

Appendix II. The Council of the Wali Songo

"Babad Jaka Tingkir," trans. Nancy K. Florida, *Writing the Past, Inscribing the Future: History as Prophecy in Colonial Java*, pp. 90-245. Copyright 1995, Duke University Press. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved. Notes adapted by A. Gade.

Tells of the design of the wali synod to enforce strict adherence to Islamic law. The indictment of Siti Jenar.

Now with the elapse
Of three days and three nights
Allah's *wali* all
In the palace did collect
With the mighty pundits all
The *mufti* [jurists] and the *khukama* [judges]
None but the elder ones
They'd come there to discuss
Their with that the Faith be firmed

The strengthening of the *shari'a* [Law]
Heeding the Holy Prophet's word
Lord Muhammad the Chosen One:
Hold fast to the *shari'a*
The pillar of the foremost Faith.
Whosoever impugns
Verily impugns he God.¹

Whosoever does God impugn
Shall face the holy tribunal
For trial and punishment
There's no avoiding it
Lord Susunan Kudus sweetly then did speak
To the Lord Sunan Darajad
Reporting the behavior of

His Highness Seh Siti Jenar:
"Who so blatantly dares in disclosure rash
The secret to unveil
The End of Ends
That on which all knowledge hangs, Being Absolute
All too impudent of manner Eccentric are his ways'

"He dares transgress the bans
Of the Prophet's holy *shari'a*

¹ The word for 'God' in the final line is the Hindu appellation 'Hyang Wid[dh]i.'

Oft scorning its commands
He impugns the rule of *shari'a*
No leading him is there to the way of righteousness
He scorns the sacred pillars
Forsakes *salat* in the mosque²
"He scorns the Friday worship He scorns prayer and *zikir* too
Plunged headlong to damnation's way
He's arrogant, incorrigible
When reproached he does reproach in turn
Vanished all his dread
Nothing holds he secret³

"If cornered, the tribunal he'd dare
With nary a care for his death
Unappeasable, he's adamant
Exposing the secret with nary a veil
Making light of the Prophet's hold *shari'a*
Oft revealing the concealed Defiant, he'll not retreat."⁴

XIX. Durma

[Melodic mood is very impassioned, angry, or violent. Appropriate for battle scenes.]

Now spoke the Lord Sunan Drajad

"In that case, son
This does agree
With what I have heard tell
And witnessed too myself
Why, it differs not
From everything you've said

"If 'tis true the ways of Ki Seh Siti Jenar
Do indeed break rank
And trouble do our course
There'll be no shielding him
He's truly subject to the justice then
Laid down by Allah's law
Unless he should reform"

² [*Salat*, which is canonical prayer five times daily, is one of the five basic duties of Islam collectively known as the 'Five Pillars. ']

³ *Zikir* (Ar. *dhikr*) is an Islamic ritual activity characterized by chanting. ... [The term, literally, means 'remembrance' (of God).]

⁴ The word *ngunduri* ('retreat'), in conjunction with the punctuation mark for a new canto directly following it, signals the reader/singer to change to the melody of Durma. This cue works from the conventionalized sound association of *durma* with words formed from the root *undur*.

Lord Sunan Drajad then canvassed
All the senior *wali*
And too the *khukama*
The *fuqaha* [legal experts], the pundits
Along with all the *mufti*
Came to the decision
That His Highness the Prince of Siti Jenar

Was subject to be punished by the tribunal
Unless he did reform
He would be put to death
Lest he go too far
Stirring up the realm
Ruining the *shari'a*
Straightaway summoned they
His Highness Prince Siti Jenar from his encampment
Conducted by the messenger arrived
Inside the palace he
Was seated properly
Together with the *wali* there
Then it was the Sunan
Of Kudus who declared:

"Receive you now the sentence
Of His Holy Reverence
If you do refuse
To redeem your ways
Which so strangely new
Do ruin the *shari'a*
Blatantly with nary a screen

"Verily are you subject to the justice which
Comes straight from the Qur'an and Hadith
The *ijma'* and *qiyas*
There's no escaping it
Allah's punishment shall fall
On you
But if you should reform⁵

⁵ The Hadith, or 'The Traditions,' are the collected body of tales detailing practices of the Prophet Muhammad and his early associates. The Arabic word *ijma* (consensus) is an Islamic legal term for the agreement of the community of Muslim (legal) scholars as a basis for juridical decision. *Qiyas* (rational argumentation) is an Islamic legal term indicating a process of coming to legal decisions for novel cases by way of analogy to 'traditional' cases (from the Hadith and Qur'an). Enumerated thus are the four bases of traditional Islamic legal decisions.

"Verily shall you be absolved
And furthermore rewarded With all beneficence"

Siti Jenar's defense. A lyric expression of rasa ecstasy.

Then laughing in delight
Seh Sunyata Jatimurti
Did slap his thighs
With beaming countenance⁶

Speaking sweetly and precisely, his words were impudent
"So! I've reached the heights
Now of fortune fair if
I am to be rewarded with
A world more beautiful
The source of all beauty
In this world and the next⁷

"As for the pronouncement of the Lord Susunan
Drajad, His Reverence
With all that deep concern
For my person's body
Such sensitivity for life
It is received with thanks
For His Reverence's loving kindness

"But I for one have not the least desire
Now to betray my words
Heretofore expressed
For ever is it thus
This my-creature's being
Is merely then to move
As authored by the Lord⁸

⁶ The name, Seh Sunyata Jatimurti, is an alias of Siti Jenar. ... [Jatimurti' is a term derived from Sanskrit that, according to the translation, means 'a state, or form, of material-spiritual enlightenment, or perfection; Reality Incarnate; Body of Reality.]

⁷ The terms for 'this world and the next' are Arabic/Islamic existential ones (*saghir*, 'empty' and *qabir* [sic], 'experienced/phenomenal' [or, alternatively, 'small' and great,' respectively]. Here they name the Javanese spatial/temporal categories, realms eternal and transient, that [are rendered here] 'this world and the next.' It is intriguing that in the poem there is no conjunction [such as the word, 'and'] separating *saghir* from *kabir*. Rather they regard it as a mere result of metric constrictions, [it is possible to read] this absence of conjunction as a device to reject the spatial/temporal duality -- qua simple duality. Unfortunately, the ambiguity does not translate into English.

"All my-creature's movements are without intent
Seeing, hearing
Gesture, voice
Ways beyond compare
Speech beyond limit
Who holds authority?
Why! The Being of the Lord

"Pervades my-creature's being
As one, drawing-while-drawn
Determining-while-determined
Enamoring-while-enamored
Being, exchanging-while exchanged
Moving-while-being moved
There the lovers do unite⁹

Uniting as lovers in the Being
Encompassed by the Lord
Vanish does the creature
Dissolved, extinguished and destroyed
Replaced by the Being of the Lord
His life is
Then the Life of the Lord

"*Lahir* and *batin*, his then is the Absolute's Being
The one worshipped is the Lord
The Lord it is Who worships
Self worshipping-while-worshipped
Self adoring-while-adored
In reciprocity
And so, in this life¹⁰

⁸ The word *kawula*, rendered as 'my creature' [here], can and does refer to Siti Jenar's personal self (functions as a firstperson pronoun) -- while at the same time denoting her personal 'creatureness' as well as 'creatureness in general.

With this verse begins a poetic exposition of the well-known Javanese *kawula / gusti* doctrine, which espouses the unity of creature and Creator, servant and Master. ...

⁹ The repetitive verbal form ... indicates reciprocity of action. In this case the reciprocity is presumably within One Actor who is (not) two. ... In the final line, the Kawi (poetic term) *pulangsih* refers more specifically to 'sexual intercourse.'

¹⁰ The words *lahir* and *batin* [in the first line] are Arabic loan words which denote the dualistic opposition of exteriority vs. interiority; revealed vs. concealed; expressed (born) vs. reserved (hidden); material vs. immaterial. It is precisely this opposition which is collapsed by Siti Jenar's discourse. ... In the same line, 'the Absolute' renders the [Old Javanese] of *Suksma*, the non-manifest essence of God. In the [fourth and fifth lines], the

"Be ye aware of life in perfection
Life restored to Reality
The Reality of Life
Subject not to death
The very tremble of a hair
Though but a single strand
Is then indeed adoring prayer

"For then adoring prayer is perpetual
When 'tis such indeed
The being of man is
Blithe though he be naked
Untroubled though hungry
Should he be insulted
His joy then knows no bounds.

"When met with danger dread
Or tried by disaster dire
He merely laughs
For his heart is without care
And he knows no fear
His is but strength serene
From *lahir* [outward manifestation] straight through to *batin* [inner essence]

"He knows no joy when graced
With pleasure consummate
Or praise
Desiring no reward
Disaster, disease, and fortune fair
To him are all the same
Not his to pick and choose

"For all of these are too rewards
Gifts divine; for the receiver
There is but acceptance
Eternal evermore
Beyond the limits of life
His life is beyond

words (*dhewe* and *pribadf*) are rendered as. 'self'; however, these words mean, at the same time, 'alone' or 'by oneself,' and hence denote here the autonomy of divine Agency. There is no single English word which can hold the tension of these two meanings.

The compass of the mind¹¹
"For he who has grasped the ultimate of *rasa*
Rasa that is Reality
The reality of *rasa*
Is surely not *rerasan* voiced in speech
Not the six *rasa* flavors
Nor again the *rasa*
Which is *rasa*-ed by the lips
Nor the *rasa* which is *rasa*-ed by the heart
Nor *rasa* fabricated
Nor again the *rasa*
Which is *rasa*-ed by the body
Nor *rasa* which is *rasa*-ed by the voice
Nor again the *rasa*
Of pleasure and afflicting pain¹²

"The Reality of *Rasa* which authors *rasa*
Rasa Real mastering *Rahsa-surasa*
Rasa which is *rasa's* navel
The king of *rahsa* all
Rasa exalted
Is *Jatimurti* recuperate.¹³

Found guilty of heresy, Siti Jenar is sentenced to death. Reports Siti Jenar's response to the sentence.

The Lord Sunan Kudus did angrily retort:
"Aha! In which case 'tis so
You stand exposed
As one who claims Godhood
Though hiding behind a veil, still manifest
As fallen to Jabariyah
Baring blatant these pretentious claims¹⁴

¹¹ [The word translated as 'acceptance' (*panarima*) in the third line can also carry the meaning of 'resignation,' although the translator notes that this may not be the primary sense in this context.]

¹² A wonderfully polysemic word [a word with many connotations of meaning], *rasa* (and its cognates [or words closely related to it]) indicates 'feeling, taste, emotion, voice, speech, gossip, sense, meaning, mystery, essence.' In this and the following stanzas, the poet plays on this polysemy. In order to retain the play, [the translator has] left the *rasa* words in the original Javanese, sometimes with the addition of English *-ed* endings. ...

¹³ The word *rahsa* (in lines 3 and 50 denotes 'Mystery.' The word *surasa* denotes 'meaning' and sometimes 'pleasure.' *Rahsa-surasa* (line 3), then, signifies 'the mystery of meaning' and 'the meaning of mystery,' as well as the reciprocal relationship between these two significations *and* the pleasure the reciprocity affords.

"Lost are you and wayward
Fallen to the devil's way
Without a doubt you shall
Meet disaster in this world
Felled by the wrath of the realm
Transgressing thus the bans
You bring trouble on the realm

"Making light of the Holy Prophet's *shari'a*
Yea is punishable by death
On the coming Friday
There is no escaping it
After we've done our *salat* [prayers]
You shall be executed
By a sword of potent might

His Highness Seh Siti Jenar ever more defiant
Was not the least afraid
Dauntless and unflinching
His face shone brighter still
With refulgent radiance keen
And with sweet allure
Smiling he answered triumphant:

"Hark ye well, my fellows all
All ye *wali*
And ye pundits too
Are acting childishly
Twice over do ye do the deed
Why! You do explode
With empty threats in this attempt

"In a waste of windy surfeit words
You think to threaten
A suckling babe
Who might fall in a fit

¹⁴ Siti Jenar stands 'exposed' (*kakandhangan*) in the sense of 'corralled' or 'exposed to public ridicule in a stockade.' Jabariyah names, for those who oppose it, a variant of Islamic thought characterized by radical determinism. [Here] to be called 'Jabariyah' is to be charged with heterodoxy [non-orthodoxy], if not heresy. Jabariyah is mentioned with concern in other nineteenth century [Javanese] texts. ... [One of the theological tensions associated with the doctrine is that the degree to which divine omnipotence is emphasized is the degree to which human beings' responsibility for their actions may seem to be diminished.]

To be rubbed with salves, as he trembles and cries
With rolling eyes
And horrible plaintive wails¹⁵

"'Twould be a shame were I afraid
Either now or on the morn
Never then shall flee
This the man Siti Jenar
'Twould be a shame that I
Did take the name
'Sunyata Jatimurti'¹⁶

"If lost I am and wayward
Fallen to the devil's way
Better had I died
When still a suckling babe
What sense is there to live
Submitted to the devil
Borne away to error?

"And now liable to justice
I stand by all my speech
Never to forswear.
Though finished on the scaffold
Were I to flee my speech
Could never then be true
True *lahir* straight through *batin*

"And true it is: true in the morning, in the evening true.
True by day and night
Beyond confines of season
'Tis true, indeed the Truth
In past, present, and future too
For it is the Truth.
Call it what you will"

¹⁵ This [kind of] fit is [known as] *saw an*, a disease of infants characterized by convulsive seizures. The seizures are caused by the pernicious influence of spirits. A remedy... is to rub the infant's brow with certain medicinal preparations, especially turmeric and lime.

¹⁶ This is an especially problematic stanza to translate. The sense of the lines diverges significantly depending on how the reader understands their syntactic [grammatical] divisions. Another plausible reading of the lines is: 'A pity it'd be were I afraid / Either now or in the morn / Never shall I turn heel/Should the man Siti Jenar / Pity this my person [body -trans.] / Then I take the name / Sunyati Jatimurti.' The Javanese original manages to hold both these meanings in tension with each other.

Now the Lord Sunan Darajad
Astounded was to hear
So staunch was the resolve of
His Highness Prince Siti Jenar
And all of them who heard
All those assembled there
Were amazed indeed aghast
The Lord Susunan Darajad did order then
That they be adjourned
Till the coming Friday
And so they did adjourn
Each to his encampment

The execution of Siti Jenar.

'Twas on Friday they were
assembled allAll the *wali*
With his Majesty the King
And all the pundits
The *ulama* [religious scholars]both great and low
The princes of ballad
The princes-regent and courtiers
Inside the Mosque when the hour had come
They did their Friday *salat* all
And after they were done
With the Friday *saat*
Then they went outside
Sunan Darajad
And His Majesty the king
Sat in a pavilion which was newly built
To the east of the Mosque's main gate
The outer gate that is To the east of the courtyard

Encircling them were the *wali*"
The pundits
And the faithful *mukmin* [believers] all¹⁷
Joined by the princes-regent and the nobility
Arrayed were the high courtiers
In a crowded crush
The Alun-alun was brimming
Seh Sunyata Jatimurti
Was clearly manifest
Seated rather to the fore

¹⁷ [The translator notes that this would be the spot where executions were in fact held in the royal city of Surakarta in the nineteenth century.]

Sunan Kudus read the sentence
Of His Holy Reverence
Unto Seh Siti Jenar
That executed then would be
The punishment of Allah which was death
Dauntless did retort
His Highness Prince Siti Jenar
With a smile, his radiance beaming:
"Indeed, would you please
Just get on with it
Without further ado"
And so Sunan Kudus
Did bare his sword
So very sharp
Sunan Siti Jenar then was put to
the sword
His neck, severed
Down his head did fall
Onto a readied carpet
Spread with white *genis* Writing on the ground
His blood did gush forth hard¹⁸

Described is the death of Siti Jenar. The testimony of the blood.

xx. Mijil

[Melodic mood is one of longing: erotic or mournful]

Red blood appeared glowing bright
And all they who did see
Spoke with words like these:
"That's not a pretty sight to see
I thought him powerful
Potent, yea invulnerable

"Why! a weakling he --laid low by a single blow
It didn't take a second strike
So, that is all there was to him
Crowing loud he claimed to truth
At the top of his voice
Pretending to sublimity

¹⁸ By *genis* perhaps is meant *gendhis*, or 'sugar.' The word *mijil* ('to go [gush -trans.] forth') at verse's end, in conjunction with the punctuation mark for a new canto directly following it, signals the reader / singer to change to the melody to Mijil.

"And there, his blood is red
Just common human blood
I'd thought somehow that it'd look strange"
At that His Highness Prince Siti Jenar
From his body spewed
Blood as black as pitch

Brilliant black like jet-black ink
And all they who did see
Said: "Why! That's nothing special
Everybody's got black blood"
With that flowed yellow
The blood from the body

'Twas like fluid yellow powder flowing
And all they who did see
Said: "Still that's nothing special
For each and everybody's got
Blood of yellow hue"
With that the august body

Then issued blood bright white
A whiteness radiant with light
And sweet of fragrance redolent
And they who saw spoke yet again
"This too is nothing special
For each and everybody has
"Got blood of colors four
For God Almighty's creatures
Are primally from these colors four
Red, black, yellow, and white
Indeed the origin of yore
Is these fundamental four"

Now the blood of colors four
Able to hold forth
Did extol in joyous thanksgiving:
"However many the joys of life
By avail of death
Those joys are had

"In death, a death perfected
It's more than marvelous
The True Man truly
Of sacred knowledge consummate
Never then does die

But lives forevermore

"To call it death is false
For by the grave untouched
He merely moves on to another place
Bearing his *kraton* along with him
The delights of death
Are beyond number"¹⁹

Now then all they who witnessed
Momentarily stunned
Bewondered at the blood's discourse
And then they all did speak again:
This must be some sorcery
That is, an act of conjuring

"Who's ever heard of talking blood
Holding discourse thus?
Was perhaps his knowledge but spiritism mere
Was that the best then he could do
This our 'Most Reverend'
But fraternize with fiends?"²⁰

"Damnably lost fallen deeper still to error
Anxious dread results
Making difficult his death
Just like the knowledge of the coarse and low."²¹

Herein depicted is the apotheosis and ascension of Siti Jenar

With that the Honored Dead
His head, that is
Roared with laughter, while speaking oh so sweet:
"Blood of my body all
Return ye now in haste
Lest ye be left behind
And enter not into

¹⁹ [In Javanese, *kraton* means 'palace,' or more literally 'the place of one who rules.']

²⁰ The art of the spirit medium is considered particularly apt for 'empty' persons, especially hysteric women.

²¹ It is widely held on Java that one possessed of an excess of *magic* powers and especially of power objects, may experience great difficulty and pain in his or her death throes. Such a person may attain release only after ridding himself or herself of these powers. This is not an easy matter, since these powers, or charms, are usually 'stuck' to their owner.

There your paradise"

The blood then did return
All of it, as if inhaled
Vanished without a trace
Then the head did circle
Around its body
Three times round

Speaking all the while: "My fellows all
None of you believed in me
Your skepticism most extreme
You took it as ridiculous
Union with the Lord
Fused in Being One"

Thereat the head fixed on again
Perfectly in place
Healed was the wound leaving nary a trace
His radiance brilliant beaming bright
Gently hailed he them,
"Peace!" In dulcet voice so sweet²²

Answered was his greeting
By all assembled there
Thunderous did their voices sound
Marvel did all who witnessed
Dazed they were struck dumb
In bewildered awe

Deathly still as if bewitched
With speechless mouths agape
They hadn't thought 'twould come to this
'Twas true that subject not to death
Death was his in life
Life was his in death²³

Life forever without death
Returned unto the end
Spirit body eternal evermore

²² Hailing 'Peace!' Siti Jenar voiced the standard Islamic greeting: 'assai am 'alaikum,' which is answered 'alaikum salam.'

²³ The final two lines ... repeat a 'metaphysical cliché' that describes the stage of mystic perfection in which the mystic attains a durable state of subsistence under the aspect of the Absolute.

Then His Highness Prince Siti Jenar
Drew night unto the presence of
The Most-High Lord Bhikku²⁴

Exchanging *salam* with his Reverence
And with His Majesty
And all the other *wali* too
Every single person there *Salam* did exchange
With He-Who-Is-Exalted²⁵

After the exchange of *salam*
With each and everyone
He-Who-Is-Exalted softly did bespeak
His Reverence the Lord Sunan
"And now given that
My punishment's been paid

"I beg your leave for I would move on
To the realm of sublimity
So fare thee well in days to come
And thou, my Lord and King Fare thee well
In future days to come

"And ye my fellow *wali* all
And ye excellent pundits too
Ye *ulama* and ye *mukmin* all
Fare thee well in your tomorrows
As well as all of ye
Nobles great and mighty.

"Ye ministers, regents, and officers
Courtiers to His Majesty
Begging leave from all of you
I bid ye all the best
Fortune fair be with you
In all your tomorrows"

Thundering they did answer

²⁴ 'Spirit body' in line 3 is [the translator's] rendering of *badan suksama*, words that signify a materialized spirituality. ...

In the final line, 'The Most-High Lord Bhikku' (Sang aMaha Wiku), literally, Highest Buddhist Monk, refers to Sunan Drajad as 'patriarch' of the 'synod.'

²⁵ *Salam* are greetings of "peace."

'He-Who-Is-Exalted' is [the translator's] rendering of the appellation Sang Wus Linuhung (Siti Jenar is in the state of apotheosis).

"Yes! In the end may all
Meet with fortune fair
Both he who's moving on and those now left behind" Now
he who was set to vanish
Brought forth his radiance Radiant
refulgent flaming flashing A lustrous
lambent light
Blazing brilliant striking
Verily dimming the daystar's rays
Blinded by the dazzle were
All those who did see Seh
Sunyata Jatimurti Softly
then did say
"I now have work to do"
Then that radiance bright did ascend on high In
no time vanishing into
Mystery Was He-Who-Is-Exalted²⁶ Leaving
in his wake a fragrance redolent
Perfectly pervasive
An eddied swirl of balmy musk
Wide-eyed was the wonder of all those who did watch Each
and every one of them
Was plunged in awed regret
Among them there were those who cried: "Oh! Oh! Oh!
Alas! Alas!
I never thought that thus 'twould be!
Verily, he was in truth a truly excellent man His
excellence exceeding
All the rest"

No more said of him who was now Mystery

²⁶ The 'Mystery' into which Siti Jenar vanished is *ghaib*, a technical term in Sufi literature. In this state of perfection, the seeker's soul, having attained fana, extinction which is absorption into the Divine, has its (non)existence in the *Alam al-Ghaib*, the uncreated world of God's Mystery