

Chapter 8: Tapping A Blessing in The House of A Young Sufi

"You of mysterious gentleness, grant me your mysterious gentleness. O Gentle One." (Khataman al-Tarekat al-Shattariyyah/Beben)

A. Introduction

Anthropologists, who have studied the concept of 'precedence' in Austronesia argue that the appearance of genealogies among common descent groups can be traced to particular 'cognate' metaphors that rely on 'botanic' icons and spatial arrangements. (Bellwod 1996; Fox 1997:8) Along the same lines, Parmentier (1987), who uses Peircean semiotics, illustrates the 'schematic' features of similar metaphoric icons in the Belauan Islands. Canberran anthropologists, as well as Pelras and Parmentier, draw attention to the function of metaphors in social action. Various 'iconic metaphors' linked to the concept of 'precedence' and to the implication of spatial arrangements and other materialised symbols, were found orchestrated in the Austronesian societies that they study.

In Pamijahan, instead of a botanic icon, a cognate concept is employed, which represents iconically the four 'sides' of the tomb and also the four imagined cultural spaces, or *pongpok* (see Chapters 5 and 9). The process of 'remembering origins' through metaphor is also found not only in the eastern parts of Indonesia but also in the western Indonesia, as suggested by Sakai in her study on Gumai People of Sumatera where Muslim influence is strong. (Sakai 1997) The Gumai point of origin within social hierarchy is represented by a ritual space.

Drawing on these studies, I examine here the use of genealogy in the process of a 'refurbishment' of the Sufi order in Pamijahan and its location in the village culture from the perspective of traditional narratives. This examination focuses on two crucial points in the village: the first is the personal narratives recited by the leader of the Order; the second is the narrative of the 'keepers of the key' or *kuncen*. I attempt to argue that the blessing of the Wali is negotiated through various 'doors' of the narratives. Furthermore, the availability of materials from the past and of memory of the past,¹ manuscripts and oral accounts in the hands of the Sufis may be used for contestation of precedence through the authority of meaning. (see also Fox 1996:131)

B. Holding the Line, Grasping the Blessing

In Pamijahan the two lines of transmission through heredity and through the Sufi order produce two different lines of authority in the symbolic world. If the key keepers, or *kuncen* mostly derive their legitimacy through family genealogy (Fox 2002), the Sufi leaders gain their authority from their linkages, called *silsilah*,

to the founders of the order, as well as through hereditary links with the Wali. (Azra 2001 and 1995; Trimingham, 1998; Vow 1980)

Usually site custodians or *kuncen* who do not have links to the Sufi *silsilah*, cannot be Sufi leaders. On the other hand, theoretically, a village person without close links with Shaykh Abdul Muhyi's line still has the chance to be leader of a mystical congregation if he has been initiated and has received a license, or *ijazah*, as well as a Sufi *silsilah*. In Pamijahan, all the custodians have genealogical links with the Wali, but not all of them are the followers of the Shattariyyah order or the Wali's Sufi tradition. Traditionally, the role of the custodians in Pamijahan, as was stated by some elders to me, is not only to maintain the Shrine but also to 'manage' the rituals of veneration of the saint within the Sufi order, or *tarekat*. In previous generations, the elders said, the principal custodian, who was called the *Panembahan*, was also the propagator of Sufism. This accords with the information given in the *Kitab Wali* where some prominent people in the past in the valley of Safarwadi were also an important transmitters of the Wali's *tarekat* teaching.

In spite of this, the situation is now slightly different from the period of the early custodians. The decline of Sufism in the village has had an influence on the psychology of the local people. Some villagers even believe that the *barakah* granted to them is not stable. It can be lower at one time or higher at another time, depending on the daily conduct of the village. Hence, the Wali's descendants, through the role of custodianship, make unremitting efforts to preserve the flow of *barakah* into their village. Besides meeting all of the obligations of *ibadah*, they also have to carry out additional prayers suggested by tradition. More than that, they have to comport themselves properly as the Wali's descendants whose obligation it is to serve pilgrims, or *nu ziarah*, and to embrace the *tarekat* as devotees of the Way.

To be the descendants of the Wali is to be able to behave as required by the grand narratives of the village. However, the great influx of pilgrims in recent times has influenced the development of the role of the custodians. But at the same time, there is a feeling, particularly among the young Sufis, that the villagers have abandoned the main teaching of their ancestor, the Wali. The custodians concentrate mostly on local pilgrimage where they are the most significant actors in the rituals. All the village ceremonies as well as practices associated with pilgrimage have to be carried out under their authority. Apart from their management role, there are some vital rites associated with the Sufi traditions required of them.

Generally, however, the custodianship and the Order seem to have different authorities: one in the hands of *kuncen*, the other in the hands of the Sufi leader. These two traditional institutions play significant roles in drawing the Wali's *barakah* into the village.

Saint veneration, *tarekat*, and *ziarah* are all hallmarks of popular Sufism. Therefore, it is important to outline briefly Trimingham's extensive discussion of the evolution of Sufi orders in the wider world of Islam from a socio-historical perspective. According to Trimingham, Sufi practices in the Moslem world can be classified into three stages: the stage of the individual Sufi, the stage of association, and the stage of organisation, or the *taifa* phase. Each stage, as Trimingham explains, depends upon the relation between the leader and followers, upon a syllabus or curricula, and on the regulations applied. In other words, the first stage is that of the lonely Sufi, the second stage is that of the Sufi gathering or association; the third stage is the Sufi organisation with its tight regulations and recruitment. Furthermore, another point made by Trimingham (1998) is his abstraction of the relation between the third stage of Sufism and the cult of saints, as well as pilgrimages. He states:

"The complete integration of saint-veneration with the orders characterizes this stage. The *taifa* exists to transmit the holy emanation, the *barakah* of its founder; the mystical tradition is secondary. ... Another aspect of this stage is that it provides a means of embracing within Islam all the extra-mural aspects of popular religion—belief in *barakah*, materialised in the form of touch, amulets, charms, and other mechanical means of protection and insurance (Trimingham 1998, 88)

Thus *tarekat* and *ziarah* practice are 'fully blended with the saint-cult' (ibid); they are in the same domain of meaning; the belief in *wilaya* (or consecration), or sainthood. The *tarekat* is highly dependent on the *wilaya* (Gilsenan 1973). In some cases, this role of charisma cannot be delegated through hereditary linkages. As in the case of Beben Muhammad Dabas of Pamijahan (see below), the line of the *silsilah* could, of course, be transferred through hereditary linkages, but the quality of sainthood cannot pass through this line. Accordingly, the *tarekat* can survive without the existence of a leader who has the spiritual quality of a Wali. After the Shaykh dies, the *tarekat* is perpetuated by his *pulis* (*murid*) initiated in the Path. However, the *tarekat* will be halted if it is incapable recruiting new novices who will be trained to be advanced Sufis and who in turn will preserve the *silsilah*.

Therefore the *tarekat* is vulnerable to the loss of linkages or to decease, if the Shaykh or the leader cannot transfer the line to younger followers. In the case of Safarwadi, the Shattariyyah Order is currently being 'renewed' by a young Sufi while the prominent elder members of the Wali's family tend to concentrate on pilgrimage activities.

The decline of the Shattariyyah Order in Safarwadi is partly influenced by the current absence of a Shaykh al-Mursid, a Master of Masters. The immediately past master of the Pamijahan congregation has passed away and his successor is seen as too young to be a master. Furthermore, the circumstances, or the

difficulty, in comprehending Sufi instruction, on the one hand, and in paying due attention to activities around the pilgrimage on the other, have contributed to the reduced condition of the Shattariyyah congregation. What is more, the expansion of other wealthy Sufi orders from outside the village has reduced the role of the *tarekat* of the Wali. The largest contemporary Sufi order in West Java, and probably in Indoneisa, the *Tarekat Qadiriyyah-Nashabandiyyah*, has vast resources which prove to be a magnet and have the potential power to initiate new novices in huge numbers. This is due to the charisma of the order's local leader Abah Anom of Surialaya, Tasikmalaya. (Zulkifli 1994: 85) In this case, small orders like the Shattariyyah have difficulty in attracting other followers who might have already embraced other orders with better buildings, good political connections, and beautiful annual festivals.

It is important to see then what has happen to the Shattariyyah Order when the Tijaniyah order surpassed it in Cirebon, as has been illustrated by Muhaimin. (1995:336) He states that, "The Tijaniyah relies on simple rites relative to other *torikoh* (orders), yet promises its adherents high spiritual efficacy and merit, together with its friendly attitude towards worldly life rather than the ascetic tendency usually exhibited by other Sufi orders". (Muhaimin 1995: 346)

I found in Pamijahan that the problem is not only the difficulty of the instruction but also the availability of the tutors who are capable of initiating novices. In regard to this situation, a prominent elder learned in legal texts (*ahli fikih*) who had studied in the various popular *pesantren* in West and Central Java said to me, in more metaphorical terms, "It is not compulsory for the son of a Bupati to be a Bupati, for the son of a *kiai* to be a *kiai*." He then smiled simply and gave me his interpretation of this, that it is not compulsory for the familiy of the Shaykh to be the followers of the Shattariyyah Order. It could also mean that it is not compulsory for the villagers to follow the Wali's mysticism.

However, if this is the case, what are we to make of contradictory views posed by the grand narratives that are found in oral transmission and the manuscripts of the ancestors regarding *tali paranti*, or custom? Which of the narratives of the Saint, theoretically, should be followed by all villagers? That of his mystical journey? Which narrative is or is not compulsory, and which one can or cannot be modified? Who is or is not appropriately in charge of the management of the *barakah*? These are crucial questions, not only for me as an outsider who needs to make abstractions in order to seek a better understanding of the culture, but also for the locals who are grappling with the meanings of their customs and narratives.

Accordingly, what I would like to present here is the serious effort undertaken by a young Sufi to renew the Shattariyyah Order in Pamijahan. In 17th century Sunda the Path of the Shattariyyah was important; Shaykh Abdul Muhyi was the foremost propagator of the Shattariyyah of his period. Now when a young

Sufi wants to 'refurbish' the Way of the Wali, obstacles soon appear in the eyes of the young Sufi and he realise the delicacy of the problem. He and his followers have to face other elders who in fact believe that the Shattariyyah is deceased or dying and who are satisfied with their pragmatic role as the guardian of the Wali's signs. Beben Muhammad Dabas, the Sufi, however has a different view of the way *barakah* should be tapped.

C. The *Zawiya*

The Shattariyyah Order is perceived as a domain of ancient mysticism that many villagers believe is difficult to practise. Historically, the Shattariyyah came earlier than other currently popular orders in the regency of Tasikmalaya such as the Tijaniyah, Idrissiya, or Qadiriyyah-Naqshanbandiyyah. Some elders and prominent custodians are of the view that Sufi practices have been in decline for a long period. I learned that the villagers believe that it is complicated to participate in the Wali's *tarekat*. There are even villagers who think that the Order has disappeared from contemporary Pamijahan, since there is no true Shattariyyah successor who can transmit the Way to the younger generation. A leading custodian told me that, in other places in Java, he had met real disciples of the Wali's teaching who still practised it and initiated new followers. Despite this, the custodisan asserted that the Shattariyyah tradition was defunct in Pamijahan. Later I was to discover that this was his way of warning me that, whatever Shattariyyah practices I might still come to witness in Pamijahan, they were, in his judgement, not authentic.

By September of 1996, I had spent three months in the field without being able to confirm a single piece information given by Rinkes (1910) regarding the existence of the Shattariyyah order in Pamijahan. Then, early one afternoon, before the *shalat ashar* prayer, someone approached me and informed me that he had what I was looking for. That night at about 10.00 p.m. he invited me to his house and showed me a manuscript written in *pegon*, the Arabic letters used in some circumstances to write the Sundanese and Javanese languages. He said that this was the Wali's teaching. This was my first contact with Shattariyyah material in Pamijahan. My informant confessed to me that he was actually unable to comprehend the contents of the manuscript. He had simply collected it as an artefact because of its value as part of ancestral heritage, its *kakantun karuhun* value. He also stated that in his village there was not a single person who could continue to translate the Sufi practices of the ancestors. At that time I had almost come to the conclusion that what had been described by Rinkes (1910), Lombard (1996: 136--138) and Krauss (Lombard 1996), and in several manuscripts as well was, in fact, difficult to verify in the field. My hopes rose.

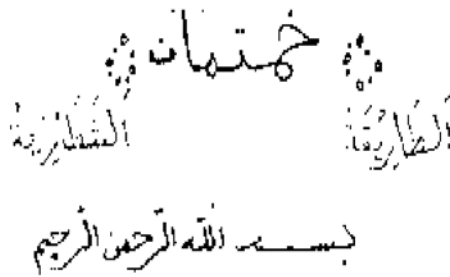


Figure 23. The first line of the first page of *Khataman al-tariqa al-Shattariyya*

It was later in Batu Ngijing, where I had been collecting data on the population, that while awaiting the *zuhur* or noon prayer in a small hut that had been erected from coconut trees for the cigarette smokers, I was approached for the second time regarding the Shattariyya order by a young man who had graduated from the State Institute for Islamic Studies (*IAIN*). He informed me in a low voice that the same night after the *Isya* prayer, about 9.30 p.m, I was invited to come to Beben's Muhammad Dabas' house. It was my policy never to reject any invitation related to my fieldwork, or to any social activities, so naturally I accepted.

Late that night, after I had waited for an hour, I met the young Sufi master. He came out onto the verandah of his and invited me to accompany him to his Sufi assembly place, or *zawiya*. He said modestly that he had a few 'stories' about Shattariyyah. He then admitted to me that he was a true follower of the Shattariyyah in the village, and without claiming more, that he was a regular leader of the Shattariyyah congregational meetings. In his *zawiya* he went to a cupboard and took out some papers. These documents were a manuscript, and a certificate given by the government, approving his activities as the leader of Shattariyyah congregation. He drew my attention to the *silsilah*, or genealogy of the masters. Furthermore, he said that Sunday afternoon was the time for the Shattariyyah congregation to conduct assemblies.

The Shattariyyah *zawiya* assembly, or communal *dikir*, is mainly performed in Beben Muhammad Dabas' residence. This *zawiya* hall is located within the smoking territory (see Chapter 4). The shrines-and-*zawiya* configuration is typically part of the transformation of the Sufi order into more popular practices. (Eickelman 1990; Gellner 1969; Trimmingham 1998) Beside the *zawiya* there runs a small creek that marks the boundary between the most sacred territory (the non-smoking area) and the less sacred area (the smoking area). However, both areas are still located within the *kaca-kaca*, or the sacred border gateway, thus still inside the sacred territory of Kampung Pamijahan. The *zawiya* is about 100 metres from the gate to the north, about 200 meters from the sacred mosque, 500 metres from the Shrine and 700 meters from the Safarwadi cave.

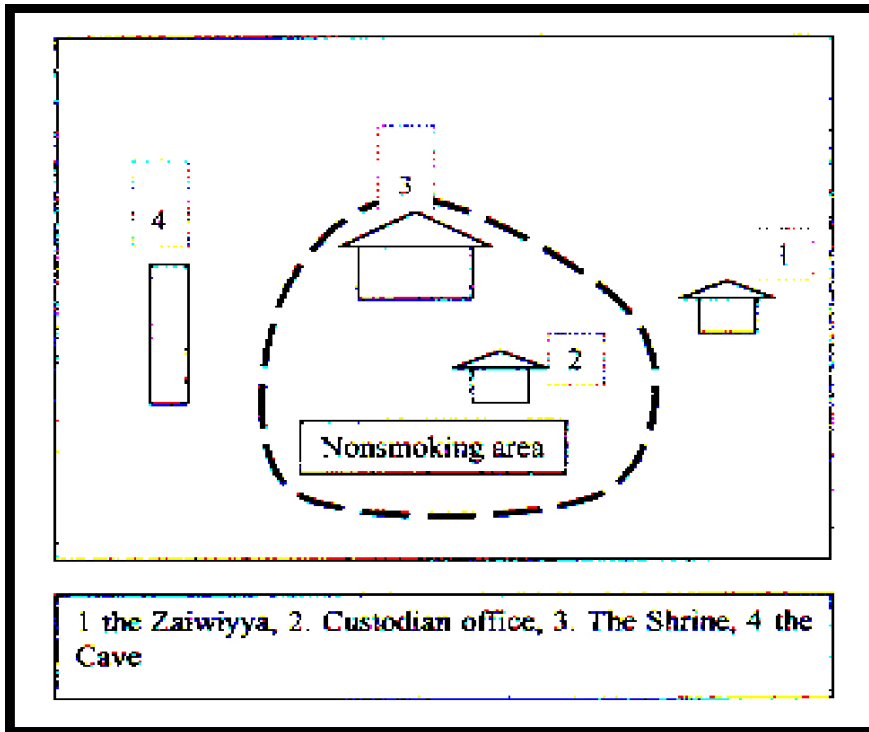


Figure 24. The *zawiya* and the most sacred space of Pamijahan

This location of Beben Muhammad Dabas's *zawiya* is a strategic one because pilgrims have to pass it before coming to the sacred mosque, the shrine or the cave. I believe that the *zawiya*, located as it is between the gate and the mosque, the shrine, and the cave, is the result of making the most of available land, while considering the feelings of the custodians and their families.

The *zawiya* has been built right behind Beben's house, amidst groups of houses belonging to the Wali's family from different lines of descent, or *pongpok*. Mainly young people occupy the area, or families who do not have rights of residential privilege, or who do not have enough land, to build their houses in the central territory or in the non-smoking area of the village. There is a clear demarcation in social level for the families who live close to the sacred mosque and inside the smoking territory. Their proximity to the heart of the sacred artefacts directly reflects their genealogical closeness to the Wali. However, the site of Beben's residence and his *zawiya* do not mean that he does not have any linkages to the inner territory. His mother still lives in the area of the centre, in the non-smoking area itself. Beben also keeps a small gift shop on the path close to the shrine. Furthermore, he is given a shift of 24 hours a week in the custodian's office as one of the custodians in charge. This is due to the fact that he has the right to this role as one of the prominent members of the third side, the *pongpok tilu* (see

also Chapter 9). In other words, Beben retains fruitful access to the symbols of the centre.

However, in the eyes of other older custodians at the symbolic centre, the combination of the Sufi institution which he runs and his service as a member of the custodial staff, is 'too much', 'too heavy', and has come too early in Beben's life. Beben, for his part, does not have any argument about their reservations. He is just respectful of these issues. His position in the village, as he always stated in our interviews, is simply to carry on or "*hanya menjalani*." Behind his humble explanation there is also latent symbolic power being negotiated. Beben, and other groups who create new options for tapping the *barakah* are in fact trying for, to borrow Fox's terminology, precedence (1996:131). Beben is only one of the custodial staff and he is in charge just once a week. Also, he does not come from the first side, the *pongpok hiji*, so it is difficult for him to be dominant in the sacred administration (*pakuncenan*). By erecting his *zawiya* and renewing the Sufi congregation (*tarekat*) of the Wali he is able to tap *barakah* through different sources. Shattariyyah is the oldest *tarekat* in the village. In popular perception, no-one masters this mysticism any longer; yet Beben has deliberately set out to access this symbolic past.

Indeed, in the *zawiya* symbolic power is derived differently from the symbolic power of the pilgrimage rituals. During the pilgrimage, villagers play the role of the hosts in the Wali's house and serve the pilgrims as well as possible. In the *zawiya*, on the other hand, Beben and his devotees access the blessing as 'the humble disciples' (*murid*) of the Wali and other mystical masters listed in the genealogy. We shall see this in the ritual of *khataman*.

The disciples take part in a mystical congregation every Sunday night. Unlike other larger *zawiya* in other places in the Tasikmalaya region, such as at Surialaya, Beben's *zawiya* is small and is not equipped with a boarding house. Most of the followers come from villages around Pamijahan. To the north of the *zawiya*, there is the third biggest mosque in the village, where some old manuscripts were previously preserved.

Beben Muhammad Dabas – at the time of my fieldwork he was 37 years old – derived his mystical linkages from his father, Haji Muhammad Akna, who was known by other villagers as an individual who practised the Shattariyyah. Beben told me, "My father, Muhammad Akna, died in 1982. He said to me that I had to carry on the Shattariyyah in this village."

Before his father initiated him, Beben spent time in a *pesantren* in Pekalongan, North Java. In village culture, most young Pamijahanese have to spend a period in a *pesantren* when they reach fourteen or after they finish primary school (*Sekolah Dasar*). However, only a few people in Beben's generation attended secular schools. He is one of a few young Pamijahanese who went to a secular school, junior high school, in Karangnunggal. After that, he continued his study

at a senior high school (*Sekolah Menengah Atas*). As his family and neighbours related, during his time at high school Beben showed no sign that he would become a Sufi. The villagers even saw him as a 'bad boy' because he was often involved in fighting with gangs from a nearby area. His parents, mindful of the moral fibre of his family, then sent him to a traditional Islamic boarding school. He also spent time at other *pesantren* in Central and West Java.

Later, Beben's family was surprised at his ability to study Sufism because they knew that he had been a rather naughty boy. After spending time in the *pesantren*, he returned to Pamijahan, establishing the Shattariyyah *Tarekat* congregation on April 4, 1991.

D. The Communal Congregation

In Beben's *zawiya*, blessings can be solicited through two types of practices: individual observance and a large weekly communal ritual called *tabarukan*. *Tabarukan* is the most important and highly influential of gatherings. It has structural as well as contextual elements. I will illustrate how meaning is structured in the three of the most important parts of *tabarukan*: the *khataman*, the *dikir* and the initiation of novices into the order. The *khataman* ritual involves the sending of 'presents' or *hadiyah* to the ancestors, Sufi masters, martyrs, the close relatives or *karabat* of the Prophet, and to the Prophet Muhammad himself. *Khataman* is a weekly congregation where the members of the Order gather and share religious experience. It takes the form of a recitation of verses from the Qur'an and the collective uttering of formulaic mystical chants. Although some elders in the village regard Beben as too young to be a leader of a *tarekat* association in the village, he claims that he has been able to persuade seven hundred people to join his association. Most of them come from Pamijahan and neighbouring areas. The greatest numbers of his followers derive their links to ancestral lines through Muhammad Akna, Beben's father, and these linkages are associated with the *Pongpok Tilu*. But there are also many others who are not linked to his father's ancestral lines. It is in this ritual that Beben demonstrates his ability to lead a congregation.

In the ritual of the *khataman*, the adherents are directed by certain explicit and implicit texts to particular interpretations. I will demonstrate presently how such texts are delivered.

I observed hundreds of people arriving at the *zawiya* at 5.30 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon. They came mostly from villages far from Pamijahan, some of them not connected by road and still without electricity. To reach Pamijahan, they had to trek through hilly forests and valleys on foot, in some cases for up to three hours. In the face of such difficulties, they often try to come early to Pamijahan. Some of them would not set out for home until the following morning, or others would return home in groups after midnight. They bring their own

food. For them travelling from their villages to Beben's house in Pamijahan is very demanding. Some of them accept it as a kind of sacred journey. Going to Muhyi's village and following his teaching, for them, is an expression of respect and devotion to Shaykh Abdul Muhyi.

The *khataman* of the Shattariyyah is actually open to any one interested in mystical congregation. The vast majority of participants range from thirty to seventy years in age. Only rarely did I come across followers still in their twenties. There are more men than women, yet women number almost 45 per cent. Families or couples usually come together. The vast majority of the participants are farmers, plus some member of custodial families.

The participants fall into three broad categories. The first are the 'true' followers of Shattariyyah who have acquired their teaching from Muhammad Akna (Beben's father) as acknowledged by everybody. On one night of the *khataman* ritual, Beben introduced me to the 'true' devotees of Shattariyyah in the village. One of them was called Mang Jamhari. He had been initiated by Beben's father. He explained:

I, Mang Haji Qadir Asna, Mang Jamhari, threw myself into the mystical journey and now continue the 'work' that we have had from your father, who said this: "Now, Mad, my young brother, life is uncertain, and if I should depart this world, my youngest child should succeed me..."

It is our hope that what he said will come true. Not long after that, he left us. He was about eighty at the time. I, Kang Isa, and the father of Kang Unang, were all close friends. We went along (to the initiation into the Shattariyyah) and slept two nights in the mosque. We were wrapped in white cotton shrouds, and even if we were bitten by something, we had to stay still. Our heads faced north (as in Islamic burial) and if something touched us we were not allowed to move. For almost three hours nobody came near us. We were afraid, something moved the floor mat, then someone appeared, then my father said, "Come, on." Then we were bathed by him. I was the first...

The second category comprises the elders of Pamijahan who have the esteem of the younger generation like Beben. Although they were never formally initiated, or had *bai'ah*, they respect and support Beben's activities. They often say that all of the *tarekat* are good as long as they can be classified as 'legitimated' (*muktabarah*) orders. The third category of participants are Beben's followers who have been formally initiated into the Shattariyyah. From the Sufi perspective, the structural relation of teacher (*guru*) and pupil (*murid*) can only be applied to this third group. They have been initiated directly by Beben. The followers often call him 'Ajengan', a Sundanese term for an Islamic scholar similar

to the term *kiai* in Javanese. To a certain extent, the first and second groups exist as counsellors and patrons for his activities.

Beben opens the ritual by giving his introduction. The respect of the participants towards Beben is evident. In a low voice and with confidence, he always delivers the reasons why they have to perform the ritual. He affirms that the *khataman* of the Shattariyyah is an effort to find *barakah* and to cleanse the heart.

On one occasion, I tried to ask Beben what he meant by an 'unclean heart'. For him, this meant any intention not based on *ikhlas* or on a true devotion to God. *Ikhlas* is a compulsory condition for serving God or doing devotions (*ibadah*). There is no *ibadah* without intention, and there is no true intention without absolute devotion *ikhlas*. *Ikhlas* is doing something prescribed without reservation because of belief in God's commands.

He continued that people who come to the shrine of the Wali because of worldly desires may have an unclean heart. For instance, the pilgrims should not ask the Wali to give them a good position in the government, huge profits in their trading or success in school. They should come to the shrine in order to remember that eventually they also will die. They have to be mindful of their relationship with God. The shrine is one of the best places for such contemplation since it is the Wali's place. Most of the senior custodians also share this rhetoric about the cleanliness of the heart. It has also become the most common explanation in the village to describe pious activities in relation to the Wali. Even so, Beben often criticises villager pilgrims who do not understand the real meaning of the pilgrimage.

According to Beben, the spirit is like a vehicle or a knife. We have to maintain the gears of a vehicle in order to keep them sharp. If we do not cleanse our heart regularly, as we cleanse a knife, mud will cover it. Dirt that has covered our compassion for a long time is difficult to scrub off. Everyone can prove his or her sparkling heart, which not only belongs to the Shaykh of the Order but also to commoners. Beben said: "We have access to the Wali's blessings (*barakah*). We have access also to cleanliness if we want it."

Beben's introduction to the *khataman* was not only addressed to his followers but also to me, since I had previously asked him about his legitimacy. He also desired to address other custodians who, behind his back, often criticize his legitimacy in the *tarekat*. As I understand it, Beben believes that he too has the right to channel *barakah* as long as his heart is clean and pure. He has often stated this clearly on different occasions.

One of the ways to obtain a pure heart is to have awareness of the human position as humble men before the Creator. The followers also have to be aware of their knowledge which is derived for the greater part from their ancestors, their master and their Prophet. Consequently, the first part of the ritual is to acknowledge

the humbleness of those gathered and to address the entire company of *gurus* in their mystical linkage. A text of the *khataman* follows below, copied from Beben's own handwriting. It was written in Arabic and Sundanese. Note the repeated use of the Opening chapter of the Qur'an, Surah 1, *Al-Fatiha*.

The Liturgy of the Khataman performed in the Zawiya of Beben Muhammad Dabas, Pamijahan

Khataman al-tariqah al-Shattariyyah

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE

To the Elect Prophet Muhammad, Peace and Prayers of Allah be upon him and upon his house and all his companions. Let us recite Al-Fatiha for them.

(2)

Then to the souls of his fathers and brother prophets, messengers, closest angels, martyrs and holy people, and to the souls of our father Adam, our mother Eve and their posterity until the Day of Judgement. Let us recite Al-Fatiha for them.

(3)

Then the souls of our masters, followers and Imams Abu-Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali and the other Companions (*sahabat*), relatives (*karabat*) and their followers until the Judgment day. Let us recite Al-Fatiha for them.

(3) Then to the souls of the learned imams (*al mujtahidin*) and their imitators in faith, wise scholars (*al ulama*) and faithful readers, and to the souls of interpreters (*al-mufasirin*) and speakers and all religious mediators, and to the souls of every holy Muslim man and woman from east to west and from the right to the left of the earth. Let us recite Al-Fatiha for them.

(4)

Then to the souls of the Shattariyyah community and all those on the righteous path, especially the honourable Shaykh Abdallah Shattari, Shaykh Qadi Shattari, Shaykh Mulla Tertousi, Shaykh Mawla Nahari, Shaykh Abd al-Rauf bin Ali, Shaykh Haji Abdul Muhyi (friend of God in Sifar al-Wadi), Shaykh Abd Allah, Shaykh Bagus Muhammad Nida Muhyiddin, Shaykh Abu-Daud and their ancestors, descendants, relatives and followers. Let us recite Al-Fatiha for them.

(5)

Then, especially to the souls of the honourable Mas Haji, Mama Haji Hanan and Mohamed Akna. Let us recite Al-Fatiha for them.

(6)

Then to the souls of our fathers and your fathers, our elders and your elders, our dead and your dead, those who have done good to us and have rights on us, those who have advised and sought advice and imitated us in supplicating for goodness. Let us recite Al-Fatiha for them.

(7)

Then to the souls of all believing Muslim men and women, both alive and dead, from the east to the west and from the left to the right of the earth, from generation to generation, from Adam's creation until the Day of Judgement. Let us recite Al-Fatiha for them.

(8)

When Allah's help and victory come, and you see men embrace His religion in multitudes, celebrate the praise of your Lord and seek His pardon. He is ever disposed to mercy. Please recite inna anjalna and the qulhu. Have We not lifted up and expanded your heart and relieved you of the burden which weighed down your back? Have We not given you high renown? Every hardship is followed by ease. When you have finished resume your toil, and seek your Lord with all fervour. Say: "Allah is One, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him." (Qur'an Surah 112, Al-Ikhlās)

Then please form an Intention (niyat).

In my prayer upon the Prophet, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, I have willed to obey Your order, to believe in Your Prophet, to love him and yearn for him and glorify Your power. With Your favour and kindness, accept my prayer and clear the obscurity of my heart, and make me one of your worthy believers.

O God, pray upon our lord Muhammad, the illiterate Prophet, and upon his House and all his Companions.

Let us recite the shalawat.

O God, Your full prayers and complete peace be upon our lord Muhammad through whom our troubles will be settled, our hour relieved, our needs fulfilled, our desires achieved, and our final hour gratified. His holy face will turn clouds into rain. Bless his House and Companions every moment, as many times as the number of everything known to you.

(9)

To the soul of Shaykh Abdul-Muhyi, our master, elder and lord Kangjeng Shayh Haji Abdul Muhyi, friend of God in Safr al-Wadi, Pamijahan, may Allah sanctify him. Let's recite Al-Fatiha for him.

Please recite: O God, You alone will fulfil our needs (recite 7 times). Lift up our station in life (recite 7 times). Repel our disasters (recite 7 times). Resolve our problems (recite 7 times). Answer our call (recite 7 times). Heal our diseases and ailments (recite 7 times). O Most Merciful (recite 7 times).

In the name of Allah, praise be to Allah. Allah alone will eliminate evil (recite 3 times).

In the name of Allah, praise be to Allah. Allah alone will bring goodness (recite 3 times).

In the name of Allah, praise be to Allah. Every grace you have comes from Allah alone (recite 3 times).

In the name of Allah, praise be to Allah. Every good thing comes from Allah alone (recite 3 times).

In the name of Allah, praise be to Allah. Every grace comes from Allah alone (recite 3 times).

In the name of Allah, praise be to Allah. There is no power but through Allah (recite 3 times).

In the name of Allah, praise be to Allah. There is no might or power but through Allah, the Supreme, the Great (recite 3 times).

Praises and thanks to Allah, and there is no God but Allah. There is no might or power but through Allah, the Supreme, the Great (recite 3 times).

O Powerful, I have grown stronger with your power. O Powerful, I seek my strength in You and in Your Messenger (recite 3 times).

O Living and Eternal, there is no God but You. You enlighten the life of the heart and of the mind (recite 3 times).

Living and Eternal, there is no God but You. Have mercy on me, You Most Merciful (recite 3 times).

You, of mysterious gentleness, grant me your mysterious gentleness (recite 3 times).

O Gentle (recite ya latif 1641 times).

I seek the pardon of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate (recite 3 times).

O Lord, may Your prayer and peace be upon Muhammad, his House and Companions (recite 3 times).

O Lord, open my mind with knowledge (recite 3 times).

O Lord, I seek you and your favour. Grant me your love and knowledge (recite one time).

I have willed to come closer to Allah. The best confession of faith is that there is no God but Allah.

Allah, there is no God but Him, the Living, the Eternal (please try to recite this dikir at least 100 times and at most 300 times).

Allah, there is no God but Him, the Living, the Everpresent. (After completing the dikir, let us close with with a supplication (doa).

Allah, there is no god but Him, the Worshipped. Before we recite the shadat rassul (Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah) we have to recite a supplication (doa). Allah is truly present. There is no God but Allah. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. May the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him.

Let us recite a doa.

O Lord, o gentle, o gentle, o gentle whose goodness has touched the people of Heaven and of the earth. We beseech you, by your mysterious gentleness. You have spoken and what you have spoken is the truth. Allah is kind to his people. He provides for whoever He wishes because He is Almighty and All-Powerful. We beseech You o Lord, by Your Might and Power, to help and support us in all our words, actions, conditions and graces, and to protect us from every evil, castigation and calamity that we have deserved through our inadvertence and our guilt, for You are Forgiving and Merciful. You have spoken, and what You have spoken is the truth. You forgive many people. O Lord, by virtue of whom you have forgiven and who have turned to You, I implore You to direct me and to hide me in your mysterious gentleness, for You are Almighty. May the prayers and peace of Allah be upon our master Muhammad, his House and Companions, and thanks to Allah, Lord of all. Amen.

Al-Fatiha

Signature & Seal

Al-Faqeer

(Beben Muhammad Dabas)

Board of Education Pamijahan, 16 June 1997

E. The *Baiah* Session

Initiation, or *baiah*, is crucial in Sufi practice. The ritual brings new disciples to the world of inner space. Accordingly, they need special guidance from the master otherwise the journey on the long path will lead to confusion and even,

quite literally, to the destruction of the soul and mind of the pupils. Sufism, as stated by Beben, is like a journey up a steeply sloping riverbank or *Safarwadi* (*safar al wadi*) - a term also used by the villagers to refer to the sacred place founded by the Wali. The path has internal obstacles that gradually become harder as one proceeds to the objective of Sufism. The *baiah* of the Shattariyyah provides an initial map and direction for the mystic 'travellers'. It is also a license to practise within the order.

As seen previously, the *Kitab Wali* reveals five important themes: (1) the *silsilah*, (2) the *ijazah*, (3) *dikir*, (4) the types of novice (*murid*), and (5) the metaphysical doctrine specific to the Shattariyyah. It was surprising to me that since the manuscripts of the Shattariyyah are preserved in the hands of other custodians and some village elders, only a few have mastered all of these five elements of the *Kitab Wali*. One of them is Beben.

Even though Beben often talks about his activities modestly, as a simple *taburakan* gathering, that is 'to seek *barakah* with *barakah*', the method and the goal are full of blessing. The gathering is a way to tap the blessing of the Wali and the *tabarukan* itself is a recitation, which it is believed has been internally touched by the blessings of the masters whose names are recited in the *tabarukan*. In fact, he also applies a standard procedure that is also found in other established orders: the *baiah*, or initiation. He requires this ritual of new disciples who desire to make the mystical journey under his guidance.

What Beben applies has been known for centuries. Traditionally, the orders in popular mysticism have three levels of devotees. These are the *shaykh* or the master, the *wakil* or *khalifah*, who is the representative of the founding master, and the *murid* or students. (Trimingham 1998: 170-179) It is the case that Beben acts as the one with the authority to initiate new Shattariyyah followers. During my field work I observed such a ritual initiation, *baiah*, or as it is sometimes called, *talqin* in the Shattariyyah mode. However, Beben confesses that he is not a *Shaykh* of the Order with the quality of *murshid* (a true master) of the Order. Rather he is a humble man who simply wants to perpetuate the heritage of the ancestor, *kakantun karuhun* (see Chapter 3). In Beben's case, his rituals and the adherents he claims, are only a small part of a mystical association. It is not an organisation. Beben realises that a Sufi brotherhood needs a powerful master, or a *shaykh al-murshid*. In spite of this, the perpetuation of the *Kitab Wali* is crucial for him and he feels he does not need to wait until one of the Wali's family in the village becomes a *murshid*. In his own words, "we are now learning the *kakantun karuhun*," or we are still practising the ancestor's teaching "*Urang mah nuju diajar ngamalkeun kakantun karuhun*". (personal communication, Beben 1997) Through his discourse, in fact, Beben is able to take on a small part of the role of the *murshid* in order to initiate his new adherents.

Baiah then is the 'vow of allegiance'. A *murid* approaches the Shaykh of the order asking him to pass on his knowledge about the inner world. According to Trimingham (1998:14) in the early period of Sufism, initiation was very difficult to acquire because at that time the Sufi was not a teacher with followers but a lonely ascetic in search of a personal knowledge of the inner world. Later, when Sufism emerged with a larger range of social organisation, some orders, in fact deliberately sought followers, often competing with one another and vying about their qualities. Some of the orders designed an exclusive method to find new followers by proposing the condition that their new members quit all previous linkages. As we know, it is just as common that the seeker can affiliate with various orders as much as he desires. However, Muhaimin (1995:342) in his study of Cirebon found that the Tijaniyyah order, in fact, applied a restriction on new devotees requiring them to cut their affiliation with any previous order. For Muhaimin, this requirement is part of the competition between orders.

Beben does not require his new followers to forsake any previous order if they want to affiliate with the Shattariyyah under his tutelage. Often, in his sermons, in front of his followers, he states that all Sufi orders, by nature, are the same. They provide us with proper guidance for seeking a way to the inner world. Thus, in Beben's terms, one is permitted to affiliate with any method of guidance, as long as it is able to lead to the inner world. At the time of my fieldwork Beben himself was in fact in the process of setting up a new branch of the Qadiriyyah-Naqshabandiyyah Order of Surialaya, which is the largest order in West Java and probably in Indonesia at the moment.

Organising mystical associations means the establishment of certain rules. Later, these become the characteristic of the order. One of the important rules is found in the *baiah*. According to one Shattariyyah follower from Cirebon who made a *ziarah* pilgrimage to the shrine of Shaykh Abdul Muhyi, and whom, coincidentally, I met during my fieldwork, was initiated into the order after fasting for a period of seven days. On initiation, he also had to provide a cone of fragrant, festive rice and accompaniments (*nasi tumpeng*), a length of white cotton cloth, a *samak* or woven grass mat, as well as perfume of different kinds.

However, in Pamijahan, Beben makes no such requirements. The *baiah* often takes place at the night after Beben has conducted the mystical congregation with his followers. I observed four married couples who asked Beben to initiate them into the Wali's *tarekat*. Instead of asking the novices to bring materials of various kinds, he only asked them to clean their bodies in ritual ablution (*wudu*) in the mosque which stands not far away from his house. The new members then gathered in a small, dark room. They stood solemnly facing Beben. They were asked to hold Beben's hands. After that, Beben requested them to follow his words, line by line. He recited the following:

Saya berlindung kepada Allah dari godaan syaitan yang terkutuk. Sesungguhnya mereka janjikan kepadanya adalah apa yang mereka janjikan kepada Allah, tangan Allah ada di atas mereka. Maka barang siapa mengingkari sesuatu ia mengingkari dirinya sendiri, dan barang siapa yang menyempurnakan janji yang telah diikat dengan Allah, maka Allah akan memberinya pertolongan yang besar.

I take refuge in Allah from the promptings of Satan the accursed. What these persons here pledge is their pledge to Allah, and His hand is upon them. So whoever denies something, he denies it for himself, and whoever fulfils a promise which he has made before Allah, then Allah will grant him all assistance.

The new *murid* should realise that *baiah* is meant to establish an important allegiance. Should he neglect his vows, access to the mystical journey under the leader's guidance will be denied. Conversely, he will reap the benefits if he meets his commitments. After this, Beben instructed the pupils to make other allegiances. The next recitation connects them formally with the linkage of the predecessors of Shattariyyah, or the *silsilah*. Beben rehearsed the statement and the followers recited it. The testimonial said:

I willingly take Allah as my God, I embrace the religion of Islam, I acknowledge Muhammad as my Prophet, I believe the words of the Qur'an, I bow in the direction of the Ka'bah, I follow the Shaykh (Abdul Muhyi), I accept his teachings and his pronouncements, I embrace the poverty of the Friends of the Prophet, may they be with me and gather all of us up safely from wickedness.

The theme of loyalty and humility were uppermost in this ceremony. Next, the guru and the *murid* recited together the following supplication:

I repent and beg forgiveness of Allah the Almighty, there is no God but He, he is all-Living and Eternal. Oh God, greetings and peace be upon our lord Prophet Muhammad, his Family and his Companions.

Then the guru and the *murids* also recited the creed of Islam three times: 'There is no god but Allah', after which the new followers pronounced a recitation of the Shattariyyah 100 times. After that, the *baiah* session was closed with this final supplication:

Before the Prophet Muhammad (upon Him be peace), his Family, Companions, all things come from God. (Recitation of Al-Fatiha.)

Before the family of the *silsilah*, their forebears, their descendants, their leaders, all things come from God. (Recitation of Al-Fatiha.)

To the soul of my teacher..., to his forebears, his descendants, his leadership and all things which come from God. (Recitation of Al-Fatiha.)

Only then were the new members fully recognised by the *guru* as disciples of Shattariyyah. They had the right to recite the *dikir* of the Shattariyyah and the obligation to follow the Shattariyyah mystical journey.

F. The Shattariyyah *Dikir*

The Shattariyyah teaching is close to the interpretation of Ibn al-Arabi's ideas on the relation between the inner world, or *batin*, and outer world, or *lahir*. Theoretically, the Shattariyyah agrees that the external world is the manifestation of the internal world. However, as I discussed in Chapter 6, the Shattariyyah tries to solve the problem of *batin* and *lahir* by proposing the modality taken to come close to God. His knowledge and power make everything that exists and is revealed. The external world is part of the inner world, but nevertheless, they argue, the outer world exists only by God's Grace. Thus, the external world is dependent upon God.

Hence, the objective of the Shattariyyah is to 'enter the inner world' and finally to 'approach' the Ultimate through the practice of cleansing the heart. 'To approach the Ultimate' is the most moderate interpretation for the Wujudiyyah teaching. For the followers of Wujudiyyah such as Hamzah al-Fansuri, the Unity of Being is conceivable. The master of the Shattariyyah in 17th century Sumatra, Abd al-Rauf, to the contrary, stated that "the essence of the world is something other than al-Haq. (see Faturahman, 2001) This means that the Shattariyyah takes a slightly different position to the Wujudiyyah doctrine, which had been part of the previous Shattariyyah practice in India. The Pamijahan Shattariyyah is similar to Sumatran Shattariyyah in terms of its 'softness' or moderateness vis-à-vis the Wujudiyyah. The implication of the doctrine can be found in the practice of mystical chant (*dikir*). For Wujudiyyah, *dikir* is a method to find Unity, but for the Shattariyyah in Pamijahan it is to witness His Glory, or *nyaksikeun*, with a pure of heart.

The followers of the Shattariyyah, like other Sufis, believe that if the heart is dirty it will generate dirty deeds in return. Because the heart is scrubbed clean by the Light, it can render the inner world in which the mystic can 'come close' to Allah. (Trimingham 1998: 201-203; Faturahman 1999; Beben's manuscripts) To comprehend the relation between the *lahir* and the *batin*, the Shattariyyah develop their own method, which is slightly different to other *tarekat* in Tasikmalaya.

The Shattariyyah followers have to practice their personal *dikir* every time after finishing each of the five daily obligatory prayers, or *shalat lima waktu*, and they also have to take part in communal *dikir* such as the *tabarukan* sessions guided by Beben. The *dikir* is complicated, since it is recognised as a special means for the journey into the inner world.

Manuscripts of the Shattariyyah, as also quoted by Beben in his explanations to me, mention that the *dikir* can be divided into two general classes based on its methods. The first is a mental *dikir*, that is a *dikir* 'spoken' silently in the heart. The second is *dikir* spoken out loud. The mental *dikir* adopts Indian Sufi practices by applying breath control similar to that of Yoga. The practice centres on the phrase 'there is no God but Allah', or *la ilaha illa Allah*, and the practice symbolically represents the process of the inhalation of the name of Allah and exhalation of sins. This process is clearly explained in the manuscripts. According to Beben, the mental *dikir* controls the recitation of *la ilaha* by following the rhythm of breathing. *La ilaha* is a statement of negation meaning 'there is no...' The disciples should exhale the breath while mentally declaring the negation. After that, the *murid* should inhale and pronounce *illa Allah* or 'but Allah' mentally. This *dikir* should be practiced over and over by the novice. The function of the *dikir* is to bring the *murid* to the realisation that there is only One Reality, or *al-Haq*.

A second type of mental *dikir* is to recite 'He' or *Hu*. The believers have to concentrate on the word 'He' which refers to 'He is Allah'. If the novice has mastered these first and the second recitations, he then proceeds to the third *dikir* called *dikir l-lah*, "Allah –Allah", and continue with *Allah Hu* or 'Allah is He' finishing with *Hu Hu* or "He He". These latter two are considered for advanced learners. The same recitation could be pronounced aloud, a practice called *dikir al-zahri*. There is an even more advanced *dikir*, which can only be acquired personally from the master, and should be undertaken only under strict guidance.

What should be noted here is that the *dikir*, whether performed personally or communally, has various meanings for the villagers. From the framework of *ibadah*, the followers do not hesitate to regard the congregations, *tabarukan*, or *khataman*, as a form of service to God within a Sufi framework. From a different perspective, I found that other doors to the blessing, *barakah*, are being opened to the villagers. If the pilgrims from outside Pamijahan have to spend a lot of energy and money to become the guests of the Wali (see Chapter 9), it does not mean that the villagers only receive *barakah* from their role as the host of the pilgrims, or *nampi tamu*. They also can 'tap' the blessing from the mystical congregations, as they do in *tabarukan* sessions. Even Beben tends to give special status to his activity 'to seek *barakah* with *barakah*'. The rituals of the *khataman*, *tabarukan* and *dikir* themselves are already radiated by the blessing because the text and recitation used have been touched by the holy masters enumerated in the *silsilah*, and for this reason the *barakah* that may be tapped is doubled. More than that, Beben also indicates that it is his association's objective to make the inner journey and to find good in God's sight. In short, it seems to me that the Wali's blessing not only flows into the village through pilgrimage and the custodianship, but also through the Sufi Order.

G. Conclusion: Telling Stories, Taking Precedence

The main metaphor in Pamijahan is related to the 'cognate expression' called *pongpok*. The *pongpok* is an imagined rectangular symbolic space providing the villagers with a way of locating their affiliations based on ancestral linkages. This is slightly different from the common metaphors in Austronesia that use various distinctive 'botanic metaphors' (Fox, 1997:8). The implications of this ideology of *karuhun* are found in the spatial order and hierarchical concept of symbolic interactions where the first side is the place of the primary family in the order. By virtue of this position, the family is then a primary group in society. The phenomenon is framed as 'the creation of precedence' that is "a priority in time but also a priority of position, rank or status" (Fox 1996: 9; Bellwood 1996: 25). This symbolic structure is maintained and ritualized in day-to-day activity. However, there is a space to negotiate this frame.

To comprehend the issue clearly, I will quote verbatim the narrative below, which was spoken to me by Beben Muhammad Dabas one night after he had finished leading the *Khataman* of the Shattariyyah and initiating new disciples. It was my first encounter with the Shattariyyah group in mid-November 1997 and I had been just three months in Pamijahan. Beben explained to me his *perjalanan*, or journey, in Sufism and his reading of the villagers' opinions. For the purpose of analysis, I will make some annotations (cf. Parmentier 1994: 86-88) in order to identify the modalities used in the narrative.

Beben's narrative, even though simple and short, in fact, displays the features that Peirce calls, 'iconic', 'indicial', and 'symbolic'. These three modalities are related to the modes of representation in reference to its 'object'. These signs mediate the past to the present. Thus, I have to frame these modalities in a third category called linguistic markers or 'glossing', 'references', and 'pragmatics'. (Parmentier 1987)

Beben's Narrative

[1] When we're face to face they treat us well, but behind my back... I don't know what the problem is.

[2] Actually, they're the majority and they all babble. They're unprincipled,

[3] Sometimes ... sometimes they say the Shattariyyah in Pamijahan is finished, but even Mama Haji Kosim himself recognises us.

[4] I asked Pak Abdu if I could study with him. But he refused, because Muhammad Akna, my father, could carry it on (the teaching of the Shattariyyah).

[5] When I married I began to 'study'. My intention then was the spiritual sincerity that I have now. Indeed, I feel firm in the 'journey' although

in reality I'm still only learning. But it's a genuine journey and I'm optimistic.

[6] Society at large has accepted us.

[7] And now it has become known outside the village that I'm one of the heirs of the tarekat. I'm just a beginner, not an adept.

[8] A while ago we were only 400, now we're up to 700.

[9] And there are even a number of young people coming in, they're mad keen, from the Western part of the village, saying they want to join us, just to witness a khataman here.

[10] From the Kaum, West Pamijahan and Warung Antay. And yet Wa Haji's from the Kaum, and so is Haji Endang. But, thank God, there are older ones among them who keep on coming.

[11] What I perform for them in the special big meetings is tauhid (the doctrine of Islam), but in my own terms and according to my own character. If I discuss tauhid, there is nothing to be hidden and I do not depart from the Law (shari'a).

[12] The Law is explained here based on the Essence, over there it is based on the Law. Here it's based on the ma'rifa, or Knowledge, so there is new meaning here for the novice.

[13] I show and I explain these things only after they have taken initiation.

[14] As for the explanation of the tarekat, even though the book is displayed to them, they cannot comprehend its contents.

[15] Sometimes when they ask, they're not ready for the answers. But they still want to know, so the way begins to open for them.

[16] Why do others 'blockade' us with what they say and do, as if we do not exist here.

[17] As if the Shattariyyah were only in Cirebon, or anywhere, they never mention the one in Pamijahan. Well, we know their agenda.

[18] There seem to be no external obstacles, but obstacles of other kinds... I'm positive about the future.

[19] The reason is that the people of Pamijahan feel rather embarrassed by the fact that they are part of the community of the sacred site of Pamijahan, they are very aware of this.

[20] They don't know what to do – should we really dance on the grave? We claim to be the people of Pamijahan, but we cannot make the 'journey'.

[21] Because there are young people around, we plant our seeds in this generation. They only turned thirty yesterday, but they're initiated. It was done in the mosque.

[22] There are some people who are interested in the spiritual dimension; if they try to put it into words, it will not come out right.

[23] Sometimes their hearts accept my existence, but if they recognise me their pride gets in the way. Beben is just a young sprout... Sometimes if the target is not God Himself, it is really difficult, resentments arise.

[24] Logically and literally it is possible, but the reality... is that they go and join up with outsiders.

[25] People dare to try to take my followers away.

[26] But that becomes an impetus for me, people are just like that. If they can say that there is no tarekat here, if they can deny it, why haven't they wiped us out?

Beben's narrative above, of course, should not be treated as the most representative example of negotiating the Wali's signs in the context of 'precedence'. (cf. Fox 1996; Bellwood 1996) However, since I observed a lot of materialized signs relating to his speech, I regard his narratives as an example of negotiating the signs of *karuhun*, the signs of the 'sides' of the tomb. Beben has 'travelled' to a symbolic territory while other prominent families have preferred to stay in the area of safety at the centre of the pilgrimage blessing site. Beben has not only moved to the more condensed mystical territory but has also literally build his *zawiya* outside the most sacred territory. (cf. Bellwood 1996:25-26)

Beben tries to present himself as a humble young man. This is not because of some individual psychological burden but rather socio-cultural factors. By socio-cultural factors, I mean the totality of the system of symbolic patterns of interaction that influence people's behaviour. The fact is that, at that time of my talk with him, Beben was 37 years old and relatively young compared to other prominent members of the guild of custodians, and some elders believe that to enter Sufism properly one should reach at least the age of forty. An elder explained to me that Sufism is not an easy way of life. One should be able to reduce involvement in worldly life gradually. The age of forty is a good time to start.

One prominent custodian informed me that one day a young politician came from Bandung who had family links with the Wali. He asked to be initiated into the Shattariyyah Order. The custodian replied to the young man "as long as you are still in active in a political party and still under the age of forty, then you won't be able to perform the mystical journey." This is evidence that there is

an agreement of opinion among the elders and prominent *kuncen* that the Way, or *tarekat*, is not for ordinary people. However, the young Sufi Beben does not accept this condition.

As seen in the excerpt above, Beben is displaying three important signs. The first is the sign referring to someone's speech. In his narrative he recited what others have said about his activity. It should be noted that Beben did not refer to particular names [1, 3, 23]. His narrative also mentions 'the ongoing speech event' [7-15] and a 'pragmatic' meaning derived from 11, 12, 13 and 23. He did not only evaluate 'signs in the past' and make a discourse of history [4], but he also dared to show to outsiders, like me, that he is one of the points in the continuum of history. To do this, he also demonstrated his ability to recite some pragmatic patterns from tradition, [11, 12, 13, 14], which explicitly enhance his position as a young Sufi.

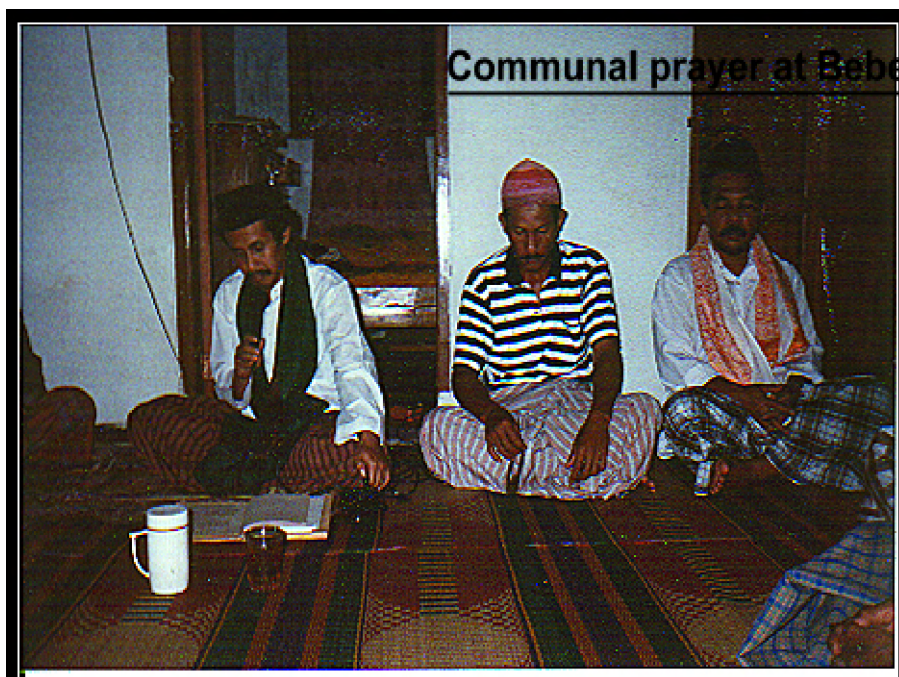


Figure 25. Beben Muhammad Dabas (left) leads communal prayer

From the illustration above, it is becoming clear that a 'convention' or *tali paranti* is being negotiated. For Beben and his followers, to negotiate the 'convention' is to 'play' with two kinds of narratives. Adopting what Parmentier refers to as 'the sign of history' and 'the sign in history', the first narrative is 'the narrative of Sufism', and the second is 'the narrative in Sufism'. The young Sufi master has to collect all the narrative in history to hand. In my view, this young Sufi is one of the best collectors of Shattariyyah manuscripts in the Valley. He has a

complete version of a Shattariyyah text. A manuscript of the Shattariyyah itself is an icon of history. It presents to the believer as a sign from the past. Indeed, Beben's father, as seen in Chapter 6, is part of the historical narrative.

The *silsilah*, the main key word in the narrative of Sufism, 'resides' in Beben's *zawiya*. This is 'a sign in history'. However, the young traveller also has to broadcast the narration of his journey *perjalanan* or *tarekah*. This is a 'materialization' of the past in his contemporariness. It is a kind of tapping of *barakah* from the margin of the village. It is not derived from the custodianship. It is not only that his *zawiya* is located on the border between the sacred and the profane, but also because his followers come from the young generation and a group who are distant from the primarily family in the *kapongpokan*. There is a situation where the custodianship and the Sufi Order are interested in the symbol but interpret it through different routes. The custodians are primarily taken from the leading figures in a *pongpok* which has a clear *kokocoran* or line of descent. Beben himself is one of the staff of custodians representating the *pongpok tilu*, or third side. However, the *pongpok hiji*, where the leader of the custodians is from, seems to take precedence in term of *ziarah*.

Such regimentary meanings have stimulated the young 'traveller' to create and find a different 'institutional' meaning through a different door of the symbolic sources of veneration of the *Wali*: namely the institution of Sufism. Just as the custodians mediate pilgrimages, so the Sufi leader or, at least, the representative of the Order, manages the mystical organisation in the Valley of Safarwadi. This is slightly different from the case discussed by Trimingham (1998) where the management of the sacred sites is likely to be attached to the Sufi institution.

In the past, as suggested by the senior custodian, a custodian should belong to two legitimate traditions. He should get access to the custodianship as well as to the mystical congregation. However, in contemporary Pamijahan, he confessed, many custodians have not read, nor do they practise, the Book of the Wali properly. He said that some of them are not even acquainted with the nature of the Wali's mysticism. This lack of knowledge and practice of Sufism among the custodians is now being perceived as one of the main factors in the decline of *barakah* in the village. It is important here to rephrase what Hefner called "the consequence of a distribution of cultural knowledge" in societies in which "everyone does not rethink tradition" in each generation. Indeed, for many people it need not even be the object of much intellectual concern. (Hefner 1985: 9-18); The knowledge of the past and present are in fact scattered. In other words, there is a distribution of knowledge of the past based on cultural and social categories.²

From these two narratives, thus, we learn that the scattered past is brought to the scattered present. The main themes of the narratives lie in the process of comprehending that scatteredness. What is happening in Pamijahan now affirms

a dynamic relation between the symbolic past, the present, and the agency of the social interaction, which, in Hefner's phrase, is called 'cultural reproduction'. (Heffner 1985) In Safarwadi, this not only involves liturgy, which is derived from the sacred narratives, but also social interaction, which secures the transformation of knowledge (ibid).

Some villagers see rebuilding this *tarekat* as obedience, but others see it as the expression of local affairs. In fact, for Beben, there is no question regarding his legitimacy because he inherited the teaching from his father, a true Shattariyyah follower in Pamijahan.³ Thus it is possible for an institution to create a new intermediary space outside the institution of the custodianship, but the custodians see such an institution as tapping the blessing "not through the right 'door'". On the other hand, what happens in Pamijahan also reminds me of what Gellner (1969), Eickelman (1976) and Gilsenan (1973) describe about the relation between the Sufi orders and social dynamics. The *igguramen* of North Africa must exercise various strategies in order to maintain their position in the loci of *barakah*. This is due to the fact that when saints blessing increases, the blessing has to be distributed. Gellner signifies that the saintly lineage roles increase better by acting as the mouthpiece of the God. However, Gellner found that the saint's *barakah* might decrease if they were incapable of performing their functions and they had to leave the central territory of the *barakah* (Gellner 1969: 70-80). Thus, for Gellner, there are two kinds of holy men: an effective and ineffective saint (ibid).

It is my argument in this volume that the strategies implemented by the villagers in order to pull blessing to their social activities involve various narratives sources and strategies. Now, in Islam a strategy should be confirmed by Scripture or otherwise it is not regarded as *ibadah*. *Ibadah* in Islam, as always suggested by the custodians, has double edges: the vertical as well as the horizontal. In the former, the followers perform very highly structured rituals prescribed in the five pillars of Islam. On one hand, the meaning of these rituals is addressed to God Himself. On the other hand, the meaning of *ibadah* is related to good conduct that is primarily addressed to men. Yet, the relation between the vertical line and horizontal lines is similar to the two sides of a coin. In the language of the custodians, to serve the pilgrims is a horizontal ritual; the chance for conducting a good deed for the pilgrim guests. But at the same time it is also understood as ritual in the vertical mode; to provide pilgrims with shelter and to guide them properly through the pilgrimrage experience, will bring a reward from God. Thus, supposedly, all conduct is performed in order to activate the vertical axis as well as the horizontal one. The inseparableness of *ibadah*, or ritual, and custom, or *tali paranti*, has been discussed by Muhaimin (1995) in his ethnographical notes on local Islam in Cirebon. However, Muhaimin does not discuss further the consequences of different interpretations of the same category of *ibadah* in relation to the symbolic institution (ibid, 109-149).

In the valley of Safarwadi, the translation of the Wali's *barakah*, which is mediated by various rituals, is subject to negotiation and even conflict among the participants as is seen in the rituals of Sufism. In the literature on rituals and religions, there has been considerable research on the function of ritual as the means of mediating social conflict. (Gellner, 1969: 5) The study of Javanese religion (Geertz, 1976:355) suggests that ritual is unable to mediate a conflict between two groups who actually retain the same beliefs. In Pamijahan, the potential conflict inheres in the spatial organization and in the narratives of the Wali. Since a certain group has dominated the cultural affairs of the village, however, the latent conflict can be transformed into the more symbolic exercises as found in the case of the Shattariyyah Order.

Beben realised that to tell a story of local affairs to me could give rise to problems in the future. He is not a man to make a 'revolt' in the sacred sites. Rather, he is trying to find a symbolic place in the villagers' affairs from which to publicly criticise the role of the *pakuncenan* while still remaining part of this traditional institution. His affiliation with the third of the 'sides' or *pongpok*, not the first, renders him, to some extent, vulnerable in the guild of custodians (*pakuncenan*) where the first *pongpok* appears to dominate the assembly. This is a simple example of how 'the ideology of the founder' functions in social action (Parmentier 1987). The study mainly questions the role of a 'founding ideology' in relation to 'hierarchy', and 'equality'. Even though studies mention that there are various modalities applied in the field studied, the common discourse of the founder ideology is apparent.

If we consider that a particular culture is constituted from various sign functions (Geertz, 1973: 29-30) then we have to put the '*khataman*', indeed the whole Shattariyyah Order of Pamijahan, as one of the most important signs in the valley 'signifying order'. As has been illustrated above, the Sufi congregation, the leader of Shattariyyah, the followers, the space or *zawiya* and the liturgical text are all displayed in the residence of Beben Muhammad Dabas. The sheer numbers of disciples, who mainly come from the neighbouring areas of Pamijahan, significantly indicate how important these signs are in the valley of Safarwadi.

However, some villagers are unaware of the potency of Sufism while others have fruitful access to the pilgrimage. Sometimes it is also not a matter of awareness but rather a matter of choice. For instance, whether to perpetuate the Wali's Order or to serve the pilgrims and maintain the shrines, the choice, in fact, is not easy, particularly when the web of '*tali paranti*', or tradition and custom, must approve it. Accordingly, there is an important phenomenon that should be explored further in order to comprehend the 'semiotic' process involving various groups in society that claim to be of a legitimate chain and have access to the blessing of the Wali. The question here is why and how the 'signs of the past' are negotiated.

ENDNOTES

¹ See, Jun Jing (1996) for an illustration of social memory used at the sacred territory in Dachuan village.

² There are parallels here with the case of the Dachuan people who have to utilize all the memories of suffering as a consequence of the impact of communist policy on their customs, for the sake of a good present (Jun Jing 1996). In the Dachuan case, the elders ritualize all their narrative memory for the young generation. However, the younger cohort also come up with their own strategies as some have been educated in secular schools and have obtained more worldly goods than the custodian of narratives.

³ Ewing (1997) deploys a psychoanalytic approach to the Shaykh's discourse.