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**Teungku Chiek Dirundeng's Struggle in Confronting Dutch Colonial**

**Syamsuar**

*Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Teungku Dirundeng Meulaboh*

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## TEUNGKU CHIEK DIRUNDENG'S STRUGGLE IN CONFRONTING DUTCH COLONIAL

**Syamsuar**

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### Abstract

*This research discussed about the study of TeungkuChiekDirundeng's struggle in confronting Dutch colonial. Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was one of the Moslem scholars and one of the fighters in South West Coast, who had developed human civilization and education through dayah. Moreover, he found the Dutch in order to defend the territory; the war was called by the Sabil (holy) war. The term of the Sabil War had motivated his troops and followers to have a high fighting spirit. This story was enshrined in Aceh story, namely Hikayat Teungku in Meukek. This research applied qualitative methods. It told about his birth and his struggle comprehensively. The data were collected through interviews, observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The findings of this study revealed that Teungku Chiek Dirundeng as a respected figure in society. He was also identical with the dayah education since he had promoted establishing the dayah. Dayah was a building center for guiding the human to understand religious values and the sabil war ideology to defy Dutch colonial. There were some dayahs built by Teungku Chiek Dirundeng such as dayah in DamaTutong, in Meukek, in Plumat, in Labuhan Haji, and the last in Rundeng, Meulaboh. On the other hand, Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was a fighter who continually fought the Dutch. In 1893, he, along with his troops, had confronted with the other Muslims, namely Teuku Raja Hitam (UleeBalang/King of Meulaboh). In this war, Teungku Chiek Dirundeng and his troops got defeated because Ulee Balang was assisted by the Dutch.*

**Keywords:** *Struggle, Teungku Chiek Dirundeng, Dutch Colonialism, Aceh*





## A. Introduction

The horizontal conflict used to occur in the history of Aceh, especially in the Dutch colonialism phase in Aceh. This event occurred not only because of colonial purpose to keep up or expand their colonial power by involving community groups but also because of the conflict of power interest in the community themselves. Dirundeng war became more interesting because two elite community groups of structural and functional in the Acehnese, there were *Uleebalang* group and *Teungku* group that had a similar community even though had dominant in one of the groups. *Uleebalang* functions and authorities were given by the kingdom to control their wealth, political influence, and their place related to violence usage as the power of a government (Ibrahim, 1970). For the Dutch, *uleebalang* was their primary power in Aceh. They treated *uleebalang* very carefully. Besides to avoid *Uleebalang* resistance itself to the Colonial Government, and also to avoid the envious from other *Uleebalang* that become their enemies because of this special treatment. (Reid, 2005).

It showed that colonialism could not able to stand on their own power without involving the existing elements of local power. When Umar supported the Dutch, he was accused of being a traitor even though some Acehnese saw it as his strategy to steal the colonial weapon. In some history, the study stated that colonialism could not be attacked by using one perspective. For example, the community showed good and bad and right or wrong judgments for one group or an event, or for everyone. In this research shows some war events of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng, it was the whole series of struggle history of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng himself.

Teungku is another name of the Islamic scholar or *ulama*, who was a religious leader (Islam) who had an important role in Acehnese society because he established the supra-village power tradition and Acehnese culture. Their role seemed more crucial after the defeat of Aceh Kingdom from the Dutch during their aggression toward Aceh kingdom (starting in 1873). Ulamas (Islamic Scholars) was outside the power structure, but they became the leaders of the community. The emptiness was increased when some of *uleebalang* and local leaders could be tamed too (Abdullah, 1983).

Teungku Teuku Abdullah or Teungku Dimeukek (popular name) or Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was ulama on the west coast of Aceh in the late 19th century. Because of his influence, his name enshrined in State Islamic College at Meulaboh, West Aceh district now. Besides, his name was famous in societies' memories, but a little study about his history was revealed by the Acehnese people, particularly the people of West Aceh. Therefore, the purposes of this study intend to examine his life history, his struggle and his contribution to region and society in the southern region of Aceh and want to know the extent of his influence in the region.

The narration of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng provided in a saga (*hikayat*) written by Teungku Malem on Lila Perkasa *uleebalang* Meulaboh instruction (Istiqamatunnisak, 2012). The short saga told that the battle of Teungku Dirundeng fought *uleebalang* Meulaboh was led by Teuku Chiek Itam Teuboh, who has appellation "Lila Perkasa". Based on the problems above that we want to write this research, to make the community know Teungku Dirundeng's profile and his struggles, and to tell his history as knowledge and learning for the next generations.

Before the Dutch arriving in Aceh in 1873, West Aceh consisted of several troop leaders or *kehulubalangan*, some of them were a member of several regions or *mukim* federations that following the government system at Aceh Besar and Pidie. Meulaboh was a member of the 16th mukim federation called Kaway XVI including Meulaboh region or Tanjung, Ujong Kala, Seunagan, Teuripa, Woyla, Peurembou, Gunong Meuh, Kuala Meureubok, Ranto Pandjang, Reudeueb, Lango langkadeuön, Keuntjo, Gumé (Mugo), Meuko, Tadu, and Seunei'i 'Am (Zainuddin, 1961). in 1874, This federation led by the old *uleebalang* when the Dutch arrived at Meulaboh, his name Teungku Chiek Ali.

*Kehulubalangan* Meulaboh could be controlled by the colonial government when they succeeded to assign Teuku Itam Teuboh (Teuku Keujruen Muda's younger brother) as a new *uleebalang* after the previous *uleebalang* death, Teuku Chiek Ali. The appointment and support of Teuku





Itam Teuboh to the Dutch was able to weaken his brother's resistance slowly because the legitimacy of Teuku Keujruen Muda was more due to the weak leadership of his elder father. The existence of strong young *uleebalang* able to control the government slowly, his influence began to erode in the coastal community but still lived in rural communities. The influence of movement followed by the displacement of Muslim's headquarters to the rural area.

The resistance of Meulaboh people toward the colonials continued until the death of their main leader. When the resistance spirit was revived by Teungku Dirundeng in 1893, many previous Meulaboh war veterans and previous Muslim communities had joined and supported Teungku followers. *Uleebalang* of Woyla and Bubon even stated that they were ready to join and fight with Dirundeng group. The interesting thing about Teungku Dirundeng history was the battle between his group and the *uleebalang* Meulaboh group had similarities with the Paderi war in West Sumatra. The similarities were in the Paderi war that occurred because of religious and economic problems, whereas in Dirundeng war, it was estimated because of the same problems and compounded by political factors that Teuku Itam Teuboh Lila Perkasa felt his authority and legitimacy was sued by the illegal new leader.

## **B. Method**

This study used qualitative methods to study the history of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng and the resistance he did to the Dutch. Data were taken through in-depth interviews, observation (participant observation), and Focus Group Discourse (FGD), in which the FGD method, the researcher could obtain a comprehensive understanding of the history and struggle faced by Teungku Dirundeng through the informants across generations. The determination of informants was taken by purposive sampling with the core informants who would become the subjects of research including the community figures who had been born (between the early XIX century and XX century) or scientists who understood the struggle of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng.

## **C. Finding and Discussion**

### **1. Finding**

The history of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng began when he wanted to find his father in the South West Coast area precisely in Batee Tunggai, South Aceh. Based on an interview with Teungku Jauhari, indicated that the father of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng, named T. Raja Ibrahim, was sent by the king to serve in the South West Coast, when Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was still in the womb. When Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was 7 years old, he went with his group for 44 days to the Batee Tunggai area that made him known as Teungku Aneuk Batee Tunggai. The name was given because his father was named by the surrounding community as Teungku Batee Tunggai.

Teungku Chiek Dirundeng also lived in Dama Tutong so that in the end he was known as Teungku Dama Tutong. While living in Dama Tutong, he also taught various religious studies for the community (Dadek, 2015). While there, he led the people and spread Islam, besides that he was also famous for the war leaders in fighting with the Dutch. During his life, Teungku Chik was well-known as a very generous person. The generosity he did with granting his property for the benefit of the people. One of them was the Al-Muqaddas Mosque which was formerly the Kuta/ defense fortress of Teungku Chik Dirundeng located in Gampong Darat, Johan Pahlawan Sub-district, West Aceh Regency. In addition, many other lands were donated and represented by Teungku Chik Dirundeng, such as the land of the Dolog office located at the location of the Muhammadiyah development complex and the Midwifery Academy, the land of Mesjid Nurul Huda (Syamsuar, Vol 1).

During his life, Teungku Chiek Dirundeng had married twice. According to an interview with Teungku Jauhari, the first wife was named Nyak Buleun binti T. Raja Itam in Meukek (now South Aceh). Their marriage was estimated to occur in 1845 when Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was 15 years old. The result of the marriage with Nyak Buleun, they were blessed



with three children namely Taungku H. Basyah (died 1946 in Blang Blahdeh Village, Meukek District, South Aceh), Nyak Gadih (Fatimah), and the third Cut Aisyah (Nyak Aisyah). The second wife of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was Cut Nyak Puteh (younger brother from *Uleebalang* Meulaboh) who lived in Cot Seumeureung/ Cot Darat Village, Samatiga District, Meulaboh (present-day West Aceh). The results of their marriage are blessed with one daughter, Cut Ubit or commonly called Nekja Ubit.

During the battle of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng against the Dutch in Tapak Tuan, he and his troops were defeated and many of his troops were killed. One of the factors which caused the defeat was because the Dutch troops were more complete and powerful in weapons, so Tapak Tuan area fell to the Dutch (Dadek, 2017). After Tapak Tuan was controlled by the Dutch, Teungku Chik Dirundeng and his loyal followers migrated and settled into the Meukek area so that he was known as Teungku Di Meukek. During his staying in Meukek, Teungku Chiek also built a dayah to educate the people and to instill the ideology of sabil war, so that people were not afraid to fight the Dutch.

In addition, he built a number of the fortress (kuta) as a place of defense of the war against the Dutch. After a long stay in Meukek, the Dutch finally found out his whereabouts and followers. Teungku Chiek Dirundeng and his followers fought with the Dutch, the war lasted for seven days. In this war, Teungku Chik Dirundeng used the strategy of guerrilla warfare in the swamps. In this war, many followers of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng were martyred (Dadek, 2017) that caused him to step back and entered the forests located in the Meukek area.

This step was taken by Teungku Chiek Dirundeng to hide while waiting for the Dutch to neglect. However, the Dutch continued to search for Teungku Chiek Dirundeng and his troops in various ways such as intimidation to the community, spies and patrolling. The search for Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was done because he used to encourage people to against the Dutch wherever he lived. This led the Dutch to have the intention to kill Teungku Chik Dirundeng who used to hamper their attempts to conquer Aceh.

After the war was over and Teungku Chiek Dirundeng chose to step back, he finally moved to the Labuhan Haji and settled until 1883. During his staying there, he also had time to build a dayah while at the same time farming, he insisted people to continue fighting with the Dutch. Again, his existence in Labuhan Haji was also known by the Dutch, so that he decided to move to Meulaboh. His decision was done to find a new place since the Dutch kept assuming him as a wanted man. Besides, a lot of his students was waiting for him in Meulaboh ( Dadek, 2017).

In 1884 Teungku Chiek Dirundeng chose to move to Rundeng with his followers and students. The place is now known as the Darat Pahlawan village, Johan Pahlawan sub-district, West Aceh district. The location chosen by Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was considered as a strategic place as a base for regulating power. During his stay, he also had time to build a dayah to spread and teach the people the knowledge of Islam, so that Teungku Abdullah was known as Teungku Chik Dirundeng. The Dayah that was built turned out to make the community enthusiastic about learning religion directly to Teungku Chiek Dirundeng so that many people learn Islamic knowledge. The knowledge taught by Teungku Chik Dirundeng was also Islamic science which has been adapted to shape the life and character of Meulaboh people. This also caused Teungku Chik Dirundeng to have a very strong position within the community as a highly respected ulama, so that Teungku Chik Dirundeng developed very rapidly (Manan & Syah Putra, 2017). In addition, he also taught religion to his students and the science of war or martial arts by using spears, swords, and firearms.

There were several reasons which led Teungku Chiek Dirundeng to have a great position and influence during his stay in Meulaboh, first. The ulama who used to teach religion, this he proved by building a dayah. Second, Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was a warfighter as well as a warlord so he had a strong military force that he had trained. Even Teungku Chiek Dirundeng also built the fortress as a bulwark in defending the territory from the Dutch.



The fortresses built by Teungku Chiek Dirundeng were Kuta Nibong which became the center of defense, Kuta Manggi, Kuta Meuseujit which was led by the Commander of the Syeh Dawod, Kuta The mosque led by Waki Nyak Abah, Kuta Bineh Blang led by Commander Waki Nyak Him, Kuta Bintang and Kuta Nyak Yet, Kuta Sijaloh led by Nyak Hasan, Kuta Bineh Krueng was led by Imum Meulaboh, Kuta Bineh Pasi was led by Teungku Krueng Kale, and Kuta Asan led by Nyak Abu. (Dadek, 2017). Third, Teungku Chiek Dirundeng had a network with the *uleebalang* party that supported his activities to war against the Dutch. The strength of *uleebalang* was obtained by Teungku Chik Dirundeng after getting assistance from Teuku Abdurahman, brother of Teuku Chik Itam, who continued to fight the Dutch. (Dadek, 2017).

The continuous influences that continued to be played by Teungku Chiek Dirundeng had made the *ulee balang* unhappy, even when he built a lot of fortresses. Another reason was that Teungku Chiek Dirundeng's troops carried out a blockade and obstruction of the merchant's boats that crossed the Meureubo river (The Saga of Teuku Dimeukek). The blockade was an attempt by Teungku Chiek Dirundeng to show the sensitivity to the existence of the Dutch colonial in the city of Meulaboh. In the blockade, he and his troops used to collect some funds to support the fighters who were in the war against the Dutch. According to Ibrahim Alfian, the *sabil* (holy) fund was collected as instructions from the king of Aceh to the *uluee ballang* to keep the fighters (Ibrahim, 1981). However, there were also funders who used it for their personal uses and not for war purposes.

The strong influences of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng made the Dutch manage a strategy to provoke the *uleebalang* to stop the attack on Teungku Chiek Dirundeng by attacking him. Even to smooth the tactics set by the Dutch, they were even ready to help the *uleebalang* with money, weapons and all the necessary facilities. This condition was a factor of Dutch disliked Teungku Chiek Dirundeng so that they supported *ulee balang* who also did not like Teungku Chiek Dirundeng due to the strong influence and support of the community since he settled in Meulaboh (Erwansyah, 2006).

In addition, cause of the ulee balang Teuku Raja Itam did not like Teungku Chiek Dirundeng because he had defeated his territory. Moreover, the methods of Teungku Chik Dirundeng were considered as a form of humiliating *uleebalang's* authority. Ulee Balang's dislike of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was known by the Dutch, even a Dutch resident assistant named Van Langen also did not like the method made by Teungku Chik Dirundeng to the blockade was an obstruction.

In the story of Teungku Dimeukek, it was told that Teuku Itam Teuboh Lila mighty felt his power was disturbed by immigrants who claimed to be the new rulers of the Dirundeng region. Therefore, as a local ruler he felt that he should reauthorize the region to reaffirm his legitimacy. Teungku Chiek Dirundeng group, there were also some local *uleebalangs* such as *uleebalang* Woyla and Bubon.

In 1894 Teungku Chik Dirundeng fought with ulee balang. In the war, Ulee Balang was helped by the Dutch in the form of full weaponry expecting to restabilize the city of Meulaboh without interference from Teungku Chik Dirundeng. Other reasons that made the Dutch help *uleebalang* are ; First, Teuku Raja Itam held the position of chairman of the sixteen *uleebalang* federation. As a chairman of the sixteen uleebala federation, Teugku raja Itam has influences that should be taken into account by the Dutch. Second, at that time, Meulaboh was a strategic center located in the western region of Aceh. Also, Meulaboh was a central trade and authority control for the South West coast government ( Dadek & Hermansyah, 2016). Third, the Dutch did not expect that Teungku Chik Dirundeng would control Meulaboh, because it would be difficult for the Dutch (Teuku Dadek, 2017). The war which lasted for 7 days made Teungku Chik Dirundeng defeated. Teungku Chiek Dirundeng's defeat caused the fortresses he had rebuilt to be controlled by Teuku Raja Itam. Even in the war, many Teungku Chik Dirundeng troops were killed. The defeat factor was also caused by a lack of complete weapons he and his troops had as well as many his followers had withdrawn from his troops.



## 2. Discussion

Teungku Chiek Dirundeng, Teungku Di Meukek, Teungku Dama Tutong, had a full name Teungku Teuku Abdullah. He was an influential Moslem scholar and fighter on the west coast of Aceh at the end of the 19th century. It assumed that he was born around 1830 in the Cot Mancang area, adjacent to Bueng Bak Jok Village, Bung Cala Settlement, Kuta Baro District, Aceh Besar District. Teungku Chik Dirundeng had an honorable family, his father named T. Raja Ibrahim and his mother was in contact with Moslem scholar in Great Aceh region. She also had a line of relations with Teuku's descendants.

The figure of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng was even enshrined in the Acehnese saga, the story of Teungku Dimeukek written by Teungku Malem (Istiqamatunnisak, 2012). Hikayat Teungku Dimeukek explained how the figure of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng faced the Dutch. In fact, he was one of the most wanted by the Dutch, causing him to move places, besides that the story also told about Teungku Chiek Dirundeng having to fight with another fellow Muslims, Teuku Chiek Itam Teuboh, who was known as Lila Perkasa which was assisted by the Dutch.

However, the story of Teungku Dimeukek did not tell how the biography and pedigree and Teungku's struggle in its entirety. Therefore the research on Teungku Chiek Dirundeng needs to be carried out so that biographies, family trees and his struggle against the Dutch can be presented to the history in order to fill out the gaps to the existing literature.

That made the Dutch use the Dutch interests to work with Teuku Raja Itam to have a considerable influence. Second, Meulaboh is a strategic center located in the western region of Aceh. Besides that, Meulaboh is also a central center of trade and an authority control center, making Meulaboh the central center of the South West coast government ( Dadek & Hermansyah, 2016). Third, the Dutch did not want Teungku Chik Dirundeng to control Meulaboh, because it would be difficult for the Dutch (Teuku Dadek, 2017). The war which lasted for 7 days made Teungku Chik Dirundeng suffer defeat.



Teungku Chiek Dirundeng's defeat caused the cities he had rebuilt to be controlled by Teuku Raja Itam. Even in the war, many Teungku Chik Dirundeng soldiers were martyred. In addition, the defeating factor was caused by a lack of complete weapons, moreover, there were troops who had withdrawn from Teungku Chik Dirundeng's troops. was a fighter who was very famous in dealing with Dutch colonialism. In 1877 he and his troops had fought with Dutch troops in Tapak Tuan. The spirit of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng in defending its territory by instilling a sabil (holy) war ideology. According to Alfian Ibrahim (1981), Teungku Chiek Dirundeng explained the ideology of sabil (holy) war through *hikayah* (Islamic saga):

*Soe prang kapee lamprang sabi  
Niet peutinggi hak agama  
Kalimah Allah agama Islam  
Kapee jahannam asoe nuraka  
Sabilullah geupeunan prang  
Tuhan pulang page syeuruga  
Ikot suroh sampoe janji  
Pahala page that sampurna.*

*Translate:*

*Who is fighting the infidels in the battlefield  
Intention to elevate religious rights  
In the name of Allah and Islam  
Infidels goes to the hell  
Sabilillah is called war  
God finally gives heaven  
Follow the order until death  
The god's reward will be perfect.*

The above saga can be explained that the spirit to fight the invaders was solely to obtain the reward of martyrdom and the pleasure of Allah. That ideology was instilled not to be afraid of the Dutch colonial.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Hikayat Teungku di Meukek, a saga that tells the story of the struggle of Teungku Chiek Dirundeng in his battle with *uleebalang*



Meulaboh Teuku Itam Teuboh Lila Perkasa, was an acknowledgment of the existence of an Acehese ulama and war leader against the Dutch colonial in the west coast of Aceh, which started from Tapaktuan, Meukek, and ended in Rundeng Meulaboh. Hikayat (the saga) was written because *Uleebalang* Meulaboh's message also told us about the respect and reverence of the *uleebalang* against Teungku Chiek in Rundeng who was used to be his enemy, and the reverence also implicitly showed that a reconciliation process has begun between the two warring groups.

Teungku Chiek in Rundeng was one of the majors of West Coast Aceh scholars who became a sabil war ideology and continued to inflame the spirit of resistance to Dutch colonialism. This anti-Dutch feeling was developed through educational institutions that he led since the first West Coast Aceh war erupted in 1874. Teungku hatred of the Dutch because the Dutch's presence might destroy Aceh as an Islamic kingdom and the disruption of religious, social and cultural life in Aceh.

Therefore, in his point of view, to maintain Aceh's sovereignty was as meaningful as defending Islam. This principle was in line with the sabil war ideology developed by the Aceh Islamic Scholar (Ulama) at that time. As a war leader, Teungku could be said to be a strong commander who had the power of belief. What he did in the warfare on the West Coast of Aceh was almost similar to the stories of figures in the Sabil War saga, where they picked up the martyrs willingly to attend the war even though they had reasons not to fight.

For Instance, the young man, Abdul Wahid had a reason for not fighting because he was not old enough, while Said Salmi had just married when there was a war call and could be used as a deterrent to war. But they preferred to pick up martyrs rather than dissolved in worldly pleasures. That was also done by Teungku Chiek in Rundeng. After the war in Tapaktuan, Teungku could actually spend his life teaching the religion of Acehese children and living quietly with his family, but he decided to lead the struggle in Meulaboh by leaving his family in Meukek.

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