JULIAN MILLIE AND SYIHABUDDIN

Addendum to Drewes

The Burda of Al-Būṣīrī and the Miracles of Abdulqadir al-Jaelani in West Java

This article provides information complementary to that found in two publications of the Dutch scholar G.W.J. Drewes.¹ Considering the breadth of this writer's contributions to Indonesian studies, we also take the opportunity to comment on his approach to the subject materials against the background of both his own oeuvre and the academic tradition in which he is situated, using these two publications as source materials.

Gerardus Willebrordus Joannes Drewes was born in Amsterdam in 1899.² Aided by a scholarship from the Colonial Office, he enrolled as a student of Indonesian languages and literature at Leiden University, and obtained his PhD in July 1925, for a thesis entitled *Drie Javaansche goeroe's; Hun leven, onder-richt en messiasprediking* (Three Javanese gurus; Their lives, teachings and messianic message). The thesis was supervised by C. Snouck Hurgronje. In that same year he left for the Indies, having obtained a position in Batavia at the *Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur* (Bureau for Popular Literature). An appointment at the *Rechtshoogeschool* (School of Law) followed in 1935, which he fulfilled alongside a full slate of writing and editing book reviews. After a period of detention in Europe during World War II, he embarked again for Indonesia in 1946, staying for two years. He returned to the Netherlands in

¹ *De mirakelen van Abdoelkadir Djaelani* has two authors, Drewes and R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka. Considering the statements on pages xiii and xiv of its preface, Poerbatjaraka's role was limited to assisting Drewes with only one portion of the book, namely the lengthy summary of the Javanese Hikayat Abdulqadir al-Jaelani.

² This life sketch is wholly derived from Teeuw's obituary of Drewes (1994), which can be read in Indonesian in Kaptein and Van der Meij 1995:123-35.

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1947 to take up an appointment to the chair of Malay language and literature at Leiden University. Before his retirement in 1970, he held various academic positions in Arabic and Islamic studies at Leiden University, while sitting on a number of committees. It was during this period of service at Leiden, and the period after his official retirement, that most of his significant publications appeared. His scholarly interest is summarized by Teeuw (1994:37): 'Casting a glance over Drewes's work as a whole, one sees plainly that Islam in Indonesia in all its facets was his favourite subject of research throughout his scholarly life, which began with his dissertation on Javanese mystics and ended with his publication on the mystical poetry of the greatest Malay poet [Hamzah Fansuri]'. Drewes died in 1992.

The two books of his with which this article is concerned are *De mirakelen van Abdoelkadir Djaelani* (The miracles of Abdulqadir al-Jaelani),³ and *Een 16de eeuwse Maleise vertaling van de Burda van al-Būṣīrī* (A sixteenth-century Malay translation of the Burda of Al-Būṣīrī) (Drewes 1955). Both of these volumes are dedicated primarily to the presentation of texts. The earlier volume provides summaries of the contents of a number of Javanese, Malay, and Sundanese texts describing the life and deeds of this saint from Baghdad. The second volume provides a transliteration of an early Malay translation of the Arabic poem in praise of the prophet Muhammad known as 'the Burda', side by side with a Dutch translation. The majority of the pages of both these books are devoted to transliteration, translation, or summary of the texts concerned.

Drewes declares his scholarly intentions in the introductory pages of both books. The volume we shall refer to in this article as *De Burda* is intended as a historical treatment of the influence of Arabic on Malay (Drewes 1955:7). Secondly, he discusses the language, age, and origin of individual works of Muslim literature, with a view to understanding the stratigraphy of Muslim elements appearing in Malay literature (Drewes 1955:17). The reasons he gives for publishing *De mirakelen* are, firstly, for the value of the Javanese Hikayat Abdulqadir as an example of Javanese-Muslim literature, and, secondly, for its contribution to the knowledge of Muslim hagiography in the Netherlands East Indies (Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:2, 13).

In accordance with the first goal stated in *De Burda*, Drewes (1955:74-91) provides invaluable materials in this book for students of the historical development of Malay. In the word list appended to the translation, Drewes's deep knowledge of Arabic, Malay, and Islamic lore is evident. In relation to his second goal, little is offered other than a very useful summary of previous research on the topic. In *De Mirakelen*, other than summaries of the contents of a number of texts devoted to Abdulqadir al-Jaelani, almost no information concerning Muslim hagiography in the Indies is provided.

³ Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938. This is available in Indonesian translation (Drewes and Poertjabaraka 1990).

For many readers, however, the strongest impressions remaining after reading these two books will be those resonating from the extensive introductions. This wide-ranging background material touches only lightly on the Indies; Drewes draws on sources concerning Islamic customs from around the world. By virtue of these introductions, the books constitute excellent entries to their respective subjects for the reader wishing to acquire a basic knowledge of these 'global' Islamic traditions, and provide a wealth of useful citations for the reader seeking to pursue deeper knowledge in other sources.

But their attractiveness extends beyond their completeness, for the introductions are tantalizingly written; they are brimming with items of anecdotal interest, with retellings of stories concerning the supernatural dimensions of the subject matter, and with colourful illustrations of mysticism. Although his self-professed goals are scholarly, the introductions in fact reveal Drewes as a storyteller, a writer sensitive to the human interest dimension of the materials he studied. At the same time, the introductions share the stylistic tropes and conventions of the scholarly tradition within which Drewes worked, and for this reason, the above-mentioned enthusiasm for his materials resides within an overall outlook that may be discomfiting to scholars of later generations. We will engage with this outlook later.

The article is divided into three sections. The first reflects on Drewes's approach to scholarship, using the introductions to the two works as source materials. We have made it a priority to discuss the introductions against the background not only of the scholarly orientation evident in his own works, but also of the tradition in which he had such a prominent role. The remaining two sections of this article present unpublished reports of customs prominent today in West Java in which the materials discussed by Drewes are used in daily situations in specific locations. Our intention is to complement Drewes's publications by illuminating how the texts are understood in particular locations and made to serve as constituent materials of religious experience today. Section two reports Syihabuddin's findings on how the poem of the *Burda* is interpreted and implemented in practice in the *pasantren* (religious schools) of Cicalengka, West Java, while in section three Millie reports his experiences in attending *manakiban*,⁴ that is, gatherings in which the miracles and life story of Adbulqadir al-Jaelani are read aloud. Section two, therefore, is intended as an addendum to *Een 16de eeuwse Maleise*

⁴ *Manakiban*, or *maca manakib*, is the custom of gathering to listen to the reading of short passages concerning the life of an esteemed figure (Arabic singular *manqabah*, plural *manāqib*), in this case Abdulqadir al-Jaelani. The majority of the *manāqib* testify to his power and piety, while others provide information concerning his genealogical background and the correct ritual practices for seeking his intercession. Concerning *manāqib*, the lengthy entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1986, VI:346-57) is informative.

vertaling van de Burda van Al-Būṣīrī, whereas section three is an addendum to *De mirakelen* van Abdoelkadir Djaelani.

1. *Drewes's approach to the subject materials*

The introductions preceding the texts of *De Burda* and *De mirakelen* constitute Drewes's representations of the textual materials under his scrutiny, and the significance he perceived in them. They offer transformations of the subject materials shaped by the particularities of his outlook. As such, these representations can justifiably be used to derive the priorities shaping Drewes's scholarly outlook.

But these representations, being domestications of the textual materials made in specific circumstances in place and time, can also be profitably read in the light of his 'tradition', a concept given great emphasis by Teeuw in his obituary of Drewes. Awareness of the pervasive influence of tradition is important, in the sense that it dispels the mythical image of the scholar-author as solitary genius. Drewes is without doubt an intimidating figure for anyone exerting themselves in those fields in which he was active, but his output was enabled to a large extent by the intellectual and institutional genealogy in which he appears. Edward Said, in whose vision oriental scholarship was perceived as a component of the greater imperialist 'enterprise', has argued for the importance of not allowing the concept of individual authorship to obscure the enabling influence of tradition. He writes, 'The work of predecessors, the institutional life of a scholarly field, the collective nature of any learned enterprise: these, to say nothing of economic and social circumstances, tend to diminish the effects of the individual scholar's production' (Said 1979:202).

Taking this into account, we have divided our overview of the introductions into two parts. We distinguish those elements of his scholarly approach that seem to be characteristic of Drewes's own work, and different from his colleagues, from those elements that are commonplace in the scholarly tradition referred to by Teeuw. This distinction is not entirely satisfactory, because it is difficult to identify where the scholarly tradition ends and Drewes the individual emerges; his characteristic traits, after all, can be seen as over/under-emphases of the constitutive elements of the tradition. A further problem with the distinction is that to imagine a 'scholarly tradition' is invariably to yield to a misleading level of generalization; among the scholars of Drewes's generation and his predecessors there was significant diversity in scholarly outlook. Nevertheless, the conspicuous emphasis he placed on certain elements of his tradition causes the distinction to emerge with some clarity.

Individual traits of his scholarly outlook

The texts upon which both books are based tend in their content and flavour to the mystical and spiritually uplifting rather than the dogmatic or scholarly. The Abdulqadir texts discussed by Drewes confirm the saint's proximity to Allah by relating examples of his mystical power and pious disposition. The *Burda* is at the same time biography and homage to the prophet Muhammad, with brief accounts of the many miracles attributed to his birth and life. In the two introductions Drewes emphasizes the importance in the texts of the *ghaib* (the supernatural, unseen world) and *'ajā'ib* (miracles, marvellous occurrences).

In fact, his enthusiasm for the world of the unseen is clear; the introductions have a racy flavour due to the colourful titbits culled from the texts and from related sources. In the case of *De mirakelen*, he retells (in his own words) no less than seven *manakib*, each of which is structured around some miraculous event or quality of the saint (Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:19-20, 23-6, 42). Furthermore, he respectfully retells a treatise on the 'various ways in which the human spirit can be made apparent and manifest in creation', written by the Sundanese ulama Ahmad Sanoesi b. Hadji Abdoelrahim.⁵ We are also informed of an initiation ceremony performed by the Qadiriyyah order in Sudan, in which candidates are threatened with having their throats cut as a sign of dedication to the order (Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:21-2). In the case of *De Burda*, we are given lengthy retellings of the supernatural events surrounding the composition of the *Burda* of Ka'b as well as that of Al-Būṣīrī, along with a compilation of a number of remedy-seeking applications of the poem from around the Islamic world (Drewes 1955:25-30).

But this domestication of the bizarre appears within a general disregard for the value of the texts in so far as they represent the products of a cultural system foreign to his own. Drewes's selective reading of the texts evidences enthusiasm for 'the unseen world', but this is accompanied by a gently expressed cultural superiority, evident in such comments as 'There is a thought deeply rooted in primitive thinking; that people bringing messages from the unseen world could only be those called to it in a miraculous way, and those also prepared for it physically in one way or another' (Translation from Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:23).

This superiority connects with a defining feature of his academic outlook; his 'unliterariness'. By this we mean a general lack of interest in the conventions informing a text's composition. This ignores the widely accepted necessity of taking into consideration the broader cultural contexts that enable engagement with the conventions at play in a particular text. A prominent example is Drewes's failure to distinguish Abdulqadir al-Jaelani as the

⁵ Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:43-4. The treatise is actually translated from the Arabic source entitled *Tafriḥ ul-Khāṭir* of 'Abd ul-Qādir al-Qādirī Ibn Muḥyī id-Dīn al-Arbilī (n.d.:1-6).

subject of hagiography from the historical person. Clearly, texts of *manāqib* and *madh* (veneration) demand a mode of interpretation different from that suited to historical texts; their authors use strategies suited to their respective goals. But Drewes shows no aptitude or enthusiasm for identifying strategies unique to these genres, a process which would involve investigation into the contexts of the creation of the texts. In his view, the historical person of Abdulqadir was to be scientifically uncovered; the venerated person is a secondary, even annoying, phenomenon (Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:18-21). Hence the introduction, with all its colourful content, indicates a preference for the mystical, but no awareness of or regard for the conventions generic to veneration literature. For example, this is his reflection upon the oldest biography of the saint:

from the work of al-Ṣhaṭṭanawfī we in no way obtain a reliable picture of the real Abdulqadir; but we do learn from it how men imagined that he must have spoken and behaved. 'Die wirkliche Geschichte interessiert nur die Europäer, der Orient lebt in der Legende'. [Only Europeans are interested in real history, the Orient is living in legend.]⁶

Drewes and his scholarly tradition

In his obituary of Drewes, Teeuw (1994:37) states his opinion that:

He [Drewes] always remained a typical representative of the older Dutch school of Indonesian studies. [...] He continued in the tradition of his predecessors, more especially his great guru Snouck Hurgronje, which is characterized by a sound knowledge of a large number of languages, a close familiarity with literatures, in particular also their textual traditions, and a wide reading in the historical background and cultural context, also of Islam in general and of Arabic and Persian literature.

Without wishing just yet to delve deeply into the accuracy of Teeuw's characterization of Drewes as its 'typical representative', in the following paragraphs we observe how Drewes's representation is to some degree determined by the 'tradition of his predecessors'. We identify two ways in which Drewes's representation is characteristic of the tradition from which he derived his approach: a textually oriented approach insulated within walls of citations, and the priority attached to the revelation of origins. Both can be seen as essential elements of literary scholarship, especially for the philologist, but in Drewes's case these principles are foregrounded to the almost complete exclusion of other possibilities.

⁶ Translation from Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:30. Drewes quotes this German sentence from C.H. Becker in *Der Islam* 2 (1911):25, also found in Becker's *Islamstudien* 2 (1932):91.

The authority of texts and citation

That some of the scholars of Islam of Drewes's generation regarded their field as consisting of and circumscribed by written texts has been described by Bowen (1993:5):

The major topics and questions within the field of Islamic studies or orientalism [...] concerned above all how to properly understand the major texts of the religious tradition [...]. The approach was generally critical and philological – where did the text, its terms, and its ideas come from? – rather than ethnographic and semiotic – how did (and do) people understand, debate and apply the text?

This preference has deep implications for the representation evident in Drewes's introductions. Drewes describes his approach to the production of *De mirakelen* as follows:

The following introduction to the contents of some miracle books is the fruit of an investigation into the saintly literature available in the area of Batavia, in which the central person is the mystic 'Abd al-Ḳādir al-Ḍjīlānī, who died in the year 1166 of our calendar. The stimulation toward this came out of an excerpt from a part of the Javanese Hikayat Abdoelqadir Djaelani, that R. Ng Dr. Poerbatjaraka was kind enough to bring to my attention. In this way, my interest in the veneration of this saint in this country was aroused, with the result that I went looking for other indigenous manuscripts which might be able to tell something about his words and works. A renewed stimulus to this end for me was my reading of the very readable biographical introduction which Walther Braune prefaced to his translation of a collection of sermons about Abd al-Kadir, which was published a number of years ago. In this introduction, Braune has sketched from Arabic sources an image of the saint, as he has lived on in legend. After that, it was fascinating to discover complete stories of his miraculous power in great variety in indigenous, popular booklets. Three such books I was allowed to borrow from Dr G.F. Pijper; I myself met some amongst the popular-religious reading material on sale in the city and privately-owned material, and finally the Malay literature present in manuscript here in the library [of the Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences)]; these all furnish persuasive evidence of the significance which the greatest saint of Islam possesses also for the inhabitants of West Java. It seems to me to be well worth the trouble to record the collected details in a new contribution to the knowledge of Muslim hagiography in this land; our knowledge with respect to this reveals many lacunae still. (Translation from Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:1.)

In summary, Drewes moves from written text to written text, from author to author, and from one institution responsible for producing and storing written texts to another. In this environment, the German translation of a famous Arabic publication provides a general schema by which the saint can be located in an Islamic world seen as a purely textual construct. It provides a general, normative, and logical continuum, within which the beliefs of the

inhabitants of West Java are somehow allocated a harmonious and coherent role. But even though Drewes was residing in Batavia throughout the preparation of the book, consultation with the 'inhabitants of West Java' is hardly evident in it. It would not be unfair to identify Drewes as a striking example of the tendency observed by Said (1979:93) in Western scholarly tradition for its practitioners to 'prefer the schematic authority of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with humans'.

For contextual information Drewes relied almost completely on the products of the institutions of his own tradition. In *De Burda*, two small contributions of at best tangential relevance concerning the singing of Kasida (Arabic verse) in Indonesia are sourced respectively from Hamka's biography of his father, *Ayahku*, and the childhood recollections of the Minang author Muhammad Radjab in *Semasa Kecil di Kampung* (Drewes 1955:21-2). But if Indonesian contextual sources were lacking, Drewes shows resolute thoroughness when it comes to enlisting the resources of the Western tradition; after all, the edifice upon which the textually oriented scholar's legitimacy rests is his capacity for citation. He is able to avoid any specific contextual data because the tradition described by Teeuw grants supreme legitimacy to 'the restorative citation of antecedent authority' (Said 1979:176). A text of the ultimate authority in Drewes's tradition, Edward William Lane's *An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians*, is cited as an example of a specific use to which the poem of the Burda was put (Drewes 1955:29). Furthermore, Drewes (1955:25) provides for the reader a chunk comprising eleven citations of Western writers who edited, translated, or commented upon the Burda between 1748 and 1952. This summoning of canonized predecessors and colleagues provides the authority that Drewes's tradition maintained from within its own system; the inhabitants of West Java are significant in this schema, but any actual practice of theirs, other than writing, is peripheral and need not be examined. These two books are evidence of a discursive field that is transnational, as one would expect of almost any study addressing Islam's intellectual heritage, but that at the same time lacks contact with any actual practice other than the academic activity indicated by the spread of citations. We remain ignorant of, for example, the 'processes by which Islamic ideas and practices have taken on locally specified social and cultural meanings' (Bowen 1993:6). In place of specific detail concerning the context in which the texts were created and utilized, contextual data is provided by yet other written texts, from sources that comply with the discursive logic of the intellectual terrain occupied by Drewes, but that otherwise bear only slender relevance to the subject materials. According to this logic, West Java and the Sudan are proximate.

Citations from Western publications, minute attention to textual detail, and the sourcing of contextual data from other written sources: these are

measures resorted to by all students of Indonesian literatures, including the writers of this article. The image of Drewes arising from the two publications under discussion here, however, is of a scholar who diligently implemented these approaches to the exclusion of other possibilities. The restricted intellectual field described above, defined by an extreme application of some of the elements of his tradition, enabled Drewes to provide impressions of Indonesian Islamic tradition requiring no input from sources external to the library.⁷

Although we are mapping Drewes against the background of his tradition, we wish to avoid the impression that the above approach was adopted by all the members of the 'older Dutch school of Indonesian studies'. In fact, the material cited above from Teeuw does not mention the variety of approaches and methodologies that are evident in the literature produced by Drewes's predecessors and contemporaries. It is certainly not true that Drewes's strong predilection for written sources and authoritative chains of citation at the expense of field observation was a norm for his predecessors and contemporaries. Engagement in the field and recourse to the assistance of indigenous informants, for example, played a significant role in much of the work of his predecessors, such as Snouck Hurgronje, B.J.O. Schrieke, and D.A. Rinkes, and contemporaries such as G.F. Pijper.⁸

The search for origins

A dominant tendency in the introductions to these two books is the desire to trace phenomena to their earliest describable manifestation. Drewes's representation of the textual materials of Indonesian Islam casts them primarily as signposts in the reconstruction of a treasured commodity: origins. The most pressing origin of all was, of course, the question of the origin of Indonesian Islam; was it of Arabic, Persian, or Indian origin (Drewes 1968)? But even where this particular issue was not addressed, as it was not in these two volumes, there were other chronological voids to be filled. A number of these are explored in the two books under discussion here.

Teeuw (1994:27) notes in his obituary of Drewes that at the time of Drewes's enrolment as a student of Indonesian languages and literatures at Leiden University, 'the three-year Bachelor's course (candidaats) in this discipline comprised the subjects Sanskrit and the cultural history of India, and Arabic and Islamic institutions, taught by Professors J.Ph. Vogel and Snouck

⁷ In 1987, Drewes's approach became the subject of critical comment in an exchange between him and two scholars of a younger generation. The exchange can be read in volume 143 of the *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (Drewes 1987:363-8; Koster and Maier 1987:368-72).

⁸ A collection of obituaries and bibliographies of a number of Dutch scholars, of whom Drewes is the most recent, is found in Kaptein and Van der Meij 1995.

Hurgronje respectively. Indonesian languages were not on the curriculum until the Master's phase (doctoraal).' Ismail Hussein (1974:13-5) expands on this situation in a paper originally presented in 1966. After noting the strong background a Dutch student of the period would have received in Greek and Latin (at secondary school) and then Arabic and Sanskrit (at university), he writes:

The sum total of this rigorous classical training has a strong historical and comparative tone, and it is no wonder then that the researches carried out by these students have been strongly of a comparative and historical nature. The European orientalist in Europe during the [nineteenth] century have been preoccupied mainly with Sanskrit, because of its relationship with the Germanic family, and Arabic because of the challenge it offered to Christian civilization. Everything else is subsidiary to these two preoccupations and is seen only in the light of these two civilizations. So the studies of Malay and Indonesian culture in general have always been somewhat like the studies of Greater-India culture and Greater-Arabia culture. Successive students of Malay literature and culture spent their time tracing the sources of foreign elements in Malay culture. [...] The resultant effect of all these activities is that we know much about the cultures of India, of Iran and of Arabia and almost nothing about Malay culture. (Hussein 1974:14-5.)

'Tracing the sources of foreign elements' is a priority of the representation Drewes (1955:12) constructs in the introductions to the two works. In relation to the poem of the *Burda*, the manuscript is taken as an opportunity to gather the conflicting sources on 'the question of the origin of the oldest Muslim literature written in Malay'. We are provided with a useful summary of the relevant literature, including references to works by Winstedt, Snouck Hurgronje, Van Ronkel, Overbeck, and Van Leeuwen (Drewes 1955:12-7). Drewes provides some justification for his emphasis on this theme: 'Chronological certainty is difficult to attain. But we must still strive on, for if we ever want to come further than generalizations [about the question of the oldest Muslim literature], then we will have to study the stratigraphy of the Muslim elements of Malay literature, and for this an investigation into the language, age and origin of individual works is the first step.' (Drewes 1955:17.) In the language, age and origins of manuscripts, it is hoped, will be found clues for solving the origin question.

The question of the Indian or Arabic origin of the Qadiriyyah order is not the only origin tackled in the volume dedicated to Abdulqadir. Drewes undertakes two related origin quests. The first is the quest for the 'most reliable' text concerning the 'real life' of Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani, touched upon above in our observation of Drewes's preference for texts of historiographical value. The second origin represents a procedure that can be used on any manuscript or publication, namely the identification of the source(s) from which it was derived. His six-page discussion of the Javanese *Hikayat Séh* tells us almost nothing about this text, but is crammed with details tracing its textual

predecessors; a genealogy of texts concerning Abdul Qadir is pursued across continents through a maze of borrowings, adaptations, scholarly editions, and cross-references (Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938:33-9).

His efforts to trace origins, abundant in all his work, constitute one of the great legacies left by Drewes, for this information, of such great use to historians and scholars of Islamic culture, could only have been obtained by one with exceptional skills in a number of languages. Furthermore, the origins discerned by him illuminate in part the processes of adaptation, elaboration, and appropriation that inform religious practice. But it is important to note that Drewes's regard for origins was pursued to extremes, perhaps at the expense of important facets of the materials under observation. The unliterariness of his approach has been noted above. But apart from this, the task Drewes set himself seems to have included very little besides tracing origins; fundamental characteristics of the subject matter are ignored. For example, it was the custom of the Sundanese ulama of the early twentieth century to choose Arabic titles for their *manakib* books; this reflected their attitude and aspirations in relation to the text and the wali. Readers of these texts hope to receive a benefit from the reading of such literature. Two examples are *Husnul-'awāqib* (The best of outcomes) and *Tafrihul-khātir* (Celebration of the impulses).⁹ The titles are a strong indicator of the belief systems in which the texts were held in authority and esteem. Drewes (1938:45), however, informs us that 'The Arabic titles which were attached by these Sundanese translations are here of little relevance; of more importance is the origin of the original'.

Moreover, the quest seems to have been one of self-justifying value; the need for the urgency evident in Drewes's search for origins is never satisfactorily outlined, nor is it directed to any specific goal. It appears that in his tradition, the importance of the quest was a given; origins were to be uncovered so that they could be known, independent of the value of that knowledge. In harmony with the sealing-off of his subject matter from any input other than from authoritative written sources, Drewes was challenged to explore a manuscript as if it were a mere signpost to a textual origin, or as a step toward reconstruction of a historical as opposed to an imagined person.

In the following two sections, we hope to add to the usefulness of Drewes's work by providing detailed descriptions of how the texts presented by Drewes are given meaning and utilized in the practices of two specific locations in West Java. Sections two and three are intended to be read profitably against the background of the wealth of material provided in Drewes's two books.

⁹ The latter has been translated into English under the title 'Celebration of the desires' (Millie 2003).

2. The Burda and *pasantren* culture in Cicalengka, West Java

The poem of the Burda (The poem of the Mantle), the full title of which is *al-Kawākib al-durriyya fī madḥ khair al-bariyya* (The shining stars in praise of the best of creation), was written by the thirteenth-century poet al-Būṣīrī, who was born in 607/1210, and died in Alexandria, Egypt, in 696/1297 (Al-Būṣīrī 1995:5). It is of moderate length, approximately 160 couplets, depending on the source consulted. A typical line of the poem refers obliquely to an event from the life of Muhammad, drawn from either the voluminous materials in circulation concerning the person of Muhammad at the time, or from the Koran itself (Drewes 1955:30-1). A dominant feature of the poem is the author's play with language; he often takes advantage of the capacity of Arabic roots to be reconstituted with differing vocalizations and significations within the one couplet. Drewes (1955:31) concisely explains the enormous attraction the poem has exerted throughout the Muslim world when he writes:

Instead, however, of setting out to write yet another book about this theme [that is, the qualities of the Prophet], which had expanded almost endlessly, he [al-Būṣīrī] managed to summarize it succinctly in poetical form, and to depict clearly for pious eyes what each of them personally could expect from God's chosen favourite, providing he appealed to the intercession of the Almighty. There is no doubt that the great popularity of this poem to a large extent is thanks to this last.

Syihabuddin's research into the Burda in Cicalengka was conducted during the preparation of a Master's thesis exploring the work from a Nusantara perspective. His goal was to obtain an impression of how the Burda, a text to which significant authority is attributed in Cicalengka's *pasantren* community, is utilized in the religious life of that location.

Cicalengka lies approximately thirty kilometres to the east of Bandung. In recent decades it has been the site of industrial development, especially in the textile industry. As has been the case with Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Ciamis, which lie to the southeast of Cicalengka, the number of *pasantren* in the area is high compared to other areas of Java, and these institutions have exerted a long-standing and defining influence on the religious and cultural life of the community. The *pasantren* of the region are well known for the emphasis they place on art forms connected with the reading and singing of the Koran.

The research necessarily was drawn to the *kaum ajengan* (*ajengan* is the Sundanese term to describe the religious leaders known as *kiai* in Indonesian). It could not do otherwise, for where the Burda is concerned, the *ajengan* act as mediators through whom the students (*santri*) and the general populace obtain access to the work and its beneficial properties. Only this section of the community possesses the skills in Arabic required to read the texts of the

poem and its commentaries, and the knowledge of the melodies used in its performance. In general, interaction with the poem by those outside of the *ajengan* class, such as the farming populace of the region, is mediated by an *ajengan*, who is typically engaged to sing and read the poem at celebrations and to accompany the offering of prayers for special purposes.

Beneficial properties (hasiat/paedah)

It was found that the significance of the Burda for the people of Cicalengka is directly linked to the benefits that may be obtained from it. Because the wider community is aware that the poem bears these special properties, the people of Cicalengka often hold readings of it in celebration of significant events in a person's life, such as pregnancy, birth, marriage, and departure to undertake the pilgrimage. Specific knowledge of these properties is limited to the *ajengan*, who obtain it primarily from a commentary about the poem entitled *Iḥāshiyat ul-Bājūrī 'alā matn il-Burda* (Commentary of al-Bājūrī on the text of the Burda, Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī 1814), but commonly referred to in Indonesia as Syarh al-Bajuri. This booklet is readily available in the *kitab* (religious text in Arabic) bookshops of Bandung for about the same price as a newspaper. The *ajengan* of Cicalengka explained that this text is the source of their knowledge of the properties of individual lines of the poem. Therefore, the applications to which the poem is put cannot be discussed without reference to this *kitab*.

One of Syihabuddin's meetings with a member of the *ajengan* class in Cicalengka was conducted in the guest reception room of the religious leader's house. Above the doorway was hanging a calligraphic ornament composed of Arabic epithets and phrases, including the *basmalah* (the Arabic phrase formula meaning 'In the name of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate'), *ayat kursi* (the much loved verse at 2:255 of the Koran), the words Allah and Muhammad, and a number of lines from the Burda. When asked about the benefit and special properties of the Burda, the *ajengan* motioned toward the wall decoration. This, he explained, is an example of the properties (*hasiat*) or benefits (*paedah*) of the Burda. According to the *ajengan*, the lines reproduced in the wall hanging have the special property of warding off evil and danger.

These particular lines, which appear in a section of the poem describing the battles conducted by the Prophet and his followers during this early period of Islam, may be rendered into English as follows:

They (that is, the followers of the Prophet) were like mountains, and you may inquire about them of those who fought with them, as to what his experience was in each contest.

You may ask Hunain, you may ask Badr, and you may ask Ohod; for these were reasons for the destruction of the heathens, more mischievous than an epidemic.¹⁰

They brought out their swords, red with blood, after they were plunged into every black lock of hair of the enemies.

Their arrows left brown pen strokes on unmarked parts of their bodies, like letters with their dots not filled in.

Although clad in weapons, each was distinguished by marks of piety, just as a rose is distinguished by its marks from a thorny tree.

The winds of victory would bring to you their fragrance, so you would think every warrior to be a fragrant flower in the bud.

It was as if they, when on horseback, were the blooms of the hills, from strength of resolve rather than the strength of their saddlery.

The hearts of the enemies flew with fear of their prowess, so that they could make no distinction between lambs and mighty warriors.¹¹

Authority for the properties attributed to these lines by the *ajengan* is found in the commentary of Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī (1814:68):

The special property (khāṣīah) of these lines is that if a person writes them over the gates of their city, house, or garden, then as long as it is written there no thief, foe, or other such person will come to that place. The person who stated this benefit said this had been put to the test in wheat, barley, and other places. He also said these stanzas were once written above the door of a house. A thief came, heard a voice in the house, and left. He then told this to his friends, and they told him that the occupier of the house was away for two weeks. So he then went back to the house on another night and heard a voice saying 'I never went away at all'. God prevented the theft through the blessed properties (*barakah*) of these lines.

Another *ajengan* in the region considered that particular lines granted him confidence and authority in discharging his duties as teacher in the *pasantren* and as religious leader for the wider community. The lines, he claimed, have the power to compel others to respect him and to obey his directions. The relevant lines are:

Who will guarantee me that my arrogant spirit can be restrained from sins, in the way that the arrogance of a horse is held back by its bridle?

And do not fancy that you will curb its lust by allowing it wrongdoing, for a feast only increases the glutton's appetite.

¹⁰ These three locations, all found in the vicinities of Mecca and Medina, were the sites of battles fought by the Prophet and his supporters.

¹¹ Al-Būṣīrī 1995:172, lines 1-8. The English translation of Sheikh Faizullah-Bh'ai Lookmanjee (Al-Būṣīrī 1893) has been used as the basis for the translations of the Burda appearing in this article. The Sheikh's translation has been altered in accordance with modern English usage.

Desire is like a child who, if accommodated, grows up with a love of suckling, but if weaned will keep its distance.

(Al-Būṣīrī 1995:166, lines 12-14)

Returning to the commentary, we find it stated there that the benefit (*fā'idah*) of these three lines is as follows, 'whoever repeats these lines when trying to banish evils by starting his speech with a tenfold repetition of them will appear to be of prestige, and this prestige will be fully acknowledged by everybody through the will of God' (Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī 1814:12).

The attributes of the poem are sought after by the wider community, and particular lines are called upon according to the qualities attributed to them. For example, the poem will make an appearance after the *salat maghrib* (sun-set prayer), for one of its lines is considered to have the capacity to bestow resolve in fulfilling the prayer obligation of the reader.

Not all the applications of the lines are based upon the instructions found in the commentary. For example, the Burda is often recited in Cicalengka at prayers offered for those about to undertake the pilgrimage. In particular, the prospective pilgrim will be prepared with the following line (74) in order to grant protection from Saudi Arabia's harsh sunlight:

Just like the cloud which followed his every movement, sheltering him from the intense heat, like that of an oven, blazing at the height of noon.¹²

The intending pilgrim can be prepared with this line by means of one or more of a number of methods. Most notably, the line may be sung, along with the rest of the poem, at prayers recited before departure. A second method is to read the line in conjunction with a prayer at the moment the pilgrim sets foot over the threshold of their home on their way to Mecca. Thirdly, the line may be written on a piece of paper and stored in the pilgrim's wallet or pocket throughout the journey.

This particular *hasiat* does not have its source in the commentary. Instead, Syihabuddin was told that it originates in 'face to face' transmission from *ajengan* to *santri* (pupil) over a number of generations. Another possible source for the propagation of the attribute is that it has been included among the many collections of prayers and their benefits known in Indonesian as *mujarrabat*. In a number of *mujarrabat* consulted in the writing of this article, however, we found no such inclusions. Whatever the case, the *ajengan* felt that the value of this property had been vindicated by positive reports from pilgrims who had returned from their journey.

¹² Al-Būṣīrī 1995:169, line 10. The cloud referred to in this line is that which is said to have followed above the head of the Prophet, providing him with shelter during his journey to Syria from Mekka with his uncle, Abu Ṭālib (Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī 1814:42).

A final point in connection with the poem's properties is the observation that various of the *ajengan* in Cicalengka, and through them the members of the community who have come into contact with them, hold al-Būṣīrī to be a *wali Allah* (a friend of or person beloved by Allah). This impression is based upon the miracle that was known to have occurred to the poet upon writing the poem (see Drewes 1955:27), and also on the properties claimed in the commentary of al-Bājūrī.

Burda and performance; enlightening content with pleasing delivery

But the authority accorded to the Burda is not only attributed to the properties of individual lines. Due to two of its basic features, the text has also come to function as a *pasantren* art form of didactic value. Firstly, the content of the poem is of didactic primacy; in it can be read the exemplary character of the Prophet and also his life story. Secondly, it is written in verse, and is thus readily adapted to song form. It shares this dual character with the Saj' (prose poem) of Ja'far b. Hasan al-Barzanji (died 1179/1765), which is more widely studied and performed in West Java than the Burda.¹³ Drewes (1955:29-31) gives an important assessment of the attraction of the Burda, and this assessment applies equally well to the Barzanji, when he notes that its author avoided the strategy of accumulating a list of glowing attributes as in other praise poems, but instead drew together copious information concerning the genealogy, life, and descent of the Prophet. The Burda, therefore, becomes a reference work concerning the life of the Prophet. By virtue of the combination of these characteristics, it has become established as an art form in the *santri* tradition of Cicalengka.

The method by which the text is studied derives from its educational and performance dimensions. The method used is known as *balangan* or *bandungan*. The *ajengan* simultaneously sings and interprets the text of the poem, using the commentary of al-Bājūrī as source. The students, seated in a circle around him, make notes in the margins of their copies of the commentary, and fill in the vowel markings of the commentary's Arabic text where this is thought useful. Only a few lines at a time can be studied in this way. The *ajengan* then invites a *santri* to read out the lines just studied. After this, the lines are sung according to the melody used in the *pasantren* by that particular *ajengan*. In some *pasantren*, the Burda is the most important text for imparting knowledge of the life and exemplary character of the Prophet, and lessons such as the one just described form part of the weekly schedule of instruction provided in them.

¹³ The two are commonly found together in the collections of stories used for celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (Maulid). In West Java, the most common collection currently found is Majmū'at al-Mawālid (*Majmū'a't* n.d.).

But the singing is not solely a mnemonic or instructional device. When the people of Cicalengka, mindful of the benefits latent in the poem, invite *ajengan* to attend events such as celebrations of the Maulid (birthday of the Prophet) and Mikraj (his ascension), they do not expect it to be read in the manner of normal speech. Instead, the poem is delivered in song, in melodies transmitted by the *ajengan* to their students, with due attention to aesthetic priorities. To the *ajengan*, the aesthetic element is an important dimension of the poem's appeal; one *ajengan* stated that the singing of the Burda was, for him, a form of entertainment to be enjoyed even in the company of oneself alone.

3. The miracles of Abdulqadir al-Jaelani

Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani was born in the town of Gilan, in present-day Iran, and spent his adulthood as a preacher and mystical leader in Baghdad. He passed away in 1166 CE (*Encyclopaedia of Islam* 1960, I:69). His tomb is still revered in Baghdad to this day. The spread of his teachings and the custom of venerating him are closely associated with the Qadiriyyah sufi order, yet it is true that in Java many people not associated with the order revere this saint and seek his intercession, most prominently by making supplicatory prayers (*doa*) in which his name is invoked, but also by listening to the reading of the short narratives of his life contained in the *manakib* books (Van Bruinessen 1992:97-8).

Every Thursday evening, *maca manakib* is held in the *pasantren* of Herang al-Qodiri, which is located in Cibaligo, an elevated area of North Bandung. The room in which the *maca manakib* is held is covered with mats and carpets. In the middle of the room, against one of the walls, is located an upraised mat, big enough for one person to sit on and be slightly above the level of the others present. In front of it are a small lectern on which a number of books rest, jugs of water and tea, and drinking glasses.

The two books on the lectern are, firstly, volume two of *An-Nūr al-Burhānī* (The illuminating Light) (Lutfil Hakim and Muslih bin 'Abdulrahman al-Maraki 2001). This is Barzanji's *al-lujain ad-dānī fī manāqib al-quṭb ar-rab-bānī asy-Syaikh 'Abdulqādir al-Jailānī* (The 'attainable silver' in the life story of the divine pivot Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani) with a Javanese 'hanging' translation. A colourful painting on the book's cover shows what looks like a mosque, although the note underneath the picture tells us that it is in fact the Qubba Sayyid 'Abdulqādir al-Jailānī (the tomb of Lord Abdulqadir al-Jaelani). The second book is *Alaa inna auliyaa Allohi laa khaofun alaihim wa lahum yahzanun; Tanbih, tawasul, manaqib, basa Sunda* (Lo! Verily the friends of Allah are (those) on whom fear (cometh) not, nor do they grieve; Admonition,

intercession, *manakib*, in the Sundanese language)¹⁴ (*Alaa inna auliyaa* 1956). This is a Sundanese publication from the *pasantren* of Suryalaya, Tasikmalaya, West Java.

It is customary for the Barzanji to be sung by the entire *pasantren* community in a neighbouring room before the *maca manakib*, which is attended by males only.¹⁵ After this is completed, the males begin to fill the room, until about twenty are present. Men bring in clear plastic bottles full of water, with brand names such as Aqua, Ades, Sprite, and Aircup, and after opening them, place them in front of the mat.

The *ajengan* enters, instructs a boy to plug his microphone into the amplifier, then puts fragrant oil on himself while some older participants light incense in a bowl. Mr Millie was advised that the incense is used for two purposes; firstly because it is pleasing to angels, and secondly to cover up the body odour of those who had come from their workplace to the *maca manakib*. He commences with some supplications in Arabic, then announces the programme to follow, namely *tanbih*, *tawassul* and *manakib*.¹⁶ Whenever he utters the name of Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani, some of those assembled murmur a response, *Qaddasa Allāhu sirrahu* (may Allah bless his secret).

Many residents of the area surrounding the *pasantren* are followers (*ikhwan*) of the sufi order known as the Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyyah. This organization, which has its headquarters at the *pasantren* of Suryalaya, Tasikmalaya, is attracting an ever larger support base in the greater Bandung area (Dadang Kahmad 2002:79). Often, a group will make the trip from Cibaligo to Suryalaya for the *maca manakib* held on the eleventh day of every Islamic month. The significance of that date is that 11 Rabbul-Akhir is distinguished as the death date of Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani. The *ajengan* of Herang al-Qodiri has never undertaken study at the Suryalaya *pasantren*, and his allegiance with the *tarekat* is not of central importance in his spiritual outlook. Nevertheless, he explained that he considered himself a loyal follower of Abah Anom, the spiritual leader of the *tarekat*, for the reason that this allegiance put him under the protection of a guru whose spiritual lineage could be traced back to the prophet Muhammad.¹⁷ For these reasons, the form of the *manakiban* does not follow strictly the programme recommended at Suryalaya (*Tanbih* 1956:3-4), but reflects the experiences of the *ajengan* during his period of study at various *pasantren* on the island of Java.

¹⁴ The title is from the Koran (10:62). I have used the translation of Pickthall (1976:275).

¹⁵ This is by no means true for all *manakiban*. Mr Millie has attended *manakiban* at which both males and females were present.

¹⁶ These terms are defined in the following pages.

¹⁷ For the concept of *silsilah* in relation to the Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyyah, see Van Bruinessen 1992:48-52, 89-96. The *silsilah* in which Abah Anom is located is set out in *Uqudu'l jumaan* 1975:26-31.

Photo 1. Crowds surrounding the mosque of Pondok Pasantren Suryalaya, Tasikmalaya, at which *manakiban* is held on the eleventh day of the Islamic month

The *ajengan* switches to Sundanese, and announces the *fatihah* (the opening chapter of the Koran). All participants join in.

Another gentleman then takes the microphone, and begins to read from a book in Sundanese, in a generally informative tone, as if making a public-service announcement. This is the *tanbih*, an injunction to good behaviour. The man reading the *tanbih*, Pak Adin, is a follower of Abah Anom active in organizing the rotating schedule of *manakiban* held in households in the neighbourhood. When he attends the *manakiban* at the *pasantren*, the *ajengan* grants him permission to read the *tanbih*, even though it would not be read if Pak Adin did not attend. According to the specifications of the Suryalaya *pasantren*, the *tanbih* is an essential part of the *manakiban* (*Tanbih* 1956:3-4). The text is read from the *manakib* book published in 1956 by the Suryalaya *pasantren* (*Alaa inna auliyaa* 1956). Although written by the current figure-head of the Suryalaya *pasantren*, Abah Anom (H.A. Sahohibulwafa Tajul 'Arifin), the contents are the admonitions (*wasiat*) of his father and predecessor, Abu Sepuh (Sheikh Abdullah Mubarak bin Nur Muhammad). The *tanbih* is written in a highly poetical style; although the contents are simple, almost every phrase is constructed to create internal rhyme. The tenor of the contents of the *tanbih* may be gauged from the following injunctions to good behaviour:

Firstly: Concerning our superiors, do not act with spite toward them, be they our superiors in dignity and status, or those in material wealth. Instead, we must be in harmonious accord with others.

Secondly: With our equals, that is to say our peers in all matters, do not seek disputes, but the reverse, we must be humble side by side concerning performance of our religious and national duties. Do not allow disputes or points of difference to occur, such as is implicit in the sacred words 'Ad-zabun Alim', which means eternal suffering, in this world until the next (the body is burdened, the heart is troubled).

Thirdly: Concerning those below us, do not seek to offend them, or to exploit our superiority, or fail to respect them, but instead act with tenderness, voluntarily so that our hearts feel joy, and do not feel harassed by anxiety, but instead guide them gently with our advice, and thereby create a desire to follow, so they may then walk in the way of goodness.

Fourthly: To the pauper and the destitute we must show warm sympathy, with pure intentions, with liberality. We must show our hearts to be sympathetic. Try to feel as if it were our own selves suffering the heartfelt pain of deprivation. Therefore, do not be lulled into thinking that 'I'm doing fine', for the poor and destitute are not so of their own choice, but by God's destiny. (*Alaa inna auliyaa* 1956:5-7.)

The participants can be divided into two groups. The majority are residents of the *pasantren*, consisting of the family who runs it and the *santri* attending it. The second group is made up of members of the local community, whose

attachment to the family commenced in earlier generations. For many of these participants, the *maca manakib* comes after the completion of a hard day's work; they appear to use the opportunity to reflect and unwind, and the atmosphere takes on a mood of sombre relaxation. This sense of reflection and relaxation is sharpened as the *ajengan* commences the following part of the programme, the *jikir* (rhythmical repetition of selected words and phrases). The first phrase to be repeated, while the *ajengan* counts on his beads, is *Astaghfir Ullāh ul-'aẓīm* (I seek almighty Allah's forgiveness), followed by *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* (There is no god other than Allah), then *Yā Laṭīf* (Oh kind one!), then *Ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad* (May the blessings of Allah be upon Muhammad). There is no melody, but the rhythm is accented heavily and with gusto. People close their eyes, little boys fall on the ground, while others sway. It is not ecstasy that causes these movements, but rather a heightened atmosphere of relaxation. Some boys even fall asleep on top of their friends. Other participants accent particular syllables in the phrase, in various ways, so that different phrases appear within the phrase being led by the leader. This continues for ten minutes or more, apparently at the discretion of the *ajengan*.

The microphone is passed to yet another participant, who recites the *tawassul*. The *tawassul* is this man's regular duty in the *manakiban*. He is related to the *ajengan*, and has lived in this complex all his life. The *tawassul* is a series of invocations of individuals and groups of people, uttered in Arabic, from whom intercession is sought. He performs it from memory, and after every invocation a *fatihah* is recited by the assembly as an offering (*hadiah*) made in the hope of the intercession of those invoked. Although the entire assembly recites the *fatihah* as a chorus, it is not verbalized in unison; participants bring their own melody and style to bear on it, so the overall effect is a low, dense mumbling.

Here are the first and fifth in the series of *tawassul*:

To his honour (*haḍrat*) the chosen Prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and on his family and companions and wives and offspring and the noble occupants of his house, may something of Allah's be with them: [*fatihah* is recited] [...]

Next, to all the souls (*arwāḥ*) of the line of descent of the Qadiriyyah and Naqshabandiyyah, the people of the orders, especially to his honour the Sultan of the Saints, the Master of Greatness, the Pivot (Qutb) of the Universe, Master Sheikh 'Abd ul-Qādir al-Jailāni, Master Sheikh Abū al-Qāsim Junaidi al-Baghdādī, and Master Sheikh M'arūf al-Karkhī and Master Sheikh Sarri al-Saqāṭi and Master Sheikh Ḥabīb al-'Ajmi and Master Sheikh Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Master Sheikh Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, and Master Sheikh Yūsuf al-Hamdāni and Master Sheikh Abū Yazīd al-Buṣṭāmī and Master Sheikh Shāh Bahā' al-Dīn al-Naqshabandī and his honour Imām al-Rabbāni and his honour our noble Sheikh, Sheikh 'Abdullāh Mubārak bin Nūr Muḥammad and their forefathers and descendants and the people of

their lineages and their offspring; may something of Allah's be with them: [*fatihah* is recited]. (*Alaa inna auliyaa* 1956:10-2.)

Following this, the participants join in the singing of a combination of Koranic verses intended to encourage acceptance of intentions and the granting of the favour hoped for by those attending.¹⁸

Next comes the part of the night from which the event derives its name, that is the reading of the *manakib*. Before commencing these, the *ajengan* utters a *salam* to all the *rijāl ul-ghaib* (the *awliyā'* (friends of Allah) occupying the unseen world) and *al-arwāḥ ul-muqaddasah* (sanctified souls). Three *mankobah* are read, in Sundanese. The number assigned to each *mankobah* in the source book is announced before it is read. The delivery is very bright and tuneful, and Mr Millie was told that it consists of a combination of melodies learnt by the *ajengan* from his father. It is verbalized with great speed, but not so fast that it cannot be understood. The text is read literally from the written text (that is, *Alaa inna auliyaa* 1956), with no embellishment, explanation, or interpretation. As to the significance of the stories themselves to this event, some indication can be obtained from the time allotted to them. The entire event lasts approximately forty-two minutes, and of this time, only eight minutes are occupied by the reading of the *manakib*. In this connection, it should be borne in mind that this *maca manakib* is held every Thursday evening, so the interaction of the participants with the stories would be dulled by constant repetition. Furthermore, as described below, the goal of obtaining *barokah* from the reading of the *manakib* has precedence over the content of the respective *mankobah*. Hence, the *manakib* are read summarily. Nevertheless, the selection of which *mankobah* is to be read in a particular month is significant, and a schedule specifying this information is provided by the *Suryalaya pesantren*. Here is one of the *mankobah* read on this night; it may be regarded as typical of the style of this genre:

The fourteenth *mankobah*

[...] relates how people who ate the grass and drank the water of Master Abdulqadir's school were cured of the plague.

It was related by one ulama that there was a plague in the time of Master Abdulqadir, which went on to the point where hundreds of thousands were dying day after day. This was reported to Master Abdulqadir, who said, 'Anybody who eats the grass of my school will be cured by Allah of this plague'. Because so many people wanted to eat, there wasn't enough grass to serve as medicine for

¹⁸ The contents of this section of the programme is as follows; Al-Ikhlās x 3, Al-Falaq x 1, Al-Nās x 1, Al-Fātiḥah x 1, Al-Baqarah (1-5) x 1, Ayat al-Kursi x 1, Al-Qadr x 1, Al-'Aṣr x 1, Al-Naṣr x 1, Shalawat Tafrijiyah/Munfarijah x 3, Al-Fātiḥah x 1. The sequence of *tawassul*, *ayat-ayat* and *doa* is the pattern referred to in other contexts as *tahlil*. This forms the core of many supplicatory prayer gatherings in West Java.

Photo 2. A scene from *pangaosan Layang Selu*, a tradition that was in the past frequently practised in Bandung, but which has receded as the custom of *manukibun* has burgeoned amongst the followers of Abah Anom. The reader is Mama Rustana, of Kampung Cijerokaso.

all those suffering from the plague. Master Abdulqadir said, 'Anyone who drinks the water of my school will be cured by Gusti Allah'. People then drank the water of his school and were all restored to health, and the plague disappeared. (*Alaa inaa auliyaa* 1956:29)

After each *mankobah*, a small invocation is uttered by the *ajengan*. The assembled answer this with a variation on the *shahāda*, sung in the melody and strong rhythm in which the *shahāda* is often chanted. Here is the text of this refrain: *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* (repeat), *wa Muḥammadun rasūl Ullāh*, *Sēh 'Abdulqādir al-Jailānī walī Ullāh* (There is no god other than Allah (repeat), and Muhammad is Allah's messenger, Sheikh Abdulqadir Jaelani is the friend/saint of Allah).

The *ajengan* made three observations to Mr Millie concerning the content and importance of the *manakib*. The first of these is the quality of *wasiat*, which may be considered similar to the Indonesian term *titipan*, a thing or message placed in someone's possession. The *manakib* is a message to us on the subject of good conduct.

The second is the quality of *riwayat* (narrative) or *sejarah* (history). It was explained that the blessing of being able to live in peace and prosperity is not obtained without undergoing a *perjuangan* (struggle) against various forces, both internal and external. People must look to the example of certain of their predecessors who have already experienced this struggle. So, by looking at the lives of others, such as Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani, we can develop a desire to follow their example. The *ajengan* continued with an analogy; did Bung Karno not say that it is a wise person who is aware of the history of his country?

The third is *karomat*; the *ajengan* emphasized that this was the most fundamental aspect of the *manakiban*. *Karomat* means a status of favour bestowed by Allah upon a certain person; this can be in the form of a miracle performed by or on that person, but is not limited to this. Pak Ajengan explained that humans are not pure (*suci*), in fact they are full of sin. For this reason, they must strive to obtain *karomat*. This task is made simpler if one develops a love for a person who could purify himself to the point where he was able to receive this *karomat* from Allah. Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani was such a person. The reward for the struggle is to be counted by Allah as being among the followers of this saint. In this way some of the *karomat* granted by Allah to Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani can be bestowed upon his followers.

A related yet slightly different account of the purpose of the *manakib* is based upon the concept of *barokah*. This is the goal of the *manakib* for many of its participants. One of these, Pak Adin, explained its meaning to Mr Millie. This man, who is an *ikhwan* (follower) of the order based at Suryalaya, organizes a rotating schedule of *manakiban* among the *ikhwan* in his neighbourhood. He has eight children and a number of grandchildren. He earns a mil-

Photo 3. Mama Rustana in the process of singing the life story of Abdulqadir al-Jaelani

lion rupiah per month as a factory superintendent. He explained that when he performs the necessary calculations, it is clearly impossible for him to feed and clothe all the people for whom he is responsible. His income falls short of the amount required to do this. So, it is *barokah* that allows him to make ends meet, and to maintain the standard of living required for his family. It is a bounty of good fortune emanating from the divine one, he explained, obtained by the intercession of Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani.

After the conclusion of the *manakib* section of the programme, a number of prayers are read from the book *an-Nūr al-Burhānī*. The assembly, with palms upraised, chants *Amin, yā rabb il-'alamin!* (Receive our prayer, oh Lord of the Worlds!), while others repeat the phrase *Qaddasa Allāhu sirrahu* (May Allah bless his secret) when the name of the saint is mentioned. These prayers, in Arabic, continue for some five minutes. The prayers are read rapidly, but the *ajengan* takes care to articulate each word clearly, and stops for pauses where this is recommended in the text for the purpose of reflection on private intentions. The general intent of these prayers is similar to the *tawassul* mentioned earlier; that is, to seek the favour of Allah through the intercession of notable persons. This is not, however, limited to Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani. The lavishly written prayer by Barzanji consists of such lengthy lists of epithets, metaphors, and categories of saintly persons that a single request requires several pages of the book.

This brings us to an aspect of this *manakiban* that distinguishes it from the Suryalaya norm. As a result of his experience in various *pasantren* across Java, the *ajengan* has acquired knowledge of the intercessionary potential of a wide range of *wali*, not just Abdulqadir. Whereas the *ikhwan* of Suryalaya focus primarily on Abdulqadir in a relatively simple programme, the *ajengan* is free to pitch his plea for intercession to a much richer pantheon; the book *an-Nūr al-Burhānī* addresses all of these potential intercessors.

The conclusion of the *manakiban* is marked by the communal singing of the *Salawat Bani Hasyim* (Blessings on the House of Hashim). During this, food and coffee are brought in by students of the *pasantren*. It often happens that a visitor will bring unsolicited food to the *manakiban* as *sidekah* (alms). After this small meal, the participants leave. Some take with them the bottles of water which had stood before the *ajengan* during the reading. The water is considered to have special properties by virtue of the *barokah* emanating from the reading of the *manakib*.

The custom of *manakiban* continues an old tradition in North Bandung of gathering to read the stories of Abdulqadir. The older form, known as the *pangaosan Wawacan Layang Séh* (recitation of the verse narrative of the sheikh), is held in the region of the *pasantren*, though it is receding in comparison with the *manakiban* held by the followers of the burgeoning *tarekat*. In the older tradition, the text is recited or sung in the traditional Sundanese

tembang style over a ritual arrangement of foods (Rosidi et al. 2000:376; Moestapa 1913:19-20, 28). In contrast to the event described above, this older form does not usually occur as a matter of routine, but is often performed at feasts held by people owning a small business. The intention of such feasts, usually held in the month of Muharam, is to give thanks for the past year and seek the intercession of the sheikh for the coming year.

Conclusion

Sections two and three of this article point out a common principle, namely, that the two texts under consideration fall into a paradigm whereby a Muslim engages with the texts, through the mediation of the *ajengan*, in the expectation of receiving a specific or general benefit. The means of achieving this differ between the two texts; the Abdulqadir narratives are used in ritual reading held for the most part on a routine basis in which the *karomat* of the *wali* is the source of potential benefit. In the case of the Burda, we see that it is subjected to fragmentation into individual sections that are held to possess particular properties, sometimes in the manner of a talisman. The orientation of people's understanding of these texts toward obtaining worldly benefit is in harmony with the propositions to that effect made by Drewes in the introductions to the two books discussed in section one. What we have added by means of the other two sections is recognition that these expectations and understandings are realized in situations that are subject to locally oriented evolutions and traditions. We have located the 'authority' to speak about these works not in depth of citation, but in the *ajengan* class customarily called upon to recite and sing them, and in their followers' subjective understandings of the conventions in which the texts are utilized.

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