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ISLAM, THE STATE AND THE FORMATION OF TRADITIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Taufik Abdullah

I

On 13 February 1755 the Treaty of Gianti was signed. A major war of succession in the later Mataram kingdom was thus ended. The successor to the great empire of Majapahit, (which reached the zenith of its power in the 14th century), the Sultanate of Mataram was divided between the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta. With this treaty Mataram, the one-time inland principality that had grown into one of the mightiest powers in Southeast Asia under its greatest ruler, Sultan Agung (1613-46) could no longer claim to be exercise political control of Java. The Dutch trading company, the VOC, with its growing military and maritime power had apparently failed to rescue the central *kraton*, the court of Mataram, from the assault of the rebellious Prince Mangkubumi.¹ The division not only meant the end of the integrity of the Mataram state, but also heralded the deepening penetration of Dutch influence in the new *kraton* of Surakarta. In cultural terms, these events have been understood in many ways; perhaps we may briefly mention here the Javanese court poets and their treatment of the *palihan nagari* (division of the kingdom), a theme developed in connection with their sense of Java's cultural unity and continuity.

Although Mataram had ceased to be a unified kingdom, its dynasty, founded by Senapati, a local warrior of lowly origin, continued to rule in the courts or *kraton* that succeeded it.² A different situation is observed in the case of the Johor-Riau empire, the successor to Melaka. The murder of the childless Sultan Maḥmūd Shāh (d. 1699) dramatically ended the unbroken succession of the Palembang-Melaka-Johor dynasty,³ which began, as the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals) would have it, when Sri Tri Buana, allegedly the direct descendant of Alexander the Great, sealed a covenant with Damang Lebar Daun.⁴ Three centuries of illustrious dynastic tradition came to a tragic end through the actions of a

¹ See M. C. Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749-1792: A History of the Division of Java*, London Oriental Series, 30 (Oxford University Press, 1974).

² On Senapati, see H. J. de Graaf, *De regering van Panembahan Senapati Ingalaga*, VKI, 13 (1954).

³ B. W. Andaya and L. Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (New York, St Martin's Press, 1982), pp. 74-5.

⁴ C. C. Brown, 'Sejarah Melayu or "Malay Annals"', *JMBRAS*, 25: 2, 3 (1952).

frustrated nobleman whose wife, so tradition tells us, had been put to death by the sultan.

The Straits of Melaka entered a new phase of its history. Without a single ruler whose legitimacy was commonly recognized, Johor became subject to political and military contests. Throughout the 18th century Johor became the arena of a triangular conflict between the Malays, who occupied the legitimate throne, the Buginese; who, as the *Yang Dipertuan Muda* (Viceroy), exercised real power, and the Minangkabau, who, under the leadership of Raja Kecil and his descendants, claimed to be the legitimate heirs of the crown.⁵ Johor, not unlike Mataram in its dominant period, remained for a while, as the *Tuhfat al-nafis* describes so well, the centre of trade, commerce and cultural and religious activities.⁶ This promising state of affairs was cut short with the death of Raja Haji in 1784; the greatest *Yang Dipertuan Muda* of Johor – ‘holding a *badik* in one hand and the book *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* in the other’⁷ – in his attempt to capture Melaka from the VOC. The Straits of Melaka and its surrounding area, ‘the Mediterranean’ of Southeast Asia, became the arena of competition between two major colonial powers, the Dutch and the British.

Despite the continuing struggle of the Sultanates of Sulu, Maguindanao and Maranao against the southward movement of the Spanish,⁸ by the end of the 18th century most of Muslim states in Southeast Asia were facing political crisis. The glory of 15th-century Melaka had already become part of Malay historical consciousness, but its political influence was felt mostly in terms of dynastic claims for legitimacy and court ceremonies and rituals. Once-respected Pasai, the earliest known Muslim kingdom and acknowledged centre of religion, had long been under the control of Aceh Darussalam, whose own control in the Melaka Straits area had also been latterly curtailed. The history of the dynamic coastal principalities of northern Java, where the *walis* (Javanese saints), the rulers and the traders shared a common *pasisir* (coastal) culture, was another element of the area’s political culture, but its significance in political reality was tempered by the deeper penetration of colonial economic and political power and the attachment of the court poets to the notion of Javanese cultural continuity. Gone

⁵ Andaya and Andaya, *History*, pp. 76-98. On Raja Kecil, see, L. Y. Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor 1641-1728*, East Asian Historical Monographs (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1975).

⁶ Raja Ali al-Haji Riau, *Tuhfat al-Nafis, Sejarah Melayu dan Bugis* [Romanized version] (Singapore, Malaysia Printers, 1965), pp. 187-9. See also V. Matheson and B. W. Andaya (ed. and trans.), *The Precious Gift*, East Asian Historical Monographs (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press), 1981.

⁷ *Tuhfat al-nafis*, p. 206.

⁸ See Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 2nd edn (Quezon City, University of the Philippines Press, 1973).

was the time when small principalities competed amongst each other to gain political hegemony; gone also was the period in which segmental political units found themselves under a common political centre, established by Muslim 'state-builders'. These two important historical phenomena belonged to the 15th and 16th centuries, an era when competing centres of power engaged in continually shifting alliances and in unstable overlord-vassal relations. By the end of the 18th century, these political dynamics belonged firmly to memory.⁹ Sultan Iskandar Muda of Aceh, Sultan Agung Tirtayasa of Banten, Sultan Bāb Allāh of Ternate, Sultan Quadarat of Maguindanao and others glorified in tradition, were all figures from the 17th century. Perhaps Mangkubumi who, as the first Sultan of Yogyakarta known as Hamengkubuwono I; Mas Said, the head of the Mangkunegara House (both deriving their legitimacy from Sultan Agung); Raja Haji and Sultan Iskandar of Perak, the hero of *Misa Melayu*, and Sultan 'Alīm al-Dīn I of Sulu, (revered bearer of the title *amīr al-mu'minīn*) are the only important 18th-century political figures similarly immortalized in the collective memory of their peoples. This time of political crisis, however, was by no means a period of social and cultural inertia. In many ways, the 18th century can be considered a period of rapid cultural change.

The history of Islamic states in Southeast Asia coincided with the direct involvement of the region in the long distance trade.¹⁰ The emergence of Islamized political centres – mostly along the trade routes – took place when maritime trading centres began to exert an influence on their surroundings. From the beginning these new centres of power drew the major part of their revenue from trade rather than from agriculture. Van Leur may have ignored the spiritual dimensions of the conversion process, an aspect strongly emphasized by Johns,¹¹ when the former concluded that the spread of Islam was due to the political considerations of commercially-oriented local rulers.¹² But trade and Islam were two historical phenomena that could hardly be separated at the early stage of the Islamization process. If the histories of Melaka, Pasai, Aceh, Demak and Banten, or even Bintan, are taken as examples, we can see how either one of these two elements could promote the position of a certain centre of power in relation to the

⁹ See, for example, M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian trade and European influence in the Indonesian archipelago between 1500 and about 1630* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1962).

¹⁰ Ibid.; see also B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies: Selected Writings of B. Schrieke*. Selected Studies on Indonesia by Dutch Scholars, 2 (The Hague and Bandung, W. van Hoeve, 1955).

¹¹ A. H. Johns, 'Sufism as a category in Indonesian literature and history', *JSEAH*, 2: 2 (1961), pp. 10-23; and his 'Muslims, Mystics and Historical Writing' in D. Hall (ed.), *Historians of South-East Asia*, Historical Writings on the Peoples of Asia, 2 (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 37-49.

¹² J. C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society*, Selected Studies on Indonesia by Dutch Scholars, 1 (The Hague and Bandung, W. van Hoeve, 1955), pp. 113-16.

other centres in this region. This general historical trend was only disturbed by the advance of the agrarian-based Mataram to the centres of trade and religion on the coast.

In the manner of the kings of Pasai, Aceh or Melaka, the great conqueror of Mataram. Sultan Agung, also surrounded himself with religious scholars. After changing his title, from *panembahan* to *susuhunan*, a title that had hitherto been only used with reference to a deceased *wali*, he finally succeeded, in 1641, to get official recognition of his position as sultan from authorities in Mecca. He styled himself Sultan ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad Mawlānā Matarani.¹³ Again, not unlike Sultan Iskandar Muda, who was glorified by Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī in his *Bustān al-salāḥīn* as the defender of Islam and the great builder of mosques,¹⁴ Sultan Agung was also praised by *babad* and by one of his most illustrious descendants, Pangeran Dipanegara, as ‘a great Islamic ruler who had established the five pillars of Islam’,¹⁵ a claim that has also been historically corroborated by de Graaf in his study of the reign of Sultan Agung.¹⁶

Although almost all of the so-called Islamic states underwent a continuing process of Islamization, the structural manifestations and cultural orientations of the Islamic states varied considerably. This variety has given rise to academic stereotyping. If Aceh and Melaka are usually taken to represent the ‘real’ models of Islamic states, then Mataram is seen as an example of the continuation of the Ciwa-Buddhistic tradition in Islamic terms.

A stereotypical picture, however, tells us more about the subject than it does about the object. It reflects certain attitudes rather than an objective or empirical reality. As such it does not provide us with usable knowledge to help us understand the past and comprehend continuing historical phenomena. This paper is an attempt to examine these problems. Through the use of a comparative historical perspective, this paper, though limiting itself to the pre-colonial period in Southeast Asia, seeks to trace the dynamics of Islam in the region.

¹³ H. J. de Graaf, *Puncak Kekuasaan Mataram, Politik Ekspansi Sultan Agung* (trans.) (Jakarta, Pustaka Grafipers, 1986), p. 275.

¹⁴ Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī, *Bustān al-salāḥīn, Bāb II, Faṣal 13*, ed. T. Iskander (Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1966), p. 36.

¹⁵ Quoted by Peter Carey, *The Cultural Ecology of Early Nineteenth Century Java: Pangeran Dipanegara, a Case Study*, ISEAS Occasional Papers, 24 (Singapore, ISEAS, 1974), p. 17.

¹⁶ de Graaf, *Puncak Kekuasaan*, pp. 106-7.

II

In a stimulating article on state and statecraft in 17th-century Aceh, Brakel shows that, despite the strong ties of Aceh with Moghul India depicted by earlier scholars, the Acehnese Sultanate was deeply rooted in Hindu tradition.¹⁷ From this perspective, Aceh, the state in Southeast Asia seen as having the most deep-rooted Islamic tradition – perhaps due to the fact that most of the early great Islamic mystics and thinkers came from there – can no longer be seen as the antipode of Java, the stereotypical example of an Islamized Hinduistic state. If Schrieke is right in saying that there was no fundamental difference between Java of the Majapahit period and Mataram,¹⁸ a similar judgement might also be reached concerning Aceh.

One can argue that similar symbolic forms do not necessarily point to a common meaning. After all, one of the major cultural characteristics of the conversion process is the transformation in signification of deeply entrenched institutions or aesthetic forms. Be that as it may, one can seriously question Berg's obsession with cultural continuity, clearly demonstrated in his statement that in the Javanese perspective there is no real difference between 'a vishnuite king, a Muslim aulia, Dutch governor general'.¹⁹ Geertz, however, opens up the possibility of a fresh approach by suggesting that the role of Sunan Kalijaga, one of the legendary Nine Saints (*Wali Sanga*) was that of 'the bridge of two high civilizations, two historical approaches, and two great religions, that of Majapahit Hindu Buddhism in which he grew up and that of the Mataram Islam which he fostered'.²⁰

Whether the coming of Islam and the destruction of Majapahit created a discontinuity in the history of Java, as implicitly suggested by Krom and Snouck Hurgronje,²¹ or simply brought forward political change, as stated by Van Leur, what is unarguable is that the spread of Islam did make a difference. Trade, commerce and the emergence of competing Muslim coastal principalities might

¹⁷ L. F. Brakel, 'State and Statecraft in 17th-century Aceh' in A. Reid and L. Castles (eds.), *Pre-colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia*, Monograph of the MBRAS, 6, (Kuala Lumpur, 1975), pp. 56-66.

¹⁸ Schrieke, *Studies*, Part 2, pp. 217-29.

¹⁹ Berg's comment on A. H. John's article, in *JAS*, 24: 1 (1964) pp. 100-103, attached as an appendix. On Berg's opinion concerning the continuing strength of the Ciwa-Buddhistic tradition in Islamic Java, see his 'The Islamisation of Java', *Studia Islamica*, 4 (1955), pp. 111-43.

²⁰ C. Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 27.

²¹ See, for example, the comment of Berg on the approach of Krom, the doyen of Indonesian ancient history, in his 'Javanese picture of the past' in Soedjatmoko et al (eds.), *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1964), pp. 87-118.

not have revolutionized Java overnight, but these factors did at least change its political geography. By consistently looking at Java, or at Aceh, for that matter, from the viewpoint of its pre-Islamic past, however, one is tempted to ask 'what has changed and in what manner?' In this frame of mind one can be easily attracted by the notion of historical continuity; after all 'newness' and 'oldness' are in themselves normative categories. Continuity can be found either in the rendering of extant texts or in the symbolic interpretation of royal and sacred monuments. On this particular point, as various studies on Java have shown, the borderline between theoretical assumption and ideological, or, perhaps, cultural persuasion becomes blurred. What, for example, does that encyclopaedic work, the *Serat Centhini* signify? Is it an indication of a strong sense of continuity in Islamized Java, as Drewes suggests,²² or is it a proof of the continuing penetration of Islamic values into the world of the court or *kraton*, as Subardi emphasizes?²³

Another difficulty of this approach is the use of what Hodgson has characterized as Sharia-oriented criteria in evaluating the sultanates.²⁴ It was, of course, not too difficult for Snouck Hurgronje to look askance at the historical claims of Aceh to be 'the gate of Mecca'. Using his understanding of Islamic legal precepts, he could point to the difference between these and the structural realities of Aceh. Despite his ability to find aspects of the structural arrangement of Aceh that could be easily manipulated for colonial purposes, his approach, as pointed out by Siegel, failed to properly comprehend the nature of Acehnese society. Snouck Hurgronje also ignored, as Benda stated three decades ago, the historical dynamic of Muslim societies.²⁵ Perhaps a better way to grasp the nature of the Islamic state is to examine first of all in terms of its historical reality. Before one can determine the origin of the various elements of the state, a description of the structural arrangements of the state is needed. Before one can make a historical judgement based on Sharia precepts, what is required is a sympathetic understanding of the way tradition conceptualizes reality.

²² D. G. J. Drewes, 'Indonesia, Mysticism and Activism' in G. Grunebaum (ed.), *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*. Comparative Studies of Cultures and Civilizations (University of Chicago Press, 1955). pp. 309-10.

²³ Soebardi, 'Santri Religious Elements as Reflected in the Book of Tjentini', *BKI*, 127 (1971), pp. 331-49.

²⁴ Marshall G. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (3 vols., University of Chicago Press, 1974), 3: 318; see also A. C. Milner, 'Islam and the Muslim State' in M. B. Hooker (ed.), *Islam in South-East Asia* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1983), pp. 23-49.

²⁵ J. T. Siegel, *The Rope of God* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1971). H. J. Benda, 'Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and the foundations of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia', *Journal of Modern History*, 30 : 4 (1958), pp. 336-47.

Without ignoring the importance of continuity in historical development, the first element that has to be looked into is the traditional concept of the role of the king. With this concept in mind, the nature of the relationship between the king and the ulema, a social group whose status is dependent on religious authority, should then be investigated. An understanding of the place of the ulema in the power structure might even then not fully explain the cultural orientation of the state, but it could indicate how Islam manifests itself structurally within the state.

III

The warrior Senapati, founder of Mataram, is immortalized in the *Babad Tanah Jawi* as the descendant of both the last king of Majapahit and the first Sunan Giri. He is said to have received the *Wahyu Cakraningrat* through his father. He was also the consort of the mythical Queen of the South Sea. This qualified him to become the ruler of Java. Sharīf Kabungsuwan was a *mawlānā*, who spread religion among the people of Maguindanao. As a token of gratitude, he was asked, according to the *tarsila*, to become the first ruler of a centralized political structure of village communities. No less important was the fact that he and his descendants could claim to have the 'purest' lineage, as their origins were traced back to the Prophet himself.

The Sultanate of Sulu claims its origin from the coming of Raja Baginda from Minangkabau. From his marriage into a prominent local family Raja Baginda begot several children. One of his daughters was married to Sayyid Abū Bakr, a travelling *muballigh*. As it turned out, Abū Bakr not only preached religion among the local people, but also transformed the segmented political organization of the Sulu archipelago into a kingdom. Thus, the origin of the Sultanate of Sulu, as the *tarsila* indicates, cannot be separated from Islam and the intricate relationship between Sulu, the Arab world (Abū Bakr) and neighbouring Malay regions (Raja Baginda).²⁶

The Malay sultans, claiming to be descendants of Alexander the Great, cherished the memory of Parameshwara, who was believed to have come from Palembang (successor to Sriwijaya in Malay historical consciousness).²⁷ He founded a new political and economic centre in Melaka. Despite the fact that the Islamization of the court of Melaka only began after it had emerged as an important entrepot, the 17th-century *Sejarah Melayu*, composed at the behest of the court of Johor, emphasizes Melaka's role in fostering Islam and spreading it to other parts of the

²⁶ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, pp. 6-7.

²⁷ See O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Sriwijaya in Malay History* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1970).

Malay world. In Malay historical consciousness, Melaka, successor to Palembang, is seen not simply as the bridge between the traditions of non-Islamic Sriwijaya and the Islamic period, but also, and more importantly, as that political centre which laid the foundation of the Malay Islamic state.

Despite these divergent claims to legitimacy, the centres of power of Islamized Southeast Asia shared important traits. All of their great rulers had the reputation of being conquerors of territory, unifiers of the state, defenders of the faith and the highest authorities in religion. Berg, who always sought to underline the theme of continuity in the history of Java, suspects that Sultan Agung (1613-46) turned to Islam because of his failure to capture Batavia (1627-29).²⁸ Whatever Agung's motives, this august king of Mataram did lay the foundations for the institutionalization of Islam. The *Babad Tanah Jawi* tells not only of his two palaces – one in the South Sea, which he shared with his mythical royal consort, Nyi Lara Kidul; the other in Kota Gede, known to have existed and described by Dutch observers as 'large and open' – but also his various religious activities. According to this state myth, he often performed the Friday prayer at the great Mosque of Mecca. The *Babad Nitik Sultan Agung* claims that Sultan Agung conquered Minangkabau and Palembang by using supernatural power and converted the royal families of the two kingdoms to Islam.²⁹ Myth had its reflection in historical reality; Sultan Agung is also reported by Dutch records to have forced his Dutch prisoners to convert to Islam.³⁰ Sultan Agung not only centralized Java by subduing most of the surrounding principalities in the *pasisir* (coastal areas), he also made himself as the *khalifat allāh panatagama*, the 'regulator of religion'. He was the *panembahan*, the local ruler, who had assumed the religious authority of the *susuhunan* and the sultan, the Muslim ruler.

Beaulieu, the senior French naval officer, and other European eye-witnesses in 17th-century Aceh, were astonished by the measures taken by Iskandar Muda (1607-36) to ensure his position against any encroachment on his power by the *orang kaya*.³¹ To Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī, the *savant* at the court of Iskandar's

²⁸ Berg, *Studia Islamica* 4 (1955), pp. 111-143.

²⁹ Quoted in G. Moedjanto, *The Concept of Power in Javanese Culture* (Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University Press, 1986), pp. 62-3. For a historical account of the Islamization of Palembang, see Taufik Abdullah, *Islam dan Masyarakat: Pantulan Sejarah Indonesia* (Jakarta, LP3ES, 1987), pp. 201-4. On Minangkabau, see Taufik Abdullah, 'Adat and Islam: an Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau', *Indonesia*, 2 (1966), pp. 1-24.

³⁰ de Graaf, *Puncak Kekuasaan*, pp. 107-8.

³¹ Denys Lombard, 'Kunjungan Laksamana Perancis De Beaulieu ke Aceh pada tahun 1621' in *Dari Sini Ia Bersemi, Banda Aceh, Panitia Penyelenggara Masabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an, Tingkat Nasional ke- 12* (1981), pp. 35-64; see also A. Reid, 'Trade and Problems of Royal Power in Aceh' in Reid and Castles (eds.), *State Systems*, pp. 45-51.

successor, he was no less than a great defender of the faith, whose conquests were simply the reflections of *irādat allāh* (the will of God) acting on human destiny. Like Sultan Agung, Iskandar Muda was recognized as promulgator of the law. The 18th-century *Adat Aceh* acknowledges him as the king who laid the legal foundations of the Acehnese state, which later came to be known as 'the land of ulema and *uluebalang*'.³² He was responsible for organizing villages, into *mukims*, centred on a mosque. As such, the population of each was determined by the *fiqh* regulations concerning Friday prayers.³³

Similar claims to greatness can also be observed in the Moro region. Sultan Muḥammad Dipatuan Qudarat (1619-71) of Maguindanao was not only remembered as a brave warrior, who incessantly struggled for the unification of the Maguindanao people, and who continuously urged the Maranaos, to combat Spanish aggression, but also as a defender of Islam.³⁴ He was reportedly much concerned by the attempt of the Spanish to Christianize the Muslims. A contemporary Spanish account reports that the Sultan was revered in Maguindanao as if he were 'Mahoma himself. For he was a Moro of great courage, intelligence and capacity, beside exceedingly zealous of his accursed sect, and a great success.'³⁵ He was, then a powerful ruler and great authority on religion.

Perhaps it was also due to his 'Islam policy' that since the 17th-century Maguindanao was also known for its policy of attempting to attract foreigners to stay and marry local women and, most importantly, to convert to Islam. 'There are many escaped slaves here', a Dutch report states, 'and many Chinese who have converted to Islam and are given wives by the Sultan because whoever comes here is welcome.'³⁶ The Sultan in question is Barahaman, the successor to Qudarat.

The *Misa Melayu* describes Sultan Iskandar of Perak (1752-65), as a raja who was 'loved and feared by the people and the *orang besar* and whose name was famous among other countries. His Majesty was blessed with good fortune (*tuah*), *daulat*, wisdom (*arif bijaksana*) and nobility. He was generous in all his

³² G. W. J. Drewes and P. Voorhoeve, *Adat Atjeh*, VKI, 24 ('s- Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1958).

³³ Rusdi Sufi, 'Sultan Iskandar Muda' in *Dari Sini ia Bersemi*, pp. 65-115.

³⁴ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, p. 139.

³⁵ M. Mastura, *Muslim Filipino Experience: A Collection of Essays*, Philippine Islam series, 1 (Manila, Ministry of Muslim Affairs, 1984), pp. 32-3.

³⁶ Quoted in R. Laarhoven, 'The Chinese at Maguindanao in the Seventeenth Century', *Philippines Studies*, 35 (1987), pp. 31-50.

words and governed according to the laws of Allah and of *adat*, protecting all his people.³⁷

These kings and others, such as Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa of Banten and Sultan Bāb Allāh of Ternate, have been taken as models of what rulers of Islamic states should be – brave and just, great warriors and defenders of religion. These are exemplary kings, whose lives are romanticized and idealized by traditional historiography and collective memory. Some of them are also known to history as great patrons of religious learning and as generous hosts to religious scholars and thinkers.³⁸ The Samudra-Pasai tradition, whereby a king surrounded himself by visiting ulema, as reported by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, was followed by Melaka, as described by the *Sejarah Melayu* (and corroborated by Tome Pires' report),³⁹ and by other courts in the Malay world. The great religious thinkers and mystics, who exerted such an influence at the courts of Iskandar Muda and his successors (Iskandar Thānī and Tāj 'Ālam) are well known. The doctrinal controversies between Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī and the followers of Hamza Fansuri and Shams al-Dīn al-Samatranī, not only caused religious disturbances but also received the attention of ulema from as far away as the Middle East.⁴⁰

The competition among the ulema to gain prominence at court reflects their influence on affairs of state in Aceh. In 1699, during the reign of the fourth sultana (queen), Kalamat Shāh, some factions at the court managed to obtain a *fatwā* from Mecca rejecting the religious legitimacy of a female ruler. The *fatwā* was used to justify the removal of the Queen; after which the title, perhaps not by coincidence, passed into the hands of an Arab dynasty of *sayyids*.

Sultan Ageng of Banten was said to have been often 'accompanied by a party of priests'. Banten, the centre of trade in West Java, was, like Aceh, frequented by peripatetic ulema. Dutch records, quoted by Schrieke, show the 'heavy traffic' of ulema, between Banten and, 'via Surat', with the centres of Muslim learning.⁴¹

³⁷ B. Andaya, 'The Structure of Power in 17th-century Johor' in Reid and Castles (eds.), *State Systems*, pp. 24-5.

³⁸ See also the Introductory chapter of the *Syair Perang Mengkasar*, which 'describes' the personality traits of Sultan Hasan al-Dīn of Gowa (Makasar). This description is nothing less than the ideal conception of what a Muslim king should be. See C. Skinner (ed. and trans.), *Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar : The Rhymed Chronicle of the Macassar War*, VKI, 40 ('s-Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1963).

³⁹ Tome Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Thomé Pires: An Account of the East...*, ed. and trans. A. Cortesão, Hakluyt Society, 90 (2 vols., London, Hakluyt Society, 1944), pp. 192-240.

⁴⁰ A. H. Johns, 'Friends in Grace, Ibrahim al-Kurani and Abd Al-Ra'uf al-Singkeli' in S. Udin (ed.), *Spectrum: Essays Presented to Sultan Takdir Alisjahbana on his Seventieth Birthday* (Jakarta, Diwan Rakyat, 1978), pp. 469-85.

⁴¹ Schrieke, *Studies*, 2: 241-2.

Coastal political centres in 16th - and 17th -century Southeast Asia were not only important entrepôts and trading centres, but also centres of religious activity. Each one of the legendary Nine Saints (*Wali Sanga*) were from the coast. Sultan Agung of Mataram, who did not tolerate any infringement upon his power and who had successfully weakened the position of Sunan Giri (the 'pope' as Dutch records term him) also surrounded himself with ulema. His most trusted religious adviser was *Kalifagypan* (whose real name was most probably Qāḍī Fakhr al-Dīn), 'A decent fellow', according to a Dutch record.⁴²

The monarch surrounded by a coterie of ulema is, indeed, quite a familiar picture in Southeast Asia. Despite the low opinion of Dutch observers regarding the degree of commitment of the people of Palembang to religious ritual,⁴³ the 18th-century court of Palembang was one of the most important intellectual centres of Islam in the Malay world.⁴⁴ Cirebon, the seat of the 15th-century Sunan Gunung Jati, had by the beginning of the 18th century emerged as the centre of *sulūk* literature; in this period also, court poets of Surakarta, who usually spent some time at the *pesantren* as part of their education, were engaged in formulating the notion of Javanese cultural continuity. Despite the dramatic political changes that had taken place, Palembang continued in the tradition of the court of Aceh as the centre of learning. Even the controversial Sultan Badr al-Dīn (the sultan most hated by the Dutch, because of the destruction of the Dutch factory in Palembang) was not only a patron of Islamic literature but also an author in his own right. Certain kings of Sulu were praised in *khutbas* and *kitābs* as experts on religious law and learning; two of them were ascetics. Sultan Jamāl al-Āṣim (1862-81) was remembered as the king who 'aided the ulema financially and introduced the *ḥadd* punishment for theft.'⁴⁵ Sultan Fakīr Mawḷānā Kamsa of Maguindanao was much revered because, during his rule, a *tarsila* of Maguindanao and Buayan was completed, as was a manual of Shāfi'i jurisprudence.⁴⁶

The reputations of kings as great conquerors or unifiers of state and their roles as the legitimate holders of power and the highest religious authorities are commonly shared historical traits in Islamized Southeast Asia. To varying

⁴² de Graaf, *Puncak Kekuasaan*, pp. 106-7, 120.

⁴³ O. L. van Sevenhoven, *Lukisan tentang Ibukota Palembang* (trans.) (Jakarta, Bharatra, 1972); G. W. J. Drewes, *Directions for Travellers on the Mystic Path: Zakariya al-Ansari's Kitab fath al-rahman and its Indonesian Adaptations*, VKI, 81 (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), pp. 198-237.

⁴⁴ Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java: Catalogue Raisonné of Javanese Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and other Public Collections in the Netherlands. Volume 1: Synopsis of Javanese Literature 900-1900 A.D.* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967).

⁴⁵ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, p. 10.

⁴⁶ Mastura, *Muslim Filipino Experience*, p. 11.

degrees, the ulema were influential and at times could also be powerful, as events in the post-Iskandar Muda period in 17th-century Aceh show. But in most cases they were content to remain as royal advisers. Perhaps because the sultanates were established by *mawlanās*, respected religious teachers, the ulema quite often played a significant role in the affairs of state in Sulu and Maguindanao. The ulema often influenced the course of action of these states. Their strong opposition to attempts by the Spanish to proselytize among the people even strengthened popular commitment to Islam. In times of crisis it was also the ulema who unleashed the *jura mentado* movement. But at other times, local chiefs (*datu* or *panglima*) might also voice their resentment against what they felt to be interventions by the *'ālim* 'who is not fit... and is not a chief by heredity'.⁴⁷

As a sociological category, the ulema can be defined as the propagators of religion, the teachers of doctrine and the providers of religious services. In order to fulfil these three functions, the *'ālim* should be a man of knowledge and exemplary behaviour. Since these intellectual, ethical and spiritual requirements are highly valued qualities, a socially recognized *'ālim* had every potential to become very influential and powerful. Therefore, from the beginning, rulers had to deal with the problems of coping with the role of the ulema, both in their role as representatives of religion and potential political challengers.

IV

Although the bureaucratization of Islam did not really begin until the early colonial period, when a rationalization of the apparatus of state was being carried out, Islamic doctrinal and legal requirements had caused local rulers to carry out rearrangements in the structure of government. The Buginese-Maccassarese kingdoms instituted the office of *parewa sara'*, who was responsible for religious matters, as the counterpart of the *parewa ade'*, whose responsibilities lay in the execution of *adat* law. Both offices were under the direct supervision of the king or of the local chiefs.⁴⁸ The royal functionaries of the state in Ternate, known in Malay as *Komisi Empat* (four functionaries), or *dopolo ngaruha* in Ternatenese, consisted of the *gogugu*, *kapita laut*, the *hukum Soa Siu* and the *hukum Sangaji*. The last two officers were responsible for legal and financial affairs. Together with *soa* (district) chiefs, these functionaries were members of the royal council under the supervision of the sultan. But in religious affairs the sultan was first and foremost the *amīr al-mu'minīn* who, as the protector of Islam was

⁴⁷ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, pp. 325-6.

⁴⁸ Mattulada, 'Islam di Sulawesi Selatan' in T. Abdullah (ed.) *Agama dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta, Rajawali, 1984).

responsible for the functioning of the *sigi lama*, or royal mosque. It was around this mosque that the hierarchy of religious functionaries was arranged.

In addition to the 'four functionaries', there were also 'mosque functionaries' in Ternate. They were known as *imām Jiko*, who was the most senior *imām*, *imām Jawa*, *imām Sangaji* and *imām Moti*. Under each *imām*, there were also four *khaṭībs*, who, like the four *imāms*, also represented the two most important territorial divisions of the kingdom, Soa Sio and Sangaji. This pattern was repeated at the local mosques. The four *imāms* of the royal mosque also served as members of the religious council, under the chairmanship of the *qāḍī*, the senior judge of the kingdom. The entire structure of the state shows that the Sultanate of Ternate was based on a balance between the two powerful divisions of the state on the one hand, and between the 'four functionaries' (*komisi empat*) and the four *imāms* and four *khaṭībs* on the other. This culminated in the position of the sultan as *amīr al-mu'minīn*.⁴⁹

The balance between *adat* and religious affairs in the state system can also be found in the Moro tradition. The sultan exercised both political and religious authority. The sultan's chief religious adviser was the *qāḍī*, who theoretically functioned in terms of the state as a whole. In each district a *panglima* had his religious official, the *pandita*, who was identified with a particular group of believers and mosques. Like the state religious functionaries in Ternate, the *imām* of the royal mosque was the highest-ranking official.⁵⁰ Perhaps the most obvious influence of Ternate on the Moro tradition can be found in the arrangement of these religious functionaries.

Sultan Iskandar Muda of Aceh was perhaps the first ruler to introduce the office of *qāḍī malikul adil*, who was in charge of the religious court. As a functionary, the *qāḍī* was second only to the *orang kaya maharaya seri maharaja* in the royal hierarchy. Despite his position as the highest religious official, the *qāḍī* could never match the personal influence of Shams al-Din al-Samatrani on the Sultan. The great mystic may indeed have been 'the chief bishope of the realme a man of guest estimation with the time and all the people' as reported by Lancaster.⁵¹ In the courts of Iskandar and his successor, the most powerful *'ālim* – a position reached by building a close relationship with the ruler – was known as the *shaykh al-islām*. It was in order to secure this esteemed position that a group of

⁴⁹ See, Ch. F. van Fransen, 'Ternate, de Molukken en de Indonesische Archipel' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leiden, 1987), 1: 323-53.

⁵⁰ M. Mednick, 'Some Problems of Moro History and Political Organization' in P. G. Gowing and R. D. McAmis (eds.), *The Muslim Filipinos* (Manila, Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974), pp. 13-26.

⁵¹ Quoted by Syed Naguib al-Attas.

'moderate' ulema attempted to outmanoeuvre Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānirī. They succeeded; and al-Rānirī had to leave Aceh in a hurry.⁵²

According to a 19th-century Dutch account, only the Arab settlers regularly performed religious rites in Palembang, while the indigenous population was Muslim in name only. But in the 18th and 19th centuries there were two judicial courts under the supervision of the king. The first was the religious court, under the jurisdiction of *angerang natta agama* and the other was the criminal court, under *temenggung kerta negara*. In 1778, a Dutch observer reported that the latter decided his cases in 'accordance with Qur'an or adat and his judgment should be approved by the Sultan, before it could be executed'.⁵³ It should also be noted that the 19th-century court of Palembang is likely to have sponsored, or at least given its blessing to, the composition of Shihāb al-Dīn's *Risāla* and Kemas Fakhr al-Dīn's *Kitāb mukhtaṣar*. These books condemn not only 'hidden polytheism', but also the mystic teachings of the Seven Grades (*Martabat Tujuh*). In other words, the court itself engaged in the struggle against 'heterodox' mystical teachings, which tended to ignore Sharia obligations – this might explain the phenomenon recorded by Dutch observers.

These Malay, Buginese, Ternatense and Sulu traditions demonstrate several notable trends. First, as the *amīr al-mu'minīn*, the king was not only the head of the political and secular structure, but also the religious authority. The above examples show that the religious functions of the ulema were institutionalized and incorporated into the state structure. But, unlike most of royal functionaries, their positions could not be inherited. An inherited religious office, as in the case of the *imām muqīm* in Aceh, gradually transformed itself into an ordinary state office. Second, the influence of the religious scholar in political affairs was not determined by his official position in the power structure, but by his personal relationship with the ruler. Third, never in the history of these sultanates have the ulema (viewed as a social category) gone on to become rulers or local chiefs. In this somewhat Persianized political system,⁵⁴ the king himself could be highly knowledgeable in religious doctrine, as in the case of several kings of Sulu, or he might be a person of mystical orientation, but an *'ālim*, whose basis of social prominence was his expertise in religion, could never emerge as a contender to existing power. A *mawlānā* in Sulu or in Maguindanao might play a role as a state-builder, but could never pose a challenge to the established ruler. In the

⁵² T. Ito, 'Why did Nuruddin ar-Raniri leave Aceh in 1054 A.H.?', *BKI*, 134 (1978), pp. 489-91.

⁵³ Rademacher, quoted in P. de Roo de la Faille, 'Uit den Palembangschen Sultantijd', *Feestbundel KBG Bat.* 1928 hl. II, p. 316.

⁵⁴ Milner, 'Islam and Muslim State'; on the influence of Persia, see G. E. Marissoon, 'Persian Influences on Malay life', *JMBRAS*, 28: 1 (1955), pp. 52-69.

early 18th century, reports the *Tuhfat al-nafis*, a mystic began to assemble followers in order to establish himself as the local ruler at Danai, on the east coast of Sumatra. He was immediately attacked, captured and taken to Riau, where he was executed on the order of the *Yang Dipertuan Muda*.⁵⁵

On the basis of religious expertise and descent from the Prophet, several *sayyids* did gain political prominence in several regions. A *sayyid* was elected King of Aceh (1699) after the last queen was deposed. Another became the Sultan of Siak Sri Indrapura (1780s) and still another in Pontianak (1760s). But in Aceh, this was as a result of the of the *orang kaya* conspiracy and perhaps reflects more of a tendency towards a *fiqh* orientation in political life. In Siak, it was mostly due to court intrigues, in which the *sayyid* who eventually prevailed did so through his marriage to the sultan's daughter. In Pontianak, the *sayyid* was installed by the powerful *Yang Dipertuan Muda* of Johor-Riau, Raja Haji. In other words, even though these *sayyids* might have begun their political 'careers' on the basis of their demonstrable religious expertise, their positions as political contenders were mostly based on their 'sacred genealogy'. But their political success was entirely dependent on their ability to enter into the ruling elite through marriage. Being part of the ruling elite, it was a matter of political expediency to take part in political conspiracies and intrigue.

In his *Tadhkirat al-rāki'in*, Teungku Kutakarang lamented the fact that Aceh, 'the gate of Mecca' had been occupied by a *kāfir* force. He criticized the *uluebalang*, the local chiefs, who were willing to cooperate with the Dutch, after the king had abandoned the *dalam*, or palace. But the ulema were also to be blamed, because they had failed to give guidance to the *uluebalang*. This influential *'ālim*, who had a prominent role in the Aceh War, emphasized the obligation on the ulema to advise the ruler.⁵⁶ A similar position was adopted by Tuanku Imam Bonjol, the leader of the Padri War (1821-37) in Minangkabau. The most powerful leader in the war against the penetration of Dutch colonial power, he put his trust in the decisions of the *penghulu*, the *adat* chiefs, who decided on internal affairs. Even in times of crisis, as when Bonjol was in immediate danger, he waited, in vain, for a resolute decision by the *penghulu*. Only when they failed to make a decision did he take the necessary steps.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Quoted in V. Matheson, 'Concepts of State in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (The Precious Gift)' in Reid and Castles (eds.) *State Systems*, p. 20.

⁵⁶ J. T. Siegel, *Shadow and Sound, The Historical Thought of a Sumatran People* (University of Chicago Press, 1979). See also Ibrahim Alfian, *Perang di Jalan Allah, Perang Aceh, 1873-1912* (Jakarta, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1987), pp. 161-4.

⁵⁷ See his memoirs, in H. J. J. L. de Stuers, *De Vestiging en Uitbreiding ter Nederlanders ter Westkust van Sumatra* (Amsterdam, 1850), vol. 2, appendix.

Religion might have been used by the king to legitimate his claims, but it could never be used by the *'ālim* to support his claim to secular power. The *'ālim* might occasionally criticize the king or even join aristocratic plots against him – as was the case in Aceh, when the last queen was deposed – but he himself, as a ruler, could never be a pretender to the crown. In 1750 an *'ālim* led opposition to a usurper on behalf of the legitimate successor to the throne of Banten. His struggle lost its *raison d'être* when the latter was finally returned by the VOC to the throne.⁵⁸

In general terms, an *'ālim* might play the roles of adviser to the ruler, legitimizer of the dynasty and functionary in the state apparatus; he might even emerge as a critic of the regime. But when his place in the structure of power and political life is discussed, the Islamized states of Southeast Asia seem to follow two different traditions. If we look at Java, we find that the *'ālim* as a social category, the *'ālim* might, on the one hand, like his colleagues in other places, be part of the power structure centred around the figure of the king; but he might also be, on the other hand, the centre of his own circle. He could also be a local ruler, either as the official representative of the central *kraton*, or a local aristocratic ruler, whose authority was recognized by the king. Again, the *'ālim* might share the cultural sphere of the *kraton*, but at the same time nurture his own sphere in the *pesantren*. *Khalifagipan* was, according to Dutch record, 'the supreme pope' during the reign of Sultan Agung. But Kyai Sorandang (?) was the 'governor general', *patih*. 'Kyai Wargadipa', was the *shahbandar* (harbourmaster) at Wedung, who resided at Demak and whose territory reportedly extended deep into the Demak hinterland. As a court dignitary he was, according to a report, the favourite and close associate of Sultan Agung.⁵⁹ At the same time, Sultan Agung had to deal with the *priester-vorstendommen*, 'priestly-principalities', of Giri, Surabaya, Kudus and others. In the early years of his reign, the great conqueror had to face the opposition of the ulema of Tembayat. A Dutch record states, that 'Those of Tembayat of the fanatical Moorish popes, could still not keep quiet [they] wanted to establish a separate realm and had chosen as its head Mas Mindil [Mendi, the eldest son of the deceased Pangeran Tembayat], who adopted the title of Pangeran Menang.'⁶⁰

This opposition put Sultan Agung in a very awkward position. This is because it was believed that the success of Senapati, (the founder of the dynasty), in transforming the small fiefdom of Mataram into a conquering central *kraton* was

⁵⁸ M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia c.1300 to the Present* (London, Macmillan, 1981), pp. 101-2.

⁵⁹ Schrieke, *Studies*, 2: 190-1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 337, n. 109.

very much due to the aid of Sunan Kalijaga, who was, according to tradition, the teacher of Sunan Tembayat. Therefore, it is understandable that Sultan Agung tried to make peace with the so-called 'fanatical Moorish popes'.

Sultan Agung seems to have been satisfied by the formal recognition of the local aristocrats of his authority. He had combined secular and religious authorities in his person; he was the *panatagama* as well as the *panembahan Agung*. But Mangkurat I (1646-76) not only felt no need to assume the title of sultan, as his father did, he was also not satisfied with the formal recognition of his rule by local aristocrats. He embarked on a regicidal campaign in the coastal principalities. He even annihilated members of the ruling house of Surabaya, who were his own relatives from his mother's side. Suspecting that many ulema supported his rebellious younger brother, he had c. 5000-6000 ulema and their families put to death in one night.⁶¹ A real tyrant when viewed from an ethical-political perspective, Mangkurat was certainly 'modern' enough in his attempts to uproot all smaller *kratons* and to annihilate independent ulema. But he failed on both accounts. His anti-Islamic and anti-ulema policies, his attempt to close harbour-cities on the north coast and his regicide policies created deep resentment not only among local aristocrats but also in the *kraton* itself. These factors led to the outbreak of a major rebellion that caused Mangkurat I to abandon his palace, shortly after which he died. Trunajaya, a prince of Madura, who was initially an ally of the Crown prince himself, took up arms against the tyrannical king, in alliance with Raden Kajoran and the latter's father-in-law. Mataram was finally saved by VOC troops, but only at the expense of its northern territories. Trunajaya was killed by the very man who had urged him to rise against the *kraton* of Mataram – the former Crown prince who had, by that time, assumed the title Mangkurat II (1630).⁶²

Events during the reign of the two Mangkurats show that the Islamization policies of Sultan Agung, as well as the move towards the formation of an integrated Islamized political tradition were, at least temporarily, interrupted. But the reduction in power of important 'priestly-principalities' did not by any means mark the end of their spiritual authority. Not only did the traditions of Kajoran, Wanakusuma, Tembayat and Giri (four of the most important spiritual centers of Mataram) remain strong, but so did the religious centres, the *pesantren*, remain powers to be reckoned with. The *pesantren* had become, by the time of Sultan Agung's subjugation of Giri, not only places of exile for unwanted elements in the *kraton*, but also sanctuaries for disappointed members of the royal

⁶¹ H. J. de Graaf, *Islamic States in Java 1500-1700: Eight Dutch Books and Articles by Dr H. J. de Graaf as summarized by Th. G. Th. Pigeaud*, VKI, 70 (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), pp. 53-64.

⁶² This section is based on de Graaf, *Islamic States*.

aristocracy.⁶³ It was in the *pesantren* that the disgruntled aristocrats might find a basis of support in their opposition to the ruling powers.

In the longest, bloodiest and most costly colonial war in Java (1825-30), Prince Dipanegara, the grandson of Mangkubumi (the first Sultan of Yogyakarta), found his earliest supporters among the ulema and the *santri* of the *pesantren*. But their different attitudes toward the purpose of the war, which was, according to Dipanegara in his *babad*, to drive out the Dutch and to strengthen the religion, was the main cause of the rift in the struggle movement. Pangeran Dipanegara, who had the legitimate claim to the throne of Yogyakarta, and Kyai Maja, the charismatic and influential religious leader, who was also the head of a *perdikan* village, in the end found that they had different views regarding their common cause. In his *babad*, Dipanegara relates that his quarrel with Kyai Maja began when the latter suggested that the prince should assume the position of *ratu* (king). But since Kyai Maja also said that any realm should consist of *ratu*, *wali* (authority in religious matters), *pandhita* (expert in religious law) and *mu'min* (believers), Dipanegara might have had reason to believe that Kyai Maja's power would eventually overshadow his own, just as Sunan Giri's power had threatened the position of Sultan Demak. Dipanegara, who had proclaimed himself as Sultan Ngabdul-hamid Erucakra Sayyidin Panatagama Khalifat Allāh, could not face such an outcome.⁶⁴ Kyai Maja's version of events is somewhat different. In his statement to a Dutch commander, he said that he had to leave Dipanegara because he had established a *kraton*. In establishing the *kraton*, Dipanegara, Kyai Maja may have reasoned, might have made use of the notion of continuity, for the sake of legitimacy.⁶⁵ *Erucakra*, a title used by Dipanegara, is a Javanese term relating to the concept of a messiah. It was usually assumed by leaders of opposition to the *kraton*, such as Panembahan Kajoran, Trunajaya and even Pangeran Giri, among others. All of them were pretenders to the crown, the central *kraton*. Despite the different claims, both versions essentially say the same thing – that the worlds of *kraton* and *pesantren* are in constant dialogue.

The history of the Java war shows that the rift between the two leaders was a devastating blow to Dipanegara's cause. Never again would a noble emerge as the leader of armed opposition to colonial power. From a historical perspective, the rift demonstrates that, even in times of war, the political claims and cultural

⁶³ T. Abdullah, *Islam dan Masyarakat*, pp. 139-141.

⁶⁴ This section is based on P. Carey, *The Cultural Ecology of Early-Nineteenth Century Java: Pangeran Dipanegara, a Case Study*, ISEAS Occasional Paper, 29 (Singapore, ISEAS, 1974) and P. Carey, *Babad Dipanegara: An Account of the Outbreak of the Java War*, Monographs of the MBRAS, 9 (Kuala Lumpur, MBRAS, 1981).

⁶⁵ Schrieke, *Studies*, 2: 81 and 2: 92-3.

divisions between *kraton* and *pesantren* could not be easily settled. Despite the claim of the ruler to be both 'the owner of the earth' and 'the projection of God on earth', the relationship between secular power and religious authorities has never been an easy one.

In a concentric political tradition, in which the central *kraton* is surrounded by competing smaller *kratons*, it is the 'duty' of the central *kraton* to keep the smaller *kratons* weak. In this polycentric political system,⁶⁶ a senior 'ālim and the territory over which he has control are, in a sense, but another *kraton*. As such he or his followers are viewed by the central *kraton* as would-be challengers. The destruction of the political power of the priestly-principalities did not, however, mean the end of the influence of a particular 'ālim. His spiritual authority lingers on and his *pesantren* continues to nurture an alternative cultural style differing from that of the *kraton*.

V

Two main forms of structural tradition emerge from these historical sketches of politics in Islamized Southeast Asia. By looking at the patterns of relationship between the ruler and the ulema and the place of the latter in the power structure, the first tradition that can be discerned is one that might be termed the tradition of integration. In this tradition the representatives of dynastic power and religious authority find common ground in the concept of the king as *amīr al-mu'minīn* – the sultan is the sole legitimate bearer of *dawla*. The second is the tradition of dialogue, which, despite the recognition of the king as both *khalīfat allāh* and *panatagama*, has always had to deal with the problem of the intricate relationship between *kraton* and *pesantren*.

From the perspective of cultural history, we can see that in the tradition of integration there have always been tendencies towards the theological and cultural marginalization of non-Islamic elements in social and religious life and the transformation of meanings of historical relics and traditional symbols. The tradition of dialogue reveals a different pattern. It has consistently strived for harmony between the two sources of authority – *kraton* and *pesantren* – and sought a commonly acceptable kratonic orthodoxy, which, while acknowledging the paramount role of the secular political leader, needs the sanction of the consensus of the ulema.

⁶⁶ F. van Naerssen and R. C. de Longh, *The Economic and Administrative History of Early Indonesia*, HdO. Abt. 3, Bd. 7 (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1977) p. 477. See also R. von Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia*, Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Data Paper, 18 (Ithaca, Cornell University Dept. of Asian Studies, 1956) and Drewes and Voorhoeve (eds.), *Adat Atjeh*.

It was not al-Rānirī who punished and persecuted the followers of Hamza Fansuri in the 17th-century Aceh, but the Sultan of Aceh; even though it was he who advised the Sultan to do so. In the Javanese tradition, it was the synod of *walis*, and not the Sultan, who condemned the teachings of Shaykh Siti Jenar and who eventually punished the ‘heretic’ mystic. By publicly disseminating esoteric knowledge, Siti Jenar had not only caused dissension in society, but also threatened the prevailing system of authority. Only after the destruction of the *ulema* as a political force did the Sultan emerge as the sole authority on both religious as secular matters. By then, as reflected in the 18th-century *Serat Cabolek*, some form of imposed kratonic orthodoxy had been formulated.

The 19th-century *Adat Aceh* states that it is the obligation of the king to ask the advice of the *ulema* on religious matters, ‘on things that can be beneficial; on those, who love religion and who give preference to religion. It is the duty of the *ulema* to differentiate between *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* and *makrūh* and *mubāh*, to determine *perlu* and *sunat*, to legitimate and to reject, so that no one can forget religion.’⁶⁷ An emphasis on the religiously correct judgement of the king – if not always historically accompanied by correct behaviour – is a central theme of the ‘royal ideology’ in the tradition of integration. *Īmān* and *dawla* are inseparable elements, to the extent that the *Tāj al-salātīn*, a 17th-century tract on politics, even goes so far as to suggest that ‘we follow all kings who justly adhere, we follow his deeds. But the king who does not follow the law of Allah is the enemy of Allah, therefore it is obligatory for us to oppose the enemy of Allah’,⁶⁸ though not by way of *derhaka* or rebellion.

The integrity of the kingdom should remain a concern of the king. The advice of Sultan Muẓaffar of Perak (1752) on his deathbed to his nephew and successor, as reported in *Misa Melayu*, clearly reflects the notion of an ideal ruler in the tradition of integration: ‘My child the Raja Muda should always consult with all the *orang besar* and the *anak raja*, govern the country and protect the *rakyat*, the army and all my relatives and slaves, and confer together concerning all matters with all the *orang besar*, the *hulubalang* and the *anak raja*, and support our religion and the *imām*, the officials and all their relatives.’⁶⁹

The tradition of integration does, however, have its internal tension – a tension that appears to be a recurrent theme in the histories of the Acehnese and Malay

⁶⁷ Drewes and Voorhoeve (eds.), *Adat Atjeh*.

⁶⁸ Bukhari of Johor, *Tajussalatin*, transliterated Jumsari Jusuf (Jakarta, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Proyek Penerbitan Buku Bacaan dan Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah, 1979), pp. 30-1.

⁶⁹ Andaya, ‘Structure of Power’, p. 23.

Sultanates. So important is this factor that it is often depicted in both traditional historiographies and literary works.⁷⁰ This is the tension between the ideology of integration, which is based on consultation (between the king and his *orang besar*, as the representatives of the *rakyat*), as a prerequisite for the attainment of the *'ādil* (just) situation,⁷¹ and the tyrannical tendencies of the ruler.

How can a king, who possesses *dawla*, continue to base his actions on consensus, if it is considered *derhaka*, an act of treason, to oppose his authoritarian and tyrannical actions? The dual concept of *dawla* and *derhaka* is one that seems bound to have a negative impact on the functioning of the state. The 'rebellion' of Hang Jebat against Sultan Maḥmūd, as depicted by the *Ḥikāyat Hang Tuah*, is, on the one hand, a classic example of treachery on the part of a courtier, and on the other, reflects the dilemma posed by the cultural necessity of a 'just king' and the political 'blasphemy' inherent in *derhaka*.⁷² A similar dilemma is posed when we come to examine the murder of Sultan Maḥmūd Shāh of Johor (an act which brought about the end of the Palembang-Melaka dynasty), as depicted in the *Tuḥfat al-nafīs*. A *derhaka* might have to be committed, because the tyrannical behaviour of the raja who had forsaken 'the law of God' could no longer be tolerated. But a high price had to be paid. Not only was the person who directly committed the *derhaka* immediately put to death, the kingdom itself was in turmoil. Political anarchy had replaced tyranny. Which situation was preferable?

The situation in Java is more complicated. In the tradition of integration, the state-builders were normally supposed to have sealed a holy covenant with the people, who were 'the children of the soil'; in its Javanese manifestation, the tradition had to cover both the relationship between the empirical and the mythical worlds and the continuity between the extant Islamic state and pre-Islamic claims for legitimacy. The first king of Demak was in 'fact' the son of the last king of Majapahit, as the *Babad Tanah Jawi* would have us believe. No break in continuity ever took place. The king's right to rule is legitimized not only by an uninterrupted genealogy but also by his personal *kesakten*

⁷⁰ Cf. G. L. Koster and H. M. Maier, 'A Medicine of Sweetmeats: On the Power of Malay Narrative' *BKI*, 141: 4 (1985), pp. 441-61.

⁷¹ On *dawla* and *derhaka* as problems in the Malay political tradition, see Abdul Rachman Hj. Ismail, 'Kewibawaan Mutlak Raja dan Ketaatsetiaan Mutlak Rakyat Kepada Raja', *Kajian Malaysia*, 3: 1 (1985), pp. 32-57. On the importance of this issue in the modern history of Malaya, see, e.g. C. B. Kheng 'The Erosion of Ideological and Royal Power and the Rise of Post-war Malay Nationalism, 1945-46', *JSEAS*, 19: 1 (1988), pp. 1-26.

⁷² See, for example, P. E. de Josselin de Jong, 'The Rise and Decline of a National Hero', *JMBRAS*, 38: 2 (1965), pp. 140-55.

(sacredness) and the *wahy* (revelation) that descended on him.⁷³ The *Babad Tanah Jawi* also states, that the king is the possessor of the earth: 'everything in Java', a figure in the book says, 'the earth on which we live, the water we drink, the grass, the leaves, everything belongs to the king'. *The Serat Centini* looks at the world as a stage of *wayang*, which is moved by a *dalang* (puppeteer): 'the true *dalang* is the king himself. He himself is the deputy of the prophet, the prophet is the deputy of God Almighty, the prophet and the king are the manifestations of the invisible God.'⁷⁴

The symbolic importance of Islamic elements as the legitimate basis of power are repeatedly emphasized in traditional Javanese historiographies. In a moving event depicted by the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, Pakubuwono I laments the fact that his nephew, Mangkurat Mas (the king he had deposed) has taken all the royal regalia: 'But I know', he says consoling himself 'that even if all other *pusaka* (heirlooms) should be taken away, if only the Demak mosque and the tomb of Adilangu remain, this will suffice. Only these two are true *pusaka* of Java.'⁷⁵ The mosque of Demak is believed to have been erected by the legendary *Wali Sanga* (Nine Saints) of Java and the Adilangu tomb is the grave of Sunan Kalijaga, the most revered *wali* in the Javanese political tradition.⁷⁶ These two royal 'heirlooms' are located on the north coast of Java, the site of the early Islamic principalities.

The transfer of the central *kraton*, from the coast (Demak) to the interior (Pajang, and later Mataram) did not only shift the economic basis of the state, from maritime trade to agriculture.⁷⁷ Perhaps more importantly it also introduced changes in political and cultural tradition. In his studies of the 15th- and early-16th-century texts found on the north coast of Java, Drewes comes to the conclusion that religious and ethical teachings in this early period were purely 'Islamic', in the sense there was no trace of Buddhistic or Ciwaistic elements. The texts clearly emphasize the divide between Islam and Hinduism. In other words, the texts, which might have been produced by religious teachers, are very

⁷³ On this see Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16th and 19th century*, Modern Indonesia Project Monograph series (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1968). See also, Benedict Anderson, 'The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture' in Claire Hold et al (eds.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 1-70.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Moedjanto, *Concept of Power*, pp. 106-7.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 32.

⁷⁶ On the symbolic political significance of Kalijaga in the history of Java, see Geertz, *Islam Observed*.

⁷⁷ van Leur, *Trade*.

much the product of the 'universalist' Muslim tradition.⁷⁸ The texts and religious attitudes of the coast during the early period of *Moslemse vorstendommen* (Muslim kingdoms), to use the phrase of de Graaf and Pigeaud,⁷⁹ do show a 'break' in the cultural continuity of Java. It was after Mataram took over political hegemony that the need for a cultural basis of legitimacy became of prime importance. The historical 'break' had to be healed and, consequently, universal Islamic doctrines had to be domesticated, not only because the interior was still largely heathen, but also because the loyalty of small *kratons* had to be secured. The *Babad Tanah Jawi*, composed at the behest of the successor to the court of Mataram, begins its 'history' of Java with the statement of belief and praise to the Prophet.⁸⁰ It then continues to serve its function as the legitimizer of the dynasty by affirming the continuity of the *kejawen* (Javanese) past with the Islamic present. In the meantime, the ulema, the 'breakers' of cultural continuity, had to find their place in the newly formulated order.

Unlike in the Malay tradition, a religious leader in Java could be both a spiritual authority and a local aristocrat. In a concentric political tradition, the *'alim* could be seen as the centre of his own 'political universe'. Like the small *kratons*, they could also refer to their ancient origins. But Mataram was a historical 'upstart' of lowly origin. In spite of the 'invented' or 'remembered' (as Bernard Lewis might put it) genealogical claims of Senapati and the military might of Mataram, the kingdom still needed some kind of ideological basis that might enable it to accommodate the divergent structural and cultural demands of its domain. And indeed, a tradition of dialogue has always referred to a certain notion of political orthodoxy – a 'kratonic' orthodoxy – which, while acknowledging the place of Islam and the power of its representatives, emphasizes the continuing validity of traditional claims to and ideals of legitimate power, in the person of the king. It is perhaps from this perspective that some of the works of both the court *pujangga* (poets) and the ulema of the *pesantren* can be understood.

In their own literary styles and systems of textual symbolism, these *kraton* and *pesantren* literati wrote treatises that aimed at achieving a harmonious representation of kratonic orthodoxy.⁸¹ In this type of orthodoxy the ideological 'culprits' are those who put too much stress on one component at the expense of

⁷⁸ G. W. J. Drewes, *Een Javaanse Primbon uit de Zestiende Eeuw, Opiniew Uitgegeven en Vertald* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1954); *The Admonitions of Seh Bari* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1969); *An Early Javanese Code of Muslim Ethics*, Bibliotheca Indonesica, 18 (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978).

⁷⁹ H. J. de Graaf and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *De Eerste Moslimse Vorstendommen op Java: Studien over de Staatkundige Geschiednis van de 15de en 16de eeuw*, VKI, 69 ('s-Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

⁸⁰ Quoted by K. Steenbrink, *Mencari Tuhan Dengan Kacamata Barat Kajian Kritis Mengenai Agama di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 1988), pp. 196-200.

⁸¹ Cf. A. Day 'Islam and Literature in Southeast Asia', in Hooker (ed.), *Islam in South-East Asia*, pp. 130-59.

the other. Therefore, Kyai Mutamakin, a figure in the *Serat Cabolek*, a poem composed by a court poet, is harshly criticized. Not only has he caused social friction – his esoteric teachings have made people forget the mosque – he also represents ‘the religion of the Arabs’. Ketib Anom, however, deserves praise. He is the ideal spiritual leader. He reminds the king and the local rulers of their duties as leaders and protectors of religion and social harmony. A very knowledgeable ‘*ālim*, he is also ‘well versed in *kawī*’ (pre-Islamic literary and philosophical traditions).⁸² In a similar vein, the *Serat Dermagandul* deserves condemnation: this work created tension in society, and more importantly from the perspective of kratonic orthodoxy, it rejects the validity of the place of Islam in Javanese tradition.⁸³

The tradition of dialogue, however, not only reflects the continuing social need for a workable ideological orthodoxy but also the existence of cultural cleavages. The sociological implications of this situation have been the subject of various important studies, but from a historical perspective this situation may help to explain the eventual division within the ulema class, as the result of the bureaucratization of Islam initiated by the colonial government. While the ulema of the *pesantren* continued their roles as social critics and would-be challengers to the ruling elite, the bureaucratized ulema, the *penghulu* and his circle, were recruited into the the *priyai* (court official) ethos and lifestyle.

Warfare and the colonial situation brought about different patterns of structural change. If the almost unending colonial war in Moroland failed to destroy the symbolic, if not the actual, position of the ruling dynasties, in Aceh the destruction of the ruling dynasty and the military successes of the Dutch so-called ‘pacification’ campaigns caused deep political cleavages between the *uluebalang* and the ulema. Unwittingly, perhaps, Dutch Islamic policy only strengthened the position of the ulema as the genuine definers of meaning in Acehnese society. When the time came – during the national revolution – the ulema, and not the *uluebalang*, emerged as the real contenders for power.

The Pangkor Agreement of 1874, between the British and the Sultan of Perak, acknowledged the authority of the Sultan in matters pertaining to religion and *adat*. The agreement, which became the model of later agreements between the British and Malay sultans, strengthened the power of the Sultan vis-à-vis his subjects. ‘Islam and *adat*’ were longer simply the basis of the integrity of the

⁸² S. Soebardi (ed. and trans.), *The Book of Cabolek: A Critical Edition with an Introduction*, Bibliotheca Indonesica, 16 (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1975).

⁸³ G. W. J. Drewes, ‘The Struggle between Javanism and Islam as illustrated by the *Serat Dermagandul*’, *BKI*, 122: 3 (1966), pp. 309-65.

state and of social cohesion, but also the sphere in which the much-reduced authority of the sultan could be concentrated. But, in an increasingly pluralistic society, a result of the coming of Chinese and Indian migrants, the sultanates became the only political domain open to the Malay nationalists. Along with Islam and the Malay language, the institution of the sultanate was taken to symbolize Malay identity. The tradition of integration continues to be functional and with it the internal tension lingers on.

VI

The formation of Islamic states cannot be separated from the process of Islamization. Since this process closely followed trade routes, the emergence of Islamized centres of power cannot be simply regarded as the logical consequence of internal social development. An Islamic state might emerge in a *kāfir* social and cultural environment. Therefore the identification of an 'Islamic state' as a historical 'fact' should first of all be seen as an attempt to conceptualize itself. It should be perceived through its ideal structural arrangement and ideological stance, as described by traditional historiographies. The concept of an Islamic state reflects an attachment to Islamic universalism. At its highest conceptual level, the Islamic state is one which tries to accommodate universal doctrinal demands in its formal structural arrangement and which formulates its ideological legitimacy on the basis of religious precepts. As a concept, the Islamic state is an ideological as well as an ethical state, the existence of which should be accounted for in terms of the transcendent.

But the state, or *kerajaan*, or sultanate, is not merely a concept. It is also an organization of power with the king, or sultan, or raja, as its head. As an organization it also demands loyalty and obedience for the sake of its survival. As an empirical reality, then, this *kerajaan* can be characterized as an organization consisting of clusters of unclearly defined roles, rather than as an institution with state functionaries. In this multicentred organization, the main political task of its head, the raja or the sultan, is to secure his predominant position. The working of the 'state' apparatus is very much dependent on the ability of the ruler to use his spiritual or ideological legitimacy to guarantee the 'sacredness' of the office. Systems of economic and political patronage, kinship alliances and other factors should all be applied to strengthen the always-fragile position of the king. The 'biographies' of Sultan Agung of Mataram, Iskandar Muda of Aceh and other great kings clearly show that the structural weaknesses of the state had to be compensated for by strong personalities. One might, from an ideological perspective, lament the fact that the 'Islamized' states of Southeast Asia had to face the unprecedented challenge of the west before they were able to

transform themselves into workable 'Islamic states'. This challenge came much too early; it came before these states formulated viable structural foundations, capable of accommodating idealistic doctrinal demands as well as divergent local situations and changing historical circumstances. This inability has been one of the most significant sources of internal tension in each of the traditions discussed.

The concept of political tradition is clear enough. It is no more than an analytical device. It is formulated as a way to comprehend complex historical and sociological tendencies. The validity and the versatility of the concept should, of course, be tested not only in terms of its explanatory rigour but also in its predictive capacity. Even though this paper has concentrated on the former, and has not properly dealt with the latter, one or two points have to be emphasized.

A political tradition is basically a matter of *'urf*: that is to say, a local variant in the historical Islamic world. 'Integration' and 'dialogue', the two major traditions that have been formulated, can only be applicable to actual and historical political entities. In other words, despite similar ideological and structural traits to be found in both Aceh and Makassar, for example, their understanding of integration can differ significantly. As a concept, tradition should be seen as a cultural prism through which the *umma* in their various geographic localities or political entities look at changing realities. Tradition is the *weltanschauung* as well as the ethos in undertaking dialogue with the external – those that cannot be simply wished away. It is this dialogue that forms the basis of behaviour.

In the process of history, not only has tradition to undergo internal change, it also gradually loses its 'monopoly' as the only basis of both *weltanschauung* and ethos. Colonization, urbanization, the formation of nation states and other factors, which both challenge tradition and re-create it, have undermined its strength and validity, only for it to re-emerge vigorously in times of crisis. We need only cite the cases of the southern Philippines, the four provinces of southern Thailand and even Aceh. The *'urf* aspect of tradition may have been declining but its universalistic persuasion remains strong; this aspect alone is not effaced by time.