Francis R. Bradley

Forging Islamic Power and Place. The Legacy of Shaykh Da'ud bin 'Abd Allah al-Fatani in Mecca and Southeast Asia. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016, x + 312 pp. ISBN 9780824851613 Price: USD 54.00.

Bradley's *Forging Islamic Power and Place* is a pioneering study of the Islamic renaissance of Patani in the nineteenth century, and the life and works of the Patani refugee, Shaykh Da'ud (1769–1847), who was the nexus of a network of Islamic learning that connected the Malay archipelago and Mecca. Bradley examines a corpus of Jawi manuscripts that have been ignored by historians, primarily due to their *religious* nature, and in his words, presents a 'watershed moment' in the history of Islam in the Malay archipelago (p. 137). This moment, as *Forging Islamic Power and Place* regularly reminds readers, was characterized by a 'textual turn' or the textualization of Islam, the circulation of handwritten manuscripts that were produced by Patani shaykhs (sheiks), and the institutionalization of Shaykh Da'ud's knowledge.

Forging Islamic Power and Place should draw the attention of students of Islamic, Indian Ocean, global, and social history. Indeed, in spite of Bradley's focus upon the knowledge network of the émigré to Mecca, Shaykh Da'ud, he walks readers through the social world of the Patani elite or *orangkaya*, who competed for social power in three distinct spaces: the marketplace (that declined in the late seventeenth century), the court and the mosque. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's work on social capital and symbolic power, Bradley pays attention to how religious scholars like Shaykh Da'ud endeavored to establish their 'sociocultural hegemony and preeminent moral authority' in a society that had been violently dislocated between the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (p. 8). Bradley refuses to categorize the era when the Patani Sultanate suffered five major military defeats at the hands of Siam, and when thousands of members of the Patani community were displaced, as a period of *decline*, as nationalist historians have. On the contrary, in focusing on a key member of the Patani elite that was in exile in Mecca by the late 1780s, Bradley elaborates on how a section of this literate elite innovatively reproduced their sociocultural power and reinvented themselves as leaders of transregional Patani communities.

Writing a social history of Islamization or textualization, Bradley endeavors to show how scholars and teachers assumed positions of Islamic leadership, gradually in the course of the nineteenth century and after the 'annihilation of the elite political families left a social void at the pinnacle of Patani society' (p. 62). In this period, Patani shaykhs and *ulama* served as 'progenitors of the sociomoral order' and 'revolutionize[d] people's relationship with Islam and

Islamic authority' (2). 'Patani', as Bradley suggests, evolved from a political entity (associated with the erstwhile Sultanate) into a religious community led by a literate elite. As such, *Forging Islamic Power and Place* investigates the textual Islam of the 'premier Malay-speaking scholar of the day', Shaykh Da'ud, as a product of a broader history of Patani competition for social power. Bradley argues that Shaykh Da'ud was unflinchingly devoted to leading Patani communities to a form of rejuvenation in his multiple roles as a translator of classical Islamic literary works, as a transmitter of legal and mystical debates in Mecca and 'centuries of Arabic scholastics' to the Malay peninsula, and as a propagator of Shafi'i law and the Shattariya *tariqa* (Sufi *path*).

In Chapter 4, Bradley introduces Shaykh Da'ud's handwritten manuscripts and divides these into topics that the shaykh was preoccupied with in four periods of writing in exile, until his retirement in 1845. These chronological periods consisted of 'Period One: Essential Jurisprudence and Eschatology', 'Period Two: Basic Tenets of Faith', 'Period Three: Sufism' and 'Period Four: A Return to Jurisprudence and Pedagogy'. These neatly categorized stages, however, fail to betray the reality that topics such as 'Sufism' for instance, were manifest in Shaykh Da'ud's writings throughout the aforementioned periods and even amidst the Wahhabiya occupation of Mecca from 1803 to 1818. More pertinently, *Forging Islamic Power and Place* emphasizes that throughout Shaykh Da'ud's career in Mecca, his intellectual output was connected to questions of social power in the Patani diaspora and rejuvenating Patani society. Bradley describes, for instance, how Shaykh Da'ud's literary efforts to expound on Shafi'i laws of marriage or 'the right way of marriage', were directed at rebuilding broken families of the Patani diaspora (p. 75).

In a similar vein, the shaykh's scholarly interest in eschatology is placed in a context of being a Patani refugee and having experienced the demise of families and companions. As Bradley notes, his encyclopedia of Shafi'i law and theology that was completed by 1841 was 'perhaps compelled by Patani's latest political defeats by Siam' (p. 81). Moreover, in a section on the Sufi shaykh's literary advice for his students to embark upon a *journey* to 'seek a deeper connection to God' in Chapter 5, Bradley highlighted that this *journey* was clearly spiritual and spatial and was a response to the dislocation, travel, and relocation of the Patani community. Readers are left to wonder whether Bradley endeavors to over-synchronize the writings of Shaykh Da'ud with the everyday lives of his audience, even as he concludes that the shaykh 'gave meaning to their trials and tribulations by calling followers to match their temporal relocations with a spiritual journey' (p. 91).

Forging Islamic Power and Place further introduces readers to the way Patani shaykhs like Da'ud exercised their Islamic leadership through textualizing a

'practical Islam' of the Jawi-Islamic world that had been based upon oral tradition. While Bradley places particular emphasis on the period between 1812 and 1819, Shaykh Da'ud appears to have been immersed in the task of converting his imagined audience to a textualized Islam throughout his career. Combining roles of an *alim*, a Sufi, a scholar, and a diasporic leader, the shaykh labored to educate fresh converts, Muslims who were still unacquainted with his textualized Islam, as well as new initiates into Sufi *tariqas*, through producing primers on textualized Islam, on Shafi'i thought, and on the Shattariya *tariqa* and *shari'a*. Bradley points out that the émigré shaykh regularly attributed the devastation of Patani to the religious complacency of Muslims in his writings, and called upon an audience of common Muslims to integrate Islam (a textualized Islam) into their lives. In avoiding judgmental statements on the nature of Muslims in the Malay archipelago, Bradley at times appropriates the tenor of his dramatic personae to conclude that the Patani refugees in Mecca were 'more religiously inclined than their compatriots' on the peninsula (p. 63).

In propagating a 'textualization of Sufi practice and ritual prayer' and bringing local Patani traditions in accordance with Shafi'i thought, Shaykh Da'ud conceived of himself as belonging to a global community of *ulama* that had inherited an intellectual genealogy from God, as well as the reformer of 'practical Islam' in the Jawi-Islamic world. In spite of the fact that *Forging Islamic Power and Place* emphasises that the shaykh's writings and translations were committed to rejuvenating Patani communities and the rebuilding of Patani, the chapters of the book appear to suggest that Da'ud was more directly concerned with the dissemination of his works in the Jawi-Islamic world and the reform of Islam in this space.

Forging Islamic Power and Place, on the whole, traces the emergence of Islamic elites who employed texts and 'new forms of cultural capital' to wrest 'social control from the dominant material classes' and to become the 'progenitors and shepherds of Patani's moral order' (p. 115). In two chapters that introduced 'most dynamic actors' beyond Shaykh Da'ud, Bradley elaborated on how the knowledge network of the émigré shaykh in Mecca was perpetuated by his peripatetic students who had acquired an education in textualized Islam. For instance, students of Shaykh Da'ud, from the time after the shaykh's initiation of students in 1808, circulated the Indian Ocean and disseminated handwritten copies of his works to parts of Arabia and the Malay-Thai peninsula, and onwards to Sumatra, Cambodia, Bangkok, and the African Cape. While Bradley succinctly describes how the 'network reached its furthest extent at the African Cape' in Chapter 6, the Introduction also promised to display how written teachings were disseminated to a region that appears peripheral in *Forging Islamic Power and Place*, South Asia (p. 114).

Recounting the *Legacy of Shaykh Da'ud* in Chapter 7, Bradley focuses upon how a network of Islamic learning that connected Mecca and Southeast Asia, was further institutionalized through Islamic schools (*pondok*) that proliferated in the Malay-Thai peninsula. Bradley follows the spiritual and spatial paths of students of Shaykh Da'ud who returned from Mecca to the archipelago, to relocate themselves within settings of displaced Patani populations, to shepherd a new moral order in the face of Siamese and British imperialism, and to establish a zone of Islamic schools. The *pondok* zone, in the words of Bradley, bound a politically divided region with a 'common cultural grammar that was based on the thought of Shaykh Da'ud' (p. 137). The network of Islamic learning that had been expanded by the students of the refugee shaykh crystallized more in the late 1870s with the increased connectivity between Patani and Mecca. This gifted 'petty' hajjis who had been exposed to Shaykh Da'ud's knowledge network, opportunities to establish *pondok* upon returning to the archipelago.

The *Legacy of Shaykh Da'ud* was sustained by the circulation of pilgrims, texts, and ideas between Mecca and the archipelago, and the sanctity that was attached to handwritten copies of his works following his retirement. In the course of the nineteenth century, and beyond the 1909 border that separated a 'culturally interlinked region' and divided Siam from British Malaya, handwritten copies of the shaykh's manuscripts were circulated between *pondok* in Patani, Songkhla, Trengganu, Kelantan and Kedah that 'all bore the imprint of Shaykh Daud' (p. 137). For this reason, the relevance of *Forging Islamic Power and Place* lies in how it serves as a window into a Jawi-Islamic world wherein a handwritten manuscript tradition has outlived the 'print revolution', and the émigré shaykh's written word has rejuvenated even practices of Islam that were allegedly 'local' and beyond the ambit of this study.

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