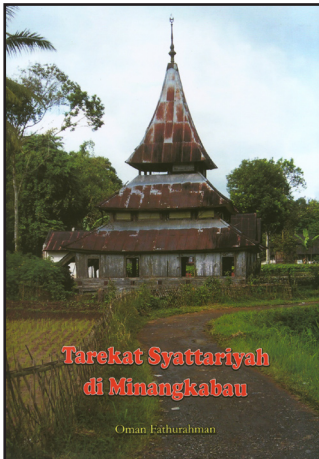


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adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah

[tradition based on canonic law, canonic law based on the Book]

syarak mangato, adat mamakai

[canonic law states, tradition utilizes]

The above is a proverb in Minangkabau culture, which indicates the relationship between tradition and Islam. Because of the strong relationship between the two, Islam has become the main component of the “ethnic identity” of the Minangkabau people. This means that when someone proclaims him- or herself to be a Minangkabau citizen, s/he is definitely a Muslim; similarly, if one is not a Muslim one should not declare oneself as a Minangkabau citizen.

Islam and Minangkabau tradition have become inseparable ever since the teachings of Islam entered the Minangkabau region. The cultural area of Minangkabau in the Province of West Sumatra has a long history related to the influence of the Islamic religion in the lives of the Minangkabau people. Up until now, the exact moment Islam was introduced into the Minangkabau remains a debatable issue. Some sources say that Muslim merchants introduced Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries AD from Arabia and Persia, while others state

that Sheikh Burhanuddin introduced Islam in the seventeenth century.

Tracing the history of the introduction of Islam into the Minangkabau should actually be through written evidence. But Suryadi (1998: 1) explains that oral tradition is deeply rooted within Minangkabau culture. The Minangkabau people, as their history reveals, are accustomed to pass on their stories orally. The passing on of the Minangkabau cultural heritage from one generation to the next has also more often been done orally than in written form. Historians also state that the difficulties scholars encounter in tracing Minangkabau history are also caused by the fact that Minangkabau society has left scarcely any written sources before the arrival of Westerners.

However, this does not mean that there are no written historical artefacts. Since the introduction of Islam into the Minangkabau, manuscripts were used for the transfer of Islamic religious knowledge. One of the texts in manuscripts most commonly found in the Minangkabau is related to a certain mystical order, known as the Syattariyah, which developed rapidly in Minangkabau. These manuscripts caught Fathurahman's interest who subsequently discussed then in his doctoral dissertation he defended at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia in 2003. In 2008 this doctoral dissertation, which included various expanded discussions, was published as a book entitled *Tarekat Syattariyah di Minangkabau; Teks dan konteks* (The Syattariyah Order in Minangkabau; Text and context).

In the first introductory part of his book, Fathurahman explains that the Syattariyah Order was one of the first orders to be introduced into the Minangkabau and that it typically developed in the traditional educational institutions known as *surau*. According to Fathurahman, nearly all religious *surau* became the basis for the development of this order. This differs from Java, for instance, where mystical orders developed in educational institutions known as *pesantren*; however, not all *pesantren* developed the teachings of an order. In Minangkabau, *surau* are important as they shape the culture of their surrounding society and the tradition of writing religious manuscripts in the Minangkabau continues because of the presence of these *surau*.

Fathurahman himself contextualizes the Syattariyah manuscripts as sources, which he analyses in his book. In this case, he uses a social-intellectual historical approach, which is an analysis of the social intellectual factors that influenced historical events themselves. Hence, Fathurahman's book exposes the dynamics and the development of the Syattariyah Order in the Minangkabau and shows the more profound meaning of these manuscripts.

Fathurahman explains the teachings of the Syattariyah Order in the second part of his book. Here he also explains the history of the arrival of the order, which entered the Malay-Indonesian region from India via the Haramayn. In the Malay world, the leading character within the Syattariyah Order is Abdurrauf bin Ali al-Jawi who had students from all over Indonesia, including Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan (1646-1699) from the Minangkabau who developed the teachings in the region.

Fathurahman elaborates the expansion of the Syattariyah Order in the

Minangkabau (West Sumatra) in part three. Here he not only explains the introduction of the teachings of the Syattariyah Order into West Sumatra, but also discusses the religious traditions in West Sumatra in relation to the characteristics and the patterns of Islam that developed in the area. This is because the teachings of several other orders also developed in West Sumatra, such as the Naqshbandiyyah. Apart from that, around the nineteenth century we see the emergence of Islamic traditionalists (*kaum tua*, the old generation) and Islamic modernists (*kaum muda*, the young generation). The older generation generally carried out their religious practices based on the rituals of their orders. Contrarily, the various religious concepts of the younger generation were influenced by the ideas of reformers in Egypt such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. They believed that only the Holy Quran and the Teachings of the Prophet have the authority of the ultimate truth and, therefore, can be regarded as guidelines for Muslims in the way they implement their religious practices.

Further on, in Part Four, Fathurahman discusses the written sources regarding the Syattariyah Order. He divides them into three groups: 1. Arabic sources believed to have had a strong influence on the teachings and the methods of the religious chanting of the Syattariyah Order and which were the sources of inspiration for the writing of Indonesian manuscripts in the following period; 2. Indonesian manuscripts regarding the Syattariyah Order written in Arabic, Malay, Sundanese, and Javanese which were written at the beginning of the arrival of Islam in Indonesia and are believed to be the most authoritative sources related to the Syattariyah Order as it developed in the Malay-Indonesian world; and 3. Malay-Minangkabau manuscripts about the Syattariyah Order written in the contemporary period. All of them can be used to observe the dynamics and the development of the Syattariyah order over time. In this part, Fathurahman discusses the contents of the Syattariyah Order manuscripts one by one.

Part Five explains how the teachings and the religious chanting of the Syattariyah Order were handed down; information was taken from the *Al-Simt al Majid* and the *Ithaf al-Dhaki* which are Arabic sources local Syattariyah manuscripts writers in the Malay-Indonesian world used as references. In this case, Fathurahman shows that local Syattariyah manuscripts do not only copy or rewrite these Arabic sources but also add to, deduct, and re-interpret them. This part is made clearer by a table (in Appendix 7) which shows the comparison between these manuscripts.

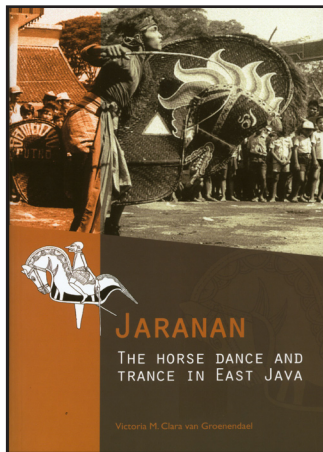
Part Six, which is the last part, discusses the dynamics of the Syattariyah Order in West Sumatra. Here Fathurahman explains the development and the genealogy of the Syattariyah Order in West Sumatra, its characteristics and the tendencies of its teachings, and the ritual expressions of the Syattariyah Order that are specific to the Minangkabau and differ from those used in other regions. One of the local ritual expressions of the Syattariyah Order in the Minangkabau, according to Fathurahman, is in the ritual of *basapa* and *salawat dulang*.

Fathurahman's work is very interesting and adds to the readers' understanding of one of the mystical orders in Indonesia and of its journey specifically in the Minangkabau, seen from manuscripts, which are simultaneously part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. As a philologist, Fathurahman not only edits, transcribes, and translates the available manuscripts but he also conducts a profound analysis of these manuscripts so that the social and historical contexts are highlighted.

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Victoria M. Clara van Groenendael, *Jaranan; The horse dance and trance in East Java*. Translated by Maria J.L. van Yperen. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008, xiv + 293 pp., illustrations + audio CD recordings of *jaranan* performances. [Verhandelingen 252.] ISBN 978 90 6718 306 2. Price: EUR 39,90 (soft cover).



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The fieldwork for the book *Jaranan; The horse dance and trance in East Java*, written by Victoria M. Clara van Groenendael, has been very interesting and Victoria's determination to elevate the horse dance as the object of her research needs to be appreciated. Compared with other Javanese dramatic traditions, the horse dance has received less attention as the object of research. Victoria's findings provide a sound set of comprehensive knowledge about these horse dances and contribute importantly to

the documentation of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

Victoria manages to describe the horse dance as a totality and her description is interesting to read. Although her book is a scholarly work because it is written based on scientific fieldwork it is presented in the form of a popular package and therefore anyone can read it. The Samboyo Putro horse dance group in the district capital Kediri was the primary source of the data for her research. Victoria's participatory fieldwork findings were supplemented by literature study and in-depth interviews with members of the Samboyo Putro group and she was actively involved in the performance activities of this group. Her