Comparative Study of Southeast Asian Kitabs:
Papers of the Workshop held at Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan on October 23, 2011

Edited by
SUGAHARA Yumi
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Preface

This Working Paper consists of the edited papers which were presented at the workshop “Comparative Study of Southeast Asian Kitabs” held at Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan on October 23, 2011, and organized by the research group on “Southeast Asian Muslims and Modernity” of the Center for Islamic Studies of the university. Added to these papers is the text of “Some early Islamic posters from the Netherlands East Indies”, a lecture given by Dr. Nico Kaptein (Leiden University) at Sophia University on October 22, 2011, which was jointly organized by the Institute of Asian Cultures and the Center for Islamic Studies of the university.

In 2010 Group 2 of Sophia University Islamic Studies (SIAS), one of the centers of the National Institutes for the Humanities (NIHU) Program for Islamic Area Studies (IAS) in Japan, published a catalogue of Southeast Asian kitabs collected for the library of Sophia University (Kawashima, Midori, et al. eds. 2010. A Provisional Catalogue of Southeast Asian Kitabs in the Sophia University Collection, Tokyo: NIHU Program). The word kitab refers to a particular kind of textbooks on Islam in Southeast Asia, written in Arabic script in Arabic or a local Southeast Asian language. The kitabs listed in the catalogue were collected in Indonesia (Banda Aceh, Crebon, Jakarta, Kudus, Medan, Pekalongan, Pontianak, Semarang, Sukabumi, Surabaya and Yogyakarta), Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur and Malacca), Singapore, Brunei (Bandar Seri Begawan) and the Philippines (Manila and Marawi City). The collecting of kitabs is presently continued in other areas of Southeast Asia such as Georgetown (Penang), Kota Baru and Banjarmasin. In 2011 also Arabic-Malay kitabs published in Cairo, Egypt, were collected. New catalogues covering these recent acquisitions are planned.

A third activity in addition to the collecting and describing of kitabs is to organize international workshops on the comparative study of Southeast Asian kitabs, for research and exchange of information with researchers both from Japan and overseas. The present SIAS Working Paper No. 14 is the result of the first of these international workshops. Five papers were presented by members of Group 2 of SIAS. They can be detailed as follows.

Ervan Nurtawab addresses problems of translation of the Qur’an into Malay, Javanese and Sundanese. He points out that the preference either to choose
a translation or to retain the original word demonstrates a strategy of the ulamas for spreading Islam in Southeast Asia. Sugahara Yumi's paper examines the influences of the publishing business that flourished from the 19th to 20th centuries for the diversity of kitabs in Indonesian society, with special attention for the different places of publication. Oman Fathuralham reviews the kitabs collected in Cairo. He discusses the genres of the kitabs and authors including their origins, and draws the attention to some noteworthy kitabs. Hattori Mina presents a preliminary report of her research on learning methods applied to kitabs in Islamic schools (pondok pesantren) in West Java. Kawashima Midori introduces the kitabs of Lanno, Mindanao, the Philippines, printed in the 1930-50s, preceding the so-called "Islamic Resurgence", discussing the characteristics of these kitabs from the point of the authors, genres, printing technology and institutions involved. In his lecture, added to the papers of the workshop, Nico Kaptein deals with Islamic posters printed at the lithograph printing office of Sayyid Ullman (1822-1914), Batavia, designed for conveying religious messages. He points to the fact that posters, like kitabs, also provide information on religious history.

I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Willem van der Molen (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, the Netherlands) and Prof. Cyril Velthuij (Sophia University) who offered editorial assistance. Thanks are due to researchers who participated in the workshop and the lecture, and also to the institutions and individuals who generously supported and cooperated in this project. Finally, I would like to express my hope that the Kitab Collection of Sophia University will continue to inspire research on Islam in Southeast Asia.

SUGAHARA Yumi

When the Text Meets Its Local Contexts: Lexical Equivalents in Southeast Asian Qur'anic Translations

Ervan NURTAWAB

1. Introduction

The Qur'an states that the Prophet Muhammad who speaks in his clan language, which is Arabic, has been sent for all humankind. Yet, the Qur'an is not revealed in all human languages. It is written and spoken in very clear Arabic, which accounts for the attempt to understand it through translations. For this reason, translations play a crucial role in making Islamic teachings and values spread far beyond Arabic borders. Moslems pray in Arabic and recite the Arabic Qur'an. Aside from that, not surprisingly, Moslems living in non-Arabic speaking countries and who do not speak Arabic need translations as a medium to understand the Qur'an.

Moslems have a long historical tradition of translating the Qur'an, which could be traced to the early Islamic period. Nevertheless, we have no adequate information as to whether the Prophet himself carried out the translation of the Qur'an. However we have the story of one companion, namely Salman the Persian who translated the Fatiha, which is the first Qur'anic sura, into Persian. The fact is that since then Muslims have been developing and producing hundreds or even thousands, of works on Qur'anic translations in almost all languages, throughout the world.

The meaning of the Qur'an could be fairly well presented in non-Arabic languages. Yet, the attempt to find lexical equivalents during the translation process is believed to be the most difficult task facing a Qur'anic translator. For this reason, not only does the translator pay attention to the two languages, but also to the two cultures in which the Qur'an has been interpreted and practiced. In Southeast Asia, the tradition of translating the Qur'an as a whole had begun as early as the 17th century, when Abd al-Rauf al-Jawi Al-Fansuri made the first Malay Qur'anic exegesis in 1675. This has been regularly reprinted since 1844. In the following centuries, Qur'anic translations have been increasingly found in other Southeast Asian languages, such as Javanese. This article examines lexical equivalents in Southeast Asian Qur'anic translations with special reference to two important works on Quranic translations in Malay and Javanese, that is, the Tierjuman al-Mustafa [TM] by 'Abd al-Ra'uf and al-Ibriz [TI] by Bisri Mustofa, currently seen in the Sophia University library. For comparison, I also attach the