

Jurnal



# ADABIYA

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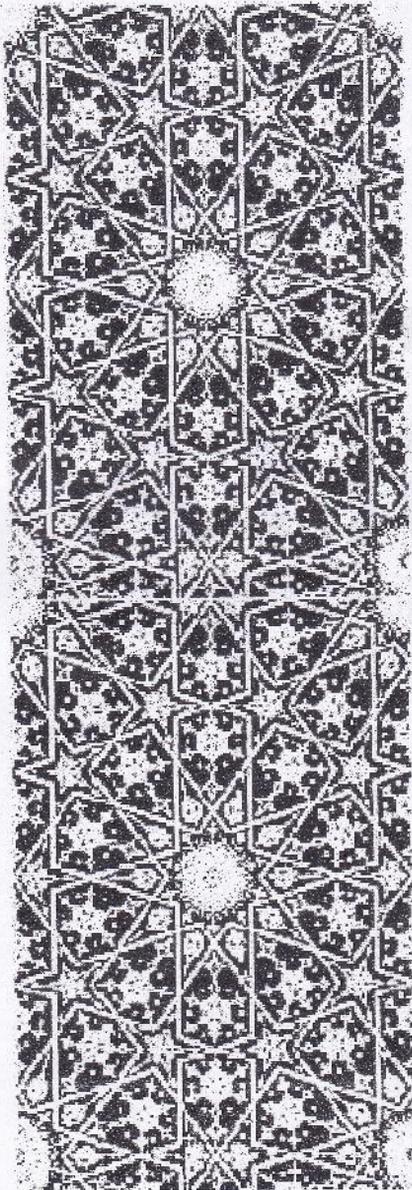
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# *Keuneunong*

Abdul Manan, M. Sc., MA., Ph. D<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*Keuneunong* adalah sebuah sistem kalender tentang fase-fase aktivitas selama mengolah sawah. Masyarakat Aneuk Jamee di Desa Blangporoh Kecamatan Labuhan Haji Barat Kabupaten Aceh Selatan menggunakan sistem kalender yang sama sebagaimana sistem kalender orang Aceh lainnya. Memperhatikan cuaca adalah hal yang paling penting mulai dari menabur bibit padi di persemaian hingga bibit padi muda itu dipindahkan (ditanam) ke sawah untuk menghindari gangguan hama-hama tanaman padi serta menghindari kurangnya air di dalam sawah-sawah tersebut. Ada 12 keuneunong dan pada masing-masing keuneunong itu memiliki tanda-tanda/gejala alam dan tingkah laku binatang tersendiri sebagaimana halnya pada waktu perubahan musim dari musim kemarau ke musim hujan atau sebaliknya karena keuneunong ini memiliki kaitan erat dengan musim dan cuaca. Selain keuneunong, ilmu bintang dan posisinya dapat juga menjadi sebuah petunjuk alam tentang musim dan lain-lain yang berkaitan dengan aktivitas bersawah dan melaut. Keuneunong juga menentukan kapan petani menanam tebu, palawija, menangkap ikan di laut, di sungai dan berlayar. Keuneunong khususnya bagi masyarakat Aneuk Jamee dan orang Aceh pada umumnya menyerupai sebuah aktivitas formal mulai dari bersawah hingga melaut.

**Keywords:** *keuneunong, symptoms of nature/weather, behavior of various animal species, the “knowledge of stars”*

## Introduction

The Aneuk Jamee in Blangporoh has a calendar system about the phases of activities during cultivation in the rice fields.<sup>2</sup> These phases in Jamee language are called *kanai* (Acèhnese *keuneunong*) i.e. “hit”, or “come into contact with” or seasonal calendar. For the stored rainwater farm, all activities in the rice field have to be suited with condition of the season (the cycle of “hutting” rotation), both for the dry land called *ladang* and for the wet land called *sawah*. The “counting of weather” is utmost important from sowing rice seeds (Acèhnese *aneuk padé*) in their seedbed till moving young rice plants (Acèhnese *bijèh padé*) to the farms to avoid disturbance of plant pests (Acèhnese/Indonesian *hama*) and the lack of water in the these areas. Meanwhile for the rice fields with irrigations, the farmers do not depend on “hitting” or “seasonal condition” as they are having irrigations. Nearly all the

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<sup>2</sup> This ethnographic research was conducted in the village of Blangporoh in West Labuhan Haji-South Aceh during two months in 2010. I thank Prof. Platenkamp, Prof. Sprenger and Ms. Mina Bahar, MA of Muenster University-Germany for their critical comments on the early version of this text.

farms in Blangporoh are of the “stored rain water farm” types as irrigation does not function well. The farmers, therefore, regulate their farming activities according to season.<sup>3</sup>

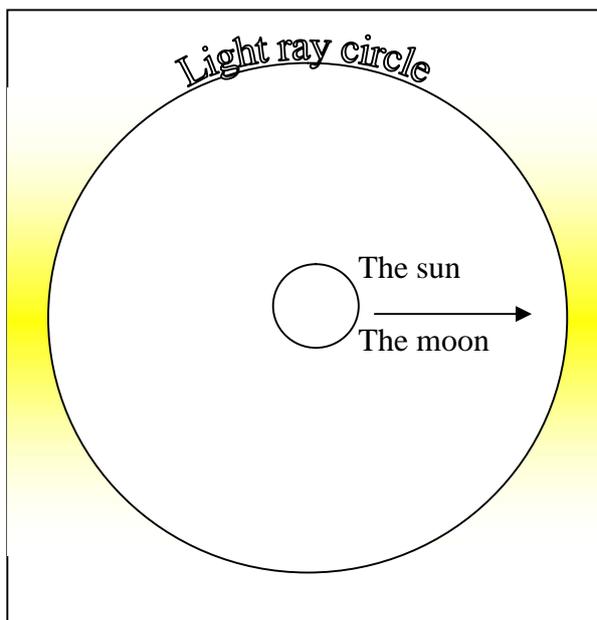
If one of the rice field activities is not suited with “hitting”, the rice field cultivated will not give a good result as “hitting” has a close relation to the weather and season. One fisherman relates the following Acèhnese expressions:

<i>Barang gapeu but dengon bismill h</i>	Any work with the name of All h
<i>Lakè bak All h bèk na mara bahaya</i>	Asking All h not to give disasters
<i>Tajak u laôt kalon keuneunong</i>	Going to the sea to observe the start of season
<i>Tajak u gunung kalon udara</i>	Going to the mountain to observe air
<i>Tajak u laôt ta kalon bintang</i>	Going to the sea to see stars
<i>Bek menentang ngon badè raya</i>	In order not to go against a great storm
<i>Ta tron u blang takalon langkah</i>	Going to the farm to observe “steps”
<i>Menan amanah bak ureueng tuha</i>	Like trusteeship from elders’ advice
<i>Tapula padé kata sepakat</i>	Planting rice with discussion
<i>Bèk na ulat peyakét yang na</i>	So as no caterpillar pests eat rice stems
<i>Tajak u ranto bèk takôt-takôt</i>	Do not be afraid of going on migration
<i>Rumoh mak sebut dilè tamita</i>	Foster mother’s house first is looked for
<i>Barang gapeubut niet bak teupat</i>	Any work the intention should be sincere
<i>Laôt ngon darat Tuhan peulara</i>	Sea and earth All h takes care

### Symptoms of weather

The symptoms of weather also must be observed so that rice plant pests can be avoided in order to have a satisfactory result. The Acèhnese expression for agriculture is as follows:

<i>Meukrong huroe tanda musém khueng</i>	Light ray circle circling the sun is a sign of dry season
<i>Meukrong bueleun tanda ie raya</i>	Light ray circle circling the moon is a sign of big water



This picture shows the moon at night and the sun at the daytime. A light ray circle circles the moon and the sun indicating a change of season. In line with this the Acèhnese say, “The sun and the moon are circled by their light ray circle” (Acèhnese *meukeurong mata huroe dan meukeurong bueleuen*, see this figure).<sup>4</sup> Light ray circle circling the sun is a sign of dry season (Acèhnese *tanda musém khueng*). It is said if during the day the sun is cloudy and

<sup>3</sup>The rituals guiding the cultivation of farm land are of three kinds corresponding with the stages of farming process (preparatory rituals, rice sowing rituals and rice growing rituals) as well as with the different types of agricultural land.

<sup>4</sup>This figure is taken from Emtas (2006:116).

around it is clearly seen a light ray circle. This circle is called *krong* or *meugeulanggang mata huroe*. This is an indication that a dry season will come soon. It is approximately from April to June. In addition, a light ray circle circling the moon is a sign of big water (Acèhnese *tanda ie raya*). It is sometimes called *meugeulanggang buleuen*. It is said if during the night one sees that the moon is circled by a light ray circle, this is an indication that the change of season, that is from dry to rainy season will come soon. As the rainy season comes the farmers have to be ready because flood will come at the peak of rainy season, approximately from October to December.

The Acèhnese farmers use a lunar calendar to govern the seasonal change from dry to rainy period while they orient the timing of their activities according to the observed behavior of various animal species such as infestation of mice (Acèhnese *hama tikoh*), plant hoppers (Jamee/Acèhnese *hama wèrèng*), caterpillars (Acèhnese *ulat*), grasshoppers (Acèhnese *darut*), a strongly smelling insect (Acèhnese *geusong*) and certain bird species (Acèhnese *chichém*) etc. They can be predicted when they reproduce, lay eggs, and when their eggs hatch. Before beginning to cultivate, the farmers should know when the dry and rainy season arrives in coordination of the Hijriyah calendar (Indonesian *kalender hijriyah*)<sup>5</sup> and the Gregorian one (Indonesian *kalender masehi*).

The rice ritual specialist (Acèhnese *keujruen blang*) in Blangporoh, Keujruen Seuma says that farmers should know when rice field mice (Acèhnese *tikoh blang*) reproduce their young (Acèhnese *meaneuk*). After bearing their young, mice are very greedy and eat rice plants in order to have enough milk for their young. At this time, the farm should flood so that the young mice cannot survive. Furthermore, farmers should know when, for instance; grasshoppers (Acèhnese *darut*), dragonflies (Acèhnese *déndén*), butterflies (Acèhnese *bambang*), insects which release a pungent smell (Acèhnese *geusong*), and other rice pests hatch their eggs. After hatching, they are hungry and eat the young leave tip of rice plants. After being caterpillars, they transform into cocoons (Acèhnese *keupompong*). From cocoons they become insects (Indonesian *serangga*), i.e., grasshoppers, butterflies, dragonflies etc. As these insects are still small, they are very greedy. All young leaves of rice plant tips become their food.

The village farmers know seasonal cycle through the indication of the nature. The cycle of season changing also refers to “hitting”. Knowing “hitting” by way of observing

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<sup>5</sup>*Hijriyah* (Arabic *hijriyyah*) indicates references to Muslim calendar, with a base date of A. D. 622. *Hijriyah* started with the flight of the Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina.

constellation called “scorpion star” (Jamee/Acèhnese *bintang kala*)<sup>6</sup> with the moon. This observance results in twelve phases of “hitting” (Hurgronje, 1906: 254-8; Abdullah, 1993:10). These phases mark when the animals begin reproducing, laying and hatching their eggs.

There are two basic observations of “hitting”, the Hijriyah month and the Gregorian month. This is due to the shifting between the Hijriyah month and Gregorian month. The difference of counting is between 12 and 14 days. The Gregorian months have more days compared to the Hijriyah months. One Gregorian month has 30 or 31 days in a month meanwhile a Hijriyah month has 29 or 30 days. Therefore, the shifting of day and month happens in every year. More or less every 33 years, the Gregorian year will coincide with Hijriyah year: e.g., the first January will be the same time with the first Muḥarram. If this does not happen on the same day, sometimes there is a difference between one or two days, for instance both New Years happen in the same week.

For further explanation about the basic of “hitting counting”, the following formula is used (Mahmud, et al., 1977/1978:114):

$$K = C - 2 \times B$$

K = season called *kanai/keunong* “hitting”

C = the constant value

B = Gregorian month

$$\text{Example: } K = 25 - 2 \times 10$$

$$= 25 - 20$$

$$= 5$$

Thus, “hitting” 5 is from October. At this time the east season (Acèhnese *musém timu*) comes.

The result of multiplication creates a “hitting”. The formula of counting is suited with rainy season, dry season, as well as the blowing wind so that all other forecasts can be predicted at the beginning as the dry season and rainy season come. It is important to note that the “counting of hitting” with this formula is not the same for all areas in Acèh, for instance; for the highland area, north, and east area of Acèh. This research is conducted at the lowland area of west Labuhan Haji, South Acèh which is oriented towards the Indian Ocean in which the coastal area consists of Bukit Barisan’s mountain. The geography is different from that of north and east coast area of Acèh which is oriented towards Malacca strait.

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<sup>6</sup>A group of stars which looks like a scorpion (Acèhnese/Indonesian *kala*) so that the Acèhnese say “scorpion stars” (Acèhnese/Indonesian *bintang kala*).

## *Keuneunong*

The following is the description of the twelve “hitting” in the lowland region of south Acèh:<sup>7</sup>

01). “Hitting nine” (Jamee *kanai sambilen*) begins in August. It is said this moment the “rice stars” (Acèhnese *bintang padé*) begins rising in the east and seven stars (Acèhnese *bintang tujôh*) have risen before the “rice stars” rise. The indication of nature that can be seen during this month is that a land crab called *bing krungkhong* are wild as they do not know where their nest lies and start searching safe places to hide as the rain will be heavy. This is a good moment for farmers to sow rice seeds in their seedbed (Acèhnese *lheu umong*). Another indication is that when the *syafa* tree (Acèhnese *bak syafa*)<sup>8</sup> is split, the head of the caterpillars are pointed up rather than down indicating that the caterpillars will no longer eat the “liver” of the *syafa* tree. The village farmers believe that this is a safe moment to sow rice seeds (Acèhnese *tabu bijeh padé*) in their seedbed. Should the head of the caterpillar in the *syafa* tree is still down; the farmers do not sow their rice seeds. This indicates that caterpillars will eat the ‘liver’ of *syafa* tree. Should the village farmers sow rice seeds in their seedbed at this time, the young rice plants will later on be eaten by caterpillars as they have grown up before they are moved to their rice fields.

02). “Hitting seven” (Jamee *kanai tujoh*) begins in September. During this month the village is noisy by the sounds of the dogs’ copulating (Acèhnese *asèe meuseuntét*). At this time, the farmers start planting sugar cane, cucumber and pepper in the dry fields while waiting for the rice seeds in the seedbeds to be moved to their rice fields.

03). “Hitting five” (Jamee *kanai limo*) begins in October, at this moment the east season (Acèhnese *musém timu*) begins. It is a good time for fishermen to catch fish in the sea. The wind blows from the east; there are no big waves. The fish in the rivers go to estuaries for laying eggs for the first time, approximately between September and October. Another indication is that mushrooms (Acèhnese *kulat*) start growing on the decaying woods. In this case, the rice ritual specialist related as follows, “*musém timu tapot kulat, musém barat takuh reubong*”, means “mushrooms are picked in east season and bamboo shoots are dug in west season”.<sup>9</sup>

04) “Hitting three” (Jamee *kanai tigo*) begins in November. This period is a good time for sailing from the city to the west coast as the sea is calm. The wind blows everywhere and

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<sup>7</sup>The information regarding 12 *keuneunong* (“hitting”) can be obtained from *The Achenese* (Hurgronje 1906: 254-8), and *Hikayat Asai Pade* (Abdullah 1993:10-11). Most information described here, however, is obtained from a discussion with village old men.

<sup>8</sup> *Syafa* tree (Acèhnese *bak syafa*) is a kind of tree that the farmers make uses of its leaves as medicine.

<sup>9</sup>Bamboo shoot which the villagers called *reubong* grows when the west season comes. Many village people collect and cook them.

is not strong. If it rains, it will also not be strong. Another indication is that female turtles (Jamee *tatung*; Acèhnese *punyi*) start crawling above the high tide line in order to lay their eggs in the sand.

05). “Hitting one” (Jamee *kanai satu*) from December, at this time, the rain becomes heavier (Acèhnese *ie raya*) followed with sound of thunderclap and croaking frogs. Floods often occur as at this time “noisy wind” (Indonesian *angin ribut*) followed by heavy rain. At



this moment, the fishermen cannot go fishing and remain on land to repair their fishing nets.<sup>10</sup> In addition, Between December and January the season changes from west season to east season or “hitting shift” (Acèhnese *keunong peralihan*).<sup>11</sup> This period is free

from “hitting” or refers to “hitting scaly anteater” (Acèhnese *keunong tanggilek*). The indication of nature that can be seen at this time is that rain continuously becomes heavier and people at this time often catch scaly anteater (Acèhnese *tanggilek* from the Indonesian *tremgiling* (see photo-Detik. Com on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008), a kind of land animal with heavy scales that enters villages as their dens in the mountains are full of water. The villagers kill these animals and take their scales as a talisman (Acèhnese *senangkai*). The anteater’ scale is often hung on the neck of a child or is tied around his hip or on his hand.<sup>12</sup> Some people says that by hanging anteater’s scales on children, they prevent “scabies disease” (Acèhnese *penyakét kudé buta*) and some others says it prevents children from “high red disease” (Acèhnese *penyaket mirah manyang*). In addition, another indication at this time is that the village at night is noisy due to the sound of the cats copulating (Acèhnese *mi meagam*), while the mountain at night is noisy due to the sound of tigers copulating.

06). “Hitting twenty three” (Jamee *keunong duopuluh tigo*) begins in January. Rice cannot be harvested yet. At night the east wind starts blowing. This is also called *musém timu* (east season). The sea is calm. This is a good time for fisherman to sail and to catch fish at

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<sup>10</sup>Hitting one (Jamee *kanai satu*) is known only because it must be after hitting three (Jamee *kanai tigo*) but cannot be seen because the sun and the moon are both in a scorpion star (Wibowo 2000:69).

<sup>11</sup>“Hitting” scaly anteater (Acèhnese *keunong tanggilek*) is included in rainy season. If rain falls before the “hitting” occurs, rain will not be heavy or “a moment rain” (Indonesian *hujan sesa’at*) but if rain exactly falls on the “hitting” (raining at the meeting between the moon and the scorpion star), it will continuously fall for more than a week.

<sup>12</sup> Nowadays, the trading of Tremgiling is more lustrous because the cost of its meat reach Rp. 800.000 each kilogram and its scales can be a raw material and “strong drug” (Indonesian *obat kuat*). The skin of Tremgiling is marketed in Asian countries, such as in Singapore (see Detik. Com on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

night as the wind blows from the land to the sea and during the day the wind blows from sea to the land. The fishermen can reach the land quickly with the help of the sea wind.

07). “Hitting twenty one” (Jamee *kanai duopuluh satu*) from February is generally harvest time, the harvesting season (Acèhnese *musém seumeukoh*). The farmers now are holding a “ritual feast” called *khanduri ule thôn* “the head of the year *khanduri*” after harvesting. This is also a good time to plant *palawija*<sup>13</sup>, vegetables and tobacco plants.

08). “Hitting nineteen” (Jamee *kanai sambilenbaleh*) begins in March. The fields lie fallow. At this time the farmers leave their fields free from rice planting for several months and, at the same time, livestock; for instance, buffalos, cows, sheep, goats and so on are free to enter the rice fields to eat growing grass. This time in Acèh is called *musém luwah blang* “the season of wide field”. It is said that “hitting” twenty three (Jamee *kanai duapuluh tigo*), twenty one (Jamee *duopuluh satu*), and nineteen (Jamee *sambilenbaleh*) are the time when the eggs of dangerous insects hatch especially the strongly smelling insects called *geusong*. These insects grow in a kind of fruit called *boh labu kumbung*<sup>14</sup> that grow in the mountains. When this fruit is ripe and falls down, *geusong* leave it and seek the rice milk everywhere in villages. The rice specialist says that if there is no food for *geusong* after forty four days, they will return to mountains and die there. If they have opportunity to suck rice milk, they will multiply causing much damage to the harvest. He laments that these days, there is always many *geusong* that will no longer return and die in the mountains as many farmers no longer cease cultivating their farms at the same time.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, *geusong* can easily move from one village farms to another and heir food is always available.

9. “Hitting seven teen” (Jamee *kanai tujuhbaleh*) in April when the west season starts. The sugar cane at this time has already been blooming. A kind of river fish called *bungkuh* go down from the upper reaches of rivers downstream to the estuary for laying eggs and then back to upper reaches of the rivers for the second time. Moreover, the “ritual feast for the sea” (Acèhnese *khanduri laôt*) is held during this season. The west wind starts blowing. Fishermen will not go fishing due to quick winds and big waves. Instead, they go to their farms to start cultivating.

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<sup>13</sup>Crops planted as second crop in dry season.

<sup>14</sup>*Boh labu kumbung* is well known in the farming area. Its fruit is as big as a ball and contains strongly smell insects (Acèhnese *geusong*) and falls down when they are ripe as “hitting twenty three” (Jamee *kanai duapuluh tigo*), twenty one (Jamee *kanai duapuluh satu*) and nineteen (Jamee *sambilen baleh*). The rice specialist in Blangporoh says that several years ago, the farmers in Blangporoh village went together to the mountain to cut the trees of this fruit before their fruit become ripe.

<sup>15</sup>Some farmers no longer follow the seasonal calendar because they are not patient to await the appropriate moment to cultivate the farms and have no other work to do except farming. Therefore, the result is always unsatisfactory, says one farmer.

10. “Hitting fifteen” (Jamee *kanai limobaleh*) in May when the farmers start plowing (Acèhnese *meu ueu*) their farms for planting rice. Storm and big waves still takes place in the sea. At this time the eggs of fish hatch. It is said that when “hitting fifteen and seventeen”, certain fish in the rivers go to an estuary to lay their eggs and certain fish in the sea go to near the seashore or the seashore of islands in the sea to lay their eggs. Then their eggs are hurled by the waves to the seashore. The waves leave the fish eggs on the seashore. The heat of the sand makes their eggs hatch.<sup>16</sup> They are then taken back again to the sea by big waves during “hitting fifteen” because at this time big waves form. In the river of Krueng Baru in west Labuahn Haji at this time is the season of small fish called *lulo* that swim from the lower to the upper reaches of the river. Meanwhile in the sea itself is the season of shrimp fly (Acèhnese *musém udeung sabèe*).

11. “Hitting thirteen” (Jamee *kanai tigobaleh*) in June when farmers start preparing their seedbed where the rice seeds (Jamee *banieh*) is sown. In the sea, big waves still occur and at this moment trees start blooming due to the west wind. As the west wind blows, the tree trunks shake and their branches rub each other. As a result the hollow spaces in tree trunks are opened and the wind penetrates the tree trunks causing the trees to bloom. Therefore, the villagers say that the west wind is the “husband of the tree” (is just like the “husband of the turtle is the south wind” because “if the south wind blows the female turtles lay eggs”).

12. “Hitting eleven” (Jamee *kanai sabaleh* ) in July when the rice seeds (Jamee *banieh*) begin to be sown. Rain often falls. The west wind starts subsiding and the south west wind at this time starts blowing. Sailing from the capital city to the west coast therefore again takes place.

Based on the above season calendar, farming becomes the main society activity; other activities are done as a part-time job when their cultivation in the farm decreases. Firstly, when the farmers wait for the rice seeds to grow in their seedbed (Acèhnese *lheu bijèh*) till after they can be moved to the farms. Secondly, when farmers wait for the harvest time after the young rice plants have been planted to their farms. The seasonal calendar shows that most of the time in a year is spent in the farm by the village farmers. Plowing the farm should have been started from April (see no. 09, “hitting seven teen”) till the following month (see no. 10, “hitting fifteen”), in the month of June (see no. 11, “hitting thirteen”). The farmers have finished sowing the rice seeds in their seedbed because the rain has been heavy. The time

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<sup>16</sup>It is like the turtle eggs. They hatch because of the heat of sand. For the hatching of the turtle eggs, stronger heat of sand is required, therefore the turtles lay their eggs little bit far from the border of the sea water in the sand, says one fisherman.

when the rice seeds can be sown can only be done in “three hittings” only; “hitting eleven” (Jamee *kanai sabaleh*), “hitting nine” (Jamee *kanai sambilen*), “hitting seven” (Jamee *kanai tujuh*). If these “three hittings” are over, the farmers have no opportunities to move their young rice plants (Acèhnese *bijèh padé*) to the farm as they have already been eaten by caterpillars. This case has been well described in the following Acèhnese expression:

<i>Keunong siblah tabu jareng</i>	“Hitting eleven” sowing wide apart
<i>Keunong sikureung tabu rata</i>	“Hitting nine” sowing nearly all
<i>Keunong tuj h jet cit mantong</i>	“Hitting seven” still allowed to sow
<i>Keunong limong ulat seuba</i>	“Hitting five” caterpillars eat young rice plants

This expression states that a good time for sowing rice seeds in their seedbed is in hitting nine (Jamee *kanai sambilen*). If a farmer sows rice seeds at this time, all rice seeds will grow well. “Hitting eleven” (Jamee *kanai sabaleh*) is little bit early but “hitting seven” (Jamee *kanai tujuh*) is little bit late although it is still allowed to sow the rice seeds in their seedbed. “Hitting five” (Jamee *kanai limo*) that is in October is really late to sow the rice seeds in their seedbed. As consequence, the rice caterpillars (Acèhnese *ulat padé*) eat the young rice plants before they grow. It is suggested not to sow the rice seeds in October as all the growing rice seeds will be eaten by caterpillars. And harvest time occurs in February (see no. 07, “hitting twenty one”).

### “Knowledge of Stars”

Apart from *keuneunong* or “hitting”, “the knowledge of stars” and their position can also become a “natural guidance” about the season and others which are related to farming and fishing activities. There is a constellation called *bintang tigo* (“three stars”). The constellation is so named based on its position which is in a row used as a compass orientation. The farmers also know a group of nine stars (Jamee *bintang sambilen*), that are Venus (Indonesian *bintang zuhra*), or at dawn the star rises in the east called “eastern star” (Acèhnese *bintang timu*). The star rises in the west at night called “deer star” (Jamee *bintang rusu*) or “thief star” (Jamee *bintang pancilok*) because the deer and the thief go out from their places as this star rises.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the farmers also know a “ray fish star” (Acèhnese *bintang paro*) because it resembles the ray fish or kite fish. When this star rises in the east, the west season comes. According to many farmers whom I discuss with in the village, the main star determining seasons [weather] is called “seven stars” (Jamee/Acèhnese *bintang tuj h*).

In relation to the “seven stars”, the rice ritual specialist says as follows:

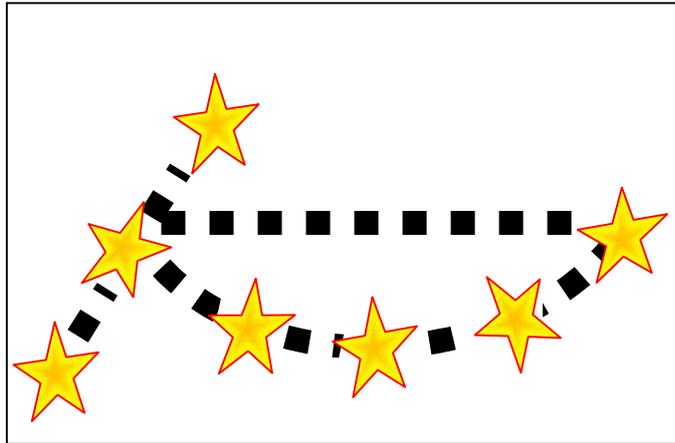
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<sup>17</sup>See also Wibowo (2000:73).

*Bintang tujuh dijak malam*  
*Teunget insan mandum lam donya*  
*Bintang tujuh dijak uroe*  
*Tron jak meugoe umat ube na*  
*Bintang tujuh dijak ateh glée*  
*Pula padée pe yang suka.*  
*Bintang tujuh dijak u laôt*  
*Tadrop unghôt yang raya mata*

Seven stars move at night  
 All human sleep in the world  
 Seven stars move in the day  
 Going to cultivate the farm all mankind  
 Seven stars move on the mountain  
 Planting rice whatever you like  
 Seven stars move to the sea  
 Catching fish which have big eyes

The constellation of the “seven stars” resembles <sup>18</sup>a canoe and sometimes it is called “canoe



star” (Jamee *pintang biduk*, see figure) because these seven stars resemble a canoe with its prow and stern. Next to the stern, there are stars that resemble a rudder. Its prow is in the east and the stern is in the west. If these two directions are known, the position of north and south will be easily determined. This orientation is

crucially useful especially for the village fishermen.

In a year, the group of seven stars appears six months in the day and the other six months in the night. When it appears on the mountain, then it is time to start cultivating the fields, whereas if it appears on the sea, then it is the east season comes. Like the groups of seven stars, the group of stars resembling scorpion called “scorpion star” (Jamee/Acèhnese/ *bintang kala*) also “walk” six months in the day and the other six months in the nighttime in a year but the “scorpion star” “walks” in the opposite direction. If the group of seven stars “walks” in the day, thus the “scorpion star” “walks” in the night and vice versa. They do not “walk” at the same time. It is said that that if the seven stars set at the same time with the sun, it indicates bad weather. This usually happens as “hitting fifteen” (Jamee *kanai limobaleh*) takes places.

## Conclusion

The Aneuk Jamee have a calendar system for the phases of activities during rice cultivation. These phases are called *kanai* (Acèhnese *keuneunong*) i.e. “hit”, or “come into contact with”. For the stored rainwater farm, all activities in the rice field have to be suited to the condition of the season (the cycle of “hutting” rotation), both for the dry land called *ladang* and for the

<sup>18</sup> This figure is taken from Wibowo (2000:74).

wet land called *sawah*. The “consulting of the weather” is of utmost importance, from the sowing of rice seeds in their seedbed to moving young rice plants to the farms to avoid disturbance by plant pests and to avoid the lack of water in these areas. Meanwhile for the rice fields with irrigation, the farmers do not depend on “hitting” or “seasonal conditions”. Nearly all the farms in Blangporoh are of the “stored rain water farm” types as irrigation does not function well. The farmers, therefore, regulate their farming activities according to the seasons.

The Aneuk Jamee farmers use a lunar calendar to govern the seasonal change from the dry to the rainy period while they orientate the timing of their activities according to the observed behavior of various animal species such as mice, plant hoppers, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and certain bird species etc. They can predict when they reproduce, lay eggs, and when their eggs hatch. Before beginning to cultivate, the farmers should know when the dry and rainy season arrive in conjunction with the Hijriyah calendar (Indonesian *kalender hijriyah*)<sup>19</sup> and the Gregorian one (Indonesian *kalender masehi*).

The village farmers know the seasonal cycle through signs of nature. The cycle of season change also refers to “hitting” as observing a constellation called “scorpion star” with the moon. This observance results in twelve phases of “hitting”. This is due to changes between the Hijriyah month and Gregorian month. The difference in “counting” is between 12 and 14 days. The Gregorian months have more days compared to the Hijriyah months. One Gregorian month has 30 or 31 days in a month, while a Hijriyah month has 29 or 30 days. Therefore, the shifting in days and months happens every year. Every 33 years, the Gregorian year will coincide with a Hijriyah year: e.g., the first January will be at the same time as the first Muḥarram. If this does not happen on the same day, sometimes there is a difference of between one or two days, for instance both New Years happen in the same week.

“Hitting”, i.e. “the knowledge of stars” is also a “natural guidance” about the seasons related to farming and fishing activities. There is a constellation called “three stars”. This constellation is thus named because of its position; the stars are in a row and can be used as a compass orientation. Another group of nine stars rises in the east at dawn called the “eastern star”. The star rising in the west at night is called “deer star” or “thief star” as the deer and the thief leave their places as this star rises. The star resembling the ray fish or kite fish is called “ray fish star”. When this star rises in the east, the west season comes. However, the main star determining the seasons is called “seven stars” and resembles a canoe with its prow and stern

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<sup>19</sup>*Hijriyah* (Arabic *hijriyyah*) indicates references to the Muslim calendar, with a base date of A. D. 622. *Hijriyah* started with the flight of the Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina.

and is called “canoe star”. Next to the stern, there are stars that resemble a rudder. Its prow is in the east and the stern is in the west. If these two directions are known, the position of north and south can be easily determined. This orientation is crucial for the village fishermen. In a year, the group of seven stars appears six months in the day and the other six months at night. When it appears above the mountain, it is time to start cultivating the fields, whereas if it appears above the sea, the east season has arrived. Like the groups of seven stars, the group of stars resembling a scorpion is called “scorpion star” and also “appears” six months in the day and the other six months at night in a year but the “scorpion star” “appears” opposite to the seven stars. If the group of seven stars “appears” in the day, the “scorpion star” “appears” at night. If the seven stars set at the same time as the sun, bad weather comes.

The traditional farmers in Acèh understand the seasonal calendar. They know when they have to go to their fields, plow them, sow the rice seeds as well as when the rice seeds have to be moved from their seedbeds to their fields. The simultaneousness between the period of rice sowing and that of rice planting is critical in preventing attacks by the caterpillars and other rice pests on the rice plants, especially as the grains of rice begin producing milk. And, it also prevents *geusong* “a strongly smelling insect” sucking the rice grains which are still liquid. The seasonal calendar also prescribes when farmers plant sugar canes, *palawija*, catch fish in the sea, river and sail. Therefore, the seasonal calendar especially for the Aneuk Jamee in west Lahuhan Haji, south Acèh and for the Acèhnese as a whole resembles a formal schedule of activities from farming to fishing.

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