

# Refleksi

JURNAL KAJIAN AGAMA DAN FILSAFAT

**“Agama sebagai Solusi dan Pemersatu  
antar Umat”**

## WACANA

**Suhaimi**

**Politik Islam Indonesia dan Demokrasi  
Pancasila di Era Reformasi**

**M. Ikhsan Tanggok**

**The Role of Chinese Communities to the  
Spread of Islam in Indonesia**

**Ida Rosyidah**

**Gandhi’s Ideas of Women in Hinduism**

**Abdul Hadi W.M.**

**Takdir Alisyahbana dan Pemikiran  
Kebudayaan**

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**Metodologi Penelitian Keagamaan:  
Dekonstruksi Hermeneutik I**

## TULISAN LEPAS

**Cucu Nurhayati**

**Potret Perkotaan dalam Menghadapi  
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## AGAMA SEBAGAI SOLUSI DAN PEMERSATU ANTAR UMAT

Perdebatan agama sebagai solusi bagi umat manusia atau bukan masih merupakan pro dan kontra bagi sebagian orang. Ada di antara umat manusia yang menganggap bahwa agama tidak dapat memberikan solusi yang banyak bagi menyelesaikan berbagai persoalan, dan ada yang menganggap bahwa agama dapat memberikan solusi bagi banyak persoalan yang dihadapi oleh manusia. Oleh karena itu, tidak sedikit orang yang lari ke agama atau kepada tokoh-tokoh agama untuk menyelesaikan persoalan yang dihadapinya. Sebagai contoh, banyak orang lari ke tokoh-tokoh agama untuk meminta pertolongan atas ketergantungan obat-obat terlarang yang menimpa dirinya. Contoh lain, banyak orang menggunakan lembaga-lembaga keagamaan untuk menyelesaikan berbagai konflik keagamaan. Mungkin ini yang dapat kita tangkap dari kesan yang dimunculkan dalam sebuah artikel di dalam jurnal ini.

Semua agama di dunia ini menawarkan berbagai konsep yang dapat digunakan untuk memberikan solusi bagi banyak persoalan yang dihadapi oleh umat manusia. Tentu saja konsep-konsep yang ditawarkan itu berlandaskan pada ajaran-ajaran suci yang berasal dari kitab suci masing-masing agama. Semua konsep tersebut mengarah pada bantuan yang diberikan agama untuk membawa manusia ke jalan yang benar. Konsep agama yang masih dianggap cukup jitu dalam memecahkan berbagai persoalan tersebut juga dijadikan landasan bagi banyak para ahli untuk memecahkan berbagai persoalan sosial di Indonesia.

Ada sebagian orang menganggap bahwa agama adalah dapat menyebabkan berbagai *social unrest* (kerusuhan sosial) yang terjadi di berbagai daerah di Indonesia dewasa ini dan ada juga sebagian orang yang beranggapan bahwa agama bukanlah penyebab dari kerusuhan tapi agama dapat memberikan solusi bagi berbagai kerusuhan sosial yang ada. Teori ini masih tetap dipertahankan oleh banyak sarjana yang mengkaji masalah agama, terutama Suhaimi yang dalam tulisannya menyoroti persoalan agama dalam kaitannya dengan *social unrest* dewasa ini. Dalam tulisannya, Suhaimi melihat bahwa agama bukanlah penyebab dari banyak kerusuhan

sosial, tapi justru dapat dijadikan alat untuk meredam berbagai kerusuhan sosial yang ada.

Bicara masalah agama dapat menyelesaikan berbagai persoalan yang ada, rasanya kurang lengkap jika kita tidak membicarakan pelaku agama tersebut. Pelaku agama adalah para penganut agama-agama yang ada yang menyebarkan dan menjalankan ajaran agama tersebut. Di pundak para pelaku agama inilah agama tersebut dapat disebarkan ke seluruh masyarakat, dan dapat diperkenalkan kepada masyarakat tentang ajaran-ajaran perdamaian yang terkandung di dalamnya. Pelaku-pelaku agama ini, tidak hanya terbatas pada satu suku bangsa, tapi terdiri dari berbagai suku bangsa. Sebagai contoh agama Islam di Indonesia tidak hanya disebarkan oleh satu suku bangsa tapi oleh banyak suku bangsa, termasuk di dalamnya suku bangsa Cina. Banyak orang beranggapan bahwa orang Cina tidak mempunyai peran dalam menyebarkan agama Islam di Indonesia. Mungkin anggapan tersebut dapat dikatakan kurang tepat. Karena berdasarkan sejarah penyebaran Islam di Indonesia, orang Cina juga dapat memiliki peranan penting dalam menyebarkan Islam di Indonesia. Dalam proses penyebaran tersebut, tidak satu pun konflik yang kita jumpai disebabkan tindakan para pelaku agama. Mungkin ada benarnya jika banyak orang yang beranggapan bahwa Islam disebarkan di Nusantara dilakukan secara damai, dan ada kalanya menggunakan kebudayaan setempat sehingga dapat dengan mudah diterima oleh masyarakat.

Jika dalam tulisannya Suhaimi menyoroti persoalan agama sumber konflik atau agama dapat dijadikan alat untuk mempersatukan berbagai suku agama dan berbagai kepentingan, namun M. Ikhsan Tanggok dalam tulisannya lebih melihat peran orang Cina dalam penyebaran agama Islam di Nusantara. Meskipun keduanya melihat agama dengan sudut pandang berbeda, namun kedua tulisan tersebut memiliki keterkaitan antara satu dengan yang lainnya. Islam dalam hal ini bukan saja dilihat dari konteks ajarannya, tapi juga dapat ditelusuri dari konteks sejarahnya. Melalui sejarah tersebut, orang dapat melihat ke belakang bagaimana pelaku-pelaku agama dapat meletakkan agama yang mereka yakini sebagai komunikasi atau penghubung antara satu dengan yang lain dan dapat membuat masyarakat berlaku damai.

Dalam tulisannya, M. Ikhsan Tanggok juga melihat betapa pentingnya melihat agama dari sudut pandang budaya atau kebudayaan. Sebab agama

tidak akan diterima dengan mudah oleh masyarakat tanpa diterjemahkan dalam berbagai kebudayaan suku bangsa. Oleh karena itu, agama dipahami secara berbeda sesuai dengan kebudayaan masing-masing suku bangsa. Namun secara teologis, ajaran-ajaran agama masih tetap dipertahankan keutuhannya. Ajaran-ajaran agama tidak semata-mata menyangkut masalah teologi tapi juga membahas tentang gender yang dewasa ini lebih banyak dibicarakan dalam diskusi-diskusi dan seminar di perguruan tinggi maupun di luar perguruan tinggi.

Sehubungan dengan gender tersebut, maka Ida Rosyida dalam tulisannya menyajikan dengan panjang lebar masalah gender, terutama pemikiran Gandhi tentang gender. Tidak ubahnya dengan tokoh-tokoh filsuf Timur, Gandhi juga melihat adanya perbedaan antara lelaki dan wanita. Wanita menurut Gandhi selalu dinomor-duakan dan lelaki memainkan peranan penting dan berkuasa atas wanita. Dalam masyarakat patrilineal, lelaki selalu di nomor satukan, tidak hanya dalam lingkungan keluarga, namun juga dalam ritual-ritual keagamaan. Hal yang sama juga dijumpai dalam agama Hindu, di mana di dalam upacara keagamaan, laki-laki memegang peranan yang lebih penting. Meskipun demikian, pemikiran Gandhi tidak terlepas dari konsep-konsep ajaran Hindu yang mereka jadikan pedoman dan acuan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.

Agama bukan saja bicara tentang teologi, gender sebagaimana dijelaskan di atas, tapi agama juga bicara tentang perbedaan. Bicara tentang gender sama artinya bicara mengenai perbedaan, yaitu perbedaan antara laki-laki dan perempuan. Dalam pandangan agama-agama besar di dunia, perbedaan bukanlah “musibah” tapi “*rahmah*” atau dapat membawa keberkatan apabila kita dapat memahami arti dari perbedaan tersebut. Karena adanya perbedaan antara lelaki dan perempuan, maka populasi di dunia ini selalu bertambah atau berkembang. Dalam konsep agama Islam juga dikatakan bahwa berbagai macam suku bangsa yang berbeda-beda diciptakan oleh Tuhan di muka bumi ini, adalah agar umat manusia yang berbeda tersebut dapat saling kenal-mengenal dan bekerja-sama satu dengan yang lainnya untuk mencapai satu tujuan yang mulia. Inilah makna dari adanya perbedaan, dan bukan perbedaan tersebut dijadikan alat untuk memusuhi satu dengan yang lainnya dan juga melahirkan kelompok-kelompok yang tujuannya untuk menjatuhkan satu dengan yang lainnya.



Dalam ajaran agama Islam juga, Tuhan sangat menghargai adanya perbedaan, lihat saja ada ayat dalam al-Qur'an (*lakum dinukum waliadin*) yang cenderung mengakui adanya perbedaan. Dalam al-Qur'an Tuhan mengakui adanya agama di luar agama Islam. Jika Tuhan sendiri mengakui keberadaan itu, kenapa umat manusia tidak mau mengakui keberadaan yang ada di luarnya. Inilah yang mungkin sangat disoroti oleh salah satu artikel dalam jurnal ini. Dalam jurnal ini, Nanang Tahqiq, melihat bahwa perlu mengkaji ayat al-Qur'an, terutama "*lakum dinukum waliadin*" sebagai alat untuk menghargai adanya perbedaan, terutama menghargai agama di luar agama Islam itu sendiri. Nanang melihat bahwa ayat tersebut tidak dipahami oleh sebagian umat Islam sesuai dengan misi ayat tersebut yang sangat menghargai adanya perbedaan. Ayat ini juga mendorong umat Islam untuk menciptakan toleransi sesama umat beragama, sehingga di antara agama-agama yang ada di dunia ini dapat saling menghargai dan bekerja sama. Oleh Karena itu, sangat tepat jika tema terbitan jurnal **Refleksi** kali ini adalah "Agama Sebagai Solusi dan Pemersatu Antar Umat". Tema ini bermakna agar agama dapat dijadikan sebagai penyelamat dan mempersatukan berbagai umat manusia di dunia untuk tujuan kemanusiaan dan persatuan.

Jakarta, Desember 2006

*Redaksi*

## THE ROLE OF CHINESE COMMUNITIES TO THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN INDONESIA

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**Abstract:** *The role of Chinese people in the development of Islam in Indonesia in the past was significant, as evidenced by historical evidence such as mosques and Muslim Chinese graves. The spread of Islam in Indonesia was not only carried out by Arabs and Persians, but also by Chinese people, both those who came with traders from the Middle East and separately. Since Islam entered the Malay Archipelago, especially Indonesia, through traders, it is understandable that Islamic kingdoms first emerged in coastal areas rather than inland or mountainous areas, which generally adhered to Hinduism, Buddhism, or local religions and beliefs. Their main purpose for coming to Indonesia was not to spread Islam but to establish relationships and trade. However, because they were Muslims, their attitudes and actions could influence the local population wherever they were, and intermarriages between them and the local population could lead the locals to convert to Islam.*

**Keywords:** *Local beliefs, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Muslims, Chinese, Indonesia.*

**Abstrak:** Peran orang-orang Cina dalam perkembangan Islam di Indonesia di masa lalu cukup besar, ini dapat ditandai dengan bukti-bukti sejarah peninggalan masa lalu, seperti masjid-masjid dan kuburan-kuburan orang Cina muslim. Penyebaran Islam di Indonesia ini tidak hanya dilakukan oleh orang-orang Arab dan Persia, tapi juga dilakukan oleh orang-orang Cina, baik yang datang bersama-sama dengan para pedagang dari Timur Tengah, maupun secara terpisah. Karena Islam masuk ke Tanah Melayu ini terutama Indonesia dibawa oleh para pedagang, maka wajarlah jika kerajaan-kerajaan Islam itu muncul pertama kali di daerah pesisir dan bukan daerah pedalaman atau pegunungan yang umumnya menganut agama Hindu dan Buddha atau agama dan kepercayaan lokal. Tujuan utama mereka (orang-orang Cina) datang ke Indonesia bukanlah menyebarkan Islam tapi menjalin hubungan dan perdagangan, namun karena mereka beragama Islam, maka sikap dan tindakan mereka dapat mempengaruhi penduduk setempat di mana mereka berada, atau kawin-mawin di antara mereka dengan penduduk setempat dapat membawa penduduk setempat berpindah ke agama Islam.

**Kata Kunci:** Kepercayaan Lokal, Islam, Hindu, Buddha, Muslim, Cina, Indonesia.

## Introduction

It can be said that the ethnic of Chinese communities in Indonesia have less information about the history of the spread of Islam religion in Indonesia, in particular to regard to the role of the Chinese communities in the spread of Islam, either within ethnic of Chinese alone or non-ethnic of Chinese which later create the gap and prejudices between them. Whereas, according to the historical findings, the spread of Islam in this archipelago cannot be separated to the merits of Chinese immigrants who came (in the ninth and tenth century) from Mainland China.

Drawing on this background, it is significant to raise question as to whether this lack of information was in fact propelled by the very little attention of the Chinese communities to Islam religion or on the basis of their aim which was solely to commerce, thus they had little chance to think of its past history while the inter-faith relationship was very harmonious during that time.

## The entry of early Chinese Communities to Indonesia

The early Chinese Muslims communities came to Nusantara (presently-Indonesia) together with Muslims communities from Middle East. It can be proved to the coming during that time of ethnic of Chinese travelers in the commerce with Arab and Parsian to Indonesia. It was initially brought to the Malay Archipelago-Indonesia in the first century of (Hijra

or Islamic Callender) or the seventh century A.D. The story of the entry of Middle East Muslims communities was told by the famous Chinese traveler, I-Tsing in the 51 H or 671 A.D. During that period, they came through Arab ship from Canton and arrived at Bhoga river, (Srighoba or Sribuza, presently knows as Musi River). Sribuza or the capital of the kingdom of Buddha Sriwijaya. Modern scholars identified it as the city of Palembang,<sup>1</sup> in Sumatera Island.

The entry of Islam to Indonesia region was various in its time. The first entry was the island of Sumatera. When the kingdom of Sriwijaya was still in victory, many Islam traders sailed in Mollucas Strait. Their sites of commerce were located in the coastal area of the island of Sumatera. Those traders assimilated and opened good relationship with the local communities.<sup>2</sup>

The entry of Islam in this Malay island-Indonesia was not only originating from Arab, but also India, Parsi, China, Maghribi and Turkey. Although Islam came to the Malay land-Indonesia through many countries, however the Islam religion, which brought by Arab communities remained originating from Middle East, not India, Turkey, Persia, or even China.<sup>3</sup> Hence, there was possibilities as to the commerce mission if the Arabs were followed by other ethnic groups (such as, Turkey, India, China), where they passed by before they continued their journey to the Malay island-Indonesia, especially Sriwijaya kingdom.

Sriwijaya was a very important city during that time. It became the central of commerce, big and advanced. All commerce ships which came abroad, especially from Middle East would pass by here. Its territories covered the whole of Sumatera, Malay and Java. Sriwijaya came to power dating from the first century of Hijra to five centuries later. The kingdom was famous to many other countries because it became the central of international commerce.

Of other sources, it is also shown that the ethnic of Chinese had been in the Malay island-Indonesia, especially in Java (not Sumatera) in the seventh century. This news was provided in Mainland China's records which told that there had been already a kingdom, named Holing-Ho-Ling and a king, named Si-Ma in Chopo (Java Island) during that period. This Holing country was just. The news about this Holing kingdom was also heard by the King Ta-Cheh. Later, he sent his men to prove the truth of this news.<sup>4</sup>

Historians interpreted what the Mainland China's historian that "Chopo" was Java. Later, the Holing kingdom was known as the kingdom of Kalinga in East Java. The queen of Sima, was a woman king who reigned the state of Kalinga during that time. Ta-Chen was a name which was given by China to Arab. According to the above Mainland China's records, it was mentioned that what was meant to the king of Ta-Cheh was in fact the king of Arab. In the history records, it was already proved that the kingdom of Kalinga had a chance for several times to send his men to the mainland China.<sup>5</sup>

Of the above said words, we can be more assured that the existence of the ethnic of Chinese in this Nusantara land (Indonesia), especially in Sumatera and Java was since the first century of Hijra. Because since that period the relationship among China, Arab, and other Malay regions were good, in addition to the men who came from various countries were already Muslim, while as we know that Islam was spread to this Indonesia by peaceful means.

That there was assumption that the entry of Islam to Indonesia was brought by the ethnic of Chinese, also strongly emphasized with the story of the coming of Cheng Ho to Indonesia in the fifteenth centuries along with his men, especially in the city of Semarang. Cheng Ho was known as a skillful sailor and faithful Muslim. He had visited almost the whole countries in this South-East Asia for commerce ties. Furthermore, when he visited the neighboring countries, he also prepared and made huge ships, sophisticated equipment and a lot of trained men in shipping. According to Yan Zhi, there are at least 3 reasons why the admiral of Cheng Ho visited other neighboring countries, namely:

*First*, Ming dynasty (1368) since this period had become stronger and powerful in China. Up to the fifteenth centuries, China was not just united it was also becoming a strong state in the East Asia. In addition to this, China's agricultural sharply increased on one hand, thus the result of its production always increased every year. In other hand, the Ming kingdom needed also spices, perfumes, dye substances and others from abroad to bring her state's needs. The commerce with other countries can only be happened if the Ming kingdom had capacities and been strong in the realm of economic. Later, China during period had truly proved to be a strong and rich country. With this economy strength, Cheng Ho and his men were sent by their emperor to open the commerce ties abroad.

*Second*, a close tie was established between China and other countries in Asia-Africa for a long period of time, that dating back to or since Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.) and Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.), there had been mutual relationship and cooperation in this commerce, which brought the people of China, both of aristocrats and ordinary peoples were used and trained to commerce. Later, it became the benefits for Cheng Ho's journey to West Ocean.

*Third*, the skill of the people of China during that time in making a ship was already advanced. It was happened during the Yuan dynasty (1206-1368 A.D.). Ships, which they make was big in size and they can bring around 1000 peoples. The ships were also provided by modern equipment, such as compass as a guiding tool and anchor. All this is one of the basic requirements for Cheng Ho and his men to conduct a long journey for commerce mission.<sup>6</sup> Through this commerce, religion and culture of the people of China can be spread out to the regions they visited.

### **Cheng Ho Visited to Sumatera and Semarang**

The story of Cheng Ho to Sumatera and Semarang is interesting to be studied because many historical evidences supported it up to now. The most important to be noted is not its story, but how Cheng Ho's influences toward the spread of Islam in the regions he visited.

According to Yan Zhi,<sup>7</sup> it was recorded that Cheng Ho had visited Sumatera for seven times. Every time he visited Sumatera, he had only visited Java for six times. Only on his sixth visit, Cheng Ho and his men did not visit Java. In addition to this, He had also visited other islands and kingdoms, namely Java, Palembang, Pasai (Aceh), Lamuri (Lambri), Nakur (Batak), Lide, Aru, Tamiang, Pulau Bias, Pulau Lingga, Kalimantan, island of Gelam, island of Karimata (which are situated between Kalimantan and Bangka), island of Balitan, and others.<sup>8</sup>

The story of Cheng Ho to Semarang was also revealed by Prof. Dr. Hasan Muarif Ambari,<sup>9</sup> as quoted in the book of "The Chinese Chronicle of Semarang". According to Ambari, in his visit to Indonesia, Cheng Ho had once visited Semarang to repair his broken ships. Accompanied by Ma Huan and Fei-Hsin, Cheng Ho did not forget to visit the Chinese mosque in Semarang for prayer there. Hasan Muarif Ambari believes that that mosque was the oldest Chinese mosque ever being established in 1411-

1412. According to Uka Tjandrasmita,<sup>10</sup> that similar mosque or Sam Po Ho or Sam Po Kong is Chinese mosque known as Hanafi in Semarang.

Ambari added that when Cheng Ho came to South-East Asia, especially in Nusantara or Indonesia, there had grown and developed in the region Islam kingdom, such the kingdom of Mollucus, Banda Aceh Darrussalam, Cirebon and Banten, where during that time Samudera Pasai was the oldest kingdom in Nusantara.<sup>11</sup> Drawing on these reasons, the coming of Cheng Hon and his men to Nusantara had no hindrances. Nevertheless, we cannot find any religious (Islam) proselytizing or activities being done by Cheng Hon and his men upon his visit to several regions in Java, such as Jepara, Lasen, Tuban, Gresik, Surabaya and others. What was reported is only about agricultural produces, customs, trading goods, currency, and others.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Cheng Ho's coming to several regions in Indonesia had at least influenced the local communities where he visited.

In his visit to variety of countries, Cheng Ho was also accompanied by Wang Jing Hong, a pilot of him who was being considered as the important person in his voyage. Unfortunately, he suddenly fell sick when his ship arrived at the Northern Java Coastal. As a commander of the Treasure Fleets, Cheng Ho took initiatives to stop in the Simongan port (of which later known as Mangkang), Semarang. After stopping by, Cheng Ho with his companions found a cave. They used that cave for temporary shelter before they found a better place to stay. They erected a small house outside the cave for a shelter and used it for taking care of Wan Jing Hong. It was said that Cheng Ho himself who made traditional medicines and acted to be Hong's doctor. Ten days later, Cheng Ho continued his voyage to the West and left a ship along with its equipment and ten men who were assigned to take care of Hong in order to assure Hong's condition in fully recovered. After recover from his illness, Hong changed his mind to continue his voyage to follow Cheng Ho. Together with 10 men, Hong decided to stay on a land and erected a more permanent house for their shelter for future.<sup>13</sup>

Since Hong and his men had stayed on that land, many local communities came here and became crowded. In addition to this, a marriage ties happened between Hong's men and the local communities. Thus, the process of assimilation between ethnic of Chinese and local communities be-

gan to happen peacefully without any single of hindrances. Since the region is good for agriculture, thus this region was filled by other local communities and they live by working in the rice fields and planting.

As said by Yuan Zhi,<sup>14</sup> Cheng Ho was also a faithful Muslim. He passionately spread Islam religion to the ethnic of Chinese and local communities. Ho is also expert in the agriculture science. He taught the local communities of how-to do-good plant. In order to commemorate Cheng Ho's merits, Hong made a statue of Cheng Ho in the cave where he found it for the first time as to local communities would remember and pay a respect for him. Hong died at the age of 87. His body was buried by the Islam religion ceremony where he lived. Since Hong had done many good things to the local communities, he was called as "Kiai (the leader-trans) Juru Mudi Dampo Awang". Hong's tomb can be found presently inside the Sam Po Kong temple in Semarang as believed by part of Indonesian people. Up to nowadays, many varieties of people come to the temple for him for prayer and ask blesses or a sort of lucks for their lives. Since that time falling on the first and fifteenth of each month as to the Chinese Calendar, many people especially the ethnic of Chinese went in big numbers to the temple to worship the statue of Sam Po Kong and make a devotional visit to the grave of Kiai Juru Mudi Dampo awing or Wang Jing Hong in addition to ask blesses or sort of lucks to him.

Lee Khoon Choy,<sup>15</sup> in his book entitled "*Indonesia, Between Myth and Reality*", said that one of the reasons why the temple of Sam Po Kong was erected in Semarang, for instance, is to pay a respect of the admiral of Cheng Ho. Cheng Ho was sent by the Emperor Yung Lo of Ming dynasty to the West Asia regions (Arab country) and Nusantara archipelago to improve the relationship between the people of Mainland China and the local communities to where Cheng Ho visited. As known, the relationship between Mainland China and West Asia and Nusantara was being broken by the emperor of Mongo (Khubilai Khan) who reigned during that time. It was exactly it is the right time if Cheng Ho was sent to those counties because he was Muslim and the regions where he visited were already being a Muslim.

The coming of Cheng Ho, Wang Jing Hong, Fei Hsin and his other 10 men had produced beneficiaries for the local communities, especially in Semarang. It is because Hong and his men came to stay longer and



socialize closely with the local society. Although we hardly can see the concrete forms of, they had done, nevertheless at least their influences and contributions to the spread of Islam in the regions are more significant and meaningful. Aside of that they also came to stay there for quite long period of time Hong's body was also buried in a stone cave in Semarang. In addition to this, the marriage among the ethnics which were done by Hong's men had made contributions to the spread of Islam where they belonged to.

In the seventeenth the region where statue of Sam Po Kong was located and its surroundings had been dominated by Johannes, a Jew. Because of Johannes' domination, the freedom of the ethnic of Chinese for worship in the Sam Po Kong temple was hampered. It is the reason later on what has made the ethnic of Chinese communities to make a copy of the statue of Cheng Ho and it was being placed in the Tay Key Sie temple, a temple of great awareness which was erected in 1771 in Semarang.

### **Muslim Chinese after Cheng Ho**

As of the story of the admiral of Cheng Ho's voyage mentioned above, the ethnic of Chinese have already existing in the Java Island coastal area since the seventeenth century, especially in the area of West Java Island coastal area. On this reason, Claudine Salmon and D. Lombard,<sup>16</sup> concluded that the ethnic of Chinese had come to West Java Island coastal area long before the coming of the Dutch colonialists. During that time, West Java covered several areas, such as Banten, Cirebon, Tangerang and Jakarta. Banten is the most crowded commerce center site during that time. For this reason, Hamka,<sup>17</sup> called West Java as the biggest commerce and port Centre which took the ships from other countries to buy spices and bring them to each country. What is also important is that so-called Sunda Kelapa port which was later to become Batavia (1619), but the ethnic of Chinese still call it the city as Ve Cheng which means the city of Kelapa or Sunda Kelapa as to its origins (D. Lombard, 1985:14).<sup>18</sup> Up to now, not only Indonesian Chinese, but all the Indonesian people call it Sunda Kelapa.

In 1619, the local communities' Centre of commerce was destroyed by VOC. Hence problem of labors arose. The Dutch people were reluctant to recruit non-ethnic Chinese (Javanese people) be their workers since the

two parties' relationship had been worse for a long time. The Javanese armies from the kingdom of Mataram besieged Batavia in 1628-1629. The Dutch people preferred to recruit other ethnic community, such as Bugis, Makassar, Bali, Ambon and more especially the Chinese people to be workers.<sup>19</sup>

During the Dutch colonialism, the Chinese people had gained higher classes than the local people. The Dutch tried to recruit the Chinese people from variety of regions to come to Jakarta. They were also later served as the connector between the local people and the Dutch people. This condition had created social discrepancies between the local and Chinese people. Aside of this, during the New Order, the Chinese who converted to Islam could also lessen the discrepancies between the Chinese and the local people. As said by Junus Yahya, a Chinese Muslim that one of efforts to resolve the Chinese problem in Indonesia is by way of converting to Islam religion.<sup>20</sup> However Junus' idea does not prove yet anything. His idea has given little attention within the Chinese communities since it has proved that a few of Chinese communities come to be Muslim during the new order and the Reform period. Most of the Chinese communities still prefer to come to adhere non-Islam religion, such as Buddha, Catholic, Christian or some of them remain to adhere to his/her traditional religion, namely Confucianism and Taoism.

Although in the seventeenth centuries, the ethnic of Chinese had gained important positions in the commerce almost throughout the Java Island coastal however we could not find activities as to the Islam practiced as religion among the Chinese communities. Or it might be that the Chinese communities as told by D. Lombard above were those who were not being yet a Muslim. In relation to this, it is interesting to reveal here what Ahmad Syafi'i,<sup>21</sup> wrote in his article entitled "The Notion of Religion According to the ethnic of Chinese". According to Syafi'i the ethnic of Chinese who came after (recent) were those who originated from the ethnics belong to the non-Islam religion which meant that the communities did not practice Islam as a religion. Most of them were not also from the educated class, but they were traders and workers.

Of the above mentioned, we can conclude that from the early to the seventeenth centuries, most of the ethnic of Chinese who came to Nusantara had practiced Islam religion before in his/her origin of land. But, da-

ting to the second or the recent coming of the ethnic of Chinese to Nusantara (from the seventeenth centuries onward), showed that they were not yet being a Muslim. They still held his/ her origin religion, namely Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism because these three religions had relatively developed in China.

It is also interesting here to note that an event occurred during the second half of the eighteenth century. On the one hand in that period the ethnic of Chinese who were in the Java Island Coastal, in particular in Jakarta competed themselves to build a house of worship, that is a temple (Chinese's house of worship). Take an example, *da-shi miao* or *feng-shan miao* temple where are located in the Glodok area in the West Jakarta. This temple is also known as the temple of the traders which was functioned as the center of commerce office belonged to ethnic of Chinese. Meanwhile, Tian Hao temple, which is located in the Bandengan Selatan streets within the West Jakarta area. It was possibly said that the temple was built in 1751 as to it was functioned during that time as a place to the protection of the traders and sailors. On the other hand, there was a new tendency for the Chinese who were mostly as traders to adhere Islam religion. This is why the Dutch colonial government took firm action toward the religion conversion which was practiced by the Chinese. For the Dutch colonial government, the religion conversion had produced huge losses for her. First, by way of religion conversion, the number of the individual Chinese as tax-payers decreased. Second, an act of assimilation between the Chinese and the local communities had destabilized the reign of the Dutch,<sup>22</sup> and also brought impact to the position of the Dutch people in Indonesia becoming unstable and less strong.

What is the most interesting of assimilation is that the change of name, that is changing from Chinese names to the names which are commonly used in the local communities or Islam society. For example, Chuan Cho, after he converted to Islam, his name changed to be Yunus Yahya who is now known as the Chinese Muslim figure and active in the preaching activities among the Indonesian Chinese communities. The Giok Sin, after his conversion to Islam, his name changed to be Hojjah Komariah, who is also active in the Islam proselytizing. The late H.Abdul Karim Oey Tjeng Hien was former chairman of PITI (Indonesia Iman Tauhid Association) and many others. Although, as said by Abdurrahman Wahid the Chinese has changed his/ her name, question as to his/ her origin names remain to

be emphasized. Wahid added that the Chinese is always put in blame for the things which are in fact inappropriate or true in our lives,<sup>23</sup> or they always remain be discriminated.

The religion conversion to Islam which occurred among the Chinese had brought the VOC to take firm action. In 1742, VOC issued an order to examine the Chinese who pretended conducting religion conversion by the doctor. As of in 1745 they were being prohibited to assimilate with the Muslim communities and obliged to pay individual tax. Nevertheless, the Dutch colonial government was finally given up. In 1759, the Chinese was started not to be considered again belong to the China's nation that they were deemed the same with the other local communities.<sup>24</sup> Although they were deemed the same, many of them still received unfair treatment or they were not treated equal as with the other local ethnics in Indonesia, in matters of either of the making of Identity Card (KTP) or marriage and many others. For instance, Chinese who hold his/her origin religions cannot process their papers for endorsement in the Civil Marriage Office.<sup>25</sup>

In 1770, VOC had intensified its efforts more to prevent the Chinese from the Islam conversion. A captain named Do Sewa was assigned by the Dutch colonial government to keep a mixed ethnic of Chinese who had converted to Islam an eye in Batavia. The surveillance was conducted up to 1827. However, some efforts to keep the spreading of Islam going never ceased and declined. In 1785, a captain was assigned by the VOC to keep a mixed of ethnic of Chinese who converted to Islam and together with his men, the captain suggested VOC to build a special mosque for the Chinese. This request was approved by VOC. A mosque was built then to which is known as the Krukut mosque in Jakarta. This mosque was built on a land which was called Cobong Baroe to which belonged to that Captain.<sup>26</sup> Now, that mosque has not only been used by the Chinese communities for worship, but also other ethnic of communities.

The news of the Chinese who have assimilated with the local communities and called themselves as Muslim was also acknowledged out by Wang Da Hai, a Muslim who visited Java in 1719. These Chinese Muslims did not mind to be a Javanese, eating pork because Islam prohibits it. They started to read books and being under the surveillance of a special captain belonged their own ethnic assigned by VOC to keep the mixed of ethnic of Chinese who convert to Islam.<sup>27</sup> This kind of condition was sad

for the Chinese Muslims in the past and it was changed after the Dutch's leaving from Indonesia.

Meantime, the news of the Chinese who became Islam can be also proved by the past historical heritage, such as mosques and tombs belonged to the Chinese Muslim. Mosques which were built in the second half of the eighteenth centuries are Krukut mosque, Kebun Jeruk mosque and Tambora. These three mosques are all located in Jakarta. The main characteristic of the Krukut mosques is that of there was a podium made of wood inside the mosque which showed the advanced work of the Chinese's wood carving art. Unfortunately, the originality of this podium had changed because it was plated with silver paint in 1975. Looking from outside of the mosque, it does not appear much to leave the images of historical traces since it had been rehabilitated and renovated into modern style of the nineteenth and twentieth century. However, from the point view of historical understanding, the mosque showed that there was really an encounter of cultures between the China and the local communities.

It is precisely different with the Kebun Jeruk mosque (Jakarta), which has the inside of the tomb belonged to the Chinese's art style. This tomb belonged to the Madam Cui who died in 1792. Although the tomb is not as luxurious as those belonged to other non-Chinese's tombs in several regions of the mainland, but this Chinese Muslim's tomb inherited the grandeur of the art of wood carving belonged to the Chinese's Muslim during that time.

In the above respect, the Tambora mosque (Jakarta) also inherited the similar excellence of what the Krukut and Kebun Jeruk mosques had. It is not only showing the historical values which may remind us with the processes of the development of Islam in the past by the Chinese. Unfortunately, the Tambora mosque is not quite recognized by the society. Is it because the mosque's location is not located in the strategic place, or is it because there are a very few proselytizing activities in the mosque (compare to the Sunda Kelapa Mosque in Jakarta and the Salman Mosque in Bandung). However, there is a tomb with not inscription which shows the Chinese's art genre in the past in the yard of the Tambora mosque. Those three mosques and two tombs and a podium above has reminded us that there had been a huge process of religion conversion to be Islam among the Chinese in the eighteenth centuries. In this respect there had been also

a process of assimilation occurring among the Chinese and the non-Chinese ethnic or local communities.

Although the religion conversion movement among the Chinese had continued to occur in the eighteenth centuries, however the VOC remained against this movement. In the eighteenth centuries, the VOC's authorities had several times issued a ban to the Chinese communities who entered to practice Islam religion or assimilate himself/herself with the local communities. The VOC was directly accused of the Chinese people who entered to practice Islam in order to be able to pay low taxes similar to taxes imposed by VOC to the local communities and to release the limitation imposed by the VOC about the commerce matters.<sup>28</sup>

Accusations by accusation against the Chinese Muslim communities by the Dutch had continued up to the nineteenth centuries. Therefore, during the first half of nineteenth centuries, the VOC appointed two leaders to deal with the Chinese, one is for general affairs and another is for special affairs as to mixed ethnic of Chinese. VOC appointed a captain or lieutenant coming from the Chinese communities and be served to keep the movement of the Chinese Muslim an eye to make them obedient to the appointed leaders and to assure them to pay taxes as imposed by the VOC.<sup>29</sup> What had been done by VOC against the Chinese communities during the eighteenth centuries was happened again during the nineteenth centuries.

The VOC did not only limit the freedom, opportunities and keep of the Chinese Muslims an eye to enter to adhere Islam and to assimilate with the local communities, they also segregated the places where they lived from the local communities where they lived. Aside of this, the Chinese communities were also granted a privileged position, such as they were served and functioned as the interlocutors for the commerce matters between the local and non-local communities. They were also assigned to impose the taxes, either from the local communities or the mixed of ethnic of Chinese. This was precisely brought to the social discrepancies between the local and the minority communities. If we try to analyze this situation further, what was happened over the war (1825-1830), either it was the civil war (Surakarta assisted Yogyakarta against the Diponegoro) or the war against the Dutch colonial government was propelled by the excesses of the unresolved social discrepancies.

Although VOC attempted unceasingly to limit the Chinese communities to assimilate with the local communities, nevertheless that did not lessen the spirit of the Chinese to keep assimilating and conversing to practice Islam in the Nusantara. According to Ahmad Syafi'i,<sup>30</sup> in his research report, entitled "The Notion of Religion According to the Indonesian ethnic of Chinese" that of the emergence of the Islam kingdoms in Java cannot be separated by the significant and big roles of the Chinese communities as to the spread of Islam in Indonesia, excluding the Arab and Persian.

## **Conclusion**

Islam had come to Nusantara since the first century of Hijra or since the seventh centuries. The spread of Islam was not only brought and carried out by the Arab and Persians, but also the Chinese Muslim from the mainland China. Islam religion which was brought from outside was always linked to the commerce mission. The coming of Islam from outside the country was not propelled by a merely religion motivation but also the economic or commerce and friendship motivation, hence it is not astonishing if the Islam tradition has a little bit different comparing to the tradition brought from the Middle East. However, the teaching of Islam is the same throughout the globe.

The fact that the spread of Islam in the past was conducted by the Chinese communities can be proved with the existing Chinese Muslim's tombs in several mosques in Indonesia (for example several mosques in Jakarta) and several temples in Jakarta, such Sam Po Kong temple in Semarang and the Ancol temple in Jakarta (Cheng Ho's cooker tomb). These evidences showed that the spread of Islam in the past was also carried out peacefully so that the existing early religions was not being interrupted by the latter coming of religions in one particular regions. This model must have been able to be developed in the Indonesia's present situation to keep the inter-religious relationship

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