

## The Relevance Of Japanese Harmony Culture (*Wa*) To Islamic Traditions : Cultural And Japanese Language Studies At Al Anshor Margahayu Islamic Boarding School Bandung

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Received: Nov 25, 2024

Revised: Dec 10, 2024

Accepted: Dec 16, 2024

Published: Jan 15, 2024

### Abstract

Idealism and lack of awareness of nature preservation in Indonesia cause damage to the natural environment. According to the Islamic view, the natural environment is one of the gifts given by Allah to mankind. Its preservation is a shared responsibility to be maintained and preserved. In Islamic boarding school education, not only local content based on Islam is presented, However, in the era of globalization, the understanding of the culture of harmony (*WA*) needs to be introduced. Harmony between humans and the environment needs to be realized. As an effort to realize this, it needs to be conveyed through the cultivation of awareness education for nature and the environment presented in the pesantren curriculum. The concept of natural harmony in the Qur'an and how this concept can be an important guide in environmental conservation efforts and humans should maintain and stay away from the destruction of nature. This research contains a descriptive-analytical library research with a philosophical approach, namely by investigating and thinking deeply, so that the wisdom, essence or essence of the subject matter can be easily understood and understood carefully. The results of the study provide important messages that emphasize the aspects of order, cleanliness, and mutual respect between visitors, which are an important part of public culture in Japan and their relevance to the teachings of Islam.

**Keywords:** *Japanese Culture, Islamic Boarding School, Islamic Teachings, Harmony*

### Abstrak

Idealisme dan kurangnya kesadaran terhadap kelestarian alam di Indonesia menyebabkan rusaknya lingkungan alam. Menurut pandangan Islam, lingkungan alam adalah salah satu anugerah Allah yang diberikan kepada umat manusia. Kelestariannya menjadi tanggung jawab bersama untuk dijaga dan dilestarikan. Dalam Pendidikan pesantren tidak hanya disajikan muatan lokal berbasis agama Islam saja, namun dalam era globalisasi, pemahaman budaya harmoni (*wa*) perlu diperkernalkan. Keharmonian antara manusia dengan lingkungan perlu diwujudkan. Sebagai upaya dalam mewujudkan hal tersebut perlu disampaikan melalui penanaman pendidikan kesadaran terhadap alam dan lingkungan yang disajikan dalam kurikulum pesantren. Konsep keharmonisan alam dalam Al-Quran dan bagaimana konsep ini dapat menjadi panduan yang penting dalam upaya konservasi lingkungan dan manusia seharusnya memelihara dan menjauhi perusakan alam. Penelitian ini berisi studi kepustakaan (library research) yang bersifat deskriptif-analisis dengan pendekatan filosofis, yaitu dengan cara menyelidiki dan berfikir secara mendalam, sehingga hikmah, hakikat atau inti dari pokok persoalan dapat mudah dimengerti dan dipahami secara seksama. Hasil penelitian memberikan pesan-pesan penting yang menekankan pada aspek keteraturan, kebersihan, dan saling menghargai antar pengunjung, yang menjadi bagian penting dari budaya publik di Jepang serta relevansinya dengan ajaran dalam agama Islam.

**Kata Kunci :** *Budaya Jepang, Pesantren, Ajaran Islam, Harmoni*

## Introduction

Education is the main foundation in building civilization. One form of education that has a long and significant history is pesantren-based education. Islamic boarding schools have existed in Indonesia since the 13th century along with the entry of Islam into the archipelago (Susilo and Wulansari, 2020: 84). Pesantren has the characteristic of being a residence for students who are under the direct supervision of kiai or pesantren leaders who not only play the role of teachers but also as spiritual guides. Santri is a term used to refer to students who study at Islamic boarding schools.

Based on the curriculum, pesantren can be grouped into two types, namely traditional pesantren and modern pesantren. In traditional Islamic boarding schools, the learning focuses on teaching Islamic religious sciences such as the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh, tafsir, monotheism, Sufism, and Arabic. Meanwhile, modern Islamic boarding schools generally add general education that is equivalent to formal schools.

As for the length of time, pesantren can be carried out for many years in accordance with the applicable rules and there are also pesantren that are held only on the sidelines of formal schools or for example during the month of Ramadan called Flash Pesantren. At the Al Anshor Margahayu Raya Mosque in the city of Bandung, every Ramadan there is always a flash pesantren. To increase the insight of curriculum students during Islamic boarding schools, in addition to being taught religious sciences, general sciences including foreign cultures and one of them is Japanese culture. In the context of today's globalization, learning from successful countries such as Japan is important for developing countries, including Indonesia as well as Islamic boarding schools.

Japan is one of the countries in the world that has extraordinary advantages in various aspects, ranging from technology, economy, to culture. Behind Japan's success lies a strong education system and cultural values that they have long built and developed. One of these cultural values is contained in one of the articles of the constitution made by Prince Shotoku (593), namely the importance of "*Wa*" or harmony (Shindo: 2015:56). Harmony exists in various life orders, but the material is focused, in this activity material is presented related to harmony with the natural environment, especially public spaces, namely city parks.

## Method

The implementation of this research is carried out in stages by means of the counseling method, which is a method that is carried out by providing information or education to students in order to carry out a flash pesantren in the month of Ramadan organized by the Ramadan committee of the Al Anshor mosque. The counseling process is carried out directly with the following steps.

First, material needs are identified in the framework of a flash pesantren. Identification was carried out by interview techniques with the instructor of the flash pesantren. In addition, observations were made on the behavior of students in how to treat the clean environment of the area around the place where students study. The results of observations identified that the culture of protecting the environment, especially disposing of garbage carried out by students, is still low. Based on these observations, material about the harmony between humans and nature is determined.

Second, the preparation of counseling materials was carried out. Third, the implementation of counseling is carried out by lecture and discussion techniques. Fourth, an evaluation of the results of counseling was carried out.

## Result and Discussion

The concept of "*Wa*" (和) is a distinctive and original Japanese culture. "*Wa*" is getting along with others without conflict, being able to work together, and respecting each other (Shindo, 2015: 56). This concept is a fundamental principle in Japanese culture that is rooted in the history and social life of the people. Literally, the kanji 和 (*Wa*) means harmony or harmony (Kuratani, et.al., 1982: 73). This kanji also reflects the values of collectivity, togetherness, and balance in social interaction. "*Wa*" is not just a philosophy, but also a guide in all daily behavior and communication of Japanese society. One of the concepts of *wa* (harmony) is reflected in the relationship between Japanese society and its environment. Japanese people have a very close relationship with nature. The concept of "*Wa*" is reflected in the way Japanese society respects and celebrates the beauty of nature collectively, creating harmony between humans and the environment. This can be reflected through the celebration of nature or the behavior of Japanese people towards nature.

In Japanese parks, there are often appeals for visitors to maintain cleanliness, order, and safety. The appeal speech was delivered politely, in accordance with Japanese culture which highly values

politeness and community cooperation. Here are some examples of appeal phrases that can be found in parks in Japan:

(1) Take your trash home with you.

*Gomi wa mochi  
kaerimashou.*

'Take your  
rubbish home'

(2) Be quiet.

*Shizuka of shimashou.*  
'Please calm down'

(3) Take good care of your plants.

*Shokubutsu is the taisetsu of shimashou.*  
'Take good care of the plants'.

(4) Do not enter the lawn.

*Shibafu ni hairanaide kudasai*  
'Don't step on the grass'.

(5) Pets must be on a leash.

*Petto o rīdo o tsukete kudasai*  
'Please attach the leash to the pet'.

(6) Fire is strictly prohibited.

*Persimmon genkin*  
'No fire'.

(7) Push your bicycle and walk.

*Jitensha and Oshite*  
*Aruite Kudasai 'Push*  
*your bike'*

(8) Keep noise moderate.

*Souon wa hikaeme ni shimashou*  
'Please keep the noise off'

Speech (1) is an appeal to both Japanese people and foreigners not to leave garbage in the park, but to take it home to be disposed of in the proper place.

Speech (2) is an invitation for everyone to maintain a peaceful and calm atmosphere in the park so that all visitors can enjoy a quiet environment.

Speech (3) is an appeal speech that aims to remind visitors not to damage plants and flowers in the garden. Speech (4) is an appeal that everyone who comes to the park to keep the lawn beautiful and maintained, visitors are asked not to walk or play on it.

Speech (5) is an appeal for pets not to roam freely and disturb other visitors, owners are asked to always tie their pets.

Speech (6) is a prohibition so that every visitor does not make a bonfire or cook, for the sake of mutual safety.

The appeal speech (7) is addressed to visitors who come to the park to guide their bicycles to prevent accidents or collisions between pedestrians and cyclists.

Speech (8) is intended so that visitors do not make excessive noises and disturb the calm around.

In Japanese, there is the word *meiwaku* (迷惑) which means 'distraction' or 'inconvenience' as in *the sentence hoka no hito ni gomeiwaku o kakenaide kudasai* (其他人にご迷惑をかけない).

This sentence literally means 'please don't trouble others. This expression reflects the fundamental values in Japanese culture, particularly regarding social harmony and the importance of maintaining good relations between individuals. In Japanese culture, maintaining social harmony or *Wa* is very important. *Wa* refers to balance and cooperation in society. Japanese society highly values mutual respect and maintains good relations between individuals.

Therefore, avoiding behavior that can disturb or trouble others is a way to maintain *Wa* or harmony in society. In addition, the above sentence contains the meaning of personal responsibility to always be aware of the impact of our actions on others. In Japan, there is a belief that everyone has a responsibility to maintain public order and not harm others. This is reflected in many aspects of daily life such as the ethics of disposing of garbage, taking care of plants, maintaining the ethics of speaking, the ethics of socializing and others. In addition to the above sentence, in Japanese culture, there is the concept of *haji* or shame. If actions that disturb others, including throwing garbage, cause others to feel disturbed, damage nature

and others will cause others to feel disturbed or troubled.

This is considered something embarrassing and disrespectful. Therefore, this phrase reminds people to always be careful not to take actions that can cause embarrassment, both for themselves and others. So, every community must respect each other or *sonkei*.

This expression also shows the importance of mutual respect in society. By not causing trouble to others, one shows respect for the rights, space, and comfort of others. is, the two surfaces are fused together. Collective awareness and respect for others are very strong in Japan. There is a culture of *gaman* (我慢) which means restraint or patience for the common good. In social situations, Japanese people generally do not like to cause disturbances or commotion. Japanese society values privacy and avoids behavior that can disturb others. This is evident in interactions in apartments or residential environments, where residents usually maintain calm and do not make loud noises that can disturb neighbors, including in public spaces such as parks.

Overall, these phrases (1) to (8) are part of a highly practiced social ethic in Japanese culture, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony, taking responsibility for our actions, and respecting others.

As stated above, Islamic religious knowledge is taught in Islamic boarding schools. In the Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims, there are also verses related to protecting the environment and maintaining social relations with others as in surah Ar-Rum (30:41) which reads:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

*"It has been seen that damage on land and in the sea is caused by the work of human hands; Allah wants them to feel some of the consequences of their deeds, so that they may return (to the right path)."*

This verse explains that the damage that occurs on the earth is the result of human actions, and a warning for humans to repent and protect nature. Allah created man on this earth to be a *Caliph* (leader), which means the executor of God's will. Many secrets of Divine Greatness and power become clear in the

world, because of human effort. Therefore, being a *Caliph* should be *mushlih*, meaning always improving and embellishing (Hamka, 1988:94).

However, in reality, there are not a few humans in this world who damage nature and the environment due to worldly desires. This is in line with the statement of the Prophet Shu'aib to his people, it is clear that if the human heart has been broken. Because their intentions have been evil, damage is bound to arise on the face of the earth. The human heart imprints on its deeds (Hamka, 1988:95). Based on the content of the above verse, that even though in fact the progress on earth today has advanced, such as the erection of towering majestic skyscrapers, long bridges, and super fast means of transportation connecting from one place to another as if the world is narrow, but the preservation of nature must be maintained. Because humans and nature are like pieces of coin, that In addition to the verse above, in the Qur'an there is a verse about maintaining social relations with others. Islam strongly emphasizes the importance of maintaining good social relations with fellow humans, such as treating others fairly, helping each other, and maintaining friendship. In Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) Allah said:

Allah is the Most Accepting of Repentance and the Most Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

*"O man, indeed We have created you from a man and a woman. Then We made you nations and tribes so that you might know one another. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Knowing."*

This verse emphasizes the importance of diversity and getting to know each other in social relationships. This verse teaches the importance of being kind to everyone around us, from our family to those in our social environment.

In Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:2):

وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

*"And help you in virtue and piety, and do not help in committing sin and enmity."*

This verse invites mankind to help each other in good, not in evil. From these verses, we can understand that Islam teaches the importance of maintaining the natural environment and social relations for the sake of common welfare. Balance in relationships must always be maintained, namely the relationship between man and Allah (*mu'amalah ma'a Allah*), the relationship with man (*mu'amalah ma'a an-naas*) and the relationship with nature (*mu'amalah ma'a al-'alam/khalqi*).

### **Environmental Teaching and Education**

The culture of preserving plants is also strengthened through environmental education. In many schools in Japan, children are taught to appreciate nature and take care of plants from an early age. They often have projects growing vegetables or tending to gardens at school. In Indonesia, although environmental awareness still needs to be increased, there have been educational initiatives that teach the importance of preserving plants and the environment, both in formal schools and through local communities.

The culture of maintaining and preserving plants is an important part of cultural heritage in many countries. In Japan, it is closely related to the philosophy of life, spirituality, and art, while

In Indonesia, plants play an important role in daily life, from garden gardens to traditional medicine. Modern society continues to strive to maintain this tradition through *urban farming*, environmental conservation programs, and education, so that future generations can continue to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature. These messages emphasize the aspects of order, cleanliness, and mutual respect between visitors, which are an important part of public culture in Japan, including the culture of littering in Japan. Japanese society considers that maintaining cleanliness is not only a personal responsibility, but also a form of respect for the environment and others. This is in line with the WA principle which emphasizes balance and cooperation in society.

According to the Islamic view, the natural environment is one of the gifts given by Allah to mankind. Its preservation is a shared responsibility to be



maintained and preserved. The concept of natural harmony in the Qur'an and how this concept can be an important guide in environmental conservation efforts.

In the Qur'an, there are verses that show the majesty of Allah's creation, the beauty of nature, and the connection between humans and nature. The Qur'an teaches that the universe is arranged with wisdom and balance that reflects His majesty and power.

One of the verses in the Qur'an that highlights the harmony of nature is in Surah Alrahman

[55]: 5-6, which reads:

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ

*"The sun and moon (circulate) according to calculations. And the vegetation and the trees, both are subject to Him."*

The verse affirms that the universe operates in perfect harmony and order. The sun and moon circulate according to the calculations prescribed by God, while plants and trees submit to Him. This verse gives an overview of how the universe follows the rules and ordinances that have been established by God. In addition, in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 11, Allah SWT says:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ

*"And when it was said to them, Do not do any damage to the earth, they replied, 'We are the ones who make repairs.'"*

All living things on earth must take care of and protect their environment. Protecting nature will benefit all living things, including humans. If we pay attention to our environment, we will help maintain the balance of the ecosystem and ensure that every organism in the ecosystem.

performs its functions perfectly. If one species experiences disruption or extinction, it can have an impact on other species, including humans. Protecting natural resources also means protecting the environment. Sustainable forests provide habitat, timber, and oxygen for many species. Clean water and fertile soil are valuable assets that must be maintained so that future generations can take

advantage of them.

It is important to increase the awareness and knowledge of Muslims so that the commitment to protecting the environment can grow and develop. Since childhood, Islamic teachings about the environment must be instilled in families, educational institutions, and the wider community. It is hoped that the young generation of Muslims will learn about the importance of protecting the environment through teaching and emphasis. They are the ones who will make changes to create a better future.

As Muslims, we can reduce energy consumption, dispose of garbage properly, save water, use renewable energy, and support nature conservation efforts to protect the environment. In addition, religious institutions such as mosques and Islamic educational institutions can also contribute significantly in educating the public about the importance of the environment and the actions taken.

In teaching and educating his companions, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also emphasized how lucky we will be rewarded if we participate in environmental conservation efforts. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ غَرَسَ غَرْسًا فَأَكَلَ مِنْهُ إِنْسَانٌ أَوْ دَابَّةٌ إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ بِهِ صَدَقَةٌ

*"Any Muslim who plants a tree and then there are people or animals who eat from the tree, will surely be written for him as a reward for alms."* (HR. Bukhâri no. 6012)

Islam pays great attention to environmental conservation. In order to maintain the beauty and balance of the universe created by Allah Almighty, we as Muslims have a moral and ethical responsibility. We must respect and protect God's creation and be leaders in environmental conservation through concrete actions such as wise management of natural resources, animal protection, hygiene practices, and good education. As a result, we can achieve a vision that is in line

with the teachings of Islam and pass on a sustainable environment to the next generation.

### **Conclusion**

The culture of harmony (*wa*) with the natural environment in Japanese culture needs to be introduced and is important to be applied to pesantren education. Harmony between humans and the environment needs to be realized. As an effort to realize this, it needs to be conveyed through the cultivation of awareness education for nature and the environment presented in the pesantren curriculum. The awareness of human harmony with the natural environment is also listed in the Qur'an. Humans should maintain and stay away from the destruction of nature.

The purpose of the research carried out is to form the students of the Islamic boarding school at Al Anshor Mosque to be motivated to be more able to improve and implement Islamic values, especially harmony with the environment.

These messages emphasize the aspects of order, cleanliness, and mutual respect between visitors, which are an important part of public culture in Japan, including the culture of littering in Japan. Japanese society considers that maintaining cleanliness is not only a personal responsibility, but also a form of respect for the environment and others. This is in line with *the WA* principle which emphasizes balance and cooperation in society.

According to the Islamic view, the natural environment is one of the gifts given by Allah to mankind. Its preservation is a shared responsibility to be maintained and preserved. The concept of natural harmony in the Qur'an and how this concept can be an important guide in environmental conservation efforts.

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