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## Early Education of Ancient Terengganu Muslim's Scholars Before 19th Century

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### Abstract

The education background of the ancient Terengganu's Muslim scholars, especially before the 19<sup>th</sup> century has its own history. The lifestyle at that particular time patterned their noble personalities, such as Tok Ku Tuan Besar (1209 H/ 12 February 1795 C.E. - 21 January 1878 C.E.), Tok Ku Paloh (1233 H/1817 C.E. - 1335 H/1917 C.E.) and Tok Pulau Manis (1650s - 1736 C.E.). Hence, this paper will be discussing those three prominent figures, particularly related to their early education in order to historically retrieve their background and educational pattern. By utilizing the approach of content analysis from the library sources and in-depth interview, this paper attempts to analyse few patterns and educational background of the selected scholars. On that point, the researchers able to get the overview on the depth of their concern and commitment that had given, especially on the religious education. The findings indicate that those scholars practised the way *talaqqi musyafahah* (verbal lesson attained directly from a teacher and joined by a small group of students) and it is conveyed in a form of *sanad* (a chain of the authenticated narrator) by a teacher in each discipline learnt by them. The findings also suggested to implement their method and educational pattern in the 21<sup>st</sup> century's field of education, thus the prominent figures and scholars along the history timeline will be reborn again in this era.

**Keywords:** Education, Talaqqi, Sanad, Ancient Terengganu's Muslim Scholars, 19<sup>th</sup> Century

### Introduction

Ancient Muslim scholars in Terengganu were amongst the important individuals in helping the Islamic teaching being spreading in this state. Due to their variances of disciplines and educational background had prepared Terengganu to become the state that is full of knowledge and Muslim scholars. Henceforth, this study was conducted to deeply understand on the ancient

Muslim scholars' educations, especially before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thus it will contribute as a lesson and model for the general masses and future generations.

This paper focuses on the background and early education background of the ancient Muslim scholars before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the fire aforementioned scholars; Tok Pulau Manis, Tok Ku Pulau Besar, Tok Ku Paloh, Syeikh Abdul Qadir Bukit Bayas and Tok Ku Pulau Manis. All of them were the earliest scholars in the history of Islamic education in Terengganu cum motivated this state as the hub of knowledge immensely. This research also opted the approach of qualitative by using the content analysis from the library sources and in-depth interview.

### **The Educational Background of Ancient Terengganu Muslim's Scholars**

The scholars are the heirs of the prophets. They possess the noble character and ingenious quality, especially in the field of religion. Many of the Muslim scholars, particularly in Terengganu had changed the way of thinking and life amongst the society members. Their deeds, sacrifices in educating and nurturing the society is extremely giving out the vital impact towards the society (especially amongst the Terengganu's people) until this present day.

The background of ancient Terengganu Muslim's scholars was variant, either they obtained knowledge from the local source or Middle East countries. They also follow the classes that practised *talaqqi musyafahah* with the scholars that were well-known for their knowledge and also received guidance from the authors of the books that they were studying at that time.

It is undeniable that the existence of the ancient Terengganu scholars had significantly impacted and contributed towards the society through their knowledge. Due to their situation of experiencing hardship in getting knowledge, it concerned those scholars to get closer with the society by teaching and spreading the knowledge on their own effort and sweat.

### **Early Education of Syeikh Abd Malek Bin Abdullah (Tok Pulau Manis)**

Syeikh Abdul Malek was one of the earliest scholars that established the Islamic education in Terengganu. According to Muhammad Abu Bakar (1991), he stated that Tok Pulau Manis obtained his early education from his own family members. The historical account also recorded that he pursued his studies in Aceh and directly guided by one of the famous scholars namely as Syeikh Abdul Rauf Singkel (1030-1105/ 1620-1693). Along his study period in Aceh, he rewrote the book of exegesis; Tafsir Baydawi, wrote by Syeikh Abdul Rauf Singkel in the Malay language. There is a great probability that the education received by Tok Pulau Manis happened during the era of concreting the belief of *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* in the Malay Archipelago. Besides, based on the statement by Syafie Abu Bakar in his book, 'Syeikh Abdul Malek bin Abdullah and his writings' did mention Syeikh Abdul Malek was sent to Mecca to pursue his studies. He travelled to Mecca around the year 1680s and he was 30 years old at that particular time. Syeikh Abdul Malek received his education and guided by well-known scholars, such as Syeikh Ibrahim al-Kurani (1025-1101/ 1616-1690) and he was also a teacher to Syeikh Abdul Rauf Singkel. During his studies in Mecca and Medina, he emphasized on *fiqh* (Islamic law), *usuluddin* (aqidah and Islamic thought), *tasawuf* (Islamic sufism), *tafsir* (exegesis), hadith (report of words and action of Muhammad p.b.u.h.) and other disciplines, such as nahu, sarf (Arabic linguistic and

grammar) and sundries. Towards understanding *fiqh* of as-Syafi'e, Syeikh Abdul Malek tutored by Syeikh Ibrahim al-Kurani that was replacing Ahmad Quayashi, one of the teachers of as-Syafi'e school. Meanwhile, in the field of *usuluddin*, Syeikh Abdul Malek followed the approach of Imam al-Ashari, a major principle belief for the followers of *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. In the discipline of *tasawuf*, Syeikh Abdul Malek opted the ethics of *ubudiyah* of Imam al-Ghazali. He had a very high tendency towards the field of *tasawuf*. Thus, he involved in his chosen *tariqa* (an order in Sufism), namely as Shadiliyah that was receiving major acceptance in Egypt, founded by Abu al-Hasan al-Shadili (D. 656/ 1258), a Moroccan. He was exposed to this *tariqa* through the book of Hikam, a writing of Ibnu Ata'ulah (D. 709/1309), besides of other writings such as al Tanwir fi Isqat, Lataif al Minan dan Taj al- Arus. Syeikh Abdul Malek put his enthusiasm and attention towards the famous *tasawuf* scholars and became his references which counted not less than 143 figures.

His second important subject was a discipline of *fiqh* and he received the lessons from Syeikh Ibrahim al-Kurani. Amongst the books used during his studies were Daw' al-Shama'ah written by Jalaluddin al-Sayuti, Minyat Ahl al-Wara', masterpiece of Syeikh Ahmad al-Qushashi- a teacher to Syeikh Ibrahim al-Kurani, Minhaj al-Talibin, authored by Imam Nawawi, Tatimmah by ibn Matuli al-Hawi by al-Mawardi, Nihayah by Imam Ramli, Fath al-Wahab by Abu Yahya Zakariyya al-Ansari, Fath al-Qarib written by Muhammad Abu Qasim al-Ghuzza, al-Mihaj al-Qawin by Ahmad bin Hajar al-Haytami, Tuhfah al-Muhtaj and Fath al-Qarib written by Muhammad al-Sharbi al-Khatib, Mahalli by Muhammad Ali bin Ahmad bin Said bin Rawa, Fath al-Muin Sharb Qurrat al'Aya by ibn Hajar, Bahjat written by Imam Yahya Abu Bakar 'Amiri, Kitab al-Farwiyah authored by Syeikh Ibrahim al-Kurani.

### **Early Education of Syeikh Abdul Qadir Bukit Bayas**

Syeikh Abdul Malek was amongst the prominent scholars of Terengganu and also a teacher to Tok Ku Tuan Besar. According to Hasanuldin (2014); Or-Kan & Ahmad (2018), Syeikh Abdul Qadir received his early education in few *pondok* schools (former institution of religious school) scattered in Pattani. Amongst the listed school that were attended by Syeikh Abdul Qadir as a student was *Pondok Kuala Bekah* in Pattani, together with Syeikh Dawud bin Abdullah al-Fattani and other few *pondok*, such as *Pondok Pauh Bok*. Later on, he furthered his studies in Mecca and Medina with Syeikh Dawud al-Fattani (Soghir, 1997; al-Fatani, 2002 & 2011).

According to Hasanuldin (2014), there is a statement saying that Syeikh Abdul Qadir Bukit Bayas also learned from Syeikh Dawud al-Fatani, even though from the hierarchy lineage, al-Fatani was at the level of his grandfather. Amongst Syeikh Abdul Qadir Bukit Bayas's teachers during his studies period in Mecca were Syeikh Muhammad Salih bin Abdul Rahman Pauh Bok al-Fatani and Syeikh Muhammad Zain bin Faqih Jalaluddin Acheh – amongst the ancient scholars of Malay Archipelago. Also stated by Hamid (1990); Soghir (1997); Mustaffa (2011), amongst other teachers when he was in Middle East countries were including Syeikh Muhammad Salih bin Ibrahim, Syeikh Ahmad al-Marzuki, Syeikh Mustafa Fath Allah, a student to Syeikh Ibrahim ibn Hasan al-Kurani al-Shattari and others.

Nonetheless, whenever Syeikh Abdul Qadir migrated to Terengganu, he was already established as the famous and prominent figure of the Islamic scholar. However, related to the chain of teachers that transmitted the knowledge to him, there is no chronological record showing his encounter with those teachers. The name of his teachers was mentioned due to their presence at the same age as Syeikh Abdul Bukit Bayas (al- Fatani, 2002 & 2011; Lădaru, Marin, Diaconu, 2018). In brief, there is not much-written information that was recorded related to the educational background, teachers, educational institution attended and related matters to Syeikh Abdul Qadir.

### **Early Education of Sayyid Muhammad bin Zayn al Abidin (Tok Ku Tuan Besar)**

Tok Ku Tuan Besar was no stranger to the history of Islam in Terengganu. According to Ibrahim (2016), he stated that Tok Ku Tuan Besar being an orphan since his birth. However, he had a pious mother and six uncles in Terengganu. According to the accounts, his uncles were amongst the knowledgeable people and considered in the high position in the society. There is a big probability to say that Tok Ku Tuan Besar received his childhood education from the matriarch of his family since his own uncle from his patriarch line, Sayyid Muhammad bin Sayyid al-Aydarus migrated to another state after stayed in Terengganu Ibrahim, 2016; Omar, 2010, Fadil 2010).

Based on the research done by Ibrahim (2016), he stated that the educational pattern of Tok Ku Paloh opted the educational concept of *tasawuf* Bani Alawi – considered as the primary reference of the ancestral pattern of education in understanding Islamic teaching. Tok Ku Tuan Besar also obtained his education through the local and foreign states as well. There were two prominent scholars of Terengganu that were emphasized by Tok Ku Tuan Besar, came from Pattani. Those two scholars were Syeikh Abd Qadir bin Abd Al Rahman Bukit Bayas (1864 C.E.), the first *mufti* (a Muslim legal expert) of Terengganu, and Hj Wan Abd Allah bin Muhammad Amin (1889M), second *mufti's* state of Terengganu (Ismail, 1987; Musa, 1991).

Tok Ku Tuan Besar learned at *Pondok* Syeikh Abdul Qadir at Bukit Bayas village, Kuala Terengganu. Nonetheless, Muhammad Abu Bakar (1991) forwarded his opinion by saying that Tok Ku Paloh was merely his study-mate whenever they were going back and forth to study with their teacher, Syeikh Abdul Qadir Bukit Bayas. He also pursued his studies at Masjidil Haram, Mecca (Muhammad, 1981; Ismail, 1987). He studied in Mecca about 17 years and his age was 20 years old during that time (Embong, 1991).

Tok Ku Tuan Besar also continued his studies in Hadhramaut and amongst of his teachers was Sayyid Abd Allah bin Umar bin Yahya (Sayyid Muhammad al- Aydarus, 1267) – a prominent figure and scholar of Hadhramaut, Tahrir at that particular time. He also received guidance and tutored by Syeikh Abd al-Baqi bin Muhammad Salih Shia'b in Madinah and Syeikh Dawud bin Abd Allah al-Fatani in Mekah (Soghir, 2000). He also deepened his knowledge on the variant of disciplines, such as *fiqh*, *usuluddin*, *tasawwuf*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, Arabic language and sundries, as a continuation from his intermediate level from what he had obtained formerly from his own family in Terengganu. In short, Tok Ku Tuan Paloh pursued his studies in Mecca, Medina and Yemen.

### Summary and Discussions

Pertaining to the abovementioned discussions, this study able to able to present summaries on the early education of ancient Muslim scholars of Terengganu – which are stated as follows:

- i) All those three scholars had the early education that started from their own family. They were nurtured by supplementing them religious education until they were able to become a prominent figure of Islamic scholars, cum contributed to educate and help the society in term of education and state's administration management.
- ii) All those three scholars also received education from local and outside of their own places. They were used to get knowledge through the method of *talaqqi musyafahah*, which was directly guided by famous scholars in the variants of knowledge and disciplines.
- iii) All those three scholars were coming from the different lineages. Two of them were having the bloodline relationship with Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h.; Tok Ku Tuan Besar and Tok Ku Paloh. The genealogy of the aforementioned scholars was preserved well by having a complete hierarchy. In contrast to Syeikh Abdul Qadir Bukit Bayas and Tok Pulau Manis that having an incomplete hierarchy. In this paper, the researchers suggested that preserving the genealogy hierarchy and the individual official record is vital for the purpose of having a clear understanding on the lineage and the transmission's chain of knowledge obtained by certain scholars.
- iv) We also able to know that all of these three scholars were closely interrelated to each other. Tok Ku Tuan Besar was a student to the remaining two scholars; Tok Pulau Manis and Syeikh Abdul Qadir Bukit Bayas. In the meantime, Syeikh Abdul Qadir Bukit Bayas was a student to Tok Pulau Manis. Hence, in this sense, all of these three scholars had a continuous transmission's chain of knowledge.

### Conclusion

As a conclusion, in the overall overview, it can be simplified that all of those three scholars were having a great history of education, either from their transmission's chain of knowledge, education and upbringings. The approach of *talaqqi musyafahah* that was implemented in their education system was regarded to be a catalyst factor of their successfulness of becoming the ancient figures and scholars that receive no contestant until this present day. It is a hope that this research paper able to contribute towards the Muslim society in term of understanding the history of early education of ancient Terengganu's scholars.

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