

THE CULTURE OF RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATION ACTS BY FOREIGN ORIGIN MOSLEM TRAVELERS AND TRADERS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: This article discusses the history of Arabic and Chinese arrival that contributed to Islam and the integration of religiosity and nationalism in their new place. It is aimed at knowing their contribution seen from the process of cultural development, including character and habit, which had been founded long time ago based on ideas and spirits and was built in unique spatial setting by characterized figures.. Arabic and Chinese people, who were famous of traveling, exploring the world, and trading, arrived in Indonesian archipelago some centuries ago. They lived in the archipelago and, through natural processes, decided to settle and build their civil society and civilization.

Keywords: culture, religiosity, education, explorer, trader, moslem, origin, foreign.

Abstrak: Tulisan ini mencatat sejarah kedatangan Arab dan Cina, yang kemudian menampilkan aksi-aksi nyata atau sumbangsih-sumbangsih mereka dalam bidang-bidang keislaman dan integrasi dari spirit religiusitas dan nasionalisme di tanah yang baru. Tujuannya untuk melihat sumbangsih dari perspektif proses pembangunan kultur yang telah diletakkan pondasinya sejak lama, berasaskan pada ide-ide atau pemikiran-pemikiran dan spirit serta dibangun di *spatial setting* yang unik dan oleh figur-figur yang berkarakter. Orang-orang dari bangsa-bangsa Arab dan Cina yang telah terkenal dengan kegiatan penjelajahan dunia atau dalam rangka berniaga, telah pula sampai ke kepulauan Indonesia pada berabad-abad tahun silam. Mereka kemudian tinggal, dan akhirnya melalui proses yang natural, kemudian memutuskan tempat ini sebagai tempat berlabuh terakhir mereka, hingga kemudian konstruksi layaknya sebuah masyarakat madani dan peradabannya mereka bangun.

Kata Kunci: budaya, keagamaan, pendidikan, penjelajah, pedagang, muslim, asal, asing.

A. INTRODUCTION

Religion has been discussed since decades as a holy institution which also can take its importance position in culture and civilization construction. And Indonesia was and always be a spatial (space, place) setting of ethics, moral values and beliefs, has been an arrival point of great religions and nations. Arabs as the origin place of Islam and it is mixed with their historical experience for being travelers and traders (al-Qur'an, 106: 1-2), also have expanded their record to South East Asia region which in Indonesia archipelagoes were one of first reached geographical lands compared with other countries there.

In addition, Islam is a universe religion, means owned not only by or for Arab people. Since decades also, Islam in Indonesia has spread in all its islands and regions and embraced by most of tribes and ethnics here. Perhaps it's not strange that Islam in Indonesia is embraced by local ethnics as Javanese, Sundanese or Betawians, but it was gotten many glimpse of uniqueness if it is embraced by Chinese community in Indonesia, especially since long time ago that they mostly embraced other religions or beliefs such as Christian, Buddha or Konghuchu.

Furthermore, the idea of culture acts is not as simple as we can imagine related to Chinese community here in Indonesia. It's for some reasons as mentioned before that they are minority here and since long time ago they already have embraced other religions and beliefs than Islam. Chinese Moslem people here in Indonesia face many obstacles and problems. Even for themself to "join" in Islam, it is also difficult to bring also their families to come to and embrace Islam, for example for a Chinese Moslem's father who his sons and daughters, and perhaps his wife, still in their own religions or beliefs that it is different than Islam.

For some cases, this essay will take Arabs in Indonesia in general and Chinese Moslem in Purbalingga as nearest, newest and live portrait of their religious roles played in their society and community. Religious here exceeded a normative term as the relationship between human and God, but more than that includes humanities, education, social and communal services. Other previous works surely have shown their interest on those, for example can mentioned one of them, Uka Tjandrasmita (2000), looked view on assimilation between local people and new comers whom are Chinese Moslems, like

in mosque architectural arts as cultural assimilation between them. Here, this essay is trying to have others point of views regarding the theme of.

So this essay has some important questions that they are how Arabs and Chinese Moslems have come to Indonesia, how Islam has arrived to Chinese people community in Purbalingga and what are Arabs origin in Indonesia generally and Chinese origin Moslems in Purbalingga do their religious and education acts or roles in their country here, generally, in Indonesia for Arab origins or specified in their community in Purbalingga for Chinese origin Moslems.

In other words, this essay purposes to remind us about Arabs coming to Indonesian archipelagoes, gives more portrait and description and it is showing us the history of Islam coming in Chinese people community in Purbalingga's area and after that will give us some information about communal role played and still by Arabs and Chinese origin Moslems in the big frame of culture acts which perhaps they can be recognized and highlighted as some of Moslem travelers' and traders' cultures and personalities.

B. THEORIES BEYOND THE CULTURE, EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS ACT, AND TRAVELING AND TRADING

In the same time, themes on culture will be committed and approved as interesting issues along the times. It is for a main reason that culture is a big part of human civilization, and was intended or not, all of our actions are going to recorded as history and recognized as culture which from lexical point of view, Oxford dictionary has included customs, ideas, etc. of a particular society or group of people to the term of culture (Worn, 1999: 184).

Koentjaraningrat (1985: 5) has explained more about the term that culture has 3 forms, the *first* is ideal form, which means culture form as it is defined in lexical term and also includes opinion, values, ethics, law, etc. *The second* is behavioral or action form. It puts the culture form in the term of whole systematic behavior of human in his or her society. And the *last one* is the concrete form, in which viewed the culture form in the real and sensed things like art, heritage, statue, sculpture, etc.

Furthermore, the word of "custom" emphasized a strong discourse and laid the term of culture in the frame of the characterization process of ideas, acts and also art or sensed things creation. Yes, we are already talking strongly the significance of time aspect in culture forming or constructing. Definitely culture is not a light and an instant product of time or also produced by little or small

people in small place. However a singular person may form a culture, but perhaps a greater culture might be easier to be created by more people.

And we may like to give more explanation relates to the spatial factor as long as wider spread of culture, the more effects and influence might be held in the context of human civilization achievements. Of course, that thing cannot cancel the concentrated culture which may appeared and occurred in small area of place and with low population.

Education itself in all of it forms, formally, non-formally and informally, known since long time ago for roles of constructing, empowering and coloring the societies and civilized the humanity. The forms also indicated participation can be played by all people regardless to the ethnics, religion and groups, and after that, strongly it is grateful information we can hear until now. But also education needs funds, educated human resources, facilities, political support and other things to make education full of fun.

Furthermore, education has continuous or eternity side as long this life is still going on, makes education has important role through histories of human being and until the end of this world, or perhaps the end of education world is one of signs of the end of this world. It depends on human or society participation on keeping all human being educated and civilized. It is also applied on education role related to keep human society in maintaining and reaching its goals and missions for nation's welfare and prosperity. All of society members, educated or not, poor or rich, from city or village, man or woman, can play their roles here.

Islamic religious act regarded, it is a famous term for all actions vertically, in which the relationship between the created and the Creator, verbally by word or words, intentionally by heart and proved by real actions,¹ and also the relationship between a human and him or herself, and then also between a human and others in the context of applying Islamic (*syari'ah*) values in all dimensions of humanities, social, economics, law, etc. This wide range of definition is a benefit and an advantage for an Islam embracer to actualize and maximize all of his or her soul toward what has been known as for Allah's sake (*lillahi ta'ala*) to internalize the teachings and values, and also be a useful person for him or herself and the society. In another side, it is a challenge for him or her to avoid the missing of chances in achieving many good things.

If Islamization of knowledge can be written as values revolution in science, technology and knowledge field, the religious act is more relates with the

¹ It is also well known as the definition of *al-īmān* or faithness.

implementation of Islamic values itself in community service in all of its levels from local to global as a good embracer of the religion and as a good member of society.

In contrast with, some people especially in the contemporary world may consider both of traveling and trading activities fulfilled and have trends toward materialism life and dive in. Some may also assume and claim fun is main purpose of both activities. More correct about traveling, history has proved more historical achievements were written through. New world discovery and natural resources exploration are some of those proofs, although again especially in this time traveling more be recognized as pleasure and sport activities, and some is more serious that it is for business purposes. Back to history as was glimpsed in introduction section of this essay, Arabians known as their traveling activity for trading. Also after Islam has come, traveling also used for trading and religious callings in opening new regions. After that, some Moslem scientists also use traveling as their expedition activity in exploring new knowledge. Maybe can be mentioned here, Ibn Battuta was one of Moslem scientific travelers.

And may we take a look again too that trading is regular and normal activity can be practiced by everyone and everywhere, in his or her place or other places. It is a normal activity in means human beings fulfill their needs of goods and services by producing, selling or in the contrast they buy some products and resell them. It is a clean activity which Islam has allowed trading as one of human interactions in this life. Prophet Mohammed Peace Be upon Him, his wife Khadija and many of his friends and followers also involved in trading activity and others transactions as lending, hiring, etc. Furthermore, human being can do traveling and trading and in the same time practicing religious and education acts since Prophet Mohammed Peace Be upon Him time, caliphates' period and perhaps until this day and tomorrow.

C. RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATION ACTS BY ARAB AND CHINESE ORIGIN MOSLEM TRAVELERS AND TRADERS IN INDONESIA

Indonesian archipelagoes attracted foreign travelers to land their ships in this wonderful place. Some of them are travelers and traders who have come from Arab and China. Saba Arabian tribe in South Arab Sub-continent was famous for their historical acts in traveling and trading. Since last quarter century Before Christ, they had excellence knowledge and experience in weather, climatology, sailing routes and navigation and, of course, the trading

competition in the region (Hitti, 2002: 61-62). That fact showed Arabian capability in treating harsh and difficult situation that time of drying or high temperature and water lack.

After that, since 7th CE or same as 1st in Islamic centuries' system, Indonesian archipelagoes hospitalized the coming of Arabian Moslem travelers who in the same time were traders, also in same time of India and Persia traders' coming (Yatim, 2006: 191). Means previous cultures and religion have occurred before. The chance and challenges in the same time for them to behave in such situation especially in educating, teaching and spreading Islamic values. Meanwhile Islam also urges daily performance in human interactions as rule and conduct in every fields of life in which they should be on, one of things they have succeeded in.

In addition, education and religious acts are more previous and developed as sailing and trading progressed. Yatim (2006: 299-302) then said, the sea coasts were the place of the Islamic kingdoms' capitals built in the beginning or medieval of 13 CE. There were also the places of Moslem communities grew up. Yatim added, those capitals also place of Moslem scholars and callers to gather in. We may also found names like Nuṣ al-Dīn al-Raniri and others. Al-Raniri>Raniri himself has Hadramaut Quraishi Arabian blood.

And in modern times, Arabian origin here in Indonesia established many big Islamic social and religious organizations which participate in both of formal religious and general education, social, art and culture development. Those institutions can be found in most cities and towns in Indonesia. They conduct formal education from the lowest level, elementary, preparatory, secondary school and higher educations. They also showed their deep seriousness by managing those to become qualified institutions. Many of them are considered in best classification. Although many Arabian here also involved in other fields such as politics and governmental works, many of them also still showed deep interest in business and commerce.

From west of Indonesian archipelagoes, now we can move views on the east of us. China perhaps led trading adventure toward. All of us might already have heard about Cheng Hoo's world expedition. Known as a great sailor and Indonesian archipelagoes some of geographical land he has passed by. Some of cities and towns included previous Jakarta (Batavia), Semarang, Pasuruan and Surabaya witnessed his trips and activities. Hoo has built some mosques and small praying places as Moslem worship space (Supardjo, 2011b: 10). We can say also that Hoo has drawn starting point in maintaining China origin's

participation in every cities or towns in Indonesia and probably also in other places in the world. Surely also Hoo achievements did not limit in mosques build, more than that in social, educational and cultural dimensions.

Previous Banyumas residence areas also saw Hoo's achievement in introducing Islam as openly and universal religion to China origin/ Tionghoa. Especially in Bobotsari, Purbalingga, K.H. Tan Shien Bie who lived in 1700's and passed away in 1806 was an example for Tionghoa community. Bie served his community by establish and manage an Islamic boarding school. In later century, Herry Susetyo or Thio Hwa Kong as his Chinese name is the next Tan Shien Bie. Herry Hwa Kong, his daily nickname, embraced Islam in 1982 in 32 years old of his age. He has known about the religion since long time ago before his embracement, has wished and has dreamed strongly about. Hwa Kong works as trader for his daily profession.

In community level, Chinese origin Moslems who mostly are new Moslems there have gathered in a social and religious organization called Pembina Iman Tauhid Islam or Supervisor of Faith, Monotheism and Islam, and it is abbreviated with PITI. The organization previously called Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia or Unity of Indonesian Tionghoan Moslem. In Purbalingga it was organized since 9th of March, 2003, and in Indonesian itself was formed in 1953. The organization idea is to realize the wholly and completely dimensions of the Islamic teaching's blessing for the universe.

Furthermore, in its journey, the organization is trying in bringing some missions which are important to be viewed here. The missions are:

- (1) "the implementation of Islamic calling principle of commanding the good and prohibiting the bad in the context of improving the understanding and the implementation of Islamic teaching quality in the frame of national life;
- (2) conducting education, teaching and cultural development which is on the track with Islamic teaching to supervise Moslem human beings who are characterized with fear, good behavior, good skill and wide knowledge;
- (3) to construct cooperation with others social organization in improving social welfare in the frame of realizing the Islamic brotherhood" (Supardjo, 2011a: 2).

Although it was bring name of Tionghoa origin, the organization opens itself to all for its exclusively organization as have been said by PITI Purbalingga's Secretary Mr. H. Untung Supardjo, BA in special interview conducted in 16th of March, 2016 in his house. In 2003, there was 90 members of this organization and has increased around 150 members in 2011. Mr. Supardjo

added that the organization is not involving also in political life in the country. Perhaps those characteristics can bring themselves and move more freely and will take the focus on others things than political or ethnical terms. Mr. Supardjo also said that for PITI Purbalingga forming there was also big effort of Mr. Gunawan Santosa Hadiningrat from Purwokerto, also a success businessman there.

In realizing the mission of Islamic calling, one main thing which it was achieved is by establishing a mosque as religious center. The mosque started to be built in March of 2005. It has passed many difficulties and obstacles, also in its financing aspect. Finally they can be solved and officially opened in July 5th, 2011. It is a big mosque with local, Arab and Chinese ornaments architecture. Regular daily five times praying in congregation is held in this mosque, also the Friday praying. And toward conducting a live mosque, the mosque council also organizes most of Islamic occasional events such as Islamic New Year, Isra Mi'raj and others Islamic events. Taraweh praying in Ramadan also held in in this Mohammed Cheng Hoo Grand Mosque which is located in Selaganggeng, Mrebet, Purbalingga or in Purbalingga-Bobotsari highway road. For its location, the mosque serves the travelers from the cities and the towns around it, beside to be place of worship for people live around or nearby. The views in that route of trip became more wonderful too.

After that, there are also established a formal and non-formal education. The formal one is a pre-school or earlier education and consists of play group and kindergarden/*al-rawd \hbar* , whereas al-Qur'an learning center represents the non-formal one. The institutions were started in 2014. For this academic year of 2015-2016, around 20 learners are studying there under the teaching of 4 teachers. All those institutions take the location in the mosque's complex. Regarded to the informal education, perhaps the activity of daily congregation praying is an indirect form of it when Islamic personality and character building are tried to be reached by, in same time also the organizing of Islamic occasional events which held by the board council of the mosque.

D. THE CULTURE OF RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATION ACTS BY FOREIGN ORIGIN MOSLEM TRAVELERS AND TRADERS IN INDONESIA

Most of everything has meaning in the context that can be analyzed. Both of Arab origin in Indonesia and Moslem Chinese origin especially in Purbalingga has showed us many things. If the theories of culture have emphasized

the time aspect in determining things to be claimed as culture, both of two subject samples here have proved that. Since centuries they have did many for their local society. Their religious acts means and reflected many Islamic values we can mention here: (1) doing useful things for many. It was the implementation of “best person is who most useful for human beings” (*Hādīts*). Providing mosque as worship place for travelers who passed the road, providing religious center for people live around to gather in, and especially also for Mosque of Mohammed Cheng Hoo in Purbalingga to be a meeting place for Moslems Chinese origin there.

Then, the next religious act is, (2) the culture of balances. Foreign origin travelers and travelers showed the feeling of the need to balance in this life such as between world life and the day after life. And in more details like the balance of materialism and spiritualism life, individual and social spirit, take and give, and other balances of good things. In many Islamic texts the teaching and value can be found. “Do for your world [life] as you will live forever, and do for your day after [life] as you will die tomorrow” (*Hādīts*); (3) the need to involve in. Being foreign origin is not an obstacle for them to pull themselves and not participate in their new society and nation. The concept of “giving greeting between Moslems” (*Hādīts*), is a simple example to all Moslems to unity and involve with others in order to build a strong and healthy social and national construction.

After that, the idea to gather in a religious and social organization perhaps came from, (4) the concept of group or congregation. For example in the context of PITI; being little Chinese origins who embrace Islam comparing to other religions such as Christian, Budha or Konghuchu may be give them spirit to be together. They are gathering in learning new religion together, practicing the teachings together, taking the chances to participate in society together, and facing the challenges in their new faith and belief together also. Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1997: 175) said that for people, grouping is good thing and sometimes better decisions can be made by them. They as experts have said also that creativity can be improved through gathering.

The act toward themselves and others is the religious act of, (5) calling and commanding (*al-Qur’ān*, 3: 104). For themselves, the presence and the survival of such as social and religious group and the concrete thing like mosque and Islamic center functions as tool and device to internally being stronger in faith and fear, or more than that might be calling for non-Moslems to become. For Chinese origin Moslems who are in their small amount, those things also always

give them motivation that they are part of Moslems brotherhood when they see to a wonderful mosque building which is mainly built from someone's idea from their community and also the physical outlook derived mostly from their origin art and culture.

In addition, the education act can be considered too as the real actions of religious teachings. And furthermore, education was trusted since old ages/ periods and gave the human being history proofs because it glimpsed civilization with norm, skill, science and knowledge in all of forms. The educational system which has been known since early history of Islam (Yatim, 2006: 54), was applied by Arab travelers and traders to everywhere in the world they arrived, reached, stayed and then live in to the rest of life. The education institutions have been built by them included whole competencies which the country has been needed. The play group, kinder garden and *al-Qur'aan* learning center is education media for transferring and forming cognitive, affective and skill competencies.

Many Arabs origin here in Indonesia had built education institution from early education to higher. When national education system aim is improving it people intellectually, the foreign origin samples have showed their participation. And all individual or groups participation in education process should be appreciated. The initiated participation in education by foreign origin should be put also in frame of social environment care and attention. They also behaved as true Indonesians who have made five pillars of Pancasila as their soul and philosophy of being careful persons. As known that the real mission of education is characterizing human being toward the wished goals (Daulay, 2004: 3), the education goals are not easy enough to be reached, and those people answered the challenge to be part of national education big program. And one of those caring and attention is providing children education such as early education and *al-Qur'aan* learning center which are also preparing behavior and personality foundations.

Furthermore, it is the same like what Chinese origin Moslems in Indonesia or Purbalingga as an example have did here. And the presence of education institutions nearby the mosque, the organizer did monitoring, preventing and guiding functions in the context of religious education (Eggen and Kauchak, 1997: 390). Perhaps they are fewer in amount and might be something that is not many because it is predicted that most Chinese origin here in Indonesia are embracing other religions or belief than Islam. After that, although originally is foreign, but Arabs and Chinese origin Moslems when they have arrived here

perform as person, and person melts in group or society and belongs into (Hijazi, Ghabash and Faraghi, 1999: 63).

E. CONCLUSION

Many foreign origin cultures have come to Indonesian archipelagoes. Since centuries ago, they, Arabs and Chinese origin Moslems as samples, have given this country many contributions in religious and education acts. Those great efforts can be considered as the cultures that have been done by foreign origin travelers and traders who finally stay and live here in this country because it has been occurred since long time ago and has been found in wide area like Indonesia and the importance thing that has given strong influences and good effect toward moral, spiritual and educational development. Although surely that they are finding and facing difficulties and obstacles but in the same time those things are chances and challenges for them and for us together in strengthening our social construction. For them, being far away from their origin homelands did not make them always feel to not give something to this place. In the same time, local people have succeeded in hospitalizing and served them to not consider themselves like outsiders but more than that have welcomed them to be our part. To conclude, all of these supports to each other of us are true implementation of Islamic teachings and cultures.

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