VARIEDNES OF JAVANESE RELIGION

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ACCOUNT

Java is famous for its combination of diverse cultural forms and religious beliefs. Andrew Beatty considers Javanese solutions to the problem of cultural difference, and explores the ways in which Javanese villagers make sense of their complex and multi-layered culture. Pantheist mystics, supernaturalists, orthodox Muslims, and Hindu converts at once construct contrasting faiths and create a common ground through syncretist ritual. Vividly evoking the religious life of Javanese villagers, its controversies and reconciliations, its humour and irony, its philosophical seriousness, and its formal beauty, Dr Beatty probes beyond the finished surfaces of ritual and cosmology to show the debate and compromise inherent in practical religion. This is the most comprehensive study of Javanese religion since Clifford Geertz's classic study of 1960.

ANDREW BEATTY is the author of Society and Exchange in Nias (1992). He has carried out over four years of field research in Nias and Java, Indonesia.
Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology

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VARIETIES OF JAVANESE RELIGION

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VARIETIES OF JAVANESE RELIGION

An anthropological account

ANDREW BEATTY
For Mercedes, Sofía, and Daniel
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My debt to the people of Bayu is as great as my affection for them. Since I have called their village by a pseudonym, in order to spare it unwanted intrusion, I can take the liberty here of naming those to whom I am most grateful: the headman, Pak Sutris, and his wife, Bu Sulastri, for their great kindness, hospitality, and unwavering support; Pak Rayis and Bu Eti for their wisdom and friendship; Pak Daso and Ma’ Daso for their loyalty and perseverance with my education; Pak Lurah Sunarto, Pak Ela and Bu Wilase, Pak Pathan, Pak Lurah Hanapi, Pak Senadi and Bi Untung, Bi Misri, Pak Suwardi and Kana, Bi Jiyah and Pak Mu’i, Mas Untung, Ma’e Yusup and Bu Suwari, Ma’e Erwin, Pak Sutam, Pak Sihan, Pak Sutris and family in Sukosari, Pak Tulik, Pak Saleh, Man Tok (a wonderful cook), Pak Serad, Pak Timbul, Pak Andi, Pak Waris: all of whom helped us in innumerable ways and enriched our lives with their friendship. I should also like to mention the boy who was a fine friend (the first among many) to our children and who I hope will one day read this book: Hadi.

Should others in Bayu eventually read this account in some form, I hope they will find it sympathetic and representative of their different views. Javanists will probably identify a four-five structure embedded in a nine; *santri* will be pleased that Islam – hence green or multicoloured! – is in the centre. Bayu, incidentally, is the name of the guardian deity of the cosmic centre.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Mercedes, for sharing in the joys and hardships of fieldwork. I dedicate this book to her and to our children, Sofia and Daniel.
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Glossary

Words appearing in this glossary are italicized only at first mention in the text; other foreign words are italicized throughout.

\begin{itemize}
  \item *abangan* nominal Muslim
  \item *adat* custom, traditions
  \item *alus* refined, spiritual, incorporeal
  \item *barang* lion-dragon; drama of this name
  \item *buda* Hindu-Buddhist; pertaining to pre-Islamic Java
  \item *bupati* district administrator, ‘regent’
  \item *buyut* great-grandparent or great-grandchild; title for spirit
  \item *cocog* fitting, apt, compatible
  \item *danyang* place spirit
  \item *desa* administrative village unit
  \item *dhukan* healer, magician
  \item *du’ā* prayer
  \item *dhuhr* sibling, kin; one of the four personal guardian spirits
  \item *fatihah* (Arabic) opening verse of the Koran
  \item *gandrung* female entertainer/dancer
  \item *gling* windmill
  \item *hadith* (Arabic) traditions of the Prophet
  \item *haj* the pilgrimage to Mecca
  \item *haji* title of person who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca
  \item *kasar* coarse, material
  \item *kawrah* Javanese wisdom, Javanist lore
  \item *kejawen* Javanism
  \item *kiyai* traditional Muslim leader, usually head of a pesantren
\end{itemize}
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>explanation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kraton</td>
<td>palace, court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>langgar</td>
<td>prayer-house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lontar</td>
<td>literature, traditionally inscribed on palm-leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lurah</td>
<td>headman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mandhi</td>
<td>efficacious, (magically) powerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modin</td>
<td>village Islamic official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niyati</td>
<td>intention, required before performing prayer or ritual action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pesantren</td>
<td>(or pondok-pesantren) Islamic boarding school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priyayi</td>
<td>member of nobility or elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rasa</td>
<td>taste, bodily feeling, intuition, organ of consciousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>rukun</td>
<td>in a state of social harmony</td>
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<tr>
<td>salât</td>
<td>(Arabic) prescribed Islamic prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanggar</td>
<td>non-Islamic place of worship, shrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sangku</td>
<td>zodiac beaker used in Cungking cult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>santri</td>
<td>pious, orthodox-leaning Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sedhekah</td>
<td>commemorative or funerary prayer meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sembahyang</td>
<td>Javanese term for Islamic worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shariah</td>
<td>Islamic law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slamet</td>
<td>well-being; secure, well, free of danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slametan</td>
<td>ritual feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tahliyan</td>
<td>Islamic chanting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umat</td>
<td>Islamic community of faithful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wakaf</td>
<td>Islamic foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wakil</td>
<td>delegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wali</td>
<td>saint, friend of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wayang</td>
<td>shadow puppet theatre</td>
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