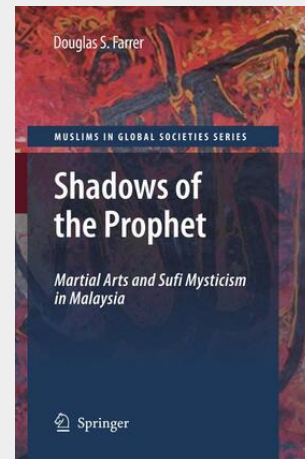


## Shadows of the Prophet

Martial Arts and Sufi Mysticism

Contemporary accounts of Malay culture that focus on shamanism, dance, medicine and performance reveal only a partial view of Malay mysticism. However, given knowledge of the Malay martial art (silat) a more comprehensive understanding of Malay mysticism, religion, sorcery and magic becomes possible. Recognizing the silat master's (guru silat) role in Malay mysticism recognizes the social anthropology of Malay religion, sorcery and magic. Hence this account explores Malay mysticism, shamanism and sorcery from the perspective of silat, which may be considered as a kind of embodied war magic or warrior religion. *Shadows of the Prophet: Martial Arts and Sufi Mysticism* is based upon my doctoral dissertation (Farrer 2006b). Part I of the book, reflections, outlines the methodological and theoretical base of the research. Chapter 1 outlines the fieldwork method of performance ethnography used to investigate a transnational silat organization called Seni Silat Haqq Melayu. This group are an offshoot of the Islamic Haqqani- Naqshbandi Sufi Order headed internationally by Shaykh Nazim, and led in Southeast Asia by a Malay Prince; H. R. H. Shaykh Raja Ashman. Readers who prefer to delve directly into the ethnographic materials may skip Chapter 2, which contains an extensive academic literature review of anthropological theories of art, embodiment, magic, and performance read alongside Malay animism, shamanism, ritual and theatre.

This is the first in-depth study of the Malay martial art, silat, and the first ethnographic account of the Haqqani Islamic Sufi Order. Drawing on 12 years of research and practice in Malaysia, Singapore, and England, social anthropologist and martial arts expert D.S. Farrer considers Malay silat through the transnational Sufi silat group called Seni Silat Haqq, an offshoot of the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi Order. This account combines theories from the anthropology of art, embodiment, enchantment, and performance to show how war magic and warrior religion amalgamate in traditional Malay martial arts, where practitioners distance themselves from "becoming animal" or going into trance, preferring a practice of spontaneous bodily movement by summoning the power of Allah. Silat and Sufism are revealed through the social dramas of 40-day boot-camps where Malay and European practitioners endeavor to become shadows of the Prophet, only to have their faith tested through a ritual ordeal of boiling oil. The unseen realm and magical embodiment is further approached through an account of Malay deathscapes where moving through the patterns of silat summons the spirits of ancestral heroes. Those interested in Malaysia, Sufism, transnational Islam, and the study of religion, conversion, magic, sorcery, theatre and martial arts will find this book indispensable. "the eagerly awaited monograph on the practice of silat" Joel S. Kahn "No other work on silat has achieved this level of inside understanding" Roxana Waterson



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