

## Hikayat Prang Sabi and Combating Zeal of The Acehnese Fighters during The Dutch Occupation

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### Abstract

This paper tries to uncover the impact of the Hikayat Prang Sabi on the fighting spirit of the Acehnese warriors during the Dutch occupation. The research was mostly conducted in the Special Collections Reading Room of Leiden University Library where the primary sources were gathered. The secondary sources were browsed and retrieved in the Leiden University Library, the KITLV Leiden and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), also at Leiden. The manuscripts of the Hikayat Prang Sabi were skimmed and read. The stories which are written in metre were summarized, and some of the representative verses were transliterated and rendered into English. The secondary literatures were surveyed and the findings were gathered and selectively used for the purpose of this study. The data show that the impact of the Hikayat Prang Sabi has on the martial zeal of the fighters was tremendous. The recitations which aroused the fighters, resulted in the incidences, the concerns of the colonial government with the circulation of the hikayat, and the comments of the interested figures and scholars, will be clearly presented.

### Keywords

Hikayat Prang Sabi; Fighting zeal; Acehnese fighters; Dutch occupation

## INTRODUCTION

*Hikayat* is an Arabic word which means narrative story or tale. In Acehnese too, *hikayat* means a narrative story or tale which is usually written in metre, irrespective of its content. One of the characteristics of *hikayat* is that its initial sections contain praises to God and the Prophet Muhammad followed by the author's general overview, exhortations or advices. It is commonly composed to be recited in front of either a small or large audience. The contents of the *hikayat* cover a wide range of subjects such as history, religion, education, fiction and so on (Ali, 1977). In this composition, *prang sabi* in Acehnese or *prang sabil* in Indonesian has a meaning similar to the 'Holy War' or a struggle in the path of Allah,' i.e. *jihad fi sabilillah*. The Arabic word *jihad* is a noun. Its singular past tense verb is *jahada* or *jahadat*. The root of the word *jihad* is *juhda* which means 'effort.' Another related word is *ijtihad* which means working hard or diligently. Therefore, the term *jihad fi sabilillah* does not only mean 'war,' and *jihad* which is associated with Holy War, is a special case of *jihad* (Fatoohi, 2002). The *Hikayat Prang Sabi* can be viewed as a tale or narrative story which is composed in a rhythmic form aiming at exhorting people to wage war against the infidels regardless of some its parts, which also insert advices for people to be obedient to God in general.

This article tries to present some important insights concerning the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* and discuss the impact of this *hikayat* has on the fighting spirit of the Acehnese warriors during the Dutch occupation. Some philological information on the texts and the contents of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* will be generally highlighted, and the impact of it on the fighters' courage will be clearly underlined.

This piece of research is significant for enriching our knowledge of the literature contained in Acehnese manuscripts in particular, and that of Indonesian in general. Appreciating the spirit of our elders and ancestors just by preserving the inheritance they have handed down to us is not enough. In terms of classical manuscripts, preserving them in such a way that they could be revered, referred and enjoyed by future generations long after they have ceased to be used is meaningful and important (Robson, 1988). The writer's research experience shows that Acehnese manuscripts are the least explored compared to those of Java, Bali, Sulawesi and Palembang. Hopefully, this work would awaken the interest of both Indonesian and international philologists to study Acehnese manuscripts. If philologists had been interested in working on the classical literatures of Aceh or the manuscripts, both the old literatures and the manuscripts would have been made accessible and available. In turn, Aceh, Indonesia and the world would have philological connection and the literatures on Aceh in general would be abundantly available. In line with this, a distinguished Dutch scholar, Arie Johannes Piekaar (1910-1990), who spent 22 years of his life in Aceh says that it is necessary to collect research materials on all aspects of Aceh such as on language, literature, history, customs and traditions, culture and so on and that is crucial to discover the treasure of old literatures of Aceh which are of value (Harahap, 2003). It is very important to study the *Hikayat Parang Sabi* in particular, because, as H.T. Damsté (1874-1955) a staff member of the Ministry for Home Affairs of the Colony states, it gives us insights on the way of thinking, attitude and behaviour of the Acehnese people (Alfian, 1999).

To the best of the present writer's knowledge, a topic of this sort has not been written either in English or in Indonesian yet. However, since the writer does not have a good command of Dutch yet, he cannot be certain if there is no work on this subject in Dutch.

According to Alfian, as quoted by Gade Ismail, the *hikayat* as a literary work of Acehnese people can be classified into, at least, three categories. First, it is pure literary work which is composed for the purpose of entertainment. One of the examples of this category is the *Hikayat Peulandok Pance*. Second, is the kind of the *hikayat* that could be used as media for teaching religion and indoctrination of certain ideas. The *Hikayat Prang Sabi* is grouped into this category. This type of *hikayat* used to be used by *ulama* (local religious authority) for the purpose of encouraging the Acehnese fighters to wage war against the administration of the Netherlands East Indies. The third category is the *hikayat* which narrates the events of the past, such as the *Hikayat Prang Aceh* (Ismail, n.d).

The primary sources of this research are the manuscripts of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* which are kept in the Special Collections Reading Room of the Leiden University Library, and the secondary sources of this study are books, journal articles, parts of books, proceedings and papers regarding the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. The *Hikayat Prang Sabi* is

chosen as it is the most important text in this respect because this literary work used to be very significant for both *jihād fī sabīlillāh* in Aceh during the colonial era and its popularity in the literary work (Hamidy, 1982).

Why should research on the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* be carried out in Leiden? The *Hikayat Prang Sabi* was viewed as dangerous by the Dutch government during the colonial era, as we know that it stirred up the fighting spirit of the Acehnese warriors. Before engaging in battle, they used to listen to the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* being recited to them as a ‘warm-up’ to incite their anger. As noted by Alfian, in 1932 the Aceh Governor, A.H. Philips, in an explanatory statement during the official resignation ceremony, said that the recitation of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in public, could affect the readers and the listeners in such a way that they went mad and consequently killed their enemies. This habit was undermined by the Dutch Administration by confiscating and destroying the copies of the manuscript of *Hikayat Prang Sabi* they found. The gathering of *Hikayat Prang Sabi* was pursued continually. As Alfian wrote, due to Damsté’s effort, numerous copies of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* previously belonged to the collections of Damsté, Dr. Van Velde and Prof. Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje, as well as some others, were sent by the staff of the Home Affairs Ministry of the Colonial Government to Leiden University (Alfian, 1999). Because of this, it is almost impossible to find this *hikayat* in Indonesia nowadays. Thus, research on this subject must be conducted in Leiden.

## RESEARCH

### *Leiden University Library and other institutions*

The research on the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* was mainly carried out in Leiden University Library and the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV) at Leiden. The website of the Leiden University Library: <http://ub.leidenuniv.nl>, U-Cat: General Catalogue (English Version) was browsed for books on the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. A short list of accurate results was retrieved. Because of the writer’s lack of philological training, documents on philology especially Indonesian philology were studied for the background information of this work. For example, *Principles of Indonesian Philology* written by Stuart Robson was studied as a starting point of this research. Other books on Aceh which were written by prominent specialists such as C. Snouck Hurgronje, A.J. Piekaar, Anthony Reid as well as works of scholars of Aceh origin like Ibrahim Alfian, T. Iskandar and Ali Hasymy were read by using bibliographies, outlines and indices. Sections or parts of the books which are closely related to the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* were collected and duly noted in a diary. Hoping to gather comparatively recent literature, the researcher also tried to use the electronic catalogue of the Leiden University Library, U-LIP Library Information Portal to search for journal articles on the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. Unfortunately, it proved disappointing. No journal articles were found dealing with the topic being studied. Since the Leiden University Library’s holdings are not specialized in the literatures of Aceh, nor specifically in the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, one of the library’s reference librarians referred the researcher to the KITLV. As we know that the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean studies collects a lot of materials about Indonesia, and some of these deal with Aceh including the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. By using its user-friendly electronic catalogue, which is also a tool for searching for journal

articles, present researcher was able to access the relevant holdings of the institute. Some good books and one journal article were retrieved. This institute has even established a full text journal in electronic format which puts some articles on *hikayat* on-line. Unfortunately, this electronic journal does not happen to contain a single article on the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*.

Apart from this, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) was also visited for documents and information on this subject. Several books and two journals reporting a few pieces of research on Indonesian philology were accessed.

### **Special collections reading room**

As we know the main task of the philologist is to bridge the communication gap between author and modern reader. To do this task, philologists strive to make texts accessible and understandable by presenting and interpreting the texts. Making the texts understandable or comprehensible needs an introduction, a translation or transliteration and so on (Robson, 1988). Even though the purpose of this present study was just to see the impact of *Hikayat Prang Sabi* on the fighting spirit of the Acehnese warriors during the Dutch occupation, a series of techniques which lead to philological research activities have been implemented. Since the manuscripts of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* serve as the primary source of this survey, the researcher spent most his research time in the Special Collections Reading Room of the Leiden University Library.

After filling in the request forms provided by the staff in charge of the manuscripts, using the *Catalogue of Acehnese Manuscripts: in the Library of Leiden University and other Collections Outside Aceh* which was compiled by Voorhoeve and T. Iskandar and published in Leiden by the Leiden University Library (Legatum Warnerianum) in co-operation with the Indonesian Linguistics Development Project (ILDIP) in 1994, the writer explored all the manuscripts of *Hikayat Prang Sabi* kept in the Special Collections Reading Room (Cod. Or..., which stands for *oriental manuscripts* of the Leiden University Library). The catalogue was always used as a guide for searching the manuscripts. The relatively short text description in the catalogue was read before accessing the texts.

There are 48 entries of the texts under the heading: *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in the catalogue. However, only 38 out of 48 texts are kept in the Special Collections Reading Room. Five of them are kept in the Jakarta National Library (Jakarta Vt.44, Jakarta Vt. 57A, Jakarta Vt.222, Jakarta Arab. 273, and Jakarta MI. 354), 1 in Djajadiningrat Collection (Jakarta Dj.3), 3 in Amsterdam, Royal Institute for the Tropics Museum (Amsterdam 674/790, Amsterdam 674/876 and Amsterdam 2454/4 a-c) and 1 in Antwerp, Ethnological Museum (A.E. 22-1-1130[2]).

The content of the manuscripts not only consists of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* texts, but also other texts which are mostly poems (*nazam*) on religious subjects and their practices and admonitions which instruct people be obedient to God. Although some of the texts are aged and sloppily written, texts of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* were read and those on other subjects were skimmed. The explanatory notes that provide information on the dates, collection, copying and originality were scrutinized. A few manuscripts have been outlined using handwriting. The outlines were read and the ones in Dutch were translated

before the contents of the manuscripts were figured out. Since there were many texts of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, the contents of the texts were examined and compared to see the integration and completeness. Most verses of *Hikayat Prang Sabi* are composed to encourage people to make war against the Dutch administration during the era. However, only some verses of the exhortations and contracts were quoted, transliterated and translated into English for the purpose of this project. All the data of this research were manually recorded in a diary.

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### *Hikayat under the same category and publications*

While exploring the literatures regarding the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, the writer found that there were some other *hikayats*. Although they are not under the heading of *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in the catalogue of Acehnese Manuscripts compiled by Voorhoeve and T. Iskandar, they are grouped under the category of *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. This classification is based on the function of *hikayats* mentioned earlier, which could be used as media for teaching religion and the indoctrination of certain ideas. At least five of the *hikayats* are the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (the Pasai Chronicles), which were written around the middle of the 14th century and used by the Sultan of Samudera Pasai who warred against the infidel neighbours in the 15th century. In these *hikayats* one could find an account of the war in which it is stated that the war is called 'war in the way of Allah' (*sabilillah*) and in this war, the Prince of Aceh, Iskandar Muda (1607-1636), made several attempts to drive out the Portuguese who had settled in Malacca a century earlier (Hurgronje, 1906); the *Syair Prang Menteng* that gives a description of the war campaign and informs that Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin of Palembang took a defensive action against the aggression of the Dutch military under the commander H.W. Muttinghe (1773-1827) in 1819 in this war the Sultan himself engaged the enemy in the battle (Alfian, 2001); the *Nasihat Ureueng Muprang* comprising one category texts, admonitions and exhortations to wage the holy war against the Dutch, drawing upon the Koran verses and Hadis published in Damsté 1928 (Voorhoeve and Iskandar, 1994); the *Hikayat Prang Geudong* recording the fighting in Geudong Lhokseumawe on the north coast of Aceh in 1879 in which General K. Van der Heyden (1826-1900) dispatched troops to Geudong, resulting in the surrender of Teuku Bentara Peukan, who is better known as Teuku Raja Itam (Iskandar, 1986).

Some of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* have been transcribed in Latin Alphabets and published by some publishers both in and outside Aceh. Dada Meuraksa and Nurdin Yahya copied the manuscript which was published by the Dinas Penerbitan Balai Pustaka Jakarta in 1958. H. M. Zainuddin transliterated the *hikayat* and this version was published by Pustaka Iskandar Muda Medan in 1960. This *hikayat* has also been copied by Abdullah Arief in 1963. The Perpustakaan Ali Hasjmy published a copy in 1967 and the Department P & K (The Ministry for Culture and Education) of Indonesia also published an Anzib version in 1980.

Except for this, the *hikayat* has also been published as a book with commentary and parts of a book in which the *hikayat* is broadly commented on as a literary work. A book

entitled: *Hikayat Prang Sabi Menjiwai Prang Atjeh Lawan Belanda* written by Ali Hasjmy consisting of the transliteration of the manuscript interspersed with a broad commentary was published by the Pustaka Faraby Publisher Banda Aceh in 1971. The *Hikayat Prang Sabi* has also been published in English as a part of a book entitled: *Shadow and Sound* by James Siegel in 1979. The discussion of this book is specifically concentrated on the dream of a young man, Moeda Balia, on his way to battlefield about nymphs and the luxuries of heaven depicted in the *hikayat*. *Hikayat Prang Sabi: Satra Prang*, which was written by Teuku Ibrahim Alfian and published by Balai Pustaka Jakarta in 1992 also contains the transliterated version of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. In the last part of this scholarly work, a copy of the original treatise of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* was appended. In fact, the manuscript is the *Hikayat Prang Sabi Teungku Putroe* (Cod.Or. 8689). This *hikayat* of Damsté collection comprising 76 pages was called *Hikayat Prang Sabi Teungku Putroe* because it was formerly in the possession of Teungku Putroe, wife of Tuanku Muhammad Dawot (Voorhoeve and Iskandar, 1994). Nur'aini Aly has even transcribed and rendered all the verses of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* into English. This book was published by KITLV Leiden in 2000.

## AN OVERVIEW OF AUTHORSHIP AND ORIGINALITY

Shortly after the declaration of war on 6 April 1873, the first Dutch force of 3000 men landed on the Aceh shore which was led by Mayor General J.H.R. Kohler. Having lost their commander, General Kohler, in the war, the troops retreated to Batavia. Intending to conquer, they returned to Aceh with 13000 troops (Alfian, 1999) under the command of Lieutenant General J.van Swieten in November 1873. This war lasted for about 40 years, and cost more lives, money and social displacement than any other Dutch colonial war (Iskandar, 1986). According to the Aceh origin scholar, T. Iskandar, the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* was written during the Aceh war (1873-1903) for the sake of giving combating zeal to the warriors making war against the Dutch (Iskandar, 1986). It seems that the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* had yet to be very populer during the first aggression. During this period of time, as mentioned by Ramli Harun in the introductory section of his trascribed version of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, a man called Abdurrisyad recited verses of Koran related to the Holy War instead. He explained how big the reward granted by God to fighters who die as martyrs is.

Despite just being a matter of speculation according some scholars, the original authorship of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* is generally attributed to Teungku Chiek Muhammad Pante Kulu who was born in 1836 in a village called Pante Kulu situated in Pidie Regency, Aceh, Indonesia in the family of the *ulama* that is closely related to the group of the Ulama Tiro (Hasjmy, 1971). As asserted by Ali Hasjmy in his book *Hikayat Prang Sabi Menjiwai Perang Aceh Lawan Belanda*, Teungku Chiek Pante Kulu wrote this literary work on board a ship on his way home from Jeddah to Penang as his contribution to support his company, the Teungku Chiek Di Tiro, who was leading the Holy War against the Dutch Government (Hasjmy, 1971).

The *Hikayat Prang Sabi* was composed during the era of Teungku Chiek Di Tiro, one of the greatest indonesian heroes in Aceh, who left his hometown Tiro, Sigli for Kuta

Raja, Aceh Besar in 1881. When he set out for Kuta Raja, the Dutch military had successfully taken control over some shores of Aceh Besar which they invaded in 1873.

Teungku Muhammad Haji Pante Kulu who had just arrived home from Mecca is one of the *ulama* who were involved in encouraging people to make jihad. He was also well known as a poet and had a melodious voice as well. This Holy War epic was composed in Acehnese language in rhyme using Arabic scripts. It was prepared to provoke people into warring against the Dutch in 1881 (Dinas Pendidikan Balai Pustaka, 1958).

According to T. Iskandar, which is repeated by Teuku Ibrahim Alfian in his book *Sastra Prang*, the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* has its source from an Arabic work entitled: *Nasihah al-Muslimin*. The complete title of the book is *Nasihah al-Muslimin wa-tazdkirat al-mu'minin fi fadha'il al-jihad fi sabil Allah wa-karamat al-mujahidin fi sabil Allah* which is written by a prominent ulama, shaik Abd. Al-Samad (Abdussamad) al-Falimbani or Abdussamad Palembang from Palembang, who resided in Mecca in the early 1760s (Iskandar, 2001). This information could also be found on the last page of one of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* manuscripts in the Leiden University Library (Cod.Or. 10.996).

## RESEARCH RESULT IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS READING ROOM

The writer's research experience in the Special Collections Reading Room was disappointing with regard to his quest as to the original author of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. The fact that no text of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* mentions an author by name is assumed to be due to the fact that it was considered dangerous and subversive by the Dutch government during colonial times. The Dutch government either burned or confiscated all copies of this work which they could get their hands on and arrested the possessor of the manuscripts. The Dutch government would have severely punished the author had it found the author of *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. As a consequence of this, the researcher did not find any texts written by Teungku Muhammad Pante Kulu, who in the scholarly communis opinio was the composer of the *hikayat*. There is a text which is just on exhortations and admonitions (Or. 8035) written by Nja Amat, but there is no evidence which could be used to prove that Nja Amat means Teungku Muhammad Pante Kulu even though the Acehnese people like to shorten the name, Muhammad to be Amat. However, there are some names of copiers of the *hikayat*, and dates when the *hikayat* was copied. Since the texts were copied by using handwriting in ink or even pencil, quite a few of them proved to be difficult to read because they are aged and sloppily written. The manuscripts are customarily written in lined books. They are Damsté collections, Snouck Hurgronje Legacy and from J.J van de Velde, G.W.J. Drewes and the R.A. Kern Estate. Most of them were gathered in the early twentieth century. A few of the manuscripts are equipped with notes and outlines. The autograph notes, which are mostly about the copiest and the date of gathering and the outlines written by the collector were found to be helpful and saved the researcher's considerable time. Only few texts of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* are appended with incomplete handwritten transliterations. Some of them include lists of prophets and *hikayats* on the Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Wars during his life, like *prang badar*, *prang khandak* and other wars. According to Prof. Dr. Jan Just Witkam (the Interpres Legati Warneriani), these are rather *Qisas al-Anbia'* books. Most of

the texts included in the books or bundles of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* are closely related to a jihad in warring against one's worldly desires (*hawa nafsu*) and advices for seeking knowledge and so on. Even some private letters and legal documents happened to be found in some bundles. These private letters, which are mostly dated in the early twentieth century, are handwritten in Malay using the Latin Alphabet.

Based on their content, the texts of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* can be roughly divided into two categories. One consists of exhortations and admonitions to wage Holy War against the Dutch, quoting the verses of Koran and hadis. In the other category belong texts which are structured around accounts of Four Holy Battles of the Islamic past. The four stories are about the dream of Ainul Mardhiah, the Holy War of Mecca against the Abbyssinians, the black Saet Saleumi, and Muhammad Amien the newborn baby (Voorhoeve and Iskandar, 1994). Another thing that the researcher noted was that some of the stories are more complete than the others. Some of admonitions and exhortations contained in the manuscripts are inserted with fewer and less complete verses of the Koran and Hadis than the others. Another important piece of information concerning the research in the Special Collections Reading Room on the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* is the number of pages the text encompasses, ranging from two to more than 100 pages.

#### ***When and where is it recited?***

Reciting the *hikayat* was commonly done before people went to the battlefield. It was read before them in *dayah* (an Acehnese religious school of the highest level), in the *meunasah* (village center) or any other places where the people got together to prepare themselves for battle (Alfian, 2001).

#### ***Seven advantages of the Holy War***

In one of the *hikayat* preserved in the Special Collections Reading Room of the Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 10996, ff. 92-97) also mentioned by Alfian, it is stated that those who were taking part in the Holy War would undoubtedly be granted the following rewards: (a) their sin would be forgiven by God; (b) seats are reserved for the fallen and bliss as well as enjoyment would be provided for them in the heaven; (c) they would be safe and sound and the tomb would be comfortable; (d) they would be protected from being destroyed at the final judgement; (e) they would be granted a luxurious dress with emeralds for assessories in the heaven; (f) they would be married to beautiful angels and would be living together with 72 of them in a palace; (g) all sins of 70 persons in their family would be forgiven by God. In addition, those who financially and materially support the war would also be allowed to enter heaven.

### **SUMMARY OF STORIES**

In the following we will give a brief summary of the respective verse stories found in the *hikayat*.

#### ***Abeudo Wahet (Ainul Mardhiah)***

This story is situated in the era of Prophet Muhammad. An *ulama* called Abeudo Wahet seriously discussed the *jihad fisabilillah* in an assembly by quoting verses of Koran



and Hadis. One of the participants was a young man called Muda Belia. Hearing the discussion on the rewards of the Holy War, the twenty year old orphan swore that he would become a devoted fighter. Then, the young man, who had some wealth which had been handed down by his deceased parents, prepared himself for war by purchasing weaponry for himself and his comrades. Then, he set out for the war which was being led by Abeudo Wahet. On his way to battlefield, he took a rest and fell as sleep. In his sleep he dreamt about heaven in which he met 72 nymphs and Ainul Mardhiah, the princess, who was waiting for him. In his dream of the heaven he also entered the garden of beautiful and aromatic flowers, rivers, with golden banks and so on. The coming of Muda Belia was informed by a nymph to the princess. Then, Muda Belia continued on, to meet her. Unfortunately, when Muda Belia was about to embrace the princess, the beautiful princess pushed him away saying that “only one those who died as martyr deserves me.” After telling Abeudo Wahet the dream, he continued his trip to the battlefield and warred against the infidels. The battle raged violently. After killing 9 enemies in the Holy War, he also died as a martyr (HPS, Ms.Cod. Or. 10996).

### ***Holy War of Mecca against Abyssinians***

This war occurred in 570 AD, the year in which the Prophet Muhammad was born. In this year thousands of Abrahah's (the Abyssinians governor) elephant troops tried to attack Mecca and demolish the Ka'bah. This incident is mentioned in Koran (*surat fil*). The people of Mecca were too weak to wage war against the huge number of the infidel troops on their elephants. To avoid the clash, all the Meccans fled the town. Unable to war against them, the Prophet Muhammad's grandfather, Abdulmuthalib, and other Quraish leading figures approached the Ka'bah and said prayers to their gods asking them to destroy their enemies. Before the troops destroyed the Ka'bah, God had sent a flock of birds (*Cicem Hujeun*, called *ababil* in the Koran) to throw stones at the infidels that were going to attack Mecca and the Ka'bah. With God's help the infidels were defeated except one, who returned home to convey the news (HPS, Ms. Cod. Or. 10996).

### ***Muhammad Amien, newborn child***

This story is about a childless man who wished to have a child before he became too old to be a father. He had prayed for a long time and finally his prayers were answered. His wife got pregnant and he did not want to be a way from his wife. However, his happiness was short-lived. Just before the birth of his child, there was a call to Holy War by the Prophet. The call presented a dilemma, for he had to choose between seeing the birth of his long expected child and engaging in his religious duty, Holy War. He finally decided to participate in the Holy War. After returning from the battlefield, he discovered that his wife had died in the advance stage of pregnancy and had been buried. Upon hearing this bad news, he went to the grave sadly. When he arrived there, he found his child alive at the grave. When he asked God for his wife, a voice from heaven said that ‘you failed to ask God's protection for your wife. You just asked God to protect your child.’ In his enthusiasm to see his unborn child, he had completely forgotten his poor wife when he prayed (Alfian, 2001).

### ***Sa'et Saleumi***

An ugly looking black man, Sa'et Saleumi, had problem finding a wife. He had been striving to find a wife but was unsuccessful due to his ugly face. Finally, with the Prophet's help he managed to find a wife. No sooner had he found a beautiful wife, Umar's daughter, than he received a call to join the Holy War. At that time Sa'et was looking forward to living happily with his beautiful wife, but he preferred to engage in the battle of the Holy War. Combating bravely in the battlefield, he died as a martyr after killing many infidels.

Surprisingly thereafter, a handsome young man riding a horse came to Umar's house and entered his daughter's room every night. When he was asked by the widow who he was, he explained that he was Sa'et Saleumi her husband who, because of divine decree, had been revived. He got home every night in the dark and disappeared in the morning. When someone reported the case to the Prophet, the Prophet did not deny that the handsome young man was Sa'et Saleumi who had died as a martyr. He got home in such a way that his wife bore three children, until God stopped Sa'et going home (Alfian, 2001).

### ***Examples of the verses of exhortion and admonition sections***

Some of the representative verses of the exhortions and admonitions, which are sometimes interspersed with verses of Koran and Hadis, will be made understandable here.

The war against the Dutch is a deed of *fardhu'in* (which in Islamic law connotes an 'individual obligation as a Muslim'), i.e. it is obligatory for both men and women, young and old, including children (Alfian, 2001), stated in one of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in the Special Collections Reading Room of the Leiden University Library (here in translation):

*"Jihad is compulsory, fardhu'in,*

*All of us must be convinced,*

*That is Hadis of our Prophet, Muhammad Amien (HPS, Ms. Cod. Or.8682 B)"*

There are also some verses which are often inserted for blaming the ulama that were reluctant to lead or be involved in the Holy War.

Example of such verses are:

*"Do not rely on a religious scholar,*

*If he is reluctant to lead and wage war,*

*Even though he is very pious, and could fly like a bird,*

*He cannot be heard, brother,*

*Do not follow him because he goes astray deviated by devil*

*(HPS, Ms. Cod. Or. 8682 B)."*

*"Hello, people (teungku), no more religion in all over the state,*

*All the ulama keep quiet, pay no attention on warring infidels,*

*They locked their tongues; they do not follow the message of Allah taala,  
Except Teungku Chiek Di Tiro, replacing Muhammad Rasullah (HPS, Ms. Cod. Or.  
8706)”*

We now give an example of a verse intended to take the fear away from a potential fighter:

*“No pain if you were shot,  
As painful as a child pinched by his mother,  
As soon as you were shot,  
The nymphs would arrive welcoming you,  
They hold you on their lap,  
They wipe your blood while praising God (HPS, Ms. Cod. Or.8690)”*

Some of the verses depict the beauty of the nymphs in the paradise:

*“Nymfs would be your wives who are smooth and white,  
Seventy of them will serve you,  
They are so beautiful that they can't be described,  
You enjoy looking at, let alone tauching them (HPS.Ms. Or. 8690)”*

Here is representative example of verses concerning the contract between the warrior and God:

*“Allah taala buys you for the Holy War,  
Whoever gives his soul and wealth,  
Allah will recompense for it with paradise (HPS.Ms.Cod. Or. 872)”*

In some parts of the *hikayat*, it also says that the martyrs of the Holy War do not die despite their death:

*“In spite of their death, do not say they have died,  
You are severely infuriated by Allah if you say they have died,  
They happily survive for God,  
They are enjoying themselves in paradise (HPS. Or.8706)*

### **Impact**

It is not easy to measure the impact of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* on the fighting spirit of the Acehnese warriors during the Dutch occupation. However, documented cases of its recitation were resulted in encouraging troops to make war and removing their fear. Incidences because of the recitation, the comments on the remarkable influence from the

interested figures and scholars, and the concerns of the Dutch government for the circulation of the *hikayat* prove that the impact the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* has on the fighting zeal of the Acehnese fighters was tremendous.

Even though not all casualties mentioned can be proved to have been caused by the recitation of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, the influence this Holy War tale is to a great extent—the exhausted heart could be stirred up, the weakened enthusiasm could be revived. In other words, Teungku Chiek Pante Kulu had succeeded in boosting up the spirits of the exhausted warriors through his famous work the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* since 1881 (Balai Pustaka, 1958). In line with this, H.C Zentgraaf describes its effect, as quoted by Ali Hasjmy, in the following manner: “...menig jong man zette de eerste schreden op het oorlogspad onder den machtigen indruk dier lectuur op zijn emotioneele ziel...zeer gevaarlijke lectuur...(many a youth first stepped in the battlefield because of the tremendous influence of this literary work [*Hikayat Prang Sabi*] touching their emotions ... a very dangerous work...) (Hasjmy, 1971).”

Based on the result of an interview with an elder in Ulee Glee, Pidie, Aceh, Tgk.H. Musa (91), the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* today has already been forgotten by the younger generations of the Acehnese, and one could hardly expect to find the *hikayat* still in circulation nowadays. During the colonial war, the people passing by the back yard of a *meunasah* (village center), where most young people spent the night, could hear a youth reciting the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* rhythmically whilst lying there. In the era of conflict between the Aceh Movement for Freedom (GAM) and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia a decade ago, a young man tried to repeat the past by reciting the *Hikayat*. Ma’nu a young man in Aceh Utara said that “my fine body hairs erect after I recite the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*.” He imagined the experience encountered by the Acehnese people during the colonial war (Efendy and Saleh, 2000).

An Australian historian, Anthony Reid, illustrates the popular epic produced by *ulama* in 1880s as something terrifying and successful (Hasjmy, 1977). An Indonesian writer, Hamidy, describes that “...Kelihatannya *Hikayat Prang Sabi* mempunyai daya tarik bagaikan besi berani, karena dia ternyata mampu menimbulkan semangat jihad ke dalam hati...(It seems that the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* has power like a ‘magnet,’ for its ability in stimulating the fighting (jihad) spirit of the people...) (Hamidy, n.d).

The *hikayat* effectively stimulated the fighters to go to war. Data show that on May 11, 1904, 95 women and children were killed by the Dutch in the battle in Penason; 51 women and children were killed on May 18, 1904 in Tumpeng; 248 in Kuta Reh; 316 persons in Kuta Lengat Baru. They thought they would be happy and looked forward to enjoying the luxuries in the heaven because they died in the *jihad fisisabilillah* (Alfian, 2001). This piece of work does not only affect people as a group but also individuals. It is recorded that once at night, a man called Leem Abah, a resident of the Peurada Village, Kemukiman (a Cluster of villages sharing similar characteristics, usually 3 to 7 villages or even more) Kayee Adang, District XXVI (now Kecamatan Ingin Jaya) overheard and seriously heard someone chanting the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. The next day at dawn he had been in Peukan Aceh (down town) exactly in front of the Societet Atjeh Club (now Balai Teungku Umar) where Leem Abah suddenly stabbed a Dutch precisely on his breast to

death with a dagger he had hidden in his folded cloth. This incident happened in 1907 (Alfian, 2001).

After the Dutch-Aceh war was considered over by the Dutch, many attacks on the Dutch were still lunched by individual Acehnese men or women in cities which had been previously considered secure and peaceful. It was so shocking that the colonial government in Batavia sent its advisor for native affairs, R.A.Kern, in 192 to Aceh to investigate the phenomena of the unbelievers killing, *poh kaphe* in Acehnese (*Atjehmoord*) in Dutch. In 1910-1921 alone, 99 Dutchmen were attacked and 12 of them died, the rest was being seriously wounded. Kern in his report put forward the argument that the killers were inspired by hatred toward the unbelievers and basically triggered by the spirit of the Holy War (Alfian, 2001).

In April 1924, some of Daya people in Aceh Barat were planning to attack a Dutch bivouac in Lamno. Before attacking the bivouac, the fighters heard the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* read to them to arouse their spirits. This attack could be defeated by the Dutch however. The Dutch believed that the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* was extremely dangerous since it could motivate the warriors to war against the Dutch. Therefore, the *hikayats* were seized and most of them were destroyed. The Governor General of the Netherlands East Indies was so worried about the impact of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* that in his confidential letter to the East Indies Governor in Aceh he wrote that he was happy to read the report on political situation in Aceh for the first half of 1926 because it said that another three of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* had been confiscated by the Dutch Government. Then, in this confidential letter he stated that the efforts for investigating the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* would be continuously carried out because of the devastating effect created by the *hikayat* (Alfian, 1992).

The *hikayat* was frequently recited before the Acehnese fighters leaving for the field. Apart from this, it is assumed that the *hikayat* was also read during hostilities, or the break in battle, as written by Nur'ainy Ali: "...War leader too, seemed to carry out copies of the *hikayat* with them. The *hikayat* was often used to boost up the spirits of the fighters when the situations were difficult and spirits were low. Once the Acehnese had heard the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* or heard it was being recited, their zeal was aroused, they felt a compulsion to commit themselves in the battle. The *hikayat* was able to stimulate the emotions of its readers and listeners and influence their perception on life and death (Ali, 1997).

## CONCLUSION

The *Hikayat Prang Sabi* enormously affected the spirit of the Acehnese fighters during the Dutch Occupation. Findings of this research prove that the impact the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* has on the fighting zeal of the Acehnese fighters was tremendous. The *Hikayat Prang Sabi* was produced by an *ulama*. During that era, most ordinary people relied completely on the *ulama* who were considered well-informed and well-educated. Enlightened by verses of Koran and Hadis, most of the Acehnese people were automatically stimulated and involved in the Holy War.

The four stories of the Islamic past give examples of the characters that made the choice with their whole heart to engage in battle whilst ignoring their own private interests. The exhortations and admonitions in the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* postulate that the involvement in the Holy War was viewed as a sublime preference in the society during those decades. Above all, the character of the Acehnese in general, which is not slavish, contributes to the resistance of the Acehnese to the mitigation and the coming of the colony.

Making the manuscripts accessible and understandable for the future generations is a must. The old Acehnese manuscripts have yet to appeal to many national and international philologists. The uniqueness of the language of the texts, the Acehnese language, may present an obstacle for the foreign researchers. Therefore, the initiative taken by the Acehnese researcher to carry out the research on this subject needs a serious support.

If research on the manuscripts were to be seriously encouraged, the literatures contained therein in particular and the literatures of Aceh and Indonesia in general would become abundantly available. As a result, future generations especially those who have problem reading the old texts, could access and enjoy the old literature. In this way, they could appreciate the exploits of their ancestors and at the same time critically learn from historical occurrences which are internationally linked.

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