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A QUEST FOR JUSTICE:

THE MILLENNARY ASPIRATIONS OF A CONTEMPORARY JAVANESE WALI

A Thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Australian National University

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This thesis is my own work and all sources used have been acknowledged.

[Signature]
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The place was a village house. The time was afternoon. The situation was likely to be one a fieldworker would expect to encounter -- an interview with an ordinary peasant. At that time, early 1980, I had been in the area for quite some time, conducting fieldwork routine: interviewing, observing, note taking and photographing. For quite some time I often said to myself: "My God, what significant finding can be expected from an ordinary community in an ordinary place at an ordinary time like this!" After all Java, in all its complexity, had been studied by so many scientists for so long. And yet there I was, myself a Javanese, thrown into the middle of an ordinary community in an ordinary place at an ordinary time as if my Javaneseness would make a contribution to anthropology.

It was a hot, dry afternoon. I was about to go with my motor-scooter when a truck arrived. It was full of passengers, male and female in strange dancing costumes. That was the first time I heard about Embah Wali and his dancing rituals. My peasant friend told me that those dancers were to perform in another village, Live Rock, on invitation. The place could be said to have been located under my nose -- I had visited the surrounding villages, but somehow had missed Lively Rock. I did not know why. And although I saw Embah Wali's picture on the walls of some houses, the place and the name of the old man were never mentioned to me. Not, that is, until the afternoon I visited a peasant friend of mine and a truck full of unusual dancers passed by.
Still, such an unexpected incident is not extraordinary in the life of any fieldworker. What was interesting was that a series of coincidences took place which brought me to the writing of the following thesis. Those coincidences were so nice that I am tempted to quote what the central figure in this study said to me, "When the puppeteer wants to play his performance, it does not take time for him to take the puppets out of the box and to confront them in a certain play." Indeed, this play of mine involves many nice people to whom this piece of acknowledgement is dedicated.

First of all it is dedicated to those who have kindly initiated my training at the ANU. In 1976 Yulfitia, my wife, was to undertake a training in demography in Canberra. At that time I had been inactive in the field of anthropology for over ten years, and there was no sign ahead that I could enter it again. Under the circumstances, Prof. Dr. Harsja Bachtiar encouraged me to go with her for an opportunity to come back to anthropology. The idea was strongly supported by Dr Taufik Abdullah and Dr Suharso, then Director of LEXNAS and Head of LEXNAS' Population Studies Centre respectively, who both facilitated whatever was required for that purpose. Dr Peter McDonald, then from the Department of Demography RSSS, ANU, organized my application to the Department of Prehistory and Anthropology and saw to it that when we arrived in Canberra everything was all right for us. For those who have played the initial part of the play, all I can say is that my deep gratitude will go with me to grave.

And what a play! It could have gone differently had it been played at other times. But when I arrived in Canberra it so
happened that the anthropological establishment at the ANU began to take an interest in Indonesia, in particular, under the present Head of the Department Prof. A. Forge and some other scholars at the University. My MA training could be completed mainly because of their supervision and the facilities offered by the Department and the University. That training led me to an opportunity to conduct further study which resulted in the writing of this thesis. The fieldwork for this study was conducted from October 1979 to March 1981. The project was made possible by support from various parties, including a research grant from the Indonesian Foundation of Social Sciences (YIIS), facilities from the Department of Prehistory and Anthropology, ANU, and co-sponsorship by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (LEKNAS). While writing this thesis, I benefited from further facilities extended by the Department of Prehistory and Anthropology and additional financial support from the Department of Anthropology RSPaCS, ANU, made available through Prof. J.J. Fox.

My thanks are also due to various authorities in the area where I did my fieldwork, in particular, Pak Abdul Rachim, then the Humas (Information) Chief of the regency. My special gratitude goes to all my friends in Lively Rock with whom I shared the joy of being part of their great community. My family has always been a support throughout the period of fieldwork and the writing stage of the thesis. I also wish to express how I enjoy sharing the agony of writing a thesis with my fellow students, in particular, of working together at night in the lower ground floor of the A. D. Hope building. And last but not least I would like
to mention that this thesis could never have materialized without the meticulous guidance kindly offered by my supervisors, Professors A. Forge and J. J. Fox. They have made themselves freely available with precious assistance at every step of my work.
Embah Wali

... a beggar king, not a king of beggars.
"... It did not make me supernaturally powerful or anything like that."
Embah and Followers

He dresses, talks and behaves just like other people, yet he is followed by the others in the manner that subjects follow a king.

Embah (middle), the Spokesman, and the Anthropologist

The puppets are just like dead beings until they are held by the puppeteer for their respective performances.
Court Dances beneath the Trees

"They dance because they are happy, and when happy their mind is opened wide, it is like day with its male character."
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THERE EXIST, without doubt, two ways in which a comparatively large and complex society like that of the Javanese can be investigated; firstly, through a thorough study at a general level and, secondly, through exhaustive study at the local level. The revival in the study of Javanese society after the war, particularly the one initiated by the Mojokuto project, has produced several general studies on Java such as those by Geertz, Dewey, Jay.

For the last two decades, however, there has existed a trend with strong emphasis on local studies as a way of understanding the complexity of Javanese social development. This is particularly observable from some fine local studies by social

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1Some of the works are Geertz, Clifford, The Religion of Java; Geertz, Mildred, The Javanese Family; Dewey, Alice, Peasant Marketing in Java; Jay, Robert, Javanese Villagers.
historians such as Onghokham, Elson, Fernando, but also by other social scientists, such as Penny & Singarimbun.2

The argument that follows from these two different approaches involves the question of whether study at the general level may represent what has actually taken place at the local level; whereas studies at the local level such as that by Penny & Singarimbun are often criticized as not being representative for broader interpretation. There seems to be no doubt that both ways of approach are complementary rather than contradictory.

The late David Penny, for instance, in a personal conversation said that he would be pleased to learn if his monographic findings in Sriharjo were inconsistent with socio-economic trends in other villages. On the other hand, despite the fact that the Mojokuto team did base their broad interpretation of Java on the findings from their fieldworks in a certain village of Mojokuto, as Geertz quite correctly says "anthropologists don't study villages, [but] they study in villages" [Geertz 1975:22]. The writings that came up from the project provide generalities about Javanese life.

In 1978, as part of my MA training in anthropology, I wrote a thesis on the social change that took place in Blitar, a regency in East Java, covering a period from the colonial penetration of the rural areas in the first half of the last

century until 1970's. The thesis, based on an investigation of library and archival materials obtainable in and from Canberra, takes into account the persistence of certain Javanese hierarchical values in the course of the socio-political development over decades. This persistence, as the thesis argues, may explain why despite structural changes throughout history the old feudal mentality and values continue to dominate and pervade the society - an inferiority complex and fatalistic outlook detrimental to popular participation in the country's development. With all its shortcomings, the thesis attempted to deal with the interplay of the Javanese image at two different levels, the general and the local.

In 1980, for my Ph.D thesis I did a fieldwork in Blitar with the purpose of continuing the line of thought I had developed in my MA thesis with data from the field. My research proposal argued that despite the persistence of the certain hierarchical traditional values within the cultural framework, the popular desire to escape from passivity was deep-rooted. Social disobedience ranging from violent resistance to peaceful protest, expressed in Java in general and in Blitar in particular, points to the significance of social values at variance with what is normally regarded as traditional Javanese values. My study was to investigate such alternative values as manifest in different ways.

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"traditional"

3 What is meant by the pre-independence period -- that set of values supposed to be renewed with the struggle of Independence.
at different levels in social life, especially in those areas of social life rich in symbolic expression such as the performing arts, rituals, and folklore.

The research proposal argued that as a result of a long history of feudalism and colonialism in Java, what are normally called traditional values are those values that defend the privileged minority which dominates the traditional body politic. In other words, the image of the society is very much biased towards this kind of traditionality, in which the Javanese society is perceived as a society with values stressing the significance of harmony in all aspects of social life. Such values are sanctified by a solid ideology strongly upheld by people from all walks of life.

While the presence of such a solid ideology is undeniable, its nature and the way it operates in relation to the cultural and political system is frequently overlooked. This study is to look at the interaction between the social, cultural and political systems which bring about and at the same time are historically brought about by ideology - the interplay between the socio-political situation at any one time and the existing social life.

My situation in the field however, changed the course of my research. An unexpected encounter with a messianic movement which was focused upon a certain Embah Wali in Blitar presented a chance too good to miss. Whereas in the research proposal, messianism, which is deep-rooted in the Javanese tradition, was only one aspect in the investigation I wished to carry out,
especially since Blitar's history has had a lot of messianic movements, the presence of a living messianic movement in full swing offered an opportunity to make a study of the movement itself.

The shift of focus of the fieldwork, however, brought about certain immediate problems. In the first place messianism in Javanese culture is a tradition with deep influences from various ideological, religious streams. In the second place, messianism in Java is not a subject of social investigation that is already well-established. By its nature, messianism poses an ambiguous problem to society. Its followers share some of the same cosmology as the other members of the society, yet they take a different line of rationality and, therefore, they are often regarded as irrational, ridiculous and even abnormal. Moreover messianic movements, as known in Java, are small-scale, rustic and short-lived, and possibly for this reason they are hardly seen as important phenomena within the framework of the established tradition.

Early writings on the subject look at messianic movements more in terms of indigenous religious, cultural peculiarities. At times, clashes between such movements and the colonial authorities were unavoidable, and only then they were marginally incorporated in the official records.

The social, historical studies by Prof. Benda (1953, 1960) possibly provide a starting point for these phenomena to be viewed sociologically. In particular, Beada's article on The Samin Movement (1969) revived interests in these matters and led to articles on the same issue by King (1973), Giap (1969), Korver
(1976). Each of the studies stresses different factors as explanations and the limited sources of information, mostly from colonial archives, restrict further argument.

Complementary to the studies on the Samin Movement are the works by Indonesian historians Prof. Kartodirdjo and Onghokham. In particular, Prof. Kartodirdjo's *Protest Movements in Rural Java*, which is a comprehensive overview, provides the readers with a broad-based view of the phenomena. The remarkable recurrence of social unrest motivated by the human expectation of justice poses the intriguing question whether such phenomena should indeed be treated as abnormal cases or as ordinary cases with a rational basis.

All in all, the empirical study of the subject certainly requires a sound knowledge of this rich background. A lack of preparation in this matter would handicap the initial understanding of the symbolic meanings expressed in the activities that Embah Wali's movement was engaged upon. Moreover, the movement was understandably developing into a community in a peculiar social situation where meanings and values were intentionally distorted and turned upside down. It indeed took a newcomer in this field of study a long time to comprehend the "logic" before he could make sense of and then appreciate the points that the movement was attempting to make. It was only after a sufficient comprehension of the movement's logic that the identification of characteristic elements of the movement's social as well as religious expectations was possible.

Despite all the difficulties, this study of a messianic movement allowed me to see at first hand the interaction between
political, economic and cultural factors within the narrow context of a rural community. The movement drew its following from villagers who are the bastion of Javanese traditionality. Throughout the history of modernization initiated by the colonialists and continued by their more conscious fellow countrymen, the traditional Javanese peasantry has gradually widened its worldview. With modern ideologies ranging from communism to theism, as presented by popular leaders such as the late Sukarno as well as various political parties, the Javanese peasantry has become acquainted with a broader dimension of rationality. The rational basis of traditionality associating the security of the present and the future with the unchanging legacy of the past has become supplemented with a dynamic view of modernity.

This supplementary element is understandably fragile, being grafted on a deep-rooted traditional mode of reason. At times, when optimism grows, it attracts a wide, popular acceptance. However, many times things become difficult and people are driven back to their traditionality. They entrust their security to the mystical world of religiosity which has been with them for centuries. Very often this tendency leads them to the mystical pursuit of truth, severing their views of themselves and the world from those of daily life. This is the extreme realm of traditional religiosity - kebatinan, literally the realm of inner self.

At times, however, the escape to traditionality does not necessarily suppress critical consciousness. This study, in fact, is intended to demonstrate that within the limitations of a
traditional framework people still manage to develop a certain level of critical consciousness as a buffer against harsh daily realities. The movement is a fine example of how a large number of people locked in a system of social relations in which they are ideologically disadvantaged define their lowness by their utter contrast to the privileged. Within this dichotomous framework, the oppressive nature of the privileged becomes the target of their particular use of the Javanese customary humour in the form of folk-etymology and linguistic play.

Humour is, purportedly, unaggressive, and yet deep down it can be very serious. Turning the world of meanings upside down is funny, perhaps seemingly mad, in fact it is deadly critical of the prevailing socio-political situation. Unlike many movements of the same nature, Embah Wali's movement is clever in that it does not allow itself to be dragged into a direct confrontation with the authority. And yet at the same time, in its own way, the movement is deeply involved in the activities of making its followers conscious of the injustice they are experiencing. Through ritualizing their daily activities, members of the movement make their expectations manifest to all.

This study attempts to argue that despite its strongly traditional appearance, the movement does have a rational basis. Given the dynamics of the Indonesian politics during the last two decades, a large part of the rural community has undergone intermittent change. There has been change which has affected political consciousness. Thus, there has occurred a rapid development from the turmoil of the period of revolutionary independence and the subsequent high-powered politicization process
to a period of bloody depolitization. This change has affected the way the economic life of the community is generated.\textsuperscript{4}

Whereas there is no doubt that materially the standard of living has improved, spiritually a large part of the community is demoralized, being reduced into powerless objects of development. For a society with a long historical perception of material and spiritual happiness inherent in the concept of harmony, the developments that have been taking place have created a great number of questions.

My intention is therefore to present an ethnographic description which will examine the movement within the context of the prevailing socio-political situation and out of which its rational basis can be made apparent.

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapters I to III give a descriptive account of the Blitar region in terms of historical socio-economic and political factors seen in relation to the general trends which have prevailed in Indonesia as a whole. This is intended to provide a basic understanding of the context within which the topic of the thesis is to be understood.

The ethnographic account starts in Chapter IV focusing on Embah Wali who is the spiritual leader of the movement. The life story of the man complemented with episodes of the life stories of some of his disciples is given at length, because it is here that the moral question and the rational basis of the movement are most

\textsuperscript{4}What is meant here is not simply what normally is called mode of production, but rather the ideologico-cultural framework such as social ideas and spirit within which the mode of production is generated.
clearly to be found and understood. Certain accounts by close
witnesses are presented to accentuate the line of rationalization
that the movement has followed and is still following. This is
complemented by my account of events I myself witnessed and
stories I heard.

Chapter V provides a socio-ideological analysis proper,
developing on discussions in earlier chapters. The central
question dealt with is the search by individuals for an ideal
spiritual leader and, through him, the search for a perception of
the world and the society within which their individual lives may
be generated. The picture of these followers and their problems
is exemplified by case studies and quotations. An attempt to
gather better quantifiable data nearly led the fieldwork to a
disaster for one simple reason: these are people who suspect and
are sensitive to all kinds of writing, let alone questionnaires!

Chapter VI deals with the movement's pursuit of consistent
values against a background of socio-political developments which
affects the diverse values in the community. A large proportion
of the discussion is directed to an examination of the nature and
characteristics of two contradictory sub-cultures with their
concomitant values systems. Careful consideration is necessary
here because of the value bias inherent in the existing social and
ideological structures. The tension, conflicts and search are
therefore to be seen rather as a dynamic process than a mode of
cultural reproduction.

Chapters VII & VIII characterize the followers and their
motivation, and analyse the movement in the framework of current
political situation. For a better understanding, the development
of the movement is compared with cases of a similar nature in the region as well as in other areas.

The final chapter is dedicated to a discussion of politics and culture and the prospect that a community such as this one faces. Its conclusions are necessarily speculative.
CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND

THIS THESIS is an attempt to present an analysis of the phenomenal rise of a movement associated with a certain Embah Wali of Blitar, East Java. This movement is a millenarian movement. Its aim is to achieve a total, imminent, ultimate, this-worldly, collective salvation based on messianic ideas. Socially, it is a movement of the masses and its ideology is concerned with popular notions of justice, order and happiness.

Although it is necessary to present an ethnographic picture of this rather general notion in the Javanese cultural setting, this thesis will focus on the significance of the movement within the socio-political framework of the contemporary Javanese community. It considers the relevance of the symbolic formulations and performances of the movement as expressed by the participants themselves in their vision of the society, the world and the underlying structural order they perceive to exist. This kind of symbolism is a statement of ideas and expectations that
can only be understood against a background of the total Javanese world of culture, politics and economy.

There are two reasons for this: firstly, the culture of the Javanese masses is basically silent so that expressions such as Embah Wali's world of symbolism is a breakthrough in the politics of Javanese speech; secondly, Embah Wali's movement represents, at its best, one ideologico-cultural model in the configuration of Javanese cultural plurality. It is thus relevant to an understanding of Javanese peasant politics and culture within the wider framework of Javanese society.

The analysis is to be understood on two levels, namely in terms of the inner, spiritual meanings that arise from Embah's and his people's understanding of themselves, and of their history and mythology; and, in terms of the outward, visible symbols that are interpreted by Embah and his people from their experiences in attempting to establish a firm base in their quest of happiness.

For this purpose, the socio-cultural background against which Embah Wali's movement develops has to be examined. Of particular significance are certain themes within which the movement's symbolic formulations and performances are made manifest. These involve the hierarchical structure of society in Javanese ideology. At the grass-roots level, this hierarchical tendency is centred upon a deep emotional and intellectual adherence which is sustained by the tradition of the puppet-shadow theatre. This ideology of an hierarchical society is one that was developed throughout the feudal and colonial history of Java.
Chapter 2

The Cultural Genesis of Javanese Society

Traditional Javanese society is predominantly pluralistic in its cultural structure. Analytically the society falls into a vertical division of the elitist nobility and the populist commoners, locally priyayi and wong cilik, and into the horizontal division of indigenously oriented group and the non-indigenously oriented group, locally abangan and santri (Koentjaraningrat 1960; Geertz 1964). Over the centuries various religious streams have interacted, co-existed, syncretized, and interwoven a tradition which colours Javanese contemporary life. Three major layers of religious traditions are immediately observable:

1. Folk religions characterized by animistic and dynamistic beliefs;
2. Indic religions characterized by sophisticated hierarchies in ideological as well as social structures; and
3. Islam, and to a much lesser extent also Christianity, characterized by a canonical monotheistic cult.

The three layers have developed indigenously into the Javanese religious tradition. It is customary to speak of Javanese religiosity as a syncretized, integrated religious system, a complete religious hybrid peculiarly Javanese. So far as the majority of Javanese are concerned, this is indeed the case, although frictions do occur at certain levels between the Islamic and non-Islamic parts.
The Indic layer of the tradition began entering Java in the 5th century. It is interesting to see how the tradition managed to penetrate the culture more deeply than just the religious structure. Certain highly sophisticated cultural elements such as ideas of statehood and kingship, literature and architecture were also adopted. The significance of this layer is in its incorporation of Javanese localities into various centrally structured dynasties. With this incorporation a wide gap was created between the countryside and the urban centres, the popular majority and the elitist minority and, consequently, between the little tradition of the peasantry and the great tradition of the court.

This hierarchical structure, however, together with other cultural elements managed to be fully adapted and transformed into the indigenous tradition, a complete cultural hybrid severed from all relations with the mother country, India, with myths being fully adopted and identified as native myths. In this way Mount Semeru in East Java became the mythical Mahameru, the Javanese created clown-figure Semar became a mythically indispensable god in addition to the Indic gods, and the canonical rituals in the temples were complemented with agricultural rituals at the village level.

When Islam arrived in Java in the 14th century, the folk-Hindu religious hybrid had been well-grounded and identified as the native faith. Islam succeeded in dismantling all the Indic thought religious institutions, but not the system. Because of its nature as a world religion with an outside orientation, Islam is identifiable as foreign, non-native. A horizontal division of
society is mainly caused by a social polarization along lines of ideological, cultural orientation. Two identifiable extremes consist of an allegedly indigenous Javanese tradition versus Islam, native versus foreign. In the 1950's and early 1960's, this orientation led to the peculiar political party system, in which political groupings were patrimonially organized on the basis of a common ideological denomination, crisscrossing social strata and common interests. Political groupings of this kind were locally known as aliran, meaning 'stream,' and were composed of sub-organizations covering a wide range of social activities including women affairs, youth, arts, students, academics, trade unions, peasants, etc. Along the lines of such aliran, for example, pious Muslims of all social strata were followers of the Islamic parties either directly or indirectly through one of their sub-organizations. Similarly, the communist party did not necessarily embrace people only from the working class group.

Hierarchy as an ideological system

Although the Hindu caste system did not survive in the Javanese social structure, the hierarchical principle continues to persist. The principle is manifest in the set of basic traits, values, and norms prevalent in the society and is imbedded in worldview and ideology. So imbedded is it in the popular mind that it has survived the successive waves of ideologies brought about by Islam, western colonialism and Independence.

Basically, the hierarchical structure classifies society into two: the urban elitist minority and the rural populist
majority. Ideologically, the structure is sanctified by religion; socially, it is justified by etiquette and privileges; and culturally, it is legitimized by a hierarchically structured tradition.

In such a hierarchy, the values and ideology governing social life are structured in such a way that they are biased towards the elitist, privileged minority, and behind the bias are socio-economic and political interests. This established linkage between ideological values and socio-economic, political factors is often insufficiently taken into account.

In this study, the ideas of Paulo Freire on consciousness and conscientization are used for their simple, yet well-founded explanation of cases such as the Javanese. The ideology and values perpetuating the social structure, in Freire's term 'the culture of silence,' are not consciously constructed by the elite and then imposed from above upon the rural majority. Rather, they are the result of the structural relations between the dominator and the dominated. The silence, in this case the ideological acceptance of disadvantaged status rather than politically forced acceptance on the part of the dominated, according to Freire is due to the level of consciousness, termed as 'semi-intransitive.' This consciousness is characterized by its insufficient distance from reality, by inability "to objectify (it) in order to know (it) in a critical way." (Freire 1977)

In Java, the term for the elite is priyayi, literally 'the ounger brothers/relatives of the king,' or ngaluhur, 'the superior.' Ideologically, the king is the sole source of authority and power and his relatives are therefore said to be born superior and
pre-destined to rule. On the other hand, the wong cilik (little people) or kawula cilik (little subjects) are born inferior and predestined to be ruled.

It is this pattern of lord-vassal (locally, kavula-gusti) relationships imbedded in semi-intransitive consciousness which characterizes feudal relationships in Java, in that a peasant as a subject is tied to his lord ideologically rather than because of the land that he cultivates. Ideologically, the people are "owned" by the king, to whom they are obliged to provide services in kind and in labour.

An aristocratic concept of Javanese kingship as stated in the "official history of Java" explicitly says that "everything on the land of Java, the soil on which we live, the water from which we drink, the grass, the leaves and every other thing on earth are owned by the king." (Meinsma 1941: 257-58)

Although this traditional dichotomy dates back a very long time, it is during the last three centuries or so that its constitutional characteristics for distinguishing values and behaviours has crystallized into a clear social system. Historically, high status was strongly associated with bureaucracy. Following the defeat of the northern trading port towns by an inland, agriculturally based ruler, Sultan Agung,

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1 Traditionally, the power of the elite group was based on men and not on land. A territorial division, for instance, was expressed by the number of households (locally cacah) under it.

2 This history, locally known as The Babad Tanah Jawi, provides a version of history dating back from Adam to the Javanese dynasties of the 17th century.
traders could not gain prestige. In the developed system, bureaucracy and aristocracy were synonymous and occupied the highest stratum in the traditional pattern of ideal values.

Culturally, this meant that the priyayi adopted a life-style distinctly different from that of the rest of Javanese society, an exclusive priyayi life-style with elaborated etiquette, arts, literature, and reverence for sophisticated mystical pursuits. Politically, they were the ruling class, the basis of the traditional bureaucracy throughout the pre-independence period. Ideologically, they were the group with a claimed in-born superiority predestined to rule.

This kind of socio-ideological structure perpetuated by a certain mode of thought is hereafter mentioned as 'tradition.' In other words, from a structural point of view, it contains ideological preferences and principles, and, on the other hand, basic traits or personality types. It is interesting to note that these traditional principles and ideal values have been perpetuated despite the successive political changes which were brought about by Islam, colonialism and independence.

In another section of this chapter, we will examine the perpetuation of this ideological structure throughout the colonial period and, despite a severe blow, the Japanese occupation and the period of the revolution. Although true aristocracy as a social class was uprooted during the revolution, the elitist-aristocratic spirit still lingered on and, in many cases, re-emerged. An example of this is the highly-valued status attached to Government service which in the past was identical with aristocracy. With the education system increasingly open to people of all walks of
life, the traditional ideal values attached to the aristocratic elite were transformed to other symbols. One present day example of such symbols are academic titles deriving from the Dutch-originated tradition of tertiary education. In modern Indonesia, however, academic titles are used to denote social status rather than academic achievement, a situation comparable to the colonial period when aristocratic titles were important in determining social statuses.

It is in this way that in modern-day Java the aristocratic culture remains as a source of and reference point for the ideal values and norms of the society. Styles in many aspects of social life, such as house architecture, furniture, fashion, food, and so on, are very much dictated by these elitist tastes. 3

Such a perpetuation is hard to understand without first looking at an effective vehicle through which traditional principles and values are transmitted and preserved. Interestingly enough, with the ending of the formal Indic religion and its concomitant religious institutions, the transmission and the preservation of the tradition was able to continue. A multi-dimensional folk shadow play, the wayang (literally, 'shadow') played an important indoctrinating role where the old institutions ended; and perhaps its role has become greater since the demise of these institutions.

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3A report by national daily Kompas (29,1,1984) mentions the widespread imitation of Spanish-style architecture in houses even in small towns.
Wayang and the Javanese values system

Wayang is entertaining and therefore popular, loved by people from all walks of life who live in the cultural centres as well as in the countryside. It is, at the same time, ritualistic and therefore able, as Anderson says (1965:5), "to command deep emotional and intellectual adherence." It is too complicated to discuss wayang in its historical perspective here. Instead, I wish to stress certain aspects that are crucial to the discussion.

Although wayang is believed to have originated in pre-Hindu times from the practice of ancestor worship, the development of wayang in its present form as theatre began with the Hinduization process of Java in the 10th century and the adoption of the Indian mythological epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. It could be that the elaboration process of this form of theatre coincided with the social and political development of the Hindu-Buddhist states in Java which gave rise to a Javanese version of the Indic caste-system. These developments were coupled with the development of spiritual and moral values which reflected the ideological basis of the aristocratic ruling class and were committed to sustaining this aristocratic hegemony over the community.

When Hindu-Buddhist politics in Java began to give way to Islam at the turn of the 15th century, the political structure remained unchanged and its ideological basis, as expressed in the wayang, survived. In this way, it brought about the Javanese institutional value system or, as Anderson calls it, "the wayang tradition" (1965:5). In other words, wayang has become a
"religion," and the messianic movement under study is a fine example of a social movement strongly motivated and modelled in accordance with the wayang. As to how the audience is indoctrinated by and through wayang, we need to look at the actual dramatic performance of wayang. But first, a brief discussion of wayang technicalities.

Wayang is a theatrical performance using leather puppets set on a banana trunk as the stage with the light from either a traditional coconut-oil lamp, a modern pressure lamp or an electric bulb, whatever is convenient, illuminating a white screen as background. The stories, which are episodes from the Javanese version of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana epics, are performed by a puppeteer (locally, dalang) to the accompaniment of a Javanese musical orchestra (locally, gamelan). The play is normally performed at night from 8 p.m. till 5 a.m. with the audience watching it in a very relaxed and informal atmosphere.

The repertoire includes two main categories of plays (locally, lakon), namely the 'basic plays' (lakon paken) which are the episodes from the original epics and therefore form an important part of Javanese mythology; and the 'branch plays' (lakon carangan) which are invented episodes that depart from the main line of the story. Although the ritual aspect of wayang is nowadays much less important, it has never been completely lost. Wayang is performed to entertain guests on ritualistic occasions such as weddings, circumcisions, births, and so on. At a higher level, wayang is performed in certain political rituals.

Another more recent genre of wayang is 'the human wayang' (wayang wong), a wayang theatre which is enacted by human actors.
This form of wayang is purely entertainment and is mostly performed by professional troupes whom an audience buys tickets to see.4

The play is constructed upon the theme of universal conflict between good and evil, the sacred and profane, or the godly and the worldly. Underlying it is the philosophical view of harmony, and every play is in fact a dramatization of the maintenance of harmony through the struggle of those who represent a high, spiritual ideal against the others who deny this ideal. Along with this main theme are overlapping classificatory categories. They are, in the first place, the categories of the right and the left associated with the high ideals and the denial of such ideals. There are also the categories of the material realm of the commoners and the mystical realm of the aristocratic masters who, in wayang, include the 'heroic knights' (satriya) and the 'priests' (pandita). The knights of the right are associated with ideal, spiritual values, the ogres (buto) and other foreigners (sabaran) of the left with malicious characteristics.

There is the "third" category with an ambiguous role. This is represented by groups of grotesque clown-servants (punakawan) who physically and mentally do not fit in any category. The most popular among them is a father-son team, namely Semar as the father and Gareng, Petruk and Bagong as the sons. They always accompany their knightly master in performing

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4 The original, leather puppet theatre is also called wayang kulit, 'leather wayang,' to distinguish it from the human wayang. There are several other genres of wayang, including those made of wood, of wood and leather, or painted on cloth scrolls. Hereafter what is meant by wayang is the most popular leather puppetry.
challenging adventures and their presence is imperative for the master to complete his mission.

They are semi-divine, yet even by commoners' standards, they are very rude, ill-bred and countrified. In the framework of the elitist ideal world of rigidity, restrained manner and refined behaviour, the values that they offer, as Forge remarks for Bali (1978:79) are, "... an alternative view of human virtue that is not dominated by concern for correct refined behaviour, but is much more direct and mundane, appreciative of food and sex, independent of the caste system ..." They are indeed betwixt and between and as such are in a liminal situation in which rigid categories are bridged through their caricatures. The fact that they are not found in India and that in crucial times, such as in the final decisive battle of Baratayuda between the two opposing groups of cousins, they are promoted to the rank of respected elders and sit among the important advisers of the knights on the right side leads to speculation that the role of the commoners in the Javanese caste-system was important and respected.

The categories generally, but not always, follow blood lines. In this way, although knights generally personify spiritual excellence, some do not; although ogres generally are malicious, some are not. Still, the knight is safely associated with the aristocratic elite and with their spirituality and superiority. They are masters of mystical as well as martial arts and as such are the sanctified holders of power, both mystical and political. They are the selected few who are capable of receiving the 'divine royal radiance' (locally, wahyu) upon which the claim to power is based. In other words, the world of wayang is the
world of the aristocrats, of their spirituality and chivalry. The commoners are hardly mentioned except as loyal followers of the elite of both sides. It is the elite who strives for the achievement of the perfection of life so much elaborated in wayang and Javanese philosophy. In such philosophy, the masses have no identity and instead identify themselves with the elitist ideological world and relate themselves to the deeper philosophy of life through such an ideological world.

The main theme underlying this ideology is for a man to find and fulfill his destiny. In the case of the commoners, this means the unquestioning acceptance of their social status vis a vis the elite. The idea of acceptance and loyalty implicit in the wayang stories is stressed in 19th-century court literary works. One verse of such works (Tanojo 1924), for instance, goes as follows:

Dene beja cilaka utawa luher asor,
aja sok naugring mring Gustini-ra Sang Katong
Tulisane lochilmaful kang runuhun
papancene kang wus pasthi tan kena owah sarambut
tulise badanirski, aja na mundur sapakon

Thus, the nature of good fortune and disaster or high and low
Do not question your God about it
(because) your destiny which is already written
is unchangeable and you must not try to avoid it.

On loyalty, another verse states:

Kang jumaeng iku ambawani
karsaning Byang Manon
wajib padha wedi lan batine
aja mamang parentahing Aji
........
dasar Ratu abener parentahe
kaya priye nggonira sumungkir
yen tan nglakoni pasti tan rahayu
The reigning king represents
the will of God
you must respect him with all your heart
never doubt his orders

... as a king he is always right
you must never deny him
or else you will meet disaster

It is with this kind of ideology that commoners relate
themselves to the deeper meaning of life. Interestingly enough,
despite its early association with the elite and its ideological
defence of the elite, present-day wayang is not necessarily
related to the elite. Even in its classical form, wayang's
popularity has transcended social groups in the community. It is
mainly performed by artists from the lower social class and
enjoyed by people from all walks of life. Because of the level of
people's consciousness, the elitist identity is not fully
recognized as such, particularly since through the puppeteer's
virtuosity, many lower-class aspirations surface in the form of
social comments and jokes through the clown-servant roles.

Now and then, it is true, rebellious ideas emerge in
certain newly invented plays such as the play "Clown-Servant
Petruk Becomes A King." In fact, the structure of the wayang

5 The play is a sort of social dream. The servant Petruk
was a victim of ill-treatment by his master. He flew into a rage
and succeeded in promoting himself to the throne where his
non-elitist, servant norms and values prevail. He is victorious
almost to the end until eventually he is defeated by trickery and
reverts to his original low-class position as servant, ending his
"sweet" adventure.

There are some other more succinctly conscious plays such as
"Udawa's Claim" (locally, Udawa Gugat) involving a claim to land
manipulated by the superior.
stories itself is organized as such that it is possible to air alternative values. The hero Bima, who is the second brother of the Pendawa family, is interesting not only because of his non-conformity to aristocratic standards of behaviour, his straightforward manner, and his point-blank view and firm fidelity, but also because of his egalitarian mentality expressed in the way he treats people equally. No matter whether they are of higher or lower rank, older or younger, he speaks to every one with the same level of language.

This does not mean that such forms of alternativity find acceptance in actual daily life, when social order and social structure prevail strongly. Bima’s qualities, particularly his outward characteristics, are attractive but inapplicable. The model for daily life in terms of standard behaviour are other heroes who comply with prevailing norms and values.

It is not an exaggeration to say that to a Javanese audience wayang functions severely more than movies do to moviegoers. Wayang provides ideal heroes and, because of its continuity and repetition, generation after generation, demands credulity. What wayang means to the Javanese will be sufficiently illustrated throughout later discussions on the movement under study. At this stage, it is sufficient to quote my account of the social significance of wayang in daily life in Blitar from my MA thesis (1979:93-95):

My first encounter with wayang was when I came to Blitar in 1947 as a child refugee from the war-torn city of Surabaya. Being a town boy in the relatively traditional village of Bajang, I was very much impressed by the way wayang coloured the surface of daily life. Entering the average house in the village, one could expect to see wayang figures in the form of ornaments, paintings and real wayang
puppets on the walls. There was also a tradition of Arabic calligraphy carrying verses from Qur'an which depicted certain figures of wayang.

At school, when we were told to draw, I found that most of my classmates always drew the figures of their wayang heroes. What surprised me was that they could draw the figures so accurately and beautifully just by heart without following any model, something I always tried to do during my stay in the village without any success. Outside school, when playing together, we used to pretend to perform a wayang episode with toy wayang puppets made of bamboo, leaves, paper, paddy straw or other materials available (original wayang puppets are made of cowhide). This children's wayang performance, accompanied by oral traditional music, was indeed one of our favourite games.

It was in this social setting that my love of wayang began. I started to identify with certain heroes in the wayang stories, just like everyone else. I learnt from such heroes certain merits, including the ways of seeking mystical qualities, loyalty, self-restraint, reserved behaviour and elaborated etiquette. I also learnt a number of do's and dont's. One of the dont's that I learnt at home and of which now I see the equivalence in wayang was the principle of seniority. In a typical wayang conversational setting, in the presence of one's senior or superior one is not supposed to speak unless so invited.

With this kind of ideologico-cultural setting, it comes as no surprise that one will never deny one's seniors or superiors as the following account indicates:

At home I was always told that to argue with superiors and elders was completely out of the question; that I should never deny what my father told me. It was all right to do whatever I liked behind my father's back, but never to show any disagreement in his presence. A popular Javanese song, which contains such instructions, runs as follows:

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6 I now have lost the art of making wayang puppets from bamboo. However, in 1975 when I tried to get somebody in Blitar to make a set of such puppets for the central Museum in Jakarta, I was surprised to learn that most of the Blitarrese had lost the art as well.
Dedalane guna lawan sekti
kudu andap asor
wani ngalah duwur wekasane
tumungkula yen dipun dukani
bapang yen dipun simpangi
Ana catur mungkur

The way to virtue and mystical quality
is humbleness and politeness,
williness to submit
because finally it is highly rewarded
be patient upon reprimand;
do not ever take rebellious attitudes,
although later you can express whatever you want.

If it is accepted that human actions are to a large extent
structured by their social milieu, and the values and mental
attitudes governing activities and relationships are conditioned,
or at the very least are strongly influenced by the organisation
and the structure of the society, then the kind of ideological
perspective described here has to be taken into account in looking
at and understanding social phenomena such as the messianic
movement that I intend to analyse.

We may start with the impression of Javanese mentality as
a mentality with an inferiority complex, being timid and docile.
It is perhaps an exaggeration, but Joseph Conrad writes of Java
that "every man you meet is a slave." (1947:31). As evidence that
this mental complex is deeply entrenched in the Javanese mode of
thought, we can refer to the leader of the movement concerned who
admitted that "the commoners are just like cattle that are owned
and are placed at the owner's disposal."
The Javanese past in perspective

Despite its long history, it is only since the last century or so that the Javanese institutional system began to stabilize and came into its present shape. The main factor for this was the intrusion of the Dutch colonialism into the heart of the Javanese agrarian community. If there is one thing that Indonesian politicians and social scientists are in agreement on in their analysis of the society, it is its feudal-colonial past.

Yet, while this feudal-colonial characteristic is widely recognized, its significance and its nature are often overlooked and only partially analysed. An exception in this case is Geertz' Agricultural Involution which has adequately dealt with this question and has presented an excellent framework for Javanese colonial history. One factor not much dealt with there that is crucial to this thesis is the cultural complex generated by Javanese feudalism and its effect on the formation of Javanese ideology and mentality.

Since Agricultural Involution, some other fine works, particularly by social historians such as Sutherland (1973) and Onghokham (1975), have come out. Certain studies have also been conducted using the ecological model that Geertz has set out. These works by Elson (1978) and Fernando (1978) have fairly or unfairly reassessed Geertz' argument.

In this section, we will briefly consider Javanese history since 1830, the time when the colonial administration started to interfere actively in the countryside through a colonial system of agrarian exploitation better known as the Cultivation System. In
that year, using guns and trickery, the Dutch succeeded in putting
the 5-year old Java War to an end. The war involved a self-styled
Just King, Prince Diponegoro, who managed to rally the support of
the masses and seriously threatened the survival of the reigning
Sultan. His prospect was good, for general discontent had spread
through the principalities and his claim to be the Just King
received a wide acceptance. The Dutch defence of the Sultan
nearly cost the complete loss of Java.

For centuries, Javanese politics had given Java an image
of being unintegrated and involved in an endless intra-elite wars.
Because of the presence of the Dutch on the island, this meant
that the endless wars became exercises of self-defeating ritual;
each time a victor emerged, the Dutch became the real winners with
a greater portion of the land and more authority as a result.

Through this combined feudal-colonial political game, what
was left at the end of the Java War in 1830 were traditional
rulers with full regalia, but without much power except over
legions of token warriors used for ceremonial purposes. Their
legitimacy was either preserved or re-established for colonial
purposes. Socially, these Dutch-backed aristocrats had to serve
new roles as native colonial officers responsible for the
organization and supervision of agricultural production for
colonial demands.

This new arrangement brought about certain consequences
affecting social relations between the rulers and their subjects.
Traditionally, Javanese rural communities enjoyed a high degree of
independence in governing their own social affairs as long as
traditional obligations including taxes in labour and in kind were
properly met. In this way, despite the fact that Javanese politics was authoritarian, the prevailing authoritarianism was moderate, set up with an acceptable balance of patron-client relationships in a loosely integrated bureaucratic framework.

However, with the new pattern of political relations, this pattern of rule changed considerably. The peasantry's position became weakened in its relationships with the nobility who, in its new capacity, actively came face to face with their subjects. This meant that the relationships now became unbalanced and led to a strongly integrated and highly hierarchical bureaucratic framework. At the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy and the end of the agricultural distribution flow were the Dutch in their capacity of advisors to the traditional rulers.

As far as day to day political relations were concerned, a relatively modern administrative structure was gradually formed, ranging from the central administration in Batavia (Jakarta) at the top to the villages at the bottom. The two were strongly linked by a network of regencies and districts, manned by the newly revived local aristocrats.

The regency derived from the native administrative unit locally called kabupaten, meaning 'the abode of or the territory under the regent (locally, bupati).'. After the Dutch take-over, the term continued in use, although the Dutch term regent was officially adopted.

Traditionally, the regent exercised power that formally was authorized by the king. In the Javanese cultural setting, the king was the absolute ruler and owner of the land and everything
on them, including the people. The king's dominance over his subjects was evident. As soon as one cleared land for agriculture, one had to start paying tribute to the king in recognition of his authority. In reality, the tribute went to the regent.

In relation to the peasants, the regent's performance indicated that he was not so much the king's representative as a minor king in his own right. So long as he complied with certain formalities in recognizing the king, the regent enjoyed great independence and exercised unchallenged authority to rule, to judge, and to maintain order over the people. Part of the tribute that he received from the peasants went to the king. In addition, he also had to provide the king with material and human support in time of war.

The regency as a major social and economic unit was used by the Dutch for the Cultivation System. And yet, despite this intrusion, other arrangements remained basically unchallenged. The regent's role as the organizer of production and labour continued and even increased. The Dutch simply maintained for themselves the king's right to demand taxes.

This did not mean that the Dutch were not interested in further interference. Indeed, they did intend to exert more control and felt that the native rulers should be reduced in number and eventually be done away altogether. It was only that the cost of replacing the native officials might upset their economic interests that such further interference was not carried into effect.
Reform was, in fact, sought during the British interregnum under Lieutenant Governor Raffles in 1811-1816. Essentially, British colonial policy, as initiated by Raffles was to eliminate every element of compulsion in rural economic exploitation such as forced deliveries and corvee, and to introduce a liberal policy of rural exploitation based on individual land-rent, by which the peasants were encouraged to cultivate export crops of their own free will.

The reform clashed with the interests of the existing native political establishment. The regent was the first to suffer, because his privileges of forced deliveries and labour were restricted to only the villages assigned as his appanage. However, Raffles' brief interruption and the insufficiency of means available to him led to the failure of this reform. Furthermore, the costly Java War and economic difficulties in the mother country led the Dutch successors to think twice before risking economic failure in the wake of administrative re-organization. This led to the introduction of the Cultivation System which was a starting point of the feudal-colonial administration in the countryside.

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At the turn of the 18th century, the colonial power in Java saw successive changes. Firstly, in 1796 the East India Company, under which parts of Indonesia were either directly or indirectly colonized, went bankrupt and all its possessions were taken over by the mother state. During the period Holland was involved in the Napoleonic war against England. For a brief period, under Governor General Daendels the Dutch colonies in Indonesia officially belonged to pro-France Holland. This led to direct conflict with the British East India Company which resulted in a brief incorporation of Java and other parts of Indonesia by the British colonial power under Raffles. With the end of the war in Europe and the return of the Prince of Orange from exile, colonial authority in Batavia was returned to the Dutch.
In brief, for the Javanese peasants, the System represented just another form of forced delivery and labour of the sort they had been used to for ages. Theoretically, the system was tolerable: the peasants were now mobilized to grow export crops instead of paying taxes in cash. The idea was these extractions were to involve only a fifth of the people's agricultural land and labour equal to no more than the value of tax imposed upon rice cultivation. This was to be set at a rate ranging from one-half for wet ricefields to one-fourth for dry fields. In other words, compulsory cultivation of export crops was to replace the old landrent. In practice, however, the original landrent remained and compulsory cultivation became an addition to it.

Regents & peasants: Javanese cultural politics

When the Cultivation System was introduced in 1830, the regents and other local aristocrats lost much of their traditional status and specific roles, and were fully incorporated into the colonial bureaucracy. Losing once and for all their independence as local rulers, they never again posed a serious threat to the Dutch. And yet, for the purposes of the Cultivation System their feudal position and authoritarian power were revived. To their own people, they functioned as feudal lords, not so much bureaucrats. To the Dutch, they functioned as loyal tools of the colonial administration. Financially, they were reliant on salaries and premiums based on a percentage of the collected
government produce. This ambiguity led to serious problems. The way was open to corruption. Revived aristocratic grandeur led to a tendency to follow the royal pattern of life-style and customs. Most of the grand residencies were built during this time, complete with a combination of traditional and colonial furniture and dinner sets, all of which meant nothing to the peasants but required an increased burden to support their lords’ prodigality.

As both the Dutch and native officials shared common interests, malpractices became common. The interaction of the two sides of the bureaucracy functioned in such a way that many Dutch officers had adopted a mestizo version of the aristocratic life, while many native aristocrats became westernized. The more important thing, however, was the implication this situation had for the pattern and techniques of administration. Basically, both sides were involved in a symbiotic relationship with rituals of superfluous gift-givings and promotions based on favouritism.

Officials on both sides were well aware that their careers depended very much on the success of their mission, namely the fiscal figures from their districts. As Clive Day points out (1904:292), "nothing mattered so long as the revenues were large." As such the extent of the burden imposed upon the peasants depended very much on the individual initiatives of the local rulers, Dutch and native, rather than on fixed rules. In addition to the obligation to produce export crops, the peasants were subject to forced labour for necessary public works, such as roads and bridges, irrigation works, land clearing, warehouse building, and so on.
On top of this, to the peasants, there was no distinction between the rulers' public and private capacities. In this regard, officials of all levels found it convenient to demand their subjects' service in labour as well as in kind for their own personal interests. Parties held for weddings, circumcisions and the like involving members of the aristocratic families were very much public affairs. For the aristocrats to entertain themselves on such occasions, the people had to contribute agricultural produce, poultry, cattle and labour.

To the people, the introduction of the Cultivation System and the intensification of colonial administration resulted in little else but increased burdens, in labour as well as in agricultural extraction. Despite the fact that the Cultivation System covered a relatively small percentage of agricultural land, on the average only 5%, the percentage of peasant households involved was very high, over 70% (van Niel 1972:98). Day points out (1904:284), that "the total effect of the Cultivation System with its attendant demands was estimated to be an increase of burdens from ten to one hundred fold." So heavy was the burden in labour that a story had it that when fortifications were being built at Gombong, Central Java, the natives bound to service were ordered to take the necessary burial shrouds with them (Day 1904:285).

Not only did the extent of burdens increase, but the arbitrariness also intensified. In 1833 the regent of Gresik Lor, East Java, ordered all land registers and proof of private landowning to be collected and burnt, just to make land dealing easier (Sutherland 1973:69).
Despite a great transformation in social structure following the intrusion of the colonial bureaucracy, the value system underlying the social relationships between the aristocrats and the commoners and the institutional framework within which development was pursued remained basically the same. But the aristocrats no longer ruled on the basis of their own traditional credibility and the assent of the commoners, instead they had to rely more and more on the colonial power. Quoting Furnivall (1944:140): "...[They] were in the same position as before, but instead of standing on their own feet, they were hanging on to the Dutch Government...." With this new basis, "they could do what they liked, and they burdened the people to an extent previously unknown ...."

To the people, the new situation did not only mean increased burdens. As the regents lost their traditional ground of authority, the traditional basis for relationships with the rural communities was weakened, the peasants' loyalty to them was gradually reduced to a merely formal level. Even when the colonial exploitative pattern of the Cultivation System was officially put to an end late in 19th century, the socio-cultural structure had already been institutionalized and continued to dominate social life in the years ahead.

The Cultivation System was replaced by the so-called Ethical Policy aimed at improving the life of and protecting the interests of the peasants. Behind this stated aim, however, was the victory of liberal over conservative in the mother country on the issue of whether the colonized country should be exploited through government enterprise or through free enterprise. The
year 1870 saw the introduction of the agrarian law, followed by the sugar law, which allowed investment of private capital in the agricultural sector. With it, a new force entered the Javanese political arena, to the peasants another master, namely private enterprise.

Transitional History

The ending of the government's monopolized exploitation of the rural areas did not immediately end the notorious Cultivation System. The forced cultivation of coffee, for instance, continued until the first quarter of this century. Moreover, having been institutionalized, the social institutions of the Cultivation System period remained. Basically, they were organized to serve the purpose of the exploiters, be they the colonial government or private enterprises. The need for labour and land were met through the services of the village headmen who now were made to represent the supra-village interests rather than the village interests.

In the meantime, the liberalized colonial policy at supra-village level produced certain unexpected side-effects beneficial to the colonized community. The introduction of western education allowing certain elements in the community to enter the modern world resulted in the growing of a new consciousness responsible for the building of nationalistic sentiments. This new consciousness eventually spread among the people through legal and illegal mass organisations, including
polITICAL parties. For the first time in their history, the people were made aware of the exploitative nature of the colonial government.

At times, such consciousness developed indigenously within the framework of a local tradition. Development of this kind was responsible for the widespread outbreak of what Prof. Kartodirdjo calls 'protest movements' in the rural areas. A good example of such a movement was the Samin Movement which developed in the northern, central Java at the end of the last century (Benda & Castle 1969; Giap 1969; King 1973; and Korver 1976). The movement, which survives up to now, was at least partly motivated by grievances generated by the colonial economic over-exploitation.

There were many other movements of similar nature for which Blitar was not excepted. In 1888 a peasant movement generated by messianic ideals sprang up in the isolated, southern part of Blitar. The movement centred on a renowned guru, Jasmani, who prophesied the imminent ousting of foreign rulers, the Chinese, and the native civil servants and the coming of the Just King, locally known as the Ratu Adil. What is interesting about this movement is that hatred of the Dutch (and the Chinese) was placed at the same level as hatred of the native civil servants.

At a different level, political consciousness in the modern sense managed to arouse part of the rural population to revolt in 1926-27 against the colonial power (see Benda & McVey 1960). The severe suppression of this communist-led revolt did not completely crush popular sympathy for political agitation against colonialism. Certain underground movements continued to
survive in certain parts of Java. In Blitar, the so-called Gagak Hitam (literally, 'Black Crow') movement, which was a continuation of the organization responsible for the 1926 rebellion, survived the witch-hunt by the colonial authority of alleged communist agents and continued to be active until the end of the Japanese occupation. To a certain extent, the movement managed to instill radical ideas and to arouse hatred for foreign imperialists. A report by the Resident of Kediri to the Governor General in Jakarta in 1929 on the people's feelings gave details of incident involving a native inspector of public works who paid an official visit to a well-to-do native in the district of Kesamben, Blitar. After hearing what position the visitor held, the host told him: "Then you are the enemy of the Javanese people." (Penders 1977:288-91).

The trend of nationalistic consciousness found a wider avenue with the fall of the Dutch colonialism in the wake of the Japanese invasion. With that fall, the ideal of hierarchical relationships collapsed almost at one blow. The Japanese conquerors, it is true, were close to brutal in their treatment of the natives. However, unlike their Dutch predecessors, they did not treat the native administrative corps as an exclusive group. Older people still remember how callous and ruthless many of the Japanese were and how they used to deal out physical punishment to anybody for making mistakes. However, such humiliating punishment was not dealt only to ordinary people, but to those previously.

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8 It is a custom in Java for two new acquaintances to ask about each other's background including position.
regarded as belonging to the exclusive, elitist group as well.

For the first time the people saw that there was nothing special about these elite people: when they were found to have made a mistake, they got the same humiliating punishment, and could be scolded just like anybody else. An account of the social condition during the Japanese occupation period has been given by an ex-head of the residency of Banyumas, S.M. Gandasubrata (1953). Not only did the Japanese treat the native indiscriminately, but in fact they tended to show a conceited and arrogant attitude towards the upper class and the intellectuals, whilst towards the lower class their attitude was benevolent and familiar.

According to Gandasubrata (1953:6):

> From the beginning it was clear they improved the position of the lower classes and the masses, whilst they lowered the upper classes. They said they wished to remove the differences between these two classes.

Certain Javanese customs, such as the homage and squatting, were abolished. In clothing, following the shortage of textiles, it became usual to wear practical clothes: that is, men used shoes and shorts, whilst the women wore frocks. Eventually, this simple type of western clothing became popular even in the village (Gandasubrata 1953:12-13). And in this way, "the lower class began to acquire self-respect" (Gandasubrata 1953:13).
The proclamation of Independence on 17 August 1945 was a landmark in the nation's determination to do away with the old value system. Dominant in this old feudal, colonial value system was an hierarchical image, and this was obvious when the social atmosphere after the proclamation became very egalitarian. "Merdeka," literally meaning 'freedom,' was the popular social greeting equivalent to the English "hallo" and "bung" was the common term of address for everybody from ordinary people to the President, replacing the previous hierarchical honorific terms of address. Disagreements, however, arose within society over the issue of what value system should be instituted. The struggle for a new value system was manifest in the fact that various political parties competed with each other at the same time as they continued the armed struggle against the re-entry of the Dutch colonial forces.

In 1955, another political landmark occurred when Indonesia held its first election. The result was a polarized political life in two factions, the abangan and the santri, spearheaded by four major political parties: the nationalist PNI and the communist PKI for the abangan, and the Moslem Masjumi and NU for the santri. In terms of political platform, there was a division of the left and the right. There were also the cultural factors of aliran, literally 'stream,' which made up distinct social, cultural identities. In this kind of political pattern, supporters were recruited according to traditional

9 The term bung is said to have been created during the Revolution days by a blend of bang, a low Indonesian but coarse term for 'brother,' and the Dutch broer of the same meaning which was popular among the intellectuals.
attachments more than according to political, ideological platforms (Geertz 1960; Wertheim 1969).

During this period, President Sukarno and various local military dissidents were gaining a foothold in the country's political arena. President Sukarno was dissatisfied with his figure-head role and had been manoeuvring for a more influential position, whereas the young colonels in the regions were anxious national to obtain a more important role in the administration.

All these factors contributed to Indonesia's political instability after the 1955 election. A constitutional crisis arose when the two factions in the Constituent Assembly failed to reach a consensus on the issue of Islam versus secular state philosophy, and a showdown between various conflicting political interests was apparently unavoidable.

It was the local military dissidents who struck first. The result was Sukarno's rise from the political periphery to the centre. In mid-1959 he decreed the country's return to the 1945 Constitution which secured his direct role in politics as the head of the government. This gave him an opportunity to apply his political ideals which were basically marxist in nature couched in traditional terms.

His strategy was to bring all political forces, the nationalists, the religious groups and the communists, together in a revolutionary front. He revoked the elected legislative assemblies and replaced them with his version of assemblies based on what he called the Indonesian spirit of democracy relying on consensus. His revolutionary call was "to eradicate the remnants of feudalism and colonialism" by which "the mandate of the
people's sufferings to achieve a just and prosperous society" could be realized. Sukarno's concern was for the country's rural proletariat, the Marhaen, a term which he coined. This concern was better accommodated in the communist party's platform than in any other political party. Although he was very cautious in his political manoeuvres, a relatively moderate land reform act passed in 1960 was a point at which different political interests could no longer be brought together.

The day the act was passed, 30 September 1960, was decreed as "Peasant Day" to be commemorated as one of the ceremonial days in Indonesia's modern political calendar. Yet obviously ritual alone was not enough to satisfy the party fighting for historically deprived rights and to persuade the party standing for traditionally imposed privileges. In the years following the land reform act, Java's countryside saw the initial clashes between the partners of Sukarno's revolutionary front and it became clear that the front was bound to split apart. The law restricted land ownership-size and converted village land and ex-plantation land under peasants' occupation to private ownership. Since in Java large-scale ownership was limited,

10 He took the term from a certain Marhaen, a minor peasant he met during his political novitiate in the colonial years. He regarded Marhaen as typical of the Indonesian peasantry with their miniscule ownership of everything -- land, a house, and agricultural tools.

11 The maximum ownership of ricefields in densely populated areas such as Blitar was stipulated by the law as five hectares. By 1965, there were only a few cases of properties larger than the stipulated maximum, yet even in those cases the owners could easily evade the law by a traditional transfer of ownership called hibah, 'grant,' which in many cases was a "fictitious grant."
and ex-plantation land made up only a small part of agricultural land, the land reform act did not effect major land redistribution. In areas such as Blitar where formerly there were relatively intensive plantation activities, clashes occurred between the communist-organized peasants and vested interests.

More significant, however, was the other component of the act, namely, the one regulating crop-sharing arrangements. Traditionally, the sharecroppers formed the real agricultural working class disadvantaged by the ever increasing population pressure in Java's rural areas. These members of the lower class were the victims of their lack of capital and, consequently, had to pay a lot more for their share of agricultural production under sharecropping arrangements. In Blitar, the normal harvest division under sharecropping arrangement was mertalu or 2:1, in which the landowner took two thirds of the gross output with the production costs, excluding the sharecropper's labour, shared equally by the landowner and the sharecropper. This meant, in effect, that in real terms the harvest division was 3:1, since with traditional rice, production costs equalled approximately one third of the total harvest. The new law was intended to improve the condition of the majority of Javanese peasantry by securing a fifty-fifty division in both production costs and harvest. Obviously, this disadvantaged the landowners and, therefore, met their strong opposition.

By 1964, four years after its promulgation, there was no progress made in carrying this new crop-sharing law into effect. When the communist party took up the issue and pressed ahead with mobilizing the peasants to implement the law unilaterally, strong
reactions came from all the other parties and groups fearing a socialist revolution. Tension ran high in rural areas and the community was divided along the traditional aliran lines. Early 1965 saw physical conflicts in various places, including Blitar, that resulted from this political polarization (see Walkin 1969; Lyon 1970; Mortimer 1972). In such a situation, a head-on conflict was only a matter of time. This time it was the communists who struck first.

The New Order as Contemporary Setting

On 30 September 1965, the communists masterminded a naive coup which, although claiming the deaths of six army generals, was easily foiled. In the wake of the failure of the coup, the de facto revolutionary front broke down completely, and the nation saw the rise of a new ruler from the ranks of the military, General Suharto. Under the tacit guidance of the military, all the non-communist groups took part in the persecution of communist sympathizers. This resulted in widespread wild killings, claiming a death toll in the order of hundreds of thousands. The communists and their fellow travellers rapidly disappeared, either going underground, or being arrested or killed. Minor sympathisers had to undergo a traumatic period, being condemned to be virtual outlaws.

Despite the seemingly coordinated anti-communist alliance, political life once again rapidly polarized. The first to fall victim was President Sukarno who had tried to maintain a fragile
balance of conflicting political interests by relying for political support on his charisma.

Despite his erratic behaviour, he is remembered by many for his strong identification with the people. With his charisma, he managed to implant revolutionary ideas in the minds of the people. And with these ideas, people began to perceive themselves and the world and to speak out in their own language and with their own symbols. Slogans and maxims made popular during this period were of populist nature and were taken from the populist tradition of the community.\(^{12}\)

Yet, despite his popular successes, his manoeuvrings failed to change the military power structure. In the wake of the communist party's collapse, his most resolute supporters, his own days were numbered. His power was gradually stripped off until on 11 March 1966 General Suharto effectively managed to take over the presidency which he has continued to hold ever since. On the morning of 21 June 1970, Sukarno, the founder of the nation, passed away.

After Sukarno, the nationalist party, which he founded and used to reflect his political ideas was emasculated. Its close association with Sukarno and, to some extent, with marxism was an excuse of its demise. Taking the advantage of the party's

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\(^{12}\) An example of such slogans made popular again by Sukarno to arouse social solidarity during the time was "Ho Lapis Kuntul Baris," a cry shouted out by peasants when pulling or lifting up something heavy together. It uses the analogy of white herons that in the past made lines on the newly irrigated ricefields. Sukarno also created popular catch-words to convey meanings which were otherwise hard to grasp. See van der Kroef 1962; Wilner 1966.
weakened role as the only vanguard of the abangan, the Moslem faction in the anti-communist front pressed ahead with their long-standing aspiration for a Moslem state. Violent incidents took place in the countryside until the military authority, which was basically abangan in nature, sensed that their survival, too, was under threat.

Unlike his predecessor who relied upon a fragile balance of power, General Suharto enjoyed virtually an excess of power. Political life was restructured to impose his dominance. The aim of the political strategy was basically two-fold: first, to secure legitimacy by demoralizing his immediate political counterparts; second, to secure political control over the masses by banning all political activities in rural areas so as to leave the rural masses literally "floating" and the government apparatus unchallenged as the only source of leadership. Consequently, the political framework that had gone through the colonial period, the revolution and the Sukarno's era and had accommodated the tripartite structure of nationalists, religious groups and the communists, was dismantled. The public service, too, was structured to adopt a principle of political mono-loyalty; and the government's dominance in the legislative assemblies was secured by a major proportion of appointed deputies.

However, despite the excess of power that was held by the government, the depolitization policy did not really bring about the expected changes in the rural areas. The objective to make bureaucratic patronage acceptable to the rural community did not fully succeed for two reasons. Firstly, the government failed to appeal to the santri community which, to a certain extent, managed
to maintain its alignment through traditional, religious institutions. Secondly, the effect of the tight security that the government maintained led to structures that became too bureaucratic, paternalistic and, to some extent, corrupt, and thus hardly met the approval of the abangan rural community who had been politicized by the revolution and the Sukarno years.

In this political situation, the first election of the post-Sukarno period was held: impaired political parties had to face the full force of the bureaucratic power and its military partner. The predictable result was the government's success in winning an overwhelming majority of votes. Yet, ironically, this "success" led to a growing frustration. From time to time, this frustration surfaced in the form of all kinds of protests. In the cities, students expressed their grievances over corrupt and undemocratic practices, while in the countryside they reacted to widespread administrative abuses. The authority, however, would not tolerate any resistance and all protests were dealt with severely.

In 1974, students protests against a visit by the Japanese Prime Minister led to violence in the major cities. This provided the authority with an excuse to crack down on demonstrations, put students leaders and other opposition activists in jail, and close down critical newspapers. Political stability was once again restored, at least temporarily. Despite economic successes that were widely accepted, the greater involvement of the government apparatus at the village level caused strain on practically all sectors of the community.
On the eve of the second election in 1977, political control tightened even more. Political parties were involuntarily regrouped into two: the PPP accommodating all the Moslem groups, and the PDI accommodating all other non-Moslem groups. Together, however, these parties were no match for the government's political wing, Golkar, which enjoyed full bureaucratic facilities and military support. Students leaders who survived the crack-down managed to mobilize another wave of protests in the early 1978, on the eve of the Presidential re-election, only to be severely dealt with once again. When the fieldwork started in Blitar late in 1979, an imposed order prevailed once more, yet the trauma of past tensions was present and the people's yearning for justice and order continued.

Blitar: the Regency Setting

When travelling through Blitar nowadays, one is impressed by the well-cared for agricultural lands, good infrastructure and moderate standard of livelihood. Indeed, throughout history Blitar has been relatively well-off.

Located to the south of Mount Kelud and to the north of the Indian Ocean: on the southern part of East Java, Blitar is divided by the River Brantas, the main drainage for the region. Geologically, these two parts, the southern and the northern portions of Blitar, are of greatly different appearance and provide different habitats.
Chapter 2

The northern portion is associated with Mount Kelud, known for its periodical eruptions which bring disaster as well as fertility to the area; the southern portion is associated with the infertility of the southern tertiary ranges composed of limestone, sandstone and karst. In between lies the Blitar lowland, the richest, most intensively cultivated and densely populated part of the regency.

Nowadays the general view of Blitar is not much different from other agricultural areas in Java - enclaves of tree-screened villages interspersed among ricefields. But a century ago the view was quite different. Sparse population and wilderness were evident as indicated by the following demographic comparison between Blitar's lowland districts of Srengat and Blitar and Jombang's district of Mojoagung, 40 kilometres east of Surabaya.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area in sq.km</th>
<th>Density per sq.km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blitar's</td>
<td>20,612</td>
<td>1,087.5</td>
<td>18.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mojoagung</td>
<td>20,180</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>74.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Suwandi 1978:23

Jonathan Rigg, a member of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences, who in 1847 travelled through the area, recorded this impression (Rigg 1849:495):
"...for want of population ...vast tracts of fine land ...are lying waste and useless, and even under the most favourable circumstances, some generations must pass away before all the good land is likely to be occupied.

We will see that later figures fail to support Rigg's prediction\textsuperscript{13} As the previous table indicates, in comparison with Mojoagung, the population density of Blitar in 1845 was much lower, amounting to only about one fourth that of Mojoagung. Since then, however, the density figures have increased considerably. Table 2 indicates that by 1930 the population of Blitar had multiplied more than 20 times, while for Mojoagung it had multiplied only 8 times. The annual rate of increase for Blitar in 1845-1890 was 4.49 percent, much higher than the trend for the whole of Java for the same period which never reached 4 percent.

There is no doubt that in-migration was the main factor for Blitar's rapid population growth which was consistent with its pattern of agricultural exploitation. In 1930, the year the first census was held, the percentage of immigrants in Blitar's total population was nearly 25%.

\textsuperscript{13}To start with, the accuracy of the figures that Rigg quoted in support of his impression is generally doubted. The population figures collected by Blaeker in 1845 that Rigg now and then cited are seen as under-registered (Peper 1975:98; Breman 1971:19; Nitisastro 1970:63). The discrepancy revealed by later surveys varies by district to district from between 5 to 50 percent, and a 20 percent under-enumeration is applied in Table 1 to get just a very rough idea.
TABLE 2

POPULATION DENSITY IN BLITAR'S DISTRICTS AND JOMBANG'S DISTRICT OF MOJOAGUNG, 1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area in sq.km.</th>
<th>Density per sq.km.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blitar's northern</td>
<td>443,505</td>
<td>1,020.18</td>
<td>434.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>districts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blitar's southern</td>
<td>145,911</td>
<td>728.71</td>
<td>200.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>districts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jombang's Mojoagung</td>
<td>135,710</td>
<td>212.92</td>
<td>637.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kantoor voor de Volkstelling 1934

The population movement was initially begun by the turmoil of the Java War in the late 1820's. A combination of a stabilized social order in the wake of the war resulting in the increasing population pressure and the intensified exploitation of the countryside through the Cultivation System caused a migration to less densely populated areas in the east including Blitar. Early comers managed to secure secondary rights to land in already established villages or primary rights to the unclaimed lands in remote areas such as south Blitar. Later they came for jobs in plantations. Blitar's district of Klingi, which was basically a plantation centre, was one of the towns with the highest proportion of immigrants in East Java in 1930, namely 45.9%

This history of demographic change has contributed to some of Blitar's traditions. Many of these traditions were said to link with two major cultural centres in Central Java - Jogjakarta and Surakarta. Today one can see in Blitar names of villages identifiable as of Central Javanese origin, such as Matraman,
Mantingan, or Bagelenan. A dance troupe from north Blitar, the so-called Reyog Bulkio, is unlike any other troupe in the region or the surrounding areas, and is closer to a kind of dance from Central Java's Bagelen. Folktales have it that village founders came from the west, and many of the historical landmarks are of Central Javanese origin. The name of the village Bajang, for instance, is said to have been given by a certain Raden Mas Said, a well known rebel prince who revolted against the Surakarta rulers in the second half of the eighteenth century (Arudjipramono 1968; Bajang 1970:4); a legend about the origin of a sacred gong now kept in the district of Lodoyo has it that a certain Prince Puger of Demak, who rose in rebellion against his own brother Prince Seda Krapyak, the second King of Mataram (1601-1613), had to escape to the jungle in South Blitar, bringing with him his sacred gong (Tani 1946:8-9).14

It is irrelevant to this discussion whether these kinds of traditional links are well-founded. What is relevant is the fact that certain modes of thought, such as those of the movement under study, rely on these links as a source of legitimacy.

From the outset the Dutch realized that lack of population was a major obstacle to Blitar's full agricultural exploitation.

14 Annually, the gong is given a ceremonial bath in the month of Maulud (this traditional calendar is peculiar in that it is a Javanized version of the Islamic calendar). Traditionally, the ceremony was a major official event, equivalent to the ceremonial bathing of the sacred gongs of the Jogjakarta House. In the late 1950's, however, along with the rise of both secular and Muslim political parties, traditional ceremonies were discouraged and eventually lost their official statuses. Yet, in mid 1970's, in accord with the national trend to revive traditionality as part of the new political style, the annual ceremony was made official again, complete with the old grandeur and spirit.
For this reason the area was exempted from landrents in the hope of encouraging the increase of population.

The first colonial economic exploitation in the area was perhaps a saw mill founded in 1830 at the village of Gaprang, about 5 kilometres southeast of the town. By the middle of the 19th century, however, coffee was the chief crop the Blitarese had to cultivate for the Dutch. Rigg’s account mentions that "the coffee gardens are found everywhere very clean, and in healthy, thriving condition." (Rigg 1849:235) Sugar, which was the chief colonial product in many other areas, came late to Blitar and could never replace the significance of coffee. In Blitar, coffee continued to be a compulsory crop long after the liberal reform of 1870.

It was probably in 1906 that the compulsory cultivation of coffee in Blitar ended (Suwandi 1978:76), at the time when private coffee plantations were already well-established in the northern part of the region. To the present, Blitar continues to be a coffee-producing area through private and government plantations as well as through planting through individual small holders.

All of the private plantations suffered during the Japanese occupation. Most of the coffee trees were cut down and replaced with maize or castor oil plants for war purposes. The damage was even greater during the Revolutionary years that followed, when the peasants occupied many of the plantations and converted them into agricultural lands and villages. The occupation of the plantations was, in fact, encouraged then by the military authorities as part of the scorched-earth policy. Later on, the plantations were transformed into de facto villages with
the peasants possessing usufruct rights (Soetikno 1961:14-15).

Some plantations, however, survived the transformation and continued to function in a much reduced state. With the return of law and order, the old private enterprises tried to recoup their former rights from "illegal" settlers. In the neighbouring regency of Kediri in 1954, the recouping attempts resulted in physical clashes with the settlers, mostly backed by radical peasants organizations including the communist affiliated one. Further clashes were only avoided when, in the following year, diplomatic relations with Holland were severed as a consequence of the heightening conflict over West Irian. Dutch enterprises in Indonesia were nationalized, including those in the plantation sector. Most of the Dutch-owned plantations were transformed into government-owned enterprises: a few, for various reasons, were transformed into either cooperatives or private enterprises. The status quo was maintained with settlers and, with the promulgation of the new agrarian law in 1960, theoretically, these settlers were entitled to be granted full property rights.

The implementation of the new agrarian law as regards the conversion of ex-plantation lands was very slow. When the abortive communist coup took place in September 1965, the edict granting the settlers ownership had only just been issued. The coup, however, reversed this development. Instead of being granted ownership, settlers were rounded up under the pretext of close association with communist organisations and were re-settled in narrow plots of land, just enough for each of them to have a minimum dwelling, whereas their cultivated lands were returned into the old plantations under new managements.
Blitar was the last regency formed by the Dutch within the residency of Kediri. When the Dutch formed the residency of Kediri in 1830, Blitar was administratively only a minor district. Its administrative centre was in Srengat (currently a sub-district under the regency of Blitar) which had sub-regency status under the regency of Tulungagung (de Klerck 1909:392).

In 1846, this sub-regency was made a separate regency. However, there was no assistant-resident \(^{15}\) appointed and day to day administration was the responsibility of a controleur \(^{16}\).

In 1850, administration was shifted from Srengat to Blitar. Only in 1863, however, was Blitar promoted to the status of a full regency. This made Blitar the last regency established in the residency of Kediri.

The relatively late administrative development of Blitar was attributable mainly to the developing social and economic significance of the region. Blitar was seen by the Dutch as historically one of the difficult areas in the southern part of Java (de Klerck 1909:193), an image derived from its traditional reputation as an area of refuge for all sorts of bravados, rebel princes and fugitives. In a way this reputation continues to live in popular imagination - some native Blitarese are proud of their alleged link to Surapati, a well-known self-styled king who fought

\(^{15}\) Assistent-resident was the Dutch counterpart of the bupati who was the native ruler of a regency. The Dutch administrator was often referred to as the big brother of the native ruler.

\(^{16}\) The controleur was the Dutch official superintending the cultivation and collection of export crops.
against the Dutch-backed central Javanese throne. Some say that the various insurrections that have taken place in the area can partly be explained by this tradition.

Two recent insurrections, for which Blitar is widely known, are worth mentioning. In February 1945, during the Japanese occupation, the garrison of the native auxiliary army in Blitar revolted against the Japanese. In 1968, in the wake of the abortive communist coup, South Blitar saw a desperate attempt by what was left of the communist underground movement to launch a guerrilla war Vietcong-style by taking the advantage of the relatively isolated and rough terrain of the area. However, to the nation Blitar is best known as the birthplace and burial place of the proclaimer of Indonesia's independence, Sukarno.

Socially, Blitar is predominantly abangan. A recalculation of the results of the 1955 elections (the first and the only elections reliable for estimating social division arising from political polarization), shows that over two-thirds of the Blitarese are abangan (Suwandi 1978:28) and one third santri.

Currently, the total population of the region is a little over one million living on 1,604 square kilometres of land. General population density is 624 per square kilometre. Territorially, the density in north Blitar is 815 and in South Blitar is 318 per square kilometre.

17 Locally which stands for Pembela Tanah Air or literally 'defenders of the fatherland.' The troop was founded by the Japanese to supplement their regular forces. As for the revolt in Blitar, see Prawiroatmodjo (1953) and Notosutanto (1968).
According to the region's 1978 registration, over 50% of the working age group, namely those over 10 years old, were in the agricultural sector, including 15% agricultural labourers. The second and the third largest categories of employment were in the trading sector and in the government service, each with 3%.

In 1980 out of 160,390.813 hectares of land, 135,135.850 hectares or 84.25% was agricultural land; this included 21% ricefields, 26.45% dry-fields, 23.73% house-gardens, and 13.14% plantations (Bappeda II Blitar 1980).

There were 114,795 plots of agricultural property. A further breakdown of the workforce in the agricultural sector is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Peasant with land &lt; 0.25 ha</th>
<th>Peasant with land 0.25 - 0.50 ha</th>
<th>Peasant with land &gt; 0.50 ha</th>
<th>Share-cropper</th>
<th>Laborer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Blitar</td>
<td>38,469</td>
<td>21,267</td>
<td>21,001</td>
<td>80,757</td>
<td>13,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Blitar</td>
<td>7,747</td>
<td>8,429</td>
<td>17,862</td>
<td>34,038</td>
<td>9,648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46,216 29,716 38,863 114,795 23,443 79,513

Source: Bappeda II Blitar 1980.

18 Territorially, there is a striking contrast in landownership between that in north Blitar and in south Blitar because of the great difference in soil fertility affecting agricultural productivity.
Most of the ricefield land lies in the fertile lowland which has a good irrigation system from rivers running from the foot of Mount Kelud in the north to the River Brantas. The system was partly laid down during the heyday of the colonial sugar cropping. There were two sugar mills operating in the area during the pre-independence period. They were burnt down as part of the scorched earth policy during the independence war, and with that, the notorious impact of sugar farming upon the Blitarrese peasantry was virtually put to an end.
CHAPTER III

THE CULTURAL WORLD OF JAVANESE VILLAGERS

Physically, there is nothing significant about the village of Lively Rock in Blitar.¹ When I came to do my fieldwork in the area, the village was not mentioned in the briefing that I was given by the local authorities. The village is as seemingly average as other villages in the area.

Yet, it is in this village of Lively Rock that the movement under study is concentrated. On a 2-hectare plot of house-yard dancing sessions are held practically everyday. On Sundays such sessions are attended by hundreds of dancers. By Javanese standards, these sessions are tremendous. And yet when I came to the local cultural office, I was not told about the cultural activities which were taking place at the Lively Rock. This office is also supposed to be aware of indigenous beliefs.

¹The normal translation of the hidden meaning of the village should be 'the Prolific Rock.' There is a reason for its current translation in this study which will become self-evident.
And yet although the activities in the Lively Rock were easily recognizable, I was not told about any ritualistic activities, although I was told about a number of religious groups of much less significance. As far as the official record is concerned, the artistic as well as ritualistic activities which take place in the Lively Rock are non-existent.

This study is intended to explain why Embah Wali, the leader, is so popular with one sector of the community and is not popular with other sectors. The point is that, whereas Embah Wali presents a remarkable cultural case, there are some elements in his performance which represent a general trend in the society.

This chapter is an introduction to a chapter which is concerned to recount Embah Wali's life as it is told by him and by those who know him, particularly those who in this study are categorized as his disciples. Because this life story has to be understood against the background of a particular cultural and ideological world, this introductory chapter is devoted to a review of this world as already analysed at length by other writers. In this cultural world, I will try to sketch the traditional background to the symbolic system which Embah Wali creates to mobilize popular support and the image of an alternative social life which he instills.

This section, however, does not purport to go into the details of the cultural world which colours Javanese rural life.

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2 Most prominent among these studies are Geertz's The Religion of Java (1960), Anderson's Mythology & the Tolerance of the Javanese (1965) and "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture" (1972), and Jerome Weiss' Ph.D. thesis The Folk Psychology of the Javanese of Ponorogo (1977).
Instead, I will deal only with those aspects of the cultural world that most obviously affect daily behaviour and attitudes to life.

The Lively Rock is a sub-village. It is located 13 kilometres east of Blitar, 3 kilometres off the Blitar-Malang road and 4 kilometres southwest of the district town Wlingi. The district town serves as an administrative centre for rural areas with considerable agricultural potential. In the past, the town developed out of the plantation boom in its northern part. According to the 1930 Census, Wlingi was a district town with the highest proportion of in-migrants in Java. Not much of this past glory remains now, except that a sense of rapid changes prevails in the area.

At present, the educational system and the media have brought the rural areas closer to modern Indonesia. In Embah Wali's boyhood, however, they served only as peep holes through which modern ideas could be glimpsed. Embah was aware of the notion of colonial domination since his early days without ever going to school. There is no doubt that schooling was not a necessity of the time. Popular world views were still dominated by traditional ways of ideological socialization which directed individuals to what they believed in. In other words, through the traditional process of ideological socialization Javanese villagers were brought into a cultural world which incorporated various traditions. In the case of the Javanese village, there was the great tradition represented by the wayang tradition and the little tradition that grew out of the daily life. Both traditions were concerned with a vision of inner quietude as instrumental in establishing happiness. However, whereas the
great tradition stressed the philosophical ideals of pre-Islamic religious doctrine popularly called kebatinan, 'the knowledge of the inner life,' as the basis of a search for quietude through asceticism, meditation, and various other practices leading to the achievement of a spiritual union between man and the absolute, the little tradition was more concerned with the daily reality of life exposed to all kinds of influences including the operation of various supernatural forces.

For the little tradition, human happiness was best served by maintaining conciliatory relations with those forces rather than achieving the high ideals of spiritual union which, although perfectly correct, were beyond the capacity of the majority of Javanese commoners. With the intensified interference of the supra-village administration during the colonial period, the manifestation of the great tradition in the countryside was even further institutionalised in social relations.

Dominant in the Javanese rural tradition is the belief that apart from its visible, physical aspect, the universe has its invisible aspects, which are the source of various supernatural powers. The realm of the spirits, like the human world, is structured.
Through ideological socialization, a Javanese villager is made aware of the presence of the various mystical powers. Because of complex religious heritage, there is no uniform notion of mystical power, particularly in relation to the notion of God. Indigenous religious conceptions range from one extreme, that there is no other mystical power but God the Almighty, to the other that there is no personified manifestation of mystical power in the form of God. In between there are those beliefs that emphasize the Almightiness of God from which all other manifestations of mystical power derive to those which regard God as but one of various personified manifestations, perhaps the highest, in an hierarchical structure of mystical power. In this section I will deal only with the general notion of mystical power, but, in doing so, I will move back and forth between extremes whenever this is required by the line of the discussion.

Mystical power is much like electricity. It can be present anywhere in different degrees. Phenomenal natural features such as volcanoes, great rivers, the ocean, large trees, and the like are believed to be inhabited by spirits with mystical powers. Rare things, such as breadfruit stones (breadfruit is supposed not to have a stone), tiger's canine tooth, precious
stones and the like are by nature mystically powerful, and so are extraordinary beings such as dwarfs or albino water-buffaloes. Other mystical objects like krisses, gongs, spears, guns and the like may be man-made, but still possess mystical power.

Like electricity, mystical power is transferable and unstable. It can come or go, can be boosted or wasted. It can be technically made to be present such as in the case of a man-made kris, and it can be paranormally acquired through various mystical techniques. The greatest appearance of mystical power is God the Almighty. Spirits possess different degrees of mystical power, and so do human beings. One greatly revered spirit is, for instance, Nyai Roro Kidul, 'the Goddess from the South Seas.' The mystical power of some figures continues to be present long after their deaths. As such, the graves of such figures become hallowed objects of pious visits.

Ultimately, the mystical quality of human beings is stratified according to rank and generation. Elders are mystically higher than juniors, aristocrats higher than the commoners. Because of this structure, people need to observe norms so as not to transgress the mystical rule. Juniors must not be in a position physically higher than elders, commoners must bow as low as possible in front of aristocrats.

This rule applies to the realm of spirits as well so that when one enters a strange place, one needs to greet invisible inhabitants of the place. When Embah Wali went to Banyuwangi, the easternmost town in Java in 1939, an epidemic was spreading in

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See Chapter IV:100.
the area. When leaving the place, he did not bid the resident spirits farewell as he was used to doing, fearing that the epidemic-causing spirits would follow him home. Angry parents are believed to be capable of endangering their children, because what they unthinkingly say may come true. A curse called kualat may befall someone after arguing with parents, or after transgressing sacred places or objects. Certain objects, places, persons, parts of human body such as the head are believed to possess high mystical power capable of endangering people unless properly dealt with. In other words, the transgression of the high mystical power leads to a condition contrary to being selamet, that is, a situation of cilaka or 'misfortune.'

The aristocrats are believed to be born mystically superior; the commoners mystically inferior. As such, society is structurally divided on hereditary lines. The aristocratic minority is destined to rule, whereas the rest of the society is destined to be ruled. However, regardless of their innate qualities, individuals may have access to various sources of mystical power. Therefore, one's mystical quality can be increased through the possession of mystical objects such as krisses or precious stones, through visits to hallowed places that may convey mystical power, and through the adoption of various 'mystical techniques' which allow the acquisition of more mystical power.

Kings and regents are the manifestation of the highest mystical power in human beings. The adoption of names such as Hamengkubuwono ('having the universe on his lap'), Pakubuwono ('the nail of the universe'), Pakualam ('the nail of the world') indicate the association of these rulers with cosmic power. Their
innate superiority is even further increased by various mystical objects in their possession, including the regalia, but also by the collection of rare things and beings. The Susunan House of Surakarta is known to keep a number of albino water-buffaloes implicitly named *Kyai Selamet* and dwarfs called *Kalawija*. To boost their mystical superiority even more, the tradition implies that kings maintain sexual relations with none other than the Goddess from the South Seas. In both the Surakarta and Jogyakarta Palaces, dancing rituals are performed to symbolize such relations.

As mystical power may come and go, aristocrats and kings in particular, are supposed to be keen performers of mystical techniques, mostly of self-abnegation. The *wayang* provides a picture of such techniques and of what can be gained from their application. It recounts tales of how genuine knights who are keen performers of mystical techniques are destined to win in battles and eventually to rule, whereas ogres and false knights who prefer to indulge in the worldly pleasures are bound to lose.

Traditionally, performing mystical techniques for the aristocrat is a rule. If the *wayang* lore presents an ideal picture of this aristocratic world, it conveys ample stories about the unbending determination and unending pursuit of the knight for mystical control. Because of the significance of the great tradition in the formation of the Javanese ideology, this picture is often aristocrat oriented, and in many ways the art of mystical technique is superimposed on mystical teachings or what is better known as *kebatinan*, 'the science of the inner-man.' This is a religious stream emanating primarily from Indic religious
traditions which emphasizes higher mystical enquiry, particularly revelation of the existential mystery. In contrast to the aristocratic ideals of mystical pursuit, there is another side to certain mystical efforts known as kanuragan, 'the science of mystical versatility.' whose aims are to acquire specific worldly advantages.

Because of the deep influence of the great tradition in the life of ordinary people, this picture of the mystical realm is widely held by villagers, too. Despite the handicap of having to devote most of their time and energy in the agricultural production, the villagers often practice some mystical techniques as part of their observance of mystical goals.

The simplest form of observance takes the form of maintaining good relations with the mystical realm through the selametan ritual. Basically, this feast of solidarity with the neighbourhood also involves the major spirits in the vicinity. All of them take part in the ritual which is focused on a set of dishes served by the host and set out, generally but not always, on a mat on the floor of the main room. The participants, the host and the neighbours, sit on the mat around the dishes which symbolize the meaning the host wishes to emphasize.

At village level, these meanings are arrived at by drawing folk-etymologies from the names of the dishes, and allowing the chanter freedom to innovate new meanings. The following is an example of the significance and expectations that can be drawn from selametan dishes. The selametan concerned was held by a

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6See Geertz (1964).
member of the Embah Wali movement and the chant happened to be delivered by none other than Embah Wali. While the pattern of folk-etymologizing is typical, the particular form of the folk-etymology was in no way typical.

The selametan was held to celebrate the Javanese birthday of a boy, and the part of the chant dealing with food symbolism was as follows:

"... With JENANG it is expected that he (the boy whose birthday was being celebrated) can JEjeg (stand upright) and meNANGi (follow closely) what his mind (nalar which will be discussed separately) says according to the right rules of conduct; with jenang PETHAK it is expected that he can moTHAK-mathuk (reach agreement) with others and avoid disagreement; with jenang ABKIT it is expected that he knows obahe BeRITA (the movement of news) and understands the spirit of the letters; with jenang pari BARU it is expected that beBAREgan (together with the others) he lives and loves others in the universe; with jenang TULAK it is expected that future misfortune can be TULAK (kept away) while the prevailing misfortune can be met happily; with sego GOLO!

After a series of syncretic chants, depending on the particular conception of the mystical power that dominates the feast, the spirits including the God are asked to grant the host's request which is supported by the other guests who pool their mystical power for the purpose indicated by the host. It is assumed that with the participants, the neighbours and the spirits, agreeing and supporting whatever the host wants, the mystical power can be produced, aggregated, and re-transmitted in the form of berkah, 'blessing.' Thus the sanctified food is able to bring about the selamet from which the ritual, selametan, takes its name.
Selamet can also be established by purification. It can be done with the help of a ritualist who can literally "fence" (mageri) person or a place with mystical power. Selamet can also be gained through certain mystical charms. Young coconut leaves, for instance, are believed to be capable of keeping evil forces away. They are used widely in ceremonies as decoration, such as gate tassels. Whoever passes the gate is purified and therefore selamet.

Many people commit themselves to relations with the mystical realm that are closer than those through selametan. They go and visit cult places of mystical significance to share the blessing of some extraordinary power and thus gain selamet. They can also practice mystical techniques or follow instructions based on kanuragan for worldly purposes. Because of its material aims, kanuragan is less respected and is usually accepted with ambiguity. Sukarjo, a puppeteer who is one of Embah Wali's followers, told me about the kind of kanuragan widely adopted in soccer. He said that a player can be literally "filled" with kanuragan by a practitioner by having his shins accupunctured with steel needles to make him win tackles. He can also learn a spell to make his opponents weak. To indicate that having kanuragan for this purpose is not so admirable, Sukarjo told of his own unpleasant experience. One day, having just come from a soccer match, the steel needles fell from his shin onto the floor in front of his father. Knowing what this indicated, his father was very angry and rebuked him severely. He was quite sure, however,

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7 The tradition of visiting places of mystical significance is locally called jiakah.
that when his father was young, he must have possessed the same thing, because the practice was quite normal among soccer players.

For his profession in the wayang theatre, Sukarjo adopts several kinds of kanuragan spells. There are spells for preventing rain, for warding off malicious spirits and supernatural powers which may trouble his performance and for attracting an audience. All the spells concern conditions required for the success of his profession. Without these spells, he said he could not perform. He acquired the spells and some other qualities by learning from well-known gurus as well as by unyieldingly practicing certain mystical techniques since his boyhood. Most of the techniques involve fasting, including fasting every Monday and Thursday coupled with other forms of fasting such as abstaining from salt, from meat, from cooked food, from food other than vegetables. He also visits places of mystical importance including the graves of prominent figures. His becoming a follower of Embah Wali came in the course of his routine visits to prominent gurus.

Another kanuragan experience comes from Embah Wali's second-most senior disciple, Trisnoko. He said he used to have no less than 38 gurus, including one spirit from the South Sea. With his kanuragan, he could make himself invisible and invulnerable to weapons. He used to practice mystical techniques of self-abnegation and live an austere life. He slept outdoors, very often in an abnormal position; at one time, he slept in the middle of a cluster of banana trees, on another occasion on a rock in the middle of a river. Most times he fasted or abstained from certain foods.
Harder than fasting are mystical techniques of an ascetic nature, generally referred to as ngelakoni. There is no clear rule as to what form of action falls under this category. A tentative way of defining ngelakoni is if such actions defy standard rules of behavior and thus place the performer outside the community. Examples of ngelakoni actions are amply found in the life of Embah Wali. In 1940, for example, he took off his clothes and wore only a loincloth for no less than 15 years.\(^8\)

Embah Wali and his disciples were not the only ones who lived ngelakoni lives. In that period there was another figure similar to Embah who, in fact, started his ngelakoni life much earlier than Embah. He was Embah Suro of Wates, South Blitar, who, many people believe, was Embah Wali's senior as well as rival. In his own way, Embah Suro awed many people, yet he did not go as far as Embah Wali.

When a person has achieved a relatively high mystical state, he may be known as a wong pintecer (a wise man), a common term for a man in possession of mystical expertise, or a dukun which is a general term for all sorts of spiritual practitioners including mystical healers and counsellors. Wong ngeter (one who knows), wong tuwo (old person), or embah (an honorific address meaning 'grandfather') are also used to refer to the same sorts of persons, although they need not necessarily be elderly.

Here and there one can expect to find somebody of this

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\(^8\) An account in Appendix I by Trisnoko, the secondmost senior disciple, provides an idea of how harsh a ngelakoni he has lived. In Appendix II, Trisnoko recounts his encounter with somebody undergoing a ngelakoni life -- Embah Suro who was senior to Embah Wali.
sort in the countryside. In Lively Rock itself, for instance, there were at one time two men of this sort: Embah Kasanp rawiro who was Embah Wall's father and who served for a period as a sub-village chief, and Embah Arjoprawiro who lived in the neighbourhood.9

The Words of the Ancestors

Belief in the dominance of mystical power leads to a tradition of folk-etymology which is not peculiarly Javanese. For the purpose of this thesis, I do not intend to deal theoretically with the tradition itself, but I will be concerned with the tradition as it is used in the countryside as a way of creating symbolic expressions in the social intercourse.

There is a need for the Javanese of not only maintaining formal relations with the mystical world through rituals such as selametan, but also of grasping the meaning of the mystical world. Although the mystical world is mysterious, it is not without an intelligibility. Significance as a rule, is always cryptically expressed through symbols, literary, natural or imaginary, which are locally called perlambang. The Javanese go to great lengths in trying to decipher the significance of this covert information.

Although this covert information is open to all, only those who are steeped in the tradition or trained in the science of traditional symbols may understand. Some of the knowledge

9Short accounts of both these wise men are in Appendix III.
which relates to ordinary events, is given by tradition. Thus, for instance, a visit by an unexpected guest is indicated by the warbling of a prenjak bird around the house; the death of a relative, if a small lizard called cecak, which normally hangs on house walls and ceilings, falls upon one's head; or, the coming of a disastrous period when a comet appears in the sky.

Other information is closely linked with the literature of the great tradition in that meanings are cryptically couched in beautifully ambiguous words. "It is that the ancestors," one wise man said, "are inclined to scramble their messages in the intentionally perplexing order of words." A literary tradition called candrasengkala, for instance, is a cryptic way of expressing important dates. Because this is a literary tradition, the words used are usually old Javanese, which is known only by men of letters and traditionalists such as the wayang puppeteers. In many cases the mystical meaning of words is intensified by pairing impossibly contradictory terms in a kind of word play. So, for instance, the following phrases describe high mystical state:

antara ana lan tanana  † between existence and inexistence
sugih tanpa banda, digdaya tanpa aji, unggul tanpa bala, menang tanpa ngasorake  † rich without wealth, † supernaturally invulnerable † without charms, superior † without army, victorious † without defeating
sing isi iku suwung, sing suwung iku isi  † the one which is full is † empty, the one which is † empty is full
The search for hidden meanings, as part of an understanding of the mystical realm, is extended and perpetuated by the wayang tradition. The theatre, because of its strong court-oriented basis, is full of ancestral words: old Javanese literary phrases woven throughout the recital. Except for certain esoteric, ritual chants, the puppeteer has to make these literary phrases clear to the audience.

A puppeteer, well-trained in the literary tradition, may pursue the meanings of the difficult words etymologically. However, most of the rural-class puppeteers are not that qualified. They know the literary tradition by memorizing but do not necessarily understand its full significance. Pressed for vocabulary, they have no other alternative but to pursue the meanings of the difficult, literary words by folk-etymologizing. For instance, "a king who is andanawarih," refers to 'a king who is a guardian against ogres or danawa' (an danawa ri). Folk-etymologically, however, this is interpreted to mean 'a king who is generous with gifts or dana (an dana warih).

Because of the importance of the wayang in daily social life, folk-etymology becomes an effective tool of symbolic expressions. It can be applied jokingly, seriously or critically. When some close friends are having a relaxed conversation over coffee and snacks, and they realize that the snacks are finished, one may comment on the empty plate or PIRING by saying that it is called PIRING because when sePI (it is lonely or empty) miring (it slants); another speaker, holding his cup of coffee, may reply by commenting on the cup or CANGKIR as something which nyanCANG (ties) pikIR (one's mind). This kind of folk-etymologizing is
done jokingly. But when a father advises his newly-married son on family affairs and comments that *GARWA* (a wife) is like *siGARaning nyawa* (half of one's soul), he is serious. When Embah Wali says that the word *REPUBLIC* for 'republic' in the Republic of Indonesia means *keRE sak eBLIK* (bleg) or 'heaps of beggars,' he is being critical of the current situation. By that, he implies that the country is full of officials with a mendicant mentality who are keen on taking bribes.

Folk-etymology is an efficient tool not only for conveying controversial messages, but also for legitimizing fundamental statements. In fact, the claims that Embah makes are all based on his re-interpretation of words, in that he asserts that the bad situation at present is caused by the wrong interpretation of the meanings of words. In the community, folk-etymology is also used intentionally to transgress moral taboos. Whereas normally *JIMAT* refers to a charm, Embah says it is none other than 'barang sIJI diruMAt,' something which is always well kept, thus referring to the male sexual organ. *SELAMET* is none other than 'SELA sak iMEt,' a tiny gap, referring to the vagina.

In the Tradition of the Messianic Just King

The Javanese concern for *selamet* and *tenterem,* however, is not completely understandable without looking at its messianic aspect. In fact, it is because of various sporadic messianic movements that the Javanese village can have its history felt. The tradition, it is true, does not derive from the village. It
has been invoked by rulers, rebels and peasants yearning for justice. As early the 19th century, the rebel Prince Diponegoro identified himself as the Ratu Adil, the Just King, and predicted an end to the prevailing injustice. In the modern colonial period, Sukarno often invoked this enduring tradition to justify Indonesia's struggle for independence.10

Culturally, the tradition is a Javanese religious hybrid. The strong Indic tradition in Javanese religiosity has led to the widespread concept of world rejection, as well as to various ideas of self-abnegation and asceticism. Of particular importance in this case is the tradition of the hermit, which is conveyed to the villages through wayang. Hermits, distancing themselves from social life, have an opportunity to make social comment. In wayang, the advice of an ascetic priest is sought because from his position, the priest can offer an alternative view which might otherwise be missed. Sometimes such an alternative view challenges the generally accepted view and provides the basis for messianic ideas. Thus when the situation in the real world is too confusing and too oppressive to bear without protest, it can only be remedied through the appearance of a Just King.

Blitar seems to have long been fertile ground for this tradition. A strong manifestation of messianic ideas is reflected in what happened in southern Blitar in the last century. In 1888 a certain Jasmani of the Birawa district stirred his followers to revolt and proclaimed himself the long-awaited Just King (Kartodirdjo 1972:112). Later other wise men spoke about the

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10 See Sukarno's defence oration in the political trial of 1930, Indonesia Accuses!, edited by Roger K. Paget (1975).
imminent coming of a Just King. In Embah's youth, for instance, Embah Suro, also from southern Blitar, claimed that the Just King was already in existence but had not yet come to power. By this he was referring to Surakarta's Prince Pakubuwono XII. In 1945, Embah Jugo of northern Blitar was the guru to young officers of Blitar's Japanese-sponsored auxiliary army battalion. These young officers led the battalion in revolt and linked their revolt to the cause of the Just King (Noto Sutanto 1968). During my fieldwork, besides Embah Wali, a certain Pak Bena of northern Blitar had, for the past five years, been proclaiming the imminent coming of the Just King.11

Less intense manifestation of messianic ideas is to be found among those who do not necessarily speak up about the Just King but who, through their mystical pursuits, have come across the idea of the Just King. In the countryside, an oral tradition predicting the short-lived Japanese occupation to be succeeded by a time of prosperity has had a wide popularity. During the revolutionary period, this messianic idea was further enriched by various prophetic verses, including verses attributed to the semi-mythical prince Joyoboyo, and to another mythical figure Sabdopalon, as well as to the nineteenth century writer Ronggowarsito.

The Joyoboyo prophecy basically creates a periodization of the Javanese history into three major eras: Kali Swara, Kali Yuqa

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11: He was a man in his early thirties and was considered to be junior in terms of wisdom, so that he was not called Embah which normally implies seniority. He had got himself into trouble because of his radical statements, especially for telling people not to pay taxes. At the time of my fieldwork he had already been arrested twice.
and Kali Sengara. Kali Swara is the era of creation or what Embah calls Jaman Kadewatan, 'the time of gods' when gods were still present in the world and intermingled with human beings; Kali Yuga is the era of Java's development into a Kingdom during which time order was left to pre-ordained kings, or what Embah calls Jaman Raja-Raja Tanah Jawa, 'the time of the Javanese Kings'; Kali Sengara is the time when the earth began to lose its consistency and to fall into cyclical change.

The era of Kali Sengara falls into several minor eras. Currently, it is the era of Kala Bendu which means 'the time of wrath' or more popularly Jaman Edan, 'the time of madness,' when immorality and inhumanity prevail and the life of the commoners is miserable. Kala Bendu is to be succeeded by the era of Kala Suba, 'the time of happiness and celebration' indicated by the allegorical coming of King Herucakra who is more commonly referred to as the Ratu Adil, 'the Just King.' He will be known for his justice, modesty, honesty, generosity and all other pure, lovable qualities; his reign will be the time when, as court-writer Ronggowarsito wrote, wong cilik bisa qumuyu, 'the little people can laugh.'

Another prophecy is by a more obscure figure, a certain Sabdopalon, who is believed to be the servant-advisor of Majapahit's last ruler, King Brawijaya. This mythical servant denounced his master's decision to surrender to his own rebel son, Raden Patah, a convert to Islam, thus ending the glorious era of the Javanese kingdom and ushering in the dark era of Islam. Sabdopalon, who is believed to have mysteriously vanished, stated that he would give a chance to the Muslims but the time would come
when he would return to propagate the religion of Java and to bring back the glory of Java.

The court-writer Ronggowarsito invigorated previous messianic ideas in his beautiful verses, including one which is very popular, depicting 'the time of madness.' Part of these verses is as follows:

Amenangi jaman edan
ewuh aya ing pambudu
melu edan nora tahan
yen tan milu anglikoni
boya keduman melik,
kaliren wokasanipun
dilalah kersane Allah
begja-begjane kang lali
luwih begja kang eling lawan waspada

We have lived to see a time without order
In which everyone is confused in his mind
One cannot bear to join in the madness
But if he does not do so,
he will not share in the spoils,
and will starve as a result
Yes, God; not wrong:
Happy are those who forget,
Happier yet those who remember and who have deep insight12

In keeping with the so-called Joyoboyo’s prophecy on the transition from Kala Bendu to Kala Suba, Ronggowarsito wrote that

Iku lagi sirep jaman Kala Bendu
Kala Suba kang gumanti
wong cilik bisa gumuyu
nora kurang sandang bukti
sedyane kahbe kelakon

12From Ranggawarsito’s Serat Kalatida, translation by Geertz in his The Religion of Java (1976:281).
When the time comes for Kala Bendu to end to give way to Kala Suba the little people can laugh as there will be no more shortage of food and cloth all their aspirations will be fulfilled.

The Ratu Adil complex focusing on these various prophecies is deep-rooted in tradition and history. To many, the notion of the Just King, accommodating as it does a yearning for justice and moral excellence, leads them to set a good example for themselves and others by their qualities of self-sacrifice. Embah's father, for instance, granted one hectare of his land to the families who were living magersari on his house-garden. His generosity went further to the extent of always giving extra-shares to his sharecroppers. Embah Suro of southern Blitar lived a simple life, but he always served anybody who visited him with a meal. Pak Bena of northern Blitar who urged people not to pay taxes, spent a lot of his own money to sponsor small-scale development projects. The most obvious example is Embah's principle of giving to others. The ritual building of a bridge in 1980 was a symbolic manifestation of this principle.

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13 From Ronggowsito, Serat Sabdo Jati.

14 Magersari refers to the ownership of a house built by permission on someone else's land.

15 See Chapter VI.
CHAPTER IV

EMBAH WALI:
THE LIFE OF A BEGGER KING

THERE ARE two ways by which the life of a man like Embah can be approached. The first is analytical and involves close observation. The second is narrative, providing the actor with the opportunity to reconstruct his life in the form of a story. The first option can be adopted by an observer wanting to establish some sort of critical account, whereas the second can be adopted by a believer who sees reality in the mode of thought that Embah represents. Although for this study a critical analysis into the formative processes in the development of Embah's ideological consciousness has to be attempted, the second option has its own appeal in that it provides the reader with the native logic behind expressions and activities -- an insight into the system of meanings which sustain the Lively Rock community.

The system of meanings that Embah has creatively built offers to his followers not only a relief from the harsh
experiences of day-to-day life that are too confusing and at times frightening, but also a way of understanding the humiliation that befalls them. That is why, the way the actors, Embah and the followers, see the reality is fundamental to the understanding of the phenomena at Lively Rock.

This does not mean that a critical analysis of Embah as an individual in his social and historical setting ought not be attempted, but rather that Embah's story is itself an important element in an over-all analysis.

In the Realm of the Just King

Perhaps it is best to start with the people who gather from various places on the plot of land belonging to Embah Wali in Lively Rock. Among the people who daily gather around Embah, there is an atmosphere of, as they themselves acknowledge, orumum, 'something out of the ordinary.' The whole setting is unusual and the people are proud of their being unusual. The feeling is even more apparent when one meets Embah Wali. He is a man of humble and ordinary appearance who dresses, talks and behaves just like other people, yet he is followed by the others in the manner that subjects follow a king. Such unusualness is best expressed by the followers themselves who enjoy comparing Embah with "normal" rulers. They make the comparison between kere-ne ratu and ratu-ne kere, 'a beggar king' and 'a king of beggars.' What they mean here is that, although Embah's appearance is close to a beggar, he possesses every quality of a king;
whereas "normal" kings often give the impression of greatness, in fact, their qualities are often worse than beggars in that they are inclined to demand like a mendicant.¹

This simple comparison symbolizes at spiritual level people's ideas of the political nature of social relations. Whereas a "normal" king is a matter of politics, the nature of a King is a matter of life with a capital "L." To Embah and his followers, human life both socially and spiritually is best exemplified in the wayang. The wayang is a show-case of the two levels of life in the truest sense of the word: a social life clearly structured in terms of a king and his subjects and a spiritual world organized in terms of a puppeteer and his puppets.

An idea behind this analogy is that human beings are like puppets who are made, owned and required by the puppeteer to perform his play. As puppets, human beings are predestined to represent individual roles in a play and to act and behave accordingly. Consequently, Embah and his followers are aware of and accept happily the roles that are required of them, namely, roles as the inferior members of society. In terms of Javanese political culture, they are totally dependent. As for the nature of such dependence, Embah says:

"We are just like cattle. But even cattle need to be fed, to be provided with a pen and to be taken care of. And as cattle, we also want to be healthy and fat, although the fatness we want is just the fatness of cattle, not the fatness of an elephant or anything like that. After we are

¹Javanese traditional politics is monarchic and for traditionalists like most of the members of the Lively Rock community, the term ratu, 'king,' and other equivalent terms for rulers, including president, are inter-changeable.
taken care of, it is up to the owner to decide what we are used for. It is even all right for us to be slaughtered."

People accept this kind of inferiority as the work of the puppeteer. A senior disciple\(^2\) draws an analogy between the puppeteer and a volcano:

"When the volcano erupts, billions of stones, big and small and of different shapes, are thrown out. There is no more point in questioning why all the stones are different from each other than in asking why people are born in the world with differences. Some are born inferior, some are born superior and mystically endowed."

This statement by the secondmost senior disciple represents Embah's interpretation of the Javanese folk notion of the mystical nature of man. Yet, it is not the mystical nature alone that determines one's social status in the world. The same disciple draws another analogy:

"Rice grains from the outset have been predestined either to be used as seeds or to be used for consumption. It is the farmer who selects which grains are really suitable for seeds. As a result of man's selection, rice for seeds can be accidentally cooked and consumed and, likewise, rice better suited for consumption can be mistakenly used for seeds. In the latter case, the wrong seeds will certainly produce a bad harvest. In the case of man and his innate nature, he, like the peasant who selects the right grains for seeds, is in a position to select a leader. It is important for him not to make a mistake but to recognize and follow the one who actually bears the sign of a high mystical nature."

\(^2\)Disciple is my own term for categorizing various personalities around Embah. See Chapter VII.
Commenting on "the crisis of political leadership" following the successive general elections after 1965, Embah says: "Salah siji salah kabeh." (literally, 'one mistake causes all the other mistakes.') The present chaotic time, he says, is a consequence of people having chosen the wrong man to follow. Having a ready wit he produced a pun on the slogans of past elections "pilih salah siji," 'vote for one [of the contestants],' by saying: "Pilih siji salah." ('To choose one is a mistake,' in that to vote for anybody other than the heavenly chosen is a mistake.)

Embah believes that the Sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengkubuwono IX, is the manifestation of the highest mystical qualities and is therefore the Just King. The Sultan was born to an elevated state and, as in the case of the rice grains that are predestined to be used as seeds, he is predestined to be the one who will bring to an end the time of madness and herald the long-awaited just and prosperous society. Embah's conviction is based on his understanding of the alleged prophetic signs of Joyoboyo that fit well with the Sultan's biography.

The prophecy, which circulates locally, claims, among other things, that

"...Java will be prosperous and peaceful only when there arises to power a certain king, who is the son of an exiled queen and was born in a place near an uprooted banyan

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3 The Javanese word salah happens to mean either 'one of' or 'wrong.' Embah, however, wittily twists the slogan pilih SALAH siji into pilih siji SALAH. At the spiritual level, he indicates that the present leader is mystically unsuitable.
tree, and whose palace is located east of the River Opak Gedhe, and who would at present remain unrecognized even if one tripped over him...."4

This biography itself is passed by word of mouth and must have reached Embah at an early age. As the only son of his mother, the queen, the Sultan's childhood was, as people say, very sad. His father sent his mother home shortly after she had given birth, and the boy had to leave the palace on his father's order and live with a Dutch family when he was only three years old. After this time he neither saw his mother again nor returned to the palace for twenty-five years. During the intervening time, he was educated at Dutch schools and lived within the Dutch community. The final part of his formal education was in Indonesian studies at Leiden University, before he was summoned by his father to be named crown prince. He arrived back in Java on

4 The prophetic signs fit in with the Sultan's life in the following points:
1. When the Sultan was still an infant, his parents were separated and the queen mother was sent back home or "exiled."
2. When he was born, it is said that a banyan tree nearby the palace fell or "was uprooted."
3. The Jogjakarta Palace is indeed located on the "east of the River Opak Gedhe."
4. Since Independence the Sultan lives mostly outside the palace as a common citizen, putting off his honorific privileges as a king so that he "remains unrecognized even if one tripped over him." During the period of the revolution, stories about his low-profile image were very popular, including one about his giving a lift to a petty trader woman who was going to the market and how the woman fainted after realizing who the kind driver was who had refused her tip (see Atmakusumah 1982:199).
the eve of his father's death. 5

This supposedly sad part of the Sultan's life is believed to be one of the prophetic signs of his predestined Just Kingship. There are cases in which certain people try to justify their allegedly mystical qualities by relating these qualities to their "sad" past. The second-most senior disciple, for instance, was proud, when telling the story of his childhood, that parts of it happened to be similar to the Sultan's. As the first child of his parents, he was adopted by his grandfather's brother when he was only eight months old. He was taken from his native village and did not return for twenty-five years. During this time, he said, he never experienced the true love of his real mother.

Rumour has it that Embah, too, is not really the true son of his acknowledged parents. It is said that one day, a couple of beggars with a baby came to the village. In exchange for food, cloth and money, they left the baby with the then sub-village chief, who acknowledged the child as his son. After that time, the beggars never appeared again in the village and as the baby grew up, he was known as the sub-village chief's only son. Embah's own youngest son has even gone so far as to say that the beggars in fact came from Yogyakarta in disguise and were really of noble birth.

5 The real biography is less dramatic than Embah's version. While it is true the Sultan spent most of his youth within the Dutch community, from time to time during the period he returned to the palace and went to meet his mother. As for the Sultan's biography, see Soebagijo 1973, Panitia Peringatan 1980, Atmakusumah 1982.
Son of the Lower Orders

The truth, however, seems to be found in Embah's own account that categorically contradicts other widespread stories. He says that he is the true and only child of the sub-village chief Kasanpawiro. His boyhood name was Pardi and as regards the date of his birth, he knows only that he was born on Sabtu Pon, a Saturday (Sabtu) coinciding with the Javanese day of Pon in the five-day week.

Embah's father was relatively well-off. He possessed three hectares of land and controlled another hectare of the village land as a consequence of his position as sub-village chief. With this land, he did not have to engage in hard agricultural labour and found time to deepen his interests in Javanese literature and mysticism. In addition to the eminence of his position, Embah's father was respected for his generosity and wisdom.

However, socio-culturally, Embah's father belonged to the lower orders. He was a wong cilik, and therefore Embah was also.

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6 According to Javanese custom, there are two kinds of male personal names -- a boyhood name given when a boy is born, and an adult name adopted after marriage. See Hardjowirogo 1980.

7 The Javanese commemorate this kind of birthday every 35 days. In the case of Embah, the year of his birthday is unclear, as both village and district archives as well as popular accounts are unreliable and contradictory. Embah himself, as many other Javanese can see no point as to why the year of birth should ever be known. Only when one is important, need one keep a record of such dates and events, he says. All he can remember well is Lahar Seloso Kliwon, 'the eruption [of Mount Kelud] on Tuesday (Seloso) coinciding with the Javanese day of Kliwon' which was in 1919, indicating that he was most probably born in the early 1910's.
brought up as a wong cilik. Like other country children of his
time, Embah received hardly any formal schooling, although as a
son of a village official he had the opportunity of an education.
To this day, Embah can neither read nor write Roman letters,
although he is very good at writing and reading Javanese letters.

As the only child of a respected man, Embah was somewhat
spoiled; he never worked in the fields, doing only light work in
the domestic garden. He spent most of his time keeping every
section of the house, the garden and the ricefield neat and
well-organized. His contemporary age mates in the village claimed
that as a child, unlike most other country boys, he was always
clean and neat. The way his house and garden are looked after
nowadays justifies this statement. The only work he does at
present in his old days is to start his day very early in the
morning by picking up the fallen leaves in his yard, one by one,
with a pointed stick.

Although he claims that he is of common origin, Embah
admits that he has been "out of the ordinary" since he was born, a
quality like that of every puppet in the wayang theatre. He
became familiar with the Javanese religious tradition from an
early age. As the son of a "wise" man, it is said that his father
filled him sufficiently with various mystical sciences and
instructed him in various traditions of abnegation. People
believe that he has immersed himself deeply in these sciences and
he has achieved such superiority in these matters that, unlike
other people, he can appear humble and never needs to show off his
real qualities.
Embah always identifies himself with the poor and the disadvantaged. When speaking of his experiences with women, for instance, he says:

"When I was young, I behaved normally just like the other young men. I also chased after women, although the women I chased after were only those who were bad-looking. So they were quite happy with me, even thankful that I had chased after them...."

An old neighbour who has been a loyal follower of Embah for a long time recounts the following:

"When invited to a selametan, Embah always took food which was not delicious, food which otherwise people would not take until the very last. He did so because there were enough people ready to take the delicious food, whereas there was nobody else to take food that did not taste good...."

Like his father, Embah, too, was known for his generosity. Embah's neighbours recall that since boyhood Embah has been known as honest, generous, and helpful. He used to leave produce from his garden on his fence so that anybody in need could take it. Later on, when he inherited land upon the death of his father, he always contracted the land on a share-cropping basis giving his share-croppers more than they would get under normal arrangements. And at harvest time, he always gave extra share to harvesters. He also dedicated much of his time and money to carrying out projects for the sake of the community.
Despite his identification with the lower orders, Embah never engaged himself in agricultural work. The only job Embah ever took on (through his father’s connection) was with a sugar mill. He started as a field labourer, but was promoted rapidly until he became a foreman.

In Embah’s eyes, Blitar in the 1920’s was not a happy place. There were three sugar mills with a network of railroad tracks spreading throughout the best ricefields in the region. The signs of modernization were present: good irrigation, handsome village buildings, a developing district town. Certain part of the community did benefit from the development: motor-cycles, modern-style houses, etc. The situation for the rest, however, was gloomy. The years of the world depression badly affected cash-crop producing areas such as Blitar. People recall the years as jaman meleset.8

Nowadays Embah blames the Dutch for the sufferings and the humiliation that the Javanese commoners underwent in the past. He remembers well that at one time the villagers in the area were mobilized to work on improving the road for a visit by the Governor General to Blitar. Not only was the road improved, but on its surface the villagers had to lay cartloads of hay so that the Governor General could travel comfortably in his regal carriage. Embah says:

“What can you expect to be worse than that from a colonialist ruler? The hay might have been used for our cattle, but in the colonial period the government was not concerned about the people’s cattle.”

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8 Meleset or 'slippery,' is a local interpretation for the term 'malaise.'
As regards the deeper penetration of "foreign" domination into Javanese society and culture, this is how Embah nowadays describes the situation:

"Because they were colonialists, the prevailing law was also the colonial law which was by nature the law of the woman. They paid us money for our land and our labour, but they brought to this place new [consumer] goods, new entertainments for people to spend their money on. In fact, they taught people to spend money so that they took back more than they had paid us."\(^9\)

Taxes on the land were high so that many people had to leave their home villages because they failed to pay their taxes and were forced to carry out corvee. Many who remained in the villages ended up working for cash in the sugar mills.

As a foreman, Embah had relatively a lot of money, particularly as he still lived with his father. He was known always to dress neatly and well. Yet, he did not feel happy. As he recalls it now, he witnessed too much suffering around him. He saw bands of people moving from one village to another, taking casual jobs. His wife, whom he met in the sugar-fields, was one of these migrant labourers. She came from a poor village in South

\(^9\) Embah's ideology is based on the classificatory notion of male and female. This notion is further elaborated to cover "everything in existence," such as natural phenomena and human motives. See Chapter V.

\(^{10}\) The cycles of the sugar mill's production were at that time ritualized. The cycles, particularly the eve and the end of the sugar milling, were celebrated with big selametan and festivals, at which many of the villagers spent a lot of money.
Blitar. She had to leave her parents when she was only a small girl and migrated with other girls from one place to another looking for a living, mostly in the fields during harvest time and in the forests collecting firewood. It was her last job as a field labourer with the sugar mill that brought her to Embah. The marriage, as Embah sees it now, was between the son of a village official and the daughter of the lowest class village family. It was, therefore, a representation of the union between the high and the low.

After the marriage, both Embah and his wife (commonly called _Embah Putri, 'grandmother') stopped working for the sugar mill. This was followed by unusual development noticeable in their lives. Embah began to retire from social life and to embark upon a life of denial. He gave away his good clothes to neighbours and friends and stopped attending social gatherings, never turned up on _selametan_ occasions, and refused to take part in the village _gotong royong_ (self-help, mutual cooperation) undertakings.

Blaming the colonial power and its private subsidiaries, Embah now explains his stance as follows:

"It's true I refused to take part in _gotong royong_ projects, but why should I, if I did not feel _lego_ about them?!"

People were told to work _gotong royong_ on irrigation projects, on [government] building projects, on road projects, but these projects were beneficial first of all to the sugar mill. The sugar mill was the one that should have

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11 _Lego_, 'pleased' or 'uncomplaining,' and also _demen_, to take pleasure in,' are important notions in Embah's ideology related to the notion of justice. See Chapter V.
borne most of the burdens, not the villagers who each had only a small plot of land."

However, despite his refusal to participate in community activities, Embah embarked upon his own projects dedicated to the community. With his own resources he built guardhouses, irrigation sluices, small bridges, etc. He did all this, as he says, out of a feeling of lego (being pleased), without being instructed or commanded.

The Period of Lelana

Marriage is for a Javanese man the entry to full manhood. A newly married man adopts a new name, his manhood name, and he is socially accepted as a full member of the community. With Embah the transition certainly meant more than this. From the time of his marriage, late in 1929, he not only adopted a manhood name, that is Kromoprawiro, but also a new outlook on life. After his marriage, he began seriously to question the situation affecting his life, society, and the world.

He started this spiritual search by embarking upon ventures that normally would be regarded as mystical practices of ngelakoni, namely a mystical technique of basically ascetic

\[12\] Nowadays such activities are explained as part of the awah (willingness to give) characteristics which are essential for the materialization of justice. Such activities are nowadays ritualized as in the case of the building of a bridge. See Chapter V.
abnegation. Nowadays Embah denies any knowledge of the mystical sciences, and claims that he was never involved in ngelakoni practices, although, it is true, he used to take part in certain unusual, perilous practices. These practices included various forms of self-abnegation such as fasting, living outdoors, not speaking for a long period, wearing very little clothing, and so on.

Sometimes such actions were quite extreme. In the bank of the river behind his house, there is a burrow apparently hollowed by rushing water, just big enough for a man to crawl inside. This burrow goes very far underground, some say even as far as the South Seas. However, Embah seems to be the only one who knows exactly where it ends, because at one time he ventured into the hole. He explains:

"Inside it was completely dark and wet. It went winding, sometimes wider, sometimes narrower, then it ended up in a seemingly bottomless hole, at a place I believe somewhere under this yard. I threw a stone, it did not sound as if it landed on anything."

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13 There is no rule about what form of technique falls under this category. A tentative way of defining such techniques is that the performer is regarded as defying categories and standard rules. See Chapter III.

14 A common practice of relating to a particular landmark of mystical significance such as Mount Kelud, the South Seas, etc.
With his present mode of thought, when asked what he learned from that venture beneath his yard, he answers:

"... nothing. It did not make me supernaturally powerful or anything like that. It just gave me one clear lesson, namely that in complete darkness, in a small, wet burrow underground, people feel unbearably constricted and depressed, that is all. Apart from that, nothing...."

A year after his marriage, his first son was born. Not long afterwards, his father died (his mother had died when he was a small boy), leaving him with a relatively large amount of land and a big house.

In 1935, when his first son was 5 years old, Embah began to venture on lelana. This is the tradition, as found in wayang mythology, for a knight to wander around in search of adventure while extending help to those in need and fighting evil. In modern times, the tradition is performed by those in pursuit of mystical qualities not so much by extending help to persons in need and by fighting evil, but by visiting cult places and performing various mystical techniques of ascetic self-abnegation. Embah took his small boy with him on a journey to Jogjakarta which had to be done on foot just as in the wayang stories.

To stress its self-denying nature even further, for the journey, Embah spent only £1.00, mostly on bananas. He says:

"At that time bananas were very cheap; still each time I looked for the poorest quality, the ones that were already loose on the stalk and had fallen off. And to save even
more money, I ate the bananas unpeeled, so that I was easily filled."

A few months later he revisited Jogjakarta with a haji friend with whom he enjoyed having discussions. This time, after visiting the palace complex and other historical monuments in Jogjakarta, they continued on to Demak on the north coast, Tuban, Surabaya, and back to Lively Rock.¹⁵

A year later, in 1937, Embah set out on another journey, this time to Banyuwangi at the easternmost end of Java. The journey to Banyuwangi took him 17 days there and back, the same time he had taken on his earlier journey to Jogjakarta. He then concluded that his place in Lively Rock was located precisely equidistantly between Jogjakarta, the centre, and Banyuwangi, the periphery of Javanese kingdom.¹⁷

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¹⁵ For the description of a journey with Embah see the two accounts by people who accompanied Embah on his recent journeys in Appendix IV.

¹⁶ Demak and other places on the north coast, including Surabaya, have historic monuments, namely mosques and tombs of the early Moslem saints. The monuments are sacred to the Moslems and are objects of pilgrimage.

¹⁷ Another common practice of relating to places of mystical importance, in this case Embah wants to impose the legitimacy of his place in the newly invented mythology.
The Period of NGELAKONI

During his period of melana, Embah had already begun to form a distinct idea of Javanese statehood. His journeys to Jogjakarta indicate his acceptance that Jogjakarta was the seat of the Javanese King. 18 It was later that Embah’s acceptance of the Sultan as the Javanese King developed into a notion of the Sultan as the sought-after Just King.

After the journey to Banyuwangi, Embah retreated to the seclusion of his house and was rarely seen outside. Across the river a few hundred metres from his house there is a banyan tree, and Embah was frequently seen sitting alone there for days. 19 It was during this time that Embah led an ascetic life by practicing various forms of ngelakoni.

Initially, the practices followed a common pattern. Besides seclusion under the banyan tree, they included various techniques of fasting and meditating. However, in 1940, on the eve of the Japanese occupation, Embah followed by his wife took off their clothes and wore only a loincloth. This action awed people, since in their experience, nobody had ever done anything

18 During the Dutch East India Company period, the old Javanese kingdom disintegrated and was divided into four small states; currently two are located in Jogjakarta, another two in Surakarta. Of the two states of Jogjakarta, Embah’s choice is the House of Hamengkubuwono commonly known as the Sultan.

19 In a tone of exaggerating Embah’s mystical aura, some say that the part of the banyan tree where Embah used to lean wore out.
like that before. More shocking still, a year later, in 1941, he took off even the loincloth, leaving himself fully naked as he wandered around his compound. When he put on his loincloth again in 1942, he ceased speaking for three years. During this time he wandered around the village, always bringing with him a bunch of bamboo strips. With these bamboo strips, each time he saw a broken fence or the damaged bamboo wall of a house he repaired it.

In 1944, a young man named Sukopanitro, who was then the secretary of a nearby village, started to visit Embah regularly. Because Embah did not speak at all, he could only watch whatever Embah did, and sometimes he followed Embah's example. After Embah spoke again, not long before the end of the Japanese occupation, Sukopanitro followed Embah's example and took off his clothes, making himself Embah's first disciple.

An event in Embah's daily life that happened in 1947 is worth mentioning. Early one morning, without telling anybody what he had in mind, he and his wife began erecting a simple and small hut on the bank of a river just beside his house. The river was down below his yard, fenced by clusters of bamboo. It was on the lower part of the slope under the clusters of bamboo that the hut

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20 Embah Suro who had started earlier on ngelakoni had not gone as far as Embah Wali. He is described as having long hair down to his shoulder, wearing a necklace with a bike reflector on it, having one of his sleeves and also one of his trousers longer than the other, wearing slippers made of old shoes that were cut off at the ends. In short, he is said to have let himself be regarded as a lunatic, although he certainly was not.

21 For reason of political sensitivity in the time of writing, all names have been changed.
was erected, making it a kind of hidden sanctuary. From that morning on, for eight years, Embah resided in that hut.

In the meantime, in 1947, another two disciples, Trisnoko and his wife Watini, joined Embah. Afterwards, there came five other disciples -- Atmo, Mustari, two brothers Slamet and Kidi, Ngaelan, and Mulyani, bringing the number to ten, including Embah and his wife. Of the eight disciples, only the first three continued to follow Embah. Ngaelan ceased to follow Embah's example and is nowadays reported to be a cattle trader. Kidi's whereabouts is unknown. Rumour has it that when Embah ended the ngelakoni period in 1955, Kidi was disappointed and left Lively Rock to pursue a ngelakoni life somewhere else. Three have died, including Slamet, who as a political activist was killed during the massacre of 1966.

The reason that these people turned up was in general the same: encounters in their long search for mystical truth. Most of them had a background similar to Embah's, namely a strong Javanese traditionality. Some accounts say that the reason that Slamet and Kidi came to Lively Rock during the first military showdown with the communists in 1948 was to seek refuge because of their affiliation with the communist party. But both Sukopanitro and Trisnoko had been known as persons keen on mystical pursuits before coming to Lively Rock.22

Apart from wearing loincloths and undertaking various kinds of self-abnegation, these "naked" ten continued to live

22In Appendix V Trisnoko's account of his past is recounted. He had experienced a continuous ascetic life before meeting Embah, and his account tells how he first met Embah and then decided to follow Embah's example.
their normal lives in the community, except that Sukopanitro resigned as village secretary when he started wearing the loincloth. Slamet, who was a puppeteer, and his younger brother Kidi, who was a gamelan drummer, continued to perform; in fact, they were in demand for the "special" quality that was believed to have been brought about by these "naked" wayang performers. Ngaelan, who was a cattle trader, maintained his business. Mulyani, who was a bricklayer, remained so. Atmo, Mustari, Trisnoko and his wife continued to live on their land. As Embah's wife remarks: "I even had a baby (her youngest) at that time!" (meaning that she had a normal sex life, whereas it is normally believed that an ascetic self-abnegation requires sexual abstinence.)

This particular kind of asceticism is locally called tapa ngrame, meaning 'living ascetically in public.' In wayang stories the knights always lead their ascetic lives in a hermitage, either in the middle of dense jungles, on tops of steep mountains and in other isolated places. In modern-day times, however, this example seems to be too hard to follow so that Embah said that it was only the aristocrats who led ascetic lives in a hermitage.23 Because asceticism as a set of traditional practices has been lost in Javanese culture, except in mythology, there were no rituals to be observed, no rules or orders to be followed. Embah's explanation nowadays is that at that time Embah and his disciples did things

23 A well-known figure in mysticism, Drs. R.M.P. Sosrokartono who was a son of the regent of Jepara by a concubine, did lead an ascetic life in the middle of the dense jungle of Besitaag on the southern border of Aceh, Sumatra. The jungle, he said, was the home of elephants, rhinos, tigers, and other wild animals. See Sosrokartono 1977:42j.
as they wished out of deman ('willingness'; see footnote 12). In other words, rules, rituals, if anything, were developed as things went along. And so were Embah's teachings.¹²⁴ One account by Sukopanitro of one of his experiences during the ngelakoni period, gives an idea of how such "teachings" occurred. He explained:

"It happened that one night all eight of us [disciples] stayed overnight in Lively Rock. We slept outside the hut, and at night it was very cold in Lively Rock. It was after midnight that we happened to wake almost together at the same time, apparently because of the cold. We lit a fire to warm ourselves up. We pushed each other a bit to get ourselves as close as possible to the fire and to the warmth. Watching our behaviour, Embah said: "Look at what you do! Only for the warmth of the fire you have pushed each other. What will happen if you are in high positions?"

From time to time, individually or collectively, they practised various kinds of self-abnegation. Usually, Embah initiated an action without telling anybody, and the others, by watching Embah's example, later decided to follow. Sukopanitro tells another account of his experience when he followed Embah's example of abstaining from food and taking very little to drink. He remarks:

"I followed Embah's example when he had been fasting for five days. On my fifth fasting day, for my other friends it was their second or third day, I was already very weak. All eight of us laid ourselves down on the ground because of weakness, while Embah and Embah Putri (Embah's wife) were inside the hut. I thought they were both asleep when suddenly we smelt something very appetizing coming from the hut. Instead of being asleep for weakness, on his tenth fasting day Embah was frying chopped onions, and the smell

24 Embah, and obviously his followers as well, always maintain that Embah never teaches anything.
indeed tortured us. It was at that time I realized most clearly the human feelings associated with hunger."

There were times when collectively the naked ten did strange things. In 1949, for instance, not long before the Dutch troops pulled out from the occupied territories following an armistice agreement, Sukopanitro and friends launched a kind of war game apparently based on a scenario laid down by Embah. Troops of a peasant army, armed with self-made toy rifles and led by the "naked" disciples, walked back and forth through the villages and the district town. While walking, this strange troop made a lot of noise like children playing a war game. Obviously this kind of behaviour attracted the attention not only of the villagers, but also of the Dutch military authorities, then still stationed in the district town. Sukopanitro was held responsible and was interrogated for a night, but in the morning, he was released, apparently as the interrogators were completely puzzled.

It is hard to assess what motivation was behind the game as present explanations by Embah and the followers who took part in the game are based on their current ideological outlook. If anything, it could be that the game, as some other later activities of a similar nature, were one manifestation of the way Embah perceives reality through the wayang and expresses his statement through the same medium, the theatre. In this way, the

25 The troop was intended to symbolize the Dutch. As regards the incident, Embah says that the Dutch, too, had their role to perform, and that they would pull out soon after that role was completed.

See Chapter V for the transformation of the Dutch quality from "female" to "male."
game could have been a dramatization of what would normally be a social, political statement. This is consistent with what is happening in Lively Rock currently.

In a similar vein, at a later date, Embah put on a spontaneous drama. One night, not long after an "important dream," Embah asked those, who by chance were present, to perform a wayang play. Without any preparation, the play was performed without puppets and without gamelan instruments. It was a full-length performance with Slamet, the disciple, imitating the puppeteer and Sukopanitro and the others imitating gamelan accompaniment. The story was the crowning of King Parikesit, the King who completed the Mahabarat cycle after the final Baratayuda Battle, and who was believed to be the Just King who reigned after evil had been completely defeated. From the theme of the performance and the stage of development in Embah's ideological outlook, the whole exercise was self-explanatory.

Embah and his wife lived in the small hut on the bank of the river (his bigger children kept living in the house) from 1947 to 1949. In the hut he was surrounded daily by the eight disciples as well as regular visitors. From the hut, Embah led a kind of doctrinal movement which initially was vague but was becoming more clearly articulated with each passing day. Whereas to his disciples the direction of Embah's views was possibly

26 See below.

27 In a separate chapter we will identify more clearly the mass of people who rally around him in terms of different levels of consciousness, but in the meantime we have distinguished the disciples from other visitors.
clear, to most other visitors Embah was a mystical enigmatic. The fact that his standard of ngelakoni surpassed others known in the area had given him a reputation of being a highly respected wise man comparable to a wali. From this he received the name by which he is commonly known. Apart from his alleged mystical superiority, he was believed in particular to possess a prophetic vision in keeping with the tradition of Joyoboyo. His unusual actions, and also significant events around him, were interpreted as prophetic signs of the future. When he first took off his

\\\[\text{Chapter 4 Page 108}\\\]

28 Wali is a term commonly used to refer to the mythological saints believed to have been responsible for the spread of Islam in Java. Their reputed remains are found in places along the north coast and have become cult places. They are believed to have possessed superior mystical qualities, and their cult places are visited by many pilgrims for that reason. Embah is referred to as Wali in the belief that he, too, possesses those qualities.

29 Locally, they are called perubahan, which literally means 'change.' To the Lively Rock community, any 'change' in this sense, even a minor one, is taken for granted as referring to a change in the wider community. The following is an example from an insignificant occasion in late 1980.

Setiaji (the spokesman; see Chapter VI) was Embah's major source of current affairs reports. He listened to the radio and read newspapers, and whenever visiting Embah he always had something to tell. One day, after an exceptionally long absence, he was surprised at finding something new on Embah's table in the front veranda. It was a new pair of scales Embah Putri recently bought for selling rambutan fruit. There were several good rambutan trees in Embah's front yard and in the past the fruits were always sold wholesale. However, in the rambutan season that year, Embah Putri decided to sell them retail and that was why she bought the new pair of scales which she put on the table in the middle of the veranda.

For a keen follower like Setiaji, however, a new pair of scales on the table in the middle of the veranda was not simply a pair of scales. In fact, that day he had come with something interesting to tell Embah, namely press reports on the suspension of several well-known judges charged with bribery. Could it be that it meant the beginning of the long-awaited 'order of justice,' particularly when related to the demonstrative display of Embah Putri's new pair of scales? He exclaimed: "How come nobody told me earlier about this pair of scales?"
cloth on the eve of the Japanese occupation in 1940, the action was believed to prophesy the coming of a period of hardship indicated by the fact that even basic clothing were soon beyond the people's purchasing power. Likewise, when in 1947 he moved from his house to the hut on the bank of the river hidden among the bamboo clusters, the action was interpreted as ngungsi, namely 'to flee from home to find shelter somewhere else because of war or natural disaster.' In this way he is believed to have predicted the imminent war, when the villagers had to ngungsi.

Developing generally unnoticed by visitors was a mode of thought and a new ideology. The first part of this ideology to surface was Embah's perception of wayang. At a deeper level, Embah's view of Javanese politics came to centre around the notion of kingship and of the social expectations associated with the notion of Just Kingship. Embah's journeys to Jogjakarta in the 1930's seem to be in line with his view that Jogjakarta was the capital of Javanese state and that the Sultan was the legitimate king of the Javanese. During the period in the hut, Embah's views on politics and society coalesced into a notion of the Just Kingship and he formed the opinion that the Sultan was in fact the long-awaited Just King.

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30 In a humble way, Embah says that the name Wali derives not from his alleged wali qualities, but from the fact that in the past 'he forgot to put on clothes,' locally, suWALE laLI.

31 In 1965, on the eve of the abortive coup, Embah went ngungsi again. See Chapter VI:180-81.
This notion found its justification in a mystic dream that Embah had one night. He said that one night in his hut, not long before he had to abandon it because of fire, he dreamt of being visited by the Sultan. The Sultan asked him a single question: "Is it true that when the time comes [for the Just King to arise] I will be the man?" To this question, Embah answered consistently: "Yes, that is true!" Understandably, to Embah the dream was not just a dream, it was a spiritual encounter with the Sultan. His being asked the question was evidence of his being chosen by Urip, (see Chapter V) as a witness for the Just King.32

From then on, Embah began to enunciate his idea of the Just King and make it public. The mimic wayang performance without puppets was a symbolic statement of this idea. Later on, the theme of Just Kingship was put forward more vocally. He began to tell the people about his dream and said that the idea of the Just King was not only a longing, it was a reality. The Just King was already present, although people did not recognize him, in the person of the Sultan.

After the mimic wayang performance, regular visitors became more keen on Javanese culture. They began to play gamelan with whatever instruments were available as a substitute and later

32 Witness' is locally referred to as saksi. The word saksi here, however, means more than that; it implies someone whose presence as witness is mystically essential for the legitimacy of a chosen figure to rise to, or stay in, power. In Javanese tradition, the figure can be a mystic such as the legendary Juru Mertani for King Senopati of the early Mataram Kingdom, or Sabdopalon for King Brawijaya of the late Majapahit kingdom, or an ambiguous clown such as Semar for the Pendawa in the wayang mythology.
they began to make a set of iron gamelan instruments. With the availability of this gamelan set, they began to perform wayang wong (wayang that is danced; see Chapter III) every night. Like the gamelan set, the costumes for the performances were made out of simple materials, such as coconut leaf sheaths. The stories performed were explicitly on the theme of Just Kingship.

However, to everybody's surprise, after more than two years the performances suddenly came to an end, on a day that coincided with an important event in Embah's life and movement. This was the day Embah and his disciples exchanged their loincloths for normal clothes. The unusual way that this took place and the aura that it caused is so strange that the account of the event by Trisnoko is recounted here:

"It was Ahad Kliwon (the day coinciding with Sunday [ahad] and Javanese day of Kliwon), 1955. Nobody knew that there would be a perubahan. In the morning those who came for the wayang practice were turned away by Embah Putri. There would be no more performances, she said. So everybody just stayed and waited.

Then we were given a ritual breakfast. I think there were more than a hundred of us at that time. All were given breakfast. People stayed there until 12 o'clock, then they went home, except those who wore loincloths.

In the evening something interesting took place. Embah said that he would go to Jogyakarta and asked if any of us would like to come along. When the eight of us said we

33 A good gamelan set is made of brass or bronze. An iron gamelan set is regarded as poor both in terms of quality and status. This gamelan set survives until today and is used for current dancing sessions.

34 'Change,' see footnote 29.

35 The meal which is usually served for selametan.
would, we were surprised to see Embah carry Embah Putri pickaback and walk around and around the verandah. One by one we followed behind in a strange procession, until Embah stopped out of exhaustion. He then wrote on a piece of wooden board a solemn statement of our full acceptance of the Sultan's protection. Then we were told to go home.

I did not know what happened in Lively Rock the following day, because I came back there three days later. When I came, I saw that Sukopanitro was wearing ordinary clothes, whereas Embah was wearing a black costume of the kind he always wears nowadays, and so was Embah Putri. Understanding the new situation, I immediately went home. Having worn loincloth for the past eight years, I had no clothes whatsoever at home. I caught a chicken and sold it in the market. The money was just enough to buy some rough cloth for my wife and myself."

As with his other "strange" actions, it is hard now to assess from the actors' present explanations what actually motivated the events surrounding the ending of the loincloth period. Many of the visitors try to relate the event to the first elections held a few months afterwards, while the actors themselves, Embah and the disciples, nowadays consistently refer to the 'scenario' laid down for them to play in order to develop in a specific direction.

As this kind of explanation will make sense only after we look at Embah's current mode of thought and ideological outlook, Embah's life story will be interrupted by a chapter dealing with Embah's ideology proper. In yet another separate chapter, namely Chapter VIII, we will attempt an explanation of how it is that although the actors believe they are acting under the strict

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36 The Javanese word used is pengayoman, which is more in the sense of "mystical" protection than the normal physical, security. From here on the mention of 'protection' in relation to Embah is always in this sense.
direction of the "puppeteer" cum "scriptwriter," they are in fact laying down their own scenario which consists of the responses and reactions made to situational pressures. Commenting in retrospect on his ventures during the ngelakoni period, Embah makes use of a play on words. He says:

"I did not ngelAKONI, but I was keLAKON. 'Life' made me a footpath for people to tread on so that I could know them and understand their problems." 37

Post-loincloth Period

The mystic notion of kelakon has continued to this day. The day Embah put on his cloth again and the dancing sessions ended was only a few weeks before the country held its long-awaited first election. The 1955 election was a landmark in Indonesia's political geography. Despite the coincidence, however, Embah's dramatic change of loincloth was not given any particular symbolic significance. In fact, in terms of activities, the post-ngelakoni period was quiet. What was left from the earlier ascetic period was a small community made up of the disciples and some followers, particularly those who joined

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37 Both words derive from the same root laku, meaning 'forward motion of the legs' or 'journey.' Lakon means 'story' or 'play,' and also 'fate.' NgeLAKONI is to experience actively the fate, the predestined role in the play, whereas keLAKON which generally means 'to have one's aim fulfilled,' in this case means 'to have oneself trampled down.' Explicit in this word-play by Embah is his humbling of himself, making a comparison of himself with a footpath rather than a dignified umbrella for providing mystical protection.
Embah during the dancing sessions. Whenever they felt free, they came to Lively Rock to pay homage to Embah and then did nothing in particular. A neighbour who followed Embah from the time of the dancing sessions (another dancing session was to follow later; see Chapter VI), noted: "At that time Embah was not as talkative as nowadays. He commented on politik\textsuperscript{38} only when asked, otherwise he kept quiet."

Paying homage to Embah, however, was obviously insufficient to keep the community together. One by one the disciples stopped coming, and in the 1960's only Sukopanitro and Trisnoko kept Embah company. Of the other six, not to mention Kidi who is believed to continue a ngelakoni life somewhere else, only Atmo was regarded as having continued to live a good life and later having died respectably. The other five disciples abandoned the principles they held during the loincloth period. They are said to have adopted bad principles including sharp practices and excessive womanizing. In the late 1960's, Sukopanitro returned to the bureaucracy and was involved in the government's agricultural credit project. He took a second wife and, because of his "busy activities," ceased coming to Lively Rock. He came back to Lively Rock again in late 1970's when he lost his job. In the mid-1970's Trisnoko was known for his foretelling of daily lotto numbers. He received voluntary rewards for his service and, understandably, began to distance himself from Lively Rock. When one day, one of his customers hit the jackpot because of his foretelling (rumours

\textsuperscript{38}Literally 'political affairs,' but contextually 'current events,' including price rises, earthquake, drought, train derailment, a night fair in Jogyakarta, etc.
had it that the win was in the order of 50 million rupiahs), he received a very generous reward. He bought a plot of land in his native village and built a small hut on which he lives nowadays. He left his wife after a quarrel arising from an admitted love affair. After leaving his wife, who was Embah's third disciple, he never came back to Lively Rock.

For those who kept coming and those who stopped, and even for those who only observed what was happening in Lively Rock, the declining intensity of the Lively Rock group aroused questioning. Trisnoko noted: "Being at leisure itself is ngelakoni and this is not all that easy." In particular, the group did not have institutionalised rituals to sustain itself and the ideology that Embah was building was still in its formative stage. As if to fill the gap in necessary activity, the group invented its first building ritual.

The invention was prompted by a certain follower of Embah from Jogyakarta. He was a man named Probo, a keen Javanese mystic cum profiteer who had been in contact with Embah since Embah's early days. He was a distant cousin of Lively Rock's sub-village chief who, like Embah, was known as a 'wise man.' Initially, he came to Lively Rock to see his uncle and that was how he came to know Embah and develop good relations with him. Later on, he brought with him some other people to Lively Rock, making a small contingent of a dozen or so from Jogyakarta.

Probo lived on palace land known as Beteng more or less equivalent to those living nagarsari on Embah's land. However, to Embah and other members of the Lively Rock group, Probo gave the impression of having close relations to the Sultan's family.
Sometime in the late 1950's, he came to Lively Rock with a devious plan. He said that the Sultan sent him to advise Embah to build a tobacco kiln for the sake of the tobacco growers in the area. He even showed Embah a letter written on the palace's letter-head. With all these formalities, Embah was understandably quick to agree. It would become the group's first building rite. And like the group's other important building activities in the future, the project was carried out by the group using its own resources (see Chapter VI). However, when the project was only half completed, Embah realized that Probo's connection with the Sultan was fraudulent and the project had to be abandoned. He had all that had been completed to that point demolished. (However, the deep stone foundation could not be removed and so it remained where it was as a useless reminder until 1981, when it unexpectedly served another purpose). It seemed that Probo had played upon Embah's innocence for the sake of his own tobacco business.\(^{39}\) Commenting on the experience, Embah says that it was the corrupt nature of the times which was reflected in Lively Rock.

However, despite the failure, the project served its function as a catalyst for keeping the group together. Besides this activity, the group's identity was strengthened by the

\(^{39}\) On another occasion, this same Probo perpetrated another fraud on the Lively Rock group involving some millions of rupiah of the group's fund for buying costumes. To save himself from legal charges, he reported to security authorities about the regular gathering of ex-communist prisoners in Embah's compound. What he referred to was the 'Emper sessions' in the late 1970's with Setiaji, indeed an ex-political prisoner, as the speaker. As a result of his report, the local security authorities through Sukopanitro urged the cessation of the sessions, and a team of interrogators from the provincial office of the public prosecutor came to interrogate Embah.
intensifying of Embah's mythology. The mythology, established during the angelakoni period, was centered upon the Just Kingship of the Sultan and Embah's legitimacy as a "witness." Typical to Embah, however, the rituals and mythology were creatively invented and strengthened in response to a situational demand. One such "invention" was a great debate that Embah had on the issue of the Just King.

One day in late 1950's, an aristocrat from Surakarta came to Lively Rock. He asked Embah whether Embah had ever met a prince. After Embah replied he had not, the visitor said that he was a prince, namely Prince Suryokusumo, a son of Surakarta's Sunan Pakubuwono by a concubine. Having made an impression, he asked Embah about the Just King, whether he was already present. In response to this question, Embah asked the visitor whether he knew why Jogjakarta was called the daerah istimewa. Embah is quoted as saying:

"Jogjakarta is istimewa ('extraordinary') not because its land or its population is extraordinary, but because it is under a ruler who is extraordinary indeed, namely Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX. He does not dress like a sultan, lives an ordinary life and works among and mixes with the people. He is 'a king unrecognized by one even if one tripped over him." (see Chapter V:164)

This initial exchange enticed the visitor to stay overnight in Lively Rock, during which time the debate was extended to cover other philosophical issues. For many who

40 After Independence, Jogjakarta, which under normal circumstances would be a mere residency within a province, was granted a special territory level administration equivalent to a province for its role during the revolution years (see Chapter V:166). 'Special' in Indonesian is istimewa (nowadays the term used is khusus in Daerah Khusus) which also means 'extraordinary,'
witnessed it, the debate was the most clear-cut explanation Embah ever gave of the whole question of the Just Kingship (see Chapter V) and continues until today to serve as one of Embah's myths.

In early 1960's Embah began to relate his myths to daily realities by means of his social comments. One such comment on political affairs involved nicknames that he gave to the country's prominent leaders. Sukarno was nicknamed Ahli Corek, the designer who projected the nation; the first Vice President Hatta Ahli Batin, the expert who did the deep thinking; Syahrir, one of the first prime ministers, Ahli Wicara, the orator (in the diplomatic sense); and the Sultan Ahli Nyata, the realist who was bound to bring expectations to reality. Despite the fact that the analogies were not particularly appropriate (Sukarno would have been better nicknamed Ahli Wicara for his famous oratory), they were useful in distinguishing the Sultan from the other leaders. Whereas the other three leaders, all of whom have died, was an expert in a certain illusory realm -- designing, thinking, speaking -- it was the Sultan who was in charge of the realm of reality, of nyata; and on the ideology of this indigenous word nyata we devote the subsequent chapter.
IN THE PREVIOUS chapter we followed Embah's life story reconstructed from his own narration and from the accounts of those close to him. There is no doubt that despite the claims by the narrators that the story thus presented represents "reality," such a reality is subject to biases caused by the way the narrators justify their interpretation and rationalize their expectations. In other words, reality is painted with imaginary contours in terms of a contextual configuration which defines the ideological framework of the narrators' minds. I have used the term ideology elsewhere and in this chapter in a loose sense. By this usage, I wish to refer to the ideational realm of culture, the segment which involves the patterning of how men believe they should live their lives in a structured, meaningful world. Such patterning develops out of a certain thought system which, in turn, seeks to justify a particular social and political order.
In this chapter I am concerned more with the construction of the thought system that underlies the social and political order which Embah sees as the basis for the establishment of a just and prosperous society. The system is evident in Embah's notion of the nature of the universe, the cosmology and the existential status of man, and in his version of Javanese mythology and its chronicles. Thus I wish to present Embah's ideology and worldview not on its own, but rather in its social and political context. Since the stress of this thesis is on the development of symbolic interaction within the Lively Rock community as a form of popular politics, I wish to focus on the creative process in the construction of the symbols and philosophy by which the group defines its expectations. Through the analysis of such symbolic interaction, the consciousness of the actors can be reflected against the background of current political and social developments.

**Embah's Perception of Wayang**

There is no better model for Embah's worldview than the Javanese shadow theatre, the wayang. Its myths provide Embah with a picture of a proper social order, whereas the organization of the theatre provides a model of the spiritual order. I have already dealt with the ideological impact of the theatre upon the popular view of society; I now want to look at its impact upon Embah's view of spirituality. Embah's life story is full of examples that indicate how wayang affects not only the way Embah
idealizes, but also the way he experiences life. Episodes in his life story are not only attributable to the wayang tradition, but are the wayang. Ventures such as njelakoni, lelana, tapa ngrame (see Chapter IV) and other extraordinary ascetic practices cannot be seen simply as following the wayang model; they are part of the wayang world itself. Social relations between Embah and his followers of the kind found in the wayang occur not only at the ideal level, but also in actuality, in the way people talk to and treat Embah. Being among these people within Embah's compound, one feels that one is in a different kind of Java, perhaps a Java of the dream-time.

Naturally, the same image of wayang, not necessarily of the same intensity, is also found in the wider community. Both Javanese mysticism and court literature draw analogies between the human and the wayang worlds. One verse in the famous Javanese 19th-century literary work Serat Centini, for instance, goes as follows:

Kelir jagad gumelar
asnanipun maklukiing Widi
gedeboh bantala wegung
belencong pandaming urip
gamelan gendinging lakon

The white screen is the universe
the puppets are God's creatures
the banana trunk is the earth
the coconut-oil lamp is the candle of life (Urip)
the gamelan orchestra is the musical background
of the act.

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In other words, it is no exaggeration to say that life is seen as wayang and in that way wayang is for the Javanese a representation of the cosmology and human affairs. For Embah, the representation goes further. Not only does he see life is a wayang performance; life is itself wayang in the truest sense of the word. What, for an observer stands as reality and mythology, for Embah stands as one integrated entity, namely the wayang world or, in Embah's words, the reality of urip, with urip meaning 'life.' What is involved here is an interchangeable combination of two Javanese words, nyata (real, reality) and urip (live, life). Thus, in Embah's perception, nyata is urip and urip is nyata.

In another section I will examine more closely Embah's notion of urip. Here it is sufficient to explain that one analogy for urip is that of the puppeteer who is responsible for the performance of a grand play. Identifying himself and his fellow human beings as wayang puppets in a wayang performance, Embah draws the immediate implication that human beings are unaware of their own roles, meanings and purposes in the grand play which is being performed by the puppeteer. Furthermore, just as Javanese society is basically structured as in the wayang, so for Embah, wayang presents an ideological model of the social structure and of the position of the commoners in this structure.

The notion of man-as-puppet is fundamental to Embah's worldview. This worldview expresses an acceptance of the powerless nature of man vis-a-vis the world he lives in and the life he experiences. His being is totally determined. Like puppets and plays, objects and events are already fixed permanently to serve certain purposes beyond man's consciousness,
and nothing can escape this determination. Puppets are created, owned and directed by the puppeteer and, as such, they are unaware of their own actions. Man has to accept this situation, because for a puppet there is no other way. It is impossible, for instance, for a puppet to consult the puppeteer or to interfere with the play that is being performed. In this way Embah denies the generally accepted mystic concept of Kawula-Gusti, literally 'servant and master.'

According to this general concept, two extreme statuses, the lowest and the highest, are juxtaposed as the merging of the ruled and the ruler, or of the human being and God. In the latter case, it is believed that there are certain properties common to man and God that lead to the ultimate union between man and God as the highest mystical achievement (see Moertono 1963; Soewito-Santosa 1980). This notion also leads to another belief, namely that one's life is in fact already predestined. Yet, there is a possibility for man to revise his destiny by petitioning God. There are many examples in the wayang stories where the satriya knights try to interfere with God's plans by various forms of meditation and annegation, practices labelled as nqelakoni. In brief, the purpose of such practices can be regarded as an attempt to interfere with one's destiny by petitioning God directly or through the services of other mystical powers, such as important spiritual figures or the souls of the dead, particularly of those regarded as mystically high. Practices of this nature are locally called nenuwun, 'deep, humble request.' The tradition of nenuwun in Java is manifest in many aspects of ritual life, particularly in the traditions of selamecan and jiarih (see Chapter III:72).
Despite his present denial of asceticism, Embah Wali was certainly brought up in the cultural world of the wayang. It does not really matter whether he used to be a keen patron at the wayang performances or just a passive onlooker, the tradition has affected his way of thinking and behaving. The ascetic adventures of his early life were closely modelled on the normal practices of the wayang world, practices which are elitist and demonstrate mystical pursuits exclusively related to the aristocratic ideals of kasampurnan, 'perfection of life.' Over the years, it is true, Embah departed somewhat from this general direction. He came to realize the futility of such pursuits for commoners. He later reinterpreted his previous adventures and denied all their underlying assumptions by pointing to an analogy with the wayang: puppets are just puppets and the best way for puppets to be puppets is to let themselves be manipulated in whatever role and play the puppeteer intends. Contrary to the general concept of possible mystical interference, for Embah, there is no room for a puppet to question its role, the play, or the purpose of the play in which it is to be used.

Thus, man as a puppet does not have to trouble himself with unnecessary thoughts about the past or the future, matters which trouble the minds of many people who come and see Embah for counselling. To them Embah always says that the past and the future are not for them to work out, and as such, there is no point in regretting their past experiences or worrying about forthcoming events. His own extraordinary adventures in the past, for instance, are said to be nothing but parts of the play that the puppeteer wanted him to perform. Repeating his remarks
(quoted earlier) on the popular belief of his 'ngelakoni' (performing asceticism), he said that he did not 'nge-LAKON-i,' namely 'did not act to perform asceticism'; on the contrary, he was 'ke-LAKON,' namely 'was acted to perform asceticism' by the puppeteer (See Chapter IV:113). By playing on the root-word lakon, Embah stresses his notion of the human capacity as passive puppet and its incapacity to perform anything on its own. For a puppet what matters is the here and now. The past is already done and played out, and the future is known only by the puppeteer.

Embah said: "The past, the present, and the future are the same. The past was 'today' at some time in the past, the future is 'today' at some future time. All is but the same 'today.'"

However, having adopted a messianic vision of time and of the position of man in the social and spiritual sphere, Embah does not remove himself from the wayang tradition. Instead, he sees wayang as a showcase of society. Just as in the wayang, for Embah, the body politic is monarchic for a simple reason: a ruler is not for people to choose. He is a chosen figure with innate qualities. A "democratic" state with a government chosen by the people is for Embah ridiculous. He gives this analogy: 'Just as a man cannot choose his father, so, too people, cannot choose their king.' As the case of a father and his children, the children are actually "made" and "owned" by their father. Similarly, a king is the owner of the people (See Onghokham 1975, Moertono 1963, Anderson 1972).

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Embah says:

"Java is destined to be ruled by a king. Even the colonialists who conquered Java in the past were under great kings and queens (of Holland and Japan). By nature republik (republic) is not Javanese. It is 'ke-RE sake-BLIK (a mass of kere or 'beggars'), that is why the mendicant inclination on the part of the authorities to demand bribes from the people is so strong."

It is the fixed pattern in wayang mythology that kings fight and conquer each other, and that the king who wins the fight seizes the property of defeated king, including the person of the defeated king and his people. Not all kings, however, are Ratu Adil, 'just kings'; many are Ratu Angkara Murka, 'selfish and greedy kings.' Yet, whether a king is wise and just or selfish and greedy, he is entitled to his people's total loyalty. Thus, for Embah, history is experiential evidence of man's incapacity to play a conscious role. Yet, man can learn to recognize the processes of development and change by experiencing such developments and changes himself or, in Embah's words, by personally experiencing life and grasping nothing but reality. From his life, for instance, man learns that events change cyclically just as day turns to night and night to day. In the wayang, the play is developed according to a fixed cycle, and so is human life. In other words, although details of the grand play are obscure, the course is comprehensible. Matters such as sickness and health, good fortune and disaster, all are the continua of inescapable realities. In Embah's words:

"Sickness and good health, disaster and good fortune they are all in existence. Sickness occurs in-between
periods of good health, disaster in-between periods of good fortunes. One does not have to worry about being sick, because sickness follows good health, and, in turn, is followed by good health."

This is a statement which could not be more fatalistic. Yet, it is true, it expresses the powerless nature of Embah and his people vis-a-vis outside orders. To what extent this fatalism is adopted depends on the individual. For those at one extreme, the attitude can be as extreme as Embah's statement. Embah's experience of a stroke in 1966 which paralysed him for two years (See Chapter VI:182) is a good example of this attitude. During the two years, Embah refused all medical care and, instead, relied fully on his unyielding trust in Urip which he believes is responsible for laying down the boundaries between sickness and good health.

This fatalism is also manifest in Embah's notion of social structure. Just as puppets are made according to their respective roles and ranks, all of which are needed in the grand play by the puppeteer, so, too, human beings. Some people are privileged and superior, others are inferior, but all have been fixed in their respective positions. The analogy with differently shaped stones thrown out in volcanic eruptions or of different rice grains was developed by Embah's secondmost senior disciple (See Chapter IV:87) expressly to represent this kind of attitude. The point is for man to understand his nature and then to live accordingly. It is within these limitations that man should accommodate his expectations and aspirations.

Embah's analogy with cattle (see Chapter IV:86) in which
he sees people of his class as cattle that need to be fed and
provided with a pen is also a very good illustration of this.
But, as he says, even cattle want to be healthy and fat, although
the fatness they want is just the fatness of cattle, not the
fatness of an elephant. In other words, what Embah means is that
he and his followers want to be taken care of to the standard
appropriate to their class.

Embah's rejection of normal 'kebatinan' tradition

In orientation, Embah belongs more to the abangan
tradition, which is culturally represented by the wayang and
ideologically by Javanese mysticism, the kebatinan. Both these
traditions intertwine and are further related to other sources in
the Javanese chronicles and oral literature. In rural Java,
however, these two traditions are the main references for abangan
religiosity. The experiences of people such as Embah and his
secondmost senior disciple provide a good example of how such a
religious life operates. Over time, however, Embah has departed
from these traditions and has built his own ideology. Embah's
views represent a denial of the normal Javanese ideology, yet
still remain very much within normal Javanese religiosity.

As I have already indicated, the abangan tradition has a
kebatinan ideological basis, which is basically aristocratic. A
Javanese phrase states that "agama agening Aji, kawruh kawruhing
Ratu": 'religion (Islam) is for a King just a cloth, [but]
mysticism is his [real] science.'

A kebatinan ideologue and intellectual, Warsito, stresses this nature of kebatinan in his provocative, polemic article 'Kebatinan is the Spiritual Culture of the Javanese Courts.' In this article, he specifies various aspects of kebatinan -- metaphysics, mysticism, ethics and occultism. The metaphysical aspect of kebatinan deals with the question of the so-called sangkan paraning dumadi (literally, 'the origin and ultimate goal of existence'), the mystical aspect with manunggaling kawula gusti ('the union of man and God,' that is man's relations to God), the ethical aspect with budi pekerti ('the rules of conduct'), and the occult aspect with the so-called jaya kawijayan or kanuragan (martial and magical arts). Which aspect is most conspicuous depends on the individual kebatinan stream or person. Some streams and figures put emphasis on the metaphysical aspect, some on the mystical aspect, and others on occultism. In Blitar, for instance, a certain Pak Kiran used to be known as a prominent figure in kebatinan metaphysics and mysticism, but over time, he became better known for his healing practices which were based on occult arts. From the life of Embah's secondmost senior disciple, it is clear that this course can be the other way round. He used to be good in the kanuragan occult arts, but later had to disown

3 Kawruh is another term for elmu, 'science,' which usually connotes kebatinan.

the arts before following Embah.

For most organized kebatinan streams, emphasis is usually on one or both of the metaphysical and mystical aspects. Some are even opposed to occultism, claiming that it contradicts and hampers the search for the union of man and God (Soewito-Santosa 1980). To understand how Embah departs from the general stream, we need to look briefly at the nature of kebatinan.

The origin and at the same time the ultimate goal of existence is God in the sense of the supreme cosmic essence. If the universe is the macrocosm, man is the microcosm with a spark of this cosmic essence as its inner, spiritual aspect. Man, therefore, has in him the godly essence and as such shares the same qualities and power with God as a drop of water does with the ocean. It is man's duty to reunite this godly essence with God as a drop of water returns to the ocean. In the general stream of kebatinan, emphasis is then put on mystical exercises aimed at purifying one's spiritual qualities and restraining one's worldly appetites which are believed to distract one from the path to union with God. The following is an illustration of the cosmological conception of one kebatinan stream called Pangestu as given by Soewito-Santosa (1980):

"As origin or starting point in the Pangestu we have the Suksma Kawekas (The Supreme or Ultimate Subtle One). Then Suksma Kawekas develops a Will (Karsa) which gives rise to the existence of Sang Suksma Sejati (The True Subtle One) or Sang Guru Sejati (The True Master). The development of Suksma Sejati brings about the existence of the Roa Suci (The Holy Spirit), in fact still a radiance of Suksma Kawekas which is then regarded as becoming the soul of the individual. This threefold aspect of God is called Tri-Purusa."

The process that results in the afore-mentioned happens in the immaterial world, called Alam Sejati (The True World) or Kadatoning Sang Suksma Kawekas (The Seat of the Supreme
Subtle One). Even the Holy Spirit is still in the immaterial world, because the material world does not exist yet. It is said that when the Supreme Subtle One wanted the Holy Spirit to descend on earth, his Will was frustrated, because the universe had not been created yet. So He created the universe first, in stages. The first stage was the creation of the four basic elements, namely ether, fire, water and soil. Interaction between the four basic elements gave rise to the other stages, namely the creation of everything in the world, such as fauna, flora, spirits, etc. At this stage the Holy Spirit was ready to descend to earth, by combining itself with the four basic elements....

Ideologically, mysticism as adopted by kebatinan groups is sophisticated and esoteric. Such groups are normally exclusive. Their doctrine is inexplicable and to understand it without exception one has to experience it oneself. A kebatinan follower has made the comparison with saltiness: one has to taste salt oneself to know what saltiness is. As such, mystical practices and exercises have to be done according to strict rules and under the guidance of instructors. In the kebatinan group called Subud, for instance, such instructors are called 'pelatih,' in the Sapta Darma 'penuntun,' in the Sumarah 'parong,' all literally mean more or less the same, namely 'instructor' or 'supervisor'; in the Pangestu 'Siswa Muda/nerda' (junior/senior student assistant), in the Ngelmu Sejati 'Wakil Mirid' (teaching assistant). To join such groups, one usually has to undergo certain initiation rites. In the Mortitomo Waskito Tunggal in Blitar, to be initiated is called 'diwirid' (to be [spiritually] filled), in the Subud 'dibuka' (to be opened), and in the Pangestu diwiwaha (to be celebrated).

Needless to say, because of their exclusivism, complicated exercises, and sophisticated doctrines, most kebatinan streams are
hardly accessible to the peasantry. Outside the organized kebatinan tradition, individual endeavours to get into the kebatinan realm are mostly bound to be futile. In addition to the exhaustiveness of such endeavours, the wide intellectual gap between the peasant tradition and the sophistication of the kebatinan tradition seems to hinder the participation of the peasantry in the tradition. Many of Embah's disciples affirm this account. Most of them had been involved in a long pursuit of spiritual enlightenment before meeting and then following Embah.

Here we need to look more closely into the ideological realm which has "satisfied" Embah's followers. If ideology is something that man makes, it has taken a lifetime for Embah to come to his understanding. He has gone through trials and tribulations and experienced the severities of an ascetic life before realizing that what he thought to be the Javanese cultural tradition was in fact an incorrect, false one. What he offers as an alternative is a much more simplified vision capable of accommodating popular aspirations and expectations.

In the first place he simplifies the sophistication of the normal Javanese ideology. The metaphysical and mystical questions based on the elitist, elevated way of thinking are brought down to earth. What matters are things that are real; nyata (real, the evident) is the keyword. The doctrines of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and kebatinan are only jare from ujare, meaning 'what people say,' since nobody knows exactly if they are true or not, so they are not nyata. Nyata refers to things and events which everybody can clearly witness, prove and feel and not just internally. Nyata is not only to be felt and to be accepted, it
is to be used to learn lessons and to draw analogies. People can learn from reality how things and events develop and are organized.

Basically, reality is classifiable into two categories: male and female, or locally _lanang_ and _wedok_ (colloquial term for _wadon_, woman). Gender that is discernible in reality is applicable without exception to everything in existence. In sexual intercourse, in Embah's terminology, the male _aweh_, 'gives,' whereas the female _njaluk_, 'takes' or 'demands.' In this way the male is bound up with a willingness to _give_ (aweh) and thus to generate life. Maleness counts if, as a sexual organ, it is alive. In Javanese 'life,' 'alive' and 'to live' are all _urip_. On the other hand, the female is bound up with the qualities of taking and demanding (njaluk) life from the male. The female sexual organ is comparatively "dead." In other words, maleness is synonymous with life (_urip_) and with the quality of giving (aweh); femaleness with death (_mati_) and with the quality of taking (njaluk).

Drawing an analogy from daily life, Embah notes that man is bound up with the tilling of the soil to bring plants to life, whereas woman are involved with cooking which basically puts plants to death for food. A man gives (provides) money to support the life of his family, whereas a woman asks for and takes money from her husband to buy things.

In accordance with this analogy, the universe is also classifiable into the same categories. The day is the time when living things are active and alive, the night is the time of inactivity. Thus the day is male and the night is female. In the
day, things lay open and are clearly visible; they are nyata. At
night things are not clearly visible, ora nyata.

The sun is the source of power and life, the moon is
powerless and moves aside when the sun rises. The sky is for
Embah the space beyond the earth. The sky is male and so is
associated with life, and the earth is female and is associated
with death. These categories are evident from the fact that
living things are above ground when they are, in Embah's term, in
the sky. When below ground they are [buried] in the earth.

Since 'sky' is a synonym for 'life,' as Embah understands
it, things are "in the sky" not because they are living, rather
they are living because they are "in the sky" or "in life." In
other words, in complete contrast to the kebatinan and various
other world religions, life is not inside but outside man and
other living things. Normally, it is believed that the life or
the soul is in man as his inner, spiritual aspect, whereas for
Embah, life is like water for fish. Fish are alive and active,
swimming around, feeding, fighting and copulating because they are
in water, and so, too, is man capable of moving around, working,
reproducing and the like because he is "inside life" or, in
Embah's words, kebuntel urip, literally 'wrapped in life.' When he
is dead or, in Embah's words, oncat saka urip, literally 'jumps
out of life,' he is 'wrapped in soil' or kebuntel lemah.5

In Embah's words, "what looks full [of life, that is a
living man] is actually empty [of life], what looks empty [of

5 Another phrase which is frequently used by Embah
indicates that man is alive because he is 'held in life's mouth'
or locally dimeut urip, and is dead when he is 'spat out by life,'
dilepeh urip.
life, that is the sky] is actually full [of life]" or locally "sing sejatine isi iku swungs, sing suwung iku isi." This philosophical phrase is also very commonly used in the kebatinan, but has a different meaning. Normally it is used to describe a mystical state achieved by meditating, when the concentration of mind is such that one is able to free oneself from one's physical consciousness and is able to relate oneself fully to one's spiritual consciousness. It is believed that in the condition of being entirely empty of one's physical consciousness one is actually full with spiritual consciousness. When applied to the analogy of wayang, Embah's philosophical view regards the puppets as dead beings until they are held by the puppeteer for their respective performances. In this way death is analogous with the earth, the place of dead beings, and with the box where puppets are kept. Because the sky and the puppeteer are analogous with life, so Embah also says that man is alive when he is held by the life.

Plants are alive when they emerge and grow from the soil, which is the realm of the death, into the sky which is the realm of the life; so, too, human beings when they emerge (referring

6Explanation is by Dr. Soewito-Santosa in a personal conversation.

7Because in Javanese 'life' and 'alive' (and also 'to live') are represented by the same word urip, Embah's remark makes an effective and beautiful word-play contrasting wong (man) and urip (life, alive). The common term wong urip, 'a living man,' possesses two contradictory factors -- the factor of wong and the factor of urip. Each factor represents certain qualities which dominate one's characteristics at any one time as evident in the discussion below.
especially to birth; in Embah's term, mrocot) from the womb. In this way, the existential question of 'the origin and ultimate goal of being' (sangkan paraning dumadi), which has become the precious subject of mystical quest for so many people for so long is, as a matter of fact, not mysterious at all. In regard to another aspect of the question, namely man's outgoing and particularly his homeward path which are so much discussed in kebatinan circles (see, for instance, Soewito-Santosa 1980), the answer is simple: the vagina. That is where man comes from and that is where he is bound to go. Explanations other than this, according to Embah, are mendacious, invented intentionally to mislead people.

To support his statement Embah picks up the local phrase golek selamet and folk-etymologically re-interprets it. The phrase is very common and mean 'to seek safety.' It is said when one is in a situation of danger such as war, natural disaster, in a critical stage in the life cycle or, more recently, in a time of political violence. Traditionally, one 'seeks safety' through ritual and mystical means leading, among other things, to the selamet-an ritual (see Chapter III). To Embah, however, the real meaning of the word selamet is morphemically divisible into SELA or 'gap' and sakIMET or 'very very narrow.' Then the compound word lexically means 'a very very narrow gap,' that is 'vagina.' So, to seek safety or golek selamet in Embah's logic means 'to seek the vagina,' which is the natural destination of every man.

The vagina (female, earth) is only a place of origin and destination. It is the male that makes, builds, or works, locally yasa or gawe, things and brings them to life. It is this very
nature of the male which explains the mystery of existence in that
the male reproduces matter through union with the female, in the
way the universe is created through the union of the sky and the
earth. In Embah's words, "when in union [the male] builds" (nek
kumpul jawe).

Plants are grown, taken care of, and owned by the
peasants, and so are human beings by their male parents.
Therefore, the male (peasant, father) is the creator as well as
director and owner of things or, in Embah's words, the puppeteer
for his puppets. This kind of logical explanation is applicable
to matters of higher substance. The cosmic, social and political
orders are also organized in the same way. If the sun is the
source of life and power for the universe, so, too, is the Just
King or Ratu Adil for the world. He is the one who 'has the world
on his lap,' locally Hamengkubuwono, which is the honorary name of
the Sultan of Jogyakarta. He brings the law of the male which is
equivalent to the keywords of urip (life), nyata (reality), lanang
(male), aweh (willingness to give), and yasa (to make, to work),
keywords which lead to an understanding of the order of justice
(adil) and cultural maturity (Jawa for Java).

Here we come to the important realization that the notions
of life (urip), male (lanang), puppeteer (dalang), just king (Ratu
Adil), and the sun, in the final analysis, are of the same nature.
Just as the puppeteer creates and owns his puppets, so, too Life
as the owner of human puppets can do anything to the beings that
it has created. It can make new ones, repair damaged ones, or
throw away old, unrepairable ones.
Yet one thing is certain, Life is just. One has only to see how the puppeteer looks after all his puppets without exception, no matter who they represent. All puppets are made from the same material and to the best of the puppeteer's craftmanship, and all are treated equally and kept in the same box. The differences between individual puppets are in the roles they are meant to play, and even these roles apply only when the puppets are brought out of the box for their performances. In any performance, it is the puppeteer alone who is responsible for and behind the different voices, behaviours and roles of the various puppets.\(^8\) One can see also in the way the sun radiates its light equally to all, regardless of sex, status or rank, and without being asked. Put in human perspective, sunlight is equivalent to love and in this way, 'love' is one of the male's important characteristics.\(^9\) Similarly, one does not have to seek mystical protection or to request something by praying (nenuwun; see Chapter III), because protection is always been given in the way the sun sheds its light on all or, in Embah's words, "sewerage, king, thieves, peasants are all equally radiated" (peceren, Ratu, maling, pak tani kesorotan kabe). In December 1978 Embah and

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\(^8\) In wayang wong or 'human wayang' (see Chapter II:22), that is wayang performance which is danced by human actors, each wayang figure speaks for itself. However, in the weekly human wayang performance in Lively Rock (see Chapter VI:197-98), the dialogues are spoken out by the director (in Javanese dalang, 'puppeteer') through a sound system.

\(^9\) A puppeteer explained to me in Embah's presence that what looks like an exaggerated manifestation of masculinity by Arjuna, the third of the Five Pendawa brothers in the wayang, who has a reputation as a great lover with uncounted wives is, as a matter of fact, a symbolization of generous love.
2,500 of his followers made an excursion to Jogyakarta to see the Sultan's palace (see Chapter VI). The introductory part of a letter that Embah sent in advance to the Sultan for permission reads as follows:

"Kapareng hangaturaken pasowanipun poro abdi dalem ingkang tansah nampi pangayamanipun NGARSO DALEM INGKANG SINUWUN...."

"Please accept the visit of your humble servants who have always received the mystical protection of YOUR EXCELLENCY...."

We can see that, whereas normally it is advisable for one to petition God and have one's destiny revised, for Embah such behaviour is ridiculous and useless. Hence one does not have to feel discouraged by one's bad fortune and envious of others' good fortune. What is important is to trust fully in life, which is the puppeteer. It is within one's limitations that one is free to live and to do as one wishes. This means that a peasant should carry on farming, a trader carry on business, a carpenter carry on carpentry and so on, but also that a thief should carry on stealing, each, as Embah says, according to his ability and will or sakisane sakgeleme. ¹⁰

It would be ridiculous, Embah says, if the puppet of a clown wanted to be an ogre, the puppet of an ogre wanted to be a knight and so on. There is nothing wrong for the puppet of a clown to be stupid and ill-favoured and to behave foolishly, or

¹⁰When I asked Embah's permission to live around the compound for my fieldwork, he said: "You are just like everybody else here. Do whatever you want according to your ability and will."
for the puppet of an ogre to be loathsome and mischievous. On the other hand, it is stupid to expect the puppet of a clown to behave like a knight and likewise the puppet of a king to behave like an ogre. Similarly, it is also ridiculous to expect a thief not to steal or a lunatic to behave like a normal man. Embah says: "All the contents of the world are required to complete the performance of the grand play." As a model Embah always points to events in his frontyard. There, it is true, all sorts of people gather. They are all welcome, including lunatics, and all are treated equally.

This is how the classificatory categories, what Embah calls 'the nature of the male' and 'the nature of the female' (baku lanang and baku wedok), apply to man's perception of external reality. The same categories, however, also apply to man's perception of himself. At this stage, however, it is perhaps necessary to dispel any confusion that may arise from the different levels of usage of this gender classification. At one level, there is physical sexuality which is associated with the physical features of male and female and, at another level, spiritual-symbolic sexuality which does not necessarily coincide with physical appearances, as the following diagram indicates:
Chapter 5

PHYSICAL, SEXUAL
CATEGORIES

Male            Female

- Male qualities
- Female qualities

The Sultan of Jogyakarta is identified as ♂️, Holland's queen Juliana used to be identified as ♀️, currently as ♂️. (See below in regard to transformation of the Dutch colonialists into the Dutch of the male quality.)

As Embah sees it, the phrase wong urip, 'a live human being' which is commonly used to refer to a 'human being,' is composed of two contradictory entities, namely wong (human being) and urip (life, living). The equivalence is also found in the

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"Characteristic of Embah's way of thinking is an emphasis on the unequivocality of words. Those who are not familiar with Embah's logic will easily make unnecessary mistakes. Despite my good command of "normaal" Javanese, in conversation with Embah I frequently made silly mistakes. Time and again I asked him about certain issues involving wong urip in the sense of just 'human being,' to which Embah would immediately correct me: "So, you asked me about two different things again, namely wong and urip... wong is just a dead puppet, you know, whereas urip is life. So, which one do you want to know?"
common compound word Gusti Allah, literally 'Lord God.' However, for Embah the phrase is reinterpreted into a composition of two contradictory entities, namely Gusti, 'Lord' which is understandably male, and Allah which is reinterpreted as kalah, 'losing' which is a female quality. In this way, to Embah Gusti Allah is not a term which indicates the supreme being, but it is just an equivalence of the term wong urip (see Footnote 7).

Basically, the wong aspect carries the female qualities and is spiritually represented by what is called in various loosely interchangeable terms: pikiran (mind), ati (heart), batin (inner feeling), and more popularly among the Lively Rock family, wong-e (the wong). The urip aspect is represented by nalar,\textsuperscript{12} or uripe deve, literally 'one's own life,' perhaps life with small letter "l," namely life which is channeled to individuals. According to Embah, Life with capital letter "L" is like a generator that provides power to electric bulbs.\textsuperscript{13} Subsequently, the term 'great life' is used for Life as the "generator" and 'life' for life as the "bulb." In Embah's terms, employing a beautiful play on the word urip, the great life is called urip sing ng-urip-i, literally 'the life which generates,' and the individual life is called urip sing ka-urip-an, 'the life which is

\textsuperscript{12}Normally, nalar is just another word for pikiran which refers to the notion of mind or intellectual reasoning power. However, with Embah the two words are differentiated in terms of their respective connotations: pikiran is the wong-based reasoning, nalar the urip-based one.

\textsuperscript{13}When Embah mentioned this analogy, the portable generator had become widely available even in rural areas for private use by rich peasants or, in the case of Lively Rock, for cooperative, neighbourhood use.
generated [by the great life].' The spiritual situation of a person consists in a dialectic between two elements, namely what the secondmost senior disciple calls the "judge" for urip and the "accused" for wong. In the final analysis, all human actions, emotions, motivations and desires, or in other words, all human physical and spiritual activities are classifiable into these two contrary elements, namely what members of the Lively Rock family call garapan-e wong and garapan-e urip, with garapan meaning 'work to be done,' in this case perhaps, the 'activities,' physical and spiritual, motivated by the wong and the urip respectively.

Garapan wong, because of its female nature, is dishonest, crooked, unstable and untrustworthy. It is subject to changes and vulnerable to unprincipled motivation. Sometimes it leads to happiness, other times to unhappiness. Because of its unstable and unprincipled nature, garapan wong leads one to the so-called perang batin, namely 'struggle within one's own inner feeling.' The secondmost senior disciple gave an example of a person who was unhappy because he wished to have a TV set. When he managed to get the set, he thought that he felt happy. Yet, later on he felt unhappy again, because he wished to have a bigger set and as such the struggle within one's inner feeling was repeated and continued on and on.

It means that pikiran or batin always moves and changes. In other words, it is this unstable, changing movement of pikiran or what is called obahe pikiran which deprives one of one's peace of mind; and, as such, the two extremes of human feelings, namely happiness, good fortune, good health, on the one hand and unhappiness, disaster, ill-health, on the other hand, are the
root-cause of the absence of the peace of mind (ora tenterem). In fact, such an absence of peace of mind (ora tenterem) is the very nature of human suffering and the universal problem of mankind. To liberate oneself from human suffering is then to overcome the root-cause of this suffering by preventing one’s pikiran or batin which, in turn, represents garapane wonq, from moving from one extreme to another. This means that when one meets good fortune, one must not feel too happy; on the other hand when one meets disaster, one must not feel too unhappy.

In the final analysis, tenterem is a fully balanced spiritual situation, a condition precisely between the two extremes like the pivot of a fully balanced pair of scales, with the two scales mediating between the two contradictory feelings. In such a condition of harmony, a human being is believed to be spiritually in the best position. This spiritual situation that Embah calls dangan is conditional upon one’s tenterem.

On the other hand, garapane urip which channels printah urip or 'the instructions of the life,' is honest, trustworthy and invulnerable to change. It carries what life actually wants from the individual or what the puppeteer wants to play with his puppet. The wonq aspect in its relations to printah urip is like a shield which conceals the sunlight. It is only when one is dangan that one is in the optimal position to understand the instructions of life or what Embah calls di-nalar-i, that is, to understand reason through the work of the nalar which is urip-motivated reasoning.
The Ideology of Reality At Work

We have learnt earlier that kebatinan provides an ideological basis for the abangan tradition and wayang is the standard reference for its ideas and practice. While Embah accepts wayang as a model of cultural life, he formally rejects standard kebatinan and instead develops his own ideology of reality. In this section we will see how this ideology provides a basis for ideas and values and people's conduct in their daily social life.

Earlier we have seen how Embah's classificatory categories enable people to justify their life and to understand social reality. It is no exaggeration to say that for Embah and his people, certain concepts provide the necessary set of indigenous, intellectual tools for reconstructing history, analysing present realities, and looking into the future while, at the same time appraising themselves. All can be reduced to the simple classification of male and female or baku lanang and baku wedok, 'the nature of the male' and 'the nature of the female.' Furthermore, these concepts also provide the model for the characteristics and qualities that people may adopt in their own life, and for the analysis of outside realities.

Without feeling inhibited, Embah says that the nature of the male is reducible to the nature of the male sexual organ. Its maleness counts when it is urip (alive), and when it is alive, it becomes erect or, in Javanese, ngaceng, a word which has the same root and shares the same connotation as the word kenceng (taut, straight, direct). This, in turn, is lexically related to the
word jujur ('straight,' but also meaning 'honest'). As a compound word, jujur-kenceng means 'straight and honest.' So, following the tradition of folk-etymology, the words lanang (male), urip (life), jujur-kenceng (straight and honest) are inter-related in the sense that life has the characteristics of the male, namely jujur-kenceng. On the contrary, wedok (female) is the opposite of lanang and so are all its characteristics.

This means that at this level the baku lanang represents an ideal quality. In daily life, to uphold baku lanang, one has to maintain the characteristics of jujur kenceng. One must be inclined to aweh (give) rather than njaluk (demand) which is the characteristics of baku wedok, and to achieve anything, one must yasa and gawe (build and make) rather than gamble or be inclined to request by praying (nenuwun). Furthermore, one must be willing to show love rather than hate. All these characteristics find their analogy in the roles and positions of the respective sexes in sexual intercourse. One must also have the quality of nyata and prefer openness and evident facts to secrecy and fiction, straightforwardness and honesty to crookedness and dishonesty.

Embah's reference to sexuality and its function is a good example of this quality. Embah says, people must not feel inhibited about it, because it is a reality, and reality is never something to be ashamed of. The tendency to use other words as euphemisms is, to Embah, ambivalent and ora lanang, 'un-male.' Furthermore, one must also uphold the unequivocality of words or what Embah calls sabda pendita ratu, literally, 'the words of a priestly king.' The phrase, which derives from the wayang tradition, indicates the admirable character of a king, a Just
King, who always means what he says. As a just King bears the qualities of Life and maleness, to Embah this character is one of the important male principles.¹⁴

An extreme example of the upholding of the male quality as a way of life is Embah's life. Since his marriage, which possibly marked the beginning of his ascetic life, Embah has refused to accept any kind of gift from anybody. He takes food only from his wife. His withdrawal from social life is, among other things, derived from his strict adherence to this principle. He cannot attend a *salametan* ritual in the neighbourhood, because the substance of such an occasion is the partaking of a ritual meal given by the host. He does not accept fire offered to light his cigarette.

His own children, none of whom leads a life like their parents, feel uneasy toward him, because they cannot behave as normal children do in relation to their parent. The eldest son, up until the end of my fieldwork, was a sub-district chief in Kediri, some 50 kilometres away from Lively Rock; the second son, a former official in the regency office in Blitar, had - by the

¹⁴ This principle strikes outsiders as peculiar and frequently causes unnecessary misunderstandings. For instance, in Embah's community, people do not say *nyambut* gawe and instead *tandang* gawe. Although both compound words have the same meaning, namely 'to work,' the word *nyambut* in *nyambut* gawe separately means 'to borrow' which in daily Javanese rural life is very close to 'to ask for' which, in turn, is of the female nature. The same rule applies to the compound word *nyuwun* pamit, a farewell greeting spoken to the host when a visitor is about to leave. To the Lively Rock family the word is not acceptable, because the word *nyuwun* separately means 'to ask for.' They also do not say *kawon* tenan, the higher level form for the word *kahanan*, 'situation,' because lexically it is separable into *kawon*, 'defeat' or 'be defeated,' and *tenan*, 'indeed'; defeat is a characteristic related to the female quality.
time I finished my fieldwork - retired to live in a simple hut in a ricefield where he sharecropped Embah's ricefield;\footnote{This situation was chiefly motivated by personal problems he had with his brothers and sister, and with certain personalities in Embah's community. However, from reports that I have received recently, this son has begun to live as a saint himself, with people coming to see him for all kinds of consultation. He is residing in more or less the same place that Embah lived in the late 60's. (See Chapter IV)} and the third son was with a crack army regiment in Jakarta. From time to time the children visit their parents and during such visits traditionally they bring gifts to those back home. However, in the case of Embah's children, their parents do not accept gifts.

One evening during my fieldwork Embah's daughter, who had a house and a stall in Embah's compound, held a selametan for her son's Javanese birthday (see Chapter III:70). Embah and I who were having a conversation were invited and surprisingly Embah agreed to come. He acted as the person who chanted the prayer, but when the meal was about to be served, he left. Some months earlier, for the inauguration of the bridge (see Chapter IV), the regent of Blitar came to Lively Rock with a big entourage and a musical troop and his own supply of cookies and refreshments. When bowls of canned fruit were passed among the dignitaries row, Embah passed his portion to me, sitting next to him.

In line with his being opposed to njaluk (demanding), Embah is known for his aweh (willingness to give). People recount stories of Embah's early life, when he built public projects such as irrigation weirs, small bridges, guardhouses with his own hands and resources; when Embah's wife left vegetables from the house-garden on the fence for those in need to help themselves;
when during the loincloth period, Embah wandered around the village with a bunch of bamboo strips with which he repaired broken fences or the damaged bamboo walls of houses.

This example was closely followed at least by his secondmost senior disciple. During the loincloth period in his village, he wandered around at night (in the day he stayed mostly in Embah's compound) to fill bath-tanks in the neighbourhood with water. ¹⁶

Most of the followers, however, admit that they are nowhere near Embah's example. Many of them come and see Embah to seek tenterem, mainly because of domestic problems such as when a spouse runs off with somebody else, or when they have unpaid overdue debts, or problems in the place of work, conflicts with neighbours or relatives, thefts, ill health, or problems which affect their pikiran and make it unbalanced.

The following is a typical example of Embah's counselling transcribed from a conversation that I attended and recorded on tape. It was midday. There were eight men working on the building of the Gamelan House (See Chapter VI). They were resting after having lunch and sitting on the ground near a cluster of bamboo. Embah joined them and was chatting with them. My arrival with a tape recorder and a camera did not disturb them at all, because as a rule everybody is free to come and to go, to do sakisane sakgeleme and, if need be, to interrupt Embah. I was

¹⁶ The traditional bathroom in Java has a hole as an outlet at one end and a walled tank at the other end. One takes a bath by washing oneself with bowl after bowl of water. The tank has to be filled with water from a well which can be several meters deep. As people bathe twice a day, filling such a tank is not an easy job.
soon involved in one of the most important conversations I ever had with Embah. In the middle of the conversation pak Parto, a peasant from South Blitar, arrived. After the usual homage he paid to Embah, he was questioned by Embah in krama style.17

"What has brought you here?" asked Embah.
"It is like this, Embah. My son Anang, he has been away herding our cow for three days and hasn't come back," reported pak Parto.
"How come he is herding a cow for three days already?"
"That's why, Embah..."
"I don't think he is actually herding... I mean, the fact that he has been away for three days, I think he's not herding at all."
"I think he isn't, Embah..."
"I think he's just gone away, that's all."
"But he said he went to herd, Embah."
"Though he said so, the fact that he's been away for three days indicates that he's not herding."
"That's why, where can he be... the reason for my coming here is to ask you about the boy's whereabouts."
"You must be kidding...."
"I mean, where is he now...."
"Well, how do I know? If you as his father don't know, how can I know? If I told you he was out there, under that fallen leaf (pointing at a fallen leaf on the ground) you wouldn't believe me, would you?"
"Where is he likely heading for?"18
"That's it, if I told you he was going northeastwards, I would be lying to you, because I have been here since the day before yesterday, having not gone anywhere, how would I know...?"

Addressing me: "This is the case mas Arjo. These people, they are hardly ever convinced when I tell them to have full trust in their own urip, who always looks after their own bodies and knows about their own actions. They are hard indeed to instruct, easily become narrow-minded and

17The Javanese have at least seven levels of language that relate to seven distinct social-status relations between addressee and addressee. Of these, two levels may be considered basic, namely ngoko which reflects informal and egalitarian relations, and krama which is more formal and hierarchical.

18In a standard mystical counselling session, a person seeks a hint -- perhaps a hint at a direction -- from a wise man.
then come and see an old, ugly man like me, how do they nalar-i (explain it)? From the outset I never tire of telling the truth that the one who has the authority over your life is the one who controls all your conduct and actions. So, don't be afraid and worried, because all has been properly taken care of."

Back to pak Parto: "How old is the boy?"

"He's seventeen, Embah."

"Well, after all he's not really a boy any more. Seventeen is close to manhood. Even if he is away we shouldn't be afraid that he was taken away by wewe or was enticed by someone. He's been matured...."

"He has, Embah...."

"Still, he's gone or more precisely run away, did he have quarrel with you or something like that...?"

"Actually he did not, Embah."

"But a boy running off with a cow must have a reason. Perhaps he was scolded by his father, or was angry because he wanted some money and did not get it...."

"That's right, he's been asking me to buy him a motorbike, but I told him perhaps next time if we get some money."

"Well, well, nothing big with boys nowadays. To be precise he wants a motorbike, doesn't he? Although he is nearly mature, the will of his wong cannot yet be bridled, can it?"

"Yes, Embah...."

"That's it, the one who wants a motorbike is his wong, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"It's impossible for his urip to need a motorbike.... Well, all of you present here," addressing to all present. "You must be able to answer...."

In chorus: "Certainly not, Embah. The urip surely doesn't need anything."

"So, there you are.... It's clear now that the one who wants a motorbike is the wong. So, if pak Parto is now here to report that his boy has run off with a cow, the one who is concerned seems to be the wong as well."

The chorus: "Yes, Embah, it is the wong."

"That's it. It's the wong of pak Parto who is concerned about the disappearance of his boy and the cow. His urip can't be concerned, because he knows that the boy and the cow did not disappear, they are still in existence. Believe me, they can't just disappear. They only move somewhere else, not here now. But the boy and the cow are still in existence...."

"Yes, Embah...."

"Now, if I may ask, you're concerned, is that because you're afraid of losing a son or a cow? Well, if you were

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19 A kind of malevolent female spirit residing mostly in bamboo clusters on the banks of rivers.
to choose, would you prefer to lose the boy or the cow?"

"Of course I would prefer to lose the cow, Embah."

"So, you still love your boy. That means that your
urip is still bright, because, speaking of love, it is the
urip who loves, isn't it?"

"Yes, Embah...."

"That's it. The wong is surely more regretful at the
loss of the cow, because the cow is priced at three hundred
thousand [rupiah], whereas a boy has no price, even when he
tends to cause anger, running off with a cow.... right?

But if you still love your son, that means that your
urip loves the boy's urip or, in other words, it's a
relationship between urip and urip....

So, now pak Parto you have to be dangan, don't be too
concerned. When dangan, your nalar is wide open and bright,
nothing shields it. When concerned, the pikiran shields the
nalar, so the nalar is covered. But when dangan, it gives
light to the path ahead, so that it is easier for you to
find your boy again....

But if you haven't found him, you musn't be concerned
either. You must be sure that he hasn't disappeared, only
moved away. Even so he remains the same boy and remains to
be protected by the urip like you and me. Because the
urip's protection is everywhere, even in Jakarta and
Surabaya one is still under its protection....

Don't you think so.... or do you think urip only
provides protection in your house, I don't think so....

But if he is eventually found or comes back on his own
without the cow, you musn't scold him, because you said you
preferred to lose the cow rather than the boy. Didn't you
say so...."

"I did, Embah."

"That's all, be dangan!"

Distinguishing himself from the normal kebatinan stream,
Embah always says that his place is not a peguron, literally 'a
traditional education institution centred upon a guru,' but a
place where people nggarap kahanan nyata, literally 'till
reality.' While it is true there is no formal teaching given, the
people look at Embah's life as an example and listen to Embah's
words as guidance. The recorded counselling above is a typical
example of Embah's "teachings" given indirectly and informally
under the bamboo clusters.

Sometimes these teachings are demonstrated in a quite
unexpected way. One morning there came a visitor who seemed to be
unfamiliar with the situation in Lively Rock. He seemed to be an ordinary Javanese who upheld the tradition of nenuwun and was in search of berkah or 'mystical blessing' (see Chapter IV) in one place after another. His visit to Embah was to ask Embah to give him mystical protection, and "protection" was exactly what Embah granted him.

Embah said to him: "Please, lay yourself down on the emper over there!"

Confused but obedient, the visitor laid himself down. And suddenly, to the surprise of everybody, Embah stood on his four limbs in a push-up position on top of the man and said: "Feel and see yourself! My protection is only as far as the size of my body, it's not much at all or will that suffice for you? Of course, it will not!" At this stage of speaking, because of old age, Embah fell on the floor. He continued: "You see yourself, it is even hard for me to support myself, let alone other people. So, from now on, stop looking for protection, because you are already under protection. Trust in your urip, because urip always provides a reliable protection no matter whether or not you request it!"

It is amazing to note that the news of this incident which I myself witnessed travelled a great distance in a relatively short time. Five days later I met a group of visitors from north Malang, some 80 km away from Lively Rock, who retold me the incident incorrectly.

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20 Emper usually means the roofed floor in front of a house. But in the case of Embah's house, it is unroofed. The word will be mentioned again in Chapter VI in different contexts.
A schematic summary of Embah's ideology of reality as classified into different categorical levels is shown in the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual category</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual symbolism</td>
<td>Life (Urip)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puppeteer (dalang)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Victory (menang)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural symbolism</td>
<td>Sun, day, sky</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental characteristics</td>
<td>the nature of male baku lanang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Just King (Ratu Adil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>urip motivated direction (garapang urip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social order</td>
<td>the male order (tata lanang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social life</td>
<td>peace (tenterem)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>real (nyata)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>unequivocal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Sabda Pandita Ratu)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>willingness to give (awaeh)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>work, build, make (yasa, tandang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>love (meneng, demeng), uncomplaining (lepo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>justice (adil)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>straight and honest (jujur-kenceng)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Embah's View of History

Consistent with his classificatory principle, Embah views the past, the present and the future in terms of male and female categories. For him, history is a cyclical continuity which runs from the time of the gods (jaman kadewatan), to the time of the Javanese dynasties (jaman raja-raja tanah Jawa), the time of the colonialists (jaman penjajah) and finally to contemporary times.

The time of the gods was the time when the foundations of human cultural life were laid down or, in the most senior disciple's words, jaman tata-urip diwayangake, literally 'the time when the order of life was performed in the wayang play.' Order began to be experienced in human life during the history of the Javanese dynasties whose exploits are told in a blend of stories presented either in the so-called Babad Tanah Jawa, namely indigenous chronicles written as literary works by court writers, or in the body of folklore and oral literature as related in traditional plays such as ketoprak. Prominent in these historical tales are names such as Aji Saka who is believed to be the inventor of Javanese characters; Joyoboyo, the King of Kediri who is believed to have prophesied the well-known ramalan Joyoboyo, 'the Joyoboyo prophecies'; the Brawijayas who were kings of Majapahit; Sutowijoyo or Senopati, the founder of the Mataram Kingdom and Mangkubumi, more often known as Hamengkubuwono I, who was the founder of the Jogjakarta House.

From Embah's point of view, the line of indigenous, historical continuity is based on the theme of just Kingship, and is drawn within the framework of the wayang theatre, both of which are derived from one and the same source: urip. Instead of
discussing recognized versions of this mythology, I want to examine Embah's interpretation and his view of history. The discussion that follows will, therefore, stress how this mythology is interpreted by Embah to justify his ideology of reality.

Basically, the mythology is discernible within the categorization of the wayang tradition. In brief, in addition to the wayang kulit and wayang wong, 'puppet theatre' and 'dance drama,' both of which tell the same stories based on the epics Mahabarata and Ramayana, there are some other puppet theatres which tell different stories based on different sources. They are among others: the leather wayang gedog which tells the story of the so-called Panji cycle of the Kediri period, the wooden wayang krucil which tells the story of the so-called Menak cycle of the Islamic period. King Mangkunegoro IV of Surakarta together with his famous writer Ronggowarsito in the 19th century classified these different sources into a chronological sequence and invented another kind of wayang to fill the madya, 'middle,' time, namely the gap between the purwa or 'ancient' time and the wasana, 'final' or contemporary time. In line with these sequential categories, Ronggowarsito wrote a trilogy, namely Pustaka Raja Purwa (the Book of the Purwa Kings), Pustaka Raja Madya (the Book of the Madya Kings) and Pustaka Raja Wasana (the Book of the contemporary Kings). Pustaka Raja Purwa was basically to be performed in the popular wayang kulit which was therefore also called wayang purwa; a new kind of wayang invented by King Mangkunegoro IV was to perform Pustaka Raja Madya and therefore was called wayang madya; another invented wayang was to cover Pustaka Raja Wasana and was called wayang wasana (see Mulyono 1975, Sastroamidjojo 1964, Drewes 1974).
Embah's version of history seems to fit in with the above chronology. The purwa time is what he calls jaman kadewatan, and the madya time jaman raja-raja tanah Jawa. The messianic notion of the Ratu Adil or King of Justice is deeply rooted in this view of history. Only the coming of the King of Justice can end the period of chaos and bring about order and prosperity.

The words Ratu and Adil in Embah's symbolic classification represent one category, namely the male, with Ratu being the personification of urip, the unchallenged holder of power for the maintenance of order, and Adil being the characterization of urip, the inexhaustive source and carrier of male qualities such as jujur kenceng (consistent honesty) and awah (willingness to give). Yet, despite his male status and characterization, a king is not free from the basic rule of classification: he, too, has two classificatory aspects - male and female. His performance depends on which of his aspects is stronger. Thus, a Ratu Adil is a king who upholds baku lanang, 'the nature of the male,' and carries out garapane urip, 'the instructions of life'; whereas Ratu Angkara Murka, literally a 'cruel and greedy king' is a king who is dominated by the baku wedok, 'the nature of the female,' and, consequently, performs garapane wong, the 'instruction of the wong.' Contrasted to the tata lanang or 'the male order' of the Ratu Adil, Ratu Angkara Murka reflects tata wedok, the 'order of

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21 Here we see again how Embah manipulates a normal lexical construction. Where normally Ratu Adil is composed of two words with one, adil or 'just' as an adjective for the other, ratu or 'king,' for Embah, the two words are both nouns with the same meaning. Earlier we have seen this same sort of interpretation in wong urip, normally a construction of a noun, wong or 'man,' and an adjective, urip or 'live,' meaning a 'living man.' With Embah, the two words are treated as nouns with different meanings, 'man and life.'
the female,' where injustice prevails.

Put in a historical perspective, the sequence of rulers, and the periods associated with them are fixed by the "puppeteer" in a comprehensible cycle divided into day and night. The daytime of the Ratu Adil is followed by the night-time of the Ratu Angkara Murka and vice versa. Although a certain time, day or night, is associated with a series of Kings, certain kings are predominant and their rise characterizes certain times. That is why the term Ratu Adil is actually used to refer to those kings, under whom, rhetorically, the day is at its height, and the same is true of the Ratu Angkara Murka and the night-time.

For Embah, the Ratu Adil during the jaman kadewatan or the time of the gods was Parikesit, the grandson of Arjuna who was made King after the final Baratayuda battle, when all angkara murka qualities had been destroyed and the order of the male could be fully manifested; during jaman raja-raja tanah Jawa or the time of the Javanese kings the Ratu Adil was king Joyoboyo of Kediri.22

The day-time of the male order declined with the fall of the Majapahit kingdom in the 13th century and the coming of the Islamic era was characterized by the female order of what Embah calls penjajah, 'colonialists.' Islam, the Dutch and the Japanese are identified as the colonialists and are associated with female qualities such as daksiya (maliciousness) and njaluk (willingness

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22 At the end of his life, King Joyoboyo is said to have muksa, namely vanished physically rather than have died normally. The place of his muksa is believed to be located in a village called Menang which is said to take its name from the mythical name of his palace Mamenang. The village is near the town of Kediri, and in the village a huge monument has recently been built by a certain Hondodento family of Yogyakarta to commemorate him.
This is how Embah views history. Obviously he is unaware of the Indic nature of the pre-Islamic period in Java which he regards as the time of Java (Java) which happens to mean 'mature' or 'cultured,' free from foreign influences. It was the time of the Ratu Adil, when social life was more or less like the puppeteer's narration in wayang performance at Lively Rock which goes as follows:

"... It is a big country, its soil is fertile and prosperous, and its people are peaceful and feel secure. It is a famous and well-respected country. All the subjects in the villages live in peace and content, and are happy with their agricultural works. The country is free from criminals and far from disturbance.

The regents and officials are all well-known for their wisdom, talent and understanding. They all carry out properly the duties of governing the country and make every effort to glorify the King. Everybody maintains a cooperative spirit for carrying out the King's instructions; nobody causes trouble.

The King is pious, just, loving and virtuous. He gives food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, sticks to those prone to slipping, umbrellas to those caught by the rain or the sun's heat. He comforts those who are in hardship, cures those who are sick. His administration is impartial, resolute in dealing out justice, even his own children and relatives, if found guilty, are punished. That is why the country is free from vice, overwhelmed by the glory of the King."

In Embah's view, the fact that things were all in good order, prosperity prevailed, justice reigned, and people lived happily was due to the manifestation of the Just King who was consistently honest and just, his words were reliable and unequivocal. In addition, he was characterized by a willingness to give (aweh), so that the people were sufficiently provided with their necessities, including land for them to cultivate, school-buildings for their children to learn, bridges and roads
for them to pass over, and so on.\textsuperscript{23}

On the other hand, during the time of the colonialists who followed, poverty prevailed, injustice reigned, and the people lived in hardship. The ruler was the Ratu Angkara Murka. He was unjust, malicious and greedy, his words were unreliable and equivocal, and he was characterized by an inclination to demand from his subjects (njaluk), so that the people were burdened with heavy taxes and levies.

For present purposes, historical events are summarized in the way Embah understands and accepts them. In the beginning was the play. Things and events were classified for the purpose of the play into male and female, into life, justice, unequivocality, the willingness to give, truth and reality, love, happiness and the day on the one hand and into death, injustice, ambiguity, the inclination to demand, falsehood, hatred, unhappiness and the night on the other hand. The day is the time of the Just King, when justice prevails,\textsuperscript{24} or, in other words, it is the time of the male order. But the day is bound to be followed by the night, when things are asleep and dead, injustice reigns, truth and reality are hidden and changed by malice and secrecy, the king is unwise and instead of providing necessities, he is inclined to collect heavy levies and to take bribes. In brief, it is the time of the female order.

\textsuperscript{23}In much the same way, the Lively Rock family was involved in development projects, including the development of a bridge and a school-building.

\textsuperscript{24}Embah compares the power of justice (and also protection, see page 138) to the sunlight, by which "sewerage, king, thieves, are all equally radiated."
The hardships and sufferings borne by the people during the colonial period are attributed to the nature of a female order associated with injustice, an unwise and greedy ruler, who exploited the people and caused chaotic social life.

As both periods are part of the cosmic order and its cycle, the colonial period is associated with the night and, consequently, the lunar calendar; the time of the Just King with the day and the solar calendar. In Java, the traditional lunar calendar has a five-day week, whereas the more official solar calendar has a seven-day week. To Embah, these refer to the duration of the respective periods: the colonial period is bound to last 5 centuries, followed by the time of Just King which will last 7 centuries.

As Embah understands it, the rise of the Just King is just about to occur, in this very century. In fact, the Just King is already in the world, although most people do not realize this. In Embah's words, he is nowadays 'a king who would not be recognized as the Just King even if one accidentally kicked him or tripped over him' (see Chapter IV). 25

Since the personification of the Just King is the focus of Embah's symbolic actions and aspirations, we need to know more about Embah's view of the person of the Just King.

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25 As the colonial period is understood to start with the fall of the Majapahit kingdom in the 14th century, so in Embah's calculations, the Just King should have risen to power at the turn of this century. The fact that so far he has not, Embah says, is because he is generous enough to give "bonus" to the present regime (the Javanese word that he uses dibaboki, 'to be given present, usually by a winning gambler who enjoys distributing some of his win among his supporters').
The "extraordinary" person of Jogjakarta

According to Embah, the Just King is Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX who is the head of the princely state of Jogjakarta. Traditional Javanese political legitimacy rests upon the issue of autochthony vis-a-vis foreign influences. Traditionally, Javanese autochthony is to be traced back to the times of the Majapahit kingdom which was the last pre-Islamic state in Java. Unresolved tension between Islamic and non-Islamic traditions, and between native and foreign cultures since then has given rise to a yearning for some kind of cultural direction as manifested in the person of a just king with pure Javanese qualities. Such a yearning is quite common among Javanese traditionalists, and in various places in rural Java, one can find people holding certain royal figures in great esteem as their real kings. For Embah Suro of South Blitar, for example, the figure was Prince Pakubuwono of Surakarta (see Appendix II).

The Sultan of Jogjakarta is popular in Blitar. Embah's secondmost senior disciple regarded the Sultan as his king before he met Embah because of his reading of an old handwritten

26 The princedom is one of the four princely states in Java that still remain after a long history of interactions between Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic and Dutch colonial politics. The history of the princedom dates to the 18th century when, as a result of a factional struggle, the former kingdom of Mataram was split and a certain Prince Mangkubumi was recognized by the Dutch as the Sultan of an area which was henceforth known as Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat or Jogjakarta as it is more popularly known today. The prince was later known as Sultan Hamengkubuwono I (See Selosumardjan 1962, Ricklefs 1974).

27 The imperial crown of the Mataram rulers is said to derive from the Majapahit period (Schrieke I:14).
manuscript in the possession of his adopted father. There is no doubt that the Sultan was very popular during the revolution, partly because of his peculiar role in the revolution and partly because of his populist image as evident from popular stories around him.

One of the stories most frequently repeated by Embah is about the Sultan's giving a lift to a vegetable market vendor (Atmakusumah 1982:199). It was during the time of the revolution. A vendor standing on the road in need of a lift to take her vegetables to the market was lucky when a military jeep stopped. She was taken to the market by the driver in military uniform. At the market the kind driver even helped her with her baskets of vegetables. Only after the jeep had gone did she realize that something was wrong. She was surrounded by her surprised fellow market vendors. She was told that the driver in military uniform was none other than the Sultan. Another story, which is only known among the Lively Rock family, involves the Sultan who went incognito to the sugar mill Madukismo in Jogjakarta by disguising himself as a field labourer. He is said to have worked among other field labourers to understand their lives and problems, a useful training before his rise to the Just Kingship.

For Embah, however, his recognition of the Sultan as king dates back to a time long before the revolution, in fact, before the Sultan himself was made the king of the principedom. It could be that Embah first saw Jogjakarta as the mecca of Javanese tradition, culturally as well as spiritually, and hence he held the king of the area as his king. He made pilgrimages to Jogjakarta twice while the Sultan was still in Holland studying.
There is a Javanese verse which prophesies the Sultan as the Ratu Adil, but it is not clear whether this verse is old or relatively recent. This popular verse, which belongs to oral tradition of Blitar, states, in part: "...The Ratu Adil is the son of an exiled queen mother, and was born in a place near an uprooted banyan tree, whose palace is located east of the River Opak Gede, and who nowadays would not be recognized even if one accidentally kicked him or tripped over him." It is also unclear how far back the verse dates, although it was certainly popular during the time of the revolution (1945-1948).

Embah himself, however, insists that he has held the Sultan to be the Ratu Adil from the beginning for a reason he could not explain except by saying that it was Urip that made him see the Just Kingship in the Sultan. The following is Embah's version of the Sultan's life, to which he adapts his messianic view of history and his analysis of social realities. Some parts of the story are based on recognizable events in the Sultan's life, other parts are popular mystification, and still other parts are probably Embah's own mystification.

The Sultan's extraordinary quality has been evident since his birth. Popular belief has it that when he was born, one banyan tree in the town square was uprooted by a sudden whirlwind (the

28 In Javanese: "... Sang Ratu Adil iku putra ibu paselongan, tedhak turuning ringin rebah kratone wetan kali Opak Gede, saiki sang Ratu Adil isih kesampar kesandhung, langka jalan wikan..."

Prophecy: "... was born near an uprooted banyan tree...". He was born on Sabtu Paing, 12 April 1912. When the prince was three years old, his father sent his mother out of the palace and from that time he never saw her again until his dramatic return to the palace 25 years later (the prophecy: "...the son of an exiled queen mother"). At the age of four he, too, was sent out of the palace to live with a Dutch family for his education. And in 1930, together with his stepbrother, he went to Holland for further education until his father sent for him in 1939.

All this supposedly sad and harsh life for a prince was, Embah said, part of the preparation for his predestined assumption of the Just Kingship. The Sultan had to manjing or work himself into the colonial regime to understand the nature of the female order under the Dutch.

As a Just King, the Sultan is definitely in possession of exceptional qualities. During his school days, nobody could match him physically and intellectually. In Holland, he led his school

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30 The day Saptu Paing is the Saturday which coincides the Javanese day of Paing. Traditionally, the Javanese commemorate birthdays of this kind called weton, which come every 35 days, with selametan. In Embah's community, the Sultan's weton is celebrated as Saptu Paingan or the Saptu Paing holiday, with special selametan held individually and a gathering in Lively Rock that goes on all night followed by mass dancing the following day.

In Javanese tradition, Saptu Paing is one of the best days. Numerologically, it is double-nine with nine as the highest value. Two nines are 18 or one and eight the total of which is nine again.

31 The word manjing means 'to work and sometimes also to live temporarily in another place.' In rural Blitar, the word is normally used, for instance, for those who leave their villages to work in the plantations, on construction projects, or in factories in town.
soccer team to victory in all its matches.

In 1939 he was suddenly summoned by his ailing father. He was met at the harbour in Jakarta by his father and brothers, and then together they went to Yogyakarta by train. Before that, in a room of the Hotel des Indes where they stayed overnight in Jakarta, his father gave him the royal kris, Kyai Joko Piturun. It was only then that everybody realized he had been made the crown Prince. Already on the train to Yogyakarta, his father fell into a coma. It is said that on the arrival of the train in Yogyakarta, "a clap of thunder exploded in the clear sky, during dry weather and while the sun was shining brightly." This extraordinary natural phenomenon accompanying a return to the palace after 25 years was nothing less than sign of the Sultan's destiny to be a great king. Extraordinary phenomena like this continued to follow the Sultan's life.

In 1942 the Dutch colonial administration collapsed following the invasion of the Japanese, and in 1945, in the wake of the Japanese surrender, the nationalist leaders in Jakarta proclaimed Indonesia's independence. The Dutch, however, returned to Java again, taking the opportunity of the chaotic situation. Armed confrontation with the young Republic was unavoidable. Rapidly Indonesia's territory narrowed and the political capital of the Republic had to move to Yogyakarta. Even this territory fell to the Dutch when they launched a so-called police action, by which they arrested the nation's key-leaders and occupied cities in what was left of Republican territory. Interestingly enough,

32 See Selosumardjan (1962:23). The author refers to this as an "event" rather than a rumour.
the Sultan was left undisturbed and his courtyard became a tiny enclave within the occupied territory. From this enclave the Sultan played a significant role in the struggle, militarily and politically, against Dutch aggression.\(^{33}\) The strange situation surrounding the Sultan during this crucial time was considered evidence of his exceptional qualities: the Dutch saw the palace as an impregnable fortress, fortified by troops of nymphs and elves from the South Sea.\(^{34}\)

The culmination was perhaps the circumstances surrounding the closing period of the Dutch aggression. On March 1, 1949, the guerrillas of Lt. Col. Soeharto, who later became the president of the Republic, launched an all-out attack upon the Dutch forces occupying Jogjakarta and managed to take control of the city for at least six hours. To the Dutch who always claimed that the Republican guerrillas were nothing but bands of terrorists, the successful attack served as a bitter set-back.

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\(^{33}\) A book dedicated to the Sultan on his 70th anniversary entitled 'The Throne for the People' (Tahta Untuk Rakyat) edited by Atmakusumah (1982) recounts episodes in the Sultan's life and stories around him, including his significant role in the Republic's struggle for independence. Many such stories are already widely known and coincide with Embah's version of the Sultan's life.

\(^{34}\) Segara Kidul, 'the South Seas' or the Indian Ocean bordering the southern territories of Jogjakarta and Blitar is believed to be mystically very important. This is the territory of the goddess Lara Kidul with her army of nymphs and elves. The goddess is said to be the mystical spouse of Javanese kings and as such it was normal for her to come to the aid of the Sultan. She is believed to have come to the aid of Embah Wali, too, during the construction of a bridge that the Lively Rock family had built (see Chapter VI), so that in September 1980, in the procession for the inauguration of the bridge a troop of all sorts of such goblins were represented by masked-dancers.
In the wake of this incident, the commander of the Dutch occupation army visited the Sultan in his palace and mentioned his suspicions both about the Sultan's secret activities and about the palace being made a clandestine rendezvous point by the guerrillas. An account by Prince Prabuningrat who is a step-brother of the Sultan reports that the Sultan made it clear to the Dutch commander that, if they wanted to proceed with a search of the Palace, they could do so only after they killed him (see Atmakusumah 1982:171). The Dutch did not proceed with the search and, in Embah's eyes, this incident is the evident confrontation between the Just King, the bearer of the male order, and the colonialists, the bearers of the female order, with a clear victory to the male order. At that time, the Dutch still regarded the Sultan as the someone who was, in a sense, still manjing or serving his apprenticeship with the Dutch. But after this confrontation, the Dutch suddenly realized that the apprenticeship was over and that their rule was coming to an end. They then submitted and acknowledged their inferiority in the face of the Sultan. Upon the Dutch "submission," the Sultan who was always, as the puppeteer narrates, 'very lovingly, generous and wise' (ber budi bawa leksana), sought no vengeance as normally a victorious king would do; instead he granted the Dutch free passage to leave Java peacefully. For this unusually generous and loving treatment by the Sultan, the Dutch were grateful and promised that they, too, would abandon their past colonialistic attitude and adopt a new attitude in line with the male qualities which the Sultan had exemplified.

Embah claims that one day the colonialists will return not to colonize again, but to help and to give aid in line with their
newly adopted quality of *awe*. By way of folk-etymology, Embah plays on the words of the militant political slogan during the Sukarno era about the danger of the neo-colonialist and imperialist forces. In Blitar's countryside, political agitators of the left leaning parties warned about "the return of the Dutch, the British, and the Americans to colonize again (Landa, Inggris, Amerika njajah malih). The word *malih* contextually means 'again,' but on its own, it also means 'to transform.' Embah takes up this second meaning to reconstruct the slogan by interpreting it that 'the Dutch, the British, and the Americans have had their old colonialistic quality transformed.' The colonialists left and day returned. Yet, despite the departure of the colonial regime, the female order still persists because the men who took power are those who served the Dutch and the Japanese during the colonial era and, therefore, are used to female qualities. In other words, the Dutch and the Japanese colonialists have gone, but their female qualities are still maintained by their ex-servants.

These ex-colonial servants were those who, in Embah's eyes, were already defeated either by being taken prisoner by the Dutch (namely the key-leaders of the Republic during the occupation of Jogyakarta), or by retreating into the countryside to launch guerrilla warfare. They were 'the losers' (*sing kalah* which classifies them in the female order), and as such, they can never usher in 'the male order' (*tata lanang*). The only winner (*sing menang*) in Embah's eyes, was the Sultan; he was the

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35 For Embah, drawing an analogy from the *wayang* play, battles should be fought face to face, and troops hiding in the countryside and leaving the battlefield should be regarded as defeated.
only one who never submitted to the colonialists or retreated to
the jungle and, therefore, can bring about the male order. This
explains why at present the situation is still not good for the
commoners. They are still subject to the elite's tendency to
demand heavy levies and bribes (njaluk), a common practice during
the colonial period. Justice is not yet a reality because,
although the Just King is already here in the person of the
Sultan, he has not come to power. In terms of cyclical change, it
is still very early in the morning, and the moon has not yet fully
gone from the sky.

However, the sun has begun to shine brighter and brighter,
and accordingly the bad characteristics of those who still
maintain the female order are becoming more and more visible. The
people will eventually realize the true nature of the ruling
regime and recognize the Just King. As Embah says, playing on the
words of the election slogan, the people will no longer pil/ih
SALAH siji, but pil/ih BENER siji. In the election campaign,
people were told to pil/ih SALAH siji, which literally means 'vote
for ONE [of the three official contestants].' The word salah in
this case means 'one of,' but on its own it can mean 'wrong,' and
with this second meaning the slogan is reinterpreted by Embah to
indicate that what people do by voting for contestants other than
the Sultan in the elections is wrong. What they should do,
instead, is to pil/ih BENER siji which means 'to elect the RIGHT
one' which is understandably the Sultan. The fact that the Sultan
was made Vice-President after the 1971 election was seen by Embah
as a strong indication of the Sultan's predestined rise to power.
To Embah, the vice-presidency served as the Sultan's
apprenticeship with the bureaucracy.
CHAPTER VI

THEATRE OF MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS

IN EARLIER chapters I have tried to relate Embah Wali's development as a person and the development of the movement associated with him from the point of view of Javanese social and cultural history. However, the phenomenal rise of the movement to its present scale was undoubtedly triggered by the developments after 1965. In this chapter I will look at developments inside and outside the movement during this period: the interaction between the situational challenge to, and the symbolic response by, the movement.

The turbulent times following the abortive coup in 1965 left many people with traumatic memories. The deepest of all was the one left by the massacres in 1966 for which Blitar was among the areas that suffered a heavy toll. There is no way that the local massacre can be analysed quantitatively.¹ Official

¹Estimates of total deaths nationally range from less than 100,000 to over one million. See van der Kroef (1971:14).
statements indicate that a low rate of increase could have been caused by the violence of that period (Direktorat 1972:211). Figures from Blitar's Census Bureau, for instance, indicate that the annual rate of increase in the regency from 1965 to 1966 was minus 0.1%; from 1966 to 1967 0.9%, and from 1967 to 1968 0.9% (Suhadak n.d.:44) whereas the rate for East Java for the same years was 2.4, 2.4, and 2.5 percent respectively (Direktorat 1972:216-17). The toll for Blitar was particularly severe because of the military showdown between the Indonesian army and the remnants of the communist party. In 1968, members of what was left of the biggest communist organization outside the socialist world, dug themselves in the rough terrain of south Blitar in a desperate attempt to wage a people's war as in Vietnam. Underground hideouts were built, villages were fortified, people were organized. And yet, none of this gave the army trouble in their effort to crush people's resistance. Using peasants as a human fence, the army put an end to the resistance in a mere three months.

Worse still, the trauma went beyond the horror of the killings and arrests. The political change from the "old order" to the "new order" brought about a transitional period which was, for many, hard to bear. For the success of the government's development programs all aspects of social life were subordinated to the priority of maintaining security and order. For this

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2This tactics had been successfully applied in crushing the relatively long-lived Moslem rebellion in West Java. The supposedly rural guerrillas were literally netted by human fences of tens of thousands of peasants mobilized from the surrounding villages. See Semdam VIII Brawidjaja (1969).
purpose, the government policy, moving from one period of
toughness to another, was directed toward a consistent silencing
of popular expression. Locally, witch-hunts and victimization
were pursued to create a climate of fear. In south Bliitar, in the
wake of the abortive popular resistance, thousands of peasant
prisoners were demonstratively humiliated as outcasts; they were
publicly shaven bald and herded around to work as forced labour.
Houses, scattered because of local geographical conditions, were
re-settled for security reasons and were made to look like
"normal" Javanese hamlets. There was also a forced adoption
program by which children of murdered peasants were taken away
from their old environments which were considered "sinful." 3.

The human tragedy defies description. One grandmother
burst into tears when asked about the "adoption" of her grandson
ten years before. Another grandmother with two grandchildren
taken away from her lived a neurotic life. Determined to take
back the grandchildren, she made brooms of coconut leaf ribs day
and night to be sold every market-day to get enough money as if
money mattered in her case.

While tough measures were applied in south Bliitar, in the
north, the rural populace were not left in peace. Taking
advantage of the spirited anti-communist campaign in the south,
the militant Moslems in the north engaged in blatant actions to

3 The term lingkungan penuh dosa, 'sinful
environment,' was actually used by one local authority in his
briefing to me. A survey report in 1971 details the
implementation of the pilot project of this program, namely the
one affecting children who lost both parents. See Laporan
Pelaksanaan Survey Foster Care ... (A Report on the
implementation of the Survey on the Foster Care Project for
Children Victims of the G.30.S/PKI in the area of South Bliitar,
1971)
enforce Islamic rituals and rules among predominantly nominal Javanese Moslems. Under the slogan of "making the society accept the new order's ideals" (Pengorde-baruan), the villagers were told either to practice their religion properly or to suffer the consequences of being regarded as atheistic communists. This militant group was known for their role in the massacres, and judged from that notoriety alone it can be imagined what trauma the campaign had upon the rural populace. Different from the purge in 1966, however, this campaign affected a broader range of people, including nationalist party (PNI) followers. Because of their normally easy-going, syncretic religiosity, these people were under constant threat and humiliation. There were extreme cases where at some social gatherings former PNI followers were forced to eat cattle fodder, because nationalist party symbol was the bull's head. In other cases, the dead bodies of Christian villagers were prevented from being buried in the village cemeteries. Because of harassment like this, there occurred a reaction which saw an influx of converts to non-Islamic religions. Christian churches, Hindu and Buddhist temples saw an unprecedented increase in membership.\(^4\) There is little doubt that the mass conversion on such a large scale at this particular time was motivated mostly by the need for sanctuary, physical as well as spiritual.

\(^4\) See Willis Jr. (1977); Koch (1972); Tasdik (1970).
Reactions to harassment

Taseri was a respected figure in Bajang village. He was a senior male nurse in a district health clinic, and in rural areas, such a person normally practises as a kind of barefoot doctor as well. He was also a local PNI leader, and the respect that the community had for him saved him from the harassment many people of his background had to undergo. Because of his profession, he had to deal with the unattended victims of killings and began to question the morality behind this brutality. He visited Embah Wali for what he called his "spiritual crisis." His organizational talent, however, led him to the newly developed Hindu movement. The movement was initiated by a self-styled priest Ki Padmohandewo of the Wlingi district town.

Ki Padmohandewo used to be a well-known mystic, but during the time of the harassment he declared himself a Hindu. Like Embah Wali's movement, the churches, and temples, the Hindu movement of Ki Padmohandewo functioned as a formal religious umbrella and immediately attracted a large following. It became further consolidated with the arrival of Taseri who later dedicated his talent to the development of the Hindu movement in the area. In fact, as Taseri said, had Ki Padmohandewo declared himself a Buddhist, Buddhism would have flourished in the area.

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After the harassment subsided, the movement was incorporated as a local organisation of the Parisada Hindu Dharma, the national umbrella for Hinduism, and continued to develop strongly. Ki Padmohandewo, however, persistent in his own style of Hinduism, retired from the movement and returned into his old religious practices before he died in 1971.
A different escape from harassment was experienced by Kiran of the village Sukosewu. He had been a local leader of the nationalist youth organization. After the coup in 1965, the organization was in an awkward situation with no clear direction. It established a short-lived alliance with the militant Moslems and the military in an anti-communist front. During the period of the massacres, the organization was under instructions to render assistance in the purge. When the situation was reversed and pressure was directed toward his organization, Kiran retreated from the political arena and, instead, deepened his mystical knowledge and skills. Initially, only fellow members of his organization came to him for his mystical protection. Later on, however, he became known for the efficacy of his mystical power to cure all kinds of diseases. In this capacity he attracted the attention of the sick, including those from the elite. It was this mystical status and the connection with authorities that saved Kiran from harassment and secured him protection.

Mass conversion, however, was also motivated by the need for the harassed to make a statement of their disagreement with the wanton transgression of morality. Taseri's conversion from political to religious activity was one case. In other cases, individuals turned to Embah Wali's movement. It became the more clear with each passing day that, contrary to general expectation, governmental toughness was not simply a symptomatic excess of a transitional period. It was an institutionalized style of politics. Even after the successive traumatic campaigns of 1966 and 1968, the villagers had to experience one period after another of political toughness. In 1971 the first election after the 1965
upheaval was held to secure the democratic legitimacy of the new order government. It turned out to be the arena for a political game. To win the election at all costs, the authorities did not hesitate to use "bulldozing methods." Political activities were banned at village level to make the villagers literally "a floating mass," free from political direction other than the government's. Those who had previously been arrested for complicity in the upheaval were told not to vote and to report weekly to the security office. Sporadic violence took place, this time between the militant Moslems and the army-backed organizations.

As had been the case for sometime, the alleged communist sympathizers were ready-made scapegoats for both sides. They were rounded up as a precautionary measure, and when released afterwards, they continued to be branded as ex-tapol, 'ex political prisoners.' Among them were three people who later became prominent followers of Embah Wali, namely Setiadi, the spokesman, Kasman, the enumerator, and Prawiro, the ritualist.

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6 A term bulldozer for 'bulldozer' was then popular in reference to widespread intimidations and other illegalities during the elections. Home Minister Amir Machmud, for instance, was quoted as saying that he did not mind being called a bulldozer (Sinar Harapan 26.4.1971, "We know Who are Foes and Who are Friends," Indonesian Current Affairs Translation Service, April 1971). With regard to the use of the term 'floating mass,' see Kompas editorial "The Concept of the Floating Mass" (25.9.1971), in Smith, Roger M., Southeast Asia: Documents of Political Development and Change, 1974.

7 'Enumerator' as a functionary is explained below.
After experiencing harsh detention because of their membership in communist affiliated professional organizations, these ex-political prisoners were categorized as golongan C or 'C category,' the supposedly least dangerous category of three categories. After their detention, they lost their jobs and were discriminated against in many aspects of social life. They were alienated from normal social relations and there were only a few places where they were welcomed.

Among these places was Setiaji's. Setiaji was a self-employed tailor. His house was open and was frequented by all sorts of people. He began visiting Embah after the 1965 coup. He was a bright self-taught young man, a good speaker, and was friendly. It was the frequent visits by some ex-political prisoners which aroused suspicion and in one of the periods of political toughness in 1971, he was arrested. Although he was arrested for 40 days, was shaven bald and was suspected of complicity in the new-style communist organization (PKI Gaya Baru), evidence could not be obtained beyond the fact that he was frequently visited by some ex C-category political prisoners. 8

Kasman was a tenant farmer. He was known as hard-working and honest, and his landlord had no complaint except for one thing. At harvest time, the landlord noted that Kasman liked to give an extra share to harvesters. The landlord suspected that he

8 Information from local military authorities as well as from the regency's chief of the social political affairs directorate.
was a communist. However, that was the only suspicion and this was not shared by other members of the community. His arrest in 1971 was because of his admission that he was an adherent of the so-called agama Jawa, the 'Javanese Religion.' It was an invented term to justify his refusal to be classified as a Moslem. During the traumatic period of religious harassment in 1968, he refused to seek sanctuary in a church or temple and instead he went to Embah Wali. When he had to report to the village office to register for the election and in the process had to declare, among other things, his religion, he persistently claimed that he was a follower of the Javanese religion.

The term agama Jawa in the area was coined by Prawiro who had been a follower of Embah Wali since the fifties. He intensified his visits to Embah after the upheaval. In one village indoctrination gathering in the heat of the religious harassment in 1968, he was spared from terrible humiliation for publicly not following any formal religion only because of his respected seniority. But he witnessed other people being humiliated publicly by those who claimed to be religious. Since then, as he says, he has severed all relations with Gusti Allah or God and all official religions. He maintains that this shameful conduct which was comparable to behaviour of the ogres in the wayang was motivated by religions which were basically

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9 The same habit of giving extra share to harvesters and sharecroppers was also adopted by Embah (see Chapter IV:93).
"non-Javanese." Accordingly, he has publicly admitted to being an adherent of the 'Javanese religion.' In 1971, together with Kasman he was arrested because of this statement. He was in the same detention camp together with Setiaji and Kasman. After their detention, the three became more convinced of Embah Wali's example and dedicated their lives to the movement.

The same routine exercise of toughness on the part of the government and of nervousness on the part of the people was repeated each time political tensions built up. It is against the background of this continued agonizing tension that we must consider the further development of Embah Wali's movement. But before that we will first look at a series of dramatic events in Lively Rock since 1965 as seen and understood by members of the Lively Rock community.

**Slipping away from the great house**

Midnight 30 September 1965: in Jakarta the coup plotters were possibly already on the move when Jawoto, Embah's third son, and his good friend Suyadi, who were sleeping on a bamboo bench outside Embah's house, were wakened by noises from the

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10. 'Non-Javanese,' locally *ora Jawa*, literally means 'alien to Java,' but also means 'improper, immoral, or immature.'

11. At the time of my fieldwork, both of them were soldiers; Jawoto was with Indonesia's para commando regiment in Jakarta, and Suyadi was with the infantry in East Timor.
direction of the kitchen. Before they were fully awake, they saw Embah go out of the house. He was followed by Embah Putri, carrying sleeping mats and some kitchen utensils and shouting: "Ngungsi, ngungsi!" From behind, Embah Putri told Jawoto and Suyadi to help with the junk.

So at dawn Jawoto and Suyadi found themselves in the middle of Embah's ricefield at the east of the house, following Embah and Embah Putri almost blindly. Thus before news of what was going on in Jakarta reached Lively Rock, people were already aware that an important "change" was occurring. The change was reflected as well as was prompted by Embah's action to ngungsi. Just like the ngungsi experience in 1947 (see Chapter IV:102 &

12 Ngungsi mean 'to flee from an area threatened by war or natural disaster' (see Chapter IV:105). The Blitarese are familiar with ngungsi as they used to experience it during the periods of the revolution and Mount Kelud's repeated eruptions.

Despite his claim that whatever he does has nothing to do with ngelakoni, from time to time, it is true, Embah does actions which by normal standards are strange. His ngungsi experience this time, as the one in 1947, could be one of those strange actions. During my fieldwork, I witnessed several times actions which invited my questions. Some of those actions are:

1. In February 1980, Embah buried an old chandelier, the kind which was in demand as an antique. His explanation was that the chandelier was disposed of because it was very old. A few weeks afterwards former Vice President Hatta, who was regarded as the co-founder of the Republic, died. Many followers were quick to interpret that the burial of the chandelier was a prediction of Hatta's death.

2. On the new year of 1981, Embah instructed his people to cut down the live fence of lamtoro shrub (Leucaena glauca Benth) surrounding his relatively large compound, and to replace it with a new one. Because such a fence with its useful by-products such as cattle feed (leaves), vegetable (seeds) and firewood was normally kept alive forever, Embah's action was quite unexpected. Weeks later the President initiated a cabinet shake-up affecting the minister of justice, the attorney general, and the chief of the high court in an attempt to enhance the fight against corruption. Many followers thought the shake-up was linked to Embah's change of live fence.
109), Embah built a temporary hut again on the ricefield. The first to know was Prawiro who early in the morning came to Lively Rock to find out that Embah had 'slipped away from the great house.'

As the tension increased, the hut soon became a sanctuary frequented by panic-stricken visitors. Here they tried to understand what was developing in the country from clues they felt they could find from Embah. At the height of the violence, Embah suffered a stroke which totally paralyzed him for more than two years. He could not move his limbs, had to be fed and washed, but strangely still could speak loudly and clearly. To many, Embah's condition indicated the worst situation they could expect, being practically defenceless in the face of the wild persecutions. This was the best occasion for the followers to witness Embah's unyielding trust in Urip, because he refused medical treatment. As expected from him, all was up to Urip to make him well again.

Obviously he could no longer receive regular visitors and Embah Putri, therefore, put a tight fence around the hut. Only familiar followers continued to come and keep him company despite the tense situation. The bank of a big river not far from the hut was a spot for execution. To some, Urip's presumed protection alone was not felt sufficient and voices of worry began to surface.

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13 The phrase, locally lingsir saking dalem ageng, was taken from the wayang literary tradition, normally 'to slip away from the kingdom or the palace,' to illustrate a situation of anxiety caused by and or reflected in the slipping away of the king, the knight or the hero from his proper place. Prawiro's use of the wayang phrase in his account seemed to stress exactly his emotional worry when finding Embah had left the house.
One day, on a rare occasion, Embah became agitated and said: "Well, if people doubt the power of Urip, they should run off!" Some of the followers took the words as a symbolic instruction and did run off, others stayed. Some who ran off did find safety, others did not. Karmijan, the chief of sub-district neighbouring Lively Rock left his house only hours before a gang of executioners came to pick him up. He went into hiding on the slopes of Mount Kelud for several years until the tension subsided and then returned home unharmed. But Sutarji was arrested during his escape and was sent to the Buru penal island for eight years.

The most dramatic experience was perhaps that of Darmadi. He was dragged out by a gang of executioners and was brought to the bank of a river for execution. There he was hacked and, thought to have died, thrown to the river, but he survived although badly mutilated. The way the situation is perceived is what Embah says: "There is no surprise with the killings, as people understand that the death penalty (hukum pati) is inherent in the female law (hukum wedok)." Recalling that period, Embah says that he does not blame those who, in such a tense time, became worried, because worry is also existent. Only babies cannot feel worried, and that was why he was made paralyzed like a baby without worry.

Nowadays, recalling the difficult situation of that period, many followers refer to Embah's strange behaviour before his dramatic ngungsi action on the night the coup was attempted in 1965. Many witnessed that in the weeks before the abortive coup Embah had dug "many" rubbish dumps. By normal standards the dumps were huge indeed, and to many they served as a clear prediction about the coup and the subsequent wild killings and mass
The same way of understanding reality applies to the subsequent events.

As the turmoil gradually subsided, Embah, too, began to recover from his paralysis. In 1970, he wanted to return home. However, as the house was very old and had been unoccupied for two years, it had deteriorated. In what turned out to be the movement's first construction undertaking, the house was renovated by the followers by making use of the materials and products from the house garden itself. Upon its completion, Embah returned to the house, still carried pickaback but on the way to full recovery. As many of the followers say, Embah's recovery from paralysis was a sign of the coming brighter period.

The MPR Sessions under the rambutan trees

MPR, which phonetically reads 'em-pe-er,' stands for Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, the 'People's Deliberative

As regards the number of the dumps, the people's tendency to mystify may easily end up with fantasies, in this case perhaps a number of two or three have blown up into "many." During the building of the Gamelan House in Embah's courtyard in 1981, a hole of 4x2x2 cubic metres was dug out to dump construction material waste. Normally, a rubbish dump in one's courtyard is not larger than two cubic metres.

In the 1950's, Embah and his followers were engaged in the construction of a tobacco kiln. However, the project which could have become the movement's first construction ritual, was abandoned. See Chapter IV:116.
Assembly. Tensions began to build up again at the time that the 1974 sessions of this Assembly were held in Jakarta. Students riots in major cities signalled social discontent with the government's political and economic direction. The protest was carefully couched in a disagreement with the economic domination by foreign countries, particularly Japan.

However, behind the riots which were formally focused on anti-Japanese imported goods was a strong feeling against the government. The chaotic situation that followed was a good excuse for the government to re-establish an atmosphere of submissiveness. As before, students leaders and opposition intellectuals and politicians were arrested, and critical newspapers were closed down. There was a widespread feeling of uncertainty.

The same feeling prevailed in the countryside. It is true there were no more witch-hunts, but the paranoia of past horrific periods was there. The villagers were well aware of the power struggle in the cities and began to look for mystical signs. They took no part in any political demonstration, but in their own way they were interested in the political debate by searching for apocalyptic meanings behind the events. They visited cult places and wise men for clarification and for salamet.

Many came to Embah for the same reason. And because of the ever growing number of visitors, Embah could no longer receive them in his house as before. He sat most of the time in front of his house, on the part locally called EMPER, with the visitors sitting around him. Very soon he began talking about local EMPER sessions while people in the cities were talking about the
EM-P(e)-ER or MPR sessions and all their concomitant expectations. To many people, the equation was not just a conversational coincidence, but a prophecy of mystical relevance. To Embah, it was a starting point for his vocal assessment of the current situation.

The materialization of the Ember sessions at Lively Rock was facilitated by the appearance of Setiaji who was able to rephrase Embah's rustic words for a wider and more diverse audience. But if Setiaji was the matchstick with which the fire was lit, the kindling were the people, dried up by all the tensions resulting from the 1965 coup.

By 1974, the hope that the social order could be properly restored in the image of the Joyoboyo's prophecy -- 'the coming of the time for the Kala Bendu to end, to give way to the Kala Suba [so that] the little people could laugh (Chapter III:83)' -- this hope was fading. Despite the government's good record of economic development, it seemed, to the people, that psychological tranquility should come first. In other words, justice should prevail before the materialization of prosperity as was wisely coined in the idealistic phrase masyarakat adil dan makmur, 'a just and prosperous society.'

With the bitter reality of the past few years still fresh in mind, people began to sense that the turmoil surrounding the student riots in 1974 would push their aspirations for tranquility even further away. Because of the riots, the tightening of security control that followed was felt particularly in the villages. Permits and clearance were required for almost every movement of the population, for travelling and staying overnight.
outside regency, for holding parties, for having guests staying overnight, for employment, for school enrolments and the like. Visits to figures such as Embah Walli were first of all motivated by an innate search for security, by a need for *selamat* from the period of tranquility that was drawing further away. Then, together with Embah, people began to make sense of the bitter reality and of what lay in store for them in the end.

Normal visits for counselling began to become education sessions. Such sessions normally began with Embah responding to questions by visitors regarding problems which had led them to make the visits. As the situation went by, however, the questions and answers developed into open conversations in which critical statements involving daily life were enunciated.

It was in such conversations that the role of Setiaji, the tailor, began to be conspicuous. In fact, his role as spokesman -- a role in which he enjoyed being referred to -- was accepted by acclamation. Both Embah and his followers enjoyed his speaking, backed, as it was, by his vast knowledge of current affairs as well as traditional literature and mythologies. He managed to present Embah's stories and ideas in an enjoyable way to the people. He picked up Embah's symbolic remarks, combined them with traditional literary phrases, stressed their essence and related them to important current events.

Despite a consistent theme, because of the informal and irregular format, there was no continuity in the discussions. The participants came and went 'according to their ability and will.' Normally, those interested but unable to attend all the sessions would compare each other's knowledge of *ngendikane Embah*, of 'what
Embah said,¹-six

But the first half of 1974 was a time of tension. As the press was clamped down, people in the villages turned to overseas radio broadcasts, particularly the Indonesian service of Radio Australia, for reliable information. It was a time of fading hopes, suppressed expectations and feelings of social injustice. People needed a shelter for the bleak future. With all the dreams of the past shattered by the aftermath of the 1965 coup, the only ready shelter to protect them was again, the mosques, the churches, the temples.

Some people, however, needed more than just a shelter. They wanted explanations and directions. The need for a continuity in Embah's statements was felt. When there was a wild suggestion to regularize the sessions, it was accepted enthusiastically almost at once. On Sunday mornings, a large number of people would be waiting in Embah's front-yard, sitting on the ground under the rambutan trees. At 10 a.m. Embah would appear from the house after a brief talk with Setiaji and would sit in the middle of the gathering. In the early sessions, Embah was said to start normally by reinterpreting the meanings of some commonly used words and slogans such as selamet (safe), keamanan.

¹Within the Lively Rock family, it is very common to refer to a person as someone who had obtained 'this much or that much of results [from attending the sessions].' This was locally called entuk-entukane. After I sufficiently settled down in Lively Rock and was rather familiar with their exceptional way of thinking, people in Lively Rock family often commented me: 'Well, now Pak (Mr) Raharjo already has a lot of entuk-entukane.'
(security), persatuan (unity), and so on. With these reinterpretations by folk-etymology, he imposed new, critical meanings upon the words. And along with the critical meanings, he offered a thought- and belief-system contrary to the normal one. It was this alternative thought- and belief-system as a way to understand history and current events that became the theme of the weekly session.

The theme was knitted firstly to Embah's life story which Setiaji skillfully managed to pull out through interview-style conversations, and then to Embah's version of history. The underlying theme of Embah's life story and his version of history was the people's powerlessness in their inevitable experiences of injustice. But this 'time of wrath' was to be followed by the inevitable rise of a Just King who would bring about 'the time of happiness.' After the past had been discussed, Embah would remark upon current events by implying that the enthusiastic gathering of people in Lively Rock was evidence of the imminent rise of the Just King. He repeatedly said:

"When neighbours begin to ask [a pregnant woman] about the expected date of delivery, it means that the birth is imminent. Similarly, when there are so many people asking about the Just King, it means that his coming is imminent indeed." 17

The remarks were at times very critical and straightforward, and

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17 In the Javanese rural society, pregnancy and birth are very much social matters and therefore it is customary for neighbours to ask about the expected date of delivery, the closer the expected date of delivery the more frequent the asking occurs.
this fact alone explains why the emper sessions were so attractive.

The fact that regular gatherings involving so many people took place in a village in an area regarded as politically sensitive and at a time when the rural areas were being vigorously de-politicized did bother the local authorities. Intelligence agents were sent to investigate, but their reports were seemingly ambiguous. While on the one hand Embah Wali did make critical comments on government policies and on the behaviour of government authorities, on the other hand he called upon the people to be obedient, to carry out happily any government instruction, and to fulfil all obligations. As he says, being subjects, the people have to accept whatever policy that the government has made. He himself set a striking example that sometimes embarrassed the authorities: he always went to the village office to pay taxes several weeks early!

In this way, Embah played an important role in local politics. In the 1971 elections, he voted for the government-backed political party Golkar solely because the government's strong recommendation was interpreted as an instruction. In the 1977 elections, he agreed to campaign for Golkar after "consulting" the Sultan. He was requested by the local government to do so although he seemed to feel awkward about it. With his son-in-law, he went to Jakarta and stayed with his third son who was with a para-commando regiment. With this son, he went to the Sultan's office and was received by the Sultan's personal assistant and was given an official election leaflet bearing the Sultan's picture and message. It was this leaflet,
better known later as *Surat Resmi* or 'the official letter,'¹⁸ which was regarded as his charter for accepting the invitation to participate in the campaigns. In the major campaign rally held at the city square in Blitar, 80 trucks were required to transport Embah and some 2000 followers from Lively Rock in their traditional Jogyanese costumes, in addition to those who went straight to the place of rally on their own.

Embah and his wife were seated besides the Regent and other dignitaries on the rostrum, from where he could see his traditionally dressed followers who dominated the square. With this performance, there was no reason for the government to be unhappy. It is true the local authorities did sense some apathy, but there was no frustration, let alone radicalism.

After the election, however, all was not well. On the eve of the newly elected Assembly's sitting in May 1978 to re-elect President Suharto, social discontent increased dramatically and major university campuses became, once again, the starting point of demonstrations. This time the demand was quite straightforward: a call for the President to resign.

The political confusion mounted even more with the sudden, unexpected resignation of Sultan Hamengkubuwono. The official reason given for the resignation raised further questions.

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¹⁸ There was another *Surat Resmi* kept in Lively Rock. In 1979, amidst enthusiasm in the wake of the grand trip to Jogjakarta (see below), certain authorities in Banyuwangi intimidated those who were keen on wearing the Jogyanese traditional costumes. Embah sent Sukopanitro and Prawiro to the Sultan's office in Jakarta, and the two came back with a letter from the same personal assistant typed on the Sultan office's letter-head, saying that "all Indonesian citizens are free to wear any costume as long as it complies with tradition and custom."
Everybody, except Embah, speculated about the situation. According to Embah, the Sultan's resignation was the end of his apprenticeship. It meant that his rise to power was indeed imminent.

Political tension began building up and the security apparatus throughout the country was put on full alert. At that time Embah and his followers had held regular emper sessions for more than three years. And with the students becoming more and more vocal in their political demands, Embah, too, became more straightforward in his analysis of the current situation. An atmosphere of imminent expectation prevailed: a showdown seemed inevitable. Finally in February 1978 the government took quick, decisive action to clamp down on discontent. The press was once again silenced, students leaders and other opposition figures were arrested, and in Lively Rock the emper sessions were indirectly instructed to end.

The ritual preparation for the coming of the Male Order

I will discuss details of the developments which led to the ending of the emper sessions separately when I discuss the organization of the movement. For narrative convenience, I will deal first with what happened on 4 May 1978, the Sunday before the long-awaited sessions of the Assembly.

At about 10 a.m. that Sunday, the gathering had just started with Embah and Setiaji sitting under the rambutan tree
surrounded by the normal, large audience. In fact, the "official" record kept by Kasman put the number in attendance on that day at 214, the second highest on record. The session was disrupted by the coming of Sukopanitro, the most senior disciple, who signalled to Setiaji to go to the verandah for a word. There, in the presence of Prawiro, Sukopanitro told Setiaji that for security reasons the government did not want to see a continuation of the sessions. Sukopanitro had earlier been approached by the local district chief and had been told about the government's concern with the possibility of having Embah's place used as a meeting place by the remnants of the communist agents.  

Returning to the gathering, Setiaji made a sentimental farewell speech in which he stressed the lakon in which he had been taking part was over and it was now up to Urip to determine what the next lakon would be. The event must have been dramatic, eyewitness accounts say that some women burst into tears, particularly when after the speech, in a manner like an inferior reporting to the superior, Setiaji addressed Embah about the completion of his role. Nobody expected, however, that before too long the next lakon would begin. In fact, immediately upon the disruption of the last gathering, a new lakon started. Some of the audience who lingered in the courtyard gathered around the set of gamelan used to accompany the dancing that occurred during the first dancing session in the early 1950's.

This might all seem a coincidence, but to Embah and his

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19 Locally, Tempat berkumpulnya sisa-sisa G.30.S/PKI, a common phrase expressing the Government's over-sensitivity to the security issue.
followers it was the hand of the Urip at work. The gamelan had only been returned a few days before. After the cessation of the dancing sessions in 1954, the gamelan had remained idle. It was borrowed by Sukopanitro and, since Sukopanitro had ceased visiting Lively Rock, nobody had remembered it. From Sukopanitro, it was passed around for 15 years. In fact, it was only when the last person to borrow it died that the set was returned to Sukopanitro, and Sukopanitro having begun visiting Lively Rock again "remembered" to return it.

The set was temporarily stored in the living room of the house of Embah's daughter located on the eastern wing of Embah's front yard. From time to time people played it whenever enough players were available. However, on the morning that the emper sessions ceased, having nothing to do, some women began to dance to the gamelan and this impromptu session seemed to cheer the audience. The first dancing session of 1978 included a dancing procession around the front yard. Some people began to worry about whether this spontaneous dancing might displease Embah, but Embah was quoted as saying: "Let them dance. JOGED-BEKSA (a compound word to mean 'dance') is JOGED(ejeg) BEKuma nggayuh angkaSAA (standing on the ground, trying to reach the sky), and that is Urip!" On the day the emper sessions ceased, the movement devised a new medium of self-expression.

This medium was dancing. From the outset, people sensed that this dancing was not normal dancing. Very soon symbolic meanings, as defined by Embah, were attached to the dancing. People came to dance and to share Embah's ideas, hopes and dreams, either correctly or incorrectly. Most saw Embah Wali as a prophet.
currently engaged in a great work of preparing the coming of a new era of justice, and they wanted to be party to that great work of preparation.

By word of mouth, news spread about the dancing. The first six months saw the number of dancers swell to around 600 for each session. Thanks to Kasman’s record, we know that the highest number was 911 on the Friday Embah and his followers made a pilgrimage to Jogjakarta.

Not all visitors, however, came to dance. Most just wanted to have fun and watch the dancing. Many came for "mystical" hints about the coming results of lottery. Until its official prohibition on 1 March 1981, the daily lotto (locally known as the lotto harian) was popular and played by people from all walks of life, both in urban and rural areas. In a Javanese setting, the lotto was more than just a game of chance. It became linked to the Javanese symbolic system involving folk-religion, cosmology, numerology, and literature. The one that was run daily was semi-legal with a well-organized marketing system involving a network of salespersons throughout the community. Basically, it was believed that the winning number was supernaturally fixed and people could learn the result before the drawing by interpreting various supernatural signs. locally known as kode (from the foreign word 'code') within their reach. Such signs, including dreams, were believed to be obtainable mainly from certain personalities with extraordinary mystical qualities such as Embah, whose symbolic words were open to interpretation. Certain 'wise men' very soon specialized in the kode, and in the public places such as a city square or a market, one could find self-styled
astrologers and fortune-tellers offering their services. Very popular among systems of such symbols was the Chinese one, the impact of which was felt beyond the realm of the game. 20

Embah does not like the practice of gambling, since expecting a quick and easy benefit is contrary to the male ideal of yasa. Yet he did not reject the lotto, just as he did not turn away lunatics, beggars or thieves. And as a consequence of his stand on giving whatever people ask of him, he, too, always replied to questions about kode by mentioning whatever passed through his mind at the time. Embah said: "I'm just like a radio receiver which immediately produces sound when it is turned on."

The second-most popular counselling was for people seeking remedies for illness. To these people, Embah's answer was always to advise them to pick up whatever leaf was available around their house. The underlying idea was that it is Urip, which creates both illness and its remedies and, therefore, it is Urip alone that leads one to the necessary remedy.

People coming to ask for kode and remedies were always advised to leave at once so that their female quality of demanding (kode or remedies), i.e. their being "non-straight," could be made "straight" or kenceng by immediately carrying out what had

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20 One Sunday morning, I visited a high-ranking official in the regency administration. We had a conversation over coffee when suddenly his wife and two children arrived with shopping goods, apparently from the market. The father asked the children:

"What did you buy, sonny?"

The eldest child, a boy of 11 years old, answered convincingly:

"Twenty-seven!"

At that time I did not immediately understand that the number 27 in lotto was indicated by the symbol of a fish, and that daily terms such as shopping goods in the boy's answer to his father's question had to be understood in terms of the lotto.
been sought.

Yet, most people visiting Embah did not come for counselling or to have fun. They wanted to be close to the person they held in reverence. Answers to the question why they had come to Lively Rock were either 'to look for Embah's blessing' or 'to seek tenterem or peace of mind.'

**Embah's philosophical view of dancing**

For whatever purpose they had come, in Lively Rock people were exposed to a different cultural atmosphere. It was the atmosphere of re-interpreted traditionality with a strong emphasis on what Embah believed to be the revitalization of lost Javanese values. Throughout the emper sessions, Embah had made public the ideological basis of his views and the historical legitimacy of his claim. Throughout the dancing sessions, between counselling sessions, he made public his analysis of the current situation as part of the preparation for the imminent coming of the long-awaited era under the Just King orally and symbolically through the performance of human wayang (wayang wong; see Chapter III:22-23). on

This performance of wayang wong was on Sunday mornings. Unlike the wayang wong sessions in early 1950's (Chapter IV:111), the sessions in early 1980's were better performed, using real wayang costumes instead of costumes made out of coconut leaf sheaths. However, like the sessions in 1950's, the stories performed were explicitly on the theme of Just Kingship. The
first Sunday performance enacted the coming of the Just King (danced by Sukopanitro) who was welcomed by the Goddess of the South Seas. It was followed by a series of early Just Kings, starting from the crowning of Mahabarata's King Parikesit through the adventure of King Anglingdarma to the vanishing of King Joyoboyo. Afterwards, the wayang wong performance presented invented stories selected by prominent members such as Sukopanitro, Nyotocarito the puppeteer, Prawiro in consultation with Embah. Needless to say, the theme of the stories was the pursuit and achievement of the promised justice particularly by the lower orders -- the clown-servant Semar and his children.

Consistent with his ideological basis and the wayang model of the human world, Embah interpreted dancing as symbolically male, being an upstanding posture with hands reaching for the sky, for Urip. People dance to make themselves happy (seneng). Seneng is a word that can be interpreted by folk-etymology in multiple ways. It means 'to love' which is a male characteristic, but it also means 'happy' which falls in the same category with lego and dangan, the main indicators of male character. The dance is performed to the gamelan music, a manifestation of order. All in all, dancing symbolizes order and the aspiration of the male character. As Embah says, it is right for people to seek tenterem by dancing, because when all the conditions for the male character and for order prevail, tenterem is achieved.

There seemed to be nothing suspect about this kind of philosophy. Yet, the very fact that for the sake of this kind of philosophy, people came from all over every Sunday did raise questions for the authorities. They sent people to ask not why
the people danced, but when the dancing would end. In October 1979, when the question was asked, the dancing had only begun. It was the time when this activity was on the increase leading up to a peak period from December to February 1980. Instead of coming to an end, the dancing became even more established as a focus for other symbolic activities. It was also the starting point for regular visitors to develop into a group or, in their own words, into a family with a kind of organisation.

The first activity actually to be organized was the dancing itself with certain personalities coming forward as functionaries. Kasman continued to be the "enumerator" responsible for the "statistical" record of the dancers. He started this function when, during the initial days of the emper sessions, Embah used to ask him about the number in attendance. At first, he answered with an approximation, but when Embah seemed always to address this question to him, he felt that he should make a record of attendance to give a more accurate answer. Kasman maintained his position as an enumerator when the emper sessions were transformed into dancing sessions. At every dancing session, one would find Kasman with a pen and a note book, counting the number of dancers.

Sukopanitro's seniority in the group was well-established not only because of his long association with Embah but also because of his former administrative experience as a village secretary. He was responsible for the simple book-keeping work that the group could not avoid having, and for relations with the wider community. In November 1978, he was sent by Embah to Yogyakarta to arrange for the Lively Rock family to visit the
palace and to find a dance teacher to teach the group the proper Jogyanese style of dancing.

In December 1978, over 2000 members of the Lively Rock family including Embah in 50 buses went on a pilgrimage to Jogjakarta as a symbolic gesture of their pledge of loyalty to the Sultan. In Embah's words: "We are Javanese, and it is but natural for the Javanese kawula (subjects) to express their pledge of loyalty to their king."

The night before the trip Lively Rock was like a night fair. There were too many buses to be parked in the village's small lanes, and there were too many pilgrims to be accommodated on Embah's relatively large compound. It was on that night that Embah was said to have mentioned his folk-etymological interpretation of the village's name. The word-for-word translation of the name was 'Crowded Rock' and, therefore, the name was generally interpreted as 'a place crowded with rocks,' which was indeed the geological condition of the village. Separately, however, the Javanese word for 'crowded' generally refers to people and, always quick at folk-etymology, Embah used that meaning to reinterpret the name as 'a rocky place crowded with people.'

The formation of self-identity

Throughout the period of the emperor sessions and the ensuing dancing sessions, a certain consciousness began to emerge among the ever increasing number of regular visitors to Lively.
Rock. A crucial factor in this process of increasing consciousness was the introduction of a new philosophical way of analysing events and developments, human life and existential experience in terms of the binary opposition of male and female. With this philosophy, Embah's followers began to understand the nature of historical reality and its relevant link with the present. More importantly they, too, began to analyse social reality, its structure and dynamics. And, in their own way, they identified themselves with a certain force in the community, the force they saw as associated with their ideal image of the Just King.

The formative period, however, also saw the development of a self-identity in interaction with the outside community, particularly when authorities attempted to intervene in local affairs. Based on this initial consciousness, Embah's followers began to distinguish themselves from the rest of the community in terms of "us" and "them," "inside" and "outside," and "member" and "non-member [of the Lively Rock family]." The most commonly used term for members of the group was warga (member) and wargane dewe (member of our own family). Activities, events, and values are differentiated between those occurring "inside" and "outside" the group. The name of the village, Lively Rock, became a general reference for the place, the group, and Embah. Implied in the identity was the so-called characteristics of baku lanang, 'the nature of the male,' which was basically a reaction to political action imposed upon them. The dance session, for instance, developed out of the closing of the emper session, a manifestation of the government's sensitivity to popular expression. The same
pattern was repeated in the subsequent events.

In April 1979, for the celebration of the government-backed Golkar party, the Lively Rock family was invited to take part in a mass rally, as they had done at the time of the 1977 election. Because this time Embah did not come, the turn-out was not as impressive as in 1977, yet the Lively Rock family still formed a large contingent. A problem arose when, before the rally, participants were to be grouped according to their respective functional grouping. The Lively Rock family was to march under the banner of the '([Spiritual] Beliefs Group, locally Golongan Kepercayaan. The problem arose when, as a matter of principle, they did not want to be identified with a golongan which colloquially connoted political factionalism, and with kepercayaan (belief) which colloquially connoted traditional mysticism (kebatinan). Recalling the event, Sukopanitro repeated his answer to the authorities: "We are not golong-an, but golong. We are not ke-percaya-an, but percaya."

The remark is another word-play hinting at a dissociation from institutionalized social divisions, political as well as religious. Golong which makes golongan, 'faction,' separately means 'unanimity.' By that Sukopanitro meant that instead of being factious and associated with one golongan or faction in society, his group was unanimous in its loyalty to and acceptance of the Just King. Percaya, 'to believe,' which makes kepercayaan or 'belief,' is contrasted with the so-called kepercayaan faction.

21 Unlike other political parties which are based on strong ideological identities, the Golkar party claims to be based on "functionalism," locally kekaryaan, an idea that all functional groups share the same goal, namely 'development.'
which is a formal reference for various spiritual groups, more commonly known locally as kebatinan. The Lively Rock family argued that the kepercayaan-kebatinan groups require people "to believe" in certain spiritual beliefs, whereas the Lively Rock family with its percaya is always of the opinion that it "has already believed" in the right thing, the Just King. The argument might not be much, but the underlying statement is quite strong. The word-play expresses the clear stand of the group in dissociating itself from the general trend of social polarization.

At that rally the Lively Rock family managed to secure its identity by being allowed to form its own group. However, for the rally the following year, the Lively Rock family was not invited, but this did not mean that the family was left free to manage its own affairs.

The building rituals

Javanese villages have the ideal image of being autonomous entities. Apart from the fact that until 1981 the villages elected and supported their own chiefs and other officials, throughout history the villages hardly enjoyed genuine autonomy. During the last decade, the services of village chiefs were under constant scrutiny from above. Apart from their accomplishment of the government duties, the village chiefs were judged by their success in development programs, particularly those involving so-called swakarya and swadaya projects, the first being development projects funded by the government but carried out by
the village community, and the second being projects funded and carried out by the village community itself.

In February 1980, the Lively Rock village chief saw that the attraction of the dancing activities in Embah's compound could be beneficial to the village. It certainly had benefitted some people with food stalls. The village chief thought the village should get some share from the hundreds of bikes that were parked within and around Embah's compound everyday. A delegation from the village visited Embah one afternoon to suggest the idea of collecting a parking fee for bikes to fund the building of a bridge connecting the two parts of the village. As usual, whenever somebody came to see Embah for a seemingly important discussion, other visitors joined and listened to whatever Embah said. That afternoon instead of commenting on the idea, Embah addressed those present. According to Prawiro, Embah said:

"You all heard yourselves what the village chief wants. He wants to njaluk (to 'demand' in the sense of to levy) parking fees from your bikes for funding the building of a bridge. It is up to you whether you will agree di-jaluk-i (to be levied) or, instead, aweh (to give) what the village needs, namely a bridge."

Relying on the accounts of witnesses including Setiaji and Prawiro, the tone of Embah's remarks can be reconstructed; the words njaluk and aweh were stressed and contrasted in such a way that Embah's line of thinking became self-explanatory. Consequently, the audience answered unanimously that they preferred giving [a bridge] to being levied. The unexpected response surprised the village chief. As he recalled the meeting, he immediately figured to himself that problems would arise from
Embah's determination to "give" the village a bridge. As he said, it was clear that such a gift defied formal classification. Even for a swadaya project, namely one funded and carried out by the community itself, to be recognized as a project worth considering as part of the village's development record, it had to be approved by higher authority.

However, while the village and government authorities were sorting out formal procedures, the Lively Rock family went on with the project. By word of mouth, news spread that Embah was building (yasa) a bridge. At this stage, the need for the Lively Rock family to have a certain level of organizational arrangement was unavoidable. However, whereas a similar project would normally involve a complicated process of planning and management, with the Lively Rock family this process was considerably simplified. If anything, the organizational arrangement was loose, yet effective. As an indication of how simple the management of the project was: there was no blue-print, no record of building materials, no administrative work. As the group was notorious for its strong antipathy to paper work, administrative records were kept to a minimal. Blue-prints, even of the most simple form, were ridiculed, because, as they philosophically saw it, how could things which were not yet nyata or in reality be put on paper (see Chapter I:10).

Basically everyone could participate in the project, as

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22 The chief engineer of the project (my own reference; see below) at one time tried to explain to me about the bridge by drawing a rough scheme on the sand at the bank of the river. However, he did not let the impression remain for long and rubbed it in a matter of seconds before finishing his explanation.
the catchword said, sakisan sakgeleme, 'according to his or her wish and ability,' (see Chapter V:139). In reality this meant that anyone could support the project with money or labour or both; voluntarily or, as members of the Lively Rock family would say, as one felt dangan (desiring). As a contribution, the maximum that anyone could contribute was set at Rp2000 (then equivalent to $A4), which was the amount of money each participant of the trip to Jogyakarta had to pay. This could be paid in as many instalments as one wished. So daily, particularly on Sundays, Sukopanitro, with his note book, always made himself available for anybody who wished to contribute. This could be as little as Rp5 or, very infrequently as much as Rp2000. The money thus collected was initially supposed to be deposited in a bank. However, as the bank could not provide a special arrangement by which, as a matter of principle, the money deposited would not bear any interest, it was then kept under Embah's pillow.

As far as functionaries were concerned, Karmaji, a retired public works officer who was also a rich peasant who had begun coming to Embah in 1966, came forward as the chief engineer.

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23 While the undertaking was called yasa (see below), participation in terms of contribution as well as labour was called ndherek yasa, 'to take part in the yasa [undertaking].’ It was common for one coming to Sukopanitro with money, saying: "This is an amount of money for me to ndherek yasa (take part in the yasa)...."

24 From Sukopanitro's record, we know that I was the second out of eight persons who paid the ceiling amount of Rp2000 at once. Out of the other seven, three persons were a group of pilgrims led by a nominee for the house speaker of a small town in Central Java who were touring places of mystical cults to "secure" his nomination.
Sukopanitro kept the books. Prawiro was possibly the resident manager in a real sense of the word. When the project started, he stayed on the building site, looking after all the necessities of the project.

The project was ritually started with a selametan on Saptu Paing, March 1980, which was the traditional birthday of the Sultan. At the building site just 300 meters from Embah's house, one could see members of the Lively Rock family working, many of them still in their dancing costumes. The project, like the dancing and other activities before, was given symbolic interpretations by Embah and by members of the family. Among the Lively Rock family 'to build' is yasa, and, coupled with the quality of dangan (desiring, happy), both of which are male qualities, the building exercise was a strong manifestation of the garapane urip, 'an urip motivated undertaking' (see Chapter V:143). To impress on the outsider what this phrase meant, participants always pointed to their work. They were very proud of their work because instead of being paid, they were paying [contribution].

25 In the middle of my fieldwork I made a very bad mistake. I intended to conduct a questionnaire survey, and for that purpose I employed an assistant who was a member of the Lively Rock family. It turned out that the plan had to be abandoned at its initial stage because of the strong reaction that Embah's followers made. At that time I had not been aware of the fact that the Lively Rock family was particularly sensitive to two fundamental things: paper work and paid service. The incident will be dealt with elsewhere, but here I quote a remark by a carpenter who took an active part in the project: 'We are not paid, we work here out of our demen (willingness). But if you pay us for some work which is to be done here, we feel gadog ('at dead end' in the sense of completely disagreeable). We cannot accept that you want to mess up things which are already in a good order.'
evidence of urip motivation.

Comparing their situation with the situation of "normal" development projects, they said that "outside" development projects were done by private contractors, perusahaan. The workers were paid, yet they were not happy or willing, because they were paid very little. The budget was high, yet the quality of the work was low. In their interpretation, this bad situation was attributable to the fact that the perusahaan projects were garapane wong or the wong motivated undertakings (See Chapter V:143). Obviously, the management was corrupt. They said, development carried out by perusahaan was by nature pe-rusak-an, 'destruction.' With this word-play, they developed further interpretations of the current situation.

As long as the state was still dominated by the baku wedok, the nature of the female, activities including development programs were wong motivated and therefore were bound to destruction instead of development. Real development could only materialize when wong-natured leaders had stepped aside to be replaced by the urip-natured leader, the Just King, who was the prerequisite for the prevalence of the male order, tata lanang, and of the urip motivated undertakings.

The word pembangunan, 'development' is lexically constructed from the root-word bangun, 'awake.' Classificatorily it is in the same category with joged ('dance' in the sense of 'standing upright with hands reaching for the sky'), and urip, life. The bridge development project was seen as a model of an urip motivated undertaking. As such ritually it was a continuation and complement of the dancing sessions.
The bridge, by village standards, was a praise-worthy achievement. It was 5 meters high, 16 meters long and 4.5 meters wide, built entirely by the people's own means and resources, involving mainly human labour, basic tools and minimal modern technology. There was no pulley, crane, or welding set used. The only modern equipment used was a cement mixer hired for a few days in the final stage of the development. Everything was done by hand and everyone was proud of doing so. They always said that when an undertaking was _urip_ motivated, it would proceed smoothly; the people did not need to worry, because _urip_ would provide all the necessities and would make everything possible. As they said, it was possible for ordinary peasants not only to dance, but also to build a bridge.26 And build a bridge they did. When they needed a welder to do some welding, some welders would turn up. When they needed pipe fitters, some pipe fitters would turn up. When they needed the assistance of the Goddess of the South Sea, the Goddess would come to their aid.

While they were undoubtedly inclined to mystify their actions, the management of the project was certainly extraordinary. It was a self-organized management in which everyone found a place. The admiration for the Lively Rock family's way of building the bridge was shared by other sections of the community. The santri community in Lively Rock whose mosque is only several hundred metres from Embah's compound had

26 In Java dancing is no longer a social or, except on rare occasions, a ritual activity. It is mainly done by professionals.
long been trying to restore its old, decaying mosque. At one Friday prayer service I attended, the imam mentioned Embah and his followers. Comparing the Lively Rock family's work with his own community's effort to restore the mosque, the imam said that although "they" danced too much, they turned out to be capable of building a bridge. 27

The messianic expectation

As the final stage of the bridge development approached, mystical expectations in Lively Rock increased. This was the time when the concrete span was about to be laid. Relying upon urip for technical guidance did not always make the pace of the work as smooth as expected. For a few days, the group had tried without success to lift several coconut trunks across the river. An accident occurred involving a peasant who fell to the rocky bottom of the river from a height of 6 metres. It was sheer luck that the man was not badly hurt. He only fainted. At that time Embah happened to be making his normal inspection of the building site. He slapped the man on the cheek and, presto, the man who was believed to have been close to death opened his eyes. More importantly, however, was what followed, as I myself witnessed.

The following day, early in the morning, I came with my

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27 During the period of my fieldwork, I witnessed the building from beginning to end not only of the bridge, but of another development project that was no less impressive. On the other hand, up to the time of my departure, the santri community had not been able to start its mosque restoration project.
motor-scooter.28 It was rather an unusual morning at Lively Rock. The house, normally open by dawn, was still closed and, instead of dancing or working, visitors were sitting around in a subdued atmosphere. I approached Sukopanitro.

"It's good that you have come," he said. He told me that at dawn Embah asked Kasmuri, his son-in-law to give him a ride on his motorcycle.29

"We don't know where he is going," Sukopanitro said. "It is certain, however, that this is an important development. So please, stay and see what this is all about."30

Normally most visitors left Lively Rock before dusk, but that evening many stayed around, curious to know the meaning of the event. Understandably, when Embah finally came back, everybody was relieved. Apparently his one day tour had taken him to a newly finished dam south of Blitar and a big irrigation project on the south coast involving the siphoning of excessive water from the river Brantas to the Indian Ocean. He told us that

28 At that time I was not yet living in Embah's compound and had to commute from my home-base some 15 kilometres away.

29 In the villages most of the motorcycles were made available for paid rides. Locally such a service is called ojek. In Embah's case, it turned out that he, too, after riding on Kasmuri's motorbike pillion, paid the fare.

30 The Indonesian word commonly used is perubahan, literally 'change.' In Lively Rock, this refers to any event, particularly those surrounding Embah, which is believed to have some important mystical connotation (See Chapter IV footnote 29). In this case, Embah's rare departure that morning without plan or known reason was regarded as a "change."
he was amazed at the size of the projects and the Japanese and French involvement in them. He stressed what he had said frequently before that the ex-colonialists would return not to colonize again, but instead to help with the development of Java (see Chapter V:167).

It was Sukopanitro who provided us with an interpretation. He said that Embah's visit to these works and to the south coast was, in fact, to consult the Goddess of the South Sea about the crucial final stage of the bridge project in Lively Rock. Later on when I asked about the event and Sukopanitro's interpretation, Embah said it was up to Sukopanitro to say whatever he wanted to say. As far as Embah himself was concerned, he was simply curious to see those projects which were talked about so much in the area. While it is not for us to judge these accounts, the following afternoon the Lively Rock family managed to lift the coconut trunks which had hampered the work for some time. People believed that the Goddess had come to their aid with her troop of goblins, making possible what was normally impossible for human labour alone. In fact, from then on they believed that the goblins were among them, appearing as ordinary men and women who were dancing and working with them. For instance, on the evening of 12 August 1980 the group was invited to dance in Wates, some 30 kilometres away. Three trucks were sent to transport the dancers, and, because Kasman was held responsible only for the

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31 Besides being invited to take part in the government-sponsored political rallies, from time to time the Lively Rock family was invited by individual members to dance outside the village. Some people believed that with such a performance the mystical effects such as dangan and tenterem which prevailed with the dancing in Lively Rock could be transferred.
numbers of dancers performing in Lively Rock, the number of those on trucks was not known, except that the three trucks were really over-crowded. When coming back, however, there was more space. Talking to each other on the trucks, the dancers said that when they departed from Lively Rock there were apparently some citizens of the South Sea Kingdom in disguise with them, who were now absent.

Because of the new conviction of the Goddess' involvement, messianic expectations began to build up. To some, it was said that the bridge building project was part of Embah's prophecy for the imminent coming of the Just King. As Embah was always believed to be the [mystical] witness to the inevitable rise of the Sultan to the Just Kingship, the bridge was seen as the vital road to take for those who wished to be with Embah as witnesses. Some began to believe that the bridge was, in fact, prepared for certain dignitaries of the prospective Just King to consult the witness.

It was in this intensifying aura of subdued mystical expectation that the building of the bridge was completed. It was inaugurated on Saptu Pon, August 1980. It was again a mere coincidence, but Embah and his people saw it in different way. In the intensified heat of the mystical aura an American professor (of anthropology) happened to come to see the work of his student. It so happened that he came precisely on the glorious day as if to fulfil the people's expectation for some dignitaries of mystical importance to attend the inauguration. It had been Embah's long-standing prophetic statement that 'the Dutch, the Japanese, the Americans would come to njajah malih', which normally means
'to colonize again' but in this case was made to mean 'to have their colonialistic quality transformed [into the male quality].'
(see Chapter V:169). This American profesor was believed to have come to be with Embah and his followers of the inferior (asor) social class in the rare work of witnessing the rise of the Just King. By playing on the word profesor, Embah described this professor as the dignitary who was pro-asor, 'in favour of the inferior,' the same character shared by the prospective Just King. 32

The celebration was a great festivity, as they said, by and for those who had built the bridge. People came with their lego feelings, bringing their wn food for feasting and their artistic skills to entertain. There were three puppeteers and eleven trance dance troops performing simultaneously. The centre of the celebration was an inaugural selametan with 4000 portions of ritual food, followed by an allegorical procession of a Just King riding on a white elephant in front of a troop of masked

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32 America has a special place in Embah's prophetic picture. Its role as a superpower is understood. To him, America used to be the leader of the colonialists, that is before they have their colonialistic quality transformed. Embah always said that, starting with the Dutch, one by one all the colonialists would be transformed and would come to Java to help with the development of Java. Embah pointed to the presence of the Japanese in the development of several big water works around Blitar as evidence, and he further said that in the future the Americans, too, would come and help with the development. In this way, the American professor was also seen as the initial emissary before the others came to help on a large scale.

As far as the significance of America in relations to the Just King, the Sultan made two visits to the country, firstly when as a minister coordinating economic affairs he negotiated the rescheduling of debts and U.S. aid for Indonesia's development program; secondly, when as a vice-president he went for eye-surgery. To Embah, the visits were to secure an American pledge that they, too, would submit to the male order and agree to come in aid.
goblins and dancers.

It was all symbolical, yet at the same time perspicuous. There was no subtlety in bringing out the wayang figure of King Parikesit, the King who came to the throne upon the completion of the decisive Baratayuda battle in the epic Mahabarata, on the back of his famous white elephant, followed by the dancing men, women and masked goblins. Similarly, there was no subtlety in the naming of the bridge as Kreteg Anyar Jari Mulya, 'New Bridge of the Respected Jari.' The word jari, which at one level refers to the river, also means 'finger(s)' so that by folk-etymology the name of the bridge was made to mean 'the new bridge built by the respected fingers' symbolizing the work done by the people who let their hands be manipulated by Urip.

The day before the inauguration some officials from the regency office came to Lively Rock. The regent of the area had agreed to officiate at the inauguration, and the arrival of those officials was to prepare for the official ceremony. What took everybody by surprise was that this preparatory committee brought a slab of stone with a declaration saying that the bridge was a result of the people's swadaya (undertaken and funded by the community itself. See page 203) efforts written on it to be signed by the regent and to be fixed on the bridge as the official corner-stone. After a quick discussion, and before too long, two rather unusual name-plates were built. They were made of wooden boards, big ones, to be erected overhead crossing the width of the bridge, with the name of the bridge clearly painted on

33 Currently such a corner-stone is called prasasti, which is a very archaic term meaning 'inscription.'
them. After all, it was the Lively Rock family itself which built the bridge with its own resources. Everyone felt that the builders of the bridge themselves should officiate at the opening of the bridge and this was exactly what they did. Early in the morning, at sunrise the bridge was "given" by the Lively Rock family to the government which was represented by the village chief. In the evening, at sunset, the regent came with his entourage. He signed the inscription, and then officially inaugurated the bridge. The Lively Rock family had no more to say. The bridge was no longer theirs. Early in the morning they had "given" it to the government.

The whole exercise of building the bridge and its inauguration was a well directed performance which exemplified the notion of the male order explicit in the symbolic expressions of yasa (to build), lego (desiring, willing), aweh (giving), King Parikesit, and the respected fingers. It was a creative attempt by members of the Lively Rock family to reconcile their inability to stand against the authorities' demands and their suppressed aspirations for dignity and justice.

After the bridge construction, the followers intensified the dancing and gamelan sessions. Apart from the normal daily session, they added a session on Saturday nights and on the eve of the Sultan's birthday and Embah's birthday, and a gamelan 34

34 The Sultan's "Javanese" birthday, which comes every 35 days, is on Sabtu Paing, a Saturday (Sabtu) coinciding with the Javanese day of Paing in the five-day week. This becomes the movement's holiday commemorated by members individually with selametan at home and publicly with dancing session at Lively Rock. Embah's is on Sabtu Pon (see Chapter IV:91), on which he gives selametan, followed by a dancing session.
session in the evening. This was initially once a week, and then twice, three times. As the gamelan was kept in Embah's living room, at this stage some were of the opinion that they must have disturbed Embah, in particular when they played gamelan at night while Embah and Embah Putri were sleeping.35 Some had an idea of building a special house to store the gamelan. Almost immediately the idea found the approval of other followers, and led to an undertaking for building what they called Gedung Kesenian, the 'Arts House.' The house was built and then was inaugurated in the same way as the bridge, although there were some differences as is evident from the discussion in Chapter IX.

35 Nightly Embah and Embah Putri sleep on the floor in the living room, together with followers who stay overnight in Lively Rock.
CHAPTER VII

OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY:

MEMBERS OF THE LIVELY ROCK FAMILY

BETWEEN THE EMBAH Wali who started wearing a loincloth in 1940 and the Embah Wali of today, there has occurred a long formative process in the development of ideological consciousness. This process began when, as a relatively privileged country man, Embah embarked upon a pursuit of perfection. There were at least three noticeable stages in this pursuit. There was an initial stage of 'traditionality' when Embah participated in the rather ordinary life of his family and immediate community. This is a stage whose mode of consciousness would apply to most Javanese of the abangan tradition: the value system guiding the mainstream of social life which everyone takes for granted and knows by virtue of the socialization process. It comprises the aggregate of Javanese norms, customs, beliefs and practices which sustain the continuity of the community and keep the community in order.
Within this tradition, there is a marginal area, a part in which exception is made to ordinary norms, customs, beliefs and practices for special cases and personalities. Whereas generally transgression of tradition would bring about disorder and calamity, transgression taking place in this marginal area is regarded as reinforcing tradition and order. Thus, in the wayang, there are certain figures such as Bima and the clown servants, whose exceptional norms and values bring about an opposite result. In daily reality, this is a cultural realm which, for convenience, I call 'traditional marginality,' an identifying term for certain cultural and social entities possessed by persons such as wise man, puppeteer, jago, or dukun. This stage of 'traditional marginality' in Babah's life began when he embarked upon the mystical pursuit of the perfection of life, his ngelakoni period involving a retreat from normal social behaviour. This stage in Babah's development continued until he arrived at his ideology of nyata.

In most cases, those already in the realm of traditional marginality remain there, enjoying respect and the formalities that society pays to them as an essential part of the maintenance of order. In a few cases, however, persons of traditional marginality will go even further. The crossing of the boundaries in a way marks a form of rebellion in that the persons concerned

1 Literally, a 'cock,' referring to man of bravado who claims the secret of invulnerability.

2 A rather loose term to cover a wide range of figures who possess exceptional qualities of folk-medicine, magic or foretelling.
do not only question the mainstream of the tradition, they challenge it. They are in a position of understanding that what is required is not simple purification or perfection, but a change. However, given the structure of socio-ideological order, they fail to distance themselves sufficiently to take their judgement of society out of the arena of philosophical doctrine. Instead, they reconstitute a new doctrine and tradition. Embah crossed this boundary of 'neo-traditional marginality,' when with his reconstituted ideology of nyata, he incorporated popular aspirations of resistance to an imposed social and political order, and reconciled there with a messianic expectation.

In many ways these three stages of consciousness formation in Embah's life represent social and ideological processes crucial to the formation of the Lively Rock family as a movement. And, although the dynamics of the movement, in no way, can be attributed solely to Embah's individual consciousness development, the stages can serve as a clear model of the ideological orientation of the people who nowadays rally around Embah. It is through the development of such cultural and ideological parameters that the appeal of Embah's messianic call can be understood.

The stage of traditionality

The initial stage of consciousness in Embah's life was set by the familial and social surroundings of his place of birth. It was a traditional setting in close proximity to a Moslem section
of the community. In his own words, he was 'just an ordinary, stupid country person.' The fact that he did not go to school involved stupidity only in the sense that, although his social status would permit it, during his childhood, schooling was still something outside the traditional way of life. On the other hand, the upbringing his parents gave him allowed him to absorb Javanese village traditionality.

At this stage Embah simply lived in, and became familiar with, the constituents of traditionality. He accepted without questioning the customs, beliefs and practices that the community regarded as essential to maintain its continuity. Major components of this traditional wisdom were the literary and artistic framework represented in the wayang theatre, the babad, and various works of court literature made popular through oral tradition; a common array of Javanese rituals and ceremonies; and a belief system that incorporated numerology, astrology, cosmology and thus defined the significant events and experiences of social life.

Within the boundaries of this traditionality, Embah absorbed the social ideology which sustained the prevailing social structure. He not only accepted his social inferiority vis-a-vis the privileged, aristocratic section of the community; he pledged his loyalty to an idealized Javanese king as well and glorified this Javanese heritage. In this way he developed a rather xenophobic view of society, blaming foreign elements for all the misfortune that the Javanese people were suffering. The wayang theatre in particular provided him with a working view of life and society. It also provided him with an image of traditional
marginality and the persons within its cultural realm.

In general, figures of this kind enjoy respect. Many are called Embah, 'grandparent,' in that they are regarded as possessing the wisdom and the qualities attributed to older people. Conventional adherents to traditionality visit these marginal figures as well as other sources of exceptional potency, such as cult sites and the graves of mystics, both to obtain mystical counselling and general wisdom. The extent of the need among normal Javanese to find sources of exceptional mystical potency varies individually. Extreme cases would include those who go to mystics or healers only when they have exhausted alternative means of solving their problems such as terminal illness or unbearable personal difficulties. On the other hand there are those who are in continual search of mystical inspiration and make a habit of regularly visiting places of mystical importance.

It is in this way that a substantial part of those who visit Lively Rock can be understood. The visit by a candidate for the speaker of the local house of assembly of a small town in Central Java (mentioned in footnote 24, Chapter VI) is typical of this kind of behaviour. To secure his nomination, this candidate had climbed Mount Lawu (believed to be the spiritual capital of the old Majapahit kingdom), visited well-known graves and cult places along the way, and from Lively Rock had gone on to cult sites on Mount Kawi and to others near Java's easternmost town of Banyuwangi.

Most of Embah's visitors maintained the tradition of such visits before they came to him. To many of them, Embah is just
one of these marginal figures. Other places of popular visitation for similar purposes are the grave of Blitar's regent Sosroadinegoro (1896-1917) in the town of Blitar who was known as Bupati Sidik, the 'Wise Regent,' because of his high mystical attainments; the remains of the mystic Embah Jugo in the district town of Kesamben; the remarkable healer Pak Kiran who on the evenings of Jum'at Legi is visited by thousands of visitors who came from far and near; the grave of Embah Suro in South Blitar; the district office in South Blitar where a sacred gong is kept; and, recently, the tomb of President Sukarno.

In his early period Embah, too, must have participated in the tradition of making such visits. He is familiar with places of mystical significance and not just those in the surrounding area. On his second visit to Jogjakarta in 1936, he went on to the north coast and visited well known Moslem sites. He also made a trip to Banyuwangi, the easternmost town in Java. A participant's account of his trip on foot in 1977 to the newly built dam Karangkates, east of Blitar, indicates that along the way he identified every one of the important mythological places (see Appendix IV).

The same background applies to his disciples and followers. The accounts by Trisnoko, the secondmost senior disciple, Nyotocarito, the puppeteer, members of the Selakajang gang, and the peasant from south Blitar (Chapter IV) confirm this. Without elaborating on those accounts, it can be said here that

\[3\] The grave of this highly respected mystic is on Mount Kawi. The remains in Kesamben, the place believed to be his abode before moving on to Mount Kawi, are an extension of the Mount Kawi cult site.
through this practice, people assimilated a traditional worldview and adopted those unstated principles that everyone knows by virtue of this socialization process. Among these principles are self-restraint from worldly matters and a familiarity with various ways of fasting, meditation, and other practices of an Indic religious nature. The following is an account by the secondmost senior disciple, Trisnoko, of his school years. In terms of formal education, Trisnoko was the most educated in the lively Rock group. (He finished the Dutch MULO highschool.) He said:

"I did regular fasting on Mondays and Thursdays from the time I went to school. All the time, even during school holidays. Since year six I stopped eating rice, [and] I ate only cassava. In year seven, I stopped taking salt.

"... My daily timetable during my school days was like this. In the evening I played around with other children. I went to bed at 10 p.m., and then woke up at 2 a.m. to study until morning. Other children studied in the evening and then went to bed. And when they woke up in the morning, they forgot what they studied before going to bed. In my case, my school lessons were still fresh in mind, because I went to school straight after my study at home..."

Embah, too, was used to various practices of abnegation since his childhood. In fact, his life during his period of traditional marginality was an intensification of practices to which he had already become accustomed. It is in this way that his first two stages of development are a continuum rather than clearly separate ideological phases.

The first stage is the basis of Javanese religious behaviour. Ideologically, it motivates the bulk of people whom I shall refer as visitors. They visit Embah not so much as an ideological man, but as a mystical man. Their visit is part of
their religious behaviour in search of **selamet** (safety) and in this case, they see in Embah a mystical potency that may establish **selamet**. Embah's relevance to them was particularly felt during the time when **selamet** was threatened such as during the aftermath of the 1965 coup. In more normal times, Embah's relevance is limited to some daily routines such as counselling for personal problems, for healing, and for symbolic hints at the daily lotto numbers (**kode**). In all these cases, Embah is just an alternative among other potential sources of mystical potency. As many of these visitors said, they visit Embah to ngalab berkahe Embah, 'extract Embah's [mystical] blessing.' For healing, for instance, Embah's reputation is much overshadowed by the enormous reputation of the healer Pak Kiran just seven kilometres away.

In this way, the mass of visitors fluctuates considerably, depending on the mystical situation at any one time. There are cases when some healers or mystics gain meteoric popularity and are visited by tremendous numbers of people. The healer Pak Kiran is one of them, and some say that his mystical status is now declining. The big influx of visitors during the initial stage of the dancing session, which culminated in the inauguration of the bridge, was prompted by the extraordinary aura that was created by the performance of what are normally court dances beneath the trees of the house garden of a village. The dance was seen as a mystical rite which could establish **selamet** (safety) and bring about **berkah** (blessing). Some even sought in the dancing session hints at daily lotto numbers by looking at the number of dancers at one session, at how many times Embah walked around the dancing arena, and so on.
The stage of traditional marginality

This stage of consciousness is perhaps best identified with Embah's period of ngelakoni, during which he established himself in a status relatively independent of the imposition of tradition upon the community, a status of being 'out of the ordinary.' His action secured him status as a wise man, a saint popularly comparable to a Wali in the tradition of Javanese Islam. Culturally, his status was more comparable to a priest in Indic religion. With this status he could make comment on all aspects of human and social lives.

However, people do not need to involve themselves in all the troubles one expects of ngelakoni to reach the stage of traditional marginality. They can achieve this by sharing the ideas upheld and developed by a saint such as Embah Wali. The spokesman Setiaji phrased this as follows: "Embah is the one who has gone to the selametan, I and the others are the ones who are fortunate to share the berkat." By dispensing his berkat, the person concerned, in this case Embah, is not just a source of mystical potency, a wise man or a saint, but the wise man. And those who share his berkat are not just visitors in need of some sort of wisdom, but followers. As followers, to a certain extent they, too, are able to share in whatever consequences are associated with being 'out of the ordinary.'

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4 The part of meal that a participant of a selametan brings home to be shared by other members of the family.
The transformation of the Lively Rock family into a mass movement during the initial stage of the dancing session was prompted by the ecstatic sense of being out of the ordinary which was creatively developed by Embah in response to situational pressure. The performance of court dances in a village setting with all its symbolic interpretations aroused expectations of a change which everyone thought Embah would bring about. After all, the political situation with students demonstrations, vocal political statements and psychological uncertainties strongly suggested an impending change. Deep in the mind of the people was the messianic tradition which promised them a transformation to perfection, -- a radical change from a time of misery to a time of justice and prosperity. The order of the signs of the coming golden age was wisely laid down in the popular slogan which, in Indonesian, reads adil dan makmur, 'justice and prosperity,' with 'justice' coming first and not the other way round. This simple slogan, Embah said, was coined in acknowledgement of the fact that the people sought a King of Justice, Ratu Adil, not a King of Prosperity, Ratu Makmur.5

Embah was seen as a prophet who, in the tradition of the Joyoboyo prophecy, Jangka Joyoboyo, was prophesying with his dancing session (njangka) a radical change of time. And people with traditional expectations of change were anxious to take part

5 Embah's endless ability to manipulate the folk lexicon to invent new terms produced the phrase Ratu Dagang, 'a King of Commerce,' to signify the present regime. He said, the fact that every service by government bureaucrats had to be "bought" was because the present "king" was a 'King of Commerce.' Rumours about the business activities of the President and members of his family were talked about in the village as well.
in the great work of preparation by participating in the dancing. The ecstasy that was brought about was tremendous. The peasants were honoured to have this rare chance of taking part in the preparation of the coming of a golden age and were willing to make sacrifices. They were prepared to leave their work, to spend money on coming to Lively Rock, and on buying traditional costumes for dancing. They quickly organized themselves in groups. They hired trucks, mini-buses, sometimes large buses to come to Lively Rock. Many came by bike, many others on foot.

During the peak period of early 1980, visitors from the village of Selakajang made up the biggest contingent. On Sundays, in addition to those who came individually, the village sent two trucks. A contingent from Banyuwangi, 350 kilometres to the east, came every second Sunday in one truck. Enthusiasm was running so high that the chief of the sub-village in Sukopuro, South Blitar, who was the leader of the contingent from his area said: "Every Sunday my village is kothong blong (completely empty). All the people tumpleg blag (pour) to Lively Rock...," using onomatopoeia to stress his enthusiasm. What he was referring to, in fact, was his group of only about 70 people out of a population of 1100 in his sub-village.

Similar overt enthusiasm is also indicated by the following case. Only five years before, there were always too many harvesters during harvest time looking for ricefields in which to work. In harvest time, bands of harvesters from all over would wander around to take part in the harvest of various ricefields. The account was confirmed by peasants around Blitar. However, during the harvest period of my fieldwork this was not
the case. At the harvests that I witnessed, the situation seemed to be normal. Some ricefield owners even complained that it was not always easy to find enough harvesters. Many of them correctly saw that since the introduction of the high-yielding rice varieties and the implementation, for the sake of pest control, of the policy of simultaneous planting and harvesting, labour had to be distributed more widely. However, some ricefield owners of the villages near Lively Rock saw it in a different way. They said that many harvesters were not keen on earning money by taking part in the harvests as before. They were more ayem (untroubled). Although, in general, this statement is unfounded, there is some truth in some cases.

Kasiyem was a woman farm worker of a neighbouring village, 3 kilometres northwest of Lively Rock. She and her family of four - husband and two children - lived on a small plot of land with just enough room for their bamboo hut. For their livelihood, the family relied on casual jobs that Kasiyem and her husband could find in the neighbourhood. When not engaged in casual labour, Kasiyem used to sell cakes in the market every fifth day or to peddle the cakes around the village. As she said, life was unbearable and kisruh (troubled, because of domestic quarrels). She came to Lively Rock when the dance session was in its initial stage. She sought counsel from Embah for her troubled mind. According to her, this was what Embah said to her:

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Ayem is the Javanese term used to denote a feeling very close to tenterem, 'peace of mind.' Together, ayem and tenterem form a compound expression which stresses a condition of deep peace of mind.
"... Your kisruh (troubled mind) is because you maintain a darkened mind. When in dark, it is like night, your mind is occupied by the female aspect and is inclined to njaluk (demand). You are inclined to demand your husband to be like this or like that and so, too, your husband to you.

"... Look at those women dancing there. They dance because they are happy, and when happy their mind is opened wide, it is like day with its male character. Only when you open your mind widely can you abandon the female character of demanding and your troubled mind...."

Kasiyem interpreted Embah's words as advice to participate in the dancing. Although it is clear that part of her troubled mind was economically related, she said it was indeed a matter of mind. She began to dance regularly and, consequently, gave up many of her economic activities such as selling cakes. This was because through the dance she said she could see the truth in Embah's statement. As she said, not only did she find peace of mind in her dancing, but also blessing. She could feel how her life improved considerably. In her words, plants that she and her husband planted grew like being "pumped." Now Kasiyem spends every day, except for the days she is really unable to come, from early morning until evening in Lively Rock, working in the kitchen.

Rubinem is a woman of another neighbouring village, 2 kilometres north of Lively Rock. Her two daughters have all married and left the house. She and her husband have a house garden. The husband is a share-cropper with a secure contract that continued for 15 years. In addition, Rubinem used to be a

7 The Javanese word used is disebul, 'to be blown with breath from the mouth,' as when one does with a balloon.
successful petty trader. She was at first a rice grain pounder and seller and later sold textiles door to door mainly on credit. She was successful with this business as is evident, she said, from her renovated house. Yet she did not feel tenterem, apparently because of her unease over the possible risks of non-payment by those to whom she sold on credit. She visited various wise men and cult places with a request that her customers would not give her trouble. But when she met Embah she was told that her lack of tenterem was because she kept going on an endless journey. Almost immediately she ceased her business and concentrated on her dancing. And, although she is now economically inactive -- in Lively Rock she was one of several women in charge of cooking the meals for the men working on the group's building project -- she said her family's livelihood had not suffered. Like Kasiyem, she, too, referred to the considerably increased income from her house garden.

Kasiyem and Rubinem are now at the stage of traditional marginality. By their adherence to Embah, they have reached a stage where they recognize Embah not only as someone of mystical importance, but also as someone to be followed. Even their respective neighbours recognize that they had changed. Their reduced economic activity is one indication, but more importantly is the fact that they no longer celebrate the Moslem holiday following the fasting month. Following their example, their husbands have ceased going to the mosque on Fridays. Both always tended more to an abangan lifestyle, and their husbands went to the mosque only after the compulsory religious conversions of the late 1960's. Still, their Moslem neighbours regard them as
a!Jostates who have been "fascinated by the words of the ugly old man." Both couples, like many other individuals, declared publicly that they would follow no religion but Javanism. They were fortunate in being left free after their declaration, whereas Kasman and Prawiro had to go to detention for a similar stance (Chapter VI).

Many other followers of Embah have undergone the same experience. They are prepared to be regarded as out-of-the ordinary by fellow villagers and are prepared to make sacrifices in going to Lively Rock. Many of them, it is true, were somewhat out-of-the ordinary before they came to Lively Rock. They have previously pursued philosophical perfection similar to the way that Embah did in his melaKoni days. Most prominent among them is the 'Selakajang gang.' This is a contingent centred upon a few core members from the village Selakajang, about 15 kms to the west of Lively Rock. Before coming to Lively Rock, these core members were involved in the activities of the so-called agami Budha Jawi Wisnu, 'the religion of Buddhism, Javanism, Vishnuism,' which was, judging from its label, a syncretic faith with a strong antipathy to Islam. The sect was led by a certain Ki Padmohandewo of the district town and, during the aftermath of the aborted coup, was transformed officially into Hinduism (see Chapter V).

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8 This is a derogatory reference to Embah by parts of the santri community who are indirectly against Embah. In return, Embah has accepted the reference and has assumed it as part of his humble self-image by saying: "Well, the Moslems, too, nowadays have an appreciation for 'reality' (nyata), because indeed I am old, and indeed I am ugly." In daily conversation, he uses the reference (as in the counselling session transcribed in Chapter V: 151).
Back in their village, this group formed part of a strong abangan community. In the pre-1965 coup period, the political make-up of the village was composed of 30% santri and 70% abangan-oriented political parties. Understandably, in the wake of the aborted coup in 1965, these core members attracted many fellow abangan villagers, particularly as the village witnessed serious violence. Like their leader in the district town, they, too, were officially identified as Hindus, although ritually they still kept to their old norms.

In 1976, they came to know Embah and immediately became loyal followers. To the Lively Rock group in general, the Selakajang gang occupies a special status and is regarded as model followers. They are always in forefront in doing work, and although none of them have a dancing background, nowadays their dancing is among the best. From time to time they have brought dancers from Lively Rock to dance in their village to the amazement of the other members of the village community. For them, their coming to Lively Rock is an extension, if not a culmination, of their long pursuit of spiritual perfection. To them, Embah Wali is at the top of their mythological list. They see in Embah the personification of the god Vishnu who, in the wayang mythology, incarnates different personalities.

We saw in the earlier chapter cases involving people like Kasman and Prawiro who were pushed by situational pressure to

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9 These figures are based on the 1955 election. Although results of the 1955 election are technically available, it is not always possible for a native fieldworker to obtain them. Their availability depends very much on the consideration of local authorities.
cross the line of traditionality. And once having crossed the line, Kasman was amazed by his own transformation. As he admitted, prior to his transformation he was a quiet person who could hardly express himself. It was when 'pushed by situational pressure,' \textit{ksbentel}, while he was in the detention that he came to realize the reality of Urip. He lost his shyness and fear, and found that suddenly he could express himself very well.

The same applies to various other groups and persons, including contingents from the villages of Bantur (southern Malang), Batu (northern Malang), Banyuwangi, Ngantang (western Kediri), Gandusari (northern Blitar). Persons from these villages came to Lively Rock as the result of a new consciousness ritualized through activities and gatherings at Embah's compound. They not only accepted Embah's ideology which was "out-of-the ordinary" as the truth, but they were proud of this label. Sometimes they became over-enthusiastic by declaring themselves publicly as Kasiyem did.

In some cases, individuals intentionally adopted norms which were in stark contradiction to generally accepted norms. The Selakajang gang, for instance, developed a taste for dog meat partly because dog itself is tabooed by the Muslims. In Embah's kitchen, meat is a rarity, but when he wants to eat meat, he prefers pork which is tabooed by the Muslims. Another example involves a tendency for some followers not to have their boys circumcised as a matter of principle.

Not only are people proud of being steadfast in their principles, but they are also keen on extending their pride even further. The contingent from Bantur, for instance, once tried to
have the dancing ritual institutionalised in its village, only to face a prohibition from local authorities. So did the contingent from Selakajang. Only they were given subtler treatment. For each day of dancing they wanted to perform, they needed to get official permission, a bureaucratic procedure which was too much for them to deal with. Having failed to have the dancing ritual extended on a more permanent basis, the Lively Rock group tried to send troupes to dance outside the village from time to time in places where some members live. In the period after my fieldwork, Embah's followers seemed to have extended the building ritual as well. In a report that I received, they were involved in the building of a high school in the district town.

The stage of neo-traditional marginality

It is possible for some men to cross the doctrinal boundary of traditional marginality. From this position, they not only make comment on the prevailing tradition; they challenge it. They "reinvent" what they consider to be the original tradition by attempting to reform the prevailing ideology through which they interpret their current situation. A most obvious example is the Samin movement which arose in the area of Blora at the turn of the century. This movement managed to institutionalize a new ideology involving both modes of thought and ways of life. Although some reformers do not manage to institutionalize their reinvented ideologies, others manage to do so in spectacular ways, causing some social tumult.
Embah Wali's neo-traditional marginality is evident in his ideology of *nyata* and this ideology is exemplified by his daily life and mode of thinking. The more or less consistent adoption of this ideology in daily life is an indicator of this stage of consciousness. For this reason, only a few in the Lively Rock family can be said to have ever reached this status.

In this category, beside Embah are the disciples who shared the *ngelakoni* period with Embah and, therefore, are held in the high respect as senior disciples. Prominent among these men are Sukopaditro and Trisnoko. There are also some late comers, who did not share the *ngelakoni* experience with Embah, but whose daily lives and modes of thought are consistently in the line of the *nyata* ideology. Included in this category are a handful of persons such as Prawiro, Kasman, Jadi, and core members of local groups such as the Selakajang band. Kasman, submitted himself fully to the hand of *urip* by leaving his family and his economic activities and has devoted his life to the service of the Lively Rock family. Prawiro, a small peasant and a ritualist, always adheres to Embah's example. During the construction of the bridge he stayed at the construction site day and night, taking care of all the building materials and unexpected problems. Jadi is a rich peasant and the only signatory (out of 30 or so) of the widely publicized "Rules on share-cropping contract" (see Chapter IX) who is still consistently applying it.

As I have indicated at the beginning of this chapter, my categorization of members of the Lively Rock family is based on socio-ideological characteristics which are attached to the three stages in the formative process of Embah's consciousness. Such
categories are useful for identifying both social characteristics and individual processes in the transformation of consciousness.

The following diagram indicates these modes of consciousness:

From the diagram, we can identify the mass of people that gather at Embah's compound in Lively Rock. At the centre is Embah Wali whose presence alone justifies all the other activities. Although not always, the disciples enjoy respect and authority to direct the activities. During the bridge construction, Sukopenitro was the "project manager" who dealt both with the
group and the outside authorities and was responsible for the book-keeping. He was also the initial organizer of the dancing sessions. On the other hand, the "technical manager," Karmaji, is not seen as a disciple. His role is crucial only when the group launches a construction project. He was responsible for Embah's house renovation (see Chapter VI:184); and his major undertaking was the bridge. He was involved only partly in the construction of the group's Arts Centre (the Samelan House) because of personal problems during the construction period. His position was taken by Prawiro who knew little about construction, but whose character as a disciple was undoubted. Likewise, the Emper Session was only possible because of the meteoric rise of Setiaji as a spokesman in the group. In fact, the session was a ritualistic format created for him to play his role, and yet he was in no way a disciple. He was the kind of man who could speak convincingly about Embah's ideology and its relevance, but who himself admitted that he still remained at some remove from the consistent application of this ideology.

Setiaji and Karmaji did play a role in the group, but they were just two among many. Individuals in this category range from those with important roles such as Setiaji and Karmaji, to those whose presence is hardly noticed but who are keen on taking part in all activities. They made up the large group of almost 3000 who in 1978 went with Embah on a pilgrimage to Jogjakarta in 59 buses; who celebrated the inauguration of the bridge over a 48 hour period, with the accompaniment of three wayang performances and 11 trance dance troupes; who constructed, with their own resources and labour, a strong bridge, a handsome 'arts house'
and more. These followers are prepared to make sacrifices and are keen to follow whatever Embah directs them to do.

Then, there are the visitors who come for hints at lotto numbers and compare Embah's remarks with the hints of others, who visit Embah to seek counselling and healing, or who come to Lively Rock as part of their routine visits to sources of mystical potency. They participate in the activities loosely, yet the very fact that they take some part in activities such as dancing distinguishes them from the outside community, the spectators, who come to Lively Rock just for fun and entertainment with no participation whatsoever. These spectators, therefore, are not considered as members of the family.10

In brief, the associational structure of the so-called Lively Rock Family covers the elements indicated by the following diagram.

At the top, there is Embah Wali and his wife. They are surrounded by the disciples whose authority lies in their ideological stance.

10From Embah's point of view, they are members as well. To him, just by coming to Lively Rock these spectators have taken part in the yasa, the 'building' ritual, according to their ability and wish.
In terms of activities they are accompanied by a group of leaders whose ideological stance is not as respected as the disciples' but who play important roles in the activities. Together they make up the nucleus of the association, the elite who internally direct and externally represent the group. Outside this small nucleus there is a dense stratum of followers who, because of their ideological acceptance, actively take part in the activities, including the emper session, the pilgrimage to Jogyakarta, the dancing session, and the building activities. Associationally they take instructions from the disciples and leaders as well as directly from Embah and his wife. Further outside there is an even larger number of visitors who take part passively in the activities but do not necessarily accept Embah's ideology. The associational link with the disciples and leaders is loose compared with the one with Embah.
CHAPTER VIII

THE EMBAH'S ROLE IN POPULAR POLITICS

IN THE PREVIOUS chapters I have examined the phenomenon of Embah Wali in terms of those factors which make up the socio-cultural world of Java's "little people" who live mostly in the countryside. I have argued that intellectual orientations in such a particular world are directed by the general structure of an accepted worldview. In Chapter II I took up Paulo Freire's notion of the ideological structure of the dominating and the dominated classes. Translated into the Javanese case, the most obvious two contrasting classes are the privileged, aristocratic minority, the "relatives of the king" as represented in the wayang, and the under-privileged agrarian based majority, the "little people."

Following this line, I argued that "the religion of Java" as perpetuated by the wayang has been essential for the construction of the cultural world shared primarily by the abangan segment of the Javanese community, and that such a cultural world
Ideologically determines the nature of structural relations between the two social classes. In reality, this assures the political hegemony of a privileged minority over the rest of the community. In cultural terms, it means that this privileged part of the community has a monopoly on the wisdom upon which political hegemony rests. For centuries this kind of ideological and cultural setting has not only gone unchallenged, but has been used by the colonial interests for their own purposes. Such a setting has been preserved in the sanctification of 'tradition' which has been manifest in different ways at different times.

In subsequent chapters, I have argued that, while the prevailing Javanese cultural world restricts and directs intellectual orientations, as in the case of Embah Wali's early thinking, it cannot restrict an increasing consciousness of the nature of social injustice. In fact, it is this consciousness which, in the past, has been transformed into powerful political aspirations for the expulsion of the colonial authorities and the proclamation of the country's independence. In the post-proclamation period, popular consciousness has been further enhanced with the intensified politization of every sector of social life. Heated political debates brought down to the rural level were focused on the issue of how the notion of justice should direct change in the social and political realm. Viewed from the nature of Javanese cultural values, it is but natural that this debate at the rural level has offered a serious challenge to supposedly sanctified tradition. In reality, the debate took on the form of political mobilization and, eventually, violence which led to the bloody incidents following the aborted
coup in 1965. Mainly because the extent of these incidents was unprecedented in people's memory, popular politics at the village level abated. Social confusion prevailed with the tightening of security control.

Consequently, this meant aggravated intervention into all aspects of social life. While it is true political activities could easily be discouraged, the popular consciousness of the need for justice continued to develop. At this stage, Embah Wali began to play his critical role. Confused by a combination of rapid social change and repeatedly frustrated by the widespread corruption that they faced, people of the rural lower class who were most vulnerable to the coercive tendency of the bureaucracy began to look at the marginal aspects of their tradition.

This chapter is directed to the discussion of how developments of various factors in the society coalesce in Embah's aspirations for the Just King. It will attempt to construct the structure of the Embah's interaction with the wider community. Within the framework of this construction I am interested in Embah's social concerns and preoccupations and in how these preoccupations have been played out in the cultural tensions that the Javanese have long endured. This is thus an examination of Embah's intellectual struggle against those cultural misdirections: Embah's creative strategy in directing popular frustration through harsh and delicate political tensions. Essentially Embah's development was two fold: first, Embah developed a simplified conceptual lens with which people could see, in a blunt, straightforward, and uncompromising manner, their ill social surroundings and the under-privileged life they led;
second, he creatively fostered a low profile of acceptance using constructive rituals to reconcile outside tensions and to lead his followers safely through those delicate and harsh tensions.

**Traditional sense of cultural identity** and aspiration for justice

Embah Wali presents a case of an intellectual struggle by a traditionalist of the lower class to conceive of human life beyond the generally accepted view of society. It is a spiritual experience of redefining tradition, re-emphasizing new meanings and recreating rituals within the changing framework of the colonial and post-proclamation period. The notion of a Just King was the key element of Javanese traditionality that Embah seized upon in this spiritual experience.

This kind of Javanese millenarism is well-entrenched in the rural version of Javanese tradition. It is represented in the wayang theatre as well as some classical literature. Some of this literature is available in handwritten copies of printed verses that had only a limited circulation when they were originally published. They include popularly known court literature such as Welatama and Centini but also some controversial literature such as Suluk Gataloco and Serat Darmogandul.¹ They are usually in the possession of some rural elite and are regarded as precious

¹As regards the last two compositions, see Anderson 1981 and Drewes 1966.
heirlooms. The image of the Just King is normally modelled according to the wayang cycle: the ecliptic period of sufferings and hardship of the Five Pendawa Brothers is to come to an end with the defeat of the mischievous cousins in the final, decisive Baratayuda Battle and the crowning of Prince Parikesit. Similarly, the fall of the "Javanese" kingdom of Majapahit is regarded as an ecliptic period of darkness in the history of Java. This period is to be followed by a time of brightness which will occur with the return of the mythical clown-servant Sabdopalon. The notion of Justice here is viewed more in a moral sense, that is, as the defeat of vice and the victory of virtue, without any social connotations.

At times, however, other aspirations may occur and be superimposed on the general image of Just Kingship. One of these involves a rather common defence of the Javanese sense of cultural identity in opposition to foreign domination. In the face of both Islam and colonialism, the view is maintained that the past Javanese glory will only return with the coming of a Just King. This indigenous cultural consciousness is adopted by many traditionalists. Generally such traditionalists emphasize the mythology of Sabdopalon whose retreat from the spiritual arena because of the rise of Islam initiates the ecliptic period of

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2 The possession of such heirlooms is one of the things that Embah Wali and his two senior disciples, Sukopanitro and Trisnoko, have in common. The three are in possession of handwritten copies of *Serat Darmogandul*. Embah's is written in Javanese character, while Sukopanitro's and Trisnoko's are in Roman. The *Serat* (verse) is an interpretive description of the historical antagonism between the Javanistic tradition and Islam, dating back to the fall of the Majapahit kingdom. See Drewes 1966.
cultural darkness. In this sense, the King of Justice might be better termed as the King of Tradition.

Another aspiration is one dealing more directly with the experienced reality of social injustice. Usually in times of crisis people will identify their miserable social conditions as those prophesied for ecliptic period. The attempt is to justify their feeling against the repressive practices of the establishment -- at times to the extent of rebelling against the establishment -- in the belief that their situation will only come to an end with the coming of a Just King.

It seems that this sense of cultural identity comes as a direct consequence of the developing consciousness of Javanese spirituality. The heated polemic between a Javanese mysticism intellectual and ideologue, S. Warsito, and a Moslem intellectual, Prof. H.M. Rasjidi, in 1972 is a good example (see Warsito et al 1973). Embah's acceptance of the Jogyanese Sultan as the Just King as indicated by his pilgrimage to Jogjakarta in the late 1930's is another example. And so is Embah Suro of southern Blitar who adopted the same aspiration except that he went for the house of Surakarta.  

Cultural consciousness & national awakening in Blitar

Besides their early indigenous cultural consciousness, Embah and his two senior disciples have other characteristics in

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3See Trisnoko's account of him in Appendix 2. There is a different Suro referred to below.
common. They are what might be best described as well-intentioned dreamers with a strong concern for social issues. Their concerns partly derived from their families. Embah’s father was a formal leader as well as a patron respected for his wisdom and generosity. Trisnoko’s father was a school teacher from whom Trisnoko learnt about nationalism and colonialism as well as about the Javanese traditionality. Despite his reasonably good education, Trisnoko did not want to work for the colonial government and, instead, led a life which was relatively independent. Sukopanitro’s father was a village secretary who was known for his wisdom, appreciation for traditional arts, and knowledge of mysticism. Sukopanitro had been a good dancer and gamelan player before his encounter with Embah. In this way, Embah and the two disciples had been absorbed in Javanese traditionality before embarking upon further pursuits. Their traditionality was coloured among other things by their appreciation for wayang and by their possession of Serat Darmogandul.

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4 He worked as a driver of his father’s dogcart before he embarked upon a long lelana life as a wanderer. This kind of life took him to the town of Kediri, some 40 kilometres northwest of Blitar. He found a good fishing spot on the river Brantas just outside the town. There he gained his livelihood while deepening his interest in spiritualism and traditionality during the Japanese occupation. This kind of life brought him culturally to the realm of traditional marginality. The proclamation of independence prompted him to return to Blitar. For sometime he maintained his independent life as a fisherman and, at times, as an occasional worker in the sugar fields which, after the burnings of the sugar mills as part of the scorched earth policy and the departure of the colonial administration, were managed by the peasants. He fished and worked in sugarfields in the villages neighbouring Lively Rock. By then, he was conversant with many aspects of Javanese religious traditionality, and was thus primed for his encounter with Embah Wali. (His account of this encounter is in Appendix I).
It is almost natural that the concern for social issues soon emerged in Embah's perception of traditionality. Throughout his spiritual experience Embah has incorporated the expectations of the community. Implicit in his notion of the King of Tradition in his early period was the seed of rebellion because of frustration over declining morality. Embah's mystical claim began with his withdrawal from community life and at the same time with his establishment of an alternative value system of ritualistic giving and generosity. It was a statement of rebellion against the widespread tendency for the authorities to burden the people with unjust levies. This mystical pursuit was, in effect, a personal as well as a social action. Personally, it was intended to satisfy his own yearning for spiritual perfection and, socially, it was a statement that he made of himself to the community. With his ngalakoni action, he claimed status not only as a wise man, but also as a patron of the "little people" through a set of ambiguous ritualistic actions. He placed himself in a marginal position by not speaking, not dressing, and by performing many erratic actions in a bid for status in the mystical realm. He also developed a series of gift rituals such as the donation of free vegetables from his garden, personal land distribution, generous shares to his harvesters, and personal community projects. By these actions he began to secure a power base among the rural populace. Contrary to the general norm in the community, he established an ideal pattern in which clients could expect their patron's generosity in return for nothing but their loyalty.
In material terms, this pattern might not mean much. Embah’s generosity was largely symbolic, but it did establish an alternative system of values by which the psychological needs of the commoners could be met. This does not mean that the new value system came easily. In fact, its materialization was made possible only by the operation of several factors, both in the society and in Embah’s life. Among those factors was the strong tradition of rebellion against authority in the region.

In Chapter IV I considered Embah’s life in some detail; here I need to stress certain aspects of that life. Like Trisnoko, Embah, too, prepared for his life of traditional marginality by turning down an opportunity to work with the colonial administration. Should he have wanted to, upon the death of his father, Embah could easily have succeeded him as the sub-village chief. Similarly, at a later date but for the same reason, Sukopanitro who had been a village-secretary gave up his position. This self-sacrificing act can be seen, on the one hand, as part of traditional religious behaviour and, on the other hand, as a self-righteous statement about the colonial situation.

Indeed, Blitar during late 1930’s was an area where revolutionary ideas were rife. The term ‘imperialism,’ for instance, was widely understood. People like the chief of the village Sukopuro, Harjokartomo, the school teacher of the village Talun, Hadisasmito, and the plantation worker of the village Modangan, Sukandar, for instance, had at one time in their lives experienced struggles against the imperialists. The village chief was sentenced to death by the Japanese because he gave sanctuary to Supriyadi, the leader of the PETA battalion whose members
revolted against the Japanese in February 1945. His life was only saved by the proclamation of the Independence. The school teacher was a sympathizer of the nationalist youth organization the 'Young Indonesia.' He actively implanted the nationalistic ideas in the minds of his school-children, two of whom were among the six PETA rebellion leaders executed by the Japanese in 1945. The plantation worker, was imprisoned twice during the Dutch colonial period and once during the Japanese occupation for his involvement in the underground communist movement the 'Black Crow.'

The relatively strong trend of national awakening in Blitar is a subject worth investigating. It is interesting to note that 'bad times' then were linked to foreign domination. The people's feeling about employees of the colonial government may be illustrated by an incident in the district of Kasamben experienced by a native Inspector of Public Works. As part of his duties, the Inspector visited a well-to-do villager, who, after he had heard what position the visitor held, told him: "Then you are the enemy of the Javanese people." (Penders 1977:288-91) Recalling the period, nowadays Embah Wali can identify the clash of interests between the colonial administration and the people. He told a story about a visit by the Governor General to the area in late 1920's, in which he said that the piles of hay which would otherwise be useful as cattle fodder had been sacrificed to be laid on the road which the governor general would pass. He also justified his action in withdrawing from community self-help activities by saying that such activities only benefitted the sugar-mill (Chapter IV:95).
To some people, the distaste for the colonial system was developed further during the Japanese occupation. The young officers of the native auxiliary PETA battalion who initiated a plot of rebellion against the occupying Japanese were prompted to do so by the people's hardship and sufferings, particularly the distressing scenes at the sites of defence projects that they were sent to guard, where hundreds of men died of hunger and sickness. Embah's most senior disciple, Sukopanitro, was one of the village officials responsible for selecting the men to be sent as labourers. In fact, twice he took labourers from his village to the project site, where he saw miserable scenes -- men working under harsh and extremely repressive conditions. In his recollections nowadays, the coming of a Just King was never more expected than at that time in Javanese history. Sukopanitro's commitment to Lively Rock was prompted by his belief that Embah was the one who was "preparing"\(^5\) for the coming of the Just King.

The same sense of injustice was also felt by other people at different level of consciousness. Whereas for Embah and the disciples the injustice was experienced as part of a cultural traditionality, for people like Harjokartomo, the chief of the village Sukomuro, or Madisasmito, the teacher of Talun, or Sukandar, the plantation worker of Modangan, this injustice was viewed as the result of the socio-political situation. Cultural traditionality and socio-political perception were different.

\(^5\)The word used njangka normally means 'to prophesy.' However, the tone of the word as used in Lively Rock is closer to the sense of 'preparing.'
understandings of the same situation achieved through different experiences. The plantation worker, Sukandar, for instance, viewed the social injustice within the perspective of the colonial situation. For him, the experience was derived from a process of what Freire calls 'conscientization': of people being conscious of the nature of structural relations in the society. For Embah, the same frustration was translated into his yearning for the coming of the Just King. Sukandar's conscientization process was more common among the plantation workers whose cultural world was more marginal. On the other hand, the peasantry who came to Embah were more responsive to the perception of Justice as presented in terms of a religious tradition.

In this way, a comparison between Sukandar and Embah is interesting. Both are informal leaders of different sorts. However, while Embah has been a spiritual leader for a long time, Sukandar ceased his political activities after being honoured as one of the Indonesian Independence Pioneers. Sukandar is a son of a worker who migrated to the area from Ponorogo in the beginning of this century. Like his father, Sukandar, too, worked in the plantation and lived surrounded by labourers most of whom were migrants from the western areas or their descendants. The

\[ \text{A holder of the medal } \text{Periatis Kamerdekaan Indonesia} \] is entitled to receive a special allowance monthly. Blitar is possibly one of the areas with the largest number of the medal holders. In 1979 the number was 213, including 12 who were granted medals because of their involvement in the PETA rebellion in 1945, 3 in the Seven Provincien Mutiny in 1934, and the rest for various underground political activities, mostly those involved in the underground armed resistance, the Black Crow. Nowadays, because of his monthly allowance, Sukandar is very reluctant to reveal his past political activities.
contrast between social surroundings of this kind and the social
surroundings in Lively Rock is evident. While, because of its
more diverse and recent foundation, the plantation area was
relatively less traditional; in Lively Rock traditionality is
deeply rooted. While the agricultural production in the
plantation area was generated through industrial relations, in
Lively Rock production continued to be carried out through both
traditional patron-client relations and through reciprocal
relations. In other words, social relations in Lively Rock are
more personal than in the plantation area. This difference
affected the worldviews of these respective villagers. In brief,
the worldview of the villagers in the plantation area was less
traditional than the villagers in Lively Rock. Consequently,
plantation workers were more open to new ideas and more responsive
to political agitation.

Both Sukandar and Embah dedicated their respective efforts
to the same audience, the rural lower class. Both underwent the
same experience: during the initial stage of their respective
developing movements, they were not readily accepted. Sukandar's
anti-imperialist views did not easily gain popularity. He was put
in jail twice during the Dutch period because of reports by fellow
villagers who were not convinced of the illegitimacy of the Dutch
colonial administration. During the PETA army rebellion in
February 1945, Sukandar had been in jail in Surakarta for a year
on a serious charge of agitating against Japanese imperialism. In
that month, a group of the rebelling troops passed through
Sukandar's neighbourhood. An innocent report by a member of the
neighbourhood to the Japanese authorities led to the immediate
capture of the retreating troops. The person who gave this report was not a collaborator, but was simply unaware of the colonial situation as analysed by Sukandar. Similarly, when Embah Wall embarked upon a stoic life, he was avoided rather than followed by members of the community because of the ambiguous feeling that his action provoked. There was no way that the community could be aware of his views of the Just Kingship. Even his two most senior disciples, Sukopanitro and Trisnoko, were initially attracted by Embah's mystical claims and example, and only afterwards became aware of Embah's cultural consciousness, when they witnessed Embah's long argument with an aristocrat from Surakarta (see Chapter IV:117).

Because of different experiences, the consciousness that Sukandar and Embah arrived at were not only different; they contrasted with one another. Sukandar's consciousness led to social disobedience, whereas Embah's led to acceptance. Sukandar's aim was to transform reality, to overcome wickedness by constantly fighting the evil aspects of reality, be they imperialist forces or feudal interests in society. On the other hand, Embah's aim was to live with both the good and the evil aspects of reality and thereby to relieve the tension that might arise from the conflict.

Social concern & Creativity

There is, however, a more fundamental difference between Sukandar's political experience and Embah's spiritual experience.
For Sukandar, social concern was the basis of his conscientization process, whereas for Embah the concern was independent of his spiritual development. His experience of social reality, which was creatively incorporated in his process of spiritual development, brought about a certain mode of thought. Around these principles Embah gradually improvised his worldview as the situation demanded.

His perception of the Sultan as the Just King and the social dimension which is currently attached to that perception is a good example. His acceptance of the Sultan as the promised King of Justice who is also the King of Tradition, for instance, involved a traditional choice between the Jogyakarta house and the Surakarta house. Embah’s justification of this choice, besides being bolstered by traditional prophecy, is innovative and in line with the historical development of Indonesian national politics (see Chapter V:166-170). At the same time, it is formulated in agreement with his notion of victorious maleness vis-a-vis defeatist femaleness. During the revolution years, the Sultan was the only leader who remained victorious when the Dutch invaded Jogyakarta, the last stronghold of the Republic. Historically, whereas other key leaders of the Republic were taken prisoner by the Dutch, the Sultan was left free and undisturbed in his palace, making the palace a tiny enclave of the Republic within Dutch occupied territory. The fact that, in Embah’s view, the Sultan was victorious, while other key leaders, including the guerrilla army, which retreated to the countryside, were defeated by the imperialist forces is evidence that the Sultan belongs to the male order and is the bearer of Just Kingship. The other key leaders
who are defeated belong to the female order and are the bearers of the female, colonialist characteristics of demanding; in no way can they bring justice and prosperity to the country. In regard to Jogyakarta's status as a special territory, Daerah Istimewa, Embah remarked that 'Jogyakarta is special not because its people or land are special, but because its ruler is special.' (See Chapter IV:117) More recently, he links the corrupt morality of the administration with the fact that those responsible are the ones who were defeated in the past and, thus, belong to the female order and have the tendency to demand bribery.

Consequently, while the direction of Sukandar's conscientization process was consistent and ultimately predictable, the direction of Embah's spiritual process was creative and open ended, depending very much on his experience of outside realities. It is obvious that during the heyday of the political parties, which accord well with Sukandar's mode of consciousness, all was quiet in Lively Rock (See Chapter IV:113). It was the period when the popular interests were relatively well represented by Sukarno's populist stance and by the political parties. These institutions were of relevance after independence because they provided a role with which the people could identify and through which they could relate themselves to the world. This world, as they came to understand it better, was relatively mundane and future oriented. It was a world of people creating and transforming realities. In Sukarno's term which soon became a popular catchword, it was a world of revolusi ('revolution') as contrasted with Embah's view of constancy, where changes were a matter of cyclical development rather than a matter of humanly led
transformation. For the ordinary villager, membership of a political party was mainly an attempt to orientate himself to the world beyond the village, a gesture of solidarity with certain fellow villagers and a gesture of hostility towards certain other villagers. In other words, political organizations became media of self-expression.

In such a setting, Embah's alternative view of life became irrelevant. He continued to serve as a wise man with traditional services including mystical counselling and healing. As with the other figures of his kind, he was understood by his audience through his symbolic gestures. He was interpreted by his clients in terms of the kind of drinks Embah served (see Appendix I), the objects or directions Embah pointed out during a conversation rather than by what he actually said. Visitors mostly came for personal reasons rather than because of social pressure. Because of this, they came to and left Lively Rock as separate individuals; solidarity was minimal, except for a small group of disciples and followers. The so-called Lively Rock Family had not yet come into existence. What was popular were the political parties and their affiliated organizations at the village level.

When these political cum social organizations were banned by rulers from Jakarta following the abortive coup in 1965, and Sukarno was practically disowned, Javanese rural politics became quite different from what it had been immediately after independence. The rural masses not only lost their medium of self-expression; they were under pressure to keep silent while the social fabric of their lives was undergoing major surgery. Frustrated by the fact that the mundane world could be very harsh
and could deprive them of both physical security as well as spiritual morality, the people began to turn in their outlook from Sukandar's mode of consciousness to that of Embah.

A tragic incident involving a certain Embah Suro of Nginggil and his followers on 4th March 1967 was part of this shift in mode of consciousness. Embah Suro, like Embah Wali nowadays, managed to echo the call for solidarity across the abangan world of the Javanese rural populace as well as to offer a feeling of protection. Unlike Embah Wali, however, he failed to manoeuvre his followers out of a difficult and explosive situation. He developed an aggressive stance by arming the frontline of his followers with a strange combination of a few modern rifles, magic clubs, spells and incantations which led to his annihilation. His challenge to authority was abruptly terminated when his mystically armed troops were annihilated by Indonesia's best para-commandoes, ending his short-lived adventure in the realm of Javanese traditional marginality.

A Combination of factors

Embah Wali is more fortunate in that so far he has managed to manoeuvre into an acceptable position. During the difficult situation after the 1965 abortive coup, like Embah Suro he, too, was visited by those who were most threatened. In the Javanese tradition of selamet- and tenterem-seeking rituals, the presence

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As regards the Embah Suro affairs, see Hanna 1967; Ramelan 1967.
of a mystic like Embah Wali or Embah Suro is quite common. However, in Embah's case, there were certain factors that converged in rallying his following and developing it into a solidary movement. Basically, there were three interacting factors operating at this particular stage of local social development: the factor of Embah Wali's identification with the agrarian lower class, the factor of the social trauma of constant harassment, and the factor of the authorities' morality.

Embah Wali's strong identification with the agrarian lower class has always been evident. Since his youth, the agrarian lower class was exactly the kind of audience he had been addressing himself to by his rituals of giving. Through his remarkable action following his ngelakoni period, he tried to make statements both on his mystical repute and on his dedicated patronage of the rural lower class. His conscious dedication to this part of the community is obvious from his remark about the way he dresses in ordinary black peasant pyjamas. He said:

"...I wear ordinary clothes so that people do not feel hesitant to approach me. If I were to wear the costume of an army general, people would certainly be scared of me and would not come to me."

Playing on the words ngelakoni and kelakon (See Chapter IV:113), Embah indicated that he was made a footpath by Uri so that people could tread on him and in this way he could know them and could understand their problems. He also compared his role to that of a rubbish pit on which all sorts of people could come and throw away their "rubbish" or problems.

Moreover, Embah's intellectual struggle has brought him to a stage of consciousness where he firmly upholds a norm which
turns out to be crucial to his populist approach. This is his unshakeable stance of not accepting any gift. Initially, when he began to adopt this stance during his pre-nyelakoni period, he caused a considerable awkwardness in the community. He ceased attending selametan in the neighbourhood simply because he did not want to take the meal which was served. Some keen visitors to various wise men were reluctant to see him precisely because of this refusal to accept gifts. It is traditional for a visitor to a wise man to bring a token gift, syarat or 'requirement' it is called, which is intended to establish the required patron-client relationships. Without such gifts, the necessary patron-client relationship is not felt to be properly established and, accordingly, Embah's refusal to accept gifts is seen as contrary to tradition.

Over time, however, such an ambiguity began to make sense when general frustration with the proliferation of a culture of corruption began to spread. Embah Wali became relevant as an alternative standard at a time when bribery in the disguise of tips, presents and tributes, and widespread corruption became a

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8 Theoretically, such a gift is symbolic in nature, but normally in addition the visitors can bring presents as well. Visitors to Pak Kiran the healer, for instance, need to bring a bunch of three kinds of flowers, kembang talon, as syarat. In addition, they are normally advised to bring a pack of the best clove cigarettes as a present. While it is true most visitors just bring this basic syarat and present, some bring several packs, even a carton, of clove cigarettes, some others bring much more impressive presents in the form of luxury goods such as cameras, clocks, radios and TV sets. Just a quick glance round his house gives an idea of how extravagant such presents can be. Visitors are of the opinion that the more valuable the present, the more intense the patron-client relation. Obviously, very soon visitors tend to be structured accordingly, and those without big presents voluntarily step aside.
common reality. More importantly, with this stance, all feel equally welcome regardless of their social and economic statuses. Contrary to the general norm, visitors of the higher class tend to feel uneasy when together with the commoners and step aside, leaving Embah Wali as a figure for basically the lower class. In other words, Embah's alternative norm has acted as a self-selecting mechanism for membership.

Despite his strong orientation to the elitist culture, Embah remains a villager whose basic identity is with his rural sub-culture; and he is master of this sub-culture. His attitudes and behaviour, and his use of idioms and symbols are rustic and in keeping with a rural life-style and thinking; and he is adept in exploiting the resources of this rustic world. My initial difficulty in understanding him, despite my good command of the language, was due to the fact that he speaks of a different world of meaning -- a world of mountains, rivers, trees, birds, animals in the context unknown to me and, I assume, to many others like me. His comparison of subjects with cattle (see Chapter IV:86) brilliantly brings out his view of the structural relations between the rulers and the ruled and indicates popular expectations of what ought to be the proper morality of such

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9The regent of Blicar, Eddy Slamet, was known as a keen visitor to various mystics in the region and I frequently came across him in the places of these people. However, despite his recognition of Embah Wali's potency in rallying the masses (for the 1976 election, Embah Wali was invited to sit next to the regent on the rostrum of the government-sponsored mass rally at the town-square, half of which was filled by members of the Lively Rock family), he visited Embah only once, that was at the inauguration of the Bridge, and left in haste when Embah's followers began to dance provocatively to the music of the angklung (musical instrument made of bamboo) orchestra he provided on that occasion.
relations.

Most evidently, his ideology of nyata is an excellent achievement in successfully translating a sophisticated, court-based philosophy into a rustic framework of meaning, the framework with which he and the agrarian audience he addresses are most familiar. Normally, the understanding of such philosophy becomes a complicated exercise of solving spiritual enigmas hidden in the court literary style verses. Embah, however, disconnects this enigma-solving exercise from its traditional link with court verse and, instead, casts it in terms of the daily symbolic world involving ordinary idioms and metaphors. This new formulation in terms of the symbolic world has become more relevant because of the situation affecting the ideological realm in mid-1970's. That was the period when the old political symbols had been uprooted and been replaced with a new rhetoric that had not yet fully gained popularity. Lacking this long-established understanding of the cultural world of the agrarian majority as possessed by Sukarno and the old political parties, most of the new rhetoric tended to be empty of meaning.

The factor of social trauma is related in particular to the explosive situation following the abortive coup in 1965. Because of its past political background, Blitar was undoubtedly among the worst areas stricken with rampant violence. The situation was made even worse because of the attempts by remnants of the communist underground movement to launch guerrilla warfare from southern Blitar, leading to the massive counter-attack by the military, the effects of which were felt in the countryside throughout the region.
Locally, the harassment that the people underwent was reflected by the increasing number of visitors to cult places as well as to mystics. Many new cults arose, including the revival of archaic denominations such as Hinduism and Buddhism, and many mystics gained meteoric popularity, as in the case of Embah Suro of Nginggil. A sharp increase in the number of visitors to this isolated village in northern Madiun was recorded in 1966-67. This was undoubtedly generated by the trauma caused by the events of late 1965 and early 1966 and the climate of political terror which still continued afterwards. Despite the fact that only those with some association with the communist affiliated mass organisations were threatened, the situation at that time was so chaotic that practically everybody, particularly those who lived in the areas affected by the massacres, felt threatened. The "palace cum temple" of a saint like Embah Suro became a strange citadel, where people came for spiritual protection in the forms of his blessings, spells, and amulets, and a certain prophecy about the imminent outbreak of the "final war" which was to be followed by the reign of justice and prosperity under Sukarno. 10

In the mid-1970's, the trauma in the countryside was looming again with the student demonstrations in the capital cities. There was a feeling of uncertainty and fear for the repetition of terror. Selamet-and tenterem-seeking ritual activities increased considerably. In Lively Rock, these

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10Prophecy of this kind, however, was sufficient for the rulers in Jakarta to be regarded as a serious threat. A company of para-commandos was sent on the 4th of March 1967 to put an end to Embah Suro's adventure by executing him and his loyal followers, and burning his complex to the ground.
activities brought about the ritualization of the emperor session which gave an impetus to the formation of Lively Rock solidarity through a series of rituals including dancing sessions and building activities.

The social trauma, however, was also closely related to the political style and morality that the government adopted. After the traumatic events of the late 1960's which were not the sort of thing that could be so easily forgotten, the bases of the New Order rule had been more or less established beyond any reasonable challenge. Because the coming of this government to power was through the annihilation of its political opponents, the kind of political style that was adopted was based on the excess use of power. Without hesitation this excess of power was used to generate change. In the political realm, the emphasis was to secure a system which relied on complete loyalty to the top by transforming government apparatuses and security forces into loyal personnel, re-structuring political parties, and de-politicizing the rural community. This made the government and the bureaucracy practically the only source of wisdom and power. With the dynamics of development, the presence of the state bureaucracy was even more felt than ever. Although not always in a desirable way, the state was present in the form of physical developments, regulations, programs, instructions, warnings, and red tape. The bureaucracy was of a sort which enjoyed authority without challenge. Its style of administration was feudalistic and was prone to malpractice and injustice. It did not take long for the roots of frustration to come into the open.
For the politicians and intellectuals in the capital city, the cost of development could simply be a matter of argument, but for the people at the grass-root level, it was a matter of experience which was, in many cases, unpleasant. Too much emphasis on security generated an authoritarian tendency of administration and increasing corruption, a bureaucratic style which was best identified as neo-feudalism. This was responsible for the widespread climate of uncertainty and frustration.

Embah's creativity

The development of a mass movement in Lively Rock was in particular attributable to Embah's creativity in manoeuvring his following out of their weak position. Embah Wali was fortunate when during the explosive time of the late 1960's, unlike Embah Suro, he maintained a low-profile by moving to a temporary hut that he built in his rice-field a few hundred metres east of the house. Comparable, in a very inferior way, to Embah Suro's citadel, the hut was fortified with a high, strong fence with the gate left closed most of the time. This closed stance of Embah limited the gathering of people, who might arouse the suspicion of the authorities, as visitors could rarely meet face to face with him. Worse still, Embah had a stroke which practically paralysed him for two years. Despite all this, he was still visited by more visitors than before.

11 Locally, ngungsi. See Chapter VI:182.
All this could have been a mere coincidence, or as Embah understands it, the manipulation of Uriq. However, at another level, the situation at that time was so hopeless that the best Embah could do was to keep quiet and wait. As the brutality subsided, he began to open his gate and speak to his disciples and followers from the mat on which he had been lying for most of the last two years. His recovery coincided with his return to his house.  

Outside his house, as social life returned to normal again, the trauma continued to prevail. In the first place, the security approach that the government adopted put society in a constant climate of anxiety. The rhetoric on the possible come-back of the communist agents was constantly repeated. And, although at a much reduced rate, political purges continued at all levels of social life. Social order had to be established at all costs to provide the necessary condition for the accelerated implementation of the development programs.

A series of rapid developments took place in the 1970's, one following on the other. The demonstrative use of excessive power was evident when, during the first election in 1971, the government applied what press reports described as "bulldozing methods." In 1974, frustrated students took to the streets in a disguised protest against the domination of Japanese capital. Student leaders, political opposition leaders, and intellectuals

12He was still carried pickaback by his son-in-law from the hut, but from then onwards he was recovering well without ever receiving medical treatment. See Chapter VI:184.
were arrested, newspapers were closed down, and security measures in the countryside were tightened. The old trauma was rapidly revived and gave rise to an influx of visitors to mystics and cult places.

A mixed feeling of anxiety and frustration led villagers to look for psychological sanctuaries as well as 'fine examples' in a society where norms and values were turning upside down. The marked increase in the number of visitors to Lively Rock in the mid-1970's has to be seen from this perspective. Basically, people were moved by the awareness of their powerlessness, by frustration at their corrupt social surroundings, and by anxiety at the looming explosive situation. They expected to find in Embah an explanation for their confusion and consolation for their anxieties.

Embah's response was creative. He was able to answer the frustration and anxiety of powerless people with the prospect of a time of justice and prosperity by means of a series of ritualistic activities. These activities were devised as impromptu responses to situational pressure.13

13 It is not difficult to detect the importance of spontaneity in the Javanese tradition. Although in terms of ritual the tradition is rigid, it still leaves sufficient room for spontaneity, as in the case of the wayang puppeteer. In a wayang performance the puppeteer has to abide strictly by the established framework of presentation, yet as a performer he has to improvise spontaneously whenever the opportunity arises. This kind of improvisation is, in fact, the main factor in the popularity of wayang. Similarly, in social intercourse, despite the rigid restrictions of etiquette, individuals may improvise meanings and connotations by playing on words or sentence constructions using folk-etymology. As I have mentioned in Chapter III, in the case of wayang puppeteer, folk-etymology is sometimes used to compensate for the limitations of the puppeteer's literary knowledge.
Embah was never a puppeteer, but his ability to improvise and to effect impromptu performance is beyond compare. It is not a quality that he has always had. In the past, as an old follower recalled (see Chapter IV:114), Embah was not as talkative as nowadays. He barely made political comment. Even recent followers, such as Setiaji, claim that before the Emper session (Chapter IV), Embah did not talk the way he does now. As Kasman, a disciple who was originally very quiet and could hardly express himself, put it for himself, it was when 'pushed by the situation,' kebentel, as when he was under detention, he suddenly found that he could express himself very well (see Chapter VII:234). For Embah the 'situational pressure' occurred when, after 1965, visitors came to see him in unprecedented numbers, themselves pressured by the situation. The influx of visitors beginning in 1965 and culminating in the dance sessions in 1980 was generated by a gradual process of tension and uncertainty which deprived the rural populace of their basic selamat and tenterem assurance. Although basically silent, the villagers could be very critical of the political behaviour at a higher level. They could identify clearly cases of injustice, malpractice and corruption in their social surroundings and then talked about them. The moral credibility of the authorities was in question.

Embah was quick both in reading the situation and in developing an appropriate response to it. During the harsh tension in 1965-66, he understood very well that he could not do much to meet his visitors' need for solace. Therefore, he simply kept quiet and waited by retreating into seclusion, ngungsi, and
"allowing"\(^\text{14}\) himself to lie powerlessly. Otherwise, he might have endangered not only his followers, but also himself.\(^\text{15}\) Only after the tension subsided, he began to play a role as the Wali who would work out the coming of a period (njangka, see Chapter VII:227) of the Just King. He revived his old ideology of nyata which incorporated the notion of a Just King. The coherent articulation of this ideology was necessary for interpreting the widespread confusion and frustration. Although this ideology requires considerable understanding, it did not take a great deal of intellectual effort for Embah's followers, let alone his disciples, to comprehend it through Embah's reconstruction of an indigenous classification of male and female. Although the classification is known in Javanese philosophy, its application as a cognitive system to identify daily realities is an indication of

\(^\text{14}\) Although it seems that during that period Embah indeed suffered a stroke, many believe that he was actually involved in another ngelakoni measure, namely tapa mbayi, 'to make himself behave and be regarded as a powerless baby.'

\(^\text{15}\) During the Pengorde-baruan period, namely the period when 'the society was made to accept the new order's ideals by force (see Chapter VI:174), a campaign was launched in Blitar by Moslem radicals to eradicate non-theistic elements in the society, including relics of historical past and superstition. The campaign was not all that successful. An attempt to eradicate the worship surrounding a sacred gong, namely the Embah Pradah of the Lodoyo district, for instance, ended in failure. A group of Moslem youth indeed raided the small house in the frontyard of the district chief's residence where the gong was kept, and then took the gong to be dumped into the nearby Brantas river. However, right on the bank of the river the leader of the gang suffered a strange stroke, and the gong was returned where it belonged. Reports had it that there was an attempt to harass Embah, too, because of his vocal denial of Islam. The harassing gang is said to have surrounded Embah's hut, but strangely enough could not find the gate.
Embah's genius. It allows the people to judge their corrupt social surroundings in a simple and straightforward manner, yet, at the same time, to live with the situation rather than be frustrated by it. With this reinvigorated cognitive system, Embah's ideology of nyata became meaningful and opened a new horizon of meanings.

Fitting well with this new horizon of meanings is the role of the Sultan as the Just King on whom depends the only feasible expectation of a time of justice and prosperity. Embah reconstructed an imagined history to establish the Sultan's legitimacy as the Just King. This reconstruction of history itself is a beautiful piece of creativity. Whereas normally a call for Just Kingship is based on trust, Embah attempts to justify his call by reinterpreting bits and pieces of the Sultan's life history according to his ideology of nyata. In this way, for instance, the Sultan's education in the Dutch community as well as his vice-presidency is interpreted as manjing, 'apprenticeship,' (see Chapter V:165 & VI:192); his staying in the palace during the brief Dutch occupation of Jogjakarta in 1948 was a victory of the Just King over the colonialists; and his low-profile attitude as proved by his experience of giving a lift to a vegetable vendor was in accordance with his prophesied profile as a genuine king who is temporarily unknown by his subjects.¹⁶

¹⁶The alleged prophecy says: "... Ratu kesampar kesandhung langka jalong wikan." ('A King who would not be recognized even if one accidentally kicked him or tripped over him.' See Chapter V:164).
Within the framework of this historical legitimacy, he made social comment by comparing the current leaders of the republic and their order of injustice with the Sultan and his assured order of justice. All the current issues at the national (and international) level as well as at the local level found their respective niches in this comparison. Thus, the common practices of bribery, corruption, abuse of power were understood in terms of the nature of the female order as a continuation of the colonial order. Whereas meaning in normal politics is based on the demolition of an old rhetoric and the construction of a new one, Embah reinterprets the rhetoric of politics rather than replacing it. To him, the nature of the colonialist order is best understood not from its rhetoric, but the fact that this rhetoric is manipulated to serve the female mentality. In this respect, he made popular his new meaning of daily words in the religious realm, for instance,

_Gusti Allah_ ('God') as a conflicting, and thus unacceptable compound of words for 'Ruler' (Gusti, classificatorily 'male') and 'Loss' (Allah from kalah, classificatorily 'female'). It is the equivalent of the common word _wong urip_ (see Chapter V:141-42).

_neraka_ ('hell') as 'what is aimed is achieved' (sing _di-NER teKA_) which is vagina;

_surga_ ('paradise') as 'when already finished feeling contented' (_yen ngaSO leGA_) which is orgasm;

_selamet_ ('safety') as 'a very narrow gap' (_SELa sak iNED_) alias vagina;
words in the political realm, for instance,

**persatuan** ('unity') as 'the beastly qualities' (per-SATO-an) in reference to the general corrupt mentality;

**keamanan** ('security') as 'being stricken with pestilence' (ke-AMA-nan) in reference to the fate of the little people being victimized by their own authorities;

**republik** ('republic') as 'a heap of beggars' in reference to the mendicant mentality of the authorities;

**non-blok** ('non-aligned countries') as 'a group of countries which adopt the female [Non from nana, ‘miss’) mentality of begging [for aid].

Ebah's creativity is indicated by his mastery in symbolizing his aspiration through activities and events as they arise. Dancing as well as building activities are symbols of **Urip**. The gift of a bridge to the government is a symbol of the Just King's generosity. Ebah is also creative in the way he responded to situational pressure. Each time so far he has managed to manoeuvre his followers and himself out of difficult situations and closer to the believed time of the Just King. Successively, he orchestrated the **emper** session in response to the political tensions in the mid-1970's, the dancing session in response to the banning of the **emper** session, and the bridge project in response to a demand by the authorities. His mastery of impromptu performance was manifest during the visit by an American professor at the inauguration of the bridge in 1980 (see Chapter VI:213-14). He was quick to comment that the professor was **pro-asor** or 'pro-little people,' a reference to his "theory"
that indeed America as the leader of the colonialist world had been transformed and had come to help bring prosperity to Indonesia. During the building of the Gamelan House in 1981, the first timber that the group bought for the wooden framework was of low-quality. It could not be sawn for beams and pillars as planned and, therefore, was sawn for roofing laths while other timber had to be bought. Commenting on the reverse order of framework preparation in which normally priority is given to pillars and beams, Embah said that it was now time that the direction of service be reversed from bottom-up to top-down.

Under these circumstances, his followers found cathartic articulation of the critical awareness of their situation as affected by the state bureaucracy. Malpractices and unjust policies became the subject of normal conversation. It was common in a gathering such as a selametan for people to talk about graft in this schoolbuilding project or in that bridge construction project, or on how much asphalt in a certain road betterment project was "eaten." Using another play on words, Embah compared the low quality of average development projects with the quality of development projects that he and his followers undertake in Lively Rock by saying that official development projects are undertaken by perusahaan which, instead of meaning 'private contractor,' was made to mean pe-RUSAK-an, 'destruction.'

The phenomenon of Embah Wali involves the convergence of several factors in present-day Javanese social life. It is a reconciliation of the traditional aspiration for a time of justice and prosperity to a modern-day reality of frustration and confusion. It involves a meeting between an agrarian lower class
in need of psychological consolation and a country philosopher trying to revitalize the old wisdom. It is basically a rural experience and, therefore, its wisdom, expression, and aspiration has to be understood within the context of the tension and harmony that the Javanese rural culture has developed in relation to the great culture.
Through the long history of Hinduization, Islamization, and colonization, the Javanese have experienced a peculiar process of cultural syncretism. Various streams of tradition have coalesced and formed a new hybrid of cultural tolerance and contradiction. While the so-called Javanese religion reconciles various contrasting religious traditions, it also witnesses a constant struggle between these contrasting traditions. Similarly, while Javanese culture has established a solid structure to govern the interplay of economic and political interests among various strata of the community, it also contains and accommodates conflict.

The phenomenon of Embah Wali is a micro-manifestation of this fact of Javanese experience. Embah belongs to the agrarian majority of Javanese society in contrast to the aristocratic, elitist minority. Whereas traditionally, he upholds the aristocratic oriented nature of the culture, he also represents
the cultural aspirations of the Javanese commoners for a utopian society characterized by a secure condition of justice and prosperity. In the same breath, while he understands that foreign elements are already part of Javanese culture, and that the aim of Javanese traditionalism is to purify its culture, he takes an anti-foreign stance in such a way that foreignness is not simply a matter of cultural impurity, but more an oppressive element of society.

After an unpredictable period in the 1970's, social and political order in Blitar was gradually restored as in other areas of Java. Although the momentum for a mass spiritual movement began to lessen, the Embah Wali movement had passed its formative period and had established itself. Just how far it will develop in the future and how relevant it will be is a matter of history to determine. In this chapter, I wish to examine the movement within the parameters that the movement itself has laid down, and in terms of the limitations that the situation has imposed upon it.

The attractions

The characteristics of the present Lively Rock Family were determined by the way that the group developed as a movement centred upon Embah Wali. Although Embah Wali himself has a long history of spiritual pursuit, his movement as a social phenomenon only began in the mid-1970's, when a large number of visitors came to attend the so-called emper assembly. This assembly differed
from the small group of followers and disciples who surrounded Embah in mid 1950's, in that the early group gathered mainly in popular appreciation of Javanese tradition as manifest in Embah's spiritual experience.

At the ideal level, the kind of Javanese traditionalism that Embah pursues is one based on the extreme pre-Islamic side of the Javanese syncretism. It is strongly opposed to foreign elements such as Islam and Dutch colonialism and in favour of Javanese concept of nativeness which is, in Embah's view, manifest in the millenarian notion of the Just King. To Embah, the relevance of traditionalism of this kind to daily reality is that it provides a certain intellectual awareness of the colonial situation.

During the early period of independence, optimism for a better future following the departure of the colonialists was high, and the situation was not conducive to Embah's millenarian notion. For a long time, only a small audience was interested in Embah's view of the future and Embah's re-invigoration of ideal wayang images. He presented these images within the general framework of Javanese spirituality and literature at some remove from the court tradition. And, in his pursuit of philosophical meaning, he relied on folk-etymology as common mystical exercise. The use (or better, misuse) of the word nyata for reality in many Javanese mystical groups, for instance, is ironic because this word is actually taken from the Indic sunya-ta for void, a spiritual notion of a true balance within divergent tendencies. In time, the word was "Javanized" and etymologized into su-nyata with nyata taken as the root-word meaning 'reality' and su as the
prefix for 'good,' making it mean the 'good reality,' which is also what Embah means by the word. At this level of understanding, Embah was just a common mystic of the kind that one would expect to meet throughout Java, and his followers formed just one mystical school.

By contrast, the great number of visitors who began to flock to him after the turmoil following the abortive coup in 1965 were initially not particularly aware of Embah's ideology of nyata or his notion of the Just King. They were simply in need of some mystical protection and their visits were the result of situational pressures. By this time, however, Embah had arrived at a clear portrayal of the millenarian Just King who, in his view, combined the characteristics of justice, generosity, impartiality, and self-sacrifice, and whose words were unequivocal. He tried to demonstrate these characteristics by setting an example himself. In the early days when he was setting himself as an example, the bureaucratic presence was comparatively much less evident and, consequently, bureaucratic injustice and impropriety were less apparent than today. Furthermore, in terms of consciousness, people had not yet been politicized as they became after independence. Changes that took place before independence were, at their pace, endurable. Problems arose when revolutionary changes, including changes in agrarian relations, began to be effected in the early 1960's. Yet, still these changes were minor in comparison with the changes that were brought about by force after 1965. The single most decisive factor that motivated the upsurge of visitors to cult places and mystics in the last decade was undoubtedly the trauma caused by
the unprecedented degree of political violence.

At the official level, this political violence was usually described as punitive action. There was a confusion about what was happening. The undercurrent of feeling as represented by Embah Wali, for instance, indicates something different. Explicitly Embah expressed his disagreement when he referred to the atrocities as clear evidence of the law of the woman (hukum wedok) which was analogous to the death penalty. He said that the situation was associated with nothing less than the female order (tata wedok) which could only be brought to an end by the bearer of the male order, the Just King. Having taken this stance on this particular issue, it was clear that he stood counter to the "normal" view on other matters, too. In fact, he propounded an alternative view of a social situation which was otherwise unspeakable. It turned out that this alternative view fitted the views of those coming to him for explanations. In their words, their view was in agreement (cocok) with Embah's. The secondmost senior disciple, Suyoko, said that "those people wanted to speak, but they used Embah's mouth for the speaking." Basically, Embah expressed the people's frustration and confusion. The coincidence of viewpoints is evident from Embah's stance on various major issues.

Rampant political hatred & violence. Both hatred and death (killing) are the manifestation of the female order and, consequently, injustice. They are standard practices of the colonialists (foreigners) because their perpetrators are those who either used to take lessons from the colonialists, or the
supporters of foreign religions. 

Newly imposed taxes & levies. In principle, taxing and levying are analogous with the female quality of demanding which is manifest in colonial practices of burdening the people for the sake of the mother country. On the other hand, following the model of the wayang civics, Embah is of the opinion that subjects such as himself have to accept whatever obligations and duties are imposed by the government even if the imposition is of the female character. In this respect, Embah sets himself as an example by always fulfilling his civic obligations -- he always pays land tax a few months in advance! However, a problem arose when at one time local authorities wanted to collect parking fee from bikes which were parked on his courtyard to finance the building of a bridge. In principle, in his courtyard, which was regarded by his followers as a model land of the Just King, nobody would be allowed to demand anything from anyone. Embah reacted in such a way that satisfied the authorities and himself. He and the followers gave them the bridge in lieu of the fee.

Development in reality. Embah welcomes the influx of foreign aid and investment and interprets it as an evidence of his mythology on the "submission" of the colonialists to the Just King and their pledge from then onwards to adopt the male quality of

\[1\] Explicit under this category are those currently in power because they used to collaborate with or, in Embah's words, 'to take lessons from,' the colonialists (President Suharto, for instance, was at one time in the Dutch and later the Japanese army), Moslems and other believers in imported religions.
giving (see Chapter V:167-68). This part of the prophetic mythology is entwined in his popularized play on words Landa Amerika niatah malih' which, instead of meaning that 'the Dutch and the Americans come back to colonize again' as it should, is made to mean that 'the Dutch and the Americans (can be extended to the Japanese, the Australians, the French) have transformed their old colonial nature and come back again to give aid.' Within this mythological framework, to Embah, foreign aid and investment are essential for the promised prosperity under the Just King.

On the other hand, Embah is critical of common malpractices in the implementation of the development programs by private contractors as is explicit in his interpretation of the word perusahaan, 'private contractor,' as perusakan, 'destruction.' (see Chapter VIII:273) He claims that while the old colonialists could come back to have their colonial nature transformed, the ex-apprentices of the colonial administration (Embah's reference for corruptors) continue to employ their old practices.

Agrarian issue. When the land reform law and its subsidiary law on share-cropping were promulgated in the early 1960's, Embah was one among a few landowners who voluntarily accepted the new stipulations. He called his three share-croppers, one of whom was his second son, and asked them if they accepted the stipulation which was very much in their favour. As official record indicates, it turned out that he was one of only two landowners in the district who registered in the village office that they adopted the stipulated sharecropping contracts. The failure in the implementation of these new laws was one of the
reasons behind the political tension which culminated in the violence in the wake of abortive coup in 1965. It was obvious that it would need even greater effort to put them into effect in the period after 1965 when the driving force behind the laws, the old leftist political parties, had been physically annihilated. Yet in 1970, Embah and eighteen followers pledged to adopt a unique "private" stipulation on share-cropping, a formulation which in the final analysis was close to the spirit of the law. The pledge, entitled 'The Regulation on Share-cropping Ricefields' (Tata Makarya Anggaran Sabin), was printed and distributed widely among Embah's followers.² It was welcomed enthusiastically by many as the initial sign of the coming of the male order.

Nowadays, enthusiasm has subsided considerably. The tendency is reflected by the secretary of a neighbouring village, one of the first eighteen signatories who was very enthusiastic initially, and who sponsored the printing of the pledge and distributed it among the followers and sympathizers. He admitted that, while the idea of the pledge was good indeed, ordinary people like him could not be expected to be as firm as Embah. Thus he no longer applies the stipulation of the pledge and, instead, follows the general rule of 2:1.³

²See Appendix V.

³Embah's sharecropping regulation is based on 2:1 formula as well. The difference with the general rule is in the cost share. In Embah's, the cost is fully borne by the landowner, while in the general rule, the cost is divided equally. This means that in real terms on the basis of the 1979 prices, the share in Embah's formulation is 3:2, while according to the general rule, it is 2:1. See Chapter II:46.
Embah has been "socialist" since his early days. His father gave away land. He gave away produce from his house garden. He says, under the Just King everybody is guaranteed land to till. Answering a question on the communists, he said that although it was true they adopted foreign values, the values were close to the male quality of giving as evident from their land re-distribution program.

The same comment applies to the Catholics. Embah says they are good in building schools and hospitals and, in particular, in consoling people who are in fright (a reference for church's activities during the chaotic period of late 1960's) rather than intimidating people (a reference to Muslim radicals' activities in the wake of the 1965 abortive coup).

Government policies. In short, Embah can only praise policies which are in line with the male quality of giving and of pleasing the people. He criticised, for instance, the family planning program because of its coercive implementation. His view of the prevalent style of governing is evident from his etymological interpretation of the word ke-AMAN-an, 'security,' as 'pestilence.' Over-emphasis on the security has resulted in an unnecessarily autocratic style of governing which deprives the people of their peace of mind.

The troubled social life, Embah says, is because of the pestilential nature of government, a displeasing nature associated with the quality of femaleness. In his view, a king (government) is analogous to a cattle owner who has to provide his cattle with sufficient feed and a proper pen. More importantly, a good king
has to please his people and let them live in harmony.

The example that he established in Lively Rock is focused on the basic rule of sakisane sakgeleme, 'do as you can and as you wish.' People are encouraged to feel free to do whatever they can and want without instruction or prohibition. The catchword is for people to feel lega, 'at ease.' Should they like to dance they are free, and should they just like to see the dances they are free, too.

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4 A good example of the emphasis on pleasing other people can be taken from a serious incident which I experienced during fieldwork. Using a questionnaire I intended to conduct an investigation of the members of the group to record certain basic facts such as residence, occupation, time of and reason for first visits, etc. As with other activities in Lively Rock, I asked Embah's permission which he never failed to give.

However, there was a confusion among the group because of my activities of putting information on a card system. The confusion came to a head when, for a short period, I was absent and the questioning was conducted by two assistants. People simply refused to be questioned and registered.

On my return, I approached Embah to remind him that I had had his permission, and that I had no bad intention whatsoever with the questionnaire. I became involved in an argument with him, before finally the argument was interrupted by a consultation which was transcribed in Chapter V:149-51. In the argument he lectured me, that to know whether some activities were right or not was not whether the intention behind the activities was bad or not, but whether the activities pleased the people or not. He said: "You think you are right because your intention is good, but then these people got scared because you put their information on paper. They wonder what the information is for. They are unhappy with anything put in writing. They are only little people, and stupid. Yet they are happy just to be like that, and live as they are, and things are going good. They don't want those things which are already good to be disrupted. How come you think you are right when the reality indicates that you have caused them to feel awkward (marakne gadog)?"

In Embah's classificatory view, pleasure is, of course, associated with the male order, displeasure with the female order.
Rhetorical and bombastic tendencies. The era of Sukarno and the leftist political dominance was marked by a populist style in the choice of political symbols as a result of the attempts by both Sukarno and the political parties to identify themselves with and to draw their legitimacy from the people. The present government, however, rose to power through the use of its power and, therefore, does not deem it necessary to identify itself with the people. Instead, it makes every effort to draw legitimacy from the re-invented tradition. This has resulted in the widespread tendency to adopt rhetorical and bombastic expressions and symbols.

Sukarno was known for his populist slogans such as gotong royong (self-help), Ho Lopis Kuntul Baris (a cry shouted by peasants when pulling or lifting up something heavy together. See Chapter II:48), and sandang pangan ('clothing and food'). On the other hand, Suharto is more keen on adopting phrases known mainly in the circles of Javanese mysticism such as Ing ngarso sang tulada, ing madya nyabant karya, tut wuri andayani, which refers to the alleged Javanese principle of leadership: 'when in front to set an example, when in the middle to be keen on working, when in the rear to follow and to stimulate.' These "traditional" slogans are usually irrelevant to the daily life of commoners and cause confusion and misunderstanding. Their high-sounding nature is very often intentionally aimed at bolstering legitimacy.

Despite his high respect of court culture, Embah Wali criticises the unnecessary use of rhetorical slogans by popularizing straight-forward and explicit slogans. When the bridge that his followers built was to be inaugurated by the
regent of Blitar by the "granting" of a prasasti, Embah Wali put his own straight-forward slogan printed on a board across the bridge saying: *Kretad Anyar Jari Mulya*, 'The New Bridge of Respected Fingers.' One follower asked Embah to name his baby daughter, and the name given was *Awan Tentrem*, 'the Tranquil Day,' which symbolizes the male character (the Day and the Tranquility).

The building for storing the gamelan that was inaugurated just before I left the field was named *Seger Waras Ayem Tentrem*, 'Good Health and Harmony,' which again symbolizes the male character. All these names are very explicit and relevant to the life of the commoners.

**Declining morality.** Standard morality for Embah Wali is that of the Just King which indicates the qualities of maleness -- willingness to give, impartiality, use of straightforward and unequivocal words. In contrast, the prevalent norms are related to the qualities of femaleness -- partiality, use of devious and equivocal words, and, in particular, willingness to take. Common practices of illegal levy is the manifestation of the female qualities at their worst, and is analogous to mendicity. Embah's comparison between the Just King (who exemplifies male qualities)

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5 This is a Sanskrit word for 'inscription' usually carved on a stone to commemorate an important event associated with the king. The use of the word for this modern ceremonial purpose is new. Before, the word used was *batu pertama* ('first stone') and *batu terakhir* ('final stone').

6 The name of the river happens to be *Jari* which means 'finger.' Embah picks up this name to symbolize the male aspect of 'life' signified by *yasa*, to 'build' (see Chapter V).
and the ordinary King (with female qualities) is implied in his play on the words kere for 'beggar' and ratu for 'king.' This kind of comparison is explicit enough for the commoners to understand.\(^7\)

As regards the style of speaking, Embah particularly criticizes subtlety and equivocation, and, in particular, inconsistency between what is said and what is in the heart.\(^8\)

Embah mentions the common "yes sir" attitude among government officials by referring to the wayang example, in which daily administration is conducted by patih, 'vizier,' who always reports to the king that the state affairs and the condition of the people are good. This attitude is standard in a state under a female quality regime and that is why, Embah says, the Sultan did not appoint a new vizier upon the death of the old one. Similarly, the prevalent female mentality, he says, is partly caused by such inconsistency. He is known for his plain language to the extent that he is against the use of words which have double meaning and

\(^{7}\)See Chapter IV:85-86. The play on words is KERE-ne RATU, RATU-ne KERE basically indicates that the Just King (whom he believes is the Sultan of Jogyakarta) might give the impression of a beggar (kere), but he has every quality of a Just King; whereas the King (which explicitly refers to the present President) gives the impression of a King, although because of his mendicity, he is a beggar King. He refers the President as a King of Commerce, and this explains why the citizens have to buy every service from the government apparatus.

\(^{8}\)The Javanese are notorious for their liking to speak in this manner. The Sundanese, who are the western neighbours of the Javanese, have the saying "ajak Jawa" (Javanese invitation) to refer to invitations, remarks, offers and the like that are not really meant but are made merely for the sake of showing one's good manners (Gandasudirdja n.d.:4).
of compound words made of two contradictory words.\footnote{As regards unacceptable double meaning words, see Chapter V footnote 14. Many compound words are constructed from two complementary, which to Embah is contradictory, words such as lanang-wedok, 'men (and) women,' abang-putih, 'red (and) white,' and so on. In both compound words, the connective word lan, 'and,' must be added in between. The more preferable construction is abang mbrananq, 'very red,' putih memplak, 'very white,' etc., which emphasizes rather than confuse the meaning.}

Embah's views on various issues developed in response to problems, or "rubbish," as Embah calls such problems, that were raised by visitors. They were creatively incorporated into his ideology of nyata and his notion of the Just King, making them philosophically and culturally justified and prophetic. The strength of his explanations is that they are presented in a vernacular idiom using metaphors, and linguistic word-play which are at once powerful, popular and explicit. Embah's main strength is of course in the fact that he understands well and is in sympathy with the plight of the people who visit him. Understandably, while responding to other people's problems, Embah continued to raise philosophical ideas which earlier he expressed without much success through symbolic actions. In conversations linked with pressing everyday realities, his message gets across much easier than before.

In brief, these philosophical ideas serve in two ways: first, to identify problems and situations dialectically in terms of male and female aspects; and second, having identified the problems which have caused tension, to accept them as natural facets of life. In other words, Embah does not encourage people to struggle to overcome the female aspects which temporarily might...
dominate their lives, but to live with them in the understanding, as he says, that 'the day comes at the end of the night.' This simple message might not be attractive in another place and another time, but the Javanese in the 1970's were, as one puppeteer follower of Embah explained, like "rice grains which were being winnowed." The situation they were in was so hopeless that they could do nothing but submit. What Embah did was to explain the meaning of their submission and provide a reasonable basis for hope at the end of the chaotic period. His success lies in the fact that he was capable of making explicit, analytical statements on the prevailing difficult situation and at the same time lead his followers safely through that difficult situation.

The limitations

There are, however, limitations which make the Lively Rock family difficult to credit as a moral force. Despite Embah's long record of spiritual pursuit, the Lively Rock family did not develop into its present form through a long and steady process of interaction between Embah, the community, and the authorities. The Lively Rock Family emerged rather unexpectedly through the deep trauma brought about by the violence in the late 1960's and the successive atmosphere of uncertainty in the 1970's. Because of this, the main attraction in Embah is not so much his spiritual vision which runs counter to the general trend of ideas in the society, but his prophetic vision. In other words, the binding factor is not the fundamental and stable part of Embah's vision,
but the spasmodic, unstable part.

Interesting developments did take place whereby rituals that were spontaneously invented in response to situational pressures were used to create a form of solidarity. However, it is clear from the outset that such creative developments are not without internal vulnerability. Some of these points of vulnerability are as follows:

**Simplicity.** Although Embah's early spiritual exercises were traditional and exploited all kinds of severe techniques of self-abnegation, the vision of spirituality that he arrived at is quite easy-going and simple compared with the sophisticated trend of the general religious system. It is non-instructive and non-ritualistic, and needs little comprehension to follow. It has no esotericism as Embah himself discarded whatever esoteric part of his spirituality that might have been achieved at the end of his spiritual pursuit. As the spokesman Setiaji said, Embah is like someone who has had all the troubles of going to the *selametan*, while he and the other followers are the ones who are fortunate in simply being able to share the *berkat* (see Chapter VII:226). This easy-going character of spirituality has its advantage in that it has the potential to rally the masses. However, at the same time, it has the disadvantage that the convictions it generates are generally superficial and loose, incapable of engaging followers for very long.

There was no codification of the 'cult' activities at Embah's courtyard into any verbally expressed system that could be called a system of beliefs. In fact, Embah Wali specifically
rejects belief in a religious sense. There is therefore little but practice to be transmitted after his death, although some figures are already making a claim on the succession.\textsuperscript{10} Because of this, there are relatively few dedicated believers who could be regarded as the vanguard of the group. Thus the group relies primarily - if not exclusively - on Embah for its continuity.

Strong feeling against organizational structure. The Lively Rock Family draws its following largely from those who have been either victimized or frustrated by conflicts that follow organizational lines and by the tendency for society to be tightly structured in various invented forms of social organization. The incident in 1979, when the Lively Rock Family refused to march under the banner of the Spiritual Group (Golongan Kepercayaan) on the occasion of the anniversary of the Government-backed Golkar Party (see Chapter VI:202), is indicative of this strong feeling. To the outsiders, the group always insists that it is not a social organisation (golongan) nor a mystical (kepercayaan) group.

Because of this suspicion, organizational ties are loose and activities have to be based on trust. The philosophy which is

\textsuperscript{10}Trisnoko, the secondmost senior disciple, had been absent from Lively Rock for some two years when I did my fieldwork. He lived in a hut, that he built on a plot of land that he inherited from his parent, in a ngelakoni life-style. He never left the hut, lived only on "dried leaves which were blown by the wind into his hut," namely 'whatever gift that came to him' accompanying counselling that he gave.

Embah's second son, a former petty clerk and a share-cropper, left his house which was located beside Embah's and lived in a temporary hut right on the spot where Embah lived ngungsi in 1965 (see Chapter VI:180-81) for a year when I finished my fieldwork. During the time he continued to live as a share-cropper. However, from reports that I received later he seemed to embark on a career as a wise man in his own right.
upheld is the non-instructive 'do as you wish.' Consequently, the group is vulnerable to individual abuse of solidarity. Even during the early post-ngelakoni period, Emban and his small group of followers fell victim to a corrupt manipulation of one respected member of the group who misused the name of the Sultan for his own tobacco business (see Chapter IV:115-16). With the intensified activities of the group, involving relatively large amounts of money, the vulnerability to individual misuse of solidarity is even greater, and time will tell whether the group's solidarity can withstand such kinds of abuse. Some examples of recent abuses are as follows:

1. Probo, who falsely used the name of the Sultan in the late 1950's for his business in tobacco, came back to Lively Rock again during the big revival in the late 1970's, again for his own purposes. This time he used his Jogyanese connection to provide Jogyanese costumes for members of the group who were to make the pilgrimage to Jogjakarta (see Chapter VI:200). Not only did he charge his fellow members more than was necessary for the costumes; he also reported to the authorities that 'remnants of the underground communist movement' were gathering in Lively Rock, in order to divert attention when it was discovered he was charging too much. His report led firstly to the cessation of the so-called emper assembly and, secondly, to Embah's interrogation by a team from the provincial office of the public prosecutor.
2. During the bridge building project, the money raised from the members' contributions was kept in a simple bag under Embah's pillow. At one point, it was discovered that there were 150,000 rupiah missing. Embah's eldest son, who was a district chief, was discovered to have misappropriated government money for his gambling and, being desperate, had also stolen the money from the bridge project fund. Embah had to repay the money that was taken, and the eldest son did not dare to come to Lively Rock until the big festival for the inauguration of the bridge.

3. During the bridge building project, Karmaji who was a kind of manager of the project misused his position. He had recently taken a second wife and built a house for her from the commission he received from the project's timber supplier.

4. During the building of the gamelan house, Embah's fourth son, who was a petty clerk in the local administration office, took the group's money from under Embah's pillow and this money also had to be repaid by Embah.

5. Embah's youngest son had, when I was about to leave, the intention to exploit Embah's name to get voluntary labour and contributions for his own project of building commercial stalls in the courtyard. Before, food vendors were free to build their own temporary stalls.
Strong feeling against formalized teachings. As a reaction to the doctrinal trend of the prevalent religious systems, there is a strong feeling in the group against formalized teachings. The closest approximation to ideologica indoctrination occurred during the so-called emper assembly. Afterwards, Embah's ideas were mostly presented as comments on particular issues or as symbolic activities which were usually in response to pressures from outside. Therefore, the chance for Embah's philosophy and ideology to be systematized for propagation to a wider audience is slight. There are no cadres who can regenerate the ideology; all look at Embah as the only source of understanding. In this way, Embah is multi-interpretable, depending on the understanding that every individual has acquired in his or her approach to Embah. Those individual perceptions can be complementary or contradictory to one another. The fact of Embah's birth, for instance, has been so widely distorted consciously or unconsciously, and for different purposes, despite the fact that Embah himself is always available to be asked. The most distorted version of the fact is given by Embah's youngest son who says that Embah is a son of a couple of noble birth who came from Jogyakarta in the disguise of beggars (see Chapter IV:90). This means that proximity to the source of understanding does not mean greater reliability of understanding. This also means that there is no mediator between Embah and his followers who can sustain the group should Embah no longer be with them anymore.
The prospect

Against all this, there is still a spatial limitation. The Samin movement at the turn of the last century developed and to a certain extent maintained its independence from the rest of the society in the remote areas of Java's middle mountain ranges. By contrast, the Embah Wali movement has developed at a time when the Javanese countryside has been brought much closer to the centres of economic as well as political life. The significance of modern communication, in particular of electronic media in social life, has been such that nowadays every part of Java is accessible to outside contact.

In this way the prospect for the continuation of the Lively Rock Family, as a movement like the Samin movement, is limited. Its future seems to be doomed to oblivion once the pressures which precipitated its development subside. In the case of the Samin movement, the most influential factor was geography: its membership was recruited in ready-made communities, namely specific villages and hamlets, rather than loosely through the attraction of individuals coming from different places, as in the case of Embah's movement. Being relatively isolated, the movement was capable of withdrawing or restricting itself from relations with the wider community.

The Samin movement seems to have replicated the experience of the Baduis in West Java and the Tenggerese in East Java, two isolated communities that manage to protect their old systems of belief from incorporation by Islam. Having succeeded in retreating into isolation, both communities -- as indeed the Samin
movement -- have had the opportunity to stabilize their alternative, pre-Islamic religious systems and to develop them as independent systems of belief.

With the Embah Wali movement, geographical factors do not lend support. Its membership comes from as far as Surabaya in the north, Banyuwangi in the east, and Madiun in the west. There is no way that they can live together, let alone isolate themselves from the rest of society. When Embah Wali began his spiritual pursuit and eventually arrived at his ideology of nyata, there were two avenues open to him for the future. One was the avenue of traditional mysticism which would have led him to emulate other mystic groups in Java. The other was the avenue of messianism which requires other factors to arise. In fact, Embah has followed both avenues. He followed the first avenue when he gathered a small group of disciples and followers around him. This way seemed to have led to a stalemate. At that time he was just one of various wise men in the region. Even in terms of eccentricity, he was neither unique nor remarkably extraordinary. Embah Suro of southern Blitar was senior to him. Thus if Embah continued to follow the avenue of normal mysticism, he would nowadays be known as a wise man, who was perhaps more respected than the others of his kind, but who had no mass following.

Following the avenue of messianism, the spasmodic, unstable part of Embah's ideology came to the fore. The fundamental and more stable part of his ideology, it is true, was retained, but with much less significance. The fate of Embah's rule on sharecropping is a good example of the fact that the essential part of Embah's view of justice cannot really be brought
into effect. Similarly, despite Embah's repeated call for a
cessation of the demanding mentality, only a few - a very few -
follow his call. The majority of his followers retain the old
mentality of nanu-wun ('deep, humble request'; see Chapter V:123),
and they continue to see Embah for his mystical blessing and hints
on lotto numbers.

Despite the potential attraction of rallying a huge mass
of people, Embah's vision of messianism is unstable, responsive to
pressing factors but incapable of being sustained for very long.
The group's solidarity can be preserved through the creative
invention of certain rituals. However, without him the meaning of
these rituals is uncertain, so that they seem to be doomed as
well, once the binding factor, Embah Wali himself, is no longer
with them. There are too many problems of ordinary social life,
such as the ownership of the buildings that the group has ritually
built on Embah's compound that will be too difficult to solve
without Embah. And there are signs that the followers'
preparedness to make sacrifices is declining. When the group
built the bridge, the project was funded by the contribution of
followers and sympathisers who set the maximum at two thousand
rupiahs each. Such a maximum limit provided widespread support
and enhanced the egalitarian nature of the project. Such support,
however, could not be obtained during the next building project --
a house for the gamelan. Consequently, the group had to accept
contributions above the set limit, allowing certain rich
sympathisers to give generous support. Inevitably the egalitarian
principle of the group was transgressed. Even if the movement
survives, it will not be like the ideal one that Embah initiated.
Like other movements of a similar nature, Embah's easy-going and simplistic ideology seems to be just too utopian to sustain a real community in the real world of the Javanese. However, while the relevance of Embah Wali movement may decline when those factors supporting the group lose their meaning, the social and cultural background for the rise of similar movements is still strong. It needs only the trigger of other pressures for new movements to a rise.
APPENDIX I

The following is an account of how Trisnoko, Embah's second most senior disciple, first met Embah and then decided to follow Embah's example. He explained:

In 1947, I had lived in the village of Tawang (a neighbouring village to the Lively Rock) for one year after my marriage to a woman of that village. One day, a neighbour who knew what I was up to, said to me: "If you are interested in meeting a guru, you must see Embah Wall." This neighbour gave me directions to that place, and the following morning I went there.

When I got there, Embah was entertaining three guests. The other guests were served coffee, I was given only a cup of plain water. One of the three guests asked me: "How come your drink is different?"

"Well, as you see, this was all I was given. I am in no position to explain it."

When the three guests left, I stayed. Then suddenly Embah said to me: "Be brave!" From the time I arrived until the time I left the place in the afternoon, that was the only word Embah said to me. On the way home my mind was preoccupied, for what must I be brave about? At home I

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{It seems that matters such as the kinds of drinks that Embah serves are important in this cultural setting, particularly in the context of folk-etymologizing. When I first visited Embah I, too, was given a drink. After knowing that the drink I was served was tea, a villager acquaintance of mine commented: "Teh (tea) means wenTEH (clear, distinct). It is very lucky of you that Embah indicated that your life will be clear."}\]
revealed my intention to my wife about wearing a loin-cloth like Embah. She cried desperately, yet I was determined.

Three days later I went to Embah again, this time I wore gunny shorts. Embah said: "It is not far anymore, if you are really determined, you have to go more quickly."

Again I was puzzled by these words. At that time I heard that Embah had been wearing loin-cloth for seven years. Did I have to catch up on his 7-year head-start? The following day, I remember, it was Saturday of Pon, 9 Suro in the year of Dal. Early in the morning I wore my loin-cloth. I cut the gunny shorts into a loin-cloth. I had told my wife the night before about my decision to wear loin-cloth and to stop speaking I did not know for how long. My wife had no other alternative but to accept the idea and she said that she would remain as my wife.

At 5 a.m., I left my house. I wallowed in a water-buffalos mudhole, washing my face and hair with mud, and then I started to walk northeastwards in the direction of the village of my birth where my adopted parents and other relatives lived. On the way I met people whom I knew, but they looked at me uncertainly. I passed a foodstall that had been busy serving early customers, and the owner said: "Is this someone who is ngelakoni or just a mad man?"

In the middle of the road I saw horse dung. I laid myself down on it. "Oh, a mad man!" the foodstall owner exclaimed. I swayed my hips at him. I was glad he thought I was mad, because a mad man was innocent and not corrupt. I preferred to be regarded as a mad man.

I passed a market which was already busy with sellers preparing their business. They said: "Oh, a mad man at this time of the morning! Selling well, selling well...." 4

When I arrived at my native village, I saw my adopted father was outside, sweeping the frontyard. He immediately recognized me and shed tears. "Oh my son, so strong is your determination. I salute you," he said. I said nothing, but wrote on the ground "Javanese [means] order [and] observance of nobleness [and] right deeds." 5 Then I left him.

2 Javanese calendar. The year mentioned was 1947.

3 Later on she, too, wore a loin-cloth.

4 The belief is that a mad man possesses mystical power that may bring luck.

5 Word-for-word translation. The Javanese is Jawa tata setiya ing budi benering tumindak.
APPENDIX II

At one time in the early 1950's, obviously as part of his routine visits to prominent gurus, the secondmost senior disciple visited Embah Suro. His account of his first impression of Embah Suro is as follows:

"He was in his late sixties, living a ngelakoni life. His hair extended to his shoulders and was tied up. He wore a necklace with a bike reflector on it. One of his sleeves was longer than the other, and so was one of his trousers. His slippers were made of old shoes that were cut off at the ends. In short, he let himself be regarded as a lunatic, although he certainly was not.

"The first words he said to me when I approached him were to invite me to have lunch with him. But the rice must have been three days old, kept in a tiffin pail. It was to be eaten with eggplant soup in the same condition. We ate from the same pail by hand. When I dipped my fingers into the meal, it was already mushy, too mushy by any standard. He ate three handfuls, I had to finish the rest.

"And then he asked me a question: "Who is going to be the person who will bring peace and prosperity to Java?" I answered out of my faith: "Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX! (of the Jogyakarta House)" To which he commented: "Well, for me the person is Sunan Pakubuwono XII (of the Surakarta House)."
APPENDIX III

Here and there in Java's countryside, one can expect to find somebody with extraordinary mystical status -- wong pinter (wise man), wong ngerti (one who knows), wong tawa (old man). In Lively Rock, for instance, there were at one time two men of this kind. There was an interesting story about these two wise men, Kasanprawiro, who was Embah Wali's father and the then sub-village chief, and Arjoprawiro, a close neighbour. They were apparently involved in a sort of competitive friendship. When Kasanprawiro died, Arjoprawiro succeeded him as the sub-village chief.

Arjoprawiro's son, Joyoprawiro, was of Embah Wali's age. Both Embah and the young Joyoprawiro apparently learnt mystical techniques and knowledge from their respective fathers. They both, following their fathers' example, developed a sort of competitive friendship.

When Embah did something, Joyoprawiro who after the death of his father succeeded as the sub-village chief, did something similar. When Embah said something, the sub-village chief said something similar and vice versa. Whereas Embah looked to the
Sultan of Jogyakarta as the long-awaited Just King, the sub-village chief looked to the Sunan of Surakarta.

In 1954, Embah began to build a tobacco-kiln for the village. This was matched by the sub-village chief building a bridge crossing the river that separated the sub-village from the main village. There are interesting stories on both building projects and their respective ends.

Embah's kiln project was initiated by someone from Jogjakarta who had been a regular visitor to the Lively Rock, but the project later turned out to be a fraud and it had to be abandoned. Embah instructed his men to pull down the half-completed construction.

The bridge project was sponsored by a nephew of the sub-village chief who was a high official in a government department, and who regularly saw the sub-village chief for mystical counselling. It so happened that when Embah's project failed halfway, the sub-village chief's project stopped halfway as well for lack of money at the time when only the piers of the bridge had been erected.

Years later, all that was left from Embah's project were the stone foundations that had proved impossible to remove, and of the sub-village chief's project only the badly damaged piers stood up in the river. Of the two wise men, Embah was considered to be higher. If only to prove this, later on, after the death of the sub-village chief, Embah and his followers completed the bridge that had been left unfinished by building a span over the restored piers of the previous failure.
APPENDIX IV

To give an idea on what a journey with Embah is like, the following are two accounts by people who accompanied Embah on recent journeys. The first account is by Tumpuk, a carpenter from a neighbouring village and a regular visitor to Lively Rock since 1975. In 1977, he and some other fellows accompanied Embah to the Karangkates Dam Project about 20 kilometres east of Blitar, apparently to see the Sultan who opened a national Pramuka (Indonesian boyscout) Jamboree in that place.

"It was early morning. However, several people were already present in Lively Rock to sowan (pay homage to) Embah. We were caught in a conversation when suddenly he said: "Well, as I will go now to Karangkates, who wants to go with me?" Certainly all wanted to go, and we left immediately without any preparations, Embah and Embah Putri (Embah's Wife), Pak Prawiro, Setu, Darmo, Pak Rukun, and myself. Just before leaving Embah Putri went to the kitchen and collected two bunches of ripe bananas."

1Bananas seem to be an important provision for Embah's style of journey. During my stay with Embah, I left Blitar several times. Before going, I always took leave of Embah, and each time I was given a bunch of bananas.

"Banana in Javanese is geDANG, and folk-etymologically the word is re-interpreted to mean paDANG, literally 'bright,' in expectation of a bright way along the journey."
"Nobody had the slightest idea as to how we would get to Karangkates or which way we would take. Nobody dared to ask Embah, everybody just followed him. We went southeast, mostly through ricefields as a shortcut and to avoid villages. Obviously we were exposed to the sun and very soon the bananas were finished, not because we were hungry, but because we were thirsty. Now and then we saw coffee stalls, yet Embah did not seem to bother about drinking, and the others just kept quiet, too.

"It was high noon when we arrived at Karangkates. Unaware of what was going on, I was surprised to see that a big festival was taking place. It was the opening of the Pramuka Jamboree. Not long after we arrived and mingled with the crowds, a helicopter landed and out of it stepped none other than Ngarso 'Dalem (His Majesty [the Sultan of Yogyakarta] who was then the Vice President of the Republic and the national chairman of the Pramuka movement). I was not aware of what Embah and Embah Putri were doing, as I slipped away for food and drink.

"At about three o'clock in the afternoon the dignitaries flew off and we too set off for Lively Rock. This time we went northwest. Along the way we stopped several times at some archaeological sites, and Embah told us stories about them. He must have been familiar with these places. As before, we saw foodstalls along the way now and then, but nobody dared to suggest that we stop to drink. Only once Embah said there would be a nice belik (small natural pool) ahead that would be good for washing our faces. When we got there, I not only washed my face but also drank some water while plunging my face into the pool. When we got back to Lively Rock in the evening, all of us were exhausted, all except Embah who took no food and drink at all during the journey."

The second account is by Embah's son-in-law who lived in a separate house in Embah's frontyard. He was the one who gave Embah a one day ride out of Lively Rock during the crucial period of the bridge building activities (see Chapter VI:211). The following is his narration about his trip to accompany Embah to Yogyakarta by bus in 1978:

"It was already 7 p.m. and I had just finished my dinner when Embah knocked at my door, wearing seragam (literally 'costume,' that is to mean Jogyanese traditional costume). He said he would go to Yogyakarta and asked me if I would like to accompany him. I said I certainly would, but I was surprised when he said he was ready to go. I
Appendix 4

changed my clothes, asked my wife for some money and straightway we left. Several people who were still there accompanied us to the main road where we caught a bus to Blitar.

"It was nearly 10 p.m. when we got to Blitar, and there was no public transport to go further. Embah said we'd better spend the night at Pak Mul's (Embah's second son who was then a clerk in a local government office). When we got to the house, the door was already closed and everybody was apparently asleep. Embah said we must not wake anybody up, so we laid ourselves down on a bamboo bench on the verandah.

"At 3 a.m. Embah woke me up and said we'd better go to the bus terminal so as not to trouble Pak Mul's family. At that time of morning there was nobody yet at the terminal, so we just sat on a bench. A little later a coffee stall started selling hot drinks, and I was waiting for Embah's instruction to buy coffee and perhaps also breakfast. There was no instruction, I guessed we would have coffee in the next town, Kediri.

"We took the earliest bus and at 7 a.m. we got to Kediri. Embah told me to buy all the onde-onde (sesame seed cake with a sweet blackbean centre) that one cake peddler had. I felt that all the onde-onde would be too many for us, but I just did what he said. While waiting for the connection, I waited for Embah's hint so I could eat the cakes. But there was no such hint. Instead he gave away the cakes to beggars who approached him. The same thing he did each time our bus stopped and a bunch of beggars approached his window.

"It was already afternoon when we arrived in Jogjakarta. The day was extremely hot, yet we went straight to the palace. Embah walked around the palace. At one spot under a banyan tree, Embah stopped and seemed to meditate. It was that time that I got a chance to slip away for long enough to buy a glass of tea and eat some cakes.

"From the palace Embah went straight to Kaliurang (a holiday resort some twelve kilometres north of Jogjakarta). It was already dusk when we got there. We took a look around a barrack that, Embah said, was the place where the

2 Commenting on a government plan to renovate Jogjakarta's alun-alun (city square with banyan trees, located in front of the local government chief's residence) in December 1981, the Sultan was quoted as saying that consideration had to be given to the "historic" significance of the sixty-two banyan trees and two main banyan trees on the alun-alun (Kompas daily, 3.12.1981). With this comment, the Sultan hinted at a certain mystical significance of the banyan trees on the alun-alun in front of his palace.

It could be that the banyan tree under which Embah meditated was one of the two main trees mentioned by the Sultan.
Dutch troops were stationed after being "defeated" by the Sultan (see Chapter V:168).

"From there we set out for Joogyakarta again, this time on foot. It was possibly 10 p.m. when we were on the descending and winding road to Joogyakarta. I thought I would never make it. But unexpectedly Embah stopped in front of a house. It was the house of Pak Darmo (a regular visitor to Lively Rock and a local figure in mysticism). He was still awake at that time of the night, in conversation with some guests. He was obviously surprised by our unexpected visit. Embah said that we needed a rest, but his host should not bother about giving us dinner. However, coffee and snacks were served and as Embah definitely would not drink his, I drank both cups.

"Early in the morning, at about 3 a.m., Embah woke me up and whispered to me not to make a noise or wake up other people. He said we should leave the house immediately so as not to trouble our host. Before slipping away, he told me to leave a 500-rupee note under the pillow for the person who prepared the bed. It must have been dawn when our host realized that his guests had gone. He sent two motor bikes to catch us and bring us to Joogyakarta. However, Embah refused the offer and sent his thanks to our host.

"It was already morning when we got to Joogyakarta again. At the bus terminal Embah told me to buy onde-onde cakes again to give away to beggars who might approach him. We got back to Kediri in the afternoon, and it was then that he asked me to bring him to a foodstall. He said: "Now, because our journey has been completed, we can have something to eat."
APPENDIX V

The 'Regulation on Share-cropping Ricefields' is printed on manilla paper and reads as follows:

Dukuh "Lively Rock"
Desa ..............
Kecamatan ........ *

Kabupaten Blitar
Propinsi Jawa Timur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TATA MAKARYA</th>
<th>ANGGARAP SABIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabin setunggal hektar = 100 are maratiga.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wragatipun dipun sowngo ingkang kagungan sabin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PERINCIANIPUN :

1. Bibitipun sabin sak hektar 20 kg = Rp 500
2. Wragat tanam 1,500
3. Tambahan rabuk/mess 6,000
4. Wragat nenggo 1,000
5. Wragat metik 1,000

--------

Ongkos sedoyo Rp 10,000
Kirang langkung sami kaliyan gabah 500 kg
Para sederek ingkang sami setuju kaliyan TATA MAKARYA
meniko sami tondo asmo.

"Lively Rock," tanggal 21 - 10 - 1971
REGULATION ON SHARE-CROPPING RICEFIELD

Sharecropping arrangement of one hectare of ricefield is 2:1. The costs are on the land-owner.

DETAILS:

1. Seeds for one hectare are 20 kg = Rp 500
2. Planting cost 1,500
3. Additional chemical fertilizer 6,000
4. Maintenance cost 1,000
5. Harvesting cost 1,000

Total Rp 10,000

More or less equals 500 kilograms of unhulled paddy.

Those who agree with this REGULATION ON SHARE-CROPPING are welcome to put their signatures.

Lively Rock, dated on 21.10.1971

All costs were based on prices and average per hectare production of rice in 1971 which was 3000 kilograms. Under common arrangement, the owner was obliged to pay two thirds of fertilizer cost, namely Rp 4000, whereas the remaining costs, Rp 6000, had to be paid by the share-cropper. Under the stipulated sharecropping arrangement, the owner and the sharecropper are respectively entitled to half of the nett products.
In real terms, the difference between common arrangement and Lively Rock's, and also the Sharecropping Act for one hectare of ricefield with average production of 3000 kilograms at Rp 20 per kilogram, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Production</strong></td>
<td>Gross Value (G.V.)</td>
<td>G.V. minus all costs</td>
<td>G.V.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rp60,000</td>
<td>Rp50,000</td>
<td>Rp60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Owner's share</strong></td>
<td>2/3 G.V. minus 2/3 fertilizer</td>
<td>1/2 Nett Value (N.V.)</td>
<td>2/3 G.V. minus all costs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rp36,000</td>
<td>Rp25,000</td>
<td>Rp30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(40000-4000)</td>
<td>(40000-10000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharecropper's</strong></td>
<td>1/3 G.V. minus remaining costs (20000-6000)</td>
<td>1/2 N.V.</td>
<td>1/3 G.V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rp14,000</td>
<td>Rp25,000</td>
<td>Rp20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(20000-nil)</td>
<td>(20000-nil)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proportion</strong></td>
<td>18 : 7</td>
<td>12.5 : 12.5</td>
<td>15 : 10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1 : 1)</td>
<td>(1 : 1)</td>
<td>(3 : 2)</td>
</tr>
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