Book Review

Bernard T. Adeney-Risakotta, *Living in a Sacred Cosmos: Indonesia and the Future of Islam* (Southeast Asia Studies, 66; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), xvii + 406 pp., ISBN: 9780985042974 (cloth), \$39.00, ISBN: 9780985042967, \$28.00 (pbk).

Islam in Indonesia has a long and unique history. After a lengthy period of religious and cultural dominance of Buddhism and Hinduism, Islam arrived in the Western Coastal areas of Sumatra in 674 CE and established the Kingdom of Perlak and Aceh. However, Islam in Indonesia became more widely accepted in Java at the end of the fifteenth century before spreading to the entire archipelago.

The face of Islam in Indonesia as depicted in this monograph is a just trace of Indonesia's long history. Islam was found to have spread in the archipelagos by six means: traders, politics, marriage, education, sufism, and arts (Pulungan 2019). The influence of the spread of Islam through education is what makes Indonesia what it is today. The history of the journey of Islam through the Archipelago, which has been influenced by various civilizations—thus its standing as a pluralistic nation—makes Indonesia unique compared to other nations. One only has to look at the history of Indonesian civilization, one period after the other, starting from the Hindu kingdom of Mulawarman in Kutai, which was founded in the fourth century CE, then the Syailendra Dynasty in Central Java, which flourished between the eighth and ninth centuries, a Buddhist civilization that left the legacy of the Borobudur.

The archipelago of Indonesia is at a crossroads of sea trade, with ships passing through the Malacca Strait to the Indian Sea, the South China Sea, and the Pacific Ocean. Trade and the entry of foreign culture in Indonesia has become the norm, and this is true of the time period when Islam entered Indonesia, so that 'Muslims in Indonesia consider, modernity, religion and tradition are not three different things' (p. 2). This monograph provides important information about the face of Islam in Indonesia and also the future of Indonesia and the future of Islam. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, greater than the number of Muslims throughout the entire Middle East'. (In fact in this population, the dominance of Islam in Indonesia is decisive.)

Adeney-Risakotta has lived in Indonesia for decades and has an intimate knowledge of the dynamics of the situation in Indonesia. In some places with a dense Muslim population, calls to prayer reverberate five times a day on loudspeakers, which are so noisy that they could be considered noise pollution. Mixing culture and customs is predominant in the country, which makes Indonesia very diverse and colorful. The long road to assimilation of different cultures in Indonesia determines the face of Indonesia today, including the face of Islam that developed with moderation and color, as is evident in the use of colorful headscarves, with different

styles and developments (p. 39). This book not only describes Islam in Indonesia as it is, but also compares it with the attitudes of other religious groups—Catholics, Protestants, and Hindus. The monograph presents the colors of Islam as more rich and diverse than Islam in the Middle East.

One chapter of particular note for readers of this journal concerns the imagination of nature and natural disaster (p. 229). It describes the general respect of the Indonesian people for nature, who believe that nature is frightening and always has a supernatural dimension. However, those who destroy Indonesian ecosystems are not native indigenous groups, but those with a capitalistic and secular background. Indonesia is a country where a thousand natural disasters could occur every year. The country is surrounded by a ring of fire, a volcanic area with volcanoes that line along the islands of Sumatra, Java, Nusa Tenggara, to Maluku and Papua. Religious life provides a different dimension through which adherents see nature and face disasters, and their image as a strongly religious nation is very much reflected in the high level of belief that natural disasters are a test from God (45%), versus those who think natural disasters have a modern cause and effect (42%) (p. 249). The attitude of surrendering to fate is very strong, as was evident in Aceh during the devastating tsunami. By recognizing this characteristic of submission to the will of God, the involvement of religious leaders in recovering the mentality of tsunami victims was imperative. The general secretary of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI), Din Syamsuddin, told some 2,000 worshipers at the Banda Aceh Baiturahman Mosque that they might have been the cause of the disaster, saying ‘God will not love us without testing our love for Him...’ (Miller 2010: 35). This is why it is important to bring religious knowledge to cases related to the destruction of nature and to study how religious visions can provide understanding to the people. This religious belief can also be mobilized in helping to accelerate sustainable development and be related to environmental conservation actions (Mangunjaya and Praharawati 2019). Thus, this monograph is a map of the actual position of religious life in Indonesia as well as a helpful text in understanding the future of Islam in Indonesia.

Fachruddin M. Mangunjaya
Center for Islamic Studies and Graduate School
Universitas Nasional
Indonesia
fmangunjaya@civitas.unas.ac.id

References

- Mangunjaya, F.M., and G. Praharawati. 2019. ‘Fatwas on Boosting Environmental Conservation in Indonesia’, *Religions* 10.10 (2019): 570.
Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10100570>.
- Miller, Michelle A. 2010. ‘The Role of Islamic Law (Sharia) in Post-Tsunami Reconstruction’, in Matthew Clark et al. (eds.), *Post Disaster Reconstructions: Lessons from Aceh* (London: Earthscan): 29-60.
- Pulungan, H. Suyuti. 2019. *Sejarah Peradaban Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Penerbit Amzah).