

# Exploring the Literary Works of Tengku Mariam: Analysis of Manuscripts and Contributions to Culture, History, and Politics

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## Abstract

Tengku Mariam's reputation as a palace poetess may not be widely recognized and has often been overlooked by scholars, despite her extensive contributions spanning various genres. Most existing research on Tengku Mariam has concentrated on her involvement in the performing arts, particularly her influence on the Pahang joget gamelan (a traditional Malay dance) in Terengganu. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a study that sheds light on Tengku Mariam's literary accomplishments and contributions, thereby bringing greater awareness to the content of the Malay manuscripts she produced as a palace poetess. This study, titled Exploring the Literary Works of Tengku Mariam: Analysis of Manuscripts and Contributions to Culture, History, and Politics, utilizes library methods and text analysis to fulfil its objectives. The primary goals include identifying and presenting the themes present in Tengku Ampuan Mariam's manuscript writings and analysing these themes within the collection housed by the Terengganu State Museum. The results reveal that Tengku Mariam's manuscripts encompass themes such as culture, history, and politics. This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Tengku Mariam's literary works and serve as a valuable resource for individuals seeking insight into the substance of her manuscript writings.

**Keywords:** Tengku Mariam, Malay Manuscripts, Malay Literature, Cultural Heritage, Palace Poetess

## Introduction

Tengku Mariam Al-Marhum Sultan Ahmad Mua'zzam Shah (1882-1914) was a palace poet who left behind a valuable legacy of works on various themes. The works produced by Tengku Mariam, such as *The Ballad of Ancient Weddings*, *The Ballad of Voyages to Java*, *The Ballad of Voyages to Siam*, *The Ballad of Voyages to Medan, Deli, and Brastagi*, *Memory Ballad of Marriage (Volumes 1 & 2)*, *The Royal Visit and Royal Consort Book*, *Genealogy of Sultan Omar*, *Verses of Tengku Ampuan Mariam*, and *Pahang Dance and Gamelan*, are evidence of her diversity and richness of artistic talent. In addition to being a writer, Tengku Mariam also

played a role as a scribe in manuscripts such as *The Tale of the Origin of the Supreme Council of the Universe* and *The Tale of Isma Yatim*, demonstrating proficiency and excellence in the art of copying and maintaining the quality of Malay literary heritage. According to the writer Abdullah (2001), Tengku Mariam owned 40 manuscripts, indicating the magnitude of her contribution and influence in the world of Malay literature.

The marriage of Tengku Mariam to Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah (1920-1942), the 13th Sultan of Terengganu, on July 21, 1913, was the main driver for her migration to Terengganu. Despite residing in the Terengganu palace, this did not diminish her special status and rights as a poet originating from the Pahang palace. Her life experience of moving from Pahang to Terengganu also reflects a spiritual and intellectual journey that shaped the richness of her legacy left for the benefit of future generations. Overall, Tengku Mariam is an invaluable figure in the world of Malay literature who left a highly valuable legacy in the development of Malay art and literature, proving her greatness, precision, and richness of thought that continue to be valued and observed by the Malaysian arts and cultural community to this day. Despite her prolific writing, Tengku Mariam's status as a female poet from the Pahang palace remains relatively obscure and has been overlooked by scholars. Limited research has focused on her literary contributions. For example, studies by Nordin and Mohd. A'Seri (2014) emphasized the historical contexts of her works, while others examined her involvement in the gamelan tradition. Works by Ibrahim (2005), Taib Saearani and Agus Cahyono (2016), and D'Cruz (2020) discuss Tengku Mariam's role in the Pahang gamelan joget and its decline during times of war. She is recognized for introducing and popularizing the Pahang joget gamelan in Terengganu, establishing her as a significant figure in the realms of art and culture. Therefore, there is an urgent need to delve deeper into the study of Tengku Mariam's writings to uncover fresh insights and explore various unexplored facets of her work. This would allow audiences to develop a more profound understanding and appreciation of the intellectual contributions made by female palace poets.

### **Literature Review**

The analysis of scientific studies examined provides a comprehensive overview of the main ideas (Halis Azhan et al., 2021). Tengku Mariam Almarhum Sultan Ahmad Mua'zzam Shah made significant contributions to the arts and culture of the states of Pahang and Terengganu by introducing Pahang's joget gamelan and preserving this cultural heritage in Terengganu. Her marriage to Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah (1920-1942), the 13th Sultan of Terengganu, not only solidified the presence of gamelan in Terengganu but also played a crucial role in spreading the uniqueness of joget gamelan in both states.

Studies by Mat Piah and Ismail (1986), Mohamad (2012), Taib Saearani (2016), Mohamad Amran et al. (2018), as well as Norsafini and Premalatha (2023) affirm Tengku Mariam's influence in the advancement and preservation of joget gamelan in Terengganu. Following her marriage, Tengku Mariam successfully introduced Pahang's cultural arts to Terengganu by training the younger generation in traditional musical instruments. She also established the joget gamelan group *Budak Joget* with the aim of passing down Pahang's culture in Terengganu. Furthermore, research by D'Cruz (2020) reveals that the joget gamelan dance was a classical dance among the palace circles in the 18th century. She highlights that the joget gamelan in Terengganu originated from Pahang and was strengthened by Tengku Mariam. D'Cruz also studied the accessories used in this dance and the dance movements of

gamelan in the palace. The differences in character and patterns of Tengku Mariam's gamelan dance compared to Javanese or Riau Island dances are also emphasized.

Recent research by Mohamad (2022) highlights the significant role of Tengku Mariam in advancing arts and culture in Terengganu, particularly in dance and gamelan music. Her efforts were further emphasized in 1920 after Sultan Sulaiman's ascension to the throne by employing dancers from Pahang to train dancers in Terengganu under her supervision. Not only renowned for joget gamelan, Tengku Mariam also stood out as a prolific Malay manuscript writer. Field studies at the Terengganu State Museum have revealed that Tengku Mariam created several historically valuable written works. Among the renowned Malay manuscripts are *The Ballad of Ancient Weddings*, *The Ballad of Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah's Voyages to Java, Siam, and Medan*, *Memory Ballad of Marriage (Volumes 1 & 2)*, *The Royal Visit and Royal Consort Book*, and *Genealogy of Sultan Omar*. The presence of these works demonstrates that Tengku Mariam not only focused on gamelan dance art but also made intellectual contributions through manuscript writing, leaving a valuable heritage to society. The brilliance of her writing has shared important stories about the history and palace events of her time.

Additionally, the research conducted by Nordin and Mohd. A'Seri (2014) examined manuscripts concerning Tengku Mariam's overseas visits and affirmed that she had her distinctive writing style. Tengku Mariam detailed the royal couple's travels extensively in diary entries, forming the core plot of her writings. The existence of Tengku Mariam's written works as a female palace poet has had a significant impact in transmitting culture, history, and politics to new generations, further solidifying the diversity of her intellectual talents. These actions reinforce the influence and cultural legacy left by Tengku Mariam, making her a figure worthy of study in Malaysian history. Although Tengku Mariam produced several valuable Malay manuscripts, in-depth studies on her writings remain limited. The lack of extensive research highlights the need to further explore and evaluate the intellectual heritage she left behind. There is a necessity for more studies by academics to appreciate and gain a deeper understanding of Tengku Mariam's contributions in manuscript writing. As stated by Harun (2001), perspectives that delve into more detailed research from various angles are crucial to unravel and acknowledge Tengku Mariam's true position as an outstanding Malay manuscript writer. These studies not only help confirm her identity and excellence in writing but also open avenues to uncover and appreciate aspects of her authorship such as philosophy, thoughts, language skills, literary elements, arts, and culture in her writings.

Records from the Terengganu State Museum indicate that Tengku Mariam, a talented and open-minded writer, produced writings covering a variety of themes such as history, autobiography, and travelogues. This diverse range of topics showcases her brilliance and creativity as a female palace poet. Further research into Tengku Mariam's works could not only reveal insights into the intellectual and cultural development of society but also allow for a more thorough preservation of the valuable heritage of Malay writing. Exploring her writings may also unveil her perspectives on social issues, cultural norms, and personal reflections, as well as reveal subtle nuances, symbolism, and hidden messages that contribute to a deeper understanding of her literary prowess and artistic expression.

## Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify and categorize the themes present in Tengku Mariam's manuscript writings.
2. To analyse the thematic discussions within Tengku Mariam's manuscripts held in the Terengganu State Museum collection.

## Methodology

In the methodology section, the focus on reading journals, theses, and online scientific resources allows for comprehensive research into previous studies and the identification of relevant study problems. This study rigorously follows a four-step procedure: selection, collection, analysis, and formulation of data. Initially, in the selection stage, great care is taken to gather data that directly aligns with the study's objectives, emphasizing materials that offer valuable insights into Tengku Mariam's literary works and contributions. Subsequently, during the data collection process, an exhaustive search strategy is employed to retrieve pertinent materials from diverse sources such as academic journals, theses, and online scientific resources, ensuring all relevant information is meticulously documented for detailed analysis. Following this, in the data analysis phase, the collected information is meticulously scrutinized. This study utilizes thematic analysis, a qualitative approach specifically crafted to identify and explore the primary themes within the texts, aiding in a comprehensive understanding of the depth and breadth of Tengku Mariam's writings. Finally, in the data formulation stage, the synthesized information from the analysis leads to definitive conclusions regarding the themes and contributions found within Tengku Mariam's manuscripts. Thematic analysis proves particularly advantageous in this study as it enables the identification and discussion of the key themes present in Tengku Mariam's works, focusing specifically on the manuscripts archived in the Terengganu State Museum collection. This methodological approach establishes a robust framework for grasping her significant literary contributions to culture, history, and politics.

## Analysis and Discussion

In the analysis study, Tengku Mariam holds important views on the relationship between culture, history, and politics the societal context. By emphasizing the role of traditional games as a platform to understand cultural values, we can also see how royal visit records help us appreciate and immerse in the rich history. Furthermore, Tengku Mariam's thoughts urge us to connect ethical values, harmony, and the significance of cultural heritage, historical and political understanding to society in a more holistic manner. With this approach, we can enrich dialogue and pass on essential values to future generations.

### *Cultural Theme - The Congkak Game*

In a field study, the author came across a Malay manuscript focusing on a traditional folk game, namely the game of congkak, stored in the Terengganu State Museum Collection. The manuscript titled *Handwritten Book of Playing Congkak* with call number LMN.TR 1985.17 stands out as a significant cultural heritage in the effort to preserve and disseminate knowledge about traditional games among the community. This manuscript is written in Jawi script with a format of 20 lines and 4 to 13 phrases per line. The presence of this manuscript reflects Tengku Mariam's sincerity in providing information about the game of congkak. The writing style is easy to understand, and the simplicity in the use of the brush facilitates readers to research and comprehend each page of information about the game. This manuscript is

not just a valuable source of knowledge but also a record that preserves cultural heritage that must be carefully safeguarded for the welcoming of future generations. The enriched knowledge within this manuscript can raise awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and folk games in inheriting traditions and strengthening the identity of the local community. The continuity of efforts to preserve and record knowledge about the game of congkak is indeed compelling in the context of preserving the cultural wealth of local heritage.

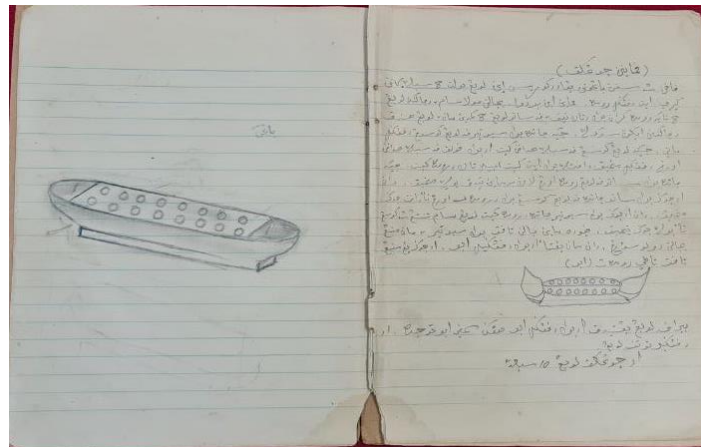


Image 1: LMN.TR 1985.17. Handwritten Book of Playing Congkak

Source: Terengganu State Museum

Image 1 shown above is a visual recording captured during a study at the Terengganu State Museum in February 2024. Tengku Mariam's manuscript provides clear guidance on how to play congkak, a traditional game that is highly popular in Malaysia. More than just a game, congkak further strengthens the local cultural identity and important traditional heritage that should be continued. According to historical studies, congkak was introduced to Southeast Asia in the 15th century through trade activities (Maizan, 2018). In Indonesia, this game is known as congklak or dakon (Lacksana, 2017), highlighting the wide-reaching popularity of the game across the Southeast Asian region. Congkak can be played in two different situations – as leisure entertainment or as a serious event in formal competitions. The game involves a wooden board with holes or even holes in the ground, while rubber seeds or marbles are often used as playing pieces. Its simplicity yet enjoyable nature makes congkak not only a source of entertainment but also a platform to train thinking skills, tactics, and precision.

With the brilliance of the congkak game in fostering social interaction, critical thinking skills, and strategic competence, it is important to understand and convey the values and traditions behind this game so that future generations can accept and appreciate it as part of the rich cultural heritage. According to the study by Chepa and Wan Yahaya (2017), each congkak player will have seven pairs of holes with a large hole on the left, known as the 'home'. Each hole contains seven congkak seeds, often made of pebbles, tamarind seeds, or shells. Furthermore, according to Rusmana (2010), the congkak board has 2x7 small pits, including two 'storehouses' which are usually filled with small seeds like kuwuk, pebbles, or grains. Each pit (except the storehouses) needs to be filled with seven seeds, making the total number of seeds required to be 98 in total. Understanding the significance of each element in the congkak game, including the layout of the board, the types of seeds used, and the strategic gameplay involved, highlights the intricacies and depth of this traditional game. By



delving into the detailed mechanics and history of congkak, we can truly appreciate its role not just as a form of entertainment, but as a cultural artifact that encapsulates social dynamics, strategic thinking, and traditional values for generations to cherish and uphold.

With the evolution of the congkak game, there has been a transition from using holes in the ground to wooden boards with similar pit markings. Congkak is not only known as an entertaining game but also a strategic game involving elements of calculation and tactics. Players who can strategize efficiently with congkak seeds will have an advantage in winning this game. With its enjoyable and mind-stimulating nature, congkak continues to be a beloved traditional game among the local community. As the game has transitioned from the traditional ground holes to wooden boards, it has retained its strategic essence while adapting to modern preferences. The fusion of tradition and modernity in congkak gameplay highlights its ability to transcend time and remain relevant to contemporary audiences. Moreover, the strategic and tactical aspects of congkak provide players with a mental challenge that sharpens their analytical skills and strategic thinking. By continuing the cultural practice of playing congkak and appreciating the cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation, we not only preserve a beloved pastime but also nurture essential cognitive abilities and social interactions within the community.

In the explanation provided in the *Handwritten Book of Playing Congkak* by Tengku Mariam, clear steps are outlined to start and play the congkak game within the community. The process begins with the preparation of the congkak board, featuring two rows of holes and a large hole at each end of the board, known as the 'home'. Each hole contains seven seeds except for the 'home' hole, which remains empty. Once the congkak board is set up, the game starts with the first move involving picking up all the seeds from one hole in the player's row and distributing them one by one to the following holes in a counterclockwise direction. If the last seed lands in the player's 'home' hole, they earn an extra turn. This process continues with players taking turns until one player runs out of seeds in their row. After the game ends, the remaining seeds in the opponent's row are collected and added to the 'home' of the player who still has seeds in their row. The winner is determined by the total number of seeds collected in each player's 'home'. This detailed and structured gameplay not only entertains but also encourages strategy, tactical planning, and numerical skills among the players. With precise and clear rules like these, congkak serves as more than just entertainment but also as a platform to cultivate players' cognitive and social skills. It is essential to continue the tradition of playing congkak and appreciate the cultural heritage embedded in this game for the enjoyment of both the current and future generations.

Through reading this manuscript, it can be observed that Tengku Mariam possessed profound thoughts about the congkak game. To her, this game served not only as mere entertainment but also to impart important messages about cooperation and tolerance among its players. Each move of the congkak seeds in the game encapsulates ethical values that teach the significance of respecting victories with humility and accepting defeats graciously. In the context of human values, justice, and harmony in society, the experience of playing congkak can convey a profound message about the importance of togetherness. As expressed by Mohd Yusri and Yang (2024), the concept of unity instilled by Tengku Mariam can serve as a foundation for nurturing noble values in society. It can also help foster a spirit of nationalism and unity within individuals. By emphasizing the moral lessons embedded

within the game of congkak, Tengku Mariam elevated the significance of this traditional game beyond its mere mechanics. It showcases how traditional games can serve as more than just pastimes but also as vehicles for instilling virtues, encouraging cooperation, and fostering a sense of community among players. The lessons of humility, sportsmanship, and unity learned through congkak can resonate deeply within individuals and contribute to a more harmonious and cohesive society.

Tengku Mariam's thoughts provide support to the idea that learning through games, such as congkak, holds significant educational value. This concept can be applied in daily life to cultivate individuals who are more moral, tolerant, and competitive. Through games, various aspects of life can be taught and learned, including fundamental life values essential for building a more harmonious and prosperous society. The idea drawn from Tengku Mariam's writings about the game of congkak highlights the importance of this game in fostering strong relationships among its players. Tengku Mariam expresses the view that congkak is not just a game but also a beneficial medium for building and nurturing respect among players. She sees the game of congkak as an effective tool to strengthen social connections, stimulate a sense of camaraderie, and foster solidarity within the community. By emphasizing the social and relational aspects of congkak, Tengku Mariam underscores the game's potential to serve as a bonding agent that transcends mere gameplay. Congkak becomes a symbolic representation of unity, respect, and social harmony among players. Through this lens, congkak transforms from a recreational activity into a valuable tool for promoting empathy, understanding, and mutual cooperation. The game exemplifies how traditional games can play a significant role in shaping positive social behaviors and nurturing a cohesive community fabric.

According to Mohd Tohar and Abdul Latiff (2017), solidarity in society has a significant impact in fostering attitudes of loyalty, cooperation, compliance with social norms, and reducing individualistic tendencies that prioritize self-interest. With unity and togetherness, communities can interact positively, forming a cohesive community that can overcome divisions and imbalances. Therefore, the game of congkak is not just a training ground for tactical and strategic skills, but it also serves as a platform to strengthen social bonds, reinforce traditional values, harmony, and unity within society. Through this game, individuals can learn to cooperate, respect opponents, and cultivate attitudes of mutual respect and support for each other. In conclusion, traditional games like congkak not only provide entertainment but also contain profound values in building a progressive and harmonious society.

The concept of education and learning through folk games like congkak is a powerful medium in character development. The concept of character education introduced by Lickona (2012), emphasizes the importance of moral education involving cognitive knowledge, emotions, and actions. Without all these aspects, moral education will not be effective. In this way, the game of congkak is also considered a tool that can stimulate successful cognitive skills, movement planning, and analytical skills in players.

The aspect of active imagination associated with the game of congkak can lead to more effective problem-solving in one's daily life. This quality opens space for creative thinking exercises and strengthens critical thinking skills, as suggested by Rusmana (2010). By

emphasizing this aspect, Tengku Mariam's thoughts in the Handwritten Book of Playing Congkak become a comprehensive source of learning—involving the development of cultural values, personality formation, and the enhancement of mental and emotional abilities of players and the community to confront life's challenges more systematically. Through the integration of character values, cognitive learning, and critical thinking exercises through the game of congkak, individuals not only learn playing skills but also cultivate positive attitudes, intelligence through gameplay strategies, and honed creativity. Therefore, traditional games like congkak do not only enrich entertainment but also have the potential to be effective educational tools in shaping competitive, ethical, and visionary individuals

The preservation of culture is a crucial aspect in Tengku Mariam's perspective on the cultural heritage of society, as prominently shown in the Handwritten Book of Playing Congkak. Tengku Mariam clearly delineates that the game of congkak is not just an ordinary game but a medium for passing down valuable cultural traditions from one generation to the next. She takes positive steps by documenting and organizing guidelines for playing congkak to uphold the cultural heritage values in congkak activities, considering it as an important form of cultural heritage. According to Ahmad al-Jafari (2023), cultural preservation efforts are key to maintaining the history and origins of a nation, ensuring that civilization heritage is fully inherited by future generations. Tengku Mariam's cultural preservation initiative through this manuscript not only preserves the values and identity of the local community but also encompasses cultural heritage aspects that include the tradition of playing congkak.

The importance of sustaining local cultural values cannot be overlooked, as it plays a vital role in shaping the identity and culture of a society. The efforts undertaken by Tengku Mariam in carrying forward this cultural heritage raise awareness about the richness of cultural heritage that needs to be preserved and passed down for many generations. In this context, cultural preservation becomes a highly valuable asset that must be safeguarded and maintained to ensure the continuity and sustainability of local cultural heritage. Preserving cultural heritage is not just about retaining traditions from the past, but it is also about ensuring that future generations have access to their cultural roots and understand the significance of these values. Tengku Mariam's dedication to connecting with cultural heritage through the game of congkak highlights the importance of respecting and cherishing local traditions that bind communities together. By valuing and preserving cultural heritage, societies can maintain a sense of identity, promote unity, and pass down unique customs and practices that define who they are. This collective effort in cultural preservation ultimately contributes to the richness and diversity of our shared human experience across generations.

#### *Historical and Political Theme: Royal Couple's Visit Notes*

Tengku Mariam's significant contribution to Pahang is evident through her success in restoring diplomatic relations between Pahang and Terengganu. The diplomatic marriage she initiated successfully strengthened the strained relationship between the two states, especially after the divorce between Tengku Long, Tengku Mariam's sister, and Sultan Zainal Abidin III of Terengganu in 1895, as summarized by Harun (2015). The importance of this diplomatic relationship not only emphasizes political, economic, and social stability but also focuses on the welfare of the people and general well-being, as suggested by Mukmin (2011).



From the writings produced, Tengku Mariam played a pivotal role in maintaining these relationships by documenting her travels with her husband, Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah. Through her willingness to share experiences and life together, Tengku Mariam not only upheld diplomatic relations at an official level but also fostered personal closeness between these two significant regions. With her efforts in preserving diplomatic relations, Tengku Mariam demonstrates her commitment and wisdom in ensuring the harmony and continuity of robust international relationships. This not only maintains the amicable status between Pahang and Terengganu but also reflects Tengku Mariam's wisdom and firmness as a visionary leader responsible for the security and well-being of both communities she serves. A unique feature in Tengku Mariam's work is her inclination to emphasize recording dates and events of her travels with her husband. This ability distinguishes her works from the Malay literary tradition that tends to focus more on narratives and myths in conveying history. According to Abd. Azam and Yatim (2012), the Malay writing tradition often emphasizes mythical elements and storytelling in conveying history, deemed a unique identity trait in the creative writing style by Denisova (2011). As a queen of the Terengganu palace, Tengku Mariam often accompanied her husband in various official and unofficial ceremonies, allowing her to record notes that were later transformed into solid written works.

Tengku Mariam's historical and political themed writing is identified by the title *Handwritten Book of Various Memories and Visits* with call number LMN.TR.1985.8. This Jawi-scripted note is organized in a school exercise book with 20 lines. On its cover page, the intriguing Jawi inscription reads *The Book of Visits by Her Highness Tengku Ampuan* at the top, while at the bottom, it states, *Various Memories and Visits, First Java, Second Bangkok, Medan, and Brastagi*. Upon reviewing the manuscript, it was found that each page is numbered at the top, and important events are marked with thick ink along with dates to emphasize the significant visits undertaken by Tengku Ampuan. Through Tengku Mariam's efficiency and sensitivity in compiling this manuscript, she ensured that every important event was meticulously recorded to ensure clarity and authenticity in documenting her history and travels with her husband. Her initiative to meticulously record every detail demonstrates her commitment to preserving history and cultural heritage that can provide lasting benefits to future generations.

The uniqueness of this manuscript can be seen through Tengku Mariam's approach in documenting each event by emphasizing the dates clearly before providing detailed activity specifics. With this note organization, readers can immerse themselves and understand the impact and significance behind each visit event more comprehensively and systematically. For example, in the record on 13 Zulhijah 1350, corresponding to 19 April 1932, Tengku Mariam noted that Sultan Sulaiman visited Kelantan to inaugurate a new road between Besut and Kelantan, where he stayed overnight in Kelantan (p. 4). While Tengku Mariam's notes mostly follow chronological time sequences, there are exceptions where some dates are arranged non-consecutively. This demonstrates the author's sensitivity and freedom in arranging notes to provide a dramatic effect or specific emphasis on the recorded events. These exceptions may add interesting colour and dynamics to the shared narrative in the manuscript. In portraying historical events, the manipulation of time sequences can enhance the storytelling experience, providing depth and intrigue to the narrative. By strategically deviating from standard chronological order, authors can draw attention to pivotal moments, create suspense, or highlight significant occurrences. This storytelling technique adds richness and

complexity to the manuscript, engaging readers in a more dynamic and enthralling exploration of the historical and political events documented by Tengku Mariam.

For example, on the last page of the *Book of Visits by Her Highness Tengku Ampuan*, matters 6 and 7 are written as follows:

1. Monday night 4 *Jamadilakhir* 1313, Sultan Sulaiman's Birthday.
2. Marriage in Pahang, 14 *Syaaban* year 1331.
3. Accept power as Sultan Mahmud's representative, year 1337.
4. Ascended to the throne, 2 Ramadhan year 1338.
5. Coronation, 23 *Jamadilakhir* 1339.
6. Received the KCMJ star, in the year 1341, 1923 AD.
7. Trip to England, 26 March, 1356, 1937 AD.
8. Passed away, 14 Ramadhan Friday 1361, 1942 AD (Page 80)

These entries provide a glimpse into the significant events and milestones in Sultan Sulaiman's life, from his birthday and marriage to receiving honors and diplomatic visits. With precise dates and details, Tengku Mariam captures the essence of Sultan Sulaiman's reign and personal life, showcasing the key moments that shaped his legacy. By meticulously documenting these events, Tengku Mariam ensures that the historical and political significance of each occasion is preserved for future generations to appreciate and reflect upon. With such detailed and meticulous approach, Tengku Mariam ensures that each event and activity recorded in her manuscript is not only accurately documented but also leaves a profound impact and deeper understanding for the readers. The sensitivity and freedom in arranging notes reflect the author's wisdom and creativity, making this manuscript a valuable source in understanding the history and life journey of the royal family at that time.

The uniqueness of this manuscript is reflected in Tengku Mariam's narrative that includes excerpts from speeches during a tea reception at the Maziah Palace in 1939, allowing readers to feel the true atmosphere of the event and experience the interactions among attendees using respectful titles like 'The Honorable,' 'The Royal Highness,' and 'The Honored.' As highlighted in this written work, the use of humble titles accentuates courtesy and service to guests, adding a dimension of politeness and grandeur to Tengku Mariam's manuscript. Simultaneously, it portrays valuable historical and political moments and customs that enriched the palace at that time. By recording speech excerpts with grace and gentleness, Tengku Mariam successfully presents a rich atmosphere infused with cultural politeness and high customs. Among the content of the text include:

- (1) The Honorable British Adviser, The Most Honorable Chief Minister, The Royal Highnesses, The Honorable Dato's, Gentlemen of the White Officers, Ladies and Gentlemen. I deliver this speech on behalf of Her Highness Tengku Ampuan Besar of Terengganu. The banquet held today is a gracious gesture of His Royal Highness to congratulate Captain Peter Murgenson on receiving the Sultan's award with the title of Orang Kaya Wira Bakti. The services of Captain Peter Murgenson in his position have been duly noted. Therefore, as the representative of His Royal Highness, it is with great pleasure that I convey these congratulations to Captain Peter Murgenson.

Read by Abdul Ghani bin Ishak. (Page 13)

The detailed account of this tea reception not only provides insights to the readers about the customs and social etiquette of that period but also reinforces an appreciation for the traditional values passed down for future generations. Narratives and notes like these immerse readers as if they are experiencing the rituals and nuances of that era themselves, bridging the gap from the present to the rich historical heritage and teaching the grandeur and elegance of proper etiquette in communication and interaction. Tengku Mariam not only documented financial details related to the construction of the Tengku Ampuan Mariam School but also offered a detailed portrayal of the expenses incurred for the school's construction, including contributions and assistance received from others. Through these financial records, readers can witness Tengku Mariam's meticulous and systematic approach to financial management involved in the school's construction. These financial notes provide a clear overview of the funding sources required to make the project a success, reflecting her commitment and vision in developing this significant educational institution.

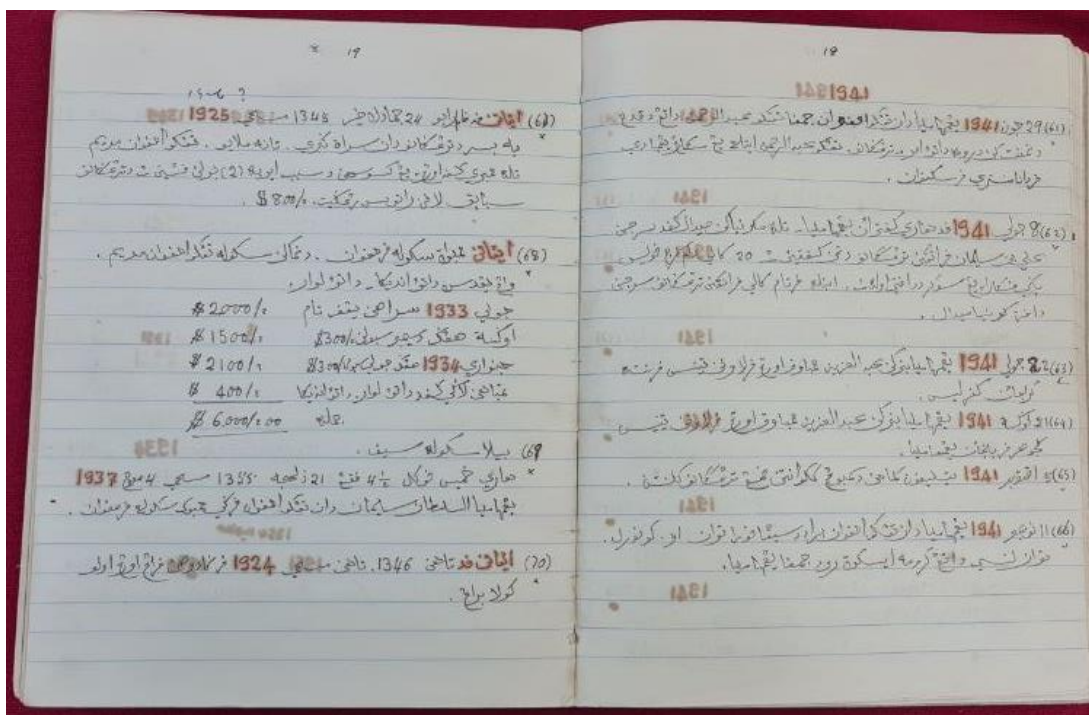


Image 3: LMN. TR. 1985.8 Page on Establishing the Tengku Ampuan Mariam School Source: Terengganu State Museum

With this detailed approach, not only does it highlight Tengku Mariam's commitment to education and community development, but it also showcases her proficiency in managing financial aspects to achieve success in these development projects. Initiatives like these not only reveal Tengku Mariam's level of leadership and entrepreneurship but also shed light on the impact of her legacy and influence in advancing local education. Through meticulous and comprehensive financial records, Tengku Mariam demonstrates the importance of careful and disciplined financial management in realizing development projects. This legacy not only reflects her greatness as a visionary leader but also as a catalyst contributing significantly to the progress of education and community development. Event and date records play a crucial role in writing, especially in the context of history and documentation. The significance of these elements is aimed at:

i. Forming Collective Identity

Historical and political records along with accurate dates help in forming the collective identity of a society or nation. It strengthens awareness of the origins, traditions, and achievements of our ancestors. This is crucial in ensuring that the values and lessons from the past are not forgotten and continue to be passed down to future generations. Embracing this collective identity can also enhance pride and unity within the community.

ii. Building Historical Narratives

The elements of dates and events in historical writing contribute to shaping a coherent narrative. By understanding the sequence of events correctly, readers can link one event to another. This not only solidifies their understanding of historical sequences but also how one event can lead to another, providing a clearer picture of cause-and-effect relationships.

iii. Upholding Truth and Validity

In a world often inundated with potentially inaccurate information, precise records of dates and events also serve as a tool to uphold the truth and validity of information. By including reliable sources and clear dates, writers can build trust among readers and researchers. This is important to prevent the spread of misinformation, which can be misleading or cause misunderstandings.

iv. Educational and Academic Enlightenment

Besides serving as an educational tool that shapes critical thinking, historical elements also allow for more comprehensive and holistic educational enlightenment. Students and researchers can use historical records as primary and secondary sources for their studies and analysis. This not only aids in understanding specific topics but also hones their analytical and research abilities.

v. Policy Development and Decision-Making

Well-documented history also plays a crucial role in policy development and decision-making. Leaders and policymakers can refer to past events to understand the impact of previous decisions, enabling them to make wiser and more effective choices for the future. It also helps in assessing risks and opportunities that may arise based on historical and political trends.

Tengku Mariam's dedication to documenting events through Malay manuscript writing, as seen in the *Handwritten Book of Various Memories and Visits*, demonstrates her commitment to historical and political knowledge. Tengku Mariam realized that recording events is crucial not only for her time but also for future generations who seek to learn and appreciate historical heritage. Her detailed and meticulous approach in recording each event, complete with dates and details, reflects the immense importance she places on historical and political facts. These records prove that Tengku Mariam values history as a tool for understanding and evaluating the past objectively, making it a reliable and useful reference source. Furthermore, the documentation of financial details she conducted, including expenses and assistance received for the construction of the Tengku Ampuan Mariam School, demonstrates her transparency in managing these development projects. This transparency ensures not only the success of the projects but also strengthens the community's trust in her integrity and commitment to financial management. Overall, Tengku Mariam's meticulous

documentation of events and financial details reflects her seriousness in preserving history and transparency, offering valuable inspiration and lessons for future generations.

The existence of historical records allows future generations to research and study these significant events. This opens opportunities to develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the historical and political development of Terengganu. Furthermore, an analysis of Tengku Mariam's records not only enriches previously written historical and political perspectives but also yields richer and more holistic interpretations of the events that took place. It provides a deeper insight into the history and identity of Terengganu, offering further exploration of the values and traditions that constitute valuable historical heritage for the local community.

### **Conclusion**

Tengku Mariam's dedication to preserving and documenting historical events through her manuscripts is truly commendable. Through her meticulous approach in recording dates, events, and financial details, she not only upholds the cultural heritage and traditions of Terengganu but also provides valuable insights for future generations. By emphasizing the importance of historical records, Tengku Mariam contributes to the formation of a collective identity, the building of historical narratives, the upholding of truth and validity, educational enlightenment, and facilitating policy development and decision-making. Her works not only serve as historical artifacts but also as educational tools to foster critical thinking, research abilities, and an appreciation for the past. Tengku Mariam's commitment to transparency in managing financial aspects demonstrates her integrity and dedication to community development. Through her manuscripts, she leaves a legacy of wisdom, leadership, and cultural preservation that continues to inspire and educate individuals about the rich history and heritage of Terengganu. By continuing to study and analyse Tengku Mariam's writings, researchers and historians can gain a deeper understanding of the historical and political development of Terengganu, enriching the perspectives and interpretations of the events that shaped the region. Tengku Mariam's meticulous documentation serves as a valuable resource for exploring the values, traditions, and legacy that form the foundation of Terengganu's cultural identity. Her contributions to historical and political preservation highlight the importance of cherishing and learning from the past to shape a more informed and enlightened future.

This study has uncovered three key themes in Tengku Mariam's literary work, as evidenced by the manuscripts examined in the Terengganu State Museum: First, the preservation of cultural heritage, particularly by documenting traditional Malay games such as congkak and highlighting their cultural and educational significance. Second, the meticulous recording of historical and political events with precise dates and specific details that provide a rich context about the socio-political dynamics of their era. Third, the inclusion of Tengku Mariam's personal reflections, which add depth and insight to the historical accounts. Suggestions for future research include: a comprehensive survey of all her extant writings, a stylistic analysis of her writing, a comparative study of her contributions with those of other palace women poets, the translation and publication of her manuscripts, and an examination of her role in the development of the Malay literary tradition. These steps will provide a deeper understanding of Tengku Mariam's literary legacy and her significant contribution to Malay culture, history and politics.



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