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MALAY PROVERBS
BIDAL MĒLAYU

A. W. Hamilton

MALAYAN HERITAGE SERIES

6

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楊貴莊珍藏
Koleksi Yang Quee Yee



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INTRODUCTION

The present volume is an attempt to present to the casual reader, or resident in Malaya, a selection of two hundred well-known proverbs in such a form that he will be able to appreciate the flavour of the original Malay and, at the same time to gain a quick insight into the application of the adage, without the necessity of perusing a tiresome paragraph dealing with its meaning or implication.

In order to achieve this end I have given, as far as possible, an accurate rendering in English of the Malay maxims followed by a concise English equivalent expression which illustrates the main application. As terseness is of the essence of any saw, clarity had, in some cases, to be sacrificed to the desire to obtain a balanced interpretation which, through its rhyming appeal, should prove simple to assimilate and recollect.

Where the meaning of the proverb is self-evident no attempt has been made to do more than translate the original Malay; in all other cases a dash has been interposed between the translation and the interpretation.

As the various authorities and even the Malays themselves differ in their understanding of the meaning of certain proverbial expressions, I have chosen for illustration the context in which I have been accustomed to hear the particular proverb used, but the reader must bear in mind that the same saying can be used to point a moral in any one of a host of varying circumstances.

The simple grammatical structure of the Malay language lends itself admirably to pithiness of speech and as a consequence any English rendering has a tendency to appear verbose, even where a direct translation conveys the sense unimpaired.

In a community where the written word came late and was the privilege of the few, the customary law of the land and accumulated moral precepts together with many practical injunctions for everyday life, based on the shrewd observation of natural phenomena, were handed down in the form of maxims which are still current and in frequent use.

In order that the reader with some knowledge of the language may avail himself of the opportunity of adding a useful and telling phrase to his speech and, that those without may be tempted to explore the pleasant paths of a simple and delightful tongue, I have added a Glossary containing all the Malay words used in the proverbs together with their meanings as exemplified in the setting in which they are used.

The frontispiece and cover design are by my old friend and contemporary Mr. W. G. Stirling.

A.W.H.

MALAY PROVERBS

BIDAL MĚLAYU



A. W. HAMILTON

MALAY PROVERBS

Let's live in this world by the rules of old,
For manners are not to be bought and sold.

Don't think there are no crocodiles
Because the water's calm.—
Beware of false security,
Lest you should come to harm.

Like plates and dishes clashing at the slightest lack of care.—
The continual bickerings of an ill-assorted pair.

The prawn does not know of the hump on its back.—
We're seldom aware of the graces we lack.

When a junk is broken up the sharks are full of food.—
'Tis an evil wind indeed that blows nobody good.

BIDAL MELAYU

Hidup di-dunia biar bĕradat,
Bahasa tidak bĕrjual bĕli.

Apabila ayer tĕnang jangan di-sangka tiada buaya.

Bagai pinggan dĕngan mangkok, salah sĕdikit hĕndak
tĕrantok.

Udang ta' sĕdarkan diri-nya bongkok.

Jong pĕchah yu kĕnyang.

MALAY PROVERBS

In life, by custom hedged around;
In death, we lie wrapped in the ground.—
Men are helpless creatures pent
In their own environment.

A lax eye spells a broken head.—
On dangerous ground mind where you tread.

As a vessel full of oil is borne upon the palm.—
A loving woman's anxious care to shield her charge from
harm.

On his own couch a man may sing:
In his own heart a man is king.

Better white bones than the white of an eye.—
Rather than shame it were better to die.

BIDAL MELAYU

Hidup di-kandung adat, mati di-kandung tanah.

Silap mata pēchah kēpala.

Sēperti mēnatang minyak yang pēnoh.

Orang bērdendang di-pēntas-nya, orang bēraja di-hati-nya.

Biar puteh tulang jangan puteh mata.

MALAY PROVERBS

The onlooker may be in his most sympathetic state,
But the shoulder 'neath the burden is the one to feel the
weight.

Don't drag for anger with a net,
Or push away your daily bread.—
Don't look for trouble, or delay
To take whatever comes your way.

Only once does a banana bear.—
Lost chances never re-occur.

He has the forked tongue of a monitor lizard.—
The insincere talk of a treacherous blackguard.

If shy to ask you will lose your way.—
If slow to question you go astray.

BIDAL MELAYU

Berapa bėrat mata mėmandang bėrat juga bahu mėmikul.

Marah jangan di-pukat, rėzėki jangan di-tolak.

Ta' akan pisang bėrbuah dua kali.

Lidah bėrchabang bagai biawak.

Malu bėrtanya sėsat jalan.

MALAY PROVERBS

As fowl that scratch up in the morn sufficient for their meal.—

The men who live from hand to mouth and no ambition feel.

There is fine as well as wet:
Some day I'll get even yet.

Escaped from the jaws of a crocodile to enter a tiger's gape.—
Out of the frying pan into the fire, in a Malayan shape.

From the bow the ship is steered.—
Husbands who by wives are veered.

The full length of your stretch should be the measure of
your sheet.—

To cut your coat according to your cloth is always meet.

BIDAL MELAYU

Sěpěrti ayam kuis pagi makan pagi.

Ada hujan ada panas, ada hari boleh balas.

Těrlěpas daripada mulut buaya masok ka-dalam mulut harimau.

Kěmudi dari haluan.

Běrapa panjang lunjor bagitu-lah sělimut.

MALAY PROVERBS

Be good within reason but never do evil.—
Be neither a Saint nor in league with the Devil.

Iron in repose will rust,
While tubers rest and grow in girth.—
Idle minds acquire a crust;
Reflective minds rich stores unearth.

What you lose on the cost you will gain in the wear.—
The price is not lost if the quality's there.

;

When your waistbelt lacks subsistence,
Close friends, even, keep their distance.

When the pestle is broken the mortar gets lost.—
A husband's neglect may his wife's chastity cost.

BIDAL MELAYU

Buat baik bėrpada-pada, buat jahat jangan sa-kali.

Diam bėsi bėrkarat, diam ubi lagi kėntal.

Alah di-bėli, mėnang di-pakai.

Kalau tiada rial di-pinggang, sahabat yang rapat mėnjadi rėnggang.

Antan patah lėsong hilang.

MALAY PROVERBS

The clever, off dullards a meal will make:
The sleeper is food for the wide awake.

Broken threads we piece together;
Broken charcoal's done for ever.—
Lovers' quarrel may be mended;
Cease to care, and love is ended.

The sap will trickle down the stem where leaves will float
away.—
In times of stress our friends depart but relatives will stay.

Better all black than just ink splashed around.—
In for a penny, in for a pound.

As the drum beats so goes the dance.—
Lax control spells lax observance.

BIDAL MELAYU

Chërdek makan si-bingong, tidor, makanan si-jaga.

Putus bėnang boleh di-ikat, patah arang sudah sa-kali.

Kalau gėtah bėleleh, kalau daun mėlayang.

Alang-alang bėrdawat baik hitam sa-kali.

Bagaimana bunyi gėndang, bagitu-lah tari-nya.

MALAY PROVERBS

Lightning in a luminous sky;
Thunder impregnate with rain.—
The obvious, which meets the eye,
Does deeper purposes contain.

To place your head in the noose you've set.—
From your own petard a hoist to get.

If you slap water on a tray it spatters your own face.—
Dirty linen in public washed but adds to your disgrace.

;

Let things fall gently and not with a crash.—
Let folk down easily; never abash.

The tongue being boneless—lightly trips;
Fair words butter no parsnips.

BIDAL MELAYU

Kilat di-dalam kilau, guroh męngandong hujan.

Tahan jęrat sorong kępala.

Di-tępok ayer di-dulang tępęrchekek muka sęndiri juga.

Biar jatoh tęrlętak jangan jatoh tęrhęmpas.

Lidah tidak bęrtulang.

MALAY PROVERBS

Should rattan be lacking then roots will avail.—
When a whole loaf is wanting a half must prevail.

The mouse-deer may forget the trap.—
But not the trap the deer.—
Men often think they won't be caught
When retribution's near.

The branch breaks off just as the hornbill goes by.—
Circumstantial proof of guilt that's hard to nullify.

What ocean is waveless?—
What person is blameless?

By indirect means of attack to show up any flaw.
To thrash your child in order to get at your son-in-law.—

BIDAL MELAYU

Tiada rotan akar pun bėrguna.

Pėlandok lupakan jėrat, tėtapi jėrat tiada mėlupakan
pėlandok.

Enggang lalu ranting patah.

Laut mana ta' bėrombak.

Pukul anak sindir mėnantu.

MALAY PROVERBS

To stretch out your legs before you squat.—
On short acquaintance to presume a lot.

Hornbills will with hornbills sport:
Sparrows with their kind consort.—
Birds of a feather flock together:
Rich and poor do not forgather.

Like unto a buffalo butting her calf with the flat of her horn,
not the pointed half.—
To chastise, with mock severity, some childish irregularity.

'Wont', in time will conquer pain.—
Men get used to any bane.

To wait for the rice to be served on your knees.—
To hope for the best whilst you sit at your ease.

BIDAL MELAYU

Bělum dudok bělunjor dahulu.

Enggang sama ěnggang dan pipit sama pipit juga.

Sěpěrti kěrbau mėnandok anak-nya, dėngan papar tidak dėngan hujong.

Alah bisa oleh biasa.

Mėnantikan nasi těrsaji di-lutut.

MALAY PROVERBS

To sit like a frog 'neath a coconut shell.—
The smug stay-at-homes who in ignorance dwell.

However dull the embers be,
When blown they burn right merrily.—
Though a man be ne'er so old.
His emotions are not cold.

The flower in the hair is worn, the root is kicked aside.—
Married men who do not tend the parents of the bride.

Soft ears always the ones to be wrung.—
Soft folk always the ones to be stung.

To listen indeed but never to bother.—
To go in at one ear and out at the other.

BIDAL MELAYU

Sěpěrti katak di-bawah těmpurong.

Sa-lěmau-lěmau putong di-dapor di-tiup běrnyala juga.

Bunga di-pětek, pěrdu di-těndang.

Tělinga lěmbut yang kěrap di-pulas orang.

Děngar, děngar, di-pakai tidak.

MALAY PROVERBS

Fast rolls the big drum's noise around,
Unaware of its hollow sound.—
A fool who talks both loud and long,
Not dreaming that he could be wrong.

As finger-nails upon the quick.—
Fast friends who close together stick.

As a durian* and cucumber—cannot lie beside each other,
A brass pot and earthen pitcher cannot ever swim together.

Like a pea its pod forgetting.—
Men who scorn their early setting.

Think not because the cane is bent the sugar's crooked too.—
It follows not that from bad men no good will e'er ensue.

* A large, edible fruit with a hard, spiny rind.

BIDAL MELAYU

Gěndang raya bunyi dęras, ta' tahu diri-nya bęrongga.

Sęperti kuku dęngan isi.

Sęperti durian dęngan timun.

Kachang lupakan kulit.

Jangan di-pikir kalau tębu itu bengkok manisan itu bengkok juga.

MALAY PROVERBS

A mountain I would fain embrace;
Alack! these arms can't span the space.—
Not to be in the position
To fulfil some great ambition.

The axe which dives after the adze.—
To throw good money after bad.

A dead stump in its fall destroys the woodpeckers it
nourished.—
The downfall of a mighty man will ruin those he cherished.

Whilst you dive to drink your fill.—
With one stone two birds to kill.

Were there no breeze the trees would not quiver.—
But for a fire there is no smoke soever.

BIDAL MELAYU

Niat hati 'nak pĕlok gunong, apa daya tangan ta' sampai.

Sĕpĕrti kapak mĕnyĕlam bĕliong.

Punggor rĕbah bĕlatok mĕnumpang mati.

Sambil mĕnyĕlam sambil minum ayer.

Kalau tiada angin ta' akan pokok bĕrgoyang.

MALAY PROVERBS

The blindman who regains his sights,
Or hunch-back straightened from his plight.—
Folks, not used to their new estate,
Are prone to be immoderate.

A pumpkin by a mouse devoured.—
A picture of a maid deflowered.

If you win you will be charred,
Whilst if you lose, you're ash.—
Resort to law leads in the end to being shorn of cash.

When the curry is tasty, the rice will be raw.—
Nothing is perfect, there's always a flaw.

The cheaper you make it the less people tender.—
The more you yield the more you must surrender.

BIDAL MELAYU

Buta baharu chělek, bongkok baharu bětul.

Labu di-kěrbok tikus.

Kalah jadi abu, měnang jadi arang.

Gulai sědap, nasi měntah.

Makin murah makin měnawar.

MALAY PROVERBS

The bucket which frequents the well,
In course of time, will get a spill.—
The pitcher, at the well will break,
Which goes too oft its thirst to slake.

Within the bounds of other men,
Assume the nature of a hen.

Baa when in a sheepfold but in buffalo pens you moo.—
When you find yourself in Rome then do as Romans do.

Better than a haftless blade is one which has a handle.—
Better far the married state than that of being single.

When the pillow has gone, to take the mat instead.—
A man who weds her sister, when his wife is dead.

BIDAL MĚLAYU

Di-pělělar timba ka-pěrigi, sa-kali ta' sa-kali pěchah.

Masok něgěri orang bawa rěsěmi ayam bětina.

Masok kandang kambing měngěmbek, masok kandang kěrbau
měnguak.

Daripada běrputing baik běrhulu.

Lěpas bantal běrganti tikar.

MALAY PROVERBS

For this world's goods evince no greed;
They follow not when you are dead.

Like to the kepayang* fruit;
Intoxicating to the taste
And yet to throw away were waste.—
Lovely women of ill-repute,
To court whom spells a broken heart
And from whom one is loth to part.

A tiger leaves its skin when dead,
But men live by their fame instead.

Behaviour denotes birth.—
Ways will show ancestral worth.

Slap your chest and after that consult your appetite.—
Before you plunge into a course make sure you're doing right.

* A species of forest fruit.

BIDAL MELAYU

Harta dunia jangan di-tama', kalau mati tidak mēngikut.

Umpama buah kēpayang, di-makan mabok di-buang sayang.

Harimau mati tinggalkan bēlang, manusia mati mēninggalkan
nama.

Usul mēnunjokkan asal.

Tēpok dada tanya sēlera.

MALAY PROVERBS

The men of today, although skilled beyond mention
And great in their knowledge, yet lack comprehension.

A well-fed man, if offered food,
Will say nice dishes are no good.—
Those who are with good things sated
Often call them over-rated.

Even the back of a chopper, if honed, is sure to get sharp
in a sense.—
Even a fool, if sufficiently schooled, will not be eternally
dense.

;

Put in the basket, but not in the amount.—
Just to pass muster but of no great account.

Though small it's a Malacca chilli.—
A small but peppery little filly.

BIDAL MELAYU

Sungguh pun bijak orang sĕkarang, ilmu-nya banyak
paham-nya kurang.

Orang yang kĕnyang kalau di-jamu, lauk yang sĕdap di-kata
tawar.

Bĕlakang parang lagi jikalau di-asah nĕschaya tajam juga.

Masok ambong ta' masok kira.

Kĕchil-kĕchil chabai Mĕlaka.

MALAY PROVERBS

Smoke is seen when a village burns,
But hearts aflame, no one discerns.—
Though no outward sign is given,
Hearts may be with anguish riven.

Like the two sides of a tray.—
Folk who may face either way.

Leave her now and then if you would really love your wife.—
Absence leads to fondness in a married person's life.

;

Like to a hammer with a chisel.—
Only to work when others compel.

A debt of gold we can repay,
Kindness indebts till our dying day.

BIDAL MELAYU

Těrbakar kampong kělihatan asap, těrbakar hati siapa akan tahu.

Sěpěrti talam dua muka.

Kasehkan bini tinggal-tinggalkan.

Laksana pahat děngan pěmukul.

Hutang mas boleh di-bayar, hutang budi di-bawa mati.

MALAY PROVERBS

When elephants in conflict lean,
The mouse-deer gets killed in between.—
Avoid the quarrels of the great,
Lest ruination be your fate.

As a tiger hides its claws.—
Velvet gloves on iron paws.

One persons eats the jack-fruit, but another gets
begummed.—
The innocent who suffer for the guilty thus are summed.

Horse mackerel bite towards the night.—
To come on well late in a fight.

'Twere better with a clever foe to contend,
Than seek the companionship of a witless friend.

BIDAL MELAYU

Gajah sama gajah bėrjuang, pėlandok mati di-tėngah-tėngah.

Sėpėrti harimau sėmbunyikan kuku.

Lain makan nangka lain kėna gėtah-nya.

Chėncharu makan pėtang.

Daripada sahabat dėngan orang yang bodoh baik bėsėtėru
dėngan orang yang bėrakal.

MALAY PROVERBS

Where there's a will there are thousands of ruses;
Where there is none, then a thousand excuses.

The paddles in our hand we grasp
When folks have reached the further shore.—
To start too late upon a course
Which other men have done before.

Get your fish but do not let the spear be badly bent.—
Obtain your end but in the act your means should not be
; spent.

In water deep, fish do not die.—
Does 'safety in numbers' imply.

A tumble-down house that is painted anew.—
When mutton is dressed up as lamb to the view.

BIDAL MELAYU

Hëndak, sa-ribu daya; ta' hëndak, sa-ribu payah.

Kita baharu chapai pëngayoh orang sudah sampai
ka-sëbërang.

Ikan biar dapat sërampang jangan pokah.

Ayer dalam, ikan ta' mati.

Rumah burok di-sapu chat.

MALAY PROVERBS

Access of wealth may manners cost:
Through poverty is prudence lost.

Should you give way to an angry mood,
All fear will be lost in hardihood.—
Mild folk, if plagued beyond endurance,
Are capable of bold performance.

Quite unaware of the smuts on his face, he can count all
the stars in the sky.—
To see the mote in another man's eye, but the beam in
your own not to spy.

Tho' but a span it is still the sea.—
Where danger lurks you should prudent be.

Whoever itches will be the one to scratch.—
The shoe may be worn on the foot that will match.

BIDAL MELAYU

Hilang bahasa kerana mas, hilang budi kerana miskin.

Turut hati yang gëram, hilang takut timbul bërani.

Bintang di-langit dapat di-bilang, ta' sèdarkan muka-nya di-sapu arang.

Walau sa-jëngkal lautan.

Siapa gatal dia-lah garu.

MALAY PROVERBS

Pay a just king homage due;
Unjust kings we should subdue.—
To obey the law is right;
Against injustice we should fight.

A buffalo on the plains bespoke.—
Buying a pig in a poke.

The sunshine of a whole year round washed out by a rainy
day.—
The labours of a lifetime are through one fault wiped away.

Like a pea upon the tray.—
One who wobbles every way.

The larger the pot, the more rice adheres.—
The better your lot, the greater your cares.

BIDAL MELAYU

Raja adil, raja di-sěmbah; raja ta' adil, raja di-sangkak.

Měmběli kěrbau di-padang.

Panas sa-tahun di-hapuskan oleh hujan sa-hari.

Bagai saga di-atas talam.

Běsar pěriok běsar kěrak-nya.

MALAY PROVERBS

The fencing which devours the rice.—
Protection at too great a price.

Let bodies be weary,
If hearts remain cheery.—
Men will strive with all their might,
If a pleasing end's in sight.

Like a maiden overcome by the bride's fringe on her forehead.—
As shy and awkward as a maiden shortly to be married.

As a fire eats into chaff.—
Nursing hidden flames of wrath.

To lose at the cock-fight but win in the cheering.—
To cover defeat 'neath a jocular bearing.

BIDAL MELAYU

Pagar makan padi.

Biar badan pēnat asalkan hati suka.

Bagai anak dara mabok andam.

Sēperti api di-dalam sēkam.

Biar alah saboŋg asal mēnang sorak.

MALAY PROVERBS

To be stuck upright like a spear in pawn.—
To feel out of place and all forlorn.

Even elephants will stumble,
Tho' they have four feet.—
All of us are prone to tumble,
The' we be discreet.

He who cannot dance declares that the ground is wet with
rain.—
Good workmen find no fault with tools, where bad ones will
complain.

When the plating goes, the base will show.—
When the sham wears off the man we know.

Like unto a two-edged saw.—
Profit from each side to draw.

BIDAL MELAYU

Těrchachak bagai lěmbing těrgadai.

Gajah bėrkaki ampat lagi těrdorong.

Sėbab tiada tahu mėnari di-katakan tanah lėmbap.

Hilang sėpoh nampak sėnam.

Sėpėrti gėrgaji dua mata.

MALAY PROVERBS

A tiger that roars on no prey will alight.—
The bark of a dog that is worse than its bite.

The buffalo supplies the milk;
The cow supplies the name.—
The humble folk perform the work,
Where others reap the fame.

When a person is drowsy to push forward a pillow.—
Encouragement upon a course a man's inclined to follow

A single hook and a piece of bait.—
An enterprise that is tempting fate.

One-handed claps produce no sound.—
A quarrel needs two folks around.

BIDAL MELAYU

Harimau mēngaum ta' mēnangkap.

Kērbau punya susu sapi punya nama.

Orang mēngantok di-sorong bantal.

Kail sa-bēntok, umpan sa-ekor.

Di-tēpok tangan sa-bēlah ta' akan bērbunyi.

MALAY PROVERBS

In less time than cotton burns,
Men can perform evil turns;
But it takes a thousand years
Ere a sign of good appears.

On your own person to measure a coat.—
By your own standard on others to vote.

When the house is completed the chisel is heard.
When the matter is settled you put in your word.

To look up after you have bumped your head.—
To lock the stable door when the horse has fled.

Water, though it may be slashed, is never cut in twain.—
Relatives may quarrel but they always meet again.

BIDAL MELAYU

Kalau hëndak jahat ta' sēmpat kapas di-bakar, kalau hëndak baik sa-ribu tahun.

Ukor baju di-badan sēndiri.

Rumah sudah pahat bērbunyi.

Sudah tērantok baharu tēngadah.

Ayer di-chēnchang tiada putus.

MALAY PROVERBS

Have a care before the event:
Pay heed before your all is spent.—
Always look before you leap:
Something for the morrow keep.

Rain which to the sky ascends.—
The reverse of normal trends.

As a crab which tells its young to walk a proper gait.—
Satan reproving sin with the injunction to go straight.

;

Whom fire will not burn nor an immersion damp.—
The incurable ways of an obdurate scamp.

To wait for the fig-tree to lose all its gum.—
To await the Greek kalends which never will come.

BIDAL MELAYU

Ingat antara bĕlum kĕna, jimat antara bĕlum habis.

Hujan bĕrbalek ka-langit.

Kĕtam mĕnyurohkan anak-nya bĕrjalan bĕtul.

Bakar ta' hangus, rĕndam ta' basah.

Mĕnanti ara ta' bĕrgĕtah.

MALAY PROVERBS

Old wives are good indeed to wed;
The mind is schooled and stomach fed.

Before it creeps the plant must grow:
Were it not true would men say so?—
From our own actions always spring
The reasons for folk gossiping.

Rather be swallowed whole by a crocodile,
Than nibbled by tiny fishes all the while.—
'Neath the blows of the great 'twere meet to die,
But not through the torments of lesser fry.

What the hand plucks the shoulder bears.—
We usually create our cares.

An axe on an embroidery frame—we deem
To use a sail needle to sew a fine seam.

BIDAL MELAYU

Alang-kah baik bėrbini tua, pėrut kėnyang pėngajar datang.

Ta' tumbuh ta' mėlata, ta' sunggoh orang ta' kata.

Biar di-tėlan oleh buaya jangan-lah di-pagut oleh ikan kėchil-kėchil.

Tangan mēmėtek, bahu mēmikul.

Kapak naik pėmidang.

MALAY PROVERBS

From the newly rich don't seek a boon
Or visit a man on his honeymoon.

The sky is bounded by a ring:
The earth held up by stays.
Through frequent faults of reasoning,
A slave, you end your days.

A peacock which spreads out its tail within some jungle
lair.—
One who wastes his sweetness on the empty desert air.

The well goes searching for the pail.—
The forward girls who seek a male.

Pleasure first with pain to follow.—
Sinful joys which lead to sorrow.

BIDAL MELAYU

Orang baharu kaya jangan di-hutang, orang baharu nikah
jangan di-tandang.

Langit bėrkėlikir bumi bėrtėmberang, salah-salah pikir
mėnjadi hamba orang.

Mėrak mėngigal di-hutan.

Pėrigi mėnchari timba.

Sėdap dahulu sakit kėmudian.

MALAY PROVERBS

If good seed in the ocean fall,
An island will spring up withal.—
No matter where the seed is strewn,
Good blood will come into its own.

Like an arcca-nut cleft in two.—
Well-matched from every point of view.

A herd of water buffaloes can at the least be penned:
A single human being oft is more than we can tend.

;

When horns grow on the kitchen cat.—
When pigs have wings, we say to that.

The enemy beneath your sheet.—
A false relation or helpmeet.

BIDAL MELAYU

Kalau bēneh yang baik jatuh ka-laut mēnjadi pulau.

Bagai pinang di-bēlah dua.

Kērbau sa-kawan dapat di-kandang, manusia sa-orang tiada tērkawal.

Kalau kuching bērtandok di-dapor.

Musoh di-dalam sēlimut.

MALAY PROVERBS

Who dyes the sea a deeper green,
Or sharpens thorns within the wood?—
You can't teach tricks to those who've been
Well-versed in them since babyhood.

Who chillis eat will feel the heat.—
Rash acts their consequences meet.

To pick and choose from internodes* and pick upon a
knot.—
Through the wood and through the wood, and a crooked
stick you've got.

An aberrant ship we can recall,
But not the words that we once let fall.

Light bones a heavy stomach make.—
Active men of success partake.

* The smooth stem between the joints of canes.

BIDAL MELAYU

Ayer laut hijau siapa-kah chēlup, duri di-hutan siapa-kah
pěrtajam?

Siapa makan chabai ia-lah mērasa pėdas.

Pileh-pileh ruas tērpileh kapada buku.

Těrlangsong pėrahu boleh balek, tērlangsong chakap ta'
boleh balek.

Ringan tulang bėrat pėrut.

MALAY PROVERBS

Too lazy to live yet unwilling to die.—
To thrive on ill-health but of work to fight shy.

The fate of a husk is to rise to the top, whilst that of a stone
is to sink.—
To fail or succeed is a matter of luck, and not what we
venture to think.

A long-horned ox, though it may not butt, will have that
reputation.—
If your looks be against you, innocence is no consolation.

Your child when born; when grown, a thorn.—
Of children who grow up to be a menace to the family.

The chipped nail does the tray attack.—
The pot which calls the kettle black.

BIDAL MELAYU

Hidup sėgan, mati ta' mau.

Untong sabut timbul, untong batu tēnggėlam.

Lėmbu tandok panjang, tiada mėnandok pun di-kata orang
juga ia mėnandok.

Kėchil-kėchil anak, sudah bėsar mėnjadi onak.

Mėngata ka-dulang paku sėrpeh.

MALAY PROVERBS

Horse-mangoes have an ugly rind.—
Sweet natures 'neath rough skins we find.

Like the globe-fish when inflated,
Stomach empty but dilated.—
A person swollen up with pride
And self-esteem, but nought beside.

If the rice were not so cold the plate would not be cracked.—
Your indifference to me, by my dislike is backed.

Like scissors cutting at the tip.—
A quietly delivered quip.

Uncaught the object of your chase, your apron's contents
scattered.—
In vain pursuit of greater ends to lose your means that
mattered.

BIDAL MELAYU

Buah mēmbachang burok kulit-nya.

Laksana buntal kēmbong, pērut bunchit dalam-nya kosong.

Nasi ta' dingin pinggan ta' rētak.

Bagai gunting makan di-hujong.

Yang di-kējar tiada dapat, yang di-kandong bērchecheran.

MALAY PROVERBS

Let your children lifeless lie,
But do not let your customs die,
Human lives we can replace,
Not the traditions of a race.

The wet clothes dry upon his waist.—
Of abject poverty to taste.

A single muddy buffalo will soon besmear the rest.—
A people's name is sullied by the actions of a pest.

;

Not even water would leak from his fist.—
A close type of man with a miserly twist.

Not to get a single fish and finish all your bait.—
Not to obtain what you wish and waste your whole estate.

BIDAL MELAYU

Biar mati anak jangan mati adat.

Kain basah kėring di-pinggang.

Sa-ekor kėrbau mėmbawa lumpur, sėmua-nya tėrpalit.

Ayer di-gėnggam tiada tiris.

Umpan habis, ikan ta' dapat.

MALAY PROVERBS

Should you a lazy paddle ply,
Your craft will go a-drifting by.—
If one is leisurely inclined,
In life's race you get left behind.

To have taken vinegar the first thing in the morn.—
Soured looks that usually from jealousy are born.

To regret in time is gain;
To repent too late is vain.

If you give him your calf, he wants your thigh.—
Give him an inch for an ell he'll apply.

Like an egg which is perched on the point of a horn.--
A precarious position for one to adorn.

BIDAL MELAYU

Sėgan bėrdayong pėrahu hanyut.

Chuka di-minum pagi hari.

Sėsal dahulu pėndapatan, sėsal kėmudian apa guna-nya

Bėri bėtis hėndak paha.

Sėpėrti tėlor di-hujong tandok.

MALAY PROVERBS

Palembang* unbeaten and rations run low.—
When means are exhausted with little to show.

As rice-dust on the measure's brim;
Which is not missed if it fall out,
Nor does it fill should it fall in.—
A person of such small account
That, tho' his absence none would note,
His presence does to nought amount.

Let us go slow so long as we're safe.—
Provided we get there, at slowness don't chafe.

Honey without and gall within.—
A false heart beneath a fair skin.

Like a gem with a ring for its setting.—
A match that's pre-eminently fitting.

* In reference to an unsuccessful siege by the Dutch.

BIDAL MELAYU

Pělabor habis Pělembang ta' alah.

Sěpěrti lěmukut di-těpi gantang, masok ta' pėnoh kěluar
ta' luak.

Biar lambat asal sělamat.

Di-luar madu, di-dalam hěmpědu.

Sěpěrti chinchin děngan pěrmata.

MALAY PROVERBS

A Scops owl moping to the moon.—
The longing of a love-lorn loon.

A snake which crawls about a root
Is not less poisonous to boot.—
The powerful who deign to bend
Are no less powerful in the end.

Like a barren woman who at length is brought to bed.—
Of boundless joy and happiness symbolically is said.

;

If he can't seize a horn then an ear he will twist.—
In obtaining an end any means to enlist.

A dig in the ribs should cause an ache.—
A bribe should always be adequate.

BIDAL MELAYU

Laksana punggung mēründukan bulan.

Jikalau ular mēnyusor akar tiada akan hilang bisa-nya.

Bagai mak mandul baharu bēranak.

Tiada dapat tandok tēlinga di-pulaskan.

Tumbok rusok biar sēnak.

MALAY PROVERBS

If in some course you pleasure find,
Your broken head with cord you bind.—
However great the cost may be,
If pleased, you pay it willingly.

Charcoal smeared upon your face.—
An unforgivable disgrace.

As if it weren't enough to fall, the ladder lands on top.—
Misfortunes seldom singly come but always in a crop.

Where do ants die but in sugar?—
Men risk ruin for their pleasure.

I am not a child in the banana-eating stage.—
I am not a simpleton but one of mature age.

BIDAL MELAYU

Hati kalau suka kěpala pěchah di-simpai.

Muka těchonteng arang.

Lagi jatuh di-timpa tangga.

Di-mana sěmut mati kalau tidak ada gula?

Aku bukan budak makan pisang.

MALAY PROVERBS

When you are without a gun,
All and sundry you should shun:
When you're without store of rice,
All work ceases in a trice.—
Not without capital can work proceed:
Lacking protection you're helpless indeed.

Different trays have different stands.
Other men have other ways.

Because of warring with the well to die at last of thirst.—
Whoever quarrels with his bread and butter comes off worst.

Like water on a calladium leaf.—
As water off a duck's back, in brief.

Like dew on the tip of a blade of grass.—
A transient love that will surely pass.

BIDAL MELAYU

Kalau ta' bĕrsĕnapang, baik bĕri jalan lapang:
Kalau tiada padi, sa-barang kĕrja ta' jadi.

Lain dulang lain kaki, lain orang lain hati.

Sĕbab bĕrkĕlahi dĕngan pĕrigi, akhir-nya mati dahaga.

Sĕpĕrti ayer di-daun kĕladi.

Bagai ĕmbun di-hujong rumput.

MALAY PROVERBS

Tho' gold may pour from foreign skies,
Whilst spears and daggers rain at home;
Yet better off is he who lies
On his own soil, than far to roam.

Pendant without a string in sight.—
A poor deserted woman's plight.

To ask for some blood from a piece of dried fish.—
To squeeze blood from a stone is the apposite wish.

;
"Twas your own forefinger thrust in your eye.—
Let down by someone on whom you rely.

On hearing thunder in the sky your water jar to empty.—
To lose the substance that you have for shadows of vague
plenty.

BIDAL MĒLAYU

Hujan mas perak di-nĕgĕri orang, hujan kĕris lĕmbing di-nĕgĕri sĕndiri, baik juga di-nĕgĕri sĕndiri.

Bĕrgantong tidak bĕrtali.

Minta darah pada daeng.

Tĕlunjok mĕnchuchok mata.

Dĕngarkan guntor di-langit ayer di-tĕmpayan di-churahkan.

MALAY PROVERBS

A buffalo pierced with a ring through its nose.—
To follow around in a submissive pose.

The cat awaits the pendant fish.—
A symbol for a latent wish.

The type of bravery of a fly.—
Persistent efforts to annoy.

Poling downstream excites the crocodiles risability.—
Wasted effort portrayed as the height of absurdity.

A deer into the village strays.—
Or shy and awkward in one's ways.

BIDAL MELAYU

Kěrbau chuchok hidong.

Ikan gantong, kuching tunggu.

Běrani, běrani lalat.

Hilir bėrgalah, buaya kětawa.

Rusa masok kampong.

MALAY PROVERBS

It's not as if there's just one flower or solitary fish.—
There are just as good fish in the sea as e'er came out of it.

To fall on to a mattress spread.—
Of one who a rich wife has wed.

Like the king-crab and its mate.—
Couples ne'er found separate.

Whilst the bird is on the wing, the pepper's ready mashed.—
To start counting one's chickens before they are hatched.

Like the brinjal and the dried fish.—
Fated to meet in the same dish.

BIDAL MELAYU

Bunga bukan sa-kuntum; ikan bukan sa-ekor.

Jatoh ka-tilam.

Sěpěrti kěronchor děngan bělangkas.

Burong těrbang di-pipiskan lada.

Bagai těrong děngan ikan kěring.

MALAY PROVERBS

Through just a drop of indigo a jug of milk is lost.—
A little act, of carelessness a lifetime's work may cost.

Don't stir up a hornet's nest.
Leave the sleeping dog at rest.

The worm becomes a serpent great.—
The humble raised to high estate.

Tho' the wound be gone, the scar will live.—
One can't forget tho' one may forgive.

On the heels of desire does death await;
Follow your feelings and ruin's your fate.

BIDAL MELAYU

Sěbab nila sa-titek rosak susu sa-bělanga.

Sarang těbuan jangan di-jolok.

Chaching měnjadi ular naga.

Luka boleh hilang, parut tinggal juga.

Ikut hati mati; ikut rasa binasa.

MALAY PROVERBS

When the lower fronds of the palm tree fall,
The upper leaves should not laugh withal.—
In another's demise, or loss, discern
The coming approach of your own turn.

Do crocodiles a carcass spurn?—
Will men from evil promptings turn?

The prop was snapped asunder as the betel-vine ascended.—
The promise of a fruitful life that early death has ended.

Take out the essence and discard the dross.—
Pick out the worthwhile and reject the gross.

The turtle lays a thousand eggs,
Yet no one is the wiser;
The hen, which lays a single egg,
Is a world-wide advertiser.

BIDAL MELAYU

Pělěpah bawah luroh, pělěpah atas jangan kětawa.

Ada-kah buaya mēnolak bangkai?

Sireh naik, junjong patah.

Ambil pati-nya buangkan hampas.

Pěnyu itu bértělör bėribu-ribu sa-orang pun tiada tahu,
ayam bértělör sa-biji pėchah khabar sa-buah nēgėri.

PRONUNCIATION

The consonants are pronounced as in English but the vowels are given their continental sounds, so that

a = ah, e = eh, i = ee, o = oh, u = oo.

The atonic or toneless *ě* is pronounced as "er" with the "r" not stressed, or as the "a" in alone.

In an open syllable, unless it be a final one, the vowel is long, whilst in a closed syllable it is always short. A final "a" dies away in sound, as in Java.

The diphthong "ai" is pronounced as in aisle and "au" as in sauerkraut.

An "h" between two dissimilar vowels is elided, but as a final letter it is gently aspirated.

A final "k" forms a glottal check or stop which abruptly shortens the preceding vowel sound.

There is no strong accent at all but there is a slight stress on the penultimate syllable unless it ends in *ě*.

In the system of romanizing employed in Indonesia the Dutch sound values of certain letters differ from the English, so that—

dj = j, j = y, oe = u, sj = sh, tj = ch, ch = kh.

In addition the vowel "e" (eh) may be accented thus "é", whilst the toneless "ě" (er) is not marked at all, whilst in modern usage "œ" is replaced by "u" or "o".

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

A			
abu	ash	asalkan	provided
ada	to be, to have, there is	asap	smoke
adat	custom	atas	on, above
adil	just, fair	ayam	fowl
akan	will	ayer	water
akar	root		
akhir	end		
aku	I		
alah	to lose, to be beaten		
alang-kah	how splendid		
alang-alang	in a mild way		
ambil	to take	badan	body
ambong	basket on back	bagai	like
ampat	four	bagaimana	in whatever way
anak	child, young	bagitu	in that way, so, thus
andam	to trim a bride's hair		
angin	wind	baharu	newly
antın	pestle	bahasa	language, polite ad- dress
antara	between		
apa	what	bahu	shoulder
apabila	when	baik	good, well
api	fire	baju	coat
ara	fig	bakar	to burn
arang	charcoal	balas	to requite
asah	to hone	balek	to return
asal	origin	bangkai	carcase
		bantal	pillow
		banyak	much
		basah	wet
		batu	stone
		bawa	to take, to convey

B

bawah	under	bërchabang	forked
bayar	to pay	bërchecheran	to dribble away
bělak	to cleave	bërdawat	covered in ink
bělakang	back	bërdayong	to paddle
bělakang	stripes	bërdendang	to hum a tune
bělanga	pot	bërgalah	to pole
bělankas	king-crab	bërganti	to substitute
bělatak	woodpecker	bërgantong	to hang
bëli	to buy	bërgëtah	to have sap
bëliiong	adze	bërgoyang	to sway
bëlum	not yet	bërguna	of use
bëljunior	to stretch one's legs	bërhulu	to have a handle
bënanang	thread	bëri	to give
bëneh	seed	bëribu	in thousands
bëngkok	bent	bërijalan	to walk
bëradat	to have one's conventions	bërijual	to sell
bëraja	to reign	bërijuang	to engage in combat
bërakal	clever, sensible	bërkaki	to have feet
bëranak	to give birth	bërkarat	to rust
bërani	brave	bërkëlahi	to fight
bërapa	how much, however	bërkëlikir	to be ringed
bërat	heavy	bërnnyala	to blaze
bërbalek	to return	bërombak	to have waves
bërbini	to have a wife	bërongga	hollow
bërbuah	to fruit	bërpada-pada	reasonably
bërbunyi	to sound	bërupting	to have a shank

běrsěnapang	to have a gun	buaya	crocodile
běrsětěru	to be at enmity	budak	youth
běrtali	to have a rope	budi	kindness
běrtandok	to have horns	bukan	no, not
běrtanya	to ask	buku	knot
běrtělor	to lay eggs	bulan	moon
běrtěmberang	to be stayed	bumi	earth
běrtulang	to have a bone	bunchit	distended
běsar	large	bunga	flower
běsi	iron	buntal	globe-fish
bětina	female	burok	rotten, ugly
bětis	calf of leg	burong	bird
bětul	correct, upright	buta	blind
biar	to let, to permit	bunyi	to sound
biasa	accustomed		
biawak	monitor-lizard		
bijak	wise	chabai	chilli
bilang	to count	chaching	worm
binasa	to destroy	chakap	speech
bingong	muddle- headed	chapai	to grasp
bini	wife	chat	paint
bintang	star	chělek	opened (of the eyes)
bisa	pain, venom	chělup	to dye
bodoh	stupid	chěncang	to slice
boleh	can, to be able	chěncaru	horse-mackerel
bongkok	hunch-back	chěrdek	clever
buah	fruit	chinchin	ring
buang (kan)	to throw away	chuchok	to pierce
buat	to do	chuka	vinegar
		churahkan	to pour out

C

	D		
dada	chest	durian	fruit, sp.
daeng	dried fish		E
dahaga	thirst	ekor	tail, a classifier of animals
dahulu	first of all, previously	ĕmbun	dew
dalam	in, within, deep	ĕnggang	hornbill
dan	and		G
dapat	to obtain, to get, can	gajah	elephant
dapor	cooking-place	gantang ^h	gallon
dara	virgin	gantong	to hang
darah	blood	garu	to scratch
dari (pada)	from, than	gatal	to itch
datang	to come	gĕndang	drum
daun	leaf	gĕnggam	to grasp
daya	artifice	gĕram	excited
dĕngan	with	gĕrgaji	saw
dĕngar (kan)	to listen, to hear	gĕtah	latex, sap
dĕras	quick	gula	sugar
di-	in, on, at, a sign of the passive	gulai	curry
dia	he	guna	use
diam	to keep quiet	gunong	mountain
dingin	cold	gunting	scissors
diri	self	guntor	thunder
dua	two	guroh	thunder
dudok	to sit		H
dulang	platter, tray	habis	to finish
dunia	world	haluan	ship's bow
duri	thorn		

lagi	more, yet	luroh	to fall as a leaf
-lah	an emphatic particle	lutut	knee
lain	different, another	M	
laksana	like, similar	mabok	intoxicated
lalat	fly	madu	honey
lalu	to pass by	mak	mother
lambat	slow	makan (an)	to eat, food
langit	sky	makin	the more
lapang	spacious, empty	malu	shy
lauk	food taken with rice	mana	which, where
laut (an)	sea	mandul	barren
lĕmbap	damp	mangkok	bowl, dish
lĕmbing	spear	manisan	syrup
lĕmbu	ox	manusia	mankind
lĕmbut	soft	marah	anger
lĕmukut	rice siftings	mas	gold
lĕpas	to let go	masuk	to enter
lĕsong	mortar	mata	eye, blade
lidah	tongue	mati	to die, dead
luak	to decrease in quality	mau	to want
luar	outside	Mĕlaka	Malacca
luka	wound	mĕlata	to creep
lumpor	mud	mĕlayang	to float in the air
lunjor	to stretch one's legs	mĕleleh	to trickle
lupakan	to forget	mĕlupakan	to forget
		mĕmandang	to gaze at
		mĕmbachang	horse-mango
		mĕmbawa	to bring

měmběli	to buy
měmētek	to pick
měmikul	to carry on the shoulder
měnandok	to butt
měnang	to win
měnangkap	to catch
měnanti (kan)	to wait, await
měnantu	son-in-law
měnari	to dance
měnatang	to carry on the hand
měnawar	to bargain
měnchari	to look for
měnchuchok	to pierce
měngandong	to be pregnant
měngantok	to be drowsy
měngata	to malign
měngaum	to roar
měngēmbek	to bleat
měngigal	to display (of a peacock)
měngikut	to follow
měnguak	to bellow
měninggalkan	to leave behind
měnjadi	to become
měnolak	to push aside
měntah	raw, uncooked
měnumpang	to lodge
měnunjokkan	to show

měnyělam	to dive
měnyurohkan	to order
měnyusor	to skirt
minta	to request
minum	to drink
minyak	oil
měrak	peacock
měrasa	to feel
měrindukan	to mope
miskin	poverty
muka	face
mulut	mouth
murah	cheap
musoh	enemy

N

naga	serpent
naik	to ascend
'nak	to wish to
nama	name
nampak	visible
nangka	jackfruit
nasi	cooked rice
něgěri	country
něschaya	certainly
niat	desire
nikah	to marry
nila	indigo

nya	his, her, its, their	pěchah	to break in bits
		pědas	hot, pungent
		pělabor	rations
	O	pělandok	mouse-deer
oleh	by	Pělembang	Palembang
orang	person	pělēpah	frond
onak	barb	pělok	embrace
		pěmidang	lace-frame
		pěmukul	hammer
	P	pěnat	tired
pada	to, than	pěndapatan	gain
padang	field	pěngajar	instruction
padi	rice, paddy	pěngayoh	paddle
pagi	morning	pěnoh	full
pagar	fence	pěntas	sleeping bench
pagut	to peck	pěnyu	turtle
paha	thigh	pěrahu	sailing ship, canoe
paham	to understand	perak	silver
pahat	chisel	pěrdu	stem, crown of plant
pakai	to wear, to use	pěriok	cooking pot
paku	nail	pěrigi	well
panas	heat	pěrlēlar	to drag
panjang	long	pěrmata	gem
papar	flat side	pěrtajam	to sharpen
parang	chopper	pěrut	stomach
parut	scar	petak	hold
patah	to break in two	pětang	afternoon
pati	essence		
payah	difficult		

pētek	to pluck
pikir	to think
pileh	to choose
pinang	areca-nut
pinggan	plate
pinggang	waist
pipiskan	to mash
pipit	sparrow
pisang	banana
pokah	bent
pokok	tree
pukat	to net
pukul	to strike
pula	again, then
pulas (kan)	to twist
pulau	island
pun	even
punggok	Scops owl
punggor	stump
puntong	fag end of brand
punya	to own, a pos- sessive particle
puteh	white
putus	to break (of ropes)

R

raja	prince
rapat	close

ranting	branch
rasa	to feel
raya	great
rēbah	to collapse
rēndam	to soak
rēnggang	apart
rēsēmi	nature
rētak	cracked
rēzēki	daily bread
rial	dollar
ringan	light
rosak	to spoil
rotan	rattan
ruas	internode
rumah	house
rumput	grass
rusa	deer
rusok	rib

S

sa	a, one
sa-barang	any
sa-bēlah	one side
sa-biji	a seed
sa-buah	a globular object
sa-bēntok	a ring
sabong	cock-fighting
sabut	coconut husk
saga	scarlet pea

sahabat	friend	sëlera	appetite
sa-hari	a day	sëlimumut	coverlet
sa-jëngkal	a span	sëmbah	to pay homage
sa-kali	at all, all together	sëmbunyikan	to hide
sa-kawan	a herd	sëmpat	to have time
sakit	painful	sëmua	all
salah	mistake	sëmut	ant
sa-lëmau-	however weak	sënak	ache
lëmau		sënam	groundwork, base
sama	together with	sëndiri	oneself
sambil	whilst	sëpërti	as, like
sampai	to reach	sëpoh	gloss
sangka	to suspect, to think	sëram pang	spear, trident
sangkak	to oppose	sërpeh	chipped
sapi	ox, cow	sësal	to regret
sapu	to smear over	sësat	to go astray
sarang	nest	si	the
sa-ribu	a thousand	siapa	who
sa-tahun	a year	silap	mistake
sayang	pity	simpai	to bind around
sëbab	because	sindir	to chaff
sëbërang	further shore	sireh	betel-leaf
sëdap	pleasant	sorak	to cheer
sëdarkan	to be aware	sorongkan	to push forward
sëdikit	little	sudah	already, a sign of the past
sëgan	lazy		tense
sëkam	chaff	suka	to like
sëkarang	now	sunggoh	true
sëlamat	safe		

sungguh pun although
susu milk

T

ta' not
ta' akan unlikely
tahan to set
tahu to know
tahun year
tajam sharp
takut fear
talam tray
tama' to covet
tanah earth, ground
tandang to visit
tandok horn
tangan arm
tangga ladder
tanya to ask
tari dancing
tawar tasteless
tēbu sugar-cane
tēbuan hornet
tēlan to swallow
tēlinga car
tēlunjok forefinger
tēlor egg
tēmpayan large jar
tēmpurong coconut shell
tēnang calm

tēndang to kick
tēngadah to look up
tēngah middle
tēngah-tēngah in the midst
tēnggēlam to sink
tēpi edge
tēpok to pat
tērantok collided
tērbakar on fire
tērbang to fly
tērchachak implanted
tērchonteng smeared
tērdorong to trip up
tēndang to kick
tērgadai in pawn
tērhēmpas dashed down
tērkawal guarded
tērlangsong to overshoot
 the mark
tērlētak placed down
tērlēpas escaped
tērong egg-plant
tērpalit besmeared
tērpērcheh splashed
tērpileh to pick on
tērsaji served
tētapi but
tiada is, or are not,
 without
tidak no, not
tidor to sleep

tikar	mat
tikus	mouse
tilam	mattress
timba	dipper
timbul	to float
timpa	to fall on top of
timun	cucumber
tinggal (kan)	to leave behind
tiris	to leak
titek	drop
tiup	to blow
tolak	to push
tua	old
tulang	bone
tumbuh	to sprout
tumbok	to punch
tunggu	to wait
turut	to follow

ubi
udang
ukor
ular
umpama

umpan
untong
usul

walau

yang

yu

U

tuber
prawn
to measure
snake
example,
instance
bait
fate
behaviour

W

even if

Y

who, which,
that, which
shark