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Title: The Jakhanke Muslim clerics: a religious and historical study of Islam in Senegambia

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The Jakhanke are a specialized caste of Muslim clerics and educators, now mostly Manding speaking, who traditionally look to Dia (or Diakha) in Masina (now in the modern Republic of Mali) as their origin. They rose into prominence from the missionary activities of al-H^{ajj} S^{alim} Suware sometime around 1200. At that time they were still part of the Serakhulle (or Soninke) people but soon developed into a specialized clerical elite with a reputation for learning and pacifism. From their beginnings in Masina they adhered closely to the teachings of al-H^{ajj} S^{alim} who led them eventually to Diakha-Bambukhu on the River Bafing. From this time on they spread widely in Senegambia (the region along the Senegal and Gambia rivers) and beyond, carrying with them a strong commitment to the peaceful dissemination of Islam. Their significance in the Islamization of much of precolonial West Africa is without parallel, and the Islamic educational system as it developed was largely their creation. This book investigates Jakhanke identity. Seven chapters devoted to Jakhanke history in the long process of dispersion and eventual settling down are followed by three thematic chapters (ch. 7: Jakhanke educational enterprises; ch. 8: Prayers, dreams and religious healing; and ch. 9: Slavery, Islam and the Jakhanke).

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