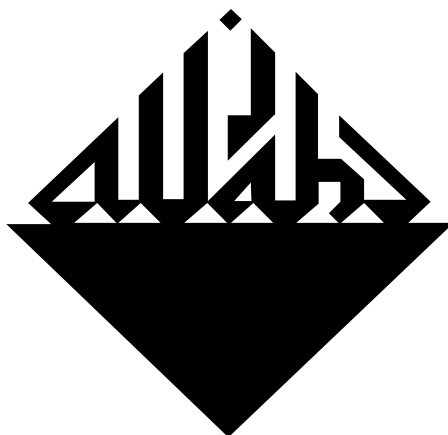


STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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BUDDHISM IN MUSLIM INDONESIA

Karel Steenbrink

THE MISSING MINISTER OF RELIGION AND THE PSII: A CONTEXTUAL BIOGRAPHY OF K.H. AHMAD AZHARY

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A Textual Approach to Understanding Nusantara Muslims

Karel Steenbrink

Buddhism in Muslim Indonesia

Abstract: *This article presents an overview of various ways in which Buddhists and Muslims have lived together in Indonesia since the arrival of Islam about 1200. It tells how Buddhism has slowly disappeared and become a religion for mainly the Chinese who, until the late 19th century, have often converted to Islam. This article analyzes the role of three key figures in the recent government-supported revival of Buddhism. These figures are the Chinese-Indonesian monk Ashin Jinarakkhita, the Balinese lay devotee and government official Oka Diputhera, and the Chinese-Indonesian businesswoman Sri Hartati Murdaya. They have tried to accommodate Buddhism to the Muslim-dominated nationalism of modern Indonesia. The result of the past five decades is that Buddhism has obtained a modest but safe position in independent Indonesia.*

Key words: Buddhism, Confucianism, WALUBI, conversion, nationalism.

Abstrak: Artikel ini menganalisis bagaimana cara umat Budha dan umat Muslim hidup bersama secara damai di Indonesia sejak kedatangan dan penyebaran Islam pada sekitar tahun 1200. Artikel ini menunjukkan bagaimana agama Budha perlahan-lahan menghilang dan menjadi sebuah agama bagi orang-orang Cina, yang sampai akhir abad ke-19 banyak yang pindah ke agama Islam. Artikel ini berupaya menganalisis peran tiga tokoh kunci dalam kebangkitan agama Budha beberapa waktu terakhir yang didukung oleh pemerintah: biksu keturunan Indonesia-Cina Ashin Jinarakkhita, pejabat Kementerian Agama Oka Diputhera, dan seorang pengusaha keturunan Indonesia-Cina Sri Hartati Murdaya. Ketiga tokoh tersebut berusaha mengakomodasi Budha ke dalam nasionalisme yang didominasi Islam dalam Indonesia modern. Hasilnya, selama lima dekade terakhir agama Budha memperoleh posisi yang aman dalam Indonesia merdeka.

Kata kunci: Agama Budha, Konfusianisme, WALUBI, konversi, nasionalisme.

الخلاصة: يقوم هذا المقال بتحليل كيف كان البوذيون يعيشون بسلام جنباً إلى جنب مع المسلمين باندونيسيا منذ مجئ الاسلام وانتشاره حوالي عام ١٢٠٠م، يعرض هذا المقال كيف كانت الديانة البوذية تختفي شيئاً فشيئاً وصارت ديانة خاصة للصينيين حيث ابتداء من أواخر القرن التاسع عشر الميلادي يتحول كثير منهم إلى اعتناق الاسلام، ويحاول هذا المقال أن يقدم تحليلاً عن دور ثلاثة شخصيات رئيسية في نهضة الديانة البوذية في الأوقات الأخيرة مؤيدة بالحكومة: وهم الراهب الاندونيسي الصيني الأصل آشين جيناراكخيتا Ashin Jinarakkhita، ومسئول بوزارة الشؤون الدينية وهو أوكا ديوترا Oka Diputhera، وسيدة الأعمال الاندونيسية من أصل صيني وهي هارتاتي موردايا Sri Hartati Murdaya؛ وهؤلاء الشخصيات الثلاثة كانوا يحاولون تكيف البوذية بالقومية الاندونيسية التي يسودها الاسلام في اندونيسيا المعاصرة، والنتيجة أن البوذية تتمتع بعد خمسة عقود بمكانة مستقرة في اندونيسيا المستقلة.

الكلمات الاسترشادية: الديانة البوذية، الكونفوشية، وكالة البوذيين الاندونيسيين، التحول، القومية.

The Indian religions of Vaishnava Hinduism, Shivaism, and Buddhism, arrived in Southeast Asia from 200 AD onwards. The oldest references are in the (Chinese) biography of the Kashmiri prince and monk Gunavarman (367–431), who is said to have preached in Sumatra. The Chinese traveller and Buddhist monk I-ching (Yijing) was in Palembang, Sumatra, in 687–689, and praised the kingdom of Shriwijaya as a centre of Buddhist learning. While staying in Palembang he translated some works from Sanskrit into Chinese and suggested that pilgrims travelling to Nalanda through the searoute should visit the kingdom.

Theravada doctrines dominated Buddhism in Shriwijaya until about 700. But for later periods we only find Mahayana influence. In several places of Sumatra remnants of Buddhist places of worship remain preserved. About a century later another major Buddhist kingdom, that of Sailendra (circa 750–850), built the grandiose Borobudur shrine, originally started by the rival Hindu realm of Sanjaya as a Hindu shrine. Borobudur is clearly inspired by Mahayana Buddhism. Only some decades after Borobudur was finished the Sanjaya kingdom constructed the Hindu masterpiece of the Prambanan temple, some 30km away. Near the Prambanan temple (devoted to Vishnu and Shiva) is the Candi Sewu (Thousand Shrines) which has some 250 stupas. This practice of Buddhism living side by side with Hindu expressions continued to be the general trend of the various Indian influences in Indonesia: a range of Buddhist sects living side by side with traditions of Hinduism. The national motto of modern Indonesia, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (“In Pieces, yet One”, or “Unity in Diversity”, as a symbol of the country’s many languages, cultures, and ethnic identities of Indonesia) has been taken from the writings of the monk and court poet Mpu Tantular (circa 1350) of the Majapahit kingdom. Mpu Tantular wanted to express that “the truth of the Buddha and the truth of Shiva is one”. In modern discourse, the great ruler of the Majapahit empire, Hayam Wuruk (1350–1389), is seen as a true follower of Shiva. However, his first minister, the legendary Gajah Mada, is seen as a loyal Buddhist.¹

At about the same time when *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* was formulated, one of the last Buddhist texts — *Kunjarakarna Dharmakathana* — was translated into Javanese. It is the story of a demon (*yaksa*), Kunjarakarna, who is purified by ascetic exercises and is ordered to pay a visit to hell to see the punishments of the sinners. He sees that for an old friend

a cauldron is prepared, and he returns to warn this friend. It is the 'Lazarus' story in a definite Buddhist garb, although somewhat mixed with Shivaite elements. At that time the Buddhist influence had already stepped back from India. It is quite remarkable that, at so late a moment, Buddhist elements could enter Indonesian civilization.²

Islam had already arrived in the archipelago circa 1200, first in the northern harbor towns of Sumatra. Then, circa 1400, Muslim traders increasingly arrived on the northern coasts of the major island of Java, making converts until the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism slowly disappeared.

How Islam Eclipsed the Indian Religions

The spread of Islam in Southeast Asia went slowly, from the northwest to the southeast and from coastal to inland regions. It was not an absolute process for all regions of the country. The island of Bali retained its Hindu–Buddhist character. There still is a division between Shaivite and Buddhist *pedanda*, or ritual specialists, although they are integrated in the specific religious world of Bali. It has to be said, however, that the Buddhist element was nowhere dominating and the number of Buddhist *pedanda* always remained quite small. In the mid 1960s only 20 *pedanda boda* were found in Bali and, since then, the number has decreased again.³ The *pedanda boda* has a role in some larger rituals, where he takes care for the southern part, or the section of death, within the temple site. Buddhism is found in other divisions of the religious scene, such as with the Chinese *tridarma*, the specialist for burials.⁴ In classical and modern Javanese, *buda* is the common word for the pre-Islamic religion of Java. This, however, has little to do with the Buddhism of Sakyamuni. With the exception of Bali, the coastal regions of west and central Indonesia accepted Islam between 1200 and 1700. Many inland regions and smaller islands in the eastern regions cherished tribal religion until the 20th century, and then decided to follow either Islam or Christianity.

Why was Islam more successful than the Indian religious traditions? Scholars have emphasized the network of Muslim traders in the Indian Ocean. This network has even been described as a 'Muslim Mediterranean' (Johns, 1984 & 1993). In order to enjoy the profits of this network, local rulers wanted to become more intimate with these new opportunities for trade. Other motives that are given include the

lack of caste traditions in Islam, providing new opportunities to people of lower class. Buddhism is part of the Hindu–Buddhist system and is connected to a mild system of class consciousness which remains vivid on Bali. Other motives could have included the superior magic showed by Muslim scribes and scholars, and their lack of fear toward bad spirits. These motives are not only found in the scholarly literature but also in the superb novel about the arrival of Islam and the eclipse of the Hindu–Buddhist culture, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Arus Balik* (Crosscurrent), published in 1995.

In the classical account of *Babad Tanah Jawi* the chronicle of the Muslim court of Mataram, the Muslim ruler of the coastal region of Demak, Raden Patah, is depicted as a son of the last Hindu–Buddhist King of Majapahit, Brawijaya V. The latter complains about the negligence of his son to visit the court and pay homage as a son must do at least once a year. However, Raden Patah states that “it is the rule of the religion that does not allow a Muslim to pay his honours to an unbeliever [*kafir* from Arab *kāfir*]. And it was foretold that Bintara/Demak would become an independent kingdom, from where the conversion of the Javanese to Islam would start”. Thus, Raden Patah collected a huge army from several Muslim allies on the north coast and encircled the capital of Majapahit. His father Brawijaya took position at the highest part of his palace, saw his son in magnificent dress surrounded by his mighty army, and “ascended to heaven with all the troops that had remained loyal to him”. At the same moment when Lord Brawijaya ascended to heaven, some people saw something like a fireball leave the palace of Majapahit, looking like lightning and sounding like thunder. It fell down in Bintara/Demak.⁵ This is a typical Javanese harmonising story where the transition went in a smooth and peaceful way under divine guidance. Other legendary stories tell about quite serious fighting between coastal rulers and the prince of Majapahit. The last and deciding fight is often placed about 1527.

There may be some truth in the rather general idea that Hindu and Buddhist practices and doctrines spread from top to bottom, from the palace and the officials at the royal shrines to the common people — if they reached the common people at all. On the other hand, Islam may have been spread more from the bottom to the top — from the individual traders to the elite in the small coastal towns,

and then inland to the political centers of the great empires, especially Majapahit. In all cases, it has to be admitted that the Hindu stories of the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata were continued by the Muslims of Java and Southern Borneo Banjarmasin in the form shadow theatre (*wayang*).

Within the Muslim civilisation of Indonesia some aspects of Buddhism have survived. Most prominent is the mythical and ascetic tendency among segments of the new Muslims. A Muslim version of the story of the Buddha as a prince who left his palace and sought a life of meditation and preaching is preserved in the Malay story *Hikayat Sultan Ibrahim* (Jones, 1983). The story tells of a truly Muslim mystic saint, with the general idea about a sultan who abdicates the throne to live the life of a Sufi mendicant very much resembling that of the Buddha.

A Hybrid Buddhist–Muslim Shrine in Semarang

In southwest Semarang, on the northcoast of Central Java, a popular shrine is often visited by Chinese Buddhists and Javanese Muslims. It is basically a cave with some altars in traditional Chinese style, and an anchor from a ship of the Dutch East India Company. The anchor, however, is believed to be that of the admiral Zheng He of around 1405–1433. Zheng He was the leader of a Chinese fleet seeking economic and political expansion to the south. Local tradition refers to him as Sam Po Kong and it is believed that he was a Muslim. Attached to the cave is an impressive Chinese temple, extended and renovated most recently in 2006 in commemoration of the visit of Zheng He to Semarang. The Buddhist monastery of Jalan Dago in Bandung was until recently much more often visited by Muslim devotees than by Buddhists. The monk Ashin Jinarakkhita was a frequent visitor to this *vihara* in the 1970s and 1980s, and was not troubled by this religious pluralism.⁶

In 1964 one Mangaradja Onggang Parlindungan wrote a curious book *Tuanku Rao* on the ‘terrorist war’ of the Muslim Minangkabau, West Sumatra, against the Batak people in the mountainous center of North Sumatra. Under heavy pressure they brought that region to Islam. Parlindungan, himself a Muslim of Batak origin, wrote a book about legends, mixed with much fiction and especially hatred against Minangkabau Muslims. In an appendix to the book (p. 650–672), he published a Malay text on the Chinese origins of Islam in Java. The book caused much debate and was officially banned by the Indonesian

government. The text was also debated in academic circles. Two highly respected Dutch scholars, De Graaf and Pigeaud, wrote a commentary to this text which they labelled as the ‘Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon’. Their Dutch academic institute rejected the text as forgery, but finally an admirer of the two and a well - established scholar of Javanese history in his own right, Merle Ricklefs, finally published this text in 1984 under the title of *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries*.

As is clear from the 2006 extensions in the Semarang shrine, the story remains very much alive and has received new interpretations. The most important of these living memories is that of the possibility of Chinese traders, Buddhists and Muslims alike, living together peacefully, visiting Indonesia in peace and harmony and contributing to the religious history of this country in the early 15th century. Below we will see more efforts to use the past history of Indonesia for modern reconstructions of Buddhism and Buddhist–Muslim relations.

Not only in the Semarang shrine can we see a continuing symbiosis of popular Buddhism and Islam, but this is the case with many more Muslims shrines in Java. At the Surabaya shrine of Sunan Ampel (dedicated to one of the nine first preachers of Islam of Java) there is the memory of a *puteri Cina*, a Chinese princess, married to a Muslim saint. In Bayat, at the grave of Sunan Tembayat, there is a vivid memory of the saint who originated from Semarang and was the first preacher of Islam in the southern districts of Central Java. His grave is frequently visited by huge crowds, among them also many non–Muslim Chinese Indonesians.⁷ These are just a few examples of how Chinese Buddhists may easily mingle with Muslims in the so–called ‘popular’ religion, especially in visits to graves. In the following sections we will deal mostly with official religion and key representatives of the communities. We should, however, never forget that conflicts more often arise due to economic, social, and political reasons than from religious causes. Also, popular religion is more inclined to allow syncretic practices than official religion.

1900–1950: Buddhism as Part of a Revival of Chinese Cultural Confidence in the Dutch East Indies

A Chinese traveller to Java in the 18th century, Ong Tae-hae, remarked that:

When the Chinese have settled for several generations in foreign countries without ever returning to China, then they easily forget the teachings of their ancestors and Chinese sages. They adopt the way natives eat and dress, read their books. They do not object to call themselves Javanese and become Muslims. Because these people (Chinese Muslims) have become numerous, the Dutch have placed them under a *Kapitan* who supervises them.⁸

That was the situation of Buddhism in Indonesia about 1900. With the exception of the island of Bali, Buddhist traditions were found only among the Chinese migrants but were not really flourishing. Until 1900 most Chinese migrants (as well as Europeans and Arabs) married local women. After that year increasingly more Chinese and European (but not Arab) women were among the new migrants and, in fact, the 'racial purity' became somewhat stronger in the first decades of this century.

The *peranakan*, or Southeast Asia-born Chinese, showed a remarkable cultural revival in the beginning of the 20th century. The most obvious sign of this revival was the foundation of Chinese schools, the *Tiong Hwa Hwee Koan* (THHK). These schools had a national Chinese base, Mandarin as the language of instruction, and English added for commercial reasons. The first THHK school was founded in 1901. The number grew very quickly and in 1905 there were already 75 THHK primary schools with a total of 5500 pupils.⁹ A decade later THHK managed 442 schools with 19,636 pupils and 858 teachers, with most directly coming from China.¹⁰ In fact, many THHK schools developed from more or less traditional Chinese schools, of which there were 217 recorded in 1899. These had 4452 students in Java and Madura. In these schools the mode of instruction was the traditional one. Students learned the Confucian classics by heart, reciting from the Chinese characters in Hokkien, usually with a minimum explanation of the meaning.¹¹

Some conversions to Christianity occurred from 1880 onwards. Also, there was a clear revival of Confucianism, or which can probably be labelled as neo-Confucianism.¹² There was much eclecticism (interest in theosophy, use of elements from Islamic mysticism and Javanese magic), but there were virtually no further formal conversions to Islam. It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that Islam became considered as indigenous and outmoded against the perception of Christianity and neo-Confucianism as rational and modern, but there certainly was a tendency towards considering things this way.

Reconstruction of Buddhist Denominations and the Nationalist Interpretation: From Kwee Tek Hoay to Ashin Jinarakkhita

One important individual thinker and writer in the early 20th century was Kwee Tek Hoay. He was born in Bogor, south of Jakarta, around 1880, and died in 1951 in Cicurug, a small town in West Java, not far from Bogor. As a young boy he learnt Chinese, picked up Malay and also learnt English from an Indian teacher, S. Maharadja, who was engaged by the THHK school of Bogor in 1900. Through his knowledge of English he could read Chinese and Indian classics and also Western literature. His main source of income was the trade in textiles, but he was also very active as a journalist, writer, and translator. He wrote lighthearted romantic stories, but also published a 10-volume life of the Buddha, a Malay translation of the *Bhagavadgita*, and a book on the life and doctrines of Confucius. In 1931 he established his own printing and publishing house, where he printed many romantic books to keep the business healthy. Also, he published many more writings on philosophy, theosophy, and religion. In 1933 he founded the Sam Kauw Goat Po, or 'Three Religions Society' (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism). From 1932–1942 he published two magazines on religion — *Moestika Dharma* and *Moestika Romans*.¹³

While Kwee continued to work within the harmony of the three Chinese religious traditions, a more specific Buddhist revival had begun within circles of Javanese, Eurasian, and even white inhabitants of the Dutch colony who were mostly members of the Theosophical Society. At the start of the 20th century, they established the Java Buddhist Association as a branch of the International Buddhist Mission. Its headquarters was in Burma. This association was Theravada-oriented.¹⁴ They invited the Ceylonese monk Narada Thera to make a trip through the Dutch East Indies in 1934. They also organized the first Waisak celebration in the modern era at the Borobudur shrine on May 20, 1932.

A member of the Bogor branch of the Theosophical Society, The Boan An (born 1923), became the most influential figure between 1950–1970. He studied chemistry in Groningen, the Netherlands, from 1946–1951. He also followed courses of Sanskrit and comparative religion. After his return to Indonesia he became a pupil of the monk

Pen Ching at the Kong Hoe Sie temple, or *klenteng*, in Jakarta.¹⁵ There his head was shaved and he became a *sramanera*, or novice, in the Ch'an order. In May 1953 he strongly promoted the Waisak celebration at Borobudur as a national Buddhist festival. Soon after this celebration he wanted to pursue further studies in Sri Lanka but was not granted funds to go there. Instead, he was gladly received by Mahasi Sayadaw in Rangoon, where he studied Vipassana meditation. He was again initiated as a novice, but now in a Theravada order, on January 23, 1954. After that he used the name Ashin Jinarakkhita.¹⁶ The ordination of Jinarakkhita is seen in the history of Indonesian Buddhism as the first ordination of a monk since the fall of the last Hindu–Buddhist Majapahit kingdom in 1527.

Jinarakkhita lived in the time of impassioned nationalism. Among the Chinese population he wanted to show that being a (Chinese) Buddhist was not contrary to Indonesian nationalism. Instead, he promoted the old roots of Buddhism in Indonesia. The Waisak celebration at the impressive Borobudur shrine was quite instrumental in this respect. He also wanted to adjust to the historical compromise about religion between secularists and proponents of an Islamic state through the acceptance of Pancasila ideology in 1945, when belief in *Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*, or in the One and High Divinity, had been formulated as one of the five pillars of the new republic. He strongly promoted the idea of *Sang Hyang Adi Buddha*, or the Lordship of the High Buddha, as found in the 10th century Old Javanese text *Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan* as congruent with the idea of there being one God as accepted by Christians, Muslims, and Hindus for the national ideology.¹⁷ In 1975 the formula for taking an oath was established by government decree as *Demi Sang Hyang Adi Buddha* (I swear to Sang Hyang Adi Buddha).¹⁸ In his 1986 catechism the first 17 questions are about this first principle of all being, from which the whole creation developed. Questions 18–20 are about the principle of evil, or *mara*. While reading it, I wondered whether a Christian catechism with the concept of original sin was at the basis of this beginning. However, no follow up was given to this emphasis on one deity and an outward source for human weakness. Questions 215–218 discuss the meaning of the veneration of statues of deities, saints, and the Buddha in Buddhism. These are only seen as simple help for human beings to visualise the love and mercy of the Buddha.¹⁹

Jinarakkhita wanted to establish a distinct Indonesian interpretation of Buddhism. He called his movement Buddhayana (as different from Mahayana, Theravada, and Tantrayana) and held several international debates about this topic. He was most outspoken in his difference of opinion with the Sri Lankan monk Narada, who had visited Indonesia in 1934 and later again in 1959 and 1969. Jinarakkhita called his doctrine a 'theistic Buddhism'. Narada Thera wrote quite often to Parwati, a secretary to Jinarakkhita, and urged her: "Please, tell your teacher that there is no God in Buddhism". Jinarakkhita's reaction was that this could be true for Ceylonese Buddhism, but Indonesian Buddhism cherished a distinct flavour of several blends of Buddhism and would not practise its religion without the concept of a supreme divinity.²⁰

Jinarakkhita died in 2002. Until the end of his life he was active in teaching, giving courses and starting initiatives for Buddhism, in general, and for Buddhayana, in particular. It is not quite clear how the 0.84 per cent of Buddhists who live in Indonesia — or slightly over two million in the total population (according to the 2000 Census) — are divided between the major denominations.²¹ It is my impression that an overwhelming majority visit rather independent shrines that should be labelled as Sam Kauw or Tridharma (uniting the three doctrines of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism into one compound). If a specific denomination should dominate, the Maitreya sect certainly has many followers among the Chinese. Buddhists of Indonesian origin may have more sympathy for Buddhayana, but among the Balinese there are also followers of another stream, the Kasogatan, led by Oka Diputhera, as discussed below.

My first experience of the Buddhist revival in Indonesia was in May 1970 when I was doing fieldwork in Muslim boarding schools. In the town of Cirebon I visited a Chinese temple and saw an announcement that people could subscribe to join the Waisak celebration at Borobudur. On our way from Cirebon to Muntilan, the four buses with some 200 people stopped at several Chinese temples. The older people performed traditional rituals, throwing stones to the ground as part of divination rituals. But the younger pilgrims, who had received their obligatory religious education at high school from monks from Thailand, went to special chapels with Buddha statues alone and spent some time in silent meditation. They found their parents old-fashioned and

superstitious. The cleavage between denominations has not become so strict as that between Catholics and Protestants for the Christians, or between traditionalist and reformist Muslims (Nahdlatul Ulama versus Muhammadiyah) in Indonesia. Nevertheless, there have been a number of conflicts between various organizations. Jinarakkhita's Buddhayana was in the 1990s the subject of several debates. In 1992 this organization, together with Sangha Agung Indonesia (its Council of Monks), was excluded from the national union of Buddhist organizations, WALUBI. Buddhayana compared this Council of Monks with the position of religious scholars, or *ulama*, in the Muslim community. A religious decision was therefore called *keputusan dharma*, or even *fatwa*. In 1999 another public debate started among the Indonesian Buddhists about "the arrogance of this small Buddhayana organization to issue *fatwa* for the Buddhist community". WALUBI stated that in Buddhism only the scripture of the Buddha is valid and that an institution like a *fatwa* is not part of the Buddhist tradition.²²

1959–1990s: Oka Diputhera and the Bureaucratic Integration of Buddhism

Religion is not a private affair in modern Indonesia. It is also a public and a state business. A key institution here is the Ministry of Religion, established in January 1946. It serves mostly the 87 per cent of Muslims in the country, but for Christians (nine per cent) there are Catholic and Protestant directorates. A Hindu section was established in Bali in 1960. Later, in 1967, a Buddhist office was founded within this Hindu Balinese administration. Only in 1980 was a special Directorate for Buddhist Affairs established in the ministry. Oka Diputhera was its first director until his retirement in 1991.

In 1959 the young Balinese I Gusti Ngurah Oka Diputhera (born in 1934 in Jembrana) became a staff member for this ministry. As a student at the Sanata Dharma Teacher Training College (run by the Jesuit Catholics), in Yogyakarta, he felt attracted to the preaching of pure Buddhism by Jinarakkhita and was ordained to become an *upasaka*, or lay devotee.

Under the new order of General Soeharto (1966–1998) religion became a much more visible phenomenon in society. For Buddhism there was the special ruling that Chinese names for persons and organizations as well as Chinese characters were forbidden. This made

Buddhism a more Indonesian reality. The Buddhist officials of the ministry became active in the publication of Indonesian translations of sacred scripture. In 1973 the old Javanese text *Kamahayanikam* was again translated into Indonesian.²³ In the new introduction it was emphasized that this old book of Indonesian Buddhism had a strong tendency towards Tantrayana or Vajrayana in its choice of magical formulas or mantras. We will see that Diputhera, in his own Buddhist organization, Kasogatan, also included this third stream of Buddhism. In 2003 a section from *Dhammapada Atthakatha* (the *Appamada Vagga*) was published by the ministry.

The most important activity of the Buddhist section in the Ministry of Religion was the organization of religious education, overseeing kindergarten to university. In all levels of education, religion had become obligatory in the Soeharto period. The ministry started with education for the teachers. Diputhera himself became the initiator for the Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Nalanda in Jakarta in the late 1970s. It is now the major college for teachers of the Buddhist religion, modelled after the State Academy of Islamic Studies. Similar colleges for Muslims were opened in eight other places in Indonesia, most of them in Java (including in Malang, Semarang, and Boyolali), while two were established in Sumatra (Medan and Lampung). Also, a State Institute for Hindu Studies was established at the initiative of the government. Only Catholics and Protestants had their own theological schools established.

A full series of booklets was written to fulfil the need of textbooks for pupils and teachers. A quick look at some of these books shows a great difference between the ritual/dogmatic and the ethical discussions. The sections on ritual and doctrine are full of technical terminology in Pali and they must be as strange for Indonesian pupils as the chanting of Arabic for Muslim students. As a religious language Pali received some extra stimulus. Since the 1990s the Buddhist section of the Ministry of Religion organised a national contest in the reading of Pali scripture, an event resembling the annual competition in Quran reading for Muslims. At Waisak the *Piala Presiden* (President's Cup) is now given to the winner of this contest in reciting sacred scripture.

In the sections on social ethics, the books of religious instruction show quite a different style. They are more concerned for Pancasila or nationalist Indonesian ethics. The standard course book for 3D-grade

senior high school defines the goal of ethics as the effort to reach a state of *manusia seutuhnya*, or full humanity. This is elaborated in the schedule of the five pillars of Pancasila. The first pillar, or belief in the ‘One and High Divinity’, is illustrated with a quote from *Udana VIII: 3*, as follows:

There is, monks, an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated. If there were not that unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated, there would not be the case that emancipation from the born, become, made, fabricated would be discerned. But precisely because there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated, emancipation from the born, become, made, fabricated is discerned.²⁴

This text is one of the most often quoted of the classical Buddhist texts and serves to combine this doctrine with the Muslim-inspired Pancasila ideology of modern Indonesia. Besides, the explanation about this first pillar of the state ideology only stresses that belief in God is something personal and can be found in many expressions that all must be respected.

The second pillar of Pancasila is ‘just and civilised humanity’, and is here identified with Buddhist virtues like *metta* (love), *karuna* (care), *mudita* (empathy) and *upekha* (inner balance). The third pillar is the unity of Indonesia. The commentary here says that Buddhist love is to be united. They are proud of the Indonesian people and nation. In this context of unity, the Buddha says: “Happy are those who are united; happy are those who remain within their harmony” (Dhammapada 194). The fourth pillar is ‘democratic socialism’ and is explained with a quote from the *Mahāparinibbana Sutta*, in which the Buddha asks Ananda to take the consultation with the other monks very seriously. For the fifth pillar of ‘social justice for the whole people of Indonesia’, it is stressed that it is forbidden to live luxuriously at the disadvantage of other people, to forget the poor, not to live in proper relation to partners, parents, friends, employers, monks, and society as a whole.

For daily life in the modern cities of Indonesia some specifications are given about the abuse of drugs, abortion, rape, and fighting between schools. This summary of the ethical issues in school books shows a clear Buddhist flavour that has been given to the actual issues. But in the ritual and doctrinal, this is much more outspoken.²⁵

In 1974 a new marriage law was accepted by the Indonesian parliament and this ruled that marriages should be administered

according to the religion of the couple. This has brought the civil administration of marriages also under the responsibility of Buddhist officials. In this case, the duty is entrusted not to the monks but to the lay *Romo Pandita* ('Father Ministers', a brilliant combination of the terminology for Catholics and Protestants). Due to the program of family planning under the Soeharto government, Buddhist organizations also had to support initiatives for birth control. Oka Diputhera was the chairperson of a small committee for the composition of a booklet of 98 pages supporting the program. The publication is a nice mixture of elements from governmental instruction and texts from Buddhist scripture, plus arguments from tradition. It is stated here that Siddharta Gautama, in 13 years of marriage, only had one child and abstained from the possibility of having more children.²⁶

An important element in the religious policy of the Soeharto government was the co-operation among religions in its development program. The government wanted to establish harmony between the religions and good procedures for consultation. In 1975 the government took the initiative to establish a national council of Muslim scholars, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Council of Ulama, MUI). Catholics already had a conference of bishops and Protestants a council of churches. For Hindus, a Parisada Hindu Darma (Hinduism Society) was erected in 1959 as a Hindu board in Bali.²⁷ In 1979 Oka Diputhera, as the highest official for Buddhism in the government administration, launched Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia (Representation of the Buddhist Community in Indonesia, WALUBI). Finally, WALUBI became a federation of three councils of monks — Mahayana, Theravada, Vajrayana — and six Buddhist communities.²⁸ We will not go into detail about the internal struggles, conflicts and developments of WALUBI, but only sketch some elements that are important for this organization within the framework of religious policy in Muslim-dominated Indonesia.

Under Minister of Religion Ratu Alamsjah Perwiranegara (1978–1983), a program for harmony among religions was developed along three lines: internal harmony within a religion; harmony between the religions; harmony between religions and the government. The program was developed through numerous seminars and meetings. One of its peak moments came in 1983 when all civil organizations, including religious bodies, accepted the Pancasila ideology as *asas tunggal*, or the

sole political and social principle, for their activities. In this period Diputhera held at least two seminars for the Buddhist community — one in Medan on November 16–18, 1981, and the other in Bandungan, south of Semarang, on August 30–September 1, 1983. As major issues, the following can be extracted: a) the organization of WALUBI itself as a representative body; b) the position of the monks in this structure (Diputhera proposed that they should have a legislative power, or ‘shall formulate *fatwa* about topics like birth control’); c) national registration of monks and their ordination; d) stricter formulation of the Buddhist *rohaniwan* (clergy), especially the criteria to become a *pandita* or *maha pandita*; e) improvement of religious education in private and state schools; f) an increase of government–paid *dharmaduta*, or professionals working for *da‘wah* or Buddhist propaganda.²⁹

Although Oka Diputhera started his dedication to Buddhism as a pupil of the monk Jinarakkhita, in the 1980s he preferred the monk of Balinese Brahman origin Girirakkhita (ordained in 1959 by Narada Thera and 13 other international monks). He also established his own Buddhist organization, called Kasogatan (after the old Javenese word for the Buddha *sugata* meaning ‘blessed’), in 1975.³⁰ With a height of 1.76m and body weight of 90kg, Diputhera really was a heavyweight in the arena of Indonesian Buddhism. Especially in the 1980s and 1990s, he was often invited to give talks on television. In the 1980s there were only two national channels and the weekly 30 minutes that were set aside for Buddhism was a good opportunity to reach many non-Buddhists. As a respected senior official, Diputhera made official Buddhism a valued partner of the government in ethical and social issues. In 1991 he was succeeded as director for Buddhist Affairs by Budi Setiawan, a high official in the national police. Cornelis Wowor, a Minahasan who converted from Protestantism in 1972, became the director for Buddhist affairs in 1998. Although a vast majority of Buddhists in the country are Indonesians of Chinese descent, they are very seldom to be found among the circles of government officials. The Buddhist section of the Ministry of Religion is no exception to this rule.

Early 1990s and Later: Hartati Murdaya and the Socio-economic Position of Buddhism

Buddhism was part of the general revival of religions in the post-communist period of President Soeharto. In 1966 Partai Komunis

Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) was banned and religion increasingly stimulated — firstly, to balance the interest in communism and, secondly, to support the developmental goals of the new government. The Islamic revival has been given most attention, but also Hinduism and Christianity witnessed increases in their numbers and activities. Having membership of one of the five recognised religions became increasingly important for Indonesians. Civil marriage was reduced in facilities and, therefore, in quite a few matters people had to choose an established religion. Tribal religions saw people opt for Islam or Christianity and only in a few cases did they manage to reformulate themselves as a branch of Hinduism. This was the case with the Dayak tribal religion as it became Hindu–Kaharingan, and the Batak religion as Hindu–Parmalim.³¹ For some time there was also a ‘Buddhist adherence’ within the Tengger tribal religion of Java, as a remnant of the Hindu–Buddhist period of the Majapahit kingdom. Finally, the Tenggerese embraced formal Hinduism, which proved more lenient than Buddhism.

With a fast growing number of officials, the Ministry of Religion became an important factor in this general religious revival. Above we have seen how top official Oka Diputhera led the relatively very small Buddhist section in this department. He was also a central leader in the first years of WALUBI, as we have seen above. By far the most prominent personality in the world of business and business–related political influence was Hartati Murdaya. Born on August 29, 1946, to a Chinese–Indonesian family in Jakarta as Chow Lie Ing, she took an Indonesian name as Siti Hartati Tjakra Murdaya. Married to Poo Tjie Gwan (born in 1941 in Blitar), the name Murdaya is taken from her husband. The couple is, according to the 2006 Forbes list, one of the 40 richest in Indonesian, ranking 16th. They acquired their wealth as the Indonesian partner of the Swedish ASEA Group and the Swiss Brown Boveri Group, specialising in power plants. These contacts started in the early 1980s. Besides, Hartati Murdaya owns in her own right several shoe companies and has contracts with Nike. As such she had some troubles with strikes supported by US anti-Nike activists. She is also active in the logging business. Leftist activists have written very negatively about her. George Aditjondro blamed her for close ties with the military and members of the overtly corrupt Soeharto family. He criticised her mostly for the tension between her fame as a Buddhist

— who claims to meditate up to three hours per day — while being a businesswoman reluctant to pay to her workers even the country's extremely low official minimum wage.³² Hartati Murdaya founded a state-supported association of Buddhist intellectuals, Keluarga Cendekiawan Buddhis Indonesia, as a parallel to a state-funded organization of Muslim intellectuals. She also established a Buddhist hospital in Tangerang and welfare organization Yayasan Paramita.

A very different image of Hartati Murdaya arises from the emotional story of her vocation to become chairperson of WALUBI. It is found in the book published by WALUBI in 1997 to record its early history and development. At the first National Convention of WALUBI in July 1986, the Nichiren Buddhists were more or less discarded. In July 1987 a council of monks declared Nichiren Buddhists heretics because they did not consider the full Tripitaka as Buddhist scripture, but accepted only the Lotus Sutra as such. Besides, Mr Senosenoto, the first secretary general of WALUBI and Nichiren leader, had promoted Waisak not as the birthday (and commemoration of enlightenment and death) of Buddha Sakyamuni but as “a day of giving sympathy and love”. For its own reasons the government wanted the unity of all Buddhists in WALUBI, and would not give permission to convoke a second National Convention in 1991, if the Nichiren Buddhists were to be present. General chairman, the monk Girirakkhito, was in great trouble. But thanks to his ability to perform the *samatha bavana* meditation, he could come to rest.

Finally, Girirakkhito Mahathera put himself on a sleeping bed. He tried to calm down his thinking and in his wisdom Girirakkhito Mahathera asked the Almighty Lord to give him strength and advice in the troubles he faced. How to find permission to hold the Second National Convention of WALUBI without participation of the Nichiren Buddhists? That was his difficult problem. Finally, Girirakkhito fell calmly asleep.

In his quiet and refreshing sleep, Girirakkhito Mahathera dreamt in a very clear way and as if he himself was not dreaming and as if the facts were truly happening. In his dream Girirakkhito Mahathera saw a crystal coffin floating in the air and then coming down pushing on his body. The crystal coffin at once melted down and disappeared. He then saw a mighty being standing with a powerful and venerable appearance. This impressive creature whispered to Girirakkhito with very clear words: “The mission to end the quarrel within WALUBI must be executed by a woman. Her name is Siti Hartati Murdaya”.

This was the inspiration as it was received by Girirakkhito Mahathera in his clear dream, as if it was real life. Although Girirakkhito stayed at that moment in one of the houses of Siti Hartati Murdaya, on Jalan Terusan Lembang, he did not yet know her personally. The next morning he called Siti Hartati Murdaya [who was then in the United States] to tell her about the inspiration he had received from a Lofty Creature. Girirakkhito stressed that the one who received the mission to lead WALUBI out of its problems was Siti Hartati Murdaya. Hartati told him that she did not know much about WALUBI: “How could I fulfil this mission? And my knowledge about Nichiren is also very little”. Finally, Siti Hartati Murdaya accepted the duty to carry out the mission that she had to fulfil as it was given to her by Girirakkhito Mahathera. All material about the laws and bylaws of WALUBI and about the Nichiren was handed over to Hartati Murdaya.³³

Hartati Murdaya could, it seemed, find a way out of the problems. On March 25, 1992, the board of WALUBI met President Soeharto to ask him to be willing to open the second National Convention. On April 17 a meeting of monks (Viyaka Sabha) discussed again the issue of Nichiren and concluded that a dialogue about doctrine was not possible. On April 25, 1992, President Soeharto held the official opening of the second National Convention of WALUBI. Siti Hartati Murdaya was there nominated as chairperson for charity and as a special advisor to the general board.

A third and again quite different account about the religious vocation of Hartati Murdaya is found in a very polemic booklet published in 1999 about the issue, titled *Why WALUBI must have a seat in the National Congress*. The national congress in Indonesia is a state institution that functions more or less as a broad state podium for general policy. It is based in the constitution as a body that comes together after national elections to formulate the outline for the government policy in the next five years. Not only political parties, but also delegates from occupational groups and also from religions are nominated for this very prestigious body. In the period 1993–1998 the monk Girirakkhito was member of the Congress. He was then succeeded by Hartati Mudraya. The 1999 debate apparently had to do with the differences of opinion about the status of the monks in the Buddhist community — either as advisors or as deciding leaders. The monks in this matter finally lost to the lay people who dominated WALUBI and most Buddhist organizations.

In the booklet of 1999, the Nichiren Buddhists were again mentioned as member of WALUBI. However, Buddhayana had now

left the federation.³⁴ The pamphlet had a long story about Siti Hartati Murdaya. It tells how she, in 1995, had deep experiences in Mahayana meditation. She also met the female monk, or *bhiksuni*, Cheng Yen in Taiwan and the organization Tzu-Chi as a body of rich people working for the poor. Cheng Yen told her that she had met Catholic nuns who praised doctrines of peace and love of Buddhism, but reproached her that Buddhists did not involve themselves in practical social action. In this way Cheng Yen had started her movement. This became an enlightening encounter for Hartati Murdaya.

Waisak has since the 1950s been the most important public event of Buddhist character in Indonesia. Since 1953 it was held at the Borobudur temple, or rather in a procession between the nearby small Mendut shrine and the giant Borobudur. From 1975–1982 the temple was closed for restoration, a project initiated by the Indonesian government in co-operation with UNESCO. On January 21, 1985, shortly after the official reopening, nine stupas of the seventh and highest level were badly damaged by nine bombs. A few days later in a mosque in nearby Yogyakarta I found a leaflet claiming that the bombing attack had been done “in order to resume the work of the prophet Abraham, who had destroyed the idols of Mesopotamia. Indonesia was now on its way back to ancient paganism and idolatry”. The culprits were found and sentenced to long periods in prison. However, Borobudur remained open only for tourists and cultural visits and, for the time being, it was decided that Waisak could not be celebrated at this most beautiful and grandiose of old Buddhist shrines. Finally, Waisak could again be celebrated at Borobudur in 1994. In that year, for the first time, President Soeharto attended the great Waisak celebration at the Jakarta Convention Hall in the same way as he used to attend the ecumenical Christmas Celebration in that place and light the first candle on the country’s largest Christmas tree.

It is quite curious to read the official booklets for the Waisak celebration at Borobudur. After an introduction by the organizing committee, there are in this official program short greetings by the president, the (Muslim) minister of religion, some six other ministers, the chief of the army, the national bodies for Protestants and Catholics, followed by the program of the celebration itself. They all underline Indonesia as a nation where religion has a firm position, religious freedom and harmony of religion is very important, and where religions

have to co-operate in the fight against poverty, crime, hedonism, AIDS, drug use and many other vices that are still present in society. In 1995 the minister of religion, the medical doctor and West Sumatran Muslim Haji Tarmizi Taher, gave a speech at the start of the procession from the Mendut temple in which he said:

As a nation of so great a variety in a vast territory, we have to see to our similarities rather than to our differences. Therefore, all the religions have accepted 10 years ago without any problem Pancasila as the sole foundation for social, national, and political life.³⁵

In the definition of the six religions that are officially accepted in Indonesia, some criteria were important: international; professing the One Divinity; Holy Scripture; a prophet. In the overall structure of the state's acceptance of Buddhism, it was actually more the need for national harmony, law and order, and co-operation in government development goals that played an important role. Buddhism had to make some adjustments to the Indonesian situation. A greater prominence was accorded for Sang Yang Adi Buddha as the One and Supreme Divinity, while more emphasis was placed on social relevance. Also, a more important role was given to the laity in comparison to the monks, whose role was restricted. Thanks to the state ban on the rival religious traditions of Confucianism and Taoism, Buddhism could rise to one of the 'big five' in the Indonesian religious scene. This allowed for many privileges in the media, education, and in the formal government administration (marriage, taking oaths, presence at official events, etc). All this did not happen because of a general doctrine of Islam, but was rather related to the concrete position of Islam as the major religion in the Pancasila religious pluralism of modern Indonesia.

Islamic Discourse about Buddhism: Anti-Chinese Riots in the 20th Century and Muslim Perceptions of Buddhism

The Jewish and Christian religions and their prophets have always been in the center of Muslim discourse, but the Buddha and Buddhism only feature at the margin of Islamic thinking — if they feature here at all. Comparative religion has never been an important subject in Indonesian Islamic debate. A quite exceptional work here was written by the 17th-century Gujerati scholar Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī who lived for about a decade in Aceh and wrote a work on the great religions of the world. It was much simpler than the great work by Shahrastani, but was

in the same style. The Hindu tradition is related here to the prophet Abraham by a curious etymology of the word for Brahmans (written as *Barahīm* and, so, sounding as an Arab plural of Ibrāhim). However, the Buddhists are not mentioned by name.³⁶ Only in the 20th century was a tradition of history of religion resumed by Indonesian Muslims, although only in a very modest way. In the 1930s a book in Arabic for higher Islamic education was published by Mahmud Junus, *al-Adyān* (The Religions). In 77 pages all major religions are presented, starting with short notes about the Zoroastrians and Sabaeans, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, Shinto in Japan and Fetishism in West Africa — every area of the world having its own religion. More elaborate presentations are later given, beginning with Judaism (pages 30–42) and Christianity (42–57). The sources here are Arabic, probably partly taken from French encyclopaedias.³⁷

In the 1960s a first academic level for Islamic education was established with the Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN, State Institute for Islamic Studies). IAIN had 14 main colleges in the major cities and many further branches. Prof. Abdul Mukti Ali — who was minister of religion from 1970–78 and had obtained a masters degree at Montreal's McGill University with Wilfred Cantwell Smith — introduced Comparative Religion as an important subject. But, notwithstanding this openness, all new publications about the world religions remained concentrated on general handbooks in Arab countries with some additions from English-language sources. In 1988 IAIN Yogyakarta published a handbook *Agama-agama di Dunia* ('The World's Religions', Yogyakarta: Sunan Kalijaga Press, 1988). It is without any polemic or comparison, just a presentation comparable to Ninian Smart's famous handbook, although much shorter and cheaper. An even shorter textbook like Mudjahid Abdul Manaf, *Sejarah Agama-agama* ('History of Religions', Jakarta: Raja Grafindo, 1994) is without any personal viewpoint. Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are explained in the usual encyclopaedic manner. Seen against the background of the traditional Islamic education in Indonesia, the IAIN has taken a big step forward. As in society, in government administration, and also here in the academic circles of Muslim scholarship, the various religions have become accepted.

Another step has been taken since the troublesome period from 1998–2002, remembered for the abdication of Soeharto as Indonesia's

president, riots, and killings by religiously inspired gangs and militias, mostly of Muslim and Christian background. Mujiburrahman has aptly described Muslim–Christian relations as inspired by mutual feelings of fear.³⁸ This has been different for Muslim–Buddhist relations, mainly due to there being a small minority of Buddhists in the Muslim–dominant society. Besides, Buddhists were mostly restricted to one ethnic identity — the Chinese. Hinduism was also largely restricted to an ethnic (and geographic) identity — the Balinese. Christians, on the other hand, were spread throughout the country. As a result of these problems, several universities have started academic programs for inter-religious understanding. One important project is located at the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) at the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM, University of Gadjah Mada) in Yogyakarta. Christian and Muslim institutions are founding members, and Buddhists only join out of personal interest.³⁹

In the 20th century, a long series of anti-Chinese riots disturbed Indonesian societies. Under Dutch colonial rule, the Chinese could not settle outside urban areas, were restricted in travelling outside their place of residence, and were, therefore, mostly small traders or craftsmen in urban areas. After the establishment of Sarekat Islam in 1912 as the first Muslim social and nationalist movement, some Chinese processions from temples were disturbed and, in some places, shops were set in fire after accusations that Chinese had sent dogs to a mosque. Occasionally, especially during periods of less political stability, similar anti-Chinese riots took place. Among the most serious occurred during the May 1998 riots in Jakarta, where Muslim gangs scapegoated the Chinese community for the fall of the Soeharto regime. In particular, these accusations related to Soeharto's strong financial supporter Liem Sioe Long and his Salim group. Some 1000 deaths and the widespread destruction of property resulted. The word *kāfir* (unbeliever) was often written on the walls of houses that were later set on fire.

Some Chinese converted to Islam. One of the best known was The Kian Siang, alias Bob Hassan, who was a business partner of the Soeharto family. There were also some Chinese who accepted Islam in a mixed mood of religious and nationalist motivation. Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia (PITI, Muslim–Chinese Union of Indonesia) is the successor of an initiative that started in 1936 in Medan and later became a modest nationwide movement to promote the integration of

Chinese in Indonesian society. PITI had suggested to Chinese people to convert to Islam. The best-known propagandist was business man Junus Jahja (born as Lauw Chuan To in 1927), who lived in Jakarta.⁴⁰

One of the few Muslim leaders who gave attention to the conversion of Chinese to Islam was Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, who was better known under his acronym Hamka (1908–1981). As a new-style Muslim leader who was active in writing novels and editing a magazine in Medan in the 1930s, he resented the fact that the 30 percent Chinese population of this booming capital of the plantation industry in North Sumatra showed much interest in theosophy, but no interest in Islam. The Chinese there viewed Islam as dry and non-philosophical. At the request of a convert to Islam, Oei Tjeng Hien, Hamka began writing in 1937 a series of articles that were later published as *Tasawuf Modernen* (Modern Piety). In this book there are references to Schopenhauer, Tolstoy, Rockefeller, the medieval Muslim scholar al-Ghazālī, but none to the Buddha or Chinese sages. The topic of happiness is central and any overly strict emphasis on legal practice is even ridiculed. However, no openness toward or knowledge of Buddhist ideas is shown. In other works Hamka also remains silent about the Buddha. In his handbook of Islamic doctrine *Peladjaran Agama Islam* (1956, many reprints), there is a large section about prophets, but the question whether the Buddha is a prophet according to Islamic theology is not even raised. I found only a short remark in his Quran commentary on 21:85, in which Dhū al-Kiflī is mentioned. From an Arab of Surabaya, Hamka once heard that the learned Sudanese Ahmad Soorkati, who was teaching in Indonesia from 1911–1943, thought that this Dhū al-Kiflī should be identified as Siddharta Gautama because his name also could be read as the prophet from Kapilavastu (written as k.f.l.w.). The same is repeated at 38:48 — the other verse of the Quran mentioning Dhu'l Kifl.

The question of whether the Buddha can be seen as a prophet by Muslims and, consequently, whether the Tripitaka can be seen as an equivalent to Torah and Gospel as a divine revelation, is important for the question of whether Buddhism can be accepted as a fully recognised religion in Indonesia. However, the question of the acceptance of monotheism was more important. In fact, there has been very little discussion about the prophethood of the Buddha. In recent online discussion groups the question has been raised by few Muslims, and it is still good to summarise here aspects of the debate. I will give first

a number of positive arguments in favour of the idea of accepting the Buddha as a prophet. Firstly, most traditions about the Buddha have no solid chain of transmitters. The allegation that he would have considered himself as divine or that he would have eaten pork is therefore not really proven. Secondly, the Buddha preached among South Asian people and could remove their polytheism. The kernel of his message concentrating on love, true doctrines, and mercy were a step forward for his people. Thirdly, the Buddha received enlightenment that can be compared to the revelation given to the Prophet Muhammad at Mount Hira. Fourthly, the Buddha was a prince of royal descent and left his high position to preach religion. Muhammad, in the same vein, abandoned his position among the elite tribe of Quraish to preach Islam. Fifthly, there is a *hadith* or private saying of Muhammad telling that one of the former prophets was the son of a king. According to some scholars, such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Mujāhid, this was Dhū al-Kiflī. Sixthly, the Buddha has given a message that Muhammad would come after him. This is the text of Saddharam Pundarika Sutta 94, which talks of the coming Maitreya. In fact this was to predict the coming of Muhammad. This is in line with Quran 4:164 about ‘messengers about whom We have told you before, and messengers about whom We have not told you’.⁴¹

These discussions usually tend to be very general and do not quote precise details of Buddhist history and doctrines. Buddhism is seen as a quite tolerant religion with a high system of ethics but without stricter internal discipline. This is also the image as found with one of the most prominent modern and liberal writers about Muslim doctrine, Nurcholish Madjid. Since he started his career as national chairman of the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI, Muslim Students Association), Madjid pleaded for a ‘secularization’ of Islam and a practical application of its eternal doctrines and values. But this, he argued, should be done in loyalty to its kernel. Here Hinduism and Buddhism are seen by him as too easy:

Hinduism and Buddhism have too much tolerated Indonesian animism and were willing to give it a place in their own religion. That is the reason why so many remnants of animism still are seen in the practice of Hinduism and Buddhism in Indonesia. When Islam arrived in Indonesia the situation in matters of belief was even more or less similar to the condition at the arrival of Hinduism and Buddhism. But today Islam teaches the true doctrine that is the basis of the belief in God’s unity, *tawhīd*.⁴²

In another publication Nurcholis Madjid repeated the common idea about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as revealed religions with an open view for the reality and value of this world, in contrast to the worldview of the Indian religions that did not really take this world seriously. *Ḥaqqīyah* (realistic) is for him the key word for a positive evaluation of the Muslim view of this world.

The cosmology of *samsara* brings us to a pessimistic view on this world, while the [Muslim] *ḥaqqīyah* cosmology gives us a more optimistic view about this world. This is clear in some of the doctrines about life in this world. The cosmology of *samsara* that is the worldview of the Indian religions (Hinduism and Buddhism) puts rejection of this world and living as an ascetic as the highest ideal. But in the Semitic religions and their worldview of *ḥaqqīyah* there is a tendency to prohibit this way of life.⁴³

More political statements about modern Buddhism in Indonesia were made by another prominent liberal Muslim leader, Abdurrahman Wahid, who was national leader of the great organization of Muslim leaders, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Also, Wahid was Indonesia's president from October 1999 until July 2001. After his presidency he uttered severe criticism of WALUBI because lay people had taken over the leadership of the Buddhist movement. On May 26, 2002, at the occasion of Waisak, a council of monks at the Konferensi Agung Sangha Indonesia (KASI, Conference of the Indonesian Buddhist Sanghas) organised a celebration in the huge Senayan Convention Hall of Jakarta. But the most prominent celebration was held under the authority of WALUBI at the Borobudur shrine in Central Java, where also the minister of religion had given a talk. Wahid noticed similar problems in the organization of Islam and Buddhism. Because Islam “knows no clergy” — after the Prophet Muhammad's saying *lā rahbānīyah fī al-Islām*, translated as “there are no monks/priests in Islam” — a variety of people are now in the highest council of Muslim scholars, MUI, even though many of its leaders are not true scholars of Islam.

Everybody now may say that he or she represents Islam. There must be clear criteria. Without these a chaotic situation may rise, as is the case now. Here we must listen to the word of the Prophet Muhammad: “When important questions are left to people without qualifications, we may well expect the Day of Judgment”. Are Muslims in this country already in this stage?⁴⁴

In 2003 Wahid repeated his objections against the dominating position of lay people in WALUBI.

The values of the Muslim community are defined by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia, of the Catholics by the Conference of Catholic Bishops, of the Protestants by the National Council of Churches, of the Confucians by the High Council of the *Konghucu* Religion of Indonesia. In this way the Buddhist community should, according to this author, follow the religious values as formulated by the High Council of Monks in Indonesia, Konferensi Agung Sangha Indonesia. They should not follow some party or organization of lay people. These lay people have to obey the religious specialists. This we have to realise as government or as members of society. As long as this matter is not settled, our life as a nation is still in danger.⁴⁵

This is a quite remarkable statement about internal debates of the Buddhist community by a very distinguished Muslim.

The highest body for Islamic doctrine, the MUI, has issued some *fatwa* directly related to Christians but also important for other religions. In 1980 MUI issued a *fatwa* against the ‘growing practice’ of inter-religious marriage. Although Quran 5:5 explicitly allows the marriage of a Muslim man with a woman “from those who are given Scripture”, this also was no longer seen as permitted. In the debate, this was mostly seen as relating to Christian women. However, according to some definitions, also the Buddhists can be seen as those who are given Scripture, especially if the Buddha Dhu’l Kifli should be taken as a prophet. A *fatwa* banning Muslim participation in Christmas celebrations was handed down in 1982. This was later extended to a general ban on Muslims being present or active at rituals of non-Muslim religions. Needless to say, this has not diminished the presence of Chinese Buddhists at Muslim shrines and vice versa. Not included in this ban is the minister of religion, who speaks during Waisak at Borobudur. During the following decades an increasing number of legal measures were introduced to separate religions. On July 29, 2005, MUI issued a series of eleven *fatwa*, most against liberal views. One of these banned “pluralism that views all religions as being equally valid and having relative truths. Pluralism in that sense is *haram* (forbidden under Islamic law), because it justifies other religions”. Another of these *fatwa* was a prohibition for Muslims to have common prayer sessions with people of other religions. In January 2009 MUI issued a prohibition of yoga, prompting some Buddhists to ask why Vipassana meditation was not also banned. As an important council of Muslim scholars, NU protested this *fatwa* against yoga. However, this series of Muslim decisions shows a national trend towards more separation between religions.

On June 12, 2003, the new Law on National Education was accepted in parliament, including the rule that all pupils must follow religion classes according to their own religions. This was mostly seen as a measure against Muslim pupils attending Christian schools where they could be attracted to become Christian. Also private Christian schools now should give classes on Islam for Muslim pupils and prepare a prayer hall or mosque to allow them to pray. In the debate I never came across parents who were not happy with the practice of many Chinese Buddhists who sent their children to Catholic or Protestant schools and allowed them to follow Christian religious classes. These and other measures tend towards the creation of a nation that is in school, in marriage, in many social expressions, strictly divided in regards to religion.

The Strong and Weak Sides of Apartheid and ‘*Dhimmitude*’

During the colonial period the Dutch administration made a division of its colony into those citizens either under European or native jurisdiction in regards to family law. A third category of *vreemde oosterlingen*, or ‘other easterners’, referred to Arabs and Chinese who were subject to family law according to their own race and religion or culture. We have seen above that this racial separatism, that can be easily be labelled apartheid, has in the new Indonesian Republic become a separate system for religions. I call it *dhimmitude* after the regulations in traditional Islamic law, dividing people according to their religion and giving special status to Muslims as first-class citizens. Such traditional law sets other communities aside and labels them as *dhimmī* (protected people). As non-Muslims, these people have to pay a special tax and are subject to rules of their own religion’s family law, especially concerning marriage and inheritance.

One of the stories that I learned in the period working on this research about Buddhists and Muslims in Indonesia is about modern Aceh, where in 2001 *sharī‘ah* law was introduced. The Chinese Buddhists of Aceh are not subject to *sharī‘ah* law unless they put themselves under its regulations. This happened in October 2008 when a Chinese Buddhist, who did not act according to an Islamic law banning alcohol, wanted to present himself as subject to *sharī‘ah* law. He was condemned to four months of prison.⁴⁶ How are we to judge this measure? Should we just see it as a pragmatic move because the verdict under *sharī‘ah*

administration could well have been milder than under regular state law in Aceh? Should we see it as openness from the Chinese Buddhists toward Muslim values? Should we see it as a sign of the capacity of Buddhists in Indonesia to adjust to the Muslim majority? Is this the *jizyah*, or tax of non-Muslims, to be paid to live in harmony and peace in a Muslim-dominated country that is not a Muslim state but a plural Pancasila society?⁴⁷

Endnotes

1. Ishvara, 1997, p. 70.
2. Teeuw, 1981, pp. 1–50.
3. Bakker, 1993.
4. Bakker, 1993, pp. 12–13.
5. For ‘ascending to heaven’, the Javanese–Arab word *merad/mi’raj* is used, that is the common word for the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad in a difficult period of his life. Ngabehi Kertapradja, *Babad Tanah Djawi*, published with an introduction by J.J. Ras, Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1987.
6. Juangari, 1995, p. 151.
7. The grave of Bayat is visited at night between Thursday and Friday on the *Jumat-Legi*, according to the Javanese Muslim calendar, once every 35 days. I saw quite a few Chinese during visits in the period 1982–1991.
8. Ong Tae-hae, *The Chinaman Abroad: A Desultory Account of the Malay Archipelago Particularly of Java*, translated by W.H. Medhurst, quoted after Ong Hokham ‘The Peranakan Officers’ Families in Nineteenth Century Java’, in G.J. Schutte (ed.), *Papers of the Dutch–Indonesian Historical Conference*, held at Lage Vuursche, The Netherlands, June 28–29, 1980, Bureau Indonesian Studies, Leiden/Jakarta, 1982, pp. 278–291.
9. An overview in Kees Groeneboer, *Weg tot het Westen. Het Nederlands voor Indië, 1600–1950*, KITLV, Leiden, 1993, pp. 357–358; Also I.J. Brugmans, *Geschiedenis van het Onderwijs in Nederlandsch-Indië*, Groningen/Batavia, 1938, pp. 329–330.
10. *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, ‘s-Gravenhage/Leiden: Nijhoff/Brill I: p. 484 (s.v. Chinezen).
11. Charles A. Coppel, ‘From Christian Mission to Confucian Religion: the Nederlandsche zendingsvereniging and the Chinese of West-Java, 187–1910’, in David P. Chandler and M.C. Ricklefs (eds.), *Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Indonesia. Essays in Honour of Professor J.D. Legge*, Monash University, Clayton, Southeast Asian Studies, 1986: pp. 15–39, esp. 19.
12. See, Charles A. Coppel, ‘The Origins of Confucianism as an Organised Religion in Java, 1900–1923’, in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* vol. 12, 1981, pp. 179–196.
13. Salmon, 1981: pp. 209–218. See also, Steenbrink, 2001.
14. Brown, 2004, p. 48.
15. Chinese temples of all kind — Buddhist, Confucian or Taoist — are usually called *klenteng* in Indonesia. The word has its origins in *Guan-ying ting*, or temple for the goddess Guan-yin. Salmon 2003, p. 111.
16. Juangari, 1995, pp. 49–56.
17. Brown, 1987, p. 112. Jinarakkhita had access to the text through a Dutch translation by J. Kats in 1910. Several Indonesian translations of this text were later published.
18. Juangari, 1995, p. 147.
19. Jinarakkhita, 1986.
20. Juangari, 1995, pp. 143–145.
21. For the figures, see Suryadinata, 2003, p. 127.
22. For this conflict Ishvara 1997, pp. 122–127, an angry statement by the WALUBI board in 1994 and another statement of November 24, 1999, found on the Apakabar site on April, 28, 2009, <http://www.library.ohiou.edu/indopubs/1999/12/03/0012.html>.
23. There was an earlier translation by Gusti Bagis Sugriwa, published in 1957 and reprinted in 1971.
24. I have taken the translation by Bhikkhu Thanissaro as available on <http://www.accesstoinsight.org>. This text is also the basic quote in the chapter on ‘The One and

- High Divinity' in Mulyadi Wahyono, *Pokok pokok dasar Agama Buddha*, Departemen Agama, Jakarta, 2002. It is a book of some 210 pages published by the ministry as a summary of Buddhist doctrine. For the emphasis on monotheism, see also Brown, 1987.
25. Reference has been made here to *Buku Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Buddha Berbasis Kompetensi, SMA Kelas 3*, Paramita, Surabaya, 2006, pp. 9–28. The book has been published anonymously, but the preface is signed by the successor of Oka Diputhera as director of Buddhist affairs in the ministry, Budi Setiawan.
 26. *Nasehat Perkawinan Agama Buddha dan Pendidikan Kependudukan – Keluarga Berencana dalam Agama Buddha*, Departemen Agama, Jakarta, 1983, p. 89 [Instruction about Buddhist marriage and population strategy: Birth Control in Buddhism].
 27. For *Parisada Hindu Dharma*, see Bakker, 1993, pp. 225–291.
 28. A list in *WALUBI*, 1997, pp. 87–88. The six councils are Theravada, Kasogatan/Tantrayana, Maitreya, Niciren, Mahayana and Tridarma. After 1992 the position of the Buddhayana community remained disputed.
 29. For the 1981 meeting, see *Laporan Hasil Musyawarah Intern Umat Beragama 1981–1982*, Departemen Agama, Jakarta, pp. 255–281 (see p. 260 about the proposal to consider the monks as a council for *fatwa*). The minutes of the 1983 meeting are in *Hasil Musyawarah Intern Umat Beragama*, Departemen Agama, Jakarta, 1983–4, pp. 135–168 (see p. 165 about the *Dharma Duta* and the use of *da'wah*). In 2005 the ministry published on its website a list of 'Buddhist clergy' for the whole country, mentioning 1308 freshmen, 873 junior *pandita* and 781 senior *pandita*, together with 692 novices and 369 monks. See <http://kalbar.depag.go.id/index.php?a=artikel&cid=rohaniwanbudha>.
 30. The full name of this organization has changed several times. After elements of Tantrayana were recognised as original Indonesian its name was used as *Majelis Agama Buddha Tantrayana Zbenfo Zong Kasogatan Indonesia*.
 31. See Bakker, 1993, p. 241, 268, and 299, and various contributions in Ramstedt, 2004.
 32. His article entitled: 'Dollars before refugees: how Malaysia and Indonesia share the same notorious Swiss–Swedish bedfellow' appeared on the internet at <http://www.library.ohiou.edu/indopubs/1998/07/24/0000.html>. I accessed it on October 9, 2008. The article was dated July 24, 1998, and Aditjondro was at that moment a lecturer in sociology of corruption at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Related to the unrest at that moment he added about the four children of the Murdayas: "All the Murdayas' four children are currently safe at U.C. Berkeley and University of Stanford in California, USA."
 33. Isvara, 1997, pp. 115–116.
 34. *KELAMBU* 1999, p. 7 for Nichiren and pp. 15–17 for polemic against Buddhayana.
 35. *WALUBI*, 1995, p. 38.
 36. Steenbrink, 1991, pp. 144–145.
 37. Steenbrink, 1991, pp. 147–148.
 38. Mujiburrahman, 2006.
 39. See the website <http://www.crccs.ugm.ac.id/>.
 40. See a conference paper by Anne Dickson <http://arts.monash.edu.au/mai/asaa/annedickson.pdf>. In August 1984, I stayed a few days in the house of Junus Jahja in Jakarta, preparing a reprint of Dutch language articles on Islam written by young Muslim intelligentsia of the 1920s in the magazine *Het Licht*, published by an Indonesian Muslims Students' organization with the Dutch name *Jong Islamieten Bond*. The project was undertaken together with Abdurrahman Widyakusuma, who later wrote a dissertation on the JIB. By publishing Dutch language articles Junus Jahja

- hoped to attract older Chinese who could read Dutch but had a poor command of modern Indonesian. Besides, Dutch was still seen as more 'modern and prestigious' than Indonesian. The effort was not successful.
41. See <http://forum.upi.edu/v3/index.php?topic=6105.0>. UPI stands for Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, a public and secular university in West Java.
 42. Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, Bandung: Mizan, 1987, p. 224.
 43. Nurcholish Madjid, 'Pandangan Dunia Al-Qur'an: Ajaran tentang Harapan Kepada Allah dan Seluruh Ciptaan' in Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif & Said Tuhuleley, *Al-Qur'an dan Tantangan Modernitas*, SIPRESS, Yogyakarta, 1990, pp. 3–10, quote from p. 5.
 44. Wahid, 2006, pp. 64–65.
 45. Wahid, 2006, pp. 136–137.
 46. Email message from Dr. Rusjdi Ali Muhammad, lecturer at the Raniri Institute of Islamic Studies in Banda Aceh, April 29, 2009.
 47. I thank Rusjdi Ali Muhammad (Aceh), Freek Bakker (Utrecht), Mujiburrahman (Banjarmasin) and Simon Rae (Dunedin) for their remarks on an earlier draft of this study. This article is an elaborated version of a presentation at the international conference *Buddhism and Islam: Encounters, Histories, Dialogue and Representation* held at Montreal, McGill University, May, 29–30, 2009, with the support of the Department of Religion and the Numata Foundation.

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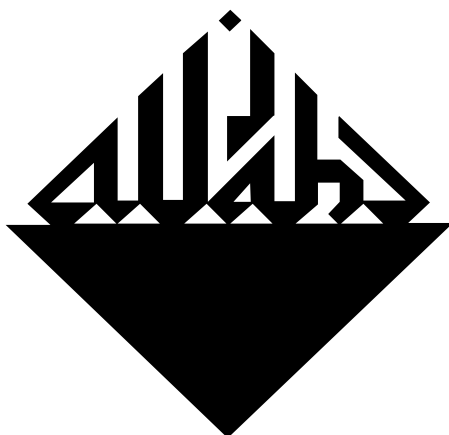
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الحقيقة الموافقة للشريعة: التصالح بين التصوف
والشريعة بنوسنتارا في القرن ١٦ الميلادي

إئين سوريانينجسيه

جدول أعمال الأحزاب الاسلامية

في اندونيسيا المعاصرة: بين الشريعة والديموقراطية

تاسمان
