

The Journeys of Two Mindanao Ulama in the Late Eighteenth Century to Early Nineteenth Century

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ABSTRACT

Although many studies have been conducted on the history of Muslims in the Philippines, a substantial study of the personalities, activities, and thoughts of individual *ulama* (Islamic scholars) from the southern Philippines before the twentieth century is conspicuously lacking. As a result, Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu before the U.S. colonial period are usually regarded as intellectually inactive. This study looks at their history in a new light, focusing on two *ulama* from Mindanao: ‘Abd al-Majid al-Mindanawi, who wrote an Islamic manuscript in Aceh in the late

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eighteenth century, and Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said, who traveled from the Lake Lanao region of Mindanao to Mecca at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In discussing their journeys and achievements, this paper draws on the manuscripts written by these two intellectuals during their travels. Actively participating in intellectual interactions with fellow Muslims in the Malay world, both persons were firmly integrated in the network of *ulama* that connected the centers of Islamic learning in Southeast Asia with those in the Middle East. Moreover, they were not only on the receiving end of foreign knowledge but were also actively engaged in transmitting and producing knowledge by writing manuscripts in Malay. Thus, this study challenges the prevailing narrative that describes the Philippine Muslims primarily as brave warriors and their history predominantly in terms of a series of battles to defend their land against foreign aggressors. Although such actions represented part of their experiences, the southern Philippines also produced Islamic scholars who contributed to the enrichment of Muslim intellectual and cultural life in their homeland as well as in the Malay world.

KEYWORDS

Mindanao, Muslims, Philippines, ulama, Islamic scholar, Islam, manuscripts, Lanao, Maranao, the Malay world, Mecca, hajj

INTRODUCTION

In his pioneering study of the history of Muslims in the Philippines, Cesar Majul indicated the important role played by the *ulama*¹ in integrating Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu in

the southern Philippines into the wider Muslim community and creating Islamic identity. He stated that the *ulama* were in contact with other *ulama* in neighboring areas and highly esteemed by the people because of their superior knowledge, contributing to the development of a sense of *dar al-Islam* (“abode of Islam” in Arabic) and the defense against Western imperialism (Majul 1973: 86, 95-98). Yet, a substantial study of personalities, activities, and thoughts of individual *ulama* from Mindanao and Sulu before the twentieth century is conspicuously lacking.² As a result, Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu before the U.S. colonial period tend to be regarded as intellectually inactive.

A major reason for the lacuna is the general dearth and inaccessibility of primary source materials produced by the *ulama* from Mindanao and Sulu themselves. It is because of the fact that many Islamic manuscripts were seized by Spaniards and Americans during their war against Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu, while some manuscripts were lost or destroyed during the prolonged armed conflict since the late 1960s. Furthermore, most of the surviving manuscripts have been carefully guarded as sacred treasures by families who inherit them and rarely exposed to the eyes of others (Kawashima 2012a: 1-3; Gallop 2012: 71-73).

The last few decades saw the publication of several studies featuring manuscripts from Mindanao and Sulu, making these materials available to researchers and the general public and attracting more attention to such materials.³ However, a detailed study of individual *ulama* and their writings has not yet been undertaken.

This study aims to fill this lacuna. Focusing on two *ulama* from Mindanao who traveled a long distance in the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, it examines the manuscripts written by them and discusses their activities

and contribution. The first part of the study deals with ‘Abd al-Majid al-Mindanawi, who wrote an Islamic manuscript in Aceh in the late eighteenth century, followed by the second part that discusses Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said, who traveled to and from Mecca in the early nineteenth century.

CASE I: ‘ABD AL-MAJID AL-MINDANAWI

The Malay manuscript collection of the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta contains a manuscript written by an Islamic scholar from Mindanao.⁴ This manuscript, namely ML361, is written mostly in Malay with some Arabic and contains a text entitled *Kifāyat al-mubādī ‘alā ‘aqīdat al-mubtadi* (The adequacy of principles on theology doctrines for beginners) (hereafter, *Kifāyat al-mubādī*), which explains the basic doctrines of Ash‘ariya theology, and a few other religious texts (See Figure 1).⁵



Figure 1. *Kifāyat al-mubādī ‘alā ‘aqīdat al-mubtadi*. National Library of Indonesia, Jakarta, ML361. p. 3 (right) and p. 4 (left).

The author identified himself in the introductory part in Arabic as *‘Abd al-Majid al-Mindanawi balad al-Shafi‘i madhhaban* (p. 3, lines 11-12). ‘Abd al-Majid is the author’s personal name, followed by nisba (“attribution” in Arabic), or adjectives denoting a person’s attributes such as the place of origin, tribal affiliation, descent, profession, and so on. The first nisba, namely *al-Mindanawi balad*, means that the person is from the country of Mindanao, and the second nisba, *al-Shafi‘i madhhaban*, means that he follows Shafi‘i *madhhab* (the school of Islamic jurisprudence).⁶ This Arabic passage is followed by its Malay translation: *‘Abd al-Majid Mindanawi pada nama negerinya Shafi‘i pada mazhabnya* (p. 4, lines 4-5). On the basis of this information, it can be said that *Kifāyat al-mubādī* was written by an Islamic scholar named ‘Abd al-Majid who hailed from Mindanao and followed the Shafi‘i *madhhab*.

The Arabic colophon that is found at the end of the text is as follows:

*Qad faraghat hādhihi al-risālah fī balad al-Ashī ba‘da al-
ṣalāt al-ṣubḥ yawm al-jum‘ah sittah yawman min shahr
rajab al-mubārakah fī al-ta‘rīkh al-Sulṭān al-a‘zam wa-al-
ikrām Mawlānā al-Sulṭān al-Mahmūd Shāh ibn al-Sulṭān
Jūhan Shāh*

(This work was completed in Aceh, after the early morning prayer on Friday, 6th of Rajab during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Shah ibn Sultan Johan Shah.)⁷

Because Sultan Mahmud Shah of Aceh reigned from 1760 to 1781, it can be estimated that this manuscript was completed sometime during this period in Aceh, although the exact year cannot be ascertained.

‘Abd al-Majid explained the reason why he composed this treatise in the introductory part in Malay as follows:

Sesungguhnya telah menuntut akan daku oleh setengah bagi sekalian manusia akan menulis daripada satu risalah yang melengkapia ia atas i’tikad pada madhhab daripada Shaykh Imam Ash‘ari yang telah digemari Allah ta‘ala daripadanya.

(I was requested by some people to write a treatise that completes the creed of the theological school developed by Shaykh Imam Ash‘arī, with whom the Almighty Allah is pleased.)⁸

The information found in the manuscript is consistent with the general condition of Muslim scholarship in Aceh in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Located on the northwestern tip of the island of Sumatra extending out into the Indian Ocean, Aceh played a unique role in mediating the Indian Ocean and Malay world, assuming the name *Serambi Mekkah* or the front yard or gate to the Holy Land. Muslims from various parts of Southeast Asia stopped at Aceh on their journey to and from Mecca, while it was also visited by those from other places around the Indian Ocean and beyond (Azyumardi 2004: 84; Tagliacozzo 2013: 86). Some travelers sojourned there to study or teach Islam. Thus, Aceh developed into one of the most important centers of Islamic learning in the Malay world, where numerous Islamic scholars actively engaged themselves in producing Islamic literature in Malay. Although such Islamic literary activities had peaked in the seventeenth century, Aceh continued to play an important role in Islamic learning until the end of the nineteenth century (Iskandar 2011: 61; Feener 2010: 489-494; Reid 2010: 441). Hence, ‘Abd al-Majid is considered to be one of those traveling *ulama* who sojourned in Aceh.⁹

The Shafi‘i *madhhab* with which ‘Abd al-Majid identified himself was the dominant *madhhab* in the Malay world, including Mindanao and Sulu. It was also the official *madhhab* of the Sultanate of Aceh. During the reign of Sultan Mahmud Shah in Aceh, the dominant school of Sufism that enjoyed the patronage of the sultan was called “Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa.” The majority of *ulama* in Aceh supported this school, following the doctrines of Ash‘ariya theology (Baihaqi 1983: 143-146). Muhammad Zayn b. Faqih Jalal al-Din al-Ashi, the leading scholar in Aceh at that time, was among them.¹⁰ Therefore, it is obvious that Muslims in Aceh during this period wanted to learn more from the work of Ash‘arī and requested ‘Abd al-Majid to write a treatise on the subject in Malay.

How did the manuscript find its way to the library in Jakarta? In the catalogue compiled by Sutaarga et al., an entry in the minutes of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences is cited as a reference to ML361 (Sutaarga et al.1972: 305). The entry records that ten manuscripts in Arabic, Malay, and Acehnese were found by Captain W. B. J. A. Scheepens in Semelet in Gayo country and Pamene in September 1902 (Notulen BG: vol. 42, p. 127)¹¹. This suggests that the manuscript was seized by the Dutch military police in the interior region of Aceh in 1902.¹² If this was true, the manuscript was probably brought into the hinterland by its owner when he/she retreated there during the Aceh war and was subsequently confiscated by the Dutch officer, who turned it over to the Batavian Society of Arts and Science in Jakarta.

Thus far, there is no further information about the personality and career of ‘Abd al-Majid al-Mindanawi. Which part of Mindanao did he come from? Did he study in Mecca? Did he write other manuscripts? Did he return to Mindanao, leaving the manuscript with somebody in Aceh? Or, did he never return to Mindanao, having settled down in Aceh and died

there? These questions can be answered by further research in the future.

All that can be said at present is that ‘Abd al-Majid al-Mindanawi participated in the intellectual activities of Muslims in the Malay world and contributed to the development of Muslim scholarship by writing a treatise in Malay.

CASE II: SAYYIDNA TUAN MUHAMMAD SAID (KADI SA BINIDAYAN)

THE ORAL TRADITION

There are oral traditions concerning Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said (hereafter referred to as Sayyidna).¹³ According to one of his direct descendants, Usman Imam Shiek al-Aman (hereafter referred to as Usman Imam), Sayyidna was one of the earliest hajis from the Lake Lanao area and the very first person from the southern coast of Lake Lanao who stayed in Mecca for a significant period of time to study Islam and safely returned home. Sayyidna is the childhood name of this scholar, while Muhammad Said is the name he obtained after performing hajj.¹⁴ Sayyidna is known as “Kadi (or Hadi)¹⁵ sa Binidayan” among the people in his hometown Binidayan and its adjacent areas.¹⁶

Sayyidna is remembered by the local people as a famous *wali* or Muslim saint endowed with *baraka* or sacred power. The oral tradition abounds in miraculous occurrences that were attributed to Sayyidna. For example, he is said to have crossed Lake Lanao in a flash, without riding a boat and without being seen by anybody. It is also said that when Sayyidna put his hand on the neck of a *karabao*, or water buffalo, and said a prayer, it fell on its knees and submitted itself at the disposal of a butcher.¹⁷

The summary of the story of Sayyidna, as presented by Usman Imam in his lecture in 2001, is as follows.¹⁸

Sayyidna was born in a village of Magonaya in Binidayan, a town located on the southern shore of Lake Lanao. When he was twelve, his mother told him to fulfill his duty of going on hajj and studying Islam. Sayyidna obeyed his mother and left his hometown and headed for Malabang by land. He then sailed to Cotabato, later to Zamboanga, and further on to Tawi-Tawi. Then, he proceeded to Balabac and Labuan, from where he departed for the island of Borneo.¹⁹

However, his ship was wrecked by a storm, and he was swept away to Lingga. People in Lingga took care of him and he recovered. People recognized the sign of piety in Sayyidna and requested him to heal the Sultan of Lingga who had taken ill. Sayyidna prayed and implored Allah to heal the Sultan. After some time, the Sultan was cured. The Sultan told Sayyidna that he would give anything he liked as a reward. Sayyidna asked Sultan to assist him in going to Mecca. Sultan ordered his vassals to arrange a ship to accompany Sayyidna to Johor, where he would wait for a party going to Mecca.

Sayyidna reached Johor, where he was married and blessed with two sons. After some time, he bade farewell to his family and proceeded to Palembang to continue his journey to Mecca. After one year, he sailed for Jidda. He stayed in Aden for three months and finally reached Mecca.

He performed hajj, obtained an honorific name of Muhammad Said, and continued to stay in Mecca studying Islam for seven years. One night, he dreamt of

his mother, and his teacher told him that it was the sign that his mother had passed away and that he must go back home to teach Islam. Sayyidna, therefore, returned home via Palembang, where he married another woman and had two sons. He stayed there for two years and wrote a book, *Ahl al-sunna wal jamaa*. Then, he took leave of his family and went to Lingga to see the Sultan again. The Sultan was pleased to see him, and Sayyidna was then married to the Sultan's daughter. With the Princess of Lingga and her entourage, Sayyidna arrived in his hometown Binidayan.

Upon returning home, he established a government system called *tartib ago igma*,²⁰ which was based on Islamic law and agreements among the people in Binidayan and its neighboring town Bayang.

This story is an important material that shows how Sayyidna was remembered by his descendants. However, in using it as a source material to reconstruct his life, it needs to be examined carefully, comparing its contents with information available from other source materials.

Several existing material objects testify that Sayyidna was an actual figure and not simply a legendary one. Among these objects is his tomb that stands in the village of Magonaya in Binidayan (See Figure 2). According to Usman Imam, until around the 1960s, his tomb used to be visited by people who expected to receive the benefit of his *baraka*. They would put coins on top of the tombstone as offerings and pray. The roots of plants growing around his tomb were removed by visitors who believed in their special power to cure sick people. Such practices, however, came to be condemned by a group of *ulama* who graduated from Islamic educational institutions in the Middle East and were discontinued by the 1970s.²¹

There also exist several manuscripts that are said to have been copied or written by Sayyidna. Among them is a manuscript that contains accounts of his journey.



Figure 2. The tomb of Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said, who is also known as “Kadi (or Hadi) sa Binidayan,” which stands on top of a small hill in front of the mosque in the village of Magonaya in the municipality of Binidayan, the province of Lanao del Sur, Philippines. It is a square structure made of piled stones, with a long and narrow stone standing on it. No inscription is found on the top stone or the structure.

Photograph: Kawashima Midori.

MANUSCRIPT

This manuscript was found in the collection of Sheik Muhammad Said bin Imam sa Bayang (d.1974), another descendant of Sayyidna, at Al-Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) Library at

Marawi City in the province of Lanao del Sur. This collection consists of manuscripts and books he inherited from his ancestors and those collected by him.²² This paper will present and examine two texts, found in a manuscript called B4-Ms2, that contain important information on Sayyidna's journey.

The Colophon of *Ta'bir Mimpi* (B4-Ms2)

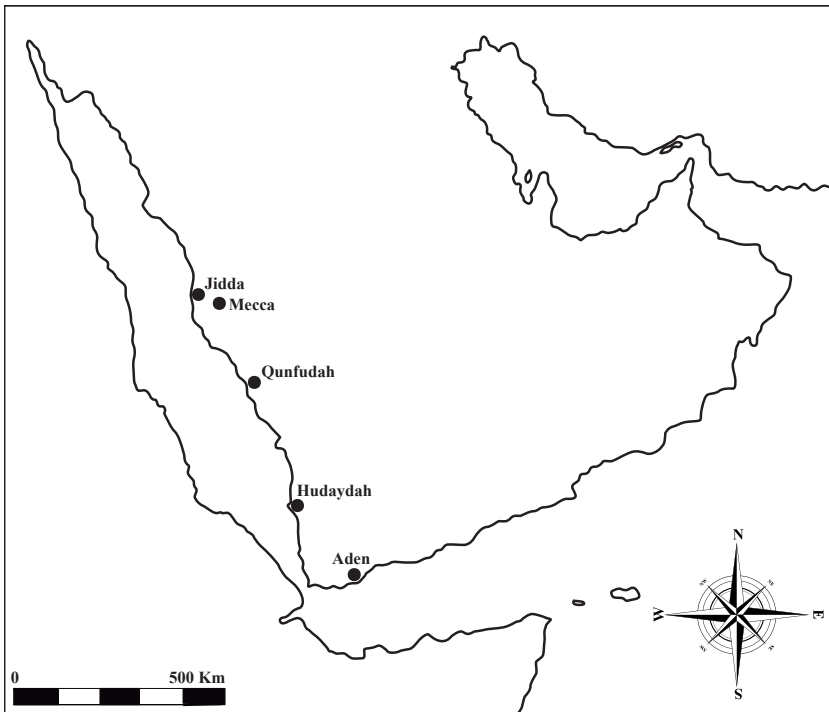
At the end of a treatise on *Ta'bir mimpi* (dream interpretation), as shown in Figure 3, a colophon is found that claimed that (Sayyidna) Tuan Muhammad Said finished writing the treatise in Hudaydah on Wednesday in Rabi'ul akhir (the 4th month) in the year 1218 AH (ca. July 20 to August 18, in 1803 AD).²³ The text and its translation are presented in Appendix A.



Figure 3. The colophon of *Ta'bir Mimpi* (the dream interpretation) (right). B4-Ms2, ff.11v-12r. From the Collection of Sheik Muhammad Said bin Imam sa Bayang at Al-Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) Library at Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Philippines.

Note that although Sayyidna was on his way to Mecca and could not have performed hajj by that time, the honorific name that he received after performing hajj, namely Muhammad Said, is used in this document. This may indicate that this manuscript

is a copy that was made later by someone else or perhaps by Sayyidna himself after he had performed hajj and obtained the new name. Sayyidna may have, in fact, been using the name Muhammad Said before performing hajj, which is in contrast to what the oral tradition says.



Map 1. The Arabian Peninsula

Hudaydah was an important port town in Yemen facing the Red Sea (see Map 1), which was thriving on coffee trade and visited by many vessels (Alpers 2014: 82; Schuman 1979: 539). Henry Rook, a discharged British army officer who sailed on the Red Sea in 1782, wrote in a letter that all the coastal vessels arrived at Hudaydah to take pilots (Rooke 1783: 51). When Abdullah Munshi sailed from Singapore to Jidda in 1854,

his ship also anchored at Hudaydah (Ché-Ross 2000: 196). Therefore, it is obvious that Sayyidna, who had sailed across the Malay world and Indian Ocean, sojourned in the town for some time before embarking on the final part of his journey.

The aforementioned colophon also stated that there was a solar eclipse at the time when Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said finished writing the treatise. According to the astronomical data of Her Majesty's Nautical Almanac Office (HMNAO) of UK, an annular solar eclipse was indeed observable across northern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean on Wednesday, August 17, 1803, and it started shortly after 6 am and continued for about three-and-a-half hours in Hudaydah.²⁴ A contemporary Egyptian historian, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, also recorded a solar eclipse that he observed in Cairo on the same day (Jabarti 1994: vols. III & IV, 400). From the above, it can be presumed that Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said finished writing the treatise in Hudaydah in the morning of August 17, 1803.

The author (presumably, Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said) asked those who wish to copy the text to be aware that "there may be many errors because he does not yet perfectly understand the language of ours, Jawi (*bahasa kita*²⁵ Jawi), [because it is] different from his own language, namely the Malimdanao language." The use of the term "Malimdanao," which is repeated in another text in the manuscript, will be discussed subsequently.

The expression "the language of ours, Jawi" indicates that the author regarded the Malay language written in the Jawi script as a common medium for Malay-literate Muslims from various places of the Malay world, including himself. Thus, the "Jawi language" served to integrate the Muslim scholar from Mindanao into the realm of Islamic scholarship of the Malay world.

The Account of Sayyidna's Voyage (B4-Ms2b)

The manuscript also contains a brief Malay text composed of only twelve lines in a single page, which relates Sayyidna's journey from Hudaydah to Mecca (See Figure 4). The use of the term *hamba*, a self-effacing word for "I" or "me," indicates that the text was authored by Sayyidna himself. On the other hand, the honorific name that he received after completing hajj is also used. As in the case of the aforementioned colophon, it is uncertain whether this text was the original or later copied by Sayyidna himself or someone else. The transliteration of the text and its translation are given in Appendix B.



Figure 4. The account of Sayyiduna's voyage from Hudaidah (right). The main text starts from the 6th line, following magical words to serve as an amulet (top), and a brief note which is erased. B4-Ms2, ff.2v-3r. From the Collection of Sheikh Muhammad Said bin Imam sa Bayang at Al-Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) Library at Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Philippines.

According to the text, Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said departed from Hudaydah on 11 Rajab, 1218 AH (ca. October 26, 1803). This means that he left Hudaydah approximately two months after he had completed writing the treatise in the port city.

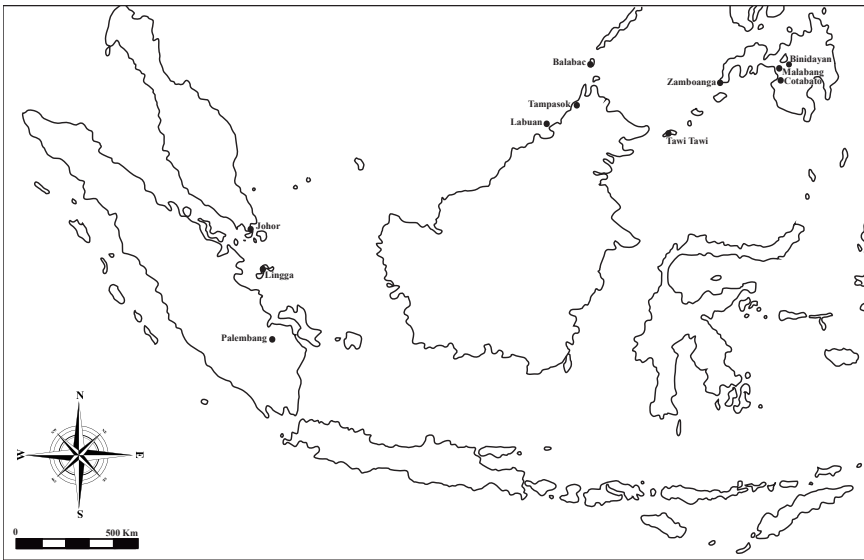
The pilgrimage is performed from the 8th to the 12th of Dhu al-Hijja (the 12th month), but in those days, many pilgrims from distant places tried their best to reach Mecca before Ramadan (the 9th month) to maximize their religious duties by observing both Ramadan and hajj in the Holy City (Witkam 2013: 216).²⁶ This may have been the reason Sayyidna departed from Hudaydah in Rajab (the 7th month) because he would then be able to arrive in Mecca in time for the start of Ramadan.

The ship Sayyidna boarded is referred to as *perahu dawuh* (dhow boat) or an Arab sailing vessel with lateen sail, which was common on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The passage on the Red Sea was a dangerous one because of the enormous waves and innumerable rocks and shoals in the coastal zone, and shipwrecks were common in this sea (Rooke 1783: 52; Aguis 2013: 89-90).

According to the text, when the ship stopped at a certain port,²⁷ a violent storm struck and destroyed the ship. Sayyidna made a vow that if he could reach Mecca to perform hajj and return to his country while his uncle, who was living then in Tampasok, was still alive, he would kiss his feet.²⁸ The text also claims that Sayyidna arrived at the port with a certain Ibrahim; however, there is no further information on this person.

With regards to Sayyidna's uncle who had been living in Tampasok, the oral tradition says that Sapatula (Shafatullah), the father of Sayyidna, had a brother who had gone to Tampasok and lived there for some time, where he was made the Sultan of

Tampasok.²⁹ Tampasok is the name of a river that flows into the northwestern coast of Borneo, and it also referred to a settlement located around its river basin, which is presently included in the district of Cota Belud in the state of Sabah in east Malaysia (See Map 2).



Map 2. The Malay world

Muslims inhabiting the coastal area of Illana Bay and its hinterland in the Lake Lanao region—people presently classified into two ethno-linguistic groups, namely Iranun and Maranao, respectively—expanded their maritime activities during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the global commerce of Sulu in maritime and forest products flourished, many Muslim chiefs from this region emigrated with their clients and slaves of mixed ethnic origins to the river mouths in northern Borneo and established settlements, motivated by commercial gains and opportunities (Warren 2002: 133). They also established settlements in other places in the Malay world, such as Jolo,

Celebes, and Sumatera. These communities were connected with each other and with their native places in Mindanao by intermarriage, forming “a social network with no clearly defined boundaries” to serve as forward bases for their maritime trading and raiding. However, the majority of the inhabitants of such settlements were engaged in subsistence agriculture, fishing, or other local enterprise (Warren 1985: 150; 2002: 126). Tampasok was a notable example of such settlements as Muslim chiefs from Mindanao firmly established themselves in Tampasok by the early 1790s (Warren 2002: 128).

Among the present-day “Iranun”³⁰ people who live in the Kota Belud district in Sabah, there are many who trace their history to migrations from Mindanao at various points of time, ranging from as early as before the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century, and to different stories that persist among them concerning their origins.³¹ Moreover, the oral tradition handed down to Usman Imam says that the Sultan of Brunei requested assistance from many Iranun(-Maranao) leaders to reinforce his army to fight against the Portuguese, and many Iranun(-Maranao)s went there in response to his call.³² The text of Sayyidna’s vow that mentions his uncle who stayed in Tampasok indicates the existence of such personal connections between the Lake Lanao region and Tampasok.

Sayyidna made another vow saying that he would stay in a mosque in Watu for three days if he could go back to the country of “Malimdanao.” Watu was one of the major settlements around Lake Lanao, located on its northwestern coast, which presently form part of the municipality of Balindong. The mosque in Watu is recorded in the travel account of Thomas Forrest, an English country trader who visited Mindanao in 1776. Although Forrest did not personally visit the Lake Lanao region, he recorded that “a mosque of stone situated on a height” in Watu was “remarkable in fine weather from Byang [Bayang],” based

on information provided by “some intelligent persons” (Forrest 1779: 274).

As Sayyidna was born and grew up in Binidayan, a town adjacent to Bayang, the mosque in Watu standing across the lake must have been a familiar site to him. Sayyidna’s mention of it in his vow indicates that it was an important place for the religious life of Muslims residing on the southern shore of Lake Lanao at that time.³³

The term “Malimdanao,” which is used in the aforementioned colophon, is found in the expression “to return to the country of Malimdanao (*kembali ke negri Malimdanao*).” The word “Malimdanao,” which is uncommon, is presumed to be a variation of “Maguindanao.”

Contemporary Europeans made distinctions between Muslims inhabiting the Pulangi river basin and its adjacent lowland areas under the rule of the Maguindanao Sultan on the one hand, and those inhabiting around the Lake Lanao region under the rule of numerous chiefs, on the other hand. These Europeans called them by different names. For example, Thomas Forrest referred to the former as Maguindanao, and the latter and those inhabiting the coastal area of the present Illana bay as “Illano” or “Illanon,” although Forrest noticed that the Maguindanao and the Illanon languages were nearly the same (Forrest 1779: 174-175). The British and the Dutch referred to “sea rovers” or “piratical people” who came from Mindanao and Sulu as “Illanon,” “Ilanon,” or “Lanon.”³⁴ These terms were sometimes used indiscriminately to refer to all seaborne raiders in the Malay world in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries (McKenna 1994: 16).

Furthermore, the term “Malanao” was used by the Spaniards to refer to Muslims living in the upland area around

Lake Lanao, distinguishing them from “Maguindanaos” in the Pulangi river basin.³⁵

Although Sayyidna came from the Lake Lanao region, he did not call his own language Ilanon or Malanao but Malimdanao. This suggests the possibility that people classified into different groups such as Maguindanao, Ilanon, or Malanao by Europeans may have actually shared a broader identity as Maguindanao or Malimdanao.

Sayyidna’s reference to his country as Malimdanao may be interpreted that he meant the island of Mindanao because the term Maguindanao was also used to refer to the island (Forrest 1779: 174; Saleeby 1906: 26-27), or he may have used the term “the country of Malimdanao” to mean a greater Maguindanao society stretching from the Pulangi basin to the coastal area of the Illana bay and the Lake Lanao region in the inland, where the same language was spoken.

The last part of the text stated that he arrived at Jidda on 4 Shaban 1218 AH (ca. November 19, 1803AD). It took him 23 days to sail from Hudaydah to Jidda. After spending several days in Jidda, he left for Mecca and finally arrived at Mecca in Shaban 1218 AH. Thus, he could have arrived at the Holy City before the start of Ramadan.

THE ROUTE OF JOURNEY IN THE ORAL TRADITION AND THE MANUSCRIPT

Based on the manuscript and the oral tradition, Table 1 shows the places mentioned as visited or intended to be visited by Sayyidna during his journey from his hometown Binidayan in Mindanao to Mecca. In the manuscript, a shipwreck is mentioned as having occurred on the Red Sea, whereas the oral tradition says that it occurred off the coast of Borneo. Tampasok, Lingga,

PLACES	ORAL TRADITION	MANUSCRIPT (B4-MS2)
Binidayan		
Malabang		
Cotabato		
Zamboanga		
Tawi Tawi		
Balabac		
Labuan		
Tampasok	(Intended to visit, but encountered shipwreck, and did not reach.)	(Uncle who lived here was mentioned in the vow.)
Lingga	Drifted ashore. Cured Sultan who helped his journey.	
Johor	Stayed 2 years; got married; had two sons	
Palembang	Stayed 1 year.	
Aden	Stayed 3 months.	
Hudaydah		Completed Ta'bir Mimpi in Rabi'ul Akhir (Aug. 17, 1803); Left on 11 Rajab, 1218 AH (ca. Oct. 27, 1803).
a-n-t-a-k-m-p-d (Qunfudah?)		Encountered shipwreck on 26 Rajab, 1218 AH (ca. Nov. 11, 1803).
Jidda		Arrived on 4 Shaban (ca. Nov. 19, 1803); Left on 10 Shaban, 1218 AH (ca. Nov. 25, 1803).
Mecca	Stayed 7 years.	Arrived in Shaban, 1218 AH (Nov. or Dec. 1803).

■ Places mentioned as visited ■ Places mentioned, but not visited

Table 1. The Route of the Journey of Sayyidna Tuan Muhammad Said from Binidayan to Mecca

Johor, Palembang, and some other places around the Malacca Straits are those where “Illanon” settlements are recorded in the European and Malay sources in the late eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century.³⁶ It is probable that Sayyidna stopped at these places on his travels, while it is also possible that people in the Lake Lanao region imagined the main events of his journey as occurring in places in the Malay world that they were familiar with as the story was transmitted through generations.³⁷

According to the manuscript, Sayyidna stayed in Hudaydah for about two months or more, whereas the oral tradition says that he stayed in Aden for three months. Possibly, Hudaydah was confused with Aden, another important port city in Yemen, located at the eastern approach to the Red Sea.

CONTRIBUTION OF SAYYIDNA

In addition to Ta‘bir Mimpi and the travel account, B4-Ms2 also contains several Islamic treatises. Among them is a copy of a treatise on Sufism in Malay written by ‘Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani, a scholar from Palembang (d. ca. 1789), who had studied in Mecca. It is a Malay rendering of a work by Shaykh Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Damanhuri, a prominent scholar of Egypt.³⁸

Sayyidna is also said to have brought home with him a few other manuscripts. A priceless one is an illuminated Qur’an manuscript, which is said to have been copied by him and called by the name “Maradika” (See Figure 5).³⁹ Because there were very few copies of the Qur’an manuscript in the Lake Lanao region before the twentieth century, each manuscript was carefully preserved by the family of its owner as a precious heirloom. Furthermore, it was regarded as a sacred treasure of the local community. When villagers made rules concerning the governance of the village or settled disputes among themselves,



Figure 5. “Maradika,” the Qur’an of Bayang, initial double decorated frames with *Surat al-Fatihah* (Q.1) on the right-hand page and the beginning of *Surat al-Baqarah* (Q.2) on the left-hand page. Photograph: M. Kawashima, O. Fathurahman, and E. Nurtawab.

the Qur’an manuscript was brought to the oath-taking ceremony as a “witness” to ensure that the rules and agreements were observed.⁴⁰

As mentioned earlier, Sayyidna was also a *wali* or Muslim saint to whom the masses turned expecting to receive *baraka*. The title of haji, the knowledge and experiences he obtained during his journey, the possession of sacred manuscripts, and the veneration and admiration he received as a *wali* from the common people had greatly enhanced his authority and social prestige. This probably helped him to establish or consolidate the *tartib ago igma*, a set of rules on the organization of communities

and behaviors of people, in his hometown Binidayan and its neighboring town Bayang, increasing the social cohesion among the inhabitants.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the foregoing that the two *ulama* from Mindanao who traveled during the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century were firmly integrated in the network of *ulama* that connected the centers of Islamic learning in Southeast Asia with those in the Middle East. They not only passively received foreign knowledge from outside but also actively transmitted and produced knowledge by composing treatises or copying manuscripts. The Malay language written in the Jawi script served as a medium of communication connecting them with other *ulama* from the Malay world.

Thus, this study challenges the prevailing narrative that describes the Philippine Muslims primarily as brave warriors and their history predominantly in terms of a series of battles to defend their land against foreign aggressors. Although such actions represented part of their experiences, the southern Philippines also produced Islamic scholars who contributed to the enrichment of Muslim intellectual and cultural life in their homeland as well as in the Malay world.

The two *ulama* considered in this study are just a fraction of many Muslims from Mindanao and Sulu who crossed the ocean for religious purposes before the twentieth century. Little is known about the personalities, life, and works of these other Muslims. Hence, further research based on manuscripts and other source materials and fieldwork will bring to light the intellectual and religious dynamism involving Muslims of Mindanao and Sulu and their counterparts in the Malay world and beyond.

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APPENDIX A

MALAY TEXT AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE COLOPHON OF TA'BIR MIMPI. (Transliterated and translated by Oman Fathurahman and Kawashima Midori.)

Source: Bungkos 4 - Ms2, f.10v, The Collection of Sheik Muhammad Said bin Imam sa Bayang at Al-Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) Library at Marawi City.

Legends: [] indicates the addition by translators.

Malay text:⁴¹

Tammāt al-kalām bi-al-khayr wa-sallama hijrah Nabi sallallāh ‘alayhi wa-sallama seribu dua ratus sepuluh dualapan tahun kepada tahun dal akhir kepada hari arba’ akhir pada bulan Rabiul akhir ketika duduk negeri Hudaydah ketika itulah gerhana matahari pada waktu itulah tanggal, ketika itu Tuan Muhammad Said mengkhawatirkan menyurat akan ta’bir mimpi ini, tetapi banyak yang salah karena belum lagi sempurna mengerti akan bahasa kita Jawi, lain kepada bahasa sendiri, yaitu bahasa Malimdanao. Melainkan maklumlah kiranya tuan-tuan sekalian yang berkehendak menyalin hamba punya surat maka adalah seperti pantun anak Melayu.

English translation:

The writing was well finished on Wednesday in the month of Rabi’ul-akhir in the year 1218 of Hijrah [calendar] of the Prophet, may peace be upon Him [ca. July 20 – Aug. 18, 1803], end of the Year Dal,⁴² when he stayed in the land of Hudaydah. At that moment,

there was a solar eclipse, that was the time. At that moment, Tuan Muhammad Said completed writing this *Ta'bir mimpi*. However, there may be many errors because he does not yet perfectly understand the language of ours, Jawi, [because it is] different from his own language, namely the Malimdanao language. Therefore, for those of you who want to copy this text of this humble person, please understand this. It is like a poetry (*pantun*) of Malay fellows.⁴³

APPENDIX B

MALAY TEXT AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE ACCOUNT OF TUAN MUHAMAD SAID'S VOYAGE FROM HUDAIDAH. (Transliterated and translated by Oman Fathurahman and Kawashima Midori.)

Source: Bungkos 4 - Ms2, f.4v, The Collection of Sheik Muhammad Said bin Imam sa Bayang at Al-Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) Library at Marawi City.

Legends:

< > indicates the text written in the margins.

[] indicates the addition by translators.

Malay text:

Alkisah tatkala Tuan Muhammad Said berlayar dari negri Hudaydah pada sebelas hari bulan Rajab pada hari khamis maka dengan takdir Allah subhanahu wa taala tatkala sampai kepada a-n-t-a-k-m-p-d dengan m-r-s-h Ibrahim maka datanglah ribut yang amat keras maka lalu pecah[h] perahu dawuh tempatnya

menumpang kepada nam likur hari bulan Rajab pada hari Jumat pada waktu [i]tulah tanggal. Setelah itu maka lalu bernazar hamba pada ketika itu jikalau selamat serta sampai <akan maksudnya> haji maka ia kembali ke negrinya jikalau ada lagi hidup saudara bapaknya <yang telah duduk di negeri Tampasok> maka diciumnya kakinya dan lagi satu perkara jikalau ada mudah-mudahan kembali ke negeri Malimdanaw maka ia duduk ke dalam masjid kepada negeri yang bernama Wato barang tiga hari, tamat. Tatkala sampai ke Jeddah pada empat hari bulan Shaban pada hari Sabtu maka naik pula ke Mekah pada hari Jumat pada sepuluh hari bulan Shaban sampai ke Mekah pada hari Ahad pada hijrah al-Nabi sallallah 'alayhi wasallam seribu dua ratus dualapan belas kepada tahun Dal akhir.

English translation:

As the story goes, Tuan Muhammad Said sailed from the land of Hodaydah on the 11th day of the month of Rajab, Thursday [ca. Oct. 27, 1803]. Then, by the will of God, Glorified and Exalted be He, once he arrived at *a-n-t-a-k-m-p-d* [Qunfudah?] with *m-r-s-h* Ibrahim, then came a very strong storm and the dhow (an Arab lateen-rigged boat) he was riding was destroyed on the 26th day of the month of Rajab, on Friday [ca. Nov. 11, 1803], that was the time. After that, [this] humble person made a spiritual vow at that moment, [saying that] if he could reach [Mecca to perform] haji <[which is] his intended destination>, and then return safely to his country, while the brother of his father <who had already lived in the land of Tampasok> is still alive, then he would kiss his feet, and if he could hopefully return to his country of Malimdanaw, he

would stay within a mosque in a town which is called Wato for about three days. End. He arrived at Jiddah on the fourth day of the month of Shaban, Saturday [ca. Nov. 19, 1803]. Then, he went up to Mecca on Friday, the tenth day of the month of Shaban [ca. Nov. 25, 1803]. He reached Mecca on Sunday in the year 1218 of the Hijrah [calendar] of the Prophet, peace be upon Him, end of the year Dal akhir.

NOTES

- ¹ The word *ulama* originates from the Arabic word ‘*ulamā*’, the plural form of ‘*ālim*’ which means scholar or learned person. In Muslim-inhabited areas in Southeast Asia, including the southern Philippines, it is used as a general term for Islamic scholars.
- ² There are several studies that discuss personalities and writings of individual *ulama* of Mindanao from the twentieth century onward; these include Lingga (1995), Panda (1996, 2009), Kawashima (2002, 2003, 2014), and Acmad (2010).
- ³ These include Tan (1996, 2002, 2005), Tan and Bakuludan (1996), Tan and Harirulla (2002, 2007a, 2007b), Kawashima (2002, 2003, 2011, 2012b, 2012c, 2014), Donoso (2010), Gallop (2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2016), Kawashima and Fathurahman (2011), Riwarung (2012), Nurtawab (2012), and Fathurahman and Kawashima (2017).
- ⁴ This manuscript is recorded in several catalogues, including Ronkel (1909: 416-417), Sutaarga et al. (1972: 305), Iskandar (1996: 434, 596), and Behrend (1998: 289), and described in Kawashima and Fathurahman (2011: 255-260). I am indebted to Dr. Oman Fathurahman who read and translated the text, and Dr. Nico Kaptein

of Leiden University who brought this manuscript to our attention. Mr. Haji Sanwani, Mr. Aditia Gunawan, and Mr. Ali Musa of the National Library of Jakarta also helped in our research.

- 5 Ash'ariya theology is the theology taught by Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Isma'il al-Ash'ari (b.873- d.936) from Basra.
- 6 Shafi'i madhhab was founded by Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i in the 8th century.
- 7 ML361, p. 97 (Read by Oman Fathurahman).
- 8 ML361, p. 4 (Read by Oman Fathurahman).
- 9 According to Teuk Iskandar, 'Abd al-Majid went on haji via Aceh and composed this treatise upon returning from Mecca (Iskandar 1996: 596).
- 10 For Muhammad Zayn al-Ashi, see Laffan (2011: 28) and Azyumardi (2004: 124).
- 11 Read by Prof. Kobayashi Yasuko of Nanzan University.
- 12 However, caution is required in determining the provenance of ML361 as such. The descriptions of the ten manuscripts by Snouck Hurgronje are found at the appendix of the minutes but none appears to conform to the content of ML361 (Notulen BG: vol. 42, p.14).
- 13 As some of his descendants are also named Muhammad Said, the full name Sayyidna Tuan Muahamad Said or his childhood name Sayyidna for short was used in this study to distinguish this scholar from his namesakes of later generations.
- 14 *Tuan* is a Malay term used in referring or addressing a male with a high social standing, which is also used in Maranao to refer to a religious man.
- 15 The Arabic term *ḥājj* used to be pronounced as *kadi* or *hadi* in Maranao.

- 16 Interview with Usman Imam, March 17, 2001, Marawi City.
- 17 Interview with Usman Imam, Dec. 2, 2003, Marawi City.
- 18 Since no written source materials concerning Sayyidna were available at the time, I asked Aleem Usman Imam to give a lecture that would include the story about Sayyidna, which was recounted to him by his parents. Complying with my request, Usman Imam wrote a paper in Arabic and read it at a lecture at Sophia University in Tokyo on February 24, 2001. It was translated into Japanese and published in Japan (Imam 2004). For the Arabic text and English translation of his lecture, see Appendix A in Fathurahman and Kawashima (2017).
- 19 One version of the oral tradition says that Sayyidna intended to go to Tampasok on the northern coast of Borneo, where an Iranon-Maranao community was located (Interview with Usman Imam, Nov. 30, 2003, Marawi City). The settlement in Tampasok is discussed in detail below.
- 20 The Maranao word *tartib* derives from the Arabic word *tartib* and means arrangements or a set of rules created by ancestors and inherited. It recognizes various ranks of leaders and people in general in the community. *Igma* derives from the Arabic word *ijmāʿ*, meaning “agreements,” while *ago* is a Maranao word for “and.” Thus, *tartib ago igma* means “arrangements and agreements,” which regulate people’s behaviors in the community as well as the relations among communities (Mednick 1965: 305-306).
- 21 Interview with Usman Imam, December 2, 2003, Marawi City.
- 22 The publication of the annotated catalogue of the collection with several papers related to the collection is forthcoming (Fathurahman and Kawashima 2017).
- 23 AH indicates the year in the Islamic calendar.
- 24 The website of HMNAO: <http://astro.ukho.gov.uk/eclipse/0531803/> (accessed on August 30, 2014).

- 25 The Malay word *kita* means “we” or “us” including the person addressed.
- 26 Abdullah Munshi also arrived in Mecca in Shaban (Ché-Ross 2000: 182).
- 27 The name of the port reads a-n-t-a-k-m-p-d, which is unidentified, although k-m-p-d may refer to Qunfudah, an important port town located between Hudaydah and Jidda along the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula, facing the Red Sea.
- 28 To kiss one’s feet is a symbolical action of showing respect to elders.
- 29 Interview with Usman Imam, Nov. 30, 2003, Marawi City. There is another version of the oral tradition which says that the uncle of Sayyidna went to Tampasok to look for Sayyidna after he heard of Sayyidna’s departure from Binidayan for Mecca.
- 30 They were formerly called “Illanun,” but because of the word’s negative connotations associated with piracy, the then Illanun Cultural Association petitioned the Sabah Government to formally change the name Illanun to Iranun, which was approved in 1988 (Smith 2011: 2, 5, 12).
- 31 See Sather (1967: 98), Warren (1985: 157), and Smith (2011: 2).
- 32 Interview with Usman Imam, Nov. 30, 2003, Marawi City.
- 33 Upon his return from Mecca, Sayyidna is said to have built a mosque in the settlement of Magonaya in Binidayan (Interview with Alim Usman, March, 2000, Marawi City).
- 34 For example, the Malay-English dictionary by Marsden explains the term “Illanon,” “Lanon,” or “Ilanon” as the piratical people of Mindanao who infested the Eastern seas (Marsden 1984: 12). The Malay-Dutch dictionary by Klinkert explains the word “Lanoen” as sea rovers who came from Magindanao and the Sulu archipelago

(Klinkert 1916: 45, 903). For the discussion of the meaning of “Ilanun” and “Iranun,” see Saleeby (1906: 14), Kuder (1945: 123), and Warren (1985: 149).

- 35 See Blair and Robertson (1970: vol. 40, p.117, footnote 43).
- 36 For example, *Tuhfat al-nafis*, a Malay work on history of Riau, mentions Ilanuns from Tampasok who participated in the attack on Dutch in Riau in 1787 (Ali Haji 1982: 185-186). See also Warren (2002: 124-143).
- 37 After I completed this paper, I found a colophon in a microfilm image of another manuscript written by Sayyidna Muhammad Said (Ms. 1 in the Collection of Usman Imam Sheik al-Aman), which indicates that Sayyidna stayed in Bandar Perlis, a port town located in the northern part on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula, probably on his way home from Mecca. For further details, see Kawashima 2017 (forthcoming).
- 38 Read and annotated by Oman Fathurahman.
- 39 Interview with Alim Usman, Dec. 4, 2003, Marawi City. *Maradika* means freedom in Maranao. This manuscript is also known as the Qur'an of Bayang. See Kawashima (2012b), Nurtawab (2012), and Gallop (2012) for further details of this manuscript. After these papers were published, this Qur'an manuscript was transferred from the Presidential Museum and Library of the Philippines to the National Museum of the Philippines in Manila. In 2015, this Qur'an manuscript was declared as a National Cultural Treasure. It is exhibited at present on the third level of the Museum of the Filipino People in the Archaeological Building of the National Museum.
- 40 Interview with Usman Imam, Dec. 4, 2003, Marawi City. See also Pandi and Macarapat (n.d.: 41).
- 41 The italicized part is in Arabic.

- 42 The year signified by the Arabic letter *dal* in the eight-year cycle in the Muslim octaval calendar.
- 43 The meaning of the last sentence is unclear.

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