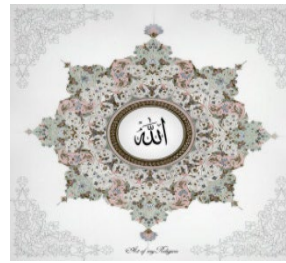


**29-30
OCTOBER 2022**

(Saturday- Sunday)



دانشکده
مطالعات جهان
دانشگاه تهران



IRAN AND THE MALAY WORLD

HISTORICAL AND
CONTEMPORARY
RELATIONS, AND
THE FUTURE

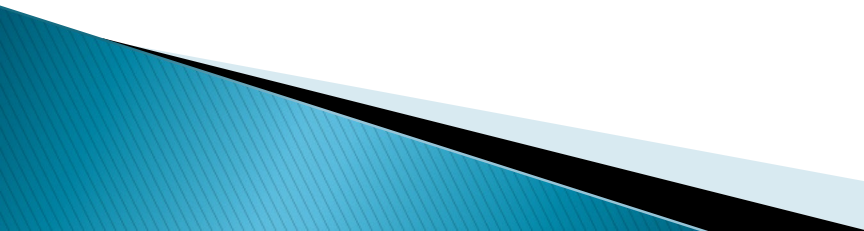
**"Criticality of historic Persia-
Iran within the Malay-
Indonesian World and Study"**

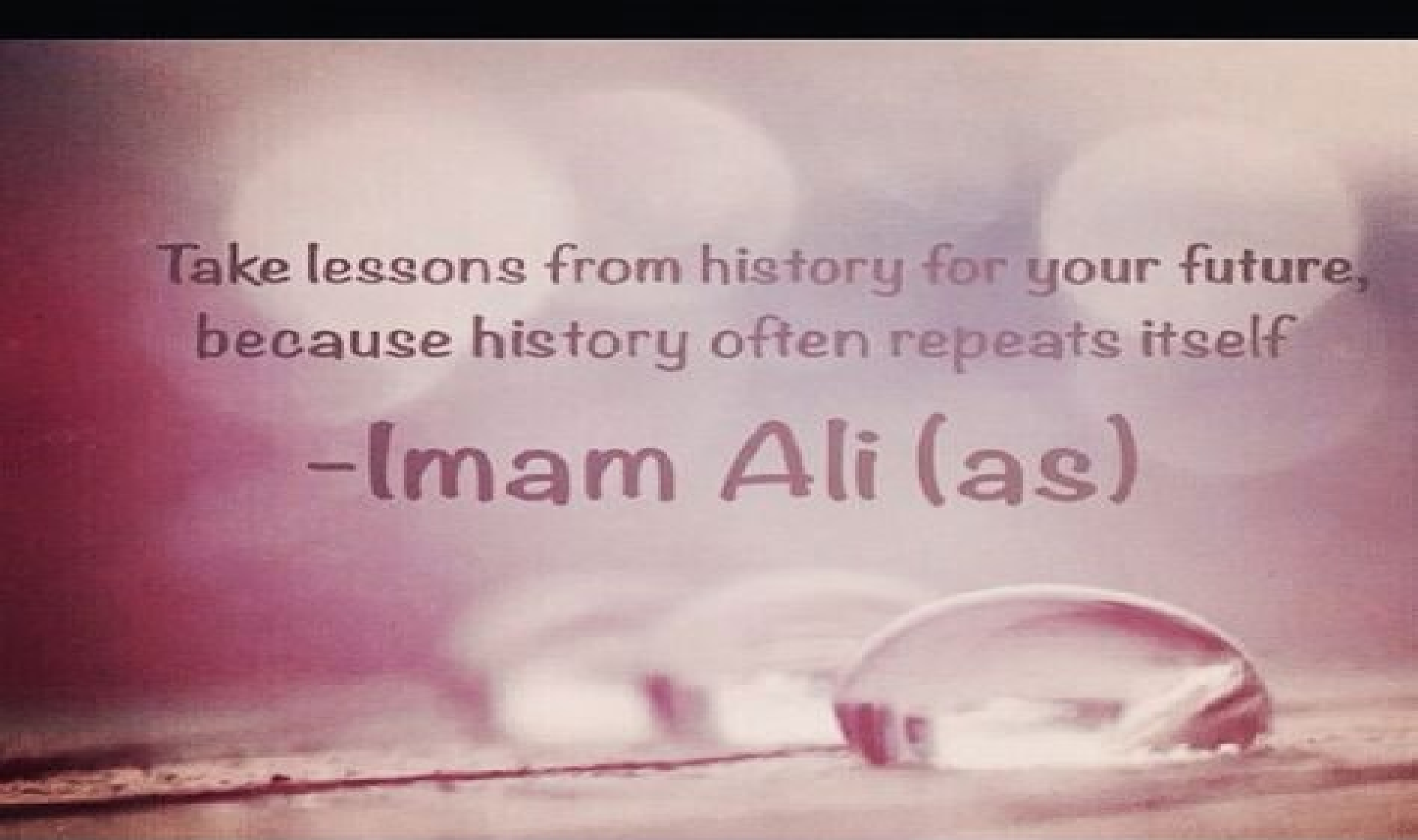
Dr Mozaffari Falarti
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Concluding Comments in a Recent Conference on West-Asia (Middle East)

- ▶ When dealing with the region
 - ▶ “Knowledge is Power”
 - ▶ Knowledge of the past and historic realities (from a multidisciplinary perspectives) are indeed instrumental to contemporary times, interpretations and understanding of real events
- 



Take lessons from history for your future,
because history often repeats itself

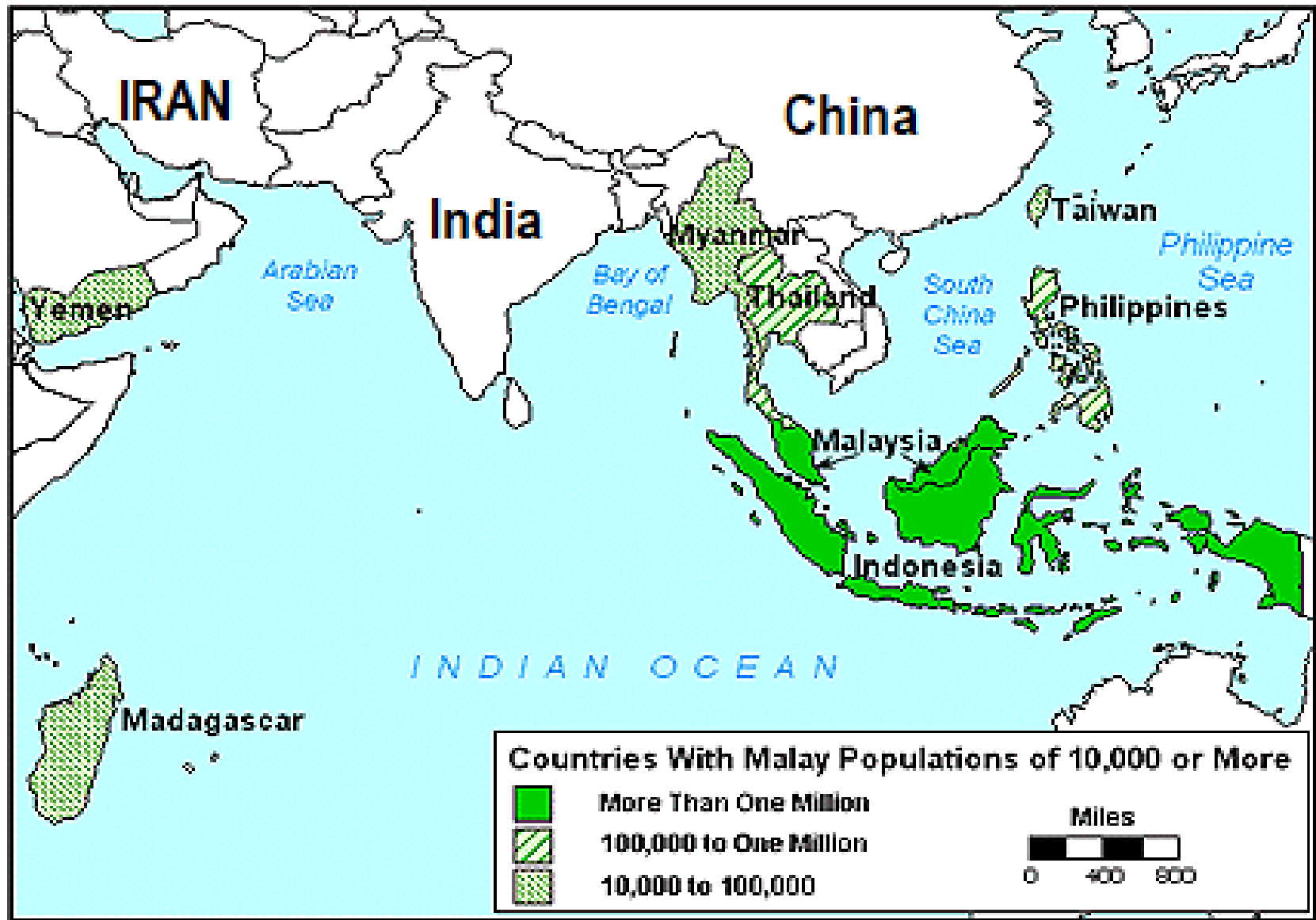
-Imam Ali (as)

Idea/Gap for this Study


- ▶ Chapter on 'Religious Conversion in Southeast Asia', as part of 2020 Routledge Publications
 - Persia or Iran has played a pivotal role within the regions religious conversion
- ▶ My earlier research
 - Book Publications on regional political history with Rowman & Littlefield and others
 - Persian influences e.g. linguistic, literary, music, political systems amongst others
 - Earlier Conference, Field Trips, Travels
 - Misconceptions
 - Gaps in knowledge & the need for more study and region from a multidisciplinary perspective within and outside the region

My presentation: key objectives

- ▶ An overview of Iranian (Persian) historic relations with Southeast Asia in pre-Islamic and Islamic period
 - Much focus is on the Malay-Indonesian World (includes those in Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand, Brunei, Singapore amongst others)
- ▶ Looking at the dynamic and forces that have historically bonded Iran with the region (to the modern times)
- ▶ To outline the complexity of Iran as a geopolitical nation and as peoples impacting the region
 - To consider studying Iranian influences at different time intervals, and to different parts of Southeast Asia
 - To highlight the need for expanding Malay outlook and scholarship
 - Understanding of Greater Iran or the Iranian-Persian World



Persisting/Popular/Contemporary Theories on the Malays & Southeast Asia

- ▶ The region's political system has been predominantly influenced by historic India and China
 - ▶ Religion arrived via India and/or by Arabs
 - Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam
 - Christianity from Europe
 - ▶ Trade chiefly by Indians, Chinese, Arabs and later Europeans
 - ▶ Foreign literary scholarship and language that impacted Malay-Indonesian are mainly Sanskrit and Arabic
 - ▶ Malay political and indigenous systems are considered all the same with little tensions and variations in theories
- 

Current studies on Iran–Persia in Southeast Asia

- ▶ With few exceptions most studies deal with it in passing, ignore and/or discount the links
- Argue that Iran Influenced limited aspects of local religion, literary and linguistic sources, political systems and way of Malay–Indonesian life :
 - Iranian influences simply understood to be by Arabs/Turkish/Indians E.g. mystic Abdul Qader Gilani or Sunni Islam scholars/scholarships
 - things unrelated to Iran are often sometimes connected to it, including religious rituals, festivals, arts, language ...
 - Some argue Iranian influences only came via India or by Indians or due to recent political events (particularly after the Iranian revolution)

The other side of the Coin: In Iran

- ▶ Concurrently little scholarship, or new light, by contemporary Iranian academics
 - ▶ Both by Iranian scholars within and outside of Iran
- ▶ Iranian students studying in SE Asia little interested to learn the local language or study in the Humanities field

Evidence of Iranian relations/interactions in Pre-Islam Period

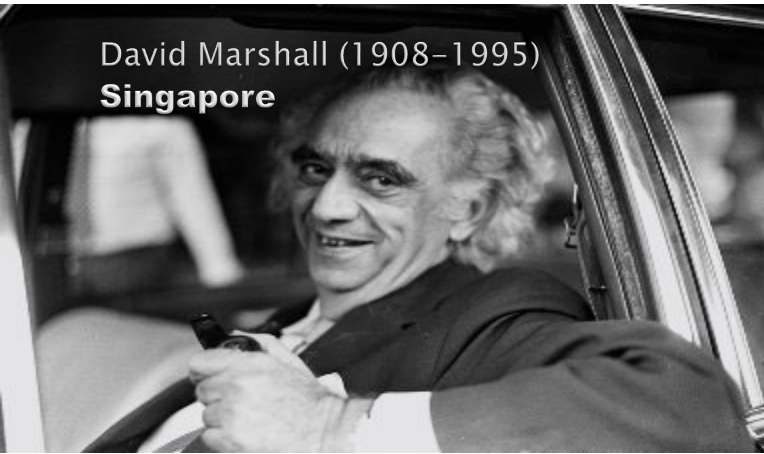
- ▶ Prior to the advent of Islam in Arabia and the fall of the Sassanid dynasty in 651 C.E.
 - Mahayana Buddhism (Kushan) in SE Asia/Buddhism in China
 - Persian Ships in South China
 - Gifts from Persian Kings to the rulers of Japan
 - Spread of early Christianity by Persians to China
 - Jewish Persian Travellers
 - Persian arts
 - Manichaeism & China
 - Persian–Parthian horses & cavalry in mainland Southeast Asia
 - Persian Nestorian/Armenian Pearl Traders in SE Asia
 - the mysterious places like Tambralinga, Kalla/h etc in Southeast Asia
 - Persians controlling the Red Sea–Persian Gulf trade

Iranian Islamic era influences and connections (8th Century C.E. to the late 18th Century)

- ▶ Islam (major conversions in)
 - Office of Shaykh Ul Islam
 - Importance of Adat (custom) and religion
 - Historic evidence Ibn Battuta, Marco Polo/ Sumatra
 - Kedah archaeological evidence/ Java
 - Vietnam/Champa Persian settlement
- ▶ Court
 - Genealogy
 - Regalia
 - Nobat
- ▶ Trade
 - Trade to the Philippines
 - Monsoon traders
- ▶ Art, Language & Literary Sources
 - Letters in the alphabet e.g. Pasar/Bazaar; Shahbandar; Langgar
 - Farsi-knowledge in religion, foundation myths, political systems (just ruler), Hikayats, Poetry

MODERN IRAN CONNECTION

David Marshall (1908-1995)
Singapore



Royal family
Cambodia

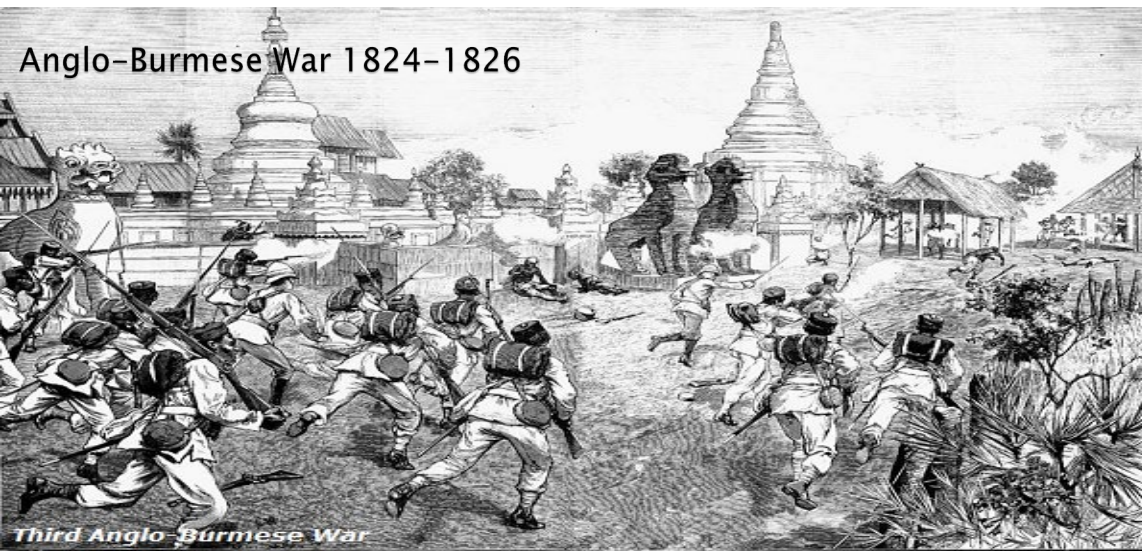
Sultan Abdul Halim
Malaysia

1927-2017



Malay-Indonesian
Royal Houses

Anglo-Burmese War 1824-1826



Thai Royal Family
Thailand

IRAN

CONNECTION



**Putra Jaya Mosque
Malaysia**

©Stanley Loong/shutterstock



**Champa
Vietnam**



RAFFLES, SINGAPUR



**Tabot Festival
Indonesia**



**Armenian Church
Singapore**

Final remarks

- ▶ Historic connection, links and interactions are too deep and intertwined
- ▶ There needs to be more cultural, scholarly, political and academic exchanges at the grassroots level
- ▶ Education & joint research & exhibitions
 - Funds, visits, translation-teaching of regional languages
 - scholarships
- ▶ Dialogue and breaking barriers of miscommunication/issues etc amongst religious and political entities
- ▶ Persian-Iranian research & scholarship must be subjected to different time periods and each region considered separately
- ▶ Dialogue to overcome political, social and religious mistrust, ambiguities and misunderstandings