

# PRAYING THROUGH THE SAINT’S HANDS: Discursive Tradition of the *Wawacan Seh* Ritual in Banten

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper deals with cultural negotiation and the process of change in the Wawacan Seh ritual in Banten. The Wawacan Seh (literally meaning: reading the manāqib of the Sheikh) is a ritual activity in which people gather to recite and listen to Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani’s manāqib (hagiography text). The text is written in an old form of the Banten-Javanese language, in a non-rhyming poetic form called macapat and is sang by a juru maos (reader) using a traditional chanting technique specific for these poems. The Bantenese perform this ritual to ngalap berkah (j/s. to seek God’s blessing) and to obtain kesakten (j/s. supernatural powers). They also mostly perform it in pre-Islamic ways, such as by using various sesajen (j. offerings) and they do it during every life-cycle ritual (or rites of passage). In Banten, this ritual has become the “main ingredient” for almost all of Bantenese’s performing arts and local religious traditions such as debus, rudat, beluk, pencak silat, and others. In practice, the ritual often invites reactions from Universalist Muslims who deem the ritual “non-Islamic”. The encounter of many traditions and cultures leads to discourse, and subsequently to new cultural negotiation. The changes of this ritual can be analysed from the new modified forms of the ritual such as maca silsilah, Manakiban, and istigosah kubro. The discourse involves some subjects (such as religious discourse in relation to the expression of local Islam between Localists - Moderates – Universalists). The changes in the Wawacan Seh ritual not only mark significant changes in an objective form of culture but also in the sense of ontological, social, and power relations inherent in it. These changes indicate that there are other, more systematic and structured changes that surround cultural agents, simultaneously at the level of social interaction, power relations, and structures of authority, as well as in terms of these agents’ worldview and their religious perspective.*

**Keywords:** local culture, ritual, discursive tradition, wawacan, sufism, Banten

## 1.0 Introduction

The *wawacan seh* tradition in Banten now becomes a folk tradition, which is detached from its origin, *tarekat* (sufi) tradition. It becomes inseparable part of many other traditions in Banten, such as *debus*, *rudat*, *beluk*, *rebo wekasan*, and other art performances which are operated by chanting *manāqib* Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani before or during the performance. (Vredendregt, 1973)

*Wawacan Seh* (literally meaning: reading the *manāqib* of the Sheikh) is a ritual activity in which people gather to recite and listen Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani’s hagiography (*manāqib*). People who perform it as a ritual believe that the magical power and piety of a *wali* (Muslim saint) can bring benefits. They also believe that a *wali* is God’s friend and an intermediary between “heaven” and “earth” (Chodkiewicz, 2010, p. 19) so that their supplication to God would be answered. Therefore, the *Wawacan Seh* ritual is not only performed regularly (either weekly, monthly, or annually) but also organized at certain occasions.

Of course, deciding to adopt the *Wawacan Seh* ritual in Banten as the object of my discussion and analysis has several reasons. One of them is that although it is not a typical Bantenese tradition—

because *Manakiban* rituals (the same ritual but in Arabic) can also be found elsewhere—but what makes it unique in Banten is that the reading performance still employs the traditional chanting technique (*macapat*) in the Banten-Javanese language and requires various offerings (*sesajen*). It has also become an added ritual for—or it could be said the main ingredient of—almost all other Islamic local traditions in Banten.

The existence of *wawacan* literature (the text of the *manāqib* written in Banten-Javanese) used in the performance of the *Wawacan Seh* ritual signifies the penetration and the cultural negotiations of Islamic teachings in Banten. The Islamic teachings and literature that came to Banten were not taken for granted by the local people. The literature was vernacularized initially in order to acquire a local taste so that the local community could easily accept it. It shows the serious efforts of the early Islamic preachers in Banten who adapted and vernacularized the Arabic *manāqib* book of Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani (further written as AQJ), *Khulāṣat al-Mafākhir*, into an old Banten-Javanese poem (*pupuh*). They vernacularized it in accordance with the complicated poetic formulas of the various meters of *Pupuh Macapat* writing technique, such as *Sinom*, *Kinanti*, *Asmarandana*, *Dandanggula*, *Pangkur*, *Lambang*, and *Durma*. Researchers later recognized this text of the *wawacan* as the oldest *wawacan* text about Sheikh AQJ written in the local language which then spread to other regions and became the basis for the adaptation of the same *wawacan* text in the Sundanese language in the Pasundan region. (Drewes & Poerbatjaraka, 1938; Millie, 2009)

In their local living tradition, the Bantenese use the *wawacan* as an intercessionary text during religious ritual readings performed for several intentions. For them, this ritual is part of their expression to infer their concept of sanctity. It is a form of the local Muslims' expression to honor the saint (*wali*) in the form of a ritual. Sanctity is an idea that exists in every religion. Yet, it is also a difficult topic to be grasp in the interrelationship between religion and culture. This difficulty is mainly because of the inseparability of expression between religious tenets and local culture practices. This kind of expression has provoked criticism by Muslims with a strong preference for uniformity in religious tenets and observances, and this preference generally insists on the strict insulation of religion from the vagaries of local cultures.

In terms of their response to the practice of the *Wawacan Seh* ritual, I categorize Bantenese Muslims into three categories: Universalist, Localist, and Moderate. Universalist Muslims deem the *Wawacan Seh* practice an un-Islamic ritual due to its strong connection with the local tradition. The recent wave of Islamic reformism in Banten has also exerted its influence on this ritual and that although it has been performed for a long time, it needs to be changed and negotiated to become more "Islamic". In addition, modernity characterized by rational thinking also influences this ritual performance.

The *Wawacan Seh*, which has been existing for centuries in Banten, has been growing, changing, and has been attached to other traditions. However, some traditions and art performances in Banten are derivative forms and became attached to this ritual, such as *debus*, *rudat*, *beluk*, *Rebo Wekasan*, and other art performances which include the chanting of the *manāqib* of Sheikh AQJ (*Wawacan Seh*) before or during performances. This condition has become a barrier for unifying one single voice of the implementation of Islamic *shari'a* in Banten because it has been attached to the tradition of society or even has become the distinctive local identity of Banten itself.

The implementation of Islamic *shari'a* is one of the ideals behind the formation of Banten province (separated from the province of West Java) in 2000. Nevertheless, the concept of the kind *shari'a* to be implemented—until now—is still not quite clear, in this case, Nur Ichwan says:

“... the concept of *sharī'ah*, as in any other regions, was not clearly defined by its supporters. Some understand it as *fiqh* (Islamic law) and some other as a comprehensive way of life. Some understand it

culturally as Islamic practices so far implemented by society and support cultural Islamisation through education and various cultural approaches and some others understand it structurally through state intervention in the forms of *shari'ah*-inspired bylaws (Peraturan Daerah/Perda) and other Islam biased decrees and policies.”(Ichwan, 2012, p. 167)

In fact, the uncertainty about the form of the *shari'a* to be implemented has drawn many responses from *ulama* regarding forms of the Banten Islamic tradition such as the *Wawacan Sch* and arts performances and traditions they see as derivative. On behalf of the implementation of the *shari'a* in this new province, different opinions and contestations are emerging between Universalist Muslims (those who want to implement the pure teaching of Islam in Banten) and Localist Muslims (those who want to keep the tradition of Islam as it is and been handed down in a process of many generations).

Therefore, unsurprisingly, the case of taking down the statue of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa in Kebon Jahe in Serang in 2003 and that of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin in Tangerang in 2009 due to worries they might become idols Bantenese people might worship did not invite so many polemical responses than the case of the *fatwa* (religious recommendation) of the *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI—Indonesian Council of Ulama) of All-Java and Lampung recommending that *debus* is *haram* (forbidden) because it contains elements of *shirk* (idolatry). This *fatwa* shocked the Bantenese people and invited reactions from various parties, including *ulama*, *santris* (Muslim students) and university students.

Since the *fatwa* was broadcasted in the mass media, a number of Banten university students gathered on the main street of a busy traffic zone in Ciceri, Kota Serang, on 18 August 2009, to protest the *fatwa*. The protest was based on the assumption that *debus* is part of the local Banten identity and has existed since the era of the Sultanate. The ritual and all other Bantenese Islamic traditions are closely related to the emergence and growth of the Sultanate of Banten, as well as to *tarekat* (Sufi Orders) and other Sufis traditions.

The traditions and art performances in Banten, such as *debus*, *rudat*, and *seni beluk Banten* have been included into the *Wawacan Sch* ritual, or are seen as popular expressions of the *keramat* (supernatural power) of Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani. The *Wawacan Sch* transformed into a folk tradition, even some seclude from its origin (the Sufis or the *tarekat* tradition). Formerly, the *Wawacan Sch* tradition originated from the *tarekat* tradition (Sufi orders, especially the Tarekat Qadiriyya and later Tarekat Qadiriyya wa Naqshabandiyya (furthermore to be called TQN).(Laffan, 2006, p. 94)

This ritual has a significant role for *tarekat* followers. They perform it to affirm their spiritual connection (*ribāt*) to the Saint, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani. In the Pesantren Suryalaya in Tasikmalaya, West Java, which is explicitly allied with the TQN, the *Manakiban* ritual is performed aggregately as a monthly ritual (on every 11<sup>th</sup> day of the Hijri months, it is also called *sebelasan*), and as an annual ritual (on every 11<sup>th</sup> of the month Rabi’ul Akhir in commemoration of the day of death of Sheikh AQJ—*haul*). The *Manakiban* consists of the recitation of the history of the Prophet Muhammad and the history of Sheikh AQJ, especially their virtues and miracles. (Mulyati, 2002, pp. 393–398; Soebardi, 1973, p. 226; Zulkifli, 2002, p. 75) However, in some areas in Banten, it has become a folk tradition that has seen several changes and modifications due to the historical interaction between Islam and local culture.

## 2.0 Literature Review

I have to say here that this paper is not the first work to discuss tradition in a general way or specifically about narrative texts used in ritual practices. Most of the research carried out by previous scholars was related to their interest in the texts as they might reveal the Islamic cultures and traditions in the Indonesian Archipelago. Many texts are actually not only to be read in the way we read today,

because they are intercessionary texts which are interesting not only because of their narrative contents but also because of their function. The Islamic community of the archipelago usually uses texts for specific ritual reasons. In a ritual, a text functions as an intermediary between the people and God.

Many scholars who are interested in these texts and make them the object of their studies used a philological approach. The 'Abd al-Qadir narratives have been examined by G.W.J. Drewes and Poerbatjaraka, (Drewes & Poerbatjaraka, 1938) Petrus Voorhoeve, (Voorhoeve, 1949) Ahmad, (Ahmad, 1988) Budhisantoso, (Budhisantoso, 1990) and Muhamad Hamidi. (Hamidi, 2003) These studies mostly focus on the contents of the texts and pay little or no attention to the ritual contexts in which they had, and continue to have, such value. The question that remains unasked in these studies is what actually happens during the recitation of these tales.

The supplication *Manakiban* ritual or the *Wawacan Seh* is a tradition that has an important role for the followers of the Tarekat Qadiriyya and Tarekat Qadiriyya wa Naqshabandiyya (TQN). In the *tarekat* tradition, this ritual is usually held monthly (i.e. every 11<sup>th</sup> day of the month of the Hijriyya calendar) and annually (i.e. every 11<sup>th</sup> of Rabi'ul Akhir, commemorating the death of Sheikh AQJ). Therefore, scholars who conduct research on the *tarekat* (TQN) usually also discuss the *Manakiban* tradition, to mention some of them: Sri Mulyati, (Mulyati, 2002) Zulkifli, (Zulkifli, 2002) Soebardi, (Soebardi, 1973) and Ajid Thohir. (Thohir, 2002) They discuss the *Manakiban* as a regular spiritual exercise performed by the followers of TQN, particularly in Pesantren Suryalaya, besides other rituals such as *dhikr* (a repeated remembrance of God) and *khataman* (reading a distinctive prayer or remembrance of God in the *tarekat* tradition).

Generally, these scholars do not reveal different information about the *Manakiban* ritual in Pesantren Suryalaya, even though each of them emphasized different aspects. Thohir, for instance, tells us that he was amazed at how fanatic *tarekat* followers treat their Grand Sheikh and how they were very eager to obtain Sheikh AQJ's blessing during a *manaqib* recitation. After having followed the ritual, he saw hope and optimism emanate from their faces, especially after they had kissed the hand of the Grand Sheikh. (Thohir, 2002, p. 85) This phenomenon is an emotional response of the followers in a *Manakiban* ritual, but unfortunately, Thohir did not discuss it further as a social phenomenon which is an expression of the TQN followers' perception of sainthood miracles (*keramat*) and divine grace (*baraka*). In this regard, I should mention Julian Millie's work, *Splashed by the Saint: Ritual Reading and Islamic Sanctity in West Java* which discusses the *Pangaosan Layang Seh* or Karamat reading ritual performed by Sundanese Muslims, particularly TQN followers on Bandung's northern fringe in West Java. Millie tried to answer a single question in *Splashed by the Saint*, and that is "What can the ritual reading and recitation of saintly narratives [based on written texts] tell us about Islamic sanctity and the place it occupies in the wider Islamic society?" (Millie, 2009, p. 16) In order to examine this religious observance empirically, the author looked not only at the text but also at the context of *karamat* reading, which is the recitation by TQN followers of some of the written religious texts about 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani in Bandung.

In conclusion, Millie gave an overview of how Islam's greatest saints, such as 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani, were welcomed into the people's prayers and the expectations people had because of this in West Java. He recounted the social history of the reading of 'Abd al-Qadir's *karamat*. Another important discussion here is that on the marginality of the *Pangaosan Layang Seh* and the increased popularity of the *Manakiban*. Millie surmises that this seems to have been caused by the former's tendency to grant authority to a local convention, whereas the latter does not appear purely and simply as a supplication for 'worldly ends', but instead blends this interpretation with others. (Millie, 2009, p. 179) However, the *Pangaosan Layang Seh* itself has also changed. Millie relates that it is now more accessible to Sundanese of all walks of life due to Pesantren Suryalaya's stipulations for *karamat*

reading.(Millie, 2009, pp. 122–123) In the past, only wealthy people performed *Pangaosan Layang Seh* because the performance was expensive.

In the context of Banten, I need to mention three researchers who have carried out research related to the *Wawacan Seh* practice: Athoullah Ahmad,(Ahmad, 1987) H.M.A. Tihami,(Tihami, 1991) and Ruby Achmad Baedhawiy.(Baedhawiy, 2009) In his work, Ahmad explains the *Wawacan Seh* tradition and its ritual in Banten, especially in Carenang village. He discusses three main subjects, i.e. the technical details of the *wawacan* ritual, its social and religious functions, and its influence on the religiosity of the Bantenese people. In contrast, Tihami's research is actually a study of the practice of the *Rebo Wekasan* tradition, in which the *Wawacan Seh* ritual is part of the tradition. Nevertheless, he describes the *Wawacan Seh* ritual in detail, especially regarding its symbolic meanings.

In his turn, Baedhawiy's research focuses on the practice of the *Wawacan Seh* ritual as performed in two districts, Baros and Gunung Kaler in Banten. In addition to a description of the ritual, he also analysed the social context in these two districts.

These three researchers have emphasized similar matters, especially in their conclusions about the *wawacan*'s tradition and ritual. They acknowledge that the social function of the ritual is that it is tool for social cohesion (it seems that they draw on Durkheim's and Parsons' theories to analyse its function) and they also use the Geertzian approach, especially for identifying the meaning of the ritual's symbols. What's interesting about these three types of research is that they display the data that existed at the time of their research. Ahmad and Tihami conducted research in the late 1980s and early 1990s when Banten was still under the administration of the Province of West Java, while Baedhawiy examined the *Wawacan Seh* ritual in 2007 when Banten had acquired its own provincial government and had been separated from the Province of West Java.

In contrast to the researchers' discussions above, this paper focuses on the ritual change in the framework of the Islamic discursive tradition. In contrast to Millie, this study will not only focus on *tarekat* followers who usually perform the ritual but also on non-followers, i.e. common people who perform the ritual. In the case of Banten, the ritual has become part of the folk tradition and common people who have never taken the oath of allegiance (*bai'at*) of the *tarekat* also perform it. In contrast with Ahmad, Tihami, and Baedhawiy, this research not only discusses the ritual practices and their social function but also analyses the cultural and social transformations, as well as the ritual change.

### **3.0 Method**

This study combines theoretical and empirical investigations. In terms of data collection, this study employs several research methods and techniques. The sources for these investigations were collected through bibliographical study, fieldwork as well as observation.

Before conducting my field research, I first made a bibliographical study to enrich my data. During my field research, I checked these data to get a more comprehensive picture. During my fieldwork I obtained many new data regarding the ritual changes that existed in the community.

### **4.0 Banten, *Tarekat* and Early Formation of the *Wawacan Seh* Tradition**

The high honor of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and the forms of ritual associated with him are now widespread in almost all regions in Indonesia. The origin of the beliefs and rituals which is associated with the saint is not clear, probably due to the lack of documentation. Bruinessen speculates that the traditions and practices associated with *tarekat* may have begun from the sultanate court itself (Banten Sultanate), subsequently it spread into a popular tradition in the general. It's spreading widely in the public space changed 'Abd al-Qadir into a saint with a local character, as well as the ritual practices associated with him.(Bruinessen, 2000, p. 367)

The historical phases of Islamization in Banten proved the acculturation process. Based on outsider scholars' perspective, Banten is known as an area that has a religious population. (Bruinessen, 1999, p. 153) Although, the process of Islamization in Banten, or the archipelago in general, still evokes many speculations and disputations among scholars. (Alatas, 1985; G.W.J. Drewes, 1968) However, it is clear that the process of Islamization did not occur in a single way. Trade and political alliance between the merchant and the sultanate played an important role. (A. Johns, 1955) Some historical records stated that Islam is disseminated through wars. (Hurgronje, 1973, p. 13) The Bantenese people were known as the most rebellious society in Indonesia in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. From 1813 until 1890, there were no less than 80 uprisings in this area. (Ali, 2007, p. 1) The uprisings against Dutch Colonial were mostly led by religious figures: *kiyai* (religious teacher) and *mursyid tarekat* (*tarekat* leader). Both of these figures frequently encouraged their disciples or followers to perform *dhikr* (remembrance of God) and certain *wirid* (litany) to obtain magical power (*kesakten*) and invulnerable body from weapons attack, as a provision against the Dutch colonialists. (Kartodirdjo, 1966)

The Sufis' influences through their *tarekat*'s network then played a significant role in the process of Islamization. (Bruinessen, 1994, p. 4; Jones, 1961, p. 23) *Tarekat*, as a Sufi order or Sufi brotherhood organization, is a Muslim community that has an ability to adapt easily to any other communities and cultures. This ability led the *tarekat* becoming an effective instrument for spreading Islam across the archipelago. (Howell, 2016, pp. 702–703; A. H. Johns, 1995, pp. 169–183; Rahman, 1979, pp. 150–166) It was an obvious fact that most areas in Indonesia, or many other nations such as Africa and Central Asia, have been Islamized by the Sufis, which have taught them the foundations of Islam, such as love each other, simplicity, and believe in God, without using any sophisticated logical thinking or applying strict Islamic law. (Arnold, 1896) In order to Islamize archipelago effectively, the Sufis also used local language instead of Arabic. (A. Johns, 1955, pp. 70–72) They taught how to respect the Prophet Muhammad, even in many ways it typically looks like a cult. (Hurgronje, 1973, pp. 40–42) Sufis narrated the Prophet Muhammad mostly as a mystical and mythical figure rather than a historical figure. They highly praised the Prophet as excessive songs produced and scattered across the archipelago evidenced it.

Before Islam massively came into the archipelago, the indigenous people have paid a great attention to the mystical and magical things. It related to their cosmological worldview. The population, in general, had a conviction that the center of the cosmic played an important role in their daily lives. They believe that the cosmic centers have supernatural powers; to mention some of them are ancestral graves, mountains, caves, oceans, and forests as well as certain other places that were considered as sacred sites. Visiting sacred gravesites to obtain supernatural power has become a part of religious practices in this area since a long time ago. They visited these places not only for worshiping, but also for obtaining and seeking supernatural insight (*ngelmu*), the magical power (*kesakten*) and political legitimacy. (Woodward, 2011, pp. 77–84)

After embracing Islam, people changed their cosmological worldview. As a result, Mecca and Medina have become their new cosmic center orientation as the source of spiritual insight (*ngelmu*), magical power (*kesakten*), as well as political legitimacy. (Bruinessen, 1999, pp. 41–54) In addition, they considered Arabic literature as a higher level of magic and efficacy rather than local literature. Moreover, the use of *tarekat* as social networks, supernatural power sources, *keramat* sources appeared conspicuous in the period of fighting against Dutch colonial. (Kartodirdjo, 1966)

The existence of popular stories about the *keramat* (spiritual power) of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in the community shows the broad influence of the existence of *tarekat Qadiriyya* in the region. This *tarekat* is recognized as the first *tarekat* disseminated in the archipelago, as well as *tarekat Naqshabandiyya*. (Bruinessen, 1989, p. 69) The founding fathers of the Banten Sultanate were the followers (or even the caliphs) of *tarekats*. It was quite possible that Sunan Gunung Jati (Sharif Hidayatullah), and his son, Mawlana Hasanuddin, were members of the *tarekat Qadiriyya*, as well as the Naqshabandiyya in the early time of the Banten Sultanate. His success story of Islamizing eight

hundred local Hindu priests was inseparable from his efforts of demonstrating the supernatural power and the invulnerability skill influenced by the *keramat* of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani.

In the seventeenth century, however, Banten was an important area of international trade. In this case, Ricklefs says: 'With the help of the English, Danes and Chinese, the Bantenese traded with Persia, India, Siam, Vietnam, China, the Philippines and Japan'.(Ricklefs, 2001, p. 101) These conditions influenced Banten in terms of political and religious. Since then, the nobles of Banten Sultanate established a relationship with Mecca and Medina. Abu al-Mafakhir 'Abd al-Qadir, the Banten ruler at the time, and his envoys in the 1630s recorded his visit to Mecca,(Djajadiningrat, 1983, pp. 196–197) and from that time the Sultan of Banten claimed to have the legitimacy of his power from the Meccan ruler.(Bruinessen, 15 C.E., p. 167) In addition, the good relationship between Banten and Haramayn (Mecca and Medina) and the Sultan excitement to the Islamic sciences has turned Banten into the important central for Islamic studies in Java and even in the archipelago that was visited by many people who want to learn, as well as Sufis.(Azra, 2004, p. 95)

In the time of the next Sultan, i.e. Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (r.1651-1682), the Sultanate of Banten was in its heyday. In that time, the presence of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari has given many influences, especially in the political and religious fields. Bruinessen called him as one of the two Great Scholars in Banten, besides Sheikh 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Qahhar al-Bantani. Both are the most influential and prominent ulama in the Sultanate of Banten which respectively came from different periods.(Bruinessen, 1999, pp. 267–270) Yusuf al-Makassari was highly respected ulama and was the *murshid* of the five *tarekats*, i.e. the Khalwatiyya, Naqshabandiyya, Shattariyya, Qadiriyya, and Ba'alwiyya.(Bruinessen, 1999, p. 268)

During the reign of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, the Sultanate of Banten confronted the colonial government. At the time, the role of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari for the Sultanate of Banten was very significant in leading the *jihad* against the colonial government and in igniting the spirit of *jihad* to his followers.(Bruinessen, 1992, p. 35; Hamid, 1994, p. 99) Bruinessen also said that Yusuf al-Makassari taught the invulnerability skill to his followers and the Banten sultanate military through *tarekat* exercises.(Bruinessen, 1999, p. 268) I assume that his ability in the Islamic sciences and his involvement with the *tarekats*, Yusuf al-Makassari influenced not only on interconnectivity between the Banten sultanate and the *tarekat* but also the Banten sultanate and the popularity of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani who was believed as the greatest saint and explicitly most referred for invulnerability skills. In fact, in order to convert as many Bantenese Hindus and Buddhists as possible to the Muslim cause to support the war against the infidel Dutch, the sultanate's officials accepted the practice of local traditions, thus creating syncretism in Banten. This led to the emergence of an amalgamation of the *tarekats dhikr* and litanies (*awrād*) techniques alongside local magical formulae (*jangjawokan*), creating more powerful invulnerability skills to use against the Banten sultanate's enemy.

In the further period, the relationship between the Sultanate of Banten and the *tarekat* tradition was still preserved. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the *tarekat* tradition acquired a very clear form during the reign of Sultan Abu Nasr Muḥammad 'Arif Shifa Zayn al-'Ashiqin (r. 1753-1777). During his reign, the Sultan was noted to get an *ijaza* from several *tarekats*, even he was a *khalifa* of the Qadiriyya order, 'Alwaniyya, Naqshabandiyya, and Rifa'iyya. It can be seen from his epithets attached to his name, al-Khalīfa al-Sulṭān ibn al-Sulṭān Abū al-Naṣr Muḥammad 'Arifīn al-'Ashiqīn al-Qādirī al-'Alwānī al-Rifā'ī al-Bantānī al-Shāfi'ī.(Millie, 2009, p. 23) The reason he wanted to be the *khalifa* of the Qadiriyya and the Rifa'iyyah orders was because of his association with the *keramat* of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani and Sheikh Ahmad al-Rifa'i who were recognized by traditional Islam.(Bruinessen, 2000, pp. 361–395; Hurgronje, 1906, p. 249)

Moreover, among the Sultans of Banten that has much attention to the writing and copying Islamic texts was the Sultan Abu Nasr Muhammad 'Arif Shifa' Zayn al-'Ashiqin.(Muhammad, 1980, p. 27) In the catalog written by R. Friederich and L.W.C. van den Berg, the name of Sultan Abu Nasr Muhammad 'Arif Shifa' Zayn al-'Ashiqin is much mentioned. The sultan's name listed on page 18, 24, 42, 77, 99, 105, and 123.(Berg & Friederich, 1873, pp. 18, 24, 42, 77, 99, 105, 123) The statements in



those pages indicate him as the Sultan of Banten who loved and obsessed to knowledge. The Sultan used to ask someone to copy the Arabic texts, to write book or treatise, and to translate it into a local language.

It has been debated among scholars on when the ritual reading of *wawacan seh* was first done in Banten. Drewes and Poerbatjaraka argue that the ritual has appeared in Banten since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This argument based on their language analysis utilized in several *manaqib* texts which are scattered in several places in Banten and Cirebon. According to them, the language used is the ancient Java language of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. (Bruinessen, 2000, p. 366)

Martin van Bruinessen disputes the argument and identifies it as an exaggerated and highly speculative argument. According to him, the *manaqib* reading tradition became popular in Banten around the 1880s along with the intensity of the Qadiriyya *tarekat*. Explaining the process of how the tradition of reading is popular in Banten, Bruinessen refers to the popular practice of the Sheikh of the Qadiriyya *tarekat* which translates and vernacularizes the various texts of *manaqib* into several local dialects in which his followers live. Yet, Bruinessen's argument leaves behind a number of issues, such as when was the first text being translated and vernacularized into the local language of Banten? Who is Sheikh taking the initiative to do it? It is difficult to find the answers of these two questions in Drewes and Poerbatjaraka's works as well as in Bruinessen's own works, because the historical premise of whether the Qadiriyya *tarekat* appears is in line with the development of the *manaqib* reading tradition or not.

Although still a speculation, Julian P. Millie tried to make an explicit answer to these questions. According to him, the palace of the Banten sultanate is a place of translating Arabic texts into local languages, including the text deals with *keramat*, glory and struggle of the saint, i.e. Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. Millie explained that in the catalog of manuscripts compiled by Voorhoeve, there is a translated text of Hikayat Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's. This manuscript is an adaptation from *Khulāṣat al-Mafākhir* written by Abdullah b. As'ad al-Yafi'i (1298-1367). The manuscript is allegedly derived from the library collection of the Banten Sultanate which was destroyed by Deandels (1913). The manuscript was brought to Batavia (now: Jakarta) and became one of the collections of the *Bataviaasch Genootschap* in 1835. According to Voorhoeve, as quoted by Millie, the manuscript was written in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. (Millie, 2009, pp. 24–26)

To affirm his argument, Millie stated that the Banten Palace was a very important place in the transmission of *manaqib* Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. The Banten Palace is also an ideal environment in which authoritative Arabic texts were translated and adapted into the local language for the benefit of religion and science. (Millie, 2009, p. 25) In short, the oldest *manaqib* text in Banten was written in Javanese in 1789, while the oldest *manaqib* text in Sundanese was written in 1882. The text of which is in Sundanese is mentioned as a copy and translation of the Javanese one. (Millie, 2009, p. 26)

## 5.0 The Practice of *Wawacan Seh*

Bantenese people generally perform this ritual when they have certain objectives or intentions, such as: 1) *Slametan* or *tasyakuran* (thanksgiving). In this moment, the *wawacan seh* is performed when they finished building houses or after buying new vehicles, such as car, boat and motorcycle. It also called as *ngeruwat* (throwing bad luck and hoping for blessing). 2) Before the celebration (*walimahan*), such as before celebrating circumcision (*walimat al-khitan*), before wedding ceremony (*walimat al-urush*), and before traveling (*walimat al-safar*). 3) On art performance, such as on performing *beluk*, *rudat*, *pencak silat*, *terbang gede*, and *debus*. In these moments, the *wawacan seh* is chanted during the show. In the performance of *debus*, for instance, the *wawacan seh* is chanted as a ritual invoking the magical power and protection from God through the hands of Sheikh, especially from Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani as known as the King of the Saints in Islamic Sufis tradition. 4) In hazardous condition, such as when they get the plague. 5) Other objectives, such as when they have a *nadzar* (vow to do something if prayer is granted), *mulud fatimah*, and *rebo wekasan*.



Generally, the *wawacan seh* ritual took place at night, although it also could be performed in the morning or afternoon depending on the request of the host. Before performing the *wawacan seh* ritual, the host must provide a kind of "offerings". As I observed in the Carenang district, when H. Kartawi, a local figure, just bought a new car, he was about to carry out the *tasyakuran* (thanksgiving) by performing the ritual. Before the event that was held at night, or *ba'da 'isha*, H. Kartawi, which is assisted by his wife and relatives, is busy to prepare ritual equipment, such as *sesajen* before performing the ritual. *Sesajen* is the most basic offerings, such as cups of coffee (bitter and sweet), cups of tea (bitter and sweet), cups of milk, cups of mineral water, seven types of flowers, seven types of meals (known as *perwanten*), cigarettes, *menyan* (incense) and *perpuyan* (container to burn incense), basin containing water and coins. As a requirement of the ritual, *juru maos* (the ritual guide) usually checks the *sesajen*, whether it is completed or not, because it is believed that if it is not completed it will be disturbed magically during the ritual.

In addition to providing "offerings" as a condition for the ritual, H. Kartawi also must provide beverages such as cups of coffee and tea, food, fruits and cigarettes for the guests. The invited guests are generally neighbors adjacent to his house. Dishes are served in the midst of the guests who sit in a circle. So everyone can reach the dishes and drinks provided during the ritual performance.

There are steps of the ritual: first, the host conveys the objective and purpose; second, *juru maos* reads *tawassul* (supplication to the Saints and Sheikhs); and the last, *juru maos* recites the text of *Manaqib*. The details of these steps are as follows:

### 5.1 Conveying purpose

After the invited guests fill the room, the place where the ritual will be held, the *wawacan seh* ritual is opened with a brief welcome from the host or who represents it (usually his or her relatives). In the brief speech, after greeting, the host thanked the guests for their presence at the event. Afterwards the host expressed the intent and purpose of organizing the *wawacan seh* ritual and asking the guests to participate pray for it. In my observation on the ritual, before ending his short speech, H. Kartawi apologized to the audience, when there was a shortage in the banquet and lack of assistance in welcoming. The common sentences often spoken by host are: "*mudah-mudahan, semoga, moga-moga*" (hopefully). For the host, those words imply his expectation of the success of the business, the work to be or is being carried out, as well as to expect the sake of the new car he bought.

### 5.2 Reading *tawassul*

One of the important parts of the *wawacan seh* ritual is the recitation of *tawassul* (supplication), where the host wants his will, purpose and intention to receive the support and help of the ancient and noble souls of the spirits by performing this ritual. The spirits are believed to have the power to influence human life in this world. In essence, they also believe that the spirits do not have full authority. But because of the sanctity of his soul, he has closeness to the source of absolute authority (Allah), so that his *keramat* can be distributed to human beings on this earth. In this case, *tawassul* is reciting *al-Fatihah* to the spirits who are believed to be connected to God. The series of the spirits who are often given the recitation of *al-Fatihah* in this ritual are as follows:

- The prophet Muhammad, his family member and companions.
- The Apostles and Prophets of God, the angels, the martyrs, the pious people and his companions who always accompany them.
- The Imams and their followers, the great and holy scholars who are guided throughout the world.
- The founders and sheikhs of *Tarekat* Qadiriyyah and Naqsyabandiyah and followers of all tarekat, especially to the Sultan of the Guardians and the axis of the world, i.e. Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Junaid al-Bagdadi, Sheikh Ma'ruf al-Karkhi, Sheikh Habib al-Ajami, Sheikh Hasan al-Basri, Sheikh Ja'far al-Sadiq, Sheikh Yusuf al-Hamdani, Sheikh Abu Yazid al-Bistami, Sheikh Bahauddin al-Naqshabandi, Imam al-Rabbani, the sultans of Banten,

Sheikh Abdullah Mubarrak bin Nur Muhammad, his descendants and relatives and those belonging to their *tarekat* genealogy.

- Our parents, teachers, and relatives.
- For all believers and Muslims around the world, especially to...(mentioning the name desired by the host)

### 5.3 Reciting the text of *manaqib*

The core event of the *wawacan seh* is the reading of *manaqib* by *juru maos* (ritual guide). *Manaqib* Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani contains the story of his lifetime and the extraordinary events he experienced. These stories are regarded as signs of his *keramat* given by God. As explained earlier, there are several versions of the number of story episodes in translated *manaqib* texts used by Bantenese in the ritual. Each episode has a different topic. Therefore, some *juru maos* acknowledge that the reading of the *manaqib* is not always to read completely (53 episodes), but adapted to the host's request. In the event of welcoming celebrations (*hajatan*), such as weddings or circumcisions that are performed the day before the event, the recitation of *manaqib* is performed usually goes on from *bakda isya* (after 'Isha prayer) to dawn (or about 9.00 PM until 3.00 AM) by completing all existing episodes. However, when combined with other *slametan* events, as in the case of H. Kartawi's *tasyakuran*, the *manaqib* reading lasted briefly, for about 1 until 1.5 hours.

Although what they read is the hagiography of Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, but they mean by this is "his presence", or the Sheikh is present when the ritual takes place. According to Salim, they believe that Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani is *wali* (saint) who is very close to Allah, so that whatever his request will be granted. In addition, Sheikh 'Abd al-Qadir is believed to have supernatural powers given by God, so that all spirits and evil spirits will be defeated and subject to it. As a *wali*, who is very close to God, as well as classified as a martyr, therefore even though he is dead but his soul is still alive and ready to help those in need of help. His spirit has become a holy spirit called *keramat*. Therefore, if people ask God through his hands, the Banten people call it "ngende keramate" (asking God through his *keramat*).

In line with Salim, Sukri from the district of Petir, states that the *wali* is Allah's lover who has been given some glory or sacred as a sign of his saintliness. According to him, one of the functions of *wali* is to be an intermediary to communicate between God, the All-Mighty, and the weak-minded (*dho'if*), human being. He believes that God's blessings are not necessarily attainable by ordinary people because of the immense distance they have with God, so it is necessary in this case to be the bridge between the two. This role is played by *wali*. That is, *wali* has an important role in determining someone gets a blessing so he can be guarded and safe.

## 6.0 Vernacularization and Reproduction of the Text

The large number of works that contain Sheikh AQJ's hagiography as stated above are proof that AQJ is a very popular Muslim in the Islamic world. In addition to the works I mentioned above, there are still many other AQJ hagiographies in languages other than Arabic, such as in Turkish, Urdu, English, Indonesian, as well as Indonesian local languages. The works about Sheikh AQJ written by Indonesian *ulama* (both in Arabic, Indonesian, or in local Indonesian languages) are often versions of adaptations of earlier *manāqib* texts written in Arabic. The most influential Arabic *manāqib* and the most widely used by Indonesian writers are 1) *Khulāṣat al-Mafākhir*; 2) *Lujjayn al-Dānī*, and 3) *Tafriḥh al-Khātir*.

In fact, apart from these three Arabic-language *manāqib* works, there are many vernacularizations and translations written by Indonesian scholars. I will focus on some of the works that circulated widely and came to be used in the ritual tradition of the *manāqib* reading or the *Wawacan Seh* in Banten. Some of these works are:

1. *Ghawth al-Dānī fī Wawacan Syekh Abdulkadir Jaclani* (written in Banten-Javanese language) it was written by Muhammad Zuhdi Alawi bin Ali Ahmad al-Fasyuni (w. 1982) of Cisantri, Baros, Serang.
2. *Kitāb Wawacan Sch Abdulkadir al-Jaclani Qaddasallahu Sirrahu al-‘Azīz* (written in Banten-Javanese language) it was written by Khayruddin bin Muhammad Salwan from Kampung Bagawati, Serang, Banten.
3. *Manāqib al-Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī bi al-Lughat al-Sundawiyya* (written in Sundanese) it was written by Ahmad Khaerudji from Kampung Cikadu Tenjo, Serang, Banten.
4. *Tijān al-Jawāhir fī Manāqib al-Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir* (written in Sundanese) it was written by H. Muhammad Juwaeni bin Haji Abdurrahman from Parakan Salak, Cianjur, Jawa Barat.
5. *Al-Nūr al-Burhānī fī Tarjamat al-Lujjayn al-Dānī* (written in Arabic with Javanese annotations) by Muslih ibn Abdurrahman al-Maraqqi of Mranggen, Jawa Tengah.
6. *Jawāhir al-Ma’ānī fī Manāqib al-Sheykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī* (written in Arabic) it was written by haji Ahmad Jauhari Umar from Pesantren Darussalam, Pasuruan, Jawa Timur.

The first three are adaptations from *Khulāṣat al-Mafākhir* of al-Yafi’i, the fourth work (*Tijān al-Jawāhir*) is an adaptation of *Tafriḥ al-Khāṭir* by al-Irbili, and the last two works which were written in Arabic (with Javanese annotations) are adaptations of a more recently written book, namely *Lujjayn al-Dānī* of al-Barzanji. It seems that the adaptations in Banten-Javanese have always been based on al-Yafi’i’s book while the works written more recently are mostly versions of al-Barzanji’s work.

The first two works written in the Banten-Javanese language appear to be works that were copied by their authors from a *Wawacan Sch* book that was written anonymously and was studied by Drewes and Poerbatjaraka. This can be seen from the language which was used which seems to be old Banten-Javanese which is rarely found in Banten society today. This is in line with the recognition of Hj. Bahriyah, K.H. Muhammad Zuhri’s wife, who copied the *Gawth al-Dānī*. She said that the *Gawth al-Dānī* was not her husband’s work but a manuscript left by his father, K.H. Ali Ahmad. Zuhri re-wrote and reproduced the manuscript in wood print in as many as 1000 copies per year for Tuan Qosim, the owner of a bookstore in Pasar Serang (the traditional market of Serang). Muhammad Zuhdi’s did this, according to Hj. Bahriyah, to earn money to pay for the operation costs of the *pesantren* he fostered throughout his life. K.H. Muhammad Zuhri himself died in a traffic accident on July 29, 1982, at the age of 51. (Ahmad, 1987, pp. 28–29)

It is interesting to look at the title Muhammad Zuhri gave to his version: *Gawth al-Dānī fī Wawacan Syekh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī al-Mu’tabar wa al-Mustafad li al-Istighāthah bi Ahl al-Bantanī*. The sentence “*li Ahl al-Bantanī*” (*a.* for the Bantenese) explains that the *Wawacan Sch* ritual is a tradition that has been around for a long time in Banten. In this book, Zuhri openly states that his work is an adaptation of al-Yafi’i’s *Khulāṣat al-Mafākhir*.

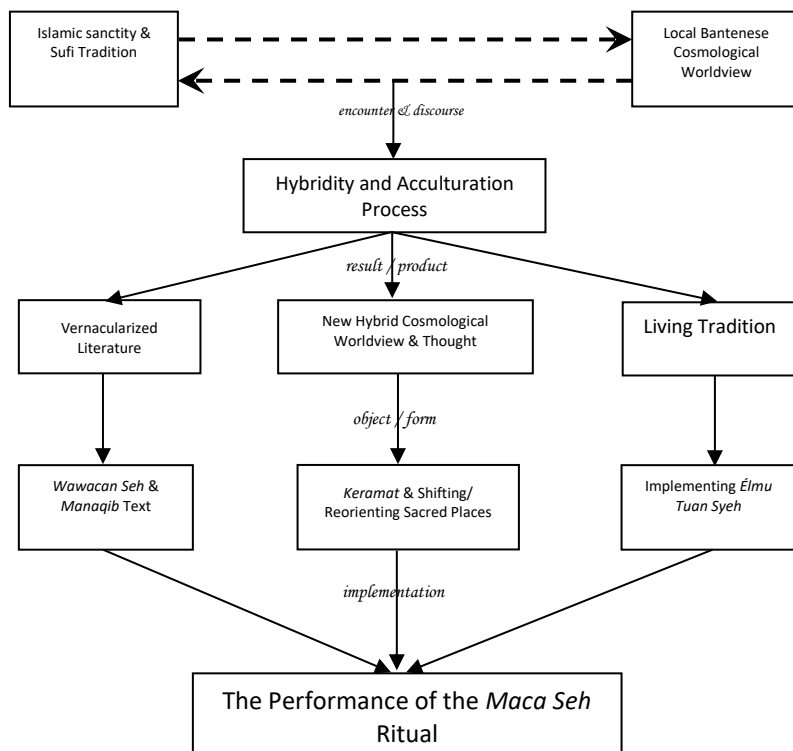
In his work, Zuhri begins with the reading of the *hadrot* lineage, namely the reading of “*ilā ḥaḍarati...*” and continues with an invitation to recite *Surah al-Fātiḥah* together and address it to the Prophet Muhammad, *al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidūn* (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali), the Prophet’s family, Hasan and Hussein (grandchildren of the Prophet), righteous saints (*al-awliyā’ al-ṣāliḥūn*), followers of the teachings of the Prophet (*tābi’īn*), *al-Quṭb al-Rabbānī wa al-Gawth al-Ṣamadānī*, Muhy al-Din ‘Abd al-Qadir, Ahmad al-Rifa’i, Maulana Ibrahim al-Khalīfah, and both parents (*ābāinā wa ummahātinā*), and then to state one’s intention (*khuṣūṣan li ṣāḥibi hādhan-niyyah*). It ends with the sentence *li al-salāmah wa al-‘āfiyah*.

Furthermore, the book includes a preamble in which Zuhri explains that it is adapted from al-Yafi’i’s *Khulāṣat al-Mafākhir*. As with many other works, this book also opens with an introduction

of the Sheikh and his kin lineage which shows that he is a descendant of the Prophet; his family names (including that of his aunt, Aisha, who was also his teacher, his famous brother, Abi Ahmad Abdillah, his well-known children such as 'Abd al-Razzaq, 'Abd al-Jabbar, Isa, Ibrahim, and Muhammad), his teachers (in the fields of Qur'anic studies, theology, *fiqh*, language and literature, and Sufism), as well as about supernatural power (*keramat*) to which the readers and listeners of the *Wawacan Sch* reading ritual pay special attention.

Almost all adaptations have the same sequence and begin with the reading of the “*hadrot*” or *tawassul*, and continue with the life story of the sheikh, starting from a description of his genealogy, intellectual genealogy and *tarekat*, extraordinary stories, the time of his studies, becoming an *ulama*, being the Pole of the Saints (*quṭb al-awliyā*), and his death. They usually end with prayers and the *al-Fātiḥah* or the *tawassul* for the Prophet, the family of the Prophet, the companions of the Prophet, the angels and all the prophets, the martyrs in the way of Allah (*shuhadā*), the saints (*awliyā*), pious people (*shāliḥīn*), the followers of the Prophet and those after him (*tābiʿīn wa tābiʿ al-tābiʿīn*), Hasan and Hussein, Khadijah al-Kubra, Fatimah al-Zahra, Aisha al-Ridho, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani, Abi Yazid al-Busthami, Abi al-Qasim al-Junayd, Baha'uddin al-Naqshabandi, both parents, *muʿminīn* and *muʿmināt* (*a.* men and women believers), and Muslims.

Each of these works explains the benefit one gets from reading a *manāqib* for those who read it, especially in Arabic adaptations such as *al-Nūr al-Burhānī* and *Jawāhir al-Maʿānī*. What distinguishes these works, besides the language used (Arabic, Banten-Javanese, and Sundanese), is the number of stories they offer and how they are told. The number of episodes (saga) presented in the *manāqib* translations of *Khulāṣat al-Mafākhīr* varies. One text contains 7 sagas, the other 10, and yet others 40 sagas while the adapted and translated version of the *Tafīrīkh al-Khāṭir* offers 53 episodes. The books in Banten-Javanese and Sundanese (books 1-4) are poems written in *macapat* meters. The transition of one canto to the next is clearly indicated in the text so that *juru maos* (*pewaca*/person who leads the *Wawacan Sch* ritual) can easily adjust the melody of the canto he or she reads. The fact that the texts are in *macapat* poetic form indicates that they are vernacularizations of Arabic versions into the local traditions called *dangding* or *macapatan* and form an embodiment of a popular oral/vocal art tradition in Banten.



An explanation of the process of the formation of the *Wawacan Seh* tradition can be seen in the diagram in which I illustrate that the appearance of the *Wawacan Seh* ritual tradition began with an encounter between two traditions or cultures, namely the teachings of Islam, especially the Sufi tradition (or more specifically the sainthood of Sheikh AQJ) and the Bantenese existing tradition and cosmological worldview. Both cultures interact in the hybridization and acculturation process which produced three main products, namely literature, a new worldview and

thoughts about reality, and a new living local tradition.

The literature that was produced by the encounter between the two cultures is the vernacularized form of the *manāqib* text of Sheikh AQJ. This text is highly unique because it was written by someone who wanted Islam to be accepted by the Bantenese community with a local taste. This vernacularized text was compiled by way of translating it from Arabic into the Banten-Javanese language following the very strict formulas of the *pupuh macapat*. It was thus not just translated but also interpreted and adapted in the form of *macapat* poetry which requires a strict adherence to poetic formulas that were already known among the local communities.

In order to give it a very strong local taste, in this vernacular literature almost the entire Arabic vocabulary was translated into the local lexicon as it was known at the time. For example, the word “Allah” is translated by the word “*Sang Hyang Widhi*”. Because this literature was written in *macapat* poetic form, these texts were not treated as we treat books today. The vernacularized text became an intercessionary literary product or text which was also used for ritual reasons, in this case, in the *Wawacan Seh* ritual.

The second product of the cultural encounter was a new hybrid cosmological worldview and way of thinking. It was a new way of looking at reality and a shift to a new paradigm over sanctity in the perspective of society. This new perspective is called *keramat*. *Keramat* was actually a new way for the people to see the reality of holiness and sanctity. A long time ago, before Islam came to Banten, the people believed that old and large trees, mountains, caves, seas, forests, and other places had supernatural sacred powers. Other than places, they also believed that ancestor spirits had magical powers that could bring disaster or good luck and they were called *Ki Buyut* or *Karuhun*. The Bantenese people used to make offerings at these sacred places and for the spirits to ask for salvation, supernatural power, and also political legitimacy. The encounter between this kind of perspective and Islamic teachings resulted in cultural negotiation, namely a change in the perspective on reality and sanctity. The changes and shifts that occurred from previously leaning on large trees and caves shifted to places sanctified by Muslims, namely Mecca and Medina. While the spirits that they believed in before shifted

to Islamic figures, namely *wali* (of course with the added belief that the supernatural power they had come from God) who had many supernatural powers that anyone could who needed them because they were believed to be the persons nearest to God other than the Prophet. The third form as a result of the encounter between the two cultures was a new Bantenese living social, cultural, economic tradition, and, of course a new religious life. One of the most prominent is the magical tradition. The encounter of the two cultures gave rise to the two schools of black and white magic. Black magic still used non-Islamic formulas and techniques and was used for evil reasons while white magic had been “licensed” by the teachings of Islam and was only used for goodness. One white magic that resulted from this encounter was *Elmu Tuan Syeh* (j/s. literally meaning: the teachings of Sheikh AQJ) which is usually associated with invulnerability techniques, magical power, healing, and so on. Ultimately, the three products from the encounter integrated into one tradition, namely the tradition and the ritual of the *Wawacan Sch*.

The *Wawacan Sch* became a popular tradition and one of the oral/vocal art performances in Banten that maintained its sacred ritual form. Although it has been debated among scholars when the first *Wawacan Sch* or *Manakiban* tradition was held in Banten, some researchers such as M. Athoullah Ahmad, Ruby Ach. Baedhaway, and Julian Millie agree that the *Wawacan Sch* (or commonly called *Manakiban*) was closely related to the dissemination of the Qadiriyya and/or Qadiriyya wa Naqshabandiyya (TQN) Orders. In this sense, I agree with previous researchers that the tradition is part of the Qadiriyya Order (and other, derived orders) that had turned Sheikh AQJ into a central role figure so that his followers often presented him with a “gift” or a *tawassul* and recited his genealogy and hagiography.

At this point, the *Manakiban* with its tradition of praying, *tawassul*, and spiritual connection became a tradition whose practice was the same in all regions in Indonesia because everybody involved in it was an equal member of the *tarekat*. However, differences began to emerge when it turned into a folk tradition and became detached from its original source, which was the *tarekat* tradition. It became a distinct tradition that came to be performed and led by people who were no longer members of any particular *tarekat*. Over time, the *Wawacan Sch* ritual also became an indispensable part of many, other local traditions in Banten, such as *debus*, *rudat*, *pencak silat*, *beluk*, and so forth. The tradition and the ritual performance underwent many changes and were accommodated to the local culture. This cultural and traditional appropriation attracted many scholars, especially anthropologists and social scientists, to do research on the topic. They sometimes refer to it as a new product of acculturation and as a syncretic and hybrid culture.

## 7.0 Concluding Remark

Formerly, this tradition originated from *tarekat* tradition (Sufi order, especially *Tarekat Qadiriyya* and *Tarekat Qadiriyya wa Naqshabandiyya* [TQN]). This ritual has a significant role for *tarekat* followers. It is performed by the *tarekat* followers as their spiritual connection (*ribāṭ*) to the Saint, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani. In the *pesantren* of Suryalaya, which is specialized on the teaching of Sufism (TQN), the ritual of *manaqiban* is performed aggregately every month of the lunar calendar (on every 11<sup>th</sup> day of Hijri), and therefore it is also called as *sebelasan* (eleventh). *Manaqiban* consists reciting the history of the Prophet Muhammad and the history of Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, especially their pieties and miracles. However, in some areas in Banten, it has become a folk tradition with several changes and modifications due to the historical interaction between Islam and local culture.

To become popular culture, *tarekat* proceeds through a complicated way. In order to be easily accepted and become a popular movement in the community, it is necessary to translate and vernacularize the source, i.e. Arabic texts. Therefore, there is a process of translating the text of

hagiography of Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani from Arabic into Javanese or Sundanese Banten. The translation process implies two meanings. First, it indicates that there has been a vernacularism and localization of the *tarekat* from the Arab or the Middle East. The *tarekat* can now be lived not only by Arabic speakers but also non-Arab Banten people. This in turn makes the *tarekat* accepted largely by wider society. Secondly, Javanese or Sundanese Banten language is recognized as a legitimate language for conveying Islamic messages to the public. This also integrates the language of Banten as part of the language of the Muslims.

Observing the practices of *wawacan seh* ritual in several areas of Banten, I found many different variants ranging from the ritual text used, offerings, and time. In Carenang, Baros, and Petir district, for example, people still routinely perform this ritual with complete offerings as mentioned above. While in some areas of Anyer, this ritual is performed without offerings and incense, it is performed only by serving simple dishes to be eaten together and bottled mineral water placed in the middle for earning “blessed water”. In some areas of Ciruas, only a few people still perform this ritual. For them, the ritual is carried out simply by calling only *juru maos* to read the *manaqib* by itself in a room provided by host while women cook the necessities for *walimah* event. While in some other areas the ritual is no longer practiced completely, they only read *hadorot* or *tawassul* at *slametan* without reading the *manaqib*. These differences indicate an evolutionary change by modifying pre-Islamic symbols and practices to become acceptable ritual such as *istigosah* or *istigosah kubro*. This evolutionary change certainly reflects a dynamic reasoning and discursive tradition process which is motivated by both ideational and structural factors. Some examples of Ideational factors here are the change of people’s worldview, rationality, experience, and others. While the structural factors such as economic policy, politics, charisma figures in society, and social media. Therefore, in some cases ritual is thus both an avenue for addressing these conflicts and contradictions and a means of attempting to resolve them through the performance of the ritual itself. Ritual is thus transformative. (Turner, 1967, p. 19)

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