

## Research Article

# Islamic Literacy: The Role of KH Ghalib in Islamic Preaching and Education in Pringsewu, Lampung 1930-1945

Agus Mahfudin Setiawan\*, Rizal Khoirudin

Islamic State University of Raden Intan Lampung

**Abstract.**

This research highlights the crucial role of KH. Ghalib in enriching literacy through Islamic preaching and education in the Lampung Province. The research methodology employs a historical approach comprising four steps: heuristic, verification, interpretation, and historiography. Primary information was obtained through interviews with community figures in Pringsewu who have in-depth knowledge of KH. Ghalib's role in preaching. The research results indicate that KH. Ghalib was a reformist fighter born in 1899 in Mojosantren Village, Krian, East Java. After completing his education at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School, he embarked on a preaching journey that took him to various regions in Indonesia, including North Sumatra, Malaysia, and Kalimantan. In 1927, after performing the Hajj pilgrimage, KH. Ghalib arrived in Singapore and from there, he traveled to Pringsewu, Lampung. KH. Ghalib established the first madrasah in the region in 1930, using an education method based on memorization and sorogan. Additionally, KH. Ghalib was active in preaching activities and managed various economic initiatives to support the operation of the madrasah. These efforts demonstrate the significant role of KH. Ghalib in promoting Islamic literacy in the Pringsewu Subdistrict, making a substantial contribution to the development of education and the dissemination of Islamic values in the community during the period of 1930-1945.

**Keywords:** Islamic Literacy, KH Ghalib, Preaching, Islamic Education, Fighter

Corresponding Author: Agus Mahfudin Setiawan; email: agus.mahfud@radenintan.ac.id

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## 1. Introduction

As they constitute the majority in the nation of Indonesia, Muslims play a crucial role in the process of nation-building and shaping the country's identity. Education, as one of the main pillars in improving the quality of life of a society, has been a primary focus for Muslims in their efforts to advance the Indonesian nation. From an Islamic perspective, education (at-tarbiyah) is regarded as an extremely effective Islamicization movement, and it has been an integral part of Islamic civilization since the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Especially in the province of Lampung, Islamic education has held a special role since the early development of Islam in this region. The process of Islamization in Lampung is inseparable from the dedication and hard work of scholars, one of whom was KH.

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Ghalib in 1927, a scholar and educator, who brought the teachings of Islam to Pringsewu. Prior to the arrival of this preacher, the Pringsewu community was far from religious teachings. They were more focused on economic activities such as trade, which led them to engage in negative practices like gambling and alcohol consumption. Despite the challenging circumstances, some remained steadfast in their religious practices.

The importance of education in the process of Islamization is evident from KH. Ghalib's efforts in establishing the first mosque in Pringsewu in 1928, which became a symbol of Islam's presence in the region. In the following three years, KH. Ghalib founded an Islamic boarding school that not only focused on religious education but also provided access for its students to formal education through a madrasah.

Research on KH. Ghalib is certainly not a new endeavor; there are several previous studies found, including: The study related to this research, such as the book "Untaian Bunga Rampai Perjuangan Di Lampung" (A Bouquet of Struggles in Lampung): This book provides in-depth insights into the study of religion and military aggression. The book "100 Tokoh Terkemuka Lampung" (100 Prominent Figures of Lampung) by Heri Wardoyo: This book offers information about the profiles and histories of notable figures, particularly the biography of K.H. Ghalib and his role in spreading Islam in Pringsewu. The book "Dakwah Islam dan Misi Katolik di Lampung Abad 20" (Islamic Preaching and Catholic Mission in 20th Century Lampung) by Agus Mahfudin Setiawan: This book provides a perspective on Islamic preaching in the 20th century in Lampung. The thesis by Ahmad Nur Fauzi on the Role of KH. Ghalib in Islamic Education in the Pringsewu Sub-district, Pringsewu Regency. The journal "Masyarakat Kolonis Jawa Di Pringsewu Tahun 1925-1945" (The Javanese Colonial Society in Pringsewu from 1925 to 1945) by Dewi, Astri Kurni: This journal presents research on the lives of the Pringsewu community in 1930 during the colonial era, including the emergence of the bawon colonization system. The journal "Perjuangan K.H. Ghalib Dalam Mempertahankan Kemerdekaan Indonesia Tahun 1949" (The Struggle of K.H. Ghalib in Defending Indonesian Independence in 1949) by Hutama, Wakidi, and Arif: This journal is important as it discusses the spread of Islam carried out by K.H. Ghalib in 1930, as well as the establishment of the Bambu Seribu Islamic Boarding School in the same year.

Unlike what is written in this research regarding KH. Ghalib's contributions in the field of Islamic preaching and education in the Pringsewu Subdistrict, Lampung from 1930 to 1945, his legacy holds significant historical value. His efforts in amalgamating preaching, Islamic education, and literacy form a strong foundation for the improvement of quality of life and progress of the community in this region. This article will delve deeply into

the crucial role of KH. Ghalib in enriching literacy through Islamic preaching and the development of Islamic education in the province of Lampung.

## 2. Methods

This research employs a historical methodology consisting of four steps: heuristic, which involves both survey and interviews; verification, which includes critical analysis of sources to obtain facts for use in the subsequent steps of interpretation and historiography. The primary information was obtained through interviews with community figures in Pringsewu who had in-depth knowledge of KH Gholib's role in preaching. In the heuristic phase, the author collected primary data through an interview with 60-year-old KH Samsul Maarif. Additionally, secondary sources such as trusted journals related to the study of this figure were utilized. In the second stage, source criticism was performed. Externally, the author sorted through several informants who could be interviewed. Internally, for oral sources (interviews), the information obtained from one informant was cross-referenced with others. It was also compared with other written data.

In the third stage, the author utilized the Great Man Theory, a historical theory that attributes the driving force and cause of history to Great Individuals or Leaders. This theory was proposed by Thomas Charley and James A. Froude, who believed that great figures like statesmen, emperors, kings, generals, prophets, and religious figures like learned scholars and clergy, were catalysts for historical events (see Sulasman, 2014, 125-126). This theory was used by the author to interpret and present KH Gholib's role in preaching and Islamic education. The author also employed a social causation approach, as this research focused on the social conditions of the Pringsewu community. Therefore, it can be categorized as a historical thought study. In the final stage of this historical research method, there were several achievement indicators.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Biografi KH Ghalib

KH. Ghalib, whose name is now immortalized as a street in the Pringsewu Regency, was a reformist fighter who actively resisted colonialism in Indonesia. Born in 1899 in Mojosantren Village, Krian District, East Java, to his parents K. Rohanibin Nursih and Muksiti, KH. Ghalib grew up as an adventurous individual. Since the age of 7, his mother entrusted Ghalib to Kiai Ali Modjosantren to learn religious sciences, including the

Quran, Fiqh, Tauhid, and Akhlaq. Later, Ghalib continued his education at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School alongside the founders of Nahdlatul Ulama, K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, and K.H. Kholil in Bangkalan, Madura.

In addition to his biological mother, KH. Ghalib also had a foster mother named Hj. Aisyah, from whom he had foster siblings, H. Hasan Thohir and Abdul Fattah. Although Hj. Aisyah did not have biological children, she was able to breastfeed three sons effectively. After completing his education with KH. Ali in Mojosantren Village, KH. Ghalib, who was known for his penchant for changing learning locations, continued his journey and studied the wisdom sciences from various teachers he encountered.

He continued this habit of wandering well into adulthood. In addition to learning, KH. Ghalib also applied his knowledge by spreading Islam and building mosques in every place he visited. Eventually, in Pringsewu, he had built 27 mosques during his preaching journey. This strong and handsome man with a sweet dark complexion married Nyai Syai'ah. Although they did not have biological children, KH. Ghalib had three adopted children: Jamzali, Siti Romlah, and Rubaiyah.

Silsilah Keluarga K.H.Ghalib

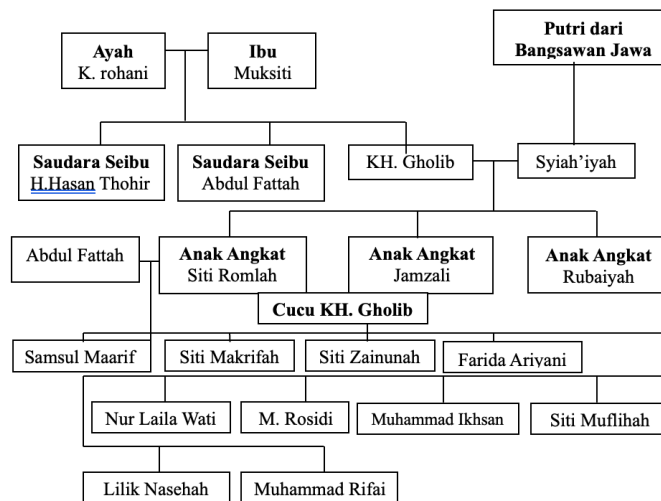


Figure 1:

### 3.2. KH. Ghalib: The Wandering Scholar and Educator

When speaking of Pringsewoe, one cannot omit the contributions of a wandering student from Mojosantren village, Krian, East Java. His name was KH. Gholib, a student and also one of the founders of Nahdlatul Ulama alongside KH. Hasyim Asy'ari and Syaikhoni Kholil Bangkalan. KH. Gholib's fondness was for wandering, combining his travels with the propagation of Islam.

After KH. Gholib married a Javanese noblewoman named Syiah'iyah, he made the decision to embark on a journey beyond the island of Java, as many kyai (Islamic scholars) had already spread Islam there. This led him to engage in preaching outside of Java. KH. Gholib began his travels with his wife, choosing the sea route. They traversed the lands inch by inch, starting from Java, then to Kalimantan, Sumatra, and even as far as Singapore and Malaysia.

In 1920, when KH. Gholib arrived in Tanjung Pura, Medan, North Sumatra, he was warmly welcomed by the community. KH. Gholib even built a mosque which served as a venue for religious activities for children, teenagers, and the elderly. After a short stay in Medan, KH. Gholib decided to continue his wanderings with his wife, although the exact year of their departure is not specified.

In 1922, upon arriving in Malaysia, KH. Gholib had a similar experience in Batu Pahat, Johor. His religious teachings and lectures were warmly received by the local community. After a few years, as new leaders emerged in Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia, it was deemed that they were capable of continuing the teachings of the kiai. Thus, KH. Gholib decided to relocate.

Around 1924, KH. Gholib began to explore regions that were in need of Islamic teachings. One such area was Martapura, Balikpapan, Kalimantan, where he even established a mosque and an Islamic boarding school as means to disseminate Islamic knowledge. Despite the modest conditions, within a year, the Islamic boarding school founded by KH. Gholib experienced significant growth.

In 1927, KH. Gholib and his wife set off for Singapore. His stay in Singapore, like in the other areas he visited, was not lengthy. Due to his social adeptness and commanding presence, KH. Gholib faced no difficulties in carrying out his mission of Islamic preaching. Before coming to Lampung, he and his wife embarked on the Hajj pilgrimage to the holy land of Mecca in 1927 from Singapore. After performing the Hajj, KH. Gholib returned to Singapore. Eventually, it was there that he met M. Anwar Suprawiro, an expatriate from Pagelaran, Pringsewoe, Lampung. Through Anwar, he learned about the Dutch East Indies government's colonization program, which involved sending people from Java to Lampung to open up forests and plantations..

Upon the invitation of M. Anwar Suprawiro and after hearing about the conditions of the colonized community from him, KH. Gholib decided to journey to Pringsewoe. This information moved KH. Gholib's heart. Together with his wife, they set sail to Lampung by sea..

### 3. The role of Islamic Preaching and Education

In 1930, KH. Gholib established the first madrasah with three classrooms and 100 students. The school was built with earth floors, brick walls, and tiled roofs. He was assisted by H.M. Noeh in managing the educational institution. This school operated without charging any fees. KH. Gholib financed the operational costs of the madrasah through self-sustained activities like rice milling. His economic capabilities, which supported his Islamic preaching efforts, undoubtedly posed a challenge for the Dutch authorities. This was further reinforced by other resources. In a newspaper report from De Sumatra Post and Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad on May 25, 1939, it was mentioned that KH. Gholib was considered wealthy at that time. He owned a bus company (with 12 units), motorboats for transporting cattle from Java to Lampung, and an outpatient clinic.

Masjid Jami, established between 1932-1933, served as a gathering place for Muslims. It was from this place that he provided Islamic education and fostered a sense of brotherhood among fellow Muslims. In addition to KH. Gholib, there was also KH. Abdul Sayuti in Onderafdeling Pringsewu. They collaborated in building a small surau known to the community as Nurul Huda. It was from this surau that the spread of Islam took place in the Teluk Betung Division, particularly in Onderafdeling Pringsewu. Over time, both natives and newcomers who attended religious classes at the surau increased. Most of them did not reside in the surau and were known as 'santri kalong'.

Regarding the distribution of private schools among traditionalists in the Teluk Betung Division, it can be seen in the table below:

TABLE 1: Sebaran Sekolah Partikelir Islam di Afdeling Teluk Betung.

Wilayah Afdeling	Teacher's Name	Location
Teluk Betung	Sekolah Agama Tarbiyahtul Islam D.M Nawawi Abdoleah Anjahur Abdurahman M Imin	Panjang Tanjungkarang Panjang Tanjungkarang Panjang Tanjungkarang
	Madrasah Islami Khaoriah Mochtar Bin Zahid Hi Hasan Bin Hi Hajat Hi Said Bin H Ishak Jacoeb Bin Sadam Imba Abdoelmadjid	Kampung Masjid Teluk Betung Kampung Masjid Teluk Betung Kampung Masjid Teluk Betung Kampung Masjid Teluk Betung
	Madrasah Islamiah Mohammad Soengai R Soerachman Soelaiman Hi Mohd Noeh	Wonodadi Gedong Tataan Wonodadi Gedong Tataan Wonodadi Gedong Tataan Pringsewu
	Sekolah Rakyat Salim Aliman	Merak Batin Goenong Sugih Margakaya Gedong Tataan
Kota Agung	Sekolah Swasta Abdul Kadir Zailani Mohd. Shahab	Mohd Nor Gelar Raja Hinggam Mega
	Sekolah Agama Achjar Achmad Sarbani Mohd Asj Ari Mohd Demiririk Mohd Noer Ropiodin Bin Hi Abdulah	Soekarame Marga Gunung Alif Bandar Negeri Penantian Marga Rembang Talang Padang Soekarame Soekarame
	Sekolah Swasta Mohd Nor Gelar Raja Hinggam Mega	Banding Agung Marga Goenong Alip

Source *Memorie Van Overgive Lampoengsche 1932-1938*, page. 90-94.

In 1934, Kh. Gholib received an assistant Demang named Najamuddin and ustadz Ja'far who initially came for a friendly visit. However, over time, ustadz Ja'far became a teacher in the madrasah founded by Kh. Gholib. Besides him, in conducting teaching activities, he was assisted by ustadz Aijib Ismail Abut (of Arab-Banten descent) and Syaïd Alwi al-mahdali (from Teluk Betung).

In 1935, Kh. Gholib established an educational institution in the form of a Salafiyah madrasah with a memorization and recitation learning system. The community's life in the Teluk Betung Division, especially in Onderafdeling Pringsewu, was far from the actualization of Islamic values. Activities like excessive drinking and gambling were prevalent. Moreover, the community, dominated by migrants from Java busy with economic activities, became increasingly distant from a proper understanding of Islamic teachings. This was also due to the loans provided by the Dutch government, forcing them to exert extra effort to repay their debts. The government implemented this policy due to the economic decline in the Dutch East Indies. This situation prompted traditionalists to advocate for Islamic teachings, which received a positive response from the community.

The process of preaching did not take long, given Kh. Gholib's close relationship with the transmigrants, most of whom hailed from Java and settled in the vicinity of the pesantren. Despite their worrisome economic conditions, local traditions such as evening Quranic recitations by parents and children after Maghrib, commemorations of Islamic holidays, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (Maulid Nabi), and puputan ceremonies were still observed.

The mosque and pesantren served not only as places of worship and education but also as centers for the resistance movement against the Dutch. This included the pesantren under the guidance of Kh. Gholib. In spreading Islamic teachings in Pringsewu, Kh. Gholib constantly faced opposition from the Dutch. The Dutch employed various tactics to undermine Kh. Gholib, including establishing a church in Pringsewu to compete with Kh. Gholib's activities..

Kh. Gholib, along with the ustadz, began teaching as a noble duty. The Dutch, aware of this, felt threatened by the presence of Kh. Gholib's pesantren. The Dutch and their allies residing in the Catholic Church of Pringsewu constantly disturbed the peace of Kh. Gholib and his students. Kh. Gholib was even on the brink of deportation from Pringsewu by the Dutch, with various accusations and allegations against him. He was even accused of owning a money-printing machine in his home. However, Kh. Gholib

did not waver in the face of these challenges. Dutch residents in Pringsewu frequently visited Kh. Gholib's home to observe the activities there.

Kh. Gholib and the ustadz continued to spread Islam and develop their pesantren. Dutch residents in Pringsewu regularly visited Kh. Gholib's home to closely observe his activities and those of his students. Eventually, a meeting was held at Kh. Gholib's residence between the Dutch and Kh. Gholib. This meeting led to an agreement that Kh. Gholib would be allowed to carry out his mission in the Pringsewu area.

Kh. Ghalib's presence in Bambu Seribu was like a guiding light in the darkness. After three years of the mosque and his residence being established, Kh. Ghalib took the initiative to build a pesantren. The pesantren he established not only served as a place to study Islamic knowledge but also provided general education, producing students who were not only religious but also had general skills. In the early days, there were 20 students learning in the pesantren, which had three simple classrooms. Despite the simple system and building conditions, the students were able to learn and receive comprehensive religious and general education from the teachers.

KH. Ghalib established the first educational institution known as Madrasah Salafiyah, which lasted until 1949. In completing their education, KH. Ghalib recommended his students to use the method of memorization and then review. In that era, this method was considered the most effective for the students. They were encouraged to actively participate in the learning process, asking questions when they didn't understand something, and even had the authority to answer questions based on their knowledge. Thanks to the success of KH. Ghalib's pesantren, he attracted students from all over Indonesia, as evidenced by the fact that the students he taught reached a thousand in number.

In addition to Kh. Ghalib, the first teacher who taught in the madrasah pesantren was named M. Nuh, who hailed from Cianjur, West Java. However, because he was considered insufficient, M. Nuh eventually invited his brother-in-law named Muhyidin to join in teaching at the pesantren. When the Dutch arrived in the Pringsewu region through Kota Agung, they were welcomed warmly by the native population. This marked the beginning of the Dutch's occupation of the Pringsewu area, and their intention was to capture KH. Ghalib, but they mistakenly apprehended and killed M. Nuh, as they believed he was KH. Ghalib.

Seeing the rapid development of the pesantren, KH. Ghalib finally requested two individuals to serve as assistant Demangs. Najamuddin and his younger brother Ja'far, who initially came to visit the pesantren of KH. Ghalib, were eventually invited to be part of the teaching staff. Like most mosques and pesantrens in Indonesia, they were not



only centers for religious studies and worship, but also served as bases for mobilizing against the colonialists. This was also true for the pesantren under the guidance of KH. Ghalib.

The journey of Islamic preaching and the development of Islamic education undertaken by KH. Ghalib through his mosque and madrasah pesantren faced disturbances from the colonizers. The Dutch military, who had also settled in the Pringsewu region, realized that Islam was gaining ground and being well-received by the community. As a result, the Dutch military began to disrupt the pesantren complex through threats of violence against KH. Ghalib and his students.

The pressure exerted by the Dutch military on the existence of the madrasah pesantren of KH. Ghalib took various forms. They not only issued threats but also attempted to forcibly convert students to Christianity by establishing a Catholic church. The church was strategically built in close proximity to the pesantren with the intention of competing with KH. Ghalib's efforts to develop Islam in the Pringsewu area. However, this did not dampen KH. Ghalib's spirit in advancing his pesantren. Despite the challenges, KH. Ghalib's pesantren continued to thrive. In 1935, the Madrasah Salafiyah experienced its golden period, marked by the increasing number of students studying there, reaching up to 1000 individuals. These students came not only from the local region but also from outside of Sumatra..

In 1942, during the Japanese occupation, the educational institution of Pondok Pesantren KH. Ghalib continued to operate and experienced rapid progress. As time went on, the Madrasah further advanced, with an increasing number of students and the arrival of teachers from both Java and Lampung. This situation attracted more students eager to learn. "In a short period of time, there were more than a thousand students studying there, coming from Lampung, Palembang, Bengkulu, and Jambi." The competencies developed at the Madrasah included proficiency in Arabic, mastery of Nahushorof (Arabic grammar), and the ability to recite the Qur'an fluently and melodiously. The educational institution required all students and teachers to observe prayer times and perform congregational prayers at the mosque. Every Friday night, the students engaged in the recitation of Berzanji and Marhaban.

In 1945, during the period of Indonesian independence, Islamic education faced challenges on the road to success, including Madrasah KH. Ghalib. There were conflicts between Islamic, Nationalist, and other groups, each with their own paradigms and visions for making Indonesia a Pancasila-based Islamic state. The emergence of these issues led to the formation of political parties and rebellions initiated by Islamic groups. This indicated Islam's disappointment with the president's decision at the time, which

established Indonesia as a Pancasila-based state. The development of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, including Lampung (Pringsewoe), post-independence underwent significant changes. The government provided substantial opportunities by integrating public and Islamic schools, ensuring that education did not regress and could flourish.

KH. Gholib was not only a revered figure in terms of his religious knowledge but also made significant contributions to the socio-economic aspects of the Pringsewoe community in 1939. He greatly assisted the local community by providing employment and services. The community played a pivotal role in supporting the local economy because people were not solely reliant on wages or income provided by colonial Holland. KH. Gholib's economic ventures in various fields, managed privately, also served as a platform for his Islamic preaching by employing local residents and providing enlightenment through the facilities he operated. KH. Gholib was considered wealthy. In fact, he funded the operation of the Madrasah through his economic ventures, such as private rice milling. In that year, he already owned a car, which was a rarity at the time. KH. Gholib's economic acumen, coupled with favorable newspaper reports from *De Sumatra Post* and *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, posed a formidable challenge to the Dutch.

KH. Gholib received positive assessments regarding his ability to manage the economy. He also owned a transportation company for the local community, consisting of 12 well-maintained buses operating in the Pringsewoe area. In addition, he built an outpatient clinic, which was supervised by qualified experts and greatly benefited those in need.

KH. Gholib also purchased a motorboat in Palembang with a capacity of 16 horsepower. He used this motorboat to transport those who wanted to travel from Java to Lampung, especially laborers. This network of motorboats was a crucial asset for the people of Banten who often sought work in Lampung, especially during the harvest seasons of pepper and coffee. However, due to the low prices of pepper and coffee, these workers often earned less than expected, making it difficult for them to afford the return journey on government-owned ships in the Dutch East Indies.

As time passed, the pesantren initiated by KH. Ghalib developed various educational programs, including the Islamic Kindergarten of KH. Ghalib, the Islamic Junior High School of KH. Ghalib, and the Vocational School of KH. Ghalib. The non-formal educational institutions included the Quranic Education Center (TPA), the Learning Activity Center (PKBM), and the Pondok Pesantren KH. Ghalib. The pondok pesantren, which is now known as the Yayasan KH. Ghalib, has undergone significant development from

its inception to the present day. This progress is marked by changes in leadership and the addition of educational institutions offered.

## 4. Conclusion

KH. Gholib played a significant role in Islamic preaching and education in the Pringsewoe region in the early 20th century. Through the establishment of Madrasah Salafiyah, he not only provided free access to Islamic education for the community but also integrated religious values into everyday life. His success in the field of economics, particularly with his rice milling business and transportation ventures, enabled him to support the operation of the madrasah and empower the surrounding community. The Madrasah Salafiyah founded by KH. Gholib experienced rapid growth, with the number of students reaching into the thousands. The method of teaching through memorization and review proved to be highly effective, attracting students from outside the region to study there. However, the presence of KH. Gholib and his pesantren did not escape the attention of the Dutch, who attempted to disrupt his preaching activities. They even established a church to compete with KH. Gholib's influence. Despite facing pressure and threats from the colonialists, KH. Gholib and his students remained steadfast in spreading the teachings of Islam and developing the pesantren. The legacy of KH. Gholib, in the form of a continuously growing pesantren, continues the mission of Islamic preaching and education for future generations. His success and contributions in advancing the religion and Islamic education in the Pringsewoe region are still remembered and revered to this day.

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