [...]. The varied forms of tabūt in Sumatra’s towns are probably the result of several process of transplantation and local development.’ Kartomi said that the story of the ‘Hasan-Hosen’ commemoration in Sumatra resembles the version mentioned in *Qanoon-e-Islam*. This account assumes that both Hasan and Husayn were martyrs. Thus the elegies sung during tabūt at Pariaman, in either the Minangkabau or Urdu languages, mention both brothers; for
example, reciters exclaim ‘kasihan Hasan, kasihan Hosen!’ (poor Ḥasan, poor Ḥusayn). On this matter, Drakard states that the

\textit{tabut} ceremony is still practiced on Sumatra’s west coast. \textit{Tabut}, otherwise known as the Feast of Hasan and Husain, is a Shi‘ite festival which mourns the defeat of the prophet’s descendants on the field of Karbala. The story of this defeat is known in the Malay world through the \textit{Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah} […]\(^{14}\)

It is worthy of note that in the language of Aceh an alternative name exists for the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar, Muḥarram, in which the \textit{tābūt} festival takes place. Revealing the influence of different versions of the story of the commemoration of the Battle of Karbala on local culture, Muḥarram is referred to as ‘Asan-Usén’ in Achenese, a name which Hurgronje assumes refers to Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.\(^{15}\)

\textit{Dutch observations of the tābūt}

In his essay, Helfrich, along with his colleagues, outlines the story of Karbala in the form of an annual religious and cultural practice of the people of Bengkulu. Some scholars contend that \textit{tābūt} festival shows the influence of Shi‘ism on Indonesian Islam; however, its religious aspect was gradually replaced with cultural and touristic facets in Southeast Asia. Some studies indicate that the influence of Sunni Arabs on Malay-Indonesian world in the nineteenth century vanished and altered the traces or purposes of Shi‘a rituals like the \textit{tābūt} in Indonesia as well. By contrast, some studies suggest that the influence of \textit{ahl al-bayt} in the Malay-Indonesian world transcends sectarian conflict and truly belongs to the people whose commemoration of Ḥusayn, to some extent, is not based on Shi‘a ideology. Azra also argues that Ashura or the \textit{tābūt} ‘are not fully shaped on Shi‘i traditions, because their Islamic practices are originally just similarities, empty from the theological framework and ideology of Shi‘ism.’\(^{16}\)

‘Hasan-Husayn’ or the ‘Tābūt Feast’ was particularly influenced by the \textit{Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah}, wherein it is mentioned that Gabriel gave a handful of earth from the land of Karbala to the Prophet
Muḥammad and ‘it was to be kept in a bottle, and, when the deaths of Ḥasan and Husain were near, the earth would turn red’. One fictional figure named Nastal, or Nastala, is frequently mentioned in some of the aforementioned hikayat, as well as in Helfrich’s essay, as one who played a major role in establishing the tāḥūt festival in Indonesia. The hikayat say that Nastal had injured the corpse of Ḥusayn (he is known as Amir Ḥusayn in the Cerita Tabut) in Karbala and, upon repenting, went towards Mecca where he was recommended by Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad to remove his sin by commemorating the martyrdom of Ḥusayn every year. The account of this story, as related by Helfrich and colleagues, has been translated from Dutch into English and is included for the benefit of the reader.

It should be noted that Helfrich’s notes on the history of tāḥūt, to a large extent, resemble the same story mentioned in Cerita/dari/Tabut [Ml. 145] preserved in the Museum Pusat Jakarta (‘Central Museum of Jakarta’); particularly a section in which Prophet Muḥammad, Umm Salamah, and Gabriel discuss the martyrdom of Ḥusayn by the people of Yazid in the field of Karbala:

\[\ldots\] Maka kata Jibrail, “Amir Husain ini, sepeninggal Rasulullāh dia/nya/mati terbunuh(h) oleh ka/h/um Yazid di padang Karbala.” Dan menjawab isteri Rasulu l-Lāh (ber)nama Umi Salamah, “Apa kenyataannya oleh kami esok hari?”

Maka jibrail pergi mengambil satu // genggam tana(h) di padang Karbala. Maka dikasi(h)nya kepada Umi Salamah. Dan kata Jibrail, “Simpan ini tana(h) baik-baik di dalam surahi kaca dan hendakla(h) diperiksa ini tana(h) seban tabun, pada tiap-tiap satu hari bulan al-Mubarram. Dan jika ini tana(h) menjadi dara, maka (h)ampirla(h)mautnya Amir Husain ini.” Dan itula(h) artinya orang membuat tanah(b) itu.18

This similarity shows that local folk prose based on Middle Eastern elements and figures were able to shape Malay customs and rituals in general and the tāḥūt festival in particular. Such folk prose could contextualize a new type of commemoration of Ḥusayn for a couple of centuries. Likewise, socio-anthropological studies conducted by international researchers (i.e. Helfrich and Feener) prove how the
inhabitants of Bengkulu were highly impressed by *bikayat* (‘stories’) to perform some specific day-to-day practices during the ten days of Muḥarram.19

**About Helfrich**

Born in Serang, Helfrich was the son of Conrad Helfrich, a Bavarian medical officer, and Jeannette Caroline Couvreur.20 He began his studies initially in Leiden, but then moved to Java in 1881. Helfrich was a knowledgeable geologist, geographer, and ethnographer of South East Asia in general, and Bengkulu and Krui (Kroē) in particular. During his life he was vested with various responsibilities; he was, for example, a government official for Besuki, Krui, Bengkulu, Aceh, and Palembang, and also a board member of the Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië.21

Helfrich’s essay appeared in the first volume of the *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, a bimonthly and multilingual journal dedicated to the study of cultural, anthropological, and ethnological collections.22 An English translation of Helfrich’s essay follows.

**Translation of Helfrich’s essay**

Het Hasan-Hosein of Taboet-feest te Bengkulu
The Hasan-Husayn, or *Ṭābūt* Feast at Bengkulu23
as told by O. L. Helfrich, W. R. Winter, D. M. Schiff

Mr W. F. Sikman, resident at Bengkulu, gifted several models, connected to the above mentioned feast, to the National Ethnographical Museum, and series of notes on the celebration of this feast, collected by the above mentioned gentlemen assisted by two Sipaijis. A part thereof, connected to the celebration of the Hasan-Husayn feast at Bengkulu, is published here; for which Dr Snouck Hurgronje at Leiden assisted us in editing. — J. D. E.

Every year in the month of Muḥarram, the first month of the
Muhammadan year, at the capital Bengkulu and in the principality of Krui which belongs to the Bengkulu area, there is a feast celebrated, which is known under the title Hasan-Husayn, or the ṭabūt feast, or as Ashura. The day of Ashura (10 Muḥarram) is, according to the orthodox Muhammadan creed, a day of fasting on which several facts are commemorated, including the heroic death of Ḫūsayn at the battle of Karbala (680 AD). This last event has now, especially in the countries where the Shi‘a have, or had, a large influence, been the cause of many celebrations, which have the sufferance history of the family of ‘Āli as its subject, but which originate from mostly non-Muslim customs. The account of this feast, as it takes place in Hindustan, can be found in the works on Islam in that country. In the East-Indies the Muhammadans in some areas make on the day of Ashura a special food. Unusual customs, as told in the mentioned accounts, are only to be found in Bengkulu, Krui, and here and there on the Sumatran west coast at Padang, as far as we know; maybe Bengali soldiers are the source of these when they came in the times of the British. Some specialities of the Husayn legend will be told below, where they add to the knowledge of these matters at Bengkulu, but in general reference to the mentioned accounts is deemed sufficient.

Of the event that occurred after the battle of Karbala it is told: the beheaded corpse of Ḫūsayn was left on the battlefield. A certain Nastal, Ḫūsayn’s servant, knowing that Ḫūsayn’s belt contained a diamond or a valuable talisman, thus he became greedy. Why, he asked, would I leave that precious trinket on the battlefield for scavengers? Is it not better if I made it my own? Putting his deed to his word; Nastal began to undo the clothing of the beheaded. While in the act, the hands of the headless corpse forced the hands of Nastal back, stopping the criminal in the act of his evil plans. Angered, he chopped off the hands of the corpse, while at the same time he heard thunder and bolts crossing the air in all directions, and horrifying sounds crept through him. The natural elements hit him so hard that he was immediately struck unconscious and fell on the ground. In the state of unconsciousness, Nastal had a dream wherein a crowd carried pyramid-like royal palaces, accompanied by harmonious sounds, human voices shouting: ‘Make room! Prophet Adam, Prophet Ibrāhīm, Prophet Mūsā, Prophet ‘Īsā, Lady Fāṭimah, and Prophet Muḥammad are coming to honour the emir Ḫūsayn.’ Following this dream, he saw Muḥammad’s face; the Prophet slapped Nastal in the
face and told him: ‘As a sign of your disgrace your face will remain black and your offspring will also be born with a black complexion.’

Nastal awoke after these words were spoken by the Prophet. Feeling remorse for his evil deed, Nastal began to sob out of sorrow and went straight to Mecca to visit the Ka‘bah to plead to Allah for forgiveness for his evil deed. Then, while praying, Nastal was noticed by a Muhammadan clergyman named Ja‘far ibn Muhammad Sidiq, who had just performed the circumambulation (tawāf) of the Ka‘bah. This person, finding him in a remorseful and black state, asked him what happened. Nastal told him about the sin he committed, his dream, and the words spoken to him by the Prophet. Ja‘far answered: ‘Nastal! You are a great sinner and your entrance in this holy place is not right. There is only one way you can receive forgiveness, and that is if you and your progeny hold a feast of remembrance concerning the life and death of Ḥusayn every year as a penance for the sin you committed.’ (This is according to the legend.)

Some of the above-mentioned Bengali soldiers understood themselves to be descendants of Nastal, and although there are no more Bengals by birth on Bengkulu, their descendants declare that they will commemorate the feast in detail every year from the first to the tenth of Muḥarram, as penance for the crime committed by their ancestor ‘Nastal’.

The fear that they will miss out on the greatest pleasure, namely, to see Allah face to face, if the feast is not observed, is so deeply entrenched with the Bengkulu descendants of Nastal that they do not dare to let the first to the tenth of Muḥarram go unnoticed. In addition, people are dedicated to celebrating the feast since they believe that through it they can fulfil certain wishes.

The term ṭabūt is understood by the descendants of Nastal in Bengkulu as a tower or pyramid-shaped little house and is currently the description of the feast itself. On the first day of Muḥarram, the feast starts with a parade towards a plain labelled Karbala, in Padnag Djati (in Penjingaham province), which is a small plain crossed by a small river. Upon arrival, the people take a handful of soil from the wet ground and bring it to the small offering house, the doerga. This act is called ‘carrying of earth’ (ambil tanah). This ceremony is connected to the following legend.

Hasan and Ḥusayn, while they were still infants, were sitting next to the Prophet’s wife, Amislamah (Umm Salamah), and the Prophet, when Gabriel appeared and told the Prophet: ‘Your grandson Ḥusayn will eventually be ruthlessly killed on the plain of Karbala, and to prove
I am speaking in sincerity, I give you a handful of soil from the plain of Karbala; I urge you to let your descendants keep it in a bottle after you pass away, and to present it for a day on the first of Muharram every year, to observe if it displays any traces of blood; this would mean that Ḥusayn’s end is near.

Upon hearing Gabriel’s words, Muḥammad started to smile. When Amislamah saw this, she asked the Prophet why he smiled. The Prophet told Amislamah that Gabriel had appeared and what he had told him, and handed her the soil with the request to preserve it well in a bottle and to bring it out every year on the first day of Muharram.

On the eighth of Muharram in the year 680 AD at the Kertas River, as the legend continues, Ḥusayn halted and ordered his followers to cut down trees to reinforce the tents. His followers cut down several small trees and noticed bloodstains on their machetes. Immediately, they told Ḥusayn, who informed Amislamah. She recalled Gabriel’s words to Muḥammad and hurried to open the sack containing the bottle of soil. To her dismay, she noticed bloodstains on the earth.

On observing her fright, Ḥusayn asked her what was wrong, whereupon Amislamah told the words of Gabriel. Hearing this, Ḥusayn decided to not go to Kufa but to wait on the plains of Karbala for the coming events.

Now, we continue with the description of the festivity. On the fifth of Muharram, the people collect stems from banana trees (ambil batang pisang). These are brought to the house of offerings and are covered with flowers which are stuck next to it into the ground. This activity is combined with the role play of the majnūns who are costumed children accompanying the people with music and dance (menari); the musical instruments used are the drum or tambourine (gendang) and the flute (soeling). This custom takes place to commemorate the celebration of the wedding between Ḥusayn and princess Shahrbānū (Hosein met de prinses Sri Banoe). The majnūns represent the young court ladies of Shahrbānū.

On the sixth and seventh of Muharram, peace offerings, consisting of rice, banana pastry, and money are brought to the doergas while saying supplications (duʿā) in remembrance (dhikr) of the deceased. The ceremony is supposed to commemorate the day before Ḥusayn’s journey to Kufa; on that day the graves and tombs of beloved ancestors are visited and offerings brought to honour them.

On these days the people celebrating also beg for alms (called djalan
It is recalled that the ones who stayed behind after Husayn were left in a terrible condition as they were the relatives of the slain and those taken prisoner, who [according to the legend] all started to collect alms to survive; the begging celebrants represent the pekirs [poor people, i.e. faqirs or fuqarā’]. Their prescribed clothing only consists of a piece of white linen, which is draped loosely around the body. 

With flags in their hands containing the names of ‘Umar, Abu Bakr, ‘Ali, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn, and several creedal statements, while beating drums and blowing flutes, the celebrants enter the quarters of the European immigrants and visit houses to collect charity. The parade is constantly accompanied by the majūns.

With each group of begging pekirs, one notices a person called the sa‘ai kora, or sa‘ai sekora, who supervises them. These persons represent the ones that watched and guarded Husayn’s children and his followers. Their clothing is made of the cloth of goeni and zak. It is not only the pekirs who go around begging, but the festivity as a whole ends up as one large day of begging, to the annoyance of conservative believers. The Bengkulus, who are not descendants of Bengalis, enjoy these parades so much that they follow the people celebrating, dressed in the most unusual costumes and disguised with a mask so they can participate in the begging. One group is dressed in shoes, black coats, and white trousers, with self-made train conductors or luitenantspet (‘lieutenant cap’), another group with long stockings, long shirts, and white trousers or in a fake bear or tiger skin.

These are the jesters who, through their frolics, make the normally calm Bengkulus laugh.

On the evening of 8 Muḥarram, the so-called penja jari (‘five fingers’/vijf vingers) or jari-jari (‘gold or silver fingers’) are given as offerings to Husayn and are provided with lighted candles and carried around (arak jari-jari) while playing lagoe matam, a sad musical march. This ceremony recounts the shameful crime committed by Nastal, when he cut off the fingers of his master. On the same evening, twelve offerings are also brought to the doerga, which contain rice (nasi-keboeli), emping, banana, and sorbat. This refers to the ‘doparmatam’, the twelve royal stepbrothers of Husayn, who all on the eighth of Muḥarram brought an offering when hearing of the death of Husayn. On the eve of the ninth of Muḥarram, Husayn’s turban is carried around, which is called ‘arak sarban’.

This ceremony refers to the equipment and dress of Husayn while
travelling to Kufa. The day of the ninth of Muḥarram is spent resting, as it is the hari soensan, or the difficult day, [seen as] the day of ʿUsayn’s death. Everyone stays at home; seriousness and silence pervades. The music is silenced. Frolic is forbidden. The believers cry and mourn and plead passionate prayers for the mercy of Allah to be on ʿUsayn so that he may rest in peace.

On the eve of the last day of the festival (10 Muḥarram) finally the tābūt is lighted and displayed to the audience. The silver fingers and the handfuls of soil are placed within it, while the sarban (turban) is laid around the tābūt. After the miadji (imam) makes a prayer at the doerga, the tābūt is taken up and carried around. Preceded by the miadji and several followers, who recite an appropriate formula, and followed by the crowd of disguised, dancing, and jumping jesters, the tābūt is carried to the Kota, while loudly calling out the names Ḥasan and ʿUsayn, and the playing of the flute and tambourines.

As any well-to-do, so-called descendant of Nastal has a tābūt, and every tābūt is followed by such a crowd, it is unnecessary to say that such parades remind us more of a cheering circus crowd than one would associate with any religious festivity.

During the parade, people treat themselves with cakes such as the koewe mitai, made of sugar, flour, and butter; the koewe emping made of rice; and also with roti benggala and nasi keboeli, while the ajer sorbat, which is made available to the crowds in pots around the doergas, is used as drink. On the day of the tenth of Muḥarram the cheering crowds gather around ten o’clock in the square of the Residential House, and the tābūts are carried around the Kota for several hours.

Around noon, the tābūts are taken to the square of Karbala while shouting the names of Ḥasan and ʿUsayn, and are then thrown into the river boeang taboet (saragat kadin). Before this, the silver and gold fingers and the sarban had already been removed, and are locked up for the next year’s festivities.

After this the crowd holds a meal, after which everyone goes home. Thus end the tābūt festivities.

Final remark

According to the abovementioned notes, it is apparent that the tābūt
festival narrated by Dutch scholars markedly follows Malay stories and culture originated from non-Malay sources. Indeed Indian Islam could receive, influence, and transfer the Middle Eastern elements to Southeast Asia, particularly the Malay-Indonesian world. Thus it would be expected to see a different version of the ten days of Muḥarram in Sumatra rather than a mere replication of Middle Eastern customs. The following works published in different languages dealing with the tābūt festival in Bengkulu, Indonesia show the importance of this event.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our gratitude to Amir Dastmalchian and Amina Inloes for assistance with editing.

Notes

5 Michael Feener, ‘Tabut: Muharram Observances in the History of Bengkulu’.  
7 Ta‘ziyyah is an Arabic term used in Iraq, Iran, and northern and western India in connection with the commemorations of the Battle of Karbala. In southern India the term tābūt is used, whereas in the former Dutch colony of Suriname, taja is the preferred term.
8 Ibid., 904.
9 Jaffur Shurreef, Qanoon-e-Islam or the Customs of the Moosulmans of India: Comprising a Full and Exact Account of their Various Rites and Ceremonies from the Moment of Birth till the Hour of Death, trans. G. A. Herklots (London: Parbury, Allen & Co. 1832), 183.
10 Zulkifli, The Struggle of the Shi‘is in Indonesia (Canberra: Australian National

12 Ibid, 79.

13 Ibid, 78.


17 In the initial passages of *Cerita/dari/Tabut* the name of Nastal is seen: ‘ada satu orang laki-laki (ber)nama Nastal, Ka/h/um dari Amir Husain. Dan Tatkala Amir Husain berperang kepada ka/h/um Yazid di tana(h) padang Karbala, itula(h) asalnya membuat tabut’.


19 To read about Shi‘a Islamic identity and rituals, see Chiara Formichi, Chiara, ‘Shaping Shi‘a Identities in Contemporary Indonesia between Local Tradition and Foreign Orthodoxy’, in *Die Welt des Islams* LIV, no. 2 (2014), 212-236.


23 O. L. Helfrich, W. R. Winter, and D. M. J. Schiff, ‘Het Hasan-Hosein of Taboet-feest te Bengkoelen’, in *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* I (1888), 191-96. In Helfrich’s article Bengkulu, a city on the west coast of Sumatra, has been referred to by its historical Dutch name of Benkoelen.

Frequently, in classical Malay literature, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq is written as ‘Ja’far al-Sidiq’.

At this point, the author cites ‘Taf/XVII, fig. 5’.

As Snouck Hurgronje notes at this point, one of the wives of Muhammad was called Umm Salamah, but this was not the grandmother of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.

Probably in order to resemble the funeral shroud (kafan).

At this point, Hurgronje notes the peculiarity of mentioning the names of two caliphs in this context, and suggests it is an example of the way popular tradition and literature of the East Indies Muhammadans accommodated ‘heretical’ Shi‘a practices.


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