



## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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# BATUHAMPAR TRADING VILLAGE: A PROTOTYPE OF HALAQAH IN 19TH CENTURY MINANGKABAU



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### Abstract

This article investigates Batuhampar Trading Village as a prototype of an ideal halaqah system in 19th-century Minangkabau. Established by Sheikh Abdurrahman Batuhampar, the village was a center of Islamic scholarship focusing on Quranic recitation (tilawah), Quranic readings (qira'at al-Qur'an), and the Naqshbandi Khalidiyah Sufi Order. The objectives of this article are (1) to describe the halaqah education system implemented in Batuhampar Trading Village, (2) to identify factors supporting the sustainability of halaqah in Batuhampar Trading Village during the 19th century, and (3) to analyze the scholarly network of Batuhampar Trading Village within the context of Minangkabau intellectualism. The analytical method employed is social intellectual history. The findings indicate that: (1) Batuhampar Trading Village implemented a prominent halaqah system of its time, encompassing Qur'anic halaqah and sufi orders, functioning as a significant scholarly hub; (2) Its success was bolstered by the persuasive preaching of Sheikh Batuhampar, his respected scholarly authority, and the spiritual depth of the village; and (3) Batuhampar Trading Village was founded on a broad scholarly foundation and a cosmopolitan network.

*Artikel ini menginvestigasi Kampung Dagang Batuhampar sebagai prototipe sistem halaqah ideal di Minangkabau abad ke-19. Kampung Dagang, didirikan oleh Syekh Abdurrahman Batuhampar, merupakan pusat keilmuan Islam yang fokus pada ilmu tilawah, qira'at al-Qur'an, dan Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah. Tujuan artikel ini adalah: (1) untuk menggambarkan sistem pendidikan halaqah yang diterapkan di Kampung Dagang Batuhampar; (2) untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang memfasilitasi keberlanjutan halaqah di Kampung Dagang Batuhampar selama abad ke-19; dan (3) untuk menganalisis jaringan keilmuan Kampung Dagang Batuhampar dalam konteks intelektualisme Minangkabau. Metode analisis yang digunakan adalah sejarah sosial intelektual. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: (1) Kampung Dagang menerapkan sistem halaqah yang terkenal pada masanya, yang mencakup halaqah al-Qur'an dan Tarekat, serta berfungsi sebagai pusat keilmuan yang signifikan; (2) keberhasilan Kampung Dagang didukung oleh dakwah persuasif Syekh Batuhampar, kepemimpinan spiritual yang kuat, dan fondasi spiritualitas yang mendalam; dan (3) Kampung Dagang Batuhampar dibangun di atas dasar keilmuan yang luas dan jaringan yang kosmopolitan.*

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## Background

Islamic education began in a simple form and later developed to meet the needs and conditions of the times<sup>1,2</sup>. Islamic education began in a simple form and later

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<sup>1</sup> Hendra Kurniawan and Fauziah Nur Ariza, "Sekolah Islam Terpadu: Perkembangan, Konsep, dan Implementasi," *Ittihad* IV, no. 1 (2020): 81–88, <https://ejournal-ittihad.alittihadiyahsumut.or.id>; Saiful Saiful, "Sistem Pendidikan Islam, Integrasi Ilmu Pengetahuan Agama Dan Teknologi Digital," *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 6, no. 2 (2023): 1100–1107, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i2.1659>.



developed to meet the needs and conditions of the times. Initially, it was characterized by informal gatherings where the Prophet Muhammad himself imparted knowledge to his companions. These early sessions, often held in the Prophet's mosque in Medina, were straightforward and focused on the fundamental teachings of Islam, including the recitation and memorization of the Qur'an as well as the transmission of hadiths. As Islam spread and its followers increased, the methods and structures of Islamic education evolved significantly. The need for more organized and systematic approaches to teaching became apparent, leading to the establishment of madrasahs and other educational institutions. These institutions were designed to cater to the growing demand for Islamic knowledge and to provide a more structured learning environment. They offered a broader curriculum that included various branches of Islamic studies, such as fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), hadith studies, and more. Over time, Islamic education further adapted to incorporate the changing socio-political and economic landscapes. For instance, during the Islamic Golden Age, educational institutions began to integrate scientific and philosophical subjects into their curricula, reflecting the period's intellectual dynamism and curiosity.

The development of Islamic education was also influenced by the diverse cultural contexts in which it was practiced. In regions like North Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, Islamic educational practices absorbed local traditions and educational models, resulting in a rich tapestry of learning environments that were both uniquely local and universally Islamic. This adaptability ensured that Islamic education remained relevant and effective across different eras and regions. Throughout its history, Islamic education has maintained a core focus on the spiritual and moral development of individuals, alongside their intellectual growth. The teacher-student relationship, marked by respect, trust, and a shared commitment to seeking knowledge, has been central to this tradition. This relationship was often formalized through the system of ijazah, or certification, which authenticated the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student, ensuring the continuity and integrity of Islamic teachings. In contemporary times, Islamic education continues to evolve, facing new challenges and opportunities brought about by globalization, technological advancements, and changing societal norms.

Modern Islamic schools and universities strive to balance traditional religious teachings with contemporary subjects, preparing students to navigate both their religious obligations and the demands of modern life. The integration of online learning platforms and digital resources has also expanded access to Islamic education, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to engage with Islamic knowledge more easily. In summary, the evolution of Islamic education from its simple beginnings to its current forms demonstrates its resilience and adaptability. It has consistently responded to the needs and conditions of its time, ensuring that the essence of Islamic teachings remains accessible and relevant to successive generations. The journey of Islamic education highlights the enduring value of knowledge in Islam and its pivotal role in shaping individual lives and broader Muslim societies.

Prophet Muhammad serves as a reference in Islamic education, laying the foundation for its principles, from methods and materials to the roles of teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. He exemplified all of these directly before his companions, as recorded abundantly in the hadith literature. One of the earliest forms of Islamic education was the halaqah, meaning a circle. In halaqah

<sup>2</sup> Saiful, "Sistem Pendidikan Islam, Integrasi Ilmu Pengetahuan Agama dan Teknologi Digital."

sessions, teachers and students sat in a circle, fostering an egalitarian and interactive atmosphere. These gatherings often took place in mosques, homes, or other communal spaces, with a focus on memorization and study of the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh (jurisprudence), and theology. Besides halaqah, surau also played a significant role in traditional Islamic education, especially in Southeast Asia. Surau, small places of worship, also functioned as centers for religious learning, serving as hubs of community life in rural areas. Education in surau was informal and community-based, with an emphasis on the oral transmission of religious knowledge. As time progressed, Islamic education evolved with the establishment of more formal and structured institutions, such as madrasahs.

The first madrasah, Nizamiyya, was established in Baghdad in the 11th century by Nizam al-Mulk, providing comprehensive education covering religious and rational sciences.<sup>3,4</sup> In Islamic education, the relationship between teacher and student is highly respected and governed by a code of ethics, with Prophet Muhammad serving as the primary exemplar who encouraged his followers to seek and impart knowledge. The tradition of ijazah plays a significant role in maintaining the integrity of Islamic scholarship, where ijazah serves as a certificate issued by a teacher to a student, authorizing them to teach specific texts or subjects. Throughout history, Islamic education has faced various challenges and adaptations, especially during the colonial era that introduced Western-style schools. However, Islamic education has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. In the modern era, many madrasahs have incorporated modern subjects into their curricula, blending religious and secular education. Islamic education, from halaqah and surau to formal madrasahs, has played a crucial role in the intellectual and spiritual development of Muslim communities. Rooted in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, this education has adapted to changing times while retaining its fundamental principles in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. The emphasis on memorization, oral transmission, and ethics has ensured the preservation of knowledge across generations, serving as evidence of the enduring value of learning in the Islamic tradition.

Among the earliest forms of Islamic education, as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad himself and adopted by several classical and traditional Islamic educational institutions, is the halaqah method of learning. Despite being considered the most classical form of education, halaqah is still utilized in classical educational institutions to this day. Halaqah has not faded away amid the evolution of contemporary educational models and approaches. In fact, there is a perception that the practice of halaqah education is gaining strength, particularly as societal views on humanism gain prominence, alongside growing dissatisfaction with educational models that lean towards capitalism and modernization.

In educational theory, within the context of classical education, there are at least two models of education: (1) perennialism, which seeks to revive old traditions in response to perceived erosion of morality and character, and (2) essentialism, which directs education towards the world of work, prioritizing science over arts and culture. The perennialist model of education calls educators back to the roots of tradition as a

<sup>3</sup> Nurlila Kamsi, "Nizamul Mulk dan Madrasah Nizamiyah Relasi Lembaga Pendidikan dan Penguasa (Madrasah Dan Otodoksi Pendidikan)," *Edification Journal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 5, no. 1 (2022): 53–54.

<sup>4</sup> Anita Solihatul Wahidah, "Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam di Era Modern Melalui Madrasah Nizamiyah," *Al-Mabsut: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Sosial* 12, no. 1 (2018): 8–9, <http://www.ejournal.iaingawi.ac.id/index.php/almabsut/article/download/286/131>.

means of imparting the scholarly values and nobility of character passed down by predecessors<sup>5</sup>. In this context, the halaqah becomes the targeted object.

The Minangkabau, one of the ethnic groups encompassing a vast geographical area, has a long history, particularly in Islamic education. The halaqah serves as the precursor educational system, long before the adoption of classical, high-class systems applied in modern institutions such as madrasahs. In the context of Islamic education, prominent Islamic reformers, such as Syekh Burhanuddin, adopted the halaqah system within the surau he established in Ulakan. This system expanded not only in the Rantau region but also reached the highlands, known as Darek. In Darek, during the 19th century, clusters of surau villages were established, utilizing the halaqah system. These surau settlements were known as Kampung Dagang, located in Nagari Batuhampar. Kampung Dagang emerged as the largest, most prestigious, and most influential traditional educational institution in 19th-century Minangkabau. Azra refers to Kampung Dagang as the most representative 'pesantren' of Minangkabau.<sup>6</sup>

The halaqah of Kampung Dagang Batuhampar is intriguing for a more in-depth study, for several reasons: Firstly, it represents an ideal educational system in the 19th century. Secondly, the halaqah of Kampung Dagang had a broad influence in Minangkabau. Thirdly, it was led by charismatic scholars who could be considered prominent educational figures in 19th-century Minangkabau. Based on this background, this research intends to discuss the halaqah system implemented in Kampung Dagang, Batuhampar.

This study is a literature review, particularly an important review of the writings of Dhofier<sup>7</sup> and Kern<sup>8</sup>. In its analysis, this research employs the approach of social intellectual history, which examines the factors and social realms that influence historical events. Several questions will be addressed in this research: (1) What was the halaqah education system like in Kampung Dagang Batuhampar? (2) What were the factors that supported the survival of the halaqah in Kampung Dagang Batuhampar in the 19th century? (3) How was the scholarly network of Kampung Dagang Batuhampar in the context of intellectualism in Minangkabau?

## Halaqah in the Historical Trajectory of Islamic Education

Educational System of Nusantara Scholars in Haramain (Azra, 1994)<sup>9</sup>. Nusantara scholars who pursued their studies in Haramain (Mecca and Medina) followed a traditional educational system known as halaqah. Halaqah is a form of study circle where an ulama (Islamic scholar) teaches knowledge to his students in a circular arrangement. This system allows direct interaction between the teacher and students, as well as in-depth discussions on various scholarly topics, especially in Islamic fields

<sup>5</sup> Raja Lottung Siregar, "Teori Belajar Perenialisme," *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 13, no. 2 (2016): 172–83, [https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2016.vol13\(2\).1522](https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2016.vol13(2).1522).

<sup>6</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisi dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "Traditional Islamic Education in the Malay Archipelago: Its Contribution to the Integration of the Malay World," *Indonesia Circle. School of Oriental & African Studies. Newsletter* 19, no. 53 (1990): 19–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03062849008729746>.

<sup>8</sup> R. A. Kern, "The Origin of the Malay Surau" 29, no. 1 (1956): 179–81.

<sup>9</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern "Ulama" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

such as tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), hadith (Prophetic traditions), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and tasawuf (Sufism). Additionally, education in Haramain was characterized by the diversity of students' backgrounds who came from different parts of the world, creating a broad and influential intellectual network.

Halaqah in Pesantren (Dhofier, 1982)<sup>10</sup>. Halaqah in pesantren has similar characteristics to those in Haramain. In pesantren, halaqah is a teaching method where a kiai (Islamic teacher) or guru teaches the kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts) to his students. This learning process usually takes place in the surau (prayer room) or mosque of the pesantren, where students sit in a circle around the kiai, who is in the center. This method emphasizes memorization, in-depth understanding, and intensive discussions. Halaqah in pesantren aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to shape the character and morals of the students based on Islamic teachings.

In his monumental work, "Tarikh al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah," Ahmad Syalabi mentions several terms used to refer to Islamic educational institutions in the early period. One of these is "kuttab," which served as a place for learning reading and writing. Additionally, Syalabi mentions other locations that became centers of education, such as bookshops, gathering places for literary figures, mosques, and even the palaces of kings<sup>11</sup>. In the early period, nearly all educational settings utilized a sitting system, whether in rows or in circles. The educational system employing a sitting method with a teacher came to be known as the halaqah.

In the history of Islamic education, the term halaqah is closely associated with education in mosques. Mosques were the earliest educational venues in Islam, preceding the introduction of madrasahs or other terms<sup>12</sup>. In historical accounts, it is mentioned that when Prophet Muhammad taught religion, his companions would sit in circles, attentively listening to Islamic teachings. As Islamic education progressed, it became more comprehensive, not only involving teachers and students but also incorporating books as references. During the early days of Islam, Prophet Muhammad conveyed teachings orally, as his utterances were guided by revelation. After the Prophet's passing, the Qur'an and hadith were codified, and religious sciences began to be organized and classified into written texts. Besides the Qur'an and hadith collections, various Islamic scholarly works emerged, categorized as matn (original text), sharh (exegesis), and hasiyah (commentaries).

With such development, a halaqah became more comprehensive with activities that delved into the sources of Islamic teachings. Initially referring to small groups gathering to study the Qur'an and hadith, the concept of halaqah evolved over time to encompass a wide range of disciplines in Islam, including exegesis, jurisprudence, ethics, and even general knowledge. Modern halaqahs not only focus on memorization but also emphasize deep understanding and practical application of these teachings in daily life. In a halaqah, students listen to explanations and comments on the reference books of Islam. This process, known as "mendaras," entails reading and meticulously reviewing texts until their content is well understood. Mendaras aims not only for

<sup>10</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad Syalabi, *Tarikh Al-Tarbiyah Al-Islamiyah, Diterjemahkan Oleh Muchtar Jahja Menjadi Sejarah Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, t.Th.), h. 33-92. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1973).

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Jakfar, Abdul Rauf Haris, and Fahmi Zulfikar, "Lembaga Tahfizh Al-Qur'an Dalam Sejarah Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah* 14, no. 1 (2020): 1, <https://doi.org/10.32832/jpls.v14i1.3320>.

memorization but also for understanding the context, meaning, and implications of the text. The teacher in the halaqah, typically an esteemed scholar or intellectual, plays a crucial role in guiding students through this process. They provide in-depth explanations, elucidate the meanings contained within the texts, and offer relevant comments and interpretations.

The explanations and comments in these books are not only textual but also contextual. Teachers elucidate the historical, social, and cultural backgrounds of the texts, enabling students to understand their relevance in their current lives. Furthermore, teachers connect the teachings in these books with contemporary issues, assisting students in applying their knowledge to various aspects of modern life. Thus, halaqah serves not only as a place for learning but also as a space for discussion, inquiry, and deepening understanding of Islamic teachings.

Mendaras in the halaqah also encompasses various teaching methods. One such method is talaqqi, where students directly receive knowledge from their teachers through reading and explaining texts. This method emphasizes the importance of the direct relationship between teacher and student, enabling accurate and authentic knowledge transfer. Additionally, this method includes question – and – answer sessions, allowing students to ask questions and receive clarifications directly from their teachers. This ensures that each student understands the material well before moving on to the next topic. Besides talaqqi, another method commonly used in halaqah is musyawarah, where students discuss and exchange ideas on the topics being studied. Musyawarah not only enhances students' understanding but also trains them to think critically and analytically. In musyawarah, students are encouraged to explore various perspectives, analyze arguments, and develop their abilities in dialogue. These are crucial skills, especially in facing various complex social challenges and dynamics.

The role of the teacher in the halaqah is crucial. Teachers serve not only as conveyors of knowledge but also as spiritual and moral guides for their students. Good teachers are those who have a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and can teach them in a way that is easily understood and relevant to their students' lives. Teachers should also possess noble qualities such as patience, wisdom, and compassion. They must create a conducive learning environment where students feel valued and motivated to learn. Students in the halaqah also have an active role in the learning process. They not only listen but also actively participate in discussions, ask questions, and share their views. This active participation is essential, as it helps students better understand and internalize the knowledge they learn. Additionally, by actively participating, students can develop their critical and analytical thinking skills, which are crucial in their lives outside the halaqah. Furthermore, halaqah often involves practical activities aimed at applying the knowledge learned in daily life. For example, students may be involved in community projects, such as teaching children in their neighborhood, participating in social activities, or engaging in environmental campaigns. These activities not only help students apply their knowledge but also develop their social and leadership skills.

Halaqah often utilizes modern technology to support the learning process. For example, teachers may use multimedia presentations, videos, and online resources to enrich lesson materials. Technology also allows halaqah to be held virtually, enabling more people to participate without being limited by geographical location. This is especially important in the current digital age, where access to information and education is becoming increasingly easy and widespread. Furthermore, halaqah also plays a crucial role in shaping the character and personality of its students. Through intense interactions with teachers and fellow students, they learn values such as

honesty, humility, hard work, and respect for others. Halaqah also emphasizes the importance of good morals, teaching Islamic ethics and morality in every aspect of life. Thus, halaqah not only focuses on intellectual development but also on the formation of noble character.

In the community context, halaqah also serves as a means to strengthen social bonds and solidarity among its members. Through shared learning, discussions, and social activities, halaqah members can build strong and supportive relationships. This is crucial, especially in maintaining social unity and cohesion within the Muslim community. Thus, halaqah is not just a forum for learning but also a platform for developing various aspects of life, including intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions. The development of halaqah, with its activities delving into the sources of Islamic teachings, reflects the commitment of Muslims to preserve and develop their scholarly traditions. Halaqah continues to be a crucial pillar in Islamic education, playing a crucial role in shaping knowledgeable, virtuous, and prepared generations to face the challenges of the times.

In halaqah education, the term "class system" is not known. Halaqah is only distinguished by the teacher who teaches and the level of the book being studied. For example, halaqah al-Qur'an; its lessons revolve around reading the Qur'an, from letter recitation to various readings based on qira'at. This halaqah is usually attended by children and teenagers since Qur'anic studies serve as the foundation before delving deeper into sharia law. The teacher teaching is a qari.

The center of halaqah education before the 20th century was the Haramain (the two holy cities: Mecca and Medina).<sup>13</sup> The popularity of halaqah in Haramain was caused by several factors: (1) Haramain served as the center of worship and pilgrimage for Muslims worldwide; (2) Prominent scholars from various parts of the world resided in Haramain; and (3) The rulers of Haramain at that time, the Ottoman Turks, had a strong motivation to develop Islamic scholarship. Haramain became a center of Islamic scholarship, attracting Muslims from all corners of the globe. For instance, the Masjid al-Haram, besides being a place of worship, was also crowded with circles of knowledge (halaqah) led by renowned scholars. In the Malay Archipelago, Minangkabau also served as a center of Islamic scholarship based on halaqah. Halaqah in Minangkabau was centered around institutions known as surau. Surau, besides being places for congregational worship, also served as venues for conducting circles of knowledge.

## Kampung Dagang Batuhampar: A Historical Overview

Kampung Dagang is an Islamic educational complex located in Batuhampar, Payakumbuh. The term "kampung" implies that this complex is bustling, consisting of many buildings, thus resembling a village. Historical records indicate that the complex comprises more than 35 structures, including two-story surau, accompanied by traditional Minangkabau houses, daily shops, and even a communal kitchen. Meanwhile, the term "dagang" connotes travelers or sojourners, referring to those who

<sup>13</sup> Novrizal Novrizal and Ahmad Faujih, "Sejarah Pesantren Dan Tradisi Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *AL Fikrah: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.51476/alfikrah.v2i1.354>.

journey from afar with the intention of seeking knowledge<sup>14</sup>. Thus, Kampung Dagang signifies a village of knowledge seekers.

Kampung Dagang was established by Syekh Abdurrahman al-Khalidi (1777–1899), a prominent scholar in 19th–century Minangkabau. After pursuing knowledge for approximately 48 years, he returned to his hometown, Batuhampar, and began preaching. At that time, although the community in Batuhampar was Muslim, the practice of Islamic law was not fully implemented. Syekh Abdurrahman succeeded in encouraging the community to adhere to Islamic law, such as performing prayers, through persuasive preaching.

Syekh Abdurrahman Batuhampar, also known as Baliau Batuhampar, was a charismatic scholar. Not only did he educate his students to become renowned scholars in subsequent generations, but he also passed down his knowledge to his children and grandchildren, who later became religious figures. Among them was Mohammad Hatta, who became a leader in the Republic of Indonesia. Hatta wrote about his grandfather as a scholar who was able to reconcile religious principles with local customs, thus fostering a strong harmony in Minangkabau society<sup>15</sup>. The renown of Syekh Batuhampar elevated the name of Kampung Dagang. After Syekh Batuhampar established the surau, many students flocked from various parts of Sumatra and even from the Malayan Peninsula. Throughout its historical journey, Kampung Dagang Batuhampar became the most important center of learning in Minangkabau. Particularly notable was its expertise in the fields of Qur'anic recitation and the Naqshbandi Khalidiyah Sufi Order.

## The Model of Surau, Layout, and System

West Sumatra is an important region in Indonesia with regard to traditional architectural heritage, particularly mosque or surau<sup>16</sup>. The main surau that serves as the locus of Kampung Dagang is a wooden, multi-gabled building called Surau Gadang. Surau Gadang functions as a place for halaqah Al-Qur'an and the study of tauhid and also serves as a prayer space, including functioning as a Jami' Mosque for Friday prayers. From the name of this surau, the community sometimes refers to Syekh Abdurrahman or Syekh Batuhampar with the title Baliau Surau Gadang. To the left of Surau Gadang stands a large, two-story building known as Surau Suluk. Across the street is another surau building called Surau Baru, which serves as a primary facility for students seeking to study or worship. Adjacent to Surau Gadang on its right is another surau building, which later became a burial ground (gobah) for Syekh Batuhampar and his descendants. Near Surau Gadang is a fish pond used for ablution (kulah). In front of the ablution area stands a large Rumah Gadang used for welcoming guests. Near this fish pond, Syekh Arsyad, the son of Syekh Batuhampar, erected a tower resembling those found in the Middle East, which serves as a minaret for the call to prayer (azan) and as a space for the sheikh. Within this complex is also a place where adult students learn and practice dhikr according to the methods of the Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah

<sup>14</sup> Mansur Malik, "Syeikh Abdurrahman 1777-1899" Dalam Edwar (Ed), *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981).

<sup>15</sup> Mohammad Hatta, *Untuk Negeriku I: Bukittinggi-Rotterdam Lewat Betawi* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Bambang Setia Budi and Arif Sarwo Wibowo, "A Typological Study of Historical Mosques in West Sumatra, Indonesia West Sumatra is an Important Region in Indonesia in the Context of Traditional Architectural Heritage, Especially Mosques. There Are 39 Historical Mosques Registered as Cultural Herit," *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering* 8, no. January (2018): 1–8.

Khalidiyah. During the time of Syekh Abdurrahman, no fewer than 400 individuals would engage in spiritual retreats (*bersuluk*) and reside in this building annually.

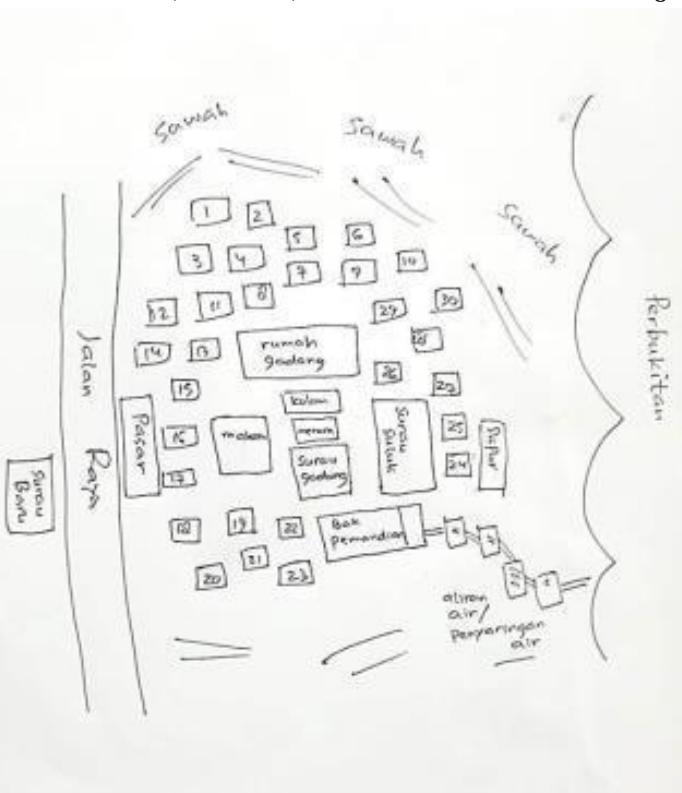


Figure: Sketch of Kampung Dagang Batuhampar, drawn by Apria Putra (2023) based on Mansur Malik (1981), Azyumardi Azra (1999), and the explanation of Sya'rani Khalil Dt. Majoreno (1999), the grandson of Syekh Batuhampar

Around these main buildings stand more than 30 two-story surau buildings serving as residences for students. These suraus are named based on the regions of their inhabitants, such as Surau Mukomuko (from Bengkulu), Surau Kampar (students from Kampar), Surau Kamang, and others. The area of Kampung Dagang is approximately 3 hectares, all of which are endowed land. In addition to these buildings, there is also a small market to fulfill the needs of the students in Kampung Dagang. Additionally, there is a communal kitchen with permanent staff to cook.

Based on this information, the complexity of Kampung Dagang Batuhampar is known. Kampung Dagang served as the base for halaqah activities in the 19th century. Malik (1981) noted the vibrant learning activities in Batuhampar. When night fell, oil lamps were hung on the surau poles. The voices of students echoed as they read the Qur'an and recited the Nazham Sifat Dua Puluh<sup>17</sup>. The halaqah education system implemented in Batuhampar involves sitting in circles around the teacher. In the recitation lessons (*tilawah*), it starts from the basic level of pronouncing letters to learning the *qira'at* at seven. For the Qur'an halaqah, after listening to the memorization, students individually face the sheikh to correct their recitation.

After receiving lessons from the sheikh, students return to their respective surau where they reside. They will review their lessons with assistant teachers, who are senior students authorized to teach. For those proficient in Qur'an recitation and the

<sup>17</sup> Malik, "Syekh Abdurrahman 1777-1899" Dalam Edwar (Ed), *Riwayat Hidup Dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat*.

Naqshbandi Khalidiyah Tariqah, they will be granted ijazah. This certificate will include the teacher's recommendations, urging them to always obey religious teachings and behave well.

### Anaksiak, Guru Tuo, and Syaikh

In the Kampung Dagang community, there are at least three interconnected and continuous elements: the teacher, the student, and the book. These three elements are inseparable from the halaqah of Kampung Dagang; they interact to form a strong network of knowledge. The head teacher is called a syaikh. Besides teaching and possessing a strong personality and authority, the syaikh is also a spiritual leader of the Batuhampar community. The term "syaikh" linguistically means an elderly person. In terminology, it refers to someone who possesses virtues and knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

There is a unique aspect in Batuhampar, where the spiritual leader is specifically referred to as Datuak Oyah, influenced by the strong local customs. In each period, there can only be one Datuak Oyah. The term Datuak Oyah signifies that the leadership of Kampung Dagang encompasses two important points: custom and religion. "Datuak," in terms of customs, is a title given to the traditional leader who is appointed collectively to lead a community. Meanwhile, "oyah" here refers to a spiritual father, which represents the teacher who guides followers towards Allah. Thus, here we encounter the convergence of two elements, indicating that customs and religious laws are intertwined. The first person to be bestowed with the title "Datuak Oyah" was Syaikh Batuhampar himself. After his passing at the end of the 19th century, it became a tradition to appoint descendants of the syaikh who possessed knowledge and expertise in customs to lead the spiritual aspects of the Batuhampar community. The appointment of "Datuak Oyah" is a significant event in Batuhampar, attended by representatives from both the local customs and religious authorities, not only from Nagari Batuhampar but also from surrounding regions. The connection between custom and sharia law is an important issue in Minangkabau society.<sup>19</sup> Especially in the 19th century, after the Paderi Era, students in Kampung Dagang were referred to as anaksiak, meaning those who sought knowledge from distant places. There is an opinion suggesting that the term "anaksiak" originated from Siak, on the east coast of Sumatra. Due to their spirit and perseverance in seeking knowledge, they traveled far into the Minangkabau hinterlands. Anaksiak held a relatively high position in society because they earnestly pursued knowledge. According to Malik (1981), the number of anaksiak in Kampung Dagang during Syaikh Abdurrahman's era reached around 1000–2000 individuals.

An interesting tradition that became customary during the peak of Kampung Dagang Batuhampar was the practice of visiting the community every Thursday. Usually, the children of anaksiak were excused from Quranic studies on Thursdays, and they would then descend into the surrounding areas of Batuhampar to visit one house after another. These children were typically greeted by the community with meals consisting of rice and side dishes. They were then treated with the intention of receiving blessings for their pursuit of knowledge. After being treated, the children of anaksiak

<sup>18</sup> Mawardi, Akhmad Alim, and Anung Al-Hamat, "Pembinaan Akhlak Menurut Syekh Az-Zarnuji Dalam Kitab Ta'limul Muta'allim," *Rayah Al-Islam* 5, no. 01 (2021): 21–39, <https://doi.org/10.37274/rais.v5i1.385>.

<sup>19</sup> Januar, "Implementation of Syekh Muhammad Djamil Jaho's Islamic Education Perspective through Adat and Syara' Interaction," *Islam Transformatif: Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 2 (2022).

were asked to pray. Afterward, they were provided with rice. This rice would serve as their sustenance for a week, especially for those who came from distant areas and did not receive supplies from their hometowns. To assist the students, assistant teachers were appointed as representatives of the sheikh. These assistant teachers in Kampung Dagang were called Guru Duo, individuals esteemed for their knowledge. Periodically, Guru Duo would be ready to assist the anaksiak in reviewing their lessons.

### **Subjects: Recitation of the Qur'an and the Naqshbandi Sufi Order**

Kampung Dagang, besides teaching the fundamentals of religion, specifically focuses on two important subjects: the recitation of the Qur'an (tilawah Al-Qur'an or qira'at seven) and the practice of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order (Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah). These two fields of knowledge are given greater priority in Kampung Dagang. Syekh Batuhampar is renowned as a prominent expert in Qur'anic recitation; it is even said that when he recited the Qur'an, listeners would be entranced by the rhythm he produced. Additionally, Syekh Batuhampar is also a highly respected mursyid (spiritual guide) of the Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah Sufi Order. He obtained the ijazah (authorization) of the Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah Order in Mecca in the mid-19th century.

During the time of Syekh Batuhampar, the practice of suluk, which involves regular worship for several days and is a distinctive feature of the Naqsyabandiyah Order, was conducted throughout the year. The number of participants in the suluk increased, with one period reaching up to 400 individuals. Most participants were elderly individuals seeking the path to the hereafter. They were instructed by the Syekh to cultivate the habit of remembrance of Allah. The suluk routine in Batuhampar has its own unique characteristics. Usually, suluk lasts for a maximum of 40 days, but according to prevailing information, suluk in Batuhampar was conducted for around 60 days. The prolonged duration of suluk undertaken by the seekers (salik) in Batuhampar may be a result of the rigorous practice they undergo.

Anaksiak who have completed the Qur'an along with qira'at will be granted ijazah by Syekh Batuhampar as a recognition that the student has completed their studies and is competent to teach their knowledge. There are no strict rules for obtaining ijazah in recitation and qira'at; it depends on the ability of the anaksiak to recite verse by verse and memorize proficiently. However, for the tarekat, in addition to having greater obedience, the participant must also possess a strong spiritual connection, as assessed by the teacher.

### **The Scholarly Network of Kampung Dagang**

Kampung Dagang established a cosmopolitan scholarly network. Through Syekh Batuhampar, the anaksiak forged scholarly chains with the axis of knowledge at that time, namely Haramain. Syaikh Batuhampar began studying religion at the age of 15 and continued until the age of 63. From the age of 63 until 120, he dedicated himself to the community. For 48 years, he studied religion in various regions, from Batusangkar to Tapak Tuan. From Tapak Tuan, he embarked on a steamship journey to Mecca. He spent years studying Qur'anic Qira'at under Syaikh As'ad al-Asyi. Additionally, he focused on studying and practicing the Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Khalidiyah in Jabal

Abi Qubaisy, Mecca, under Syaikh Isma'il al-Khalidi.<sup>20</sup> Syaikh Isma'il himself was a central figure of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order in Mecca who hailed from Minangkabau. He initiated several figures from the Nusantara region to receive the teachings of this order in Jabal Abi Qubaisy. Syaikh Isma'il himself was a disciple of Sayyid Abdullah Afandi, who was one of the central figures of the Naqshbandiyya Khalidiyya branch in Jabal Abi Qubaisy.

Syaikh Batuhampar can be considered one of the main disciples of Syaikh Isma'il, alongside figures like Syaikh Barulak, Syaikh Silungkang, Syaikh Tungkar, and others. These names are titles of great Sufi figures in 19th-century Minangkabau. One of the reasons for the fame of Kampung Dagang is the cosmopolitan scholarly network of Syekh Batuhampar. Not only that, all of his children were sent to Mecca to study religion, continuing the tradition. And the halaqah represents the unbroken tradition of scholarship.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the teacher connections spanning continents, the students of Syaikh Batuhampar were also known as central figures in the development of Islam in the 20th century. This demonstrates that the halaqah, which served as the center of Syaikh Batuhampar's activities, was able to educate the anaksiak (students) effectively. Among the network of students of Syaikh Batuhampar are (1) Syaikh Sulaiman Arrasuli Canduang, the leader of Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah Canduang, a renowned Islamic school for the elderly, and also the founder and respected elder of PERTI (an Islamic educational organization); (2) Syaikh Arsyad Batuhampar, Syaikh Batuhampar's own son, who continued the halaqah of Kampung Dagang; he intellectually expanded the network to Egypt and Jerusalem; (3) Syaikh Muhammad Salim Bayur Maninjau, a prominent scholar on the shores of Lake Maninjau; and (4) Syaikh Batangkapeh, one of the important scholar networks in South Coastal areas.

The networks of Syaikh Batuhampar's students had a significant influence in Minangkabau. For example, Syaikh Sulaiman Arrasuli Canduang, through the organization he led, PERTI, was able to manage more than 360 Islamic schools (pesantren) spread across West Sumatra, Riau, Jambi, and Muko Muko (as reported in 1954). This certainly owes it to the scholarly network obtained by this organization through Syaikh Batuhampar himself.

## Conclusion

Kampung Dagang Batuhampar is one of the representations of Minangkabau halaqahs in the 19th century. This village implemented the popular halaqah system of that era, particularly focusing on al-Qur'an recitation (tilawah) and Tarekat practices, thus proving to be a center of scholarship in its time. The success of Kampung Dagang Batuhampar is attributed to the persuasive preaching of Syekh Batuhampar, known for his knowledge and authority, as well as the strong spiritual aspect of the village. Moreover, Kampung Dagang Batuhampar was built upon a strong scholarly foundation and a cosmopolitan network, enabling a broad exchange of knowledge and ideas. From this study, several important suggestions can be drawn to advance Islamic education today. Firstly, there is a need for in-depth research into traditional halaqahs in

<sup>20</sup> Malik, "Syeikh Abdurrahman 1777-1899" Dalam Edwar (Ed), *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan 20 Ulama Besar Sumatera Barat*.

<sup>21</sup> Andriyani et al., "Historical Study of Islamic Education Patterns of the Prophet's Period and Its Constituency in Current Islamic Education," *Turkish Journal of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Turkish Journal of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation* 32, no. 3 (2021): 2911–15.

Minangkabau. This research aims to raise awareness of the long history of Islamic education in Minangkabau and the importance of preserving this scholarly heritage. A better understanding of how these halaqahs operated and their contributions to Islamic education can provide valuable insights for the development of modern educational methods.

Secondly, important traditions in Islamic education, such as sanad (the chain of transmission of knowledge from teacher to student) and talaqqi (direct transmission of knowledge from teacher to student), need to be adopted in modern educational systems. Sanad, which has been a "fortress" of religious knowledge for centuries, and talaqqi, which involves direct learning from a teacher, have proven to be effective means of preserving religious knowledge. Integrating these traditions into modern educational curricula can help ensure the accurate and authentic transmission of knowledge, as well as the continuity of religious knowledge.

Thirdly, it is important to incorporate the intellectual and social history of Minangkabau into school curricula. By studying this intellectual history, the younger generation will become acquainted with the intellectual richness of previous generations and understand their contributions to the development of knowledge and culture. This understanding will not only enhance their appreciation of their intellectual heritage but also inspire them to continue learning and innovating.

Kampung Dagang Batuhampar exemplifies how a small community can become a significant center of scholarship through the implementation of an effective educational system based on strong spiritual values. The persuasive preaching of Syekh Batuhampar, his scholarly and authoritative character, and the strong spiritual aspect of the village all contributed to the success of Kampung Dagang Batuhampar as an educational center. Additionally, the cosmopolitan scholarly network played a crucial role in the exchange of knowledge and ideas, enriching the knowledge base of the village. To ensure that this scholarly heritage remains alive and relevant, there need to be ongoing efforts to research and integrate these traditional practices into the current educational system. By conducting in-depth studies of traditional halaqahs, adopting important traditions such as sanad and talaqqi, and incorporating the social and intellectual history of Minangkabau into teaching materials, we can build bridges between the past and the future, ensuring that the Islamic scholarly heritage continues to thrive and evolve. Studying traditional halaqahs can also provide a broader understanding of how these communities adapted to the changing times and challenges they faced. This is important for formulating effective strategies for developing an education system that meets the needs of the modern era without neglecting the values and traditions that have proven effective for centuries. The adoption of sanad and talaqqi traditions in modern education can also enrich students' learning experiences. By learning directly from teachers with sanad, students can experience the authenticity and depth of the knowledge they are learning. The talaqqi process also allows for direct interaction between teacher and student, enabling deeper discussions and a better understanding of the material being taught.

In conclusion, Kampung Dagang Batuhampar is a tangible example of how traditional Islamic education can shape significant centers of scholarship. Through the implementation of the halaqah system, persuasive preaching, and strong spiritual aspects, this village succeeded in becoming an influential center of knowledge. By delving deeper into these practices and integrating them into modern education, we can ensure that this scholarly heritage remains alive and continues to grow, providing sustainable benefits for future generations.

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