2 Soeharto's Javanese Pancasila

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On the evening of 19 July 1982, President Soeharto received a delegation from the Golkar-affiliated National Indonesian Youth Committee (Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia, KNPI) at his private residence. The talk he gave was never published in Indonesia but was surreptitiously recorded on tape and then transcribed (Anon. 1982). Copies of the text were eagerly passed around in diplomatic and intelligence circles as evidence of what really made Soeharto tick. In it, he combines the role of political leader outlining to youthful supporters the concrete tasks ahead with one akin to that of the *guru* of a Javanese mystical sect explaining the meaning of life to a group of initiates.

By this time, Soeharto had established the basic framework of his authoritarian political system. Soeharto saw society as composed of a variety of groups performing different occupational functions which would all be beneficiaries of rapid economic development. The varying roles that functional groups—called *golongan karya* or *golkar*—played in the economy should not, in his eyes, give birth to ideological differences. Social conflict of any kind would threaten growth, and so was illegitimate and had to be repressed. Conflict was seen as the work of extremists. Soeharto had no inkling that growth and modernisation would themselves arouse conflict. His political system consisted of a state party (Golkar) tasked to win parliamentary elections every five years against competition from two heavily constrained political parties. Relying on support from the Indonesian Armed Forces and technocrat ministers, Soeharto reversed the economic decline of the Sukarno era. Believing that Indonesian society had to be de-politicised to bring about economic growth, he enforced a 'floating mass' policy, by which the rural masses were forbidden to engage in organised political activity except during campaigns for the largely ritualistic elections.¹ Between elections, they were under the sway of the Armed Forces and the national administrative structure, two nationwide hierarchies around

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¹ The 'floating mass' doctrine has claims to being one of Indonesia's rare, original contributions to authoritarian political thought. It was not, however, necessarily effective in de-politicising the rural *populace*, not least because it did not target religious practices that often linked the supporters of the Islamic party to their actual or potential leaders, such as Friday mosque attendance and prayer-group meetings (*pengajian*).

which Golkar honeycombed. Decades of high economic growth in Indonesia and a rapid expansion of the education system were accompanied by increasing social and economic differentiation, but Soeharto's 'functional' model of society ignored such differentiation. This outlook suited Golkar's electoral needs, as it was the natural home for those performing occupational functions, or *karya*.

Soeharto's attraction to Javanese religious beliefs became well-known from his early years in power (McDonald 1980:12). It may have begun when, as a child, he had come under the influence of a shaman (*dukun*) called Kiai Daryatmo, who was versed both in the Koran and in Javanese beliefs (meditation and mysticism, *samadi* and *kebatinan*).² Soeharto acquired his philosophy of life from studying with Daryatmo in the latter's prayer-house, where he helped the older man prepare traditional cures. Daryatmo is reported to have remained an influential figure in Soeharto's life for many years.³ As president, Soeharto was surrounded by associates who were either nominal rather than devout Muslims or indeed Catholics, and who wanted to make use of mystical sects to counter Muslim political aspirations. Soeharto seemed to support this strategy in the early 1970s by endorsing *kebatinan* congresses. It appeared likely that *kebatinan* would acquire official recognition as a religion alongside the five hitherto recognised religions in the teeth of Muslim opposition. This would have reduced the number of Indonesians professing to be Muslim. In the end, however, Soeharto refrained from granting this recognition. His undertaking a minor pilgrimage (*umroh*) to Mecca in 1977 had no observable impact on his vigilance against Muslim politicians.

How much his Javanese beliefs shaped Soeharto's political outlook remains debatable. His usually controlled behaviour was certainly heavily influenced by Javanese precepts of inner calm reflected in external impassiveness. Moreover, Soeharto often indulged in practices aimed at placating supernatural forces. And his ambition to rule over a de-politicised realm was perfectly compatible with the outlook of Javanese kings, whose 'primary duties in the political sphere were to guard against disturbances and to restore order if any such disturbance should occur' (Moertono 1981:38). But he shared this outlook with his Dutch colonial predecessors, who expressed what were to become Soeharto's political goals in terms of calm and order (*rust en orde*) without themselves being in the thrall of Javanese authoritarian traditions.⁴ Anderson, the western scholar who has contributed most to explaining Javanese attitudes to power, has argued that

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2 See Soeharto, 1989, p.15. Soeharto introduces Daryatmo in his autobiography with the term *muballigh*, or Muslim preacher. Daryatmo came from Wonogiri in Central Java. See also Roeder, 1969, pp.119–20.

3 See Elson, 2001, p.228. Soeharto did not admit this in his autobiography. Soeharto was also believed to be influenced by the mystically inclined military officer, Sujono Humardani. See McDonald, 1980, p.131. But Soeharto denied this in his autobiography, claiming that it was he who had exerted influence over Sujono, not the other way round.

4 On the similarities between Soeharto's statecraft and that of late Dutch colonialism, see McVey, 1982, pp.84–91.

Soeharto had a 'multicolored mentality', which showed traces of revolutionary nationalism, some acquaintance with Javanese chronicles and puppet theatre, the attitudes of a petty colonial-era aristocrat and the effects of military officer training (Anderson nd). None of the major influences in Soeharto's early life prepared him to tolerate open conflict or to foster political freedom.

Soeharto depicted his government as steering a middle course between the extremes of communism and radical Islam. Although it did not reflect the vast social and ideological variety of Indonesian society, the three-party or Golkar plus two-party structure was held forcibly in place for twenty-five years. The one element Soeharto was still to add to his structure when he spoke to the KNPI in 1982 was the imposition of Pancasila as the sole legal basis for all political and social organisations.⁵ But his vast program of indoctrination courses known as P4 (*Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila*, Directive for the Realisation and Implementation of Pancasila) had already been underway for several years.⁶ In his autobiography published in 1989, Soeharto was to report with satisfaction that by March 1983 some 1.8 million civil servants and 150,000 military personnel had already undertaken P4 courses (p.337). In all probability, most KNPI leaders present at Soeharto's residence on 19 July 1982 had already undergone some of these courses.

Pancasila's role

Soeharto's objective in addressing the KNPI representatives seemed to be to establish the ancient origins of Pancasila, the five principles first championed by Sukarno that consisted of belief in one supreme God, nationalism, humanitarianism, democracy through representative deliberation, and social justice. Soeharto told his audience that, with the 1982 parliamentary election now successfully concluded⁷, the next national task was the holding of the 1983 People's Consultative Assembly session, which would approve the new Five-Year Plan and decide on the broad outlines of state policy. Soeharto hinted in passing, as he occasionally did during his last decade and a half in office, that his next five-year term would be his last, given his age (he was then 61). The possibility of his stepping-down made placing the next Five-Year Plan on a firm ideological foundation all the more important in his eyes. If he was really

⁵ Elson sees his effort to give Pancasila an ideological monopoly as one of the key stages in Indonesia's 'political corporatisation'. See Elson, 2001, p.228.

⁶ For an early account of P4 courses, see Morfit, 1981, pp.838–51. Morfit drew attention to the financial cost of the P4 courses, the sanctions that were applied for absenteeism and the vagueness of Pancasila's principles themselves. Morfit also suggested that the course materials imparted an entirely static and ahistorical view of the past and envisaged an unchanging future.

⁷ For a good account of this election, see Pemberton, 1986, pp.1–22. Golkar won 64.3 per cent of the vote in 1982, a slight improvement over its 1971 and 1977 results.

thinking of retirement at this stage, Soeharto might well have seen as urgent the task of imposing Pancasila as the sole basis for socio-political organisations, a task that would have been accomplished before his departure from office. He said that economic development would once more be Indonesia's major objective for five years, but it would be meaningless without political development. And he warned that Indonesians still did not all see political development in the same way. 'We do not yet use a single language when talking about political development.' Some people, he pointed out, thought that the freedom guaranteed in the 1945 Constitution allowed them to do whatever they wanted. This happened, Soeharto said, because Indonesians had not accepted Pancasila as the sole state ideology, the sole foundation for the state and the sole 'proper' outlook on life.

The problem was that there was, unfortunately, more than one way of accepting Pancasila. To make his point, Soeharto recounted a meeting he claimed to have had with President Sukarno in Semarang in 1956 when he was the acting Central Java military commander. He had asked Sukarno whether the Indonesian Communist Party's (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) success in the parliamentary election of the previous year, in which it was placed fourth, might not endanger Pancasila. Sukarno had answered that the PKI's result proved it had popular support and now he would have to Indonesia-ise or Pancasila-ise the communists. Soeharto, for his part, had told Sukarno his policy was to 'separate' the PKI from the people's economic development, a policy he claimed then received Sukarno's blessing.⁸ Without explaining what 'Pancasila-ise' might mean, Soeharto told the KNPI leaders that Sukarno had tried to Pancasila-ise the PKI through Nasakom but that this had failed.⁹ In fact, he said, the PKI had exploited the legitimacy that Nasakom conferred on it to build up its strength and eventually launch a revolt. The lesson that Soeharto drew from his anecdote was that Pancasila should not be just a device or an umbrella to bring together all ideologies, such as communism, socialism, liberalism and religion (sic). If Pancasila was no more

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8 Soeharto said: 'I reported that, since I did not believe that the PKI could be Pancasila-ised just like that, I was trying to distance (the PKI from) the people by carrying out development'. Sukarno replied, according to Soeharto: 'Yes, that's right. Carry on.' Soeharto continued pursuing economic development in a way that aimed at 'separating' the people from the PKI through his three decades in the presidency. If this conversation with Sukarno took place at all, it is more likely to have been in 1957, after the establishment in July of that year of the Fourth Territory Development Foundation, which was to be Soeharto's major vehicle for promoting economic development in Central Java and for raising funds for his subordinates, particularly through investment in companies involved in the distribution of primary commodities. See Elson, 2001, pp.62–63.

9 The acronym Nasakom stands for Nationalism, Religion and Communism, the formula that expressed the three main ideological currents that Sukarno tolerated and encouraged to co-operate with one another during Guided Democracy. Anderson has offered a different perspective on Nasakom, arguing that Sukarno's advocacy of Nasakom was a claim to Power deriving from his absorbing all parts of the political system within himself, while others merely remained the representatives of their respective currents or ideologies. See Anderson, 1972, p.15. Soeharto did not imitate Sukarno in this respect, since he was not prepared to admit the legitimacy of competing ideologies that he might seek to embody within himself. By 1982, Sukarno's rehabilitation was well under way with Soeharto's encouragement, and Soeharto's remarks here convey no criticism of his predecessor's approach to the PKI.

than an umbrella or receptacle (*wadah*), the adherents of those ideologies would ape the PKI and exploit their position of shelter under the Pancasila umbrella, all the while keeping their own separate ideological identities. As a result, the country would be riven by conflict. The only solution was for Pancasila to be the sole ideology or basis for Indonesian political and social organisations, replacing all other ideologies.¹⁰

An ancient legacy

But, for this to be achieved, Soeharto foresaw that the people would have to be convinced of Pancasila's truth. And they would be persuaded of the truth of Pancasila if they saw it as the heritage of their ancestors. Sukarno had already led the way, by asserting in 1945 and in later years that he had not invented Pancasila but had merely 'dug' it up from the 'pearls' left by the forefathers of his people. Apart from a couple of genuflections towards non-Javanese, Soeharto clearly saw those ancestors as being Javanese. Soeharto told the KNPI that their distant ancestors had bequeathed the elements that coalesced into the principles of Pancasila in ways that were too simple to be understood by over-clever scholars.¹¹ Modern theories such as Marxism, communism and so forth could not cast light on the ancient wisdom. Defending the early Indonesians against the onslaught of over-educated scholars, who tended to write them off as practitioners of black magic (*ilmu klenik*), Soeharto said the ancient Indonesians living before Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity and 'ideology' reached Indonesian shores were beyond praise. Not only had they developed such useful practical concepts as mutual help (*gotong-royong*), they had also produced a science of reality (*ilmu kasunyatan*¹²), which he said contemporary Javanese already knew about but which the non-Javanese now ought to study.¹³

10 Few students of Indonesian politics have accepted Soeharto's view that Pancasila is at all an 'ideology', let alone one that could replace all others. King, for example, has urged that 'the Panca Sila should not be labelled an ideology (even a rudimentary one) because of its original instrumental character (a compromise establishing limits on parties), lack of logical consistency (one, supreme God vs. democracy), and lack of any future orientation'. See King, 1982, p.111, n.17. Given the non-specificity and vagueness of its principles, one can also see Pancasila as merely a slogan or a talisman. One of Pancasila's peculiarities is that it serves more readily as a weapon or instrument of the powerful than of the powerless. The oppositionist Petition of Fifty that surfaced in the early 1980s criticised Soeharto's exploitation of Pancasila but it was easily repressed.

11 This comment recalls Sukarno's hostility to western 'textbook thinking' that he condemned in the early years of Guided Democracy. There had been an intense and bitter debate in 1981 about who had 'dug up' Pancasila. It had been launched by army historian Nugroho Notosusanto, who had claimed the excavator had been the long-dead Minangkabau nationalist figure and ideologue, Muhammad Yamin. See *Sekitar Tanggal dan Penggalinya*, Jakarta: Yayasan Idayu, 1981.

12 Geertz translates this as 'highest reality'. There was a mystical sect called Kawruh Kasunyatan ('Knowledge of the Highest Reality') that was founded in Solo in 1927 and had a branch in Mojokuto. See Geertz, 1960, p.347.

13 'Yang Jawa tentu mengetahui, tetapi yang luar Jawa supaya belajar'. Soeharto's condescending comment about non-Javanese recalls his speech at the September 1957 National Conference held as Outer Islands were heading for rebellion. Still Central Java commander, Soeharto took a hard line against the Outer Island

The science of reality gave birth to the science of the origin and destination of man (*ilmu sangkan paran dumadi*¹⁴), and that in turn spawned the science of the perfect life (*ilmu kasampurnaning hurip*).

Soeharto then explained the meaning of these sciences. The science of reality acknowledged the reality of nature and everything in it, including man. An appreciation of nature led to the conclusion that a superior spirit had created it, and that spirit was God, the creator of the whole of Nature, including man. God gave man the necessary means for life, namely a body, a spirit and a soul. As long as these are united (*manunggal*), man is alive, but when the body and soul have separated, man is dead. God also gave man the five senses, then the power to reason, to feel and to desire (*cipta, rasa, karsa*). God also infused man with good and bad feelings or passions that are forever in conflict, such as honesty and corruption, or patience and irascibility. God also gave man the conflicting needs of being an individual and of living in society. Soeharto described these insights of the ancient Indonesians as the science of reality. According to the science of the origin and destination of man that the ancients also discovered, God determined that man would die. Where he goes at death depends on his behaviour during his life. Those who have mastered their passions will be judged to have done good in this life. The mastering of the conflicting passions was, Soeharto said, the key to a perfect life, the understanding of which was *ilmu kasampurnaning hurip*.

At this point in his talk, Soeharto acknowledged a role for religion, any religion, as religion also exhorted man to control his passions. The ancient Indonesians were for this reason tolerant of all the religions that came to Indonesia, he said, and everybody was free to choose the religion of his or her taste. But he added that one role Pancasila would not play was that of a religion. 'I have said time and again to (Muslim) religious scholars who are afraid that Pancasila will evolve into a religion, that that is not possible. Pancasila as an outlook on life, the basis of the state and as an ideology guarantees tolerance and the vitality of all religions'. While welcoming religions, Soeharto continued, earlier Indonesians had not forsaken Indonesian culture. These early beliefs in one supreme God, in self-help, and in humankind's individual and social dual nature had led to

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dissidents. He said that the 54 million people on Java would feel unjustly treated if economic development was held back there to permit the regions to catch up. See Lev, 1966, p.29. Daniel Dhakidae drew the writer's attention to this speech.

14 The Jesuit scholar, Magnis-Suseno, describes *sangkan-paran* as being at the heart of Javanese mystical speculation. See Magnis-Suseno, 1997, p.118. He writes that a Javanese can only reach *sangkan-paran* if he is dedicated to this as the one aim in life and he is ready to resist the outer world's temptations, though he has to continue performing his duties in the world. *Sangkan paraning dumadi* literally means 'the origin and destination of being'. In a personal communication, George Quinn notes that 'many Javanese see life as fleeting or transitory—a short stopping off between where we came from and where we are going to. The transitoriness of life can only be understood if we are aware deep down that we come from somewhere and are going somewhere'.

the belief in the principles of unity, people's welfare and social justice that had sunk from the surface but had been rediscovered through Sukarno's articulation of Pancasila.

Soeharto's search for Pancasila's origins thus did not involve an attempt to trace each principle one by one to strands of early Indonesian thought or social practices. He was not interested, for example, in attributing self-help notions to the exigencies of co-operation in agricultural labour or the need to cope with the vagaries of nature or any other historically grounded phenomenon. Soeharto seemed content to establish the patrimony and legacy of the ancient Indonesians as being little more than a form of deism.¹⁵

Having spoken up to this point almost exclusively about the Javanese without actually saying so, Soeharto then offered the Javanese alphabet as further proof of the wisdom of the ancient Indonesians. This alphabet, he stressed, was developed before either the Arabic or the Latin script reached Indonesia's shores,¹⁶ and it contained the essence of Javanese philosophy. The first five letters, ha-na-ca-ra-ka, depicted human life beginning in embryo as a naked or empty spirit, which later acquired the capacity to think, to feel and to will. The next five, da-ta-sa-wa-la, meant that man also acquired good qualities and these were equalled in power by bad qualities, as the next five letters (pa-dha-ja-ya-nya) indicated. The last five letters, ma-ga-ba-tha-nga, meant that man lived as long as his soul and body were united but then died and returned to God.¹⁷ When he had completed his account of the meaning of the Javanese alphabet, Soeharto commented: 'That's wonderful, isn't it? Is it clear... have you understood that?'

15 Mulder (1992, p.10) notes that, in Javanese thinking, real knowledge is personal insight into the nature of things and their relationships that cannot be formulated objectively. 'As a result, Javanese teachings should be full of symbolism and secret wisdom that stimulate fantasy and reflection.' This seems close to Soeharto's approach towards his guests. They will have acquired no concrete knowledge of Indonesia's past through listening to him. By contrast, on occasion, Soeharto prided himself on his ability at explaining concrete phenomena, such as agricultural production.

16 Apparently at pains to emphasise the original authenticity of the ancient Javanese, Soeharto made no reference to the Indian origins of the Javanese alphabet. The Javanese Soeharto used in this section is rather obscure, and the present writer acknowledges the help of George Quinn and of Prapti McLeod in deciphering it. In a personal communication, George Quinn notes that 'what Soeharto is saying is that the initial two letters of the alphabet represent life in its primordial or embryonic form. Into this primordial 'silence' or 'emptiness' (*kasunyatan*) come thought (*cipta*), sense perception (*rasa*) and will (*karsa*) represented in the letters ca-ra-ka.' The writer has also benefited from Quinn's analysis of ha-na-ca-ra-ka in his 'Ajisaka in the 21st Century', a paper presented to the workshop, 'Script as Identity Marker in Southeast Asia', organised by the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde and the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, Jakarta, 29 November–1 December 2004.

17 A more common reading of the Javanese alphabet comes from a folk-tale about one Aji Saka who travelled with two companions from the land 'Above the Wind'. The companions had an argument and embarked on a fight in which both died. Aji Saka invented the alphabet with the following poem to commemorate his friends: 'There were two messengers who never refused an order; of equal strength, they both died'. The interpretation of pa-dha-ja-ya-nya is the same in both Soeharto's rendering of the alphabet and the folk-tale's. See http://www.aseanstoriesproject.org/indonesia/story_4.php. Also see Hefner, 1990, Chapter Six.

The pioneering Javanese

Soeharto summarised the kernel of the wisdom of the ancient Indonesians as being submission to Almighty God. He then listed the tenets of the Central Java-based spiritual association, Pangestu,¹⁸ as being awareness of God, belief in God and obedience to God. Pangestu was the only spiritual movement Soeharto cited in his talk to the KNPI. He then asked how such Javanese beliefs were compatible with religion. 'Well', he said, 'religion basically teaches the same thing'. But why was religion revealed (*diturunkan*) not in Indonesia but 'over there'.

God indeed loves humankind and it was over there (*disitulah*) that God's position was not understood, wasn't it? Therefore God had to send his Prophet with all his revelations to lead the people who lived there to the right path. (The Prophet was sent) not just for those people, however, but for all of humankind. Although the Prophet was born in the Arab world, in the Middle East, he was tasked to speak to all of humankind in order to guide them to controlling their two conflicting passions.

Soeharto's implication was that the ancient Javanese were ahead of the Arabs in understanding God and did not need a prophet to be sent among them.¹⁹ Moreover, the teaching that the Prophet was to impart had already been discovered by the Javanese.

At this point, Soeharto was referring exclusively to Islam, indeed even transposing to Islam a principal element of Javanese belief. His words do not suggest he also had Christianity's Middle Eastern origins in mind. Hinduism and Buddhism also escaped his attention here. This passage reinforces the impression that Soeharto's remarks to the KNPI should be seen as another chapter in Hinduised Java's centuries-old debate with Islam, rather than a consistent defence of imagined ancient Javanese beliefs against all foreign religions, including Christianity. Soeharto concluded this section of his remarks by saying that all Indonesians

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18 Pangestu was set up in 1949 after its founder, Soenarto, had received three 'revelations' over a period of seventeen years. The revelations were published in two volumes, entitled *Sasangka Jati* [The True Origin] and *Sabda Khusus* [Special Words]. Soeharto used the words *eling*, *percaya* and *mituhu* to describe the three tenets. Non-Javanese among his listeners would not necessarily have understood the first and third of these terms. These concepts are translated as *sadar*, *percaya* and *taat* in Indonesian. See Kartodirdjo, 1988. With a founder, revelations and emphasis on submission to God, it is difficult to say in what terms Soeharto would have denied Pangestu was a religion as he had denied Pancasila would become one. In his autobiography, Soeharto contented himself with a brief and dispassionate account of Javanese mystical beliefs, saying that adherents of such beliefs had to choose one of the five legal religions (later increased to six). He dropped the reference to Pangestu. See Soeharto, 1989, pp.311–13.

19 If Soeharto is claiming in this passage that the Javanese embraced monotheism before the Arabs, his would be a minority view.

were free to choose their own religion while remaining individually responsible to Almighty God. 'Those who believe in Islam, let them choose Islam, those who believe in Christianity, let them choose Christianity.'

Slipping back into the role of political leader, Soeharto went on to describe how important it had been for Indonesia's harmony to reduce the nine political parties that had contested the parliamentary election in 1971. He still seemed to harbour resentment that politicians had resisted the fusion of parties, even though the large the number of parties in existence, the more ideologies had thrived. Now, he said, he was encountering the same kind of resistance to the adoption of Pancasila as the sole ideology. Soeharto claimed the Indonesian people had tasked him to simplify the party system as early as 1966, seven years before fusion of nine into two finally took place. But at least he could draw satisfaction from the respective material/spiritual and spiritual/material orientations of the two parties, that difference being a further example of the dualism he had outlined in explaining Javanese beliefs to the KNPI leaders. As for Golkar, it stood between the two political parties as it was based exclusively on Pancasila. The Armed Forces, for their part, would guide the people from behind (*tut wuri handayani*).

Soeharto concluded his evening talk by saying that he knew the ideas he had put across would be difficult for the non-Javanese in his audience to understand. What he had outlined, nonetheless, was the legacy of the early Indonesians, whether they were Javanese or not. He gave as a non-Javanese example the practice of *tepung tawar* in Aceh, which he said the Acehnese had been unable to abandon because it was so rooted in indigenous culture.²⁰ The Acehnese had adapted *tepung tawar* to Islam, he explained, by reading prayers to accompany it. Here, Soeharto was placing himself unequivocally in the Javanese syncretic tradition, which the modernist Muslim movement spearheaded by Muhammadiyah had combated throughout much of the century, and in the tradition of defending customary practices (*adat*). Indeed, he was offering the adherents of traditional practices frowned on by modernist reformers the argument that those practices were valid because they were indigenous and authentic. He also suggested that maybe the early Bataks in north Sumatra had likewise left 'pearls' behind them that could inspire national sentiment. He had instructed the managers of the P4 program to look out for all such legacies. P4 indoctrination would continue

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20 *Tepung tawar* is known as *peusijeuk* (various spellings) in Acehnese. It is a traditional practice of showering dampened leaves over participants in ceremonies such as weddings. *Tepung tawar* is also found in various states of Malaysia and, with a different format, is a welcoming ceremony for visitors in East Kalimantan. Whether or not it is in conformity with Islam still troubles devout Acehnese. See <http://www.erasmuslim.com/ust/aqd/454f0342.htm>.

into the indefinite future, he promised, in order to shape the outlook of the Indonesian people so that they would unfailingly believe in the truth of the sole ideology, Pancasila.²¹

Aftermath

Although it has not been possible to determine why Soeharto used the KNPI visit in July 1982 to expound these views, it is surely beyond question that the talk should be seen as a high-water mark of his advocacy of a view of Indonesia inspired by Javanese concepts. By 1985, he achieved his long-term goal of imposing Pancasila as the sole basis for social and political organisations. But, later in the 1980s, Soeharto seemed to shift ground. Worried that he was losing control over the Armed Forces, he gave new political opportunities to devout Muslims. He sponsored the establishment of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslimin se-Indonesia, ICMI), under the leadership of his protégé, Habibie, and he began to tolerate more overt expressions of Islamic piety in daily life.²² He himself embarked on a major pilgrimage with his family in 1991, returning from it bearing the new first name of Mohammad.²³ Soeharto even reportedly impressed members of his entourage with accurate pronunciation of Arabic, acquired as a teenager at a Muhammadiyah school in Central Java.²⁴ This shift may have gained greater plausibility because his KNPI talk, against which Soeharto's new discourse might have been compared, was never published.

It is uncertain whether this latter-day Islamic piety was exclusively politically driven, or whether Soeharto felt more relaxed about Islam after Pancasila's acceptance as the sole basis for social and political organisations. Surprising as this development was in view of his KNPI talk, there was not necessarily any inconsistency in his eyes. As noted above, Soeharto's first spiritual adviser, Daryatmo, was an expert in both the Koran and Javanese religion. As he aged, Soeharto may have sought to master the same broad-ranging spiritual knowledge

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21 Mulder noted years ago that the P4 program was 'remarkably Javanese', with the government playing the role of a Javanese parent vis-à-vis the populace who were still '*durung* Indonesia', not yet civilised in the proper Indonesian way. See Mulder, 1992, p.121.

22 See Aspinall, 2005, pp.39–41, for other aspects of Soeharto's changed stance towards Islam.

23 It is hard to understand why Soeharto failed to see the political value of undertaking a major pilgrimage until he had been formally in office for twenty-three years unless this delay shows how intensely opposed he had been to Muslim political aspirations and had seen them as a threat.

24 Interview with Nurcholish Madjid, who was quoting Habibie, Jakarta, 21 April 1997. Habibie may not have been the best qualified associate of Soeharto's to judge. His knowledge of German is better documented than his expertise in Arabic, and he was no authority on Islamic doctrine either. Soeharto said regrettably little about his Islamic education in his autobiography.

as Daryatmo.²⁵ Sukarno, moreover, had had a similarly eclectic outlook. It may be easier to move from immersion in Javanist beliefs towards the expression of greater Muslim piety than to go in the reverse direction.²⁶

The imposition of Pancasila as the country's sole ideological basis, by which Soeharto put so much store, was a short-lived but disastrous achievement. It was eventually abandoned in the reformist momentum of 1998–99, when the rich ideological diversity of the natural Indonesian polity re-emerged almost in its entirety. P4 courses also ceased. The Pancasila-as-sole-basis campaign was in fact a de-stabilising initiative that, reinforcing Muslim feelings of being the principal victims of Soeharto's repression, prompted an upswing in Islamic radicalism and provided a *casus belli* for Darul Islam and later Jemaah Islamiyah leaders and militants. Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir gained early notoriety as opponents of the sole basis. Nor was the sole basis struggle necessarily helpful to nationalist forces. It is arguable that the glorification of Pancasila as an indigenous, superior belief system may also have impeded secular nationalist forces from modernising their ideology. In a speech on 29 November, 2006, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia—Perjuangan, PDI-P) chair Megawati Soekarnoputri used words that Soeharto might well have been happy to insert into his KNPI talk. She criticised the new democratic system as being unduly reliant on voting rather than consensus. She asked whether Indonesians wanted a democracy that originated in Indonesia or one that came from 'who knows where?' Why criticise (her father's) Guided Democracy only to accept the (foreign-derived) democracy that Indonesia now had? (*Gatra*, 30 November, 2006).

Soeharto died in January 2008, almost a decade after his enforced resignation. So far no signs have emerged to suggest that Indonesians will attempt a major reappraisal of his life or presidency. For any such exercise, however, his KNPI talk would repay close attention as one of the most uncompromising statements of a Javanist outlook issued by an Indonesian power holder. It thus takes its place among key authoritarian New Order documents or doctrines such as the floating-mass, 'mono-loyalty' for the bureaucracy and the dual function for the Indonesian military.

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25 Roeslan Abdulgani, who was probably the leading Pancasila ideologue and who remained close to Soeharto until his death in 2005, was a diligent reader of the Koran who also shared Soeharto's taste for quoting Javanese maxims.

26 Adopting a more strongly Islamic persona did not prevent Soeharto from continuing to engage in Javanese religious activities. He oversaw a cleansing ceremony (*ruat bumi*) on being informed that the 'nail of Java', located on Mount Tidar in Central Java, had come loose. See Friend, 2003, pp.261–63.