Zulkifli’s *The Struggle of the Shi’is in Indonesia* is a pioneering work. It is the first comprehensive scholarly examination in English of the development of Shiism in Indonesia. It focuses primarily on the important period between 1979 and 2004 – a period of nearly a quarter of a century that saw the notable dissemination of Shi’i ideas and a considerable expansion of the number of Shi’i adherents in Indonesia. Since Islam in Indonesia is overwhelmingly Sunni, this development of Shiism in a predominantly Sunni context is a remarkable phenomenon that calls for careful, critical investigation. Zulkifli has provided precisely this much needed investigation. His work offers both a starting point for understanding and a foundation for future research.

This book gives evidence of a depth of engaged, sympathetic research on and among the key figures who were critically involved in the development of Shiism in Indonesia and on their social and intellectual backgrounds. There is also an important examination of the principal ideas underlying the *Madhab Ahl al-Bayt*, the Imamate and Imam Madhi, *Ja’fari* jurisprudence and ritual piety. Appropriately, in his discussion, Zulkifli provides a succinct outline of contrasts with Sunni ideas and practice. He also examines the publishing efforts that underpinned the dissemination of Shi’i ideas and the founding of IJABI (*Ikatan Jamaah Ahlul Bait Indonesia*) in July 2000 for the propagation of *Ahl al-Bayt* teachings. Given the Indonesian context, Zulkifli is also concerned with Sunni reactions to these Shi’i developments – a story that continues to unfold to the present.

It is particularly appropriate that Zulkifli’s work appear in this ANU series on Islam. Zulkifli did his MA in Anthropology at ANU for which he wrote a thesis entitled *Sufism in Java: The Role of the Pesantren in the Maintenance of Sufism in Java*. Besides its general discussion, this thesis focused specifically on Pesantren Tarekat Suryalaya in Tasikmalaya in West Java. Zulkifli’s thesis formed part of a succession of ANU studies on Indonesia’s *pesantren* that began with Zamaksyari Dhofier’s study of Tebuireng in 1980.

Scholars at Leiden University, who became aware of Zulkifli’s research and eventually succeeded in bringing him to Leiden for his PhD research made an
effort, as well, to publish his ANU thesis in the Leiden INIS series in 2002. Now ANU has the opportunity to reciprocate by publishing Zulkifli’s Leiden PhD in the ANU E Press series on Islam.

For me personally, it is a special privilege to be able to recommend this work, as I recommended his earlier work, to a wider audience. I regard this book as a work of great value and significance for the continuing understanding of the richness and complexity of Indonesian Islam.

Wendy Mukherjee of the College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU prepared the thesis for ANU E Press publication.