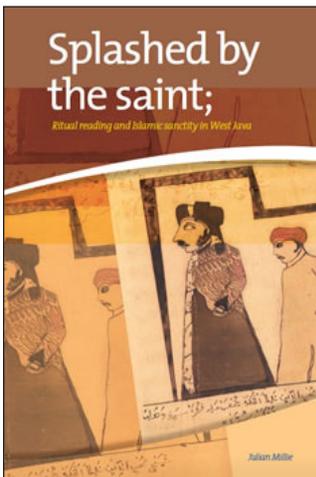


scripts that contain sacred Buddhist texts from the *Pratityasamutpada Sutra*. This proves the presence of early Mahayana Buddhism in the Tarumanagara Kingdom.

At the end of his book, Hasan Djafar concludes that the temples were built during the Batujaya Tarumanagara Kingdom in two phases. The first phase was around the sixth and seventh centuries, while the second was between the eighth and the tenth centuries. The brick temples in the Batujaya region are thus the oldest Buddhist temples in Java!

Julian Millie, *Splashed by the saint; Ritual reading and Islamic sanctity in West Java*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009, xv + 214 pp. ISBN 978-90-6718-338-3. Price: EUR 24.90 (soft cover).



Yon Machmudi

Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia
machmudi@ui.ac.id

This book discusses Sufi ritual practices in West Java. In particular, it describes how a community understands and practices the *karamat* text. Using an ethnographic approach, Julian Millie seeks to understand religious practices and rituals in a congregation of the Qadiriyyah Wan Naqsyabandiyah Sufi order and of other followers of the great saint, Abd al-Qadir Jaelani. Altogether, he spent a year with the congregation and among the readers and followers of Abd al-Qadir's sacred text. By taking an ethnographic approach, Millie not only succeeded to explain the rituals and religious practices in West Java, but he also tries to relate the ritual readings of this sacred text to religious practices mainly by describing the relationship between the text and its followers.

To observe the minutiae of the ritual reading of Abd al-Qadir's *karamat*, Millie conducted comprehensive fieldwork research by getting involved both in backstage and during front-stage activities. Thus, for instance, he stood by the kitchen door in the houses of Sufi followers to observe how they prepared the food for the celebrations. He also went to public reading rituals and travelled with a busload of pilgrims in order to familiarize himself with their social backgrounds and affiliations, as well as to understand their common daily conversations that revealed their close relationship with their leader and their attachment to the figure of Abd al-Qadir's and his sanctity.

Even though Abd al-Qadir Jaelani is not well known among classic Sufis like al-Junayd, Abu Yazid al-Bistami, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Arabi, he has become globally famous among the followers of current Sufi orders. Therefore, it is only natural that Sufi followers around the world often read his biography and his *karamat*, and almost all followers of the Sufi orders direct their prayers to him through reading the "Fatiha". He became very famous after his death and he occupies the highest position as a saint. He is considered the Supreme Succor (*al-Ghaushal-A'zam*). Almost all congregations of Sufi orders and the people who read his short biography believe in his sanctity.

The author's deep understanding of the Sufi tradition becomes evident from the book's title, *Splashed by the Saint*. Millie clearly understands the essence of the Sufi teachings as practiced by the people who conduct the ritual reading of Abd al-Qadir's *karamat*. In general, the Sufi tradition of the ritual reading of sacred scriptures aims at receiving the blessings the saint splashes onto the receivers. Therefore, "splashed" is a Sufi term that reveals the Sufi's humble approach in their worship of God by preserving their love for the saint. Millie perfectly understands this tradition, hence the book's title. In addition, the meaning of "splashed" refers to an acculturation process that involves the interaction between local Indonesian cultures and beliefs and the Arabic text of Abd al-Qadir's *karamat*.

In general, the book contributes three important aspects to the study of Islam in Indonesia that foreign researchers usually forget when they write about Indonesian Islam. First, the book analyses how the ritual reading of Sufi narratives reveal the sanctified aspects of the text. It also explores the settings and the people who practice it. Second, as a cultural anthropological study related to the study of Islamic culture in Indonesia, the book also presents a complete description of the locality of Sufi congregations in West Java. Third, as a case study that studies religious practices in a particular area, it seeks to explain various local Islamic events and beliefs within Indonesian Muslim society at large.

It is interesting that Millie also provides brief information about the transmission of Abd al-Qadir Jaelani's sacred text in the West Javanese Muslim communities. Starting with discussing the ritual practice in a village in West Java, he continues to connect it with the way it spread to other areas in Java. Because of his field observations, he is quite convincing in explaining how Sundanese culture was able to adopt the sacred dimension of the text, which originates from a different, namely the Javanese, Muslim tradition. The ritual reading and Islamic sanctity in the Javanese culture was thus transferred to the Sundanese community. Even more interesting is how the text, which is written in Arabic and derives from the Middle East, is then used by involving local, Javanese and Sundanese cultural influences. Of course, the spread of practices and rituals in West Java was channeled through the involvement of the West Javanese indigenous elites. It is the transmission of the Arabic text and its reproduction in the Indonesian context that caused the inclusion of various local cultural elements into the ritual and practices. Yet, the practice

of ritual reading and Islamic sanctity also draws criticism and causes religious disputes among Indonesian Muslims. Millie classifies those who practice the ritual reading as people who mainly belong to the huge, economically under-privileged majority who is involved in agricultural production, or people who occupy marginal positions in the urban labor market. By contrast, people who refute saintly mediation are typically more educated and have a different understanding of what it means to be a Muslim. However, Millie seems unaware of contemporary urban Sufism practiced by middle-class society. For instance, in Jakarta some followers of Abd al-Qadir's teachings come from the educated and upper-middle class.

The ritual reading of Abd al-Qadir Jaelani's *karamat* is practiced in three different social settings. The first is the social environment of the village community. The ritual reading was mainly done in a village and presided over by a local religious leader. For instance, Millie explores the role of Mama Rustana, who was invited to visit private homes to recite Abd al-Qadir's *keramat*. This practice is called *Pangaosan Layang Seh* (Recitation of the Sheikh's Book). Traditional Muslims in Indonesia refer to this practice as 'Manakiban'. The second environment is that of religious boarding schools (*pesantren*). Millie attended various religious activities in a *pesantren* in Cihunjuang and concluded that the institutionalization of the ritual reading of Abd al-Qadir's *karamat* is transmitted through religious schools. The third setting is that of the religious circles of the Sufi Tarekat Qadiriyyah wan Naqsyabandiyah (TQN) order. This order is the most authoritative one with regard to the ritual reading of the saint's *karamat*. However, while the author explores the widespread acceptance of Abd al-Qadir's *karamat* within TQN circles, he fails to analyse the reasons underlying Abd al-Qadir's central role in the two merged Sufi orders, Qadiriyyah and Naqsyabandiyah. The Qadiriyyah was established by Abd al-Qadir Jaelani, while the Naqsyabandiyah was established by Bahaudin an-Naqsyabandi. In Indonesia, both Sufi orders merged into a single order, TQN under the leadership of Sheikh Khatib Sambas.

In conclusion, even though this is not an important concern of the author, the practice of ritual reading of Abd al-Qadir's *karamat* by TQN reveals an interesting religious phenomenon in Indonesia. TQN is a global phenomenon that is highly influenced by Indonesian local practices because it is a religious adaptation made by Indonesian Muslims that is widely acknowledged by followers of Sufi orders around the world. Therefore, the book makes a significant contribution to the study of Islam in terms of doctrines and practices, and pays ample attention to local practices in Indonesia that contribute to global Islamic religious practices.
