

Foreword

Endang Turmudi's *Struggling for the Umma* is an appropriate volume with which to initiate this new series of publications on Islam in Southeast Asia. This is a study that focuses on the heartland of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, and on the role of *ulama*, or *kiai* as they are known in Java, within NU. Based on substantial fieldwork, this study provides an informed glimpse into the intimate relationships among *kiai*, their role in local and national politics and their leadership of the Islamic community.

In this study, Dr Turmudi considers the critical role that Javanese *kiai* play both in organization of Islamic education through local boarding schools, *pesantren*, and in the guidance of particular Sufi orders, *tarekat*. Thus, throughout Java, certain key boarding schools function both as centres of learning and as centres of wider religious practice in accordance with adherence to a specific Sufi order.

Dr Turmudi examines the position of various *pesantren* and their associated *kiai* in Jombang, a regency noted as a centre of Islamic learning in East Java. He uses a particular event – the transfer of the allegiance in 1977 of *Kiai Musta'in* from the Islamic United Development Party (PPP) to the government party Golkar – as the basis for an extended case study that is particularly revealing. The setting for this case study is one of the oldest and most renowned schools in Jombang, *Pesantren Darul Ulum* located in the village of Rejoso and involves the largest Sufi order in Indonesia, the combined order, *Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah*. For a succession of five generations, the spiritual leader, *murshid*, of *Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah* for all of East Java, was based at Darul Ulum. So when *Kiai Musta'in*, as the head of *Pesantren Darul Ulum* and *murshid* of *Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah*, made his decision to join Golkar, this precipitated a profound reconsideration of political relations in Javanese Islamic circles. It is the implications and consequences of this reconsideration that Dr Turmudi analyses effectively, thus providing an exceptional portrait of the politics of NU.

As a contribution to ongoing Islamic discussions in Indonesia, this study has already made its impact. The thesis was translated into Indonesian and was published under the title, *Perselingkuhan Kiai dan Kekuasaan* by the Yogyakarta publisher, Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial (LKIS) in 2003 and has since been the subject of seminars from Jakarta to Jombang. Given the fact that the book in its Indonesian translation continues to contribute to a lively national discussion, it is all the more important that the original English version be made available.

When Endang Turmudi returned to Indonesia after completing his doctoral work at the Australian National University, he took up a position as a researcher in the Research Center for the Society and Culture (*Pusat Penelitian Kemasyarakatan dan Kebudayaan*) in the Indonesian Institute of Sciences

(PMB-LIPI). However, in 2004, he was chosen as the Secretary General of *Nahdlatul Ulama*. His research background as well as his background as a santri educated at Pesantren Cipasung in Tasikmalaya under the former Rais Aam of NU, K. H. Ilyas Ruhiyat and his further education at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta combined with his M.A. from Flinders University and PhD from The Australian National University were all qualifications for the position of importance that he now holds in NU.

It is fortunate for the ANU that it is able to initiate this series of publications with a volume by one of the University's notable graduates.

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