NOTICE OF ORDINARY MEETING

The next meeting of the Society will be held in the Museum Education Building, North Terrace, Adelaide at:

8.00 p.m. on Monday 22 Sept, 1975

AGENDA

1. Apologies

2. Confirmation of minutes of meeting held Monday 25 August, 1975. (Copies of these minutes are attached)

3. Papers and Journals

   Various papers and journals from other Societies and Organizations will be tabled at this meeting.

4. Business

5. Speaker for September Meeting

   Brother W. BORRELL, of Sacred Hearts College will give an address to the Society, entitled

      'SOME ASPECTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF HONG KONG'

6. October Meeting.

   The October Meeting will be held Monday 27 October, 1975.

VERN TOLCHER,
Honorary Secretary,
213 Greenhill Road,
EASTWOOD S.A. 5063
THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFORMIST MUSLIM MOVEMENT IN CENTRAL JAVA

(Illustrated by Slides)

MITSUO NAKAMURA

INTRODUCTION

The four concepts in the title of my talk, i.e. 'Reformist', 'Muslims', Development' and 'Central Java', call for explanation. 'Muslim': statistically, approximately 90 per cent of the Indonesian population profess to be Muslims. They recite the Muslim Confession of Faith (kalimah shahadat) and undergo Islamic rituals of life crisis at birth, circumcision, marriage and death. Yet the 'purity' and the intensity of their Islamic belief and practice are open to question. (c.f. Peacock 1972) They vary socially and individually. The delineation and explication of social correlates between types and degrees of Islamic religiosity and social differentiation have been a subject of Western scholarship on Indonesian Islam. (c.f. Geertz 1960 and 1968, Benda 1958). I am operating in this tradition.

'Reformist': Indonesian Islam has more than three centuries of history behind. Islam became an integral part of indigenous traditions, and local adat(custom) and Islam merged. Since 1900 reformist movements purporting to 'purify' adat Islam developed. These movements are characterized by (1) the consciousness of traditional Indonesian Islam having been retarded, incomplete, and impure when measured against 'orthodoxy', (2) the emphasis on the direct learning of 'religious truths' from the Qur'an and the Hadith, (2) the negation of intermediary religious authorities, i.e. sultan and religious bureaucracy, (4) social activism and the internal missionary work through education and welfare activities, and (5) distinctive anti-colonialism (c.f. Bousquet 1940). I am focusing on the most representative reformist movement, Muhammadijah.

'Development': Historical evidence shows that the movement started with the effort of a small number of identifiable individuals. Now after several decades it is an on-going concern of at least one half of a million people. The process is a growth or development of a sect into a mass movement (c.f. Noer 1973)

Finally, why 'Central Java'? The Muhammadijah movement started and based in the city of Jogjakarta, the capital of the same-named Sultanate and now of the Special Region of Jogjakarta. Jogja/Solo is the heartland of traditional (pre-Islamic) culture and there the syncretization of indigeneous, Hindu-Buddhist, and Islamic religious are said to have been most remarkably achieved. Then why did the 'puritan' Muhammadijah gain its footing in this region?

My field observation (1970 - 1972)suggests that Islam especially its reformist version, is a living faith of a large number of Javanese. On the contrary to the superficial impressions of outside observers, the faith of Islam is not weakening but rather intensifying in recent years. Numerically, the Muhammadijah organization is still growing. Why is this so despite 'modernization' and 'westernization'? How to account for this process?

RESEARCH SITE

Kotagede (lit. 'Big Town') is a small town of 15,000 people, 6km southeast of Jogjakarta. The town was the first capital of the Islamized kingdom of Mataram.
in south Central Java in the early 1600's. Relics of the royal court and the royal cemetery remained and were revered there as part of the cult of royal glorification. Kasekten, the Javanese concept of mystical powers, lay behind these royal relics in Kotagede. The town became a royal sanctuary. It also became a centre of indigenous trade and industry, noted for silver and iron smith, jewellery, textile trade and batikking, wood carving and furniture making, the production of kitchen utensils and agricultural tools, etc. The expansion of Dutch colonial economy throughout the 19th and 20th centuries encouraged the commercial development of the town. Despite the predominance of adat Islam in the form of the cult of royal glorification, a strong local branch of Muhammadijah developed since 1910's. Consequently major features of religious life in the town have changed over the past few generations.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUHAMMADIJAH

The earliest push towards reformism came from a group of religious officials (abdi dalem santri) in the Great Mosque of Jogjakarta. Kjaji Hadji Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadijah, was a ketib (sermon giver) of the Great Mosque. These religious officials had been critical of the increasing laxity of Islamic observance among the court officials (prijadi). With the rise of massive nationalist movements in the 1910's and 1920's, Islamic reformism also found organizational expressions in mass proselytization, education and social welfare activities. Nationalist politics was soon severely suppressed by the Dutch colonial government but Islamic reformism continued to grow.

In Kotagede, the Muhammadijah movement was initiated by a group of individuals among whom religious specialists, officials are well as independent ulama (islamic scholars/teachers), and wealth indigenous entrepreneurs were prominent. The reformists challenged religious ground of the cult of royal glorification. For them the cult exemplified the degeneration of Islam by the court and prijaji.

The reformists demanded the removal of elements of adat Islam from the Mosque in Kotagede, and fierce battles ensured over the control of the Mosque between the reformists and the court authorities.

Among themselves, the reformists successfully campaigned for the elimination of various rituals which they regarded as expressions of adat Islam. Slametan, the most widely practiced ritual feast was discarded. Njaderana, at the grave yard as the cult of the deceased ancestors combined with the performance of dhikr, repetitive chanting of Islamic formula in group, were drastically simplified. Other life crisis rituals also were subjected to radical simplification and rationalization.

Organizationally, the Muhammadijah represented itself as an organization of 'laymen' in contrast to the traditional devotional order, tarekat, in which the authority of ulama (scholar/teacher) was absolute. Egalitarianism and voluntarism characterized the Muhammadijah organization.

THE REFORMIST IDEALOGY AND RITUAL INNOVATIONS

One of the most profound consequences of social change brought about by the Dutch colonial encroachment of Java was the blurring of the lines of demarcation between traditional status groups. Concomitantly, status morality specific to each status group was threatened. Reformist ideology which played down
social differentiation and emphasized more generalized morality in reference to the single and universal divine being was more attractive to those individuals who were gaining upward mobility yet lacking traditional legitimation in this changing situation.

Indigenous entrepreneurs who had been denied the legitimacy of their part in traditional society certainly found reformist universalism more comfortable. The change occurred around the concept of rezeki (divine provision of livelihood) exemplified the reformist rejection of fatalism in traditional Islamic ideology. The concept had been regarded as the ultimate powerlessness of human beings before the divine predestination. But the reformists transformed this concept to mean the divine recognition of material wellbeing resulting from hard work, thrifty and long-term planning. Also the reformists changed this concept into an optimism in that personal and individual efforts of devotion to God would certainly be rewarded in this world.

Among reformist ritual innovations, the institution of public prayers (sholat ied) was the most significant. The gathering of the faithful in a public square without making any social distinctions (except that of sex) has become the ritual symbolization par excellence of the reformist ideology of human equality before the absolute being. In the sholat ied, the imam is the only religious functionary leading the mass prayers. His leadership does not derive from his office but from his person as the most knowledgeable and experienced in religious matters. The position is of no durability and dissolves itself as soon as the prayer meeting is over.

Another significant example of reformist ritual innovation is the impersonalization, systematization and rationalization of the fitrah and the korban at the two most important Islamic holydays, Hari Raya Korban. The fitrah, in the form of the donation of basic staple (rice) according to the number of family members, was traditionally given to the religious specialists (ulama, kaum, modin) in the pre-reform period. The korban, ritual slaughtering of sacrificial animals (goats and waterbuffalos), was an occasion on which individual patrons showed 'care' for their respective clients in the form of distributing the meat of sacrificed animals. Muhammadijah eliminated secular and particularistic features from these two rituals by taking over the administration of the entire activities into the hands of Public committees. Chances to personal favoritism were now extremely reduced. Instead, universal aspects of religious responsibilities of the rich to contribute and of the poor to receive were realized through this device of committee organization.

DISCUSSION

One of the curious and challenging questions arisen from my field observation is the incogruency between the continuous reformist religious development and its weakening socio-economic basis. Due to continuous economic hardships after the World War II the economy of Kotagede has lost its vitality. Before the War it was a prosperous town of indigenous djuragan. Now it is a town of impoverished day-labourers, craftsmen, and peddlers. Yet, the Muhammadijah movement continues to gain wider supports. Apparently the Muhammadijah is losing its aspects of bourgeois ideology and is becoming a religious movement for the politically and economically underprivileged urban masses.

Theoretically, the kind of religious change I am concerned with may be better
analyzed by Weberian theory rather than Durkheimian, which has been prevalent in social anthropology. Durkheimian theory assumes congruency between symbolic expressions and social structure, and the former's function is taken as the strengthening of the latter. Whereas Weberian theory focuses on the actor's perception of the goal of action and on the symbolization of the goal and its communication.

REFERENCES


5. PEACOCK J. Indonesia: An Anthropological View: Goodyear 1972