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The meaning of *dukun* and allure of Sufi healers: How Persian cosmopolitans transformed Malay–Indonesian history

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For contemporary Malay/Indonesian speakers, dukun *signifies an indigenous healer. Etymologically, however, the word* dukun *is not native to Malay/Indonesian. Some say* dukun *is Arabic, but this article claims it is more Persian than Arabic. When fifteenth-century Persian settlers brought the proto-form of the word* dukun *to the Malay Archipelago, they also brought cosmopolitan notions of Sufism, faith and healing. Eventually orthodox Arab immigrants and Europeans denigrated Sufi healers as 'indigenous'.* Dukun *became a rhetorical foil demonstrating how superb Western physicians or orthodox Arabs were by comparison. Gradually, the* dukun's *reputation became intertwined with negative attitudes about 'indigenous' practices.*

Framing initial questions: What has *dukun* meant?

While they rarely admit it, over the last century, scholars writing about ethnomedicine and its practices within and around the Malay–Indonesian archipelago[1] have often taken for granted the meaning of *dukun*, which is defined in one Indonesian–English dictionary as 'shaman, medicine man, healer, sorcerer; *Dukun beranak* — midwife'.[2] *Dukun* is understood to signify indigenous, traditional, and animist practices.[3] In the nineteenth century, though, *dukun* could imply more nefarious practices, suggesting *dukun* were 'sorcerers' who worked with devils.[4]

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1 Malay, spoken in Malaysia, was coopted by traders and Europeans as a lingua franca in the archipelago in the fifteenth century and adopted in the mid-twentieth century by the new Indonesian state as its national language, Indonesian. Leonard Y. Andaya, 'The search for the "origins" of Melayu', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (2001): 322.

2 John Echols and Hassan Shadily, rev. and ed. John U. Wolff and James T. Collins, *Kamus Indonesia Inggris* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press and Jakarta: Gramedia, 2006), p. 104.

3 Clifford Geertz's *Religion of Java* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1963) influenced many anthropologists to associate *dukun* with *abangan* which he defined as 'traditional'.

4 Contemporary *dukun*, such as those I worked with in the 1980s, were regarded more positively (see Jennifer Nourse, *Conceiving spirits: Birth rituals and contested identities among Laujé of Indonesia* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999). Since 1998, *dukun* have once again become

Dukun, thus, began as a neutral term and transitioned to one which was negatively valued, then back again and so on for centuries. *Dukun* (spelled *dookon*) first appears in Bowrey's 1701 *English and Malayo dictionary*[5] translated as 'physician, surgeon or apothecary'.[6] This dictionary serves as a baseline, marking a point prior to pejorative characterisations of the word *dukun*.[7] In Bowrey the terms physician and apothecary are positive.[8] The Bowrey dictionary has none of the negative references of the nineteenth-century dictionaries, which called *dukun* 'quacks', 'sorcerers', and 'witchdoctors'.[9] By the mid-nineteenth century, Europeans were using the term *dukun* repeatedly in public forums like newspapers, urging the colonial government to bring Western medicine to rural villagers in the Malay–Indonesian archipelago. They argued that 'indigenous people are held back' by their traditional *dukun* with their 'practices and superstitious nonsense'.[10]

In what follows, it will be argued that the word *dukun* throughout its history as a loan-word in Malay/Indonesian, has been a highly charged rhetorical label at the epicentre of debates about intense social and religious issues. As a label or title with a vague origin, *dukun* has been characterised and portrayed in particular ways by skilled rhetoricians, often pejoratively. In the process *dukun* are often described as 'filthy' or 'superstitious', while positive adjectives like 'trained' or 'hygienic' adhere to the physician. Foucault has argued that it is through discursive labels such as these that

the subject of attacks by religious reformists and orthodox Muslims: Mark Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative piety and mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989); Timothy P. Daniels, *Islamic spectrum in Java* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); Steve Ferzacca, *Healing the modern in a Central Javanese city* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001).

5 Thomas Bowrey, *A Dictionary, English and Malayo, Malayo and English …* (London: Sam. Bridge, 1701), p. 367. It actually says 'a Phifitian, a Surgion, an Apothecary' in the Bowrey dictionary.

6 I have used dictionaries here as my primary historical sources due to the peculiar circumstances of Malay / Indonesian and its development as a language. There was little written literature in Malay, the exception being the 1303 Terengganu stone (Andaya, 'Search for "Melayu" origins'). It was not until the seventeenth century that a number of Malay literary texts began to appear (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The oldest known Malay manuscript: A 16th century translation of the 'Aqa'id of al-Nasafi* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1988). These texts relied heavily on Persian stylistic modes and loan-words. Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Beg, *Persian and Turkish loan-words in Malay* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1982), p. 16.

7 While there may have been many short jottings in the Malay language prior to this, most notes about everyday life were written on palm leaves, *lontar*, few of which have survived. (Timothy E. Behrend, 'Small collections of Javanese manuscripts in Indonesia', *Archipel* 35, [1988]: 23–42). Most early Malay literature like *Hikayat Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* spoke about the court-based elite, not *dukun*. Of those remaining manuscripts, none, to my knowledge, spoke about *dukun*, since most people in the region wrote in their primary languages, not Malay. To circumvent the lack of primary sources, Michael Laffan's work has served as inspiration. Michael Laffan, 'New charts for the Arabic Ocean: Dictionaries as indicators of changing times', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (BKI)* 159, 2/3 (2003): 351–87.

8 At the time, surgeons were untrained barbers, or sailors, so the gloss is not necessarily affirmative. Peter Boomgaard, 'The development of colonial health care in Java: An exploratory introduction', *BKI*, 149, 1 (1993): 82.

9 Nicholas Belfield Dennys, *A descriptive dictionary of British Malaya* (London: London and China Telegraph Office, 1894), p. 104.

10 Anonymous, 'Javaansche Denkbeelden Omtrent Ziekten', *De Locomotief: Samarangsch Handels- en Advertentie- Blad*, 29, 5 (1880): 2.

systems of thought construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak, legitimating extant positions of power.[11]

Building on Foucault's notion of power created through discourse, the following essay aims to examine ways in which the discourse involving *dukun* over time reflects powerful interests as they shift, realign and/or negotiate what kind of medical practices are regarded as legitimate and worthy. Consequently, it will be presumed that the word *dukun* is not introduced as an isolated word, but as a concept within a body of cultural knowledge communicated through a language that conveys the status and power of the speaker. A language's particular conventions, styles and aesthetic flourishes, as well as the demeanour of the speaker, signal to the listener who has the power to define what 'good' medicine is and how it should be practised.

The quest for etymological roots: Is *dukun* Malay, Arabic or Persian?

A central question here, then, is what are the historical roots of the term *dukun*? Are its roots Malay or is it native to one of the many local languages? Surprisingly, neither is the case. Because Malay came into widespread use as a lingua franca replete with a large number of loan-words, many Malay terms have nebulous etymological origins, or speakers believe the word to be indigenous to Malay. With respect to *dukun,* it has been variously declared both indigenous and loaned from Arabic. For instance, Russell Jones's etymological dictionary lists *dukhun*[12] as an Arabic loan-word:

Dukhun[millet] > Ar *dukhn*

Clearly millet, the grain, has little to do with indigenous healers. It is true that linguists say it is not mandatory that a loan-word keep its original semantic meaning in borrowed contexts. Yet, there usually is some remote logic which governs these linguistic appropriations. To understand the etymological connections between *dukun,* millet and Arabic, it seemed best to turn to an authoritative scholar of Arabic.

According to Professor of Arabic languages and literatures Walid Hamarneh, the assumption that *dukun* is derived from Arabic for millet, is incorrect.[13] Hamarneh referred to Edward Lane's dictionary based on fourteenth-century Arabic.[14] Its first definition of *dhqn* was 'a headman who might wear a crown or turban', one who is 'decked with bracelets'. Hamarneh read Lane's second definition saying: 'The word originally was from the Persian or Farsi[15] for "town or village" *Děh* (ده) and "*leader*

11 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977); M. Foucault, 'Two Lectures', in *Power / Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 78–108.

12 The nineteenth-century spelling for *dukun*; *Loan-words in Indonesian and Malay: Compiled by the Indonesian Etymological Project*, ed. Russell Jones (Leiden: KITLV, 2008), p. 68. Technically this is not an etymological dictionary, but a book on foreign loan-words in Indonesian and Malay.

13 Jones did not differentiate Arabic and Persian; this was not the purpose of his project. However, Hamarneh makes a persuasive argument that Jones's listing of *dukun* as an Arabic loan-word had made a 'linguistic mistake'; it had relied on a twentieth-century, modern Arabic dictionary, and not one appropriate for the period in which *dukun* would have been absorbed into Malay.

14 Edward William Lane, *Arabic–English lexicon*, vol. 1, repr. (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, [1863] 1968), p. 924. This is based upon Muhammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzur's fourteenth-century lexicon, *Lisan al-'Arab* [The Arab tongue]), (Bayrut: Dar Sadir, 1955 [c.1302]).

15 Persians are Farsi language speakers. Here Farsi is glossed as Persian.

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or prince" (*qhan* خان). 'When the two words merged into *dĕhqhan* or *dĕhqn,* the dictionary says it came to denote the following':

> a rustic, a person who might own land in a village, town or sub-district… a person of great wealth…or makes a show of, sharpness or quickness of intellect, cleverness, ingeniousness….[16]

Hamarneh and I agreed that this second definition referring to a clever, rustic villager made more sense in terms of the contemporary meaning of *dukun.* Until recently, *dukun* were village healers, sometimes even headmen, diviners or advisers to Rajas. Others were midwives serving all social ranks. These 'rustics' were respected for their cleverness and intelligence, and assisted or advised royalty in life-threatening activities such as birth or war. Hamarneh's expert assistance had found that Persian made more sense as an etymological root for *dukun* than Jones's theory that *dukun* was an Arabic word meaning millet. Nevertheless, there were still unanswered questions about how the 'bracelets', 'turbans' and 'Persian leaders' referenced in Lane's first and second definitions fit with the current definition of *dukun* as healers.

Speculation about Persian cosmopolitans as 'purveyors of medicine'

It was not difficult to find traces of Persian speakers who, since the first century CE, had visited the Malay archipelago for trade. Persians, as 'the purveyors of medicine' had reached the archipelago in search of the prized 'Indies camphor'.[17] Indies camphor was renowned in Greece and Egypt as the most efficacious medicine for therapeutic massage. The Persians had monopolised the camphor trade in the Middle East by the first century.[18] During this period some Persian traders settled in the city called Dunsun in Funan, near present-day Bangkok.[19] There Central Asian 'Turkmen and Sogdians' handled the trade in camphor, as well as that in silks, gold and books.[20] Over the centuries, Persians may have settled in other coastal enclaves, but not in large numbers. When in the archipelago they communicated in Malay with locals and in Persian with Arab, Chinese and Indian traders.[21]

By the end of the fourteenth century, however, the Persian city of Samarqand had suffered devastation under various Turkic and Mongol leaders. Mongol warlord Timur-i-Lang made Samarqand his capital, but in the process levelled homes and brutally murdered anyone who defied him. Throughout the region thousands of well-educated Muslims, including physicians, were forced to leave their homelands. Most came from the Samarqand, Transoxiana region of Central Asia (now Uzbekistan), an area famed for its physicians, including Ibn Sina and e-Samarqandi. Samarqand was once called the 'Jewel of the Silk Road', renowned for its libraries, printing presses and educational excellence. When the Mongol Genghiz Khan levelled the area in the early thirteenth century, Persian survivors vowed to stay and rebuild to keep their culture

16 Lane, *Arabic–English Lexicon*, p. 924.
17 Claude Guillot, 'La Persé et le monde Malais: Échanges commerciaux et intellectuels', *Archipel* 68, 1 (2004): 164.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 162.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.

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alive.[22] However, when Timur-i-Lang began his brutal campaign a century later, the remaining intelligentsia, the so-called 'Persians of the Pen', had enough. They poured out of Central Asia in the 'Samarqandi diaspora'.[23]

The profound impact this exodus had on Southeast Asian history is rarely noted. It is proposed here that it sparked a dramatic cultural shift in the Indonesian/Malay archipelago as erudite refugees, their descendants or those trained by them, brought to these shores a language and style honed for centuries by sophisticated traders in the grand Silk Road cities. The refined clothes these Persians wore, their flowery speech with its tendency to rhyme, and the tales of scientific advances documented on illuminated manuscripts, all conveyed a sophistication that more than likely enthralled compatriots in the port-cities.

Sheldon Pollock in *The language of the gods in the world of men* calls phenomenon such as this 'cosmopolitanism'. Pollock suggests that cosmopolitanisms are created when one supra-regional language begins to dominate as a language for elites. It garners such power and influence over others, not as an everyday language, but as a language embodying a set of concepts that 'stimulate imitation of their style and way of being' across a wide geographic area. 'Cosmopolitan languages,' says Pollock, 'are not forced upon other cultures', rather they are borrowed.[24]

The current essay draws on Pollock's insights to suggest that in the early fifteenth century during the diaspora of refugees fleeing the second wave of Mongol invasions in Central Asia, a passionate interest in all things Persian spread; Persian became THE 'cosmopolitan' language connecting the Malay/Indonesian archipelago to the wider world of Islam. As a cosmopolitan language, though, Persian did not replace the vernacular, which remained the means by which ordinary people conversed. Here, that vernacular eventually became Malay, for it was the lingua franca through which all the disparate ethnic groups communicated.[25] Yet it was Persian concepts and actions that so enticed the Malays that they adopted them as their own.

Persians reportedly stood out from other travellers in whichever port they sailed into. Those who kept diaries, as Tomé Pirés did in the early sixteenth century, made note of the Persians' sartorial finery: 'The fine silk embroidered tunics and billowy trousers fastened with a sash, the turbaned head-cloths, secured with a jewel or a peacock feather, were magnificent.'[26] In seafaring ports where products and knowledge were exchanged, it is easy to imagine that travellers flocked to hear these dandy dressers' stories about the splendours of home. Ibn Battuta, the Moroccan traveller who visited Sumatra in the fourteenth century, even noted that local Sumatrans were so 'enthralled with matters Persian' that they had given their legal chamber a Persian title, *faradkhana*, not a local name.[27] It is clear that the allure of all things Persian

22 Guillot, 'La Persé et le monde Malais': 177.

23 Ibid.

24 Sheldon Pollock, *The language of the gods in the world of men: Sanskrit, culture and power in premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p. 133.

25 Persian became the cosmopolitan supra-language replacing Sanskrit. Malay served as lingua franca for more than seven hundred indigenous and a host of foreign language-speakers.

26 Pires' diary was written in 1515; quoted from Guillot, 'La Persé et le monde Malais': 177.

27 Michael Laffan, 'Finding Java: Muslim nomenclature of insular Southeast Asia from Srivijaya to Snouck Hurgronje', in *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, movement, and the longue durée*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo (Singapore: University of Singapore, 2009), p. 38.

was beginning to overtake the archipelago and turn the Persian language into a 'cosmopolitan supra-language', supplanting Sanskrit.

Persian speakers conveyed a system of knowledge, belief and behaviour that conveyed what it meant to be a refined person, a cosmopolitan. Persian evoked the wealth, the turbans, and metaphorically, the bracelets. It also signified a coherent set of values; despite successive generations of diasporic travel far from their homeland, Persians were recognised as culturally tenacious.[28] Persians who intermarried with locals were said to continue to speak Persian and maintain their 'Central Asian connections, as well as character'.[29]

Significantly, Persian medicine had been renowned since the tenth century, when Ibn Sina (or Avicenna) wrote the *Canon of medicine*. In the fifteenth century, Persian doctors were conducting sophisticated eye surgery, outlining the pulmonary and coronary circulation systems, and developing the most advanced chemical and herbal treatments for skin diseases, ulcers, fevers and poxes.[30] Considering the fame of Islamic medicine, it is easy to imagine seafarers and traders wanting to hear about these new achievements and the Persians themselves wanting to impress others with them.

Moreover, it is quite likely that Samarqandis who reached the Malay/Indonesian archipelago would have carried with them a copy of the Qur'an and quite possibly Ibn Sina's *Canon of medicine*. Given that *dukun* were also defined as pharmacists in the Bowrey dictionary, a text on pharmaceutical compounds might have accompanied them as well. Likely candidates were e-Samarqandi's *Medical formulary*, or al-Attar's *Pharmacy manual*.[31] Such books would have been very impressive indeed to those who had never had the privilege of seeing texts; learned monks and elites of Buddhist kingdoms like Majapahit had kept Sanskrit texts hidden from commoners' eyes.[32]

In Southeast Asian ports where international merchants gathered, these multiple factors, the diaspora, medical achievements and general charisma, led to the rise of Persian as a cosmopolitan language. It was not the number of Persians in the ports of the Indian Ocean and Malay Archipelago that caused everyone to notice them; it was that Persians 'enjoyed an intellectual and spiritual prestige, probably not commensurate with the importance of their numbers in the community'.[33] This is evident, says Claude Guillot, 'in the literary field, especially in the domain of writing, [where] the Persian influence appears to be the most emphatic'.[34] Clearly, Persian-speakers, if not actual Persians, were persuasive figures in the lives of archipelago residents at this

28 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Iranians abroad: Intra-Asian migration and modern state formation', *Journal of Asian Studies* 51, 2 (1992): 345.
29 Ibid., p. 341.
30 Cyril Elgood, *A medical history of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), p. 173.
31 Paul Buell, 'How did Persian and other Western medical knowledge move East, and Chinese West? A look at the role of Rashid-al-din and others', *Asian Medicine* 3, 2 (2007): 290, 280, 288.
32 Kenneth Hall, 'Ritual networks and royal power in Majapahit Java', *Archipel* 52 (1996): 111.
33 Guillot, 'La Persé et le monde': 177. Malay was first written in the Persian / Arabic script.
34 Ibid., p. 178. On Persians as bullies, see Vincent Cornell, 'Ibn Battuta's opportunism: The networks and loyalties of a medieval Muslim scholar', in *Muslim networks from hajj to hip hop*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Bruce Lawrence (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 31–50.

point.[35] It is probably this atmosphere in which all things Persian were so alluring that words such as *děhqn,* signifying 'rustic leader' or *Dunsun*, signifying 'home of Persians' were bandied about, setting the stage for the word *dukun* to be formed.

The Persian doctor / saint: Maulana Malik Ibrahim or Wali Gresik

The hypothesis that *dukun* is a term rooted in the Persian language and historically linked to medical practitioners is made much more plausible by the legends of the Southeast Asian Muslim proselytisers, the Wali Songo. The first Wali Songo or saint was Wali Gresik and legends say he is the 'first who brought Islam to Indonesia' in such a way as to convert the masses.[36] Though such hagiographies do not necessarily reveal 'historical facts', they do show what is deemed important in the collective memory. What is found is that medicine is central to Wali Gresik's biography. He was born in Samarqand, of the intelligentsia, and left his Central Asian home during the Samarqandi diaspora, beginning in 1370. Sunan Gresik or Wali Gresik, as Makhdum Ibrahim as-Samarqandy or Maulana Ibrahim, was known posthumously, was born in 1359, to Persian parents living in Samarqand.[37]

Legend reveals that Maulana Ibrahim was trained as a physician in Samarqand, before the age of twenty. When his mother died, toward the end of the fourteenth century, Ibrahim, his father, and perhaps his brother, decided to leave their beloved city and travel to India. No doubt Timur-i-Lang's bullying tactics contributed to their emigration. Subsequently, they sailed to 'Champa' (somewhere in south-central Vietnam). In Champa they spent thirteen years during which time Ibrahim was a successful doctor.[38] One day he was called in to heal the king of Champa's illness after all others had failed. The king offered his daughter in marriage as a reward for Ibrahim's cure. One legend says that the king then converted to Islam.[39] Soon thereafter, in 1404, Maulana Ibrahim and his bride sailed to East Java, landing in the port town

35 After Genghiz Khan attacked Samarqand in 1220, Persian remained the language of administration and medicine. By 1247, Arabic medical manuals were regularly transcribed into Persian. Buell, 'How did Persian and other Western medical knowledge move East?', p. 290.

36 Islam had entered the Malay/Indonesian archipelago centuries before, but Wali Gresik and the other eight saints were revered because they ushered in the era of mass conversions to Islam. Abdul Halim Bashah, *Wali Songo dengan Perkembangan Islam di Nusantara (satu kajian)*, (Sungai Buloh: Pustaka al-Hijaz, 1993), pp. 72–5.

37 J.J. Ras, ed. *Babad Tanah Djawi: De prozaversie van ngabehi kerta pradja voor het eerst uitgegeven door J.J. Meinsma* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1984). This was quoted in Ronit Ricci, 'Conversion to Islam on Java and the book of one thousand questions', *BKI* 165, 1 (2009): 23–4. Ricci says Maulana Ibrahim Walik became known as Sunan Ampel for his dwelling place (p. 24). Gade says Sunan Ampel's father came from Samarqand and the father, Ibrahim Asmarkandi, died in transit from Champa. Anna M. Gade, 'Sunan Ampel of the Javanese Wali Songo', in *Tales of God's friends: The Islamic hagiography in translation*, ed. John Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), pp. 341–58. Michael Laffan, *The makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and narration of a Sufi past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 8. Laffan's sources in Central Java identify Wali Gresik as Wali Maghreb and Arab. I argue they do so from the vantage of more contemporary Arab-centric perspectives from the nineteenth century. All of these authors, like myself, are relying on written versions of oral tales or copies of original palm leaf manuscripts that have long ago disintegrated. Most of the Indonesian authors I have read, though, acknowledge Wali Gresik as Maulana Ibrahim Asmarkandi and as the first Wali Songo. Hasanu Simon, *Misteri Syekh Siti Jenar: Peran Wali Songo dalam mengislaman tanah Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004), p. 168.

38 Bashah, *Wali Songo*, pp. 72–5.

39 Ibid.

of Gresik, near present-day Surabaya. As the son-in-law of the Champan raja, it is likely that Ibrahim wore a turban, since Champan royalty were renowned for wearing 'Persian headgear'.[40] It is also possible he wore billowy pants, carried a parasol to shade his wife, the princess, who wore imported silks and gold jewellery, including bracelets, as did other elites during that period.[41] The symbolic impact of Ibrahim's wife's clothing, as well as his own, could have conceivably operated as iconographic aids to identify Ibrahim as more than just a typical Persian trader.[42]

Beyond the turbans and parasols, it is likely that Ibrahim's medical skills significantly enhanced his allure. After all, his medical prowess had become legendary in Champa, and in all probability led to his sanctification as Wali Gresik in Java.[43] Ibrahim's skills as a physician probably drew followers from the inland Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit. Legends say many peasants converted to Islam during this period; due to Wali Gresik's teachings, they settled nearby in new communities springing up on the coast.

Central Asian medicine of the fourteenth century

Indonesian and Malaysian tales of Maulana Ibrahim's life provide no detail about his medical education. Given what is known about Central Asia during the fourteenth century, though, one can presume Ibrahim learned, as all physicians did, how to read and write in Persian and to memorise verses from the Qur'an and Hadith in Arabic with an elite tutor. Once proficient, Ibrahim would have moved on to master another medical text owned by another tutor, until all had been grasped. Then a medical student would serve as physician's apprentice, cauterising wounds and mixing chemical compounds for administering as medicines.[44]

Most physicians belonged to a secret Sufi brotherhood (*tariqa*). One of the most prominent during Ibrahim's youth was Kubrawiyya. Some legends record the sect's founder, Kubra, as Maulana Ibrahim's biological father. Others regard Kubra as Ibrahim's spiritual father.[45] Whether spiritual or biological, it is fairly clear that Sheikh Kubra was significant enough in Maulana Ibrahim's hagiographies to presume, for the current argument, that he was actually a member of the Kubrawiyya brotherhood. This brotherhood disciplined members to pass through learning regimes of increasingly complex techniques oriented toward maintaining health. In the Qur'an and hadith, individual health and healing were presented as an imperative for all

40 S. Setudeh-Nejad, 'West-Asian inspired Muslim enclaves in China and Southeast Asia during the formative period of Islamic centuries: Ethno-cultural impact of Persia in the Islamisation process in the Far East', *Jurnal Ilmu Kemanusiaan*, Oct. 1999: 34–44.

41 Tomé Pires remarked that when the Muslim king of Malacca ventured out of the palace, he wore regal clothing and parasols shaded him (Armando Cortesão, *The 'Suma Oriental' of Tomé Pires: An account of the East, from the Red Sea to China 1512–1515*, vol. 2 (Paris: Bibliotheque de la Chambre des Deputes, [1944] 1990), p. 265.

42 After the Mongols invaded Central Asia, parasols and turbans tended to identify royalty in South Asia. Richard Eaton, *A social history of the Deccan, 1300–1761: Eight Indian lives,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 12.

43 Bashah, *Wali Songo*, pp. 72–5.

44 Richard Dean Smith, 'Avicenna and the Canon of medicine: A millennial tribute', *Western Journal of Medicine* 133, 4 (Oct. 1980): 367–70.

45 Bashah, *Wali Songo,* pp. 72–5.

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pious individuals.[46] The assumption was that Allah provided each human a body and thus in recognition of Allah's gift, one should nurture that body.[47]

Transoxiana Sufis developed two streams of training to follow through on the Qur'an's rules for bodily comportment. One stream was for aristocrats and members of secret societies (*tariqa*). They modelled good health practices first embodied by Muhammad by enacting Persianate rules of civility, sometimes called the rules of 'aristocratic virtue'.[48] The second stream was for the common person who physicians believed must know the basics of medicine to preserve their health. This egalitarian statement was a reflection of the tone and tenor of the Qur'an, which urged all to practice wellness and know how to heal themselves.

After the Mongol invasions, Persian aristocrats in exile parlayed this egalitarian Islamic message to recruit converts.[49] Access to popular manuals like al-Attar's *Pharmacy manual* corroborated their point. The *manual* had been translated into Persian and revised from the eleventh-century Arabic version. Multiple copies had been printed on the Samarqandi presses. This popular formulary was regarded as the first of its kind, with easy-to-follow directions and consistent measurements any literate person could follow.[50] Until the *Pharmacy manual* was revised and re-printed in Persian, the knowledge contained in it was kept secret and taught only to other family members or fellow *tariqa* followers.[51] After the Mongol invasions, however, physicians used the manual as they fled Central Asia, parlaying their superior skills and education into invitations from royalty at courts in Turkey, India, Tibet, and China.[52] In some cases, Central Asian physicians were appointed to roles as court advisers or teachers, impressing nobles with their openness and willingness to share their knowledge and skills based on this manual.[53]

Given what is known about physicians using such books as carte blanche in foreign communities, it is plausible to assume that Maulana Ibrahim used the manual in Java. Legends do mention that Maulana Ibrahim was 'willing to share his knowledge of Islam'. Perhaps he taught local peasants not only about Islam, but also about pharmacology. Such a scenario would explain why the Bowrey dictionary designated *dukun* as 'physicians' AND 'apothecaries'.

Even more credence is lent to the possibility that the *Pharmacy manual* was among Ibrahim's belongings when one considers the title of the book in Arabic and Persian is *Minhaj al-Dukkan*. *Dukkan* is a close homonym with *dukun*. Though Walid Harmaneh explains that the use of the word *dukkan* here for

46 Fazlur Rahman, *Health and medicine in Islamic tradition: Change and identity* (Chicago: Kazi, 1998), pp. 34–6.

47 Classical Sufi scholars have defined Sufism as 'a science whose objective is the reparation of the heart and turning away from all else but God'. *The principles of Sufism*, ed. Ahmed Zarruq et al. (Bristol: Amal, 2008), p. 2.

48 Seema Alavi, *Islam and healing: Loss and recovery of an Indo-Muslim medical tradition* (London: Palgrave Press, 2008), p. 4.

49 Ibid.

50 Leigh Chipman, 'Islamic pharmacy in the Mamluk and Mongol realms: Theory and practice', in *Asian Medicine*, 3 (2007): 267.

51 Chipman, 'Islamic pharmacy': 269.

52 Ibid; Buell, 'How did Persian and other Western medical knowledge move East?', p. 288.

53 Chipman, 'Islamic pharmacy', p. 269; Buell, 'How did Persian and other Western medical knowledge move East?', p. 288.

pharmacy was 'a contrived word in Arabic', fabricated so the title rhymed, this fact is irrelevant when considering the term as a loan-word.[54] *Dukkan* could also have been adopted by Persian-speaking traders as a term of endearment to designate the place where herbs were sold. Perhaps *dukkan* became a designation for the very Javanese who had learned to read and to cultivate medicinal herbs under Ibrahim's direction. Maulana Ibrahim was known, according to the legends, to have taught peasants how to farm the once uninhabitable and uncultivable forests of East Java.[55] Conceivably these rural villagers, *děhqn*, could have learned to cultivate or to collect the herbs designated in the *Pharmacy manual* and sell them in coastal markets, hence the sobriquet 'pharmacy' or *dukkan*.[56]

Added to this is the fact that *Dunsun,* the place where Persians first settled in Southeast Asia, also sounds like *dukun.* Malay/Indonesian speakers regularly blend or overlap words to make new ones. For instance, Indonesians recently created a term by merging doc-***ter*** with *du*-***kun*** to create ***terkun***. Following similar logic, it seems plausible that the terms, ***duk***-*kan, děh*-***qn*** or ***Du***-*sun* could have been blended in the past to create *dukun* and signified Central Asian medicine and pharmacology.

The mystical allure of healing as taught by the illuminationist Kubrawiyya sect

As a loan-word or a newly created term, *dukun* would have been embedded in what Foucault has called a 'body of cultural knowledge conveying status and power'.[57] Wali Gresik clearly commanded authority over the Javanese peasants he encountered due to his status as a physician. It is worth noting that medicine during the fifteenth century was not distinct from religion. Physicians were regarded as the conduit through which God healed.[58] Thus it is logical to presume that the promise of access to 'spiritual power' learned through access to Kubrawiyya secrets played a role in Wali Gresik's allure.

The Kubrawiyya *tariqa* was predominantly focused on the philosophy of light or 'illumination of Allah's essence' as taught by Sheykh Kubra.[59] Kubra had expanded upon the comparatively sober views of twelfth-century philosopher Ibn Arabi by adding thirteenth-century illumination philosophy for those in his brotherhood. He taught that one could perceive Allah's healing essence as a glowing light. He called this essence 'the light of an inner jewel', that 'appears only to the faithful', 'illuminating all that is potent and beautiful in the world'.[60] Sufi poets, like Rumi, began to borrow Kubra's imagery and elaborate upon it. When beholding Allah's illuminated face,

54 Walid Hamarneh, personal communication, 7 Oct. 2012.
55 Bashah, *Wali Songo*, pp. 72–5.
56 Javanese villages named Dukun still exist near Gresik. Other villages named Dukun are near former kingdoms, like Majapahit, Demak, and Mataram, while Duku in Malaysia, is near the former Johor kingdom.
57 Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, pp. 25–6.
58 Fabrizio Speziale, 'The relation between Galenic medicine and Sufism in India during the Delhi and Deccan Sultanates', *East and West* 53, 1–4 (2003): 171–2.
59 Henry Corbin, *The man of light in Iranian Sufism*, trans. Nancy Pearson (New Lebanon, NY: Omega, 1994), p. 61.
60 Ibid.

Rumi wrote as if he were a passionate lover in the throes of ecstasy.[61] Rumi's popularity then, as well as now, revealed the power of his words and Kubra's ideas to entice the romantically and mystically inclined.

To achieve spiritual communion, Kubra taught adepts to concentrate on Allah's light through secret, consciousness-altering, mystical techniques. The techniques to reach 'the 'luminous light within' were repetitive Arabic prayers (*dhikr*) in which acolytes uttered *la ilaha illa'llah* (there is no God but Allah) until they reached trance state.[62] Alternative paths for absorbing the healing light through euphoric trance were also achieved by meditation, retreats into caves, or martial arts activities.[63] Students learned to create balance between inner (*batin*) and outer (*zahir)* aspects of the body and soul. Masters knew when they had succeeded; students glowed with the light of Muhammad.[64]

At some point in the fifteenth century, after Kubra's death and the diaspora, those who carried on with Kubra's teachings linked this channelling of light to hadith stories about Muhammad's ability to heal a soldier named Qatada ibn al-Namun. Reportedly, Qatada's eye was sliced by an enemy during a skirmish:

> Muhammad waved the palm of his right hand over the eyeball while saying a prayer. Afterwards, witnesses said one could not tell which of Qatada's eyes had been struck, for Muhammad's power to heal with light (*nur*) emanating from his right hand made the eye once again new.[65]

To emulate what Muhammad had done, Kubrawiyya teachers taught acolytes how to concentrate and channel this omniscient light (*Nur Allah*). Kubrawiyya adepts were thus able to enhance their diagnostic and curative abilities.[66] Ibn Arabi's philosophy emulating Muhammad's life as the perfect man and Suhrawardi's illuminationist ideas interwined in Kubra's teachings so students could enhance their healing powers.[67]

Such mystical healing techniques, along with pharmacological knowledge and diagnosis, marked Central Asian, Persianate physicians as superior.[68] It explains why after the Samarqand diaspora many Central Asian Sufi-physicians gained power in Mughal India and Southeast Asia and were designated as saints whose auras were said to shine brightly.[69] It is not clear whether or not these individuals were solely members of Kubrawiyya. What is evident, though, is that political legitimacy in India, Pakistan and Champa came to be intertwined with aristocratic virtue and the ability to commune with the illuminated light of Allah.

61 Hossein Ziai, 'Illuminationism or illuminationist tradition', in *History of Islamic philosophy*, ed. S.H. Nasr and O. Leaman (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 479.
62 Martin van Bruinessen, 'Shari'a court, *tarekat* and *pesantren*: Religious institutions in the Banten Sultanate', *Archipel* 50 (1995): 177.
63 Toby Mayer, 'Yogic–Sufi homologies: The case of the "six principles" yoga of Naropa and the Kubrawiyya', *Muslim World* 100 (2010): 273.
64 Corbin, *Man of light,* p. 61.
65 B. Said Nursi, *Prophet Muhammad and his miracles* (Somerset, N.J.: The Light, 2006), p. 117.
66 Speziale, 'Medicine and Sufism in India', p. 155.
67 Corbin, *Man of light*, p. 75; Ziai, 'Illuminationism', p. 479.
68 Speziale, 'Medicine and Sufism in India', p. 171.
69 Elgood, *Medical history of Persia*, pp. 360–1.

It is suggested here that the same aristocratic virtues with their Persianate mystical notions of an illuminating radiance or aura were among the 'therapeutic tools' that accompanied Persian cosmopolitans such as Maulana Ibrahim to the Malay archipelago. Though there is no definitive evidence that Ibrahim introduced Kubrawiyya mysticism and illuminated man philosophy to Javanese *dukun,* it does seem probable, and would go a long way in explaining Ibrahim's allure and his eventual sainthood. It is also likely that continued influences from Persian cosmopolitans in India, Champa and elsewhere reinforced Ibrahim's initial teachings. With their technological advances, elaborate clothing, flowery poems, and mystical expertise, Persians created a compelling case that their style was to be emulated. Thus, for Malay speakers, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were a time when Persian culture reigned supreme from Central Asia to India to Southeast Asia, the practice of medicine was mystical, the style expressive, and there was great opportunity to emulate Sufi healers and learn their pharmaceutical techniques. It was probably then that the word *dukun* entered Malay as a concept infused with connotations about Sufism, aristocratic virtue and mystical healing.

The next section, still speculative, traces how, over the next two or three centuries, Persian as *the* cosmopolitan language imperceptibly receded into the background because of its unique linguistic qualities. Though based on Farsi, the Persian language was bursting with Arabic loan-words and its script was Arabic as well. The close association of Persian with Arabic meant that the transition from a cosmopolitan Persian to a cosmopolitan Arabic supra-language was barely discernible in the historical record. This also meant that it was very easy to shed the memory of Persian associations with *dukun* once the word was introduced into Malay.

In the process, Arabic transitioned over the next few centuries to its status as a supra-language through the assistance of immigrant Arab settlers, particularly those from the Hadramaut region. It was during this period that the more rational and sober styles of Arabic replaced the grandiose and ecstatic flourishes of Persian. Moreover, a concomitant emphasis on public *madrasah*-style education based on Arabic shifted some of the control and power away from the aristocratic descendants of Maulana Ibrahim (i.e., Wali Gresik) with their Persianate notions of aristocratic civility.

Speculation about *dukun* from the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries

Over several generations, the Sufi / Persian descendants of Maulana Ibrahim, now immortalised as Wali Songo, positioned themselves, through strategic marriages, among Javanese royalty. Initially, when Persian was still the supra-language, these Persian-oriented families centralised their power by retaining control over sacred mystical knowledge. Members of the Sufi *tariqa* (*tarekat* in Malay) passed their knowledge or *ilmu* on to nobles in secret ceremonies, usually inside royal courts or rural venues.[70] It is likely that the techniques to channel Allah's radiant essence, as well as the illuminated perfect man philosophy in Persianate forms of civility and

70 G.W.J. Drewes, 'New light on the coming of Islam to Indonesia?', *BKI* 124, 4 (1968): 433–59; M. van Bruinessen, 'Najmuddin al-Kubra, Jumadil Kubra and Jamaluddin al-Akbar; Traces of Kubrawiyya influence in early Indonesian Islam', *BKI* 150, 2 (1994): 308.

comportment, became standard practice for Javanese royalty during this period. There is, however, no documentation to prove this, but it is worth noting that the same pattern appeared in Mughal India.[71] Moreover, in East and Central Java 'good' and 'virtuous' aristocratic practice must achieve a balance between inner thoughts and outer behaviour (*lahir/batin)*, just as the balance between *zahir* and *batin* brought peace and illumination to Central Asians. This balance brought health to Central Asian and Mughal Indian kingdoms and probably to Javanese as well.[72]

The Persianate skills and knowledge to heal self and kingdom were shared among nobles in various Javanese kingdoms and also taught in rural Islamic boarding schools called *pesantren*.[73] The teachers were quite possibly called *dukun*, though *kyai* were terms for the Sufi masters as well.[74] In 1596 in the Banten kingdom, Sultan Muhammad's teacher/spiritual guide was designated as '*Kiayi Dukuh*'.[75] Since the Sultan was Wali Gresik's grandson, it is quite likely the term *dukuh* is related to Sufi practices of *dukun.* The close relationship between rural teacher / preachers and courtly nobles formed a constant theme in indigenous histories that were translated into Malay.[76]

Gradually, however, as the flow of Persian-speaking immigrants diminished and Arabic-speaking immigrants rose, power struggles between the supra-languages as to which should dominate in teaching became more public and divisive.[77] New Arab-oriented teachers with more sober and rational perspectives about public schools, religious lessons for all, and 'empirical' medicine gained favour. They began to characterise themselves as egalitarian against 'more secretive' and 'elitist' Persians sequestered in rural boarding schools and courts.[78]

Beginning in the seventeenth century, newer Arabic-oriented immigrants from the Arabian peninsula inspired an egalitarian notion of political Islam. These reformist scholars, *ulama*, argued that the modernised 'neo-Sufism' they had brought to the archipelago was 'better' than the Persianate 'aristocratic' forms of Islam.[79] The new legalistic Islam toned down the 'intoxicating visions' of Central Asian mysticism by focusing on a rationalised religious law, *shari'a*, available to all.[80] New Arab-style reformist Islam threatened the authority of rulers who were empowered by the illuminated man philosophy and committed to 'secretive' Persian forms of teaching and worshipping.

71 Speziale, 'Medicine and Sufism in India', p. 171.
72 Somersaid Moertono, *State and statecraft in old Java: A study of the later Mataram period, 16th to 19th century* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University, 1968), p. 121.
73 Robert Hefner and Muhammad Zaman, eds, *Schooling Islam: The culture and politics of modern Muslim education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 84.
74 Nancy Florida, *Writing the past, inscribing the future: History as prophecy in colonial Java* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 107.
75 Claude Guillot, 'Libre entreprise contre économie dirigée: Guerres civiles à Banten, 1580–1609', *Archipel* 43, 1 (1992): 60.
76 M.C. Ricklefs, *Mystic synthesis in Java: A history of Islamization from the 14th to the early 19th centuries* (Norwalk, CT: Signature Eastbridge Books, 2006), p. 51.
77 Azyumardi Azra, *The origins of Islamic reformism in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), p. 69.
78 Ibid. pp. 1–2, 5.
79 Ibid.
80 A.H. Johns, 'The poems of Hamzah Fansuri', *BKI* 146, 2/3 (1990): 327.

The tragic consequences of such clashes between Arab and Persian perspectives of Sufism were first evidenced in Demak Kingdom in the sixteenth century. Though the raja and saints had embraced Arab reformism with its more rationalised, *shari'a*-centric definitions of Islam, one of their close relatives, Siti Jěnar, declared himself an illuminated man, and therefore more mystically and Persian-oriented. Siti Jěnar moved to a rural boarding school outside the royal court of Demak.[81] There, Siti Jěnar, with teachers and students, set upon a quest to attain union with Allah.[82] At the moment of ecstatic 'embrace' with Allah, Siti Jěnar purportedly 'poured out' the sacred teachings, 'the closely guarded secrets of the mysteries of being' his fellow aristocrats had kept hidden from the masses. When the Demak nobility learned of this breach, Siti Jěnar was accused of 'hiding secrets' by teaching in a rural boarding school. Paradoxically he was also accused of 'revealing secrets'. Siti Jěnar was condemned to death either way. His 'rash disclosure to the masses' was said to have caused a 'breakdown of *shari'a* orderliness as to how teaching should proceed'.[83]

Roughly fifty years later, another clash erupted in the new centre for Islamic literature in Aceh, Sumatra. Disagreements arose over which language, Persian or Arabic, would orient scholars and the public.[84] One famous Sufi scholar, Hamzah Fansuri, proudly proclaimed his Islamic poems were 'full of indigenous mysticism'. Indeed the style of Fansuri's love poems to Allah were derived from Persian literature, but in Fansuri's case, they were delivered for the first time in the Malay language. Each poem elaborately evoked images of passionate union in Allah's embrace, lovingly exalting the light of Muhammad (*Nur Muhammad*), born from Allah's radiance. One of Fansuri's more famous lines alluded to 'a soul so afire, with a love so divine, that it wills itself consumed in flames, the ashes of which become the camphor bush'.[85] Another line spoke of flirtatiously making eyes at Allah (*bermain mata dengan Rabb-al-Alam*).[86] The intoxicating and provocative expressions of this Persian-inspired Malay author sharply contrasted with the parsimonious and utilitarian prose of Arab judges and leaders who advocated close adherence to the fundamental principles of the Qur'an.[87] Though Arab scholars and Persian physicians both generally believed that prayers from the Qur'an could cure, the more sober-minded legal scholars objected to mixing the exalted language of Muhammad with Persian references to erotic love and Malay references to secular topics like trade, camphor and flirting.

Nuruddin al-Raniri, one of several immigrant *ulama*, declared the work of Hamzah Fansuri heretical.[88] Raniri staged a public book burning. By using the rhetoric of polarity, pitting the *ulama's* more legalistic Islam against 'indigenous mysticism', Raniri and his fellow *ulama* defined Arabic as the supra-language of the Malay world. They made their point by burning all books with 'heretical' speech,

81 Florida, *Writing the past,* p. 181.
82 Ibid., p. 177.
83 Ibid., p. 359.
84 Vladimir I. Braginsky, 'Universe–man–text: The Sufi concept of literature (with special reference to Malay Sufism)', *BKI* 149 (1993): 201–25.
85 Johns, 'The poems of Hamzah Fansuri', p. 331.
86 *The poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. G.W.J. Drewes and L.F. Brakel (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986), p. 110.
87 Azra, *Origins of reformism,* p. 63.
88 Ibid., p. 62.

i.e., Malay and Persian intertwined with Arabic. By conceptually and discursively opposing the concept of 'indigenous' with all 'anti-Islamic' matters, Arabic emerged as the only legitimate supra-language. It was to be kept distinct from others. Rather than Persian poems exalting communion with Allah's healing light, now Arabic words were the only officially recognised ones for healing prayer.[89]

This is not to imply that the Persian illuminationist methods of healing disappeared. *Dukun* healing continued to use *dhikr* methods to induce trance as the means to become one with Allah's healing light. But these methods of healing were no longer acceptable in the public arenas where mosques were springing up. As Arab architecture and law along with Arabic language gained dominance, *dukun* were probably pushed out of cosmopolitan public life into performing group healings in rural boarding schools and secret *tarekat* meetings. Moreover, when more conservative *ulama* like al-Raniri declared Sufi mysticism 'indigenous', the link to Central Asian Sufis grew weaker, less acknowledged. In the process, the *dukuns*' ancestral ties to Persian forms of mysticism and healing probably started to fade from collective memory because the *dukuns* had been erased from cosmopolitan (elite) public discourse by al-Raniri's actions.

Early European terms for local healers

Dukun does not appear in any of the Dutch language writings I have perused that were written while the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) gained hegemony (1602–1798). *Dukun* was probably not a common term in the Malay lexicon of Europeans at this point, for few if any Europeans worked closely with East and Central Javanese where I suggest the term *dukun* first grew to prominence. If indigenous healers were given a title by Europeans, local language terms like *balian* (in Bali), *sanro* (in South Sulawesi) or *datoe* (in Sumatra) were used.[90]

Harold Cook's *Matters of exchange* demonstrates that European physicians and botanists like Bontius and Rumphius praised the locals with whom they worked, especially in their capacity as apothecaries.[91] Bontius and Rumphius did condemn local therapists as 'those who think they can control nature [with] religious or spiritual forms of healing'.[92] In sum, it appears that Europeans found *dukuns*' pharmaceutical practices acceptable, but their methods of inducing trance to heal others reprehensible 'quackery'.[93]

89 It became common in the Islamic world for Arabic words to be used in court cases to absolve sin and to activate the healing power of herbs, potions or amulets. James Grehan, 'The mysterious power of words: Language, law, and culture in Ottoman Damascus (17th–18th centuries)', *Journal of Social History* 37, 1 (2004): 1006.

90 H.J. Friedericy, 'Ponre: Bijdrage tot de kennis van adat en adatrecht van Zuid Celebes', *BKI* 89, 1 (1932): 234.

91 Harold J. Cook, *Matters of exchange: Commerce, medicine, and science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 375.

92 Ibid.

93 Hans Pols, 'European physicians and botanists, indigenous herbal medicine in the Dutch East Indies, and colonial networks of mediation', *East Asia Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 3, 2 (2009): 173–208.

Historical evidence of *dukun* in European encounters: The speculation ends

Though the English–Malay dictionary by Bowrey provided evidence that *dookon*[94] had entered into the Malay lexicon by 1701, few Europeans seem to have borrowed the term. After the bankruptcy and dissolution of the VOC in 1800, when British forces under the leadership of Sir Stamford Raffles eventually occupied what was once the territory of the VOC, it is then we find evidence of *dukun* in use by indigenous speakers. The first record of an indigenous person to address a healer as *dukun* was Sultan Dipanagara of Mataram.[95] Renowned for his bravery, Islamic faith and mystical abilities, Dipanagara wrote in his memoirs: 'I consulted '*Dhukun* Nurngali, my Bengali *dhukun*.' Dipanagara sought the *Dhukun*'s mystical and divinatory advice prior to the Java War and afterwards. The Sultan also asked *Dhukun* Nurngali to heal various afflictions.[96] The fact that, Dipanagara, with his distant genealogical connections to Wali Gresik, relied on a Bengali *dhukun* is significant. The mystical advice suggests that their relationship was much like that of Wali Gresik and the rural healers and pharmacists called *děhqn* and *dukkan* respectively that were outlined above.

It is likely that *Dhukun* Nurngali practised a combination of Persianate mystical medicine combined with Arabised scientific medicine. Since his birthplace, Bengal, had a well-documented history of superb medical training, it is likely that *Dhukun* Nurngali was aware of both therapeutic forms. Sufi-physicians from Central Asia reigned in Bengal from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.[97] At the end of the eighteenth century, Arab-oriented *madrasah*-style medical science was favoured by British officers over the Persianate methods. *Dhukun* Nurngali's presence in Sultan Dipanagara's home during the latter's house-arrest suggests that British authorities guarding the Sultan approved of this *dhukun* and his 'scientific' training, while the Sultan himself approved of the *Dhukun*'s mystical healing skills.[98]

Even though the British favoured Arabised medicine in India, their attitudes in the Malay Archipelago were vehemently opposed to any non-European medicine. In 1811 British overseer Sir Stamford Raffles began disparaging *dukun* and maligning Muslims simultaneously.[99] Raffles accused Muslims and *dukun* of revering as 'saints those they endow with supernatural powers'.[100] British physicians in Malay-speaking regions also inaugurated complaints about the 'unbearable presence' of 'superstitious medicine' and 'the fatal effect of ignorance on helpless victims'.[101] In 1811, British admiral and Orientalist William Marsden accused *dukun* of practices that were 'superstitious', 'barbarous and ridiculous quackery'.[102]

94 Bowrey, *A Dictionary, English and Malayo*, p. 367.
95 Peter Carey, *The power of prophecy: Prince Dipanagara and the end of an old order in Java, 1785–1855* (Leiden: KITLV, 2007), p. 117.
96 Ibid.
97 Alavi, *Islam and healing*, p. 57.
98 Ibid., p. 58.
99 Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, 'From noble Muslims to Saracen enemies: Thomas Stamford Raffles' discourse on Islam in the Malay world', *Sari: Jurnal Alam dan Tamadun Melayu* 21 (2003): 21.
100 Ibid., p. 20.
101 John Crawfurd, *History of the Indian archipelago*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: A. Constable and Co., 1820), p. 332.
102 William Marsden, 'The art of medicine', in *History of Sumatra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1811] 1966), p. 148.

When the Dutch returned to the archipelago in 1816, pejorative comments about *dukun* increased, beginning with a trickle and ending the nineteenth century with a flood of negativity.[103] The reasons for this disparaging deluge were varied and contextual. Some progressives in the newly established colonial government of the Netherlands Indies were interested in promoting 'medical science' and 'the need for native doctors' and schools in which to train them.[104] Progressives promoted their agenda by evoking 'ineffectual aspects' of *dukun.* Likewise, missionaries aimed to convert the 'natives' to Christianity, and did so by conjuring up malevolent images of *dukun* as 'superstitious witch-doctors'.[105] There were also private sector physicians who saw future 'Dokter Djawa' as competition, leading them to disparagingly remark: 'the native mind is too childlike', or 'too unintelligent to learn science',[106] and 'it is an impossible enterprise which would lead to bungling'.[107]

As Western medicine was moving toward a more modern, rational, scientific and hygienic definition of itself, its advocates railed against 'the lure of quackery'.[108] The *dukun*'s professional skills were said to be based on 'magic' and 'rituals', all 'superstitions', with only a few 'empirical techniques'[109] 'for prescribing medicinal herbs'.[110] One of the major complaints that harkened back to the seventeenth century was that *dukun* were 'very secretive, making it difficult to obtain reports about them'.[111] Stratz, for instance, claimed that 'the *dukun* are hiding under the secretive darkness of magic'.[112] Considering the struggles to establish biomedical practices in the archipelago, it is highly likely such complaints were motivated by a desire to control and subjugate *dukuns*' knowledge.[113]

Obstetricians began to malign lay midwives, *dukun bayi*, at the point when the Netherlands East Indies colony decided to introduce biomedical birth to the villagers. Rather than laud biomedicine, though, the Dutch launched verbal assaults against these female *dukun.* Doctors posted their stories in newspapers and trade magazines about encounters they had had with 'filthy *doekoen*', for instance: 'the *doekoen* woman [I met] had her filthy clothing which had betel spit and dribble caked all over it…the

103 *Doekoen* was mentioned at least 1,700 times in nineteenth-century Netherlands Indies newspapers digitised at http://kranten.kb.nl/results (last accessed 4 July 2013).
104 Liesbeth Hesselink, *Healers on the colonial market: Native doctors and midwives in the Dutch East Indies* (Leiden: KITLV, 2011), p. 62.
105 Ibid., p. 22.
106 Ibid.; Hans Pols, 'The nature of the native mind: Contested views of Dutch colonial psychiatrists in the former Dutch East Indies', in *Psychiatry and empire*, ed. Sloan Malone and Megan Vaughan (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), pp. 178.
107 W.J. van Gorkom, 'Twee circulaires tot toezegging van Steun aan Geschorste Collegas', *Bulletin van den Bond van Geneesheeren in Ned.–Indië* 2 (1902): 27–47, quoted in Pols, 'Nature of the native mind', p. 178.
108 van Gorkom, 'Twee circulaires', quoted in Pols, 'Nature of the native mind', p. 61.
109 *Dutch medicine in the Malay archipelago 1816–1942*, ed. A.M. Luyendijk-Elshout (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989), p. 4.
110 Hesselink, *Healers on the market,* p. 15.
111 J.A. van Dissel, 'Iets over de geneeskunde der Javanen', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië* 3, 2 (1869): 375–85.
112 C.H. Stratz, *De vrowen op Java: Eene gynaecologische studie* (Amsterdam and Semarang: Scheltema and Holkema, 1897), p. 42.
113 Alavi, 'Medical culture in transition', p. 896.

dirty old women are here on a daily basis and we cannot make inroads with short visits'.[114]

The overwhelming volume of negative comments about *dukun* appeared, just as the anti-midwifery movement rose in the Netherlands newspapers, galvanising a parallel rhetorical battle in East Indies print media.[115] Dutch physicians spoke of the 'bad', 'dangerous' and 'superstitious' practices surrounding childbirth without medical science'.[116] Reformers seeking to replace village midwives with trained nurses emphasised 'the hocus-pocus of the *doekoens*', who 'butcher their patients'.[117] The solution to the evils of the 'aged crone, and her superstitious practice', was 'the young [Dutch-trained] midwife, transformed and trained up in modern ideas of hygiene and practice'.[118] This anti-*dukun* rhetoric on the part of the Dutch continued throughout the colonial period, but did little to eradicate locals' use of *dukun* as midwives or as spiritual guides when all else failed.

New print media also helped another partisan group disseminate their views against *dukun* and their practices. After the 1869 Suez Canal opening brought more locals to the Arabian Peninsula and more native Arabic speakers to the archipelago, additional Muslim returnees arrived loaded down with Cairene reformist literature.[119] Reaching 'an ever-widening circle of readers' and declaring what a 'proper' understanding of *shari'a* law was, a more orthodox, politicised perspective of Islam developed that strongly disapproved of the Sufi mysticism practiced by *dukun*.[120]

With this rising Salafi reformism came a more puritanical, less flamboyant, expression of Islam. The Sufi mysticism first transported to the archipelago by Persians, and supported by earlier Hadrami Arabs, was now increasingly maligned by Wahabi/Salafi Arabs and the Dutch. Rather than directly attack mystical Islam, opponents to it joined the Dutch bureaucrats and maligned *dukun*. As the Dutch became more paranoid about potential Muslim riots against colonial powers, the rhetoric intensified.[121] The Netherlands Indies government appointed an elite Hadrami Arab, Sayyid Uthman, as 'Honorary Adviser for Arabian Affairs' in 1889. Uthman, however, turned out to be a radical in his own right, stirring up more anti-Dutch sentiment.[122] Uthman focused a great deal of his vituperative comments on *dukun*, however, stating they were 'heretics and innovators (*ahl al-bida'*)' who

114 Anon., 'Javaansche denkbeelden omtrent ziekten', p. 2.
115 F.A.C. Waitz, 'Korrespondentie uit Oostelijk Java', *De Locomotief: Samarangsh handels–en advertentie-blad*, 23 Jan. 1867, pp. 2–4.
116 Hilary Marland, 'Midwives, missions and reform: Colonizing Dutch childbirth services at home and abroad ca. 1900', in *Medicine and colonial identity*, ed. Mary P. Sutphen and Bridie Andrews (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 69; Peter Boomgaard, 'Dutch medicine in Asia, 1600–1900', in *Warm climates and western medicine*, ed. D. Arnold (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 42–64.
117 Marland, 'Midwives, missions and reform', p. 69.
118 Ibid., p. 67.
119 M.C. Ricklefs, 'The Middle East connection and reform and revival movements among the *putihan* in 19th-century Java', in *Southeast Asia and the Middle East*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo, pp. 113–14.
120 Laffan, *The makings of Indonesian Islam*, p. 189.
121 Michael Laffan, '"A watchful eye": The Meccan plot of 1881 and changing Dutch perceptions of Islam in Indonesia', *Archipel* 63 (2002): 86.
122 Azyumardi Azra, 'A Hadrami religious scholar in Indonesia: Sayyid "Uthman"', in *Hadhrami traders, scholars, and statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s–1960s*', ed. Ulrike Freitag and William Clarence-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 253.

carried out 'unacceptable religious innovations' including using 'magic spells, amulets, and incantations' and gathering community members for *dhikr* recitations.[123] Uthman declared *dukun* 'blasphemous' and 'out of line with *shari'a*'.[124]

By the twentieth century, many of the indigenous medical personnel trained either in the Netherlands or at the indigenous medical school, STOVIA, in Batavia, refused to be called *dukun.* They also preferred to distinguish themselves from *dukun* by dressing like 'Europeans' or marking themselves as 'scientists' and wearing white coats.[125] The most interesting fact is that all of the nineteenth-century graduates of the first indigenous medical school doggedly sought the right to carry a parasol at work.[126] The parasol as a symbol of high status and the iconic symbol signifying Persian and elite Javanese identity sent a message to average patients that biomedical practitioners and their medicine existed in an exclusive domain.[127]

Ironically, such elitism contributed to the survival of the *dukun* throughout the nineteenth into late twentieth centuries. Due to the dualistic system of medicine created by colonial policies, 'European' medicine and its physicians functioned completely divorced from 'traditional' medicine and its *dukun.*[128] For the great majority of indigenous people, biomedicine was perceived as impersonal and symptom-driven, unable to deal with the broader familial issues that plagued many people. As a result, there was an overwhelming reliance on *dukun.* In some places there were so many people clamouring to be *dukun* that a division of labour created a number of speciality *dukun.*[129]

Across the archipelago, as Malay, and later Indonesian, became the preferred colonial languages, shaman who had once been referred to by a local language term, like *boliang*, *bomoh*, or *sando*, were now more likely to be called the Malay term of respect for indigenous healers, *dukun.* As physician, midwife, agricultural specialist, diviner, adviser and therapist, the *dukun* remained central to and respected in village life. Muslim leaders mimicking the manners of Persianate comportment made sure to be publically blessed by *dukun,* some even following them to secret retreats in caves for meditation and channeling of Allah's radiant essence. Many colonial and elite women persisted in consulting *dukun* for their midwifery needs and love potions.[130] Thus *dukun* practices prevailed despite the colonial, reformist Muslim and scientific medical communities' diatribes against them. This barrage of complaints did, however, erase the last vestiges of any public recognition of the *dukun*'s historical links to their Persian Sufi ancestors; by the mid-twentieth century there is general agreement that the *dukun* were indigenous.

123 Ibid., p. 258.
124 Ibid., p. 263; see also Karel Steenbrink, *Beberapa aspek tentang Islam di Indonesia abad ke-19* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984), pp. 184–5.
125 Ibid., pp. 50, 201.
126 Hesselink, *Healers on the colonial market*, p. 80.
127 Ibid.
128 Stuart N. Stokvis-Cohen, *Ilmoe pembela orang sakit* (Groningen/Batavia: J.B. Wolters, 1928), p. vi.
129 Roy Edward Jordaan, 'Folk medicine in Madura (Indonesia)' (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 1985), p. 161.
130 Pols, *European physicians,* p. 200.

Post-independence and dukun in the Republic of Indonesia

After independence in 1945, the same dynamic persisted; too few biomedically trained personnel were available for too many indigenous patients. The result was an overwhelming reliance on *dukun*, despite negative rhetoric from Muslim and medical officials. The embryonic Republic had few funds to develop a medical infrastructure, and none to increase the training of biomedical practitioners.[131] In some areas, e.g., East Java and South Sulawesi, *dukun* became teachers at rural boarding schools where they continued the kind of education Sufis were known for in the past.[132] They taught the *tariqa* methods that guided adepts through exercises to commune with Allah and to heal themselves, others and the community.

By the 1980s, though, the pendulum of opinion began to swing in the other direction; *dukun* once again became objects of derision. Much of this had to do with decreased funding for Islamic boarding schools where *dukun* had become teachers, just as federal funding for *madrasah* teachers increased. Thus, fewer *dukun* were able to teach students about the methods of communing with Allah's healing light initially gleaned through Persian Islam. Eventually this resulted in more and more bureaucrats and medical personnel declaring that *dukun* were 'traditional' and 'indigenous'.

Foreign scholars also played partisan roles in this campaign to redefine *dukun*. In the 1950s, the first noncolonial scholar to work with *dukun*, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, began studying in East Java near Gresik. Geertz described *dukun* as the Dutch colonial officials had before him and as the newly independent Indonesian republic did; all parties described *dukun* as 'indigenous'. Geertz elaborated on the indigenous label, by describing *dukun* practices as 'stemming from indigenous religion or animism'.[133] In so doing he influenced the work of several generations of anthropologists, including my own.

While conducting anthropological fieldwork in the 1980s, I presumed that the *dukun* I encountered were as Geertz declared, animist. Any claims that *dukun* were Islamic were disregarded. An excerpt from my 1984 field notes among the Laujé, in Central Sulawesi demonstrates this attitude:

> The *dukun's* healing session started with everyone saying in unison in Arabic, *la illah ilAllah*, over and over… Then for a good half hour [the *dukun*] began her therapeutic process by circling her right hand with an opened palm around the lungs of [the afflicted]… without ever touching the patient. When she did this…she mumbled a prayer in Arabic. …When I asked later if she understood Arabic, she said that Allah did:
>
> > This is one of the secrets of *tarekat* and *tasawuff*; our ways are the Islamic teachings *(ilmu hikmah)* of the ancestors. Allah understands what we say… we *dukun* heal by concentrating the omniscient healing radiance that Allah gave to Muhammad (*Nur Muhammad*)…we have learned to use this radiance so we can help to bring a balance between the inner (*batin*) part of a patient and the outer (*lahir*) part. We *zikir* [dhikr]…

131 *Two is enough: Family planning in Indonesia under the New Order 1968–1998*, ed. Anke Niehof and Firman Lubis (Leiden and Jakarta: KITLV, 2003), p. 32.
132 Ibid., p. 86.
133 Geertz, *Religion of Java*, p. 86.

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> until we enter a trance. We commune with the omniscient essence and bring balance to those without it. We can see when someone is well, they are luminous. Our ancestors gave us this gift from Muhammad.
>
> *The dukun* blew (*tiup*) into a glass of water, dipped three long leafy branches in it and prayed over it in Arabic and Laujé. Then she showered the afflicted with the 'sanctified water'.

Even though informants insisted their *dukun* practices were deeply Islamic, I relied on Geertz's expert typology insisting *dukun* were primarily animist and indigenous. I now recognise that the practices of *dhikr,* circling the right palm to heal, viewing the power of healing as a radiant light and spraying the body's perimeter with sanctified water, resemble the Central Asian healing methods described above. However, Geertz's hegemonic influence on Indonesian anthropology convinced me during the 1980s that the Islamic components of *dukun* practices were a 'mere superficial overlay'.[134]

By designating *dukun* as animists, I, following Geertz, unwittingly borrowed the lexicon and ideological perspective of nineteenth-century theories of social evolution which the Dutch had deployed to justify their colonial missionising projects.[135] These hierarchies with animists as the least developed 'savages' served to rationalise preferential training for those with European or elite backgrounds. During the Dutch colonial era, *dukun* were regarded as unable to learn even how to assist trained nurse-midwives. This same hierarchy was reinstated by the Suharto regime and his fiscal benefactors, the World Bank. Thus, rather than train *dukun bayi* to assist biomedically trained midwives, in the 1970s and 1980s policies were implemented in which *dukun*'s knowledge was ignored.[136] Declaring *dukun* as indigenous animists had consequences.

Ironically, despite Suharto's steadfast attempts in his civilising policies to diminish *dukun*, he himself was an avid believer in them. Purportedly Suharto consulted a *dukun* before every major decision. Suharto and his *dukun* retreated to caves for *dhikr* and meditation.[137] Witnesses said they could notice how bright Suharto's aura was after his spiritual exercises. In 1997, though, a time of street protests against his regime, Suharto's aura was said to 'flicker' and soon thereafter, he was deposed.[138] Many said his regime was toppled because of this flickering aura. Some said the aura lost its brightness due to Suharto's failure to *dhikr.* Others said his aura flickered because he consulted two *dukun* who were in competition with one another. Their sorcery had extinguished his vital essence and power (*baraka*), diminishing the glow (*nur*) of his aura.[139]

134 Nourse, *Conceiving spirits.*
135 *Civilizing the margins: Southeast Asian government policies for the development of minorities*, ed. Christopher R. Duncan (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 4–5.
136 Eric Stein, 'Midwives, Islamic morality and village biopower in Post-Suharto Indonesia', *Body & society* 13, 3 (2007): 55–77.
137 Hikmat Sanusi, 'Mysticism in religious propagation counterproductive', *Jakarta Post*, 9 Nov. 2005.
138 Romain Bertrand, *Indonésie: La démocratie invisible—violence, magie et politique á Java* (Paris: Karthala, 2002).
139 Ibid.

After Suharto was deposed, Muslim extremists, who had been silenced during Suharto's term in office, now had a voice and they often used it to ratchet up the vitriol against *dukun* by declaring such practices anathema to 'good religious practices'.[140] Even moderate Muslims have taken up the anti-*dukun* agenda. Imam Quraish Shihab's weekly show on national Metro TV since 2003 is a good example. He reaches millions of viewers each week. One person I watched in 2009 asked 'Is my *dukun* practising black magic when he invokes spirits?' Shihab quoted verses from the Qur'an which declare that worship of any spirits other than Allah is blasphemous (*shirk*). The imam's method of indirectly attacking *dukun* by letting others do so on national television has been profound.

When I returned to Indonesia in 2009, attitudes toward *dukun* were intensely politicised and pejorative. No longer did any of the Laujé healers I knew call themselves *dukun.* They had reverted back to the indigenous Laujé term, *sando.* One practitioner explained: 'Hard-line Muslims have turned against us. Now they preach that *dukun* practice black magic and sorcery'. A former patient added: 'I am afraid to seek *dukun* treatment anymore. *Dukun* call on evil spirits which we Muslims find blasphemous (*shirk*).'

Though over the last four years of work with *dukun* in Sulawesi, no young person I know has admitted to being a *dukun*, nor to visiting one, a host of practitioners with new names, e.g., *terkun,* and *docter energi*, have arisen with almost identical healing methods to those of past *dukun*. It appears that despite the name changes in response to reformist diatribes, *dukun*-like healers with Sufi-style practices remain practitioners of choice among moderate Muslims seeking individual healers. As recently as June 2012, President Yudyohono was reportedly consulting *terkun* for advice on navigating through party politics.[141] It appears that despite the disappearance of the term *dukun* in healing contexts, the techniques associated with *dukun* still bear a family resemblance to the illuminated radiance philosophies from centuries before, and elites as well as average citizens seek these healers out.

The artful allure of Sufi healers

This essay has covered a broad swathe of time as an impressionistic outline of the history of *dukun*. The point has been to demonstrate the persistent allure for *dukun's* healing spiritual powers and the multiple ways in which the term *dukun* has shifted meaning as it was coopted into various power struggles about how to define 'good' medicine and 'bad'. A concomitant point has been to elucidate ways in which a term like *dukun* has fallen prey to linguistic politics. The Persian roots of *dukun* as a blend of *dĕhqn*, *dukkan, Dunsun* or *Dukuh* probably developed alongside the development of Malay as a lingua franca, precisely at the point when Sanskrit was being overshadowed by Persian as a cosmopolitan supra-language. *Dukun* first appeared in positive terms in Bowrey's 1701 dictionary when Persian was still the supra-language and the *dukuns*' mystical practices still acceptable.

140 William Watson, *Of self and injustice: Autobiography and repression in modern Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV, 2006).

141 Joesoef Balle, 'SBY mundur', *Kompasiana*, 21 June 2012, http://politik.kompasiana.com/2012/06/21/sby-mundur-471354.html (last accessed 12 Dec. 2012).

Dukun became publically maligned, almost imperceptibly, due to the unique quality of Persian as a language with many Arabic loan-words. Arabic silently assumed supremacy as the supra-language when enough Arabs occupied the Malay world. In the process, Arabic conveyed more parsimonious ideas about healing. The flowery and ecstatic style associated with Persian philosophy and medical practices began to recede into more hidden practices. Meanwhile more formulaic and rationalised forms of medicine prevailed once Arabic triumphed (and later shared the stage with Dutch, then English). As friction and power struggles between literary traditions, religious beliefs and scientific practices led to divisive debates, medical practitioners like *dukun* became fodder for acrimonious accusations. Europeans 'proved' they were scientific, hygienic and modern by declaring *dukun* as 'old', 'filthy' and 'superstitious'. Likewise *ulama* could prove they were true Arabs, orthodox and egalitarian, by declaring *dukun* as 'indigenous', 'mystical', and 'exclusivist'.

These polarising discourses allowed those with public venues for declaring their points of view, such as *ulama,* physicians and bureaucrats, to shift public opinion toward their group's perspective and away from that of the perceived other. In the rhetorical divide, the actual knowledge that *dukun* practices originated with Persian Sufism disappeared. Such public debates took place during dramatic transformations as to how scientific medicine should be taught and conceptualised. Medicine was taken from an aristocratic and religious domain into an individualised and secular arena that claimed to be egalitarian. Rather than remaining a cosmologically, or even sociologically oriented 'art', medicine in the archipelago shifted toward a physiological, empirical and symptom-driven 'science', though never completely relinquishing its status as an 'art'.

The oppositional strategies of rhetoricians outlined in this essay have been embedded in the broad cultural processes in which medicine was perceived as an art in partial transition toward medicine as a science. Accompanying each supra-language were discursive styles and ideals that communicated and dramatically transformed how people thought and behaved with respect to their bodies and their place in the world. That transformation, though, was never complete. Old ways may move from public scrutiny into hidden realms of secrecy, but they do not totally disappear. People everywhere are drawn in by brilliant discoveries, by promises of cures from illnesses and by charismatic proselytisers who promote these breakthroughs. The supra-language consistently conveying the latest and greatest findings could trump all others, but often it coexists in competition.

In the contemporary Malay/Indonesian world, both Arabic and English as supra-languages tug citizens with cross-cutting appeal, especially with respect to economic consumption, music, medicine, and religion. But neither supra-language brings to Indonesia or Malaysia the aesthetic that Sufi mysticism once conveyed. Many people still gravitate to the imaginative allure of Persian mysticism with its pulsating illuminations that promise healing without actual touch. With its tales of turbaned *dukun* whose intoxicating visions hint that an exciting embrace with Allah is nigh, Malay/Indonesians' love affair with *dukun*'s 'magic' may seem irrational to the more legalistic or scientifically-minded, but it is clear that the passion for *dukun*-style healers will endure for years to come.