

Ian Proudfoot

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Introduction

Ian Proudfoot is a great scholar of the Islamic world of Southeast Asia. Some refer to him as the “*Australian scholar of the Malay world*”. His contributions to the Malay and Muslim scholarly publishing is immensely exploratory and his published works are uniquely raw and unequalled. Librarians in Malaysia and Singapore fondly equate him with the hard cover blue book entitled; “*Early Malay printed books: a provisional account of materials published in the Singapore-Malaysia area up to 1920 nothing holdings in major public collection*”. One of his first publications was his PhD thesis which he obtained from the Australian National University in 1977, the title being “*Ahimsa and a Mahabharata Story*”. His interest and competence in Asian studies emerged even as he was a student when he was awarded the University medal in Indonesian studies in 1967. In total, he has written about 7 books and more than 45 book chapters and journal articles.



Ian Proudfoot

Research in Malay bibliography

His main areas of research interests were: Literacy, Printing, Colonial education in nineteenth-century Muslim Southeast Asia, Classical Malay manuscript literature and philology, Early Malay divination and time-reckoning calendars, and Malay science. He is remembered for spearheading the “Malay Concordance Project” which is a corpus of pre-modern Malay written text from more than 150 sources. It has 5.7 million words, including 130,000 verses. This is now available online at: <http://mcp.anuedu.au/Q/mcp.html>.

He was passionate about identifying the origin of information sources. He took pains to study and do research on *William Roff's Bibliography of Malay and Arabic periodicals in the Straits Settlements and peninsular Malay states, 1876-1941* (Proudfoot, 1985). He also unveiled the history of information sources and the registration of books and periodicals' ordinance in this country. He analyzed thoroughly the information of publications listed in the blue books and Gazette figures from the Straits Settlements Government Gazette (SSGG) and Federated Malay States Government Gazette (FMSGG). He did research on manuscripts readership and its conversion to print format such as

the “*Sya'ir Hassan Masri*” printed at Palembang in 1905 (Proudfoot, 1982). He attempted to trace the printing and circulation of locally published materials in Malaya during the first hundred years of printing, from 1817-1920 (Proudfoot, 1987, 1989) and also tried to locate and record Malay books published in the Malaysia-Singapore region.

Outstanding contributions

He invented “AHAD”, a computer program which can convert Islamic to AD dates and vice versa. It can be used in Microsoft Word and is freely downloadable from his web page of online resources, <http://mcp.anu.edu.au/proudfoot/online.html>, under the Calendars category. Other resources such as History of Indian Religion, Printing history, Classical Malay & Concordances and Malay Texts &

Translations are also available. He also initiated “Takwim”, a browser-based application for converting Javanese and Malay calendars and Western calendars, including *rukayah* dates emulating local moon sightings.

Publications [available at the University of Malaya Library]

1. (with A. Kumar) A Legacy of Two Homelands: Chinese Manuscript Tradition. pp.201-212 of A. Kumar & J. McGlynn (ed.), *Illuminations. The Writing Traditions of Indonesia*, New York: Weatherhill, 1996.
2. (with A. Kumar), Chinese Manuscript Literature. *Indonesian Heritage Series: Languages and Literatures* (ed. J. McGlynn), Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 1998, pp.38-39.
3. (with V. Hooker), Mediating Time and Space: The Malay Writing Tradition. pp.49-78 of A. Kumar & J. McGlynn (ed.), *Illuminations. The Writing Traditions of Indonesia*, New York: Weatherhill, 1996.
4. (with V. Hooker), The Malay Writing Tradition. *Indonesian Heritage Series: Languages and Literatures* (ed. J. McGlynn), Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 1998, pp.22-23.
5. A 'Chinese' mousedeer comes to Paris. *Archipel* (Paris), no.61 (2001), pp.69-97.
6. A Formative Period in Malay Book Publishing. *Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society*, vol.59 no.2 (1986), pp.101-132

7. A Nineteenth Century Bookseller's Catalogue. *Kekal Abadi* (Kuala Lumpur), vol.6 no.4 (1987), pp.1-11
 8. A pioneer publisher in Palembang, 1905. *Kekal Abadi*, 1(4), 1982.
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 10. Abdullah v Siami: early Malay verdicts on British justice. *Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* 80.1 (June 2007): pp.1-16.
 11. Ahimsa and a Mahabharata story. Canberra: ANU,1977
 12. An expedition into the politics of Malay philology. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Malaysian Branch*, vol.76, pt.1 (2003), pp.1-53.
 13. Brushes with modernity on Batavia's horse tram 1869-1871. *RIMA Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, vol.39, no.1 (2005), pp.129-187.
 14. Concordance to Hikayat Inderaputera. Canberra: ANU, 1990
 15. Concordances and Classical Malay. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (Leiden), vol.147 (1991), pp.74-95.
 16. Early Malay printed books. Kuala Lumpur: Academy of Malay Studies/ UM Library,1993
 17. Early Muslim Printing in Southeast Asia., *Libri* (Copenhagen), vol.45 (1995), pp.216-223.
 18. From Manuscript to Print. *Indonesian Heritage Series: Languages and Literatures* (ed. J. McGlynn), Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 1998, pp.46-47.
 19. From Recital to Sight-reading: the Silencing of Texts in Malaysia. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, vol.30 no.87 (July 2002), pp.117-144.
 20. Historical Foundations of Buddhism. *Indonesian Heritage Series: Religion and Ritual* (ed. J. Fox), Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 1998, pp.50-51.
 21. Historical Foundations of Hinduism. *Indonesian Heritage Series: Religion and Ritual* (ed. J. Fox), Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 1998, pp.42-43.
 22. Introducing AHAD. *Kekal Abadi*, 6(4),1987
 23. Major library holdings of early Malay books. *Kekal Abadi*, 8(1),1989
 24. Malay books printed in Bombay. *Kekal Abadi*, 13 (3), 1994
 25. Malay manuscripts. Jakarta: Lontar Foundation, 1994.
 26. Malay materials in the Houghton Library. *Kekal Abadi*, 19(1), 2000.
 27. New Technologies and New Perspectives. *Indonesian Heritage Series: Early Modern History* (ed. A.J.S Reid), Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 1998, pp.128-29.
 28. Penang, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993
 29. Pre-war Malay periodicals. *Kekal Abadi*, 4(4), 1985.
 30. Takwim version 2. Canberra: The Author, 1988.
 31. Ta'rikh (historiography) sec.3 Indonesia and Malaysia. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, Leiden: Brill, 1960-[1997]
 32. The Decline of the Manuscript Tradition. A. Kumar & J. McGlynn (ed.), *Illuminations. The Writing Traditions of Indonesia*, New York: Weatherhill, 1996, pp.253-256
 33. The print threshold in Malaysia. Victoria: Centre of South East Asian Studies, 1994.
 34. Variation in a Malay folk-tale tradition. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, 18, 1984, pp. 87-102
- Until May 2011, two of his publications were still in press;
1. "Indian Calendars Translated into Old Javanese" in H. ChambertLoir (ed.). *History of Translation in Indonesia and Malaysia*, Paris: Ecole francaise d'Extreme-Orient / Jakarta: Yayasan Obor.
 2. "Malaysia-colonial period" in C. Carpenter (ed.). *The World an Its peoples*. London: Brown Reference Group.

Obituary

Ian McLeod Proudfoot passed away on Friday, 23rd September 2011. He leaves behind a wife and two sons. Despite his health condition during his last days, he was untiringly working on a manuscript project for the British Library.

References

- [Online materials] <http://mcp.anu.edu.au/proudfoot/online.html>
- Proudfoot, I. (1982). A pioneer publisher in Palembang, 1905. *Kekal Abadi*, 1(4), 14-18.
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- Proudfoot, I. (1987). A Nineteenth-century Malay bookoseller's catalogue. *Kekal Abadi*, 6(4), 1-11.
- Proudfoot, I. (1989). Major library holdings of early Malay books. *Kekal Abadi*, 8(1), 7-17.
- Various discussion lists, emails and blogs.

NOTE : The University of Malaya Library has a few extra copies of "Early Malay printed books. Kuala Lumpur: Academy of Malay Studies/ UM Library,1993" and can donate to genuine researchers.