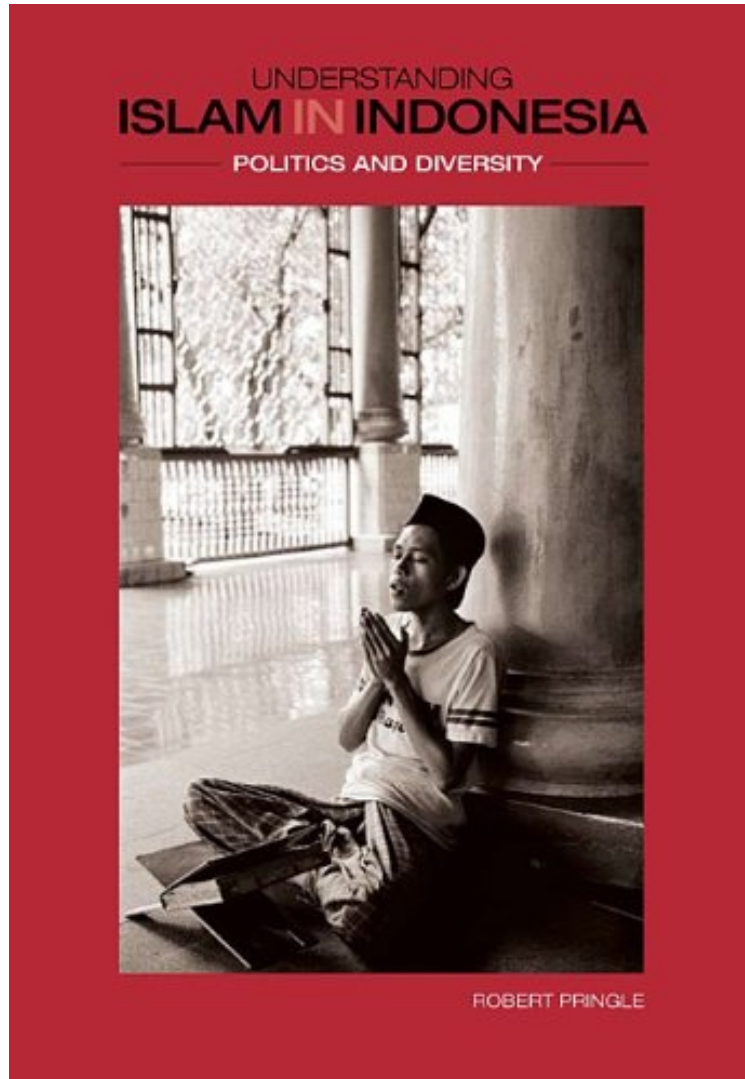


(Get free) Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity

Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity

Robert Pringle

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Robert Pringle : Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A vital book to read to understand Islam in IndonesiaBy edsetiadiThere was a time when Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was a political party in Indonesia, when Muslim Communists exist and did not contradict itself, and when the 1st Pancasila was in 5th and declared "Believe in God, with the obligation of the adherent of Islam to carry out Islamic law" (Ketuhanan, dengan kewajiban menjalankan syari'at Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluk nya).Furthermore, there are good explanations why in the whole Sumatra island only the Toba Batak people are Christian majority, why the people in Bali remain Hindu, and why those in eastern parts of Indonesia

are predominantly Roman Catholics and Protestants. Meanwhile, there is a cheeky urban myth on why the Istiqlal national mosque has 12 pillars, created by its Christian architect. And contrary to popular belief that Muhammadiyah organisation is named after the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the organisation was actually named after their theological godfather Muhammad 'Abduh, a 19th century Egyptian reformer. Moreover, did you know that the "Wali Songo" whom spread Islam in Java were mostly Chinese and Vietnamese descents? And did you know that Imam Bonjol in Padri War was in truth a Wahhabi mob that attacked the Minangkabau matrilineal tradition (they even killed some members of the Minangkabau royal family) and wanted to make Minangkabau an extreme-syariah state? The Minang indigenous requested help to the Dutch, and because he fought the Dutch in a war this Imam from Bonjol became a national hero and not a radical fundamentalist in Indonesia's history book. As the title suggests this book is indeed about Islam in Indonesia. But it is not about the theological history of Islam in Indonesia, although the author covered this in quite some length as well. Instead, it is first and foremost the history of politics in Indonesia - from the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms era, to colonial subject under the Dutch English and Japanese occupations, into the formation of the independent state of Indonesia, the turbulent first few decades, the post-1965 violence, until the modern Indonesia as we know it today - with Islam plays one of the most central roles in every era and influenced the evolution of the country. And conversely, this book is also the history of religion in Indonesia with Islam emerged as the dominant power that are shaped by the political scenes. Central to the evolution of Islam in Indonesia (and thus the development of the book) are two great mainstream Muslim organisations, Nahdlatul Ulama (which the author refer as Traditionalist, due to its assimilation with the traditional local cultures) and Muhammadiyah (which the author refer as Reformist due to its more doctrinaire style). And both organisations act as the pillar of Islam in Indonesia, which covers social, educational (with its great network of boarding schools (pesantren)), political and professional aspects of daily lives. There are also those Islamic militant groups that became "the other side" of Islam evolution in Indonesia, such as separatist Darul Islam and Al-Qaeda-affiliated Jemaah Islamiyah whom wanted to make Indonesia an extreme-syariah compliant nation. There are also the organised political parties such as Masyumi and PKS that have tried (but so far fail) to make Islam a more dominant force in Indonesian politics. And then there is Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), an organisation that was originally created in 1975 to mobilise support for Suharto's development policies, to give them stamp of approval from a religiously progressive minority of clerics, but then has since issued some of the most controversial (and idiotic) fatwas after the fall of Suharto. All of the big events throughout the country's history, all of the big names, the many riots and violences in the name of religion in Poso, Ambon, Aceh, Dayak vs Madura, etc are analysed. All of the structure and history of Islamic organisations are also discussed in details in the book, from every single political parties, separatist groups, down to the vast Islamic school system - from the 14000 pesantren in Java, to Surau in West Sumatra and Dayah in Aceh. I especially like the brilliant conclusion at the very end, where the author writes with a touching respect and love towards Indonesia, describing the complicated web of events that have created the unique and moderate Islam that Indonesia now have, and he ultimately concluded that Indonesia's own diversity "act as a break, however imperfect, on ideological, religious or political extremism." Lazy cover aside, this book could not do any better than this. 5 stars! 12 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Understanding Islam in Indonesia: a great guide By Customer The title suggests a college textbook, which will be its largest market, but to anyone familiar with Indonesia it reads more like a well researched historical novel. Islam crept into the archipelago of Hindu/Buddhist states in the 7th century and the author weaves the story of its surges through colonialism, revolution, democracy and dictatorship with wit. Pringle knows his territory; he served as a Foreign Service officer in Jakarta in the early 70s as Suharto was consolidating his power, and he also know the academic elite of Indonesia and Indonesianists. He takes us through all the upheavals, the squabbles of Muslim political parties, social organizations and extremist sects without using dense academic language, a fault that cripples other studies. He uses the device of parallels to our own political history (e.g. Ahmadiyah's relationship to Islam resembles Mormons to Christianity) in a way that immediately simplifies the complex, making it an extremely readable book. This reviewer was in Indonesia during a period of turmoil, the mid-60s, working there as a freelance journalist. At the time, I thought of it as a fight between secular nationalism and communism, with Islam just a gauzy veil that appeared fleetingly in arguments over marriage laws, or parliamentary seats, or whether to work on Friday. Pringle shows instead that Islam was a constant force underpinning the social and political upheavals. He tells how Suharto's early repression of Reformist Islam actually backfired, resulting in more support for the pluralism and diversity of Indonesian society..as well as as nasty touch of Islamic extremism in a tiny minority. The book should have wide appeal to every college course on Southeast Asia, on religion, political science and even anthropology. It should also be standard fare for anyone going to Indonesia as a businessman, scholar, or even an enlightened tourist. It has no match in its field as a reference book. The author has also very thoughtfully provided a guide for further reading with chatty comments on authors, an excellent glossary, and a concise, clear guide to the maze of political parties.

There are more Muslims in Indonesia than in any other country, but most people outside the region know little about the nation, much less about the practice of Islam among its diverse peoples or the religion's influence on the politics of the republic. In this illuminating publication, Robert Pringle explains the advent of Islam in Indonesia, its

development, and especially its contemporary circumstances. The authors incisive writing provides the necessary background and demystifies the spectrum of politically active Muslim groups in Indonesia today.

About the Author Robert Pringle has studied and written extensively about Islam in West Africa and the Philippines.