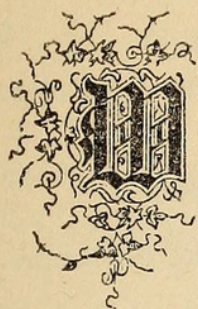


# MALAY PROVERBS.



WHEN commencing the publication of a collection of Malay proverbs in the first number of this Journal in 1878, I took occasion to explain that the specimens then printed were exclusive of a large number which might be consulted by the curious in the pages of the Malay-French Dictionary of the Abbé FAVRE and the work of M. KLINKERT.\* In order to make sure that I was not reprinting proverbs already published with explanations in French or Dutch by those authors, it was necessary to go carefully through their collections, many of the proverbs in which I had myself collected independently before those works came to my knowledge. In the course of this occupation, all the examples given by M. FAVRE were copied and translated. The publication of the collection of proverbs which appeared in the first three numbers of the Journal of this Society having, I have reason to believe, created some interest in the subject, I venture to offer to the Society this earlier collection, many of the examples in which are, perhaps, in more general use than most of those formerly published, though they are not easily accessible to Malay students who may happen to be ignorant of French or Dutch.

All the proverbs now published are to be found in the works of FAVRE and KLINKERT, but I have departed, in many instances, from the explanations given by those commentators, and am responsible for all that is here printed in small type. Some examples given by FAVRE as proverbs, but which are obviously merely rhetorical expressions or idiomatic phrases, are omitted.

The proverbs from the collection of KLINKERT are distinguished by the sign *Kl.* and reference numbers. The letter *M.* followed by a numeral indicates a reference to my own collection of Malay proverbs published in this Journal in 1878-9. *Hk. Ab.* signifies "Hikayat Abdullah"—a work by ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL KADIR, Munshi, from which many of these proverbs are taken.

The order adopted is alphabetical.

W. E. MAXWELL.

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\* "Eenige Maleische Spreekwoorden en Spreekwijzen, Verzameld, Vertaald en Opgehelderd" door H. C. KLINKERT.



1

اد كولا اداله سموت

*Ada gula ada-lah semut.*

“Where there is sugar, there are ants.” Kl. 63.

Where food is to be got, or money to be made, there people will always congregate.

Cf. *Lalat chahari puru*. “The fly seeks the sore.” Where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

2

اداكه اير يغر فنوه دالم توغ ايت بركوچق ملينكن اير يغر ستغه توغ  
ايت جوڭ يغبركوچق

*Ada-kah ayer yang pènoh dalam tong itu ber-kochak me-lain-kan ayer yang sa-tengah tong itu juga yang ber-kochak.*

“Will water which fills a bucket shake about? It is the half-filled bucket which is unsteady.” Kl. 79. Hk. Ab. 108.

Really learned men make no noise, but only those who are moderately instructed.

The proverb is more familiarly quoted as follows:—

*Ayer yang pènoh di-dalam tong itu tiada ber-kochak, me-lain-kan yang sa-tengah tong juga.*

3

اداكه درفد تلاك يغر جرنيه ايت مغالير اير يغر كروه

*Ada-kah deri-pada tĕlaga yang jernih itu meng-alir ayer yang kĕroh.*

“Can muddy water come from a clear well?” Kl. 5.

From a good man, nothing but good can proceed. Hk. Ab. 400.

4

اداكه دوري دفرتاجم

*Ada-kah duri di-per-tajam.*

“Does one sharpen the thorns?”

If a person is thoroughly vicious already, what more is there to teach him in that line?

5

ادفون النجيغ ايت جكلو دفوكل سكاليفون براولغ ٢ جوڭ اي كقد  
تمقة يغر بايق تولغ اية

*Ada-pun anjing itu jikalau di-pukul sa-kali-pun ber-ulang-ulang juga iya kapada tempat yang baniaak tulang itu.*

“Notwithstanding blows, a dog will always come back to the place where there are plenty of bones.”

One always comes back to where one's real interests lie.



- 6 ادفون فيقية اية سام فيقية جوك دان يغ اغكغ سام اغكغ جوك  
*Ada-pun pipit itu sama pipit juga dan yang enggang sama enggang juga.*

“Sparrows with sparrows and hornbills with hornbills.”

“Like to like.”

- 7 ادفون مانيكم اية جكلو دجاتهكن كدالم لمباهن سكاليفون تباد اكن هيلغ چهياپ  
*Ada-pun manikam itu jikalau di-jatoh-kan ka-dalam lembah-an sa-kali-pun naschaya tiada akan hilang cahaya-nia.*

“A precious stone, though it fall into the mire, does not thereby lose its brilliancy.” Kl. 1. Hk. Ab. 330.

A man of good family and well-bred, though he should be reduced to poverty, will lose nothing of his natural nobility.

- 8 ادفون هر يمو اية دتا كوتي اورغ اوله سبب كيكيون مك جكلو تباد لاكي  
 كيكيون افاكه دتا كوتكن اورغ اكندي

*Ada-pun harimau itu di-takut-i orang uleh sebab gigi-nia maka jikalau tiada lagi gigi-nia apa-kah di-takut-kan orang akan dia.*

“One fears tigers on account of their teeth, but if they have no teeth left, why should men be afraid of them.” Kl. 80. Hk. Ab. 308.

Said of oppressors who are to be feared while they have power in their hands, but for whom one need not care once their power is gone.

Not a proverb, but a quotation.

- 9 ادفون هيتم مات اية دمانكن بوله برچري دغن فوتهن  
*Ada-pun hitam mata itu dimana-kan bulih ber-cherei dengan puteh-nia.*

“The pupil of the eye cannot be separated from the white.” (*i.e.*, they move together, not independently).

Said of things which though a complete contrast one to the other are nevertheless necessary one to the other. A quotation.

- 10 ارغ اية جكلو دباسوه دغن ايرماور سكاليفون تباد اكن فوته  
*Arang itu jikalau di-basoh dengan ayer mawar sa-kali pun tiada akan puteh.*

“Charcoal even though it be washed with rose water, will not become white.” Kl. 2.

“What is bred in the bone will not come out of the flesh.” See M. Nos. 6 & 7.



- 11 اصلن كودا اية كودا جوڭ دان كلدي ابة كلدي جوڭ  
*Asal-nia kuda itu kuda juga dan kaldei itu kaldei juga.*  
 "A horse is by nature a horse and an ass is an ass." Hk. Ab.  
 178.  
 We are what nature makes us and cannot alter our personality.
- 12 اڭكة باتڭ كلوار چاچيڭ گلڭر  
*Angkat batang kaluar chaching gelang-gelang.*  
 "On the log being lifted, out come the worms *gelang-gelang*."  
 Kl. 39.  
 Unintelligible. *Gelang-gelang* is the name of an intestinal worm.
- 13 افبيل اير تنڭ جاڭن دسڭك تياد بوي  
*Apa-bila ayer tenang jangan di-sangka tiada buaya.*  
 "When water is still, do not imagine that there are no crocodiles." Kl. 85.  
 When things appear calm, do not imagine that there is no possibility of danger. *Ne credas undam placidam non esse profundam.*
- 14 افاكه كون بولن ترڭ دالم هوتن جكلو دالم نكري التكه بايقن  
*Apa-kah guna bulan tẽrang dalam hutan jikalau dalam negri alang-kah baik-nia.*  
 "Why does the moon shine in the forest? Were it not better that she should illuminate inhabited places?" Kl. 7.  
 Why go and do great things in a foreign country? Would it not be better to do them in one's own country for the benefit of friends and relations? See M. No. 4.
- 15 افى اية فد تتكل كچيل ياءية كاون اڭبيل بسر منجادي لاون  
*Api itu pada tatkala kechil iya itu kawan apabila besar men-jadi lawan.*  
 "Fire when small is a friend, but when large it is an enemy."  
 Kl. 81. Hk. Ab. 432.  
 This proverb comes from the "Hikayat Abdullah." ABDULLAH was accustomed to mix with English people a good deal, and it is probable that he may have heard the saying "Fire is a good servant but a bad master," and put it into Malay.  
 There is no allegorical meaning. This is a simple phrase or statement.



16

امبل فانيو بواغن همفسن

*Ambil pati-nia buang-kan hampas-nia.*

“To take the sediment (flour of sago or tapioca) and throw  
“away the refuse (fibre).” Kl. 84.

To take out of a thing what is good and reject what is worthless.

17

انتغ سابوت تمبول انتغ باتو تڭكلم

*Untong sabut timbul, untong batu tinggalam.*

“The lot of cocoa-nut fibre is to float, and the lot of a stone is  
“to sink.” Hk. Ab. 217.

Each one must take what chance and fortune send him.

18

انده خبردري روف

*Endah khabar deri rupa.*

“The rumour is better than the reality.” Kl. 38.

Said of something which has been over-rated by public report and which  
produces a feeling of disappointment when encountered for the first time.

19

انق ۲ ايكن كچيل منجادي مكانن ايكن يڭيسر

*Anak-anak ikan kechil men-jadi makan-an ikan yang besar-besar.*

“Little fishes are the prey of large ones.” (Sajarah Malayu, 6.)

The small are always at the mercy of the great.

20

انجيغ دتفوء كفلا منجوشكيت ايكور

*Anjing di-tepuk kapala men-jongkit ekor.*

“If you pat a dog on the head, he wags his tail.”

Take notice of an inferior, and he will be a thousand times fonder of you than  
you are of him.

21

انق كوچيغ منجادي هريمو

*Anak kucing men-jadi harimau.*

“The kitten has become a tiger.” Hk. Ab. 440.

A race which has improved, the descendants being superior to their ances-  
tors.

The same figure reversed is used to describe degeneracy:—

*Malu jikalau anak harimau men-jadi anak kucing.* “It is a shameful thing  
“if a young tiger becomes a kitten.” (FAVRE *sub voce* “Kuching.”)



22

اوبر ايرپ هيتم

*Ubar-ubar ayer-nia itam.*

“Water in which ‘ubar-ubar’ has been soaked will be black.”

A man takes the character of his associates. (MARSDEN.)

23

اورغ مغنتوق سورغكن بتل

*Orang mengantuk sorong-kan bantal.*

“Pushing a pillow under the head of one who is sleepy.”

Kl. 83. Hk. Ab. 3.

Said of praise or encouragement given to some one committed to a particular line of conduct and which is therefore sure to please him.

24

اورغيغ تانم فوكو ييور تركادغ تيا د ماكن بواهن

*Orang yang tanam pokok nyior ter-kadang-kadang tiada makan buah-nia.*

“It sometimes happens that the man who plants the cocoa-nut “does not eat of its fruit.” Kl. 78.

Said of some one who carries out some useful project, of which others reap the benefit.

25

اورغيغ منوغكو فريكي بيلا كه اي ماتي دهگ

*Orang yang menunggu përigi itu bila-kah iya mati dahaga.*

“Will the guardian of a well die of thirst?” Kl. 28.

Will a man who has the management of money allow himself to be short of it?

26

اوكر باجو د بدن سنديري

*Ukur baju di-badan sendiri.*

“To measure the jacket by one’s own body.” Kl. 41.

To judge others by ourselves. To attribute evil motives, because we are ourselves bad.

27

اولر د فوكل جاغن ماتي كايو دتاغن جاغن فاته دان تانه فون جاغن چاچه

*Ular di-pukul jangan mati kayu di-tangan jangan patah dan tanah pun jangan chachat.*

“Let the snake be struck but not killed, let not the stick in “the hand be broken, or the ground be disturbed.” Kl. 44.



Compare—

*Rambut di-tarik jangan putus tepong pun jangan ter-sêrah.* “If there is a hair in flour, pull it out gently and gradually, not so as to spill the flour.”

Go about a thing with discretion. The Perak version of the proverb differs from this. There the natives say:—

*Memukul ular biar mati, rumput jangan layu, tanah jangan lembab, pemukul jangan patah.*

28

امقام انجيث ماكن مونتهن

*Umpama anjing makan muntah-nia.*

“Like a dog which eats what it has vomited.”

A simile for stingy, miserly conduct.

29

امقام اورغ چمفق بوغا دبالس چمفق تاهي

*Umpama orang champak bunga di-balas champak tahi.*

“Like one who throws a flower and receives dirt in return.”

A benefit recompensed by ingratitude.

30

امقام اورغيث ممليهاكن ديرين دالم. سارغ ليه

*Umpama orang memelihara-kan diri-nia dalam sarang lebah.*

“Like the way in which a man protects himself in a bee’s nest.”

(Livre de Lecture, No. 7, p. 95.)

31

امقام اير دكغكم تاء تيريس

*Umpama ayer di-genggam ta'tiris.*

“Like grasping water without letting it slip through the fingers.” Kl. 169.

A simile to denote the extreme of stinginess.

32

امقام بواه كفايغ دماكن مابق دبواغ سايغ

*Umpama buah kapayang di-makan mabuk di-buang sayang.*

“Like the *kapayang* fruit, which stupefies if it is eaten and which it seems a pity to throw away.” Kl. 82.

Pretty but useless. .

The Perak version has *pahit* (bitter) for *mabuk*.



- 33 امقام کاسيهکن بوغا سچيفر تربواغ بوغا سکاکي  
*Umpama kasih akan bunga sa-chepir ter-buang bunga sa-kaki.*  
 "To throw away one flower in order to get a dish-full."  
 A little thing must be sacrificed to a great one.

(Livre de Lecture, No. 7. p. 95.)

The reverse is more easily intelligible:—

*Sayang-kan bunga sa-kaki ber-buang bunga sa-chepir.*

- 34 امقام کستوري کارن باوپ مک هيلغ پاواپ  
*Umpama kasturi karana bau-nia maka hilang niawa-nia.*  
 "Like the musk-deer which for the sake of its scent loses its  
 "life."

Cf. *Mati rusa karana jizak, mati kuang karana bunyi.* M. 301.

- 35 امقام کيجج درنتي دغن رنتي امس جکلواي لقس لاري جوک اي کموتن  
 ماکن رمقوت  
*Umpama kijang di-rantei dengan rantei amas jikalau iya lepas lari  
 juga iya ka-hutan makan rumput.*  
 "Like a deer fastened with a gold chain, if he is let loose he is  
 "off to the forest to eat grass."

No one can abandon his natural disposition. Cf. M. 6.

"Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop!" (DESTOUCHES.)

- 36 اوفس برهولم راجون  
*Upas ber-hulam rachun.*  
 "One poison mixed with another."

or

*Kachubong ber-hulam ganja.*

"One intoxicating drug mixed with another."

One evil or misfortune brings another.

"Misfortunes never come singly." Cf. *Lagi jatoh lagi di-timpa tangga.*

"Not only tumbled down, but hit the stairs into the bargain."

- 37 اونتا مپر هکنديري  
*Onta menierah-kan diri.*

"The camel resigns itself [to the load]."

Cf. "To kiss the rod."



38

ايتق داجر برنڠ

*Itik di-ajar be-renang.*

“The duck is taught to swim.” Kl. 77.

“To teach one’s grandmother,” &amp;c.

Cf. Javanese. *Bebek di-xuruk ngelangi.*

39

اير دتق تياد الكن فوتس

*Ayer di-tetak tiada akan putus.*

“Water cut will not split.” Kl. 49.

Quarrels between married people, or between relations and friends, are not of long duration.

Another version of the proverb is:—

*Ta’kan ayer di-parang putus.*

There is a Hindustani proverb nearly identical with it:—

*Lathi-se pani juda nahin hota.* “Water is not to be divided with a stick.”

(See Journal, Straits Branch, R. A. S., No. 3, p. 48.)

40

اير سام اير كلق منجادي ساتو سمفه ايت كتي جوڭ

*Ayer sama ayer kelak men-jadi satu sampah itu ka-tepi juga.*

“Water will mingle with water and become one, but the scum goes to the side all the same.” Kl. 57.

The great mix with the great and as a consequence the humble are put on one side.

41

ايم فوته تريغ سيغ

*Ayam puteh terbang siang.*

“A white fowl which flies by day.”

See M. 16 and 17.

42

بارغ تركغكم جاته ترلقس

*Barang ter-genggam jatuh ter-lepas.*

“That which was within the grasp falls released.” Kl. 93.

What we thought we held safely eludes the grasp.

An idiomatic phrase quoted when some misfortune occurs in an unexpected quarter, *e. g.*, the death of a child, or the faithlessness of a lover.

43

بارغسياف براني مغمغ تادافتياد براني ملاون جوڭ

*Barang siapa bĕrani mangmang ta’dapat tiada bĕrani me-lawan juga.*

“He who ventures to threaten should also be bold enough to fight.” Kl. 88.



"To make good one's word."

KLINKERT and FAVRE have *meng-amang-amang*. MARSDEN gives the word *amang*. In Perak the word is *mangmang*. Cf. M. 253.

44      بارغسياف معكالي لوبغ اي جوڭ ترفوسق كدالمث

*Barang siapa meng-gali lobang iya juga ter-prosok ka-dalam-nia.*

"Whosoever digs a pit he shall fall into it himself." Kl. 92.

Hk. Ab. 165.

He who lays a snare for his neighbour will probably suffer for it. Cf. Proverbs, XXVI, 27.

See Journal, Straits Branch, R. A. S., No. 3, p. 49.

45      باكي تندق برسندي گاديغ

*Bagei tanduk ber-sendi gading.*

"Like horn set with ivory." Kl. 163.

An unequal match.

46      باليق بلاكغ لايڻ بچارا

*Balik belakang lain bichara.*

"Behind the back another style of language." Kl. 87.

Said of false friends who say one thing to a man's face and another behind his back.

47      بايك ماتي دغن نام يغبايك جاغن هيدف دغن نام يغ جاها

*Baik mati dengan nama yang baik jangan hidup dengan nama yang jahat.*

"It is better to die with a good name than to live with a bad one." (Hang Tuah, 89.) Cf. M. 230.

48      براف برت مات ممندغ برت جوڭ باهو مميكول

*Ber-apa berat mata memandang berat juga bahu memikul.*

"Seemingly heavy to the eyes which look at it, but really heavy to the shoulders which have to carry it." Kl. 58.

A thing may seem easy enough to the looker on or to one who volunteers advice, though it may be quite the reverse for the man who has to perform it.

The man who has to do a thing knows his own business best.



- 49 براف تڭكى تر بغم باغو اية اخرپ هڭكف اي دبلاڭم كربو جوك  
*Ber-apa tinggi terbang bangau itu akhir-nia hinggap iya  
 di-bêlakang kerbau juga.*

“However lofty may be the flight of the white paddy-bird, it  
 “settles on the buffalo’s back after all.” Kl. 91. Hk. Ab. 108.

However long we may live in the world and however lofty our station, we  
 must die in the end.

- 50 براف فنجم لونجور بڭيتوله سليموت  
*Ber-apa panjang lunjur bagitu-lah salimut.*

“According to the length of the body, so must the length of  
 “the sheet be.” Kl. 71.

A man’s actions should be in accordance with his state in life. “Cut your  
 “coat according to your cloth.”

Cf. Hindustani. *Jitni chadar utna paun phailana.* “Stretch your legs  
 according to the length of your blanket.” (Journal, Straits Branch, R. A. S.,  
 No. 3, p. 50.)

- 51 براني مالو تاكوت ماتي  
*Bērāni malu takut mati.*

• “Ready to face shame, but fearful of death.” Kl. 94.

Said of those who prefer to suffer dishonour than to expose themselves to  
 the inconveniences attending the defence of truth and right.

The converse also holds good :—

*Bērāni mati takut malu.*

- 52 بر بويي باتو بر بوييله دي  
*Ber-bunyi batu ber-bunyi-lah dia.*

“When a stone speaks so will he.” Hk. Ab. 123.

Said of a person caught in the commission of an offence and who has no  
 answer to make.

- 53 برفيكر كن دوسنپ اية عالم اين دان بيلالڭ دسڭكاپ هلاڭ  
*Ber-pikir-kan dusun-nia itu alam ini dan bilalang di-sangka-nia lang.*

“To think that one’s village is the whole world and to take  
 ‘grasshoppers for eagles.’” Kl. 86.

- 54 بر كيلر كبور يتن  
*Ber-gilir ka-burit-an.*

“To wear ship.”

A nautical term, not a proverb.

FAVRE has misunderstood MARSDEN, from whom he takes the phrase.



- 55      بڠكي گاجه بولمكه دتوتف دغن پيرو  
*Bangkei gajah bulih-kah di-tutup dengan nyiru.*  
 “Can a dead elephant be covered over with a sieve?” Kl. 47.  
 Can an important matter be kept secret? Cf. M. 171.
- 56      بکيمان فوهن تيدقکن تمبغر دفانه هللتتر سبب بالوغ کوليه اد دباتغن  
*Bagei-mana pohon tidak-kan tumbang di-panah halilintar sabab  
 balung kulit ada di-batang-nia.*  
 “Why should not a tree fall when struck by lightning be-  
 “cause there is a double bark on the trunk of it?” Kl. 152.
- 57      بکيمان هاري تا هوجن کاتق بتوغ ددالم تلاک برتریق سلالو  
*Bagei-mana hari ta-hujan katak betong di-dalam tĕlaga ber-tĕriak  
 sa-lalu.*  
 “How is it that it does not rain since the frogs in the well are  
 “croaking incessantly?” Kl. 151. See *inf.* 83.
- 58      بلاکغ فارغ لاکي جکلو داسه نسچاي تاجم  
*Bĕlakang parang lagi jikalau di-asah naschaya tajam.*  
 “Whet the back of a bill-hook, and it will become sharp.”  
 Kl. 54.  
 A fool may be made useful if he be sufficiently instructed and polished.
- 59      بلوم دودق برلنچور دهول  
*Belum duduk ber-lunjur dahulu.*  
 “To stretch out the legs before having sat down.” Kl. 183.  
 To spend money not yet received. To count one's chickens before they are  
 hatched.  
 Often quoted in this form :—  
*Sa-belum duduk sudah dia ber-lunjur.*
- 60      بنتغ دلاغية دافة دبيلغ ارغ دموک تياد سدر  
*Bintang di-langit dapat di-bilang arang di-muka tiada sedar.*  
 “He can count the stars in the sky, but is not conscious of the  
 “smut on his face.” Kl. 73.  
 To see the faults of others while remaining blind to one's own.



61

بواين فون دكونچغ انق فون دچوبيت

*Buayan pun di-gonchang anak pun di-chobit.*

“To rock the cradle and pinch the baby at the same time.”

Kl. 76.

To work both ways. To take the part of one man openly, while secretly encouraging his adversary.

62

بودق ۲ مويية مندافت بوغا اداكه اي تاهواكن فاءيده بوغا اية

*Budak-budak monyet mendapat bunga ada-kah iya tahu akan faidah bunga itu.*

“When young monkeys get hold of flowers, do they know the use of them?” Kl. 90.

*Saperti monyet dapat bunga*, is the proverb, Hk. Ab. 108. The quotation above is only an application of it.

The simile is applied proverbially when ignorant persons get hold of something they don't understand the beauty or value of and soon spoil it.

63

بررغ كا كق اية چكلو دمنديكن دغن ايرماورتياد اكن منجادي فوته بولون

*Burong gagak itu jikalau di-mandi-kan dengan ayer mawar tiada akan men-jadi puteh bulu-nia.*

“You may wash the crow with rose-water, but its feathers won't become white.” Hk. Ab. 124.

Cf. *Arang itu jikalau di-basoh dengan ayer mawar sa-kali-pun tiada akan puteh.* *Supra*, No. 10. Cf. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?”

64

بوغاب دسونتيغكن فغكلن دتندغكن

*Bunga-nia di-sunting-kan pangkal-nia di-tendang-kan.*

“The flower is worn in the ear, but the stalk is cast aside.”

Cf. *Bunga di-petik perdu di-tendang.* M. 22.

FAVRE has *di-berak-kan* instead of *di-tendang-kan*, but I have thought the latter preferable.

65

بوه ممباچم بورق كوليتپ

*Buah membachang burok kulit-nia.*

“The horse-mango has an ugly rind.”

It does not follow that a rough exterior implies a valueless interior. An excellent man may have a homely appearance.

The *machang*, *bachang*, *ambachang* or *membachang* (*mangifera foetida*) is a fruit much liked by Malays as a *hulam*, or condiment.



66

بيالانغ تله منجادي هالغ

*Bilalang telah men-jadi halang.*

“The grasshopper has become an eagle.” Kl. 89. Hk. Ab. 4.

A simile used by ABDULLAH—not a proverb.

Cf. No. 21.—*Anak kuching men-jadi harimau.**Pijat-pijat men-jadi kora-kora.**Chaching men-jadi ular naga.*

67

بهاس اية تياد دجوال اتو دبلي

*Bahasa itu tiada di-jual atau di-beli.*

“Politeness is not sold or bought.” Kl. 22.

“Civility costs nothing.”

68

تابور بييجن داتس تاسيق تياد اكن تمبوه

*Tabur bijan di-atas tasik tiada akan tumbuh.*

“Grain sown on the surface of a lake is not likely to grow.”

Kl. 8.

To do good to those who cannot appreciate benefits is loss of time.

Cf. *Tampal-kan pasir di-awar lichin tiada akan lekat.* “You may dab sand on a slippery bamboo, but it won’t stick.”

You may lavish good advice and counsel on a fool, but it is a fruitless operation.

*Bijan*, *Sesamum Indicum*=*lenga*. KLINKERT has *biji-an*, seeds, apparently for *biji-biji-an*.

69

تاغن يغم چلاگ كرج جاته

*Tangan yang chelaka kerja jatoh.*

“In an unlucky hand everything fails.” Kl. 100.

FAVRE’S explanation is not lucid.

No secondary meaning. Not a proverb.

70

تاكوت تيتق لالو تمقه

*Takut titek lalu tumpah.*

“From fear of losing a drop the whole is spilt.” Kl. 36.

Excessive caution is not always the wisest policy and may defeat its own object. “Nothing venture nothing win.” See M. 223.



- 71                      تاكوٽكن توما دبواغكن كايڻ دري بدن  
*Takut-kan toma di-buang-kan kain deri badan.*  
 “Out of fear of vermin, to throw away the clothes one is  
 “wearing.” Kl. 26.  
 To sacrifice something important through magnifying some trifling danger
- 72                      تالي يڻ تيك لمبراية تاءسواغ ۲ فوتس  
*Tali yang tiga lembar itu ta'suwang-suwang putus.*  
 “A rope of three strands cannot be easily broken.”  
 Kl. 97.  
 Union is strength.
- 73                      تاهو ماكن تاهو سمڻ  
*Tahu makan tahu simpan.*  
 “As you know how to eat, know also how to save.” Kl. 75.  
 A maxim enjoining secrecy. The prudent sinner holds his or her tongue.  
 Often quoted in a *pantun* :—  
     Anak ikan di-makan ikan  
     Anak sia di-dalam tuar  
     Tahu makan tahu ber-simpan  
     Rahunia jangan bahagi keluar.
- 74                      تيل کوليت موگ  
*Tebal kulit muka.*  
 “The skin of the face is thick.”  
 Brazen-faced, shameless. An idiom only; not a proverb. FAVRE takes it  
 from a Singapore work, “*Hakayat Dunia*” (1855), p. 163.
- 75                      تفوق دادا تان سليرا  
*Tepuk dada tanya salira.*  
 “Strike the breast and examine the body.”  
 “Look before you leap.” Think over an undertaking thoroughly before  
 embarking on it. (*Livre de Lecture*, No. 7, p. 95.)
- 76                      تقوڻپ فون اي ماهو کويپ فون اي ماهو  
*Tepung-nia pun iya mahu kweh-nia pun iya mahu.*  
 “He wants both the flour and the cake.”  
 Unreasonable expectations. To want to eat the cake and have it too.



77

تلنتڠ بریسی ایرترتہارف بریسی تانہ

*Te-lentang ber-isi ayer te-tiharap ber-isi tanah.*

“Turned up filled with water, turned down filled with earth.”

Kl. 173.

FAVRE has quite misunderstood this phrase, which is not a proverb, but an imprecation. The context would be something of this sort:—“If I fail in my engagement may my fate be that of the cocoa-nut shell (*saperti tampurong iring*), may I hold water when turned up and earth when turned down,” that is “may I never have any luck, but live in misery.”

Similar imprecations are:—

*Ka-gunong ta'dapat angin ka-lurah ta'dapat ayer.* “May I (or he) ascend mountains and get no wind, and descend into the valleys and get no water.”

And—

*Sa'perti sa'pohon kayu di-barah tiada ber-akar di-atas tiada ber-puchok di-tengah-tengah di-gerek kumbang.* “May I (or he) be like a tree with no roots below and no shoots above and of which the trunk has been bored into by insects “(*i. e.*, an orphan, childless and diseased).”

This recalls the fearful curse in the Psalms: “May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow,” etc.

78

تلنجق جوڭ مپوچق مات

*Telunjuk men-chuchuk mata.*

“The fore-finger pierces the eye.” Kl. 14.

One from whom help was expected turns against us.

See *Pagar makan padi*. M. 115.

79

تلن باتو

*Telan batu.*

“To swallow stones.”

An idiom, not a proverb.

To keep a thing dark, *e. g.*, to find something which a person has dropped and to hold one's tongue about it.

FAVRE translates this idiom by “Filer doux” to “give in” or “sing small.”

Cf. *Telan bara*. “To swallow red-hot embers.”

Said of a person who is not particular what he eats—the clean or the unclean.

80

تمبو کرینگ

*Tembok kerring.*

“A dry wall.”

Said of a grasping, avaricious man. (FAVRE.)

Not a proverb. The idiom is not known to me, but *belulang kerring* is a common expression. See M. 134.



81

تولقكن تڭك كاكى برايون

*Tolak-kan tangga kaki ber-ayun.*

“Kick away the ladder and the legs are left swinging.” Kl. 74.

For explanation, see M. 43.

82

تياد روتن اكر فون بركون

*Tiada rotan, akar pun ber-guna.*“When there is no rattan, one must use *lianes*.” Kl. 98. Hk.

Ab. 163.

In default of the right thing, one must be content with a substitute.

Cf. “Half a loaf is better than no bread.” See M. 236.

83

تياد سبب ايم سيكور مغتمهوي هاري سيغ

*Tiada sebab ayam sa-ekor meng-tahu-i hari siang.*

“It is not by one wretched fowl that we learn that it is day-light.” Kl. 95.

The cock need not flatter himself that the world would not know it was day but for him.

Said of a busy-body who imagines that important events are due to him alone.

84

تياد ماكن نڭكارن مك كنا كتهپ

*Tiada makan nangka-nia maka kena getah-nia.*

“Without having eaten the jack-fruit, he is smeared with its sticky juice.” Kl. 99.

Cf. *Sa-orang makan nangka sa-rata kena getah-nia.* “One man eats the jack-fruit and all the rest are smeared with its juice.”

Quoted when a man gets into trouble without having partaken in the profits of an enterprise; or, where a whole family or community suffers suspicion or punishment through some misdeed from which only one of its members has derived any advantage.

85

تيدق تر باوا سكم

*Tidak ter-bawa sekam.*

“Unable to carry chaff.”

A sneer at laziness—“You are too lazy to carry *sekam* even.” A similar idiom is: *Berat siku*, or *pakei gēlang sampei siku*. “You can’t lift your arm” or “You have got bangles up to the elbows.”



- 86 تيف ۲ باتو يعاد برکوليق سلاو دالم سوغي اية تباداله دهغکف اوله لوموة اکندي  
*Tiap-tiap batu yang ada ber-golik sa-lalu dalam sungei itu*  
*tiada-lah di-hinggap uleh lumut akan dia.*

“Moss does not attach itself to stones which are continually  
 “rolling in a river.” Kl. 96.

This is suspiciously like a translation of the common English proverb: “A  
 “rolling stone gathers no moss.”

A genuine Malay maxim, which nearly approaches it in meaning, is: *Men-*  
*chahari jangan lincha.* “When seeking your livelihood don’t jump from one  
 “thing to another.”

- 87 تيف ۲ بوسق اية مرواف جوک اداپ  
*Tiap-tiap busuk itu meruap juga.*

“Every kind of filth gives out a smell.” Kl. 46.

Everything bad is discovered by means of itself.

A more proverbial phrase is: *Bangkei tiada ka-lihat-an busok-nia ber-bau.*  
 “The carcase is unseen, but its putridity is smelt.”

- 88 جاغن دکغکم سفرت بارا راس هات دلغسکن  
*Jangan di-genggam sa-perti bara rasa hangat di-lepas-kan.*

“Don’t take it up as one does a hot coal, only to drop it when  
 “it begins to hurt.” Kl. 45.

Do not undertake a thing because it seems easy, to abandon it later when  
 difficulties appear.

The proverb as quoted above is an admonitory form. In its simple form  
 it is only descriptive: *Genggam, genggam bara, rasa hangat di-lepas-kan.*

- 89 جاوه باو بوغا دکت باو تاهي  
*Jauh bau bunga dekat bau tahi.*

“From afar the smell is that of flowers, when close it is that  
 “of filth.”

Distance lends enchantment. Friends separated are most affectionate in  
 their letters, but when they are within reach they are liable to quarrel.

- 90 جک کربو دفکغ اورغ تالین جک مانسي دفکغ مولتپ  
*Jika karbau di-pegang orang tali-nia jika manusia di-pegang*  
*mulut-nia.*

“Men hold a buffalo by a cord, a man by his word.”

Different people are treated in different ways,



91

جکلو اولر میوسر اکر تیاد اکن هیلغ بیسپ

*Jikalau ular meniusur akar tidak akan hilang bisa-nia.*

“If a snake creeps round a root, it does not thereby lose its  
“venom.” Hk. Ab. 76, 108.

A great man may be courteous to those in humble position without losing caste.

92

جکلو براف بایق فون الجیغ میالق بوکیه بولمکه رنتوه

*Jikalau bër-apa baniaq pun anjing menyalak bukit bulih-kah runtuh.*

“Though any number of dogs should bark, will the hill fall?”  
Kl. 102. Hk. Ab. 163.

The clamour of the ignorant will have no effect on a wise man, who is not to be moved by noise.

93

جکلو تیاد دافه دبایقکی تنافی جاغن دچمکن

*Jikalau tiada dapat di-baik-i ketapi jangan di-pechah-kan.*

“Although you may not be able to mend it, you need not  
“smash it up altogether.” Kl. 104.

94

جکلو دهولو ایرپ کروه تاء دافتیاد دهیلرپ فون کروه جوئ

*Jikalau di-hulu ayer-nia këroh tiada dapat tiada di-hilir-nia pun këroh juga.*

“If water is turbid at the source, it will certainly be the same  
“lower down.” Kl. 105. (*Makota Sagala Raja-Raja*, p. 76. R. VAN EYSINGA'S Edn., Batavia, 1827.)

As a man's parentage is, so is his own character likely to be.

95

جکلو کاسیه اکن فادی بواغله اکن رمفوت

*Jikalau kasih akan padi buang-lah akan rumput.*

“If you value your corn, pluck out the grass.”

Sacrifice the useless to the useful.

96

جکلو سچاون ایرتاور دتواغکن کدالم لاوت بولمکه ایر لاوت ایه منجادی تاور

*Jikalau sa-chawan ayer tawar di-buang-kan ka-dalam laut bulih-kah  
ayer laut itu men-jadi tawar.*

“If a cup of fresh water be poured into the sea, will it thereby  
“become fresh.” Kl. 21.

Anything hopelessly bad is not to be cured by a mild remedy.



97 جكلو سفوهن كايو بايق اكرپ لايكي تكوه افاكه دتا كوتكن ريبوت

*Jikalau sa-pohon kayu baniak akar-nia lagi tegoh apa-kah di-takut-kan ribut.*

“If a timber-tree has many roots and is firm, why should the  
“tempest be dreaded.” Kl. 103. Hk. Ab. 163.

A man who through his family connections has many friends and followers  
and who is himself a man of strength of character, can afford to face all ordinary  
political storms.

98 جكلو منمفي جاغن تومفه فاديپ

*Jikalau menampi jangan tumpah padi-nia.*

“If you are winnowing, take care that the grain does not go  
“away with the chaff.” Kl. 106.

A general injunction to caution in performing any duty.

99 جوال ستر بلي مستولي

*Jual sutra beli mastuli.*

“To sell silk and buy a better stuff.” (MARSDEN).

To improve one's position. To get rid of the worse and get the better, *e. g.*,  
to put away a concubine and take a wife.

I have ventured to reverse MARSDEN's interpretation.

100 جوهري جوڳ يڠ مغل مائيكم

*Juhari juga yang mengenal manikan.*

“It is the jeweller who can tell a gem.” Kl. 101. Hk. Ab. 3.

Every one knows his own trade best.

Compare the Hindustani proverb:—

“Juhari juhar pachane.”

See Journal (Straits Branch) R. A. S., No. 3, p. 48.

101 چاچيڻ منجادي اولر ناك

*Chaching men-jadi ular naga.*

“The worm has become a dragon.” Hk. Ab. 4.

Figurative expression used of the growth of Singapore in the “Hakayat  
Abdullah.” See *supra* Nos. 21 and 66.



102 چڭگوڭ سڤرت انتان دڭوڭكيلاكن دوري

*Changgong saperti antan di-chungkil-kan duri.*

“Unsuitable, like using a pestle to pick out a thorn.” Hk.

Ab. 131.

A needle of course is the proper instrument.

This proverb has been misconstrued by FAVRE, who has translated *chang-gong* (incompatible), as “marvellous,” and has mistaken *antan*, a “pestle” or “rice-pounder,” for *intan* “a diamond.” See his Dictionary *sub voce* “*chungkil*.”

103 چو بيت فها كيري فها كانن ساكيت

*Chobit paha kiri paha kanan sakit.*

“If the left thigh is pinched the right will also feel the pain.”

See M. No. 59.

104 داونن جاته ملايڭ بواهپ جاته كفڭكل

*Daun-nia jatoh melayang buah-nia jatoh ka-pangkal.*

“The leaf falls off and is carried away by the wind, but the “fruit falls at the foot of the tree.” Kl. 20.

The worthless disappears and is forgotten, but that which is substantial remains.

105 دبوات دڭن كارن الله منجادي مرك الله

*Di-buat dengan karana Allah menjadi murka Allah.*

“Done for the sake of God, yet provoking the anger of God.”

Kl. 37.

The above is the version given by FAVRE, but the popular version is:—

*Di-buat dengan karana Allah men-jadi karana olak* (pretence).

Done with good intentions, but found fault with by others who attribute wrong motives.

106 دتاتڭ سڤرت مينيق يڭر فنوه

*Di-tatang saperti minyak yang penoh.* Kl. 69.

“Carried on the hand, like a vessel full oil.”

*Shair Bidasari*, 101.

Watched over tenderly and treated with great care, *e.g.*, a favourite child.



- 107      دتقوۋ ایر ددولغم ترفرچیق موک سندیری جوک  
*Di-tepuk ayer di dulang ter-perchik muka sindiri juga.*  
 “Strike water in a plate with the flat of your hand and it will  
 “fly up in your face.” Kl. 40.  
 If you publish the faults of your relations, the shame will recoil on your-  
 self.  
 Cf. *Mahu-kah orang meng-hujan-kan garam-nia.* M. 170.
- 108      دتمقة تیاد هلم کات بیلالغ اکوله هلم  
*Di-tampat tiada halang kata bilalang aku-lah halang.*  
 “Where there are no eagles, the grasshoppers say we are  
 “eagles.” Kl. 107. Hk. Ab. 163.  
 “In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed is king.” Journal (Straits Branch)  
 R. A. S., No. 3, p. 49.
- 109      دغرکن چرترا بورغ انق دفتکو دلفسکن  
*Dengar-kan cheritra burung anak di-pangku di-lepas-kan.*  
 “She listens to the tale of a bird and puts down the child  
 “from her lap.” Kl. 111.  
 Feminine misconduct.  
 Cf. M. No. 286.
- 110      دگغکم تاکوت مانی دلفسکن تاکوت تربغ  
*Di-genggam takut mati di-lepas-kan takut terbang.*  
 “Grasped, one fears it may die ; released, one fears it may fly  
 “away.” Kl. 61.  
 Something that one dares not keep for fear of injury to it, and yet is loath  
 to give up, not wishing to lose it altogether.
- 111      دهول تیمه سکارغ بسی  
*Dahulu timah sakarang besi.*  
 “Formerly tin, now iron.” Kl. 112.  
 Cf. *Dahulu intan sakarang jadi batu blanda.* “Once a diamond, now  
 “chalk.” Formerly honoured, now sunk into insignificance.
- 112      دودق سشرت کاتق دباوه تمقورغ  
*Duduk saperti katak di-bawah tampurong.*  
 “Sitting like a frog underneath a cocoa-nut shell.” Kl. 110.  
 Hk. Ab. 425.



Said of one who is in difficulties out of which he does not see the way.

113

دودق سقرت کوچیغ ملومفت سقرت هریمو

*Duduk saperti kucing me-lompat saperti harimau.*

“Crouches like a cat, and leaps like a tiger. Kl. 17.

A quiet person may come out on occasion and shew plenty of spirit.

114

روسق باوڠ دتمقا جمبق

*Rosak bawang di-timpa jembak*

“Onions are ruined when pressed down by their stalks.”

The illustration is taken from onions bundled up for export. *Jembak* is the group of stalks which spring from the bulb and which are cut off before it is dried. In packing there is a danger that the short ends of the stalks may press upon the bulbs and if badly dried cause them to decay. *Jembak* also means a double-handful.

Said of a person of great merit who is surrounded by common people.

Hang Tuah, 88.

115

روسق تافی کارن راگی

*Rosak tapei karana ragi.*

“The cake may be spoilt by the yeast.”

*Tapei* is a native delicacy made of *pulut* rice fermented by *ragi*, a kind of native yeast. If the yeast be bad the cake is spoilt.

KLINKERT'S version is *rosak ragi di-buat tapei*, “The yeast is spoilt by the “cake,” but I have been unable to get an intelligible explanation of this.

The meaning seems to be “an honourable name may be lost by a trifling sin.”

Cf. *Sabab nila sa'titik rosak susu sa'bēlanga.* No. 123.

116

سانو دتق سقوله ربه

*Satu di-tetak sa-puloh rebah.*

“One was cut, but ten fell.” Kl. 59.

Said when a reproof or reprimand addressed to one person applies to a great number.

117

سا کیت فندن تیدق تاهوکن دوری

*Sakit pandan tidak tahu-kan duri.*

“To feel the smart of the *pandan* without knowing that it is “caused by its thorns.”

*Sakit badan tiada tahu akan nnsib.* Not to know one's shortcomings,



Cf. *Parang ta'tahu di-tumpul-nia*. "The *parang* does not know that it is blunt;" it thinks that it is sharp.

- 118                      سارڻ اونه دماسفكي ڪٽم منجادي اومڻ  
*Sarang unam di-masok-i ketam men-jadi umang-umang.*

"When a crab (*ketam*) gets into a periwinkle-shell it becomes "an *umang-umang*." Kl. 124.

*Umang-umang* is the name of the soldier-crab when it is in a shell ; outside the shell it is *ketam*.

The meaning is: The same things have different names under different circumstances.

FAVRE in his Dictionary (following KLINKERT) has misunderstood the meaning of *umang-umang*, which he translates "*action de secouer, de remuer, de troubler.*"

- 119                      سبب برڪلاهي دڻن فريڪي اخڙپ ماتي دهڪ  
*Sabab ber-kalahi dengan përigi akhir-nia mati dahaga.*

"If you quarrel with the well, in the end you will die of "thirst." Kl. 27.

Don't quarrel with those upon whom your fortune depends.

- 120                      سبب بواه ڪڪنالن فوهنڻ  
*Sabab buah ka-kenalan pohon-nia.*

"The tree is known by its fruit." Kl. 48.

Translated probably from the New Testament, and therefore not a genuine Malay saying.

- 121                      سبب بهاس مننجڪن بڻسا  
*Sabab bahasa menunjuk-kan bangsa.*

"Manners betray rank." Kl. 43.

The full phrase is: *Usul menunjok-kan asal, bahasa menunjok-kan bangsa*. There is a play upon the words *bahasa* and *bangsa*. "Manners makyth man."

- 122                      سبب تياد تاهو مناري دڪتاڪن لمب  
*Sabab tiada tahu menari di-kata-kan lembab.*

"He who does not know how to dance declares that the ground "is wet." Kl. 67.

A bad workman finds fault with his tools. Another version is: *Di-kata-kan lantei ter-jongket*. "Declares that the flooring is uneven."



123

سبب نیلا ستیتق روسق سوسو سبلاغا

*Sabab nila sa-titik rosak susu sa-bēlanga.*

“One drop of indigo will spoil a whole pot of milk.” Kl. 35.

Hk. Ab. 124.

One little fault may cancel great merits.

Cf. *Panas sa'tahun di-hapus-kan uleh hujan sa-hari.* See *supra* No. 115.

124

ستالي تيگي واغ

*Sa'tali tiga wang.*“One *tali* equals three *wang*.”

“Six to one and half a dozen the other.” “As broad as it is long.”

The illustration is taken from the old Dutch coinage formerly in use in Malacca:—

1 real = 24 wang.

 $\frac{1}{2}$  real = 12 wang. $\frac{1}{4}$  real = 6 wang.Sa-tali or  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a real = 3 wang.There were ten *duits* to one *wang*. The *wang* was equal to two cents of a dollar, the *wang baharu* to 2½ cents.

125

سدغن كاجه يغبسراية يغبركاكي امفت لاي تركادغ ٢ ترسرندونغ

*Sedang-kan gajah yang besar itu yang ber-kaki empat lagi ter-kadang-kadang ter-serandong.*

“Although the elephant is so big and has four legs, still he “stumbles sometimes.” Hk. Ab. 76.

The proverb, as I have heard it quoted in Perak, is: *Gajah empat kaki lagi ter-sarok, ini-kan pula manusia dua kaki.* “The elephant which has four legs “stumbles nevertheless, so what else can you expect of a mortal who has but “two?” This is a Siamese proverb, and the Malays have got it second-hand:—

“L'éléphant, quoiqu'il ait quatre pieds peut encore faire un faux pas; ainsi “un docteur peut aussi se tromper.” (PALLEGOIX—Siam, I, 402.)

“If the mighty elephant, king of four-footed animals, is liable to stumble “and fall, in like manner the wisest man is apt to slide into error.” (Low—“On Siamese Literature”—Asiatic Researches, XX, 373.)

126

سدويت دبله توجہ

*Sa'duit di-bēlah tujoh.*

“To divide a quarter-cent into seven.”

An impossible task; a miracle.



- 127 سده تيدق ترسودو اوله اغسا بهارو دبريكن كشد ايتق  
*Sudah tidak ter-sudu uleh angsa, baharu di-bëri-kan kapada itek.*

“When the goose won’t have it, it is given to the duck.”

Said when a woman of bad character on a second marriage falls to man of lower rank than her first husband.

Something that animals refuse is a common simile among Malays for something completely worthless. *Tiada ter-jilat uleh anjing, tiada ter-sudu uleh itek.* “That which a dog would not lick or a duck put its bill into.” “Good for nothing.” Cf. M. 9.

- 128 سده داثة كاديغر برتوه تندق تيدق بركون لاي  
*Sudah dapat gading ber-tuah, tandok tiada ber-guna lagi.*

“If you have got a lucky piece of ivory, you don’t want horn” (*i. e.*, for making the handle of a *kris*).

If one has the best that can be obtained, one has no use for an inferior article. If a man is engaged to marry a rich and pretty wife, he is not likely to take one less desirable.

FAVRE, following KLINKERT, has *chindei* instead of *tandok* and translates the proverb thus: “When one has the magic ivory, the snake *chindei* is no longer formidable.” The sense of this is not apparent, and *tandok*, which is the version common in Perak, is no doubt correct. If *chindei* is the word, it means a kind of striped silk cloth used as a waist-band, but even so the antithesis is lost.

Cf. *Hilang buntat ber-ganti intan.*

- 129 سده كهارو چندان فول سده تاهو برتاپ فول  
*Sudah gaharu chendana pula.*

“We’ve done with eagle-wood and now it is sandal-wood “again.”

Repartee to one asking something which he ought to know and is believed to know already. *Sudah tahu ber-tanya pula.* “You’re asking what you “know already.”

- 130 سكهوه برجكوت تباد برجة  
*Sungguh ber-janggut tiada ber-jobah.*

“He has the beard truly, but not the robe” (of the learned man).

He is not what he professes to be.



131

سچو فوق تيا د بوله منجادي سکنتم

*Sa'chupak tiada bulih men-jadi sa'gantang.*

“A quart cannot become a gallon.” Hk. Ab. 261.

The Malay laws say that the object of every good *penghulu*, or ruler, should be to make the poor man's *chupak* hold a *gantang*. See M. 132.

132

سسل دھول فنداقتن سسل کمدین ایت سواتفون تیا د اٹ گونٹ

*Sesal dahulu pen-dapat-an sesal kemdian itu suatu pun tiada apa guna-nia.*

“To repent in time is gain, but to repent too late is useless.”

Kl. 118. Hk. Ab. 124.

“Post factum nullum consilium.” Cf. M. 207.

133

سکوتو براس باسه دتمفی تا برلا یغ داندغ تا برانته هو جغن تیا د سدود اوله ایتق

*Sa-kutuk bēras basah di-tampi ta-ber-layang di-indang ta'ber-antah hujung-nia tiada di-sudu uleh itek.*

“A measure of wet rice, if you winnow it the chaff won't fly, “if you sift it the grain and husk won't separate, and in the end it “won't be touched by the ducks.” Kl. 181.

Good for nothing.

Cf. No. 127. See also M. 278. *Saperti bēras kumbah di-jual ta'laku, di-tanak ta'mual.*

134

سفرت امس یغ سده ترسقه

*Saperti amas yang sudah ter-sepuh.*

“Like gold which has been stained red.”

A complimentary comparison in describing feminine charms.

135

سفرت اور ۲ دتاریق سوغسغ

*Saperti awar-awar di-tarik songsang.*

“Like dragging bamboos the wrong way” (*i.e.*, against the branches). Kl. 117.

Want of tact and management will often render an undertaking difficult. Applied to anything difficult to manage, *e.g.*, an obstinate child. Trying to teach him is like dragging a tree against the way of the branches.

*Awar*, or *awar-awar*, the large bamboo, is also spelt *hawar* or *hawar-hawar*.



136

سُفَرْتِ اَوْمِقْ مَمْبَتِيغْ دِيرِينْ

*Saperti ombak mem-banting diri-nia.*

“Like a wave which dashes against itself.” Kl. 123.

Useless rage.

137

سُفَرْتِ اَيْتَقْ مَنُفَرَكْنِ كَنْتُورْ

*Saperti itek menengar-kan guntur.*“Like a duck in a thunderstorm.” *Lit.* “which hears thunder.” Kl. 115.

Something that is completely lost upon the person who hears it. He hears, but is none the wiser, like the duck with the thunder.

138

سُفَرْتِ اِيَكْنِ دِدَالَمْ بَلَتْ

*Saperti ikan di-dalam bēlat.*

“Like a fish in a fishing stake.” Kl. 51.

Used in reference to a state of duress or subjection to the power of some one else, when freedom of action is lost.

Cf. *Laksana ikan di-dalam kēlung.*

139

سُفَرْتِ اِيَرِ دَالَمْ تَرَنْغْ

*Saperti ayer dalam ternang.*

“Like water in an earthen goglet.”

Said of a person who, after having been noisy, becomes quiet.

140

سُفَرْتِ بُوَهْ فَادِي مَاكِينْ بَرَايْسِي مَاكِينْ رَنْدَهْ سُفَرْتِ بُوَهْ فَادِي يَغْ هَمَقَا  
مَاكِينْ لَامْ مَاكِينْ تَغْكِي*Saperti buah padi, makin berisi makin rendah ; saperti buah padi yang hampa, makin lama makin tinggi.*

“Like an ear of corn, which the fuller it is of grain the lower it bends, and which grows tall in proportion to its emptiness.”

A man full of learning and ability is modest, while he who has neither is often full of vanity.

The idea is better put in the following admonitory form:—*Buat-lah 'ilmu padi makin ber-isi makin tundok, jangan buat 'ilmu lalang makin lama makin tinggi.*



141

سُفَرْت بُوغَا سَدَف دِفَا كِي لايو دِبَوَاغْ

*Saperti bunga sedap di-pakei layu di-buang.*

“Like a flower which is worn while it is pretty and thrown away when faded.”

Said of a woman made much of while beautiful and neglected when her youth is gone. See *supra* No. 64. Cf. M. 22 and 232.

142

سُفَرْت تَبُو اَيَرِپ دِمَا كَن هَمْفَسْم دِبَوَاغْ

*Saperti tebu ayer-nia di-makan hampas-nia di-buang.*

“Like sugar-cane of which one sucks the juice and throws away the pith.” Kl. 122.

To take out of a thing all that is good in it and then leave it. See *supra* No. 16. See the preceding.

143

سُفَرْت تَلُور دُوا سَبِنْدُوغْ فِجِه سَاتُو فِجِه كَدُوا

*Saperti telur dua sa-bandong pechah satu pechah ka-dua.*

“Like two eggs attached to each other, if you break one you break both.” Kl. 166.

Said of two persons closely related one of whom cannot be injured without injury to the other. The allusion is to the eggs of the lizard. *Dua sa-bandong*, two attached to each other. *Rumah dua sa-bandong*, two houses attached to each other.

144

سُفَرْت تَلُور دِهْوَجْ تَنْدَقْ

*Saperti telur di hujung tandok.*

“Like an egg on the end of a horn.” Kl. 120. Hk. Ab. 382.

Said of a risky undertaking or business. Ready to fall at any moment.

145

سُفَرْت تَمْقُوغْ مَنُوجُو جِيَه

*Saperti tempung menuju jih.*

“As the quoit makes for the peg.” Kl. 158.

Said of any one who goes for his object with swiftness and determination. This game and the technical expression used are unknown to me.

146

سُفَرْت تِيكُوسْ جَاتِه كِيرْسْ

*Saperti tikus jatuh ha-bėras.*

“Like a rat which falls-into rice.” Kl. 62.

Good fortune. To fall on one's feet. See M. 280.



147

سُفَرْت دَرِين دَغْن مَنَتِيمُون

*Saperti durian dengan mantimun.*

“Like the durian with the cucumber.” Kl. 165.

Said of two persons who have nothing in common, *e.g.*, the strong and the weak, or the wise and the ignorant.

148

سُفَرْت رَابُوق دَغْن اَئِي

*Saperti rabuk dengan api.*

“Like tinder with fire.” Kl. 114.

Two persons of equal courage and passion, ready to take offence; a word of calumny will set them at each other.

The words *sudah suntoh menyalak*, “if they touch there is a blaze,” are often added to the proverb, as above quoted, and complete the sense.

149

سُفَرْت رَاچ دَغْن مَنَتَرِي

*Saperti raja dengan mantri.*

“Like a Raja with his Minister.” Kl. 42. Hk. Ab. 414.

Said of two things which suit admirably. See Nos. 153 and 169.

150

سُفَرْت رُوس مَاسِق كَمْفُغْ

*Saperti rusa masok kampong.*

“Like a deer which enters a village.” Kl. 56.

To be shy and awkward in an unusual scene, like a country bumpkin in a town.

151

سُفَرْت چَاحِيغْ كَنَّا ايرِ فَاَنَسْ

*Saperti chaching kena ayer panas.*

“Like a worm touched by hot water.”

Said of a person who writhes under the blows of misfortune. See M. 181.

152

سُفَرْت چِنچِين دَغْن فَرَمَات

*Saperti chinchin dengan permata.*

“Like a ring with the stone set in it.” Kl. 42. Hk. Ab. 414.

Said of two things which fit exactly. See Nos. 150 and 169.

153

سُفَرْت چِيچِيكْ مَآكِن كَآفُور

*Saperti chichak makan kapor.*

“As a lizard eats lime.”



A Malay chewing betel-nut in his house wipes off on the wall the lime (one of the ingredients) which adheres to his finger. This is greedily eaten by the house-lizard, and has become a simile for any delicacy of which a person may exhibit fondness.

FAVRE has *kapar*, a moth?

154

سڤرت كافق مپلم بليو غ

*Saperti kapak menyëlam bëliong.*

“Like the axe diving for the hatchet.” Kl. 31.

Cf. *Saperti kuching minta api*. “Like the cat asking for a light.” She comes to the kitchen, but never takes the fire after all.

Said of a lazy or stupid messenger. He goes for something, but either takes a long time, or never comes back again.

155

سڤرت كافور دهوجڠ تلنڠق

*Saperti kapor di hujung telunjuk.*

“Like a little lime on the end of the first finger.” Kl. 178.

(Which the Malay, after preparing his quid of betel-nut, carefully wipes off).

Particular about a trifle. *Kapor di-hujung telunjuk handak di-buang anak babi dalam përut ta’sedar*. “The lime on the forefinger must be got rid of, but the pig in one’s inside is unnoticed.” To be very particular in condemning small sins, but to go on committing big ones and shut one’s eyes to them. Cf. Nos. 60 and 91.

156

سڤرت كايڤ خاص داتس دوري

*Saperti kain khasa di-atas duri.*

“Like fine linen on thorns.” Kl. 64.

Difficult to extricate. Requiring great care in handling.

157

سڤرت كربو چوچق هيدهڠ

*Saperti kerbau chuchuk hidong.*

“Like a buffalo with a hole through his nose.”

Bound to follow wherever he is led.

158

سڤرت كامبيڠ دكوليتي

*Saperti kambing di-kulit-i.*

“Like a goat being skinned.” Kl. 65.

Very painful; said of the death agony. Malays believe the separation of the soul from the body to be attended with great pain.



159

سڦرت کورا ۲ هندق ممانجت فوهن کايو

*Saperti kura-kura handak memanjat pohon kayu.*

“Like a tortoise that wants to climb a tree.”

Said of one who wishes to undertake a thing for which he has not enough talent or capacity. Cf. *inf.* No. 199. See M. 122.

160

سڦرت کوچيڻ بيرقکن رمبوت

*Saperti kuching berak-kan rambut.*

“Like a cat which has eaten hair and finds it difficult to digest.” Kl. 162.

To be in difficulty and endeavour to extricate one's self.

161

سڦرت کوچيڻ داتس تمبو

*Saperti kuching di-atas tembok.*

“Like a cat on a wall.” Kl. 50.

On the look out for any wind-fall.

162

سڦرت گاجه دغن سڱکلاپ

*Saperti gajah dengan sengkala-nia.*

“Like an elephant with his hobbles.” Kl. 167.

163

سڦرت گونتيڻ ماکن دعوڱر

*Saperti gunting makan di-hujung.*

“Like scissors which cut at the point.” Kl. 33.

Said of one of whom not much is thought, but who quietly and without noise performs his office.

164

سڦرت سي چابول هندق منچاڻي بولن

*Saperti si-chabul handak menchapei bulan.*“He is like the braggart who wanted to seize the moon.”  
*Sri Rama.*He wants to do something beyond his strength or power. *Si-chabul*, swaggerer, braggart.

165

سڦرت سڱاله موڱ دوا

*Saperti sakhalat muka dua.*

“Like broad cloth with two different surfaces.”

Rough (*hēsāt*) on one side and smooth on the other. “Double-faced.”  
See M. 76.



166

سفرت سوات بجي سساوي ددالم رمفوت

*Saperti suatu biji sesawi di-dalam rumput.*

“Like a grain of mustard in the grass.”

Cf. “Like a needle in a bottle of hay.”

167

سفرت سلودغ منولقكن مايغ

*Saperti saludang menolak-kan mayang.*

“As the palm-sheath shoots forth its flower.” Kl. 180.

To declare one's self (*menunjuk-kan rupa*); to publish what has been kept secret.

168

سفرت سوسو دغن شاكر

*Saperti susu dengan shakar.*

“Like milk with sugar.” Kl. 42. Hk. Ab. 414.

Suitability. See Nos. 149 and 152.

169

سفرت سيرة فولغم ككا كغم

*Saperti sirih pulang ka-gagang.*

“Like a betel leaf which returns to its stalk.” Kl. 161.

e.g. A dethroned king restored.

Cf. *Saperti janggut pulang ka-dagu; saperti misei pulang ka-bibir.* See also No. 177.

170

سفرت فارغ مات دوا

*Saperti parang mata dua.*

“Like a two-edged blade.”

Double-tongued.

171

سفرت فاسيردتقي فنتي مك تتكل تيمقس اير بولله كيت بر به اكيكن

*Saperti pasir di-tepi pantei, maka tatkala timpas ayer**buleh-lah kita ber-bahagi-kan.*

“Like sand on the sea shore on which we can mark out how far the water comes.” Kl. 164.

A man's servants or family know his disposition.



- 172      سقرت فٹکن دغن مٹكو ساله سديكيت هندق برنتو  
*Saperti pinggan dengan mangkok salah sadikit handak ber-antuk.*  
 “Like a plate and cup which on the slightest shake will knock  
 “against each other.” Kl. 159.  
 Said of two persons related to each other who are always ready to quarrel.
- 173      سقرت فوچق دغن فاله  
*Saperti puchuk dengan palepah.*  
 “Like the shoot and the leaf of the palm,” Kl. 170.  
 Mutual support. The fronds protect the tender shoot on which the life of  
 the tree depends.  
 Cf. *Saperti anar dengan tebing.* “Like the bamboo and the river bank.”  
 Inseparable, each has need of the other. When the bank slips, the bamboo  
 falls into the river. When the bamboo falls, it carries the bank with it.
- 174      سقرت فولو غ كنا سمبور  
*Saperti polong kena sambur.*  
 “Like a demon touched with holy water.”  
 To be in a state of fright and ready to beg for pardon.
- 175      سقرت فيكة كهيلاغن مات  
*Saperti pikat ka-hilang-an mata.*  
 “Like a horse-fly which has lost its eyes.”  
 To act in a blundering manner.  
 An allusion to a cruel practice of Malays who when they catch a gad-fly  
 pick out its eyes and let it go.
- 176      سقرة فينغر دبله دوا  
*Saperti pinang di-belah dua.*  
 “Like a betel nut cleft in two.” Kl. 113.  
 “As like as two peas.”
- 177      سقرت فينغر فولغر كتمقو  
*Saperti pinang pulang ka-tampuk.*  
 “Like a betel-nut which returns to its calix.” Kl. 160.  
 Cf. No. 169.



178

سفرة لوة دغن مركه

*Saperti lot dengan markah.*

“Like the sounding lead with its marks” (the knots on the cord). Kl. 168.

Said of a man learned and able who draws after him the ignorant, as the lead does the knots. *Lot*=*batu penduga*.

179

سفرت ممجنة تركنا سرودا

*Saperti memanjat ter-kena seroda.*

“Like climbing a tree and getting caught in the thorns.” Kl. 156.

To undertake a thing and not to be able to withdraw from it. *Seroda*, thorns, or some other obstacle tied round a cocoa-nut tree to prevent trespassers from climbing it.

180

سفرة منقوش تياد يربرس

*Saperti menepung tiada ber-bëras.*

“To make flour without rice.” Kl. 172.

To undertake a thing without the requisite knowledge or capital. “Bricks without straw.”

181

سفرت منيوط ائي داتس اير

*Saperti meniup api di-atas ayer.*

“Like keeping a fire alight upon water.” Kl. 70. Hk. Ab. 18.

Used by ABDULLAH in speaking of the difficulty his mother had in rearing him. As difficult as getting a fire to light on the surface of water.

182

سفرة موييت مندائة بوغا

*Saperti monyet men-dapat bunga.*

“Like a monkey which has got a flower.” Kl. 55. Hk. Ab. 108.

“Pearls cast before swine.”

See *supra* No. 62.

183

سفرة هريمو ميمبو بيكن كوكون

*Saperti harimau menyembunyi-kan kuku-nia.*

“Like a tiger concealing its claws.” Kl. 16.

A rich man who conceals his wealth, or a wise one who is modest about his acquirements.



184 سقرة هريمو مننچقكن بلغپ سقرة درين مننچقكن ثغساپ

*Saperti hariman menunjuk-kan belang-nia ; saperti durian menunjuk-kan pangsa-nia.*

“As the tiger shows his stripes and the durian its lines.”

Kl. 15.

A man of good birth exhibits signs of good-breeding, or a brave man is recognised by his pluck.

185 سقرت هله مپوئسغه اغين

*Saperti halang menyungsang angin.*

“As the fishing-eagle soars against the wind.”

Done for effect only, to look pretty. Swagger.

186 سقرة بنتغه برتابور بولهكه سام دشن بولن يغر ساتو

*Sapuluh bintang ber-tabor boleh-kah sama dengan bulan yang satu.*

“Will ten stars dotted about be equal to the moon by herself?”

Hk. Ab. 275.

Ten handmaids are not equal in beauty to the princess their mistress. One man of ability can do more than a dozen who are without intelligence.

187 سقوله كفل داتغر فون انجيغم برچاوت ايكور جوث

*Sapuluh kapal datang pun, anjing ber-chawat ekor juga.*

“Though ten ships should arrive, dogs will still tuck their tails between their legs.” Kl. 121. Hk. Ab. 275.

Whatever political changes may occur, the condition of the peasant remains unaltered.

See M. 104.

188 سمبول دافة توتقن

*Sumbul dapat tutup-nia.*

“The box has found its cover.”

Two things which suit each other, *e.g.*, a married couple who live happily. *Sumbul*=*chembul*, a small metal box or cup with a close-fitting cover, several of which are found in every betel-box to hold the various ingredients used in chewing betel.



189

سَمْبِل مِيْلَم سَمْبِل مِيْنَم اِيَزْ

*Sambil menyelam sambil minum ayer.*

“While diving, to take a drink.” Hk. Ab. 136.

To do two things at once, combine business with pleasure, duty with profit to one's self.

190 سِيْكَوْر كُوْمَنْ دَبْنُوْا چِيْنَا دَاثَةُ دَلِيْمَةُ تَمَافِي كَاچِهْ بَرْتَشَكْفْ دَبَاتَغْ هِيْدَغْ تِيَادْ سَدَرْ

*Sa-ekor kuman di benua China dapat di-lihat, tetapi gajah bertangkap di batang hidung tiada sedar.*

“One can see an insect as far off as China and yet be unaware of an elephant being caught on the bridge of one's nose.” Kl. 24.

It is easy to discover and magnify the defects of others, but we do our best to ignore our own.

Cf. *Supra* No. 60 and 155.

Another version is: *Sa'ekor kuman di sabèrang lautan nampak di-lihat, gajah di-pelupak mata tiada nampak.* The mote and the beam.

191

سَيِّكُوْر چَاچِيْغْ مَنَلَنْ نَاكْ

*Sa'ekor chaching menelan naga.*

“A worm swallows a dragon.” Kl. 119.

The weak defeats the powerful.

192

سِيَاْفْ مَا كَنْ نَشْكَاپْ مَكْ كَنَا كَتْمَنْ

*Siapa makan nangka-nia maka kena getah-nia.*

“He who eats the jack-fruit will get his fingers sticky.”

Cf. *Siapa makan chabei iya-lah merasa padas.* M. 85.

The person who does a thing is the one to bear the responsibility. See *supra* No. 84.

193

سِيَاْفْ بَرَانِي مَنَاشْكَافْ هَرِيْمُوْ

*Siapa bèrani menangkap harimau?*

“Who would dare to seize a tiger? Kl. 116.

Said of a dangerous undertaking.

194

عِبَارَتْ كُوْتُوْ بُوْلَهْ دَسَلِيْسِيْقْ

*Ibarat kutu bulih di-selisik.*

“About as easy as squashing a flea.”

i.e., A difficult operation.



195

عبارت نکري براوبه رسم

*'Ibarat negri ber-ubah rāsam.*

“Like a country which changes its customs.”

FAVRE reads *rasan*, which he supposes to be a corruption of the Dutch *grenzen*, and translates it “frontier.” This word is unknown to Malays whom I have questioned about it, so I have preferred to read *rāsam*.

196

علم دان عقل دهالي بالي ايتله تنداء اورغيغ لالي

*'Ilmu dan akal di-halei-balei itu-lah tanda orang yang lalei.*

“When science and learning are set at nought, you may know  
“by that sign that the man is heedless.” Kl. 146.

197

فاته كمودي دغن ابمن

*Patah kamudi dengan abam-nia.*

“The rudder is smashed along with the stern-post.” Kl. 125.  
*i.e.*, All hope lost.

*Abam*—I don't know this word. “Boom”?

198

فارغ كابوس منجادي سفرة فارغ بسي

*Parang gabus men-jadi saperti parang besi.*

“A knife of soft wood has become like an iron one.” MARS-  
DEN.

*i.e.*, A weak man may become strong, and a timid one courageous.

199

فاچت هندق منجادي اولر ساوه

*Pachat handak men-jadi ular sawah.*

“The leech wants to become a boa-constrictor.” Hk. Ab. 194.  
Unreasonable aspiration. See *supra* No. 159, and M. 122.  
Compare the fable of the frog and the bull.

200

فاگر ماکن فادي

*Pagar makan padi.*

“The hedge (which ought to protect the rice) eats it.” HANG  
TUAH.

See *supra* No. 78, and M. 115.

201

فانس ستاهن دهافسکن اوله هوجن سهاري

*Panas sa'tahun di-hapus-kan uleh hujan sa'hari.*



“A day's rain effaces a year's drought.” Kl. 6.

A good character lost by some little fault.

202 فد تتكل ربوڠ تياد دفاته كتيڠ سده منجادي اوراڠ كونڠ

*Pada tatkala rebong tiada di-patah, katika sudah men-jadi awar  
apa guna-nia.*

“The bamboo shoot must be broken off when it is young,  
“when it has grown tall what is the use of it (for food)?”  
Kl. 153.

The shoot of the large bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*) is highly esteemed by the Malays as a culinary vegetable, and in this stage of its growth, before it becomes too tough and fibrous, is called *rebong*. The plant when grown up is called *awar*.

Education must be begun when children are young. If put off till they are strong enough to resist, it will be too late.

This proverb will be found in FAVRE'S Dictionary under *ura*, which is translated *poussé, qui s'est étendu*. This is a mistake; the word is *awar*, which is identical with *hawar*.

203 فراهو فافن برموة انتن

*Prahu papan ber-muat intan.*

“A wooden boat laden with diamonds.” Kl. 127.

A man of common exterior endowed with good qualities. A poor man married to a princess. Unsuitable.

204 فڠگور تمبرڠ بلاتوق منمڤڠر ماتي

*Punggor tumbang belatok menumpang mati.*

“The dead tree falls and the woodpecker perishes with it.”  
Kl. 150.

The ruin of a great man often involves that of his dependants.

Cf. *Sirih naik junjong patah*. M. 107.

205 فڤڤه كافي قوتس سواجي

*Pechah kapi putus suwaji.*

“The pulley smashes and down comes the tackle.” Kl. 179,  
One failure brings about another. See the preceding.



- 206 فلندقلاه لوفكن جرة تتافي جرة تيا د ملوفكن فلندق  
*Pelandok-lah lupa-kan jerat tatapi jerat tiada me-lupa-kan*  
*pelandok.*

“The-mouse deer forgets the net, but the net does not forget  
 “the mouse-deer.” Kl. 126. Hk. Ab. 498.

The net of the law is always spread and the criminal is sure to be taken off  
 his guard sooner or later. See Journal, Straits Branch R. A. S., No. 9, p. 51.

- 207 ؤنتون هالغ دغن ايم لمبت لاون دسمبر جوك  
*Pantan halang dengan hayam lambat lawan di-sambar juga.*  
 “Like the hawk and the fowl, however long the struggle it  
 “ends in capture.”  
*Pantan=saperti, laksana.*

An unequal combat; the more powerful is sure to carry out his object.

- 208 فيو اية برتلور ٢ بربو ٢ سورغفون تيا د تاهو ايم برتلور سـجـي ٢ فچه سبوه نكري  
*Penyu itu ber-telor-telor ber-ribu-ribu sa'orang-pun tiada tahu, ayam*  
*ber-telor sa'biji pechah sa'buah negri.*

“The turtle lays thousands of eggs and no one knows any  
 “thing about it, a hen lays an egg and the whole country rings  
 “with the noise.” Kl. 23.

“Great cry and little wool.”

- 209 فوتغ هيدغ روسق موك  
*Potong hidong rosak muka.*

“If the nose is cut off the face is disfigured.” Kl. 52.

A whole family is affected by the disgrace of a single member of it.

- 210 فوتسله تمبا تشكل تالي  
*Putus-lah timba tinggal tali.*

“The bucket has fallen off, and the cord is left in the hand.”

Said when an enterprise has failed and its promoters are left with the ma-  
 terials they provided for it, which are now useless. See M. 213.

- 211 فوكل انق سندير منتو  
*Pukul anak sindir menantu.*

“To strike the daughter in order to vex the son-in-law.”

To aim an indirect injury.

To say something to a person intending that it shall apply to some one else  
 within hearing.



212

فيجة ٢ فون تله منجادي كورا

*Pijat-pijat pun telah men-jadi kora-kora.*

“Bugs have become tortoises.” Kl. 89. Hk. Ab. 4.

Said of the inhabitants of a country who have prospered.

See *supra* No. 66.

213

كاقي نايك فميدغر

*Kapak naik peming.*

“The axe mounts the loom” (undertakes weaving).

Unsuitable, incompatible. “A beggar on horseback.”

The popular phrase as I have heard it in Perak is: *Kapak masuk meminang.*

See M. 219.

Is this a different version, or is not *peming* a mistake for *meminang*?

214

كفل ساتو نخودا دوا

*Kapal satu nakhodah dua.*

“One ship and two captains.” Kl. 130.

“Too many cooks spoil the broth.”

215

كلدي هندق دجاديكني كودا

*Kaldei handak di-jadi-kan-nia kuda.*

“He wants to make an ass into a horse.” Hk. Ab. 173.

You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.

Cf. *Pachat handak men-jadi ular sawah.* No. 199.

The ass is but little known to the Malays, so phrases in which this animal is introduced as an illustration are likely to be of foreign origin.

216

كالوتيا د اغين تاءكن فوكو بر كويغر

*Kalau tiada angin ta’kan pokok ber-goyang.*

“If there is no wind the trees do not rock.”

“There is no smoke without fire.” A man would not act in a particular way if there were not some one “pulling the strings.”

Cf. *Ta’tumbok ta’me-lata.**Ta’sunggoh orang ta’kata.* M. 41.

217

كالو كريبو سكندغر دافة دكاو لکن مانسي سوغرغ تيا دافة دمعلاومکن

*Kalau kerbau sa’kandang dapat di-kawal-kan, manusia sa’orang  
tiada dapat di-m’alum-kan.*

“Though a herd of buffaloes may be successfully guarded, a



“single human being (a woman) is not to be understood.”  
Kl. 171.

See M. 148.

“Car, voyez vous, la femme est, comme on dit, mon maitre,  
Un certain animal, difficile à connaitre.” MOLIERE.

218 كالو كنامفر بير دغن تاغن يغب فاكى چنچين كالو كنا تندغ بير دغن كاكى يغب فاكى كاسوت  
*Kalau kena tampar biar dengan tangan yang pakei chinchin,  
kalau kena tendang biar dengan kaki yang pakei kasut.*

“If you receive a slap let it be from a hand which wears a  
“ring, if you receive a kick let it be with a foot which wears a  
“shoe.” Kl. 9.

Let correction or punishment come from some one of superior rank. This proverb is, I believe, borrowed from the Tamil language.

219 كالو كوچيغ فاكى تندق هلندا ماسق اسلام بهارو بوله جادى  
*Kalau kushing pakei tandok wolanda masok islam baharu bulih jadi.*  
“When cats wear horns and Dutchmen turn Muhammadans it  
“will come to pass.”

This is a common expression (modern), but it is rather an imprecation than a proverb. Another version is: *Ber-tandok kuda*, “when horses have horns.”  
“The Greek kalends.”

220 كالو لاغيث هندق منمقه بومى بولهكه دتاهنكن دغن تلنجوق  
*Kalau langit handak menimpah bumi boleh-kah di-tahan-kan  
dengan telunjuk.*

“If the sky were about to fall on the earth, could one keep it  
“off with the forefinger?” Kl. 12.

Can the oppression of a raja or chief be successfully resisted by one in a humble position?

221 كالو مپيرغ سوغى بير دتلان اوله بواي تتاي جاغمله دفا كوة اوله ايكن كچيل  
*Kalau menyaběrang sungei biar di-telan uleh buaya tetapi jangan  
lah di-pagut uleh ikan kěchil-kěchil.*

“If you are crossing a river, rather be swallowed by a  
“crocodile than nibbled at by the little fishes.” Kl. 11.

Death at the hands of a fitting antagonist is better than insults from mean and vulgar adversaries.



- 222 کایو دکتاکن باتو دان لاهیة هندق دچافی دغن تاغن  
*Kayu di-kata-kan batu dan langit handak di-chapei dengan tangan.*  
 “To call wood stone, and to attempt to reach the sky with the  
 “hand.” Kl. 129.  
 Foolish and extravagant pretensions. “All his geese are swans.”

- 223 کتم میورهکن انقپ برجالن بتول  
*Ketam menyuroh-kan anak-nia ber-jalan betul.*  
 “The crab tells its young ones to go straight.”  
 “The devil who preaches penitence.” I don’t know where FAVRE got this;  
 it seems to argue an acquaintance, on the part of the Malays, with Æsop’s  
 fables.

- 224 کربو فون سوسو سافی فوپ نام  
*Kerbau punya susu sapi punya nama.*  
 “The buffalo’s milk goes by the cow’s name.” Kl. 19.  
 Hk. Ab. 381.

One does the work and another gets the credit.

The Perak Malays say: *Hilang jasa bēliong timbul jasa rimbas.* “The  
 work of the axe is forgotten and only that of the plane is thought of.”

- 225 کمان تومقهمکن کواه کالو تیدق کناسی  
*Kamana tumpah-kan kuah kalau tidak ka nasi.*  
 “Where is the gravy to be poured if not on the rice?” Kl. 148.  
 Compare. *Ayer di tulang bumbung-an kamana turun-nia kalau tiada chu-  
 chur-an atap?*

“How does the water on the ridge of the roof find its way down except by  
 the channels of the thatch?”

A child follows his father’s example and teaching. If he were not to do so,  
 where else should he look for a guide?

- 226 کوچیغ ملومقة اورغ ترکجوت درفد تیدرپ ایم برکوکو هاریفون سیغ  
*Kuching me-lompat orang ter-kejut deri-pada tidor-nia hayam  
 ber-kukuk hari pun siang.*

“The cat jumps, the man starts up from sleep, the cock crows  
 “and the dawn appears.” Hk. Ab. 245.

Quoted *à propos* of breaking off some work or enterprise because an inci-  
 dent occurs which suggests a better course. What was being done is given up,  
 and one starts on a fresh tack.



227

کورغ ۲ بوبر لیه ۲ سودو

*Korang-korang bubur lebih-lebih sudu.*

“The less porridge the more spoons.” Kl. 60.

The more trifling it is, the more fuss is made about it. “Great cry and little wool.” “To make a mountain out of a molehill.”

228

کولایه بابی یغترسو غکوء دکفلا اورغ

*Kulit babi yang ter-songkok di-kapala orang.*

“The pig’s skin stuck on a man’s head as a cap.” Hk. Ab. 360.

Figurative mode of describing a deadly insult. Cf. *Arang ber-chonting di-muka*. *Sajarah Malayu*, 178. See M. No. 3.

229

گاجه دتلن اولر لیدی

*Gajah di-telan ular lidi.*

“The whip-snake has swallowed the elephant.”

The greater has been conquered by the less.

230

گاجه سما گاجه بر جواغ فاندق ماتی دتغه ۲

*Gajah sama gajah ber-juwang pelandok mati di tengah-tengah.*

“Two elephants meet in combat and the mouse-deer between them is killed.” Kl. 29.

Keep out of the quarrels of the powerful or you may chance to be ruined without any fault of your own.

231

گارم تومغه افکه تمفتپ

*Garam tumpah apa-kah tempat-nia.*

“If salt is spilt what is its place?”

Who will take the trouble to pick it up and put it back again? Who can tell what the ultimate fate will be of one who has “gone to the dogs?”

232

کتہ تر بگیت کواران تیا

*Gētah ter-bangket kuaran tiba.*

“When the snare has been taken up, the pigeons arrive.” Kl. 32.

“Too late for the fair.” Guests have come when the feast is over. *Kuaran* are green pigeons like *punei*.

KLINKERT and FAVRE have exhausted much ingenuity over this proverb without getting hold of the right text. They have *geta*, a bedstead, for *gētah*, birdlime, and could get no translation of *kuaran*. They have *di-angkat* for *ter-bangket*, but this is immaterial.



233 کورو کنچيغ برديري انق موريد کنچيغ برلاري

*Guru kinching ber-diri anak murid kinching ber-lari.*

"If the master does what is unseemly the school-boys will do  
"much worse." Kl. 149.

Inculcates the danger of a bad example to the young. Those who understand Malay will probably know what is the native custom the breach of which is alluded to in the proverb. KLINKERT and FAVRE have quite missed the meaning as they have *kinchang* which does not make sense.

234 لاغية برکليکير بومي برتمبيرغ ساله ۲ فيکر منجادي همب اورغ

*Langit ber-kelikir, bumi ber-tëmbirang.*

*Salah-salah pikir menjadi hamba orang.*

"The heavens are in a ring and the earth is held by stays ;

"Want of sense makes a man the slave of others." Kl. 147.

*Kelikir*=a ring of rattan or cord ; *tëmbirang*=shrouds, stays, rigging.

The first line (after the manner of Malay *pantuns*) is not intended to have any special meaning.

235 لايعغ ۲ فوتس تاليپ

*Layang-layang putus tali-nia.*

"A kite of which the cord is broken." Kl. 132.

At the mercy of fortune. See M. 129 and 242.

236 لبه فوچق لبه فلقه

*Lebih puchuk lebih palepah.*

"The more shoots the more leaves."

The mutual support of the palm-shoot and fronds has been the subject of a previous proverb in this collection. See *supra* No. 173.

The meaning here is, the more you do for a man the more he will do for you.

237 لقسان فنجالغ ترسارت تياد كتي مور تياد كبارت

*Laksana penchalang ter-sarat tiada ka-timor tiada ka-barat.*

"Like a waterlogged boat which will neither steer east nor  
"west (will not obey the helm)." Kl. 131.

In difficulties ; not sure in what quarter to look for assistance.



- 238                      لفس بنتل برگنتي تیکر  
*Lepas bantal ber-ganti tikar.*

“To put down the pillow and take a mat.”

To replace a wife by marrying her sister, or to replace a husband by marrying his brother.

- 239                      لمقر باتو سمبوپیکن تاغن  
*Lempar batu sembunyi-kan tangan.*

“To throw a stone while keeping the hand out of sight.”

Kl. 53.

Said of those who cause a thing to be done, but take measures to prevent its being known that they are the authors.

- 240                      مات تیدر بنتل منجاك  
*Mata tidor bantal men-jaga.*

“The eyes close in sleep, but the pillow remains awake.” Kl. 141.

- 241                      ماتي کاجه تیاد دافت بلالی ماني هریمو تیاد دافة بلغن  
*Mati gajah tiada dapat belalei, mati harimau tiada dapat belang-nia.*

“An elephant dies, but no one finds his trunk; a tiger dies, but “no one finds his stripes.” Kl. 30.

Crime often goes undiscovered.

- 242                      ماتيله کومن کنا فلنتیق سکلین عالم لmfه دارهپ  
*Mati-lah kuman kena pelantik sa-kali-an 'alam limpah darah-nia.*

“An insect is impaled and the whole world is smothered with “blood.” Kl. 142.

“Great cry and little wool.” *Pelantik* (in Perak *belantik*) is a spear-trap set for elephants, rhinoceros and other big game.

- 243                      ماتي ۲ مندي بیر باسه ماتي ۲ برداوة بیرله هیتم  
*Mati-mati mandi biar basah, mati-mati ber-dawat biar-lah hitam.*

“Let that which is washed be thoroughly wet, and that which “is blackened be altogether black.” Kl. 10.

“It is as well to be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb.” See. M. 167.



244

ماكين بايق اورغ ماكين بايق نية

*Makin baniaak orang makin baniaak niat.*

“As is the number of men, so will be the number of purposes.”

Kl. 135. “Many men of many minds.”

There are several proverbs of similar meaning :—

*Lain dulang lain kaki ;**Lain orang lain hati.*

“Different trays have different feet.

“Different men have different hearts.”

*Baniaak udang baniaak garam-nia;**Baniaak orang baniaak ragam-nia.*

“Many shrimps, much salt ;

Many men, many whims.”

*Iyyâka na'budu wa iyyâka nasta 'in**Kapala sama buluh hati ber-lain-lain.*

Here the first line is an Arabic text from the first chapter of the Koran, and is dragged in for the sake of the rhyme. Its meaning (unknown to the majority of Malays) is “Thee we worship, to thee we turn for help.”

The second line, which contains the proverb, means, “Heads alike have hair, but hearts differ one from another.”

245

مالو کالو انق هریمو منجادی انق کوچیغ

*Malu kalau anak harimau men-jadi anak kucing*

“It is a shameful thing if a tiger-cub becomes a kitten.”

See *supra* No. 21.

246

ماسق کدالم کندغ کمبیغ مغمیق ماسق کدالم کندغ کر بو مغوآ

*Masok ka-dalam kandang kambing meng-embik masok ka-dalam  
kandang kerbau meng-uwak.*

“To bleat with the sheep and low with the kine (buffaloes).”

Cf. “To run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.”

247

مراب کسان کماري سثرت اورغ بوتاکه یلاغن توغکتین

*Me-raba ka-sana ka-mari saperti orang buta ka-hilang-an tongkat-  
nia.*

“Groping here and there like a blind man who has lost his  
“stick.” Hk. Ab. 149.



248

مائنکم سده منجادي سکم

*M'anikam sudah men-jadi sĕkam.*

“The gem has become chaff.” Sha'ir Bidasari, 103.

A fall in station. He who was formerly held up to admiration has fallen to insignificance.

There is a kind of play upon words in the conjunction of *m'anikam* and *sekam*, otherwise the connection between jewels and rice-chaff is not obvious. Compare *udang* and *orang*, *garam*, and *ragam*, in one of the examples given under No. 244.

249

معمبالیکن مائنکم ایت کدالم چمبولن

*Mengembalik-kan m'anikam itu ka-dalam chembul-nia.*

“To put back the precious stone into its box.” Kl. 133.

To reunite persons or things after an interval of separation.

This is apparently a passage from some Malay author with a figurative meaning; not a proverb.

250

ممباسهکن ارغ یترچونتیغ دموک

*Mem-basoh-kan arang yang ter-chonting di muka.*

“To wash off the black with which one's face is smudged.”

Hk. Ab. 360.

To revenge one's self for an injury; to wipe out an affront received.

See *supra* No. 228.

251

ممبری بارغ کفد ناغن کرا

*Mem-bĕri barang kapada tangan kĕra.*

“To give things to the monkeys.”

*i.e.*, to entrust property to some one who will waste it.

See *supra* No. 182.

252

ممبواغ کارم کدالم لاوة

*Mem-buang garam ka-dalam laut.*

“To throw salt into the sea.” Kl. 134.

To lose one's labour for nothing.

253

ممکغ بسی فانس

*Memegang besi panas.*

“To hold a hot iron in the hand.” Kl. 136.

Cf. *Genggam bara*, etc., *supra* No. 88.



254

ممنجت فوكو چكوه بوله ماتي جانه

*Memanjat pokok chekoh boleh mati jatuh.*“In climbing a *chekoh* bush one may fall and be killed.”

To set about some insignificant or ridiculous undertaking as if one were doing something serious or in which there is danger.

255

منتیکن ناسي دساجيکن دلوتت

*Menanti-kan nasi di-saji-kan di lutut.*

“To wait expecting that rice will be served at his knees.”

“To imagine that the apples are going to drop into one’s lap.”

“Attendre que les alouettes tombent toutes roties.”

256

منيوف سوليغ بربويي بشسي مك بشسي اية ترفاته

*Meniup suling ber-bunyi bangsi maka bangsi itu ter-patah-patah.*

“If when you blow into the fife, the pipe sounds, the pipe will soon break into pieces.”

A man has quite enough to do in minding his own business without undertaking that of his neighbours.

257

مهل دبلي سوكر دچاري

*Mahal di-beli sukar di-chahari.*

“Expensive to purchase, difficult to obtain.” Kl. 137.

Not to be had at any price. See M. 288.

258

موات باوا مادو فنتت باوا سيغة

*Mulut bawa madu, pantat bawa singat.*

“The mouth brings honey and the tail carries a sting.”

Kl. 155.

Said of plausible persons, who conceal beneath honied words a treacherous intention. See M. 188.

259

مولت دسواف فيسغ فنتة دكايتن دغن اونق

*Mulut di-suap-nia pisang pantat di-kait-nia dengan unak.*

“The mouth is filled with plantains, while the back is hooked with a thorn.” Kl. 66. Hk. Ab. 237. *Sajarah Malayu* 339.

To deceive a person by pretence of friendship, while really working him an injury, or designing to extort something from him. See No. 258.



260

مينم اير سراس دوري

*Minum ayer sa-rasa-duri.*

“When drinking, there is a feeling as of thorns.” Kl. 139.

KLINKERT and FAVRE have *be-rasa* which is incorrect. See M. 174. “*Minum ayer sa-rasa duri, makan sa-rasa lilin tidor ta'lana, mandi ta'basah.*”

Divested of Oriental hyperbole, the sentence means “In my present state of mind I can enjoy nothing.” Compare LANE’S *Thousand and one Nights*, I, 341. “Verily from the time when I first saw thee, neither sleep has been sweet to me nor hath food been pleasant.”

261

هابس اومفن كيروغ ۲ تيا دافت

*Habis umpan kerung-kerung tiada dapat.*

“The bait is all gone but no fish have been caught.” Kl. 68.

Said of an undertaking which has failed; the money is all spent, but there is nothing to shew for it.

Cf. *Tuba binasa ikan ta'dapat.* M. 247.

*Pelabor habis Palembang ta'alah.* M. 116.

*Kerung-kerung* is a small fish caught in the sea, with hard scales like those of the *ikan batu*, very cheap and inferior.

262

هارفكن انق بوتامات سبله هارفكن تمن بوتامات كدواپ

*Harap-kan anak buta mata sa-bēlah, harap-kan tēman buta ka-dua-nia.*

“To trust in one’s child is to be blind of an eye, but to put confidence in a slave is to be blind altogether.” Kl. 25.

263

هارفكن كنتور دلاغية اير دتمقاي دچورھكن

*Harap-kan guntur di langit ayer di tampayan di-chorah-kan.*

“To empty one’s water-jar through faith in the thunder in the heavens.” Kl. 4.

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” and a full water-butt is better than all the rain-clouds in the sky, in spite of thunder, which is not always a sure sign of rain. In Perak they say *uwa-kan* for *chorah-kan*.

264

هاروم مغميلغكن باو

*Harum meng-hilang-kan bau.*

“A sweet scent overcomes a disagreeable smell.”

Kind treatment will obliterate the memory of injustice



- 265 هريمو ماتي منغلكن بلغ كاجه ماتي منغلكن تولغ  
*Harimau mati meninggal-kan belang gajah mati meninggal-kan tulang.*

“When a tiger dies he leaves behind him his striped skin, when  
 “an elephant dies he leaves his bones.” Kl. 143. Hk. Ab. 109.

*Manusia mati meninggal-kan nama.*

A man is judged after his death according to the good or bad name which he leaves behind him.

- 266 هندقله سقرت تميكر فچه ساتو فچه سمواپ  
*Handak-lah saperti tembikar pechah satu pechah samua-nia.*

“To emulate the fate of porcelain, if one piece is smashed all  
 “goes.”

Said of fidelity between friends. To share good and evil fortune together.  
 See M. 67, 197 and 263.

- 267 هوتغ امس دافة دبائر هوتغ بودي دباوا ماتي  
*Hutang amas dapat di-bayar hutang budi di-bawa mati.*  
 (Sometimes *kasih* instead of *budi*.)

“Debts of money may be paid, but a debt of gratitude must  
 “be carried to the grave.” Kl. 144. Hk. Ab. 167.

- 268 هوجن بر باليق كلاغية  
*Hujan ber-balik ka-langit.*

“Rain returning to the sky.” Kl. 13. Hk. Ab. 137.

To reverse the order of things. “To teach one’s grandmother to suck eggs.”

“Gros Jean qui veut en montrer à son curé.”

“To put the cart before the horse.”

“To carry coals to Newcastle.”

- 269 هيدغ تاءمچو غ فيفي تر سور غ  
*Hidong ta'munchong pipi ter-sorong-sorong.*

“The nose is not prominent, but the cheeks push themselves  
 “forward.” Kl. 182.

Said of a busybody.

The person really concerned is passive, but some one who has nothing to do with it “shoves his oar in,” *e. g.*, an outsider who takes up a quarrel when the relations of the disputants are content to let it drop. KLINKERT and FAVRE have failed to get the right meaning of this phrase.



- 270 هيلغ بيني بوله دچهارى هيلغ بودى بدن چلاك  
*Hilang bini bulih di-chahari, hilang budi badan chelaka.*  
 “A lost wife may be replaced, but if character is lost the body  
 “is ruined.” Kl. 145.

- 271 يغ اغكغ ايت سما اغكغ جوڭ دان يغ فاتوت اية سما فاتوت جوڭ  
*Yang enggang itu amas enggang juga, dan yang patut itu sama  
 patut juga.*  
 “The hornbill with the hornbill and each with what suits it.”  
 “Like to like.” See *supra* No. 6.

- 272 يغد لجر تباد دافت دان يغد كندوغ برچيچيران  
*Yang di-kejar tiada dapat dan yang di-kandong ber-chichir-an.*  
 “He did not get what he was running after and dropped his  
 “purse into the bargain.” Kl. 3. Kal. & Dam. 84.

The substance is better than the shadow and it is idiotic to lose the former in an attempt to get the latter. *Duos qui sequitur lepores neutrum capit.*

The Perak version is: *Di-terkam ta'dapat, yang di-kandong ber-chichir.*

*Yang di-kandong*, lit., “that which is carried at the waist” i.e., money or valuables carried in a belt or in a fold of a *sarong*.

This is the usual Malay substitute for a purse; the contents are somewhat liable to fall out if the dress is disarranged in running or fighting, &c.

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The sentences which have been omitted will be found in FAVRE'S Dictionary (Malais-Français) under the following words:—*Kuda* (compare M. No. 185); *kudong*; *kudis*; *gajah*; *gali* (see M. No. 58.); *geruk*; *tumpul*; *tumbuh*; *tembikar*; *teriak*; *dengar*; *nali*; *pukul*; *palita*; *buku*; *burong*; *mamah*; *likas*; *lintah*; and *sungei*.

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W. E. M.





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