

Educational practice: lessons to be learned from *madrrasah* and religious schools in contemporary Southeast Asia

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Abstract

This article aims at examining the current portrait of Islamic education in Southeast Asia. Recently, there have been many studies on the role of *madrasahs* or religious schools in Islamic education. As Muslim who studies social-anthropology, I would like to approach this issue by examining socio-cultural of Islamic education in Southeast Asia. Historically, the tradition has been based on Muslim society at grass root level. The word of *madrrasah* in Southeast Asia has long history, which called as *dayah* in Aceh, *surau* in Minangkabau, *pesantren* in Java, *pondok* in Malaysia, and *pho no* in Southern Thailand. The role of *madrrasah*, then has similarities with the tradition of *pesantren*, even in some Muslim countries like Indonesia scholars still can differentiate between *pesantren* and *madrrasah*. In this study, I examine to philosophical dimension and system of knowledge reproduction in Islamic education. Finally, I argue that *pesantren* or religious school is embedded in Muslim culture.

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan keadaan terkini mengenai pendidikan Islam di Asia Tenggara. Sejauh ini, sudah begitu banyak kajian mengenai

madrasah atau pendidikan agama di dalam pendidikan Islam. Sebagai seorang Muslim yang menekuni kajian sosial-antropologi, saya ingin mendekati studi ini dengan memaparkan sosio-kultural pendidikan Islam di Asia Tenggara. Menurut sejarah, tradisi pendidikan tersebut sudah menggejala dalam masyarakat Muslim pada level akar rumput. Istilah madrasah di Asia Tenggara sudah mengalami perkembangan yang amat pesat, di mana kalau di Aceh dikenal dengan istilah *dayah*, di Minangkabau dikenal dengan istilah *surau*, sementara di Jawa digunakan istilah pesantren, di Malaysia memakai istilah pondok, di Thailand Selatan digunakan istilah *pho no*. Peran madrasah, hamper sama dengan tradisi pesantren, kendati di beberapa negara, seperti Indonesia, para sarjana masih membedakan antara pesantren dan madrasah. Dalam kajian ini, dikupas tentang dimensi filosofis dan system reproduksi pengetahuan dalam pendidikan Islam. Akhirnya, saya berargumen bahwa pesantren dan pendidikan agama merupakan bagian yang tidak terpisahkan dalam budaya Muslim.

Keywords: *Islamic education; Pesantren; System of Islamic knowledge; Guardian of society; Reproduction of knowledge*

Introduction

This article aims at examining the current portrait of Islamic education in Southeast Asia.¹ There have been many studies on the role of *madrasahs* or religious schools in Islamic education. As Muslim who studies social-anthropology, I would like to approach this issue by examining socio-cultural of Islamic education in Southeast Asia. Historically, the tradition has been based on Muslim society at grass root level. The word of *madrasah* in Southeast Asia has long history, which called as *dayah* in Aceh, *surau* in Minangkabau, *pesantren* in Java, *pondok* in Malaysia, and *pho no* in Southern Thailand. The role of *madrasah*, then has similarities with the tradi-

¹On mapping of Islamic education in Southeast Asia, see Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad and Patrick Jory (eds) *Islamic Thought in Southeast Asia: New Interpretations and Movements*, 139-142. Kuala Lumpur: UM Press, 2013; Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad dan Patrick Jory (eds), *Islamic Studies and Islamic Education in Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Ilmuwan, 2011.

tion of *pesantren*, even in some Muslim countries like Indonesia scholars still can differentiate between *pesantren* and *madrasah*. It is said that "... if *pesantren* was expected to produce 'ulama', *madrasah* was hope to produce Muslim ...or in the end to produce intelligentsia and even intellectual 'ulama'."² The similarities between *pesantren* and *madrasah* can be understood as below:

In classical Islam the *madrasah* was the institution of learning par excellence, in that it was devoted primarily to the study of Islamic law, queen of the Islamic sciences. The *masjid*, from which it developed continued to be used for teaching of the various Islamic science, including that of law. The *masjid* could be devoted to any one of these sciences, according to the wishes of the founder. The *madrasah*, on other hand, was devoted primarily to law, the other sciences being studied as ancillaries.³ In Southeast Asia, both *pesantren* and *madrasah* have three functions; *first*, as center of transmission of religious knowledge, *second*, as guardian of the Islamic tradition, *third*; as center of 'ulamareproduction.⁴

Trends of Islamic education in Southeast Asia

In this section, I will start by describing the trends of Islamic education in the region by looking at a question "why did some parents send their children to religious school?" I am a product of religious school in Aceh. I entered the *Madrasah 'Ulumul Qur'an* (MUQ) in Langsa, East Aceh. We learned not only religious subjects, but also secular subjects. We were

²Azyumardi Azra, "Pesantren and Madrasah: Modernization of Indonesian Muslim Society," in Toeti Heraty Noerhadi(ed.) *Budaya Bagi Indonesia*, Jakarta: Akademi Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (API), 2012, 25.

³George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and West*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981, 16.

⁴Azyumardi Azra, "Pesantren and Madrasah...", 9; M. Hasbi Amiruddin, *Ulama Dayah: Pengawal Agama Masyarakat Aceh*. Translated by Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad. Lhokseumawe: Nadya Foundation, 2003; Yoginder Sikand, *Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2005.

treated as person in “holy prison.” The regulations in *pesantren* imposed us to be good students. The model of educational system in the *pesantren* was adopted from the *pesantren* of Gontor in East Java. After three years, I continued my study at MAPK, a *madrasah* of senior high school with special program at Banda Aceh. We were a product of a program of Ministry of Religious Affairs during the era of Munawir Sadzajali. The total students for each class were 40 who were selected from entire Aceh and North Sumatra provinces. We were given scholarship by the government (MORA). In this school we studied as normal student in public schools. However, in the afternoons, we were introduced to the world of *pesantren*.⁵ We studied *nahw*, *sharaf*, *fiqh*, *tafsir*, *hadits*, and *balaghah*. We are required to comprehend many *kitab*s like in *pesantren*. Teachers for these subjects were not called as *teungku* or *kyai*, as in *pesantren* or *madrasah*. They were senior lecturers from IAIN (State Institute for Islamic Studies) of Ar-Raniry. We were divided into three groups of student such as “Group A,” “Group B,” and “Group C.” These groups were ranked based on the result of final exam that was held once in every six months.

⁵On *pesantren*, see Azyumardi Azra, *Surau Pendidikan Islam Tradisional Dalam Transisi Dan Modernisasi*. Jakarta: Logos, 2003; Azyumardi Azra, “Pesantren and Madrasah...; Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia*. Bandung: Mizan, 1999; Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, “Pesantren Sebagai Pusat Peradaban Muslim: Pengalaman Indonesia untuk Asia Tenggara.” *Edukasi* 8, no. 2 (2010), 3939-3966; Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*. Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial, 1994; Ronald Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; idem, “Madrasa by Any Other Name: Pondok, Pesantren, and Islamic Schools in Indonesia and Larger Southeast Asian Region.” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 4, no. 1 (2010), 1-21; M. Dawam Rahardjo, “The Kyai, the Pesantren and the Village: A Preliminary Sketch.” In *Reading on Islam in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS, 1985.. On *pondok* in Thailand and Malaysia, see Hasan Madmarn, “History of Islamic Studies in Thailand: Muslim Education Reform in Thailand - The Case of Traditional Muslim Institutions (Pondok) and Its Challenges.” In *Islamic Studies in ASEAN: Presentation of an International Seminar*, 59-67. Pattani: Prince Songkla University, 2000; idem, *The Pondok and Madrasah in Patani*. Bangi: UKM Press, 2002.

After I graduated from this school, I continued to pursue my degree at IAIN (now UIN) of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. Some of my friends were interested in going to Al-Azhar for their Bachelor, while many others were still in Banda Aceh at IAIN of Ar-Raniry. My arrival to Yogyakarta was because I was not able to complete an administrative process of making visa to Egypt. In Yogyakarta, I become acquaintance with many students from Java. Some of them were from *pesantrens* in Java and some other provinces in Indonesia. At this stage, I understood that the one who has studied at *pesantrens* would be called “NU Man” (*Orang Nahdlatul Ulama*). NU is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, after Muhammadiyah.⁶ During my study at Yogyakarta, NU was chaired by former Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid. Many of students lived at the *pesantren* near the campus.

In Yogyakarta, I then knew the impact of *pesantren* to Indonesian politics. My seniors always said that there had been a revival of traditionalist group in Indonesian intellectual. To mention some of names such as Gus Dur, CakNur (Nurcholish Madjid), Djohan Effendy, Emha Ainun Najib, etc. We read and discussed their works. We had a special discussion on impact of *Orang Santrito* Islamic thought. In 1998, when the *Reformasi* occurred in Indonesia, many of great players were from Islamic group.⁷ This era was seen as the revival of traditionalist in which Azyumardi Azra mentioned about the concept of *santrization* in Muslim education, politic, and social movement.⁸ In Azra’s words:

⁶On NU, see Greg Fealy and Greg Barton (eds), *Radikalisme Radikal: Persinggungan Nahdlatul Ulama-Negara*. Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1997.

⁷See Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad. *Sejarah Islam Politik Indonesia: Dari Pra-Kemerdekaan Hingga Era Reformasi*. Banda Aceh: Ar-Raniry Press, 2013.

⁸Azyumardi Azra, “The Rise of Muslim Elite Schools: A New Pattern of “Santrization” in Indonesia.” *AlJamiah* XII, no. 64 (1999), 63-78.

There are several factors with ... have contributed to the recent *santrinization* of Indonesian society. Chief factors ... are growing genuine attachment of Islam as a result of *da'wah*(preaching) activities, improve economic condition, increasing number of Muslim “middle class” and spreading influence of Islamic revivalism at the global level.⁹

As I had witnessed this trend in Yogyakarta,¹⁰ I then started studying how the *santrinization* became a major issue in Indonesia and why religious learning at *madrasah* or *pesantren* influenced the Muslim in Indonesia? I have argued elsewhere that *pesantren* had played important role as a center of civilization in Southeast Asia.¹¹ It can be said that the history of Muslim in Southeast Asia has been history of intellectual networking between ‘ulama and *pesantren*.¹² Thus, my experience in Yogyakarta shows that *pesantren* have dominated Islamic discourse in the country. The term of *santri*¹³ had become a trend among young Muslim generation such as *santri kota* (city *santri*),¹⁴ *santri jalanan* (street *santri*), *santri baru* (new *santri*), *politik santri* (*santri* politic), *mahasiswa santri* (*santri* student), etc.¹⁵

Moreover, after 11 September 2001, I was in Kuala Lumpur to pursue my Master at University of Malaya. I again witnessed there was a new

⁹Azyumardi Azra, “The Rise of Muslim Elite Schools...,” 65.

¹⁰See my reflection in Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, *Islam Historis: Dinamika Studi Islam di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Galang Press, 2002; idem, *Wajah Baru Islam di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: UII Press, 2004.

¹¹Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, “Pesantren Sebagai Pusat Peradaban Muslim: Pengalaman Indonesia untuk Asia Tenggara,” *Edukasi* 8, no. 2 (2010), 3939-3966; idem, *Islam di Asia Tenggara: Suatu Kajian Sosial Sejarah dan Sosial Antropologi*, Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz, 2012, 95-138.

¹²See Azyumardi Azra, “Pesantren and Madrasah: Modernization of Indonesian Muslim Society”..., 87-109.

¹³*Santri* is a student who studies at *pesantren*.

¹⁴Mochamad Sodik, *Gejolak Santri Kota: Aktivistis Muda NU Merambah Jalan Lain*, Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2000.

¹⁵Nur Khalik Ridwan, *Santri Baru: Pemetaan, Wacana Ideologi dan Kritik*, Yogyakarta: Gerigi Pustaka, 2004.

trend of understanding *pondok* or *pesantren* in Southeast Asia. The institution was seen as part of the dissemination of radicalism in Southeast Asia. There have been many studies on the impact of *madrasah* or *pondok* in Southeast Asia to issue of radicalism and terrorism. Some *pondoks* were suspected to have links with al-Qaeda or *Jema'ah Islamiyyah*.¹⁶ In this discourse, this Islamic educational institution had been in negative image, especially among Western experts.¹⁷ This trend has changed the image of religious schools in Southeast Asia. The word of global *jihad* has been understood as an ideology for religious schools as part of Islamic hardliner movement.¹⁸ Many of studies then were done to investigate inside *pesantren* in order to compose the problems of radicalism and terrorism in the region.¹⁹ Finally, governments in Southeast Asia started to have a “close eye” on daily life of religious schools.²⁰

¹⁶ See some reports on *pesantren* in Southeast Asia after 11 September 2011 in ICG. *Annual Report 2003: Review of 2002 Plans for 2003*. Brussel: ICG, 2003.

¹⁷John T. Sidel, “Others School, Other Pilgrimages, Other Dreams: The Making and Unmaking of Jihad in Southeast Asia,” in by J.T. Siegel and A.R. Kahin(eds.) *In Southeast Asia Over Three Generations: Essays Presented to Benedict R. O’G. Anderson*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003; Anthony Bubalo, and Greg Fealy, “Joining the Caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia.” *Lowy Institute Paper* (The Lowy Institute for International Policy) 5 (2005).

¹⁸See Ramakrishna, Kumar. “Delegitimizing Global Jihadi Ideology in Southeast Asia.” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 3 (2005), 343-369.

¹⁹Ronald Lukens-Bull, *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; Noor Huda Ismail, *Temanku, Teroris? Saat Dua Santri Ngruki Menempuh Jalan Berbeda*. Jakarta: Hikmah, 2010; Ibrahim Narongraksakhet, “Pondoks and Their Roles in Preserving Muslim Identity in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand,” in Utai Dulyakasem and Lertchai Sirichai(eds). *Knowledge and Conflict Resolution: The Crisis of the Border Region of Southern Thailand*, Nakhon Si Thammarat: School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University and The Asia Foundation, 2005, 67-128.

²⁰See for example Carmen Abubakar, “Mainstreaming Madrasah Education in the Philippines Issues, Problems and Challenges.” In Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad and Patrick Jory (eds.) *Islamic Studies and Islamic Education in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Ilmuwan, 2011, 75-92; Faisal HajiAwang, “The Pondok System in Thai Government Schools: New Trends in Islamic Education in Thailand’s Southern Border Provinces.” In Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad and Patrick Jory (eds.), *Islamic Thought in*

It is safe to say that religious schools or *madrasahs* in Southeast Asia have faced many dynamics issues, whether from internal or external institutions. They have played important roles since the era of colonial until the post-colonial. They also have strong spirit to respond to many theories from the scholars who tested them through depth field work. At the same time, they should negotiate with interests of government in many aspects such as education, politic, and social religious problems. This situation has led to an argument that *madrasah* has been willing for any “close eye” toward their daily life. I have seen this situation in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. For example, the case of “Ngruki Network” in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, has been accused of involving in variety of terrorist network activities and of membership in a “*Jemaah Islamiyah*” network unheard since the 1970s.²¹ Other situation can be found in *dayah*(Aceh) where they involve in conflict and post-conflict.²²

Philosophical dimension of Islamic education in Southeast Asia

In this section I would like to map out three dimensions of why Islamic religious schools or *madrasah* could stand or respond for any of internal and external problems. The first dimension is the aim of education in *madrasah*. Francis Robinson maintains that “the search for knowledge of

Southeast Asia: New Interpretations and Movements, Kuala Lumpur: UM Press, 2013, 113-124; Asep ZaenalAusop, *Ajaran dan Gerakan NII Kartosoewirjo & Ma'had Al-Zaytun*. Bandung: Tafakkur, 2011; Tim Peneliti INSEP. *Al-Zaytun The Untold Stories: Investigasi Terhadap Pesantren Paling Kontroversial di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Alvabet, 2011.

²¹John T.Sidel, “Others School, Other Pilgrimages, Other Dreams: The Making and Unmaking of Jihad in Southeast Asia.” In J.T. Siegel and A.R. Kahin (eds.) *In Southeast Asia Over Three Generations: Essays Presented to Benedict R. O’G. Anderson*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

²²Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, “Dari Teungku ke Ustaz: Potret Pendidikan Islam di Aceh.” *Kajian Islam* 6, no. 1 (2011), 1-16; Hasbi Amiruddin and Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad. *Ulama, Separatisme, dan Radikalisme di Aceh*. Yogyakarta: Kaukaba dan LSAMA, 2013; Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, “Perpecahan Ulama dan Kekuatan Umat Islam di Aceh.” *Kalam: Jurnal Agama dan Sosial Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (2013): 13-24.

all kinds was the heart of early Muslim civilization.”²³ Moreover, Robinson argues that there are two forms of religious knowledge in Muslim civilization. The knowledge of knowing God is the first ‘ilm in Islamic tradition which is called as spiritual knowledge (*tasawuf*).²⁴ The target of this knowledge is how to connect heart to know Allah. While the second knowledge is how to learn al-Qur’an, the traditions, and the *shari’ah*, and many skills that Muslim might need to make the student socially useful, from Arabic grammar and syntax to logic, philosophy, rhetoric and mathematics. This second form of knowledge is transmitted to new generations of Muslim, by scholars, ‘*ulama*. They pass this knowledge to their students in a *madrasah*.²⁵

Thus, the main aim of *madrasah* is to provide a system of knowledge by which students will know their God. According to Sufi teaching, when Allah created *makhluk* his purpose was that Him to be known by His *makhluk*.²⁶ Thus, the process of transmission of knowledge in Islam is known in Malay as *kenal* which is a core concept in traditional Islam of searching of knowledge. The word *kenal* is similar to word ‘*arafa* (gnosis). This word is used in Malay such as *ma’ruf* (good things), ‘*urf* (custom), and ‘*arif* (wise man). In Islamic studies, the highest process of receiving knowledge is ‘*irfan* (intuitive knowledge).²⁷ Thus, philosophy of Islamic education in Malay world is to reach a depth meaning of word *kenal* in Muslim daily life. It can be transformed into the concept of *kenal diri* (knowing self), *kenal guru* (knowing teacher), *kenal orang tua* (knowing parents), *kenal Tuhan* (knowing God), *kenal ummat* (knowing society), *kenal waktu* (know-

²³Francis Robinson, “Foreword” In *Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2005, xi.

²⁴See also William C. Chittick, *Ibn ‘Arabi: Heir to the Prophets*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2007.

²⁵Francis Robinson, “Foreword” ..., xi-xii.

²⁶Annemari Schimmel, *Dan Muhammad adalah Utusan Allah: Cahaya Purnama Kekasih Tuhan*, Bandung: Mizan, 2012.

²⁷See also Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, *Wahdatul Wujud: Membedah Dunia Kamal*, Banda Aceh: Bandar Publishing, 2013.

ing time), *kenal batas* (knowing limit), etc.²⁸

The process of *kenalh* as meaning *ta'at* (obey), *hormat* (respect), and *kesatuan* (unity). In *madrasah*, the concept of *ta'at* can be transformed into many activities toward God, Rasulullah, teachers, parents, and finally toward rulers. The curriculum will open their mind to understand all of these targets. Even *santri* coming from many different places and backgrounds, will know each other through interaction among themselves and teachers. The subject will teach them how to behave in good conduct. The ultimate target of knowing is to open their *bathin* to know themselves. In the West this process might have been implemented at the university level. The subject will only go to philosophical and theosophical way of thinking for those interested in knowing self awareness or self interpreting animal.²⁹ In contrast, the student in *madrasah* started to learn many of philosophical, theosophical, and theological subjects at the school level. The subject of *mantiq* (logic), *nahw*, *sharaf*, *muhadharah* (art of speech in public), *tarikh tasyri'*, *usul fiqh*, *fiqh* (principle of jurisprudence), *hadith*, *tafsir*, *balaghah*, *ma'ani* (science of meaning) are called as *ilmu alat* (tool for knowledge). *Madrasah* has offered the foundation of knowledge which unlikely to be found in other systems of knowledge. These foundations were "relevant to other field of scientific research."³⁰

As noted above, the process of knowing Allah in *pesantren* or *madrasah* is the process about how to know Allah that is necessary to be known. This is a part of spiritual life in *pesantren*. Students are requested to clean their heart and mind by praying, reciting, and remembering Allah. The

²⁸See the implementation of the concepts in Muhammad Abdurrahman, *Akulturasi Nilai-Nilai Persaudaraan Islam Model Dayah Aceh*, Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Puslitbang Lektur Keagamaan, 2010.

²⁹Charles Taylor, *Sources of The Self: The Making of The Modern Identity*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

³⁰Louay Safi, *The Foundation of Knowledge: A Comparative Study in Islamic and Western Methods of Inquiry*, Petaling Jaya: International Islamic University Malaysia Press, 1996, 36.

set of ritual in *madrasah* is a menu to be a pious man or woman, not only for individual level but also society level. The atmosphere of *pondok* becomes a center of cosmological life for people who are living inside. Some *pesantrens* offer the duration of study more than five years. There is a trend where students need to study from more than one *pondok*. Historically, the relation between students and teachers is tailored by not only intellectual, but also spiritual.³¹ The *tarekat* is one way to seal the spiritual connection between *guru* and *murid*. This is long-life relationship which always gives a serious impact on the contribution of *pesantren* to the development of Sufism in Southeast Asia.³² Shortly, the establishment of Sufi orders in the regions is part of the great contribution of *pondok* in providing the spiritual life for the *murids*.

Meanwhile, the concept of respect (*hormat*) has related with concept of 'adab. In Malay language, the term of *adab* can be transformed to *beradab* (good behavior). And *peradaban* (civilization). The word *civilization* to some extent is also defined with the word *tamaddun* or *hadharah*. The system of seeking knowledge in Islamic education is to make people to be *beradab*. From the person who is *beradab* then the *peradaban* can be achieved. Syed Naquib Al-Attas mentions that: "The fundamental element inherent in the Islamic concept of education is the inculcation of *adab*, for it is *adab* in the all-inclusive sense here meant as encompassing the spiritual and material life of man that instills the quality of goodness that is sought after."³³The most important output from the *pesantren* is not a person, who has very high intelligent capacity, but an individual

³¹Hiroko Horikoshi, *Kyai dan Perubahan Sosial*, Jakarta: P3M, 1987.

³²See for example Martin van Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development of Sufi Orders (Tarekat) in Southeast Asia." *Studia Islamika* 1, no. 1 (1994), 1-23; Oman Fathurahman, *Tarekat Syattariyah di Minangkabau*. Jakarta: Prenada Media Group, Ecole francaise d'Extreme-Orient, PPIM UIN Jakarta, dan KITLV, 2008.

³³Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 1978, 144.

who has instilled the process of *adab* in his or her intellectual and spiritual journey.

Thus, the center of respect for process of *ta'dib* is the teacher who transmits the knowledge. In other words, the *guru* is a center of cosmos for the *murid* in seeking knowledge. In some *pesantrens*, students devote their lives to serve their *guru*. For them, blessing knowledge from the *guru* is more important than sitting in a class room. They will learn many things from *guru* in their daily lives. In contrast, in public school, this process will not appear, as students only spend a few hours at school. It is not surprising when some parents are worried that their children in public schools are smart, but not *beradab*. They take their mirror of life not from their *guru*, but from other aspects outside the school. The process of *ta'dib* is really crucial issue in Muslim education in Southeast Asia. I believe that most of educators should take into account the process of *ta'dib* in *pesantren* or *madrasah*.

The second dimension is the networking among the alumni. Historically, in society, the alumni of *pesantren* played important roles which called as "guardian of society."³⁴ They created the intellectual networking not only with center of Islam in Haramayn, but also in Nusantara archipelago.³⁵ In this context, Aceh, Pattani, Kelantan, Minangkabau, Java, and Sulawesi have produced Islamic scholars from traditional religious schools. I would not repeat their historical contribution in intellectual activities. However, in contemporary era, the network still exists such as the experience of *Dayah al-Aziziyyah* in Aceh, *pesantren* in Java and Madura such as Gontor, al-Zaytun, and Jombang, Krapyak, Sumenep, and *pho no*

³⁴See also Howard M. Federspiel, *Sultans, Shamans, and Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2007.

³⁵See Mona Abaza, "Changing Images of Three Generations of Azharites in Indonesia," in Bryan S. Turner (ed.), *Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, New York: Routledge, 2003, 382-418.

in Southern Thailand. Dayah al-Aziziyah in SamalangaofAceh has more than 200 branches in Southeast Asia. Some of alumni in *pesantren* of Java and Madura have their network not only in socio-intellectual, but also in socio-political life in Indonesia.³⁶

The distribution of alumni is not only in Southeast Asia, but also in some well known universities in West and East. They are pursuing their graduate degrees in some respected universities. This is a new trend where alumni of *pondok* tend to be sent not only to Middle Eastern universities, but also to some Western and Eastern universities. Some of returnees work not as *tok guru* or *tokkadhi*, but in some government and private offices. They have achieved the highest position in their career as *orang pondok*. This trend indicates that the process of *santrinization* is not only in Indonesia, as mentioned above, but also the Southeast Asian region. I have met some professors in Malaysian universities who graduated from Western universities, but have a very strong *pondok* tradition. I have visited the *pondok* of Bantan in Nakhorn Sri Thammarat which is operated by family of Surin Pitsuwan who was the former of Secretary General of ASEAN. I have met some well known activists in Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) who runs the *pesantren* in their home towns. They also create the network such as AMRON (Asian Muslim Research Organization) where Muslim scholars can share their research and interests for further action. The meeting with this group of people has shown how the impact of new generation of *santri* in Southeast Asia. We have concluded this trend by saying that:

The centuries-old tradition of *pesantren* in Java or *pondok* in southern Thailand and the Malay Peninsula has long enjoyed links with Islamic

³⁶Abdul Gaffar Karim, "The Pesantren-based Rulling in Sumenep in the Post New Order Indonesia." *Indonesian Islam* 3, no. 1 (2009), 97-121; Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, "Saints, Politicians and Sufi Bureaucrats: Mysticism and Politics in Indonesia's New Order." In *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, 92-112.

education in Middle East. This educational tradition and the religious networks that it has helped from have been crucial not only in helping to disseminate religious values and teachings to Muslim followers ... but also in contributing to Islam's impact on the political arena. Historically, the spirit of Islam that has come out of the Middle East has provided a means of social mobility for Southeast Asian Muslims, enabling some to reach the pinnacle of power and authority. Today Muslim spiritual leaders, intellectuals, and politicians are attempting to blend this earlier spirit with the more modern political idea of nationalism as well as, more recently, the trend towards democratization, to form a distinctly Southeast Asian Islam.³⁷

The third dimension is level of knowledge that is provided by the *madrasah* for better person. I would argue the level of knowledge is to achieve to process of humanization and perfect man (*manusia paripurna*). This is because the transmission of knowledge in *pesantren* has led to student to have a religious experience that ends 'man as animal' to depart to the process of 'humanization.' This is a person gains the "three aspects" of life and a believer enters the process of *ma'rifah* (gnosis), the unification of man with God and nature (cosmology). The three aspects are *shari'ah*, *thariqah*, and *haqiqah*. It can be said that the intellectual and spiritual processes in *pesantren* is to understand the three aspects which show the way for a person. They have very clear paths to go inside of *dhahir* (exoteric) and *bathin* (esoteric), which is more concerned with the mystical life (Sufi).³⁸ Annemarie Schimmel informs us that "the last sta-

³⁷Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad and Patrick Jory, "Conclusion." In Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad (eds.), *Islamic Thought in Southeast Asia: New Interpretations and Movements*, Kuala Lumpur: UM Press, 2013, 139-142.

³⁸See Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, *From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia: A Study of Jama'ah Tabligh in Sri Petaling (Malaysia) and Cot Goh (Indonesia)*. Ph.D. Thesis, School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Bundoora: La Trobe University, 2010.

tion on the mystical path are love and gnosis, *mahabba* and *ma'rifah*. Sometimes they were considered complementary to each other, sometimes love was regarded as superior, and at other time gnosis was considered higher".³⁹ As Chittick explains, the noun of *ma'rifah*, which is often translated as "gnosis" ... implies direct experience of the thing and recognition of its true nature and actual situation. The "gnostics" are those who achieve this sort of knowledge – direct, unmediated knowledge of self and God. Thus "gnosis," ... means simultaneous self-recognition and God recognition.⁴⁰

What I would like to emphasize is that there are three kinds of epistemology of transmission of knowledge in *pesantren*. The first is knowledge that is comprehended by reading the text which always relates to "yellow books" or "white books." Student will read every single page of the *kitab*s. They understand not only the text, but also the context of the text. This epistemology is seen as epistemology of *bayani*. The second is knowledge that is gained through the process of learning from their macro cosmology in daily life toward the environment and circumstances of students. This method is where the students learn from the empirical knowledge. The teacher will teach them about the process through the *'ilm al-hikmah* (science of wisdom). The third knowledge is reached through the intuitive knowledge which can be said "unmediated knowledge self and God." Some scholars have argued that the process is *'irfani*.⁴¹ Thus, the level of knowledge in *pesantren* is to lead student to process of understanding of *bayani*, *burhani*, and *'irfani*. This method has a very good combination with the process of understanding of *shari'ah*, *thariqat*, and *ma'rifat* in

³⁹Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1975, 130.

⁴⁰William C. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabi...*, 21.

⁴¹Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, *Acehnologi*, Banda Aceh: Bandar Publishing, 2012.

pesantren. As result, the quality of alumni from *madrrasah* is ready for any challenges outside of “holy prison.”

Conclusion

I have examined the portrait of Islamic education in South East Asia from socio-anthropological perspectives. As this tradition has been in the arena at many kind level of society, I still believe that the tradition of *pesantren* will be sustained in South East Asia. One of my conclusions is if there is no *pesantren* or religious school, there will be no more the uniqueness of Islamic tradition in the region. This uniqueness is a practice of cosmological life of Muslim interpretation toward their daily religious life which is based from grass root level. As mentioned above, the “three dimension” of *pesantren* has been played distinctive role in reproduction of knowledge in three aspects: transmission of *‘ilmu*, networking of *‘ulama*, and level of knowledge which lead to the process of *humanization*. I have seen that this educational practice is a recipe for revitalization and re-establishment of Islamic civilization in South East Asia. Islamic civilization has contributed to the people in the region, where some time are contested, negotiated, and confronted. The tradition of *‘ilmu* in religious school has contested with tradition of education from the West. At the same time, the educational practice in *pesantren* has also always negotiated with many interests from non-Islam perspectives, especially from secular oriented system of education. The confrontation has been occurred we realize that output from *pesantren* is like a bullet with very

⁴² Michio Kaku, *Physics of the Future: How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives by the Year 2100*, New York: Anchor Books, 2012; Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy War*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; Graham E. Fuller, *A World Without Islam*, London: Back Bay Books, 2010.

⁴³ Kishore Mahbuni, *The Great Convergence: Asia, The West, and The Logic of One World*, New York: Public Affairs, 2013, 132.

strong of spirit in their soul toward any kinds of situations outside of *pesantren*. Thus, the process of negotiation, contestation, and confrontation are the productive processes for Muslim to re-establish the concept of Islamic civilization in the twentieth first century. We need to contemplate how to create a system of religious knowledge in era of *planetary civilization*.

Some scholars mentioned that Islam as one “main problem” in future.⁴² Kishore Mahbubani, former Singaporean diplomat as ambassador to the UN, says that one of major “global contradiction is between Islam and the West. It may well be the most dangerous.”⁴³ I am sure that people of *pesantren* should take into account how to respond this statement. At the beginning, *pesantren* has produced Islamic scholars from local, national, and international, which create the system of *ummah*. In future Muslim traditions, would be seen as threat from and in system of world order in process of “*global mind*” and “*one world*.” I would bring this issue to our concern and contemplation in order to prepare ourselves how to play in the arena of *planetary civilization*. Again, some scholars have indicated that potential of main problem in world order can be found from the Muslim culture. And, as we have seen *pesantren* or religious school is embedded in Muslim culture. Thus, we need to keep our tradition and culture sustain for the future, beside it is necessary to think how to train our students in religious school into the arena of *planetary civilization*.

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