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Helen Creese



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Indonésie

Yumi Sugahara and Willem van der Molen, *Transformation of Religions as Reflected in Javanese Texts*. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa [ILCAA Javanese Studies Series 5], 2018, ix + 179 pp., ISBN:9784863372580.

Java's literary culture and religious pluralism have long attracted academic attention and debate. The religious transformations and changes that accommodated first Indic and later Islamic models over the centuries shaped a distinctive social and cultural milieu in which religious practices and understandings came to be deeply entwined in distinctively Javanese textual formations.

The present volume brings together a group of leading Javanese textual experts to address the dynamism of religious transformation through the lens of Javanese texts. The volume comprises a brief Introduction by the editors, Yumi Sugahara and Willem van der Molen, followed by eight essays, originally presented at a workshop held in 2015 as part of a major project on the transformation of religions as reflected in Javanese texts at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. The essays are ordered more or less chronologically with the focus evenly divided between the Indic-influenced Old Javanese period (Robson, Aoyama, Yamasaki and Miyazaki) and later, modern Javanese Islamic traditions (Arps, Wieringa, Quinn and Ricci). Each contribution pays attention to textual worldmaking at a specific moment and, collectively, the resulting textual analyses offer insights into the shifting thought worlds of Javanese authors over a period of more than a thousand years.

As part of a wider project to develop a history of ideas for Old Javanese *kakawin* literature, in the first chapter, Stuart Robson sets out to explore what might have inspired literary endeavour and poetic creation. He adopts a "terminological" approach to analyse a sample of terms used by *kakawin* poets of the Kadiri period (1157-1222 CE) to describe their craft. Key terms found in the poets' personal and political statements, as well as in the didactic passages within the narratives, encapsulate concepts prominent in the minds of authors and their audiences and may thus be seen as a reflection of the broader worldview of the period.

The following three chapters also engage with a variety of Old Javanese textual genres. Toru Aoyama examines a series of *Ramayana* reliefs at Prambanan temple in Central Java that depict Javanese understandings of *moksa*, that is, liberation and transformation from earthly existence, of a number of mythological creatures. Because no specific textual sources can be identified, the reliefs must therefore be read in their own terms, revealing

characteristically Javanese interpretations of literary and iconographic currents from Indic traditions. The essentially Javanese nature of religious adaptation is also highlighted in the following chapters. First, Miho Yamasaki turns attention to the imprecations found in Old Javanese inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries to map changes between the Central and East Javanese periods in the deities named in the imprecations, but noting indigenous elements were never supplanted by Indic influences. Koji Miyazaki then describes the intricate Javanese calendrical cycles (*pawukon*) that regulate human activity and discusses the Watu Gunung myth that explains the origins of this system.

The volume then turns to Modern Javanese textual traditions, in which narrative devices and motifs from both Old Javanese and Islamic traditions are newly reimagined and reconfigured. Bernard Arps traces the recurrent narrative pattern of the quest and the individual's search for revelation in the mythological narrative of Bima's quest for enlightenment, which he obtains by entering into the ear of the deity, Dewa Ruci. The original Buddhistic Old Javanese text had been recast as the *Serat Dewa Ruci* in the late eighteenth century by the Javanese poet Yasadipura I (1729-1803), and in turn this reworking served as the source for the recording in writing of the wayang play *Bima Suci* (Bima Purified) at the early nineteenth-century Surakarta court. The same tale was expanded and included in the *Serat Purwacrita* (Stories of Antiquity), another compilation of plays from the same period. Attention to the mystical quest also manifests itself in didactic admonitory texts of the court such as the *Wulangreh* (Teachings on the Rule), a work that Arps concludes promotes Islam but in a Javanese idiom.

The *Serat Dewa Ruci* also figures in George Quinn's contemporary study of the elevation to sainthood of Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur, the leader of Nahdlatul Ulama and president of Indonesia from 1999 to 2001. Gus Dur is viewed as a modern day version of the Qu'ranic prophet Khadir. Quinn argues that Gus Dur's elevation as the tenth saint (*wali*) of Islam in Java is, at least in part, authenticated through links to popular stories about previous generations of Islamic saints, specifically those surrounding Khadir's disciple Sunan Kalijaga, one of the Islamic saints who brought Islam to Java. These Islamic stories directly replicate the narrative of the earlier *Serat Dewa Ruci* and mirror Bima's quest for enlightenment, with the entry of the disciple Kalijaga into the body of his teacher, Khadir, through his ear when crossing the ocean. In this way, intertextual links continue to reach back across religious boundaries to the distant past.

The window to textual worldmaking and Javanese religiosity in the nineteenth century is again thrown wide open in Edwin Wieringa's study of a singular Javanese text, the *Serat Jiljalaha* (Satan's Sermon) by Raden Riya Ranadiningrat. Here Satan extols the virtues of all the vices and major sins in the narrative style of Islamic books of wisdom and moral lessons. By creating a subversive parody that mocks the Javanese elite, and thereby inverting the

code of Muslim ethics, the text launches a scathing cultural critique narrated in familiar religious, cultural and textual terms.

Finally, Ronit Ricci uncovers fragments and traces of Javanese writing from colonial Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka), which the Dutch authorities used as a place of exile for dissidents and rebels. Ricci discusses echoes of Javanese textuality that reflect Javanese religious life in a number of works, composed mainly in Malay by descendants of the exiles, soldiers and servants of the Dutch and later British colonial era. These texts include the *Kidung rumeksa ning wengi* (Song Guarding the night), incorporated into a Malay compendium compiled between 1803-1831 and attributed to Sunan Kalijaga, talismanic *doa* texts, the *Hikayat Tuan Gusti*, a biography of Sunan Giri, another Javanese *wali* and his role in the story of the conversion of Java to Islam. The discussion then turns to the *Babad Giyanti* and its depiction of the experience of exile, and the role of Islamic teachers in easing that burden. The question of religiosity in the Javanese diaspora is left open to further research.

In their brief Introduction, the editors lament the long-standing compartmentalization of Javanese textual studies into a focus on Old Javanese texts prior to the sixteenth century, on the one hand, and later Modern Javanese Islamic-flavoured traditions on the other. Although they call attention to the need for far greater comparative, interdisciplinary engagement, they pass up the opportunity to draw together the potentially enriching insights from the chapters that follow. Nor do the authors speak directly to each other in spite of commonalities of interest and, on occasion, even of individual texts. Broader thematic overlaps and intertextual conjunctions might fruitfully have been explored further, but must await further research. In the meantime, this volume presents a rich smorgasbord of fascinating case studies of religious transformations and continuities that are reflected in the Javanese textual record. It is hardly possible to do justice to the wide range of texts and detailed analyses in this volume within the space of a brief review, but dipping in and out of this volume will certainly reward interested readers.

Helen Creese
University of Queensland

Dirk Aedsge Buiscool, *Prominent Chinese During the Rise of a Colonial City: Medan 1890-1942*. Dissertation, University of Utrecht, 2019, 376 pages, illus. ISBN: 978-94-6375-447-7

A welcome addition to the literature about the colonial period in East Sumatra (roughly equivalent to today's Indonesian province of North Sumatra), this study's emphasis on the Chinese society of Medan fills a gap in the history of its interethnic relations and the role of the Chinese leadership. Its