

HISTORY OF MAKTAB AL-ISLAMIYAH TAPANULI

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Abstract

Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli is the earliest formal Islamic institution in Medan, North Sumatra. It seems that this institution has not received the attention it deserves, especially for its pioneering position. This might not be so surprising, because, in general, Islamic education in North Sumatra has not drawn the attention of researchers as much as that of neighbouring Aceh or Minangkabau. This article is an attempt to present a primary source on the topic, i.e. a short treatise entitled History of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. This book is an academic heritage left behind by `alim-historian of Medan, Syekh Abubakar Ya'qub (d. 1982). Here, it is posthumously published so that it can be used to enhance our understanding of the history of Islamic education in North Sumatra. Although the work itself is short but it is very important, since it contains first-hand information put together by a man who took part in the series of event he recorded. This work provides primary data and notes that should be of most importance for researchers.

Keywords: *Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, Islamic Education, madrasah, modernisation*

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Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli is the earliest formal Islamic institution in Medan, North Sumatra. It seems that this institution has not received the attention it deserves, especially for its pioneering position. This might not be so surprising, because, in general, Islamic education in North Sumatra has not drawn the attention of researchers as much as that of neighbouring Aceh or Minangkabau. This article is an attempt to present a primary source on the topic, i.e. a short treatise entitled History of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. This book is an academic heritage left behind by `alim-historian of Medan, Syekh Abubakar Ya`qub (d. 1982). Here, it is posthumously published so that it can be used to enhance our understanding of the history of Islamic education in North Sumatra. Although the work itself is short but it is very important, since it contains first-hand information put together by a man who took part in the series of event he recorded. This work provides primary data and notes that should be of most importance for researchers.

Kata Kunci: *Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, pendidikan Islam, madrasah, modernisasi*

A. Translators' Introduction

This article is basically an attempt to bring to surface a work on the history of Islamic education in Medan, capital city of North Sumatra province, Indonesia. When it comes to Islamic education, or Islamic studies for that matter, North Sumatra appears to be shadowed by Aceh and Minangkabau. However, the state of the research on Islamic education in North Sumatra has been improving recently. Some graduate students have shed more lights into the matter through their theses. Following this rise of interest, more original materials have come to surface. The book which is studied in this article is one of those original sources. The *History of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli* is basically a description of the earliest formal education institution in Medan. Written by a man who was personally involved in the

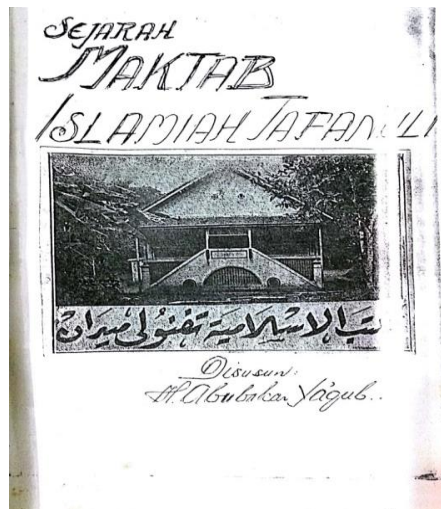
institutions, this work provide valuable historical information on Islamic education in early 20th century Medan. This article presents it to readers as well as researches by publishing and providing it in English language.

B. The full text of the *History of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli*

1. Preface

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim; Assalamu 'alaikum w.w.

Born in July 22, 1915 in Medan, I am now 60 years old (according to Christian Calendar). I intend to write a history of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli Medan (Picture 1). I believe that this would be useful for my offspring as well as for the society at large.



Picture 1: Front Cover of the Book

I am so motivated to write this simple history to clarify for future generation regarding the endower, the founders, the land, the caretakers, the date of establishment, and so on.

In addition, during a meeting of Council of Ulama North Sumatra in Medan (July 17, 1975), Ustaz Ahmad Nasution of State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) had advised that a history of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli need to be written. So I take the task of explaining Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli's establishment, its activities, and other things it had been through until today.

Should I exaggerate here and there, or perhaps I make mistakes, I hope that someone with more knowledge of the history of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli will make corrections.

Hopefully, this endeavor will be beneficial for generations to come, especially my offspring.

Wa bi'llaahi 'ttaufiq walhidayah; Wassalam; H. Abubakar Ya`qub; Medan July 22, 1975.

2. Introduction: the Establishment of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

In the course of 1850s to 1880s a great number of people from Mandailing (Southern Tapanuli) left their country moving toward East Sumatra by way of Padangbolak, Bilah Pane, Labuhan Batu and Tanjung Balai Asahan. One census revealed that 4,688 of Medan population were of sub-ethnic Mandailing migrants, fourth in number after Javanese, Mingkabau and Malay groups. A 1930 census of Eastern Sumatra population put the 59,638 sub-ethnic Mandailing-Angkolas third, after Javanese and Toba-Batak groups (Napitupuluh, 1991; Reid, 1987)

Among those who left their home country of Roburan Lombang, Tano Bato Mandailing, there was a man by the name Syeikh Muhammad Yakub. Along with his group he settled first at Asahan, where he became famous as “*Malim Mumin.*” Around 1883, he proceeded to Medan. Because he was a Naqsyabandi *syeikh*, one of his disciples gave him an estate/house at Mesjidweg (later on Moskee Straat, now Mesjid Street). *Malim*—most likely from Arabic word *mu`allim*—is an honorary title to address a man of considerable religious knowledge who teach and lead his community in religious matters. This term is still in use until the present day in some communities, notably that of Al Washliyah affiliation.

Not long after, Syeikh Ja`far Hasan’s uncle along with his group made it to Medan. This migration could be seen as the seed of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. This uncle name was H. Abd Hamid (nicknamed Panjang Mise) lived and opened a shop at Kedai Panjang Kesawan (now Ahmad Yani Street) no. 34. Kedai Panjang (literally, Long Shop) was an old name for series of shops in Kesawan area, one of the first elite parts of Medan in late 19th century. Today this part of Medan considered as old Medan, some buildings there are protected historical heritage.

For some reasons, Syeikh Muhammad Ya`qub moved to Sungai Rengas, what is now Sutomo Street, Jose Rizal Street, Kediri Street, and Antara Street (used to be named Wilhelmina Straat, Emma Straat, Maurits Straat, and Antara Straat), on a piece of land provided by the Sultan of Deli, i.e. Sultan Ma`mun al-Rasyid Perkasa Alamsyah.

Panjang Mise (H. Abd Hamid) himself bought a piece of land and built a house at Kampung Petisah, Padang Bulan Weg, no. 190. Syeikh Ja`far moved along with his uncle. In early 1990s—perhaps in 1908 or

1905—Syeikh Ja`far departed for Mecca to learn about Islam. I was not certain about the length of his stay in Mecca, but it seems to be during the reign of Syarif Husain. Syarif Husain bin Ali (1856-1931) was appointed governor of Mecca in 1908 and later became King of Hijaz. In 1916 he led a revolt against the Ottoman Turks because of the latter's more and more nationalistic policy. In 1924, however, Ibn Sa`ud defeated him and forced him to left Hijaz. He died in Amman, Jordan (Wynbrandt, 2004: 176,181-183). In Mecca he studies at the feet of scholars, such as Syeikh Abdulqadir Mandily, Syeikh Mukhtar Bogor, Syeikh Ali Maliky, Syeikh Sa`id Yamany. Syeikh Ja`far also visited Bayt al-Maqdis.

After some years in Mecca, especially learning Arabic, he came back to Jawi, perhaps in 1914 (The term Jawi used to be applied for almost the whole Southeast Asia). In appreciation, Muslim communities of Medan and the surrounding areas proposed to start a school, specially devoted for Arabic sciences. It should be noted that by that time Muslims in Medan learnt only basic religious obligations and reading the Qur'an. There was no school that teaches Nahwu, Sharaf, Manthiq and other linguistic sciences. There was no such thing as *Ibtidaiyah* school, *Tsanawiyah* school, *Qismul Ali* or the like.

Most of those who attended Syeikh Ja`far Hasan's classes have passed away, some after and some before Ja`far Hasan's death. He died in Kedai Durian at 21.40, Saturday night, March 17/18, 1950.

To my knowledge, one of Syeikh Ja`far Hasan's students was Syeikh Mahmud Syahabuddin, before the latter's departure for Mecca. Syeikh Mahmud Syahabuddin must have studied under Syeikh Ja`far Hasan around 1915. I have tried to confirm this to Syeikh Mahmud himself, but he could not remember the exact year. According to his son, the correct spelling of te name was Syekh Mahmud Syihabuddin

after his father's name. He was born in Medan in 1905, son of Syihabuddin Nasution who migrated to Medan from Pagur, Mandailing. He was one of the first-generation students of Syeikh Ja`far Hasan. He studied for a while at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli and then continued his study in Mecca staying there for 24 years. He taught at the Holy Mosque of Mecca. Among his students there are Abubakar Ya`qub and H. Bahrum Ahmad. Before World War II, he returned to Medan and assumed teaching post at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. Syeikh Mahmud Syihabuddin married a lady by the name Nafsiah binti Syekh Ilyas Tanjung. After Indonesian independence he became Civil Servant at Deli Serdang Office of Ministry of Religious Affairs. When North Sumatra Council of Indonesian Ulama was founded in 1975, he became a member of its Advisory Board. Syeikh Mahmud Syihabuddin passed away on Monday January 8, 1996/ Sya`ban 16, 1416, aged 91, and was buried at Muslim Cemetery Complex, Kapten Pattimura Street Medan (Tanjung, 2012: 13,15).

After several years of *al-Nahwu* classes at Syeikh Ja`far Hasan's house some of students' parents and Muslim community of Medan realized an urgent need for a well-managed independent school building. The community intended to set up a *maktab* (a *mandarsah*, not a *madrrasah*), but no longer as part of people or teacher's residence. *Maktab* is a name of Islamic education institution for elementary level. In pre-modern era, the more frequently used term was *kuttub* (Asari, 2007: 24-37).

After the year of 1883 significant number of people from Mandailing South Tapanuli had resided in Deli or Medan. These migrants (hence the popular phrase *Merantau ke Deli*) from Mandailing South Tapanuli were warmly welcomed by the locals. The

opening of plantations in the East Sumatra region by the Dutch Colonial in the 18th century brought a fresh economic development to the region. Soon Deli became a symbol of hope for prosperity and its population grew rapidly due to the arrival of group after group of migrants from other areas. *Merantau ke Deli or Go to Deli* became a very popular phrase (Hamka, 1941). These people from Mandailing were generally adaptable, well-mannered and did not become farmers. In fact they assumed respectable professions such as teacher, syeikh of Tarekat Naqsyabandi, sultanate officials, judges, member of Judicial Office, and so on. Some of them worked for Dutch Government or Companies; still many opted to become merchants, especially at Kampung Kesawan. According to Luckman Sinar, the word 'Kesawan' originated from 'Kesawah' which at that time was the economic center of Medan. There was a shop complex called Kedai Panjang. There was also Old Market, known today as Pasar Ikan Lama. In 1905 a horse racecourse was inaugurated about 1 km to the East of Kesawan, which later became Central Market. Now it is occupied by super-markets and malls. Some 1.5 km to the South of Kesawan was Maimun Palace and Al-Masun Grand Mosque which still exist until today. About 1 km to the West was Dutch Military Camp and their fortress during Sunggal War. Nowadays in this place stands People's Representative House of North Sumatra. To the North of Kesawan there were Esplanade, Hotel De Boer, and Post Office (Sinar, 1991).

Syeikh Muhammad Ya`qub took the initiative to gather people originated from South Tapanuli (Mandailing, Padang Bolak, Sipirok, etc.) The meeting agreed on the urgency of establishing an Islamic school building, especially to teach Arabic/Nahwu.

3. The Land and Building of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

Seniors and respectable citizens tried to seek a piece of land for the intended school building. Since most of the migrants from Mandailing/South Tapanuli settled and had their business around Kampung Kesawan, they tried to find the land there. No intention to seek at outskirts Medan, such as Petisah, Kampung Selalas Pandau, Sei Kerah, Sei Rengas, or Sei Mati. Thanks to their high involvement in community and excellent relationship with native inhabitants of Medan, a generous well-to-do citizen endowed a piece of his land for the cause. The philanthropist was Datuk Haji Muhammad Ali, owner of many properties at Kampung Kesawan. He endowed a piece of land, situated at Hindu Street, to the left hand side of Old Mosque Medan, by the bank of Deli River. According to Abubakar Ya`qub, this mosque was constructed in 1873. In December 20, 1894 his father, Syaikh Muhammad Ya`qub, was appointed as *Imam Rawatib* there based on a formal letter from *Pangeran Bendahara* of Deli Sultanate. After the death of Syaikh Muhammad Ya`qub in February 10, 1930 the post was assumed by his son-in-law, H. Usman Imam but he then left for Kedai Durian 1938. Abubakar Ya`qub along with some seniors presented themselves to the Sultan requesting that new caretaker, Imam, and Khatib be appointed. Sultan Amaluddin Tsany Perkasa Alamsyah, witnessed by Tengku Mukhtar (Sultan's Secretary), H. A. Rahman Hamid, Husin, and Adam Usman, said to Abubakar Ya`qub: "From now on you are the Caretaker and Imam of Old Mosque." With that, and never followed by a formal letter, he took the responsibility until his death in 1982 (Ya`qub, n.d.-b).

The endowment of this land was registered on an "Endowment Letter" (in Arabic Script), Register Number 80, dated Medan Kesawan, Jumad al-Awwal 05, 1335 (February 26, 1917). The dimension of the

History of Maktab Al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

land was 39 ft. from South to North and 60 ft. from West to East. The endower, Datuk Haji Muhammad Ali, stipulated the caretaker of the Endowment, as follows:

- a. Haji Ibrahim, the president of Syarikat Islam Tapanuli Medan.
- b. Syeikh Mohd Ya`qub Mandailing.
- c. Haji Ibrahim, market supervisor in Medan. (Picture 2)

The Endowment Letter also declared that:

- d. Charity building will be erected to house students of Islamic sciences.
- e. In the death of a caretaker, his rights will be inherited by his heir.

Endowment Grant included “Letter of Relegation of Right of Land Cultivation” of Sripaduka Negeri Deli, Registration Number 111 March 03, 1918, signed by Sulthan Ma'mun Arrasyid Perkasa Alamsyah. Sultan Makmun Al-Rasyid Perkasa Alamsyah became a sultan at early age. Born in 1853, he ruled from 1873 to 1924 when tobacco trade was growing and Deli Sultanate reached its heyday. He moved the sultanate's center from Labuhan Deli to Medan, started the building of Maimun Palace in August 26, 1988 and officially used in May 18, 1891 (Takari et al., 2012).

The piece of land bordered in North with Cemetery Complex, in East, South and West with Datuk Haji Muhammad Ali. The dimension of the land was as follows: In the Northern side, from stone 1 to stone 2 was 12 meters; In the Eastern side, from stone 2 to stone 3 was 18.50 meters; In the Southern side, from stone 3 to stone 4 was 12 meters; and in the Western side, from stone 4 to stone 1 was 18.50 meters. The total volume of the land was 222 square meters. The Grant was authenticated with the following words:

Krachten onderhandsche verklaring ddo, 5 Djemadilawal 1335 (1917) is dit perceel “wakaf gemaakt tenbehoef van den vereeniging Maktab Al-Islamiyah Tapanoeli Medan. Gregistreerd by het gemeentelijk Bureau voor grondzaken te Medan op heden den 26 Januari 1925 onder S.111 (signed by Onleesbaar).

4. Establishment, Dimension, and Condition of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

Having the endowment property from Datuk Haji Mohammad Ali, Mandailing community started to collect the needed fund to establish Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, according to plan. Actually, fund was not a real problem at the time. All community members were more than ready to donate or endow on the condition that the committee was made of individuals known for trustworthiness and

integrity. Development of the building started soon after the issue of Bouwvergunning no. 24/17, signed by De Voorzitter Van Den gemeente Raad Van Medan, dated March 8, 1918. Old archive shows that Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli was erected according to the fore mentioned plan. The length of the building was 18.50 meters and its width was 12 meters following the dimension of the land. The building's height was about 8 meters, complete with roofing-tiles and woodesn wall. The building's floor was elevated about two meters, and the underneath space was used as playing ground, as it had no courtyard.

The entrance to the Maktab was concrete-stairs from both left and right had sides. From the side next to Deli River, there was another stairs made of wood (rear entrance). The building was officially constructed on Sya'ban 9, 1336AH (May 19, 1918 AD).

The building consists of four classrooms and one administration room. The front classroom was covered with rattan mat, and was used for *Qism al-`Ali* level during the morning. Grade of education = Aliyah or High School. It seems that this *madrassa* is the first to introduce the term *Qism al-`Ali*. Later on the term was to be used by madrasas under the management of Al Jam`iyatul Washliyah. In present day, however, its usage becomes uncommon, having been replaced by the standard term of *madrassah*, introduced by independent Indonesian government. During the afternoon this room was used for learning the Qur'an, *Marhaba*, and so on. *Marhaba*, also *Marhabanan* often performed as part of activities such as: Celebration of Birthday of the Prophet, wedding, or inauguration of a child's name. *Marhaba* is basically praises for the Prophet Muhammad along with his biography, usually sung collectively sometimes complemented by simple musical

instruments. The songs are based on a book by Syeikh Ja`far ibn Hasan al-Barzanji (d. 1766), *Iqd al-Jawahir*, which in Indonesia more popular as simply *Kitab al-Barzanji* (Al-Barzanji, 1418 H). One other classroom was adjacent to a Cemetery Complex. The other three classrooms were furnished with complete sets of table and chair (each set for three or four students), made of Damar Laut wood, donated by Major Tjong A Fie.

Chong A Fie was one of very popular Chinese Chiefs in Medan, born in Moy Hian di Canton, China into a small merchant family. Following his father's death he and his brother migrated to Deli which at that time popular as Dollar Country for its rapid economic growth. In the beginning, they settled and started a shop at Labuhan Deli providing Chinese workers and other new migrants. He soon prospered and began to establish good relationship with Deli Sultan as well as high class businessmen. In November 4, 1885 Chong A Fie was appointed the first Chinese Liutenant of Labuhan Deli and soon got promoted. In June 7, 1886 he became Labuhan Deli's Chief of Chinese, became Chinese Captain in 1911. Later on he was appointed Chinese Mayor, then the highest post for Chinese in Medan. He was known as philanthropic who established several public facilities for Chinese population as well as for native ones. When Sultan Makmun Alrasyid planned to build Al-Mashun Grand Mosque, Chong A Fie contributed a third of the budget. He contributed the whole expenditure of building a mosque at Petisah, and other mosques at Sipirok and West Sumatra. He also contributed a big decorated clock to Medan City Hall. Chong A Fie did not forget to make ample contributions to his home country. In return, the Chinese Kingdom granted him aristocratic title. When China became republic under Sun Yat Sen, Chong A Fie was granted *Kia We Chang Star Grade 3* in 1916 and

became an honorary Advisor to the new republic (Sinar, 1991: 57,84-85).

On the inauguration day of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli a big ceremony was held, followed by great feast. It was reported that water buffalo, cows, and goats were slaughtered for the feast. That day, the Caretakers of the Endowment of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli were announced. It was stipulated that the position of Caretakers was hereditary. These Caretakers were as follow:

- a. Syeikh Muhammad Ya`qub (then lived at Kampung Sei Rengas, Frederil-Hendrik Straat no 2/Tilak Street Medan), buried at Cemetery Complex next to Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, across Old Mosque Medan.
- b. Haji Ibrahim Market Supervisor and Penghulu Kampung Sei Kerah Medan (then lived at Moskee Straat 60/Mesjid Street Medan); died in May 17, 1933.
- c. Haji Ibrahim President of Syarikat Islam Tapanuli (worked at Weeskamer Medan, lived at Negapatem Straat Medan, and has passed away.

The Caretaker Certificate along with the pictures of founders and endowers of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli were hung on the walls of the Maktab. But due to frequent floods and alternating managers and teachers, the Certificate has been missing.

I need to explain that upon their deaths these caretakers were succeeded by their respective heirs. Syeikh Muhammad Ya`qub was succeeded by Hajjah Halimah Ya`qub (because H. Abu Bakar Ya`qub had not finished his education). Hajjah Halimah passed away in July 21, 1944. Haji Ibrahim (number 2 above) was succeeded by his son Abdul Moerad (who was also Penghulu Kesawan). The other Haji

Ibrahim (number 3 above) was succeeded by his son Muhammad Thaib. The latter did not have any child, never married, and passed away before Indonesian independence.

5. Teachers, Students, and Curriculum of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

Upon completion of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli building, classes that used to be held at Syeikh Ja'far Hasan's house were transferred to the new building. Education in this Maktab was divided into two levels:

- a. Elementary/Secondary (*Ibtida'i/Tsanawi*) level, classes from 07.00-12.00 local time.
- b. Preparatory (*Tajhizi*) level (lessons on basic religious obligations and reading the Qur'an), classes from 14.00-17.00 local time. There were also classes for reading the Qur'an, *Marhaba*, etc. during the evenings.

Teachers for morning classes:

- a. Syeikh Ja'far Hasan, active for a short time after the transfer from Maktab Petisah (i.e. Maktab Ja'far Hasan) to Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. Afterwards, he spent most of his time in *batik* business, assisting his uncle, H. Abd Hamid Panjang Mise. Syeikh Ja'far Hasan died in March 17, 1950 at Kedai Durian and was buried there.
- b. H. Yahya A. Shamad (expert in Astronomy and music-lover). He also did not teach for long, because he had to work for a European Company in Medan. He died in January 7, 1972 at Sei Mati and was buried at Mandailing Cemetery Complex, Katamso Street Medan.

- c. H. Ahmad Beyki, principal of the Maktab. He excelled on calligraphy, died around 1928 at Kenari/Waringin Street Medan and was buried next to Jami` Mosque, Sei Deli Medan. Syaikh Muhammad Yunus, principal after Syaikh Ahmad Beyki. An expert-teacher of *Tasawwuf*, whose explanations were easily understood by his students. Syaikh Muhammad Yunus was born in Binjai in 1889. His father, H. Muhammad Arsyad, had moved there from Penyabungan, South Tapanuli. He has shown a thirst for knowledge since early age although he had not been so lucky financially. He studies in Kampung Percukaian and Titi Gantung—both in Binjai—under Syaikh Abdul Muthalib, after which he moved to study *fiqh* and *mantiq* at Besilam. From Besilam he went to Dorga, Kedah Malaysia to study further under Syaikh Muhammad Idris Petani. Then he proceeded to Mecca and studied industriously under Syaikh ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, Syaikh ‘Abd al-Qadīr al-Mandīly, Syaikh ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd etc. On his way home, he made a stop at Penang, Malaysia and studies under Syaikh Jalaluddin Petani and Syaikh Abdul Majid. After long painstaking study years he returned to Indonesia and taught in several places including Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli where he eventually became principal. He died at his house at Kampung Mandailing, Padangbulan Street, in July, 17, 1950 (Sulaiman, 1956: 404-405).
- d. Syaikh Abdullah Ali Al Mandily, specialist teacher of colloquial Arabic. He was *Syeikh Jema'ah Haji* (Hajj Mentor) in Jiyad, Mecca, and returned to Indonesia only after *hajj* seasons, but never returned again after 1930. He passed away in December 22, 1971 in Jiyad, Mecca.

Some others who had been teachers of this Maktab:

- a. Ismail Banda, up to 1932 only, because of his departure for Mecca and Cairo to continue his education. He died in an aircraft accident in Tehran. Ismail Banda was born in 1910 and studied at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli for five years. He continued to study at Jami` al-Azhar, Egypt, sponsored by his parents and Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah. Before his departure for Egypt he had taught at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli until 1932. Jami` al-Azhar granted him *Syahadah 'Alim* in 1937, to be followed by B.A. and M.A. in Philosophy in 1940 and 1942 respectively. In 1944, he also earned a Certificate in English from the celebrated Cambridge University. During his stay in Egypt he was also active member of Jam'iyah Khairiyah Jawiyah organization which later renamed itself as Perkumpulan Pemuda Indonesia Malaya (Perpindo). He was also co-founded an organization, Kemerdekaan Indonesia in Kairo in 1945. Ismail Banda returned to Indonesia in 1947 and lived at Yogyakarta—then the capital of Republic of Indonesia. He worked for the Ministry of Religious Affairs from July 1, 1947 to September 1, 1947. In 1948 he was posted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yogyakarta. In 1950 he was transferred to Jakarta and assigned to Indonesian Embassy in Tehran Iran, but in 1951 relocated to Kabul, Afghanistan. He intended to visit Egypt and Tehran before proceeding to Afghanistan, but his plane crashed at Tehran in December 22, 1955. He was one of the casualties (Sulaiman, 1956: 398-400).
- b. H. Abdur Rahman Syihab. He died peacefully in February 7, 1955 at his residence in Petisah Tengah and was buried next to Jami` Mosque, Sei Deli Medan. H.A. Rahman Syihab was born in 1910 in Kampung Paku, Galang that belonged to Serdang Kingdom. He started his education at Madrasah Sairussulaiman and

Vervolgschool both at Perbaungan. He then continued to study at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli Medan for eight years (1924-1932). In 1928 besides at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli he also studied at Maktab Hasaniyah of Syaikh Hasan Maksom. He was also known to have studied stenography and English language. He co-founded Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah and became very active in it. Apparently he secured the support of all Al Washliyah branch offices in East Sumatra and Tapanuli areas, paving his way to become this organization's top leader from 1934 to his death in 1955. He was also active in several other organizations. In 1944 he was appointed as official of Office of Religious Affairs (Syumuhan). Following Indonesian Independence in 1945 he chaired Indonesian Committee for Religious Affairs. In 1946 he became chairman of Islam Section of East Sumatra Office of Religious Affairs. In 1949 he chaired North Sumatra Office of Religious Affairs in Kutaraja. Then he became Inspector at North Sumatra Social Office. From 1945 to 1948 he was a member of North Sumatra People Representative and Executive Member of People Representative of East Sumatra. In 1947 he was a member of National Committee of Central Indonesia (KNIP). In 1950 he was advisory member of Committee of Preparation of United States of East Sumatra (PPNKST) and in 1954 he became a member of Parliament (Hasanuddin & Chalidjah, 1998: 42-44).

- c. H. Abdul Wahab. He is still alive and become a teacher in Tebing Tinggi, Deli. Lately, he frequently becomes a member of Board of Judges for North Sumatra Provincial Qur'an Recitation Competition (MTQ). He was a student of the Maktab at early age and became one of its teachers. H. Abdul Wahab Lubis was born

in 1907 at Bandar Labuhan, Tanjung Morawa. Born to a batik-merchant family, he studied at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli and became one of favorite students of Syaikh Muhammad Yunus. In fact, later on Muhammad Yunus appointed him as assistant. In addition to studying at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, he also studies under Syaikh Hasan Maksum. H. Abdul Wahab Lubis was one co-founded Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah and in 1934 chaired its Medan branch office. One of his noted contribution was modernizing the Mawlid Nabi celebration by allowing the *sirah nabawiyyah* be delivered in Indonesian rather than in Arabic which could be understood by a tiny minority (Tanjung, 2012a: 81-82).

- d. H. Abdul Jalil. He spent a long time studying in Mecca and Yemen and excelled in Arabic language. During his last days he was head of Office of Islamic Religious Affairs (KUA), Kota Matsum, Medan. He passed away in March, 7, 1969 in Rambutan Street and was buried next to Jami` Mosque, Sei Deli Medan.
- e. H. Mahmud Syahabuddin. He started to study at Maktab Syeikh Ja`far in Petisah and then transferred to Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. Not long after, he left for Mecca where he spent 24 years studying and teaching at the Holy Moque (Masjid al-Haram Makkah). Before the World War II he returned to Medan and taught at this Maktab. He is now living at Kampung Mandailing, Padang Bulan Street, Medan.
- f. Another teacher for morning season of the Maktab was H. Adnan Yahya' and Azhari who taught up to the World War II. They lived at Manggis Street and Titipapan, respectively.



Picture 3. *Former students/teachers of MIT. Left-right: H. Ismail Banda, H.A. Rahman Syihab, Letkol Baharuddin Ali. Standing back: H.M. Nurdin PO, H. Marzuki, Syamsul Bahri,*

Teachers for Afternoon Classes:

- a. H. Usman Iman. He was a true master in Qur'anic Recitation, *Marhaba*, and was the Imam of Old Mosque Medan. He died in September 21, 1942 at Kedai Durian.
- b. H. Badaruddin. In addition to afternoon classes, he also taught Ilmu Nahwu to girl classes at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. He died around the year of 1946.
- c. Amir Husin. He was a very cheerful teacher and always encouraged his students to work out and to study cheerfully. Now he is a Civil Servant, head of Office of Islamic Religious Affairs (KUA), sub-district of Galang and lives around Jami` Mosque of Galang.
- d. H. Muhammad Ali Usman. Became a teaching assistant for a short time, but then opened a Batik Store at Kesawan 30, Medan. He died in 1962 in Padangbulan Street and was buried at Manggis Street Medan.
- e. H. Ishak Ismail. A teaching assistant, he was born at Kampung Kesawan in 1901. He studied at the Maktab before assuming a

teaching assistant post. Retired from North Sumatra Office of Ministry of Religious Affairs, he died in Antara Street in April 22, 1970 and was buried in Mandailing Cemetery Complex, Sei Mati.

- f. Adnan Nur Lubis. He was a disciple of Syeikh Mohd Yunus (morning seasons) and in 1922 became a teacher for afternoon classes of the Maktab. He also taught at the Branch Campus of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli at Antara Street with his assistant, Abubakar Ya`qub up to 1930. Adnan Nur Lubis was famous with nickname “Lobe Nasional” and died in 1968 at Sei Mati Medan. (In his time also, Ismail Banda was transferred to teach at Asahan Street *Langgar* (now Jami’ Mosque Al-Furqan). *Langgar* is basically a place of Islamic worship, smaller than mosque, and is not used for the Fariday Congregation Prayer.

Under the supervision of H. Usman Imam, 1931 onward, the followings are teachers for afternoon seasons:

- a. Adam Usman. He attended morning and afternoon seasons of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, but also studied at Madrasah Khairiyah Delitua and Ja`fariah Kedai Durian, before becoming head teacher for afternoon classes. Now, after retiring from Deli/Serdang District Office of Ministry of Religious Affairs he continues to serve as principal of Madrasah Alwasliyah of Hindu Street, because now no one takes the leadership of MIT. He lived at Mesjid Street number 64, assuming the position of Imam-Rawatib for Old Mosque of Medan.
- b. H. Abubakar Ya`qub. He taught since 1931 until December 1935, after which he left for Mecca in January, 16 1936. He did not teach

upon returning from Mecca but continued as caretaker up to present day. In addition he was also Caretaker, Imam and Khatib for Old Mosque of Medan.

- c. H. Abdul Aziz. Apart from being a *Bilal* and *Muazzin* of Old Mosque Medan, he also taught afternoon classes of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. Now he is a Registrar of Marriage and Divorce (P3NTR) at Kampung Durian, East Medan Sub-district.
- d. Muhammad Sa'oe. He started as a student of afternoon classes, living with the household of H. Usman Imam, occupying a room of Old Mosque Medan. Last known to teach in Tembung area (plantation region). I have been unable to acquire his exact address.

Teachers for Girl Classes of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

According to old practices, *maktab* or madrasa should be specialized in the sense that boys and girls have different and separate buildings. Accordingly, a special *madrasa* for girls was held in upper floor of a house at 70 Mesjid Street (H. Abubakar Ya`qub has been living in this house since December 11, 1942 to the present). This *madrasa* was called Madrasah Islamiyah li al-Banat, with the following teachers:

- a. Hasnah Ya`qub, the wife of H. Usman Imam (died in March, 21, 1930); then
- b. Baniamin Usman, still teaching until now, door-to-door
- c. H. Asiah Lubis (now works for Islamic Information Office of North Sumatra Provincial Government).

This *madrasa* continued to operate up to the Japanese Occupation. After independence, the *madrasa* for girls was liquidated and merged

History of Maktab Al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

with Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli (under Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah). Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah was founded in Medan in 1930. It gained considerable members and supporters to the extent that allows Karel A. Steenbrink to put third after Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama (Asari, 2002: 232-238).

For women there was a twice-a-week lesson on *Fardhu `Ayn* (i.e. basic religious obligations) by H. Halimah Ya`qub at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. She also taught at the residences of the dignitaries (Tengkus and Datuks) of Deli Sultanate and Serdang Sultanate who reside in Medan. After the death of Syeikh Mohd Ya`qub in February 9, 1930, she became active in the management of MIT. One of his notable contributions was installing walls at the ground level of the Maktab so that it can accommodate some classrooms. This was undertaken in August 4, 1936. She did everything she can to ensure the financials for all kinds of maintenance works and all kinds of ceremonies (*Mawlid, Isra'-Mir`raj, Qurban, etc.*)

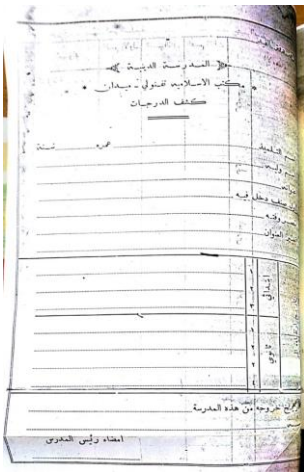
H. Halimah Ya`qub tended to take things easily. Her very disposition was: "dare to say, dare to do." In addition to being a teacher for high class women of Deli Sultanate, she was also a medicine woman treating anyone who comes to her. She distributed herbal medicine, stew liquids, and other maternity stuffs. Unfortunately, she and her husband, H. Muhammad Zain, a merchant at Kesawan, did not have any child. Their residence was not far from Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. That helped her to regularly check on it and to care for its needs.

After her death, the caretaker of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli felt into H. Abubakar Ya`qub until today. However, the *madrassa* was no longer operational, and the building was borrowed by Al Washliyah since April 5, 1947.

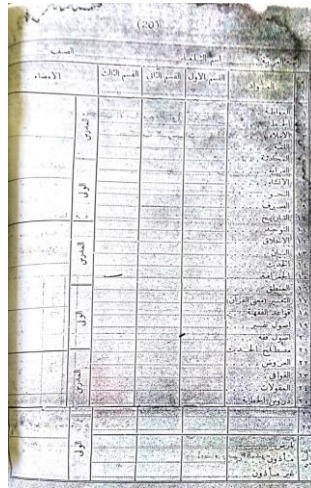
Students of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli Medan was the first *maktab* to be established in Deli, and perhaps the oldest madrasa in the whole North Sumatra. Its students were not merely from Medan and the surrounding areas (Kampung Baru, Kedai Durian, Deli Tua, Ampelas, Batang Kuis, Tembung, Sunggal, Pulu Berayan, Labuhan, Belawan) but also from farther areas like Lubuk Pakam, Perbaungan, Lidah Tanah, Tebing Tinggi, Serbelawan, Simalungun, Asahan, Labuhan Batu, Bagan Siapi-api, and Tapanuli Selatan.

Picture 4a.



Picture 4b.



Picture 4a-4b: Study Record Book of MIT

The books learnt in the Maktab (morning classes) were *Ajrumiyyah*, *Ibn `Aqil*, *Qathr al-Nida'*, *Alfiyyah*, *Qira'at al-Rasyidah*, *Fath al-Qarib*, *Jalalayn*, *Ushul al-Fiqh*, *Ma`ani*, *Bayan*, and so on. For a fuller list, see Subject List on Progress Report, (Picture 4a, 4b).

In its initial days, the Maktab did not provide a quarterly report. Students just study on and on without levels. There were no such

things as grades of *Ibtidaiyah* I, II, III or *Tsanawiyah* I, II, III or any other grading system. There was also no granting of diplomas. These only started to be introduced in 1935. It seems that Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli provided Student with Progress Report and Certificate only after being influenced by Al-Washliyah education practices. It is worth noting that the foundation of Al-Washliyah was initiated by the Maktab's teachers and students and was declared for the first time at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. There was also no mention of *Qism al-'Ali*. Nonetheless, a student transfer from 'rooms with chairs' to 'room with rattan mat' signified that he has reached '*Qism al-'Ali* level'.

Afternoon sessions focus on *Tajwid al-Qur'an*, reading *Qa'idah Baghdadiyyah* and reading the Qur'an properly according to *Tajwid al-Qur'an*, *Qiraat Hafash*, and completing 30 chapters of the Qur'an. For this reason every year there was a ceremony of "Khataman Al-Qur'an" for students who completed their reading of the Qur'an. This was a big ceremony where students are appreciated, marched in procession complete with music and songs. The students were also seated tribunal pulpit (*Mimbar Khatam Al-Qur'an*) decorated with special glutinous rice, roasted chicken, boiled eggs, and flags. During a *Khataman Al-quran*, one student reads a *surah* to be continued by another student, started from Surat al-Ḍuḥā (Chapter 93 of the Qur'an) up to the last *surah*, al-Nās (Chapter 114).

During afternoon session the subjects taught include:

- a. Islamic law on rituals and did not cover *mu'amalat*, *munakahat*, *fara'id* and so on. The lessons were limited to introduce daily personal obligations and communal obligations. Apparently the

intention was simply to learn and to practice. Graduates of the afternoon classes were not projected to assume teaching posts or any religious leadership in the community.

- b. Theology, especially the *Sifat 20* has to be mastered completely. Also some *Tasawwuf* books to remind about the Hereafter, such as *Hidayat al-Salikin* or *Al-Yawaqit wa al-Jawahir*.
- c. Biography of the Prophet Muhammad and some Islamic History: Companions of the Prophet and so on.
- d. Arabic Language: colloquial Arabic, not Arabic Grammar.
- e. Also taught basic “physical movements” and rudimentary marching skills with commands in Turkish or Arabic.
- f. Also taught singing, including Indonesian songs but emphasizing *Barzanji/Marhaba*. Back then the styles were limited to Rakby, Rashd, Husaini, Banjaka, Yaman, Hijaz and so on.

All afternoon students were male and at *Tajhizi/Ibtidai* levels. But the terms used back then were *Kelas alif-ba-ta* and *Tingkat al-Qur'an*. *Alif-ba-ta* Class referring to the first three letters of Arabic Script to signify the very basic stage of learning to read the Holy Qur'an, using the *Qa'idah Baghdadiyah* text. *Kelas al-Qur'an* refers to a stage when one has mastered the basic rules and started to read the Qur'an per se. The students came mostly from Medan and the surrounding areas: Sei Mati, Sukaraja, Kotamatsum, Sei Rengas, Sei Kerah/Pandau, Petisah Tengah/Darat, Glugur, Kampung Aur/Polonia, and Sukaramai. There was almost no student from outside Medan. When there were some, they generally came from Sidikalang and staying in Medan in the houses of teachers or well-to-do families.

Graduates of *Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli* generally became teachers, Islamic judges, and leaders across North Sumatra. Among

them are: Ismail Banda, Lieutenant Colonel Baharuddin Ali, O.K.H. A. Aziz, Ja`far Zainuddin, H. A. Wahab Guru, H. Adnan Lubis, H. A. Rahman Syihab, H. Mahmud Syahabuddin, H. Sulaiman, H. Bahrum Saleh, H. Mahyaruddin Salim, Drs. H. A. Jalil Muhammad, H. Azra`i A Rauf, Muhammad Arifin Isa, H. Abdullah Ali Lubis, H. Syarifuddin Said, H. Bahrum Ahmad, Azhari, Ahmad Baqi, H. M. Yunus Karim, H. M. Thaib Jamangatak, H. Haramaian Alam (last two lived in Mecca), Hasnol Basri, Imam Yusuf Perbaungan, and so many more that, unfortunately, I could not remember one by one. Syaikh H. Azra`i Abdurra`uf was born in Medan in 1918. He studied at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli then moved to Madrasah H. Marased on Sungai Deli Street in 1935. He departed to Mecca at the same year and studied at Madrasah Al-Falāḥ and informally also studies at the feet of Syaikh Aḥmad Ḥijāzi, a *hafīz* of the Qur`an and excelled in *qaṣīdah*. He returned to Medan in 1951 but maintained a strong relationship with the Arab world. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia frequently invited him to be part of Board of Judges of Qur`an Recitation Competition. Malaysian government also often invited him for the same occasion. In Medan, he taught at a *mushalla* in front of his house. Later on he had to bring his classes into his house because the *mushalla* was demolished to allow the expansion of Sungai Deli Street. Many of his students become celebrated reciters of the Qur`an, such as Prof. Dr. H. M. Yasir Nasution, Dr. H. Yusnar Yusuf, MS, and H. Mirwan Batubara. This disciplined scholar died in 1993 and was buried at Cemetery Complex at Sei Deli Street. (Tanjung, 2012a: 131-132).

H. Bahrum Ahmad was born in 1918 in Medan and received his early Islamic education at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. Among his teachers were H. Abdul Wahab, H. A. Rahman Syihab and H. Adnan Nur Lubis. Then he continued his education at a Methodist School

where he spent seven years and became very fluent in English. His parents advised him to study to Mecca, which he delightfully accepted. Before his departure for Mecca he studies for around six months at Madrasah Maslurah, Tanjung Pura (Tanjung, 2012a: 133).



Picture 5 :Youths and students at the Holy City of Mecca, 1937; some of them graduates of MIT. Sitting, MIT's graduates: H. Bahrum Ahmad (Plantation officer at Dolok Merangir, now teacher of Tahfizh al-Qur'an at School of Qur'anic Sciences), OK. H. A. Aziz (lives in Jakarta, Senate Member retired), H. Husin A. Karim (very popular preacher in Medan), H. Mahmud Darbani (work as Religious Advisor for Indonesian Army at Pekanbaru), H. Ahmad Badal (deceased), H. Usman Fattah (non-MIT's graduate). Standing back: H. Abubakar Ya`qub (Caretaker of MIT & Old Mosque Medan) H. Mukhtar A. Rahim (deceased). The rests were not MIT's graduates. Photo taken in Mecca, 1937

Learning activities in Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli stopped because of the World War II in December 8, 1941. When Japan forces took over Medan in March 13, 1942 Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli was officially ceased to operate. In the confusion its students dispersed

everywhere. Some teachers left Medan becoming farmers and the like. In December 28, 1941 the Japanese started to bomb Polonia Airfield of Medan, killing 30 and wounding 70. This was just about three kilometers from Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. As a result, many decided to evacuate the city. In January 16, 1942 the Japanese once again bombed Polonia and in January 22, 1942 bombed Belawan seaport. In fact, the Japanese also dropped bombs on Tanjung Balai and Labuhan Bilik. As the situation was heating up, every night Japanese radio aired their propaganda of liberating Indonesia from the Dutch. As the Japanese forces getting closer people are getting restless and hate toward the Dutch was building up. In their propaganda, the Japanese demanded that they should be welcomed just like brothers and people were asked to prepare two flags, the Japanese Hino Maru and the Indonesian Merah Putih. In March 12, 1942 Japanese military forces had landed at Tanjung Tiram and this made Medan even more frightening. That day, *De Soematra Post* published nothing but a quarter of a page. The Dutch started destroying their assets: a few locomotives, oil tanks in Medan and oil refinery at Pangkalan Berandan. On Friday march 13, 1942 the Japanese entered Medan, some of them ride bicycles they confiscated from the people. Most of the people, however, looked happy welcoming them yelling *banzai*. Dutchmen houses were all closed because most of them had left the city. The situation completely went out of hands. Shops and Dutchmen houses were looted. Some of the looters were shot by Dutchmen but that did not stop the riot. The Japanese use cruel way to take control. They caught five Chinese from the rioting masses, beheaded them with *samurai*, and had their heads hung (Hamka, 1982: 194-198; Ya'qub, n.d.-a: 24). There was one effort to open the Maktab again but failed because many of its teachers have passed away or living outside of

Medan. So today Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli is nothing more than a name. The actual user of the building was Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah under loan contract.

Students continue to learn there but no longer as Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli but under new flag of Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah. Among present day teachers are Adam Usman, H. Anas Tanjung, Musa Ilyas, Hamidah, and so on. H. Anas Tanjung was born in Medan in 1922. He studied at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli and continued to study at Madrasah Mu'allimin Al-Washliyah until 1942. Informally he also studied under prominent scholars, like H. Adnan Lubis, H. Arsyad Thalib Lubis and H. M. Yusuf Ahmad Lubis. He co-founded the Office of Religious Affairs in East Sumatra in the initial days of Independence (October 1, 1945 to October 1 1946). His final post at this office was Head of Islamic Affairs (Urusan Agama Islam). Since his youth he was active in Al Washliyah Youth Movement (Gerakan Pemuda Al-Washliyah) and became its top leader from 1953-1956. From 1966 to his death in 1978 he was entrusted as Head I of Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah. In addition, he also died as Head of Foundation of Al-Washliyah University, Curator of Islamic University of North Sumatra and Principal of Madrasah Al-Washliyah held at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. He died in Medan in April 25, 1978 (Nasution, 1975).

6. Activities of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

All community activities, especially those of Tapanuli (Mandailing) community were centered in Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli. Some of the activities are the following:

History of Maktab Al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

- a. May 23, 1923: inauguration of Mandailing Cemetery Complex at Sei Mati. The ceremony was attended by students and teachers of the Maktab and those of branch campuses of Delitua, Kedai Durian, etc.
- b. November 30, 1930: Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah organization was founded by students and teachers of the Maktab. The name 'Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah' was given by Syekh Moh. Yunus.
- c. July 01, 1934: Islamic Scout Squad of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli was founded.
- d. Since 1933 up to November 08, 1936: special classes for girls taught by H. Badaruddin on *ilmu nahwu/ Sharaf/ fiqh Fath al-Qarib*, etc.,
- e. November 20, 1935: students of afternoon classes founded an organization called Persatoean Moerid Maktab Islamiyah (Student Union of Maktab Islamiyah) that survived for just a short period of time.
- f. Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli has always been a center of movements of Islamic propagation such as ceremonies of *Mawlid Nabi*, *Isra'-Mi`raj*, sacrificial slaughtering on *`Id al-Adha*, *Khataman al-Qur'an* of the afternoon students. There were also ceremonies specially held for women, such as:
 - 1) Commemoration of the *Mawlid Nabi*;
 - 2) Commemoration of *Isra' - Mi`raj*;
 - 3) Also performing *`Id al-Adha* Prayer, special for women. At that time there was no such prayer conducted in open field or mosque that accommodate women. Acting as *Imam* was the late H. Halimah Ya`qub. This women-only *`Id* prayer was regularly performed until the World War II in December 08,

1941, and especially after the occupation of Medan by the Japanese in March 13, 1942 (Picture 6).

- g. All sorts of ceremonies involving the Mandailings or special occasion, such as the Celebration of 25th Years of Deli Sultanate.



Picture 6: *Female students learning Arabic Grammar under H. Badaruddin. Right end, the Late H. Halimah Ya`qub. Photo taken March 24, 1936*

Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli involved in many aspects of this celebration:

- 1) August 26, 1937: Special women procession led by H. Halimah Ya`qub congratulating the 25th Years of Deli Sultanate.
- 2) August 27, 1937: union of *madrasas* around Medan (Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, Darul Ulum, Ihsaniyah, Intisyariah, Khairiah Islamiyah Delitua and 'Aliyah Delitua), formed a
- 3) procession of around 2,000 students and teachers marching to Maimun Palace Medan. The Palace of Sultan Deli, around 1.5 km from Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli .
- 4) August, 28, 1937: procession of Mandailings marched to Maimun Palace via Istana Street/Pemuda Street for the same reason.

History of Maktab Al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

All of these, as well as many other activities, were prepared at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli.

- h. Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli was also frequently used as meeting venue for organizations and political parties. The building also used by:
 - 1) Some refugee families of the Revolution Era, 1945-1947.
 - 2) Hajj Committee of Indonesia (PHI) to shelter hundreds of Bengkalis pilgrims, from February to March 31, 1960. (Picture 7)
- i. The building was also loaned to SMI (Islamic High School) led by H. Baharuddin Ali and H. A. Madjid Siraj cs., in the 1950s. A Chinese Elementery School also borrowed the building once. So did Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah Elementary School under the leadership of H. Umaruddin, and so on.

Those were the activities of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli up to the coming of Japan to Medan, after which Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli was no longer active. The only surviving caretaker is H. Abubakar Ya`qub. It is worthy to note that Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli has never put emphasis on formal grading of its certificate, its civil effects, or on ensuring formal jobs for its graduates. Nonetheless many of them assume different positions, notably in the Ministry of Religious Affairs.



Picture 7: *Association of Maktab/Madrasa during the Celebration of 25 Years of Deli Sultanate in front of Maimun Palace, Istana Street (now Pemuda Street) Medan*

Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli was situated at a rather concealed spot at the bank of Deli River, next to a Cemetery Complex, and close to Old Mosque of Gang Bengkok. Referring to this rather unique geographical spot, one of its teachers, the late Syekh Muhammad Yunus frequently said: This *maktab* of ours is close to many things that contain meaning and secrets:

- a. Across the street there is a Prison House that keeps reminding us: Beware, do not break religious or state laws, unless you want to go there!
- b. On the way to Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli there is ‘Deli Theatre’. Those who need to amuse could go there watching some movies; but its better to first learn Islamic teaching about it at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, as not to become addicted to movies and not to be influenced by dirty scenes or the like. At the site of the Prison House we now see Royal Suite Condotel and Deli Theatre has become shops .

History of Maktab Al-Islamiyah Tapanuli

- c. In front of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli, only about 20 meters, is the Old Mosque of Gang Bengkok. The lessons learnt at Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli should be put into practice there. At spare times students should be going there to memorize and to discuss. This mosque is a constant reminder to increase good deeds.
- d. Beside Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli is Cemetery Complex of Datoek H. Ali which should remind us of death. Remember that, in the end, all people are to be buried; so do good deeds as a provision.

This is the basic history of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli and its activities. Although activities of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli stopped since the coming of the Japanese in 1942, the Maktab continues to be used for some purposes:

- a. As a place for education at *Tajhizi*, *Ibtida'i* and *Tsanawi* levels run by Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah, both in the morning and in the afternoon.
- b. Training of Khatib by Front Muballigh Islam, for about two more years.
- c. Weekly Arabic Language Course, by A. Rahim Syihab which still in operation until now.
- d. The Caretaker is still in the hand of H. Abubakar Ya`qub, retired from Islamic Education Inspection of North Sumatra Province, and now *Nazhir*, *Khatib*, and *Imam* of the Old Mosque of Gang Bengkok Medan.

That should be all, and all Praise and Guidance belong to Allah, may He show us the Straight Path.

Medan, 01 Sya`ban 1395.

C. Concluding Remarks

Abubakar Ya`qub's *History of Maktab al-Islamiyah Tapanuli* is relevant to the study of Islamic education in early 20th century Medan. It is very much so for it records the history of a pioneering formal institution of Islamic education in the region right from its establishment. It might also be added the fact that the author himself involved in the history he wrote, which means that the book contains first-hand and eye witness information. The book might also be relevant in the context of general history of Islamic society of North Sumatra, since it also potrays some aspects of religious developmets of Medan. For instance, it records the way the Deli Sultanate supports the ulama and religious matters. It also points out to the fact that a certain wealthy Chinese of Medan generously contributes to in building Islamic madrasa and mosques. As a final note, Abubakar Ya`qub actually wrote some other works pertaining to different aspects of Medan which are yet to be studied and published.

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