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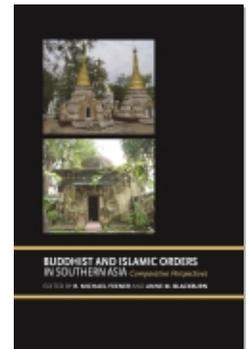
## Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia: Comparative Perspectives.

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018.

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## SHAṬṬĀRIYYA SUFI SCENTS

*The Literary World of the Surakarta Palace in Nineteenth-Century Java*

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In February 1815, a poet from the central Javanese palace of Surakarta (Kraton Surakarta) found himself stranded in Aceh on the northern tip of Sumatra. He took the opportunity of this circumstance to render into classical Javanese verse form what he called the “secret” (*wadi*), “forbidden” (*linarangan*) teachings of his Sufi masters. The result was a poetic text known as *Suluk Acih* (Song of Aceh). The poet in question was one Mas Ngabéhi Ronggasasmita, a member of Java’s most celebrated literary family. He was grandson to the renowned father of the so-called Surakarta literary renaissance, R. Ng. Yasadipura I (1729–1803), who is sometimes credited for having awakened Javanese literature from the darkness that had putatively covered it since the Muslim conquest of Hindu-Buddhist Java. Ronggasasmita’s father was the renowned poet and statesman R. Ng. Yasadipura II (T. Sastranagara, 1756–1844). His brother was R. Ng. Ronggawarsita Sepuh (the Elder Ronggawarsita), the scholar and Muslim “revolutionary” whom the Dutch colonial government exiled to West Sumatra in 1828 for having conspired against them during the Dipanagara War (1825–1830). Manuscript evidence in the palace archive suggests that Ronggasasmita, our stranded poet, shared his brother’s fate. The palace manuscript notes that the Elder Ronggawarsita and his younger brother “Mas Haji” were both exiled in punishment for their involvement in the rebellion of Prince Dipanagara.<sup>1</sup> Ronggasasmita’s nephew—the Elder Ronggawarsita’s son—was R. Ng. Ronggawarsita (1802–1873), the most celebrated of all Javanese poets. The younger Ronggawarsita, remembered today for his prophetic works, is considered “the last of the court poets” and famed as “the seal of the *pujongga*.”<sup>2</sup>

Ronggasasmita was the author of several important Sufi songs, or *suluk*. The Arabic word *suluk* refers to the journey along the mystical path (*ṭarīqa* or, in the Malay world, *tarekat*); as a poetic genre in Java, *suluk* names a corpus of metaphysical texts composed in sung poetry that explore the nature of the

relationship between God and His creation, especially the relationship between God and humanity. Of special interest in these texts are the nature of the human person (body and soul) and the potential for human perfection in and through God.

*Suluk Acih*, the *suluk* composed by our Javanese sojourner in Aceh, forms a compilation of about sixteen or seventeen mystical poems, two of which are “signed” by Ronggasasmita—the 324-line *Suluk Acih* “proper” and the 340-line *Suluk Martabat Sanga* (Song of the nine grades of being).<sup>3</sup> These two poems will form the focus of the present chapter. Ronggasasmita’s *suluk* appears to have been widely disseminated in the middle and later years of the nineteenth century, especially among the Surakartan court elite. Today seventeen manuscript witnesses of the *Suluk Acih* or portions of it are extant in the three royal archives of Surakarta, that is, the libraries of the Kraton Surakarta, the Pura Mangkunagaran, and the Radya Pustaka Museum.<sup>4</sup> There are at least fourteen additional witnesses scattered through public and private collections in Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Great Britain.<sup>5</sup>

The poems that make up *Suluk Acih* concern, among other things, the celestial composition of the human body, the generation (spiritual and corporeal gestation) of each and every human being, the nine levels of Reality manifest in the Prophet Muḥammad, the relationship between God and humanity, the nature of creation, the descent from and return to God, the discipline of human perfection, and the discipline of perfect death. The *suluk* also reveals the movement of a particular Javanese Sufi practitioner through both local and transregional religious networks; it contains brief though fascinating accounts of the author’s sojourn in distant Aceh and of his early educational journey through a series of spiritual guides in Java. The text also provides the poet’s spiritual genealogy (Ar. *silsila*; Jv. *silsilah*).<sup>6</sup> This genealogy reveals that the secret teachings that Ronggasasmita exposes in his *suluk* belong to the heritage of the Shaṭṭāriyya (Jv. Syattariyah) *tarekat*. Although *tarekat* (Ar. *ṭarīqa*) is usually translated as “order,” in the context of early nineteenth-century Java, the word is better understood as “path,” “discipline,” or “lineage.” The manuscript evidence from that time suggests that the *tarekat* did not form an “order” in the sense of a corporate body or horizontal brotherhood, but rather that it indicated a tradition of knowledge and practice that was passed vertically from individual masters to their students. In Java, the *tarekat* only appear to have become congealed into more formalized orders in the later years of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

The Shaṭṭāriyya forms a Sufi discipline that arose out of the Bistami ecstatic Sufi tradition in fifteenth-century Persia and was brought to Mughal India by Shah ‘Abd Allah (Jv. Sèh Ngabdullah Satari) (d. 1485).<sup>8</sup> Thence it spread to the holy cities of the Hijaz in the sixteenth century, and then on from there to the Malay world in the second half of the seventeenth century. The Shaṭṭāriyya, a minor order in Indonesia today, was the dominant Sufi lineage in the Malay world for nearly two centuries—from the time of its introduction there during

the 1660s until the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The Shaṭṭāriyya is characterized by the quick speed and relative ease with which its initiates may attain dissolution in God (*fanā*). According to Rizvī, the definitive practices and the emotional and metaphysical frameworks that define the Shaṭṭāriyya were set by its sixteenth-century South Asian shaykh, Muḥammad Ghawth (Jv. Sèh Muhammad Gos) (d. 1562/3).<sup>10</sup> Ghawth provided travelers along the mystical path with contemplative practices involving recitations in remembrance of God (*zikir*; Ar. *dhikr*) that were performed with bodily discipline, including breath control. All of these were to be practiced under the guidance of a shaykh.<sup>11</sup>

In the Shaṭṭārī texts of the premodern Malay world, the traveler would begin his or her journey at the highest level of manifest divinity and from there descend (*tanazul*) from Divine Perfection through multiple (usually seven) levels of being in order to perform the return (*tarki*) to God, which she or he would attain on realization of the final and seventh level of being, that of the Perfect Man (*insān kāmil*). That realization, in both senses of the word, brought to pass the perfection (body and soul) of the traveler's person or self (*awak, sarira*).<sup>12</sup> The ultimate goal was not, however, *fanā'* (dissolution of the self into the Godhead) but rather the stage called *fanā' al-fanā'* (the extinction of the extinction), which would deliver the traveler to the higher station of *baqā'*, the ultimate return marked by the self-conscious reintegration of his or her person (body and soul) with the divine. At this stage of the journey, the traveler, experiencing the truth of having always already arrived, would be in a conscious state of everlasting abiding in God, even as he or she, thus empowered, continued to move through life in the phenomenal world.



This chapter will introduce the history of the Shaṭṭāriyya path in the Indies with a focus on its place among the literary and political elite of the palace of Surakarta in the early nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> An understanding of the *tarekat* within these palace circles will be drawn from an exploration of a selection of manuscripts containing Shaṭṭārī teachings, most of which are stored in the Surakarta archives. I will touch on some of these Shaṭṭārī teachings as they appear in the two Ronggasasmitan *suluk*, with the hope that this may provide some sense of the *tarekat*'s teachings in the specific Javanese literary contexts to which they belong. Finally, I will briefly remark on the apparent decline in the status of the Shaṭṭāriyya *tarekat* within court circles and elsewhere in Java after 1830.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SHAṬṬĀRIYYA IN THE MALAY WORLD WITH A FOCUS ON SURAKARTA

The Shaṭṭāriyya was brought to the Malay world by one of Ronggasasmita's spiritual forefathers, that is, the remarkable Sufi scholar 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Singkel

(ca. 1620–1693), whose family hailed from Aceh’s west coast. He was initiated into the lineage in the holy city of Medina around the middle of the seventeenth century, having come to the Hijaz around 1642 to perform the hajj and to pursue advanced studies of Islam. This was a time of significant conflict among Aceh’s Muslims: the Sufi teachings of ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf’s “elder kinsman,” the poet-scholar Ḥamza Faṅṣūrī (d. 1527?), along with those of Faṅṣūrī’s epigone Shams al-Dīn Pasai (a.k.a. al-Sumaṭrāī/al-Sumaṭrānī, d. 1630), were under assault at the Acehnese court.<sup>14</sup> The teachings of both Ḥamza and Shams al-Dīn, which had been ascendant in Aceh during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (r. 1607–1636), were ruled heresy by his successor Iskandar Thani, under the influence of a new arrival among the Islamic scholars at his court, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1658; in Aceh 1637–1644). The next few years formed the high point, or, perhaps better, the low point, of the controversy over the metaphysical teachings that had come to be known as *wahdatul wujud* (Ar. *wahdat al-wujūd*, “the oneness of Being”).<sup>15</sup> Books were burned and followers who refused to recant were put to death. It is not at all unlikely that the young ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf made for the holy lands at this precise moment in part to escape the unpleasantness, if not the purge. ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf spent almost twenty years in Arabia, where he received the teachings of the Shaṭṭāriyya from the renowned Medinan Sufi scholar Shaykh Aḥmad al-Qushāshī (1583–1661).<sup>16</sup> After his return to Aceh in the early 1660s, ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf remained in contact with the then-Shaṭṭārī shaykh in Medina, the well-known Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (1614–1690).<sup>17</sup> While firmly establishing the Shaṭṭāriyya in late seventeenth-century Aceh, ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf disseminated among his students one of its most characteristic teachings, that of the seven levels of being (*martabat tujuh*) articulated in the Self-Manifestation (*tajallī*) of God.<sup>18</sup> He also produced the first complete Malay *tafsīr* (interpretation) of the Qur’ān, translated a number of Sufi and other works into Malay, composed his own original works in both Malay and Arabic, and served as the *qāḍī*; (chief judge and minister) of the sultanate.

Among ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf’s students was Shaykh Haji Abdul Muḥyi (‘Abd al-Muḥyī, ca. 1640–ca. 1715) of Karang, a Javanese Muslim scholar from the central Javanese kingdom of Mataram, who, sometime after receiving the Shaṭṭāriyya teachings from ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf, removed himself to the kingdom of Banten and settled in the hills of southwest Java not too far from the coast.<sup>19</sup> ‘Abd al-Muḥyī was probably a student of ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf in Aceh following the shaykh’s return to Sumatra in the early 1660s. Nevertheless, as ‘Abd al-Muḥyī himself was a hajji, it is at least possible that the two met and studied together in the holy land.<sup>20</sup> Manuscript witnesses of ‘Abd al-Muḥyī’s teachings, which include elaborations on the seven grades of being, can be found in the Surakartan royal manuscripts.<sup>21</sup>

Some have suggested that ‘Abd al-Muḥyī’s son Fakih Ibrahim may have served as the chief religious official in the Surakartan court under Pakubuwana

II (r. Surakarta, 1745–1749) and Pakubuwana III (r. 1749–1788).<sup>22</sup> That Pakubuwana II sought and ultimately failed to reign as an exemplary Sufi king in Kartasura before removing his palace to Surakarta has been explored in detail by Merle Ricklefs in his *Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java*.<sup>23</sup> Ricklefs' fascinating study reveals, among many other things, the central role that the king's grandmother Ratu Pakubuwana (d. 1732) played in this endeavor. Ratu Pakubuwana was queen to the first of the Pakubuwanas ("Axes of the World"), a royal name that was no doubt created to recall the *wali kutub* (Ar. *qutb*), the hidden "axial saint" of the age on whom all phenomenal existence metaphysically depends. In the sole (surviving) literary text attributed to Pakubuwana II, however, we find none of the Shaṭṭārī-scented metaphysical speculations that characterize Javanese *suluk* literature. This Pakubuwanan text is a moralistic-didactic poem that emphasizes the necessity of strict adherence to Islam's ritual obligations and that contains sharp criticisms of any who dare stray from the *sharī'a* (Islamic law).<sup>24</sup> The writings of his son and successor, Pakubuwana III (r. 1749–1788), do, however, reverberate with echoes of Shaṭṭārī metaphysical teachings. Among the *suluk* composed by Pakubuwana III is *Suluk Martabat Wahdat Wakidiyat*, a song that lingers on the seven grades of being that were elaborated by 'Abd al-Ra'ūf and 'Abd al-Muḥyī. The text composes a particularly subtle meditation on the second and third grades (*wahda* and *wāḥidiyya*) that form the most sublime levels of God's self-manifestation within Himself and on the dissolution of the self into the godhead that is experienced in perfect gnosis.<sup>25</sup>

If no clear genealogy from 'Abd al-Muḥyī to these Pakubuwanan kings has yet been uncovered in the archives, I have found a tiny handful of manuscript witnesses in which the Shaṭṭārī spiritual lineages of other noble Surakartan literati are explicitly traced to this saint. All but one of these are witnesses of Ronggasasmita's *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, one of the songs comprising *Suluk Acih*. In the Ronggasasmitan genealogy that begins with the Prophet Muḥammad, it is attested that the teachings passed from 'Abd al-Muḥyī to his son, Dalem Bojong, and then on to his son, Kyai Mas, and then on to Kyai Talabudinu of Banyumas, who passed them to Syakh Muhammad Salim of Madahab, Ronggasasmita's teacher.<sup>26</sup> The sole exceptional manuscript is a prose handbook of Shaṭṭārī practices and thought that was composed by a prominent Surakartan statesman, probably around the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> This statesman, Kyai Tumenggung Arungbinang, traces his Shaṭṭārī lineage to 'Abd al-Muḥyī through a different line of masters. The Shaṭṭārī teachings that Arungbinang received passed from 'Abd al-Muḥyī to another of his sons (or, perhaps, grandson), one Mas Bagus Muhyidin.<sup>28</sup> Bagus Muhyidin then passed them to Kyai Mufid of Kedhung Lo, Roma, who taught Abdul Gani of Tersana, Kedhu. Abdul Gani was Arungbinang's teacher.<sup>29</sup> Arungbinang provides this *silsila* in the preface to *Bab Dérah ing Ngèlmi Tarèk Wiriding Dikir* (On diagrams of *tarekat* knowledges and *zikir* litanies/practices), the treatise of

Shaṭṭāriyya knowledge that he compiled. It is notable that what appears to be the only extant witness of this early nineteenth-century treatise was inscribed in 1864 for a prominent Surakartan prince in a manuscript that also includes a witness of Ronggasasmita's *Suluk Acih*, of which *Suluk Martabat Sanga* is part.<sup>30</sup> Arungbinang, a courtier of I.S.K.S. Pakubuwana IV (r. 1788–1820), was a well-connected statesman in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Surakartan palace. In addition to his own service to the king, he was also the father of the Surakartan *patih* (vizier) Sasradiningrat III (in office 1846–1866) and the step-grandfather of K.G.P.H. Cakradiningrat (d. 1882), the also very well connected Surakartan noble who commissioned the copy of the 1864 manuscript containing Arungbinang's treatise of Shaṭṭāriyya knowledge and Ronggasasmita's *Suluk Acih*.<sup>31</sup>

The Arungbinang Shaṭṭārī treatise is an extensive prose treatise on the *tarekat*'s thought and practice. It is, in effect, a manual to instruct and enlighten the traveler along the mystic path, providing a detailed guide to the Shaṭṭārī initiation ritual and a great number of *zikir* texts with recitation instructions that include breathing practices and bodily postures.<sup>32</sup> The greater portion of the text forms a treatise on Shaṭṭārī metaphysics, with extensive meditations on cosmology and on “anthropology”—in the sense of teachings on the metaphysics of the human body, the mysteries of human gestation, and the means by which to open the body's metaphysical potentials (a number of these provided with diagrams, or *dérah*). As would be expected in a Shaṭṭārī text, discussions of the seven grades of being and the seven levels of the soul's attainments figure prominently. Also of interest are teachings concerning the relations of teachers and students and on the different categories of students. In addition to this extraordinary compilation of Shaṭṭārī knowledge, Arungbinang is also known to have composed a remarkable *suluk* that forms an extended metaphysical meditation on the nature of ritual prayer, or *salat* (Ar. *ṣalāt*), culminating in reflections on the perfection of *salat* in its eternal and everlasting form (*salat daim*).<sup>33</sup>

Another particularly striking Surakartan initiate into the Shaṭṭāriyya appears to have been the Surakartan king, I.S.K.S. Pakubuwana IV (r. 1788–1820), whom Arungbinang served. Pakubuwana IV is celebrated as an author, most notably of the didactic text *Wulang Rèh* (Teachings on rule), a moral handbook for members of the ruling class that he composed in 1809. It has gone almost unnoticed, however, that he also composed a number of *suluk*. The king composed these *suluk* over a period of nearly forty years—from the time that he was a young crown prince until the year preceding his death. These Pakubuwana *suluk*, concerned especially with the metaphysical and cosmological natures of the human body, are redolent with the scent of Shaṭṭārī teachings.<sup>34</sup> It is also of note that Pakubuwana IV chose the name Radèn Ayu Satariyah (i.e., Shaṭṭāriyya) for his first daughter from a queen; he named his second daughter from the same queen Radèn Ayu Kisbandiyah (i.e., Naqshbandiyya), suggesting that the king was also affiliated with the Naqshbandiyya *tarekat*.<sup>35</sup>

Muhammad Arif of Banjar was Pakubuwana IV's teacher and probably his Shaṭṭāriyya master. We learn this in the very truncated spiritual genealogy that M. Ng. Tepasonta II, one of Pakubuwana IV's courtiers, provides in his 1820 redaction of *Suluk Martabat Sanga*.<sup>36</sup> In this version, which by today's standards would count as plagiarism, Tepasonta repeats Ronggasasmita's teachings—and his educational biography—verbatim while usurping Ronggasasmita's place as author.<sup>37</sup> Dispensing with the Shaṭṭāriyya lineage from the Prophet Muḥammad through numerous generations of masters down to Ronggasasmita that belongs to this poem and its teachings, Tepasonta instead begins his genealogy with Muhammad Arif—his own guru. He compensates for this erasure of lineage by noting that Pakubuwana IV was his fellow student under Muhammad Arif and by adding other biographical and genealogical notes—these concerning his own court position and those of his ancestors.

Another Kraton Surakarta text redolent with Shaṭṭārī teachings is the *Serat Centhini*, among the most celebrated of all works of Javanese literature. The *Centhini* was commissioned by the then-crown prince of Surakarta, who would later reign as I.S.K.S. Pakubuwana V (1820–1823) in January 1815—exactly one month before Ronggasasmita would commence his writing in Aceh.<sup>38</sup> Composed by a team of court poets that was led by Mas Ronggasutrasna, Ki Ng. Sastradipura, and R. Ng. Yasadipura II (Ronggasasmita's father), along with the crown prince himself, the 722-canto *Centhini* is often called an encyclopedia of Javanese knowledge. The *Centhini* incorporates a large body of *suluk* literature, and recognizably Shaṭṭārī teachings, though usually unattributed, pervade these *suluk*. Given the apparent prominence of the Shaṭṭāriyya among Surakartan literati at the time of its composition, it is not at all surprising that Shaṭṭārī teachings are so pervasive in the *Centhini*—and that it was not deemed necessary to attribute them. In addition to the unattributed teachings, Shaṭṭārī practices are explicitly mentioned a number of times in the *Centhini*—notably as the spiritual practice of Amongraga, the “hero” of the poem. These practices are usually conjoined with those of the Naqshbandiyya, as “Satariyah Isbandiyah,” indicating that the discipline of the character Amongraga, like that of Pakubuwana IV, seems to have formed an amalgam of the practices of both *tarekat*.<sup>39</sup>

There is very strong evidence that the historical figure Kyai Maja (ca. 1792–1849), a figure whose ties with the Surakarta palace are often overlooked, was also a disciple of the Shaṭṭāriyya.<sup>40</sup> Kyai Maja is remembered today as the principal religious advisor of Prince Dipanagara (1785–1855), the charismatic Yogyakarta prince who led the rebellion against Dutch authority that later became known as the Dipanagara War (1825–1830).<sup>41</sup> That ultimately failed rebellion formed the last stand of Javanese royal power against the Europeans. Maja had been a teacher in a rural religious establishment endowed by the Surakarta palace, and he was known to have been very close to members of its royal family.<sup>42</sup> Among his intimate associates was Pakubuwana IV's brother Buminata, the prince who, after his brother's death in 1820, led the crown

prince's administration in which Ronggasmita and his kinsmen served.<sup>43</sup> Kyai Maja stood at the center of the powerful network of Islamic teachers that provided the core backing for Dipanagara's rebellion. It would not be far-fetched to presume that this network was a Shaṭṭāriyya one. Furthermore, with Kyai Maja as his spiritual guide, it is not surprising that Prince Dipanagara, too, appears to have been an adherent of Shaṭṭārī knowledge and practice.<sup>44</sup> With the failure of the rebellion and the exiles of Kyai Maja in 1828 and of Dipanagara and Surakarta's king Pakubuwana VI in 1830, the old royal order of Java was over.

The year 1830 was a watershed year in Javanese social and political history: it marked the end of indigenous royal political power and the beginning of high colonialism in Java. The defeat also appears to have delivered a blow to the ascendance of the Shaṭṭāriyya at the Surakarta court, on which I will elaborate further in the conclusion of this chapter. There is reason to believe that the Shaṭṭārī court poet Mas Ronggasmita—along with the *pujangga* Ronggawarsita's father—were among the casualties of that war. To my knowledge, no new Shaṭṭārī texts were composed at the court after the war—although the older Shaṭṭāriyya manuscripts continued to be copied, redacted, and circulated.<sup>45</sup>

### THE WRITING OF *SULUK ACIH*

Some ten years before the outbreak of the Dipanagara War, the Javanese court poet Ronggasmita composed his collection of Shaṭṭārī Sufi poems in far-off Aceh. Ronggasmita almost certainly composed this work in the course of an interrupted pilgrimage to Mekka. Stranded in Aceh, the so-called Veranda of Mekka through which pilgrims from the archipelago often passed, the poet, speaking in the third person, notes that his writing

[10] Was at the time that he was cast adrift by God  
Separated from his companions  
In the land of Aceh overseas  
Just the two of them, he and his uncle Yakir.

[11] But his uncle, fallen ill with a fever  
Weeks on end, sorrowful of heart  
Could not be drawn to speak.  
The writing began on a Friday, in the month of Rabinguawal

[12] On the seventh day, in the year Jé, in the seventh season  
Rendered in chronogram:  
“Pure Countenance of the Priest King” [17 February 1815].<sup>46</sup>  
(*Suluk Acih*)<sup>47</sup>

For pilgrims from south-central Java in the era before the steamship, performing the hajj in Mekka entailed, to be sure, an arduous journey.<sup>48</sup> We do not know how long the preparations had taken for our two pilgrims' voyage or how long they might have waited for this opportunity. We do know that the Haramayn had been under Wahhābī control from 1806 to 1813, which would have made Mekka less than conducive to Sufi practitioners.<sup>49</sup>

Ronggasasmita and his uncle probably set sail from the port of Semarang on Java's north coast in the fall of 1814 to journey westward and northward for over 1,300 miles—across the north coast of Java and then up through the Straits of Malacca to Aceh. The pilgrims would have needed to embark from Aceh sometime between late December and early February in order to catch the monsoon winds for the 4,000-mile trip across the Indian Ocean in order to arrive in time for the hajj season in November 1815.<sup>50</sup> Ronggasasmita began composing his *suluk* on February 17, 1815; owing to his uncle's illness, he had just missed the boat. We do not know whether he waited in Aceh for the next season's boat out to Aden or if he and his ailing uncle tarried there until they could catch a boat back to Java—though I am inclined to think that the poet did bide his time in Aceh, writing, and that he likely did make the hajj the following year, for, as I suggested at the opening of this chapter, I am also inclined to think that he was the “Mas Haji” who was exiled along with his elder brother in 1828. Until evidence is unearthed to prove or disprove my supposition, all that we know for sure is that in February 1815 the poet was cast off, stranded, and despondent over the interruption in his pilgrimage. At this time of intense disappointment—indeed, of a broken heart—Ronggasasmita decided to divulge in poetry the teachings of his Shaṭṭārī masters. And so he set himself to writing:

[6] The elect knowledge of Reality  
 The truth that  
 Brings perfection to life  
 The knowledge that is forbidden

[7] Secreted by the prophets, the saints, and the faithful.  
 In former times there was none  
 Who dared render it in verse;  
 For so secret is this knowledge.

[8] The first to render it in verse, in Pucung meter  
 Is Dyan Ronggasasmita  
 Charging headlong, revealing the secret  
 All the teachings of his master[s]

[9] All those bound in *primbon* books<sup>51</sup>  
 Here are set to verse  
 To be a journey of knowledge [*suluking ngèlmi*]  
 Deliverance for a broken heart  
 (*Suluk Acih*)<sup>52</sup>

The *suluk* forms a poetic journey along the mystical path, and that path was a Shaṭṭārī one. Was this journey, in part, to replace the journey to the holy land that the poet was forced to defer? What form of secret teachings could salve the wound that this interruption in the poet's pilgrimage had inflicted? Before touching on the nature of the secret teachings that Ronggasasmita so boldly reveals in his *suluk*, a word on his background is in order.

### THE BACKGROUND OF THE WRITER: FAMILY AND EDUCATION

Ronggasasmita belonged to one of the most distinguished and powerful literary families in Java. His grandfather, R. Ng. Yasadipura I (1729–1803), is among the most renowned of Javanese literati. Yasadipura I is most remembered for his translations of the Old Javanese classics (e.g., the Ramayana and the Mahabharata) into modern Javanese verse. However, his writings are not restricted to just the Indic classics: he is also credited with a masterful history that chronicles the war of the division of Java (1746–1757) through which he lived,<sup>53</sup> a poetic history of an important case of Islamic polemics in eighteenth-century Java,<sup>54</sup> a voluminous poetic rendering of the adventures of the Prophet's uncle Amīr Ḥamza,<sup>55</sup> the renowned Déwaruci tale of the Mahabharata hero Bima's mystical journey in search of the water of life (notably classified as a *suluk* in the Kraton Surakarta archives),<sup>56</sup> and at least one other poem that is more easily recognizable as *suluk*.<sup>57</sup> Yasadipura I was also an avid reader of *suluk* literature, as Ronggasasmita attests in his *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, and a close confidant of Surakarta's king I.S.K.S. Pakubuwana III (r. 1749–1788), who, as noted above, was himself an author of *suluk* infused with Shaṭṭārī thought.

Yasadipura I's son and Ronggasasmita's father, R. T. Sastranagara (a.k.a. Yasadipura II, 1756–1844), was both a prolific writer and a major statesman, serving as the senior minister of the Surakarta palace's Kadipatèn from 1826 to his death.<sup>58</sup> Sastranagara produced a range of literary works: in addition to participating in the composition of the encyclopedic *Centhini*, he also wrote historical chronicles, commentaries on good and bad statecraft, moralistic manuals for the ruling class, translations of the Old Javanese classics into modern Javanese poetry (and, conversely, translations of modern Javanese poetry into Old Javanese classical meters), voluminous histories of the Islamic prophets (*Serat Ambiya*), and, perhaps most relevant here, at least two *suluk*. One of those admonishes his children to study, to work with written materials and with properly qualified masters in order to achieve perfection, especially

perfection in death; the other *suluk* provides a sense of what that perfection might mean, and that would appear to be the perfect embodiment of spirit in both life and death.<sup>59</sup>

Ronggasmita seems to have followed his father's directions in seeking out a spiritual education, though he was not always entirely successful in this endeavor; we learn this in an unprecedented narrative that is tucked away in one of the poems that compose his *Suluk Acih*. In the section of *Suluk Martabat Sanga* immediately following the secret teachings on the nine grades of the Prophet Muḥammad's being, which open the *suluk*, and immediately preceding the poet's Shattāriyya genealogy, Ronggasmita provides a concise autobiographical narrative of his early educational journey. I should note that this is the only such first-person narrative on a Javanese subject's spiritual education that I have encountered in any traditional Javanese text. The narrative begins with a specific prohibition: Ronggasmita instructs his students and children to conceal the esoteric teachings that he has newly disclosed to them from what he calls the "sharī'a folk" (Jv. *ahli sarak*), the community of those whose main concern is Islamic Law, a community to which he himself once belonged.<sup>60</sup>

[38] Keep this hidden, fenced away closed tight  
Those belonging to the sharī'a folk [*ahli sarak*]  
Are forbidden [*siriken*], let it not be known to them.  
Even with others, you must take care.

[39] I give so strong a warning because  
It has been truly demonstrated:  
I myself did once become  
One of the sharī'a folk, but not as learned as the '*ulamā*'  
[accomplished religious scholars]

[40] Still stupid [*maksih busuk*], nevertheless I took a guru  
[*anggeguru*].  
And this first time  
It did not penetrate my heart,  
So I took another guru, the second time still

[41] My heart was confused: like yes, like no  
Scored by sharī'a  
Terrified of death.  
Again I took a guru, this then was my third.

[42] At last I began to understand,  
But still not rid of  
The traces of sharī'a, troubled  
Day and night my heart did roil in argument.

[43] Over and again my position I turned  
 On the secret knowledge [*rahsiya*]  
 Lost in twisted argument [*kapulintir*]  
 In frustration, I took no heed

[44] Heedless, again a guru I took.  
 This then was my fourth.  
 And there my heart, now strong [*gagah*]  
 Received the revelation [*wahyu*], the gift of grace [*nugraha*],

[45] Completed, opened and cleansed was my heart.  
 No longer was it shrouded  
 Gone were all the screens  
 Mad, ecstatic, now assured.

[46] Ever stronger, my passion [*birahèningsun*] for knowledge  
 Ceaselessly seeking teachers [*puruhita*]  
 From them to learn of that within [*batin*].  
 Now wholly dedicated, I did not spare expense.

[47] The taking of gurus I took to its end:  
 Within [*batin*] I was untroubled  
 But outwardly [*lahiré*] I did conceal that  
 Ritual performance [*angibadah*] was useless [*tanpa pédah*] then for  
 me

[48] Like a *dul*, my *zikir* knew no set times<sup>61</sup>  
 My *ratib* and *sama*, ceaseless<sup>62</sup>  
 I gathered all the hajjis  
 Finally then impoverished by hosting all those feasts.

[49] All ye, young and old, my followers all  
 Know ye all  
 The lineage of my gurus  
 This exceeds in excellence reading the Qur'ān.

[50] My gurus were not many, only twenty-three  
 But I am counting only  
 The lineage of but one:  
 Whose foundation came from our Master

[51] For it was first the Messenger of God who taught  
 Sayidina Ali  
 The son of bin Talib.  
 Then Sayidina Ali taught . . .  
 (*Suluk Martabat Sanga*)<sup>63</sup>

The Shaṭṭāriyya spiritual genealogy that begins with the Prophet Muḥammad continues on through twenty-eight generations of gurus before coming to Ronggasasmita's Shaṭṭārī master, Shaykh Muhammad Salim of "Madahab," that one guru whose lineage "counted."<sup>64</sup> Ronggasasmita was, then, the thirtieth in the lineage.

It is no doubt significant that the poet chose to preface his distinguished Shaṭṭāriyya genealogy with an outline of what had been his sketchy educational journey as a young spiritual seeker. In doing this, Ronggasasmita seems to be both censuring and celebrating the educational failures he experienced at the start of his quest and the excesses in which he indulged toward the end of his journey—and to be doing so in the interface between revealing the deepest esoteric knowledge of the Prophetic Reality and authorizing that knowledge with the pedigree of his Shaṭṭārī heritage. At the end of his (preliminary) journey, he is like a *santri dul*, mad and ecstatic in his embrace and his practices; he impoverishes himself by holding feasts for all the religious. Did these excesses precede or succeed Ronggasasmita's entrance into the Shaṭṭāriyya? Where is Shaykh Muhammad Salim of Madahab, that one teacher that counted, located in this narrative? Is he the favored fourth guru under whose guidance Ronggasasmita's heart was opened to the revelation, an experience that was followed by the poet's indulgence in unregulated "mystic excess"? Or was he perhaps one of those hajjis who enjoyed Ronggasasmita's largesse? Or did Shaykh Muhammad Salim come into the poet's life after his impoverishment—after the feasting was over? At the least, I should note that the excesses Ronggasasmita describes here are not consistent with the teachings in the rest of *Suluk Martabat Sanga* or with the teachings of almost all the other poems normally included in the *Suluk Acih* compilation.<sup>65</sup>

Ronggasasmita notes that it was only after having been frustrated in his study of sharī'a, and still in a state of ignorant stupidity (*maksih busuk*), that he turned to the world of (Sufi) gurus (*anggeguru*). Narrating the difficulties he encountered on the path, he may then be describing the pitfalls into which one who is too steeped in the petty details of sharī'a—though not truly learned like the 'ulamā'—may fall when confronted with esoteric Sufi knowledge. He does, after all, explicitly cite his own stumbling experience with his gurus as evidence of the impediments to Sufi practice faced by a half-baked student of sharī'a. But is this the prime reason that the secret knowledge is forbidden to the sharī'a folk? Or is this prohibition rather a warning to his students to keep what he

has taught them secret lest they be misunderstood and perhaps punished by the sharī'a folk? There is, in Javanese historical texts as well as in *suluk*, a tradition of writings concerning such misunderstandings and punishments, most notably in narratives of the martyrdom of the “heretic” saint Sèh Sitijenar that is thought to have taken place in fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Demak.<sup>66</sup> Ronggasasmita does note that, after he finally saw the light, he concealed within himself what had been revealed to him and continued to perform the outward ritual devotions required by Islam (*ibadah*), something that Sitijenar failed to do. But at the same time Ronggasasmita evaluates that performance as useless or devoid of merit (*tanpa pèdah*). And in the very next stanza—the last before turning to his pedigree—Ronggasasmita describes his very public ecstatic Sufi (Shattārī or not) practices that fall outside the bounds of prescribed ritual practice, practices that fall out of time (*tanpa mangsa*) and are marked by an immoderation that eventually beggars him.

#### **RONGGASASMITA'S ADMONITIONS TO THOSE WHO WOULD COME AFTER**

The final portion of *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, directly following the poet's Shattāriyya *silsila*, turns on Ronggasasmita's admonitions to his students and his readers, and these are four. The first two of these are dispatched quickly. Ronggasasmita first admonishes those who will come after him “to keep it fast” (*dèn-agemi*), that is, to conceal the secret teachings from the many; second, he admonishes them “to be scrupulous” (*dèn-nastiti*), by which he means to be attentive in study and unwavering in conviction. Ronggasasmita lingers, however, on the interconnected third and fourth admonitions. The third admonition is “to be diligent” (*dèn-taberi*); by “diligence” he means diligence in reading practices, and that which is to be read are *suluk*. It is here that Ronggasasmita provides the only extended critical reflections on the practice of reading that I have encountered in Javanese manuscripts. These self-conscious, at times almost ethnographic, notes on reading are, I think, unprecedented. For Ronggasasmita, diligent reading entails a kind of critical engagement that is the result both of sufficient understanding of the Javanese Sufi corpus and a dialogical interaction with the text, through which the well-informed reader participates in its production of meaning.<sup>67</sup> Passive, uncritical reception fails to meet the mark: the practice of diligent reading that he calls for entails the active and informed interpretive practice of the enlightened reader. Such true “diligence” in reading makes it possible for students to distinguish between true and false gurus, a critical distinction for travelers along the mystical path. Finally, Ronggasasmita's fourth admonition to his students is that they “take care” (*dèn-ati-ati*) in their reading practices. He goes on to explain that “taking care” means attending carefully to the complexity of meaning found within the *suluk* that are the objects of their study. Every student needs to work actively

toward the apprehension and experience of these meanings—of this complexity—but, Ronggasasmita cautions, he or she must do so under the guidance of a qualified guru. “Taking care,” then, is a function of having already practiced “due diligence.”<sup>68</sup> Only the diligent reader who has taken sufficient care is open to the experience of knowledge.

In this final section of the *suluk*, Ronggasasmita describes the exemplary reader (and presumably guru) and contrasts his practice and knowledge with that of the charlatans. For Ronggasasmita, the exemplary perfected reader was his own grandfather, R. Ng. Yasadipura I. He tells of watching his grandfather, notably one who was already imbued with knowledge (*ahli ngèlmu*), pore over texts almost every night, and those texts, he says, were *suluk* and other Sufi texts.

[76] I myself did see him in the deep of night  
When he had no guests  
Once resting from his writing  
There was nothing other seen by him

[77] Save *suluks* and other Sufi works . . .  
(*Suluk Martabat Sanga*)<sup>69</sup>

Ronggasasmita goes on to compare Yasadipura’s reading practices with those of the false gurus “nowadays” who dare to teach without a foundation of diligent reading. These rascally teachers (*guru bérnakal*) even go so far as to offer interpretations of metaphysical poems that they themselves do not understand, and by “understanding” he means the experiential spiritual understanding that is *ngèlmu*. They may be clever (*bér-ngakal*), but their cleverness is built on shaky (if rational) foundations, their interpretations of *suluk* are trivial, and their teachings lead their students astray. For this, Ronggasasmita tells us, they deserve to have their mouths stuffed with seven fists full of rocks.<sup>70</sup> As Ronggasasmita reminds us at the close of *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, if these poems were of no benefit or merit (again *tanpa pédah*), the saints would never have written them. No, they were written in days of old as teachings for the future. Hence, we must take care in our reading of them.<sup>71</sup>

## THE POET’S SHAṬṬĀRIYYA TEACHINGS

This introduction to the articulation of the Shaṭṭāriyya among the literati of the early nineteenth-century Kraton Surakarta would be hollow without some attention to the Shaṭṭārī teachings their writings comprise. My discussion here will be brief and restricted to just some of the teachings that are found in just two of the poems that compose Ronggasasmita’s *Suluk Acih* (*Suluk Acih* “proper” and *Suluk Martabat Sanga*). Both *suluk* at heart form reflections on *tawhīd* (the absolute unicity and uniqueness of God), on the nature of creation, and especially

on the nature of humanity, the most perfect manifestation of God in creation. Although there is no explicit reference in either text to the *insān al-kāmil*, the “Perfect Man” who forms the final (seventh) and most sublime self-manifestation of God in the Shaṭṭārī discourses of the Malay world, both poems can be understood as explorations of human perfection in and through God. The most perfect of Perfect Men is the Prophet Muḥammad. In Shaṭṭārī teachings, it is through the Prophet’s light that creation itself emerges, and it is in his person (both body and soul) that all the potentials of the created universe are realized most completely. Ronggasasmita explores this embodied perfection most explicitly in his *Suluk Martabat Sanga* with the poetic meditation on the nine grades of created and uncreated being encompassed by the Prophetic Reality with which he opens his song.

Having already discussed the middle and end of Ronggasasmita’s *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, I turn at long last to the opening section of the work and the secret teachings that the poet cautioned should be hidden from the people of sharī’a. These teachings with their elaborations on the very being of the Prophet provide an exemplar of the kind of knowledge that Ronggasasmita tells us is so easy to misinterpret, the kind of knowledge that he says was written to be of benefit in the future. The first thirty-six stanzas of the poem form an intricate reflection on the unfolding of God in creation through the person of Muḥammad, the most perfect of Perfect Men. The *suluk* moves through the nine levels of God’s self-manifestation in the Prophetic Reality, each of which is perpetually re-created in Muḥammad’s perfect human form in the punctual eternal moment “from before there were heaven and earth straight through unto now.” In this song, Ronggasasmita celebrates the Prophet in his perfectly realized form as the one who gathers into presence both the infinite potentials of the cosmos and the form of the man Muḥammad.<sup>72</sup> He reflects on the Prophetic Reality reflexively in a way that invites careful readers to join in the reflection and to share in the experience of that eternal moment.

The reflection begins with the Divine Face, unchanging and eternal and made fully manifest in the Prophet, as the palace (*kraton*) of God that lies within each of us. The journey through the nine levels of the Prophetic Reality descending from the first grade, that of the Face, to the ninth, that of the fixing of the Prophetic form in the person of Muḥammad, is an exploration both of the creation of the world and of the generation of humanity, that is, of the gestational process of each and every human being from conception until birth. Ronggasasmita tells us that to follow this journey under the guidance of a perfect teacher is to attain knowledge of the “palace of the self,” that is, to learn to “see” the self under the aspect of the divine. The task of the traveler on the mystical path is, then, to follow the Prophet’s realization.

*Suluk Acih* too lingers on the Prophetic Reality. Ronggasasmita both opens and closes *Suluk Acih* with a version of the well-known Sufi metaphor of the mirror. The knowledge of reality is to be discerned in the knot that this metaphor

forms. In his extended interpretation of the metaphor that opens the *suluk*, Ronggasasmita identifies the Perfect Man (that is, the Prophet Muḥammad) as the perfect reflection of God in the mirror of the universe, wherein the One who gazes is identical with the reflection on which He gazes. The subject and object of vision are one. The created universe (the mirror) is the reality of negation (*nafi*). God (the One who sees and His seeing) is the reality of affirmation (*isbat*). The reflection is the manifestation of God's self-affirmation in the form of the Prophet Muḥammad. Finally, in the closing stanzas of the same *suluk*, Ronggasasmita affirms that whatsoever man or woman completes the journey along the path (*suluk*), whosoever realizes his or her return, is indistinguishable in his or her reality from the reality of the Prophet, the manifestation of God's essence abiding in the oneness of God's Face.<sup>73</sup> And, in the end, "the one who is called 'Allāh' in truth/is he who utters 'Allāhu akbār.'" <sup>74</sup>

Both *Suluk Martabat Sanga* and *Suluk Acih* "proper" are exemplars of *wujūdī* thought. That is, both are extended explorations of the "oneness of being" that explore the absolute unicity of an absolutely transcendent God who is nevertheless immanent in His creation. The *suluk* turn on the relation of the One to the many, God to His creation, and humanity to God, through reflections on the multiple levels of being, potential being, and potential nonbeing through which God eternally discloses himself in His creation along with reflections on the central position of humanity within that creation. Ronggasasmita's *suluk* articulate the unity of being, which is ultimately only God's Being, in a manner that can neither be dismissed as vulgar pantheism nor argued to be an abstract monism.<sup>75</sup> This is effected, in part, by the wit, nuance, and economy of Ronggasasmita's poetic language. There is a terseness of expression in the metaphysical articulations of the being of God and that of humanity that opens Ronggasasmita's poetry not only to multivalent interpretation, but, more important in the context of *suluk*, to perplexity, to the knowledge of unknowingness (Jv. *éram*, from the Arabic *ḥayra*, "perplexity").

The Javanese language seems particularly suited to the generation and exploration of metaphysical puzzlements. In his rendering and evocation of these moments of wonder, Ronggasasmita plays to maximum effect the ambiguity of Javanese personal pronouns, where a single pronoun (*sira*) can and does mean "He," "he," and "you"; and another pronoun (*kita*) can mean both—and at the same time—"I" and "we" and often "you" as well. He makes deft use of the semantic indeterminacy of a number of other critical words in Javanese mystical discourse, such as words that denote "the self"; for example, the word *awak* is at the same time "self," "person," and "body." The senses of words, then, slip between and among multiple possible meanings, setting off a movement of undecidability that beats in reverberation and opens to wonder. In Javanese poetic phrasing, the agent of an action often remains ambiguous. Ronggasasmita plays with this feature of poetic language to effect productive perplexities that cross and sometimes confound the lines of poetry.

This is notable, for example, in his reflections on the creative will in the generation of the universe, where the subject of the verb “to will” (and this is the Divine Will) is willfully obscured. Finally, Javanese verbs do not mark tense. Ronggasasmita plays this feature of language, too, to maximum effect, thereby to slip with ease between past and present, time and eternity.

[6] . . . . .  
 Who stands in Junun Mukawiyah [“the Face unfurling in the wide world”]?

[7] Yea, the Reality of My Life [*sajatiné urip ingsun*: the life of God and that of the Prophet, but also that “palace of the self” that is the secret interior “I” of the *suluk*’s writer and of its reader]  
 Before there did exist  
 Heaven and earth straight through unto now  
 As for the will, what is it that was/is willed?

[8] Yea, its name is Maklum Suksma  
*Maklum* means “knowledge”  
*Suksma* is “the will  
 Not yet to will, but just to know”

[9] Who then stands within Maklum?  
 Who indeed is it but  
 The All High, the All Pure  
 Yea, truly it is my life itself, our lives themselves [*iya iku nyata urip kita dhawak*: and/or “Yea, the reality of my Life itself, our lives themselves”; and/or “Yea, the manifestation of my life itself, our lives themselves”; and/or “Yea, the Truth of my/your own life”; and so on]

[10] When the heavens and earth were yet to exist  
 Straight through unto now  
 And then there was/is another will . . .  
 (*Suluk Martabat Sanga*)<sup>76</sup>

Finally, I would like to say a word or two on how Ronggasasmita, the writer who is foremost a seeker, understands the relation between the written word and human action. Both *suluk* take an interest in the status of the written word, of writing itself. Each of them lays claim to participating in distinctive Islamic discursive traditions, and both valorize writing and reading as Sufi practice. *Suluk Acih* begins by referencing classical theological sources, the

Ibn Abbās tradition of Qur'ānic interpretation and the renowned eleventh-century theologian al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) most famous work, the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Revivification of the religious sciences).<sup>77</sup> It continues with translations from Arabic sources that form reflective interpretations of Qur'ānic passages, along with several well-known *ḥadīth* and classical Sufi utterances. *Suluk Martabat Sanga* also opens in dialogue with the Islamic theological tradition of *kalām*, and it does so through the sometimes-singular translations of Islamic theological terminology—or of what is taken to be Islamic theological terminology—through which it elaborates the nine grades of the Prophetic Reality.<sup>78</sup> After completing its intricate exercises of translation, the poem then moves into reflections on knowledge transmission, recording the poet's educational biography (stanzas 39–48), his Shaṭṭāriyya lineage (stanzas 49–67), and his advice on reading and teachers (stanzas 67–84). Finally, the *suluk* concludes by emphatically locating itself as heir to and participant in the Sufi literary traditions of Java, traditions of merit (Jv. *pédah*) whose teachings point to a kind of knowledge that is not finally subject to the constraints of the logical mind (Jv. *akal*).

While valorizing writing, both *suluk* at the same time prioritize the supra-discursive knowledge that proper reading practices can cultivate. In *Suluk Acih*, Ronggasasmita cautions his readers repeatedly not to be carried away by the written word, but to bring the word to life, in practice. Similarly, in *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, readers are warned against the slavish rationality that precludes the experience of unknowingness that marks humanity's ultimate return to God. In their relation to the Islamic written word, both *suluk* take a critical stance toward the science of jurisprudence. Although neither is hostile to the *sharī'a* itself, both are critical of the overinflation of the law and especially of the narrow interpretations of those who are carried away by an incessant focus on *fiqh*, the science of *sharī'a*. *Suluk Acih* is more measured in its criticism than is *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, which, as we have seen, seems to imply that a focus limited to the law can form an impediment to success along the mystical path. In *Suluk Acih*, Ronggasasmita is particularly critical of those who think that the final, ultimate wisdom is to be found in the study of jurisprudence at the level of the book—as an academic discursive practice. This, he says, strays into the domain of idolatry of the written word, which he condemns as a form of *syirk* (polytheism).<sup>79</sup>

For Ronggasasmita, the ultimate wisdom is not to be discovered in academic exercises, but rather realized through other forms of practice, including not only specifically Shaṭṭāriyya ritual and knowledge practices, but also the social action that the fully realized man or woman will perform in the course of his or her everyday life. This complex of praxis culminates in the supra-discursive experience of *ma'rifa* (gnosis), in which the perfected practitioner then abides. The mark of one who has come to Real knowledge—who has achieved the divine end (and simultaneously the divine beginning) of his or

her mystical journey—is not the mastery of writing but to have been dissolved into all writing slates and all writing—to have been dissolved into all life.<sup>80</sup> In Ronggasmita’s *suluk*, the end is not in disembodied abstraction, but in the dissolution of the perfectly realized man into life. His *suluk*, like those composed by his ancestors whether by blood or by spirit, were written to be useful—to have *pédah*. The *suluk* were composed to draw those who could read them carefully toward a state of productive perplexity, a space out of which they could move from venal worldliness to the realization of a form of worldly perfection like that most perfectly embodied by the Prophet—to lead them to experience what it is to “die before you die” and to sustain that experience in lives of purposeful action. The final lines of *Suluk Martabat Sanga* read:

[83] . . . . .  
It is impossible that the saints would have

[84] Written the *suluku*s were they without merit [*pédah*]  
Nay, they were created  
As teachings for the future  
So by “taking care” I mean

[85] Don’t drown in the life of this world  
Within your lives of valor [*kawiryān*]  
Live in practiced mindfulness [*prihatin*]  
To die before dying—in life!  
(*Suluk Martabat Sanga*)<sup>81</sup>

### THE SHAṬṬĀRIYYA IN JAVA AFTER 1830

I will conclude this cursory introduction to the Shaṭṭāriyya in the literary world of the Kraton Surakarta with some preliminary notes on the shifting position of the *tarekat* after 1830. An examination of manuscripts now stored in the three royal repositories of Surakarta suggests that the composition of new Shaṭṭārī-scented *suluk* by the court’s literati came to a near standstill with the close of the Dipanagara War. This apparently sudden shift in literary practice was no doubt a consequence, in part, of the vicissitudes of that war. Prince Dipanagara and his spiritual advisor, Kyai Maja, were both disciples of the Shaṭṭāriyya, as no doubt were many, if not most, of the Islamic teachers who provided the core support of the rebellion. With their defeat and with the shifting policies of the colonial government toward “political Islam” in the wake of that war, Shaṭṭārī Sufism as a subject for literary composition may well have become an uncomfortable, if not dangerous, prospect for court literati.<sup>82</sup> As we have seen, several members of Surakarta’s Yasadipuran literary family, almost certainly

including Ronggasasmita, had disappeared into exile in the course of that war. The apparent decline of the Shaṭṭāriyya after 1830 was not, however, confined to the literary circles of the Surakarta palace and was not merely a function of local political developments.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, it was a newly invigorated Naqshbandiyya that was becoming ascendant across Java as the Shaṭṭāriyya was fading into the background. Reflecting developments that were sweeping across the Muslim world, the Naqshbandiyya of this period bore distinct “reformist” characteristics: it appears to have placed more emphasis on observation of the five pillars of Islamic practice than had the Shaṭṭāriyya—or, for that matter, the earlier Naqshbandiyya.<sup>83</sup> It also attracted a more popular following than appears to have been the case for the earlier *tarekat*.<sup>84</sup> Surviving manuscript evidence suggests that the earlier Naqshbandiyya and the Shaṭṭāriyya may have been reserved to more elite circles (royals, high officials, and religious teachers—including those in the countryside, many of whom, like Kyai Maja, were associated with the court).<sup>85</sup> No doubt the reformed Naqshbandiyya generated both new lineages and new, more expansive, networks.

The success of the Naqshbandiyya in its competition with the Shaṭṭāriyya for adherents in the Malay world was no doubt accelerated by the increased flow of ideas and pilgrims to and from the Hijaz and the archipelago made possible by the advent of steam travel and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Malay pilgrims were always highly attuned to developments in the Haramayn, and, by the later years of the nineteenth century, the Shaṭṭāriyya had become unfashionable in Mekka. The aspirant Sufi practitioners from the Jāwī world sojourning in the Haramayn were instead flocking to the Naqshbandiyya—as well as to the new Qādiriyya wa’l-Naqshbandiyya order.<sup>86</sup> The greatly expanded body of returning pilgrims brought the newly ascendant Naqsyabandiyya and Qādiriyya wa’l-Naqshbandiyya teachings back to Java with them. It is not at all surprising that it was these lineages and disciplines, then, that found favor among the spiritual seekers of Java who revered and followed these hajjis.

The prominence of the Naqshbandiyya at the Surakarta court (and other royal circles) in the early 1880s is well documented in Michael Laffan’s study of changing Dutch perceptions of Islam in Java.<sup>87</sup> However, by the end of the century the Naqshbandiyya, too, appear to have faded from the palace scene.<sup>88</sup> At the very least, there is manuscript evidence from 1885 attesting that there were members of court society who heavily censured the Naqshbandīs and their practices, prescribing instead even more recently “reformed” models of Islamic practice.<sup>89</sup> Although *suluk*, including Shaṭṭārī *suluk*, continued to be copied and circulated in manuscript form among Surakartan elites up through the early twentieth century, a survey of *suluk* texts in the Surakarta palace suggests that there was a sharp drop in this manuscript production at the court after 1886. Fewer *suluk* were copied, and almost no new *suluk* were composed.

After that time, the (notably few) new “mystical” manuscripts that were produced in court circles had taken a turn toward what was thought a specifically Javanese mysticism (*kejawèn*) that was sometimes colored by theosophical speculations.

Perhaps anticipating this turn to what were to be understood as specifically Javanese knowledges, in 1850 Ronggasasmita’s celebrated nephew, the *pujangga* Ronggawarsita (1802–1873), compiled his prose treatise of Muslim mystical doctrine and practice that he titled *Wirid Hidayat Jati* (Litany of true guidance).<sup>90</sup> Many of the knowledges presented in this treatise bear resemblance to those found in Shaṭṭārī texts. But there are also significant differences. The teachings are not attributed to a Shaṭṭārī tradition that traces its lineage back to the Prophet Muḥammad; rather, the teachings provided in this *True Guidance* are said to have originated in Java, to have been first composed by eight of the usually nine saints (*wali*) credited with having brought Islam to Java.<sup>91</sup> According to Ronggawarsita, each of these Javanese saints created his own school of mystical knowledge. But, while establishing these schools as specifically Javanese, Ronggawarsita was also careful to emphasize that each of them was based firmly in the four principal sources of Islamic law: the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, *ijmā’*, and *qiyās*. These eight “schools” progressed through four generations of eight Javanese saints, finally to be brought together as one under the guidance of Sultan Agung, who ruled the kingdom of Mataram in the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>92</sup> It is the eight combined as one by the king that form the “True Guidance.” Toward the close of his treatise, Ronggawarsita differentiates this true guidance from other lesser forms of knowledge (*ngèlmu*). These lesser forms are instrumental knowledges concerned, he says, with performing miracles (*ngèlmu talèk*) and unlocking the spirit world (*ngèlmu patah*). Ronggawarsita enumerates nine forms of *ngèlmu patah*.<sup>93</sup> Among the knowledges that he categorizes as forms of “spiritism” are, shockingly, the teachings of the Shaṭṭāriyya—along with those of the Naqshbandiyya, Majalis, Sufi, Khahfi, and Patahulrahman. The less than positive evaluation of the remaining three *ngèlmus* is less surprising as they are more recognizable as what could be considered magical-mystical forms of knowledge. None of the nine, he emphasizes, is congruent with true spiritual knowledge, and all of them can lead to argument and thus ultimately to unbelief.<sup>94</sup>

And yet there is evidence suggesting that Ronggawarsita himself was a Shaṭṭārī master. A solitary manuscript witness of his uncle Ronggasasmita’s *Suluk Martabat Sanga* that was inscribed in Surakarta in 1872, a year before the *pujangga*’s death, continues Ronggasasmita’s Shaṭṭārī genealogy for two more generations. According to this witness, Ronggasasmita passed the Shaṭṭārī teachings on to none other than said nephew Ronggawarsita, who in turn guided two lower-level Kraton Surakarta courtiers along the path.<sup>95</sup> Although Ronggawarsita is not—and apparently would not have been pleased to be—remembered as a disciple (much less a *murshid*) of the Shaṭṭāriyya, this

manuscript evidence suggests otherwise. Perhaps the “seal of the *pujongga*” felt it necessary to disguise his Shaṭṭāriyya genealogy in the wake of the Dipanagara War that had claimed his father, the elder Ronggawarsita, and his uncle, the haji Ronggasasmita who authored the *suluk* that has been at the heart of this chapter.

## NOTES

I am grateful to Anne Blackburn and Michael Feener for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter. Any mistakes and shortcomings remain my own.

1. That the elder Ronggawarsita was exiled is sufficiently well known; that his younger brother was exiled along with him, however, appears to have vanished from historical memory. An entry in a prose dynastic history composed in the Surakarta palace around 1831 records the exile of the two brothers: “Mas Ronggawarsita, Mantri Lurah Carik of the crown prince’s administration, was exiled by the Dutch government along with his younger brother, Mas Haji, in punishment for their involvement in the rebellion of Prince Dipanagara on Friday, the 24th of Sawal Alip 1755 [May 9, 1828]” (*Serat Babad Sangkala kang Urut saking Kagungan Dalem Serat Babad* [composed and inscribed in the Kraton Surakarta, ca. 1831], ms. Kraton Surakarta [henceforth KS] I C [6 Ta], p. 127). For a comprehensive history of the Dipanagara War, see Peter Carey’s *The Power of Prophecy: Prince Dipanagara and the End of an Old Order in Java, 1785–1855* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008).

2. A *pujongga* is a poet-scholar who has received the revealed divine power (*wahyu*) of prophecy. It also names an office in the palace of the Kraton Surakarta. Yasadipura I, Yasadipura II, and the younger Ronggawarsita were the last three to hold this office. After his death, Ronggawarsita was known as the seal (*panutup*) of the *pujongga*, echoing the Prophet Muḥammad’s distinction as the “seal of the prophets” (*nabi panutup*). For more on this literati family and on the problematic of the Surakarta “literary renaissance,” see Nancy K. Florida, “Writing Traditions in Colonial Java: The Question of Islam,” in *Cultures of Scholarship*, edited by S. C. Humphreys (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 187–217.

3. The overwhelming majority of texts belonging to Javanese manuscript literature are anonymous. R. T. Sastranagara, Ronggasasmita’s father, was one of the very few early nineteenth-century authors who identified himself in some of his works. From around the middle of the nineteenth century, a practice known as *sandiasma* appeared in which some authors—notably the *pujongga* Ronggawarsita—signed their compositions in acrostics embedded in the opening lines of their works. The style of Ronggasasmita’s “signatures” in these two *Suluk Acih* texts is truly exceptional. In *Suluk Acih* “proper” he not only identifies himself, but also notes the historical circumstances of the poem’s composition. In *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, Ronggasasmita identifies himself in the uniquely versified Shaṭṭārī *silsila* that he provides following the extremely rare—that is, the only one that I am aware of—narrative describing his early educational experiences.

4. For descriptions of these manuscripts, the oldest of which was inscribed in 1845 and the youngest in the early twentieth century, see Nancy K. Florida, *Javanese Literature in Surakarta Manuscripts*, vols. 1–3 (New York: Cornell University SEAP, 1993, 2000, 2012).

5. On the Leiden manuscripts and for preliminary philological notes on the *suluk*, see Edwin Wieringa, “Aanvullende gegevens over de Suluk Acih van Ranggasasmita,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 149.2 (1993): 362–373.

6. Ronggasasmita provides his Shaṭṭārī *silsila* in *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, a text that is almost invariably included in *Suluk Acih* compilations. There are numerous manuscript witnesses of this text, several of which will be referenced in this chapter. My primary sources will be the *Suluk Martabat Sanga* texts in *Serat Suluk Warni-warni tuwin Wirid Syattariyah* (inscribed in Surakarta for K.G.P.H. Cakradiningrat by R. Panji Jayaasmara, 1864), ms. Museum Radya Pustaka [henceforth RP] 333, pp. 83–95; and in *Serat Suluk Acih* (inscribed in the Kraton Surakarta for Pakubuwana IX, 1867), ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), pp. 46–57.

7. In this, developments in Java appear to parallel broader historical trends across the region. See Chapter 1 in this volume by Anne Blackburn and Michael Feener.

8. K. A. Nizami, “Shaṭṭāriyya,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs (Brill Online, 2012), [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shattariyya-SIM\\_6869](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shattariyya-SIM_6869), accessed May 13, 2015.

9. On the spread of the Shaṭṭāriyya in Southeast Asia, see Oman Fathurahman, *Tarekat Syattariyah di Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Prenada Media Group, 2008), pp. 25–40; and Fakhriati, *Menelusuri Tarekat Syattariyah di Aceh lewat Naskah* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama RI, 2008).

10. Sèh Muhammad Gos is included in the *silsila* that Ronggasasmita provides in *Suluk Martabat Sanga* and is cited as an authority of Shaṭṭārī discipline in the most extensive textbook of the practice and doctrine of the *tarekat* now extant in the Surakartan archives (R. T. Arungbinang, *Bab Dèrah ing Ngèlmi Tarèk Wiriding Dikir*, in *Serat Suluk Warni-warni tuwin Wirid Syattariyah* [inscribed by R. Panji Jayaasmara for K.G.P.H. Cakradiningrat, 1864], ms. RP 333, p. 326).

11. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Munshiram Monoharial, 1983), pp. 159–160. For more on Muḥammad Ghawth and his place in the formation of Shaṭṭārī Sufi traditions, see Carl Ernst’s “Persecution and Circumspection in Shaṭṭārī Sufism,” in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, edited by de Frederik Jong and Bernd Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 416–435; and Scott Kugle’s “Heaven’s Witness: The Uses and Abuses of Muḥammad Ghawth’s Mystical Ascension,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14.1 (January 2003): 1–36.

12. The Javanese word *awak*, which can be translated as “self,” means “body.” The word *awakku* (my body) translates as “I” or “me”; *awakmu* (your body), as “you.” *Sarira* (self) is also glossed as “body,” “person,” and “you.” Fortuitously, owing to its sound (that is, like the Arabic *sirr*), *sarira* also and at the same time suggests “the inmost secret (self).” The Old Javanese *śarīra*, again denoting body, self, and person, is from the Sanskrit *śarīra*, a word that in Buddhist terminology designates “a sacred relic”—in particular a relic from the mummified remains, or the cremains, of a Buddhist saint.

13. Whereas the presence of the Shaṭṭāriyya *tarekat* among court circles in the Cirebon palace has received considerable scholarly attention, the prominence of the *tarekat*’s teachings in the Surakartan court has been heretofore overlooked. On the Shaṭṭāriyya in Cirebon, see Martin van Bruinessen’s contribution to this volume and Abdul Ghoffir Muhaimin, *The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon: Ibadat and Adat among Javanese Muslims* (Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2004).

14. Without exception, the Javanese Shaṭṭāriyya *silsilas* that I have seen always identify ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf as belonging to the family, or “the people,” of Ḥamza Faṅṣūrī (“Sèh Ngabdul Raup, putra Ngali ingkang [a]bangsa Sèh Kamjah Pansuri”). See, for example, the *silsila*

published in: Oman Fathurahman, *Shaṭṭāriyah Silsilah in Aceh, Java, and the Lanao area of Mindanao* (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2016). The connection between Ḥamza and Abd al-Ra'ūf may, however, have been less direct than this would imply; see Oman Fathurahman, *Tanbih al-Masyi Menyoal Wahdatul Wujud: Kasus Abdurrauf Singkel di Aceh Abad 17* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), p. 26. On the date of Ḥamza Faṣūri's death, see L. Kalus and C. Guillot, "La stèle funéraire de Hamzah Fansuri," *Archipel* 60 (2000): 3–24. Although Kalus and Guillot's argument for the 1527 date is convincing, it has been contested by V. I. Braginsky in his "On the Copy of Hamzah Fansuri's Epitaph Published by C. Guillot & L. Kalus," *Archipel* 62 (2001): 21–33. For more on this theological conflict at the Acehnese court, see Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, *Rānīri and the Wujūdiyyah of 17th Century Aceh* (Singapore: MBRAS, 1966).

15. The teachings that came to be known as *wahdat al-wujūd* (or sometimes *wujūdiyya*) are rooted in the intricate and sometimes ecstatic cosmological metaphysics that was developed by the great Andalusian Sufi master Ibn 'Arabī (1165–1240). Ibn 'Arabī's metaphysics explores the multiple levels of being and potential nonbeing through which God eternally discloses Himself in His creation. The disclosure moves from God's absolute unknowable, immutable, eternal essence through real being in the creative Reality of the Light of Muḥammad, to possible/relative being as God eternally impresses Himself onto nonbeing (that which-is-not), thus to make manifest His Reality in creation.

16. See 'Abd al-Ra'ūf, "Autobiographical Codicil to 'Umdat al-Muhtajin," in *Transferring a Tradition: 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Singkili's Rendering into Malay of the Jalalayn Commentary*, edited by Peter Riddell (Berkeley: University of California Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1990), pp. 222–238. In addition to his Shaṭṭāriyya *silsila*, the "autobiographical codicil" also provides 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's Qādiriyya *silsila* along with a listing of the great number of other scholars and Sufis with whom he studied in the Arabian peninsula.

17. On this relationship, see Anthony H. Johns, "Friends in Grace: Ibrahim al-Kurani and 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Singkili," in *Spectrum: Essays Presented to Sultan Takdir Alisjahbana*, edited by S. Udin (Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 1978), pp. 469–485.

18. It was Shams al-Dīn Pasai who first introduced these teachings into the Malay world; for a wonderful essay on Shams al-Dīn's major work on the *martabat tujuh*, see Anthony H. Johns, "Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrāī," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350–1850*, edited by Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassaowitz Verlag, 2009), pp. 357–371. As Shams al-Dīn's writings had been suppressed and many of his works destroyed during the purge in the early 1640s, it was 'Abd al-Ra'ūf who reintroduced and disseminated the *martabat tujuh* teachings among the Jāwa. His teachings had no doubt gained elaboration from his Shaṭṭārī *murshid*, Aḥmad al-Qushāshī. For more on textual traditions of "seven-grade" Shaṭṭārī Sufism in Southeast Asia, see A. H. Johns, *The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1965). Johns' book is a translation and commentary on an eighteenth-century Javanese poetic interpretation of the Arabic *Tuḥfa* that was composed by Muḥammad b. Faḍillāh (d. 1620) in Gujarat. The *Tuḥfa* was highly influential in seventeenth-century Aceh. Internal textual evidence indicates that the Javanese poetic interpretation was produced by its anonymous author on commission of the ruler of Cirebon.

19. Ngabdul Muhyi ('Abd al-Muḥyī) is buried in Pamijahan (or Safarwidi, Karang) in the Tasikmalaya district of West Java. His tomb was described by D. A. Rinkes in 1910 in his article "De maqam van Sjech 'Abdoelmoehji," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 52 (1910): 556–574. H. M. Froger's English translation of the article can be found in D. A.

Rinkes, *Nine Saints of Java* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1996), pp. 1–14. The tomb remains an important shrine today and still attracts many pilgrims.

20. For more on ‘Abd al-Muhyī, see Werner Kraus, “An Enigmatic Saint: Sheykh Haji Abdul Muhyi Waliyullah Pamijahan (?1640–1715?),” *Indonesian Circle* 65 (1995): 21–31; Tommy Christomy, *Signs of the Wali: Narratives at the Sacred Sites in Pamijahan, West Java* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008).

21. See, for example, the saint’s teaching on the seven levels of the human soul in *Wasiyat saking Ngabdul Mukiyi Pajang*, in *Serat Suluk Warni-warni* (compiled and inscribed in Surakarta, 1886), ms. RP 332, pp. 116–117, and other more “magical” teachings attributed to him (and to ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf) in *Ēsmu: Waris saking Tuwan Sèh Ngabdul Rakub* (compiled and inscribed in Surakarta, [mid-nineteenth century]), ms. RP 334, pp. 20–26.

22. Christomy, *Signs of the Wali*, pp. 103–104. See also R. Ng. Ronggawarsita, *Serat Sarasilah: Urutipun Panjenengan Nata ing Tanah Jawi Awit Panjenengan Ratu Prabu Dèwatacengkar, Medhangkamulan* (compiled Surakarta, mid-nineteenth century; inscribed Surakarta, 1878), ms. Mangkunagaran [henceforth MN] 245 (Reko Pustoko B 84), pp. 45–46.

23. Merle C. Ricklefs, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java 1726–1749: History, Literature and Islam in the Court of Pakubuwana II* (St. Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1998).

24. Pakubuwana II, *Serat Wulang-Dalem Sampéyan-Dalem Ingkang Sinuhun Kangjeng Susuhunan kaping II* (composed Panaraga? ca. 1742 and Surakarta 1845; inscribed in the Kraton Surakarta for the future Pakubuwana X 1885/1886), ms. KS 367 (210 Na-B).

25. Pakubuwana III, *Suluk Martabat Wahdat Wakidiyat* (composed Surakarta, late eighteenth century), in *Serat Suluk: Jaman Karaton Dalem ing Surakarta* (inscribed in the Kraton Surakarta by Ng. Hawikrama, 1870), ms. KS 481 (244 Na), pp. 30–35.

26. Ronggasasmita, *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 59–61, in *Serat Suluk Acih*, ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), p. 54.

27. Kyai T. Arungbinang, *Bab Dèrah ing Ngèlmi Tarèk Wiriding Dikir* (composed Surakarta, early nineteenth century), in *Serat Suluk Warni-warni tuwin Wirid Syattariyah* (inscribed in Surakarta by R. Panji Jayaasmarā for K.G.P.H. Cakradiningrat, 1864), ms. RP 333, pp. 300–471.

28. Although Arungbinang’s *silsila* clearly marks Bagus Muhyidin as ‘Abd al-Muhyī’s son (*Bab Dèrah ing Ngèlmi Tarèk Wiriding Dikir*, ms. RP 333, p. 312), Tommy Christomy identifies him as ‘Abd al-Muhyī’s grandson (*Signs of the Wali*, p. 105).

29. In addition to Shaṭṭārī metaphysical thought and practice, Abdul Gani also taught the “external knowledges” (*ngèlmu lahir*) that had been handed down to him from “Panembahan Kawis” (‘Abd al-Muhyī). These “external knowledges” comprise formulae (*ngèlmu, ismu*) and prayers (*donga*) that are designed to enhance the adept’s powers in the phenomenal world—when they are recited in accordance with the designated conditions. Among these knowledges are formulae to activate one’s shadow self (Makdum Sarpin), to protect oneself from iron weapons, to enhance one’s invulnerability (*kateguhan, katimbulan*), and to make oneself invisible to enemies (Arungbinang, *Bab Dèrah ing Ngèlmi Tarèk Wiriding Dikir*, ms. RP 333, pp. 423–445). The final section of Arungbinang’s *Bab Dèrah* comprises a translation of an extended excerpt from al-Ghazālī’s *Bidayāt al-Hidāya* (Beginning of guidance) (ms. RP 333, pp. 446–471).

30. Arungbinang, *Bab Dèrah*, in *Serat Suluk Warni-warni tuwin Wirid Syattariyah*, RP 333.

31. For Cakradiningrat's astounding web of genealogical connections with Surakartan kings and nobles along with his connection to the most celebrated of Surakartan literati, see Florida, *Javanese Literature in Surakarta Manuscripts*, vol. 3, p. 241.

32. The word *zikir* (Ar. *dhikr*), or "remembrance," indicates the practice of remembering God through the repetition of formulae or utterances among travelers on the mystic path.

33. *Ṣalāt* is the ritual practice of devotion that every Muslim is required to offer to God five times a day. *Salat daim* knows no time; it is perpetual. Arungbinang's *suluk* is *Suluk saking Kitab Markun*, which is to be found in *Serat Suluk: Jaman Karaton Dalem ing Surakarta*, ms. KS 481 (244 Na), pp. 243–258.

34. Among these *suluk* are *Suluk Dhudha tanpa Sekar*, *Suluk Purwaduksina*, *Suluk Dumunung in Manah*, *Suluk Dumunung ing Toya*, *Suluk Dumung ing Siti*, and *Suluk Kitab Usul-mubin*; manuscript witnesses of these *suluk* are found in *Serat Suluk: Jaman Karaton Dalem in Surakarta*, ms. KS 481 (244 Na), pp. 39–80. For other *suluk* attributed to Pakubuwana IV, see the listings in my *Surakarta Literature in Javanese Manuscripts*, vols. 1–3.

35. The princesses' mother was K. Ratu Kencana II. Later elevated to the position of R. Ayu Sekar Kedaton and then to that of K. Ratu Pembayun, R. Ayu Satariyah was the highest-ranking princess at Pakubuwana IV's court. Ki Padmasusastra and R. Ng. Wirapratana, *Sejarah Ageng in Karaton Surakarta* (composed Surakarta, 1900), ms. MN 670 (B 77), pp. 96–97.

36. M. Ng. Ronggasasmita and M. Ng. Tepasonta II, *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, in *Suluk Acih Tepasantan* (composed Surakarta, 1820; inscribed Surakarta, 1845), ms. MN 304 (A 90), pp. 52–53. The Tepasantan manuscript is (or was), to my knowledge, the oldest surviving *Suluk Acih* witness. Sadly, when I last visited the Mangkunagaran in 2012, this manuscript appeared to be no longer extant in the Rekso Pustoko library.

37. Although reproduction and redaction of earlier texts without attribution were common practices among "classical" Javanese writers, this case was exceptional because of the unusual nature of Ronggasasmita's text: in his reproduction of Ronggasasmita's text, Tepasanta effectively appropriated Ronggasasmita's personal autobiographical narrative (and experience) as his own.

38. The poem was first published in its entirety just a little over twenty years ago. This edition (in twelve volumes) was produced by the tireless Yogyakarta scholar of Javanese literature Kamajaya (a.k.a. Partono K. Kartokusumo). *Serat Centhini*, vols. 1–12, edited by Kamajaya (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Centhini Yogyakarta, 1985–1991).

39. For explicit mention of these practices, see the following stanzas in the Kamajaya edition of the *Centhini*: canto 354, stanza 66 (*Centhini*, vol. 5, p. 154); canto 360, stanza 4 (6:56); canto 362, stanza 12 (6:105); canto 365, stanza 49 (6:157); canto 366, stanza 42 (6:165); canto 368, stanza 2 (6:204); canto 368, stanza 31 (6:208); canto 383, stanza 218 (7:120); canto 383, stanza 241 (7:123); canto 667, stanza 96 (11:173); canto 672, stanza 145 (12:224); canto 675, stanza 16 (12:244); canto 708, stanza 485 (12:224). On the fusion of Shaṭṭāriyya and Naqshbandiyya practices, see also Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia: Survei Historis, Geografis dan Sosiologis* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), pp. 43–45.

40. Dipanagara, "Salasilah Kiai Mojo Tondano," Menado 15-12-1919, ms. LOr (Leiden Oriental) 8652k, cited in Carey, *Power of Prophecy*, p. 111.

41. The Dipanagara War (also known as the "Java War") was no small-scale rebellion. At a time when the population of the entire island of Java numbered some seven million, the war claimed at least 200,000 Javanese lives; Yogyakarta's population was reduced by half. Fifteen

thousand colonial troops (seven thousand of whom were “Indonesians”) also perished in the war. Merle C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 3rd edition (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 153.

42. Kyai Maja’s father, Kyai Badheran (Ngabdul Arif), was installed as ‘*ulamā pradikan*’ of Badheran, and later of Maja, by Pakubuwana IV. He was tasked with, among other things, praying for the welfare of the realm of Surakarta and coming to court to attend the state meetings convened by the palace’s leading religious official (the Pengulu). Like his son, Kyai Badheran had great influence and a large number of pupils in the Surakartan palace. Peter Carey, *Babad Dipanagara: An Account of the Outbreak of the Java War (1825–1830)* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1981), pp. 261–262, n. 110.

43. On Buminata, see note 58 below.

44. Carey, *Power of Prophecy*, pp. 90–114.

45. Among the most copied of these was Ronggasasmita’s *Suluk Acih*. In the mid-1880s there appears to have been a spike in the number of *suluk* copied in the Surakartan palace—a number of these for the crown prince who would later reign as Pakubuwana X; see my *Javanese Literature in Surakarta Manuscripts*, vol. 1, pp. 264–279. Several later nineteenth-century texts produced at the palace do carry faint scents of Shaṭṭārī thought. One of these is a prose treatise attributed to Pakubuwana VIII (1789–1861; r. 1858–1861), which is said to form the king’s mystical manual (*wirid*). The text, which is largely preoccupied with locating particular Sufi concepts and terms in particular human body parts, contains a smattering of Shaṭṭāriyya terminology but no systematic metaphysics. This text was apparently also used by Pakubuwana X (1866–1939; r. 1893–1939) as the manual that he employed to instruct his own students (*Serat Wirid-dalem Sampéyan-dalem Ingkang Sinuhun Kangjeng Susuhunan Pakubuwana ingkang kaping VIII, Bab Ngèlmu Kasampurnan* [compiled Surakarta, mid-nineteenth century; inscribed at court of Pakubuwana X], ms. KS 524 [68 Sa]). In the poetic instructions that he delivered to his son, the then ten-year-old crown prince, Pakubuwana IX advises him to find teachers with knowledge of the “writing of the body” from the “four *tarekat*,” suggesting specifically that he learn from them the knowledge of the “seven and nine grades of being.” Again, the poem does not provide any metaphysical elaborations (Pakubuwana IX, *Wulang Putra* [Surakarta, 1976], in *Piwulang-dalem Warni-warni* [inscribed in the Kraton Surakarta for Pakubuwana X, 1913], ms. KS 336 [256 Ca], p. 1177).

46. Dates of composition and inscription in Javanese manuscripts, when they are provided, are almost always composed through *candrasangkala* (or chronograms), aphoristic phrases whose words when read backwards signify—by a logical system of associative conventions—various numerical values. For example, words associated with eyes mean “two.” Words associated with fire mean “three,” because *guna*, “fire” or “ability,” also means “three” in Sanskrit. The present *sangkala* is *Naya Suci Pandhita Aji*: “Countenance” (2) “Pure” (4) “Priest” (7) “King” (1)=1742. The seventh of Rabinuawal Jé 1742 fell on the seventeenth of February 1815.

47. *Suluk Acih*, stanzas 10–12, ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), p. 2.

48. In another of his poetic works (no doubt drawing on his own experience), Ronggasasmita wrote of the sea voyage of another small group of Muslim pilgrims, that is, of the saints who are said to have brought Islam to Java in the fifteenth century. The narrative is vivid, telling, for example, how the pilgrims persuaded a trader to take them on his vessel, the time spent in trading ports along the way, the trader’s inconstancy, and a shipwreck. Ronggasasmita, *Serat Walisana*, edited by Tanoyo (Surakarta: Sadubudi, 1955), pp. 5–11.

49. The conquest of the Haramayn by the Wahhābīs in the first decade of the nineteenth century had interrupted the pilgrimage and had certainly made Mekka uncondusive to Sufi practitioners. It was only in 1813 that Mekka and Medina were wrested from the Wahhābīs by Egyptian troops in the Ottoman reconquest. I am presuming, then, that Ronggasasmita and his uncle would have been dissuaded from performing the hajj during this Wahhābī interval.

50. I am grateful to both Michael Feener and Sebastian Prange for their assistance concerning the seasonal sailing schedules between Aceh and the holy lands. Pilgrims would embark from Aceh during the winter monsoon (late December to the beginning of February) to catch the westerly currents across the Indian Ocean. The voyage would take at least six weeks but could be much longer depending on the route (via the Bay of Bengal, the Maldives, or straight for Aden via Lan̄kā). On the return voyage, pilgrims would set off from Aden during either the long monsoon (mid-March to early May) or the short monsoon that began in mid- to late August (Michael Feener and Sebastian Prange, personal communication, January 2013).

51. *Primbon* (from *rimbu*, Kawi for “to secrete, to save away”) designates a body of texts that form compilations of various forms of esoteric knowledge, with Sufi knowledge figuring prominently among them. Ronggasasmita is straightforward and, as it turns out, completely honest in the description of his project. For we find in Arungbinang’s Shaṭṭārī treatise what appears to be a witness of the very *primbon* text that was selectively rendered into nuanced poetry by Ronggasasmita to compose his *Suluk Acih* (*Bab Dêrah ing Ngèlmi Tarèk Wiriding Dikir*, ms. RP 333, pp. 389–398).

52. *Suluk Acih*, stanzas 6–9, ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), pp. 1–2.

53. Yasadipura I, *Babad Giyanti*, 21 vols. (Batavia: Balai Poestaka, 1937–1939).

54. For a textual edition and English translation of this work, see S. Soeardi, *The Book of Cabolèk* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975).

55. Yasadipura I, *Serat Ménak*, 25 vols. (Batavia: Bale Pustaka, 1933–1937).

56. R. Ng. Yasadipura I, *Suluk Déwaruci* (composed Surakarta, 1793/1794), in *Serat Suluk: Jaman Karaton-Dalem ing Surakarta*, ms. KS 481 (244 Na), pp. 198–242.

57. Yasadipura I’s *Suluk Makmun Nurhadi Salikin* is a metaphysical Sufi poem that bears within it traces of Shaṭṭārī teachings. It also calls explicitly for strict adherence to the sharī’a, as do many, but not all, other Shaṭṭāriyya-tinged texts of the late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Surakartan palace (R. Ng. Yasadipura I, *Suluk Makmun Nurhadi Salikin* [composed Surakarta, late nineteenth century], in *Serat Suluk: Jaman Karaton-Dalem ing Surakarta* [inscribed in the Kraton Surakarta by Ng. Hawikrama, 1870], ms. KS 481 [244 Na], pp. 190–197, 305–309).

58. The Kadipatèn was the governing institution within the Kraton Surakarta normally associated with the crown prince. From 1820 to 1858, there was no crown prince, however. G. P. Adipati Buminata, a younger brother of Pakubuwana IV and a patron of the Yasadipura-Ronggawarsita family, headed the Kadipatèn from 1820 until his death in 1834. As noted above, Buminata had been a confidant of the Shaṭṭāriyya teacher and revolutionary Kyai Maja.

59. The first *suluk* is *Suluk Panduking Dudunungan*; the second is *Suluk Burung*. Both are to be found in *Serat Suluk: Jaman Karaton-Dalem ing Surakarta*, ms. KS 481 (244 Na), pp. 259–266. In another of his works, it is significant that Sastranagara praises ‘Abd al-Muḥyī, the Shaṭṭāriyya shaykh of Karang, as the paragon of learning in contrast to the radical teachers

who had gotten Pakubuwana IV into so much trouble during the early years of his reign (R. T. Sastranagara, *Serat Wicara Keras* [Kedhiri: Tan Khoen Swie, 1926], p. 9). On those troubles, the so-called Pakepung affair, see Merle C. Ricklefs, *Jogyakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749–1793: A History of the Division of Java* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 285–340.

60. The word “sharī’a” (the Way) is sometimes translated as the “sacred law of Islam.” By the “sharī’a folk” (*ahli sarak*) Ronggasasmita must be referring to the students and/or practitioners of jurisprudence whose task it is to attempt to divine God’s Way in order to make their determinations of law (*fiqh*) as to which human actions are required, which advisable, which neutral, which inadvisable, and which forbidden.

61. The *santri dul* were ecstatic Sufis said to be given to excess and licentiousness. They are described in the *Centhini* and appear to be of the *malāmatiyya* (blame seeker) Sufi tradition. For more on the *santri dul*, see Merle C. Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions c. 1830–1930* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), pp. 36–38.

62. *Ratib* and *sama* are Sufi devotional practices involving music and dance, or voice and movement.

63. Ronggasasmita, *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 38–51, in *Serat Suluk Warni-warni tuwin Wirid Syattariyah*, ms. RP 333, pp. 88–90. In the 1867 witness of the poem that was inscribed for Pakubuwana IX (ms. KS 502 [15 Ca]), the stanza numbered 43 here is missing.

64. Though “Madahab” appears to indicate a place name, it may signify here “the destination” or, perhaps, “the way out.” The Arabic word *madhāhib* (sing. *madhhab*), which often refers to the four “schools” of Islamic jurisprudence, can also indicate more generally the “place one goes to,” “way out,” or “manner followed.” The place of Ronggasasmita’s shaykh, then, was the disciple’s most favored destination and, at the same time, the way out of his difficulties. I am grateful to Ali Hussain and Michael Feener for these suggestions.

65. The great majority of *Suluk Acih* compilations do, however, include the truly excessive *Suluk Lebé Lonhang*. On this wildly irreverent and simply wild poem, see Nancy K. Florida, “Sex Wars: Writing Gender Relations in Nineteenth-Century Java,” in *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, edited by L. J. Sears (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 207–224.

66. On this “tradition” of writing, see S. Soebardi’s *The Book of Cabolèk*, pp. 35–45. For a discussion of Sitijenar’s “trial” and execution, see Nancy K. Florida, *Writing the Past, Inscripting the Future: History as Prophecy in Colonial Java* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 358–366.

67. For a more extended discussion of what Ronggasasmita might mean by diligent reading, see my *Writing the Past, Inscripting the Future*, pp. 1–6. I would be remiss, however, if I did not note that my recent discovery of variant renderings in variant manuscript witnesses of the stanzas that form the basis of my earlier analysis could provide somewhat different senses concerning what defines proper reading practice.

68. *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 67–83, in *Suluk Warni-warni*, ms. RP 333, pp. 92–95.

69. *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 76–77, in *Suluk Warni-warni*, ms. RP 333, p. 94.

70. *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 77–83, in *Suluk Warni-warni*, ms. RP 333, pp. 94–95.

71. *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 83–85, in *Suluk Warni-warni*, ms. RP 333, p. 95.

72. I am grateful to Ali Hussain for his suggestion that the poem appears, in the tradition of Ibn ‘Arabī, to be describing the Reality of the Prophet (*al-haqīqa al-muḥammadiyya*) as the “presence of gathering” (*ḥaḍrat al-jamī’*), manifesting perfectly within his presence all the

divine attributes, negative and positive, the entire cosmos in *potentia* (personal communication, February 5, 2013).

73. *Suluk Acih*, stanzas 59–71, ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), pp. 9–10.

74. *Suluk Acih*, stanza 73, ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), p. 10.

75. Ronggasmita explicitly addresses the potential accusation of pantheism: “Let none of you ever dare/to call Allah the entirety of the material universe. For to call Allah such/is still to see/two beings indeed/and this is unbelief in all four schools of thought” (*Suluk Acih*, stanzas 22–23, ms. KS 502[15 Ca], p. 4). The accusation of monism is addressed in the poet’s concern with embodiment, seen perhaps most clearly in his treatment of the being of the Prophet that he elaborates in *Suluk Martabat Sanga*.

76. *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 6–10, in *Suluk Warni-warni*, ms. RP 333, p. 84.

77. *Suluk Acih*, stanza 13, ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), p. 2.

78. Ronggasmita’s translations of the Arabic terms are at times nonstandard—if not idiosyncratic. He calls the highest of the nine grades of the Prophet’s being *junun mukawiyah*, which he identifies as the stage of the undifferentiated void (*awang-awang, uwung-uwung*). The poet then proceeds to translate the word *junun* as *tata* (“manifestation” or “spreading forth,” but also “order”). He then splits the word *mukawiyah* into *muka* and *wiyah*, translating *muka* as *rarahi* (the Face) and *wiyah* as *jagad jembar* (the wide world). *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 3–5, in *Suluk Warni-warni*, ms. RP 333, pp. 83–84.

79. *Suluk Acih*, stanza 55, ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), p. 8.

80. *Suluk Acih*, stanza 72, ms. KS 502 (15 Ca), p. 10.

81. *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, stanzas 83–85, in *Suluk Warni-warni*, ms. RP 333, p. 95.

82. On these shifting policies and their effects, see my “Writing Traditions in Colonial Java.”

83. For a concise and cogent discussion of these developments, see Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, pp. 74–79; see also Martin van Bruinessen’s contribution to this volume.

84. This appears to have been especially true for the Qādiriyya wa’l-Naqshbandiyya, which became widespread in the later years of the nineteenth century. This was a new order coming out of Mekka whose practices combined those of the Qādiriyya and the Naqshbandiyya.

85. For more on the connections between the court and rural Islamic scholars, see my “Writing Traditions in Colonial Java.”

86. C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1906), pp. 18–20; C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1931). The Qādiriyya wa’l-Naqshbandiyya order was established in Mekka in the mid-nineteenth century, probably by the “Indonesian”-born scholar Aḥmad Khātib b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffar Sambas (see Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia*, pp. 89–97).

87. Michael F. Laffan, “‘A Watchful Eye’: The Mekkan Plot of 1881 and Changing Dutch Perceptions of Islam in Indonesia,” *Archipel* 63 (2002): 79–108.

88. This may have been in part a function of Dutch intervention (*ibid.*).

89. See Muhammad Azali Ibnu Sulaéman’s advice poem that was composed in Malay and inscribed in Javanese script—apparently for Pakubuwana IX (*Nasékát Manyanyi* [composed and inscribed in Surakarta, 1885], ms. KS 540).

90. Ronggawarsita’s treatise was published in Javanese script in 1908 with the title *Serat Wirid Nyayariyosaken Wewejanganipun Wali 8* (Surakarta: Albert Rusche and Co., 1908). This publication is provided in facsimile, transliterated into Roman script, translated into

Indonesian, and analyzed in Simuh's *Mistik Islam Kejawaen Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita: Suatu Studi Terhadap Serat Wirid Hidayat Jati* (Jakarta: University of Indonesia Press, 1988).

91. Although the saints who are credited with the Islamization of Java are invariably nine in number (hence their name, the *wali sanga*, or "the nine saints"), which nine saints are thought to have composed this group varies considerably. In some texts there are eight (again variably named) axial saints with the ninth of their number being the princely saint (*wali ngumran*), that is, the king who was recognized ruler of Java at the time that they were active. See, for example, my *Writing the Past, Inscribing the Future*, pp. 156–157. In the Ronggawarsitan text, the eight saints who are named as the originators of the teachings that he reveals are Sunan Giri Kadhaton, Sunan Tandhes, Sunan Majagung, Sunan Bénang, Sunan Wuryapada, Sunan Kalinyamat, Sunan Gunungjati, and Sunan Kajenar (probably naming the "heretic" saint, Siti Jenar, a saint not usually included in the enumeration of the nine) (Simuh, *Mistik Islam Kejawaen Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita*, p. 170).

92. Simuh, *Mistik Islam Kejawaen Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita*, pp. 170–172.

93. The nine *ngèlmu* are in this order: (1) *ngèlmu* Makdum Sarpin, (2) *ngèlmu* Patariyah [Satariyah = Shaṭṭāriyya], (3) *ngèlmu* Sirasab, (4) *ngèlmu* Karajèk, (5) *ngèlmu* Majalis, (6) *ngèlmu* Patakurrahman, (7) *ngèlmu* Supi [Sufi], (8) *ngèlmu* Khapi [khahfi], (9) *ngèlmu* Nakisbandiyah [Naqshbandiyya] (Simuh, *Mistik Islam Kejawaen Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita*, p. 201). The Satariyah and Nakisbandiyah name the two dominant *tarekat* of early nineteenth-century Java. *Majālis* refers to a gathering of those on the path to perform *dhihr* and *sama*. *Khahfi* (spelled *khapi*) refers to the innermost secret or consciousness. *Patahulrahman* (spelled *patakurrahman*) is the title of the eighteenth-century Javanese adaptation of al-Anṣārī's *Kitāb Faḥ al-Rahmān* (and Raslān's commentary on it) that is transliterated, translated, and analyzed in G. W. J. Drewes' *Directions for Travellers on the Mystic Path* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977). The other three *ngèlmu patah* are Makdum Sarpin (conjunction of the shadow spirit associated with a person's four spiritual birth brothers: the amniotic fluid, placenta, blood of birth, and naval cord), *ngèlmu sirasab* (?), and *ngèlmu karajèk* (a knowledge apparently having to do with the science of twitches). There is a typographical error in the 1908 published edition that Simuh used as his source text, where "Satariyah" is erroneously written as "Patariyah." The earliest witness known to me of Ronggawarsita's text is one excerpted in a Kraton Surakarta manuscript that, judging from the hand, was inscribed in the late nineteenth century. This manuscript correctly writes the name of this lower instrumental knowledge as "Satariyah" (*Serat Panatagama sarta Wirid* [inscribed Surakarta, late nineteenth century], ms. KS 523 [13 Ca-B], p. 132).

94. Simuh, *Mistik Islam Kejawaen Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita*, p. 202.

95. This originally Surakartan manuscript is now stored in the Sono Budoyo Museum in Yogyakarta (Ronggasasmita, *Suluk Martabat Sanga*, in *Serat Suluk Warni-Warni [Suluk Acih]* [inscribed Surakarta, 1872], ms. Sonobudoyo PB C.33 258 [Behrend P167]). The *silsila* naming the *pujangga* Ronggawarsita as a Shaṭṭāriyya master is to be found on page 56 verso of the manuscript. The names of his students were Ngabéhi Surakéwuh and Mas Metajaya.