

# THE BASES FOR THE FORMATION AND GROWTH OF SHIISM FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT IN INDONESIA

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Historical evidence and various other evidence show that Shiites entered Indonesia at the same time as Islam did. The great remnants of the Shiites in the past show that not only did the Shiites have a serious presence in this country, but also a period of strong political power to the extent that the Shiites ruled some areas in the past. The cultural, religious and political contexts of the formation and growth of Shiism in this country from the past to the present all show the serious presence of Shiites in this region. In the contemporary era, the most important phenomenon that has created suitable conditions for the growth of Shiism in this country is the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which has had beneficial effect on the people of this country. This article seeks to examine the contexts of Shiite growth from the past to the present. The author has studied and researched mainly this issue in the field and by analysing his findings in this country, he has proved the major effects of the Islamic Revolution of Iran on it.

**Keywords:** *Shia, Indonesia, Government, Islamic Revolution*

## ***Introduction***

The vast country of Indonesia is the largest country in the Islamic world today. It has long been an example of interfaith and inter-religious coexistence. Indonesia, the world's largest Archipelagic state, is located in Southeast Asia with more than seventeen thousand small and large islands with an approximate area of 1.595.958,56 km (Musavi Bojnurdi 2001: X/346). And, after independence, it was called "Indonesia". Jakarta, is the capital of the country,

which was originally a small port city, but now has an area of 670 square kilometres, and a population of nine million people and is one of Indonesia's most important economic centres. Although the island of Java makes up only seven percent of the country's territory, it alone accounts for about 60 percent of the country's population (Musavi Bojnurdi, *ibid.*). The population of Indonesia, according to the statistics of July of the year 2020 is 267.026.366 people.

The official religions in this country are: Islam, Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism), Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. 86.1% of Indonesians are Muslims and the rest are followers of other religions. Most of the Muslims in this country are Sunni – and in jurisprudence, followers of Shafi'i jurisprudence and Ash'arites in their beliefs, Ash'arites are the same. At least, two million Muslims in this country are Shiites, all of whom are considered Imami Shiites.

The special climatic territorial and spiritual characteristics of the people of this region have caused led to the coexistence of different religious tribes. This is confirmed by the many relics and Shiite culture and rituals that exist within the Indonesian people's culture. The Shiites, who came to this country with the arrival of Islam in this country, in the past were able to go as far as ruling over some parts of Indonesia. It is true.

Shiites went through various periods in this country in the past. Nowadays, the growth of Shiites is mainly the result of the last forty years, i.e. the period after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and the Islamic Revolution has had amazing effects on the Indonesian people. The reception of the works of prominent personalities of the Islamic Revolution among the people, the growth of rationalism in the social and cultural spheres, and the great desire of the educated people of this country to know Iran and the Islamic Revolution are examples of these effects. It is important to know the basic contexts fundamental grounds related to the growth of Shiism in Indonesia, especially after the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The present study explores the contexts of Shiite growth and expansion in Indonesia.

### ***1. The Arrival and Spread of Shiism in Indonesia***

According to some scholars such as Abu Bakr Aceh (Aceh 1965: 27), the date of the arrival of the Shiites in Indonesia coincided with the beginning of the Islamic call in Indonesia and the arrival of Muslims in the archipelago from the sixth century AH onwards. The existence of various documents and antiquities such as tombstones, and inscriptions, etc., have led them to believe that the history of Shiism in Indonesia was formed with the beginning of the arrival of Islam in this region.

These works indicate that Shiism existed in this country at that time. The famous travelogues of Ibn Battuta, Marco Polo, Safari, Muhammad Rumi and also Mas'udi addressed this issue in the book *Muruj-ud-Dhahab* (Promoters of Gold). These works, which are the basic sources for discussing Islamic history and studies in Southeast Asia, point to the presence of Shiites and the formation of a Shiite government in parts of Southeast Asia, such as the islands of Sumatra, Aceh, Pasay and Malacca.

Some historians have also said that Shiism became popular among the people of this land in the seventh and eighth centuries (Azumardi 1995: 2). They stated that two saints among Indonesia's nine famous saints (known as the *Wali Songo*), Sunan Kalijajga and Sheikh Scitijchenar, performed Shiite religious rites and ceremonies. The reputation of the nine saints is that they were the pioneers in bringing Islam to this country. Each of these saints has well-known shrines and shrines that are respected by the people and are places for remembrance, recourse and gathering of Muslims throughout the year (ibid.).

Contemporary Indonesian historian and professor at Sharif Hidayatullah University, Professor Jayadiningrait, believes that Islam was introduced to the land by Shiites. He believes that a group of Shiites in this country today are the descendants of Muhammad ibn Ali and Hassan ibn Ali ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) who fled other countries to save their lives and settled in this land.

The leader of these Shiite emigrants who migrated to Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Malaya and the Solomon Islands after many struggles with the Ibadiyya Kharijites is Ahmad ibn Isa ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as), nicknamed the emigrant. Some of those immigrants married the daughters of kings and local rulers and, in some cases, rose to high positions and even monarchy. The families of these people who are still present in Indonesia are all Imami Shias/Shiite Imams. In addition, in the year 717 AH a group of Iranian merchant ships, which included thirty-five ships, landed a large number of Shiite missionaries on the shores of this country and brought them to different parts of the land (ibid.).

Today, although the exact number of Shiites in this country is not provided and their number is never officially announced, but according to estimates by reputable scientific centres, the number of Shiites in the country is estimated at about one percent of Muslims, having reached several million people. Many Shiites keep their religion a secret to protect their own safety and the health of themselves and that of their families. Unfortunately, in the past decades, the Shiites in Indonesia have faced serious sectarian problems and therefore refrain from expressing their Shiite beliefs everywhere (Asadi 2017–2019).

### *1. 1. Areas of Shiite presence in the past*

As mentioned, the date of the arrival of Shiites in Indonesia coincides with the arrival of Islam in this country. According to some historians, the place of origin of Islam in this country is the island of Sumatra (Aceh 1965: 27). Thus, the starting point of Shiite entry into this country is the island of Sumatra. The many relics of Shiites on the island testify to the widespread presence of Shiites on the island in the past.

Dr Abu Bakr Aceh emphasizes that the first place in Indonesia to which Islam came was Aceh and the Shiite and Shaf'i religions were the common religions there (ibid.).

Areas of presence of deceased Shiites are reported in the following provinces:

#### 1. 1. 1. Shiites in Sumatra

The people of this island were followers of Hinduism before the advent of Islam and the rule of this region was also that of the Hindus. In the year 82 AH (717 AD), a caravan consisting of about 33 ships from Persia (Iran) headed by a person named Zahid, was on their way to China and included a caravan of Shiite religious missionaries. It stopped on the island and religious missionaries preached Islam (ibid.).

Therefore, the first point of Shiite presence in Indonesia, according to historical evidence, can be considered to be Sumatra, and especially Aceh and Perlak. In the Perlak area, the Shiite government, which had been based in this area for many years, caused the spread of Shiites in these areas.

#### 1. 1. 2. Shiites in the Pasai region

After the bloody clashes in Perlak, which led to the defeat of the Shiite government, the Shiites migrated from Perlak to the Pasai region. Shiites who immigrated to Pasai were, after many years, able to participate in the Pasai's reign over Pasai after many years. A Shiite named Ariabakui Maha Raja Ahmad Permala was elected Prime Minister during the reign of Queen Nahrasiya Rwangсахadio. He is said to have been a fanatical Shiite who used to treat Sunni scholars particularly harshly and, according to some, killed forty Sunni scholars who used to oppose him.

This led to clashes between the Sunnis led by the husband of the ruling queen and the Shiites led by Ahmad Permala, the queen's prime minister. At the end of the bloody conflict, the Sunnis, with the help of Sultan Mahmood the 2<sup>nd</sup> who ruled Aceh, were able to defeat the Shias and Ahmad Permala

also got killed. He is reported to have been a fanatical Shiite and to have treated Sunni scholars harshly (ibid.).

### 1. 1. 3. Shiites in Minang Kabaw

One of the areas of Shiite presence in Indonesia was the Ming Kabaw region. Ismaili Shiites ruled the area for about three hundred years. In the early nineteenth century, during Portuguese rule, their rule was overthrown by the emerging Wahhabis in a patriarchal war.

During Shiite rule in Ming Kabaw, Shiites established a high school in the city of Ulakan, headed by Burhanuddin I, who came from Aceh. In this school 1800 Shiites were taught religious sciences (Parlindungan 1974: 78–120).

### 1. 1. 4. Shiites in Java

The large island of Java has long been the centre of Indonesia and has had a special political, economic and religious status. The presence of Shiites on the island is due to the presence of nine famous Religious leaders - Saints (called: *Wali Songo*). The nine parents Saints are famous and highly respected by the people in this country. It is known that there were at least two Shiite saints among them.

The late Mohammad Asad Shahab mentions the names of six saints, all of whom he said were Shiites:

1. Maulana Ibrahim, who died in the year 822 AH in East Java. He was a religious missionary and one of Indonesia's nine patriarchs;
2. Maulana Hassan al-Din, who died in West Java, in the city of Benton;
3. Maulana Hedayatullah, who passed away in the city of Chirban in West Java;
4. Maulana Zina al-Abedin, who passed away in Central Java, the city of Damak;
5. Maulana, may God have mercy on him, Rahmatullah, who died in East Java in Surabaya;
6. Maulana Muhammad, nicknamed Bah'u'll Ainul Yaqeen, who died in East Java.

The relation lineage of all the mentioned saints goes back to Ahmad ibn Isa ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) and the names of God, Muhammad and Ali (as) are engraved on their gravestones (Shahab 2006: 42–43).

It is also noteworthy that one of the most influential missionaries in East Java was Fatima bint Maimuon. She played an important role in promoting Shiism on the island of Java. Fatima bint Maimoun passed away in 475 AH, according to 1082 AD, and her grave is located three kilometres away from the grave of Maulana Malik Ibrahim (Hasymi 1971a: 18–19).

### *1. 2. Areas of Shiite presence in the present era*

At present, Shiites are present in most of the provinces of this country. The presence of Shiites in different parts of the country is accompanied by intensity and weakness, and many Shiites are not willing to make their beliefs public due to the dominance of the Sunnis, and hence they accompany the Sunnis in their programs and ceremonies. The cities in which the Shiites have an official presence and have established official centres and institutions are: Jakarta, Bandung, Chirben, Surabaya, Jepara, Malang, Aceh, Makasar, Garut, Gambir, Bogor, Samarang, Jokja, Pakalunga, Madura, Bangil, Madan, Bukitingi, Bangkulu, Pariaman, Banmpan, Lampong, Lampung, Lampak, Kupang, Pontianak, Banjarmasin, Bali, Balikpapan, Manado, Palo, Ambon, Jayapura, etc. (Asadi 2017–2019).

## ***2. The Ground Bedrock for the Growth and Spread of Shiism in Indonesia in the Past***

If we want to examine the past context grounds of the Shiite presence in this region, we must mention two main context grounds:

### *2. 1. The political context ground of the Shiite presence in Indonesia*

Some indigenous Indonesian historians, such as Yunus Jamil (Jamil 1968: 12) and Hasymi (Hasymi 1971b: 19), believe that the Shiites were once a strong political force in Southeast Asia. In the past, i.e. the early centuries of the spread of Islam in the region, there were political clashes between Shiites and Sunnis in Nosantara (Greater Indonesia) in the early centuries of the spread of Islam in the region.

The two historians agreed that the first Islamic kingdom in Nosantara was the Perlak Dynasty, founded in 845 AD by Muslim merchants. In addition to these merchants, sailors from Persia, Saudi Arabia, and Gujarat migrated to the region, inviting the natives to Islam. They chose a Shiite named Sayyid Maulana Abdul Aziz Shah from the Quraysh tribe as their king. Thanks to his reign, some Muslims in the region became Shiites.

According to Hasymi, Shiite political rule in the Perlak era was not without controversy. During the reign of Alauddin Seyyed Maulana Abbas, the third Sunni Shiite king, the Sunnis rebelled against him. The Sunni uprising against the Shiites ended the Shiite monarchy. Then, one of the natives of Perlak named Mawla Abdul Qadir was chosen as the king and named Sultan Makhdoom Aladdin Abdul Qadir Shah Jahan. The Shiites did not remain silent after this and confronted the Sunni king with a series of secret activities.

In the king's final years, the Shiites staged riots for four years. Finally, the Shiites forced the Sunni sultan to sign a "peace agreement". According to this treaty, the kingdom of Perlak was divided into two parts: the Sunni part and the Shiite part. The coastal region was ruled by the Shiites under the rule of Sultan Aladdin Sayyid Maulana Mahmud Aladdin, Queen Ibrahim Shah. After this, with the Buddhist invasion of the Shiite kingdom, this kingdom declined and the Sunni kingdom took control of all areas.

Hasymi said that the war for power took place not only in Perlak but also in the kingdom of Samudra Pasai. The Perlak Shiites brought to power Aryia Bakui Mehrja Ahmad Marmala. He is said to have been so fanatical and extremist that he killed forty Sunni scholars in his first days. This led to a civil war between Sunnis and Shiites, and with the help of Sultan Mahmud II Aladdin Jahanshah, who ruled in Aceh, Arya Baku was assassinated, ending Shiite political rivalry with Sunnis in the region (ibid.).

He goes on to say that although the Shiites retreated politically, they continued to live in the Aceh community. He also claims that one of the famous and influential scholars of the seventeenth century named Shams al-Din al-Sumatra was also a Shiite (ibid.).

Parliamentarians claim that the kingdom of Pagaroyung was Shiite, and that all those who lived in Minangkaba from the year 1513 to 1813 were all loyal to Shiism. The Shiites were so dominant that they also established a Shiite university in Olakan. According to him, the university was under the supervision and leadership of Tuanko Laksamana Shah Bandar Burhanuddin I of Aceh, and later about 1800 Shiite clerics settled in Minang Kaba (Parlindungan 1974: 78–120).

## 2. 2. Cultural and religious context grounds

The remnants of the past show that Shiite thought and culture spread widely in this country. For example, on some weapons as is a huge old cannon in the ancient city of Bannten, the words *La Fata illa Ali, La Sayfa illa Zulfiqar* are written, and on the tombstones of some great men in the city of Aceh, such as Seyyed Hussam al-Din Husseini (d. 823 AH), Sayyid Sharif al-Din Hassan bin Ali Astarabadi (d. 823 AH) and Amir Muhammad bin



Abdul Qadir (d. 888 AH) the words *Zulfiqar, La Ilaha Illallah, Muhammadun Rasulallah, Aliyyun Waliyyullah, wa La Fata illa Ali, La Sayfa illa Zulfiqar* are written (Asadi 2017–2019: interview with Professor Hashem Adnani in 2018).

Among the people of the Indonesian archipelago, including both Sunnis and Shiites, there are many common customs and traditions that indicate the profound effects of Shiite culture on the people of this land.

One of the most mentioned and glorious ceremonies is the “Day of Ashura”. Ashura ceremonies are held in some areas of the archipelago to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (as). In the city of Aceh, the month of Muharram is called the month of Asen Osan (the month of Hassan and Hussein), and in eastern Sumatra the month of the coffin is called the month of Sura (the month of Ashura).

In this ceremony, families from Aceh cook a special dish called “Kenji Ashura”. This dish is a combination of sweets, pilawf, almonds, beans, coconut milk and sugar. This dish is cooked in “Monasah” – a place for religious ceremonies. The people of Aceh believe that the month of Ashura is a great month because the event of Karbala took place there. Also, in other parts of the archipelago, the tenth day of Muharram is called the “evil” day. Some daily activities such as marriage, male circumcision, and agriculture are not performed on this day. They believe that if these actions are taken, the person’s family will be in misery.

In the cities of Bengkulu and Pariyaman in South Sumatra, on the day of Ashura, a special mourning ceremony for Aba Abdullah Al-Hussein (as) will be held in the presence of national and military figures, as well as the mayor and the people (Asadi 2017–2019).

The ceremony starts at the beginning of Muharram and culminates in Pariyaman and Bengkulu in southern Sumatra, on the day of Ashura, which is performed in the central area and the city bazaar. The ceremony begins on the first day of Muharram by taking some clean soil being taken from the river at midnight. The soil is then placed in a container covered with a white cloth in a coffin wrapped in a shroud that is approximately nine square meters long. This coffin, which is a symbol of the grave of Imam Hussein (as) acts as a symbol of holiness and spirituality, courage and bravery of that Imam.

On the fifth day of Muharram, the stem of a banana tree is cut from a garden. This stem should be cut only with a sharp sword, and that is a sign of Qasim ibn Hassan’s courage in the event of Karbala. On the seventh day of Muharram, in the afternoon, a symbol of Hussein ibn Ali, placed in a vase, is carried in the streets, and people weep and mourn the memory of Karbala. On the morning of the ninth of Muharram, a white turban called “Turan” is prepared as a sign of the turban of Hussein bin Ali, and during this ceremony, memories of the sacrifices of Imam Hussein (as) are recited.



On the tenth day of Muharram, the coffin ceremony reaches its peak, with people from different parts of Minangkabao going to Pariaman, and during this day, the symbol of the coffin, turban and hand of Hussein bin Ali (PBUH) are turned into a source of a mass movement in the streets. This mass movement starts from the market area and the town of “Joa”. The participants in this ceremony are divided into two groups that walk through the streets. In the evening of that day, mourning groups go in regular orderly groups to the beach of Pariaman to watch the end of the coffin ceremony, that is, the throwing of the coffin into the sea.

Throwing the coffin in the sea is a sign of the end of the ceremony and the death of Zul-Janah, who is called Baraq, and it is believed that Zul-Janah will visit his owner Hussein Ibn Ali (PBUH) at the end of the ceremony and reach the highest paradise. The coffin then slowly sinks into the water and disappears into the sea. People also then return to their homes in the dark with the shouts of “Ya Hussein” (Asadi 2017–2019).

Another proof of the historical presence of Shiites in this country is that a street called Karbala has been registered in the city of Bengkulu in South Sumatra. And for a long time mourning rituals have been carried out in the first ten days of muharram in this city. Furthermore, symbols of muharram, like the flag of the five people of the Kisa and the effigy of hazrat Abbas’s hands, are taken around Come (Asadi 2017–2019: the author’s observations in the muharram ceremonies of 2018).

The author participated in the coffin ceremony in Bangkolo on Ashura in 1440 AH and was hosted by the coffin family, which had been holding this ceremony for many years. With the great enthusiasm of this family in holding this ceremony, and its greatness and glory with the participation of tens of thousands of people and with the participation of state and military officials and some members of the National Assembly, and in particular the special assistance of the Mayor of Bangkok, the mourning banners were raised and carried with the symbol of the fifty-year-old Al-Abba, as well as placards reading “Peace be upon greeting Hussein” and special clothes meant for muharram. Muharram with the words “Ya Hussein”, which was covered with Yahseen inscribed on them, all indicated a genuine Shiite movement current.

In addition, at the entrance of the street, where the tombs of the great scholars of this family like Burhanuddin were, and where the ceremony ended, and it was named Karbala, the words “Peace be upon you/Aba Abdullah” were written. At the end of the ceremony and at the request of its chairman to the large crowd of participants, the author made a statement on the day of Ashura and the philosophy of the uprising of Imam Hussein (as).

What is certain is that the “coffin” ceremony was not first introduced to Pariaman and Bengkulu by local Muslims, but was introduced to the area by

some “Sepoyshiites” who were Shiites. The Sepoys were soldiers from Delhi, India, who came with Sir Stamford Stamford Fafflesl to the west coast of Sumatra in 1824 (Azumardi 1995: 3).

Although the coffin ceremony is one of the traces of the presence of Shiites in the past of in this country and which was later accepted by indigenous Muslims, it should be noted that the custodians and performers of the coffin ceremony can no longer be considered Shiites. Therefore, when the Indonesian government introduced the event as a tourist attraction and as traditional cultural symbols in the 1980s, and changed into a religious state symbolism, almost no objections were raised.

It is noteworthy that the tradition of the coffin in Pariaman and Bengkulu is different from the tradition of *taziya* performed by the Shiites. Shiite mourning is full of political and religious beliefs and a certain sorrow and grief, which is very little seen in the coffin ceremonies in Pariaman and Bengkulu.

The Islamic University in the city of Aceh, the Islamic University is named after the Shiaite Kukoala (Asadi 2017–2019: the author’s observations on a trip to Aceh in July 2018). Also, the relics of the Shiite kingd called Perle, who ruled this region, are kept in this city. In this city, local mourning ceremonies in mourning for Imam Hussein (PBUH) are also famous. In Central Java, there is an official who distributes votive flour for Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein. Furthermore, in this region, one should not be happy in the first ten days of Muharram. This culture is also common in West Java. Also, in this region, a ring famously called “the Ring of Ali” (PBUH) is known, thanks to which the king of the time became a Muslim (*ibid.*).

Also, the performance of “Wyang” is one of the old traditions in the ancient religion customs of Indonesia. The performance of Wyang is one of the ancient traditions. In Wyang’s play, various characters play roles, each of whom has a special symbol. The character of Wyang Jemblong shows the symbol of courage and self-sacrifice that Imam Hussein (as) played in the history of Islam and in the event of Karbala. Wyang Jemblong’s character is usually played at the five-day birthday celebration of a baby boy in the hope that this baby boy will acquire a brave and self-sacrificing character like Imam Hussein (as).

Every year, during the ten days of Muharram, in the contemporary era, various ceremonies are held in the Shiite and Sunni Islamic centers and institutions of Indonesia.

In Muharram of 2018, hundreds of thousands of lovers of Aba Abdullah Al-Hussein (as) held passionate mourning ceremonies in different cities of Indonesia. This year, thousands of people gathered in Jakarta in the city’s sports stadium for the mourning ceremonies.

The most important centres and cities that are set up in the ten days of Muharram are Jakarta, Bandung, Samarang, Bangil, Makassar, Malang, Bengkulu, Pariaman, and Surabaya.

Another religious tradition that has long been common among Sunni Muslims and is related to Shiite teachings is the “analysts” or glorifications of Hazrat Zahra (peace be upon her) in which the remembrance of God Almighty, i.e. *Allahu Akbar, La ilaha illa Allah, and Alhamdu lillah* is mentioned. The ceremony follows the death of a family member. This ceremony – which is common in many parts of Indonesia – is referred to as the best practice.

Zulkifli, a contemporary Indonesian historian and head of the political faculty at Sharif University Hidayatullah, believes that the formation of the Shiite community in Indonesia began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, coinciding with the emigration of Yazidis Hazrami from Yemen to the archipelago. According to him, the first nucleus of the Shiite community was the Hazrarmias in this region. Most of these people were people in whose veins the blood of Ahl al-Bayt flowed. They called men by the name of Habib and women by the name of Sharifa (Zulkifli 2009: 6).

Zulkifli quotes Mohammad al-Assad al-Shahab, a Shiite journalist and writer, as saying that there are Shiite families amongst the Hazrami named al-Muhadzar, Yahya, Shahab, al-Jafri, al-Haddad, and al-Saqqaf among the Hadramis. Other scholars of this family include Sayyid Ali ibn Ahmad Shahab (1865–1944), who was also the founder of the Charity Society and later became the head of this society. Sayyid Aqeel Ibn Zayn al-Abidin al-Jaafari (1870–1952) was also one of the scholars of this group who completed his education in Mecca and worked hard in preaching and writing Islamic works. These three were always known as the greatest and most important Shiite scholars who did many services in the spread and propagation of Shiites in Indonesia (Zulkifli 2009: 6).

### ***3. The Bases for the Spread of Shiism in the Contemporary Era***

In the current era, Shiites are present in Indonesia and play a role in various social, scientific and political situations. At 2017, seven Shiite figures became members of the National Assembly.

Ezio Mardi Azra, one of Indonesia’s leading thinkers in the field of Islamic and historical sciences and former president of Sharif Hidayatullah State University in Jakarta, acknowledges that the victory of Imam Khomeini in the Islamic Revolution of Iran was a major factor in the revival of Shiism in Indonesia. He says: “This revolution caused a small group of Indonesian Sunnis to convert to Shiism. Since the early 1980s, Shiite institutions have been increasingly established in various Indonesian cities, and many Indo-

nesian students have come to Iran to acquire knowledge and teach learn Shiite sciences". He said: "They travelled and Shiites spread considerably. Many publishing houses also published books about Shiites". He also says: "Some government officials have suggested that Shiites, especially among Indonesian youth, have become more widespread. It is difficult to find accurate Shiite statistics. A Shiite open-minded intellectual named Jalal Uddin Rahmat, who teaches at Pajan Jaran University, plays an important role in spreading Shiite concepts" (Azumardi 1979: 29).

The university is located in Bandung. He is always involved in heated debates between Shiites and Sunnis, and discusses with some Sunni intellectuals who think the rise of Shiites is a threat to Ahl al-Sunnah. He visited Bogor, Bandung Malang, Jember, Bangil, Samarinda, Ponti Ank, Banjar Masin, and other Indonesian cities. The core of these foundations appears to be in Jakarta, which houses at least 25 Shiite institutions.

What is certain is that these foundations have the mission of propagating the Shiite school doctrines and teaching educating with the Shiite teachings. Arguably, the oldest Shiite institution in Indonesia is the Yapi Institute, which was founded in 1961 in Surabaya. Another branch of the institute was established in Bunduso in 1971 and later transferred to Bangil. Yapi institutions have become very famous for the quality of their Islamic teachings. Yapi boarding schools do not openly express their Shiite identity.

Another Shiite institution is the Motahhari Institute in Bandung. This institution, which is run by Jalaluddin Rahmat, has a high school called Motahhari High School, which is known as one of the most famous schools in Bandung. In addition to this school, the Motahhari Institute has a research quarterly called "Wisdom" which translates and publishes books and topics related to Shiite scholars (ibid.).

Today, some Shiites are able to play an active role in government positions. They are often well read, have good studies and are university graduates. In Indonesia during the Suharto period, Shiites were considered a major threat to the government; but after the Suharto period, the country's Shiites seem to have taken advantage of the general situation of political liberalization. Most Shiites are in the cities of Jakarta, Bandung, Bangil, Bogor, Jogjakarta (with three predominantly Shiite villages on its outskirts), Samarang, Makassar, Lampung and Malang.

The presence of 800 Shiite families and the holding of congregational and Friday prayers by Shiites in a mosque whose inner wall is decorated with the names of the Fourteen Infallibles (Peace be upon Them) and is known as the Shiite Mosque, is a feature of the city of Japara (Asadi 2017–2019: the author's observations during a visit to the Institute of Approximation and interview with its chairman Mr. Meqdad Torkan on 11. 2. 2018).

#### ***4. Indigenous Shiite Organizations, Institutions and Schools in Indonesia***

Indonesian Shiite religious and modern organizations, institutions and schools can be divided into two parts:

- A. Institutions and schools established and run by indigenous Shiites.
- B. Institutions and schools established by non-natives, both Iranian and non-Iranian.

##### *A. Indigenous Shiite organizations and institutions*

Indonesia's indigenous Shiites have established various organizations, institutions, and schools, each with specific goals and policies in the country. They have also established various Husseiniah ceremonial centres, publishing, and various service voluntary institutions. Here are some of the most important ones:

##### – Indonesia Ahlul Bayt Organization (IJABI)

The Ba'ath Indonesia Organization or the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon Them) Community Council, abbreviated to Positive-IJABI, was established in July 2000 by Dr Jalaluddin Rahmat and his followers in Bandung and since then has established nearly 30 branches throughout Indonesia. Its current chairman is Mr. Shamsuddin, and its council chairman was Jalaluddin Rahmat until his death. Jalaluddin Rahmat was educated in the United States and studied in Iran for a year. Unfortunately, Professor Jalaluddin Rahmat died on February 17, 2021 due to coronary heart disease, in Indonesia.

This organization has a very good cohesion and is the only organization that deals with religious activities in a fully organized and legal manner. Among the goals of this organization according to its written statute are:

- Enlightenment of Muslim minds about the current events in/of the Islamic World Day;
- Repelling Defending the oppressed weak and oppressed against from the oppressors;
- Creating harmony between the hearts of Muslims;
- Supporting the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (as) against the enemies;
- Promoting intellectual, mystical and moral ideas;

- Meeting the Spiritual and Material Needs of Historians (Asadi 2017–2019: interview with Dr Jalaluddin Rahmat, Head of the IJABI-Positive Organization in Bandung, 8. 10. 2018).

- Indonesia Ahlul Bayt Organization (ABI)

This organization was established in 2010. Most of the main elements of this centre are graduates of the seminary of Qom. According to its chairman, the difference between this organization and the IJABI-Positive organization is mainly in the propaganda strategy among the natives. Currently, the chairman of the council of this organization is Dr Omar Shahab and its secretary is Mr. Zaher Yahya.

This organization has 22 branches at the provincial level and 100 branches at the city level. One of the group's activities is translating Shiite books into Indonesian. In addition, the group prepares a monthly brochure called *Al-Walayah*, containing Islamic teachings and ethics, which is sent to the officials of the water ABI branches. The centre is affiliated with seventy other Shiite institutions throughout Indonesia and has designed a special website that is noteworthy (Asadi 2017–2019: interview with Dr Omar Shahab, head of the ABI Organization, on 9. 8. 2018 at the office of the Al-Mustafa University in Indonesia).

- Shahid Motahari Institute (RA) located in Bandung

Shahid Motahari Institute was headed by Dr Jalaluddin Rahmat (until his death in February 2021) and the deputyship of his son's deputy, Professor Meoftah Fouzi Rahmat. It is a public and non-profit school with an official government license. The school has more than two hundred male and female students. In addition to teaching courses approved by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, activities of this organization include Islamic courses consisting of Quranic sciences, hadith, history of Islam and contemporary jurisprudence, holding cultural and educational camps, and caring for and serving the Muslim poor.

This school is one of the model schools in Indonesia and has been encouraged several times by the government due to its spiritual success, type of educational programs, educational technology (Asadi 2017–2019: author's observations during his visit to this institution, on 2017/2018 and the interview with Dr Jalaluddin Rahmat, the founder of this institute and his son Meuftah Fawzi).

- Fatimieh Institute located in Central Java Province

Dr Jalaluddin Rahmat, in addition to being in charge of the Shahid Motahari School, ran two other schools called the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be

upon Them) Seminary with more than 1.400 poor and needy students and the Ahl al-Bayt Secondary School in the middle school and with hundreds of poor and needy students. His two sons, Ustad Muftah-Fawzi-Rahmat and Ustad Uleman-Fawzi-Rahmat, are both educated in the seminary of Qom. Jalaluddin Rahmat authored more than thirty books on various Islamic and Shiite topics (ibid.).

– Al-Jawad Institute located in Bandung

This institute was established in 1991. The director of this institute is Mr. Marzooqi and Seyed Hossein Al-Kaf also has an important role in the administration of this school. Mr. Marzooqi is one of the prominent religious figures and one of the most active translators of Shiite religious works into Indonesian. Among his remarkable activities, we can mention the translation of the series *Ashabakahf* into Malay and its broadcast with subtitles among the enthusiasts. Al-Jawad was especially active in publishing religious books in the past. It is noteworthy that the activity of this institute has been greatly diminished in recent years for various reasons (Asadi 2017–2019: the author's observations during his visit to this center on 2017/2018 and an interview with Seyyed Hossein Al-Kaf).

– Roshanfikr Institute

This institute was established in 1995 in the city of Jogjakarta based on the intellectual and philosophical thoughts of Imam Khomeini, and Martyr Motahhari, Martyr Sadr and Dr. Shariati, by Mr. Safwan and Mr. Rahimnir. The most important activities of the Intellectual Institute are: holding classes in teaching Islamic sciences and knowledge to volunteer students from different universities in different parts of Indonesia, holding religious meetings, selling books on Ahl al-Bayt, and others books, etc. This institute also has a library with hundreds of titles of religious books that are used by hundreds of people (Asadi 2017–2019: the author's observations during his visit to this institute on 2018/2019 and the interview with Mr. Safwan in charge of it).

– Ma'hadul Islam / Islamic Institute in the city of Bangil

The Bangil Ma'had Islamic Pact Institute (located in East Java) was established on June 2, 1976, by one of the most influential and effective figures in the country, the late Allama Sayyid Hussein al-Habashi. This seminary institute was originally established as a seminary, but since 1997,



a modern educational system has been added to it in elementary and high school courses.

This institute, which is also attended by Sunnis, is one of the model schools in East Java. At present, the Islamic Institute is run as an educational complex which includes a seminary called Imam Sadiq. Graduates of this institution have played an active role in various parts of Indonesia, and so far many students have left for Iran to study. At present, Mr. Seyed Reza Al-Habashi is in charge of the management of this institution (Asadi 2017–2019).

– Madinah Al-Ilm Al-Alam High School

Located in the south of Jakarta, it is under the supervision of Dr. Seyed Abdul Rahman Al-Aidros, a graduate of the Mustafa Al-Alamiyah Society (ibid.: visited on 2017).

– Mosques and Ceremonial Centres / Husseinayah

- Al-Mahdi Mosque, Jakarta
- Al-Thaqalain Mosque, in the Islamic Convent / Al-Ma’had Al-Islami, Bangil
- Hosseinieh Al-Huda, Islamic Cultural Centre (ICC), Jakarta

– Services and social activities

- Establishment of the Fund for the Underprivileged
- Al-Zahra Hospital for Women and Children in Palembang, South Sumatra
- Joshan Darjeh Sharghi Institute in East Java which provides relief services in the country’s disasters and crises (Asadi 2017–2019: the author’s observations during his visit to this institute on 2017/2018 and an interview with Mr. Zaher Yahya).

– Publishing companies / houses

- Mizan Publications under the management of Dr. Heidar Baqer
- Al-Huda, Jakarta Islamic Cultural Centre

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### *B. Non-native Shiite institutions and schools*

#### – Representation of the Mustafa International Society / University in Indonesia

The most important official scientific and research centre affiliated with Iran is the representative of Al-Mustafa Society / University. This centre, known as Sadra College, was established in 2003 and now currently has five main sections:

- Sadra Islamic College
- Sadra International Research Institute
- Al-Mustafa Seminary
- Seminaries under the auspices of Mustafa's representation
- Mustafa Alumni Association (Ikmal)

Al-Mustafa's history in this country began in 1997. In 2003, the Islamic College of Indonesia, in a memorandum of understanding with Paramedina University, began its educational activities at the Masters-undergraduate level in philosophy and mysticism. Then, with the development of undergraduate courses and the increase in students, the preparations for the establishment and obtaining of official and independent licences of Sadra College were acquired.

Sadra College currently has students in three undergraduate / bachelor, graduate masters and doctoral programs and has two majors in two fields. Namely, the fields of Quranic sciences and exegesis and Islamic philosophy are the two main majors of this college. There are also ten teachers with a professor degree, thirty teachers with a doctorate degree and twenty-five teachers with a master's degree. During the year 2018, the number of students was 360 students in the bachelor, 39 in the master and 6 in the doctorate programs.

#### – Al-Mustafa Seminary

This seminary was established in 2013 for Shiite students in Indonesia by the representative of Al-Mustafa University for Shiite scholars in Indonesia. The degree offers a bachelor's degree in Quranic sciences and exegesis and the degree certificate is awarded by Sadra College.

– Jakarta Islamic Cultural Centre

This centre was founded in the year 2003 by Sheikh Mohsen Hakim Elahi. Its major activities are in three fields: part-time studies; research and translation; writing books and propagation.

Also, holding Friday and congregational prayers for Shiites, reviving religious relations/occasions, completing prayer meetings, running *Du'a Kumail* programs, and solving various problems of Shiites are among the activities of this centre.

At present, the centre is managed by Dr. Abdul Majid Hakim Elahi.

– Aalulbayt Institute

The Aalulbayt (peace be upon them) Institute was established in 2006 by Hujjat al-Islam Sayyid Faris Husseini. The centre, funded by Ayatullah Sistani's office, propagates the religious values of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) in Indonesia. Organizing religious occasions, teaching Islamic values on a part-time basis to Shiite orphans on weekends, and holding congregational prayers are among the centre's activities.

### ***5. Important Indonesian Shiite Figures in the Present era***

There are many Shiite personalities in the country, each of whom has played a significant role in the process of spreading Shiism and preserving it in the present era, but it is not necessary to name all of them in this regard. They play a role in various scientific, educational, social, cultural and political fields in Indonesia.

In the latest list prepared by some scientific and cultural institutions such as Al-Mustafa branch/representation and Islamic Cultural Centre, the names of 314 prominent and influential Shiite personalities are mentioned, more than one hundred of whom are professors/teachers from different universities in the country and some are prominent members of Shiite organizations and schools. The rest are graduates of Al-Mustafa University who have turned to propagation and education/teaching. Some of them are professors, some have doctorates, and the rest mainly hold master and bachelor degrees. In 2017, a number of Shiite figures entered the National Assembly, some of whom are:

1. Jalaluddin Rahmat, from the ruling party (PDIP);
2. Ervin, from the ruling party;

3. Normanshah, from the ruling party;
4. Omar Irsal, from the ruling party;
5. Saleh Dolai, from the National Trust Party (Penn);
6. Zuolfan, from the National Democratic Party;
7. Ecasastro, from the party Golkar group (Asadi 2017–2019).

### *Conclusion*

Shiism in Indonesia has its roots in the historical background of Islam in this country. The arrival of Shiism coincided with the arrival of Islam in this country and has gradually advanced due to the existence of suitable grounds for its spread and expansion. Political and cultural context bases are two important factors for the formation and growth of Shiism in the past of this region. In the political context, the rule of the Shiites in the past over parts of Indonesia led to a significant growth of Shiism and its penetration into the body of the country's society.

Hence, many of the relics of the Shiite governments of that time are still part of the traditions and customs of the Indonesian people, even including the Sunnis today. From a cultural point of view, many cultural customs of this border and environment have been suitable bases for the growth of Shiism, to the extent that today their work presence can be seen everywhere in this land.

At present, the institutionalization of the policy of integration and moderation in Indonesia, the remnants of the historical presence of Shiites in this country, the existence of official Shiite institutions and organizations, the existence of a significant number of prominent and influential Shiite figures, the impact of the Islamic Revolution in Iran on the people of the region, especially the Shiites, and ultimately the moderate policy of the Shiites, have paved the way for the significant growth of Shiism in this country. In addition, the good relations of this country with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the tendency of the Shiites in general towards the Islamic Revolution have been suitable grounds for their considerable growth, especially after the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

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