

Javanese Culture as Guidance for Suharto's Personal Life and for His Rule of the Country

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Abstract

Obedience to superiors or 'manut', generosity, avoidance of conflict, understanding others, and empathy have been adopted by the Javanese as principle for their lives. Someone who does not understand these Javanese principles will be considered 'durung Jawa' (not yet Javanese) or 'durung ngerti' (does not yet understand) and they are eligible to be educated or punished. On the other hand, someone who understands well and takes these principles as guidance for his life will be safe and very much honored, appreciated and acceptable to be a leader. Therefore, someone who knows well about these principles of Javanese life will always try to be a true Javanese by adopting these Javanese teachings as guidance for his life and the practice of these teachings would give added values to his role and position in society. Suharto whose awareness on Javanese culture had grown up since he was young understood the above notion and had always been committed to honor and practice the teachings inherited by the Javanese ancestors. He adopted these noble Javanese cultural values and philosophy taught by the ancestors (some of them were in the form of 'petatah-petitih') as 'pituduh' or guidance and 'wewaler' or prohibition not only for his individual life but very often also for his rule of the country.

Key words: 'rukun' or harmonious unity, 'urmat' or respect, 'gotong royong' or mutual assistance, 'pituduh' or guidance, 'wewaler' or prohibitions,

Introduction

For most Javanese "to be Javanese means to be a person who is civilized and who knows his manners and his place" (Geertz 1961; Mulder 1978; Koentjaraningrat 1985). The individual serves as a harmonious part of the family or group. Life in society should be characterized by '*rukun*' (harmonious unity). The principle of '*rukun*' or harmony together with the principle of '*urmat*' or respect guide Javanese social behavior outside the family. Everyone should know his or her place and duty, honoring and respecting those in higher positions, while remaining benevolent towards and responsible for, those in lower positions.

In order to achieve '*rukun*' or harmony, "all overt expressions of conflict should be avoided. Unlike Western culture, which regards individualism and group belonging as mutually exclusive, most Javanese consider the two intimately related (Mulder 1978). Mutual assistance and sharing of burdens or '*gotong royong*', within both the family and the community, should reflect the concept of '*rukun*' (Mulder 1978; Koentjaraningrat 1985). Harmony and unity are complemented by social hierarchy.

The Javanese values of respect and the maintenance of social harmony or '*rukun*' are basic principles of normative and moral guidance for social interaction within both the family and the community..... This respect is also reflected in Javanese social behavior in other contexts, such as the workplace, schools, and political organizations. The strong emphasis on '*rukun*' or social harmony has marked the typical Javanese as inexpressive, avoiding social and personal conflict.

Javanese cultural values virtues that contribute to harmonious social integration. Ideal human-virtues include obedience to superiors or '*manut*', generosity, avoidance of conflict, understanding others, and empathy (Geertz 1961; Koentjaraningrat 1985; Franz Magnis Suseno 1988) ([http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unubooks/uul3se/uu13se\)b.htm](http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unubooks/uul3se/uu13se)b.htm)). Someone who does not understand these Javanese principles of life as mentioned above will be considered '*durung Jawa*' (not yet Javanese) or '*durung ngerti*' (does not yet understand) (<http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unubooks/uu13se/uu13se09.htm>) and they are eligible to be educated or punished. On the other hand, someone who understands well and takes these principles as guidance for his life will be safe and very much honored, appreciated and acceptable to be a leader. Therefore, someone who knows well about these principles of Javanese life will always try to be a true Javanese by adopting these Javanese teachings as guidance for his life and the practice of these teachings would give added values to his role and position in society.

Suharto whose awareness on Javanese culture had grown up since he was young understood the above notions and had always been committed to honor and practice the teachings inherited by the Javanese ancestors. He adopted these noble Javanese cultural values and philosophy taught by the ancestors (some of them were in the form of '*petatah-petitih*') as '*pituduh*' or guidance and '*wewaler*' or prohibition not only for his individual life but very often also for his rule of the country.

Due to his strong commitment to the practice of Javanese culture particularly in ruling the country, over the years many Western scholars have portrayed Suharto as an almost archetypical Javanese Sultan, driven by a philosophy of kingship that stretches far back into Java's colonial past (Review Essay, December 2000: 281). Although all what they have portrayed could not always be fully agreed, many Indonesian political elites and scholars have given their views on how Suharto practiced Javanese cultural values and philosophy in his personal life as well as in the affairs of state, or how Suharto's style of leadership was influenced by Javanese cultural values and philosophy.

Ginjar Kartasmita, in his article on "*Pikiran Modern Dalam Pribadi Jawa*" which is published in a book on "*Diantara Para Sahabat: Pak Harto 70 Tahun*" (1991) has asserted that:

"It is clear that Pak Harto is a Javanese, and Javanese '*adat*' (customs) and culture have influenced the style of his leadership. As for example, Javanese philosophies have often been used by him in order to explain the background of his policies. This is the different characteristic of Pak Harto's leadership. Pak Harto never posits himself far away from the Javanese identity although the way he is thinking is always modern. The

Javanese philosophy has already given the deep meaning of all his thought and policies” (G. Dwipayana and Nazaruddin Syamsuddin, 1991: 188).

This chapter is designed to clarify whether Suharto really practiced Javanese cultural values and philosophy as guidance and prohibition for his personal life and for his rule of the country, how Javanese cultural values and philosophy were practiced by Suharto, and whether by practicing these Javanese values and philosophy Suharto was able to get legitimacy from people. In order to get a clear and sophisticated elaboration of the problems, opinions of some competent informants regarding some particular issues were also used besides other primary data.

Life of Suharto

As a son of a poor farmer coming from a small village and having no land to cultivate,¹ Suharto was never imagined that someday he would be able to become president of a big country called Indonesia, consisting of more than 17.000 islands with 216 million populations. He was almost equivalent to Hayamwuruk, a great king of Javanese kingdom, Majapahit, who was able to rule for almost 38 years. Only after becoming president, Suharto was then regarded by many people as ‘an extraordinary meteor emerging from Kemusuk’ (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:29).

One day, Suharto’s own father, Kertosudiro who had been divorced with his wife Sukirah, took Suharto from his mother and brought him to Wuryantoro, Wonogiri. There he left his beloved son with his younger sister, wife of Prawirowiharjo. Since that time, due to certain conditions, Suharto had to move from one school to another, first from Puluhan (Godean) to Pedes (Kemusuk) then to Wuryantoro, and moving again to Tiwir (Kemusuk) and then going back to Wuryantoro. After finishing his lower school, Suharto entered primary school or *Schakel School* in Wonogiri. But, due to a certain school regulation, Suharto had to go back to Kemusuk and finished his school at Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta.

After finishing his *schakel* school of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta, he went back to Wuryantoro to apply for a job, and was hired as a clerk at a village bank. He then attempted to find a job in Solo but failed. He then decided to apply for KNIL or ‘*Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger*’ (the Royal Dutch Army). Because of his school background, he was accepted in *Kortverband* and joined military training in Gombang. He managed to be the best graduate and began his service on 1 June 1940. He was first located in Battalion XII in Rampal, Malang (Elson, 1991:8).

Not long after becoming soldier, the Dutch surrendered to Japan. Suharto decided to abandon his uniform and fled back to Wuryantoro. Unable to find job in Wuryantoro, he moved back to Yogyakarta and tried to learn typing and fell ill with malaria. Once recovered, on 1 November 1942, Suharto availed himself of an

¹ G. Dwipayana and Ramadhan K.H. in a book of “*Soeharto: Pikiran, Ucapan dan Tindakan Saya*” or “Soeharto: My thoughts, words, and deeds” wrote that Suharto was born in Kemusuk, Godean, Yogyakarta, on 8 June 1921, from a village common woman called Sukirah. His father, Kertosudiro or Kertorejo, was a poor farmer with no land to cultivate working as an ‘*ulu-ulu*’, a man who was in charge in irrigation in village area. Not long after he was born, Suharto’s parents were divorced. His mother, Sukirah, then married Atmopawiro.

opportunity to join the police force. He was appointed assistant to the Yogyakarta chief of police, apparently at the rank of *Keibuho* (assistant inspector) (Elson, 1991:9).

Suggested by his Japanese chief of police, Suharto sought to join the PETA or '*Pembela Tanah Air*' (1943). Upon his acceptance into the PETA, he was one of only two selected from 500 applicants, Suharto was sent on a platoon commander's (*shodancho*) course, which he found quite difficult. At the end of Japanese occupation of Java, the 24 year-old Suharto was no more than a moderately promising member of a ragged volunteer army (Elson, 1991:10). However, Suharto continued his military carrier by entering the BKR or '*Badan Keamanan Rakyat*' (the People Security Body) which then became the TKR or '*Tentara Keamanan Rakyat*' (the People Security Army), and at the end became the TNI or '*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*' (the Indonesian National Army).

Exposure to Javanese values

While he was in Wuryantoro, Wonogiri, young Suharto met a number of persons, such as his uncle Prawirowiharjo (who then became his adopted father) and Kyai Daryatmo, with whom he learnt a lot about life and its values which most Javanese people or Javanese Muslims usually practiced. According to young Suharto, as a '*mantri pertanian*' his adopted father, Prawirowiharjo, had already taught him how to be a tough and creative farmer. He taught him spiritual training as well such as fasting on Mondays and Thursdays and sleeping under the edge of their house's roof. Prawirowiharjo also recommended that young Suharto sleep near '*pawuhan*' or a rubbish hole. But, to his adopted father's recommendation as stated by young Suharto himself, he was unable to do so because it was not easy to sleep at a place of decaying rubbish that gave off an odor. '*Pawuhan*' is a rubbish hole usually located in the back or the front yard of old Javanese houses. It was made by the owner, into which he threw his rubbish away and then burnt.

Whereas, from Kyai Daryatmo, who was at that time a famous village '*mubaligh*' (muslim teacher) as well as a member of the Indonesian National Committee of Wonogiri (*Komite Nasional Indonesia Wonogiri*), young Suharto learnt about religion of Islam and the Holy Al Qur'an. From Kyai Daryatmo, young Suharto also learnt the meaning of '*samadi*' or '*semedi*' and '*kebatinan*'. '*Samadi*' or '*semedi*' is "to learn knowledge of God Almighty's wills or to predict the future." This activity is popularly called '*neges karsaning hyang ingkang murbeng pandalu*' (trying to understand very well what God Almighty's wills are). God Almighty's wills could never be seen clearly and distinctly, but indirectly in the forms of '*perlambang-perlambang*' (symbols) or '*pasemon*' (secret information). '*Pralambang-pralambang*' or symbols and '*pasemon*' or secret information are usually used as the media of communication not only between God Almighty as the Creator and men as the created, but also between men and others indirectly (Fachri Ali, 1989:30).

Since Kyai Daryatmo was also regarded by the village people as a clever man having ability to heal ill persons or '*dukun*', from him too, young Suharto learnt how to serve the village people who came to Kyai Daryatmo asking for traditional medicines. Very often young Suharto helped his spiritual teacher, Kyai Daryatmo, to prepare traditional medicines or herbal for the village people who came to visit him

for those medicines. Beside that, young Suharto also joined a Boy Scout organization affiliated to an Islamic organization called '*Pandu Hisbul Wathan*' or people popularly called '*Pandu HW*'.

In short, when he was in Wuryantoro, young Suharto began to learn how to be a true Javanese or a Javanese Muslim. He learnt and practiced not only Javanese philosophy, but also philosophy of Islam. He tried to understand very well the Javanese customs as well as the Javanese way of life. He said: "At that time I was forced to understand and to adopt the Javanese philosophy of life effective in the society surrounding, to understand religion and Javanese way of life" (Dwipayana and Ramadhan, 1989:13). According to young Suharto, when living with his adopted father, Prawirowiharjo, he began to learn the teaching of the three Javanese prohibitions or the three '*don'ts*' or '*tiga 'aja*', such as: "*Aja kagetan, aja gumunan, lan aja dumeh*" (don't be startled [that is, troubled], don't be surprised, and don't be arrogant), meaning "you shall not be surprised and amazed of whatever happens on earth, and you shall not be presumptuous of your power."

All what Suharto had done during his early years then became guiding principles of his life, which stiffened him in facing problems which might have shaken him (Dwipayana and Ramadhan, 1989:13). He further explained: "I always remember the teaching of our ancestors: respect for God, teachers, government and both parents. Even after I became President, I have not changed in this matter in the slightest. I hold these teachings in high esteem and I believe in their truth" (Dwipayana and Ramadhan, 1989:13).

What he believed and practiced was then written into a book called "*Butir-butir Budaya Jawa: Anggayuh Kasampurnaning Urip. Ber Budi BowoLeksana. Ngudi Sajatining Becik*" or "Some Items of Javanese Culture: In Search of Perfect Life. Noble and Generous Mind. In Quest of the Essence of Goodness," first published in 1987. This book is a collection of '*pituduh*' (moral guidance) and '*wewaler*' (prohibitions) relating to many aspects of life (such as God the only One God, spiritual, humanism, nationalism, family, and materialism), compiled by the eldest daughter, Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, and presented by Suharto to his children to serve as the guidance for their life (Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, 1993:vii).

All moral guidances or '*pituduh*' and prohibitions or '*wewaler*' taught by Suharto were actually attributed to the teachings of Islam and also to the teachings of '*Serat Wulang Reh*' (written by Sri Paku Buwana IV), '*Serat Wedhatama*' and '*Serat Tripama*' (both written by KGPAA Mangkunegoro IV), etc. From '*Serat Wulang Reh*', Suharto adopted the principle of life, such as "*adigang, adigung, adiguna*" (Thomas Wiyasa Bratawijaya, 1987:7), "respect for God, teacher, government and both parents" (Ibid:12), "*ajining diri saka obahing lathi*," (Ibid: 16), "*rukun agawe santoso, crah agawe bubrah*" (Ibid:17), etc. From '*Serat Wedhatama*', Suharto adopted the teachings of "*sembah raga, sembah kalbu*." From '*Serat Tripama*', some teachings were adopted such as "*melu handarbeni, melu hangrungkebi, mulad sariro hangrasa wani*" (Ibid: 50), "*ber budi bowoleksana*" (Ibid:52), etc. From '*Serat Dewa Ruci*': "*sopan santun, lemah lembut tetapi meyakinkan (ruruh jatmiko), ramah tamah, saleh (susila anuraga) menyenangkan orang lain, murah hati, dapat membedakan baik dan buruk*" (Ibid:64), etc. From the teaching of Sosrokartono, Suharto adopted the principle of "*nglurug tanpa bala, menang tanpa ngasorake*" (an invasion without deploying troops, winning without humiliating). From Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, Suharto

adopted the principle of leadership of *'Tri Pakarti Utomo'*: *'ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madya mangun karso, tut wuri handayani'*.

Really believing in all what he had written in his book, Suharto asserted: "Man will come to the ultimate end he aspires to, if during his life in the *'alam madya'* – in this world – he leads a life inspired by the nature of the Lord, i.e. to be 'good', in the essence of its meaning. His entire thought, aspirations and speech must be guided by the essence of virtue, his mind noble, his heart generous or *'becik sajatining becik, berbudi bowoleksono, hambeg adil paramarta'*. To be essentially good means to be good not merely for one own sake but for the sake of others as well" (Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, 1993: x).

Suharto further asserted: "Whether or not man will reach his ultimate goal depends on how he makes use of the means the Lord endowed him with, i.e. his five senses, his thought, his feeling, and his two antagonistic passions, one for virtue and other for evil" (Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, 1993:x). In other words, if someone wants to succeed in achieving the ideal or ultimate goal of his life, he has to make himself to be a good Javanese, that is someone who is *'becik sajatining becik, berbudi bowoleksono, hambeg adil paramarta'*, that is someone who lives by undertaking all guidance and avoiding all prohibitions as taught by the ancestors.

Even, Suharto also said: "Maxims in the Javanese culture, *'pituduh'* or moral guidances, as well as *'wewaler'* or prohibitions, would make it easier for the Indonesians to nurture a noble mind and a generous heart, i.e. to develop oneself to be essentially good, and thus it will be easier as well for him to develop a conscience necessary to lead a Pancasila – based on civic and social life" (Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, 1993:x).

The way to achieve the ideals of life

According to "*Serat Wedhatama*," in order to become the ideal type of Javanese that is someone who is *'becik sajatining becik, berbudi bowoleksono, hambeg adil paramarta'*, someone has to learn from Panembahan Senapati that he/she has to be brave of living in a condition of *'prihatin'*. Meaning, he/she must be willing to study persistently or *'tekun belajar'*, he must not know the word of retreat or surrender or *'pantang menyerah'*, and he must be tough and love facing difficult or heavy problems or *'ulet dan senang menghadapi persoalan-persoalan yang berat'* (Thomas Wiyasa Bratawijaya, 1987:37).

In order to become a man possessing a simple life disposition or *'hidup sederhana'*, someone has to control him/herself by doing a certain thing, which is popularly called *'laku'*. The word *'laku'* could be equalized to attitude, behavior, or character. By cutting down on eating and sleeping or *'cegah dhahar lawan guling/berpuasa'*, rejecting funs of life in the world or *'mati raga'*, controlling bad passions or *'mengendalikan nafsu angkara murka'*, and having self-confidence, all we achieved would make us satisfied and feel closer to God who has complied with all we have requested or *'apa yang dicapai akan mendatangkan kepuasan dan selalu bersyukur atas berkat Tuhan yang telah mengabulkan permohonan kita'* (Thomas Wiyasa Bratawijaya, 1987:37).

Pardi Suratno in his book of "*Sang Pemimpin menurut Asthabrata, Wulang Reh, Tripama, Dasa Darma Raja*" (2006) has also asserted that fasting (cutting down on eating) would make someone having empathy that is someone who could feel other people's suffering. So that when he becomes a leader, he could understand the people's suffering living in poverty. While reducing sleep or '*cegah guling*' would make someone possessing more time to come closer to God Almighty. "*Serat Wulang Reh*" (written by Sri Paku Buwono IV), has told us that a leader has to pay attention day and night for the safety and welfare of his people (Pardi Suratno, 2006:142-143).

Beside cutting down on eating and sleeping, someone is also required to get knowledge. "Knowledge could be attained by studying persistently. By being persistent, tough, and not knowing the word of 'retreating' or '*tekun, ulet dan pantang menyerah*' someone would be able to improve his/her horizon and awareness so that he/she would be able to overcome problems or obstacles occurring to his/her life" (Thomas Wiyasa Bratawijaya, 1987:40).

Guidance from the Lord would only be given to someone who possesses a good character or '*memiliki keluhuran budi*'. According to Thomas Wiyasa Bratawijaya: "Someone who possesses a good character would be given guidance from God Almighty so that he would be able to reject obstacles making him forgotten of himself. He would not be able to be seduced of doing bad actions which could endanger other people either" (Thomas Wiyasa Bratawijaya, 1987:40).

Suharto quite believed in this Javanese traditional teaching that power would come automatically to someone who has a good character such as '*becik sajatining becik, berbudi bowoleksono, hambeg adil paramarta*'. Power or '*wahyu*' from God would only come into a good median. So, in order to get power someone has to improve his personality by conducting a number of '*laku*' or '*samadi*'.

Other '*laku*' or attitude, behavior or character that a true Javanese usually has to do is selecting or calculating good or lucky days or '*menghitung hari baik*', such as to select or calculate the best and appropriate days or times for his/her children's marriage or '*menikahkan anak*', to calculate in order to look for the best and appropriate day for moving to other houses, usually new houses or '*mencari saat yang tepat untuk pindah rumah*', or to calculate in order to look for the best or appropriate day for travelling or '*melakukan perjalanan*'. Geertz had ever said: "The Javanese's hobby for calculation is maintained so neatly and they believe that these numbers for calculation were inherited by his/her honored ancestors". Arwan Tuti Artha says: "In Javanese spiritual knowledge, such selection or calculation is meant to avoid disharmony. Basically, most Javanese people prefer living by creating the concept of harmony, equality and balance" (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:11).

Generally, every religion gives guidance to us of which ultimate goal has to be achieved. Religion also tells us that the ultimate goal could almost be achieved, and life in the world will end. But, where the ultimate goals must stop is mostly described abstractly. In order not to miss the way in achieving the ultimate goals, someone usually comes to a '*guru sakti*' (a teacher who possesses supernatural powers) for guidance (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:122).

The guidance is various, each with certain different conditions. Almost every '*guru sakti*' has his own guidance, different from others. As for example, one guru may give '*mantra*' to them who come to him for guidance and others ask them to do a '*semedi*' (meditation) or '*kungkum*' (soaking their body into a river for certain hours).

There are five guidances usually given to those who want to undertake spiritual character (*laku spiritual*), including spiritual guidance, such as: (1) '*kungkum ning tempuran*' (soaking one's body into water for certain hours in which two or more streams meet), (2) *ngombe banyu pitung sumur* (drinking water from seven wells), (3) '*manggon ning omah suwung*' (living in an empty house), (4) '*туру ning tritisan*' (sleeping under the edge of roof), and (5) '*туру ning jugangan*' (sleeping in a rubbish hole or landfill) (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:24).

In Javanese society, the position of '*guru sakti*' who is popularly called '*dukun*', '*paranormal*', or '*Wong pinter*' (a man possessing ability to give solution to those who need) is quite important and strategic. Such kind of practice is called '*klenik*' giving grey color as well as magical power. From the modernist point of view, the world of '*klenik*' is quite interesting. The world of '*klenik*' is very abstract and absurd, but the existence could not be rejected by anybody.

According to Probosutejo, Suharto's half brother: "The knowledge of '*klenik*' or the knowledge of '*kebatinan*' or spirituality is taught by whispering or speaking in very low tone. All knowledge are taught to one and then transmitted to others, from the ancestor of our nation to our children and grandchildren. Such knowledge is usually taught in a very quiet place such as cemetery or remote mountainous area. Javanese kings often visited the tombs of their ancestors, including their families and parents" (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:16-17).

People's perceptions on Suharto

Suharto had been perceived by many people in many different ways. As for example, Suharto was said to practice a number of Javanese spiritual traditions. Arwan Tuti Artha in his book of "*Dunia Spirirual Suharto*" (2007) said that "as a Javanese, an army, and a leader of the state, Suharto's life was always with calculation. As a Javanese, he had the commitment to maintain harmony. In the army he applied discipline, regularity and an established organization. As the leader of the state, he behaved as if there were no other leaders, except himself" (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:9-10).

Although he was a commoner coming from a poor family with an educational background not as high as his predecessor, Sukarno, Suharto had been regarded as a very lucky man. He took control over the military forces, crushed the 'Thirtieth of September Movement' masterminded by the PKI, unseated President Sukarno, and then became an acting president, none wanted to know who he was. Few people knew about his background, except he was a Javanese. But, Suharto managed to become an example of the history, a commoner who could reach the highest position of the republic. Retired Army Great General Suharto who was able to rule the country for more than 32 years, could even be equalized to Great King Hayamwuruk who was able to rule the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit for almost 38 years. It was believed by many people that it was because he was a man of high intelligence who had got a '*pulung*' or '*wahyu*' or '*wangsit*' from God Almighty.

But, General Suharto was an unusual commoner. He could not have been able to possess great power if he had not done '*nglakoni*' as many Javanese also do. Why did this '*pulung*' or '*wangsit*' or the throne of presidency come to him? It was no a

secret at all that Suharto had a thousand *'dukuns, paranormals, wong pinters'* or spiritual teachers. Suharto was regarded as a man having a strong feeling and being very much consistent. The role of *'dukun'* or *'guru sakti'* or *'wong pinter'* was felt and trusted, particularly by most Javanese (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:31).

Onghokham in his book of *"Dari Soal Priyayi sampai Nyi Blorong"* (2002) has said: "Suharto always fasted on the day before 17 August or on the other important days and he loved being surrounded by heirlooms or *'benda-benda pusaka'* coming from ancient time in order to borrow their magical power" (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:32). Fasting or *'puasa'* (not eating, not sleeping, and abstaining from sexual intercourse) was identical with *'laku prihatin'*. By fasting, he hoped that God Almighty would fulfill his ideals. There are many kinds of fasting, such as: fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, fasting on the day of someone's birth, fasting for 40 days long, fasting for 24 hours long or *'ngebleng'*. *'Laku prihatin'* by doing the fasting is various depending on the teacher's guidance (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:32).

Giving comment to what Suharto had already done particularly in developing his own personality by practicing a number of Javanese traditional teachings as taught by his guru, Retired Army Lieutenant General Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo stated:

"From his birth to his death, Suharto's status is still unclear. But, the clear fact is that he used to live in a Javanese circumstance influenced by *'budaya karaton'* or the kingdom culture. Due to this *'budaya karaton'* Suharto might have got *'warisan'* or inheritance coming to him therefore since he was a child, Suharto had already had ambition. His ambition to develop himself might have also been motivated by his unclear status. This was done for compensation to his unclear status. Since he was a child Suharto had no longer lived with his parents. He lived together with his mother's younger brother (Sudwikatmono's father, a successful businessman in the era of the New Order). He had never got any formal Western education. It was quite different from Sukarno. Therefore, since he was young Suharto always attempted to find out his strength for life in the Javanese circumstances. He developed his personal strength by learning and practicing *'ilmu kejawen'* or knowledge of Javanese life and its all aspects."²

Explaining what the meaning of *'ilmu kejawen'* or knowledge of Javanese life and its all aspects was, Retired Army Lieutenant General Sayidiman Suryahadiprojo (who used to be close to Suharto and once was appointed by President Suharto as the Governor of LEMHANAS or *'Lembaga Pertahanan Nasional'* [National Defense Institute] and then the Ambassador for Japan) further stated:

"We all already know that the strongest aspects developed in *'ilmu kejawen'* or knowledge of Javanese life and its all aspects is the aspect of intuition. The principal difference between the Western and the Javanese tradition is that in the Western tradition the dominant aspect developed is

² Interview with Lieutenant General Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, Jakarta, 6 October 2009.

ratio, whereas in the Javanese tradition the dominant aspect developed is intuition or at least the balance between ratio and intuition. Therefore it was not so peculiar to us when we often heard that since he was young Suharto loved doing the study of life and its all aspects by visiting a number of 'guru' or 'spiritual teachers.' Though he had been appointed the Commander of the Regional Military Division of Central Java, on certain days Suharto together with his 'gurus' or spiritual teachers including Sujono Humardani kept practicing the tradition of 'kungum' (soaking one's body) in a river water somewhere close to Semarang, the capital of the Central Java Province.

Basically, due to his talent or the line of his ancestor, Suharto had personal strength or power. His intellectual was also strong. He was a man who was easy to learn, fast learnt, therefore he was able to develop his personality very fast. From what he had done, Suharto was then deeply influenced by that the knowledge of Javanese life and its all aspects or 'ilmu kejawen'.

Beside 'ilmu kejawen', Suharto was also very much influenced by Islam because since he lived together with his uncle in Wonogiri, he already studied about Islam with Kyai Daryatmo, a prominent Muslim teacher or 'ustadz' in a village of Wonogiri, making his matured personality develop very fast. It was quite clear that his Western knowledge was less but it was then compensated with his 'ilmu kejawen' or knowledge of Javanese life and its all aspects that are centered on the strength of intuition."³

It was believed too by many people that Suharto's excellent performance was located on his wife's '*tusuk konde*' or a kind of pin used for rolling her hair (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:120). His wife, Siti Hartinah or popularly called Ibu Tien, had become the medium for the coming down of '*wangsit*' or the guidance from God Almighty. But, an hour after Ibu Tien died on 28 April 1996, the '*tusuk konde*' vanished. According to mystical message, the '*tusuk konde*' could only be found at the '*petilasan*' of Panembahan Senapati, Banglampir (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:120), a place where Panembahan Senapati, King of Mataram, conducted his '*samadi*' and then managed to get the first '*wangsit*' or '*wahyu kraton*' before becoming the first king of Mataram kingdom.

According to Damarjati Supajar, a professor in philosophy from University of Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, as a very popular king of Mataram, Panembahan Senapati was a great man who had the capacity to conduct the highest level of meditation or '*samadi*', therefore he was able to make sexual intercourse with the universe."⁴

Though he did not give the answer whether the people's belief was true or false, in commenting to the people's belief in the supernatural power possessed by Ibu Tien Suharto's '*tusuk konde*', Damarjati Supajar made a statement:

³ Interview with Lieutenant General Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, Jakarta, 6 October 2009.

⁴ Interview with Professor Damarjati Supajar, Yogyakarta, 10 November 2009.

“I could not understand why he (referring to a prominent leader in Yogyakarta) intended to run for president candidate for the Presidential Election 2009 without asking me for consultation. But, it did not matter to me. Later on I found out that the one who strongly urged him to run for president candidate was his own wife. I was told too that his wife urged her husband to do so because she had already managed to keep or to possess the ‘tusuk konde’ from Ibu Tien Suharto. It is popularly believed too that someone who manages to keep or to possess ‘tusuk konde’ from Ibu Tien Suharto would then be followed by ‘wahyu kepresidenan’ or supernatural power for being president given by God Almighty. And, by possessing this ‘wahyu’ he would then be easily able to be elected as president.”⁵

Since it was thought to be secret, Damarjati Supajar was not willing to explain in detail when and how the wife of the prominent leader from Yogyakarta had managed to get this ‘tusuk konde’ from Ibu Tien Suharto.

Unlike Sukarno who was a descendent of ‘*bangsawan*’ (aristocrat), Suharto was a commoner. But, his marriage with Siti Hartinah, a descendent of ‘*Javanese bangsawan*’ from Solo, on 26 December 1947, raised his social status. Siti Hartinah, who was then popularly called Ibu Tien, was a daughter of KRMT (*Kanjeng Raden Mas Tumenggung*) Sumoharyomo who belonged to the family of King Mangkunegoro from Surakarta (Abdul Ghafur, 1994:124-125). Her father used to work as Wedana in Wuryantoro, Wonogiri, for a couple of years and had good relationship with Suharto’s adopted parents, Prawirowiharjo and his wife.

This social status would then become important element for Suharto particularly during his power struggle against his political opponents, particularly President Sukarno, a charismatic leader with many resources of legitimacy. As already mentioned earlier, Suharto was able to gain ‘*wahyu*’ due to his wife, Ibu Tien. It was predicted by many people that Suharto would soon step down from the throne of presidency after his wife, Ibu Tien, died on 28 April 1996. The reason was because he had already lost the ‘*wahyu*’ or ‘*pulung*’ or ‘*wangsit*’ attained through the medium of ‘*tusuk konde*’ owned by Ibu Tien. Nobody knew whether this prediction was true. But, the fact was that about two years after the death of Ibu Tien, Retired Army Great General Suharto had to step down from his throne of presidency which according to Suharto himself as ‘*lengser keprabon, madheg pandhito*’ (to step down as king in order to be a priest). Suharto declared himself to cease to be president on 20 May 1998.

Mohtar Mas’oed, a professor in political sciences from Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta (who used to become the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences) commented that the use of terminology ‘*lengser keprabon, madheg pandhito*’ or to step down as king and become a priest showed us that for long Suharto had already regarded himself not as a president but as a great king or ‘*ratu gung binathoro*’. When he was interviewed, Mohtar Mas’oed stated:

⁵ Interview with Professor Damarjati Supajar, Yogyakarta, 10 November 2009.

“The terminology of ‘lengser keprabon, madheg pandhito’ or to step down as king and become a priest was only used for kings, Javanese kings. For president, it is used the terminology of ‘to resign’. In every democratic country, the terminology of ‘lengser keprabon, madheg pandhito’ could not be found. It is really a Javanese terminology.

“When expressing something Pak Harto often used Javanese concept, such as the fish can be caught without making water dirty or ‘entuk iwake ojo buthek banyune’. What made us quite surprised was when Pak Harto used the words ‘nang, ning, nung, neng, nong’. It was Javanese symbols that I do not understand. Pak Harto emerged to surface by introducing Javanese teachings, making politics more clearly understood.”⁶

In order to get guidance from God, Suharto also often communicated with many different “*dukun*” or “*kyai*” or spiritual teachers, someone possessing “*ilmu linuwih*” or high level knowledge. But, when a historian by the name of Ong Hok Ham asserted that one of Suharto’s guru was Sudjono Humardhani, the founder of CSIS (the Center Studies of International Security), Suharto strongly rejected and even said that reversely he was Sujono Humardhani’s teacher. Suharto even equalized himself to ‘*Semar*’, a significant character in the world of ‘*pewayangan*’ which is very dominant in the life of Javanese, either culturally or spiritually (Arwan 2007: 118). According to the belief, ‘*Kyai Semar*’ was born from ‘*endhog jagad*’ or an egg of the earth, broken itself together with two other oldest creatures in the world, ‘*Batara Guru*’ and ‘*Togog*’ (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:118).

Tuti Sumukti said that ‘*Semar*’ is one of the oldest creatures. ‘*Semar*’ is the descendant of one Goddess in the mythos with the greatest power. For Javanese, the goddess in ‘*pewayangan*’ is usually described as man. This goddess could only be contacted by meditation or ‘*semedi*’ or by climbing up the mount of cosmos” (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:118).

Beside fasting, Suharto also loved collecting heirlooms in the form of ‘*kris*’, ‘*tombak*’ (spears), and others coming from the ancient time in order to borrow their magical powers for concentrating his power (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:32). According to Ki Juru Bangunjiwo or Sugeng Wiyono, the writer of a book on “*Misteri pusaka-pusaka Suharto*” or Mystery of Suharto’s Heirlooms, “Suharto possessed almost every kind of ‘*kris*. Once after his death all those ‘*kris*’ would be presented by his children to Keraton Yogyakarta, but it was rejected.” Sugeng Wiyono further said:

“For more than 32 years ruling the country, Pak Harto had lot collections of ‘*pusaka*’ or heirlooms in the forms of wood, paintings, kris, spears and other sharp weapons, sticks and others..... Thousands of ‘*pusaka*’ (heirlooms) have now been kept at the Museum of ‘Taman Mini Indonesia Indah’ or TMII, a museum founded by Ibu Tien Suharto. And some of them are now kept in Cendana, the residence of Soeharto’s children” (<http://www.rumahleo.com/index.php/beranda/artikel/61-keuarga-ingin-titipkan-pusaka-soeharto-/>).

⁶ Interview with Professor Mohtar Mas’oed, Yogyakarta, 23 August 2009.

“A number of Suharto’s heirlooms were quite excellent (extraordinarily perfect). One of them was a kris called ‘*Kanjeng Kiai Sengkelat*’ from Solo. This ‘*kris*’ was created in the era of Majapahit kingdom (1466-1478) at the time of King Prabu Kertabumi or Brawijaya V. The maker of this ‘*kris*’ was Empu Supo Mandrangi” (<http://www.surya.co.id/web/Umum-Politik/Tutut-cs-Ingin-Titipkan-Pusaka-Soeharto.html>).

In Javanese’s belief, “*kris*’ is regarded as having mystical nuance. ‘*Kris*’ is also regarded as having magical power and important role in every spiritual business. As a weapon for killing, Javanese people who prefer maintaining harmony regard ‘*kris*’ as an instrument having magical power which can be used to guard his journey of life. There are many different ‘*kris*’, such as ‘*kris*’ for achieving, promoting and maintaining power; ‘*kris*’ for achieving peaceful life, ‘*kris*’ for maintaining dignity, etc.” (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:119).

Suharto also conducted an activity of ‘*klenik*’, directing him to be someone who was always full of calculations. He was always careful and stayed alert. He believed that everything which was always calculated in order to see the positive and the negative would end better. Elson has said that “Suharto was always careful and in an alert. He was only interested in his own future. He would stay more alert when he joined a certain group. He had to be sure that this group would win. He was very pragmatic” (Tempo, 17 Maret 2002).

Relating to such calculations, Mohtar Mas’oed stated too that in politics Suharto was also a man with full of calculations. He further said:

“In that meaning Javanese conservatism was used. It is always like that. As for example, before doing something Pak Harto’s action was quite clear. Before acting he prepared the legal formal instrument. Bung Karno was not opposed but he prepared instruments in order to trap him. It was a local conservatism. In the East hemisphere it was called Asian values. Lee Kuan Yew often used those values too.”⁷

Among five guidances that he had to do, such as ‘*kungkum ing tempuran, ngombe banyu pitung sumur, manggon neng omah suwung, turu ing tritisan, turu neng jugangan*’ (soaking his body in the river water, drinking water taken from seven different wells, staying in an empty house, sleeping under the edge of house roof, and sleeping in a rubbish hole) only the guidance of sleeping in a rubbish hole Suharto had never done (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:124). Since, in Javanese tradition, all these spiritual activities are usually done secretly, all what Suharto had done was not publicly known. Although it does not always guarantee that someone who conducts such kinds of spiritual activities would succeed in winning election, up to this present time such kinds of spiritual activities are also done by some people who run for a certain position in the government.

It had been reported too that Suharto also often visited a number of sacred places for ‘*semedi*’ or meditation, such as Gunung Selok and Gunung Srandil, both

⁷ Interview with Professor Mohtar Mas’oed, Yogyakarta, 23 August 2009.

are located in Cilacap (Arwan Tuti Artha, 2007:114). He also often visited the tombs of the ancestors or '*ziarah kubur*' including both his own parents and parents in law. In Javanese tradition, '*ziarah kubur*' or even maintaining the tombs of the ancestors is good to do. By doing so, someone would be able to get spiritual power from the ancestors (Sukamdani, 2009:15).

In relation with the benefit of '*ziarah kubur*' or even maintaining the tombs of the ancestors, Sukamdani, a successful businessman who was very close to President Suharto and his wife, Ibu Tien Suharto, made an important testimony. He said that the success of GOLKAR in the 1971 election could not be separated from the spiritual effort conducted by Suharto. In his interview Sukamdani asserted:

“Once, as the daily chairman of the Mangadeg Foundation of Surakarta or ‘Yayasan Mangadeg Surakarta’ headed by Ibu Tien Suharto and Pak Harto became the advisor, I told Pak Harto that as the new president he needed ‘spiritual power’. As the descendants as well as people of the late Pangeran Sambernyowo, King of Mangkunegoro I, we had to pay attention to the landslide of Astana Mangadeg, the tomb of King Mangkunegoro I. The Astana Mangadeg needed to be renovated. Pak Harto immediately gave his agreement. We began to conduct total renovation of the Astana Mangadeg in 1970 and the renovation was able to be finished in 1971, before the 1971 election was carried out.”⁸

Sukamdani Sahid Gitosarjono further asserted that once he asked Pak Harto to inaugurate the renovated Astana Mangadeg in order to get ‘mental spiritual power’ through the charisma of the national hero, Pangeran Sambernyowo or King Mangkunegoro I. The inauguration was carried out on the day of Pak Harto’s 50th birthday, 8 June 1971, by unveiling the cover of ‘*Tugu Tri Dharma*’ or Tri Dharma Monument. Tri Dharma was the teaching of King Mangkunegoro I consisted of ‘*rumangsa handarbeni handuweni*’ or having sense of belonging, ‘*wajib melu hanggondeli*’ or having responsibility for defending our common properties and interests, and ‘*mulat sarira hangrasa wani*’ or having bravery to continually conduct self evaluation in order to know how far we have already defended our common properties and interests. This teaching then became the basis of our service in the government. There were also other commitments such as ‘*Tiji tibe, mati siji mati kabeh, mukti siji mukti kabeh*’ (one dies all would die too, one becomes successful all would become successful too) and ‘*hanebu sauyun*’ (always belonging to one group). The philosophy of Tri Dharma was then adopted by Suharto as one of the ‘*Doktrin Kepemimpinan ABRI*’ or the Armed Forces Leadership Doctrine.⁹

Sukamdani further stated that a surprise occurred in the following morning when President Suharto inaugurated ‘*Pasar Klewer*’ or Klewer Market in Solo,¹⁰ which was regarded as the symbol of physical and material development. In his speech of inauguration, Pak Harto, was able to explain to public clearly and distinctly the Long-term Development Plan of 25 Years or ‘*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka*

⁸ Interview with Professor Sukamdani Sahid Gitosarjono, Jakarta, 10 October 2009.

⁹ Interview with Professor Sukamdani Sahid Gitosarjono, Jakarta, 10 October 2009.

¹⁰ ‘*Pasar Klewer*’ is a famous and traditional textile (particularly batik) market located in Solo. In the beginning of the New Order, this market was renovated by President Suharto.

Panjang 25 Tahun and the Short-term Development Plan of 5 Years or *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Pendek 5 Tahun*. This inauguration occurred a few weeks before the election of 3 July 1971.”¹¹

Describing Suharto's behavior as a Javanese as well as military leader, Retired Army Major General Sutarto Sigit who used to be the Chief Staff of the Regional Military Division of Jakarta and once appointed the Ambassador of Thailand stated:

”Pak Harto took the Javanese principle of *'panca po manunggal'* as the guidance. *'Panca'* is five, *'po'* is every value beginning with the word *'p'*, and *'manunggal'* means *'unity'*. Firstly, he wanted to be a *'pandito'* or priest, but unsuccessful. Pak Harto himself was OK, but due to the circumstances as well as his family, Pak Harto failed to be a good *'pandito'*, making him so materialistic. Secondly, he had to be *'pengayom'* or protector. In this case, Pak Harto was almost successful, some were protected, and others were not. It was understandable since at that time we still had a number of threats coming from Darul Islam, PKI, Dutch, and others. Thirdly, he had to be *'penata'* or manager. He was really a good political as well as economic manager. As a manager, Pak Harto was better than Bung Karno. Fourthly, he had to be *'pamong'*. As a *'pamong'* Pak Harto was also successful. He was a good *'pamong'* for peasants, fishermen, and all the poor. To them, Pak Harto was concerned very much. And, fifthly, he had to be *'pangreh'* or leader. As a leader, Pak Harto was also successful.”¹²

Retired Army Major General Sutarto Sigit who used to be a commissar of one state company under General Sumitro, and is now a businessman further asserted:

“According to me, Pak Harto had failed to become a *'pandito'* or priest due to his family. Pak Harto loved his family very much. He never disappointed his family. He said: “Do not disappoint your family. It would make it weak.” In Javanese, *'keluarga iku aja digawe serik jalaran agawe ringkih keluarga'*. This principle was then used by his children and his friends for their own benefit.”¹³

According to Retired Army Major General Sutarto Sigit who once had an experience with Ibu Tien Suharto for he was unsuccessful in requesting Queen Sirikit from Thailand to attend the opening ceremony of the *'Taman Mini Indonesia Indah'* as Ibu Tien Suharto had wanted, said:

”According to my opinion, Pak Harto became so materialistic due to Ibu Tien's influence. His children were also like that. It was so pity. Pak Harto had the principle: “Do not disappoint your family. In order to protect your

¹¹ Interview with Professor Sukamdani Sahid Gitosarjono, Jakarta, 10 October 2009.

¹² Interview with Major General Sutarto Sigit, Jakarta, 6 October 2009.

¹³ Interview with Major General Sutarto Sigit, Jakarta, 6 October 2009.

property, you are allowed not to say the truth.” This is called ‘*dora sambada*’. Pak Harto was in dilemma, due to his wife and children.

At that time many people said that Ibu Tien wanted to priorities her heritance. Pak Harto’s opponents said that she was only a daughter of Wedana, not even Bupati. Look, before dying, she built a palace like that. She wanted to place herself as the blue blood. It was not so good for Pak Harto. Some people also said that Pak Harto became like that due to the ‘*wahyu*’ owned by Ibu Tien, not by Pak Harto. After Ibu Tien died, Pak Harto soon fell down too.

There was a belief too that Tommy might not be hurt. If he were hurt, Pak Harto would have got into trouble. It was really a pity. Since Pak Harto had the principle that his family could not be hurt, his children and friends tried to get benefit from it.”¹⁴

Legitimacy for Suharto’s leadership

Many people believed that Suharto was able to get legitimacy from people due to his guidance he had already practiced.

Balidi Dwijopranoto has also stated that Suharto could be regarded as ‘*satriyo piningit*’. He said:

“Pak Harto could be regarded as ‘*satriyo piningit*’ for he always thought the faith of ‘*wong cilik*’ (poor people). With ‘*wong cilik*’, he was always good. He always worked hard for the progress of the country.

According to wayang story, ‘*satriyo piningit*’ is someone who has additional capacity or capability to fight against crimes. Pak Harto could be regarded as ‘*satriyo piningit*’ for he was able to crush the crime done by the PKI. People regarded him ‘*satriyo piningit*’ for he struggled for the progress of the people. I believe that Pak Harto was someone who always thought the faith of the people.”¹⁵

Balidi Dwijopranoto eventually stated that as an individual as well as president, Suharto always practiced the teachings of Javanese culture, such as doing what so called ‘*tirakat*’. He said:

“I think Pak Harto’s *tirakat* was good. Since he was a king, his *tirakat* had to be good. He spoke what he thought important. If it was good, he would say good, if it was bad, he would say bad. If he met poor people, he would speak soft Javanese language, not rough Javanese. When speaking with peasants or *lurah*, he would speak Javanese.

¹⁴ Interview with Major General Sutarto Sigit, Jakarta, 6 October 2009.

¹⁵ Interview with Balidi Dwijopranoto, Solo, 10 March 2009.

Pak Harto did not like someone who did not understand '*unggah-ungguh*' or ethics. Every man should be polite."¹⁶

According to Balidi Dwijopranoto, due to his '*tirakat*' Suharto was able to reach power, replacing Sukarno. Balidi Dwijopranoto further asserted:

"Pak Harto became president by election. It was not Pak Harto's will, but it was the people's will, the Indonesian people. Pak Harto did not run for president by himself. He was nominated as the candidate by the MPR.

According to Javanese culture the most important for someone who wants to become a king is his '*tirakat*'. The king was always someone whose '*tirakat*' was great. So does the president, without '*tirakat*' and struggle, someone could not succeed in becoming president. The term might have been '*wahyu*' or whatever. Pak Harto could be said as '*satriyo piningit*' for he got '*wahyu*' and elected by the people or the MPR to become president.

Pak Harto managed to become president for he got '*wahyu*' and did a lot of '*tirakat*'. Pak Harto was the man who did a lot of '*tirakat*' and always upheld and maintained Javanese culture. Compared with Bung Karno, Pak Harto talked using Javanese culture more often than Bung Karno did.

Perceived from what they had done, Bung Karno and Pak Harto were almost the same. Pak Harto was a son of a poor farmer. Pak Harto knew Javanese culture better than Bung Karno for he was born in Yogyakarta, close to the kingdom of Yogyakarta, and his wife was a descendent of Mangkunegoro. Pak Harto managed to become president for he got a '*wahyu*' from Ibu Tien and also from Pak Harto himself. Both of them were intertwined. President could be a descendent of king, he could also be a commoner, the most important one is he has a *wahyu*. '*Wahyu*' and personality are important. In order to get '*wahyu*', someone has to do a lot of '*tirakat*'.

'*Pusaka*' is not important, but he has to be close and honor God Almighty. '*Pusaka*' is only a transmitter. In the past time, '*pusaka*' was important. But all depended on God Almighty."¹⁷

Believing that doing '*tirakat*' was important precondition for someone who wanted to reach his noble ideals, Suharto often advised others, including the young, to practice it. Adib Ajiputra, a pioneer youth (*Pemuda Pelopor*), who every year met Suharto at Tapos stated that every time Suharto met the young's he never forgot to advice them that in carrying out their life they used only their brain or rational. If they

¹⁶ Interview with Balidi Dwijopranoto, Solo, 10 March 2009.

¹⁷ Interview with Balidi Dwijopranoto, Solo, 10 March 2009.

only used their brain, they would be unable to solve their life problems for their brain was really limited. The most important one, according to Suharto, was to use their feeling. Adib Ajiputra stated: “Pak Harto always understood every problem not with his brain but with his feeling. Therefore, the most important for everyone to do is always to maintain his/her feeling in order to make his/her feeling responsive to every problem.” According to Suharto, the best way to maintain someone’s feeling was by doing *‘tirakat’* or *‘laku prihatin’* or *‘tapa brata’*. As asserted by Adib Ajiputra:

“Because Pak Harto was a man who always upheld the Javanese values and philosophy, he told us that as young generation we had to understand *‘ilmu prihatin’* by conducting *‘topo broto’* etc. He also reminded us always to remember our ancestors who had given contributions to our country by visiting their tombs including the king’s tombs.

Pak Harto advised the young’s that the journey was still far away. They had to provide themselves by living in the condition of *‘prihatin’*. The implementation of *‘prihatin’* in Javanese culture were various, such as fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, praying at the midnight, or living in a very bad condition, etc.

He told us that the past leaders or kings such as Joko Tingkir always lived in the condition of *‘prihatin’* so that they were able to get *‘wahyu’*, or *‘kewahyon’* or possessing magic power.”¹⁸

Talking about Suharto’s legitimacy, Adib Ajiputra strongly stated that as the President of the Republic of Indonesia, his legitimacy was unquestionable. Adib Ajiputra even regarded Suharto not only as president but also as *‘raja gung binatoro’* or the Great King.

“He was not only a leader but also someone who was able to bring peace and prosperity to people. He was regarded the great king or *‘raja gung binatoro’*. Many people really regarded Pak Harto as the Great King.

As a Javanese he often used Javanese terminologies when speaking. What he often delivered to people was that our nation was a great nation due to highly respected values taught by the founder of the nation, including all kings who had given us principles for life such as Gadjah Mada to Sultan Agung and Bung Karno.”¹⁹

Tri Wiratno who also practices the Javanese teachings very much believes in the notion that Suharto managed to become president for he possessed *‘wahyu’* (*pulung*) or magical power. Explaining about this belief, Tri Wiratno asserted:

¹⁸ Interview with Drs. Adib Ajiputra, Solo, 10 March 2009.

¹⁹ Interview with Drs. Adib Ajiputra, Solo, 10 March 2009.

“Pak Harto must have possessed ‘*wahyu*’ or ‘*pulung*’ or magical power. In Javanese life, ‘*wahyu*’ or ‘*pulung*’ could only be achieved by spiritual ways. Such kind of ‘*wahyu*’ is really existed. This ‘*wahyu*’ has to be achieved and will not automatically fall into someone’s hands. They way to reach ‘*wahyu*’ is by ‘*laku prihatin*’ such as fasting, visiting the tombs of ancestors (usually during midnight) or soaking one’s own body into a river far away from the crowd. In order to get ‘*wahyu*’ someone has to do ‘*samadi*’ in a quiet place. By doing such kind of ‘*samadi*’, guidance from God Almighty in the form of ‘*wahyu*’ or ‘*pulung*’ will come and enter to his body.”²⁰

According to Tri Wiratno, Suharto possessed not only ‘*wahyu*’ or ‘*pulung*’ but also ‘*pusaka*’ or ‘*piyandel*’ or heirloom. He further said that: “I absolutely believe in the notion that Pak Harto possessed ‘*pusaka*’ (*piyandel*) or heirloom which was not always possessed by everyone, something like ‘Kris’ or others. Such ‘*pusaka*’ or heirloom was needed for it was important for a leader like Suharto.”

“As the president Pak Harto could not be separated from his guru or kyai or intellectuals or those who had brilliant mind. It was made as if Pak Harto could become president because of ‘*wahyu*’. Anyone who wanted to replace him would get trouble since it was told that Pak Harto was someone who had ‘*wahyu*’ or ‘*pulung*’ so that it would not be easy to compete him. Many intellectuals, ‘*ahli samadi*’, and ‘*ahli tirakat*’ regarded that Pak Harto had managed to get ‘*wahyu*’.

”We could not be separated from spiritual problems. Though we don’t believe it, we believe in spiritual phenomenon. It was difficult to say that we don’t believe in spiritual stories. Though it was against our belief because of our different background of science, it was difficult for us not to believe it. How could we not believe it if in reality they experienced it though we did not?”²¹

Unlike others, Agus Dodi Sugiartoto has his own opinion. Suharto practiced the Javanese cultural values only as a tool for hegemony. Agus Dodi Sugiartoto further argued:

“The Javanese teachings and philosophy were only used by Suharto as a tool for hegemony of the majority, the Javanese. Pak Harto knew well that Javanese would die if he was appeased. The tactic and strategy used by Pak Harto were to influence first and then to rule them. In order to do that he used the Javanese teachings and philosophy of Javanese as the media. The opinion that Pak Harto was a Javanese Sultan was only used by his loyal followers to make personal-cult to Pak Harto.”²²

²⁰ Interview with Dr. Tri Wiratno, Solo, 10 March 2009.

²¹ Interview with Dr. Tri Wiratno, Solo, 10 March 2009.

²² Interview with Agus Doddy Sugiartoto, Solo, 10 March 2009.

Like Tejo Pramono, Agus Dodi Sugiartoto also stated that Suharto had misused noble Javanese cultural values and philosophy. These noble values were merely used by Suharto for building hegemony. As said by Agus Dodi Sugiartoto:

”The concept of king and the Javanese philosophy were not translated in accordance with the content of Javanese philosophy. Javanese concept was used as the instrument of hegemony toward the majority of Indonesian, the Javanese. As for example, philosophy of harmony was translated that someone was forbidden to launch critiques, or was not allowed to be an opposant. All people had to be in conformity. Harmony was translated as conformity.”

”The philosophy of harmony was deviated and used as political instrument, making it against the principles of human rights, *'Bhineka Tunggal Ika'* and democracy. The head of family could not be opposed and the existence of other leader was not tolerated, making the emergence of new leaders impossible.”²³

According to Agus Dodi Sugiartoto, in his attempt to maintain, promote, and demonstrate power, Pak Harto did not use noble Javanese cultural values and philosophy as his guidance, but military strategy. He said:

”In the era of Pak Harto, the model of state power used by Suharto was militarism (pretorian). Government was under the hand of the military and power was concentrated on the one hand. In the era of Pak Harto, the pretorian concept was used. There is similarity with the model of power in the kingdom era, the king of which does not want the twin suns to emerge. Like in pretorian state, political parties were eliminated. The existence of political parties was only a symbol (of democracy). Opposition was curbed and media was controlled. LITSUS or Special Investigation , clearance for environment, etc. Were installed. Social, political, and economic power were seized and centralized on the military leaders. The position of minister, governor, mayor/bupati, camat and lurah were occupied by military members. Economic power was held by military generals of Pak Harto. As for example, Pertamina was in the hand of Pak Harto’s close friend, General Ibnu Sutowo.”²⁴

Agus Dody rejected the notion that Suharto managed to gain power due to certain conditions, such as he was able to marry Ibu Tien, to gain *'pusaka'* and *'wahyu'*, to have the character of *'ksatria'*, and to possess an irrational but great story of *'Serangan Umum 1 Maret'* or a Public Attack of 1 March. He said:

²³ Interview with Agus Doddy Sugiartoto, Solo, 10 March 2009.

²⁴ Interview with Agus Doddy Sugiartoto, Solo, 10 March 2009.

”It was the success of hegemony awareness resulted from the long and untransparent power. Uncritical common people were slept by this false awareness, as if the source of Pak Harto’s power came from *’wahyu’* which had been in accordance with the Javanese dream, the emergence of *’satriyo piningit’*. Hegemonic awareness was use as the instrument for influencing people in understanding power, which in the end making personality-cult toward the ruler emerge.”

“The story of Nyai Roro Kidul with Panembahan Senopati is the story disseminated with the purpose of building mystical awareness of his followers or common people, so that belief and personality-cult could emerge. What the previous kings of Java had done was attempted to be imitated and applied by Pak Harto and his followers.”²⁵

P-4 was regarded as an instrument for Suharto to insert Javanese political culture into the national political life. But according to Agus Doddy:

”The principle of deliberation and concensus was used by Suharto as another way of perpetuating his power, the main problem was Suharto disagreed with the idea of dialogue, criticism, different opinion or different decisions. The practice of *’musyawarah dan mufakat’* then became very anti-democracy. Javanese philosophy was interpreted and translated in accordance with Suharto’s interests. This interpretation then became the instrument of Suharto to rule Javanese people.”²⁶

At the end, Agus Dodi Sugiartoto and Tejo Pramono concluded that the legitimacy enjoyed by Suharto was not achieved by penetrating his *’wahyu’*, *’pusaka’*, or the status of *’satriyo piningit’* or the likes, but by manipulating Javanese culture and using totalitarian and military approach.

Summary

Based on his belief that only someone whose entire thought, aspirations and speech were guided by the essence of virtue, whose noble mind, and whose heart generous or *’becik sajatining becik, berbudi bowo leksono, hambeg adil paramarta’* would easily be able to achieve his ideals of life, than Suharto always tried to be a good Javanese. In Suharto’s belief, only such people could be closer to the Supreme God and were easily be able to get *’wahyu’* discerned by the Supreme God.

But, in order to be a good Javanese, someone had to do a *’laku’*, such as cutting down on eating and sleeping, rejecting funs of life in the world, controlling bad passions, and having self-confidence. Other *’guru sakti’* even requested someone to do a *’laku’* in the forms of soaking one’s body into water for certain hours on a place where two or more streams meet, drinking water from seven wells, living in an

²⁵ Interview with Agus Doddy Sugiartoto, Solo, 10 March 2009.

²⁶ Interview with Agus Doddy Sugiartoto, Solo, 10 March 2009.

empty house, sleeping under the edge of roof, and sleeping in a rubbish hole or landfill. In fact, Suharto almost had done all what the '*guru sakti*' had requested. He believed that because of which he was able to get power from the Supreme God.

Javanese political culture does not talk about division of power. Almost Javanese political thinkers only talk about how to be a good Javanese or how to be a good leader. Since power comes from the Supreme God, they don't talk about legitimacy or even about division of power, such as legislative power, executive power and judicative power like Western political thinkers have described. Javanese political thinkers also do not talk about how a king has to be appointed or elected. According to Javanese philosophy, it is not easy to be a king. They only talk about what a king has to do in order to be a good king or '*Ratu Adil*' (a Just King). For most Javanese, obedience of people could be reached only if the king could not only maintain peace and security, but also provide enough food, clothes, and shelters for his people. The king is also expected to be '*ber budi bowo leksono, hambeg adil paramarta*' and '*wenang murbowaseso*' (to give rewards for those who always obey the laws and to give punishment for those who are against the laws).

As a true Javanese, President Suharto always tried to keep tight these principles. He even wanted all Indonesian people, particularly the political elites or leaders, to have such kind of character. Therefore, in facing his political opponents, Suharto always tried to show that all what he had done had been based on highly respected Javanese philosophy of life. Those who were against such a philosophy would be regarded as someone who was '*waton suloyo*' or someone who put his personal interest first and the public interest later. It was against Pancasila.

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