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Dong Sull Choi
Brigham Young University

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THE PROCESS OF ISLAMIZATION
AND ITS IMPACT ON INDONESIA

Dong Sull Choi

Most people in the West automatically identify Muslims with Arabs. Today, however, Arab peoples make up only a small minority, perhaps 15 percent, of the world's Muslims. Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, all situated in South and Southeast Asia, are the four largest Muslim societies and account for over one-half of the world's Muslim population. Indeed, Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world, has the largest number of Muslim adherents of any nation. According to The 1994 Universal Almanac, about 88 percent of Indonesia's 196 million people are Muslims. The rest of its population are Dutch Protestant (5 percent), Roman Catholic (3 percent), Hindu (2 percent), Buddhist (1 percent), and some animists.

Indonesia's recorded history begins somewhere around the 4th century A.D. The earliest inscriptions of the Indonesian archipelago are found on seven stone pillars from Kutai in East Kalimantan, formerly known as Borneo, which on paleographic grounds are dated to roughly 400 A.D. The last seven centuries since 1300 A.D. are generally regarded as the "modern period" of Indonesian history. Unlike the previous turbulent periods, this modern Indonesian history has been characterized by some unity and coherence. Probably three fundamental elements are responsible for the historical unity of this period. The first is cultural and religious, that is, the "Islamization of Indonesia", which began in approximately 1300 A.D. and continues today. As will be seen below, Islamization is a process that has continued down to the present day. The second is topical, that is, the interplay between Indonesians and Westerners which began roughly in 1500 A.D. and still continues. The third is historiographical, that is, the primary sources throughout this period are written almost exclusively in the modern forms of Indonesian languages (rather than Old Javanese or Old Malay) and in European languages. Between A.D. 1300 and 1500, these elements emerged and are still in existence.

The spread of Islam is one of the most significant threads in Indonesian history, but also one of the most obscure. When, why and how the conversion of Indonesians began has been seriously debated by many scholars, but no definite conclusions have been drawn because the very few records of Islamization that survive, are often very uninformative. There must have been an Islamic presence in maritime Southeast Asia early in the Islamic era. According to one seventh century A.D. Chinese record, the time of the third caliph of Islam, Uthman ibn 'Affan (644–656), Muslim ambassadors from Arabia began to arrive at the Chinese T'ang court of Changan. By at least the ninth century there were sever-
al thousand Muslim merchants and traders in Canton, the largest seaport of the T'ang dynasty. Such frequent contacts between China and the Islamic world would have been maintained primarily via the sea routes through Indonesian waters. While the earliest encounters between Southeast Asia and the Islamic world may go back to the Muslim merchants involved in the China trade, as observed above, only after the consolidation of Islam on the Indian subcontinent did Muslim merchants and Sufi missionaries begin to make significant trade and proselyting efforts. By the thirteenth century, Southeast Asia was in contact with the Muslims of China, Bengal, Gujarat, Iran, Yemen, and south Arabia. The fact that Indonesian Islam belongs to one of the four Sunnite orthodox schools, known as the Shaf′i or Shafi′ite, verifies South India as the major source of Islamic influences.

The reasons for the conversion of Indonesians to the Islamic faith are much disputed among scholars. I propose three predominant causes or theories to explain the eventual acceptance of Islam. The first is the significant role played by the Sufi missionaries who came mainly from Gujarat and Bengal in India. Unlike Islam in the Middle East and India, Indonesia was not conquered by force. The Sufis came not only as teachers but as traders and politicians who penetrated the courts of rulers, the quarters of merchants, and the villages of the countryside. Sufism is the science of the direct knowledge of God; its doctrines and methods derive from the Koran and Islamic revelation. Sufism freely makes use of paradigms and concepts derived from Greek and even Hindu sources. The Sufis communicate their religious ideas in a form compatible with beliefs already held in Indonesia. For instance, pantheistic doctrines were easily understood because of Hindu teachings extant in the archipelago. The resemblance between the Sufi outlook and Hinduism was great. The Sufis stressed religious retreats and minimized the importance of mosque worship; they emphasized a belief in sainthood verging on hagiolatry; and, of course, centered their belief on the individual mystical experience of God.

The second is the remarkable role of merchants who established themselves in Indonesian seaports, married into local ruling families, and provided important diplomatic skills, wealth, and international experience for the commercial enterprises of coastal rulers. The first converts were mostly local rulers who sought to attract Muslim traffic and win allies in the struggle against Hindu traders from Java. Conversion may have yielded political advantages for the prince or ruler, such as alliances with other Islamic states, counteracting Christianizing influences, recruiting reliable troops, winning the support of Islamic religious leaders, and keeping pace with a growing trend. The most important thing is that coastal rulers used conversion to legitimize their resistance to the authority of the greatest pre-Islamic kingdom Majapahit (1293–1389), and to throw off the suzerainty of central Javan empires.

The third is the value of Islam to the common people rather than to the
ruling elites. Islam provided an ideological basis for individual worth or value, for solidarity in peasant and merchant communities, and for the integration of small parochial groups into larger societies. In an era of expanded trade, Islam may have helped to create an integrated community to replace the village-scaled societies disrupted by commerce and political change. It seems likely that all these three factors were at work at the same time, though circumstances undoubtedly differed from place to place. There was no single process or source for the spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago, but the travels of individual merchants and Sufis, the winning of apprentices and disciples, and the founding of schools, seem crucial.

Historically, the first salient evidence of Indonesian Muslim converts is seen in the northern part of Sumatra, the westernmost and second largest island of Indonesia. When the Venetian traveler Marco Polo (1254-1324) landed at Sumatra on his way home from China in 1292, he found that Perlak was a Muslim town, while two nearby places, Pasai and Samudra, were not. The gravestone of the first Muslim ruler of Samudra, Sultan Malik as-Salih, has been found, dated 1297. This is the first clear evidence of the existence of a Muslim dynasty in the Indonesian-Malay area, and further gravestones confirm that from the late thirteenth century, this part of north Sumatra remained under Islamic rule. The Moroccan traveler Ibn Batutah (1304-1378), known as the "Arab Marco Polo" and the most far-ranging explorer of the Middle Ages, passed through Samudra on his way to and from China in 1345 and 1346, and found that the ruler was a staunch adherent of the Shafi'i school of Islam. This confirms the presence, from an early date, of the school that was later to dominate Indonesia, although it is possible that the other three orthodox schools, Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali, were also present at an early time in the Indonesian archipelago.

Although Marco Polo spoke of the conversion of Perlak, and Samudra was seen as a Muslim dynasty, the first significant and motivating power to accept the Islamic faith was the kingdom of Malacca, early in the fifteenth century. From its founding in 1405 by Iskandar, the former ruler of the greatest Sumatran Hindi-Buddhist kingdom Srivijaya, to its capture by the Portuguese admiral Alfonso de Albuquerque (1453-1515) in 1511, Malacca was a major center of Southeast Asian commercial activity; and more significantly, it became the Mecca and focal point of the Islamic religion in Southeast Asia. Ships from Malacca sailed to Gujarat, Bengal, China, and the widely scattered islands of Indonesia. With the consolidation of its political and commercial prosperity, Malacca became the headquarters for the spread of Islamic influence throughout the region.

By 1474, the Malay rulers of Pahang, Kedah, and Patani had converted to Islam; on Sumatra also, Islam reached Rokan, Siak, Kampar, and Indragiri. While Javanese students were coming to Malacca as early as 1414 to study with Muslim teachers, the coastal principalities of Java, Demak, Tuban, Madura, and
Surabaya had all become Muslims in the middle of the fifteenth century. These conversions were probably partly stimulated by their rivalry with the interior kingdom of Majapahit, the greatest Hindu state in Java. Islam's most spectacular period of expansion came during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, coincident with the powerful influence of the Christian Portuguese and Dutch. Now Java, Sumatra, Brunei, Malay Peninsula, and Kalimantan, and even the far-eastern Moluccas, popularly known as "the Spice Islands," were all converted to Islam.

The spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago is often described as some "contagious disease," as if it happened simply because it was Islam. While pockets of the Indonesian population are fundamentalist Muslims, such as the Acehnese in northern Sumatra, the success of Islam is due, on the whole, to its strong ability to adapt to local customs. All classes alike, at least in the early days, may have regarded Islam as an added source of supernatural intercession, rather than a simple rival to Hinduism. Certainly great concessions were made to local practices, and even the traditional puppet shadow play "wajang" was used by early Muslim missionaries to win over the common people. Consequently, Indonesian Islam is rather different from austere form found in the Middle East. For instance, respect for the dead throughout most of Indonesia is not expressed by wearing veils but in donning traditional dress. Muslim women in Indonesia are allowed more freedom and shown more respect than their counterparts in other Muslim countries. They do not have to wear facial veils, nor are they segregated or considered to be second-class citizens. Muslim men in Indonesia are allowed to marry only two women and even then must have consent of their first wife. Muslims in other parts of the world can have as many as four wives, which is based on the Koran chapter 4 verse 3, saying "Marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four." But the same verse continues to teach, "If you fear that you shall not be able to deal 'justly' with them, then only one." Throughout Indonesia it is the women, not the men, who initiate divorce proceedings. The Minangkabau society of Sumatra, for instance, is a strongly Muslim group, but their traditional common adat laws allow matriarchal rule, which conflicts diametrically with the assumption of male supremacy inherent in Islam.

The story of the Islamization of Indonesia raises a number of questions and arguments of importance for the understanding of Islam's later role in that community. The paradox exists that, despite the huge Muslim population and influence, Indonesia is not an Islamic state, Islam is not the national faith, and today, no political party is identified by its commitment to an Islamic ideology, but in many respects Indonesia appears nonetheless to be an Islamic country. There has been considerable debate over the meaning and role of Islam in Indonesian society, for instance, as a set of religious beliefs, as a body of law and custom, as a civilizing force, as a symbol of anti-colonialism, as a basis for nationalism and as an economic philosophy. The whole matter is extremely com-
plex and is far from resolved.

To a careful reader of Indonesian history and culture, however, it does not seem difficult to highlight at least three or four conspicuous ways in which Islam, along with anti-colonialism, has made an impact on that community. In the first place, it is indisputable that Islam has made a significant contribution to promoting the nationalist movement from the beginning. History often depends on the point of view of the historian. Most professional observers in the West think of the history of Indonesia in terms of successive waves of outside influence, such as the period of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British, and the Japanese. Indonesians, on the other hand, are likely to think in terms of a simple succession of "homogeneous" eras, such as pre-Dutch, Dutch, and Independence. It is important to note that despite the impact of the successive foreign powers, there existed at all times an autochthonous or indigenous Indonesia which interacted and was acted upon. Indeed, it has been argued that this autochthonous Indonesia led an autonomous life and underwent autonomous changes while one or another foreign country was accommodated; however, it was undoubtedly also modified by those outside influences.

For 350 years, from the time the first Dutch ships arrived in 1596 to the declaration of independence in 1945, there was little stability in the Indonesian archipelago. The actual founder of the Dutch power in the East Indies was Jan Pieterszoon Coen, a hardfisted, ruthless man of action and imagination, and one of the major figures in Dutch imperial history. In 1619, Coen developed a grandiose plan to make his capital Batavia, now Jakarta, the center of the intra-Asian trade from Japan to Persia, and to develop the spice plantations using the Burmese, Madagascan, and Chinese. By 1650, Holland was the world's greatest economic and military power. The last of the rival Portuguese and British were expelled from the archipelago by the Dutch in 1660 and 1667 respectively. As the Dutch rule consolidated itself in Java and began to penetrate more deeply into the outer islands, Islam came to offer a symbol of common resistance to alien domination. That it could do so was in part the result of the increasing depth of Islamic religious influence, since the process of Indonesia's conversion was a gradual and continuing one.

The textbook picture of the diffusion of Islam in the 15th century is misleading in its suggestion of rapidity and completeness.

The 19th century saw a revival of Muslim orthodoxy, or at least of a more rigorous adherence to the basic elements of the faith. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia had attacked the laxity which was considered to be corrupting the faith. The founder of Wahhabism, Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1787), taught that all accretions to Islam after the 3rd century of the Muslim era, that is, after 950 A.D., were spurious and must be expunged. This view involved essentially a purification of the Sunni sect. Wahhabism represented a puritan challenge that appealed for a return to the origi-
inal sternness and simplicity of Islam, and it later foreshadowed more sophisticated movements of Islamic reform. This development had an enormous impact in Indonesia as greater numbers of people undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca, and thus came into direct contact with the Arabic homeland of their religion. The emphasis on a purer and more rigorous belief, which they brought back with them, was accompanied by a successful attempt on the part of Islam to strike deeper roots within rural as well as urban society. This process eventually had political side effects. It created, in fact, a religious base of opposition to Dutch authority, which resulted in a potential rallying point for discontent.

It was with the Diponegoro’s Revolt against the Dutch in 1825 A.D. that the Islamic religion first became a rallying point in Indonesia. Diponegoro, a prince and mystic of the royal family of Jogyakarta in Java, was both a charismatic leader and an effective guerrilla general. He raised the banner of revolt and proclaimed “jihad”, the Islamic holy war, against the Dutch, with the intention to drive them from Java. The revolt, also called the “Java War” by the Dutch, lasted for five years until 1830, with the expenditure of 15,000 Dutch and 200,000 Javanese lives. In long-run terms, Diponegoro was to become a pioneer of the anti-colonial movement and to pave the way for subsequent similar campaigns. The exhausting 16-year-long Padri War (1821–1837) in west Sumatra and the even longer 35 year Atjeh War (1873–1908) in north Sumatra stand out, along with the Java War, as the three major military challenges to Dutch rule. Indeed there were few years between 1821 and 1913 when Batavia, in the name of the Empire of the Netherlands, was not fighting somewhere in the Indonesian archipelago. Intermittent anti-Dutch warfare raged in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, the Celebes, and other islands. The most murderous struggle was the Atjeh War, the longest, biggest, bloodiest, costliest military operation in Dutch colonial history. It also forced the Dutch to make their greatest single military effort to bring the Indonesian archipelago under control, and in return evoked an appeal to the idea of a holy war to expel the foreign invaders.

Again in the early 20th century, Islam formed the basis of the first mass political party of the modern nationalist movement, called “Sarekat Islam.” It was organized in 1912, and became the first modern religious and political party of an imposing size, numbering 350,000 as early as 1916 and 2.5 million by 1919. A major reason for the remarkable popularity of Sarekat Islam may be found in the new religious momentum gained since the late nineteenth century through the influence of Islamic reformism, which attempted to purify Muslim doctrine and adapt it to the needs of the modern world. Increasingly, Islam came to represent the Indonesians against their foreign rulers, the Chinese, and the Christian missionaries, whose activities in the archipelago expanded rapidly after 1900 A.D. It was on this sense of solidarity through religion that Sarekat Islam based its appeal.

In the second place, I would like to argue that Islam has become an
inspiration to economic development. The greater strength of early Muslim commercial activities has raised much convincing speculation in the minds of careful modern observers about the possible economic contribution of Islam to Indonesia. The society of Mecca in which the Prophet Muhammad (570-632) was born and lived in the 7th century A.D. was already known as the center of thriving commercial activities. The inhabitants of Mecca, belonging to the tribe of Quraysh, caused their capital to flourish through trade and interest bearing loans in a way that German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) would call "rational." By buying and selling commodities, they simply sought to increase their monetary capital. It is quite clear that the Muslim scripture Koran has nothing against private property, since it lays down rules for the possession of personal assets and inheritance. The Koran does not merely say that "one must not forget one's portion of this world," it also says that "it is proper to combine the practice of religion and material life," carrying on trade even during pilgrimages, and goes so far as to mention "commercial profit under the name of 'God's bounty.'"

I personally agree with Clifford Geertz of Princeton University, who observes in his *The Religion of Java* that "Islam played a more positive legitimating role, justifying and sacralizing commercial activity which, in the Hindu–Javanese view of the world, was necessarily an inferior and ancillary function." Geertz compares Islam during the early days of its diffusion throughout the Indonesian archipelago with John Calvin's (1509-1564) Protestantism in early modern Western Europe, and argues that "the principle of equality of believers and the very austerity of the faith made it at least an appropriate religion for traders in the coastal principalities of the Indies." In connection with this interpretation, some questions naturally arise. For instance, if Islam was the handmaiden of trade in the 14th and 15th centuries, ought it not to have promoted the growth of a capitalist spirit, to have stimulated in time a greater flowering of Indonesia's commerce, and in due course, to have laid the foundations for an industrial revolution? The answer is: Indonesian trade was curbed and held back first by the Portuguese and later by the Dutch empire, who established a monopoly over much of the trade of the archipelago and so almost stifled the development of the indigenous commercial community. Thus for centuries there was no opportunity for Islam's dynamic qualities to assert themselves. Whether the early modern Indonesian traders, if left undisturbed by Dutch domination, would have become capitalists is a very interesting question indeed. So far as I am concerned, the answer is positive. It is my understanding that from the very beginning, Islam has represented a commercial policy and consequently has had an effect on Indonesian life and society. This argument is similar to Max Weber's view of Calvinism in early modern European capitalism.

With respect to the general Muslim outlook and attitude of trade and commerce, the 14th century's foremost Muslim sociologist and historian Ibn...
Khaldun gives an unambiguous interpretation. He says, "It should be known that commerce means the attempt to make a profit by increasing capital, through buying goods at a low price and selling them at a high price, whether these goods consist of slaves, grain, animals, weapons, or clothing material. The attempt to make such a profit may be undertaken by storing goods and holding them until the market has fluctuated from low prices to high prices. Therefore, an old merchant said to a person who wanted to find out the truth about commerce: 'I shall give it to you in two words: Buy cheap and sell dear. There is commerce for you.'" There are also many scholars who interpret the issue in the opposite direction. They assert that the correlation between Islam and economic development is not a tight, close correlation, and continue to say that even if it were, it would not necessarily follow that Islam could offer the appropriate ideological support for modern economic development in Indonesia. It is partly for this sort of reason that another observer, Wilhelm F. Wertheim, has felt inclined to challenge the Clifford Geertz' argument. Wertheim advances the interesting hypothesis that the economic leadership of Indonesian society is more likely to be drawn from among the members of bureaucratic classes, rather than from the ranks of merchants. He refers, for one of his examples, to the role of Japan's samurai in providing appropriate values and active leadership for the task of Japan's miraculous industrialization, and suggests that for Indonesian Java "an ideology conducive to modern industrial growth is much more likely to be developed among the modern representatives of old aristocracy 'prijaji' class rather than the devout Muslim 'santri' class." Indeed, some evidence of this example may be found in the economic development of the Balinese court-centered towns where aristocratic elements have displayed excellent economic success.

Finally, Islam has served as a unifying force in the Indonesian archipelago. This is, I believe, one of the most crucial contributions Islamic religion has made in that community. No country on earth is so varied, mystical, and kaleidoscopic as Indonesia. According to Max Weber, societies have a characteristic "spirit," meaning total complex of values and commitments which, when institutionalized, epitomize the general character structure of a nation. In this sense, Indonesia can be called a country of "mysticism." There are endless revealing manifestations of this mystical trait in the archipelago. For instance, Archmed Sukarno (r.1949–1966), the first president of Indonesia, was widely known to have magical powers. Moreover, he depended on soothsayers, or dukuns, in making key decisions. The story is told of Sukarno going barefoot to a formal diplomatic reception because his soothsayer had warned him to let his electricity flow out, lest he should be struck by lightning. Sukarno's whole approach to life, certainly to political life, was deeply mystical. As American anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901–1978) clearly observes, the trait of mysticism permeates all classes and segments of society, including to some extent the otherwise west-
ernized intelligentsia. The cosmopolitan nature of Indonesia is also evident in its very name which comes from the Greek words "Indos nesos", meaning "Indian Islands", or more poetic, and more according to older English usage, "Isles of the Indies." As a word, it is less than a century old. The Republic of Indonesia is the world's most widely expansive archipelago with 13,677 tropical islands, stretching over 3,300 miles over the planet's equatorial belly, almost the same distance between New York City and Paris. According to one classification, Indonesians are divided into 325 ethnic or cultural groups. Granting that it is not always easy to distinguish a dialect from a language, we can say that there are as many as 583 languages and dialects in Indonesia, falling into 18 different language groups. There are more plant species on the island of Kalimantan than on all of the African continent combined.

In a country so far-flung and so segmented not only by sea, jungle, mountain, and swamp, but also by language, tradition, and culture, it is no wonder that diversity is inherent, and indeed, the ideal of unity is extremely difficult to accomplish. The Indonesian national motto is "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," from a 12th century Javanese text: "They are many, they are one," which usually gets translated as "Unity in Diversity." A more accurate literal version would be "The multiform, single unity." It would be redundant to ask what extent unity has in fact been established in Indonesia. In my views, at least three major unifying forces have historically made great contributions in that most diverse community in the world. Chronologically, the first is adat, the traditional laws and regulations; the second is the Islamic religion; the third is Bahasa, the Indonesian national language. Let me discuss Islam's contribution as a unifying force, for the other two bear no relation to my subject.

In the Islamic perspective, religion is not seen as a part of life or a special kind of activity along with art, commerce, education, social discourse and politics. It is the matrix and worldview within which these and all other human activities, efforts, creations, and thoughts should take place. It is the very sap of the tree. As has been said so often, Islam is not only a religion in the modern sense of the term—redefined in a secularized world in which religious life occupies at best a small part of the daily activities of most people—rather, Islam is religion as a total way of life. Islam does not even accept the validity of domain outside of the realm of religion, and refuses to accord any reality to the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane or secular, and the spiritual or temporal. It can be said that Islam embraces the whole of life, and in its most universal and essential sense is "life itself."

Indonesians show a great deal of diversity in the ways they practice religion in their daily lives. Yet several complexes of ritual and other social activities provide a recognizable unity to Muslim life throughout the archipelago. As one American Muslim scholar aptly comments, "unity" is now probably one of the most appealing symbols for Muslim communities in a fast-changing world.
The most basic rites of Islam revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and institutionalized by him are the well-known "Five Pillars," for upon them rests the whole practical structure of the religion. I believe these religious rites represent one of the most conspicuous examples or manifestations of the unity and coherence among the world's largest Muslim community. Thousands and thousands of Muslims throughout the Indonesian archipelago participate in these rites. The first pillar is the confession of faith, "there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger." It is repeated frequently in worship services, as the first part of a marriage ritual, and in the call to worship, which is cried out before each of the five worship times during the day. The second pillar is the five times of worship and prayer, which involves prostrating oneself in the direction of Mecca in the Middle East. These worship rituals are an important way of defining time for Indonesian Muslims. The congregational worship at midday on Friday is a socially important way of bringing people together, men and women, in a community or an urban neighborhood. For many Indonesians, the congregational worship service has become a model of how "society ought to be constructed." One of the most important Islamic festivals is the third pillar Ramadan, a month of fasting. Traditionally Indonesian Muslims get up to eat at 4:00 a.m. during Ramadan and fast all day long until sunset. During Ramadan, many Muslims visit family graves and the royal cemeteries, recite extracts from the Koran, sprinkle the graves with holy water, and strew them with flowers. Special prayers are offered at mosques and at home throughout the archipelago.

The fourth pillar is the giving of alms on a stipulated scale. The sums collected are to be kept in the public treasury, and then spent for public and religious services and works, including feeding the poor and the needy. The fifth pillar is the performance of the pilgrimage to Mecca by those physically and financially able to do so without compromising their other responsibilities. This pilgrimage provides a very important communications link between Indonesia and the Middle East. The rapid growth of the pilgrimage in the mid-19th century led to an influx of new, reformist ideas to Indonesia. Through all these religious activities, Islam not only influences routine daily living, but also contributes to Indonesia as a unifying force.

As mentioned above, the nature of Islam is to preclude all half-hearted compromise. It is an austere religion. Lacking a complex ecclesiastical organization, its appeal is to the devotion of the individual, the principle of equality of believers, and a lack of distinction of race or class. Consequently, the sense of community and unity is strongly emphasized. The very word Islam means "submission to the will of God," complete and unconditional, excluding any mere nominal adherence to, or any tolerance of competing views of the world. By its nature it was hardly a faith which would be expected to blend into the syncretic Indonesian environment. In fact, we see a good deal of blending having taken place. But there is an underlying the fact that the Islamization of Indonesian archi-
pelago is still going on and will continue in the future.

Before I close this paper, let me relate one significant episode in connection with the impact of Islam on Indonesia. On December 6, 1990, most television viewers across Indonesia were treated to the image of President Muhammad Suharto (1921–), clad in distinctive mosque attire, striking a large mosque drum to call to order the first-ever meeting of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals. It was a poignant moment in the political and cultural history of the post-1966 New Order Indonesia inaugurated by Suharto. For many Muslim Indonesians, the president's act was merely the latest in a series of overtures that the Suharto government has made over the past few years to the Muslim community. For other Indonesians, however, the president's blessing of that Muslim association seemed to represent a dangerous departure from the non-sectarian principles of the New Order government. For Western observers, unfamiliar with the government's openings to the Muslim community, the scene appeared rich with irony. Here was a man regarded by many foreign scholars as an abangan mystic, unsympathetic to "orthodox" Islam, not merely affecting the forms of Islamic ritual, but doing so while inaugurating an organization openly committed to, among other things, the deepening Islamization of Indonesian state and society. This episode clearly shows how deeply and widely Islamization is involved in the national and cultural life of the Indonesian archipelago.

Indonesia has a bright future. To influence world affairs usually requires a combination of territory, population, and economic prowess. Indonesia is a 735,538 square-mile territory, slightly larger than the combined areas of the ten European countries—the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, and the Netherlands. Indonesia has the world's 4th largest population. It is potentially one of the wealthiest countries in the world, endowed with enormous natural resources. Today Indonesia is challenging Canada for the 12th place among the world's largest economies. Under President Suharto the country has had more than a quarter-century's stability and aspires to be a second generation Asia Tiger, taking its place alongside the developing economic powerhouses of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Indonesia has perhaps the best record in poverty reduction of any large country over the last three decades. To the Western visitor in Jakarta, a government official says, "Don't ask 'Can Indonesia become a great power?' " The question is, 'When can we make it happen?'"
END NOTES


3 Ibid., xi.


6 Ibid.


10 M.C. Ricklefs, p. 4.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.


15 Ibid., p. 279.

16 Ibid.
23

[Ref. page 66]

[Ref. page 33]


20 Ivan Southall, *Indonesia Face to Face* (Sidney, Australia: King's Cross, 1964), pp. 52-53.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.


27 Ibid.


29 Ibid.


32 Maxime Rodinson, p. 30.

34 Ibid.

35 Allen M. Sievers, xi.

36 Ibid., p. 5.

37 Ibid., p. 231.

38 Ibid., p. 10.


41 "abangan", originally from the Javanese word for "red," refers to those Javanese less strict in their adherence to Muslim devotional form than so-called "santri", practicing or orthodox Muslims.

42 *From Big to Great*, p. 29, Asiaweek (October 6, 1993)

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

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