THE ROLE OF ULAMA UPON ISLAMIC EDUCATION WITHIN THE AREA OF WESTERN AND SOUTHERN ACEH (A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF TEUNGKU CHIK DIRUNDENG)

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ABSTRACT

This study described the role of ulama upon the development of religious aspect within the area of western and southern Aceh, which focused on a leading figure, Teungku Chik Dirundeng. He has significant influence on the spread of Islam within the area of southern and western Aceh. Teungku Dirundeng was also known as a persistence hero who fights the colonialization of Dutch within the coastal area of western Aceh. The study applied qualitative approach by mean of ethnographic method, which employed three data collecting technics: interview, observation, and document recording. The result led to the conclusion the Teungku Dirundeng was a scholar who had great contribution upon the development of Islam in coastal area of southern and western Aceh. It made the people on this area really respected him, even people of Meulaboh, West Aceh, put his name as the name of road and as the name of tertiary Islamic education institution.

Keywords: Teungku Chik Dirundeng, Ulama, Islamic Education and Development

INTRODUCTION

Aceh was the greatest Islamic kingdom within the Indonesian archipelago. Since the beginning of the era of Islamic kingdom, Aceh had become a sovereign kingdom with great contribution for Islamic development in this archipelago. Therefore, this area was well-known as Serambi Mekkah (the terrace of Mecca) and Bumi Iskandar Muda (the land of Iskandar Muda), which became the center for Islamic development by the existence of Islamic scholars and their literatures work (Muhammad, 2009: 81).
According historical report and researches, several Islamic scholars of Aceh even had great contribution on the development of Islam in Indonesia, such as Hamzah Fansury, Syamsudin Sumtrani, Abdurrauf As-Singkili, and Nuruddin Ar-Raniry. Aceh also had many competent Islamic scholars such as Teungku Chik di Anjong, Teungku Chik Tanoh Abee, Teungku Chik Kuta Karang, Teungku Chik Dirundeng, Teungku Chik di Tiro, Teungku Chik Krueng Kale, Teungku Chik Pante Kulu, Teungku Chik Muhammad Amin, Teungku Chik Blang Peria, Teungku Chik Dayah Cut, Teungku Chik Pante Geulima, Teungku Chik Lam Jabat, Teungku Chik Lam Birah, Teungku Chik di Leupe, and so on.

The people of Aceh considered those scholars as the noble people who mastered and taught knowledge of Islam for the people (El Anshary, 2011:17). The work of those scholars could be traced through their work, particularly in the form of book and literature, which still became references for Islamic knowledge. Ulama was also considered as a person with comprehensive knowledge and plenary obedience upon Islamic tenet, then the people acknowledge the ulama as pious person (Suyanta, 2008:175-176).

The contribution of ulama upon the development of Islam could be observed by their effort in establishing dayah and zawiyah (traditional Islamic institution) in their region to serve their role as warasatul ambiya. This institution became the center of transformation, socialization, and internalization of Islamic values, as well as the place to preserve and to teach Islam (Suyanta, 2008:178). There were several famous dayah, such as dayah Cot Kala in Bayeun, East Aceh, which was established by Teungku Chik Muhammad Amin, dayah Tanoh Abee that was established by Syeikh Idrus Bayyan from Baghdad and now managed by the family of Teungku Chik Tanoh Abee,dayah Dirundeng that was established by Teungku Abdullah or famous as Teungku Chik Dirundeng, and any other dayah within the area of Aceh (Syah Putra,2015).

Teungku Abdullah, or famous as Teungku Dirundeng, was known for his contribution on the development of Islamic knowledge within the coastal area of western and southern Aceh. He taught Islamic knowledge in the area of Rundeng, Singkil until Meulaboh, West Aceh.

**BIOGRAPHY OF TEUNGKU CHIK DIRUNDENG**

Teungku Dirundeng, known for his contribution on the development of Islamic knowledge within the coastal area of western and southern Aceh,
was originally named Abdullah (Hardi, 1993:40). There were several opinions regarded his birth. *The Encyclopedia of Great Acehnese Ulama* stated that Teungku Dirundeng was born near 1803, there was also opinion stating that his birth was unknown since there was no existing evidence upon it (Interview with Teungku Abdurrahman, April 23, 2014). The factor causing it was the prohibition on publishing such evidence during the colonial era of Dutch in Aceh. Since Teungku Dirundeng was a hero fighting the invasion of Dutch, the colonial government hides the fact about it from the people, and finally such fact disappeared from the society (Erwansyah, 2006).

Teungku Dirundeng was born in a noble family since his parents inherited the bloodline of *ulama* in Aceh Besar; several people told that his ancestors was originated from Aceh Besar. He was born in the village of Cot Mancang, Blang Bintang, Aceh Besar. His parents’ name remained unknown.

Tengku Abdullah was an *ulama*, who actively performed Islamic education at several of his *dayah*, located in Rundeng, Singkil, South Aceh, and West Aceh. He had comprehensive knowledge on the matter of *qawliyah* that was stated in the Holy Quran, and also the matter of *kawniyah* that was inferences about the existence of this realm. It made him got the title of *Teungku Chik*; the title referred that he was a great teacher with plenary comprehension on Islamic knowledge.

In the *Encyclopedia of Great Acehnese Ulamas*, it was stated that Teungku Abdullah or also known as Teungku Dirundeng lived within the period of several Sultans of Aceh, there were Sultan Alaiddin Djohar Alam Syah (1217-1245 H = 1802-1830 A.D), Sultan Muhammad Daud Syah (1245-1257 H = 1830-1841 A.D), Sultan Alaiddin Sulaiman Ali Iskandar Syah (1257-1287 H= 1839-1841 A.D), Sultan Alaiddin Ibrahim Mansur Syah (1257-1287 H = 1841-1870 A.D), Sultan Alaiddin Mahmud Syah II (1287-1290 H = 1870-1874 A.D), and Sultan Alaiddin Muhammad Daud Syah II (1302-1357 H =1884-1939 A.D).

On the time of war between the Dutch and the Kingdom of Aceh, many *ulama* in Aceh declared the war against the invaders. Their fight was called as *jihad fi sabilllah* (the holy fight against the enemy of religion). The war itself was known as *prang sabil* (the holy war). The *ulama* participating in this war was called *ulama prang sabil*. Among them were Teungku Muhammad Saman di Tiro, Teungku Muhammad Amin di Tiro,

During this war, ulama had significant influence in mobilizing people of Aceh to fight against colonialism. Along with their students, ulama set the troops to fight the invaders. During this time, Teungku Chik Dirundeng leave Aceh Besar and Banda Aceh for the village of Rundeng in Singkil, West Aceh, where nowadays was in the area of Subulussalam. The he established a dayah as a place for education of Islamic knowledge, as well as headquarter to fight the Dutch.

After the city of Banda Aceh had fallen to the Dutch after the Great War that took a general, Kohler, as a victim on April 14, 1983, the Dutch suffered a loss during the war in the field of Baiturrahman Mosque in Banda Aceh. The Military Governor of Dutch the retreated the troop back to Batavia. Then, in the December of 1983, the Dutch invaded Aceh again with the support of army, which three times stronger than the first aggression.

In this war, the Dutch could occupy the area of Baiturrahman mosque and the palace of the Kingdom of Aceh. This situation made the Sultan of Aceh retreated his army to the area of Lueng Bata, then came to the jungle of Aceh. The capital city of the Kingdom of Aceh was also moved to Lamlo. The special force of Dutch, Marchauusse, continued the invasion and swarming to the Kingdom of Aceh that forced Sultan to retreat to several areas in Aceh: Geumpang, Tunong Meuko, Tunong Gunong Meuh, Tunong Seumantok, Gayo, and finally Sultan surrendered in Panton Labu biting the of Krueng Jambo Ayee, North Aceh in 1904. However, several armies of the kingdom still fought in the deep jungle of Aceh. During this time, Teungku Abdullah, or also known as Teungku Chik Dirundeng, still fought the aggressor by applying guerrilla strategy. He and his loyal students decided to move to the coastal area of western and southern Aceh, where was considered more conducive and safe for them. After long march, he arrived in the area of Dama Tutong, in the sub district of Sawang, South Aceh. He consolidated his troop in this area. The people of this area knew him as Teungku Dama Tutong.

Teungku Dirundeng also taught religious knowledge during his settlement in Tutong by establishing religious discussion (Teuku Dedek et
al, 2015:65-67). He also served as a preacher for Islamic knowledge, who introduced Islam in Aceh during 1872-1874. In Tutong, he also set an attack to the Dutch occupancy in Tapaktuan, South Aceh in 1877. After this attack, he moved again to the area of Meukek, South Aceh to consolidate resources for *prang sabil*. In Meukek, he also established a *dayah* or *zawiyah*, and he was known as Teungku Di Meukek. In this era, he also built a *dayah* in the village of Rundeng, in Singkil; this area nowadays belonged to the city of Subulussalam. He made the area of Rundeng as a famous place for Islamic education.

The Dutch really hated Teungku Di Meukek, or also known as Teungku Chik Dirundeng, because many people came to Rundeng to study Islam (Istiqamatunnisak, 2017). Rundeng became destination to study Islam since the facilities and infrastructure of Islamic educational institution there was considered good, and the people of Rundeng was also kind to the learners from outside their area. The people of Rundeng even invited Islamic scholars outside their area; they prepared daily necessities for the scholars who taught Islam in Rundeng. The Islamic values were reflected and implemented in every aspect of society in Rundeng (Ondang Jaya, 2015:16).

In 1976, Dutch expanded its territory to the coastal area of West Aceh and occupied Meulaboh easily. Knowing this fact, Teungku Chik Dirundeng prepared his students mentally and physically to attack the Dutch in Meulaboh. After the preparation and the provision was completed, Teungku Chik Dirundeng left for Meulaboh to attack the Dutch (Teuku Dedek et al, 2015:122).

In Meulaboh, Teungku Chik Dirundeng set his headquarter on eastern area of this city since this location was considered as a strategic place. He built his barrack at the village of Tanoh Darat, in the sub district of Johan Pahlawan, West Aceh. This location was also known as Dolog or Ujong Kuta. The word of *kuta* referred to the place where Teungku Chik Dirundeng settled and taught the Islamic knowledge to the people of West Aceh and for those who came to learn it. At that time, the village of Tanoh Darat was considered as an area of Rundeng (The Ensyclopedia of Great Acehnese Ulamas, 2010:50).

During his settlement in Gampong Darat, Teungku Chik Dirundeng also established *dayah* or *zawiyah* as a place for education. Lots of people in this area came to learn about Islamic knowledge at his *dayah*. He taught
the knowledge of Islam that had been suited to adapt the local culture of the people of West Aceh, and he also guided the people in practicing Islam in daily life (Interview with Abu Syik, April 14, 2017). Teungku Chik Dirundeng then possessed the important position among people of West Aceh, since his Islamic educational institutions had been developed to be centers for Islamic studies in West Aceh.

Besides establishing Islamic educational institutions, Teungku Chik Dirundeng also built several fortresses in West Aceh. He built Kuta Manggi fortress in the sub district of Drien Rampak, which nowadays was located approximately 300 meters northeast of the Regency Office of West Aceh. He also built the second fortress, which was located 1200 meters south of the first fortress or nowadays it was located 200 meters of patriot burial site, and the people knew it as the fortress of Kuta Teungku Dirundeng (Erwansyah, 2006:1).

Since the position and influence of Tengku Chik Dirundeg upon the people of West Aceh, the Dutch provoked Hulubalang (chiefs of district) to fight him. Even the Dutch supplied them with the required resources, such as fund and weapons. Hulubalang hated Tengku Chik Dirundeng for his influence, and the people of Aceh supported him to fight the colonialist.

The Dutch avoided direct fight to Tengku Chik Dirundeng since he was really strong and got support from local residents of West Aceh. Knowing the fact that Hulubalang in West Aceh also hated Teungku Chik Dirundeng, the Dutch set the strategy to fight Teungku Chik Dirundeng with the help of Hulubalang.

Tengku Chik Dirundeng was estimated to be killed in a war around 1888 B.C, while he was 85 years old. He was killed in a great war to fight Dutch in the night of 27 Ramadhan. He made an ambushed to the fortress of Dutch, while still praying for his God. However, he was killed in the night of ambush, and the Dutch took his body to the ocean with a ship. Nobody knows where his body is buried (Teuku Dedek et al, 2015. The Encyclopedia of Great Acehnese Ulamas, 2010).

**TEUNGKU CHIK DIRUNDENG AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS ASPECT**

Teungku Chik Dirundeng had significant position upon religious aspect within the people living in coastal area of western and southern Aceh. The people respected him that his considerations, opinions, and
judgments became reference in determining certain matters. It occurred not only on religious aspect, but also in other issues including politics (fight against the invasion of Dutch).

His role and position within the society reflected that ulama was not only obeyed for the religious decisions, but also for other social aspects (Suri, 2004). Teungku Dirundeng established his role as ulama in creating good relationship pattern to the people. He built several Islamic educational institutions, as well as acted as motivator, inspiratory, catalyzer, and mobilizer of the people in every aspect of life. It was proven by his role during the war of prang sabil against the Dutch colonization.

Teungku Dirundeng was also the pioneer in teaching, developing, and spreading Islam in the coastal area of western and northern Aceh. He had established several dayah in the area of Singkil and Meulaboh. Furthermore, his institution in Rundeng, Singkil, became the center for Islamic education that made lot of students came to his dayah to learn Islam. This dayah was named after his name, dayah Tengku Chik Dirundeng, which brought positive impact toward the development of intellectual aspect, particularly on religious knowledge, of the people of West Aceh.

One of heroes of Aceh, Teuku Umar, was also student of Teuku Chik Dirundeng. Teuku Umar learned from Teungku Chik Dirundeng since he was a child. He got education about Islam that was based on contain of Al-Quran and Al-Hadist. Teungku Chik Dirundeng taught Teuku Umar reading Al-Quran since the introduction for the Arabic letter, reading syllable, until reading Al-Quran as whole (Padila, 2010). Teuku Umar was a proof that the education performed by Teungku Chik Dirundeng introduced the people of West Aceh to the nationalism, and asked them to fight the colonization.

As mentioned before, Teungku Chik Dirundeng had established several Islamic educational institution in the coastal area of western and southern Aceh. These institutions not only served as the center of religious education, but also prepared the cadres of fight against the colonialist. Snouck Hurgronje, who came to Aceh in 19th century, witnessed that many dayah in Aceh served both function (Burhanuddin, 2012).

One of the Islamic educational institution established by Teungku Chik Dirundeng was Dayah Dirundeng. It was established in the area of Rundeng Tuha, which now located on the village of Rundeng at the sub district of Johan Pahlawan in Meulaboh, West Aceh (Syah Putra, 2015).
This *dayah* was well established as an Islamic educational institution, and had contribution to the fight against Dutch in Meulaboh (Interview with Rosmah, April 27, 2014). On the other hand, Tengku Dirundeng also had great contribution to the development of Islam by establishing place for worship. He built the mosque of Al-Muqaddas in the village of Gampong Ujong Tanah Datar in order to develop Islam in the area of Meulaboh.

His effort on developing religious aspect made the coastal area of western and southern Aceh as the center of development and learning about Islamic knowledge. His institutions brought significant contributions for the development of religious side of the people living in West Aceh and South Aceh. Many students of his institution even became the hero in war against Dutch colonization, such as Teuku Umar.

However, the condition of Dayah Dirundeng recently was quite different to condition in the era of Teungku Dirundeng. It was caused since the colonization impact toward the development of this *dayah*, also there was no leaders of this *dayah* had capabilities in managing it like Tengku Chik Dirundeng. It was also possibly caused by the great influence of Tengku Chik Dirundeng as the founder of this institution that his death brought negative impact to the institution itself. This institution seemed to be family inheritance, which perhaps did not manage as the former objectives as it firstly was established (Amiruddin, 2013).

**THE ROLE OF TEUNGKU CHIK DIRUNDENG IN THE WAR AGAINST COLONIALISM**

Tengku Chik Dirundeng also became one of commander and leader of Acehnese people in the war against Dutch Colonialism. This war was considered as a holy war for Acehnese People, since protecting homeland was a holy duty in the Islamic tenet. Teungku Chik Dirundeng along with his students and follower fought the colonial.

Teungku Chik Dirundeng also fought against the ally of Dutch, *Hulubalang*. *Hulubalang* actually was leaders of Acehnese society. They hated *ulama*, like Teungku Chik, since the *ulama* got support from the people of Aceh. It made the *hulubalang* was considered as *cuak* (provocateur and traitor) bringing danger for the people of Aceh. Teungku Chik Dirundeng fought against the Dutch and *Hulubalang* in several area, such as in Meulaboh, Meukek, Dama Tutong, and Rundeng, along with his effort in teaching Islam for the people of West Aceh (Teuku Dedek et al, 2015).
The Dutch was really angry to Teungku Chik Dirundeng because the people of Aceh respected and obeyed him. His charisma and preaches was considered provoking the people of Aceh to fight colonialism. Thus, the Dutch provoked Hulubalang to help in war against Teungku Chik Dirundeng.

The colonial of Dutch was aware that the Islamic educational institutions established by Tengku Chik Dirundeng to educate people about the danger of colonialism. Therefore, the colonial tried to destruct these institutions in order to weaken the influence of Teungku Chik Dirundeng upon the people of Aceh. The aggression by the Dutch affected the development of dayah as the center of Islamic education during that time. The process of teaching and learning could not be performed well, since ulama as the teachers in dayah also used it as headquarters and fortifications to set strategies to fight the Dutch. Most of students in a dayah, or also known as santri, also participated in the war (Hanafiah, 2014: 17).

Teungku Chik Dirundeng inspired the people of Aceh and his students that the war against the Dutch was a holy war, or called prang sabil. He announced that this war became the obligation for each Muslim since the Dutch was considered as kafir (nonbelievers) that invaded the homeland of Acehnese people. Thus, the war against them was in accordance to the Islamic law. Teungku Chik Dirundeng and other ulama in Aceh delivered the massage of war against the colonial through their preaching to the people (Abdullah, 2000:242).

During this time, Hikayat Prang Sabil (The Tale of Holy War) was recited at dayah and the house of people of Aceh before them going to the war. In the areas occupied by the Dutch, people read this tale in secret. In order to deliver the message of this tale to the people of Aceh, it was not only recited and read, but it was also copied and sent all over Aceh. This tale had the longer version, yet the most common was the shot version of it (Hasjm, 1992: 83). Teungku Chik Dirundang also used the tale besides his preaching to inspire the people of Aceh.

The sense of holy war was gradually grown within the people of Aceh who were close to the ulama. After Hikayat Prang Sabil, an Acehnese literature telling about holy war and heaven for those who fight in the path of truth, was recited, the people listening it pledged to fight against the Dutch (Hasjm, 1997: 197). Moreover, most of ulama were also
commanders and leader in war against colonialism (Mujiburrahman, 2014:28). Teungku Chik Dirundeng as one of charismatic ulama in Aceh also took this role. He established dayah not only as the center as education, but also as the place to set strategies for war and the place to doctrine the people by reciting Hikayat Prang Sabil in order to evoke the spirit to fight colonialism. This movement and effort made the Dutch frustrated since they had tried many ways to eliminate the spirit of people of Aceh, but it still failed (Khozin, 2015:5).

The Islamic values embedded in the mind of people of Aceh built the distinctive characters, persistence and endurance, which finally grew the patriotism in the war against colonialism (Saputra, 2012). The role of ulama in motivating, inspiring, and mobilizing people to fight was also admitted by Snouck Hurgronje (Agustiningsih, 2007:80).

In his struggle to fight Dutch, Teungku Chik Dirundeng also built several fortresses to defend his position of enemies’ attack in Meulaboh. He built them in strategic location. The fortresses built by him were the fortress of Gampong Rundeng, the fortress of Nibong, the fortress of Padang Seurahet, the fortress of Sijaloh, the fortress of Manggi, the fortress of Ujong Gampong, dan the fortress of Kuta Asan. Teungku Chik Dirundeng became the high commander for these fortresses (Teuku Dedek et al, 2015:220).

These fortifications and tactics in war was set based on the spirit of holy war. Through his speeches and preaching, he announced that the war was an obligation to defend the nation from unbelievers. Thus, every Muslim living in Aceh must fight with any resources they had, including wealth, power, even life. Islamic tenet stated that everything they sacrificed would be rewarded by 700 times better. It was stated by a hadist (statement) by the prophet of Muhammad p.b.u.h “For those guarded a day in a war, guarded fortress, escorting the army of Islam to the war, fought in a war, or slept in a battlefield would receive the growing rewards from God; they would free of anguish until the day after” (Abdullah, 2000 : 224).

Lot of Acehnese people came to dayah of Teungku Chik Dirundeng to get education about Islam. Because of his speeches about holy war, the people that firstly came just for learning became motivated and provided support for the fight against Dutch. The Acehnese traditional education that was given in dayah also built unique relationship between teacher and students; the students still obeyed the teacher even though they had
graduated of institution. Then, the lesson about holy war against unbeliever would always be in their mind after their learning time in the dayah (Abdullah, 2000, 250).

Such unique relationship made the students of Teungku Chik Dirundeng supported and helped him while he fought against the Dutch colonialism. This fight even made him killed in a war while attacking Dutch in a thundery night. His body was taken by the enemies to the sea that nobody knew his burial place.

To remind the meritorious service of Teungku Chik Dirundeng upon this country, his named was used for several places in West Aceh, such as road, foundations, also the State Academy on Islamic Studies of Teungku Dirundeng in Meulaboh. Teungku Chik Dirundeng was an Acehnese ulama who also participated in war against colonialism of Dutch. His fight in guerilla, even in the middle of jungle, had motivated lots of Acehnese people to fight in this holy war (Majid, 2014:182). Teungku Chik Dirundeng mobilized the people of Aceh along with his students in the war. People of all ages with their own consciousness fight the colonial.

The people of West Aceh really respected Teungku Chik Dirundeng that several places in West Aceh were named after his name.

1. Tengku Chik Dirundeng Road was located in the village of Rundeng, sub district of Johan Pahlawan, West Aceh. It was named after the name of Teungku Chik Dirundeng because he had settled here and established dayah Dirudeng. This dayah became the center for Islamic education and the place where he mobilize people to fight the Dutch. Moreover, the area of Rundeng used to be the center of civilization and education at the previous time (Interview with Abu Syik, April 27, 2014).

2. The foundation of Tengku Chik Dirundeng located in Meulaboh, West Aceh. It was owned by the government of West Aceh which aimed in establishing private tertiary educational institution. It was established by the legal document of public notary Homongan Silitonga at August 29, 1984 in Banda Aceh. This foundation had established two tertiary educational institutions that became the price of people living in West and South Aceh: the university of Teuku Umar and institute on Islamic studies of Teungku Dirundeng. However, the name of this foundation had
been changed to the Educational Foundation of Teuku Umar Johan Pahlawan and both universities had been converted to be state-owned institution in 2014 (Syah Putra, 2015:11-12).

3. State Institute on Islamic studies of Teungku Dirundeng located in Meulaboh, West Aceh. It was established in 1985, which was initiated by *ulama* in West Aceh with the support of the department of religious affair (now the ministry of religious affair), the Board of Indonesian *Ulama* West Aceh Chapter, and the Corps of Alumnae of State Institute of Islamic Studies of Ar-Raniry. It formerly was *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah* (institute on Islamic educational studies) of Teungku Dirundeng. In 2003, this name was altered to be State Institute on Islamic studies of Teungku Dirundeng to remind the people about Tengku Dirundeng as the pioneer of Islamic education and his meritorious service to the West Aceh. Then, in 2014, based on The Letter of Decision by the Minister of Religious Affair of Indonesia No.31 of 2014, which was legalized on September 19, 2014, this institution status was converted to be state-owned institution (Syah Putra, 2015:12-13, 48).

**SUMMARY**

Teungku Chik Dirundeng was one of leading *ulama* in the coastal area of western and southern Aceh. His given name was Teungku Abdullah, yet he was also known as Teungku Dama Tutong and Tengku Di Meukek. He had great influences and merit upon the development of religious aspect within the coastal area of western and southern Aceh, particularly through several *dayah* that he established in the area of South Aceh, Rundeng (Singkil), and West Aceh. Furthermore, he was really persistent in fighting the Dutch colonization by the spirit of holy war along with his students and the people of Aceh.
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