



## **Influence Dynamics of Ratu Dwi Anjani as a Sacred Female Figure on Mount Rinjani Lombok: An Ecofeminist Study of the Nahdatul Wathan Organisation**

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### Abstract

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This article explores ethnographically the relationship between the feminine and indigenous sasak ideas through the figure of the sacred female jinn spirit queen Dewi Anjani who rules Lombok. As a sacred woman who rules Lombok from Mount Rinjani, Ratu Dwi Anjani is embedded in the beliefs and traditions of the Sasak people that shape the praxis of feminine spirituality of women in the Nahdatul Wathan organisation. Ratu Dwi Anjani is a representation of the agency of indigenous Sasak Lombok women who form mystical and sacred experiences and provide a comprehensive meaning of life between gender and the maintenance of goddesses or female ancestors who are respected and have power in invisible myths. The approach used is a qualitative data analysis approach with *library research*. This research aims to deepen understanding of the complexities embedded in the interaction of sacred women, gender, nature and Islam in Lombok. The results of this research present a new argument that shows how the indigenous Ratu Jin as a feminine form of God influences the discourse of Muslim holy women to carry out an integral role in the orthopraxy of the Nahdatul Wathan organization.

## INTRODUCTION

Lombok Island is an island located in the province of West Nusa Tenggara with an area of 5,435 km<sup>2</sup>. The majority of the population consists of indigenous Sasak people who adhere to Islam. The largest religious organisation in Lombok is Nahdlatul Wathan (NW). This organisation is the largest Islamic community organisation on Lombok Island as well as being an organisation that has established many Islamic educational institutions with various levels from the lowest level to universities. In addition, Lombok Island is also known for its natural beauty and deep spiritual heritage including Mount Rinjani. The people of Lombok believe that Mount Rinjani has a sacred dimension that illustrates the harmonious balance between religious belief and natural protection. This is related to the existence of the central figure of Ratu Dwi Anjani who is believed to be a sacred woman who is directly related to the spirituality between women, the universe and is a reference in the religious practice of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation which is considered the largest organisation in Lombok.

In Muslim farming communities in Indonesia, as in historical dynasties such as in Sumatra, the Sultanate of Yogyakarta and the Sultanate, the belief system in spirits and spirits whose presence is believed to create spiritual dynamics and a harmonious balance between religious beliefs and the protection of nature. For example, the Mother Spirit, the Goddess of Rice is believed to play an important role in providing hearth, prosperity, food security for life as well as in the welfare of the community. The Spirit Queens (also known as Goddesses) play a role in the invisible 'mythical' world of the immortal realm by appointing themselves as kingly rulers and human leaders. In this context, Ratu Jin Dwi Anjani's involvement in Lombok's Mount Rinjani makes her important in actualising narratives that give meaning to spiritual dynamics and the protection of nature. This is also reinforced by the Sasak myth "*Tembang Doyan Neda*" which tells how Dewi Anjani as the Creator gave life to the first human in Lombok from twenty royal jinn couples.

Discussions about the relationship between women and nature among feminists have always been a study that puts gender analysis as an effort to damage the environment and efforts to save it. This statement departs from a discourse that is often referred to in explaining ecofeminism. The above arguments suggest that women's feminist qualities have an affective relationship with sympathetic, nurturing, co-operative and altruistic traits that make them more responsible for their environment than men. However, this relationship between women and nature often invites different arguments and often contradicts each other (Ayom Mratita Purbandani & Mahaswa, 2022, p. 227).

So based on the explanation above, the problem discussed in this article is how the sacred female figure known as Ratu Dwi Anjani by the people of Lombok as a representation of the ecofeminist spirit through the 'indigenous feminine' in protecting and caring for nature, social life, politicisation and religious-gender organised in the Nahdatul Wathan organisation. According to Smith (2014) sacred women in the Nahdatul Wathan organisation have a high position. She observed that there is a feminist ethnography of the reciprocal relationship between female deities, saints, gender and Islam in Lombok in

general. As the largest organisation in Lombok, Nahdatul Wathan has a Sufistic practice known as Tarekat Sufi Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan.

There are two books in Hizib Nahdatul Wathan in which there are two gendered sequences. First, the male book that represents the male madrasa (Banin) and the second for women that represents the female madrasa (Banat). Both Hizibs are actually the same. However, men are not allowed to read the prayer at the beginning because it is intended to be read specifically by women. Whereas the male Hizib may be read by anyone.

Dwi Anjani's authority in Nahdatul Wathan's wirid is contained in the female Hizib (banat) characterised by the existence of the spiritual figure of Maulana Sheikh's daughter, Ummi Raihanun, who has a level of purity, loyalty and obedience to Dwi Anjani and obedience to her father. This sacred belief became a pattern of life in the lives of the Sasak people of Lombok indicating the existence of a type of feminine power that emphasises Islam on chastity and the sexual restriction of sacred women in the Nahdatul Wathan organisation. It is this nature that can then connect Dewi Anjani as a sacred female spirit that can only be connected to sacred women in Nahdlatul Wathan's Sufi cosmology.

## **METHOD**

This article uses a qualitative research method with a library research approach. The main source of reference in the writing consists of various written materials such as books, notes, theses, journals, and other related documents. This research relies on in-depth analysis of relevant literature to answer research problems and provide a more detailed understanding.

In the data processing process, the analysis step is carried out by identifying literature sources that have relevance to the topic under study. These sources were collected from various reliable references, then arranged and analysed systematically. This approach aims to provide an accurate and comprehensive description of the research theme based on the theoretical basis obtained from the reviewed literature.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **An overview of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation and the hizib nahdatul wathan tariqat.**

Nahdatul Wathan is the largest most influential organisation and has great power in politics and social society on the island of Lombok. The leader of the ulama or tuan guru (as the Sasak people call it) is H. Zainuddin Abdul Madjid as the initiator or founder of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation. He has two daughters and no sons. Tuan Guru Haji Zainuddin Abdul Madjid (Maulana Sheikh) was born in East Lombok in 1898. In the 1900s he began his long studies in Makkah and obtained brilliant academic achievements. After completing his studies in Mecca Maulana Sheikh or Tuan Guru Zainuddin Abdul Madjid returned to Lombok with a strong spirit of da'wah and founded the Nahdatul Wathan organisation. In the religious practice carried out by the Nahdatul Wathan organisation, there is a Sufi practice called the Hijib Nahdatul Wathan tarekat. This tarekat was founded by Maulana Sheikh in 1964.

Some literature studies describe that this tarekat was founded after Maulana Sheikh received divine guidance through the wali and prophet Khidir

when he was on a pilgrimage at the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad (Hadi 2010). Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan has been called the last tarekat in the world (tarekat akhir zaman) because it claims to be more compatible with modern lifestyles than the heavy prayer and recitation practices of traditional Sufi orders (Baharuddin and Rasmianto 2004; Hadi 2010).

There are two books in Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan in which there are two gendered sequences. The first is for men representing the men's madrasa (Banin) and the second is for women representing the women's madrasa (Banat). Both Hizib are actually the same but men are not allowed to read the prayer at the beginning because it is intended to be read specifically by women. Whereas the male Hizib may be read by anyone.

Dwi Anjani's authority in Nahdlatul Wathan's wirid is contained in Nahdlatul Wathan's female Hizib (banat), where the spiritual figure is Maulana Sheikh's daughter, Ummi Raihanun, who is considered to have a level of holiness based on her loyalty to Dwi Anjani and obedience to her father. This sacred belief is a pattern of life for the Sasak people of Lombok that shows the existence of a type of feminine power.

### **Indigenous sacred and feminine women in the nahdlatul wathan Sufi order**

Here, I take a feminist anthropological consideration of the relationship between gender and the maintenance of ancient female deities or ancestors who wield great power in the invisible mystical realm, by looking at what understanding they give of female deities, saints, and gender in the Sufi context in Lombok. I illustrate this through field data that shows Dewi Anjani's 'interlude' with Ummi Raehanun through the shared sacred relationship they inherited from Tuan Guru Hajji Zainuddin Abdul Madjid. Ethnographies of Sasak Sufism pay no attention to what feminist anthropologist Sanday (2002) calls 'women-orientated networks of significance' or aspects of gender from a feminist perspective. This is surprising given the prominent feminine symbology of the island in the form of myths about Dewi Anjani, legends about powerful daughters, honourable positions associated with motherhood and feminine associations with rice cultivation and sacred rituals referring to the fertility goddess Dewi Sri in her various forms (Saharudin 2019).

Sasak culture, dialect and lexicon are heterogeneous across the island (Mahyuni 2007) but there is consistency in reference to and maintenance of the centrality of feminine ideas. Lombok Island in the Sasak language is known by several names, including *Gumi Sasak* (Land of Sasak) and *Gumi Nina* (Land of Women) (Muliadi 2019, p. 32; Saharudin 2019). Local narratives tell us that the 'feminine' designation of Lombok reflects the fertility, abundance of water and prosperity of the island. Other clues are contained in several 'myths' that suggest the possibility of a Malayo-Polynesian, pre-Hindu (Austronesian), pre-Hindu notion of a mother-centred cosmology for the indigenous Sasak people of Lombok, as I discuss with reference to the origin myth, Doyan Neda (also known as Temelak Mangan).

Together with the female-centred origin myth and the importance of Dewi Anjani in Lombok affairs, these feminine and maternal symbols demonstrate the integral role of the feminine in the Sasak lifeworld, both visible and invisible.

They further underscore and speak to a broader cosmological complementarity that generally locates indigenous forms of feminine power within the eternal realm of the invisible ( *ghaib* ). The orthopraxy of the sacred feminine does not mean that women in Lombok exhibit more equality, justice or sacredness than elsewhere. In fact, the issue of gender equality in Lombok is an arena of contestation, especially in the context of marriage (underage marriage, divorce and polygamy) the low literacy rate of Lombok women, domestic violence, and so on (see Bennet 2005: Platt 2017: Smith 2014). As in Islamic culture, the patriarchal aspect of Sasak culture places men's authority over women in an Islamic gender hierarchy that gives men the role of leader. In normative Sufi practice, similarly, there is an orthodox doctrine that women cannot be authorised leaders of Sufi orders. Nonetheless, history and ethnography reveal that Muslim women around the world have achieved high positions and continue to be figures and leaders in their communities (All Khan 2018).

In the Nahdatul Wathan organisation, for example, there are many men and women who are loyal to Ummi Raehanun (daughter of the founder of Nahdatul Wathan). She is regarded as a holy woman who continues to associate with *pern* as a *mursida* (except in cases where women lead or guide women only). Yet scholars have shown that Indonesian women can and do occupy informal and formal positions of authority in Sufi orders (Husin 2014) particularly through kinship systems that recognise bilateral inheritance of spiritual power (smith 2012, 2014).

Overall, holy women and the concept of the indigenous feminine in the Nahdatul Wathan Sufi Order not only honour and nurture spiritual values, but also serve as a force that encourages the sustainability of local culture and wisdom amidst the dynamics of changing times. This reflects the harmony between Islamic Sufism and Sasak cultural traditions, which together form a unique spiritual identity for the people of Lombok.

### **Dwi Anjani in the Myth of the Islamic Jinn Queen as the Ruler of Lombok Island**

Myths about the sacred female-centred origins and the importance of queen Dwi Anjani in Lombok affairs are symbols of the feminine and motherhood that demonstrate the integral role of the feminine in the lives of the Sasak people, both visible and invisible. The term myth refers to the view of Barthes (2013: 151-154) who explains that myth is a form of message, speech, and or communication system whose existence is required to be believed but cannot be proven and is not a concept or idea but is a way of giving meaning. The mythology of Ratu Jin Dwi Anjani in the context of Indonesia and Lombok in particular, places the Queen of spirits and other Goddesses playing an important role in contemporary Islamic society.

Dwi Anjani in the context of Sasak society is positioned as the Queen of the Jinn (*Ghaib*) and as the 'mother' of the community who rules from the eternity of Mount Rinjani. It is she who has the power to revive the king with her 'water of life' such as the sacred lake located on Mount Rinjani with the help of her loyal birds (Ratu Dwi Anjani has a magical male-female bird pair). Through her 'water' form, she is an integral part of rice farming rituals and life in general,

placing her in a realm of immortality and power with the fate of humans in her hands (Herman et al., 1990).

The myth of the Jinn Queen Dewi Anjani in Sasak society cannot be separated from the analysis of Nahdatul Wathan Sufism. The mythology of Dewi Anjani provides an entry point to indigenous forms of feminine power where Sufism is practised in relation to feminine cosmic figures. In the Sufi order of Nahdatul Wathan Ummi Raehanun as the daughter of the founder of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation is a holy woman (who continues her father's leadership after his death) and is a representation of Ratu Dwi Anjani. In other words, the Nahdatul Wathan Sufi Order is seen to exist by how strong its role is in presenting Dwi Anjani in the praxis of her life as a mursida and holy woman. In this case, Maulana Syaikh's daughter has not only inherited the leadership, but also the loyalty of Ratu Dwi Anjani as the ruler of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation.

In this discussion the analysis of the 'indigenous feminine' provides an entry into the mystical realm of feminine authority that coexists with the hierarchy of Muslim society. Sufi masters in the Nahdatul Wathan tariqah are also called wirid masters. Women who are expert wirid get a call to serve the community. This is because every holy woman and wirid expert has the knowledge to communicate and interact with the saints (Dwi Anjani) in the realm of the supernatural. For example, in terms of non-medical treatment, Sasak people practice it by seeking treatment from them (wirid experts) as well as female Sufis who use dhikr and prayers. Thus, in the Nahdatul Wathan Tariqat, it is taught that everyone must become feminine to get guidance in life. These practices are carried out as a form of human approach to Ilah (God). Furthermore, because God in the Sufistic tradition is feminine in nature and can only be approached with feminine nature.

Therefore, the ecofeminist concept related to the relationship between women and nature taught in the Nahdatul Wathan order is part of the spirit of preserving the environment which has the nature of beauty as feminine. If humans emphasise masculinity in life, nature will be damaged and make human relationships with God limited.

### **Tasawwuf sasak: Sacred Women as the power of Nahdatul Wathan's womb**

The Nahdatul Wathan organisation has a religious practice or tariqat that has a strong dimension and is known as Tasawuf Sasak. In practice, the Sufis of Nahdatul Wathan uphold noble and sacred cultural moral values so that in their wirid contains worship of the mystical realm as a symbol of strength. Sasak Sufism is considered a form of spiritual power within the Nahdatul Wathan organisation because it is supported by the 'indigenous feminine' which has a strong dimension in protecting nature. Sacred female figures such as Rabi'atul Adawiyah and Ratu Dwi Anjani are believed to be symbols of power who are believed to occupy the assembly of saints located in the Great Sacred Mosque of Rinjani Lombok. In the Sufi order, Nahdatul Wathan is known as Tarekat Hizib Nahdatul Wathan.

The tariqah is different from traditional tariqahs in general because the name in the Nahdatul Wathan tariqah is not the name of the male

murshid/Syeikh as the name in traditional tariqahs but instead women are offered to lead the tariqah and facilitate holy actions. Sufi masters in the Nahdatul Wathan order are also referred to as masters of wirid. Women who are expert wirid get a call to serve the community because they are considered holy women. A holy woman in the Sufi order of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation is regarded as someone who has the knowledge to communicate and interact with the saints (Dwi Anjani) in the realm of the supernatural. Therefore, the practice of spiritual healing and approaching nature can only be done by becoming feminine first.

The myth of the Queen of Jinn Dewi Anjani in Sasak society has a connection with the analysis of Nahdatul Wathan's Sufism. The mythology of Dewi Anjani provides an entry point to indigenous forms of feminine power where Sufism is practised in relation to feminine cosmic figures. In the Sufi order of Nahdatul Wathan Umami Raehanun as the daughter of the founder of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation is a woman and is a representation of Ratu Dwi Anjani. The Sufi order of Nahdatul Wathan is seen from how strong and deep Dwi Anjani is displayed in the praxis of the life of a mursida and holy woman. In this case, the daughter of the founder of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation (Umami Raehanun) has not only inherited leadership but also loyalty to Ratu Dwi Anjani as the ruler of the Nahdatul Wathan organisation.

The people of Lombok believe that in the body of women there is a higher source of spiritual life compared to men because of the presence of the uterus in the female body. For example, a woman or a mother who prays tends to be considered sacred and sacred. This is because the feminine spirit of motherhood such as protecting, caring and loving tends to be more closely related to the attributes of God (Allah). In practice, the feminine power of the interaction of Rahim (the female body) and wirid (spirituality) in the cult of Dwi Anjani is found in Nahdatul Wathan Sufi women who are high in tarekat and spiritual wirid who are considered as guardians against the dangerous world of 'black magic' (Smith 2012).

Umami Raehanun, for example, who is the 'embodiment' of the wise holy woman Dwi Anjani, indirectly intersects with the ideas of adat, Islam, and Hinduism. Her noble rank as a holy woman and the strength of her wirid become a bulwark in defence. This is expressed in the Sasak language as *nine sakti*, which is interpreted as a powerful woman whose existence is part of feminine protection and strength. In addition, mystical beliefs associated with the womb and the original form of feminine power are expressed in broader cultural practices involving a woman's body. For example, a woman exposing her vulva or breasts or a woman hanging her underwear on the front window of her house if sleeping alone at night is a form of repelling or preventing the use of witchcraft that intends to enter the house.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the concept of feminism known as the 'indigenous feminine' in the Nahdlatul Wathan organisation ethnographically has a Sufi feminine dimension. In the Sasak community culture, Sufism values are reflected in gender praxis that is complementary between men and women. The figure of Ratu Dwi Anjani is seen as a holy woman as well as the Queen of Jinn who has a close relationship with the Nahdlatul Wathan organisation in Lombok. The developing narrative shows that Ratu Dwi Anjani is considered the embodiment of God's power with a feminine nature, so that he becomes a symbol of God's presence in a subtle and spiritual dimension.

The life of the Sasak people in various aspects-such as social, economic, political, religious, and cultural-is strongly influenced by the teaching of feminine values. These values emphasise the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and spirituality to their God. The feminine dimension reflects a balance in the lives of the Sasak people, which, combined with traditional beliefs and the teachings of Sufism, forms a distinctive cultural identity that is deeply rooted in their spirituality.



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