

The Tragedy of Wahid, The Mystic President: A Case of Mismatch Between ‘Sawah’ and ‘Maritime’ Cultures

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The fifty-six years’ history of independent Indonesia can be summed up as a continuity of tragedies. The nation is composed of a cluster of cultures with varying, and in some cases, conflicting basic values. The conflicts can be traced back to a mismatch between the traditional-mystical leadership which had been brought up by the “sawah” (wet rice field) culture and the dynamic-creative elite which has been moulded by the “maritime” culture. Sukarno, Suharto and Wahid have been at different intensities, believers in mysticism. The third President, Habibie, a non-Javanese was an exception, because he was born in Makassar which is part of the “maritime” culture. This article concentrates on Wahid or Gus Dur’s impeachment after having been in office for only twenty months. It analyzes the political and cultural roots of his downfall. The essay also attempts to look into the prospects of President Megawati applying the theory of “sawah” culture and “maritime” culture.

Keywords: cultural mismatch, “sawah” culture and “maritime” culture, Charisma, megalomania, vertical communication

Introduction

In October, the People’s Deliberative Assembly (PDA) elected Kiyai Haji Abdulrahman Wahid, popularly known as Gus Dur, as the fourth President of the Indonesian Republic. He defeated Megawati Sukarnoputeri. Wahid was elected in spite of the fact that his own political party had won only 51 of the 500 seats in the People’s Representative Council (PRC), while Megawati’s party had won 153 seats. The second winner was Suharto’s Golkar with

120 seats.¹⁾

The PDA, the highest legislative organ of the state is composed of 700 members, the 500 of the PRC plus 200 representing the regions and non-governmental organizations. It is also the organ which elects and withdraws the mandate of the President and the Vice President, who run on different tickets. Megawati, to console her disgruntled supporters, was elected as Vice President.

Twenty months later, following a long-term uneasy relationship — if not confrontation — between the Executive and the Legislative, Wahid was voted out of office in abstentia. He had persistently refused to honor invitations from the legislative to account for alleged irregularities in his 20 months administration. But that was not all! Not only the legislative, but also most of the political parties, the Supreme Court, the Army and the Police Force had withdrawn support from Wahid. The only party which persistently backed up Wahid was his own People's Awakening Party. What then happened in the intervening 20 months? When Gus Dur was elected President in October 1999, not only the domestic political and economic observers, but also the outside world hailed the decision of the PDA as the “most prudent under the circumstances prevailing in Indonesia at the time.”

What then were the developments which have caused so much disapproval of Megawati, which opened the way for Gus Dur?

A Short Flashback

In May 1999, President Suharto, after ruling the country with an iron hand for 32 years, resigned under the heavy pressure of the “people's power” and upon strong suggestions from his political advisors and colleagues in the cabinet.

Ignoring the prerogative of the PDA, Suharto appointed the Vice President, Dr. B. J. Habibie as his successor. A prominent hitech professional, Habibie had served as Minister in charge of science

and technology. Earlier he had worked as Vice President of the German airplane manufacturer Messerschmidt. Suharto had known Habibie from the latter's childhood, and Habibie often referred to the President as his "guiding-father."

The following year, Habibie successfully organized what was recognized as "the first truly democratic general elections in Indonesia's history." The Golkar Party he headed, however, managed to win only second place, tailing behind Megawati. Golkar, confident that Habibie could win sufficient support from other parties and the armed forces group which obtained 38 "reserved seats" in the PRC, chose general Wiranto as the running mate. Wiranto was the commander of Suharto's presidential guard and fully loyal to the fallen chief executive. The top winner, Megawati was nominated by the Indonesian National Party of Struggle.

The other political parties were alarmed. They thought that no matter who might win between the two candidates, the nation may well slip into an unimaginable conflict and chaos. The reason for such an anxiety was clear. Should Habibie win, teaming up with Wiranto, the new President would certainly become the puppet of Suharto and the military. Should Megawati win, Suharto and his still powerful supporters may sabotage the new administration, throwing the nation into chaos.

Suharto and the military were worried that Megawati might bring Suharto to trial for allegedly master-minding the infamous communist coup d'état of September 1965. Suharto was also suspected of having given direct orders to attack and destroy the headquarters of the Indonesian National Party of Struggle as well as the kidnapping of a number of Megawati's supporters. For years Suharto had been following with anxiety the rising popularity of Megawati, who threatened to block the political future of his daughter, Tutut, whom he had been grooming to be a future woman President. In his latest cabinet, Suharto appointed Tutut as Minister

for Social Affairs. Gus Dur, at that time close to Suharto, had openly referred to Tutut as “Indonesia’s future leader.”

It was in the midst of these circumstances that the remaining political parties, under the initiative of Amien Rais, the Chairman of the National Mandate Party, established the so-called ‘Central Axis’ which introduced the slogan: “Anyone, except Habibie and Megawati!” The choice then fell on Abdulrahman Wahid, who had been known for his democratic, liberal and humanitarian beliefs. He was then the Chairman of the largest Muslim organization, the Nahdatul Ulama or The Awakening of the Ulama (religious teachers). He had served in that position for 15 years.

The Nahdatul Ulama was established in 1926 as a counter-force against the Muhammadiyah, an organization of modernist Islamic leaders, founded in 1912. While Muhammadiyah followers centered in the cities not only in Java but also in Sumatra, Sulawesi and other regions, the supporters of N.U. originally came from the inland areas of Central and East Java and to a certain extent, of West Java. They are educated in traditional-mystical Islam.

The popularity of Gus Dur lasted about three months, and in some circles, perhaps a few weeks longer. Gus Dur, albeit jokingly, described the earlier Presidents in the following way. “Sukarno was woman crazy, Suharto was wealth crazy, while Habibie was hi-tech crazy. I, myself, the fourth President make the people crazy!” If not truly crazy, he certainly had made the people confused by his controversial statements, which he later simply denied making or innocently revoked them.

When the President made his first appearance before the PRC for an interpellation session, he was annoyed that so many members were posing questions or making criticism of his performance. He remarked that “this session is just like a kindergarten class!” He resorted to the use of “Prek” to stop further questions (“Prek,” a Javanese word, slightly resembles in meaning a common English

expletive).

Such a contemptuous attitude towards the Parliament set the tone of the relationship between Gus Dur and the PRC. Efforts on the part of the latter to call on the chief executive to mend his ways and to account for certain findings of alleged irregularities were ignored. When the Supreme Advisory Council sent a letter to the President to observe self-restraint, Gus Dur responded: "I consider the letter as non-existent!" Later, when the Parliament persisted in its call on the President to cooperate, he retorted: "Why should I? The parliamentary activities are against the constitution!"

When the President was about to complete one year in office, members of parliament as well as the press began to call for his impeachment due to poor performance and health, and in fact demanded that the President undergo a mental check. At almost the same time, three mental health experts and one general practitioner disclosed that based on their long observations, Gus Dur was diagnosed as suffering from megalomania as an after-effect of earlier strokes. Consequently, they concluded that Gus Dur no longer qualified to continue as President.

The Road to the Special Session of the PDA

There were five factors which have contributed to the long-term mutual recriminations between the President and the Parliament which finally had to be resolved by a special session of the PDA.

First, in its eagerness to stop both Habibie and Megawati and to elect Gus Dur, no one remembered to call for a health check of the candidate as required by the Constitution, in spite of the fact that he had twice suffered a stroke.

Secondly, Gus Dur was a highly respected Muslim scholar imbued with high-sounding theories on democracy, human rights and social justice. A reality, which no one wanted to point out was that

Gus Dur, during his long career as Chairman of Nahdatul Ulama, had been practicing a “one-man-show” demanding complete obedience from his followers. He listened to the advice of no one, except for a select “senior holy-man” often called the “Kiyai Langitan.” He made it a practice on the average of once every two weeks to visit the graves of great ulamas to ask for mystical guidance in statecraft or wangsit. These graves are situated mostly in Central and East Java. Explaining what he called Wangsit Politics, Dr. Komaruddin Hidayat, Chairman of the (Islamic) Paramadina Foundation wrote:

“In the perception of the community [especially of Central and East Java-Ed.] wangsit is received by those who often retreat to hideaways in secluded places or regularly visit the graves of holy men to seek guidance. The grave of the late President Sukarno is considered by many Javanese (including Megawati) as a source of wangsit. (Kompas, 18 Aug. 2001)

Thirdly, all these factors set the pattern of the social and political communication of Gus Dur. Although he often met leaders of the NGOs, it was to dispense his guidance and not to exchange views, let alone to debate. He also reserved time for “questions-and-answers” following the mass prayers on Friday. But the purpose was to ‘invite’ pre-orchestrated questions, the answers to which were justifications of his statements or actions or as political jabs directed at his opponents. In short he practiced vertical but not horizontal communication.

Fourthly, immediately upon election as President, Gus Dur embarked on a foreign tour, explaining that he planned to visit all the countries of the world during the first year of his five years Presidency. In 20 months he had visited 44 countries, absenting himself for 99 days, in spite of the various crises at home and great pressure on the state coffers. He even toyed with the idea of buying his own Presidential plane for use on domestic and foreign tours.

Fifthly, because of his “one-man-show” Presidency, Gus Dur gradually distanced himself from almost all political parties in the parliament, the Army and the police force as well as government agencies. In his so-called “good neighborhood” diplomacy, he managed to invite the displeasure of Singapore. At a meeting with Lee Kuan Yew, Gus Dur abruptly asked the former prime minister to give support to the formation of the so-called West Pacific Forum. When Lee replied that the issue should first be taken up through the proper channels, Gus Dur gave a press conference in the very city and berated Singapore “for discrimination against Malays.” He advised Malaysia to stop supplying water to Singapore.

Indeed, as weeks and months went by, the people began to wonder what the President had in mind as he so often made controversial statements and accusations, to be retracted or denied later or blamed the press that his statements had been misconstrued. He had certainly succeeded in making the people “crazy.”

On the other hand, Gus Dur is not without his supporters, mostly from among the 12 to 13 million members of the Nahdatul Ulama. The majority inhabit the interior parts of Central and East Java as well as pockets in West Java. Transmigrants from Java to other islands such as Lampung in South Sumatra and pockets in Kalimantan are also followers of Nahdatul Ulama.

To them, Gus Dur is a holy man and a “wali” (representative of God) and is protected by hundreds of angels. He is a human being who can do no wrong! What appear to be controversial statements by outsiders, to them are simply the wisdom of high vision. Equipped as such, Gus Dur knows what is happening and what will happen in the future, near and far! They assert that time will prove that Gus Dur is doing the right thing!

They even insist that Gus Dur is destined to lead Indonesia until the year 2009. To oppose him, let alone to try to overthrow him mid-term is a sin against God. To kill those opponents is justified

by Islamic law, they assert!

Indonesia: A Cluster of Cultures in Conflict

In order to understand this controversy, it is necessary to analyze the map of cultures in Indonesia and the concept of power in the Javanese tradition. It must be emphasized that there is as yet no such a thing as the Indonesian culture. What exists is a cluster of regional cultures with different and sometimes conflicting values. Koentjaraningrat, the pioneer scholar on cultural anthropology, explained this state of affairs in his book *Manusia dan Kebudayaan di Indonesia* [Man and Culture in Indonesia] (1971).

(Indonesia is composed of) different societies which possess differing value orientations which may be classified into six socio-cultural patterns. They are, in summary, as follows,

(1) Societies of pre-rice culture living in isolated villages with little differentiation. They are not affected by the rice culture, the copper culture, the Hindu culture as well as that of Islam. Their isolation was broken, first by the coming of the Christian missionaries.

(2) Societies practicing simple land cultivation as well as rice planting in sawahs (wet fields). They constitute peasant communities with a moderate differentiation and stratification and feel themselves as being part of the lower strata of a much larger cultural community, the higher stratum of which is considered to be a more refined and civilized society. The city community to which this society orients itself is characterized by a bureaucratic layer planted by the colonial administrative system. This system has also been influenced by the Christian missionaries and later developed further by the administration of independent Indonesia. These societies have not been exposed to either the Hindu or the Islamic influences.

(3) Societies practicing land cultivation as well as rice planting in sawahs. The basic system of their societies are those of peasant

communities with moderate differentiation and stratification. The city community to which these societies orient themselves are manifested in a civilization of a former trading kingdom with a strong Islamic influence mixed with a bureaucratic civilization introduced by the Dutch colonial administration. These societies have not been exposed to Hindu culture or very little if any. If so, it has been erased by Islam.

(4) Societies practicing land cultivation and rice planting in sawahs. They constitute peasant communities with a rather complex social stratification. The city community to which they orient themselves are characterized by former agricultural kingdoms mixed with a bureaucratic civilization introduced by the colonial administration. All foreign cultural inroads have left an impact. In the case of Bali, the influence of Islam has been felt only during the past half century.

(5) Types of city communities which constitute centers of administration but exerting a relatively minor role in trade and industry.

(6) Types of metropolitan cities which are dominated by bureaucratic control enjoying a relatively important role in trade and industry. They also constitute centers of political actions.

Based on the above classification, the people of Mentawai off the West Sumatra province (also called the Minangkabau region) and those inhabiting the Northern coasts of West Irian (western part of New Guinea) are among the representatives of Group 1. The people of Nias island off the coast of the Tapanuli province of the Batak land, the Central Kalimantan region, Minahasa (northern part of Sulawesi), Flores and Ambon belong to Group 2.

Into Group 3, are included the peoples of Aceh, Minangkabau and Makassar, while the peoples of Bali, of Central and East Java and to a certain extent of West Java belong to Group 4. The types included in Groups 5 and 6 do not interest us here.

“Pattern J” and “Pattern M”

Mochtar Naim, Professor at Andalas University in Padang, West Sumatra, further regroups the above four groups into two, which he classifies into “Pattern J” and “Pattern M” (1985, per. comm.). “J” stands for Java and “M” for Minangkabau. “Pattern J,” he points out, is oriented to a relationship which is vertical, hierarchic, centripetal and syncretic. Geo-culturally speaking, cultures which orient themselves to “Pattern J” are greater in number.

Naim further asserts that his classification is supported by a Dutch scholar T. I. Thomas, who differentiates between individuals or cultures, with characteristics of being ‘philistine,’ ‘bohemian,’ or ‘creative’. The first two characteristics are likely to be found in “Pattern J” while the third in “Pattern M.”

The ‘bohemian’ type is of the view that the epi-centrum of will resides with someone in power rather than in the individual. Hence, such an individual in society prefers to remain afloat, while watching which way the wind is blowing. He is brought up to please the one in power. During the Suharto regime, a new term was coined to describe this behavior, namely “asal bapak senang” or ABS, meaning “anything which pleases the Father”.

On the other hand, the individual in a society characterized as ‘creative’ believes that the epi-centrum of will lies in his very self, free from the dictates of others. He is, at the same time a restless being who continuously seeks to move and to change. About one fourth of the Minangkabau people practice rantau (seeking their fortunes outside the region).

One tenth of the population of Jakarta originates from Minangkabau. An important section of the population of Negri Sembilan of Malaysia migrated from Minangkabau. The ‘creative’ type is often considered to be lacking in discipline, somewhat impolite, sometimes posing as a ‘problem child’ for the central power.

Further, according to the late Bahder Djohan, a son of Minang-

kabau who had served as the Rector of Universitas Indonesia and twice as Minister of Education, referred to a Dutch expert on Indonesian Adat Law [Prof. ter Haar (Ed.)] who grouped Indonesia into nineteen sub-cultures which he further re-grouped into two. The first has developed in societies ruled by Kings, whose people were divided into the aristocracy and commoners. Here, the system of government tends to be centralized, autocratic, feudalistic, paternalistic, centripetal and the process of decision-making is top down. The second has developed a system of governance which is democratic, decentralized, fundamentalist, rational, open, centrifugal and its decision making process is bottom-up.

A. A. Navis, an award winning novelist and lecturer at the Andalas University points out that the very history of the Indonesian nationalist movement has been characterized by a continuous conflict between the two types of cultures.

At this juncture, in order to balance the presentation, it is advisable to present non-Indonesian views, such as the thesis of B. R. O' G. Anderson entitled "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture" (1977), although he also at times relied on Dutch and non-Minangkabau scholars of Indonesia.

Anderson traces the centripetal character of traditional Javanese thought to the absence of the idea of equality between them and the peoples of 'the outer islands'. In spite of the nationalist 'battle cry' stressing 'the unity of the whole of Indonesia in terms of nationhood, language and motherland', "many Javanese find it difficult to accept fully the idea of an Indonesia being composed of a cluster of equal, cooperative entities such as Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Java and the rest. Everything tends to be seen in their relationship to the Center" (Anderson, 1977, pp. 29-30).

The one President who almost succeeded to "Javanize" Indonesia was Suharto. Using the tightly organized military, he imposed all levels of the administrative system, formerly only applied to Java, to

all other areas of Indonesia and manned them with army officers. The recent demands for autonomy in the regions and the freedom to appoint their own ‘favorite sons’ to key positions, constitute a strong backlash against the imperializing policies of Suharto. The President, partly because of his own limited formal education, was prone to use Javanese in his effort to make a point, in spite of the fact that the Constitution recognizes only Bahasa Indonesia as the official language.

The Idea of Charisma

Webster’s Dictionary provides (1986) the following explanations about the meanings of “charisma”. 1: an extraordinary power (as of healing) given to a Christian by the Holy Spirit for the good of the church. 2a: a personal magic of leadership arousing special popular loyalty or enthusiasm for public figures (as a political figure or military commander). 2b: a special magnetic charm or appeal (such as the charisma of a popular actor.

Personally, I am inclined to the view that in Indonesia, the term “charisma” has been attributed to leaders born in “Pattern J.” Leaders from “Pattern M,” no matter how popular, such as Mohammad Hatta or Haji Ahus Salim, for instance, were never referred to as charismatic leaders. Because of the strong Islamic influence, they would have rejected such an attribute since it would amount to personality cult. I would further venture to say that President Suharto, (and to a lesser extent to Sukarno) was a product of image engineering, such as the rewriting of his role during the physical revolution. Suharto’s family lineage was also rewritten. Instead of being a son of a peasant, he was often upgraded to a descendant of a noble family.

The worst man-made “charisma” was the one attributed to the fourth President, Gus Dur. It is true that his father was a great religious leader, having served as Chairman of Nahdatul Ulama. He

was a cabinet minister for religious affairs in the Sukarno cabinet and was one of the founding fathers of the Republic.

Because of this lineage, from his childhood he had been the object of praise and of worship and even more so when was elected as Chairman of Nahdatul Ulama where he served for fifteen years until his election as President. Then, “charisma” building has become all the more grandiose. He was elevated as “wali”, the man chosen by God to become the national leader. To safeguard this sacred assignment, Gus Dur, according to his image-makers “are guarded by hundreds of angels and unseen holy guardians (jin). While suffering from very poor eye-sight, his image-makers claim that Gus Dur is able to see what-ever happened, far and near. At pilgrimage time, early in 2000, Gus Dur called a press conference in Mecca to announce that he knew (by intuition) that a group of army generals were plotting to overthrow him at a meeting in southern Jakarta. This accusation was never proven.

When he issued an emergency decree past midnight on July 21, he was sure of the support of the people, the military and the police. The decree froze all activities of the PRC and the PDA. The Chairman of the Nahdatul Ulama who succeeded Gus Dur twenty months ago, himself a great ulama, boasted that “Gus Dur will win! A miracle will happen at the last moment!” But the miracle never happened. The Supreme Court declared the decree unconstitutional. The army and the police ignored the decree. The PDA, immediately called a special session and on July 22 withdrew Gus Dur’s mandate. The following day, Megawati Sukarnoputeri was elected the new President. Even then, Gus Dur boasted that he was still *de jure* President and would only leave the Palace “as a dead body.” But actually, soon after the impeachment, he did leave the Palace and proceeded straight to board an airplane destined for the United States, a country he had just accused of masterminding his downfall.

Until the very last moment in office, he was so sure he had the full support of the people and that his resignation would cause a blood bath of protests as well as the secession of at least six provinces from the Republic. Nothing of the sort happened. In spite of his recurrent visits to the graves of holy men and his “protest to God” for the unfair treatment he had to suffer, he was shocked that in actuality he had been deposed.

Gus Dur became a victim, partly, of his self-made “charisma” and his over-confidence in the ‘power’ of guidance from the souls of the holy men, whose graves he so religiously visited to receive *wangsit*. This “charisma” was consistently reinforced by stories relayed by his inner circle. For instance, Gus Dur made a pilgrimage to Mecca early 2001, accompanied by about thirty of his trusted *ulamas*. A number of them reported to the press that when they looked up at the sky of Mecca, they could see clearly the image of the President. This, they claimed, amounted to a *wangsit* proclaiming that the position of Gus Dur was secure.

Dr. Komaruddin Hidayat, the Chairman of the (Islamic) Paramadina Foundation in Jakarta [which founded the Paramadina University-ed.] explained that this nation is so fond of mystical signs (or ‘*wangsit*’) as well as faith-healers. He traced back this habit to the strong influence of animism and Hinduism on the one hand and the lack of belief in rationality on the other hand. (Kompas, 18 Aug. 2001) What Komaruddin meant by “this nation” are those regions which belong to “Pattern J.”

“Pattern M”

The Minangkabaus, an ethnic group with a population of only four million from the eighty million Indonesians at the time of independence have played a key role in providing national leadership. This was true to practically every sector of the Indonesian society, except the military. Their role was very significant during

the nationalist movement seeking independence and even more so after sovereignty had been won, especially during the first decade.

Kato Tsuyoshi of Kyoto University, in his book *Matriliney and Migration: Evolving Minangkabau Tradition in Indonesia* (1982, pp. 19–20), noted that “Of the thirty major Indonesian writers in the 1920’s, nineteen were Minangkabaus. Their contribution to Islamic leadership both political and educational was prodigious. The business acumen of the Minangkabaus is well known. It is said that they are one of the few Indonesian ethnic groups who can compete with the Chinese in business. In 1952, ABADI (a Jakarta newspaper) conducted a public opinion poll to select the most prominent persons in contemporary Indonesia. Of the ten chosen, four were Minangkabaus: Mohammad Hatta, Mohammad Natsir, Haji Agus Salim and Sutan Syahrir. The Minangkabaus filled 11 per cent of the cabinet posts between 1945 and 1957.”

The year 1957 was significant. Mohammad Hatta resigned as Vice President the previous year because he could not go along with the authoritarian and left-leaning policies of President Sukarno. Hatta predicted that Sukarno’s policies were bound to fail. The split between Sukarno and Hatta brought about much resentment in various regions. Although opposed by Hatta himself, in 1958 a rebellion proclaimed the establishment of a Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia centered in Padang. A similar uprising took place in Menado, North Sulawesi.

The rebellion was soon crushed militarily and for a quarter of a century this region had to suffer the status of second rate province. The occupation army sent from Java handled the people with suspicion and its leaders were eased out of national and even local leadership. The situation was so severe that Minangkabaus began to hide their identity when residing outside the region. Parents began to give their sons and daughters names which closely resembled those of the Javanese. This nightmare continued until

1984. That year, President Suharto visited Padang. The purpose was to present an award to West Sumatra Province for the best accomplishment in the social, political, economic, cultural and security fields during the Third Five Year Development Plan. East Java received this award for the First Plan, Central Java for the Second and West Sumatra, for the Third Plan.

At the award presentation ceremony, Suharto expressed his recognition for the great talents of the Minangkabaus, who, he said had contributed their best sons and daughters to the building of Indonesia. (The first Gus Dur administration included no Minangkabaus. During his visit to Padang, he pointed out that “Minangkabaus had had their day.”)

A Cultural Mismatch

Jakob Sumarjo, himself a Javanese, has traced the roots of the cultural mismatch between “Pattern J” and “Pattern M” to what he called the difference between the sawah and the maritime cultures.

He elaborated his findings in an article published by Kompas (28 Aug. 2001) under the title “a Malay President.” I take the liberty here to quote this article rather at length.

“Suppose Mahathir Mohammad was born in Sumatra and had been elected six times as President, the story of Indonesia would have been very different. Mahathir was born in Malaya and brought up with Malay values, which can be identified with the sea, trading and Kings. These traditions have trained their citizens to have an independent character, which is pragmatic, mobile and competitive, technically minded, and with a high sense of self-respect. These characteristics have been moulded by the maritime tradition. . . .”

These differ, according to Sumarjo, from the characteristics of communities which live along great rivers and hinterlands occupied by sawahs. He continued:

“The basic character of the sawah culture, where the land (es-

tate) and its location serve as the main capital for production, employing labor in great numbers. These factors necessitate the development of a grand scale management with a strong central power. The culture of sawah communities is not much different from that (along great rivers) as found in mainland China, Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Northern India.”

Sumarjo further explained that succeeding Presidents of Indonesia, Sukarno, Suharto and Wahid originated from the sawah culture. Habibie, the third President who was in power only for 500 days, was an exception, because he was born in Makassar, which belongs to Group 3, together with Minangkabau and Aceh. Sumarjo also pointed out that the differences between the two cultures also manifested themselves in the arts. Those born in Sumatra have been advocating “seceding from the tranquil waters of the lakes and move on to catch up with the West, while the sawah communities claimed “whether there is enough food or not, the important thing is to stay loyal to the (land of) community. In such a community, the leader who claims to have received wangsit is very important as a source of guidance. The leader gradually gathers “charisma” and some of them come to be worshipped as “living Gods”.²⁾

The Prospect of the Megawati Presidency: Concluding Remarks

Applying the theories of “Pattern J” and “Pattern M” as well as the Sawah culture versus the Maritime culture, what is likely to be the prospects of the government of President Megawati? She is Javanese on her father’s side, Sumatran on her mother’s and Balinese on her grandmother’s line. Her husband is a Sumatran. Hence, she is a mixture of the sawah and maritime cultures or “Pattern J” and “Pattern M.” But it is doubtful whether she has obtained a sufficiently meaningful influence from Islam.

It is clear that she has been, in her political training, greatly

influenced by her father. Her oratory and her gestures before the crowds remind one of the her father's style. She seems to try to appeal to mass psychology rather than to an invitation to rational thinking and reflection.

The Vice President is non-Javanese from Kalimantan which, according to Koentjaraningrat, belongs to Group 2. Religiously speaking, however, he originated from the same Nahdatul Ulama of Gus Dur, although he had established his own Muslim party, the Unitary Party for Development. It must be recalled that the Vice President, Hamzah Haz, was one of the major figures who tried hard to block Megawati's right to compete for the Presidency, using his own interpretation of Islamic Law. Now, he has been made Megawati's deputy.

Judged from the composition of her cabinet, it is important to note that three army generals have been given key posts. One is Coordinating Minister for Political, Defence and Security Affairs, the second is the Interior Minister and the third, Minister of Transport. The Coordinating Minister is considered to be de facto First Minister with great influence on Megawati. The Interior Minister is known to be someone not in favor of "too much" autonomy for regions outside Java. A former Coordinating Minister for Political, Defense and Security Affairs under Gus Dur, occupies the Department of Transport. This is interpreted as preparatory to eventual emergencies. The Cabinet Secretary is also a man from "Pattern J," carried over from the Suharto regime. In the meantime, the budget for the year 2002-3 has provided an 18% increase for the armed forces. Is it biased to conclude that Megawati's administration tends to lean to the sawah culture reinforced by the military tradition so efficiently constructed by the Suharto regime? It may be recalled that the split between Sukarno and Hatta was primarily caused by the former's insistence on the theory of a permanent revolution and the mobilization of mass

movements and the construction of symbolic monuments, while Hatta emphasized that there was need for only one revolution. This must be followed-up by intensive mass education programs stressing the importance of work ethics. Sukarno's major book was *Under the Banner of the Revolution* while those of Hatta were *The Greek Heritage and Our Democracy*. Sukarno was flamboyant and bohemian, Hatta stood for simple and honest living.

As she embarks on her third month in office, Megawati is confronted with multiple problems. They can be reduced to three categories.

- (1) Bridging the cultural mismatch
- (2) Solving the economic crisis
- (3) Solving the mental-ethical crisis, the so-called "KKN"

She has delivered her Policy Speech before the parliament. It has been favorably received by political observers and the press. Regarding (1), it is doubtful whether she is aware of the existence of this problem. Regarding (2) she is faced with the dilemma of cooperating with the IMF which is spearheading the transformation of the national economy into liberal capitalism while trying to uphold the Constitution which advocates a system that guarantees social justice for all. The mental-ethical crisis is the hardest nut to crack. The system, including the parliament, is through and through corrupt. There is serious lack of "crisis awareness" among the elite who live in luxury. On the other hand, there is a plan to ask for a "hair cut" of the country's mega debts.

When Megawati visits foreign countries in search of more loans and investments, there is need to tell her frankly that unless KKN is significantly reduced if not eliminated altogether, no amount of additional loans or investments would be able to cure this "acutely sick man" of Asia. Megawati should avoid the bohemian way of life and set the example for all, beginning with the civil servants and the armed forces, by living simply and trying to rekindle the fire of

a mental revolution. Otherwise, Indonesia may well become a hunting ground of collective imperialism.

Notes

- 1) Here are the number of seats obtained by competing parties.
 1. The Ind'sn Democratic Party of Struggle (Megawati) 153
 2. The Golkar Party (Akhbar Tanjung-Speaker PRC) 120
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- 2) A very interesting book was published in Spring 2001 entitled *Bila Kiyai diper- Tuhan-kan: Membedah Sikap beragama di Nahdatul Ulama*. (When Religious Leaders are worshiped as God: An Analysis of the Religious Attitude inside N.U.) It deals with "Godly attributes of religious leaders which deserve worship," a major sin in Islam.

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