

Historical Review of Classical *Hadith* Literature in Malay Peninsula

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Abstract-- Malay Peninsula had become one of the important Muslim education centers during 15th to 16th century in Malacca. It produced many classical Islamic manuscripts including *hadith* (tradition of the prophet) literature. This study provided the discussion and review about important *hadith* literature which were written in Malay Peninsula before the independence of Malaya in 1957. It revealed how the literature developed century by century, starting from 15th century until 20th century. The names of the literatures and the authors were identified from the original literature itself and various printed materials related. In addition, for some important literature, the content of it was also discussed. As a result of this study, it was found that the number of *hadith* literature in Malay Peninsula was very low compared to the other fields in Islam. As a consequence, Muslim scholars who were involved in this field became unknown and their contributions were not appreciated. Thus, it was recommended that the Malay classical *hadith* literature must be studied and introduced to the society by editing and reproducing it in a modern way.

Index Term— Classical Malay Literature, Classical *Hadith* Literature, *Hadith*, Malay Manuscripts, Malay *Hadith* Scholars.

I. INTRODUCTION

When Islam came to Malay Peninsula in the early 14th century, as indicated by Terengganu's Inscription (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1970:24), Islamic literatures were also introduced to the society in Malay Archipelago. According to *Sejarah Melayu* (The Malay Annals), Malacca sultanate adopted Islam as an official religion in the early 15th century (Cheah Boon Kheng (ed.), 1998:122) and helped to spread it to Malay Peninsula as well as Malay Archipelago. The necessity

of writing Islamic books in the Malay language became inevitable, thus many Islamic literatures were translated from Arabic into Malay language. As a consequence, the style of writing is greatly influenced by Arabic and many Arabic terminologies, which the authors could not find its equivalent in Malay, were used in the writing. Sometimes, a smaller book is combined together with another bigger one and the smaller one is written in the margin of the bigger book. Almost all the titles of *hadith* (the prophet tradition) literature were in Arabic but the contents were in Malay. The titles were written in Arabic perhaps because the book was only a translation or adaptation and they also wanted to create sense of curiosity among the readers about the content of the book. Usually all of the books were reprinted several times without date and permission from the authors because there was no copyright regulation at the time and in some cases the authors were unknown.

According to Kratz (1981:229), the editing and publishing Malay manuscripts have been in progress since the early 19th century. Siti Hawa (2010:223-225) divides traditional Malay literatures into many categories and one of it is religious literature. Mohd. Nor (1980: 10) classified all the religious literature into their own categories namely theology, *fiqh* (Islamic law), *hadith*, sufism and *tafsir* (commentary of the Quran). In a study by Shukri (2001:99-100), he discusses some of Islamic literatures in *fiqh* and theology in his writing. Braginsky (2004) analyzes some sufi literature as part of Malay literature in his important book entitled *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature*. When Azyumardi Azra (1997:190) comments about small number of *fiqh* literature in Malay archipelago, he mentions that before the second half of the 17th century, Malay Muslim were more interested in the mystic-philosophical aspect of Islam

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rather than *fiqh*, *tafsir* and *hadith*. This has been proven by the earliest literature which has spread in Malay Archipelago around 12th century related directly with theology and sufism namely *Bahr al-Lahut* by Abdullah Arif (Amat Juhari, 2008:6). This book specifically discusses about the theory of “*Nur Muhammad*” and its relationship with sufism and theology (Mahayuddin Hj. Yahaya, 2001:9). Later on, in the early 19th century, a polemic issue between traditionalism and reformism which related with classical Muslim *fiqh* has become a main issue (Rahimin, 2006). Thus, the Muslim educational environment in Malay Archipelago is always related with Sufism and *fiqh*. In a seminar entitled “Islamic Studies in South-East Asia”, Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah (1995) presented a paper entitled “The Development of Muslim *Hadith* Scholars in South-East Asia” and he briefly identifies some of Muslim scholars who were involved in the field of *hadith*, not only in Malay Peninsula, but in the South-East Asia in general. The paper becomes the earliest preliminary study about the *hadith* scholars in South-East Asia. However, none of the above studies focus directly on *hadith* literatures in Malay Peninsula and critically discuss about it.

Hence, this study aimed to identify the literatures and the authors who were involved in the field of *hadith* throughout the century beginning at the time when Islam was started to establish in Malay Peninsula until the independence of Malaya in 1957.

II. CLASSICAL *HADITH* LITERATURE BEFORE 16TH CENTURY

During this time, it is very difficult to find any Islamic literature which focuses on *hadith* as a single field. There is a literature entitled *Durr al-Manzum* (The Pleasantly Arranged Jewels) written by Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi on the Divine Names and Attributes of Allah (Mahayuddin, 1994:3). This literature was brought to Malacca by his student, Mawlana Abu Bakr, a Muslim scholar from India (Cheah Boon Kheng, Sejarah Melayu :183). In addition, there are other classical translations from Arabic text namely *al-'Aqid* by Najm al-Din Abu Hafs 'Umar bin Muhammad al-Nasafi (d. 1142) and *Umm al-Barahin* by Muhammad bin Yusuf al-Sanusi (d. 1490) (Shukri Ahmad, 2001 : 101). The *al-'Aqid* is a very famous theology book during that time based on the numerous commentaries on this book written by Muslim scholars including Sa'd al-Din Mas'ud bin 'Umar al-Taftazani (d. 1389), but the Malay translation of al-Taftazani's commentary was lost (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1988:8). Later on, al-Attas reproduced a Malay commentary of *al-'Aqid* written by Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1658) in his book entitled “The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript : A 16th Century Malay Translation of the Aqid of al-Nasafi” (Mohd. Fakhru bin Abdul Mukti, 2008 : 70). Unfortunately,

all of the above literatures are not specifically related to *hadith*, instead it was mainly discussing about theology.

During this period of time, it was found that the Muslim in Malay Peninsula gave more attention to strengthen their faith by studying and discussing the books which were related directly with theology. In addition, the problem related with theology was discussed in the palace by the *Sultan* (King) of Malacca and the Muslim scholars. The popularity of this subject had lessen the popularity of the other field in Islam namely *fiqh*, *tafsir* and *hadith*. This fact also shows another point that Malacca has become one of the centre to study about Islam and fortunately the King supported the development of knowledge and had interest to study theology compared to the other field.

III. CLASSICAL *HADITH* LITERATURE IN 17TH CENTURY

Among the earliest *hadith* literature in this century was a book entitled *Hidayah al-Habib Fi al-Tarhib Wa al-Tarhib* (The Guide of Lover about Happiness to do Good Things and Fearful of doing Bad Things) by Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1658) and it was completed in 1636 (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995 : 4). It contained 831 *hadith* in 46 chapters and he translated *hadith* in Arabic into Malay. It was written in Pahang and brought to Aceh, a centre for Islamic education at that time, which make this literature became more popular (Mohd. Muhiden Abd. Rahman, 2006 : 57). This literature was printed with a new name, *al-Fawa'id al-Bahiyyah Fi al-Ahadith al-Nabawiyyah* and was combined together with another book entitled *Jam' al-Fawa'id wa Jawahir al-Qalaid* written by Dawud bin Abdullah al-Fatani.

Another prominent authors, Abdul Rauf al-Fansuri (d. 1693) wrote one classical *hadith* literature entitled *Sharh al-Latif 'Ala Arba'in Hadithan Li al-Imam al-Nawawi* (The Detail Commentary of Forty *Hadith* by Imam al-Nawawi) and was completed in March 1680. This is the earliest Malay commentaries on the popular Forty *Hadith* by al-Nawawi (d. 1278) (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995:4). The commentaries were not as usual as other commentaries before him because the authors gave comment on every *hadith* from the sufism point of view.

To sum up, the number of Malay *hadith* literature started to grow at the mid of this century. At least two books were directly related to *hadith*. Though both of these books were not written by Muslim scholar from Malay Peninsula, it was believed that al-Raniri started to write this book in Pahang, Malaysia. These two books are very important because the content of these books show that the Muslim at that time are still influenced by the field of theology and sufism. This can

be seen when the commentary of forty *hadith* by Abdul Rauf al-Fansuri is written from the sufism perspective.

IV. CLASSICAL HADITH LITERATURE IN 18TH CENTURY

In this century, only two literatures can be found. Abdullah bin Abdul Mubin Pauh Bok al-Fatani wrote a literature entitled *Tanbih al-Ghafilin* (Reminder for the Neglectful) which was completed in 1770. This literature is a translation from the Arabic literature with the same title by Abu Layth al-Samarqandi (d. 983) (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995:6). It contained 12 chapters and in this book, he discussed about the punishment for those who commit big sins in Islam (Abdullah bin Abdul Mubin, n.d. : 2). This literature was printed together with another book entitled *Insan al-Muttaqin Lillah Rab al-'Alamin*.

Other authors, Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari wrote a literature entitled *al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar Fi 'Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntazar* (The Brief Words about Signs of Awaited Imam al-Mahdi) which was initiated on Thursday, 7th March 1782. The content of this literature has a reference to the writings of previous prominent authors namely Ahmad Ibn Hajar al-Haythami (d. 1566), who wrote the Arabic book with the same title and Mar'i Ibn Yusuf al-Hanbali (d. 1623), who wrote a book entitled *Fara'id Fawa'id al-Fikar Fi al-Imam al-Mahdi al-Muntazar*. Later on, the content in this literature was added and completed by his descendant with a new title *Takmilat Qawl al-Mukhtasar* (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1990 : 75).

In this century, the *hadith* literature however still have not increase compared to the last century. Both of the literatures were produced in Patani and Kedah respectively. During this period, Patani and Kedah which are situated at the northern part of Malay Peninsula, started to develop as a centre for Islamic studies and produced many Muslim scholars and literatures. The content of the books focused on moral values and the polemic issue of *Imam al-Mahdi*.

V. CLASSICAL HADITH LITERATURE IN 19TH CENTURY

The most productive authors from Patani with a wide range of books, Dawud bin Abdullah al-Fatani wrote some of the books in the *hadith* field. His book entitled *Fara'id Fawa'id al-Fikar Fi al-Imam al-Mahdi* was completed in 1801. This book was a translation from Arabic book authored by Mar'i Ibn Yusuf al-Hanbali (d. 1623) with the the same title. The main theme of the book is the discussion of the *hadith* about Imam al-Mahdi. In addition, he also wrote another book entitled *Kashf al-Ghummah Fi Ahwal al-Mawta Fi al-Barzakh Wa al-Qiyamah*. This book was completed in 1822 and it was a translation from Arabic book entitled *Kashf al-*

Ghummah 'an Jami' al-Ummah which was written by 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani (d. 1565).

He also wrote a book entitled *Hadith Arba'in* (Forty *Hadith*) which is different from *Hadith Arba'in* (Forty *Hadith*) written by al-Nawawi (d. 1278). This book was published together with his book entitled *Hidayah al-Muta'allim* and was written at the side margin of the book (Shaghir, 1995:6). One of his student, Muhammad Nuruddin bin Haji Abdul Ghafur al-Fatani, copied and wrote it as a single book and completed it in 1850. According to him, the *hadith* was taken from the Arabic book entitled *Kashf al-Ghummah 'An Jami' al-Ummah* by 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani (d. 1565). Furthermore, it was believed that Dawud bin Abdullah al-Fatani wrote another book entitled *Hikayat al-Imam*. In this book, he discussed about the narrators of *hadith* including their full name, education background and the year when they died. Unfortunately, this manuscript is still missing (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995 : 6-7).

Another Muslim scholar from Patani, Muhammad bin Tahir al-Fatani was famous with his book entitled *Tadhkirah al-Mawdu'at* and it explained about fabricated *hadith*. Another author, Wan Hassan bin Wan Ishaq al-Fatani wrote a book entitled *Hidayah al-Mukhtar*, which was a translation from Arabic book entitled *al-Arba'un Hadithan* (Forty *Hadith*) by 'Abd al-'Azim al-Mundhiri (d. 1258). He completed this book in Mecca on 14th June 1833 (Wan Hassan Wan Ishaq, 1999 : 16). Another scholar, Muhammad Salih bin Muhammad Murid Rawa wrote a *hadith* book entitled *Fath al-Mubin* which was a translation and commentary for a book entitled *Hadith Arba'in* (Forty *Hadith*) by al-Nawawi (d. 1278).

In another *hadith* literature, Ahmad al-Fatani wrote a book entitled *Bisharah al-'Amilin wa Nazarah al-'Ghafilin* (Sakinah @ Sapiinah Maamor, 2006 : 27). He finished his writing in Mecca on 9th January 1887. It contains 14 chapters and he didn't include the chain of transmitters in the book because he wanted to make it brief and simple. He referred to many sources for instance *Riyad al-Salihin* by al-Nawawi (d. 1278), *al-Jami' al-Saghir* and *Lubab al-Hadith* by al-Suyuti (d. 1505), *Tanbih al-Ghafilin* and *Qurrah al-'Uyun* by Abu Layth al-Samarqandi (d. 983), *Mukhtasar Tazkirah al-Qurtubi* by 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani (d. 1565) and many more. In addition, he translated a *hadith* book entitled *al-Isti'dad Li Yawm al-Ma'ad* (Preparation for The Hereafter) by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 1448), unfortunately he could only complete four out of ten chapters from the book (Sakinah @ Sapiinah Maamor, 2006 : 30).

Furthermore, he also authored another book entitled *Jawapan Syeikh Ahmad Bin Muhammad Zain al-Fatani Tentang Hadith Memulai Dan Menyudahi Makan Dengan Garam* (The Answers From Syeikh Ahmad bin Muhammad Zain al-Fatani About *Hadith* Starting and Finishing the Meal With Salt). He explained in detail about the authenticity of the *hadith* by referring to many sources for example *Taqrib al-Tahzib* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 1448), *al-Mawdu'at* by Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1200), *al-Shu'ab* by al-Bayhaqi (d. 1066) and many more (Sakinah @ Sapinah Maamor, 2006 : 28-29). There are two of his manuscripts which are yet to be published namely *Hadith-hadith Pilihan* (The Selected *Hadith*) and *Rijal al-Hadith* (The *Hadith* Narrators). *Hadith-hadith Pilihan* is about a group of *hadith* which was selected to be memorized by his students. In *Rijal al-Hadith*, he wrote about the biodata of *hadith* narrators including their names, year of birth and death, the name of their ancestors and teachers (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995 : 5).

Ali bin Abdul Rahman al-Kalantani wrote a book entitled *al-Jawhar al-Mawhub Wa Munabbihat al-Qulub* (Presented Jewel and Reminder for Soul) which was finished in Mecca on 1889. This book is a translation from the book entitled *Lubab al-Hadith* written by al-Suyuti (d. 1505). In his commentary, he did not focus on the chain of narrators but he only explained the content of the *hadith*. This book has 40 chapters and in each chapters it contained ten *hadith*. He emphasized more on spiritual aspect on how to improve ourselves (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995 : 8-9).

In this century, Europeans begin offering money for commercial copying of Malay manuscripts (Ding Choo Ming, 1987:428) and as a result, many Malay literatures including *hadith* increased rapidly. Almost all of the *hadith* literature come from the Muslim scholars in Kelantan and Patani, which are situated closely at the Northern part of Malaysia Peninsula. It is because during this time, Patani has become the central for Islamic education and it was very famous with the traditional school system which is popularly known as *madrasah* or *pondok*, where the master of *pondok* is called *Tok Guru*. During this time, the content and references of the literature gained more variety from the previous century as the literature not only translated the *hadith*, but also discussed about the chain of narrators and the level of *hadith* authenticity.

VI. CLASSICAL HADITH LITERATURE IN 20TH CENTURY

In this century, the number of *hadith* literatures keep growing from the previous century. Haji Muhammad Husayn bin Abdul Latif, who was also known as Tok Kelaba, wrote a manuscript entitled *Mulayannah al-Qulub Ila al-Tadhakkur Li 'Alamat al-Ghuyub*. This

book was written in Arabic and it was completed on 31st August 1922. This book contains *hadith* about fear of Allah and it is still yet to be published (Ahmad Fathy, 2002 : 103).

Another famous Muslim scholar, Husayn Nasir bin Muhamad Tayyib al-Banjari or also known as Tuan Husayn Kedah wrote a *hadith* book entitled *Tadhkir Qaba'il al-Qadi Fi Tarjamat al-Bukhari* and it was completed in 1923 (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995 : 13). In the book, the authors explained about the moral values including obligations towards neighbours, orphans and the poor (Latifah Abdul Majid, 2010 : 114). It was a translation from the book entitled *Jawahir al-Bukhari wa Sharah al-Qastallani* by Mustafa Muhammad 'Imarah. The *hadith* in this book was selected from *Sahih al-Bukhari* and the commentary of *hadith* from al-Qastallani's (d. 1517) book entitled *Irshad al-Sari li Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*. Another author, Haji Mukhtar bin Ahmad bin Muhammad Zayn wrote a book entitled *Kanz al-Amin Fi Sharh al-Arba'in* in 1938 (Fauzi Deraman, 1997 : 49) and this book is about the commentary of forty *hadith*.

Umar Jalaluddin al-Kalantani, who was from Kelantan and one of the student of Tok Kenali, a famous Malay Muslim scholar, wrote a book entitled *Matali' al-Anwar 'Ala Majami' al-Azhar*. Even though this book was not focusing on *hadith* as the main topic, it explained briefly about the sciences of *hadith* or "*Ulum al-Hadith*", the history of *hadith* collection (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995 : 13-15). The book was published in 1933 (Ismail Che Daud, 1988 : 314).

In Penang, Haji Abdul Halim al-Hadi, who was a former student of Abdullah Fahim, wrote two books related to *hadith*. In one of the books entitled *Tajdhib Atraf al-Hadith Bi Sharh Ma Fi Kitab Mukhtar al-Ahadith*, he translated all of the *hadith* from Arabic book entitled *Mukhtar al-Ahadith al-Nabawiyah* written by Sayyid Ahmad al-Hashimi and gave simple commentary of *hadith* in two volumes. It contained almost 1400 *hadith*. He completed writing this book on 8th June 1938 (Abdul Halim al-Hadi : v.2, 224). He also wrote another book entitled *Ilham al-Bari Sharah Sahih al-Bukhari*. This book is very unique because it is the only book which is written in Malay about commentary of *hadith* in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. He produced this book using Malay language in ten volumes and the last volume was published on 1954. Unfortunately, he did not complete writing the commentary about all *hadith* in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Another author, Asbiran Ya'kub produced a literature entitled *Hadith Empat Puluh* (Forty *Hadith*). In the foreword written by the author, it was clearly stated that he wrote it in 1929 (Asbiran Ya'kub, 1968:3). The book contains the commentary of forty *hadith* which was written by al-Nawawi (d. 1278).

In Perak, Muhammad Idris bin Abdul Rauf al-Marbawi produced the most famous book related with *hadith* entitled *Bahr al-Madhi Li Sharh Mukhtasar Sahih al-Tirmidhi*. It translated and commented all of the *hadith* in the *Mukhtasar al-Jami' al-Tirmidhi* in 22 volumes. The last volume was completed in 24th December 1957. The first volume was printed in Egypt in 1933 (Hj. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1995:16-18). He also translated another *hadith* book entitled *Bulugh al-Maram* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 1448) into Malay language and it was the first such translation in Malay. This book compiled all of the *hadith* pertaining to *fiqh*.

There is another *hadith* literature entitled *Muhimmah Pada Ilmu Hadith* by Abdullah bin Abdul Rahim al-Fatani which is combined and printed together with another book entitled *al-Mawa'iz al-Badi'ah* by Abdul Rauf Fansuri. In this book, the author discussed about all of the *hadith* related to the actions and responsibilities of the wife and husband (Abdullah Abdul Rahim al-Fatani, n.d. : 2).

In this century, the number of *hadith* literatures increase rapidly with the the help of printing technology though it is still small compared to the field of theology and *fiqh* (M. van Bruinessen, 1990:229). Compared to the previous century, the authors come from many different states including Perak and Penang. This happened as a result of many Muslims who were sent to learn religious education in al-Azhar University and Mecca and spread the knowledge when they come back (Mohammad Redzuan Othman, 2001:66). Despite the translation activity from Arabic into Malay language, they also show originality and creativity by giving commentary of *hadith* with their own ideas and responding to the current issues in the society. The advancement in printing technology also help the authors to publish their work easily.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Muslim scholars in Malay Peninsula play a big role to teach and preserve the traditions of the prophet among Malay society. From the history, it is clearly proven that they are capable of producing *hadith* literature though their work mainly focusing on translating and adapting literature from Arabic language. During the early age, the number of books is less mainly because lack of number of authors who can write and copy the literatures. Currently, the number of *hadith* literatures keep increasing due to the interest from the society and also with the help of new technology to produce it. Furthermore, from all of these literatures, it is obvious that past muslim scholars play a crucial role in educating the society by providing them with the main and correct references in the field of

hadith. They helped the society by making them up-to-date with the latest and important book published in Arabic language. The muslim scholars nowadays should emulate the work of past scholars in order to guide the society into the correct path. Thus, in the future, it is recommended that all of these literatures be edited and reproduce it with the current technology.

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