

also testify to a great many more victims of alcohol, opium and gambling among Europeans and Chinese in the Indies than among the Javanese.” (Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam, Contacts and Conflicts 1596-1950*, English translation by Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen [Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1993], p. 103). And a popular tourist handbook by an Australian anthropologist describes the significance of Islam for Indonesian people as follows:

Indonesia is one of the few countries where Islam didn't supplant the existing religion purely by military conquest. Its appeal was first and foremost psychological. Radically egalitarian and possessing a scientific spirit, when Islam first arrived in these islands it was a forceful revolutionary concept that freed



A Mosque drum (bedug) in West Sumatran style. The function of these drums in Islamic tradition in Indonesia is to remind people nearby of time for prayer.



Indonesian Muslims respect deeply the merit of the early preachers who spread Islam in Indonesia.



Calligraphic script in the form of a tiger - "Macan Ali" - done by an artist from Cirebon.  
The calligraphic text is "la ilaha illallah".

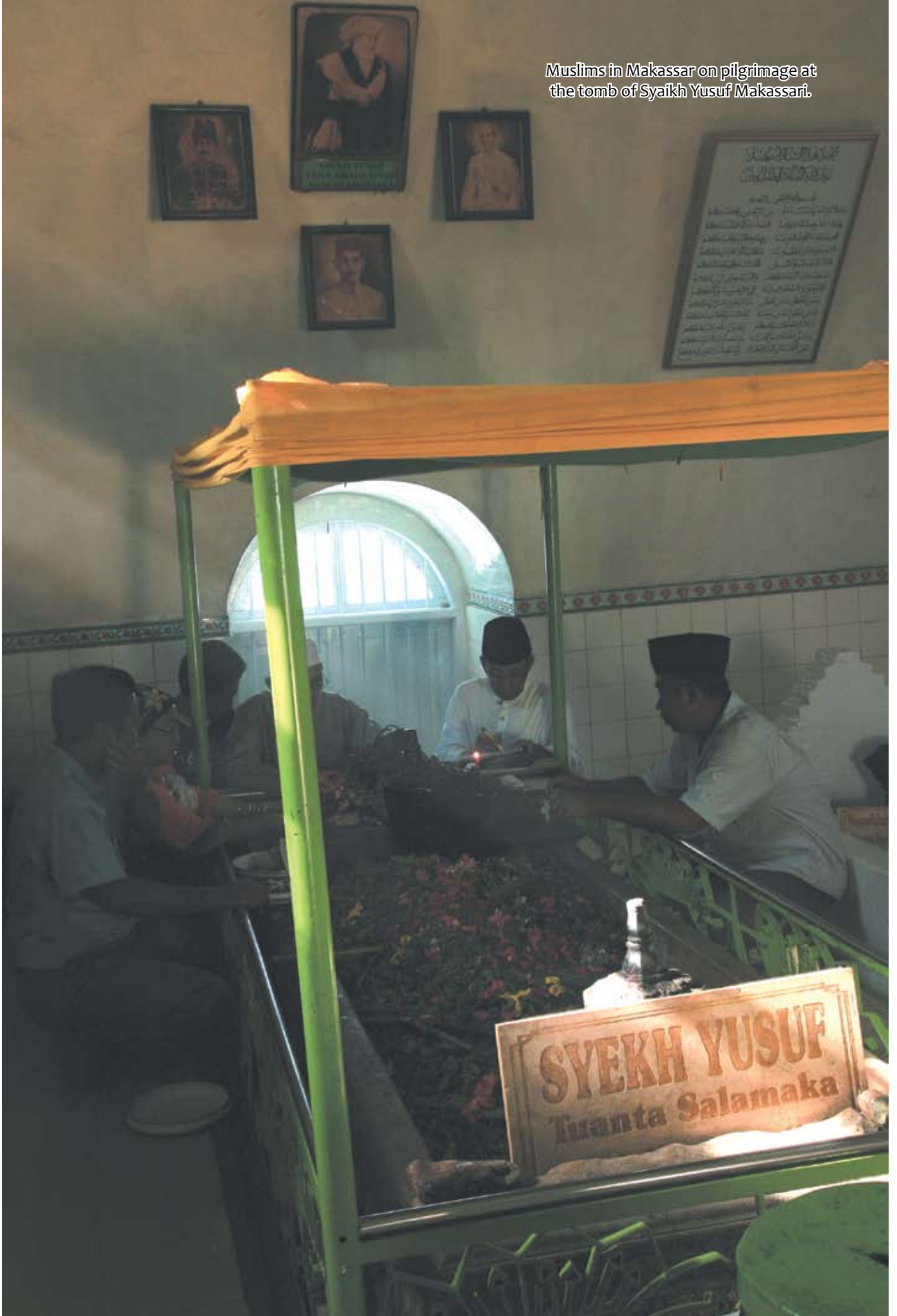
the common man from his Hindu feudal bondage. Until Islam arrived, he lived in a land where the king was an absolute monarch who could take away his land and even his wife at whim. Islam, on the other hand, taught that all men in Allah's eyes are made of the same clay, that no man shall be set apart as superior. There were no mysterious sacraments or initiation rites, nor was there a priest class. With its direct and personal relationship between man and God, Islam possessed great simplicity. Everyone could talk to Allah.... Islam is ideally suited to an island nation; it is a traders' religion which stresses the



Jubtazani, a follower of Tasawuf in Jakarta. This photo was taken when he was reciting poetry at the program "Ode Kebangkitan" ("To Renaissance") celebrating National Revival/Renaissance day in Jakarta.



Muslims in Makassar on pilgrimage at the tomb of Syaikh Yusuf Makassar.





Several Sufi dancers twirl and dance to the rhythm of the music, Jakarta.

virtues of prosperity and hard work. It allows for high individual initiative and freedom of movement in order to take advantage of trade opportunities everywhere. The religion is tied to no locality and God can be worshipped anywhere, even on the deck of a ship. It was (and is) an easy religion to join. All that was needed was a simple declaration of faith, the *shahadat*..... It compelled a man to bathe and to keep clean, encouraged him to travel



Worshippers waiting to open their fast in Cut Meutia Mosque, Jakarta.





Kubah Mas Mosque, Islam today, in Depok, West Java.

out to see the world (to Mecca), and, in short, exerted a democratizing, modernizing, civilizing influence over the peoples of the archipelago. Islam also had a great political attraction. It was first adopted by coastal princes as a counter to the threat of Portuguese and Dutch Christianity, as a rallying point of identity. Islam really caught on in the early 16th C. as a force against Portuguese colonial domination, then 100 years later as a force



While awaiting the time of evening prayer, Muslim students gather in small groups outside their very simple boarding school, in Cidangheang, Ciomas, Banten.

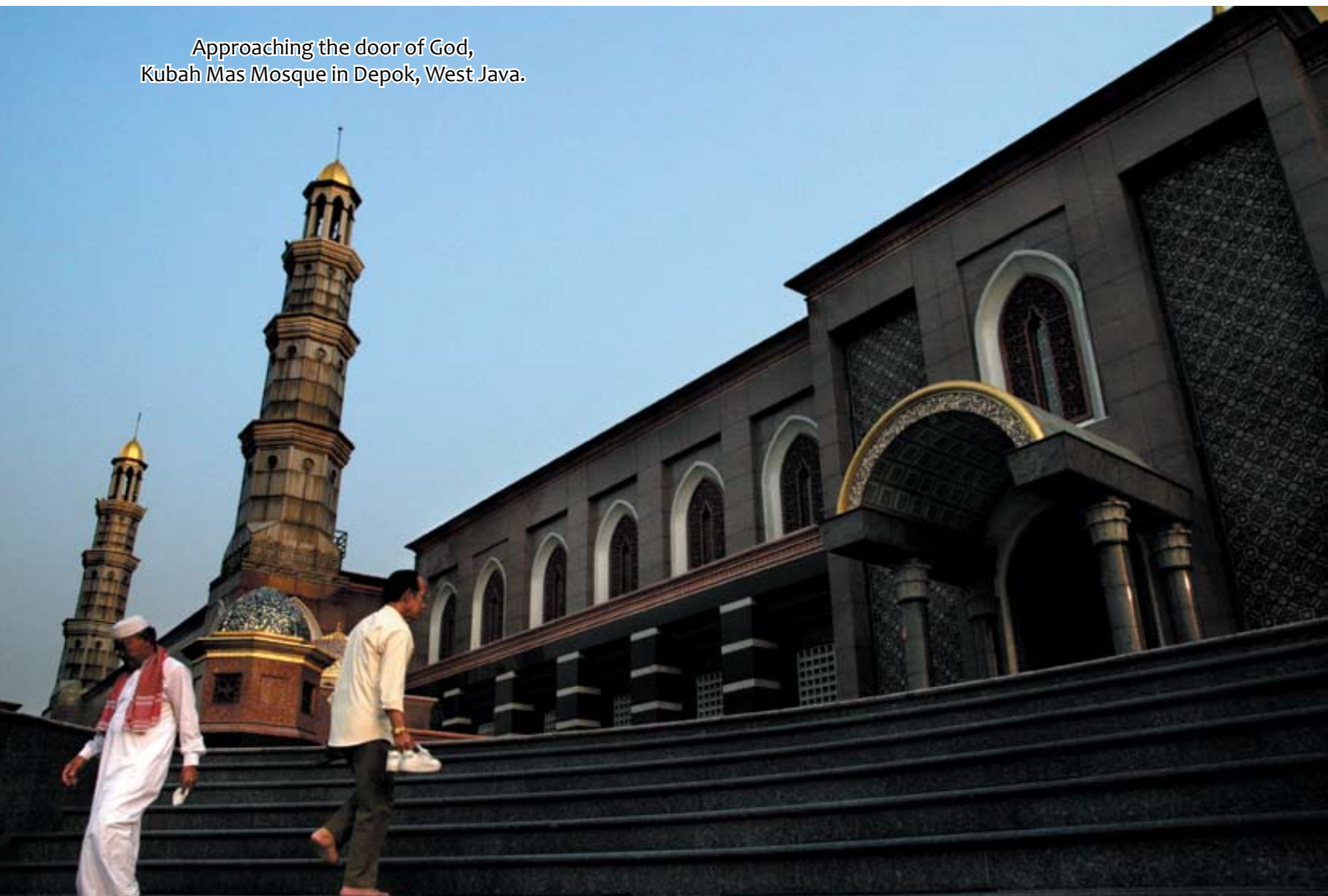
against the Dutch, always spreading just ahead of the foreign overlords. (Al Hickey, *Complete Guide to Indonesia* [Singapore: Simon and Schuster Asia, 1990], pp. 8-9).

Still another scholar recognizes the function of Islam as the cultural and religious underpinning for the unity and integration of the nation. "Islam has been the significant bond of unity among the various peoples of the Indonesian archipelago. The orthodox Islamic scribes and teachers (*kyahi* and '*ulamâ*'), scattered in thousands of villages (of Java and Sumatra in particular), have been the traditional spiritual leaders of the Indonesian peasants and often his only link with the world of Islam beyond the confines of his community. Muslim education has for decades reached hundreds of Indonesians to whom a more modern, Western style of schooling was



Staying in very simple dormitories of woven bamboo doesn't lessen these students enthusiasm to keep revising their religious lessons from the scriptures, Banten.

Approaching the door of God,  
Kubah Mas Mosque in Depok, West Java.





inaccessible.” (Harry J. Benda, *Continuity and Change in Southeast Asia*, Yale University, Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Series No. 18, New Haven, 1972, p. 38).

### Indonesian Islam and Shūfism

One of the reasons that has made Indonesian Islam what it looks like today is the novelty factor. Islam is comparatively new to the Archipelago. As has already been suggested, most of the experts say that Islam began to gradually penetrate Indonesian islands only in the fourteenth century. This means that the momentum of the spread of Islam in the area was about two centuries after the decline of Islamic civilization at the global level. Many believe that the decline started in the twelfth century. This coincided with the era of the great Muslim theologian and mystic, al-Ghazâlî who died in 1111 C.E. Some historians made



A little girl sits musing, holding the holy book, al-Qur'an - which until now has been a Muslim's life support.



Muslim students fill in the absentee roll for prayer at Bogor, West Java.



Motif bangunan  
Masjid Raya Medan





accusation against al-Ghazâlî, maybe unjustifiably, that his book, *Tahâfut al-Falâsifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers) was responsible for the death of philosophy and other speculative and scientific thinking in Islam, which then brought about the civilizational decline of Islam.

Thus Islam that came to Indonesia is the post-Ghazâlî Islam with the marked inclination toward mysticism. This is not to say that mysticism as such is unworthy, but this could explain why Islam in Indonesia is more accommodating to the local cultures than in other places. So great was the influence of al-Ghazâlî to the Javanese mystical literature that the literature, no considered to be among the most precious treasure of classical heritage of the nation, is infused with such Sufi terms, such as, among so many



Waiting for adzan maghrib, Bantang Kuala.



A Mosque is seen near Samarinda Harbor, East Kalimantan.





Thousands of Muslims from NU (Nahdhatul Ulama) celebrating the anniversary of NU, Jakarta.



other terms, *syariat*, *tarekat*, *makrifat* and *hakekat* (*sharî'ah*, *tharîqah*, *ma'rifah* and *haqîqah*, which mean, respectively, exoteric way, esoteric way, gnosticism and Reality), describing the stages of Shûfî spiritual attainment. Putting aside the *hakekat* which is considered to be the stage that could be reached only by the *khawâsh al-khawâsh* (the specials among the specials), the first three stages were symbolized in the three tiers of the roof of the mosques. The vernacular architectural style is also considered to be emblems of *islâm* (submission), *îmân* (faith) and *ihsân* (ethical and spiritual accomplishment). Those are the three levels of spiritual attainment: *islâm* being the *purwa* (elementary or beginning), *îmân* the *madya*



(intermediate), and *îhsân* the *wusana* (final). Because of the strong Shûfî orientation of the Javanese Islam, the early propagators of Islam on the island are known as respected as *walis* (saints). There are nine of them, thus the Javanese epithet *Wali Sanga* (Nine Walis), with their venerated tombs scattered along the northern coast of Java, the destinations of popular Islamic local pilgrimage.

Having been introduced to Islam long time after al-Ghazâlî, and closely following the great thinker's example, Indonesians are firm adherents to the Sunnî (*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*) school. Even in its very early introduction to the Archipelago, Islam in its certain school of thought was already embraced by some circles in a very fanatical, o maybe "fundamentalist" way. Just as al-Ghazâlî's era had been preceded by fierce debates and controversies over certain theological and legal issues, Indonesian Islam, as it developed after the great thinker, has also been infested with quarrels and controversies from the very beginning. An



Sultan Kanoman and members of his family enter the palace of the tomb of Gunung Jati in a ceremony, Gerebek Syawal, in Cirebon.



Studying and teaching activities with the children of Abah Anon Ashram in Suryalaya, West Java.



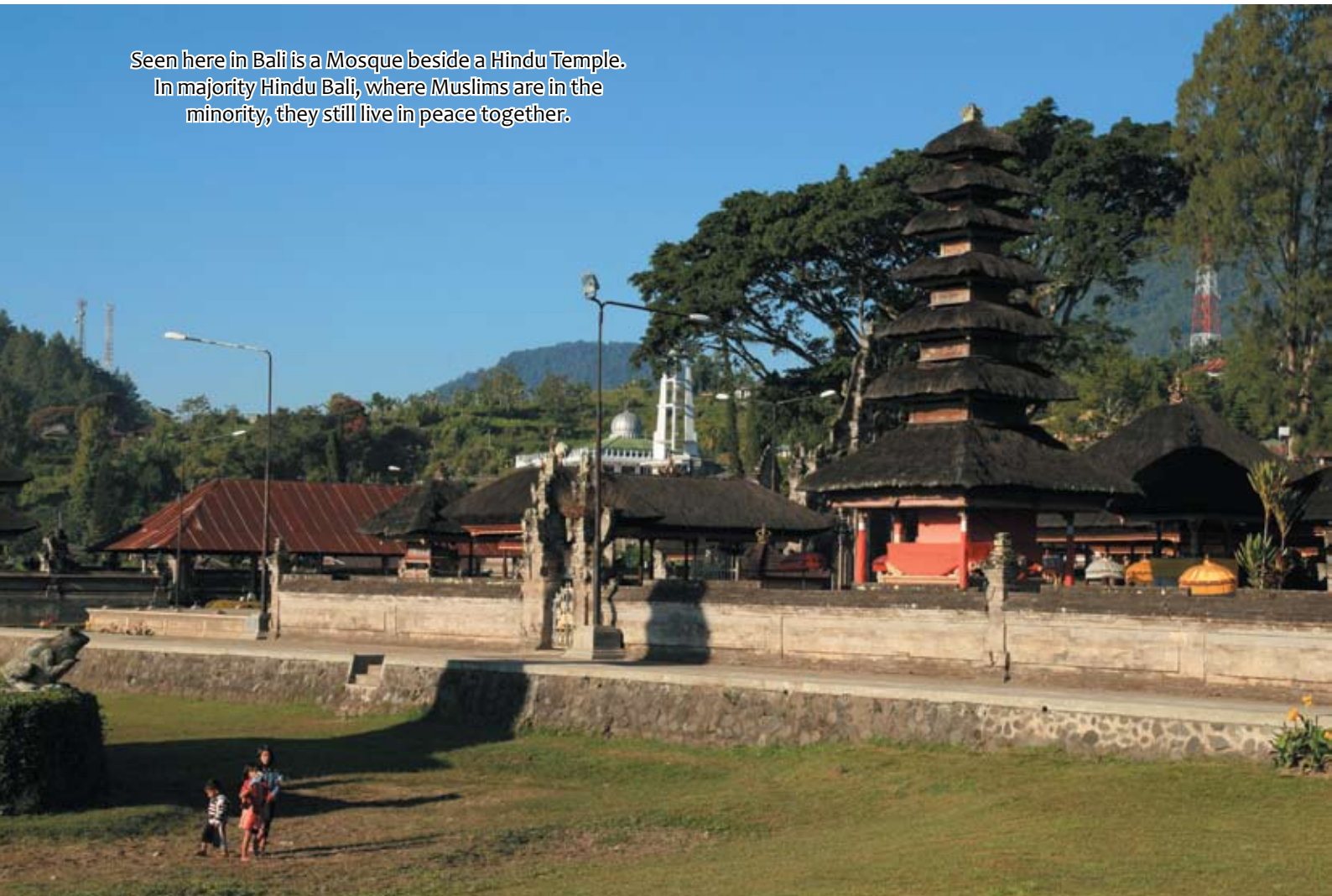
excerpt from a work by one of the Nine Walis read as follows (in Javanese):

Mangka Imam al-Ghazâlî akecap, kang linuwihaken kapanditanira, kang tini-ngalaken ing lohil-mapul ing jeroné wetengé ibunira, ingkang winengaken angiket usul suluk ing jeroné wetengé ibunira, ya syaikh al-Jaddi! Kupurlah tuwan ing patang mazhab, mapan kahananing Allahu Ta'ala dihin saha purba akapsa telata sira arani bodo, sira arani mukup dereng akarsa, dereng andadekaken, sipating pangeran denira arani amang samangsa, iku kupurira. Yen ta baya ingsun wenanga amejahana sira, supaya sira sun gantung sungsang



Young Muslim boys at Sunda Kelapa Harbor, Jakarta.

Seen here in Bali is a Mosque beside a Hindu Temple. In majority Hindu Bali, where Muslims are in the minority, they still live in peace together.







The main Mosque in Medan, an icon of that city.



tur sarwi sun pedang kalintang-lintang denira cacalatu ing pangucapira. Karana satuhuné Mahasuci sipating Pangeran saking kadi ujarira iku!

(Imâm al-Ghazâlî, the one who was the most in piety, who had been envisioned in the *Lawh Mahfûzh* inside the stomach of his mother, who was destined to formulate the principles and the ways of the Shûfîs inside the stomach of his mother, oh you Shaykh al-Jaddi! (He, al-Ghazâlî) says that you are a disbeliever according to four *madhhabs*, because you



Counting Friday donations in one of the biggest Mosques (al-Markaz al-Islami) in South Sulawesi. This Mosque is known to be one with strong economic stability.

say that it is absurd to maintain that the existence of God the Almighty is from all eternity and nothing in the existence is prior to His existence; you also say that such a God is *mawqûf* (suspended from any discussion) and did not as yet have any will, and He did not create yet; you say that the (giving) the attributes to God is temporary, that is your unbelief! If I had the authority to kill you, I would do it by hanging you upside down and then I cut you with a sword into pieces because of your uncontrolled statement. Surely God' quality is exalted from what you say!). (Widji Saksono, *Mengislamkan Tanah Jawa, Telaah Atas Metode Dak-*



The word ALLAH decorates a door of the Islamic Hospital in Kendal, Central Java.





In this digital era, with the rise in sophisticated technology, is now seen the need to balance students' lives with such facilities. Seen here, are students in a computer lab in their school in Yogyakarta.

*wah Walisongo* [Islamization of Java: an Account on the Religious Propagation Methodology of the Nine Walis], Bandung: Mizan, 1995, p. 196).

On the other hand, al-Ghazâlî as a Shûfî philosopher, along with many other Shûfî philosophers such as Ibn al-'Arabî and al-Hallâj, were the sources of inspiration for the Indonesian classical literati and the driving force for their literary creativeness. One of al-Ghazâlî's books, *Nashîhat al-Mulûk* (Counsel for Kings) found the way into Javanese translation, *Wulang Reh*, one of the most priceless Javanese classical literature. And *Wulang Reh*, as it was intended by its author, has been the



Muslim children playing sport in a modern Islamic boarding school in East Java.



Motif bangunan Istana Maemun,  
di tempat ini para raja tinggal, Medan





▶ A demonstration pro Freedom of Religion and Belief.



manual for Javanese rulers for considerably long time, and it still witnesses its modern printing and publication.

Even more important than the literature on the governing arts is the bunch of Shûfî literature written in vernacular languages. Al-Ghazâlî's masterpiece, *Ihyâ' 'Ulûm al-Dîn* (Revitalization of the Religious Sciences) is among the standard reading materials among the Javanese 'ulamâ' and Shûfîs much from the very early period of the Islamization of the Archipelago. Another great work by al-Ghazâlî, *Minhâj al-Âbidîn* (The Procedure of the Worshippers), has been reworked with extensive and elaborate interpretations and commentaries by a Javanese 'âlim, Kiyahi Ihsân Dahlân, in his great and voluminous book, *Sirâj al-Thâlibîn* (written in Arabic). This is a work by an Indonesian Muslim scholar that



Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia refusing all forms of liberalization, in this case the high rises in fuel prices.





◀ Indonesian Muslims from Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia demonstrating again against the former Government's policies.

has gained international recognition in the Islamic world. The book has been published by a famous Egyptian publisher, Mûsâ al-Bâbî al-Halabî, in Cairo.

To give an idea how such literary works actuate religious life orientation of the Indonesian people, below are some quotations and translations from a book on Shûfism written in Malay using Arabic script (*huruf Jawi*), by al-Shaykh Ismâ'îl ibn 'Abd al-Muththalib al-Âshî (from Aceh in the northern part of Sumatera), *Jam' Jawâmi' al-Mushannafât* (Collection of Written Works), (Singapore and Jeddah: al-Haramayn li al-Thibâ'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzî', n. d.).



Muslim women from Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia demonstrating against the rise in fuel prices.



▶  
A high-ranking court servant from the kingdom of Islam Mataram with the background of portraits of the Sultans of Yogyakarta.



*(Fasal) pada menyatakan zuhud yakni benci akan dunia maka yaitu martabat yang tinggi yang terlebih hampir kepada Haqq Ta'âlâ karena manakala benci akan dunia itu melazimkan gemar akan akhirat dan gemar akhirat itulah perangai yang dikasih Haqq Ta'âlâ seperti sabda Nabi Shallâ Allâh-u 'alayhi wa sallam, "Izhad fî al-dunyâ yuhibbaka 'Llâh-u" tinggalkan olehmu akan dunia niscaya kasih Haqq Ta'âlâ akan dikau dan jangan kau hiraukan barang sesuatu pada tangan manusia niscaya dikasih akan dikau oleh manusia "Izhad fî al-dunyâ adkhala-ka 'Llâh-u hikmata-hû fî qalbi-ka" tinggalkan olehmu akan dunia niscaya dimasuk Allâh Ta'âlâ ke dalam hatimu ilmu hikmah yaitu ilmu hakikat maka*



A constant non-stop flow of pilgrims to the tombs of past religious leaders considered holy. Cirebon.



**KH Sholahuddin Wahid (Gus Sholah),  
cendekiawan Muslim dan salah satu tokoh  
utama dalam Mahdlatul Ulama (NU).**





*ketika nyatalah kau pandang hakikat dunia ini dan nyatalah kau pandang hakikat akhirat itu hingga kau ambil akan yang terlebih baik bagimu dan yang terlebih kekal (p. 111).*

([Chapter] to explain *zuhd* [asceticism], that is, the hate of the worldly life. This is the highest degree that would bring someone nearer the All High Truth (*Haqq Ta'âlâ*). Because if a person hates the world he would by necessity love the hereafter, and if he loves the hereafter God would then love him. The Prophet, peace be upon him, says, "Be ascetic from the world and God will love you," that is, leave the world behind you and God the All High Truth will love you. And do not be interested in other people's belongings and they will love you.



A Muslim sailor from the Island of Madura.



Demonstrations carried out by a Muslim group opposing and demanding the dissolution of the group, Ahmadiyah in Jakarta.





◀ Waving flags on which “la ilaha illallah” in an attempt to uphold the system of Khilafah in Indonesia.

Leave the world behind and God will put into your heart the knowledge of wisdom, that is, the knowledge of reality [gnosticism]. When you are fully aware of the reality of this world and you are also aware of the reality of the hereafter, you would naturally choose the better of the two and the more everlasting).

In his criticism of Clifford Geertz’ assessment of Islam in Java, Marshall Hodgson says, in the quotation from his book made above, that “For one who knows Islam, his comprehensive data—despite his intention—show how very little has survived from the Hindu past even in inner Java and raise the question why the triumph of Islam was so complete.” Along this line of

▶ Muslim students demonstrating against the rise in fuel prices by doing prayer at the west gate of the national monument – Monas, Jakarta.





assessment, another American anthropologist, Robert Hefner, observes and makes conclusion that “in the north coast and Central Java, Islam—albeit a local variety—became the religion of state. The Hindu-Buddhist ecclesiastical communities once dispersed throughout Java’s countryside gradually disappeared.” (Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese Tengger Tradition and Islam*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 266).

If the “triumph of Islam” in Java was so complete, there is then no reason for any attempt to minimize the Javanese’ and Indonesians’ ties with a world-wide Islam, as Hodgson accuses Geertz of showing that colonial tendency. Islam has already been the choice of most



A scene from the play “The Meeting/Conference of Birds” (“Musyawarah Burung”) performed in memory of Jalaluddin Rumi, 800 years ago.



Indonesians, the reality that becomes even more manifest these days so that people begin to talk about the revival or resurgence of Islam in the region.

### Indonesian Islamic Resurgence

The resurgence of Islam in Indonesia, as it seems to be the case also elsewhere in the Islamic World, is the function of modern education that Muslims have begun to share with the modern world in the West toward the end of the last century. In Indonesia the reality is even more convincing because of the historical aspect of education in the region before, during and after the colonial periods. Before colonial time, during the Hindu-Buddhist era, Indonesia maintained an educational institutions very much comparable to those that could be found in the Indic civilizational region on the continental Asia.



Participants here from all backgrounds and religions hold a banner promoting Peace for All.



On Indonesian 62<sup>nd</sup> Independence Day (17 August) students of Yogyakarta invite all to always increase discipline and quality in Education.





- ▲ Former President H Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and Vice-President, H Yusuf Kalla in prayer on the night before Idul Fitri before they both beat the drum and open Prayers (takbiran).



- ▼ After Idul Fitri prayer, asking forgiveness for sins, done intentionally or by mistake.







Three Muslim students in discussion in a Library.

The Indonesian Hindu-Buddhist system was centered around institutions widely known as *padepokan*, which is a close equivalent to the Christian monastery. In the Islamic era that followed, the system was retained and modified so that it met with the need of the *zâwiyah*, *ribâth*, or *khâneqah* of the Islamic world, an institution designated as place of learning around a mosque with boarding facilities for both

teachers and students. The result was the well known *pondok* or *pesantren*, the traditional Indonesian Islamic educational institutions that persist very strongly until the present. One of the earliest *pesantren* was that at Tegalsari, some thirty kilometers south of Madiun. The founder of the *pesantren* was a certain ‘*âlim*, Ki Hasan Bestari from Surakarta sultanate that was given a real estate for the purpose. Among the *santri* (meaning, the student of *pesantren*) was the great Javanese poet and social critic, Burhan Ronggowarsito, so far the most influential Javanese sage whose works are still closely studied and interpreted until today.

The cultural and political significance of *pesantren* is that it has been the institution to function as the bastion to safeguard the Islamic faith from the encroaching alien culture through the colonial government. Thus, as Panders indicates, “during the nineteenth century when the West was beginning to penetrate more deeply into indigenous life, the orthodox Muslims



A Muslim woman respecting prayers of those of other religions.



A pulpit beautifully decorated with calligraphy and gold beads in the Grand Mosque in Surabaya, East Java.







An International HTI Conference in Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta.

began to react more strongly against colonial rule. Muslim teachers preached hate against the *kafir* (unbeliever) colonial government and its European and native servants; and it condemned Western concepts, methods, science, and education as *haram* (heretical). (Op. cit.).

It was not a coincidence then that the Indonesian Muslims were the least educated colonial

subjects in the Dutch colonial social system. It is true that, as Edwin Embree sees it, “between 1860 and 1880, in the surge of liberal movement in Holland, the Dutch in the Netherlands Indies attempted to provide education for all people. This period saw the first real educational system. One type of school was offered for all ranks--rudimentary training in the vernacular, with Dutch taught as a subject.” (Edwin R. Embree, et. al., *Island India Goes to School* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 41). But the Muslims were much less than enthusiastic to participate in the those educational efforts, because in reality it was not liberal at all, as the system was very discriminative against the *santri* Muslims. In fact the Dutch colonial government introduced a racist and exclusivistic policy by stratifying the Dutch Indies’ inhabitants into four classes: the highest being the Whites, followed by the so called “Oriental Aliens” (mainly Chinese but also included the Indians and certain group of the



A small child with the red and white Indonesian flag in an Independence Day procession in Yogyakarta.





A mother always instills religious education into her children at an early age. Jakarta.

Arabs), and then the traditional elite or *priyayi* (a Javanese term) as the third in the ranks. On the basis of the stratification were the folk or common people, in which the *santri* Muslims were embraced.

For each group the Dutch allocated a certain exclusive type of educational system and program. For the Whites it was, at elementary level, ELS (*Europeesche Lagere School*—European Elementary School); for the Chinese it was HCS (*Hollands Chinesche School*—Dutch Chinese School), and for the *priyayi* it was HIS (*Hollands Indlands School*—Dutch Native School). As for the common people of the folk, the bottom of the stratum, was *Volk School* or *Sekolah Rakyat* (Folk School), with three year program of learning at village levels and five year at district levels. “The *desa*, or village school, offered three years of reading, arithmetic, writing, and basic hygiene, taught in local language. Some vocational training was added in 1915, and at that time 2-year courses in agriculture, village teacher training, and skills like woodworking, metalworking, and construction were provided, all taught in local language.” (John W. Henderson, et. al., *Area Handbook for Indonesia*, Washington D.C.: The American University, 1970, pp. 190-191).



Note the expression of an HTI activist at the Conference.





A father and child engrossed in listening to an Idul Fitri lecture. Jakarta.

Among the colonial subjects that were most denied the access to modern education were the *santri* Muslims under the leadership of the '*ulamâ*' centered around *pesantrens*. To counterbalance the colonial educational system the '*ulamâ*' (also known as *kiyahis*) sponsored the establishment of *pesantrens*. Thus even *pesantren* has been there on the Indonesian soil since centuries ago, the system flourished tremendously only at the last turn of the century when the Dutch began to launch their educational program at large scale. The deprivation and alienation of the *santris* and '*ulamâ*' were so earnest that they later became the main source of the popular support for independence struggle. This was very clear in the case of November 10 (1945) affairs when the Allied forces invaded Surabaya and the Indonesians, with most participation from the *santris*, fought back very fiercely. (The affair then to be commemorated as The Day of the Heroes).



A painting showing the hero, Imam Bonjol, spreading Islam in West Sumatra.



The most that the *santris* could take part in modern education during colonial era was to go a folk or village school. But the graduates of these lower level schools did not have any allowance to continue their studies to the higher levels at secondary schools, not to say at university levels. The privilege was enjoyed only by the graduates of the first three types of schools for the whites, the oriental aliens and the priyayis. The whites were obviously limited only to the Dutch, and oriental aliens were mostly Chinese, the reality that explains why they were mostly not much concerned with the native, indigenous, common people's affairs. Many of those who had the chance to pursue their studies further went to higher education available in the country to be medical doctors, lawyers, and engineers, and they were the skilled work force for the colonial government. Those who were not satisfied with their positions grew in the



A Muslim donating in a Donation Box at a Mosque in Jakarta.



Blenduk Church (old Dutch style) in Semarang, Central Java.

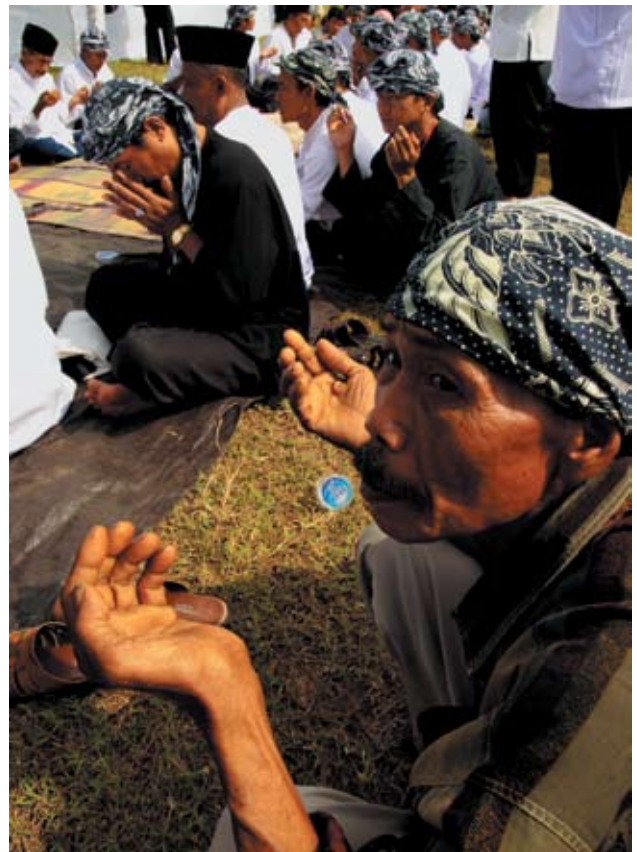




awareness of nationalism and independence aspiration. Their education was then the stimulus for the birth, the growth and the development of the Indonesian modern nationalism.

Experts on education indicate that the unintended consequence of an educational program is quite often much more important and weighty than the original intention itself. The graduates of the Dutch educational systems, particularly among the native Indonesians, soon became the pioneering heroes for the struggle for independence. This was even more noticeable among the educated priyais of the comparatively lower class stratum, like such great freedom fighters as Soekarno, Sartono, Wilopo.

By the beginning of the twentieth century Liberal colonial education policy had created the nucleus of a new

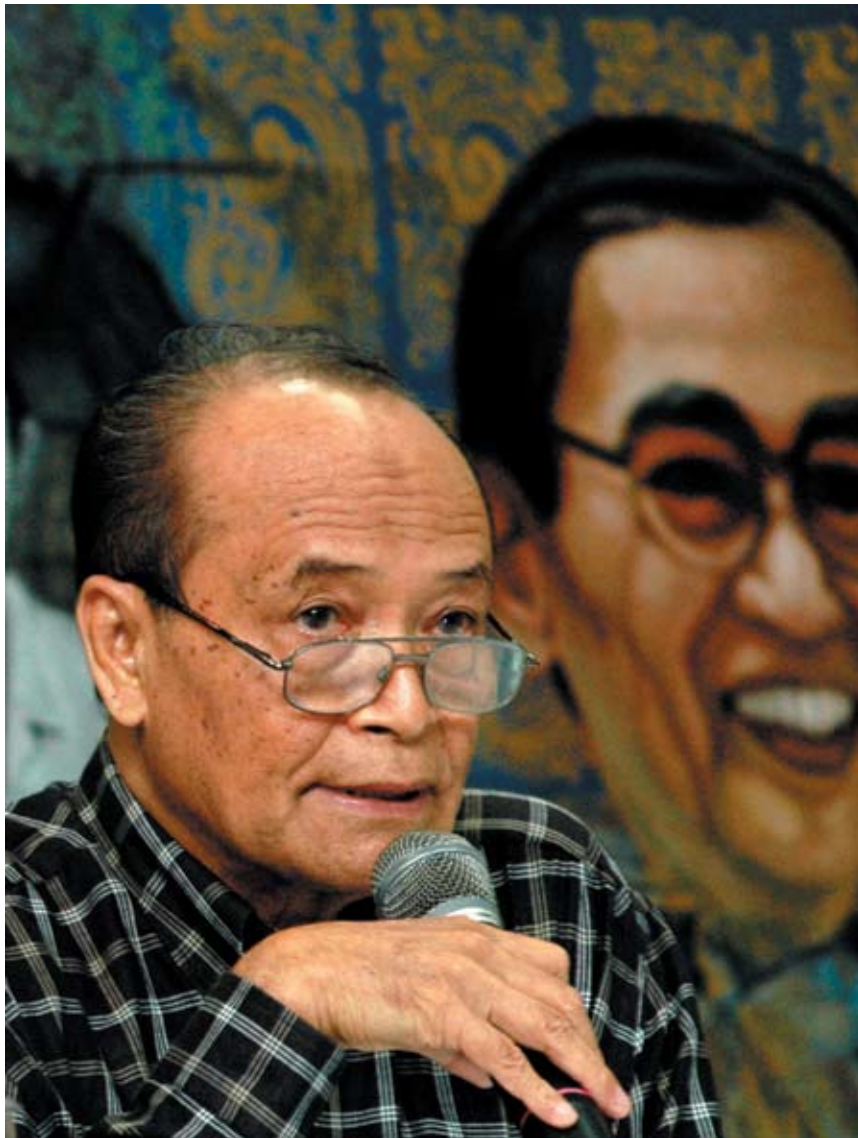


Program for the (??) Earth “seren taun” in Sindang Barang, Bogor.



Boy Scouts education was formerly developed amongst Muhammadiyah students.





Buya Syafii Maarif, ex-chairman of PP Muhammadiyah, in a discussion about Cak Nur in Jakarta.

indigenous elite, consisting mainly of Dutch-trained Indonesian doctors, teachers, and government administrators and clerks. The higher nobility for some considerable time considered these new positions in the colonial service to be far below their social status, and most the sons of the higher priyayi (indigenous administrators usually of noble origin) continued to seek appointment in the far more prestigious--in Javanese eyes, *Inlands Bestuur* (Native Regional Government Service). The majority then of this new elite originated from the lower priyayi and even commoners. . .

The appearance of this new elite caused friction in both indigenous society and colonial society as a whole, because neither the majority of Europeans nor the higher indigenous nobility were prepared to grant indigenous doctors and teachers the socio-economic recognition due the their educational qualifications, which were often far higher than those of European and native officials.



Many of the European “old-timers” in the colonial service as well as most of the Javanese regents considered the new indigenous intelligentsia as a threat to their authority and their privileged position, and as a whole paid only lip service to the ideals of the Ethical Policy, which advocated that Western-educated Indonesians should be “associated” as much as possible with Europeans, not only in cultural terms but also in a social and economic sense. . . Indigenous doctors and teachers received salaries which were far below those of most priyayi administrators., they were snubbed socially., and whenever Indonesians managed to acquire the educational qualifications required for higher positions in the civil service they were put on a side-



M. Amien Rais former Chairman of Parliament.



Young children studying al-Qur'an at a Muslim Kindergarten in Yogyakarta.



track and prevented from taking up a leading function. (Penders, op. cit.).

As for the *santri* Muslims, the fates were not very fortunate. Having been deprived from the modern education, their participation in running the modern Indonesian government was not very impressive. In some periods of the growth and development of modern Indonesian state, the Muslim freedom fighters and politicians were bitterly disqualified, and they were denied the due share in the national politics. This became the root of their disillusionment and disappointment with the Indonesian national politics, and they sponsored many rebellions and separatist movements against the central government. This made them even more alienated from participation in the national affairs, and the bitter feeling spiraled into a seemingly endless chain of cause and effect of disappointment from, and opposition to, the central government.



Rosojemiko, an official at Yogyakarta Palace for the last 10 years. He is an example of a Muslim who is also deeply in the tradition of Javanese beliefs and traditions.



Three Muslim students from a school in Cianjur walking through the rice fields on their way to study Islam in Cianjur, West Java.



The vicious circle began to crack in the early 1970's. The *santri* children who commenced their participation in 1950's (that is, after the nation had secured its independence and started to normalize the national political life), by 1970's were graduated from universities, a radically new phenomenon on the Indonesian social and cultural scenes. And in 1980's—when they had settled their domestic affairs that confined them to the inward looking attitude of life—these *santri* university graduates were the enthusiastic supporters of the struggle for Islam. The new occurrence is highly visible in the country which indicates a genuine reawakening of Islam and Indonesian Muslims. After all, Indonesia is indeed a Muslim nation, and any attempt to overlook the fact would lead to a wrong estimate of the situation. The importance of Islam as religion should not by any mean be underestimated. It is the common platform for Indonesian



Abdurrahman Wahid, more commonly called Gus Dur, was the former President of Indonesia.





A group from Madura chanting songs of The Prophet in a Program in Jakarta.

national culture, and the pavement for the integration of the country. It is also more and more the source for the political legitimacy of the Indonesian system, and is still developing to become the foundation for more positive and proactive forms of participation by all Indonesians. As Harsja Bachtiar, a noted Indonesian sociologist, confirms,

The core of religion is faith, belief. Religion gives the believer meaning to life and provide the means to deal with the problematic nature of man, such as questions pertaining to birth, happiness, suffering, and death. It is therefore only natural that religion is also a source of legitimization for leadership. The faithful will accept the dictates of religion, including the values and norms which give the right to certain individuals to act on behalf of others. Religion is, in fact, one of the most basic sources of legitimization in countries where population are very religiously oriented, and undeniable fact which some individuals unscrupulously and ruthlessly exploit for their own personal gains. I make this last remark not because other sources of legitimization are not exploited in the same manner—far from it: it seems to be one of the hard facts that a great number of individuals establish leadership position for their own selfish reasons by utilizing whatever source of legitimization they access to—but because religion encompasses the highest moral values of society so that the contrast between the ideal good and stark reality becomes very striking. (Harsja W. Bachtiar, “The Function of some Institutional Arrangements in the Formation of the Indonesian Nation,” *Berita Antropologi FSUI*, Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia, 1972, terbitan khusus No. 2, pp. 56-57).



## Conclusion

To conclude the discussion very briefly, it seems only appropriate to attest the magnitude of Indonesia as a nation, a cultural *universum*, and a religious community, and thus its immense complexity. And yet there some salient features about the subject, in this case Indonesian Islam, that are relatively easy to capture for understanding the reality. I have tried to lay open such features, mostly based on expert observations by international scholars, and some of them taken from my own experience, participation and observation. All of them are naturally open for further discussion and elaboration as to its validity or otherwise.

This paper tries to prove that Indonesian Islam is as really Islamic as elsewhere in the world. There are



Conducting prayers at the tomb of a holy man at the Mosque Luar Batang, Jakarta.



Former President Sukarno and Vice-President Hatta.



features which are peculiarly Indonesian, but these never impede Indonesian Islam from being truly Islamic. To underestimate that fact would result in an aberrant assessment leading to a grievously wrong conclusion as Hodgson reminds us.

However, as one of the fastest growing nation in the world, the process of development of Indonesian nation is still undergoing. Just as there has been major change that concerns Islam and the Muslims since two decades that elapsed, another major change is still to come, and in twenty years from now there will be seemingly a new equilibrium in the cultural, political and social structures and processes in Indonesia. Most of the Indonesians' experience with independence for this half a century has been characterized by the inevitable dominance of the educated classes of the colonial era. This social colonial legacy will quite certainly be replaced by the post colonial and independent nurtured educated people, most of them are Muslims, just most Indonesians are Muslims. Now the question is whether or not these educated Muslims and the elite of the society would succeed in their positive and proactive participation in the national affairs, authentically based on the inspiration of Islam, but also under the light of modern aspirations.

*Wa 'l-Lâh-u a'lam.*



Three small children in modern Muslim-Javanese clothes at a carnival celebrating Indonesian Independence Day in Yogyakarta.



Enthusiastic to participate in a nationalist parade in the streets of Yogyakarta.