

HASAN MUSTAPA

ETHNICITY AND ISLAM IN INDONESIA

EDITED BY JULIAN MILLIE



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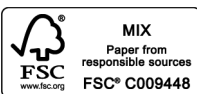
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FOREWORD

Martin van Bruinessen

This book is a long overdue tribute to a most remarkable man of letters, religious official, mystic and vernacular ethnographer *avant la lettre*, who has been undeservedly almost forgotten outside his native Priangan. Haji Hasan Mustapa was a towering figure of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who embodied a rich composite of Islamic scriptural knowledge, Sundanese literary and mystical tradition, and the *adat* or customs of highland West Java. In international academic circles, little is known of him apart from his collaboration with Snouck Hurgronje in Aceh as well as Java or his authorship of a comprehensive inventory, at Snouck's prodding, of Sundanese *adat*. In Indonesia too, he has never received wide recognition of his qualities as an intellectual giant bridging tradition and modernity, *adat* and Islam. This may be due at least in part, as Julian Millie has suggested elsewhere, to his association with Snouck Hurgronje and the Dutch colonial project, but some of Snouck's other associates (Sayyid Usman, Hoesein Djajadiningrat) have not been relegated to similar oblivion. Another factor no doubt is that Hasan Mustapa expressed himself exclusively in Sundanese or Arabic, and that his poetry was most appreciated in Sundanese aristocratic (*menak*) circles, who in Indonesia's Independence struggle supported the Pasundan state rather than the Sukarno-Hatta Republic and have been politically marginalised ever since. Later Sundanese literary figures, most notably Ajip Rosidi, have made efforts to generate a revival of interest in Hasan Mustapa, and among Sundanese intellectuals and

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academics there has been an ongoing if minor tradition of engaging with his writing and religious ideas. Broader recognition has not yet been forthcoming, but I venture to suggest that Haji Hasan Mustapa's work is potentially of contemporary relevance. Among the different responses to globalisation and resistance to Westernisation and Arabisation of Indonesian cultures there is a renewed interest in what some have glossed as *Islam Nusantara*, discourses and practices that are genuinely Muslim as well as authentically Indonesian. Haji Hasan Mustapa was definitely an authoritative and inspiring representative of *Islam Nusantara*.

My own encounter with Haji Hasan Mustapa and his religious ideas took place more than thirty years ago. I was living in Bandung and making efforts to become an anthropologist of Indonesian Islam. My research project was about economic marginalisation and Islamic radicalisation, but I soon became more interested in the various Sufi orders and Sundanese mystical movements in which some of my respondents were involved. Travelling through West Java and spending nights in various Islamic schools and places of pilgrimage, I thought I could discern a distinct Sundanese spirituality, which found expression in esoteric movements and local cults such as *Perjalanan* and *Sunda Wirwitan* but also in formal Muslim religiosity in West Java. A chain of holy graves and other sacred sites, stretching from Pamijahan on the south coast, Cirebon in the northeast and Banten in the west to pilgrimage sites closer to Bandung visited by my respondents, appeared to mirror the gradual penetration and indigenisation of Sufi teachings, mostly associated with the *Shattariyah* Sufi order. The concepts of divine emanation in seven grades of Being (*martabat tujuh*) and of man as an imperfect but perfectible manifestation of divine and prophetic attributes,

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expressed in oblique terms and suggestive diagrams in *Shattari* manuscripts, were embraced by Sufi orders as well as ostensibly non-Islamic esoteric movements. So was the idea that religion has different levels of understanding and obedience, the exoteric level of *syariat* (Ar: *shari'ah*), i.e. formal obligations and literal meanings, and the esoteric level of a higher reality or *hakékat* (Ar: *haqiqah*). The devotional repertoire of Sundanese spirituality includes pilgrimages to holy graves, self-purification in nightly bathing ceremonies, and various exercises to connect with the spiritual forces surrounding us.

The Darul Islam movement, which had aimed to establish a state based on the Shariah instead of the secular nationalist ideology of Pancasila, consisted of Islamist hardliners but was at the same time pervaded by this Sundanese spirituality. (I acquired a copy of the diary that had been kept by a Darul Islam fighter and was surprised by the mystical-magical worldview it revealed.) The Darul Islam was militarily defeated in 1962 but has persisted as a number of loosely connected underground networks, which have remained more closely attached to Sundanese Muslim traditionalism than to the Salafism of other Muslim radicals.

At the time of my research in Bandung, the Sundanese spiritual tradition found perhaps its most prominent embodiments in the *Qadiriyyah wan Naqsyabandiyah* Sufi order and the cult of Abdul Qadir Jailani (which Julian Millie later studied). And, as said, it had many other manifestations: in other Sufi orders, mystical cults, esoteric spirituality groups, and the everyday religiosity of ordinary village and urban neighbourhood communities. The only Muslim group that fiercely rejected this Sundanese spirituality and its devotional practices was the puritan reformist movement *Persis* (*Persatuan Islam*, The Islamic Association). There was a small *Persis* congregation

among my neighbours; their puritan attitude isolated them from the rest of the community, who spoke of them as having broken away from a common cultural heritage.

In fact, one of my key informants, Oemar Soeraatmadja, had in his youth been an active member of *Persis*, but following an encounter with a charismatic mystic teacher, D.S. Roekman, he had a conversion experience, became Roekman's acolyte, and helped him to organise his disciples into a Sufi association, *Paguyuban Mistik Islam Rasa Tunggal*, and acted as his exegete, explaining the master's Sundanese mystical teachings in terms of the Sufi tradition. ('In *Rasa Tunggal*, I represent *syariat*, and Roekman *hakékat*,' he said.) Pak Oemar introduced me not only to Roekman but also to several other representatives of the Sundanese spiritual tradition, ranging from orthodox Muslims to self-consciously heterodox *kebatinan* followers. Pak Oemar was also, I believe, one of the first to speak to me of Haji Hasan Mustapa and mention that he was praised by the orthodox as well as the heterodox as a man of deep knowledge, an authority of *syariat* as well as *hakékat*.

In one of our first discussions on Sufism and different levels of understanding, Pak Oemar hinted at the deeper meaning of the Muslim creed (*shahadah*) he had begun to grasp thanks to his teacher Roekman: at the *syariat* level, the prophet Muhammad was a historical figure in Mecca, distant from us in time, place and culture, but at the deeper level of *hakékat*, Muhammad is a spiritual entity that we can only know in and through ourselves. The devotions *Rasa Tunggal* taught included interiorising exercises for connecting with the latter True Muhammad. This resonates with well-known concepts of metaphysical Sufism, *wahdat al-wujud* (Unity of Being) and *haqiqah Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadan Reality). It is also

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reminiscent of the well-known anecdote of Haji Hasan Mustapa's challenging and confounding his learned colleagues over the true meaning of the Muslim creed (which is narrated by Julian Millie in the first chapter of this book).

Haji Hasan Mustapa was not interested in having many disciples and followers. Among orthodox Muslims there is no school of thought directly traceable to him. The self-described followers whom I did meet and could interview were older, Dutch educated men, who had been associated with the group *Galih Pakuan* and belonged to the heterodox end of the spectrum. Ema Bratakoesoema was a prominent promoter of Sundanese culture and the martial arts – I first met him through my martial arts contacts and later found out that several Sundanese intellectuals owed their higher education to their having been adopted by him. He had also sponsored the recent publication of one of Haji Hasan Mustapa's works, *Gendingan Dangding Sunda Birahi Katut Wirahmana* (1976). Oemar Soeraatmadja, who was his relative, suspected that Ema had tampered with the text to have it conform better to his own project of a not-so-Islamic Sundanese revival. (That was not Oemar's only suspicion: he also believed that Wangsaatmadja, Haji Hasan Mustapa's scribe in the latter part of his life, made his own adaptations and changes in the texts he was dictated and may even have passed off some of his own writing as Mustapa's. Wangsaatmadja had been active in the Theosophical Movement before he met Hasan Mustapa, and Oemar believed some of the later works show an influence of Theosophy.)

Ema Bratakoesoema and Djajasupena, the men from whom I heard most about Haji Hasan Mustapa, told me they had in fact been closer to a follower and close friend of his, Ajengan Bangkonol ('the religion teacher of Bangkonol'). Bangkonol, whose personal name

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was Abdul Hafid, had spent many years studying the exoteric and esoteric sciences of the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) tradition as an itinerant student in East Java and Madura and was well-versed in Islamic law as well as the invocation of supernatural support in healing and the martial arts. He led a small mosque and *pesantren* in the village of Cibangkonol, to the west of Bandung, and not long after Haji Hasan Mustapa's appointment as the chief Islamic official of Bandung the two men met. Hasan Mustapa questioned Abdul Hafid about the true meaning of the *shahadah* – the question referred to above and in Millie's first chapter. In a sudden flash of enlightenment, Abdul Hafid saw the old certainties on which his life had been based shattered and knew he had to make a radical break. He started behaving very eccentrically – 'like a madman,' Djajasupena said; but the eccentricities resembled those of some other holy men (*wali*) in Java. Abdul Hafid smashed the mosque's *bedug* to pieces (the large wooden drum used for marking the times of prayer) and sent the students in his *pesantren* home. 'He did not want to sell lies anymore,' Djajasupena explained; having grasped the *hakékat* of God's and Muhammad's existence, he no longer cared for the *syariat*. He left his house and wandered about, avoiding human company and spending the nights in a hut in the paddy fields, where he was visited by a mysterious guest from the spirit world. From that time on he would speak in his sleep, or go into a trance when awake and speak words that were only partly intelligible but foretold events that were to happen.

Abdul Hafid later resettled in the city of Bandung, where he remained known by the name of Ajengan Bangkonol, although he had abandoned his village and position as a teacher. He became one of Haji Hasan Mustapa's closest friends, as well as father-in-

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law to Wangsaatmadja, Hasan Mustapa's scribe. Ajengan Bangkonol and Wangsaatmadja, who survived Hasan Mustapa by many years, appear to have had a significant impact on the reception of the latter's ideas in self-consciously syncretistic upper class circles and may have downplayed the orthodox dimension of his religious views.

This was at least what I gathered from a conversation with Wangsaatmadja's youngest son Tjitjih, the only of his children who was seriously interested in Haji Hasan Mustapa's religious thought (and who kept a large though incomplete collection of his works). He told me that his father had come to Bandung from Subang as a schoolteacher in the early 1920s. With his background in Theosophy, he was fascinated when he heard the story of Ajengan Bangkonol's enlightenment and eccentric behaviour. This had in fact been what motivated him to approach Haji Hasan Mustapa and volunteer to become his scribe. He also sought Ajengan Bangkonol's company, gained his confidence and married his daughter, and remained close to him after Hasan Mustapa's death.

I told Tjitjih that I was interested in the genealogy of Sundanese esoteric movements and wondered whether Hasan Mustapa might have been the crucial link connecting the earlier *Shattariyah* Sufi tradition with these movements. Tjitjih strongly objected to this suggestion and insisted that, unlike his own grandfather Ajengan Bangkonol, Haji Hasan Mustapa always firmly remained within the boundaries of orthodox Islam. He was a master in expressing Islamic thought and concepts in the Sundanese language, but he never accommodated Sundanese pre-Islamic ideas in his religious worldview, Tjitjih insisted. He had an intellectual interest in heterodox beliefs and practices and described some in his book on the *adat* of the Sundanese, but always made his disagreement clear. He never

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dabbled in magic or recited mantras and formulas to call upon spirits, as Ajengan Bangkonol used to do and Tjitjih himself (like many young Sundanese) did in his youth. Tjitjih clearly felt protective of Haji Hasan Mustapa's legacy and did not want him to be associated with esoteric spirituality; he wanted him to be remembered as a Muslim intellectual. He was convinced that copies of Haji Hasan Mustapa's work that had been deposited in the National Museum were deliberately destroyed, and was concerned lest radical puritans might attempt to wipe out his work altogether.

I never had the chance to become more deeply involved in Hasan Mustapa's work. I never mastered Sundanese language and culture sufficiently to understand his poetry with its rich metaphors, or even the prose texts edited by Wangsaatmadja. Moreover, the vicissitudes of academic life steered my work into another direction. I remained convinced of the importance of Haji Hasan Mustapa's work to understanding the spiritual tradition of Indonesian Islam, and I have always wanted to return to it later in life. It is gratifying to see that his work has now been made more accessible with this important volume. It is the first time that we have now a major work by Hasan Mustapa in English translation, along with some helpful essays on the man and his work.

This book is an important contribution to scholarship about Haji Hasan Mustapa, and Julian Millie is to be congratulated for presenting this interesting figure for the first time to an international audience. He has put together a judiciously chosen set of essays that highlight various aspects of Haji Hasan Mustapa's religious thought and literary production. Pride of place is given, after Millie's introductory chapter, to a key work in Hasan Mustapa's oeuvre, which discusses the mystic path in Islam. The translation and annotation of this text alone are

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major feats. This is followed by an analysis of this work by Hasan Mustapa's leading exegete, Ahmad Gibson Albustomi, and a study of the Sufi doctrine of the seven grades of Being in Hasan Mustapa's poetry by Jajang A. Rohmana. These chapters clearly establish his place as a major representative of metaphysical Sufism embedded in its Indonesian cultural context. Among the other chapters we find a thoughtful essay by Ajip Rosidi, the senior Sundanese literary author and intellectual who has played a major role in reassembling Hasan Mustapa's oeuvre and transmitting his heritage as a man of letters and religious thinker to younger generations. It is good to see this early essay now in English translation.

The remaining chapters deal with various other aspects of Haji Hasan Mustapa's life and work: his attitude towards the colonial government, his attachment to Sundanese culture and his efforts to harmonise Islamic content and Sundanese form, the literary technique and use of various verse forms in his poetry. Together, the chapters of this book also constitute a good overview of the contemporary reception of Hasan Mustapa and his work by Sundanese intellectuals and academics. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and wish it a large readership.