

# Chapter 7: The Transmission of Religious Traditions: The Role of Pesantren

## INTRODUCTION

*Carilah ilmu walau kemana  
Walau adanya dinegeri Cina  
Itulah sabda junjungan kita  
Harus dikejar dengan segera.*

Seek knowledge wherever it is  
No matter if it is in China  
That is what our master (the Prophet) insisted  
It has to be sought immediately.

In the preceding Chapters I have discussed the major religious traditions that currently prevail in Cirebon. Some traditions may be independently transmitted by one individual to make it known or accessible to others. An example of this is the accession of “*ilmu ghaib*” or “*ilmu hikmah*” from an owner (master) to a learner. In this Chapter, however, I would like to focus my discussion on how the main corpus of the traditions is institutionally transmitted from one generation to the next in a more formal and systematic manner. It is not difficult to find out the main institutions responsible for this. They are widely known, being found everywhere within the society itself. They are the household, the *madrasah* (modern religious school) and the *pesantren* (traditional boarding school). With special reference to Buntet, the biggest *pesantren* in Cirebon, I wish to focus my attention in this Chapter on discussing the role of *pesantren*.

The verse at the beginning of this Chapter reflects a *pesantren* tradition. The teacher, Pak Nawawi (47 years), who wrote the verse, is a *pesantren* graduate. He composed the verse as a part of the lyrics to be sung by his students at the private primary religious school (*Madrasah Diniyah*) of “Budi Tresna” in *Desa Panembahan* of *Kecamatan Weru*. The first two lines of the verse contain a message which has been derived directly from a well known *hadith* that says: “Seek knowledge, even as far away as China.” The last two lines accentuate the fact that the message is indeed derived from the *hadith* and thus its conclusion is that it is everyone's duty because it is an instruction from the Prophet and thus part of the Islamic doctrine. The verse suggests that among the local people the pursuit of knowledge, especially religious knowledge, and its transmission from one generation to the next lie at the very heart of their inner traditions and become something which is always worthy of encouragement.

Islam, following its Judeo-Christian predecessors, is a religion of Scriptures whereby the activity of teaching and learning is an inseparable part of its doctrine. In a real sense, learning is worship, so the study of God's words, the traditions of the Prophet, and the system of law derived from them are part of everyone's fundamental service demanded by God.<sup>1</sup> For Muslims the first revelation which marks Muhammad's prophecy is God's instruction to mankind (via Muhammad) to read.<sup>2</sup> Many verses revealed subsequently also exhort believers to engage in the pursuit of knowledge. To mention a few, there is God's advice to man to pray: "O, my Lord, advance me in knowledge" (QS 20:114). Further, there are God's assertions that those who have no knowledge are not equal to those who have (QS 39:9); that those who do not observe and try to understand are worse than cattle (QS 7:179); that the meaning of revelation becomes manifest to those 'who have knowledge' (QS 6:97) and those 'who have understanding' (QS 6:98); that whosoever has been given knowledge indeed has been given an abundant good (QS 2:269); that the basic qualifications for leadership are, among other things, knowledge and physical strength (QS 2:47); that by virtue of knowledge man is superior to angels and has been made vicegerent of God on earth (QS 2:30), etc.<sup>3</sup>

The enactment of these verses was also exemplified by Muhammad's apostolic career. After the first victory of 300 Muslims over 1000 Meccan Quraisyi unbelievers at Badr in AH 624, for example, Muhammad set all the prisoners free after requiring them to teach skills to the Muslims, especially reading and writing. He then insisted to his followers that someone who leaves his home in search of knowledge, actually walks in the path of God; that seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim, male and female. Also his instruction: "Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety; he who disseminates it (the knowledge) bestows alms and he who imparts it to others performs an act of devotion to God."<sup>4</sup> Concerning religious knowledge, for which Muhammad himself held the authority, he always insisted his followers should transmit (to others) everything from him.<sup>5</sup> Under this scriptural scheme the Muslims have a legitimate claim to having Islamic ethics for the spirit of seeking knowledge. The verse cited above, which in fact is derived from a *hadith*, is part of this scriptural ethical package. As we will see this package is clearly manifest in popular traditions.

<sup>1</sup> Berkey, J. (1992), *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The first revelation is QS 96: 1–5 which translates: "Read in the name of your Lord who created; created man from clots of blood. Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful; who teaches by the pen; teaches man what he did not know.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmad, K. ed. (1988), *Islam, its meaning and message*, London: The Islamic Foundation, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> This insistence manifests in a well known hadith: "Transmit from me even a verse (*Ballighu 'anny walau ayah*)."

In recent versions albeit more popular *Babad*,<sup>6</sup> Walangsungsang's and Rarasantang's being Muslims and their departure to Mecca for pilgrimage, as cited in the previous chapter, did not occur accidentally without precedence as the *Babad Tjerbon* of Brandes edition recounts. The popular *Babad* explain that Syeikh Qura of Pesantren Karawang paved the way for Islam to penetrate the core Hindu Pajajaran ruling house when he encouraged his student, Nyai Subanglarang, to respond positively to the wish of Prabu Siliwangi, the Hindu Pajajaran king, to marry her. This marriage produced Muslim offspring's, Walangsungsang, Rarasantang and Kian Santang. After a long adventure in seeking wisdom, Walangsungsang and Rarasantang finally became Syeikh Kahfi's students at Amparan Jati. Upon completion of their learning, Syeikh Kahfi advised Walangsungsang to open a settlement at a *Tegal Alang-alang* (Field of wild grass) in cooperation with the local elder, Ki Pangalang-alang. After Tegal Alang-alang grew into a busy village, it became Cirebon and eventually needed a sort of government. Ki Pangalang-alang was appointed the *Kuwu* (chief) and Walangsungsang his assistant. Upon Pangalangalang's death Walangsungsang succeeded him and became Pangeran Cakrabuana. Thus, it was after having settled in Cirebon and becoming the Chief's assistant, according to this *Babad* that Walangsungsang went to Mecca for pilgrimage. What happened with Walangsungsang and Rarasantang during the pilgrimage and later after his return to Cirebon, by and large accord with the scenario of the *Babad Tjerbon* which tells the story of the emergence of Cirebon *kraton*.

In other words, according to this *Babad* version, the Cirebon region, sprang up and developed from the teaching-learning enterprise of *pesantren*-like institutions.<sup>7</sup> Pesantren Krawang (Syeikh Qura) paved the way for Islam to penetrate the core of the Hindu Pajajaran kingdom, whereas Pesantren Amparan Jati (Syeikh Kahfi) paved the way for the establishment of an Islamic kingdom (*kraton*). In return, *pesantren* gained full recognition, legitimation and political support from the *kraton*.

The *Babad* scenario provides even more information than this, however. It says that both Walangsungsang (Cakrabuana) and Sunan Gunung Jati were themselves priest-king (*raja-pandita*), a kind of pre-Islamic title, the ruler and the priest

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter Six. An example of this version of the *Babad* is *Sejarah Cerbon* by H. Mahmud Rais (n.d.), hand-written mimeograph in *pegon* (Javanese Arabic letters) and in Cirebon-Javanese vernacular (18 volumes). This version is now hardly found in the market but I found many people in Kalitengah and Kaliwadas know it. My copy was provided by Pak Akyas (63 years), a tobacco trader of Kaliwadas. A condensed Indonesian version (in Roman letters) of this is entitled *Perjuangan Wali Sanga, Babad Cirebon (Pasundan)* by Mahmud Rais and Sayidil Anam, already mentioned in Chapter Six. This version is available in the market and many people read it which, I think, influences their views about aspects of Cirebon history.

<sup>7</sup> Van Bruinessen (1992) speculates that the oldest *pesantren* was "Tegalsari" in East-Java, established in 1742. No further explanation is given on how and through what institution Islam was transmitted before that period. See his "Pesantren dan Kitab Kuning : Pemeliharaan dan Kesenambungan Tradisi Pesantren," *Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an*, III/4 pp. 73–85).

(*guru*) at the same time whose performances were much more like missionary workers (*Sufi* wanderers) than rulers.<sup>8</sup> Their stories are more centred around preaching than ruling. They tended to use political power to ensure fruitful missionary efforts rather than the contrary, using religion to gain political benefits.<sup>9</sup> During their reign, as far as the *Babad* narrative is concerned, not only did the transmission of Islam enjoy political support, recognition and legitimation from the *kraton* but the *kraton* itself took over and established the mission of the *pesantren*. Such antiquities as Tajug Jalagrahan, Pengguron Kaprabon, the grand mosque of Kesepuhan, the Panjunan mosque and many sites now known as *kramat* are but a few examples that are taken as evidence to substantiate this suggestion.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the Cirebon *kraton* at that stage is represented as a missionary rather than a political institution. De Graaf's and Pigeaud's assessment may be right in arguing that Sunan Gunung Jati did not have substantial political power although clearly his spiritual charisma was acknowledged and highly respected by the Demak imperium and other Javanese royal circles.<sup>11</sup> This may indicate that Cirebon was not a political institution although to a certain extent it also exercised a quasi-political power. The extent to which Cirebon was known as a centre of learning and piety is witnessed, among others, by Hoadley (1975:10).<sup>12</sup>

This situation was maintained throughout the period when Cirebon stood as a fully independent state. The situation changed dramatically however, when, under Pangeran Girilaya who succeeded Panembahan Ratu, Cirebon lost its independence, being first, controlled by Mataram and then by the Dutch Company (VOC). Girilaya's lack of status as a religious teacher in comparison to his predecessors removed Amangkurat's hesitation in demoting Cirebon from ally to vassal. Girilaya and his two sons were invited by Amangkurat to visit Mataram where they were then held as hostages. During the 1660's Amangkurat sent his governor to rule Cirebon on his behalf and thus Cirebon became the

<sup>8</sup> This may substantiate John's hypothesis that Sufi wanderers were the main individuals who were responsible for the substantial spread of Islam into the Javanese interiors. See: John, A.H. (1961), "Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History, *Journal of South East Asian History*, vol. II, pp 10–25.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter Six on Biographical Account of Cirebonese Holy men. Cf: Suleiman, S., et al. (1982), in Abdurrachman, P.R. ed., *Cerbon*, Jakarta: Sinar Harapan. Referring to Cakrabuana (Walangsungsang), the founder of Cirebon, they note: "...he reportedly left the actual rule to his ministers...then went around the lands of Sunda to propagate Islamic faith." (p.33). Referring to Syarif Hidayatullah, they note: "Syarif Hidayatullah, as a religious man, had contacts with the other leaders of Islam of the period, but was not intent on making Cerbon a political force (pp. 22–67). See also Chapter One.

<sup>10</sup> Tajug Jalagrahan (known as the oldest prayer house in Cirebon) and Pengguron Kaprabon (a place of learning, a *pesantren*-like institution within the precinct of the *kraton* at Lemah Wungkuk), both were allegedly being built by Walangsungsang as soon as he founded the settlement. The grand mosque of Kesepuhan is said to have been built by Syarif Hidayatullah as soon as he took his office as the first ruler of Cirebon; the Panjunan mosque is said to have been built by Pangeran Panjunan as soon as he settled there.

<sup>11</sup> See: de Graaf and Pigeaud (1989), pp 143–144; Hoadley, M.C. (1975), pp 9–11.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter One.

vassal of Mataram.<sup>13</sup> When Java was in chaos due to the Trunojoyo revolt, on April 30, 1681 Cirebon signed a contract for VOC's protection.<sup>14</sup> The cession of Cirebon to the VOC became official when, at the end of the Trunojoyo revolt, the Mataram-VOC contract was signed on October 5, 1705, by which Mataram transferred its suzerainty over Cirebon and Priangan to the VOC.<sup>15</sup>

There is enough grounds to suppose that at the earlier stage predating the *kraton* era, the transmission of Islam in Cirebon was centred in the village (Syekh Qura at Krawang and Syekh Kahfi at Amparan Jati). Since Cirebon had its own ruling house under Cakrabuana and then developed into a *kraton* under Sunan Gunung Jati (circa 1570), and his successor, Panembahan Ratu (circa 1650), the centre of religious transmission moved from the village to the ruling house. In 1702 the VOC removed the main traditional function of the *kraton* by forbidding learning activities within it, leaving the *kraton* as a mere ruling house with lands and other possessions but with neither political nor economic power.<sup>16</sup> Religious transmission moved back to the village one hundred years after the death of Panembahan Ratu when Kyai Muqayim, the Kraton Religious Official (*Penghulu Kraton*), fled from the *kraton* to the village and established Pesantren Buntet. The *kraton* became more and more a colonial subject and finally collapsed while the *pesantren*, despite encountering hardships and suppressions, kept its independence and has continued to function until this day. It is on this *pesantren* that further discussions in this Chapter will be focused.

## THE GENERAL FEATURE OF RELIGIOUS TRANSMISSION

Before discussing the main issue, I feel that it is necessary to touch upon the general features of religious transmission in Cirebon. In general terms this transmission follows the same tradition of religious education which occurs among the Javanese at large. As Dhofier (1985:18–24) has sketched, every Javanese is taught and formally utters the confession of faith (*syahadat*) at least once in his life time, that is, at marriage. In most cases however, the confession of faith among the Javanese is conveyed to the child as soon as he is born. In Cirebon, as well as in other parts of Java, when a mother is giving birth the father waits outside the room just in front of the door. Soon after the new baby is born, even before it is cleaned, the midwife (*dukun bayi*) puts the baby on a round bamboo tray called *tampa*, symbolising that its presence amongst the family is *ditampa* (meaning being accepted with warmth and welcome) as his presence really means adding to the number of potential believers. Immediately the midwife calls the father to enter the room to utter the *adzan* and *iqamat* (calls for prayer containing the confession of faith) at the baby's right and left ears

<sup>13</sup> Hoadley, M.C. (1975), p 36.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p 48.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p 53.

<sup>16</sup> Siddique, S. (1977), p 123.

respectively. When the father is unable to do so someone else, or the midwife herself, will do it, witnessed by both the father and the mother. This means that the first sound the child has ever heard in this world is the confession of the faith.<sup>17</sup>

Although the formal utterance of the confession of faith comes later, that is at circumcision for a boy and at marriage for both boy and girl, the child undergoes both informal and formal religious education during his infancy. The informal education is attained through observation of and participation in the day to day village life of which, religious activities of both *adat* and *ibadat* are essential parts. Meanwhile in Cirebon, there are at least three forms of formal religious instruction known to the villagers: *ngaji*, *mesantren* and *sekolah madrasah*. The intensity of both informal and formal education of the village children, however, depends very much on the parents' knowledge of and commitment to religious precepts.

<sup>17</sup> The uttering of the *adzan* and *iqamat* at the ears of a newly born baby is rooted in the *hadith* transmitted by Ahmad and Tirmidzi, depicting what the Prophet did it when his grand-child, Husein, was born to Fatimah. To the villagers, like Bu Warni (54 years) however, a midwife in Kalitengah, the uttering of *adzan* and *iqamat* is considered as an *adat* practice that has been done since an unknown time. ("Wis adate seng bengiyen mula gan ari bocah ndau lair iku, ya kudu diadani karo dikomati," meaning "it has been a tradition since the old days to utter upon the newly born baby, the *adzan* and *iqamat*).

**Plate 30: Two Qur'anic learners at "khataman" ceremony to mark the completion of the whole Qur'an.**



**Plate 31: Demonstrating the recital of the Qur'an.**



## Ngaji

One form of formal instruction almost everyone in Cirebon has experienced is *ngaji* (Qur'anic learning). It is a learning process carried on in the household when a child is around six years old. At this age the parents begin to teach their children to memorise step by step the short *surah* of the Holy Qur'an, and the incantations to be uttered in daily prayers. This is usually carried out in the evening after sunset prayer. When the parents are unable to do the teaching by themselves they send or let the children go to a neighbouring household, a *tajug* (prayer house) or the mosque, where such teaching (*ngaji*) is held.

The instruction is basically on an individual basis in which the teacher first recites the short *surah* verse by verse and the child repeats again and again until he grasps it by memory. The recital is presented in melodious format so that the memorisation is made easier and more convenient. At this stage, neither meaning nor understanding of the material is introduced, probably because it is considered unnecessary as the main objective of this early instruction is to give the child an acquaintance with and a basic ability to conform to the minimum requirements for being a good Muslim, especially to be able to perform daily prayers or at least to follow congregational prayers. As all incantations uttered in prayers must be performed without reading any text, the memorisation is therefore crucial. Sometimes, accompanying this instruction, rules of conduct and other religious or ethical dimensions are also added through chants and story telling (*dongeng*) given by the teacher (*ustadz*). The story may be of a real occurrence or fictitious. In many cases, it is taken from a segment or an episode in the life story of the Messengers, *Sufi*, or other exemplary figures.

At around seven years the child is taught the Arabic alphabet and, also step by step, to read the Holy Qur'an. The reading lesson usually starts from the first *Surah* of the Holy Qur'an (al-Fatihah) of the first *juz* (division), then jumps to the last (30th) *juz*. This procedure is taken partly because this *juz* contains short *Surah* (QS 78–114) and also because most of the *Surah* of this *juz* are frequently recited in the prescribed prayers. Learning this 30th *juz* proceeds in the reverse direction, from the shortest *surah* (QS 114) which consists of only a few short verses to the longer ones (QS 78). This procedure allows the child to gain an easy and gradual mastery. The standard text for this initial learning is called *Turutan* (literally meaning 'something to follow'). This text is available in local book shops, containing elementary materials for learning to read the Arabic letters, al-Fatihah and Surah 114 through Surah 78 of the Holy Qur'an. The completion of this text is marked by a minor *khataman* (completion ceremony) in the form of *syukuran* or *slametan*. A *du'a* is uttered at this occasion and food is served. A bigger *khataman* is held upon the completion of the whole Qur'an. Further learning moves from Qur'an to *Kitab* (religious texts) dealing with jurisprudence (*pekih* or **fiqh**), theology (*tauhid*) and ethics (*akhlaq*, part of *tasawuf*). The *kitab*



learned at *ngaji* varies considerably from village to village and from individual to individual, but the most commonly used are *Safinah* and *Sullam at-Taufiq* by Imam Nawawi of Banten, which contains a blend of jurisprudence, theology and ethics.

As there is no binding rule, *ngaji* in the village is not so effective. The proportion of 'drop-outs' is high. Only a few children who follow from the start proceed consistently to the completion of a *certain kitab*; many of them do not even complete the *Turutan*. Some factors which contribute to this are that older children are busy with their school work, some teaching sessions are short-lived as the teachers are volunteers, and in addition, especially since the second half of the 1960s, there has been the intrusion of television into village life. Quite often, children are tempted to watch an entertaining program on the television rather than going to the place where the Qur'anic teaching is held. When a child quits and drops out from *ngaji* however, it does not necessarily mean that his religious education in the village terminates. Religion is still taught in public schools; informal education by observation and participation in the village religious activities is an unavoidable process because it is part of the village life. Parents who can afford to and who are more concerned with bettering their children's religious education prefer to send them to *pesantren*, while some others are satisfied with sending them to the nearby *madrasah*.

## Mesantren

The local term *mesantren* is synonymous with *nyantri* meaning 'to go to,' or 'to learn in' *pesantren* whose purpose is to become *santri*.<sup>18</sup> A young girl or boy who goes to a *pesantren* gets special treatment from the parents. For example, I found in Plered, a group of three boys and two girls with their suitcases going by *becak* being escorted by a mass of people walking behind them for a distance of seven kilometres from their village to the railway station. The escorting people were walking not because there was no means of transportation but they intentionally did this to express honour to the children going to *pesantren*.<sup>19</sup> The boys and girls were primary school graduates, who for the first time were leaving their village for Yogyakarta to start learning at Pesantren Krapyak.

*Pesantren* in Indonesia are officially classified by The Ministry of Religious Affairs, into four types, A, B, C and D. Type-A is that which retains the most traditional characteristics where the students (*santri*) stay in a boarding house (*pondok*) around the *kiyai's* house; there is no set curriculum and thus the *kyai*

<sup>18</sup> In this case the word *santri* can either mean the student of *pesantren* or implying a hope that the child will develop into becoming wong *santri* (a devout individual). For a further account on the meaning of *santri*, see for example, Fox, J.J. (1989), "The memories of village *santri* from Jombang in East Java" (with Prajarto Dirjosanoto) in R. J. May and W. J. O' Malley (eds.), *Observing Change in Asia*, pp. 94–110. Bathurst: Crawford House Press. *Santri* in reference to a socio-religious stratum of the Javanese society, see Geertz, C. (1979), *The Religion of Java*, Phoenix ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>19</sup> Similar treatment is given to someone who is going to Mecca for pilgrimage.

holds full authority over the teaching-learning process including the type and depth of the offered subject matter. The method of teaching is typically 'traditional,' relying on the *sorogan* (individualised instruction) and the *bandungan* (collective learning) methods. In either one the *santri* sits around the *kyai* who reads, translates and explains his lessons, which are repeated or followed by his students. The lessons consist only of religious subjects and Arabic language, usually taken from or using classical religious texts. Type-B *pesantren* includes those which, besides offering the traditional instructions in classical texts with *sorogan* and *bandungan*, have *madrasah* (modern religious schools) where both religion and secular subjects are taught. The *madrasah* has a curriculum of its own or adopts the curriculum set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Type-C is a *pesantren* which, along with providing religious education of a type-B model with both traditional instruction (*sorogan* and *bandungan*) and *madrasah* system, has also an ordinary public school administered by the Ministry of Education and Culture such as a Primary (SD) and Secondary (SMP and SMA). Thus, a type-C *pesantren* is a type-B plus public school. Finally, a type-D *pesantren* is that which provides only boarding accommodation to students. These students go to either *madrasah* or public schools somewhere outside this boarding complex. No formal instruction is given in this type of *pesantren*. The function of the *kyai* is only as a counsellor and spiritual guide to create a religious atmosphere at the complex.<sup>20</sup>

Currently, according to the statistical records issued by the Regional Office of Religious Affairs, there are 133 *pesantren* in the Regency (*Kabupaten*) and 7 in the city (*Kotamadya*) of Cirebon. Following the above classification there are 54 type-A's, 68 type-B's 16, type-C's and none of type-D. Three of the *pesantren* were established in the 18th century, five in the 19th and the rest are of the 20th century stock. Thus, *pesantren* education in Cirebon has evolved for no less than two centuries.

## Sekolah Madrasah

In Cirebonese vernacular, the word *sekolah* (which literally means 'school'), can either be a verb or a noun. Used as a verb it means to go to school; as a noun it means the type of schooling (primary, secondary, general, vocational, state owned, private owned, etc). To refer to a school building, the word is *sekolahan* or *sekolan*. Thus, *sekolah* SD and SMP means respectively going to primary school (*Sekolah Dasar*) and Junior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*), whereas *sekolahan* or *sekolan* SD means the primary school building. The term *sekolah madrasah* therefore, refers to going to *Madrasah* (modern religious school), which can either be *madrasah diniyah* (which gives religious subjects) or public

<sup>20</sup> Aya Sofia and Marwan Saridjo (1988), "Kebijaksanaan dan Program Pemerintah Dalam Pengembangan Pondok Pesantren, official paper presented in "Seminar Nasional" *Perkembangan Program Pengembangan Masyarakat Melalui Pondok Pesantren*," Ciawi-Bogor, 11–13 June.

*madrasah* where both secular and religious subjects are given. Each type of *madrasah* consists of three levels, the primary (six years), junior secondary (three years) and senior secondary (three years). The three levels of *madrasah diniyah* are called *Awaliyah*, *Wustha* and *'Ulya*, whereas the three levels of public *madrasah* are called *Ibtidaiyah*, *Tsanawiyah* and *'Aliyah*. The proportion for the secular and religious subjects in public *madrasah* varies from one *madrasah* to another but the Ministry of Religious Affairs sets a standard of 70 per cent secular and 30 per cent religious subjects. Any private *madrasah* wishing to follow the Ministry's accreditation should prove that it has fully adopted this standard. The students of a standard *madrasah* are entitled to sit for the national examination and those who pass this examination receive the state issued certificate. This leads to an easier way to continue their education within the educational system and finally to attend an IAIN (The State Institute of Islamic Studies).<sup>21</sup>

According to the 1990 official record, throughout the *Kabupaten* and *Kotamadya* Cirebon, there are 373 *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI) accommodating 66,504 students, 51 *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* accommodating 9543 students and 20 *Madrasah 'Aliyah* accommodating 5466 students. Most of them follow the curriculum set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.<sup>22</sup> Only 21 of the schools are *Madrasah Diniyah*, one of which is *Madrasah "Budi Tresna"* whose song was cited early in this Chapter.

At present, *madrasah* undeniably play an important role in the transmission of religious knowledge both in the urban and rural areas. Their presence in the Islamic educational arena in Indonesia, especially on Java, has involved a long and complex process, but certainly, the *madrasah* system is quite a recent (20th century) development.<sup>23</sup> *Madrasah*, however, stands as complementary to and not as a substitute for the older form of religious learning institute, the *pesantren*. Along with the development of *madrasah*, some *pesantren* may have disappeared but some others have flourished. Although there has been a changing attitude and more and more people rely on *madrasah*, people do not expect too much from it beyond the acquirement of a basic knowledge of religion.<sup>24</sup> Until now

<sup>21</sup> IAIN stands for *Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, a state owned Higher learning institute firstly established on August 9, 1960 by the Indonesian government when K.H. Wahib Wahab, an alumnus of Pesantren Buntet, was the Minister of Religious Affairs. His father, K.H. Wahab Hasbullah with K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari of Pesantren Tebuireng in Jombang (East Java), founded Nahdlatul Ulama, an Orthodox Traditionalist Muslim organisation in 1926.

<sup>22</sup> *Kabupaten Cirebon Dalam Angka 1990*, Cirebon: Kantor Statistik Kabupaten Cirebon; *Kotamadya Cirebon Dalam Angka 1990/1991*, Cirebon: Kantor Statistik Kotamadya Cirebon.

<sup>23</sup> Mahmud Yunus (1960), notes that the oldest *madrasah* in Indonesia was Sekolah Adabiyah in Padang, established by Syeikh Abdullah Ahmad 1909, whereas in Java, it was *Madrasah Aniyatus-Saniyah Mu'awanatul Muslimin* in Kudus, founded in 1915 by the local Syarekat Islam. See: *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, Jakarta: Pustaka Mahmudiah, especially pp 54 and 220.

<sup>24</sup> Although employing the same name the *madrasah* in Java is different from that in the medieval Middle East. The Javanese *madrasah* is designated to provide basic religious education to beginners of school-age

it is the *pesantren* rather than the *madrasah* that is considered to be the real place for acquiring advanced knowledge of religion especially when the student intends to 'know religious rules' (*kanggo ngerti ning hukum*). The people regard the expected result from going to *madrasah*, without learning at *pesantren*, is only fair (*lumayan*), a little better than not knowing anything at all (*tenimbang bli ngerti babar pisan*).<sup>25</sup> Thus, although *madrasah* is important, its depth and intellectual level are considered inferior to the *pesantren*. Even among the IAIN graduates, those who have prior *pesantren* education have more potential depth in their religious knowledge and understanding compared to those who do not.<sup>26</sup> Institutionally too, *madrasah* are also said to be the offspring of *pesantren*. In the next section I wish to concentrate my discussion on the role of *pesantren* in the transmission of religious traditions.

## THE ROLE OF PESANTREN: THE CASE OF BUNTET

To demonstrate how *pesantren* in Cirebon have evolved and functioned in the transmission role, I shall present in the following section, the case of Pesantren Buntet.<sup>27</sup> Scholarly work devoted to study this *pesantren*, historically or otherwise is scanty. Siddique (1977:120–123) touches upon it only briefly when she takes Pesantren Buntet as a ready example to support her argument. Despite the fact that the political significance has disappeared, the symbolic universe of Sunan Gunung Jati is still maintained by his descendant groups through organisational structure especially the *kraton* and a number of *pesantren* and *tarekat* (Sufi orders). Siddique suggests that the fact that there are many *pesantren* and *tarekat* (Sufi orders), not only in Cirebon but also in West Java, led by the descendants of Sunan Gunung Jati who have prestige as a result of being descendants of Sunan Gunung Jati, clearly substantiates this tradition.<sup>28</sup>

children, whereas in the Middle East the *madrasah* is especially intended to provide higher learning. The latter is a natural development from the *masjid* (mosque) in its role as a college of law, and its nearby *khan* as residence of the law students in attendance (*masjid-khan* complex). For detail see for example: Makdisi, G. (1981), *The Rise of Colleges*, Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.

<sup>25</sup> At present most *pesantren* have *madrasah* and even, public schools and thus, there are only a few *pesantren* which retain the form.

<sup>26</sup> Most current well known Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, such as Nurcholis Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid and Zamakhsyari Dhofier, received their basic religious education from *pesantren*.

<sup>27</sup> A number of works have been devoted to recount the issue of *pesantren*, the most notable one, I think, is Dhofier, Z. (1980), *The Pesantren Tradition: A Study of the Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of the Traditional Ideology of Islam in Java*, unpublished Ph D. dissertation, Canberra: The Australian National University. The major portion of this work appears as its Indonesian version, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*, Jakarta: LP3ES, firstly published in 1982. My reference to this work is the 4th edition (1985) and has sold over 40.000 copies.

<sup>28</sup> It is true that being a descendant of Sunan Gunung Jati carries spiritual (religious) prestige. Among the descendants; however, there is a different stance with regard to this prestige. The *kraton* oriented descendants, demonstratively show it to the public by putting before their names, a dignitary title (Raden, Pangeran, Elang). This reference, I think, has a heavy legitimating connotation by which the users seek for acceptance from others. Their pride probably refers to Sunan Gunung Jati as a ruler. Among the leaders of *pesantren* and Sufi orders this prestige is not claimed. None of them use such a title. Kyai Abdul Jamil (1879–1919), the leader of Pesantren Buntet, is even said to have strictly forbidden

The work which fully recounts the story of Pesantren Buntet is Zaini Hasan's study (1970), which comes with an historical account giving information about the chronological development of the *pesantren* since it was built until around the end of 1960s.<sup>29</sup> Another study is Amidjaja, R., et al (1985), which is a survey study on the life of the *santri* and which, along with providing the background of *pesantren* in general and Pesantren Buntet in particular, gives special emphasis to presenting quantitative illustrations about *santri* who studied there around 1984, with such details as their home origin, socio-economic and parental background, the *santri's* attitudes in relation to their daily routine of the *pesantren* life.<sup>30</sup> Still another one is that by Hisjam Mansur, a staff member of the *pesantren* from 1958 to 1975. In this work Mansur provides both scriptural and ethical reasons for the *haul* (commemorating the death of the founder of the *pesantren*) annually held at the *pesantren*. Then he proceeds to present biographical accounts of the *kyai* who led the *pesantren* and the institutional development of the *pesantren*. By and large Mansur's historical narration tells about the same thing discussed by Zaini Hasan.<sup>31</sup> My subsequent discussion on this *pesantren* relies on these works, together with my own field notes from a short stay at this *pesantren* between July and September 1992 and various visits before and after the stay.

## The location and setting

'Pesantren Buntet' is located at 'Buntet Pesantren' (Blok Manis), the northern part of *Desa* Mertapada Kulon, District of (*Kecamatan*) Astanajapura, about 14 km south-eastern of the city of Cirebon.<sup>32</sup> Access to this 127.43 hectares *desa* is possible by taking a bus or mini bus from Cirebon to Ciledug via Sindanglaut. The *pesantren* complex is only 700 metres from the Cirebon-Ciledug main road where the *Desa* Office lies. The complex is connected with the main road by a paved road (*jalan desa*). *Becak* and passenger motor-bikes (*ojeg*) are available, ready to transport both visitors and residents going in and out of the *pesantren* complex, day and night. Their terminal lies at the junction where the *desa* and the Cirebon-Ciledug main roads meet. In 1992, nearly one third of the 3890 *desa*

his descendants to use such a title. They may be proud of being the descendant of Sunan Gunung Jati, not as a ruler but as a pious and learned individual. Above all they would be proud of their own piety and learning rather than of their ancestors. Hasanuddin Kriyani, descendants of Ki Kriyan, referred an Arabic proverb which says that it is not a real youth who says "here is my father," the real youth instead is one who says "here I am."

<sup>29</sup> Zaini Hasan (1970), *Sekilas Lintas Sedjarah Pesantren Buntet, Tjirebon*, unpublished mimeograph.

<sup>30</sup> Amijaya, R., et al (1985), *Pola Kehidupan Santri Pesantren Buntet Desa Mertapada Kulon Kecamatan Astanajapura Kabupaten Cirebon*, Yogyakarta: Proyek Penelitian dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Nusantara (Javanologi) Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

<sup>31</sup> Hisjam Mansur, K.H.M. (1989), *Haul di Pesantren Buntet Pesantren: Kajian Sejarah Ringkas*, unpublished mimeograph.

<sup>32</sup> It might be worthwhile to recall the local reference of "Pesantren Buntet" and "Buntet Pesantren." The former refers to the institute for religious learning, whereas the latter refers to the site where the institute (*pesantren*) lies, to distinguish it from the rest of the Buntet village.

inhabitants (excluding the *santri*) made their living as labourers; the rest were engaged in trades, clerical work, agriculture, and crafts. Within the *pesantren* complex itself, there are both *kyai* and *non-kyai* families. The majority are the *kyai* families who are of either the *sohibul wilayah* (the rightful *pesantren* leadership) or *keluarga biasa* (common family who have no rights to leadership).<sup>33</sup> Some of the minority *non-kyai* families are indigenous people who were already there at the time when the *pesantren* was founded, some others are immigrants. Some *non-kyai* families are *pager sari*, (literally meaning 'fence of the core') who work in the service of a *kyai* or the *pesantren*. Some *pager sari* descendants still retain their patronage from the present *kyai*, some others live independently. As the mobility of the population is high their life style is urbanised. Some private and public telephones are available, possession of motor bike, radio and television sets is quite common, there are some parabolic antennas, including some of the *kyai*'s possessions in the *pesantren* complex. Although there is no wall which separates the *pesantren* from the rest of the village, two rivers, Kali Kanci at the north and west, and Kali Ciwado at the east, form buffers against unexpected security disturbances rather than separating the complex from the entire village life. Over Kali Ciwado there is a permanent stone bridge providing a crossing for pedestrians and vehicles going in and out of the *pesantren* complex. For security purposes, heavy trucks and coaches are not allowed to pass over the bridge.

The main buildings within the *pesantren* complex are a two storey main *santri*-dormitory (*pondok*), and an antique public mosque (*masjid jami'*) equipped with a high capacity water pump provided by General Benny Murdani in 1987, upon which the mosque and *pondok* rely for their water supply.<sup>34</sup> This main *pondok* accommodates 150 *santri*, mostly the seniors. The other buildings are five *madrasah* buildings with a book shop and a cooperative, and a two storey building used for the *pesantren* office and the small *pesantren* library. Those buildings are maximally utilised all day long with two shifts of schooling. The first shift is from 7.30 a.m through 12.30 p.m, the other from 1.00 p.m through 6.00 p.m. All these buildings stand around a wide multipurpose square, used as a play ground, as a parking ground, for ceremonial undertakings, and for other activities.

<sup>33</sup> Concerning the concept of '*sohibul wilayah*' see the next section.

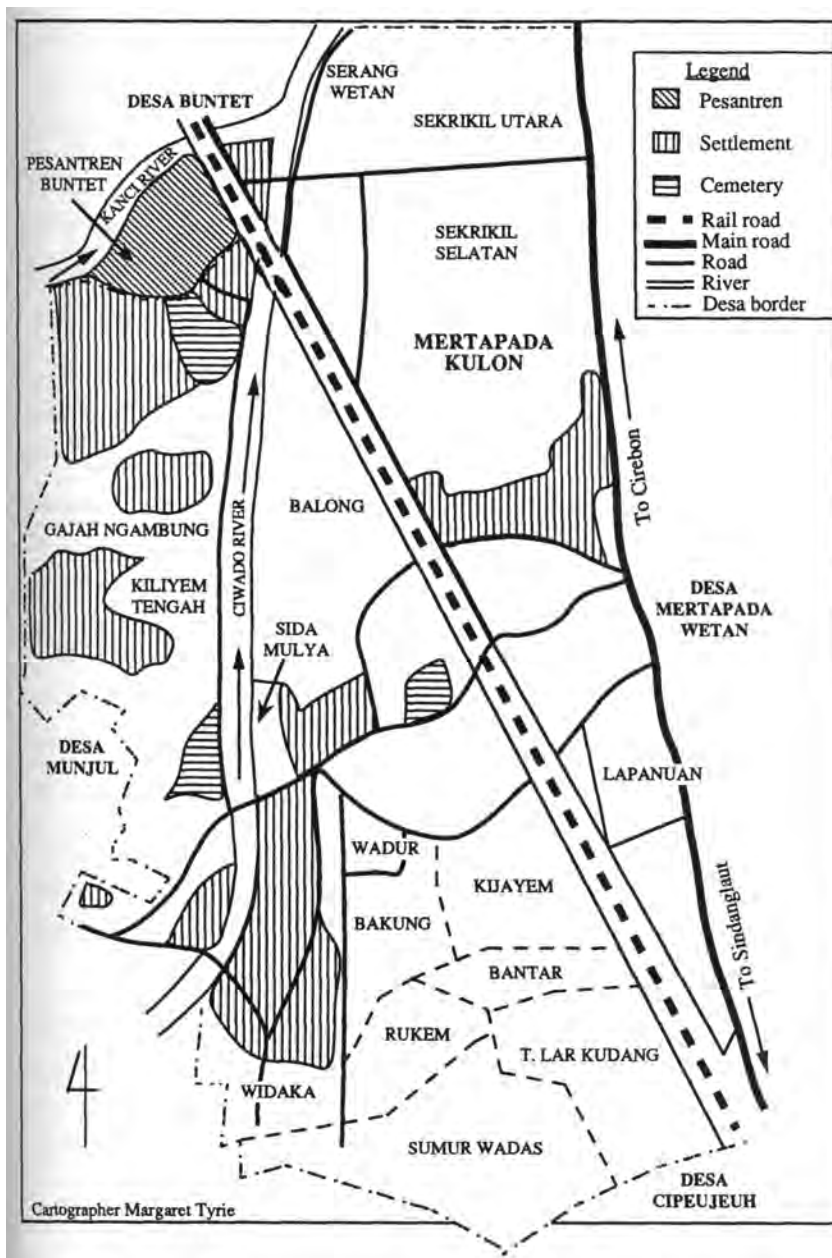
<sup>34</sup> General Murdani was Commander in Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces (*Pangab*) who, according to my informants, visited there as part of his political safari to approach a number of key *pesantren* for political purpose.

**Table 7.1: Number of Students/Santri at Buntet (1992)**

School/Madrasah	Student
Kindergarten	63
<i>Ibtidaiyah</i> (boys)	127
<i>Ibtidaiyah</i> (girls)	186
<i>Tsanawiyah</i> (Mts: boys)	698
<i>Tsanawiyah</i> (MTS: girls)	370
' <i>Aliyah</i> (MA: boys)	314
' <i>Aliyah</i> (MA: girls)	312
State owned ' <i>Aliyah</i> (MAN)	846
<i>Dirosah Diniyah</i> (boys)	71
<i>Dirosah Diniyah</i> (Girls)	67
Other <i>santri</i>	1706*
Total	4197

\* Includes those who go to public school, mature *santri* who work while studying, university students and *santri kalong* (bat *santri*).

**Map of Desa Mertapada Kulon Kec. Astanajapura Kab. Cirebon**





Junior *santri* are required to stay at the many *pondok* scattered throughout the *pesantren* complex owned by the *kyai*. There are currently no less than 40 *kyai* houses with their annexed *pondok* each of which provides accommodation for between 50 to 200 male or female *santri* separately. In 1992 there were 4760 *santri*, about 120 of whom were *santri kalong* (literally meaning 'bat *santri*', who came to the *pesantren* only at night). Most of them are involved in one or a combination of learning activities: *ngaji Qur'an* (Qur'anic learning), *ngaji kitab* (religious texts studies) and *sekolah* (going to public school/*madrasah*). *Ngaji Qur'an* was handled by 64 *kyai* and *nyai* (female *kyai*) whereas *ngaji kitab* was handled by 70 *kyai* and *nyai*. The *madrasah* school system involved 183 teachers, male and female, about 40 per cent of whom are on government subsidy. Except kindergarten the *madrasah* education in Buntet is non-co-educational where boys and girls study separately. "*Cross-pondok ngaji*" especially *ngaji kitab* is common practice in which a student staying at a *pondok* goes to another *pondok* to study certain *kitab* with another *kyai*.

Because most *santri* are outsiders, the revenue produced by the *pesantren* from the incoming cash, in turn, helps animate the market economy of the district. With few exceptions, in 1992 each *santri* spends at least around Rp.30,000.00 (about A\$ 20.00) a month for food and other daily necessities.<sup>35</sup> This means, the *pesantren* injects no less than Rp. 120,000,000.00 (about A\$ 80,000.00) cash into the local region each month which, by local standards, is a substantial contribution to the district market economy.

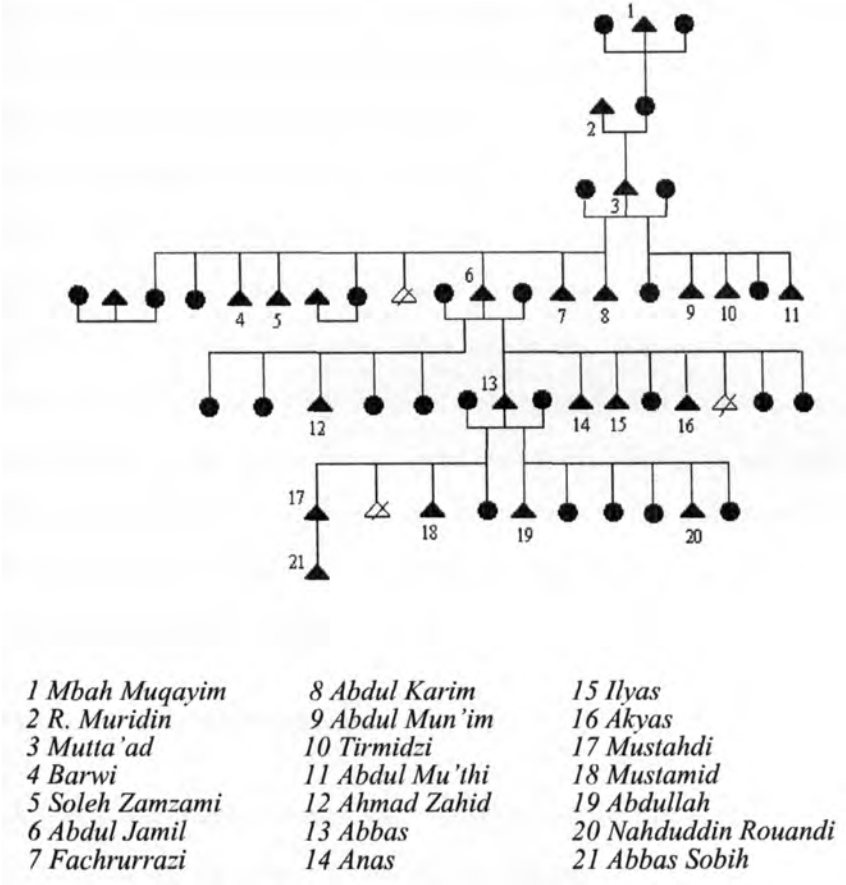
## Administration and Leadership

The overall educational activity throughout the *pesantren* is coordinated by the *Lembaga Pendidikan Islam* (LPI) or Islamic Educational Board. The LPI consists of a *Majelis Syuriah* (Steering Assembly) and *Majelis Tanfidziyah* (Executive Assembly). The former is headed by *Sesepuh* (elder), *Pengasuh* (Counsellor) and *Anggota* (Members of Executive Board). The latter is headed by a Chairman, three vice-chairmen, a Secretary General, two other secretaries, a Treasurer and some assistants. Crucial to this organisational structure is the appointment of the *Sesepuh*, the spiritual leader and symbol of the unity for the whole *pesantren*. Acknowledging the *pesantren's* possessions such as lands, buildings and equipments have come from various sources, no one in the *pesantren* is entitled to claim any individual rights of ownership over the *pesantren*. It is envisaged that the *pesantren* will become a public trust (*amanah*) and adopt the principle of so-called "trustee leadership" (*kepemimpinan amanah*). The leader bears a community trust that is to be passed on hereditarily from the *Sesepuh* along the male line to his oldest son. If, under certain circumstances, it cannot be achieved

<sup>35</sup> There are some *santri* who depend for their living on *kyai* or their friends by working or doing something for them.

because the *Sesepuh* has no son, or the son is still an infant, for example, or unable to carry out the function for any other reasons, a *Sesepuh pemangku* (caretaker) is appointed by consensus among the '*sohibul wilayah*' (rightful individuals for the *pesantren* leadership), the male descendants of the founders of the *pesantren* along the male line (see figure 7.1).

**Figure 7.1: Genealogy of Sesepuh and Sohibul Wilayah**



When Kyai Mutta'ad (number 3) led the *pesantren*, all his sons from both wives automatically became the *sohibul wilayah*. His oldest son born by the first wife, Kyai Barwi (number 4) however, married out and stayed in East Java, whereas the second oldest, Kyai Soleh Zamzami (number 5) established a new *pesantren* at Benda Kerep. When Kyai Mutta'ad passed away, Kyai Abdul Jamil (number 6) took the leadership as he was the oldest son staying at Buntet because Abdul Jamil's elder brothers, Kyai Sulaeman (number 7) and another brother, died earlier preceding Kyai Mutta'ad.

In the next generation, upon the death of Kyai Abdul Jamil, the *sohibul wilayah* were his sons from his two wives (numbers 12 through 16), Kyai Abdul Jamil's brothers (numbers 7 through 11) who were still alive and their grown up sons. The *pesantren* leadership in this generation, however, fell onto Kyai Abbas (number 13) because he was Kyai Abdul Jamil's oldest son (born by the second wife). The above principle follows upon Kyai Abbas death whence Kyai Mustahdi (number 17) took the leadership. Upon Kyai Mustahdi's passing away, Kyai Mustamid was appointed *seseputuh pemangku* and then, after Kyai Mustamid passed away, Kyai Abdullah Abbas (Ki Dulah) became the *seseputuh pemangku*.<sup>36</sup> Abbas Sobih (number 21), son of Kyai Mustahdi, shall retake the position of *seseputuh* after Ki Dulah.

The trustee leadership principle adopted in Buntet, according to Kyai Fu'ad Hasyim, finds its root in the Prophetic era, which is especially exemplified by the tradition of key bearer of the *Ka'bah* in Mecca.<sup>37</sup> When the Prophet defeated Mecca and wished to enter the *Ka'bah*, the key was held by 'Utsman bin Thalhah, a Meccan unbeliever. The Prophet asked Ali to take over the key from 'Utsman but the latter refused to pass it on to Ali. 'Utsman argued that by any means he was obliged to keep his traditional right as the key bearer which, since Abraham, was supposed to be passed on hereditarily from one generation to the next. A quarrel between 'Utsman and Ali was unavoidable. When the argumentation was going on, a verse of the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet saying: "God commands you to hand back your trust to their rightful owners and, when you pass judgement among men, you are to judge with fairness" (QS 4:58). After having this revelation the Prophet approached the quarrelling parties to stop the argument and the Prophet said: "'Utsman, keep the key with you for an undecided duration." On hearing the Prophet's words, which to him were unthinkable, 'Utsman's heart was so touched by surprise and astonishment, that as his tears fell 'Utsman embraced Islam.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See: the next section.

<sup>37</sup> Kyai Fu'ad Hasyim is Kyai Mustahdi's son-in-law from another *pesantren* and thus himself is not a *sohibul wilayah*.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Kyai Fu'ad Hasyim on August 26, 1992. Kyai Fu'ad Hasyim (53 years) is a prominent supra local public speaker of this *pesantren*. In his pondok stay about 120 *santri*.

The principle of *sohibul wilayah* as practiced in Buntet therefore, does not include female descendants and their heirs into leadership account. This, according to my informants in Buntet, is because in theory, upon marriage, women are taken by and under the auspice and responsibility of their husbands, whereas their descendants inherit their father's heirs.

## THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PESANTREN BUNTET

According to the available sources Pesantren Buntet was first established in 1750 by Kyai Muqayim bin Abdul Hadi, known as Mbah Muqayim, *Penghulu Kraton* or *Mufti* (Court Religious Official) of the Kanoman royal house.<sup>39</sup> Opposing the Dutch intrusion into the internal affairs of the *kraton*, and seeing some *kraton* dignitaries subserviently fall into the embrace of the Dutch rule, some of them even exhibited behaviour which was against the *syari'ah*, such as dancing and drinking alcohol,<sup>40</sup> Mbah Muqayim left his position in the *kraton* in favour of living outside the *kraton* wall. He built a mosque and a hut in the village where he and his followers dwelt and began to teach religion. Bearing his former honourable position as *Penghulu Kraton*, along with his profound knowledge of religion and exemplary behaviour, he attracted many students and soon his hut was full of learners and they had to erect more huts. Finally, it became a learning centre and developed into a *pesantren* complex which evolves until this day.

### The early period: Mbah Muqayim

The site where Mbah Muqayim started teaching for the first time was located at Blok Kedungmalang, a hamlet in Buntet. After a few years of operation however, the Dutch came and burned down all his *pesantren* complex. Ki Ardisela, a village headman of Dawuan who knew about the Dutch manoeuvre immediately told Mbah Muqayim so that his family and his *santir* were able to flee to Pesawahan just before the Dutch reached and besieged the *pesantren*. The *pesantren* activities ceased and Mbah Muqayim wandered from one place to another to escape from being arrested. Some of the places where he took temporary refuge were Pesawahan hamlet in Lemahabang village, Tuk in Karangsuwung and Beji in Pemalang (Central Java). After a long adventure he came back to Buntet in 1758 and established a new *pesantren* at a site called Blok Gajah Ngambung, which has now become the *santri* cemetery (*makam santri*).<sup>41</sup> Before deciding on this new site to establish his *pesantren*, it is said that Mbah Muqayim fasted for a twelve months period, doing this in four stages. The merit

<sup>39</sup> This section relies heavily on Zaini Hasan (1970) and Hisyam Mansur (1989). I could not find authoritative historical sources which confirm or reject the claim that this *pesantren* was established in 1750.

<sup>40</sup> The hedonistic tendency evidence among some *kraton* dignitaries probably refers to such persons as Pangeran Arya Carbon, the allegedly writer of *Carita Purwaka Caruban Nagari* (1720). For a short account of him, see for example, Siddique (1977), pp 51–53.

<sup>41</sup> See: Map of Pesantren Buntet Complex, p 315.

of the first three months of the fasting was intended for the pesantren's welfare, safety and continuance; the second three months was for his descendant's well-being; the third was for his *santri* and faithful followers and the fourth, as he was old enough, was for his own personal merit in this world and the hereafter.

One of his *santri* at his newly built *pesantren* was Prince Khaeruddin, son of Sultan Kanoman (Khaeruddin I). When the Sultan passed away in 1798 the Dutch installed Tumenggung Surantaka and sent the actual heir, Prince Khaeruddin, Mbah Muqayim's student, into exile in Ambon. Mbah Muqayim opposed this instalment and was involved in civil unrest to force the Dutch to return Prince Khaeruddin to Cirebon. Partly due to the change within the Dutch administration and policy, Prince Khaeruddin was finally restored to his throne and became Sultan Khaeruddin II.

Mbah Muqayim is said to have married twice. One marriage was to Nyai Randulawang (Nyi Randu), daughter of Ki Enthol Rujitnala a village headman of Situpatok, whom Kyai Muqayim assisted in the construction of an irrigation dam (*situ*). Ki Enthol was a local noble, descendant of Pangeran Luwung. The second marriage was to the daughter of Kyai Salamuddin of Pemalang. From the first marriage he obtained a daughter who married his brightest student, Raden Muhammad.<sup>42</sup> Upon his death he was buried at Tuk, side by side with Ki Ardisela. The date of his death is not told but his tomb at Tuk (30 km south-east of Cirebon) has become an object of visitation. Mbah Muqayim had no son, and after his death the *pesantren* again ceased its operation for some time until Kyai Mutta'ad came.

## Kyai Mutta'ad (1785–1852)

Kyai Mutta'ad, son of Raden Muriddin, married Nyai Ratu 'Aisyah, daughter of Raden Muhammad, the brightest student and son in law of Mbah Muqayim.<sup>43</sup> Thus, Kyai Mutta'ad is grandson-in-law of Mbah Muqayim, the founder of the *pesantren*. From this marriage Kyai Mutta'ad had nine descendants, the oldest one was a daughter, Nyai Ruhillah, who married a *Sufi-ulama*, Kyai Anwaruddin Kriyani al-Malebari, known as Ki Buyut Kriyan, whose contribution for

<sup>42</sup> How did his *pesantren* and educational activities look like and for how long the *pesantren* was in operation are not told but Ki Dulah and Kyai Fu'ad Hasyim, in separate interviews said that formerly Mbah Muqayim led a '*pengajian tarekat*' (Sufi learning) of Syattariyah order. This order is locally known as *Tarekat Kraton* (Sufism adopted by the court). Thus, it was said, Mbah Muqayim basically taught Tarekat Syattariyah but because *tarekat* required *syai'ah* and many people had not enough knowledge of this prerequisite, he also taught *syai'ah* and basic knowledge of religion.

<sup>43</sup> Kyai Mutta'ad was son of Raden Muriddin, son of Raden Muhammad Nuruddin, son of Raden Ali, son of Raden Punjul, son of Raden Bagus, son of Pangeran Sutajaya ing Gebang (Sultan Matangaji), son of Dalem Anom (Sultan Senapati), son of Dalem Kebon ing Gebang, son of Pangeran Sutajaya kang seda ing Grogol, son of Pangeran Sutajaya kang seda ing Tambak, son of Panembahan Ratu (Pangeran Girilaya), son of Pangeran Dipati, son of Pangeran Pasarean, son of Syarif Hidayatullah (Sunan Gunung Jati).

development of Pesantren Buntet was considered instrumental.<sup>44</sup> Upon his death, Ki (Buyut) Kriyan as a revered figure was buried at 'Jabang Bayi' grave complex in the city of Cirebon.<sup>45</sup> His tomb attracts visitors, some of whom, according to the *Juru Kunci*, come from Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>46</sup>

Kyai Mutta'ad also married another woman, Nyai Kidul from whom he had five descendants, the oldest one and the fourth were daughters, Nyai Saudah and Nyai Hamidah; the others were sons, namely Kyai Abdul Mun'im, Kyai Tarmidzi and Kyai Abdul Mu'thi. All the descendants from the two wives were *kyai* or married *kyai*. One of his students and also son in law was Kyai Sa'id, the founder of Pesantren Gedongan, another big *pesantren* adjacent to Buntet.<sup>47</sup>

Kyai Mutta'ad is said to have studied with Kyai Musta'in (Jepara, Central Java) and then to have gone to Pesantren Siwalan (Surabaya) for further learning. Soon after taking leadership of Buntet he applied much effort to renew the *pesantren*. With the help of his sons, especially his son-in-law, Ki (Buyut) Kriyan, he left the old *pesantren* at Gajah Ngambung built by Mbah Muqayim to build a new one at Blok Manis in the same village (Buntet) where it remains until now. He translated a number of books into Javanese and rewrote some others including the Holy Qur'an.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile Ki Kriyan taught *Tarekat Syattariyah* at the *pesantren* and attracted many followers. The number of *santri* and the *Syattariyah* followers increased considerably from tens to hundreds. Later, Ki Kriyan was appointed a religious official (*penghulu*) at Kraton Kesepuhan. After his wife, Nyai Ruhillah passed away, Ki Kriyan married another woman, Nyai Lontangjaya of Arjawinangun (30 km Western Cirebon) and had a daughter, Nyai Sa'diyah.

<sup>44</sup> The second was also a daughter, Nyai Qaumiyah, then successively Kyai Barwi, Kyai Sholeh Zamzami (the founder of Pesantren Benda Kerep), Nyai Mu'minah (a daughter), Kyai Abdul Jamil, Kyai Fachrurazi and Kyai Abdul Karim.

<sup>45</sup> Sulendraningrat (1985) tells us that the name 'Jabang Bayi' (literally meaning 'premature baby') was taken when a baby was born to Nona Delamor (Miss de l'Amour ?), daughter of a French blood Dutch Resident in Cirebon. She had a secret love affair with Prince Raja Kanoman, son of Sultan Kanoman and became pregnant. Delamor tried to keep her pregnancy secret, but she finally bore a baby prematurely. In fear of being acknowledged she put the baby in a box and threw it away into the sea. A harbour worker once found the box with a dead baby in it and finally recognised that the baby was of the throne family and buried it at a grave complex, later known as 'Jabang Bayi'

<sup>46</sup> The origin of Kyai Anwaruddin Kriyani (ki Buyut Kriyan) is not recorded neither is the date of his death. According to a legendary tale, he came from Malabar (India), thence the suffix of al-Malebari may have been derived. He was shipwrecked in the Malacca strait but helped ashore by a dolphin. He reached Johor, stayed there for a period of time and had students, some of whom were local dignitaries. He took a voyage to Java and came first to Surabaya. He wandered westward, spent a long time in Semarang before finally, he reached and stayed in Cirebon for the rest of his life. His tomb, although has visitors, does not exhibit extra appearance. It is only built of ordinary bricks and, just like the tomb of the commoners, it has no precinct.

<sup>47</sup> The present *kyai* in Buntet, therefore, trace their lineage to Sunan Gunung Jati through Kyai Mutta'ad. Nevertheless the *kyai* in Buntet do not seem to take pride from this lineage. None of them use a dignitary title like Raden (male) or Ratu (female). Ki Dulah said that his father, Kyai Abbas, and also Kyai Abdul Jamil, prohibited anyone in Buntet from using such a title. Probably, it is to show indifference toward the *kraton* that cooperated with the Dutch and adopted their life style (See note 29).

<sup>48</sup> Now, it is only the handwritten Qur'an which is still kept at the *pesantren* library.

He then stayed at the Kesepuhan court house and took with him his brother-in-law who was still a young boy, Abdul Jamil who later succeeded Kyai Mutta'ad to lead the *pesantren*. Kyai Mutta'ad died when he was 67 years old and was buried at Tuk adjacent to the graves of Mbah Muqayim and Ki Ardisela.

## Kyai Abdul Jamil (1842–1919)

The successor of Kyai Mutta'ad was his fourth oldest son, Kyai Abdul Jamil who replaced his elder brothers who were unable to succeed Kyai Mutta'ad because they married out.<sup>49</sup> During his stay with Ki Kriyan, Kyai Abdul Jamil is said to have completed many books. He also studied at other *pesantren*, one of which was Pondok Mayong (Jepara) with Kyai Murtadlo. He went to Mecca on pilgrimage and stayed there for some years. He learned among other things the Qur'anic science (the arts of reciting the Qur'an). Upon his return from Mecca he married Nyai Sa'diyah, Ki Kriyan's daughter. When Kyai Abdul Jamil succeeded Kyai Mutta'ad, Nyai Sa'diyah, his wife, was still a very young girl and Ki Kriyan gave him another wife, Nyai Qari'ah, daughter of Kyai Syathori, religious official of the Dutch administration (*Penghulu Landraad*). From this marriage he had eight children: Kyai Abbas, Kyai Anas, Kyai Ilyas, Nyai Zamrud (Qisthinthoniyah), Kyai Akyas, Nyai Ya'qut, Nyai Mu'minah and Nyai Nadroh. Later, from Nyai Sa'diyah he had five children, one of whom was a son, Kyai Ahmad Zahid.<sup>50</sup>

Kyai Abdul Jamil made many attempts to develop the *pesantren* both in managerial and academic aspects. For this, he maximised the intellectual potency available at the *pesantren* by recruiting all *kyai*, mostly relatives, who stayed within the *pesantren* complex, and senior students for active participation in various development tasks. To overcome the scarcity of text books, efforts were made to reproduce a number of advanced religious texts by handwriting. Among the reproduced texts were *Fath al-Wahhab*, *Sahih Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Suzur al-Zahhab*, *Alfiyah*, etc.<sup>51</sup> Academic activities were expanded. Along with the traditional *sorogan* and *bandungan* classes, he set up a *halaqah* (seminar) class attended by advanced students. *Ngaji pasaran* (open lecture) was also held at least every fasting month using well known quality references such as *I'alah al-Talibin*, *Fath al-Wahhab*, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, *Tafsir Ibn Katsir*, etc. A *takhassus* (specialisation) on religious subjects to be studied by advanced *santri* was set

<sup>49</sup> His oldest brother, Kyai Barwi, married out to Surabaya, whereas Kyai Soleh Zamzami established Pesantren Benda. See also the preceding section concerning the *pesantren* leadership.

<sup>50</sup> See figure 7.1

<sup>51</sup> These texts are considered authoritative, assigned for advanced learners. *Fathul Wahhab*, written by Abi Yahya Zakaria al-Ansari, for example, is an advanced analysis on Shafi'ite jurisprudence. *Sahih Bukhari* by al-Bukhari and *Sahih Muslim* by al-Muslim are two most authoritative reference on Hadith. *Alfiyah* by Ibnu Malik contains an advanced analysis of Arabic grammar in the form of 1000 poetic prescriptions of Arabic structure.

out and divided into six branches: *Ilmu Kalam* (theology),<sup>52</sup> *Ilmu Tafsir dan Hadith* (exegeses), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Nahwu-Sharaf* (Arabic grammar and word derivatives), *Tasawuf* (Sufism) and *Ilmu al-Qur'an* (Qur'anic science).

To accommodate the increasing number of *santri*, new buildings were erected including a large mosque (*masjid jami'*) whose cost was paid by donors especially well to do *ex-santri*. As the *pesantren* was surrounded by two rivers, it was felt to be rather isolated from the rest of the village. To remove this isolation a bridge was constructed and more *santri* began coming. Under his leadership, the number of *santri* reached around 700, coming from various parts of Java, Sumatera, Sulawesi and Singapore. At the same time, he was also authorised by his brother, Kyai Soleh Zamzami, to be a *mursyid* (*tarekat* leader) to teach and recruit members of Tarekat Syattariyah.<sup>53</sup> Under his leadership by the end of 19th century, this *tarekat* sprang up tremendously attracting thousands of followers. Along with the *kraton* and Benda Kerep, Buntet became another centre (*zawiyah*) of Syattariyah order. This caused the reputation of Kyai Abdul Jamil and his *pesantren* to transcend the local geographic boundary. In 1900, when he was 58 years old he was invited by Hadratus Syeikh K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari to teach at Pesantren Tebuireng in Jombang. He came there with his brother, Kyai Sholeh Zamzami of Pesantren Benda, Kyai Abdullah of Panguragan and Kyai Syamsuri of Wanantara (8 km south-west of Cirebon). They stayed and taught in Jombang for about 8 months.

Kyai Abdul Jamil was also concerned with both short and long term *pesantren* development. For the short term he himself managed the development efforts. For the long term, upon his return from teaching in Jombang, he sent a number of able students, including his sons, Abbas, Anas and Akyas, to study at various *pesantren* throughout Java. Special attention was made to develop the Qur'anic science by sending a number of able *santri* to Yogyakarta and to Banten. Among those who were sent for this purpose were Zainal Abidin (Kyai Zen), Kyai Yusuf and Kyai Murtadlo to study from Kyai Munawir at Krapyak (Yogyakarta), whereas Kyai Hasyim and Kyai Abdul Rauf studied with Kyai Tb.Mansur Ma'mun in Banten.<sup>54</sup>

In the political sphere he was known as a figure who consistently maintained the non-cooperation principle with the Dutch. He had close contact with his

<sup>52</sup> The term *kalam* basically refers to the dialectical style of discussion by putting forth objections and their response. The Mu'tazilah school of theology is credited to use this style of reasoning in the theological speculation based on the dual principle of justice and unity of God. Based on extensive use of Qur'an and the hadith, Al-Asy'ari also used this *kalam* style of rational arguments to maintain his position favouring predestination principle.

<sup>53</sup> As we shall see, Kyai Soleh Zamzami who led this tarekat at Benda Kerep was authorised by his brother-in-law, Ki Kriyan who had moved to *kraton* and became *penghulu*.

<sup>54</sup> When the sending really occurred and for how long are not told, but those who were sent turned to be instrumental potency after Kyai Abdul Jamil passed away. The trio Abbas, Anas, Akyas, brought Pesantren Buntet into its zenith (see next pages).



ex-student, H. Samanhudi, a successful *batik* trader of Surakarta, who in 1911 founded the “Syarekat Dagang Islam” (literally meaning Union of Islamic Trade), a Javanese *batik* traders's cooperative.<sup>55</sup> In this organisation Kyai Abdul Jamil was active on the religious advisory board (*Syuriah*) until he died in 1919. According to Kyai Hisyam, Kyai Abdul Jamil passed away when the *pesantren* was embarking on its remarkable institutional development. His success, to a large extent, was due to both his intellectual and managerial skills and the full support from his assistants such as Kyai Abdul Mun'im, Kyai Abdul Mu'thi, Kyai Tarmidzi, Kyai Mukhtamil and Kyai Abdullah.<sup>56</sup> Whilst his cousins, Kyai Sa'id and his brother Kyai Sholeh Zamzami, respectively established Pesantren Gedongan at Desa Ender, Astanajapura, and Pesantren Benda at Benda Kerep in the municipality of Cirebon. Upon his death, Kyai Abdul Jamil was buried at the *pesantren* cemetery (*Makam Santri*).

## Kyai Abbas (1879–1946)

When Kyai Abdul Jamil passed away, his oldest son from Nyai Qari'ah, Kyai Abbas, seemed to have been quite prepared to take over the *pesantren* leadership. Along with his broad and high intellectual quality, he is described as inheriting his father's leadership competence. He succeeded in marshalling the intellectual potential of other *kyai* who had been sent by his father to study at various *pesantren* and then returned with high intellectual achievement. It is under Kyai Abbas' leadership that Pesantren Buntet is said to have reached its golden age despite the fact that during this period the *pesantren* education encountered nation-wide instability due to the break out of the World War II and its aftermath. Kyai Abbas experienced different phases of political turmoil, pre-war Dutch colonialism, Japanese Fascism, postwar Dutch aggression, and the Indonesian revolutionary struggle for independence. During this course of history both the Dutch and the Japanese military threats and aggression are said as the major sources of unbearable hindrance for the development of the *pesantren*. Several times Buntet became the target of Dutch military raids, which caused damage and unbearable suffering among the people. Many of them fled to the *pesantren* for safety.<sup>57</sup> As a result, Kyai Abbas needed to open up a free public catering (*dapur umum*) to feed the starving people for some period of time. This even established the *kyai's* charisma among the local people. This

<sup>55</sup> For H. Samanhudi and his role in the *Syarekat Dagang Islam* see for example, Vlekke, B.H.M. (1965), *Nusantara : A History of Indonesia*, The Hague: W. van Hoeve, p. 350; Ricklefs, M.C. (1993), *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c.1300*, Hong Kong: MacMillan, p.166.

<sup>56</sup> See figure 7.1 (genealogy of the *sesepeuh*)

<sup>57</sup> Pak Maskira (67 years), a villager at Buntet told: “While the planes were roaring just over the top of the coconut trees, some bombs targeted to the *pesantren* missed and blasted in the paddy field, just around 150 metres outside the *pesantren* complex; some other bombs did not explode, but other villages, including Pesantren Sidamulya, established by his brother, Kyai Anas in 1936, was burnt down.”

period was deeply imprinted in the people's memory. For them Kyai Abbas seemed to have been a legendary saviour and unforgettable figure.<sup>58</sup>

Kyai Abbas learned religion firstly with his father Kyai Abdul Jamil, and Kyai Kriyan. Then he went *mesantren* to learn with Kyai Nasuha at Pesantren Sukunsari in Plered, Kyai Hasan at Jatisari in Weru, Kyai Ubaidah in Tegal (Central Java). He was summoned for marriage and after that he went to Mecca on pilgrimage and stayed there for some years for further study. Staying at Syeikh Zabidi's in Mecca, he studied with a number of teachers, one of whom was Kyai Mahfudz of Termas (East Java).<sup>59</sup> Among his Javanese fellow students in Mecca were Kyai Bakir of Yogyakarta, Kyai Abdillah of Surabaya and Kyai Wahab Hasbullah. In Mecca Kyai Abbas also taught and had students, among whom were some from Cirebon such as Kyai Kholil of Pesantren Balerante and Kyai Sulaeman from Babakan Ciwaringin. From Mecca he then went to Jombang (East Java) to learn with Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari at Pesantren Tebuireng.<sup>60</sup> When he was at Tebuireng he worked with Kyai Wahab Hasbullah and with Kyai Manaf and was involved in the establishment of Pesantren Lirboyo in Kediri (East Java).

Under Kyai Abbas' leadership, the *pesantren* management was further improved, academic activities were intensified and facilities were extended. Old buildings were renovated and new ones were erected.<sup>61</sup> But the most notable step Kyai Abbas took was the introduction and inclusion of the *madrasah* system into the *pesantren*. While *sorogan*, *bandungan* and *ngaji pasaran* were retained, in 1928 he founded Madrasah Abnaul Wathan Ibtidaiyah where secular subjects were taught.<sup>62</sup> Kyai Abbas' revolutionary steps are said to have been inspired by Imam Syafi'i who says:

<sup>58</sup> Such events were always told by older people in Buntet (who are now in their late 50s or over) whom I talked with about Pesantren Buntet.

<sup>59</sup> His other teachers in Mecca were not told.

<sup>60</sup> According to my informants in Buntet, the relation between Kyai Abbas and Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari during the former's stay in Tebuireng was much more collegial of about similar standing, involved mostly on discussions, rather than student-teacher (*santri-kyai*) relationship in an ordinary sense. In fact, both *kyai* were about the same age. Kyai Hasyim was only eight years older and lived a little longer (1871–1947) than Kyai Abbas did (1879–1946).

<sup>61</sup> The costs were met mostly by donors, one of whom was H. Kafrawi, a businessman from Brebes (Central Java) who provided a multi purpose building. Another one was a Chief (*kuwu*) of Gegesik (40 km West of Cirebon) who offered the renovation and enlargement cost of the *pesantren* mosque.

<sup>62</sup> The name 'Madrasah Abnaul Wathan,' which literally means School for the Country's Children, is obviously of patriotic flavour used to fit the nationalist spirit of Kyai Abbas' time and his involvement in the nationalist movements. This development might be a result of close contact with Tebuireng. In Tebuireng *madrasah* system was introduced in 1919 but reached its maturity in 1928 when Kyai Hasyim's cousin, Kyai Ilyas, upon finishing a Dutch Primary School (HIS), led the *madrasah*. The *pesantren*'s nationalist spirit was further intensified when in 1929, when Kyai Wahid Hasyim returned to Tebuireng from various learning. The development of Madrasah in Buntet is therefore, parallel with what occurred in Tebuireng. Cf. Dhofier (1985), especially pp. 103–106.

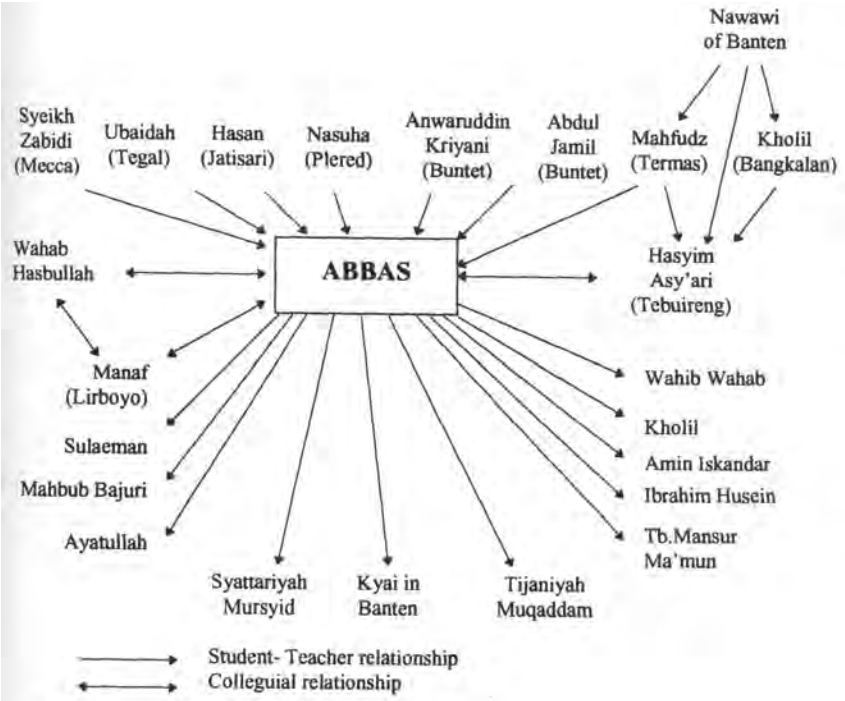
*"Keep the old values which are good and, take (only) the new ones which are better."*<sup>63</sup>

The curriculum offered by the *madrasah* contained eighty-five per cent religious and fifteen per cent secular subjects. Among the latter were *'ilmu'l-hisab* (arithmetic), *al-Jughrofiyah* (geography), *allughatul wathaniyah* (national language or Indonesian), *'ilmutthabi'iyah* (natural science) and *tarihul wathaniyah* (national history). Later he changed the *madrasah's* name from a patriotic flavour to a more academic one to become *Madrasah Salafiyah Syafi'iyah* (School of the early Syafi'ite studies) consisting of two levels, the preparatory and the *Ibtidaiyah* proper, each of which took 3 years to complete. The three years at the preparatory level were called *Tahdhiri*, *Sifir Awal* and *Sifir Tsani*, whereas the years in *Ibtidaiyah* were called grades one, two and three.<sup>64</sup> Thus, since Kyai Abbas took the leadership, there have been five different types of educational system applied simultaneously at the *pesantren*: *sorogan*, *bandungan*, *halaqah* (seminar), *madrasi* (madrasah system) and *ngaji pasaran*. The *sorogan* method was open to beginners, whereas the *bandungan* was given to those who passed the *sorogan* and was divided into *Awaliyah* (elementary), *Wustha* (intermediate) and *'Ulya* (advanced). Each level had to complete a certain set of standard texts used in *madrasah*. The first year of elementary *bandungan*, for example, which was equal to grade-IV of *madrasah* had to complete *Safinah al-Najah* (*fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence), *Qatr-al Ghait*s (theology), *Nasa'ih al-'Ibad* (ethics/*tasawuf*), *al-Ajrumiyah* and *al-Kailani* (Arabic); the second year which was equal to grade-V had to complete *Minhaj al-Qawim* (*fiqh*), *al-Bajuri* (theology), *Bidayah al-Hidayah* (ethics/*tasawuf*), *Syarh Amriti* and *Lamiyah al-A'fal* (Arabic). The third year which was equal to grade-VI had to complete *Tawshih* (*fiqh*), *Syu'ab al-Iman* (theology), *Sullam at-Taufiq* (ethics/*tasawuf*), *Millah al-I'rab* and *Syarh Nazhom* (Arabic), and *Tafsir Yasin* (exegeses). The intermediate and the advanced levels also had a number of texts to master. Al-Ghazali's *Ihya*, for example, was given at the second year of the *'ulya* level.

<sup>63</sup> This phrase is taken until now as the *pesantren's* motto and recounted in the *haul* ceremony held annually. This motto, which in fact embodies the NU's operational principle, according to Ki Dulah, implies that development should grow from the inner traditions. This means, Ki Dulah said, Pesantren Buntet will never adopt a principle of development which is based on condemnation, cutting off and throwing away the good traditions then picking up indiscriminately some new things of worse or unknown quality and totally foreign.

<sup>64</sup> Cf: Dhofier (1985), p. 104.

Figure 7.2: Intellectual Network of Kyai Abbas



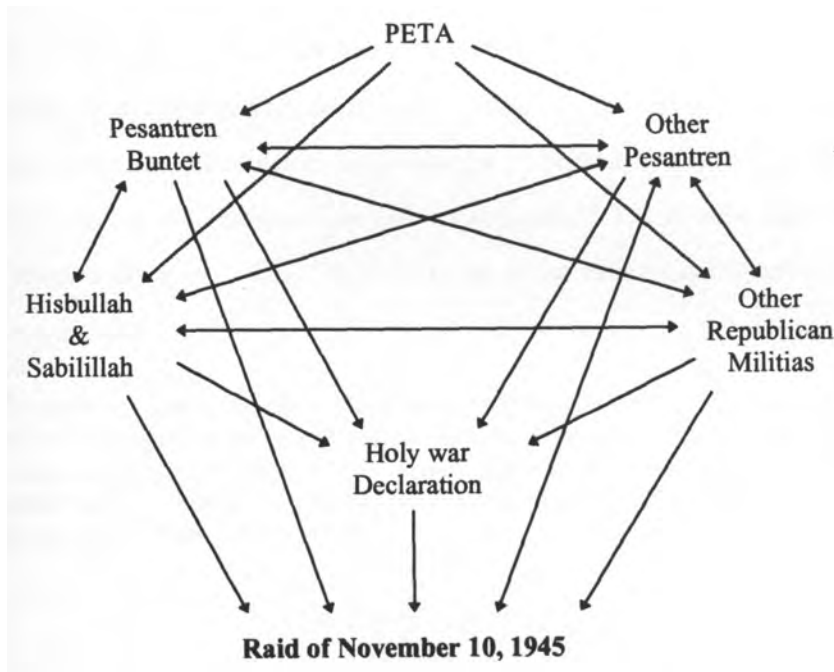
Some advanced students of both *bandungan* and *madrasah*, who were bright enough according to the individual assessment made by the *kyai*, were allowed to attend the seminar class. It is understandable that among about 3000 *santri* coming from various places only a few were fortunate enough to gain admission to this distinguished group. Among those who showed high achievement was Kyai Wahib Wahab (son of Kyai Wahab Hasbullah), former Minister of Religious Affairs who founded IAIN.<sup>65</sup>

The next was Tb. Mansur Ma'mun, a distinguished Qur'an reciter of national calibre of his time. He was then appointed to a high official position at the Jakarta Regional Administration. Another one was H. Amin Iskandar, the former Indonesian Ambassador to Iraq. Still another one was Professor K.H. Ibrahim Husein, the former Rector of IAIN Raden Fatah in Palembang (South Sumatera), the former Rector of Higher Learning Institute of Qur'anic Science (PTIQ), the Rector of the Institute of Qur'anic Science (IIQ) in Jakarta and currently, a member of Indonesian Council of *Ulama* (*Majelis Ulama*). The others are Kyai Ayatullah (Jakarta), Kyai Zuhri (Banten), Kyai Sholeh (Banten), Kyai Abdul Hamid (Banten) and Mahbub Bajuri, the former Regent (*Bupati*) of Cirebon.

<sup>65</sup> Kyai Wahib Wahab was son of Kyai Wahab Hasbullah who in 1926 became the co-founder of Nahdlatul Ulama with Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari of Pesantren Tebuireng, Jombang (East Java).

Figure 7.2 depicts Kyai Abbas' involvement in an extensive intellectual network. First, he, personally, exhibited himself as a true wanderer of knowledge seeker who had learned from many teachers including the distinguished Kyai Mahfudz of Termas.<sup>66</sup> Then he had students consisting of a wide range of individual; some of whom became *ulama*, leaders of *pesantren* and/or *Sufi* orders; some others became politicians and administrators. His close contact with various *pesantren*, and collegial relationship with other *kyai* (Hasyim Asy'ari, Wahab Hasbullah, Manaf and others), helped the foundation of new *pesantren* (such as Lirboyo) and strengthened the sense of inter-*pesantren* brotherhood. The latter was something which was instrumental for the success of his involvement in the struggle against colonialism, wherein he proved himself to be a figure not only concerned with educational affairs satisfied by his achievement in *pesantren*. Due partly to the political condition of his time, Kyai Abbas was also concerned with national movements.

**Figure 7.3: Military Network of Pesantren Buntet under Kyai Abbas.**



During the Japanese occupation he was a member of the People's Congress (*Sangikai*). Benefiting from the military training provided by the Japanese under the *Pembela Tanah Air* (PETA) or The Country's Defence Corps scheme, he was directly involved in the fight against the Dutch who, after the World War II,

<sup>66</sup> Kyai Mahfudz was student of Kyai Nawawi Banten, both were teachers of Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari of Tebuireng. See: Dhofier (1985), especially pp 86–91.

returned to Indonesia under the Allied Forces umbrella, undermining the Indonesian independence proclaimed by Soekarno-Hatta on August 17, 1945. Kyai Abbas was himself a commander of *Sabilillah* (Fighter in God's path) and then *Hisbullah* (Forces of God), both of which were Islamic wings of the Indonesian revolutionary Defence Corps.<sup>67</sup> He led a contingent consisting of a number of *kyai* and trained *santri* at Surabaya for involvement in the patriotic war against the Allied Forces on November 10, 1945. His contingent came to Jombang early in the morning on November 9, 1945.

Earlier, he had been involved in the assembly responsible for the issuance of the Holy War Declaration (*Deklarasi Jihad*) made by the Indonesian *ulama*. This declaration necessitated every Muslim to fight against the infidel (Dutch) and that the war in defence of fatherland was a Holy War (*jihad*). Kyai Abbas was also involved in the *ulama* assembly deciding the D-date (10 November 1945) to launch the raid against the allied forces head quarters in Surabaya. The raid is always commemorated as the Heroes's Day (*Hari Pahlawan*).<sup>68</sup> The relative standing of Kyai Abbas in the eyes of Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari at that moment is recounted in the following episode:

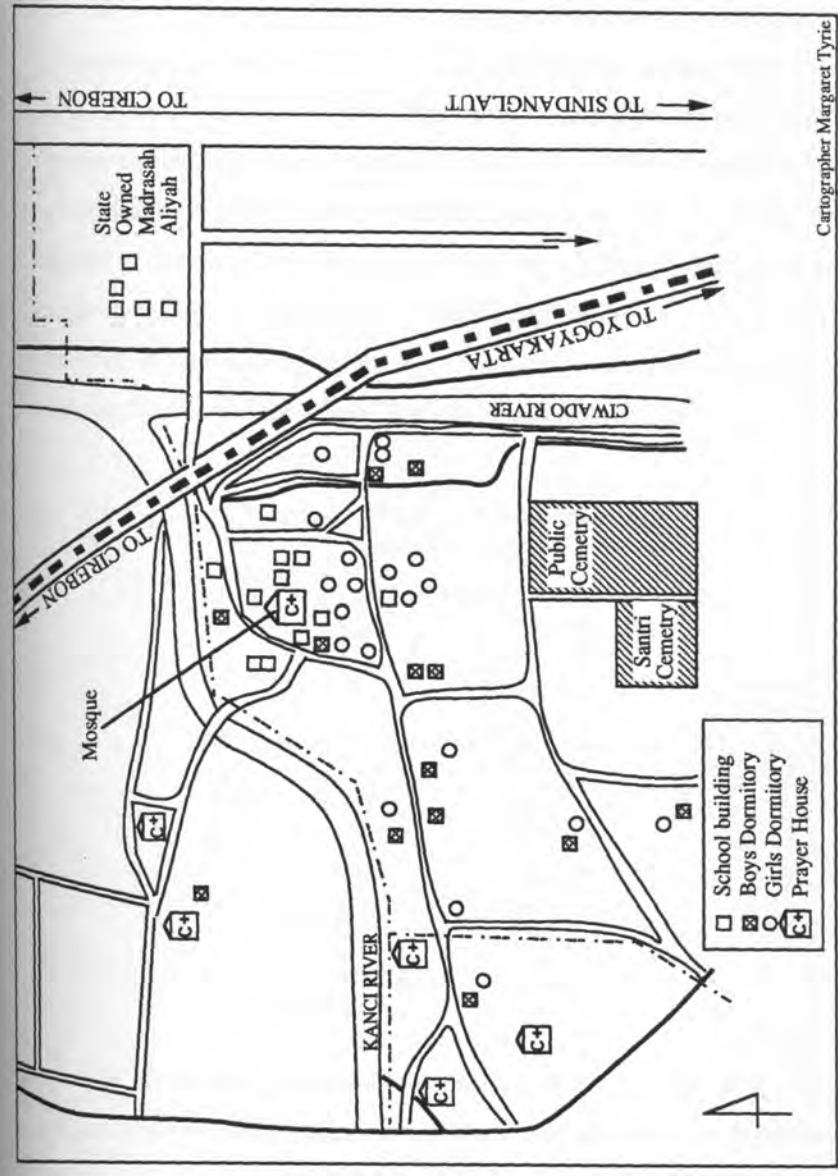
When Bung Tomo, the then Commander of the Republican (Indonesian) army, impatiently urged Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari to decide a D-date to launch a raid against the allied forces Head Quarters in Surabaya the *kyai* answered: "...please be patient, we are still waiting for the arrival of a group of *kyai* from Cirebon..."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Under his command were a number of *kyai*, including Kyai Anas, Kyai Murtadlo, Kyai Sholeh, Kyai Mujahid, Kyai Ahmad Zahid, Kyai Imam, Kyai Zen, Kyai Mustahdi Abbas, Kyai Mustamid Abbas, Kyai Hawi and Kyai Busyral Karim.

<sup>68</sup> No matter of the so many lives and material lost, the battle of Surabaya is considered as a successful cry for international recognition that the national state of Indonesia proclaimed in 17 August 1945 was a reality and gained popular support. (See: Ricklefs, 1993:217).

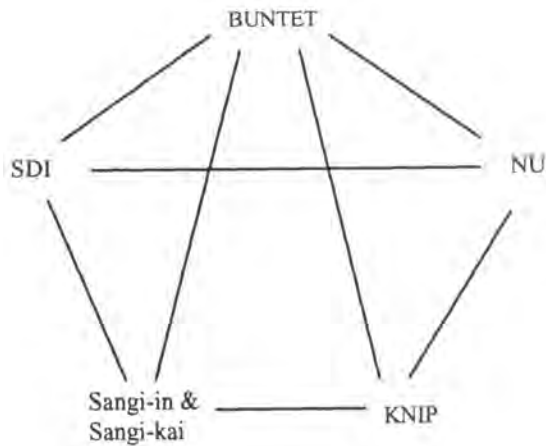
<sup>69</sup> This quotation comes from a personal interview with Kyai Abdullah Abbas (Ki Dulah) of Pesantren Buntet, on August 14, 1992. The "*kyai* from Cirebon" meant by Hadratus Syeikh, according to Ki Dulah, were undeniably Kyai Abbas and his contingent.

Pesantren Buntén Complex



To the end of his life Kyai Abbas was active in both socio-religious and political movements. His involvement in various activities and networks can partly be enumerated as follows: 1) Leader of *pesantren*, 2) Syattariyah *mursyid*, 3) Tijaniyah *muqaddam* 4) Religious adviser of the “Syarekat Dagang Islam” (SDI), 5) Member of the Central Board of *Muhtasyar* (Religious Assembly) of the NU, 6) *Rais ‘Am* (Head) of the West Java Provincial Religious Board (*Syuriah*) of the NU, 7) Member of *Sangikai* (Regional People's Congress) and *Sangi-in* (National People's Congress) during the Japanese occupation, 8) Commander of *Sabilillah* and *Hizbullah*, 9) Representative of the West Javanese *ulama* at the Central Indonesian National Committee or the *Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat* (KNIP).

**Figure 7.4: Political Network of Pesantren Buntet under Kyai Abbas.**

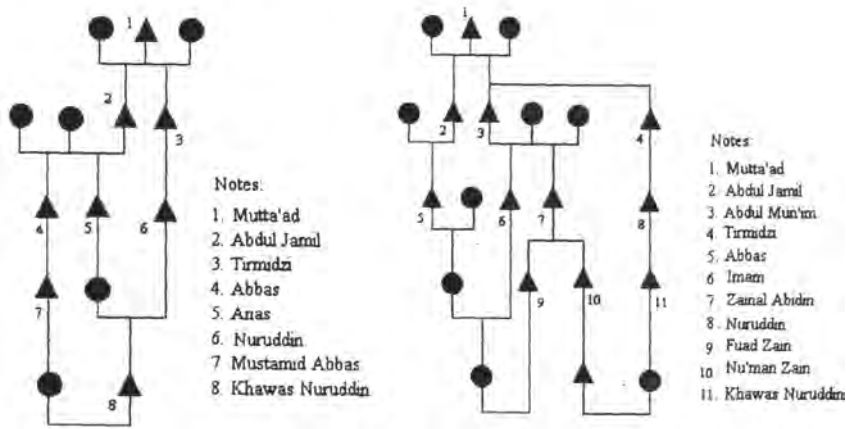


Like his father, Kyai Abbas also married twice. His first wife was Nyai Hafidzoh, with whom he had three sons and one daughter. They were Kyai Mustahdi Abbas, Kyai Abdul Rozak, Kyai Mustamid Abbas and Nyai Sumaryam. With his second wife, Nyai ‘Inayah, he had six children, the first and the fifth were sons, namely Kyai Abdullah Abbas (Ki Dulah), who now leads the *pesantren* as *Sesepuh pemangku* and Nahduddin Royandi Abbas who lives in London. The other are daughters (Nyai Hismatul Maula, Nyai Sukainah, Nyai Maimunah and Nyai Munawarah).

With very few exceptions like Nahduddin Royandi Abbas, who first married a French woman then divorced and married a Javanese from Solo, the *pesantren* family practices endogamous marriage. The present generations of *kyai* families at Buntet mostly have multiple familial ties due to both lineality and affinity. Figure 7.5 depicts a set of examples for the occurrences of endogamous marriage where descendants of Kyai Mutta'ad from the first and the second wives intermarried.



**Figure 7.5: Sample of endogamous Marriage in Pesantren Buntet.**



The endogamous marriage, according to informants of *pesantren* circle in Buntet, is advantageous in enabling the *pesantren* to preserve continuous supply of *kyai*. It is said that the offspring resulting from this type of marriage, more often than not, will be raised and educated, at least at their childhood, within the *pesantren* atmosphere. It is hoped, therefore, that even when the child's further education is a secular one, and involves in an occupation which has little relation with *pesantren* life, he or she will be motivated, sooner or later, to participate directly or indirectly in the preservation of *pesantren* tradition.

### Kyai Mustahdi Abbas (1913–1975)

Kyai Abbas died in 1946 and was buried at the Buntet Pesantren grave complex (*Makam Santri*). His oldest son, Kyai Mustahdi Abbas was appointed his successor. Kyai Mustahdi learned religion with his father Kyai Abbas and his uncles, Kyai Anas, Kyai Ilyas and Kyai Akyas. He then went to Pesantren Babakan Ciwaringin to study with Kyai Amin, to Termas (East Java) with Kyai Dimyati, to Tebuireng in Jombang with Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari, to Lirboyo in Kediri with Kyai Abdul Manaf and to Lasem to study with Kyai Ma'mun and Kyai Baidlowi. He is said to have been such a genius that once when he was 15 years old, his father, Kyai Abbas, tested him with an assignment to put *syakl* (vowel signs) on the reproduced volumes of al-Ghazali's *Ihya* so that it would become readable to the beginners. The result was amazingly very neat and without a mistake. As a reward Kyai Abbas gave him a wrist watch which, at that time, was a very precious gift.

Kyai Mustahdi married Nyai Asiah, daughter of Kyai Anas, his uncle, and had three daughters and a son. He went to Mecca on pilgrimage and stayed there for some time with (Professor Dr) Kyai Anwar Musyaddad, former Rector of

IAIN in Bandung. He worked with Sayid 'Alawy to complete a number of books, one of which was a book on *tasawuf*, *Riyadh as-Salihin*.

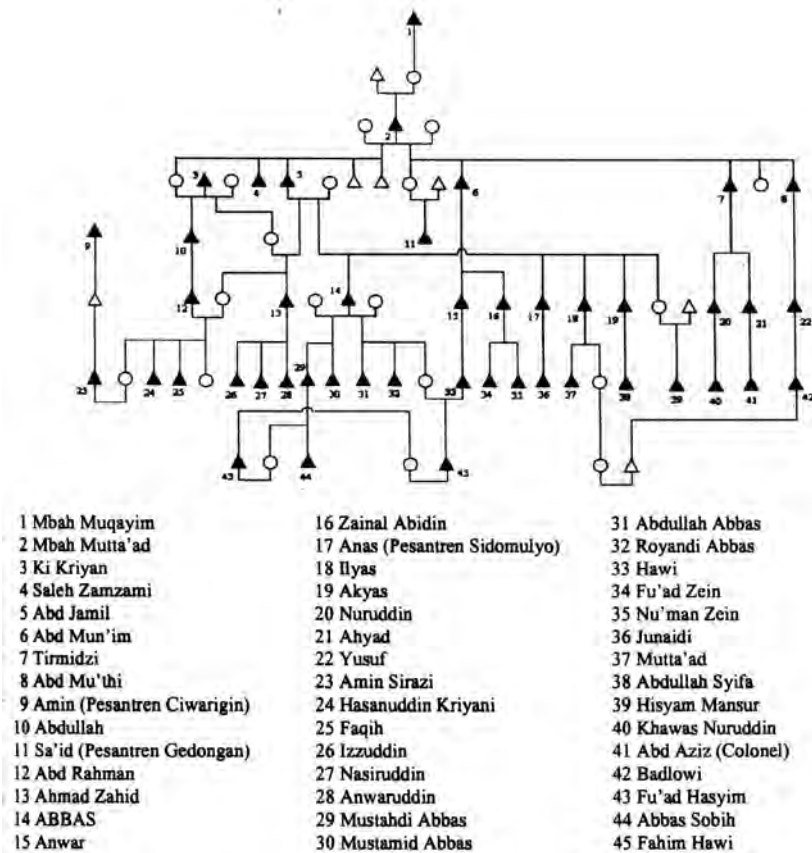
In leading the *pesantren*, Kyai Mustahdi paid special attention to developing the *madrasah* system. One part of his ambitious activity was to make Pesantren Buntet an integral part of national education. In 1950 he changed the 3 year *madrasah* established by his father into a 6 year *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI). Influenced by his strong NU mindedness, in 1958 he added to the *pesantren* junior secondary education by establishing a 4 year NU Teacher Training (PGA 4 Tahun NU). In 1960 it became two separate Institutes, each a 6 year Religious Teacher Training Centre, one for boys and one for girls (PGA 6 Tahun NU Putra and the PGA 6 Tahun NU Putri). In 1965 he also established *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* NU, and in 1968 *Madrasah Aliyah* NU. Finally in 1970 he established The Islamic University of Cakrabuana with two Faculties, *Tarbiyah* (Education) and *Ushuluddin* (Theology). Later, these faculties became affiliated with the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) "Sunan Gunung Jati" of Bandung (West Java). Inspired by the success of his *santri*, Fu'ad Zen, who won the National prize in the competition for the Recital of the Qur'an held on the occasion of the 1965 Afro-Asian Islamic Conference in Jakarta, Kyai Mustahdi established a Qur'anic Science Academy (Akademi Al-Qur'an). This academy involved 3 years of tertiary education specialising in Qur'anic Studies.<sup>70</sup>

Kyai Mustahdi also paid attention to developing the *pesantren* management and laid down an organisational structure under which all *madrasah* within the *pesantren* were integrated. The present LPI (*Lembaga Pendidikan Islam* or Islamic Educational Body) is attributed to him. It was firstly established in August 17, 1958. In 1967 he called for all Pesantren Buntet alumni to hold a congress to discuss contemporary issues, especially those which were related to Islamic education. Various issues were raised and an alumni organisation, the *Ikatan Keluarga Buntet Pesantren* (IKBP) or Buntet Pesantren Alumni Union, was set up.

The development of the *madrasah*, although in itself quite an achievement, was not the only thing Kyai Mustahdi was concerned with. As a *pesantren* leader and member of the *Syuriah* of the West Java regional NU, he was a *Mursyid* of the *Syattariyah* order who frequently travelled throughout Java, especially to Central and East Java, visiting the *zawiyah*, and this, also added to the reputation of his *pesantren*. He worked hard for his *pesantren* until he died in 1975.

<sup>70</sup> Fu'ad Zein from Pesantren Buntet won the first prize and toured some Afro-Asian Islamic countries to demonstrate his ability.

Figure 7.6: Genealogy of Some Kyai in Buntet.



**Plate 32: Kyai Abbas.**



**Plate 33: Kyai Abdullah Abbas (in sarong and white cap) before "Haul" ceremony.**



## Kyai Mustamid Abbas (1975–1988) and Kyai Abdullah Abbas (1988–...)

When Kyai Mustahdi passed away, his son, Abbas Shobih, was still a young child, and thus his brother, Kyai Mustamid Abbas, was appointed his successor. Kyai Mustamid was already 60 years old when he took over the *pesantren* leadership and was already busy enough. He was the *Rais Syuriah* of the West Java Provincial Board of the NU, member of the National People's Congress (MPR), President of Cirebon Branch of the 'Indonesian Pondok Pesantren Union.' His educational experience began at the Madrasah Wathoniyah Buntet Pesantren. He then went to Termas, Lasem, Lirboyo (Madrasah Muballighin) and Kuliyatul Muballighin at Tebuireng, Jombang. Rather than setting up a new policy, he chose to continue his brother's policies. In the meantime the Ministry of Religious Affairs reorganised its religious educational system. This policy had a considerable impact on the overall number and organisational structure of religious education in Indonesia, especially in regard to the PGA (Religious Teacher Training) and tertiary religious education (IAIN). Under the new scheme PGA was transformed into an ordinary public *madrasah*, thence the *madrasah* education operating in Buntet became: (1) Madrasah Wathoniyah Ibtidaiyah Puteri (2) Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Wathoniyah Putera (3) Madrasah Tsanawiyah NU Putera-I (4) Madrasah Tsanawiyah NU Putra-II (5) Madrasah Tsanawiyah NU Puteri (6) Madrasah 'Aliyah NU Putera (7) Madrasah Aliyah NU Puteri and (8) Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (state owned Madrasah Aliyah). The Islamic University of Cakrabuana, including the Qur'anic Science Academy, ceased its operation.

When Kyai Mustamid died in 1988, Abbas Shobih, son of Kyai Mustahdi to whom the leadership should have returned, was still very young and announced his unpreparedness to take over the leadership as *Sesepuh* (*pesantren* elder). A consensus among the *sohibul wilayah* was reached on the 7th day ceremony of Kyai Mustamid passing away and appointed Kyai Abdullah Abbas, son of Kyai Abbas, who is referred to as Ki Dulah, to take over H. Abbas Shobih's position as *sesepuh pemangku* (acting elder). This position is still retained until now (1995).

In his sixties Ki Dulah has not made significant change to the *pesantren* educational structure, but a draft of a ten year (1990–2000) *pesantren* development plan has been produced to build a new complex on a two hectare piece of land alongside the connecting road between the present *pesantren* complex and the Cirebon-Sindanglout main road.<sup>71</sup>

So far, the relationship between Ki Dulah, Abbas Shobih (Kang Obih) and other *kyai* has been good. Recently however, especially facing the 1992 general

<sup>71</sup> A News Bulletin, *Fajar* (literally meaning dawn light), also appeared in 1988 but disappeared by the following year.

elections, an internal friction between the *kyai* arose. Following the nation-wide friction, there arose a division within the NU circle concerning the political support of the NU for the competing parties. Some of the *kyai* favoured GOLKAR, the government party, while the others preferred to keep their traditional support for the former Islamic party, the PPP.<sup>72</sup> In Indonesia, as seen in Buntet and elsewhere, support for political parties is not considered merely as a practical undertaking. It transcends the pragmatic level into the ideological one. Some *kyai* in Buntet, like Ki Dulah, Ki Fu'ad, Kang Obih, Ki Hisyam and others supported GOLKAR in the 1992 elections, whereas Ki Nu'man, Ki Syifa, Ki Izzuddin and others supported PPP despite the fact that this party no longer claimed Islam as its ideological basis. With few exceptions, it happened GOLKAR supporters resided mainly in the east wing of the *pesantren* complex, that is, from the *pesantren* mosque eastward and thus they were referred to as *golongan wetan* (the eastern group). On the other hand, PPP supporters resided in the west and thus they were called *golongan kulon* (the western group).<sup>73</sup> The *golongan kulon* argued that although currently the PPP no longer declared Islam as an ideological basis, this party was still uncontaminated by non-Islamic elements. All its leaders were Muslims and still struggling for Islamic ideals, at least outwardly. It was, they said, therefore a moral obligation for the Muslims to support this party. This group, or at least some of them, became extreme and vocal in accusing the *golongan wetan* of betraying the Islamic ideals and therefore easily forgetting the sufferings and trauma caused by 1971 and the subsequent general elections.<sup>74</sup> The western group claimed that the eastern group needed to renew their testimony (*kudu syahadat maning*). Probably, due in part in the security of standing for the government, the eastern group exhibited a calm and more mature attitude. They argued that they did suffer the 1971 trauma and that the government and GOLKAR's hard measures against Islam especially in 1971 were, to a large extent, due to the key figures of the military personnel who led GOLKAR and the government at that time. Now, they argued, the situation had changed; there were no more such persons as Sukawati, Ali Murtopo and Amir Mahmud.<sup>75</sup> To be fair, they said, the present (GOLKAR)

<sup>72</sup> Currently, Indonesia has three political parties. One is PPP, which stands for "Partai Persatuan Pembangunan" (Development Union Party), is a fusion of former Islamic parties but in the 1992 election it discarded Islam as its operational basis. The next is PDI which stands for Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party), a fusion of Nationalists and Christian parties. The third party is GOLKAR which stands for Golongan Karya (Functional Group), is the ruling (the present government) party.

<sup>73</sup> See the sketch of Buntet Pesantren in the previous section.

<sup>74</sup> The 1971 general election was the first one held by the New Order government since it took power in 1966. To keep itself in power the government installed the former non-political organisation, the GOLKAR, to become a political party and compete with other political parties in the election. By various means, including the allegedly hard measures, violence and unfair practices the government forced GOLKAR, the government's party, to win.

<sup>75</sup> During the New Order government, Indonesia has a general election every five years. But each time the election was held, the 1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, unfair practices, including intimidation and violence have been allegedly made to force the government's party to keep winning. The '1971 trauma' therefore,

government had been relatively good to the Muslims and Islam, and they could expect even better in the future. Thus, there was room for the Muslims to respond positively to the changed situation and abandon their irrational oppositional stance. In addition, experience had shown that supporting the PPP had brought nothing except trauma and disappointment to many people. PPP could do nothing for its supporters who sacrificed themselves, being in custody and becoming the victims of election abuse.<sup>76</sup>

Despite this internal friction, the NU was still functioning as a binding force, at least on the surface. This appeared for example, at the occasion when the Cirebon regional branch of NU held an annual congress on November 1992. On this occasion, the *kyai* of Buntet from both sides, the *golongan wetan* and *golongan kulon*, were present, sitting together side by side amidst other *kyai* from other *pesantren* to take part in the proceedings.

## THE PESANTREN IN OPERATION: AN EXAMPLE OF DAILY ACTIVITIES

The daily activities which occur in the *pondok* throughout the *pesantren* complex are not homogeneous. They vary from *pondok* to *pondok* but in general the activities are governed by a common central theme which, according to Kyai Hisyam Mansur, is “to guide the *santri* to become knowledgeable and pious individuals, meritorious to themselves, their parents, the nation and religion.”<sup>77</sup> To this end the learning activity is geared toward acquiring intellectual and practical acquaintance with religious precepts. To achieve this broad objective most *santri* are to engage in two types of learning activities, *ngaji* in the evening and schooling in the day time. An example of its enactment in a daily practice, can be seen from what occurs in the *pondok* owned by Kyai Hisyam Mansur himself.

Kyai Hisyam Mansur, the writer of *Haul in Pesantren Buntet*, who currently limits himself to having only between 50 to 60 mature *santri* (high school students or older), concentrates on teaching two *kitab* (religious texts). For this, he first requires his *santri* to get up on before dawn (around 4.00 a.m) for the call for

refers to what usually occurred since the 1971 and subsequent general elections. The role of these persons (Sukawati, Ali Murtopo and Amir Mahmud), who were army generals and held key positions, is considered crucial in the allegedly election abuse.

<sup>76</sup> Such a division, which still appeared towards the end of 1992, the last time I visited the *pesantren*, seemed to hamper the realisation of the ambitious ten year (1990–2000) *pesantren* development plan under Ki Dulah's leadership.

<sup>77</sup> Kyai Hisyam Mansur is the writer of *Haul in Pesantren Buntet*, referred to earlier in this section. He, like Kyai Fu'ad Hasyim, belongs to an ordinary *kyai* family (*non-sohibul wilayah*) but he was active in the *pesantren's* Executive Board until 1975. From 1977 to 1982 he was a member of Regional Parliament (DPRD) of Kabupaten Cirebon representing the Islamic Party (PPP). In the 1982 election he was a candidate for the Provincial Parliament but was not appointed and returned to his administrative position as Religious Education Superintendent at the Local Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Kabupaten Cirebon. In 1992 he became a member of the Regional Parliament (DPRD) Kabupaten Cirebon from GOLKAR.

prayer (*adzan*), *puji-pujian*, to perform morning congregation prayer and *ngaji kitab*. The standard (compulsory) texts he sets for his *santri* are *Safinah* (major) and *Taqrib* (minor). Both *kitab* are basically equal texts but they differ in the ordering of the topics into chapters. The students are to split themselves into two groups and each group is further divided into two sub-groups so that there are four sub-groups. Once a week each individual *santri* has to rotate his/her membership from one group/sub-group to another and thus from week to week each *santri* will belong to a different group/sub-group. By applying the *bandungan* method in two shifts Kyai Hisyam teaches one group after another the *Safinah* in an orderly manner from one chapter to the next. Outside the *bandungan* class he requires the *santri* to read the related chapter(s) from *Taqrib* and to consult him or whoever when it is needed. Thus unlike what they do with the *Safinah*, they read the *Taqrib* on a topic rather than on a chapter basis. Once a week two shifts of discussions are held. One sub-group discusses *Safinah*, the other sub-group argues or raises some comments based on *Taqrib*. To support their arguments Kyai Hisyam encourages the *students* to consult the references he provides, consisting of *Hadits*: *Arba'in al-Nawawiyah*, *Riyadh ash-Shalihin*; *Tafsir* (Exegeses): *Jalalain*, *Ash Shawi*, *Ibn Katsir*, *Qurtubi*, *Muraghi*; Theology (*Nazham Nur al-Iman*; *Tajwid* (Arabic or Qur'anic reading rules): *Bidayah ash-Sibyan*, *Tanfir al-Atfal*, *Jazwiyah*. For *Nahu/Sharaf* (Arabic grammar and word derivatives) Kyai Hisyam urges his *santri* to go to another *pondok* to learn from another *kyai*. By applying this procedure Kyai Hisyam hopes the students will have basic mastery of certain *kitab* with some acquaintance and broadened perspectives.

In his *pondok*, *Ngaji kitab* is held from 8.00 p.m to 10.00 p.m and from 5.00 a.m to 6.30 a.m daily, except on Friday which is free. Every Thursday evening after sunset prayer, however, Kyai Hisyam still requires his *santri* to perform *tahlil*, and after evening prayer to perform *marhaba* and public speech training. For all these, the *santri* have to organise these rituals by themselves. Through this procedure he hopes that in the future or when they have completed their learning, *santri* will have the necessary training to engage actively in their societal roles.



**Plate 34: The main "pondok" of Pesantren Buntet.**



**Plate 35: Commemorating the Independence Day at Pesantren Buntet.**



**Plate 36: The Pesantren Mosque in Buntet.**



**Plate 37: Girlscouts of Pesantren Buntet on exercise.**



# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## سلسلة الطريقة الشطارية

أقول: أخذت الطريقة الشطارية من والدي ومربي الشيخ العارف كياهي مستهدي  
تباس وهو من والده الشيخ العارف كياهي عباس بونت فسترن برون وهو من والده  
كياهي الحاج عبد الحيل وهو أخذ من أخيه الشيخ كياهي الحاج محمد صالح وهو من  
كياهي محمد أنور وهو أخذ من كياهي شعري كلن وهو كنداك وهو أخذ من الشيخ  
محمد سيد مدني وهو أخذ من أبيه الشيخ طاهر مدني وهو أخذ من أبيه الشيخ إبراهيم  
وهو من أبيه الشيخ طاهر وهو أخذ من أبيه الشيخ ملا إبراهيم المعلى وهو أخذ  
من الشيخ أحمد فتاشي وهو أخذ من الشيخ أحمد شاني وهو من السيد صبغة الله  
وهو أخذ من السيد عوث وهو أخذ من الشيخ حضري وهو أخذ من الشيخ هداية الله سرت  
وهو أخذ من الشيخ قاضي الشطاري وهو أخذ من الشيخ عبد الله الشطاري وهو أخذ من الشيخ عارف  
وهو أخذ من الشيخ محمد عايش وهو أخذ من الشيخ حدافلي ما وراء النهر في الشام وهو أخذ من الشيخ أبي  
حسن خرفاني وهو أخذ من الشيخ أبو المظفر ترك العلوي وهو أخذ من الشيخ أبي يزيد العنتقي وهو  
أخذ من الشيخ محمد مغربي وهو أخذ من الشيخ أبو يزيد البسطامي وهو أخذ من إمام جعفر الصادق  
وهو أخذ من إمام باقر وهو أخذ من إمام زين العابدين وهو أخذ من إمام حسين شهيد وهو  
أخذ من سيدنا علي بن أبي طالب وهو أخذ من سيد الوجود سيدنا محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم  
وهو أخذ من الله بواسطة الروح الأمين.

A sample of "Ijazah" of  
Tarekat Syattariyah in  
Buntet