# The Contribution of Shaykh Abbas Kuta Karang in Malay Medical: A Study on Al-Rahmah fi Al-Tib wa Al-Hikmah Manuscript

Sumbangan Shaykh Abbas Kuta Karang dalam Bidang Perubatan Melayu: Kajian Terhadap Manuskrip Al-Rahmah fi Al-Tib wa Al-Hikmah

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\*Corresponding author: Norhasnira Ibrahim, Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia; Email: norhasnira@usim.edu.my Abstrak: Malay scholars had played a significant role in the Malay Archipelago's Islamization. Shaykh Abbas Kuta Karang is well-known in Aceh, Indonesia, as a 19th-century Malay scholar, religious figure, astronomer, warrior, and medicinal expert. His well-known Malay medical manuscript titled Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah is one of his masterworks. It is one of the most important references for Malay medical practitioners. The paper objectives to (i) highlight a biography of Shavkh Abbas Kuta Karang and (ii) describe the writing methodology of the medical knowledge documented in this manuscript. This study employed a qualitative methodology and was conducted in the mode of library research. This study's data was collected from the manuscript, books, journals, and previous studies. Medical knowledge in Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah consists of five chapters beginning with human anatomy (based on fire, wind, water, and soil fundamentals), types of food and medicine (grain, milk, meat, and fruit), preventive healthcare (healthy eating, drinking habit, body movements, and others), types, causes, and treatments for certain illnesses (hair loss, migraine, freckles, earache, tooth ache, and others), and types, causes, and treatments for general illnesses (fever, vertigo, stroke, semi paralysis, and many more).

**Kata kunci:** Abbas Kuta Karang, Malay Medical Manuscript, Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah;

Abstract: Para cendekiawan Melayu telah memainkan peranan yang penting dalam proses penyebaran agama Islam di Alam Melayu. Di Aceh, Indonesia, Shaykh Abbas Kuta Karang terkenal sebagai seorang cendekiawan Melayu, ulama, ahli astronomi, pahlawan dan pakar perubatan pada abad ke-19 Masihi. Manuskrip Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah merupakan satu karya dalam bidang perubatan Melayu yang telah dihasilkan oleh beliau. Ia sangat terkenal dan dijadikan rujukan oleh para pengamal perubatan Melayu. Objektif kajian ini ialah untuk (i) mengkaji biografi Shaykh Abbas Kuta Karang, dan (ii) menghuraikan metodologi penulisan ilmu perubatan Melavu yang dicatat dalam manuskrip tersebut. Metodologi kualitatif telah diaplikasikan dalam kajian ini dan ia adalah berbentuk kajian kepustakaan. Data kajian diperolehi daripada manuskrip, buku-buku, jurnal, dan kajian terdahulu yang berkaitan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa ilmu perubatan Melayu yang dibincangkan dalam Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah terdiri daripada lima bab bermula dengan anatomi manusia (berdasarkan unsur api, angin, air dan tanah), jenis makanan dan ubatan (bijirin, susu, daging dan buah-buahan), penjagaan kesihatan dan pencegahan penyakit (kaedah pemakanan yang sihat, tabiat



minum, pergerakan badan dan lain-lain), jenis, punca dan rawatan bagi penyakit khusus (rambut gugur, migrain, jeragat, sakit telinga, sakit gigi dan lain-lain) serta jenis, punca dan rawatan bagi penyakit umum (demam, vertigo, strok, separa lumpuh dan banyak lagi.)

Kata kunci: Abbas Kuta Karang, Manuskrip Perubatan Melayu, Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah;

## Introduction

Aceh is a region known for its numerous Malay scholars who have contributed to a diverse range of literary works. One of the individuals is Shaykh Abbas Kuta Karang, who will be referred to as Shavkh Abbas henceforth. Abdullah (2000) highlights that this individual has made significant contributions to the fields of politics, Islamic preaching, and the authorship of religious Islamic texts, establishing himself as a prominent Islamic scholar. In addition to his contributions to social and religious disciplines, he has also made significant contributions to the field of medical knowledge. In furtherance of his medical profession, he authored a Malay medical manuscript entitled Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah (Mohd Shafri and Muhammad Yahya in 2017; and Jauhola in 2020). This article aims to highlight the great contribution by Shaykh Abbas in the authorship of medical manuscripts in Malay during the 19th century.

#### Methodology

The present discourse pertains to a Malay scholar known as Shaykh Abbas and his literary work entitled Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah. The methodology utilized in this study can be characterized as a qualitative study. The present study employed a historical methodology regarding his biography, educational background, personal characteristics, written works, and contributions to the field of Malay medicine. The present study employed the historical method and relied on a set of selected references, including Shaykh Abbas' writings, written works by local and foreign authors on his life and legacy, scholarly analyses and research published in academic journals, paperwork, as well as doctoral and master dissertations. The primary source utilized in this study was derived from Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah. The data analysis method was applied by reviewing and analysing documentary evidence extracted from this manuscript to answer specific research questions related to this study.

#### **Literature Review**

A literature review is a comprehensive analysis of previously published scholarly works pertaining to a particular subject matter. The present study involves a review and categorization of prior research pertaining to the subject matter, which has been divided into two distinct sections. The initial section aims to gather pertinent details regarding the profile of Shaykh Abbas and his noteworthy contributions. The researcher referred various sources to support their study, including The Acehnese by Hurgronje (1906), Penyebaran & Silsilah Ulama Sejagat Melayu by Abdullah (2000), Teungku Chik Kuta Karang: Ulama, Pejuang dan Tabib by Budiman (2004), Ensiklopedi Aceh: Adat, Bahasa, Geografi, Kesenian, Sejarah by Alamsyah (2008), Tradisi, Wacana, dan Dinamika Intelektual Islam Aceh Abad XVIII dan XIX by Erawadi (2009), Ulama Membangun Aceh by Syukri (2012), Pemikiran Sheikh Abbas Kutakarang Tentang Hisab Penentuan Awal Bulan Hijraiah by Putri (2013), From Aceh for Nusantara: The Contribution of Ulama Aceh's Work Integration-Interconnection of Science by Mubarak (2017), Scraps of Hope in Banda Aceh: Gendered Urban Politics in the Aceh Peace Process by Jauhola (2020) and Khazanah Ilmu Falak Aceh (Sejarah, Tokoh, Naskah) by Juli (2022). The subsequent section entails a review of several studies pertaining to Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah. The researcher has examined two primary sources, namely Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah Kitab Perubatan Melayu by Mohd Shafri and Muhammad Yahya (2017), and Terapi Pemakanan Menurut Pandangan Sheikh Abbas Kuta Karang: Kajian Awal Terhadap Kitab Al-Rahmah Fi Al-Tib Wa Al-Hikmah conducted by Hasan et al. (2020).The discussion pertaining to Shaykh Abbas highlighted his biography, his thoughts on astronomy, his participation in the Aceh independence movement, and his literary works. Nonetheless, there is a paucity of academic research that has specifically examined his role in advancing the Malay medical field. The researcher has determined that his role as a Malay practitioner and his book titled Al-Rahmah Fi Al-Tib Wa Al-Hikmah may be interlinked. Therefore, this study discusses the contribution of Shaykh Abbas Kuta Karang in the Malay

medical by focusing on the *Al-Rahmah fi Al-Tib wa Al-Hikmah* manuscript.

# Result and Discussion: Shaykh Abbas' Biography

His full name is Shavkh Abbas bin Muhammad al-Asvi (Abdullah, 2000). Hasan et al. (2020) state that his full name is Svavkh Abbas bin Syaykh Muhammad Fadil bin Shaykh al-Harwani ibn al-Sab'ah (Teungku Shaykh Tujouh). Due to his contribution as the founder of a dayah or pesantren (Islamic school) in Aceh, he is known as Teungku Chik Kuta Karang. The term 'Teungku' refers to Aceh's respectful title for a religious person or ulama' (Sri Waryanti, 2012), while the term 'Chik' describes a person's Islamic knowledge expertise. In Malaysia, however, he is known as Shaykh Abbas Kuta Karang. Due to a lack of information, it is impossible to determine his precise date of birth. He was born in Kuta Karang village, Darul Imarah Subdistrict (Kecamatan), Aceh Besar District (Kabupaten), Aceh (Abdullah, 2000; Mohd Shafri, and Muhammad Yahva, 2017). Not much information was documented about Shaykh Abbas except by referring to his writings. For example, he described his birthplace and mazhab in Taj al-Muluk as follows:

"...Shaykh Abbas nama negerinya, masjid Jami' Ulu Susu tempatnya, kejadiannya, Kuta Karang nama kampungnya..." (page 6).

#### **Educational Background**

According to the findings of previous researchers, there is little information available about his educational background. Shaykh Abbas, according to Juli (2022), went to Haramain in Mecca to further his education. While in Haramain, among his teachers are Shaykh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani, Shaykh Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani, Sayyid Ahmad al-Marzuqi al-Maliki, Shaykh Uthman al-Dimiyati, Syakh Muhammad Sa'id Qudsi, Shaykh Muhammad Salih bin Ibrahim al-Rais, Syaykh Umar Abd al-Rasul, Shaykh Abdul Hafiz al-'Ajami and others. He had mastered a multi discipline in Islamic studies and scientific knowledge, including aqidah, fiqh, tasawuf, literature, politics, engineering, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and astrology. Shaykh Abbas was a pioneer and expert in astrology; consequently, he was renowned as the astrologer of the Malay world (Abdullah, 2000; Mohd Shafri and Muhammad Yahya, 2017; Hasan et al., 2020) and was known as "Farabi Aceh" (Mubarak, 2017).

# His Personality and Characteristic

After returning from Makkah, he had been actively involved in the spread of Islam in Aceh. In Ulee Susu, he constructed a mosque and founded the Islamic school or Dayah (Pesantren) around 1860 (Mohd Shafri and Muhammad Yahya, 2017; Mubarak, 2017). In his village, the mosque had become a place of Islamic worship and a centre for Islamic preaching. He was also a medical professional, and he treated village residents at the mosque. He was designated Qadi Malik al-Adil of the Aceh government by Sultan 'Ala al-Din Ibrahim Mansur Syah (1857-1870) due to his reputation as a smart, strict, and knowledgeable Islamic scholar. He played a significant role as the sultan's religious advisor and the locals of Aceh's main expert religious issue at the time (Juli, 2022; Hasan et al., 2020; Firdaus, 2019; Putri, 2013).

He was also a strong fighter and reformer who fought for independence. Shaykh Abbas was anti-colonial, and the Dutch were the colonizers during his time. During the Aceh-Dutch conflict in 1873, he commanded the Malay Aceh army (Juli, 2022). Shaykh Abbas, according to Hurgronje (1906), had never interacted with the Dutch in his entire existence. Hurgronje mentioned that apart from the fact that Shaykh Abbas is a peculiar man, he also stated that Shaykh Abbas is a fanatic Islamic scholar who refused to give in to the Dutch colonial in his statement:

"...He never came into contact with the government, but in the last years of his life, his friends succeeded in making the Dutch civil officers believe that this fanatic ulama had been transformed into an ardent advocate of acknowledgement of the supremacy of the Gõmpeuni..." (Page 188).

Shaykh Abbas possessed a brave and firm characteristic making him a person who is brave to share his opinion and stand in his preaches, lessons and writings. His broad knowledge and characteristics were acknowledged by a Dutch named Snouck Hurgronje (1906) in his writing:

" Teungku Kutakarang, an active and clever but peculiar man". (Page 183).

He had written several books intended to inspire and motivate locals to engage in jihad against the Dutch colonial (Mohd Shafri and Muhammad Yahya, 2017). He suggested that Aceh warriors enter battle wearing magnificent garments adorned with gold and gems. He also proposed that the Friday prayer preach to be delivered in Aceh language instead of Arabic so that the locals would understand it. All of these transformations occurred during the conflict between Aceh and the Dutch (Muliadi, 2015). As a result of Shaykh Abbas' opinions and proposals, which differed from the prevalent local customs at the time, Hurgronje labelled him as peculiar and fanatical. The statement made by Hurgronje in 1906 can be discovered in his writing:

"...Teungku Kutakarang on the other hand decreed that no such rules had any application to the warriors of Allah and carried his opposition so far as to insist on their wearing gold and silk so that the Dutch, finding these costly objects on the body of slain, might be dismayed by the wealth of Aceh which defied all reverses." (Page 184).

"Another peculiar tenet of Teungku Kutakarang was that under existing circumstances the Friday service (which is universally performed in Arabic) should in Aceh be preferably celebrated in the Acehnese tongue." (Page 184).

#### **His Masterpieces**

Shaykh Abbas, a multi-disciplined Islamic scholar, had mastered numerous fields of knowledge and disseminated them through his writings. Arwin Juli (2022) noted that Shaykh Abbas had written numerous manuscripts, the majority of which have been lost due to the sinking of the ship on which he was traveling to Aceh or because they were no longer preserved after his demise. Nonetheless, there are a few remaining manuscripts, including:

- i) Qunu' li man Ta'attuf (1259H/1843)
- ii) Siraj al-Zalam (1266H/1849)
- iii) Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah (1853)
- iv) Maw'izah al-Ikhwan (1886)
- v) Tadhkirah al-Rakidin (1889)
- vi) Kisah Bahasa Jawi (no year)

#### **His Death**

Shaykh Abbas died in 1313H November 1895 and was buried in Kompleks Makam Kuno Teungku Kuta Karang in Gampong Lampeunen, Kecamatan Darul Imarah, Kabupaten Aceh Besar (Mohd Shafri, and Muhammad Yahya, 2017). Among his notable legacies are a school known as Dayah Teungku Chik Kutakarang that teaches astrology and a mosque constructed in 1860 in the village of Kuta Karang, Ulee Susu district, Kecamatan Darul Imarah, Aceh Besar. There was also drum used to indicate the time of prayer known as tambo or bedug belongs to him that is being well kept and preserved in Muzium dan Perpustakaan Ali Hasymi (Juli, 2022).

# His Contribution in Malay Medical Manuscript

Shaykh Abbas's only written Malay medical manuscript was titled *Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah*, or "Mercy in Medical Treatment and Wisdom" (Ibrahim and Ahmad Shah, 2020). It is a translation of Shaykh Abdul-Maqri's Arabic medical manuscript titled *Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah* (Mohd Shafri and Muhammad Yahya, 2017). He did mention that he kept the same title in the translated version:

"Dan kunamai akan terjemah ini dengan kitab Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah seperti nama asalnya jua kerana aku harap akan qabul dan reda antara segala manusia dengan sebab berkah asalnya." (Page 1).

During the 19th century, translation work from Arabic to Malay was conducted actively to meet the local demand for local language references to various types of knowledge and Islamic knowledge in local languages. The same was explained in *Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah* regarding these knowledge requirements. The author also mentioned that he had received requests from friends and colleagues to write translation books from Arabic to the Jawi language:

"Maka sanya menuntut kepadaku beberapa kali oleh setengah taulanku akan diterjemah dengan bahasa Jawi akan kitab Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah bagi setengah fudala'." (Page 1).

Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah is the thickest manuscript he has ever wrote, and it took him four years to complete it. He wrote the manuscript between 1849 and 1853. He began his writing on 2nd Muharam 1266 Hijri or on Sunday, 18th November 1849. He completed his translation on Friday 22nd Rabiul Awal 1270 Hijri or 23rd December 1853 (Mohd Shafri and Muhammad Yahya, 2017). It can be found in his writing as below:

"Maka aku masuk ta'lif terjemah pada dua hari bulan Muharram bagi permulaan tahun dua ratus enam puluh [enam] tahun kemudian seribu tahun bagi demikian terjemah itu dan jika tiada aku ahli bagi demikian itu sekalipun kerana anu berbaik bagi zannya bagi barang yang demikian itu." (Page 1).

# The Manuscript's Writing Methodology

The manuscript writing can be divided into three parts and the parts are introduction, discussion content, and the end of writing. For the introduction section, the author began his writing with the word *Bismillah*, praise to Allah The Almighty and The Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The writer then introduced his name and briefly explained about himself (Mohd Shafri, and Muhammad Yahya, 2017). He further explained the reason of his writing, start date, the manuscript's full title, and he ends it with high hope that this manuscript would be beneficial to the audience. Meanwhile for the discussion content, there are five parts divided by the author as below:

Table 1. Content of Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah

Chapter	Content
Chapter 1: في علم الطبيعة	<ul> <li>Ilmu tabi'ah is a way of knowing what is normal and balanced for a human body.</li> <li>A brief explanation about the creation of a human body and body mass.</li> <li>Greek medical concept compiled and updated by Hippocrates which are the <i>khilt</i> (body fuild), and <i>mizaj</i> (mixture).</li> <li>The human body balance based on the four basics (<i>mizaj hararah</i> and <i>yubusah</i> – hot and cold (fire basic), <i>mizaj hararah</i> and <i>rutubah</i> (wind basic), <i>mizaj burudah</i> and <i>yubusah</i> (soil basic).</li> </ul>
Chapter 2: في طباب الاغدية والأدوية ومنافعها	<ul> <li>Types and benefits of good food and medicine for human body like: <ul> <li>i) Grains (wheat, rice, corn, barley, pearl millet, lentil, common bean, fava beans, chickpea, almond and sesame seed).</li> <li>ii) Milk (cow milk, sheep milk, goat milk, camel milk, cheese, butter, and ghee).</li> <li>iii) Meat (lamb, beef, camel meat, poultry, fish, and egg).</li> <li>iv) Fruit (sugar cane, grape, dates, banana, pomegranate, quince, cucumber, watermelon, and radish).</li> <li>Medicine for treatment purpose (honey, ghee, garlic, shallot, black cumin, aloe vera, garden cress, chilli, ginger, copper sulphate, vinegar, olive oil, fenugreek, frankincense, wax gourd, champor, star anise, salt, tropical almond and senna).</li> <li>Treatment of diarrhoea, cupping treatment, medicinal <i>makjun</i> intake</li> </ul></li></ul>

	(traditionally formulated herbs usually in paste form) and medicine for wound.
Chapter 3: فيما يصلح للبدن في حالة الصحة	<ul> <li>Preventive healthcare, and steps on how to prevent illness through: Management of healthy eating, healthy drinking habits, body movements, adequate rest, sleep management, sleep-wake cycle, sexual management, gas and bloating in human body, lust control, and healthy physical management.</li> </ul>
Chapter 4: في علاج الامراض الخاصة لكل عضو مخصوص	<ul> <li>Types, causes, and treatments for certain illnesses like:</li> <li>Hair loss, migraine, freckles, earache, tooth ache, flu, nosebleed, toothache, cough, colic, fluid retention, plague, diarrhoea, and haemorrhoids.</li> </ul>
Chapter 5: في علاج الأمر اض العامة المنتقلة في البدن	- Types, causes, and treatments for general illnesses like: Fever, vertigo, stroke, semi paralysis, leprosy, eczema, wart, poisoning, and many more.

The third section or the final closing part had been named as *Tatimmah Tarjamah al-Kitab*. The author wrote his ending with the manuscript completion date and his hope that those who read it will correct any errors or omissions found in his writing:

"Dan kita harap atas orang yan melihat dan insaf bagi terjemah ini bahawa membaik kiranya akan cedera tetapi pada kemudian dibicara dan ditilik bagi asal kitab ini kerana bahawasanya kita insan tiada sunyi daripada tersalah dan lupa tergelincir..." (Page 115).

From the writing and language point of view, two different types can be found, and they are Arabic and Malay language written in Jawi script. The author provided Malay translation for Arabic so that the reader would be able to understand. The author retains the original Arabic spelling for Quranic verses, hadith text, and the name of illnesses and medication. Then he continued with its Malay translation like:

"... بعد yakni air madu iaitu penghulu segala ubat, seperti firman Allah Ta'ala فيه شفاء للناس yakni pada air madu itu ubat bagi manusia...." (Page 35). Apart from the Arabic language been used, there are some other Aceh words used by the writer like *lecub* (swollen) and *mun-mun* (snut). For example:

" الزكام iaitu penyakit tambah lecub dalam hidung, dan sebab demikian itu kering pada hotak ... dan adalah زكام pada bahasa Aceh dinamai mun-mun ertinya keluar air hidung." (Page 145).

According to the research done by Mohd Shafri and Muhammad Yahya (2017), this manuscript included many Aceh words to describe about illnesses and medications. Those words could not be found in any Malay term dictionary written during the colonial time and after Aceh's independence. Some words written and used by Shaykh Abbas in this manuscript are *phet* (bile), *tumbon* (fat), *serahi kaca* (glass bottle), *pawar raja* (small intestine), *lasa* (loss of taste), *penyakit baso* (oedema), *kudil-kudil* (scabies), *cicem* (bird), *campli* (chilli), *basbas* (celery), and many other.

## Conclusion

Kitab Al-Rahmah fi al-Tib wa al-Hikmah is significant to Shaykh Abbas in the field of medical science. It contained unique characteristics combining both Islamic and scientific elements. Shaykh Abbas had produced a translation from Arabic to a structured easy to understand local Malay Aceh language at that time. Thus, making it one of the earliest medical references used by the Malays from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until today.

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