

# The Role Of Socio-Religious Teachers Of Qur'anic Recitation In Dutch East Indies' 1800-1942

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## Abstract

This paper examines the existence and role of Qur'an recitation teachers during the Dutch East Indies Government (1800-1942). Qur'an teachers in question is a teacher of Qur'an reading basics, usually conducted by those in the lowest Muslim intellectual structure. This study is important in the perception of continuity and changes in the position of Qur'an recitation teachers in their relationship with government elite, religious elites, and society. Through a socio-intellectual historical approach, this paper examines data on Qur'an teachers' incomes and their social, political, and religious roles. Qur'an teachers have a strategic role in increasing Islamic literacy at the grassroots level, even though most are at a basic level in hierarchy at the Langgar and village mosques. Despite their basic level in the hierarchy of the Islamic intellectual elite, Qur'an teachers are the "standard of reference" for fluency in reading the Qur'an, the guardians of faith, the rituals of the Qur'an and its traditions, and a reference for moral character and behavior. They also act as mediators between the Kyai and the community, and between the government and community elites.

**Keywords:** Teacher of Quranic learning, Qur'anic Learning, Langgar, Teacher Ordonnance.

## Introduction

As in other parts of the Islamic world, learning or reciting the Qur'an is a foundation stone of study (Hurgronje, 1996: 4; Dodge, 1962: 2) in Islamic education in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesian) archipelago. A.H John stated that the recitation of the Qur'an, especially at the pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), determined the Islamic lifestyle during the era of Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago. J.L Peacock also stated that this model of education system defined Islam in the archipelago in the period 1600-1942 (Jalaluddin, 1990: 8). Recitation activities of the Qur'an correlated with the Muslim's life of the archipelago. The Qur'an was positioned as a non-local text that originates from the essence of the Creator and functions as a guide to life and traditions (Woodward, 2012: 80). Because the

Qur'an is in the realm of belief (axis of truth) as part of the rukn al-îmân, reciting learning the Qur'an is positioned as one of the socio-religious obligations that fostered the circulation of norms, teachers of the Qur'an, students, media, society, and prestige. Its application was taken as an activity of urban communities, as well as in rural communities (rural) more closely. In rural communities, most of the activities are carried out in the house of the Qur'an teacher (nggon), Langgar, surau, mosque, or small pesantren. In the Beknopte Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie it is stated:

Many villages but by no means all contain a Langgar (village religion house), which also serves as a Qur'an school and as a night shelter for traveling young companions. Only a few langger village have a mësigit (mosque) that also

serves the Friday service (Bezemer: 1921: 125).

One of the groups that played a role in the development of the Qur'an tradition was Qur'an teacher recitation. They generally lead Langgar / tajug, and only teach al-Qur'an and basic Islamic knowledge. Its role does not appear to be elitist, but its contribution to the development of Muslim communities in Indonesia is very pronounced until now, especially among rural communities and remote areas. Their existence and contribution can be traced to the time of the Islamization process in the archipelago, during the Islamic Sultanate, and during the Dutch East Indies.

During the Dutch East Indies era (1800-1942), the existence of Qur'an teachers was in line with the development of the Muslim people of the archipelago which indicated an increase in the intensification of Islam. At least some evidence can be put forward against that. First, the results of the population census in the Dutch East Indies region show an increase in the quantity of the Muslim population throughout the region. Second, the increase in the number of Indonesian Muslims who make the pilgrimage to Mecca, as shown by many studies (Putuhena, 2007; Douwes and Nico Kapten, 1997). Third, the growing development of Islamic educational institutions, such as pesantren (Java), Dayah or Meunasah (Aceh), and Surau (West Sumatra).

This study relies on several sources, including notes on the Colonial Qur'an Regulations (Ekadjati and Darsa, 1999: 107), C. Spat, *De Islam En Zijn Beteekenis Voor Nederlandsh-Indie* (1925), C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Aceh: Rakyat dan Adat Istiadat* (1996), Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *School of the Qur'an and Islamic Education in Indonesia* (1992), Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah and Schools* (1984), and Martin van Bruinessen *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, and Tarekat* (1995). An overview of the life of the Qur'an teacher in the context of 19th century religious education can be found in the writings of Brumund, Verkerk, Pistorius, Van Der Chijs, and Snouck Hurgronje. In addition, a similar picture can be found of Indonesian authors who compiled their autobiographies such as Ahmad Djajadiningrat and Muhammad Rajab

(Steenbrink, 1984: 152). The most recent writing is Zamakhsyari Dhofier's writing entitled *Al-Qur'an dan Sekolah Pendidikan Islam* (1992).

## Discussion

### Teacher of the Qur'an in Typology of Religious Teachers in the Dutch East Indies Region

This Since the VOC trade monopoly in the archipelago ending in the year 1800, the territory of his former control was nationalized into the empire of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. These areas were integrated into a semi-autonomous government system known as the *Nederlandsch-indie* or the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch East Indies government led by a Governor General has full authority in making strategic policies in various fields of life, such as politics, social, cultural, economic, and education.

In the field of religious education, the Dutch East Indies government implemented a policy of a political nature by paying attention to Qur'an teachers, as well as their educational institutions (Langgar, Pesantren, Dayah, Surau, Meunasah). This policy originated with the Governor General Van der Capellen's Decree dated March 8, 1819. This decree was based on a research study on education in Javanese society with the aim of improving reading and writing skills among the people of the Dutch East Indies, especially Java. This research is intended to improve the education system for indigenous people, including whether existing educational institutions and teachers can be used for the implementation of education designed by the Government (Steenbrink, 1984: 1). However, this research was not followed up with a follow-up policy, because it seems that it is only for data collection or mapping.

With limited information, this study reports on the existence of educational activities in the Java region related to important religious education institutions in Java, as well as teaching lessons on Arabic language and letters (al-Qur'an) as well as Javanese language and script. This activity runs at various regional levels, from the

village level to the residency level. However, the existence of these indigenous educational activities and institutions was not immediately utilized by the Dutch East Indies Government. Efforts to develop an education system for natives that are based on the existing system have failed, at least for two factors.

First, the a priori attitude of the Colonial Government towards education carried out by natives, both at the home, Langgar, Surau, And Pesantren levels. This is reflected in the views of J.A. van de Chijs, Inspector of Education for natives, who in 1865 had the view that "Although I strongly agree that indigenous schools are interspersed with indigenous customs, I do not accept them because these habits are too bad, so they cannot be used in indigenous schools". Second, there is resistance (resistance) from the majority of indigenous education actors, including Qur'an teachers and Islamic boarding schools, to adapt the school education system offered by the Government. The relationship

between the two becomes binary-opposition or "Friends in Controversy" (Steenbrink, 1995).

Even though the government does not pay attention to it, the activities of chanting al-Qur'an with its various institutions continue. The main driving force is the Qur'an teachers as agents of socio-religious change. In this socio-religious process, the Qur'an recitation has created social strata for teachers and students, especially in rural areas of Java and Aceh. Qur'an teacher plays a role model for the people of the archipelago, especially for the lower economic class and the uneducated people. At that time, what was meant by an educated community referred to the community from the pesantren or Praja school. At that time, together with local rulers and other Islamic elites, the teachers of the Qur'an were able to build an academic culture that "being unable to recite the Qur'an" was a disgrace (a shame), as attached to the character of the Sundanese Muslim community, Betawi, Malay and Javanese.

**Figure 1 Portrait of pupils and teacher of the Qur'an in the study of the Qur'an in Takingeun, Central Aceh. Source: KITLV Collection, No. 25151: 1931**



According to Steenbrink (1984: 152-154), in broad outline, in the 19th century the Qur'an teacher was one of the five groups of teachers who played a significant role in the intensification of Islam in the archipelago. The other four are a) teacher of books, b) teacher of tarekat, c) teacher of unseen knowledge, amulet

seller, etc., and d) teacher of wandering (who does not stay in one place). In the hierarchy above, the Qur'an teacher occupies the lowest position, both in the scientific strata and in social roles. Generally, they lead or manage violations.

In contrast to Steenbrink, Ibn Qoyyim Isma'il in *Kiai Penghulu Jawa: Its Role in the*

Colonial Period (Isma'il, 1977), mentions several categories of religious teachers in Java, namely teachers of the Qur'an, priests, caliphs, pengulu, and chiefs of head. In this typology, the Qur'an teacher is still positioned at the bottom. The first Caliph was pinned to Muhammad Sueb who was known as the Caliph of Apo, which is immortalized as a street in the city of Bandung. Caliphs, heads of heads and heads refer to a number of religious elites appointed by the government.

Meanwhile, in the Betawi community, teachers of reciting al-Qur'an are known as Ustadz. His position is below Muallim and teachers (Zakaria, 2015: 88; Kiki, 2017). Ustadz are only allowed to teach the Qur'an al-Qur'an and the basics of Islam. This is different from Muallim who were given the authority to organize recitation of the book (yellow). At the highest position is the teacher, that is, people who are allowed to teach the Qur'an, teach books, and issue fatwas. The typologies above were assigned to indigenous teachers.

In addition, there is greater respect for teachers and preachers from among Arab descent, namely the habâib, such as for the Al-Habsyi Kwitang family and Al-Attas from Bungur. They are recognized with full respect as the descendants of the Prophet, so they are given the title Sayyid or Syarifah, especially for the Habib, namely sayyid who is a teacher for the descendants, educated natives, and laity. For teachers of the Qur'an al-Qur'an who have met the sayyids and Habâib, the fluency of pronouncing the Arabic letters of the sayyids and habâib is the standard of their fluency. Not a few teachers of the Qur'an then did intensive study with Arabs, especially Habâib. They then give gifts to the Habâib as a form of appreciation.

Qur'an teachers are positioned as independent religious experts or do not hold official positions and are outside the bureaucracy. In addition to the Qur'an teacher, in this position, the tarekat and hajj teachers are mostly located in rural areas. Their position and livelihood did not depend on knowing the ruler. Even though they are positioned as informal leaders, in the view of the rural population they are seen as figures who are appropriate to take care of religious

education, lead religious ceremonies, provide social services, such as giving advice, arbitration in social disputes, even in terms of treatment (Dirdjosanjoto, 1999: 37).

The number of Qur'an teachers in the Dutch East Indies

The exact number of Qur'an teachers in the Dutch East Indies cannot be determined, however, local historiography reports knew about the existence of these Quran teachers. Requirements for them were the ability to read well the Qur'an and read basic Arabic books (Tijan Dharûrî, Safînat al-Najâ, Jurîmiyah, Kaylanî), and being able to interpret basic Arabic texts in Malay, Javanese, or Sundanese. This ability is sufficient to make them worthy of leading a Langgar, small surau, or madarasah small. They were later referred to as Kyai, ajengan, pangarsa, Ustadz, modin, leube, malem, and even alem (Hurgronje, 1996: 5).

The pre-Dutch East Indies period, for example, during the time of Sultan Agung (d. 1645), many teachers of the Qur'an appeared, with the increasing number of Islamic educational institutions. However, his growth was stunted during the time of Sultan Amangkurat I (1646-1677), Sultan Agung's successor, because he massacred 6,000 clerics (and their families) on charges of supporting rebels. Because of this, he was dubbed by MC Ricklef (in War, Culture, and Economy in Java 1677-1721, p. 31) as a brutal ruler. However, the killing of as many as 6,000 scholars showed the existence of a large number of Qur'an teachers at that time.

After the Diponegoro War, in 1831, the Dutch government recorded about 1,835 people from the Qur'an with 16,556 students, spread across several districts that were predominantly Muslim in Java. In 1885, Van der Berg found 14,929 non-salaried students totaling 222,663 students (Dhofier, 1992, p. 88). However, the number of Qur'an teachers in the 19th century cannot be ascertained. This was because the Dutch East Indies government paid less attention to the conditions of Islamic education institutions, including Qur'an teachers and their curricula.

Data collection on the teachers of the Qur'an recitation was carried out again after the outbreak of the Diponegoro War (1825-1830) and the Banten Peasants' Rebellion (1888). This was due to the government's concern about a similar

rebellion triggered by religious elites, especially hajis, middle east Kyai alumni, and Qur'an teachers. Table 1 is an example of data on religious teachers in the Java region based on the 1888 census.

<b>Table 1</b> <b>List of Number of Religious Teachers at the End of 1887.</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Religion teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Banten	561,003	921	0.16
2.	Batavia (Jakarta)	937,289	1,134	0.12
3.	Priangan	1,668,012	1,162	0.47
4.	Karawang	333,352	261	0.03
5.	Cirebon	1,357,306	1,188	0.08
6.	Tegal	1,020,882	1,020	0.10
7.	Pekalongan	539,372	478	0.09
8.	Semarang	1,409,734	1,723	0.12
9.	Jepara	859,811	651	0.08
10.	Rembang	1,198,170	496	0.04
11.	Surabaya	1,901,655	1,575	0.08
12.	Madura	1,425,402	2,267	0.16
13.	Pasuruan	847,445	762	0.09
14.	Probolinggo	507,108	685	0.13
15.	Besuki	597,108	1,167	0.20
16.	Banyumas	1,129,553	159	0.01
17.	Bagelen	1,287,098	259	0.02
18.	Kedu	793,953	144	0.02
19.	Yogyakarta	651,123	187	0.03
20.	Surakarta	1,115,232	4,229	0.38
21.	Madiun	1,038,574	373	0.04
22.	Kediri	996,385	810	0.08
Source: Appendix F of the Report of the Director of the Ministry of Home Affairs 18 September 1888 Number 5,162 in Vb. February 7, 1889, Number 4 (Kartodirjo p. 369)				

The numbers above do not reflect the actual number, because many Qur'an teachers and their institutions are not registered, as well as because the data collection is only based on village level government reports. Apart from that, the government only needs to know the number, as data for control and supervision of the Qur'an teachers.

The Role of Qur'an teacher in the Field of Religious Education

In the observations of Snouck C. Hurgronje (1996: 3), the Muslims of the archipelago saw that reading (or reciting) the Qur'an was the beginning of all knowledge. This ability is known in the Acehnese language as beuet Kuru'an, while in Java it is known as noran or maos kur'an. This Qur'an activities during the Dutch East Indies period was a continuation of the activities introduced by the propagators of Islam during the Islamization of the Archipelago. One of them, for example, was Sheikh Qurotul

Ain who intensively taught the Qur'an, especially qir'at (the art of Qur'an recitation), since his landing in Karawang in 1418 until his death.

At the same time, Maulana Malik Ibrahim (died 1419 in Gresik, East Java) was known as the "founding father of Pesantren" in addition to "Spiritual Father of Walisongo" developing a traditional Islamic education system in Java, namely pesantren (Noer, 2001: 92). One of the things that these institutions have in common is to make the "Qur'an recitation" one of their curricula. The same thing was done at the Sikayu Mosque (1477) which is located in the west near Semarang. This mosque originated from Langgar which later developed into the first mosque in the Semarang area.

This activity continued from the time of the Islamic sultanate in the archipelago to the era of Indonesian independence, even today. The sultans in the archipelago developed their own educational models, all of which included the Qur'anic recitation as part of the curriculum. For example, out of 211 villages in Java, there are 4 villages explicitly allocated their taxes to the development of these basic education institutions, especially pesantren (Bruinessen, 1992: 32). Raden Fatah founded a pesantren in Tanah Perdikan (Yunus, 1979: 217) in Glagah Arum, Bintara, west of Jepara. Then this area developed into the center of the Demak Bintara government. Meanwhile, Tegalsari Islamic Boarding School (founded in 1742) has the above role based on the results of a survey by the Dutch East Indies Government in 1819 (Noer, 2001: 89).

The Sultan of Mataram Islam, Sultan Agung (ruled 1613-1645) with the title Khalifatullâh Syayidinâ Panatagama ing Tanah Jawi built relations between the Sultanate government and the ulama so he was able to develop the pesantren as one of the typical religious education institutions of Tanah Jawa (Mas'ud, 1999: 15- 17). The number of these pesantren played quite a role in the intensification of Islam, as well as being aimed at mobilizing for the Diponegoro War or the Java War (1825-1830). Many teachers of the Qur'an were part of the Diponegoro troops, apart from the Kyai and santri or pesantren students (Mas'ud, 1999: 21).

Qur'an teachers are generally pesantren alumni who only learn to a minimum. Some Qur'an teachers are known for their role as modin. The term modin is a derivation from the word muaddzin (prayer caller) or from the word Imâm al-dîn (religious teacher). It is named so, because Qur'an teacher is given the role of echoing the call to prayer at prayer times, especially Friday prayers. They are not given the role of khatib (Friday prayers or holiday prayer summon deliverer), because they are considered of insufficient knowledge for the role, which is left to the Kyai (pesantren leaders). However, they are given the authority to teach religion at home and to beginner santri and ordinary people (Zakaria, 2015: 81). They are also referred to as marabot (Sundanese; ribath [pondok] managers).

The majority of them lead or manage education at the Langgar (tajug; Sundanese) or even "home" (Nggon; Javanese) level. This institution is not as prestigious as pesantren, sometimes it does not even have a permanent schedule and space, but its work cannot be ignored, because it is the oldest Islamic education system in the archipelago, as conducted at the Sekayu Mosque in Semarang which was founded in 1477 (Hasbullah, 1991: 132). Some experts say that the Langgar is a remnant of the legacy of the Kawalen era (guardianship period), which later experienced the rapid development of the Sultan Agung of Mataram Islam. In van Bruinessen's view, this Qur'an Nggon can be categorized as a "pesantren" in its simple form (Bruinessen, 1994: 21).

At the beginning of its growth, the majority of Langgar were set up on the personal initiative of their owners. Many of the villagers who were rich or had performed the hajj built a Langgar around their house. The motive is the encouragement of spirituality, namely the practice of zakat, alms, and waqf, but also reasons for prestige and social status. They have a significant role in society, namely as teachers and spiritual leaders at the grass root level and as mediators between the community and Kyai (ulama; leaders of middle and large Islamic boarding schools (figure 1)) and regional leaders (dzu'amâ).

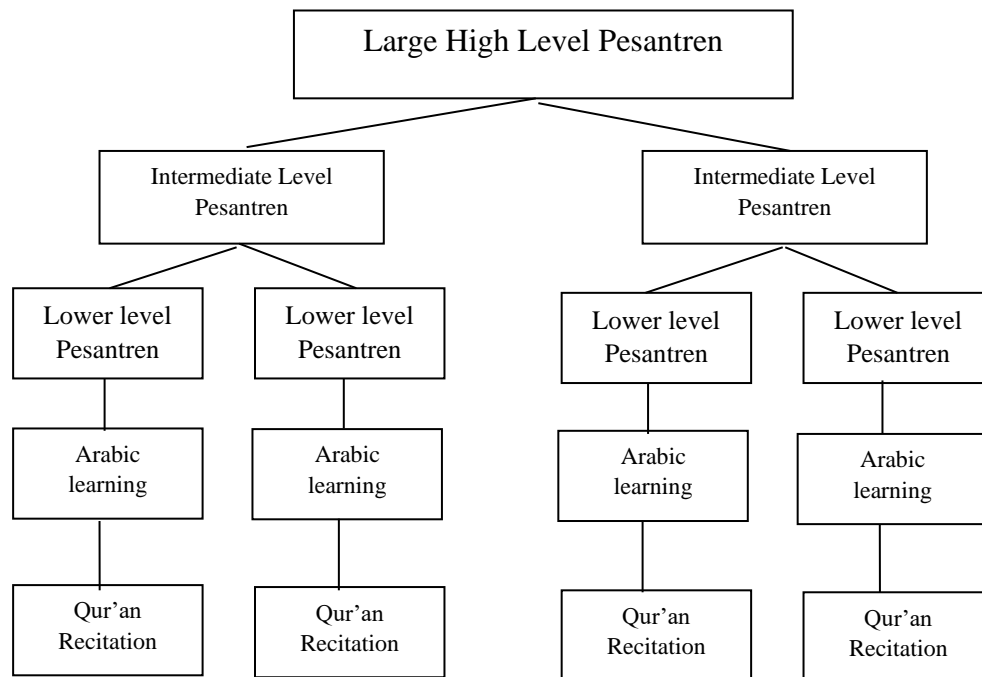
The role of the teachers of the Qur'an recitation is evident in the basic education of the Qur'an. They organize recitation of the al-Qur'an (which is known as nggon). According to Zamakhsyari Dhofier, this al-Qur'an recitation activity is the embryo of the next educational institution, namely the pesantren or madrasah. According to him, listen to the Qur'an

"It is very important to note that these Qur'anic schools in Indonesia were traditionally a part of a wider traditional Islamic education called pesantren. Traditionally Qur'anic Schools in Indonesia did not have clear denominative

terms except that the place where the students were engaged in these educational activities were called "nggon ngaji" meaning that place where students learn to read the Qur'an. Students who took part in this Islamic Education activity were denoted by their action "ngaji Qur'an", meaning learning to read the Qur'an.

In the process of educating students and society, the teachers of the Qur'an have a fairly limited role, which is limited to teaching Arabic letters, teaching reading the Qur'an (which is often limited to Juz 'amma), and teaching the pillars of Islam (Steenbrink, 1984: 152).

**Figure 2 Traditional Islamic Education Institutions or Pesantren in Indonesia (Dhofier, 1992: 89)**



They are called "mang, brother, aa, or father", very rarely are they called Kiyai or Ustadz, let alone called a sheikh. Elementary education begins with learning the hijâiyah chapters, which are often sequential or directly following the teacher's recitation. They teach the spelling of the hijâiyah letters, starting from Alif the first letter of the Arabic alphabet until the students are able to read the Qur'an. Therefore, they are also often named alif-alipan guru. In this case, Deliar Noer (1996: 14) emphasizes that

teaching in Langgar is centered on learning to read the Qur'an, and that too only concentrates on pronouncing the letters and sentences (verses) of the Qur'an correctly according to the ability of Qur'an teacher. The length of time to learn the Qur'an is not determined by the length of time, but it depends on the ability, even the local situation and conditions.

Historically, this method of teaching reading the Qur'an developed during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions.

Today's learning of al-Qur'an uses a method called al-tharîqah bi al-muhâkah or al-tarîqah bi al-musyâfahah. The way this method works is that the teacher recites the Qur'an recitation properly and then the students follow the teacher's recitation. Later, this method was named al-muhâkah wa al-musyâfahah or talqîn-taqlîdî (or demonstrative). After the students have mastered and memorized the reading, those who want to be shown the form of letters or writing from the memorized reading. So what is important here is the memorization of the students, not the writing, because writing is only to help memorize. The teacher pays attention to the movements of the students' lips, whether the reading and the letters are in accordance with their makhraj and tajwîd or not.

This method developed at that time, at least, because it was driven by several factors. First, Arab society, including Arab Muslims still rely on - to borrow Jack Goody's term - oral reasoning (oral tradition), namely people who transmit values and works (such as the Qur'an, hadith, and poetry) from oral to oral. Second, the culture of writing and reading is not yet massive, only a handful of people's expertise. Moreover, many of the early Muslims came from among the peasants, laborers, and slaves belonging to the lower class and uneducated people. Third, the existence of the Mushaf is still limited, and the tradition of copying the Qur'an has not yet developed. These three factors are at least a strong reason why the methods of al-muhâkah and al-musyafahah are the methods that are widely used today.

The learning emphasizes the ability to read Arabic without error, not understanding the contents of the Scriptures. In this basic teaching, what is trained is hearing, memory, and fluency. The reading rules described in the book about tajwîd (how to read the Qur'an properly). The theory about this is given in great detail by the teacher of Qur'an to students orally (Hurgronje, 1996: 3). Therefore, the standard of fluency (lahjah) in reading the Qur'an is the teacher himself. With this teaching, the people of the archipelago (who are classified as non-Arabic) will get to know a strange and difficult sound system (pronunciation), and thus gain an

understanding of the science of sound (phonetics) in passing (Hurgronje, 1996: 3).

In addition, the result obtained by a student after completing this basic education is the ability to memorize parts of the al-Qur'an that are needed to perform daily prayers. The practice of reading Qur'an by following strict rules is also practiced outside of prayer voluntarily because of merit (Hurgronje, 1996: 3). The art of reading from the students of the Qur'an school is only limited to the holy book, which is written using harakat (shakal), as long as they do not immediately forget it. There was learning to read other manuscripts too, such as the Buku Kuning, the Arabic book Pegon, students had to learn the tools (Arabic grammar, nahw and sharf). Therefore, although they can read the Qur'an at this stage, they generally cannot understand it well, nor can they read Arabic texts. Thus, it is difficult to categorize them as an educated group (Dhofier, 1992: 88).

Therefore, many people are unable to read and write (illiterate). According to Hurgroje, many Nusantara people viewed writing, including writing the Qur'an, as more of a burden than a pleasure. They also perceived it that in their lives they rarely needed written documents. If they need written documents, they would engage people who can write, without giving anything in return, they even asked for kindness for the writers to provide their own writing tools they need (Hurgronje, 1996: 4).

In the learning process, generally, a group of children learn together with a Qur'an teacher. Sometimes people who were rich enough brought in a private teacher to give their children the Qur'an lessons. Dhofier (1991: 15) explains:

All "nggon ngaji", however, were not of the same kind; they were in fact, highly stratified. They started with the earliest elementary form of education at home in which instruction was given mostly by parents: this consisted of memorizing some short "surah" (chapters) from the Qur'an beginning when a child was about five years old. At the age of seven or eight, a child was taught to read the Arabic alphabet usually by his older



brothers or sisters until he mastered the ability to read the Qur'an. Skill in reading the Qur'an, as it was understood by Javanese Moslems, needed continuous training by qualified teachers. To gain a better standard of reading, then the child had to attend further training, which was mostly available in mosques.

Education is individual in nature, that is, each student receives personal education from the teacher. This model is known as *sorogan*. In practice, a Qur'an teacher sits cross-legged and provides lesson material surrounded by students.

In addition, sometimes the students study together with classmates who are appointed by the teacher or considered experts (tutors or mentors) (Steenbrink, 1984: 152). Students are also given lessons on how to perform wudhu and daily prayers (prayer) five times which are good and correct as required by the Al-Qur'an. This activity can be found in every village, where the lessons are given in the village mosque, in specially designed learning places such as *Langgar*, in the houses of the *alim*, or sometimes on the terraces of the village religion teacher (guru reciting the Qur'an) (Angelino, 1930: 221-222).

**Figure 3 A Qur'an school in Java**



Source: Collectie Tropenmuseum <https://geheugen.delpher.nl/en/geheugen>

A similar picture is described in *De Islam En Zijn Beteekenls Voor Nederlandsh-Indie*, as follows:

"Op Java is in bijna elk dorp een bedehuisje, *Langgar* of zooals in de *Pasoendan tadjoe* geheeten, waar een deel van de jeugd samenkomt gedurende een paar uren van den dag om onderricht te ontvangen. Als onderwijzer treedt veelal de dorpspriester op (zie beneden), of iemand anders, die er de geschiktheid voor heeft. Het onderwijs omvat in de eerste plaats het werktuigelijk opzeggen van enkele *Koeran*-fragmenten, waarvan soms de leermeester zelf de beteekenis niet begrijpt; en voorts hetgeen noodig is om de voornaamste godsdienstplichten naar

behooren te kunnen verrichten, inzonderheid het dagelijksche ceremonieel."

Translation: In Java in almost every village there is a place of worship, called *Langgar* or as in the *Pasundan Tadjug*, where some of the youth gather for a few hours of the day to receive instruction. The village priest usually acts as a teacher (see below), or someone else who is suitable for it. In the first place, the teaching involves the mechanical recitation of some Qur'an fragments, the meaning of which sometimes the teacher himself does not understand; and furthermore, what is necessary in order to properly perform the main religious

duties, in particular the daily ceremonial (Spat: 1925: 8-9).

In several places, teachers used wooden slates as writing aids. Some students who came from rich families had slates in smaller sizes (Hurgronje, 1996: 4). A small proportion of the students had small sized copy of the Qur'an which contained the basic lessons of reading Arabic letters from the easy ones to the more complex ones. This book is known as the *Al-Qur'an Juz 'Amma* which is equipped with the *Qâidah Bagdâdiyyah* (compiled by Abû Manshûr' Abd al-Qâdir al-Bagdâdî (1037 AD) (Nelson, 2001: 14-30). The book being a copy (with writing instructions) of the main book, was at the time a quite difficult and expensive to own. Therefore, only a few students had this book" Little Qur'an".

What is even more difficult is that students have a large book of the Qur'an which contains 30 complete juz. At that time, only wealthy Indonesians had (handwritten) copies of the Qur'an or only those who had gone to Hajj had the "Great Qur'an". Not a few Qur'an teachers do not have the Great Qur'an because of the scarcity of goods and the high price. Therefore, having a "small Qur'an" (for students) and a large Qur'an (for teachers, Kyai, or adults) is prestige in itself. Because of that, one way to teach the Qur'an is to memorize it, especially certain parts (verses or letters). From here, one can find people who have memorized several surah of the Qur'an (juz 'amma, yâsîn, wâqî'ah, etc.) but they are categorized as illiterate.

After being deemed capable of pronouncing the letters, words and sentences (verses) of the Qur'an, the students were given the final juz (juz 'amma), which is a small volume of the Qur'an that is separate from the whole comprising of 30 ju. This last juz is read by students independently under the guidance of a reciting teacher (Aceh: ureueng peubeuet or guree). After the juz 'amma has finished reading, the student is asked to read the 28th juz or juh taba. This juz refers to the two letters of the first word in the 28th juz, namely tabâraka. After undergoing the recitation of hijâiyah, juz 'amma, and juz tabâarak, the student may be allowed to move to the large Qur'an (30 juz complete Qur'an)

starting from QS al-Fâtiha until the last letter (Hurgronje, 1996: 4).

For students who are considered capable of reading Arabic letters (hijaiyah), reading the Qur'an according to the tajwîd (mujawwad) principles, and being able to complete the "small Qur'an" (juz 'amma), they are considered to have pass the basic education of the Qur'an. Although they are not given a formal certificate, at the end of their education, a graduation ceremony is held by distributing yellow rice (or nyongcot). Even among wealthy families, they used to have a more festive thanksgiving while performing circumcision (Steenbrink, 1984: 152).

Students who have passed this phase are given a mandate by the teacher to guide other students. The main standard of fluency is the teacher, the next is the guide (senior santri). Therefore, in this group, the proficiency teacher of the teaching teacher is a reference for the fluency of the Arabic pronunciation of the students. The students perform imitation (imitation; mimetic) of the teacher's voice and expression. If the teacher is not very fluent, so are the students. Especially in the regions, the tongue of the Muslim Nusantara people is very difficult to pronounce some Arabic letters. Therefore, among the indigenous teachers of al-Qur'an, who were not strictly trained by Arabic teachers, there were many mispronunciations of Arabic letters (makhârij al-hurûf). For example, throughout the archipelago, he pronounced 'ain through the nose (nasal). The Acehnese have difficulty pronouncing u or au which they often pronounce with ée, for example laulâ is pronounced léela, and qauluhu is read kéeluhu, while al-hamd is read alleuham.

Apart from learning the Qur'an, the basic aspects of tauhid (pillars of faith) and worship (pillars of Islam) are emphasized as additional lessons at this basic level. This lesson is more oriented towards understanding and practicing moral religion as a guide for daily behavior (Mastuhu, 1994: 55). There are hardly any educational institutions that study interpretation. In the notes L.W.C. van den Berg, there is only one commentary book used in pesantren in Java, namely Tafsîr Jalalain by Jalâl al-Dîn al-Mahalli (d. 1460) and Jalâl al-Dîn al-Suyûthi (d. 1505).

Meanwhile, there were no hadith books that were studied. Based on this, Steenbrink has the view that the study of juz and hadith has not become the focus of studies in 19th century Indonesian educational institutions. The study of juz and hadith is carried out indirectly from books entitled tafseer or hadiths, but through supporting books, especially fiqh (Steenbrink, 1984: 157).

### **The Socio-Political Role of Teachers of the Qur'an al-Qur'an**

The socio-political role of the Qur'an al-Qur'an teacher can be seen in several events, namely his role in social society, upheaval and resistance to the Dutch East Indies Government, as well as in the event of opposition to the position and policies of the leaders

### **The Social Role of Qur'an teacher**

Socially, teachers of the Qur'an al-Quran have a higher social status than the general public or students. Many of them have a better (or middle) economic level than most people, even though some are at the lower or upper economic level. Even though they have a professional role in spreading Islam and community education, many Qur'an teachers work as farmers, both as land owners and cultivators. One measure of their economic achievement is their ability to build their own Langgar, tajug, or madrasah. Even though in many ways, many of them are also assisted by rich people who provide donations, grants, or endowments.

Because many Qur'an teachers work as farmers, they are heavily affected by various Central government policies. When Governor-General Van den Bosch undertook a cultivation policy, in 1830, the hired teachers who were also land owners and cultivators were affected by the policy. In this system, the Government exercised a monopoly on the trade in export commodities in Java. Moreover, the Dutch determined the types

of commodities that must be planted by Javanese farmers. Farmers had to hand over a fifth of their crop to the Dutch East Indies Government. In 1830-1850, the Colonial Government played a major role in this monopoly, shifting the role of local priyayi and migrants (other Europeans, East Asians and West Asians). Apart from forced cultivation and labor, the land tax was levied. These policies hardened the economic conditions of Qur'an teachers.

The involvement of Qur'an teachers in various socio-economic and political roles cannot be separated from their liaison role with the religious elite. They become liaisons with higher religious elites, both Kyai and the leader. They also act as amil zakat at the village level, receiving, collecting and distributing zakat, especially zakat fitrah and agricultural zakat, to those entitled to receive it. Many of them are in the position of modin (mu'adddzin) or marabot (caretaker) of the mosque, who get a modest right (wages) from the funds owned by the mosque.

In other cases, they also act as a liaison between the indigenous political elite (priyayi) and the community. In the Dutch East Indies government system in Java, the quasi-relational system was indirect and hierarchical-dualistic. Along with the Dutch hierarchy, there was an indigenous hierarchy, namely the Javanese aristocrats (priyayi rulers of the Mataram sultanate), then the regional rulers, and the general public. Most of the Qur'an teachers are categorized as the lower-level elite, even though in the social strata of the natives, the position of the Qur'an teachers is better at the level of ordinary people.

In various religious traditions, they are mostly involved as regulators or leaders. Not a few, traditions related to al-Qur'an, such as Yasin, Waqi'ah, or recitation of al-Qur'an where people die are led by them. In this position, Qur'an teacher recites the role of guidance of the Islamic tradition.

### **Figure 4 Islamic teaching**



Islamic teaching. Source: *Het Paradijs Van Java* (Kerkhoff, 1900: 6)

Even though they are allowed (even required) to read al-Qur'an in Arabic, they are not allowed to translate or teach al-Quran in local language. This condition caused the Muslims of the archipelago to be able to read the Qur'an, but understood very little about it, as witnessed by Kartini and Hurgroje.

### **Role in Political Upheaval in the Archipelago**

The role of the Qur'an teachers in the West Java region in the political upheaval was seen when there was a war and or rebellion against the Dutch East Indies Government, such as in the Kedondong War in Cirebon, between 1802-1818, led by Kyai Bagus Rangin, and in a peasant revolt in Banten in 1888, under the leadership of Kyai Wasid (Kartodirjo, 1973). In other areas, the years 1800-1910 were filled with resistance to the Dutch colonial government, such as the Paderi War (1819-1832), the Diponegoro War (1825-1830), and the Aceh War (1873) (Kartodirjo, 1987: 370-393). In the various wars, elements of the indigenous forces were mostly

students and teachers of the Qur'an, apart from organic soldiers and religious elites, such as Kyai, Mufti, Ajengan, Tengku, and others.

During the Java War, there were several Kyai around Pangeran Diponegoro, including teachers such as Kyai Hasan Besari (Guru Ronggowarsito), Kyai Taftazani (Kertasuro), Kyai Baidhowi (Bagelelan, Yogyakarta), Kyai Nur Muhammad Ngadiwongso (Salaman, Magelang ). In addition, there were also Kyai who became partners with Pangeran Diponegoro, such as Kyai Mojo, Ki Ageng Gombol, and others. Peter Carey (2017: 316-317) states that there are 200 santri in which there are several Arab and peranakan Chinese, court students, santri from the residents of Perdikan villages, and Islamic boarding schools. Other large groups are the santri and the Kyai Mojo family, who come from three Islamic boarding schools; Mojo, Baderan, and Pulo Sometime. Their social status also varies. A total of 22 people were pilgrims who had just returned from the Holy Land. There were also about eight religious leaders and mosque officials as well as ten religious teachers (Kyai guru). The remaining 121 people are called

Kyai in the context of looser terms as honorary titles for village elders, religious teachers, and spiritual teachers.

The composition of Pangeran Diponegoro's troops shows that the Qur'an teachers were one of the elements in the political

upheaval against the Dutch East Indies Government. They were avant-garde in troop recruitment and community mobilization to support Pangeran Diponegoro, both for military power, logistics, and for guerrilla camps.

**Table 2**  
**List of Religious Teachers in Afdeling Anyer**

No	School Location	Religious teachers	Students
1.	Anyer	15 (11 haji)	201
2.	Cirebon	72 (27 haji)	1.573
3.	Kramat Watu	77 (26 haji)	1817
Total		164	3.591
Source: Report of the Directorate of the Ministry of Home Affairs 18 September 1888 Number 5162 in Vb. February 7, 1889, Number 4, Appendix E (Kartodirdjo, p. 372)			

After the end of the Java War, not a few followers of Pangeran Diponegoro then opened recitation centers or pesantren. For example, Kyai Hambali; originally from Holing / Keling - 1840 cleared land in Pekajangan to spread resistance to the Dutch East Indies through religious education. This land was opened by KH Hambali together with several Qur'an teachers, such as Ki Ageng Basyari, Raden Sutojoyo, Raden Gondang Winangun, and Raden Suryo Mentaram. Thus, many of the Diponegoro War followers switched the strategy of resistance, from physical warfare to the realm of education.

### **Clash of Qur'an Teachers: Penghulu and Kiai**

Qur'an teachers are at the lowest level in the social strata of Islamic intellectualism, but they are the avantgarde of society. Related to this, Roff explains (1989: 43)

The highest role played by Islam in providing an ideology for the revolution which establishes the belief and practice of holy Islam in a definitive way, by fighting against foreign powers. Very likely, it seems that one result of the Java War was the strengthening of the ulama's position among the peasants.

On this side, there was Islamophobia in the Dutch East Indies government, including among the Kyai and teachers of the Qur'an. The Dutch East Indies government made a declination of the authority of the Islamic elite in the public sphere, at least towards cleansing Islam as an ideology. Therefore, the Dutch East Indies Government also formed Government scholars, some of which were known as the leader group. According to Kartodirdjo (1973) and Aqib Suminto (1985: 179-184), the competition between the leader and the kiai strengthened during the reign of the Dutch East Indies. In order to create political order and security, the government has used the official institute to monitor the movements of the Kyai, Kyai teachers, and pilgrims.

In this feud, many of the teachers of the Qur'an recitation sided with the Kyai group. So that they were positioned as opposition or anti-Dutch East Indies government. They carried out silent opposition to various policies that they felt were not taking their side, both the policies of the Dutch East Indies government, the formal religious elite (the leader), and the local government elite. Even though, they did not wage open warfare, they had carried out "peaceful-jihad" (Bull, 2005: 24).

Through the cultural movement, the teachers of the Qur'an carry out cultural resistance, such as wearing the typical clothes of the students, namely wearing a gauze and a cap. Both are symbols of resistance to westernization in culture (clothing). Many of them also reject cooperative politics (politics of cooperation), such as government assistance (subsidies) for the development of educational institutions. Because of this, many Qur'an teachers (such as the Islamic boarding school) refused to assist the Dutch East Indies government, and this attitude was even maintained by some Qur'an and Islamic boarding school teachers when Indonesia became independent.

Many Qur'an teachers also reject "People's School" and Teaching Education (Kweekschool, HKS and HIK). Even though there were those who participated, many of them refused to become government teachers. Yet at that time, in the view of some people and the government elite, the status of "government teacher" had an honorable position. They were called *ndoro guru* or *manteri guru* with fairly high economic status. They were paid 40 guilders. This amount is quite large when compared to the standard of living at that time (2.5 cents) a day (Tilaar, 1995: 317). At the end of the 19th century, the salaries of government teachers were almost the same as those of assistant *wedana* (f.50-f.150) as described in *Retnodhoemilah* (1901, year 7, no.31) (Nagazumi, 1989: 32).

However, not a few European circles, particularly the Dutch, looked down on the natives. At that time there were many hate speeches against the natives. For example, there were common signs that read *verboden voor horden en inlander* (Dogs and natives are prohibited). Even though the utterance was casuistic in nature, it was sufficient to describe the attitude of Europeans towards natives, as well as related to the ethics of the interactions between natives and Europeans.

### **Government Oversight of Qur'an Teachers' Certification**

The development of the role of the Qur'an teacher continued to experience developments during the

Dutch colonial period. Considering that the development of the *pesantren* with the potential to disrupt political hegemony, the Dutch East Indies government issued at least four policies aimed at controlling various activities of the *pesantren*. First, in 1882, the Dutch East Indies government formed a *pristeranden* in charge of supervising religious teaching in *pesantren* (Barnadib, 1983: 24). Second, in 1905, the adoption of the religious teacher ordinance policy, which was tasked with supervising Islamic boarding schools and regulating the granting of permits for teachers to teach, because they had a lot of opposition and opposition to the authorities, in addition to hampering the progress of Islam (Hamzah, 1989: 47; Putuhena, 2007). Third, in 1925, the Dutch East Indies Government relaxed the restrictions for *Kyai* teachers and *Kyai-Kyai* who only needed to provide a report when they were giving recitation, no permission was required. This softening was prompted by protests by *Sarekat Islam* and *Muhammadiyah* (Zuhairin, 1992: 149; Kahin, t.thn.). Fourth, in 1932, the adoption of the wild school ordinance policy (*Wilde School Ordonantie*) which attempted to register and register educational institutions in the Dutch East Indies, and closed educational institutions that did not have permits or provided lessons that threatened the status quo of the Dutch East Indies government (Pijper, 1985: 82).

All of these policies have the same framework, which is to supervise religious teachers, including *Kyai* and teachers of the Qur'an recitation. Moreover, the last policy issued by the Dutch East Indies government after seeing the stretching of the *madrasa* and school system among Indonesian Muslims, which was previously not taken into account. Those who returned for the *haj* were suspected of being the successors of Pan-Islamism (Suminto, 1985: 179-184). Not a few, Qur'an teachers who came home from the pilgrimage provoked and became involved in a rebellion, as it happened in the Banten Peasants Rebellion (1888).

In the midst of the tug of war between indigenous education versus European education, there are efforts to synergize it. For example, the *Muhammadiyah* schools began to incorporate

al-Qur'an education into the school curriculum in the early 20th century. These schools that were founded by Muhammadiyah, consistently and thoroughly, adopt the curriculum of Dutch-style schools, such as MULO, HIS, and others. What distinguishes it is the addition of "religious education" (met de Qur'an to be exact) into the curriculum. Therefore, these two schools can basically be said to be "Public (Dutch) plus schools". Cooperative Qur'an teachers also have room to take part. Therefore, the existence of the al-Qur'an curriculum in the Muhammadiyah school system was quite disturbing for the Dutch East Indies government at that time. Therefore, indigenous schools are required to provide regular reports, as well as the government to carry out direct supervision.

This supervision applies in general to all native teachers, Kyai teachers and Kyai. In the sj96 manuscript concerning the Dutch Colonial Period of Qur'an Regulations (Ekadjati dan Darsa, 1999: 107-108) mentioned that the running teacher must obtain a license (permit) through the regents or patih afdeling. Among the decisions is that teachers must have a registration card labeled C.I, C. II, and C. IV. In addition, they are required to learn Malay and write Dutch (Latin) characters.

In practice, many Qur'an teachers were arrested and imprisoned, either because they were deemed to have violated Dutch East Indies government regulations or for provoking resistance (rebellion). For example, there was a Qur'an teacher who was arrested just because he gave a Friday sermon using the Sundanese language. There were also Qur'an teachers who were arrested for rejecting the policy of limiting Qur'an recitation in public spaces (including the mass media).

## Conclusion

The role of the Qur'an teachers during the Dutch East Indies era can be summed up as: a) Qur'an reading instructor, b) 2. ensuring fluency in the pronunciation of letters and the reading of the Qur'an, c) be the role model in keeping the traditions or rituals of reading the Qur'an, d). Managers and leaders break, e). Be the or prayer caller at the mosque at village level. Socially, the

position of the Qur'an teacher is higher than that of santri and the lower class of society, but under the Kyai (ulama) and government elites. They are constantly monitored because they are perceived as a threat, because they have influence at the grassroots level. They are registered to be monitored, especially if they have performed Hajj, then the supervision is further increased to localize the influence of the Middle East which is trending with Pan-Islamism or Islamic reform. The Dutch East Indies government was very worried about the collaboration of Qur'an teachers, students, and the community in collaboration with religious elites and / or local government elites, as shown in the Java War (1825-1830) or the Banten Peasants' Rebellion (1888).

During the Dutch East Indies Government, the relationship between Qur'an teachers and the Dutch East Indies government and the religious elite was very dynamic. However, the relationship is more on the relationship of opposition or conflict, rather than synergy or harmony. The position of Qur'an teacher was always on the marginal side in relation to the Dutch East Indies government. They are in the position of the opposition group (anti-government), even though their role is in the position of complementing or supporting the Kyai circles. They wore sarongs and caps, which were typical indigenous clothing, as a silent opposition to symbols of European society which were claimed to be "infidels". They also did not want to engage in cooperative politics towards the education of the Dutch East Indies Government, so that the government positioned the violation model education as a lowly educational institution that did not benefit the government at all.

In the midst of the supervision of the Dutch East Indies Government, the role of Qur'an teacher could not be ignored. They were guardians of Islamic traditional norms and society which transfer functional Islamic teachings, as well as guardians of Muslim communities from the threats of colonialism.

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