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Shari`a Court, Tarekat and Pesantren: Religious Institutions in the Sultanate of Banten

Banten has, at least for the past century, had the reputation of being more self-consciously Muslim than the rest of Java, and perhaps than most other parts of the Archipelago. Several observations appear to confirm this reputation.

By the late 19th century, the Bantenese formed the most conspicuous group among the Southeast Asians resident in Mecca as teachers or students. "Most of the great teachers of the Holy Science", Snouck Hurgronje reported after his visit to Mecca in 1885, "hail from Banten". Such Bantenese as the learned Nawawi (who was the most prolific Indonesian Muslim author ever), the charismatic Shaikh Abdul Karim (one of the most influential *tarekat* teachers), the pious and activist Haji Marzuqi and Tubagus Isma`il - all compared quite favourably with their fellow Southeast Asian contemporaries.[\[1\]](#)

The population of Banten, as the same author observed a few years later, were more faithful than other Javanese in the observance of such religious obligations as the fast during Ramadan and the payment of *zakat*.[\[2\]](#) Moreover, unlike elsewhere the payment of *zakat* in Banten served to strengthen the position of independent `ulama - the *kiai* or *guru* - as against the official religious functionaries who usually

administered (and enforced) *zakat*. There were such officials down to the village level in Banten, but by the time Snouck Hurgronje wrote they played no part in *zakat* collection. Nor was the *zakat* usurped there by indigenous members of the colonial administration, as frequently happened in other parts of Java. The chief beneficiaries were the religious teachers and their students (*santri*).

Snouck Hurgronje explained these peculiarities as originating in the once proud sultanate of Banten, which had little by little been dismantled by the Dutch and was finally abolished in the early 19th century.^[3] During the sultanate, the *Pakih Najmuddin*, as the supreme judge or *qadi* was called, had been one of the most powerful men in the state. (The Dutch Javanist Pigeaud later observed that the position of the *Pakih Najmuddin* in Banten was much stronger than that of the *qadi* in the Central Javanese kingdoms). It was he who appointed the religious officials in the villages and thereby lent them a legitimacy that their successors, appointed by the colonial administration, lacked. The very title of these officials, *amil* or *pangulu amil*, indicated that collection of the *zakat* was one of their duties - *amil* is the standard term in Muslim law for the persons who administer the *zakat*. Because of the power of the *Pakih Najmuddin*, Snouck suggested, secular officials could not usurp much of the *zakat* in Banten. Together with the sultanate itself, the office of the *Pakih Najmuddin* was also disestablished by the Dutch; its last incumbent died in 1859. The village officials still went by the same name of (*pangulu*) *amil* but no longer administered *zakat*; Snouck apparently considered this as a major factor in the rise of the independent `ulama, who then received most of the *zakat*.^[4]

Independent `ulama, many of whom were affiliated with the then popular *tarekat* (mystical brotherhood) Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya,

played key roles in the peasant rebellion of Banten in 1888, which shocked Dutch Indies society and created paranoid fears of Muslim "fanaticism". Rightly or wrongly, the name of Banten became, and long remained, closely associated with Islamic militancy. The 1888 rebellion was, as Snouck Hurgronje and more recently Sartono Kartodirdjo have argued, not an expression of some inherent fanaticism but a response to concrete material circumstances and to maladministration. Nevertheless, it was the networks of *pesantren* and *tarekat* that made it possible for the rebellion to transcend the local level. These networks were to perform a similar role during the "communist" rebellion of 1926.

The present article focuses on these three Islamic institutions - religious officialdom, the pesantren and the tarekat - as they developed in Banten over the ages.

Banten, a Muslim kingdom

What exactly did islamisation of the southeast Asian port cities and polities mean apart from the formal conversion of the rulers to Islam - is there a distinct Muslim type of state, with a distinct internal structure, legislation or institutions? What for instance distinguished 16th and 17th-century Banten from earlier or contemporaneous non-Muslim kingdoms in the Archipelago?

Banten was carved out of pre-Islamic Pajajaran (with its capital at Pakuan near present-day Bogor) in the first half of the 16th century and it finally defeated and partially incorporated the mother state in the second half.^[5] By the end of the century, as a participant of the first Dutch voyage to the Indies observed, there were still many people in Banten who had not yet become Muslims.^[6] Another member of the

same expedition in 1596 mentions recent heathen immigrants from East Java, who had been welcomed by the Muslim ruler and allowed (or urged) to settle in the pepper-growing districts around Mt. Karang.^[7]

Like most of the early kingdoms, Banten was in chronic need of manpower, in its case especially for the pepper cultivation which constituted the major prop of the entire economy (and of the rulers' position). Buying or capturing slaves was one way to overcome the problem, inducing immigration was another and Banten quite actively engaged in both. In the following centuries, its harbouring of runaway slaves from Batavia became a never-ending source of conflict with the Dutch, who had similar labour problems. Religious solidarity does not seem to have played a part in Banten's immigration policy. Non-Muslim immigrants may in fact well have been even more welcome than Muslims precisely because as second-rate citizens they would be more amenable. Banten's own geographical expansion and actively induced immigration must initially have resulted in a declining proportion of Muslim inhabitants, only after some time gradually rising again due to conversions.

Banten's founder and first ruler, posthumously known as Maulana Makhdum or Sunan Gunung Jati, is considered as one of the nine saints of Java; he and his first three successors, Hasanuddin, Yusup and Muhammad, are given the religious-sounding title of *Maulana* (commonly used for very learned or saintly ulama) before their names. This seems to indicate that these early rulers legitimated themselves by claims to sainthood or to the possession of (esoteric) Islamic knowledge and powers (*ngèlmu*) - which made them the closest possible Muslim equivalent to the Hindu-Buddhist concept of the *dewaraja*. These royal claims to superior religious knowledge and the nature of this knowledge

will receive some attention below.

The first ruler to arrogate the grander title of Sultan was Muhammad's son Abdul Qadir (1596-1651). Significantly, he requested this title from the Grand Sharif of Mecca. The embassy he sent to Mecca returned to Banten in 1638, bringing various gifts and a new name for the ruler, Sultan Abul Mafakhir Mahmud Abdul Qadir.^[8] His descendants were to repeat similar requests for title and name upon accession.^[9] This did not so much, I believe, indicate ignorance on their part about the position of Grand Sharif (as has been suggested by Snouck Hurgronje and others) as a practical awareness of the need for symbols of religious legitimation and the usefulness in this respect of a Meccan connection.

Banten's rulers appear to have taken a more than casual interest in the finer details of Islamic teachings. The 17th-century *Sajarah Banten*, describing the aforesaid embassy to Mecca, records that it was also to seek an authoritative opinion on or explanation of three religious texts apparently expounding mystical doctrines of the sort expounded by Hamzah Fansuri, and to request the despatch of a learned doctor of the law to enlighten Banten.^[10] Banten's envoys met, among others, with the famous scholar Muhammad `Ali ibn `Alan and in vain tried to persuade him to come to Banten with them.^[11]

In response to certain questions posed by Sultan Abul Mafakhir and his son Abul Ma'ali Ahmad, however, Ibn `Alan wrote two treatises which still are extant. One of them discusses the sultan's questions about Ghazali's work *Counsel for Kings*, a text of obvious intrinsic interest to any Muslim ruler; the other dealt with mystical-metaphysical questions.^[12] The sultan appears to have had a sustained interest in the

controversy around Hamzah Fansuri's doctrines, for he later consulted the best-known opponent of these doctrines, Nuruddin ar-Raniri, who by that time had left Acheh for his native Gujarat. Raniri too answered Abul Mafakhir's questions in one of his last treatises, which focuses on one particular doctrine propounded by Hamzah.[\[13\]](#)

The real interest of Banten's rulers in religious matters is also reflected in their patronage of local and foreign `ulama, many of whom achieved positions of great influence at the court.

The qadi, the law court and Islamic legislation

The most distinctive Islamic institution in the state was probably the office of the *qadi* (Javanese: *kali*) or supreme judge, who in Banten played a more prominent political role than his counterparts in the Central Javanese kingdoms. The nature of the office appears to have evolved over time, from all-purpose religious authority to the more narrowly defined roles of judge and head of the religious bureaucracy.

The different titles by which we find him referred to perhaps reflect successive stages in this process. The first Dutchmen visiting Banten in 1596, who could not help but noticing this official's influence beyond the purely religious sphere, did not record the title of *qadi* but called him "bishop" or "*opperste ceque*", the highest shaikh. The former reflects the well-known Dutch tendency to perceive Islam in terms of Catholicism, but the second may have been a term actually used by the Bantenese.[\[14\]](#) The *Sajarah Banten*, a court chronicle composed around 1660, calls him Kyahi Ali or Ki Ali, which Djajadiningrat, probably correctly, reads as *kali*, the javanised form of *qadi*.[\[15\]](#) A *qadi* who was installed in office around 1650 was given the title of *Pakih Najmuddin*,

and it is by this title that most if not all *qadis* during the following two centuries were known.[\[16\]](#)

The earliest Dutch source on Banten claims that this "highest shaikh" had been deputed to Banten from Mecca, "just like from Rome they send legates".[\[17\]](#) Even if this is not an incorrect inference from hearsay, and the *qadi* of the time was in fact of foreign origin, such was in later years certainly not the rule in Banten. From the early 17th century on, the position of *qadi* appears to have been held by local men. The Bantenese embassy to Mecca of 1638 had, as said, been instructed to recruit an accomplished scholar of Muslim law but found no one willing to come to Java with them.[\[18\]](#) The later *qadis* of whom we read in the *Sajarah Banten* appear to be Bantenese of high birth. Thus, the person appointed as the new *qadi* following Sultan Abul Mafakhir's death in 1651 was a prince, Pangeran Jayasantika. When he rejected this honour and went into voluntary exile in Mecca, another member of the nobility, Entol Kawista, was appointed in his stead.[\[19\]](#) This person, incidentally, is also the first whom we know to have been given the title of *Pakih Najmuddin*.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the *qadi* played a key role in court intrigues. In Banten's first succession crisis, following the death of Maulana Yusup in 1580, his voice proved decisive in choosing the child Muhammad as the successor (as against Yusup's brother Pangeran Jepara, who was favoured by the *patih mangkubumi* and the court nobility in general).[\[20\]](#) Something similar happened following Maulana Muhammad's untimely death in 1596 during Banten's siege of Palembang. The *qadi* - this time at the *patih's* urging - brought the young prince Abdul Qadir and the state regalia (*upacara*) to the mosque and in a brief ceremony pronounced the infant king. Guardianship over the

young king was in both cases granted to the *patih mangkubumi*, and the *qadi* assumed the role of the king's teacher.^[21] In these instances the *qadi* did not simply legitimate a *de facto* ruler (as was common in most Muslim states) but was the actual kingmaker.

The *qadi* in Banten performed political roles that have few parallels elsewhere. When Maulana Muhammad and his highest officials, the *patih mangkubumi* and the *temenggung*, set out on the fateful expedition against Palembang that was to end in the sultan's death, they left the *qadi* in charge of the city.^[22] A century later, we find the *qadi* (then named *Kiai Faqih*) together with Pangeran Aria Dipaningrat conducting negotiations with representatives of the Dutch East Indies Company on behalf of Sultan Abun Nasr Abdul Qahhar (Sultan Haji, d.1687). The covenants concluded bear the signatures of the *qadi* and the *pangeran* besides the sultan's seal.^[23] Abun Nasr's successors, Abul Fadl (d.1690) and Abul Mahasin Zainul Abidin (d.1733), also charged the *qadi* with important diplomatic missions.^[24]

The *qadi's* primary duty nevertheless was the administration of the law. Being the foremost religious scholar, he was expected to have expert knowledge of the *shari`a*, Muslim law. Like in all Muslim states, however, the law that was in practice applied in Banten constituted a combination of *shari`a* rulings, customary regulations (*adat*) and royal decrees. This probably implied that the *qadi* was not the sole authority in legal matters, and that there was an overlap between his authority and that of other high officials.

This is nicely illustrated by a print in Willem Lodewycksz *D'eerste Boek*, apparently based on sketches made during the first Dutch visit to Banten. It shows the *patih* (who at that time was the infant ruler's

guardian and caretaker), the *qadi*, and another high official while adjudicating on a case. The *patih*, on the right, appears to be presiding; the turbaned person on the left is apparently the *qadi*. The original caption of this illustration does not say who the third official, in the middle, is; the editor, Rouffaer, assumes that he is a *jaksa* (prosecutor). [25] The *qadi*, interestingly, appears to have only a secondary place in the proceedings here, as an expert counsellor rather than the first judge.

The *Sajarah Banten* writes of Sultan Abul Mafakhir (d.1651) that he regularly demanded to be informed on affairs brought before the law court. In difficult trials that could not be settled by the *qadi*, the sultan adjudicated. Disputes between *pongawas* (state officials) were also settled by the sultan rather than the *qadi*. [26]

Later accounts by the VOC's representatives in Banten, however, are unanimous in attributing to the *qadi* the dominant role in virtually all legal proceedings (the exception being death sentences, which remained the ruler's prerogative). There was, at least in the 18th century, a Court of Justice, over which the *Pakih Najmuddin* presided, "adjudicating at his own discretion". [27] Criminal as well as civil cases were brought before this Court of Justice, and summary records were kept of all cases adjudicated. Four volumes of these records, dating from the second half of the 18th century, are still extant, and an analysis of their contents is likely to contribute significantly to our knowledge of Banten's social and economic history. [28]

The VOC representatives in Banten frequently complained of the *qadi*'s corruption, claiming that favourable decisions could be bought with money. The only concrete example given, however, concerned a matter of great concern to the Dutch, namely runaway slaves from

Batavia. The *qadi* was accused of providing Bantenese slave holders with certificates of ownership testifying their slaves to be legally acquired, rather than being alienated Dutch property.[\[29\]](#)

The *qadi* did not, of course, simply adjudicate at his own discretion, as some Dutch observers claimed. He based his judgements on, or at least explicitly legitimated them in terms of, Muslim law and *adat*, as the following observation (made in 1761) shows:

The Highest Priest and Judge in religious as well as worldly affairs, named Ké Focké Nadja Moedin, an old and decrepit man, (...) is supposed to preside with the members of the council over all criminal procedures. However, due to his advanced age of 73 years, he now involves himself in nothing but praying, marrying and re-marrying, and sentencing criminals, *to which end he produces the Qur'an or the Muhammadan law-book and shows what example is applicable to the case at hand; [he sentences accordingly] on condition that [the verdict of Muslim law] does not conflict with the privilege since many years granted to some localities of not shedding blood, which always takes priority.*[\[30\]](#)

The last part of this observation confirms that Banten, like many other kingdoms in Southeast Asia, limited to some extent the application of the *shari`a*'s bodily punishments (mutilation, flogging or killing) for *hudud* offenses, replacing them with fines.[\[31\]](#)

The "Muhammadan law-book" mentioned may have been one of the standard works of Muslim jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which the *qadi* almost certainly owned,[\[32\]](#) but it is not impossible that the *qadi* in fact

referred to a Bantenese digest of law similar to the *undang-undang* of the Malay states. There are several references to such works. The translator and bibliophile Isaac de Saint Martin, who died in 1696, left a legacy of over eighty Indonesian manuscripts, among which were a Malay and a Javanese collection of statutes of Sultan Abun Nasr Abdul Qahhar (Sultan Haji, 1680-1687).^[33] A Javanese manuscript presently in the Leiden collection contains various regulations issued by Banten's sultans in the early and mid 18th century, and may at one time have been used as a work of reference in Banten's law court. It appears to be less systematic and comprehensive than the Malay *undang-undang*, however.^[34] The Dutch observer who, writing in 1786, reported that the Bantenese had their own book of laws, probably referred to such a collection of decrees and regulations. It contained, he wrote, "for the most part the natural laws of all nations, blood being paid with blood, theft with prison or slavery, and the same for the failure to return debts; but the judges interpret these laws as they wish."^[35]

Following the defeat of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa and the treaty concluded between his son Sultan Abun Nasr Abdul Qahhar (Sultan Haji), Dutch influence in Banten steadily increased and the sultans' independence and room for manoeuvre correspondingly declined. The Pakih Najmuddin, however, remained powerful as ever. He was at the head of a considerable hierarchy of religious functionaries, the growth of which cannot, unfortunately, be documented in detail. In the first half of the 19th century, it was the Pakih Najmuddin alone who appointed - and when necessary dismissed - the officials in charge of religious affairs (*pangulu* and *amil*) at the district level. The *amil* was entrusted with the administration of *zakat*, the *pangulu* supervised mosque personnel and the administration of marriages and divorces, and, most importantly, was

also the district-level judge.[\[36\]](#)

In 1813 the Dutch incorporated all of Banten fully into the administrative structure of the Netherlands Indies, thereby reducing the sultan to a powerless figure-head. In 1832 the last sultan was sent into exile to Surabaya; by the mid-century, the dynasty was extinct. The office of the Pakih Najmuddin was allowed to persist for a few more decades, although its incumbent, Tubagus H. Abubakar, died in 1835. His successor H. Mohammad Adian also remained in office until his death in 1859, and only in 1868 was the office abolished. Henceforth, the district and subdistrict-level *pangulus* were appointed by the Dutch Indies authorities, which is said to have significantly lowered their standing among the Bantenese.[\[37\]](#)

Kiai and pesantren: ancient or recent institutions?

By the end of the 19th century, a dense network of pesantrens was spread all over Banten, in which numerous young Bantenese received some elementary education.[\[38\]](#) Highly motivated students went from pesantren to pesantren, studying in each the texts in which its kiai was specialised. After a few pesantrens in Banten, they would go on to pesantrens in Bogor, Cianjur, Cirebon, Central or East Java and finally, if their families could afford it, to Mecca, the most prestigious centre of Islamic learning. The pesantrens were typically (although not uniquely) located in rural districts, away from the major roads. Their geographical isolation symbolised, as it were, their ideological distance from the state. The *pangulu*, as a state official, and the independent teacher, the *kiai*, were two contrasting types, in Banten as well as elsewhere in Java.

It has often been assumed that these two types of ulama, court

officials and independent kiais, had existed side by side since the early phases of islamisation and that pesantrens such as existed in the late 19th century had been around all that time. I have attempted elsewhere to show that this view is probably incorrect and that the pesantren is a relatively recent phenomenon, emerging in the 18th century and only flourishing since the second half of the 19th.^[39] In the case of Banten, the emergence of these independent ulama in the periphery may have been causally connected with the gradually increasing Dutch control of the sultanate during the 18th and 19th centuries. Snouck Hurgronje, as we have seen above, related it to the abolishment of the office of the *Pakih Najmuddin*, after which the population transferred loyalties and payment of *zakat* from the *pangulus* to the independent kiais. The process is likely to have started earlier.

Now we do find, even in the scholarly literature, references to much earlier pesantrens. The most famous of these alleged early pesantrens was in fact located in Banten, apparently on the slopes of Mount Karang. The late Professor Drewes even believed that one of the early Javanese Muslim texts that he edited was composed by a kiai of this pesantren.^[40] The school is mentioned in the Central Javanese *Serat Centhini*, which has its protagonist Jayèngresmi study there - in the late 1630s or early 1640s - under a teacher of Arab descent, Sèh Ibrahim bin Abu Bakar alias Ki Ageng Karang. The *Serat Centhini*, however, was composed in the early 19th century (although it incorporates much older material), and one should beware of the anachronisms it is likely to contain. In the *Sajarah Banten*, which was composed not long after Jayèngresmi's alleged studies on the Karang, mentions this mountain only as a place for *tapa*, ascetic exercises, rather than bookish studies. I suspect that, if there ever was a pesantren of sorts

on the slopes of the Karang, it was established there in later times, perhaps not too long before the *Serat Centhini* received its present form, say around the mid-18th century.

By this I do not mean to imply, of course, that there was no systematic religious education in Banten before the 18th century. Banten was, certainly in the 17th century, a centre of Islamic learning. In the heyday of the sultanate, ulama of various national origins made Banten their home, and we read of Muslim scholars from elsewhere in the Archipelago visiting Banten to seek further religious knowledge.[\[41\]](#) Religious education was conspicuous enough for the first Dutch visitors in 1596 to observe that the Bantenese "have their teachers from Mecca in Arabia."[\[42\]](#) This religious education took place, however, at the court and in the major mosques of the town of Banten (and later probably in the secondary towns as well), not in distant rural pesantren-type schools.

In the *Sajarah Banten*, the hinterland is associated with essentially pre-Islamic ascetic practices; it is dotted with hermitages (*patapan*) but nothing recognisable as a pesantren is mentioned. Books and Islamic studies in this text are associated with court and town. The only Islamic education mentioned is that of the infant rulers Maulana Muhammad and Abdul Qadir, at the hands of the *qadi*.

Elsewhere in the same text Maulana Muhammad is said to have held his teacher Kiai Dukuh alias Pangeran Kasunyatan in great respect, and to have commissioned fine and precious copies of religious books (the Qur'an, *tafsir*, *hadith* and other texts), which he made into *waqf* - which probably means he granted them in perpetuity to a specific mosque.[\[43\]](#) It would appear that this Kiai Dukuh was not identical with

the young ruler's first teacher, the *qadi*; the *Sajarah Banten*, which mentions both several times, does not make this identification. Kasunyatan, located less than a mile south by southeast of the Surasowan palace, was in later years known as a major centre of religious learning and education. The mentioned grant of religious books could mean that this institution was founded under Maulana Muhammad, and that Kiai Dukuh became its first teacher, with the new title of Pangeran Kasunyatan. This means, if my reading is correct, that there were henceforth two separate Islamic institutions under state patronage: the office of the *qadi* and the "school" at Kasunyatan.

Besides the *qadi* and the ulama resident at Kasunyatan, our sources mention several other ulama who taught and exerted some influence in Banten. All of them resided in the town (and this is probably not just due to the urban bias of the sources). The few times we get a glimpse of a conflict between ulama, it is not between a rural kiai and an urban official but between two different types of urban ulama. Thus we read that around 1780 the then *qadi* resigned his office in protest because Sultan Abul Mafakhir Muhammad Aliyuddin (1777-1802) had adopted the new way of determining the beginning and end of the fasting month, which had been introduced by a recent returnee from Mecca.[\[44\]](#)

Another indication that rural kiais and pesantrens are a relatively recent phenomenon is provided by a story that was recorded in south Banten around the turn of the century. A simple villager, having heard about kiais, wants to see one. A more worldly-wise neighbour instructs him how to meet one and how to behave. He tells him to go to the city (Serang?) and to look on the *alun-alun* for someone with a goatee. As a sign of respect, he should bring a bundle of leaves. (It is clear by now

that the story is meant to be funny). The simple villager presents his leaves to the first goat he sees on the *alun-alun*, receives a jab with the goat's horns as his reward and, his curiosity satisfied, returns to his village.^[45] The interest of this story lies not so much in its irreverent attitude towards kiais as in the fact that it reflects a rural society to which kiais still were alien, foreign-looking elements, who belonged in the town on the *alun-alun* along with the other symbols of government.

It is not possible to establish when the first pesantrens, led by independent teachers, emerged in Banten. All presently existing pesantrens are of relatively recent date, the oldest of them perhaps established a century ago. This in itself does not mean much, for pesantrens here tend not to survive for more than one or two generations. It is the kiai rather than the pesantren that attracts santris; after the death of a kiai most of his santris move on to another kiai and the pesantren withers away. It often happens that the son of a kiai in Banten establishes a new pesantren rather than continuing his father's. This means that pesantrens may have existed for some time without leaving any lasting tangible trace. However, in the early 19th century there cannot yet have been many, for a deliberate search for such institutions then failed to locate them.

In 1819, the Dutch Indies authorities had the first survey of native education in Java made. It was reported that only in the towns of Serang and Banten, "priests" taught some reading and writing; in Serang there were also a few lay teachers. Elsewhere there was no education at all, and literacy was very low.^[46] However, the survey appears only to have covered northern Banten, not the southern districts, which were not yet directly administered by Batavia. It is conceivable that there were a

few small pesantrens in southern Banten. However, the earliest kiai of wide fame in southern Banten, who is still vividly remembered, flourished well after the earliest independent kiais of the north.

Kiai Asnawi of Caringin (1850?-1937) was in the 1920s the most respected and venerated kiai of all Banten. His case shows that government ulama and independent ulama, although clearly (and self-consciously) different in principle, did not necessarily have different backgrounds. He was born into a family of religious officials; his father Abdul Rahman was the *pangulu* of Caringin regency, and Asnawi initially succeeded his father in this function. During a stay in Mecca, Asnawi studied with the famous Bantenese kiai Abdul Karim, was initiated by him in the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya tarekat and appointed as his *khalîfa*. After his return to Banten, he renounced his official function, established the pesantren at Caringin, and began teaching the tarekat.[\[47\]](#) (This apparently happened some time after the 1888 rebellion, for we do not yet find his name mentioned among Abdul Karim's deputies in that connection).

At least from the 17th century on, there had always been Bantenese making the pilgrimage to Mecca, some of them perhaps staying on for a few years to pursue studies. Until the 19th century, however, their numbers must have been limited and most of them may have enjoyed official sponsorship, paying for the voyage and the cost of living. (We know this to have been the case for the better known ulama from elsewhere in the Archipelago). By the second half of the 19th century, steam power and the Suez canal brought the pilgrimage within reach of much larger numbers. By the end of the century, as Achmad Djajadiningrat has it, almost every well-to-do family in Banten supported one or two relatives studying in Mecca.[\[48\]](#) Upon their return,

these men (no cases of women are known to me) were naturally called upon to teach their relatives' and neighbours' children. Some, such as Achmad Djajadiningrat's cousin, did this informally only, tutoring one or more children individually; others, such as Kiai Asnawi, established pesantrens. The distinction was probably not a sharp one, pesantrens being extremely modest establishments.

Tarekats and tarekat teachers in Banten

Sartono Kartodirdjo's classical study of the other great rebellion in Banten, that of 1888, has drawn attention to the prominent role that the *tarekat* ("mystical brotherhood") Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya played in Banten society in the second half of the 19th century. Though not itself the initiator of the rebellion, the tarekat provided it with a network of communication and, perhaps, a chain of authority for mass mobilisation.

Like the pesantren, however - and many of the tarekat teachers in the 1880's also led pesantrens - the tarekat with a more or less organised large popular following was probably a relatively recent phenomenon. I am inclined to date its emergence to the second half of the 18th century at the earliest. It is true that tarekats are explicitly mentioned in the earliest indigenous sources from Banten, but a tarekat is not the same thing at all times and places. It may be useful to say a few words about tarekats in general before surveying the evidence from Banten.

A tarekat (from Arabic *tarîqa*, "path") is in the first place a distinct set of spiritual techniques and devotional practices. The most important of these are the *zikir* (Ar. *dhikr*, "remembering [God]"), consisting of the recitation of God's names or the formula "there is no god but God", in a specific way a specified number of times, and various prayer formulas

(*hizb, salawât*) or litanies (*râtib, wurd*). These recitations may be combined with breath control and specific bodily postures, and there may in addition be various ascetic practices. A tarekat may also have its specific theory about the mental states these exercises are to produce in the practitioner.

Theoretically one can only receive instruction in these practices (*talqîn*) from an authorised teacher of the tarekat, and only after pledging a vow of obedience (*bai`at*) to this shaikh. The shaikh gives his disciples permission (*ijâza*) to practice the tarekat; he may also authorise one or more of them to teach it to others, i.e. appoint them as his *khalîfa*. In this way a hierarchically ordered network of teachers may emerge. Each shaikh can show a chain of authorities for the tarekat he teaches, his *silsila* or spiritual genealogy. Usually the *silsila* reaches back from one's own teacher up to the Prophet, with whom all tarekats claim to have originated although there have been modifications along the way. A Sufi's *silsila* is his badge of identity and source of legitimation; it provides him with a list of illustrious predecessors and shows how he is related to other Sufis.

Many tarekats - at least at some times and places - are what may be called "congregational", in the sense that their followers are expected to take part in communal *dhikr* meetings (often following the sunset or night prayers). They may even become much like corporate organisations, in which the common ritual serves to cement other links among the members. The ordered network of tarekat teachers, their deputies and deputies of deputies may turn the tarekat into a powerful political organisation, as happened in a few exceptional cases.

In many other cases, however, practising a tarekat is a purely

individual affair, and the follower may rarely if ever meet fellow practitioners. Such a tarekat is in Indonesia the Shadhiliyya, which in the practice of most of its followers consists only of the private recitation of long prayer formulas (*hizb*, pl. *ahzâb*), believed to have magical effectiveness.^[49] The practitioner learns these *ahzâb*, ideally at least, through instruction (*talqîn*) by an authorised teacher and may maintain a special relationship with this teacher, but otherwise feels hardly a member of a brotherhood. Similarly the techniques of usually "congregational" tarekats may be taken up as a private devotional practice or - a frequent trend in Indonesia - as a method of cultivating magical powers.

It is taken for granted by virtually all historians, though on the basis of slender evidence, that Indonesian Islam was during its first centuries dominated by mysticism and metaphysical speculation (rather than, for instance, the legalism of the *shari`a*). It has been suggested that it was the development of *tasawwuf* that made Islam understandable to Indonesians and compatible with their spiritual needs as well as providing possible legitimations of monarchic rule.^[50]

In a number of articles, Anthony Johns has gone a step further and suggested that deliberate efforts by the tarekats played a central role in the process of islamisation. He imagines the tarekats to be closely associated with trade guilds (as in the Ottoman Empire for a few centuries they were), and the two travelling together from the Mediterranean to Southeast Asia. The trading ships plying the Indian Ocean carried not only numerous individual traders and their wares, he writes, but "we must visualise also clambering on board a number of Sufi shaikhs, either to attend to the spiritual needs of the craft or trade guild they were chaplain to, or to spread their gospel..."^[51]

Johns' speculative hypotheses may have some first sight plausibility since many of the early indigenous sources contain references to tarekats. Even the earliest of these sources, however, date from centuries after the process of islamisation began. Moreover, there is, to my knowledge, not a shred of evidence for Johns' implicit assumptions that something like guilds existed in the Southeast Asian harbour states, let alone that tarekat teachers were somehow affiliated with these guilds. In the case of Banten, the indigenous sources associate the tarekats not with trade and traders but with kings, magical power and political legitimation.

Banten's ruling dynasty and the tarekats

The earliest indications of a Bantenese interest in the tarekats are found in the various recensions of the *Sajarah Banten*, dating from the second half of the 17th century but probably incorporating older material.^[52] These texts have the founder of Banten's Muslim dynasty, the later Sunan Gunung Jati, take his son, Maulana Hasanuddin, on a miraculous journey to Mecca to perform the hajj. After performing the rites of the pilgrimage they go on to Medina to pay their respects to the Prophet's shrine, and it is here that Maulana Hasanuddin receives an initiation in the Naqshbandiyya tarekat.

Roughly translated, the texts say that Hasanuddin was taught the Knowledge of the Sufis, Perfect Knowledge. He made the vow of allegiance to his shaikh (*bai`at*), was given the *silsila* and the litanies (*wird*) of the Naqshbandiyya, received formal instruction (*talqîn*) in its *dhikr* and other spiritual exercises (*sughul*, Arabic *shughl*, "work"), and finally received the Sufi cloak (*khirqah*), symbolising his embarking upon

the Sufi path.[\[53\]](#)

Hoesein Djajadiningrat established that the oldest of these recensions dated from 1662-3 and that the one he called *Sajarah Banten ranté-ranté* was compiled sometime later but before 1725.[\[54\]](#)

Assuming that our passage is not a later interpolation, this means that by 1662 at the latest the Naqshbandiyya was known, and enjoyed prestige, in Banten court circles.[\[55\]](#) The association with Medina rather than Mecca is correct, and gives a cue as to when the Naqshbandiyya became known in Banten. In the 17th century, Medina was a major centre for this brotherhood, its leading shaikhs being successively Ahmad ash-Shinnawi (d.1619), Ahmad al-Qushashi (d.1661), Ibrahim al-Kurani (d.1691), and his son Abu Tahir al-Kurani (d.1733).[\[56\]](#) We shall encounter the names of these teachers, who taught several other tarekats as well, again in the following pages.

There are no indications that the Naqshbandiyya was present in Medina before ash-Shinnawi's teacher Sibghat Allah, who arrived in Medina from India in 1596. Maulana Hasanuddin's affiliation with it is therefore obviously a posthumous attribution, serving to strengthen the religious legitimation of his dynasty.[\[57\]](#) The tarekat appears here as a form of secret mystical Knowledge (and probably a source of power, *kasektèn*) possessed, and quite possibly monopolised, by the ruling dynasty. The Sufi technical terms are strung together in the text in a way suggesting that each represents some specific form of spiritual power.

The *Sajarah Banten ranté-ranté* contains a number of unrelated brief fragments, one of which, apparently older, associates Sunan Gunung Jati, without his son this time, with a number of other tarekats, the Kubrawiyya, Shadhiliyya and Shattariyya besides the

Naqshbandiyya. It has him pursue studies in Mecca and Medina and names his alleged teachers and fellow students.^[58] The account cannot be taken literally, for these teachers and most of the fellow students lived centuries before our Indonesian saint; nevertheless it contains some surprisingly information on one of these tarekats, the Kubrawiyya. The eponymous founder of this tarekat, the Central Asian mystic Najmuddin Kubra (d.1221), is portrayed as the sunan's first Meccan teacher, and his entire *silsila* is listed correctly.^[59] The names of the alleged fellow students in fact constitute two distinct lines of affiliation branching out from Kubra and ending in `Abd al-Latif al-Jami (d.1549 or 1555) and Ahmad ash-Shinnawi (d.1619), respectively.

Shinnawi, as noted before, taught in Medina. Jami lived in Central Asia but, as we know from other sources, he made the hajj in 1548, accompanied by a large entourage. On the way to Mecca he stopped in Istanbul, where he initiated none less than the Ottoman sultan, Suleyman the Magnificent, into his tarekat. This fact, noted by the Syrian historian Najmuddin al-Ghazzi, was no doubt well-known in Mecca too, and may have made this particular tarekat even more prestigious and desirable in the eyes of Banten's court.

Sunan Gunung Jati was a contemporary of Jami but there is little use in speculating whether he actually could have visited Mecca at the same time and met the master. Shinnawi was two or three generations younger. The various names juxtaposed in this Bantenese text may in fact reflect a number of consecutive contacts of Bantenese with Kubrawiyya teachers in Mecca or Medina. The anachronistic association of all with Sunan Gunung Jati reinforces our impression that the primary purpose of the text is the legitimation of the dynasty by recuperating all known mystical traditions for its founder.

Two great teachers: Yusuf Makassar (1670s) and Abdullah bin Abdul Qahhar (1750s and 1760s)

The first tarekat teacher active in Banten whom we know by name was the famous Makassarese Shaikh Yusuf (1627?-1699). Yusuf had spent around two decades in Arabia, studying under such teachers as Ibrahim al-Kurani in Medina and Ayyub al-Khalwati in Damascus. He had received initiations in several tarekats, most notably the Khalwatiyya, Naqshbandiyya, Shattariyya, Qadiriyya and Ba` Alawiyya, and apparently acquired licenses to teach them. During the 1670s he resided in Banten, as a close associate and adviser of Sultan Abul Fath Abdul Fattah, known as Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa.[\[60\]](#)

Shaikh Yusuf apparently arrived in Banten in the wake of the Makassarese warriors and sailors who left Celebes after their kingdom of Goa was conquered by the combined forces of the VOC and the rival Bugis kingdom of Bone in 1669, and who temporarily settled in Banten. We find him first mentioned in 1672, when he is reported to be tutoring the crown prince and co-ruler, Abun Nasr Abdul Qahhar (later known as Sultan Haji).[\[61\]](#) A few years later, Dutch sources refer to him as "the highest priest", suggesting he had by then become Banten's *qadi*.[\[62\]](#) In the ensuing struggle for power between the crown prince Sultan Haji and his father Sultan Ageng, Shaikh Yusuf remained firmly allied with the latter. When in 1682 the VOC intervened in Banten on Sultan Haji's behalf, Shaikh Yusuf mobilised the Makassarese still remaining there. After Sultan Ageng's capture, the shaikh led a small guerilla band of (mostly Makassarese) followers across West Java until finally he too was captured by the Dutch. Shaikh Yusuf was sent into exile to Ceylon and later to the Cape of Good Hope; his followers were allowed to return

to South Celebes.[\[63\]](#)

From his own writings we know Shaikh Yusuf to have been a tarekat teacher, but there is no evidence of his spreading any tarekat among the Bantenese. His teaching may have remained restricted to court circles - we have noted that he instructed the crown prince in the Islamic sciences - and the Makassarese community. The Makassarese, from the royal family down, held Shaikh Yusuf in great veneration, and those in Banten became his followers in politics as well as religion. The tarekat that is most closely associated with Yusuf's name, a branch of the Khalwatiyya, only spread among the Makassarese and secondarily the Bugis. Yusuf's only *khalîfas* appear to have been fellow Makassarese, which is another reason why this tarekat remained almost uniquely associated with this ethnic group.[\[64\]](#) There was apparently no one in Banten, not even at the court, who kept Yusuf's tarekat teachings alive. Yusuf's one-time student, Sultan Haji, had come to see him as a political opponent. By the middle of the next century we find some of these tarekats, notably the Naqshbandiyya and Shattariyya, being taught in Banten; the teacher, however, then did not trace his *silsilas* through Yusuf but through later teachers in Mecca and Medina.

The said teacher was named Abdullah bin Abdul Qahhar, a scholar of mixed Arab and Bantenese descent who was a protégé of Sultan Abun Nasr Zainal Ashiqin (1753-77). He is the author or copyist of a number of Arabic and Javanese books that are still extant, most or all of them originating from the Banten kraton library, that was acquired by the Dutch authorities in 1830. One of his Arabic works, a treatise on the hajj (*Risâla fî shurûat al-hajj*) was written during a stay in Mecca in 1748. His major interest appears to have been in mysticism and metaphysics.

While in Mecca he collected and copied a number of important Arabic mystical texts, among which a rare treatise by Abdur Ra'uf of Singkel. [65] After his return to Banten he wrote, at the request of his royal patron, two sufi treatises (*Mashâhid an-nâsik fî maqâmât as-sâlik* and *Fath al-mulûk*) [66] and translated Hamzah Fansuri's *Sharâb al-`âshiqîn* into Javanese. [67]

Two later manuscripts, probably originating from Banten, show him to have been a teacher of the Naqshbandiyya and the Shattariyya, [68] and some time after his death we find his name included in a *râtib* of the Rifa`iyya as one of the saints for whom prayers are said. He belonged to the branch of the Naqshbandiyya represented by Ahmad al-Qushashi and Ibrahim al-Kurani in Medina; according to the *silsila* given in the first manuscript, he took this tarekat from a *khalîfa*, perhaps a son, of Ibrahim al-Kurani's son and successor Abu Tahir Muhammad. [69] His Shattariyya *silsila* also passes through al-Qushashi but instead of descending through al-Qushashi's successor al-Kurani it passes through two other, obscure shaikhs in Medina to Abdullah's teacher Muhammad b. `Ali at-Tabari in Mecca. [70]

The very existence of these manuscripts shows that Shaikh Abdullah, unlike Shaikh Yusuf before him, established a modest network of disciples and *khalîfas*, outside the court and town of Banten where he taught himself. The Naqshbandiyya manuscript mentions three *khalîfas*, the *qadi* Muhammad Tahir of Bogor, Haji Muhammad Ali of Cianjur, and Haji Muhammad Ibrahim Harun al-Jalis, also of Cianjur.

The first popular tarekats, Sammaniyya and Rifa`iyya

The author of the Naqshbandiyya manuscript, a disciple of the said

Muhammad Tahir of Bogor, combined this tarekat with the Khalwatiyya - the text in fact deals with both tarekats. As his teacher of the Khalwatiyya he mentions the Medinan saint Muhammad [b. `Abd al-Karim] as-Samman (d.1771).[\[71\]](#) Shaikh Samman's modified version of the Khalwatiyya, usually named Sammaniyya, became popular in various parts of Indonesia, and here and there a saint cult took root, based on the belief in Shaikh Samman's powers of miraculous intervention on behalf of his devotees. In Banten there are traces of both. Shaikh Samman is one of the saints whose protection is invoked by certain - but not all - performers of *debus Banten* (see below). A folk dance called *Saman*, that is perhaps based on the lively *dhikr* or *râtib* of the Sammaniyya, used to be performed at feasts and parties, often along with a show of *silat* (martial arts) and *debus*.[\[72\]](#)

There are at present no Sammaniyya teachers in Banten, nor have there been in living memory; but in Cianjur, in the village of Cibarègbèg, there is a teacher of Bantenese descent, Kiai Abdul Qodir, who still teaches this tarekat, along with the Rifa`iyya and a number of others. It may have been from such geographically marginal teachers that a diffused Sammani influence has gradually penetrated the culture of Banten's common people.

The tarekat Rifa`iyya, of which clearer traces still are to be found in Banten, is in a similar situation. The invulnerability techniques known as *debus Banten*[\[73\]](#) are derived from a number of sources but the major influence is the Rifa`iyya, the tarekat that elsewhere too (Turkey, Egypt, India) is renowned for its *debus*-like practices. The said kiai of Cibarègbèg is also the last widely recognised teacher of the Rifa`iyya, but there have been more of them in the past. This is also attested by the fact that here and there in Banten villages one comes across manuscript

copies of simple liturgical texts (*râtibs*, etc.) of the Rifa`iyya.[\[74\]](#) At a few places there still are groups that regularly perform the Rifa`iyya liturgy, with or without *debus* exercises.

One of these places is the village of Sèkong in Pandeglang.[\[75\]](#) Twice weekly, on Thursday and Sunday nights, part of the village gathers in the mosque for a communal *dhikr* following the evening prayer. They recite the Rifa`iyya *râtib*, the Sura *al-Ikhlâs*, supplications (*du`â*) and the *dhikr*. The devotions are led by Mbah Junaed, who does not claim to be a tarekat shaikh but simply follows in his father's and grandfather's footsteps. He also leads *debus* exercises (called *almadad* here), in which again much of the village takes place. Before "playing", the participants perform a *dhikr* and burn incense while Mbah Junaed recites a formula to call up some forty powerful spirits, including those of Ahmad Rifa`i (the founder of the Rifa`iyya) and Shaikh Samman.[\[76\]](#) These spirits will ensure that no harm comes from iron or fire and that wounds inflicted are immediately healed.[\[77\]](#)

The spirits Mbah Junaed calls up are those whose names are mentioned in the said *râtib* manuscripts, of which Mbah Junaed also owns a somewhat defective copy. There are a few adaptations; Shaikh Samman's name, for instance, does not occur in the manuscripts but was apparently added because of Samman's reputation for benevolent intervention. All Bantenese Rifa`i manuscripts that I have seen or heard described contain basically the same list of saints for whom benedictions are said and on whose account the *Fâtiha* (the first chapter of the Qur'an) is recited.[\[78\]](#) First are the names of the Prophet, his family, his first four successors (the Rightly Guided Caliphs) and his other Companions. Then follow Ahmad ar-Rifa`i and `Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani,

and four later saints of the Rifa`iyya.[\[79\]](#) The final group of names are the most interesting for they are Bantenese: Maulana Hasanuddin, Shaikh Abdus Sabur (unidentified), Shaikh Abdullah bin Abdul Qahhar, and the sultans Muhammad Arif Zainal Ashiqin and his son Abul Mafakhir Muhammad Aliyuddin.[\[80\]](#)

This list of names gives an indication as to when the Rifa`iyya began to spread in Banten. The name of Sultan Zainal Ashiqin (1753-77) is in most manuscripts preceded by the word *rûh*, "the spirit of", indicating that he had died at the time of writing, but the name of Sultan Aliyuddin (1777-1802?) is not.[\[81\]](#) At least one manuscript moreover adds the words "may God make his reign last" to the latter's name, showing that the text was originally written during his government. The manuscripts attribute Aliyuddin the title of *khalîfa*, which could mean that he was the titular head of the tarekat in Banten, with an authorisation, even if only honorary, to teach it.[\[82\]](#) One manuscript dubs him, in corrupt Arabic, *al-khalîfa man ba`d al-khalîfa*, "the deputy after the deputy", which perhaps means that his father had held the same honorary position.

All extant manuscripts have the names of only these two sultans (besides that of the distant founder of the dynasty, Maulana Hasanuddin). They all appear to go back to an archetype produced at or close to the court in the last quarter of the 18th century, that has been repeatedly copied without any serious emendations being made. The fact that there are no updated versions with names of later sultans indicates that the Rifa`iyya spread from court circles and the urban elite to the population at large in Aliyuddin's time and has since then not received any new impulses under later great teachers. The close association of this tarekat with *debus* also suggests how it could have spread from the

court to popular circles. It does not require much phantasy to imagine the revered king teaching his soldiers the invocations and other techniques that - by the grace of Ahmad Rifa`i and other saints - would make them invulnerable to iron, fire and poison.

The Qadiriyya and the cult of Shaikh `Abd al-Qadir Jilani

The great popularity of the Qadiriyya tarekat (or rather, of the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya) in Banten dates from the second half of the 19th century, but there is some evidence that there was a cult of Shaikh `Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani well before that time. Possibly - but the evidence is slight - this too spread to the general populace from the court, and around the same time as the Rifa`iyya. The earliest written reference to the Qadiriyya dates from the reign of Sultan Zainal Ashiqin, under whom, as we saw, the Rifa`iyya probably first appeared in Banten. The royal seal on a document of 1755 styles the sultan "al-Qadiri", suggesting an affiliation with the Qadiriyya tarekat.^[83] A later manuscript from Banten contains the text of a Qadiriyya *ijâza* granted to the same ruler in 1772-3 by a Meccan teacher.^[84] The first mention of a popular cult of `Abd al-Qadir dates from over a century later, but there is no way of knowing how old it then was.

In the late 19th century, minor celebrations in southern Banten were commonly accompanied by a public reading of the *Wawacan Sèh*, Javanese or Sundanese adaptations of Shaikh `Abd al-Qadir's *manâqib*, pious tales of the saint's miraculous deeds. It was the only sort of text recited there on such occasions, and it was regarded as sacred, not fit to be sung in profane contexts. The Sundanese version was a relatively recent borrowing from the Priangan districts, but the Javanese one was proper to the region, containing many words of the Banten-Cirebon

dialect.[\[85\]](#) This text was studied and translated by Drewes and Poerbatjaraka, who judged from the archaic character of the language that it must be rather old. Drewes even ventured the guess that it could well date from the first half of the 17th century, suggesting that the cult of `Abd al-Qadir might have been introduced at the time of the first official contacts with Mecca.[\[86\]](#) This speculation, however, is not supported by any direct evidence.

Manâqib readings still frequently take place, both among the followers of the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya tarekat and outside those circles. It is not part of the tarekat liturgy proper but all followers at times take part in it. The senior tarekat teacher of south Banten, Kiai Kodhim bin Asnawi of Menès, has to attend *manâqib* readings almost weekly. They take place now in Arabic as well as Sundanese or Javanese, depending on the sponsor.[\[87\]](#) In the Serang region, *manâqib* readings are not only a form of thanksgiving but have also been part of the ritual surrounding *debus* performances, replacing here the Rifa`iyya *râtib* that is read in the Pandeglang region. The supplicatory function of the *manâqib* is most explicit here: it is read in order to invoke the saint's protection. At the same time, the practitioners feel entitled to the saint's protection in exchange for the reading, which most of them speak of as a payment, a *quid pro quo*.

The emergence of the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya in Banten in the second half of the 19th century has been well documented by Sartono Kartodirdjo and need not detain us much here. The Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya was a new tarekat, combining elements from various others. It was established by a learned Indonesian, Ahmad Khatib from Sambas in West Borneo, who taught in Mecca in the third quarter of the

19th century. Steamships and the Suez canal were gradually making the voyage to Arabia easier in those years, and the number of Indonesians making the pilgrimage, some of whom stayed on for months or years to study, was increasing.^[88] This was perhaps why the new tarekat spread so rapidly through much of Indonesia and found such a large popular following. The number of students gathering around Ahmad Khatib was probably unprecedented. Bantenese constituted one of the most prominent groups among the Indonesians in Mecca, and the master must have had several Bantenese disciples. One of them, Abdul Karim from Tanara, became his favourite disciple and assistant, and later (in 1876) succeeded the master as the head of the tarekat. He was the last shaikh to keep the tarekat united; after his death it disintegrated into a number of independent regional branches.^[89]

Abdul Karim returned only briefly to Banten, from 1872 to 1876, but during those years he initiated numerous new disciples into the tarekat. In Mecca he remained at the centre of an elaborate and ever-expanding network that had its greatest density in Banten. There were frequent communications between Banten and the Bantenese community in Mecca. Abdul Karim's deputies in Banten kept recruiting new followers. For the first time in Banten's history, a tarekat acquired the character of an organisation with a large, rural following.

Much of that organisation was dismantled by the government following the rebellion of 1888; some of its leaders were killed, others were sent into exile to the outer islands or fled abroad, ending up in Mecca. During the following decades the network gradually re-established itself, as more Bantenese returned from Mecca. It became centered on Kiai Asnawi of Caringin, who was Abdul Karim's major deputy (his only real *khalîfa* in Banten, according to Asnawi's son

Kodhim). Although Kiai Asnawi himself kept aloof from politics altogether, some of his relatives (including his son Emed and son-in-law Ahmad Khatib) and deputies became deeply involved. The kiai's charismatic appeal and the tarekat network were deliberately used by the organisers of the 1926 rebellion. In the wake of this rebellion, Kiai Asnawi himself was removed to Batavia, and the network partly dismantled again. Some time later, several tarekat teachers emerged who claimed to be Asnawi's legitimate *khalîfa*, the best-known of them Kiai Abdul Latif bin Ali of Cibeber near Cilegon and Kiai Falak who established a pesantren at Pagentongan in Bogor. According to his son Kodhim, however, Asnawi appointed as his sole successor Ahmad Suhari, also of Cibeber; the others were only *badals*, deputies of lower rank. Kodhim, who resides in Menès, in turn became Ahmad Suhari's *khalîfa* and is now the most respected tarekat teacher of Banten.

The occult sciences, invulnerability and healing

The popular tarekats have frequently been associated with magical practices, and Banten is no exception in this respect. It is perhaps more correct to say that the practitioners of various forms of magic have eagerly adopted techniques and prayers from the tarekats with which they became, however superficially, acquainted. Banten has a well-established reputation as a haven of the occult sciences, and quite a few Bantenese have cashed in on this reputation, acting as soothsayers and diviners, exorcists and spirit-masters, bone-setters, masseurs and druggists, procurors of wealth, position, supernatural protection and peace of mind.

Many of the magical skills cultivated in Banten are closely associated with the martial arts and the world of the *jawara*, the

strongmen dominating much of rural Banten. *Debus*, the cultivation of invulnerability to fire and sharp metal objects, is the most conspicuous representative of these techniques, and *debus* teachers engage in the whole range of magical practices. Their techniques are an eclectic blend of Muslim and pre-Islamic magic, their sacred formulas including Islamic Arabic invocations alongside Javanese and Sundanese formulas (*jampé* for healing purposes, *jangjawokan* for martial prowess, invulnerability, or love magic). A difference is sometimes made between *ngèlmu Karang* and *ngèlmu Rawayan*, the latter being associated with the Baduy and explicitly non-Islamic, the former at least nominally Muslim (although suspect in the eyes of the orthodox).^[90] Both, as well as the Islamic spells of the kiai, are believed to be effective, but at present it is deemed prudent to affirm the Islamic character of one's *ngèlmu*. It is always others who practice the alleged *ngèlmu Rawayan*.

The central element in *debus*, "playing" with pointed iron skewers that are violently thrust against the body, is obviously derived from the tarekat Rifa`iyya. The skewers still have the same shape (with a large wooden head to which iron chains are attached) as may be seen with Turkish or Egyptian Rifa`is, and the term *debus* (Arabic *dabbûs*, "pin, spike"), is originally the name of the skewer. In the Pandeglang region, as seen above, *debus* is still explicitly associated with the Rifa`iyya, but in north Banten the association is rather with the Qadiriyya. In both regions, the name of the powerful saint Samman may be added to the invocations for additional protection, and magical powers may be increased by the use of Shadhiliyya *ahzâb*.

There is one striking difference between *debus Banten* and the Rifa`iyya of the Middle East and India: in Banten the skewers, however

violently thrust or hammered, do not pierce the skin, whereas elsewhere the miracle consists in their passing through the body without causing any harm.^[91] The emphasis in Banten (as elsewhere in Indonesia where similar techniques exist) is on invulnerability, not on indifference to pain, and this is explicitly related to warfare and the martial arts. (An accomplished *debus* practitioner is also believed to be bullet-proof). *Debus* techniques were part and parcel of the martial arts arsenal of the *jawara*, along with other magical (or psychological) techniques for such purposes as invisibility, hitting an adversary from a distance, having tiger spirits and other fierce powers take possession of one's body (*sambatan*), or invoking *jinns* and other supernatural support (*hadiran*).

Tarekat-related techniques are only one part of *debus*, and *debus* teachers are not necessarily, as Vredenburg thought, also tarekat shaikhs. Some of them lead tarekat-type communal devotions but none is an authenticated tarekat *khalîfa*. Others are primarily martial arts teachers and are not acquainted with *dhikrs* and *râtibs* at all.^[92] Even the Islamic formulas used, in order to be effective, have to be "filled" or "bought" by fasting, bathing with water of sacred springs such as the Sumur Tujuh on the slopes of Mt Karang, and various other ascetic exercises. Identical results may, incidentally, be achieved by different means: one may recite a formula (that has been "bought" in advance), wear an amulet (that has similarly been "filled"), or temporarily "borrow" some of his master's powers (that are transferred by means of a *jiad*, a "blessing formula").

Debus is just one instance of tarekat-related techniques being transposed to a different context of meaning and put to a different set of purposes; one may find numerous other instances in Indonesia. An invulnerability cult probably existed in Banten (as elsewhere in the

Archipelago) long before the arrival of the Rifa`iyya, which gave it its present name, one of the instruments used, and some litanies. Like other magicians, *debus* players are highly eclectic; just any prayer formula learned from a religious teacher may be tried out on its merits and added to the arsenal.

As new techniques continue to be added, some of the older ones are gradually being shed. Pak Idris of Walantaka, the senior *debus* teacher of north Banten, has given up reading the *Wawacan Sèh* before each performance, because present audiences find that too tedious. He now does the reading and the invocations at home, he claims, the evening before a performance. Carefully prepared holy water is carried along in a plastic bottle. Experience has shown that this also works, and that the spirits still come to protect the players.^[93] Others have discovered that they can do without the *salawât* (Vredembregt's "haunting melodies") or, for that matter, the other remaining Islamic paraphernalia. *Debus* is developing into a streamlined show, sponsored (and domesticated) by the Ministry of Education and Culture and performed at the whim of local government officials and tourist operators, at such places as the Speelman fortress in old Banten, amusement parks in Jakarta and, most recently, a Yogyakarta discothèque.

The fame of Banten's magic has made some of the *debus* teachers and practitioners also popular as healers, called upon to set broken bones or to massage away physical pain but especially to cure diseases or other complaints believed to be caused by magic or evil spirits. Two of them regularly travel even to the outer islands to treat patients, and their healing practice increasingly takes up their time.

There is yet another, and more popular, type of expert in Banten dispensing "magical" cures: the *kiai hikmah*. *Hikmah*, "wisdom", is originally a term for all sorts of useful knowledge adopted into Islam from older civilisations, such as Greek medicine and philosophy or Babylonian magic. In Indonesia the term refers primarily to Islamic magic; it is practised by *kiais*, not by *dukuns*. The *kiai hikmah* may also be contrasted, as an ideal type, with the *kiai kitab*, the teacher of textual Islam, but he is expected to possess some textual learning as well. In practice, many *kiais* combine both roles, in differing mixtures.

The most famous of Banten's *kiai hikmah* in recent times was the late Ki Armin (KH. Muhammad Hasan Amin) of Cibuntu near Pandeglang (d.1988). He was a nephew of Kiai Asnawi of Caringin and himself also a tarekat teacher, initiating numerous visitors into the Qadiriyya. Distancing himself from Banten's other tarekat teachers, however, he claimed affiliation with teachers in Mecca and Baghdad, places that he frequently visited, rather than with his uncle.^[94] He led a small, old-fashioned pesantren with only 30 to 40 santri from various parts of Java, who appeared to be mostly interested in Ki Armin's specialty, *hikmah*, but also studied *fiqh*. The *kiai* had, however, little time for his students because of the other services that he performed.

Every day a stream of visitors, mostly from West Java, waited for hours to be received by the *kiai*, who briefly listened, recited a supplication or gave them an amulet, and accepted the envelope they invariably brought. Government officials and higher military personnel, who also frequently came to Cibuntu, were usually given preferential treatment and were received in private audience. Instead of making the other visitors jealous, this appeared to reinforce their confidence in the

shaikh and their conviction of his influence in high circles. Consultations by government officials confirm to the general public that the kiai is really special; after all, such high people are believed to go for the best in all matters.

Numerous stories were (and still are) told about the kiai's miraculous powers, his clairvoyance, the rapid careers or sudden riches that befell some of those who had won his favours. Many of the visitors, however, did not appear to have urgent special reasons for visiting the kiai. They came because such a visit in itself was believed to convey blessing. Ki Armin, it was said, was a perfect saint, who for several years had neither slept nor eaten. The best way to partake of the kiai's blessing was to come on a Thursday afternoon and spend the night in Cibuntu. With some luck one might see the kiai privately for a few minutes, but even if not, there was other benefit for the soul to be had. Following the dawn prayer on Friday, Ki Armin gave instruction (*talqîn*) in the Qadiriyya *dhikr* to all visitors, who later each received a printed *ijâza*. Most visitors also brought bottles or jerrycans of water, which were placed in the mosque during the prayer and *talqîn*, absorbing the kiai's blessing.[\[95\]](#)

Whereas Ki Armin maintained excellent relations with government officials at all levels and thus was admired for his influence in high quarters, the man who probably is the most renowned *kiai hikmah* at present has a reputation for maintaining maximal distance from everything that reeks of government. Ki Dimiyati of Dahu in Cadasari (north of Pandeglang), though not at all politically minded, was in fact once jailed because of an untactful sermon during the 1977 election period. As his admirers tell with relish, the prosecutor, judge and policemen involved in the case all suffered terrible diseases, and

although the kiai did not leave the prison during his incarceration he was frequently sighted in his village at the same time. Generous official sponsorship allowed Ki Armin to build a unique, beautiful mosque in Cibuntu and brought electricity and a metalled road to the village. Ki Dimiyati's pesantren, on the other hand, seems to be deliberately kept in a state of ill-repair to show to all and sundry that he refuses government support. Just in case the visitor does not immediately notice this, his attention may be drawn to it by a santri, who hastens to tell how many visiting officials offered in vain to have the pesantren rebuilt.

Ki Dimiyati was educated in various pesantrens in Central Java but never could afford to visit Mecca (he has plans for 1993, though). Among colleagues, he has a reputation for learning in all branches of the religious sciences, and he indeed spends much of his time teaching. The pesantren is one of the most traditional still existing, in the teaching methods as well as in its physical structure. All santris sleep in one large bamboo house on stilts (*rumah panggung*); the teaching takes place in an similar structure adjacent to it, where the santris also perform their prayers and where guests may stay overnight. No radio, newspapers, or idle talk are allowed here; the santris are to fill their time with worship and the study of their religious texts. The subjects taught include the standard texts of *fiqh*, doctrine and Sufi morality, but also various *ahzâb* of the Shadhiliyya tarekat. The kiai is famous for his teaching these powerful formulas and the proper way to recite them. Although the text of each *hizb* may easily be found elsewhere, many Bantenese have sought Ki Dimiyati's *ijâza* to recite them, for without *ijâza* the magic of the *hizb* is not believed to be effective.

Conclusion: the evolution of Islamic institutions in Banten

Some cautious conclusions may be drawn from the preceding discussion. The pesantren and the tarekat, the most conspicuous Islamic institutions in Banten a century ago, were relatively recent phenomena, at least in the particular form they then had. Their florescence followed the decline of the sultanate and coincided with the disappearance of central control.

The central Islamic institution of the sultanate was the office of the *qadi*, which in Banten had a far greater importance than in the other Javanese kingdoms. The *qadi* headed a hierarchy of religious officials reaching out into the hinterland. As long as this office existed, there is no evidence of independent ulama leading pesantrens or teaching tarekats in the periphery.

In the heyday of the sultanate, Islamic education took place at the centre, under the sponsorship of the kraton, and with members of the royal family among its chief beneficiaries. Such education as there was in the periphery before the mid-19th century (and some there must have been, for there were some literate people in South Banten by the end of the 19th century)[\[96\]](#) was probably highly informal.

The tarekats too appear to have been primarily an affair of the court, although some of the devotions associated with them may have filtered through to the population at large. The court, I would suggest, was interested both in the spiritual powers promised by the tarekat and in the legitimation it could lend a sultan who could claim to have reached higher forms of Knowledge. For the same reasons, the court probably had an interest in restricting the numbers who were fully

initiated in any tarekat. Conversely, the association of certain tarekats with the court (most clearly the Rifa`iyya in the late 18th century) must have raised their value in the view of the wider public. Disparate elements from tarekats (specific formulas, breathing exercises, the *debus*) probably were borrowed or imitated by people not formally authorised (i.e., not holding an *ijâza* from a shaikh). These elements, sometimes distorted and often given a different meaning, became part of the accumulated store of mystical-magical lore of the healer-cum-martial arts masters.

This changed with the decline and ultimate demise of the sultanate. Independent teachers emerged in the periphery. Snouck Hurgronje made the important observation that *zakat* began flowing to these independent ulama rather than the Dutch-appointed *pangulus*, but perhaps the emergence of the independent ulama as a group reflects some earlier shift in economic resources enabling certain families to send one or more relatives to Mecca for studies. The number of pesantrens rapidly increased in the late 19th century. At the same time, the tarekat Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya was gaining a mass following in the villages.

Educational reform reached Banten's pesantren world in the early 20th century. In 1916 the first *madrasah* (Muslim school with graded classes and a curriculum including general subjects besides textual religious studies) was established in Menès as a complement to the traditional pesantren of Kenanga. Nine years later another madrasah, Al Khairiyah, was established in Citangkil (Cilegon). Each became the core of an extensive network of madrasahs established by alumni; between them, Mathla`ul Anwar and Al Khairiyah control hundreds of madrasahs throughout Banten and beyond. Traditional pesantrens are gradually

disappearing; the ones still surviving (such as Kiai Dimiyati's, described above) serve other functions than those of the average pesantren a century ago.

The popular tarekat Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya experienced its heyday around the turn of the century and appears to have retained a large following until mid-century. It rapidly lost popularity when metalled roads, electricity, radio and television came to the villages, giving the young generation a range of alternative ways to spend the long evenings. In the towns, on the other hand, the tarekat has been finding new categories of followers. The breakdown of traditional structures, and an acute sense of moral and economic uncertainty experienced by many, are creating a new demand for spiritual teaching and magical-mystical counsel. Such seemingly traditional institutions as the tarekat and authorities as the *kiai hikmah* are the functional equivalent of therapy groups and psychiatrists, and their numbers and prominence in all of Java appear to be increasing.

[1] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka, II: Aus dem heutigen Leben* (Haag: Nijhoff, 1889), pp.357, 362-8.

[2] *Ambtelijke Adviezen van C. Snouck Hurgronje, 1889-1936* (3 vols., 's Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1957-1965), vol. II, pp.1319 (the fast), 1246-7 (*zakat*). Concerning the fast in Ramadan, Snouck reported the observation of an Indonesian friend that in Banten everyone fasted, including children below the age at which this becomes a religious obligation. He commented that the same definitely could not be said of any other district in Java, let alone an entire residency. As for *zakat*, virtually all farmers in Banten paid it voluntarily whereas elsewhere in Java it had to be enforced by officials.

[3] The last sultan, Muhammad Rafi` ad-Din, was removed from Banten and exiled to Surabaya in 1832, but Banten had already lost the last remnants of independence in 1808, when it was completely integrated into the Dutch Indies. The sultanate, however, retained its symbolic meaning for the Bantenese well

after the disappearance of the sultan. See Sartono Kartodirdjo, *The peasants' revolt of Banten in 1888* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1966), pp.72-7.

[4] Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen II*, pp.1246-7 (in a report written in 1893).

[5] See H.J. de Graaf and Th.G.Th. & Pigeaud, *De eerste Moslimse vorstendommen op Java* ('s Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1974), pp.117-22. The authors, spicing the available evidence from Javanese sources with some inevitable speculation, reason that a Muslim harbour-state was established by the later Sunan Gunung Jati at Banten around 1525 and that it gradually expanded its territory eastwards and then southwards, finally conquering Pakuan in 1587.

[6] "[D]aer zijn noch veel Heydenen die niet Moors gheworden zijn." See G. W. Rouffaer and J.W. IJzerman (eds.), *De eerste schipvaart der Nederlanders naar Oost-Indië onder Cornelis de Houtman (1595-1597)* (3 vols., 's Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1915-1929), vol II, p.27.

[7] *Idem*, vol. I, pp.128-9. These immigrants were vegetarians and believed in reincarnation, "like all Javanese before their conversion to Islam." They had fled persecution by the ruler of Pasuruan. The learned editor, Rouffaer, concluded that they were Tenggerese and suggested that there might be a connection with the present Baduy (who live much further southeast, however).

[8] Hoesein Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing van de Sadjarah Banten* (Haarlem: Joh. Enschedé en Zonen, 1913), pp.49-52, 174-7 (canto 37-42). The Javanese text of this important work has recently been edited by Titik Pudjiastuti: *Sajarah Banten: Edisi kritik teks* (Tesis, Fakultas Pascasarjana, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 1991). The edited version differs in minor details from the text used by Djajadiningrat.

[9] When Sultan Abul Mafakhir died in 1651 he was succeeded by a grandson, who initially used the modest title of *Pangeran Ratu*. He despatched another embassy to Mecca, which upon return brought him the title and name of Sultan Abul Fath Abdul Fattah (Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, pp.66-7).

[10] The titles of these texts are given as *Marqûm* (meaning "Written", clearly a defective title), *Muntahî* ("The adept", which is the title of one of Hamzah Fansuri's prose works), and *Wujûdiyya* (Pudjiastuti, *Sajarah*, canto 37.7, 42.26; cf. Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, pp.50, 174-5). The term *Wujûdiyya* usually refers to the brand of monistic mysticism represented by Hamzah Fansuri, so we should perhaps read *kitâb Wujûdiyya*, i.e. a book or books expounding these teachings. Hamzah's *al-Muntahî* has been edited and translated in Syed M. Naguib Al-Attas, *The mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), pp.329-53, 448-72. A Javanese translation of the *Muntahî* was known in Banten, probably as early as the 17th century, see G.W.J. Drewes and L.F. Brakel, *The poems of Hamzah Fansuri* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1986), pp.251-2.

[11] The *Sajarah Banten* speaks of Sèh Ibnu Alam (canto 39.27; cf.

Djajadiningrat p.51). This must have been the hadith scholar Muhammad `Ali ibn `Alan (d.1647). This Ibn `Alan should not be confused with his uncle, the well-known Naqshbandi shaikh Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn `Alan, who appears to have been more famous in Indonesia but who had died in 1624 (cf. Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia*, Bandung: Mizan, 1992, pp.55-58). A notice on Muhammad `Ali ibn `Alan and his scholarly credentials is to be found in Muhammad Muhibbi's biographical dictionary *Khulâsa al-athar fî a`yân al-qarn al-hâdî `ashar* (4 vols., Bulaq, 1867), IV, p.184-9.

[12] Azyumardi Azra, *The transmission of Islamic reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian `ulama' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1992), p.463n39, referring to P. Voorhoeve's *Handlist of Arabic manuscripts...* (Leiden: University Press, 1980), pp.204-5. Ibn `Alan's treatise is titled *al-Mawâhib ar-rabbâniyya `an al-as'ila al-jâwiyya* ("Lordly gifts: On the questions from Java"). At the request Sultan Abul Ma`ali Ahmad (who was his father's co-ruler from ca. 1640 until his death in 1650), Ibn `Alan also wrote a polemical commentary (or rather copied a commentary by Ahmad al-Qushashi) on a few sections of al-Jili's well-known exposition of monistic mysticism *al-Insân al-kâmil* (Voorhoeve, *Handlist*, pp.130-1; cf. Voorhoeve's brief notice in *BKI* 109 (1953), p.191).

[13] *Al-lama`ân fî takfîr man qâla bi-khalq al-Qur'ân* ("Gleam of light: declaring unbelievers those who claim the Qur'an to be created"), briefly described in Ahmad Daudy, *Allah dan manusia dalam konsepsi Syeikh Nuruddin ar-Raniry* (Jakarta: CV. Rajawali, 1983), pp.55-6; cf. Azra, op.cit., p.365. This polemical tract is directed against the Mu`tazili doctrine that the Qur'an is created rather than pre-existent, one carefully worded interpretation of which Hamzah defends in his *Asrâr al-`ârifîn* (Al-Attas, *Hamzah Fansuri*, pp.248-9).

[14] "Shaikh" is, of course, the most widely used term of respect for any venerable religious specialist. The spelling as *ceque* shows that it came to the Dutch through the medium of Portuguese. Its use by translators or Portuguese merchants in Banten does not, of course, guarantee that the Bantenese themselves used it.

[15] One might be tempted to interpret "Kyahi Ali" as a personal name, and the first occurrences of the term may refer to one and the same person (the religious teacher of both Maulana Yusup and Maulana Muhammad). In a later passage (Canto 55), however, we read of persons who "became *ali*," in the unmistakable sense of succeeding to the office of *qadi*.

[16] *Pakih* (Ar. *faqîh*) means "expert of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence)"; Najmuddin is a common enough personal name (the most famous person of that name, the 13th-century Central Asian mystic Najmuddin Kubra, was believed to be the teacher of the founder of Banten's ruling dynasty, as we shall see below). The *Sajarah Banten* mentions a *Ki Pakih* (without the addition of Najmuddin) for the year 1638. Later VOC sources of various periods mention several *qadi* named *Ki Pakih* Najmuddin, but we encounter also a few other names, such as Pangeran *Kali* Shamsuddin and "the famous high priest Tajuddin" (P.J.B.C. Robidé van der Aa, "De groote Bantamsche opstand in het midden der vorige eeuw", *BKI* 29

(1881), pp.67, 73). The latter, though an existing name, may of course be a corruption of Najmuddin.

[17] Rouffaer and IJzerman, vol. I, text at the back of Plate 13.

[18] Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, pp.50-1.

[19] Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, p.66. *Entol* is a title of the lower nobility in southern Banten; those so called claim descent, not from the royal house but from a certain Joh, one of the first converts to Islam (R.A. Kern, "Soendasche adatrechtstermen", *Adatrechtbundel* 8, 1914, p.101).

[20] Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, pp.37-9; Pudjiastuti, *Sajarah Banten*, canto 24.

[21] Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, pp.37-41.

[22] "... kang kinèn tunggu nagara, Kiyahi Ali ika..." Pudjiastuti, *Sajarah Banten*, canto 25.14; cf Djajadiningrat, *Sadjarah Banten*, p.39.

[23] J.K.J. de Jonge, *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, vol. 8 ('s Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1875), pp.213, 216-7.

[24] Robidé van der Aa, art.cit., p.73n.

[25] Rouffaer & IJzerman, *Eerste schipvaart*, vol. I, Plate 13.

[26] Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, pp.54-5.

[27] J. de Rovere van Breugel, "Bantam in 1786", *BKI* 5, 1856, p.161 (a report of 1786); Robidé van der Aa, art.cit., p.114 (quoting W.H. van Ossenberch in 1761).

[28] Leiden University Library Cod.Or. 5625, 5626, 5627 and 5628, described in Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java* (3 vols., The Hague: Nijhoff, 1967-1970), I, pp.322-3. A sample page of the last volume is reproduced as Plate 40 in vol. III and partially transliterated there at pp.77-8.

[29] Thus Van Gollonnesse in 1734 (Robidé van der Aa, art. cit., p.67).

[30] *Memorie van Overgave* of W.H. van Ossenberch, 1761, in: Robidé van der Aa, art. cit., p.114 (emphasis added).

[31] Cf. A.C. Milner, "Islam and the Muslim state", in: M.B. Hooker (ed.), *Islam in South-East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), pp.27-8; Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the age of commerce 1450-1680*, vol. I: *The lands below the winds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp.142-5. Reid incidentally notes (after the British sailor William Dampier) that under Sultan Ageng theft was punished by

amputation in Banten.

[32] On the books of *fiqh* and other disciplines of Islamic knowledge that were known in Java during this period, see Martin van Bruinessen, "Pesantren and kitab kuning: maintenance and continuation of a tradition of Islamic learning", in the *Proceedings of the 7th European Conference on Indonesian and Malaysian Studies* (forthcoming) [also in *Mizan* (Jakarta) vol. V no. 2 (1992)].

[33] F. de Haan, "Uit oude notarispapieren, I", *TBG* 42 (1900), pp.297-308, lists the remarkable collection of Javanese and Malay manuscripts left behind by de Saint Martin. Unfortunately all of them have gone lost, as established by P. Voorhoeve ("A Malay scriptorium", in: J. Bastin and R. Roolvink (eds.), *Malayan and Indonesian studies*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, pp.255-66).

[34] Leiden Cod.Or. 5598. Pigeaud (*Literature*, vol. II) describes it as "a handbook of regulations of Banten sultans (...) for peace and order in Banten, court and town. Mentions several sultans and princes; fines and penalties, *ta`zîr* [i. e., chastisements]; treaties/agreements with the VOC."

[35] J. de Rovere van Breugel, "Beschrijving van Bantam en de Lampongs", *BKI* 5 (1856), p.335.

[36] Under Dutch administration, a distinction was made between the mosque *pangulu* and the *pangulu landrat*, who was the Islamic judge (advisory member of the *landraad* or district court, and head of the "priesterraad" or Muslim court adjudicating in divorce, inheritance and *waqf* cases). It would appear that in Banten, both under the sultanate and under Dutch rule, the same person performed all these functions (including that of the *amil*).

[37] Kartodirdjo, *Peasants' revolt*, pp.72-4, 102-3. Cf. Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen* I, pp.772-3; II, pp.1246-7.

[38] Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat, though the son of a priyayi, was as a child in the 1880's sent to a pesantren and has left an interesting description of what these institutions were like in his days: "Het leven in een pasantren", *Tijdschrift voor het Binnenlandsch Bestuur* 34, 1908, 1-22; cf *Herinnningen van Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat* (Amsterdam-Batavia: G. Kolff & Co., 1936), pp.20-4.

[39] Van Bruinessen, "Pesantren and kitab kuning".

[40] G.W.J. Drewes, *The admonitions of Seh Bari* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969), p.11. This 16th-century text, previously known as the "book of Bonang", contains the teachings of a certain Sèh [^Abd al-] Bari. Referring to a much later (19th-century?) manuscript from Banyumas which mentions a Sèh Bari of Karang, Drewes assumes that this must be the same person and, ignoring the numerous other places named Karang, locates him in Banten.

[41] In 1675, for instance, the Dutch agent in Banten reported the arrival of a

"priest" (*paep*) from Ternate, who had travelled there to receive further instruction in "the Moorish religion." F. de Haan, *Priangan* (4 vols., Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap, 1910-12), vol. 3, p.239.

[42] Rouffaer & IJzerman, *De eerste schipvaart*, II, p.27.

[43] Pudjiastuti, *Sajarah Banten*, canto 22.8-10; cf. Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, p.36-7.

[44] De Rovere van Breugel, "Bantam in 1786", p.161. The author, who had lived in Banten for seven years when he wrote this report, remarks that the sultan, whose demeanour and tastes had initially been quite westernised, increasingly came under the influence of foreign ulama who had recently arrived (*ibid.*, pp.153-4).

[45] C.M. Pleyte, (1910), "Bantensch folklore," *TBG* 52, 1910, p.150-2.

[46] J.A. van der Chijs, "Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het inlandsch onderwijs", *TBG* 14 (1864), p.215.

[47] Interview with Asnawi's sole surviving son Kodhim, Menès, Jan. 25, 1993.

[48] Djajadiningrat, *Herinneringen*, p.9.

[49] Two of the best-known of these prayers are the *hizb al-bahr* (believed, among other things, to protect travellers at sea), composed by the founder of the order, and the *Dalâ'il al-khairât*, composed by the 15th-century North African mystic Muhammad al-Jazuli. It is generally believed in Indonesia, where these prayers are widely practised, that their magical effectiveness can only be "bought" by fasting and other mortifications under the guidance of a teacher.

[50] See, for instance, A.C. Milner, "Islam and the Muslim state", in: M.B. Hooker (ed.), *Islam in South-East Asia*, (Leiden: Brill, 1983), pp.23-49.

[51] Anthony H. Johns, "Sufism as a category in Indonesian literature and history, *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2/ii (1961), p.14. Cf Johns, "Islam in Southeast Asia: reflections and new directions", *Indonesia* 19, 1975, p.37.

[52] Besides the major *Sajarah Banten*, analysed by Hoesein Djajadiningrat, we shall also use the composite text called *Sajarah Banten ranté-ranté* by Djajadiningrat, which was edited, together with its Malay translation, in: Jan Edel, *Hikajat Hasanoeddin* (Meppel: B. ten Brink, 1938).

[53] "[Molana] késah Madinah ngunjungi Rasul, mangkana ika tumulya, winuruk èlmu kang sopi. Winuruk èlmu sampurna, lawan lampah sampurna iku

malih, sampun abé'at putrèku, sinungan séla-séla, lawan wirid tarekas bandiyah iku, lawan telkin jikir ika, lan kalawan qirqas malih." (*Sajarah Banten*, canto 17, at p.197 in Pudjiastuti's edition). The passage is slightly different in Edel's edition of the *Sajarah Banten ranté-ranté*: "*Maka nunten késah ing Madinah, maka kang putra winuruk 'ilmu kang sampurna, lan bai'at, kalayan silsilah, kalayan wirid, kalayan tarékat Naqsyibandiyyah, kalayan dzikir, lan talkin dzikir, kalayan khirqah, kalayan sug hul.*" (*Hikajat Hasanoeddin*, p.37, spelling adapted).

[54] Djajadiningrat, *Critische beschouwing*, pp.144-7.

[55] Hoesein Djajadiningrat does not mention this Naqshbandiyya initiation in his summary of the *Sajarah Banten*, which made me incorrectly conclude in an earlier article that the Naqshbandiyya became known to Banten court circles some time *after* 1662 (Martin van Bruinessen, "The origins and development of the Naqshbandi order in Indonesia", *Der Islam* 67, 1990, p.159).

[56] See van Bruinessen, "The origins", pp.153-6; idem, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah*, pp.56-9.

[57] Bantenese tradition, probably because of rivalries with Cirebon, considers Maulana Hasanuddin, not his father Sunan Gunung Jati, as Banten's first Muslim ruler. This is not the only case of mystical knowledge posthumously attributed to him. Present practitioners of the invulnerability technique *debus*, originally associated with the tarekats Rifa`iyya and Qadiriyya, which probably became popular in the 18th century (see below), also claim that their secret knowledge derives from Maulana Hasanuddin.

[58] Edel, *Hikajat Hasanoeddin*, pp.137-41. There is a similar account in Brandes' edition of the *Babad Cirebon*.

[59] The names in the *silsila*, apart from a few spelling errors and the disappearance of two names, are identical with those found in Kubrawiyya sources. On Najmuddin Kubra and the Kubrawiyya see: H. Algar, "Kubra", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi orders in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp.55-8.

[60] On Yusuf's life, studies and writings see: Azra, *Transmission of Islamic reformism*, pp.416-58; Tudjimah CS, *Syekh Yusuf Makasar: Riwayat hidup, karya dan ajarannya* (Jakarta: Dep. Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1987).

[61] Report of the VOC's Banten representative Caeff, in de Jonge, *Opkomst*, vol. 6, p.211 (also de Haan, *Preanger*, vol. 3, p.239). Abun Nasr reportedly intended to become a "priest" but it remains unclear to what extent his religious commitment and Arabian orientation were due to Shaikh Yusuf's influence. He ordered the Bantenese to don Arab-style dress instead of indigenous styles. In 1674 he departed for Mecca, returning in 1676, which suggests that he pursued studies there besides twice performing the pilgrimage.

[62] Caeff's report dated March 4, 1676, *ibid.*, p.239.

[63] De Haan, *Preanger*, vol. 3, pp.238-78.

[64] Martin van Bruinessen, "The tariqa Khalwatiyya in South Celebes", in: H. A. Poeze and P. Schoorl (eds.), *Excursions in Celebes* (Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 1991), pp.252-69, esp. 258-60.

[65] P. Voorhoeve, "Bajan Tadjalli", *TBG* 85 (1952 1957), p.108. The copies were made in 1745, during his stay in Mecca.

[66] Jakarta National Library, ms. A 31d and A 111, respectively (briefly described in R. Friederich & L.W.C. van den Berg, *Codicum Arabicorum ... Catalogum*. Batavia/The Hague, 1873).

[67] Drewes & Brakel, *The poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, p.226.

[68] Leiden Cod.Or. 7327 (Shattariyya), 7337 (Khalwatiyya and Naqshbandiyya). In his *Mashâhid an-nâsik* he describes himself as "ash-Shattârî".

[69] Leiden Cod.Or. 7337, fol. 18b-19b. The first part of this *silsila* is unfortunately defective; it gives the following names: Abdullah bin Abdul Qahhar - Ibrahim - Muhammad Tahir al-Madani [Ibrahim al-Kurani's son and successor Abu Tahir Muhammad?] - abanya yaitu Muhammad Tahir [this can only refer to Ibrahim al-Kurani himself] - Ahmad al-Qushashi - Ahmad ash-Shinnawi, etc.

[70] Leiden Cod.Or. 7327. The *silsila* begins thus: Abdullah bin Abdul Qahhar - [M.b.] `Ali at-Tabari - `Abd al-Wahhab b. `Abd al-Ghani al-Hindi - Salih Hatib - Ahmad al-Qushashi - Ahmad ash-Shinnawi, etc.

[71] Leiden Cod.Or. 7337, fol 2b.

[72] Dances called Saman/Samman are also known in other parts of Indonesia. In Banten Saman is rapidly falling into disuse.

[73] On *debus* in Banten see J. Vredembregt, "Dabus in West Java", *BKI* 129 (1973), pp.302-20, and the observations below.

[74] Two copies of a Rifa`iyya *râtib* originating from Banten are kept in the Jakarta National Library (Ms A 218 and A 673; the second had apparently been mislaid when I tried to consult it). I saw an almost identical one in the village of Sèkong (see below). Photocopies of two other but similar Rifa`i manuscripts, from villages in Pandeglang where they still were being used, were kindly made available to me by Makmun Muzakki, a student of Arab literature who was preparing a thesis on the Rifa`iyya (*Tarekat dan debus Rifa'iyah di Banten*, skripsi Fak. Sastra, Universitas Indonesia, 1990). Muzakki mentioned a number of similar manuscripts he had not been allowed to photocopy.

[75] Another case is the village of Kadudodol, described extensively in

Muzakki, *Tarekat dan debus Rifa'iyah*, chapter 4.

[76] The name *almadad* given to *debus* here derives from the formula of invocation, in which the name of each saint is followed by *al-madad*, "assistance": *yâ sayyidî Ahmad ar-Rifâ`î al-madad shai'un li'llâh*, etc.

[77] Interview with Mbah Junaed, Sèkong, January 23, 1993.

[78] In one of the manuscripts of which I possess a photocopy, this is followed by the actual invocations: mostly the same list, except for the fact that some saints are invoked more than once, under various aspects. Ahmad Rifa`i, for instance, is invoked by his proper name but also as *mubarrid an-nâr* (the one who makes fire cold), *mulayyin al-hadîd* (the one who makes iron soft), and *mushaffî samm al-afâ`î* (the one who heals poisoning by snakes).

[79] Ahmad al-Badawi, Ibrahim ad-Dasuqi, Ahmad b. `Alwan and Abu Bakr al-`Aidarus. The place of the first three in the development of the Rifa`iyya is shown in the graph in Trimmingham, *Sufi orders*, p.47. The fourth is primarily known as the progenitor of his own family tarekat, the `Aidarusiyya, but appears also to have been a Rifa`i, for Nuruddin ar-Raniri traces his Rifa`iyya *silsila* through him and his descendants in India. See S.M. Naquib Al-Attas, *A commentary on the Hujjat al-siddiq* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, 1986), p.15.

[80] One or two names of lesser persons may follow, varying from manuscript to manuscript, and the list ends with "our father".

[81] In the invocations too, Zainal Ashiqin is invoked and Aliyuddin is not.

[82] The term *khalifa*, it is true, can have a whole range of other meanings and has in fact been used (in the combination *khalifatullah*, "deputy of God") as a proper royal title in some Indonesian Muslim kingdoms. In the present context, however, that makes little sense.

[83] Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, "Afkondigingen van Soeltans van Banten voor Lampoeng", *Djawa* 9 (1929), p.157. We cannot decide whether he was the first ruler of Banten to adhere to the Qadiriyya since we do not have the seals of his predecessors.

[84] Leiden Cod.Or. 1842 (cf Voorhoeve, *Handlist* p.463). The teacher was Muhammad b. `Ali at-Tabari, from whom Abdullah bin Abdul Qahhar had received the Shattariyya tariqa.

[85] J.J. Meyer, "Proeve van Zuid-Bantensche poëzie", *BKI* 39 (1890), pp.469-71.

[86] G.W.J. Drewes & R.Ng. Poerbatjaraka, *De mirakelen van Abdoelkadir Djaelani* (Bandoeng: A.C. Nix & C., 1938), pp.10-13.

[87] Interview, January 25, 1993.

[88] For statistics see J. Vredenburg, "The hadjj: some of its features and functions in Indonesia", *BKI* 118 (1962), 91-154; F.G.P. Jaquet, "Mutiny en hadji-ordonnantie: ervaringen met 19e eeuwse bronnen", *BKI* 136 (1980), 283-312.

[89] Van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah*, pp.89-96.

[90] Rawayan is the name of central Baduy settlement no longer existing; the name is frequently used as a synonym for Baduy. My informants associated *ngèlmu Karang* with the mountain Karang, but there was also, in the early 19th century, a non-Muslim village of that name outside the Baduy district proper, the inhabitants of which were culturally in between the Baduy and the Muslim Bantenese.

[91] This was different in the past: C. Poensen describes a *debus* performance he saw in 1886, in which a large spike appeared to pass through the body ("Het daboes van santri-Soenda", *Meded.Ned.Zend.Gen.* 32, 1888, pp. 253-9). Some present *debus Banten* players also use smaller skewers, or rather large needles, which they do pass through arms, shoulders, neck and tongue, though not deep beneath the skin. This is, however, at best an additional part of a *debus* performance and never the central act, which features invulnerability.

[92] Thus my own teacher, H.Tubagus Djaeni of Tanjung Priok (originally from Serang), the aged Aki Olot and Khatib, both of Kadomas (Pandeglang). I am indebted to Pak Djaeni for introducing me to his colleagues.

[93] Interview, Walantaka, January 23, 1993.

[94] Ki Amin's teachers were: `Umar b. Hamdan and `Ali Nahari in Mecca (well-known `ulama, who are, incidentally, not said to be Qadiriyya teachers by any other source), and in Baghdad a certain `Abd al-Karim and al-Baqi al-Baghdadi.

[95] These observations were made during two Thursday night visits to Cibuntu in 1984.

[96] Meijer, "Proeve van Zuid-Bantensche poëzie", p.470.