

REDESIGNING THE COSMOS

Belief Systems and State Power in Indonesia



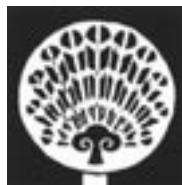
Ruth McVey

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by Ruth McVey

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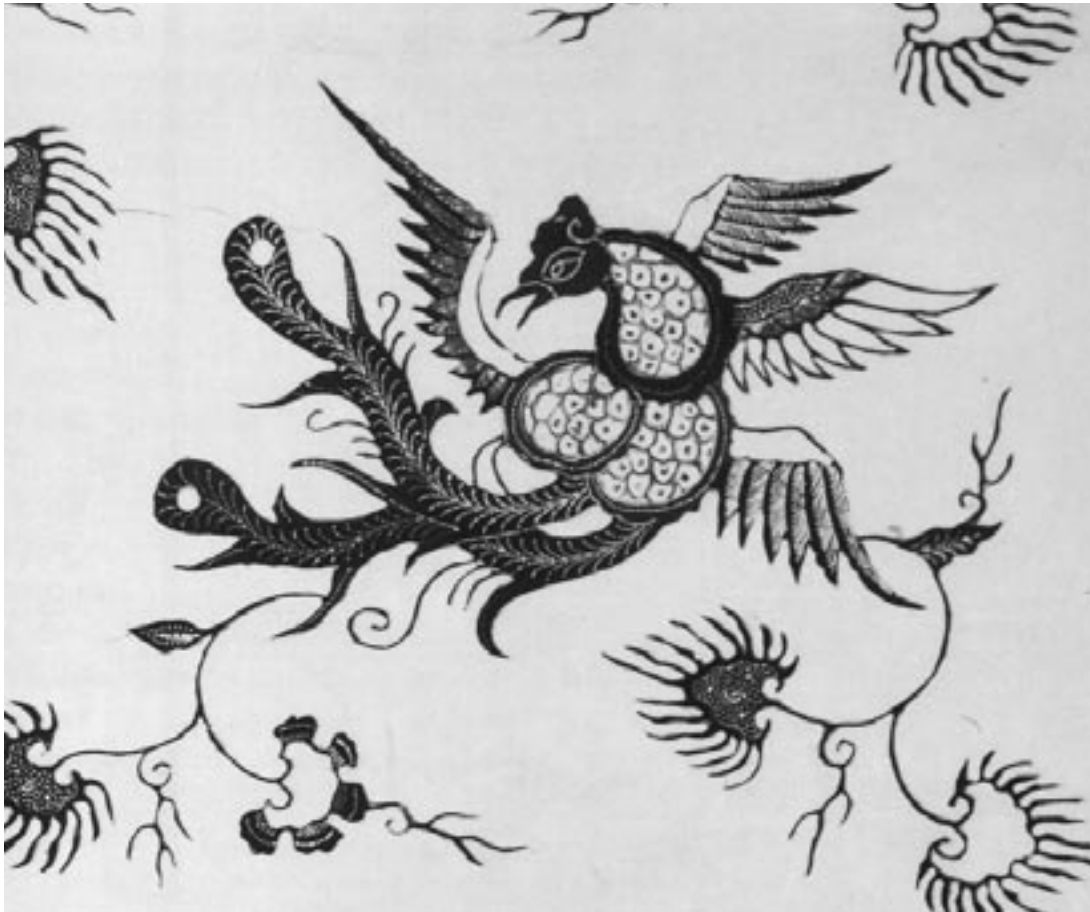
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About the Author

Ruth McVey is an Emeritus Reader at SOAS (the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London). She has written extensively on various aspects of Southeast Asian studies.



Were we to discover one day that our world was about to end, we would realize that all the scientific knowledge around which we have constructed our modern Western civilization was useless. Though it might at a material level explain what was about to happen, it could offer us no help: it would have ceased to be relevant knowledge.¹ The possibility is not as remote as one might suppose: many people, particularly in the last two centuries, have found their familiar world coming to an end, as alien and often unseen forces made their understanding of things irrelevant.

Indonesia provides a good vantage point from which to study the destruction and reconstruction of worlds of thought, for the archipelago's topography and variable exposure to major religions, a market economy, and central state power have made for a great variety of belief systems, most of which are now undergoing radical change. At the same time, there is enough

similarity between the cultural traditions and historical experience of much of the arc hipelago that we can compare variations on certain great themes.

The basic structure of belief through which we arrive at an understanding of the universe we usually call religion. At the same time, we are accustomed to thinking of the term as something quite specific, which acts especially in the sphere of morality, telling us who we are, what we must do, and why we must die. I am going to use it more broadly, for, as we shall see, simple societies make no distinction between religious and secular activity, ritual and the day-to-day. Moreover, although in modern societies we recognize a distinct sphere for religion/*agama*, our actual belief systems are based less and less on its premises: materialist science and ideology are the keys with which we seek to unlock the cosmos. But both these extremes – and the vast human experience in between, for which religion is both formally distinct and central to understanding – are belief systems which establish what is known and worth knowing; they set our cultural paradigms and explain the meaning of our lives, and I will therefore use the term ‘religion’ very broadly here to connote the system on which we base our world of thought.

Religion (if it is not merely a label) inevitably has political significance, for it locates us in a social as well as moral universe. No matter how other-worldly the faith, in decreeing how we must behave towards our fellow man it sets the basis for community and thus defines what is legitimate and illegitimate power. The conjuncture between system of belief and system of power is politically critical; it is the basis of ideology, the legitimization of domination and resistance, hierarchy and redistribution. (Of course, religion is not simply an expression of power – a fact social scientists sometimes appear to forget – but it is its relationship to state power that concerns us here.)

Durkheim and Marx are the thinkers who have perhaps most influenced the way in which social scientists have conceived the relationship between politics and religion. The former stressed its role as a source of community, the latter as a source of domination. It is no accident that Durkheim based his study on a primitive, stateless society (that of aboriginal Australians) and Marx his on the observation of modern Europe. Overall, as we move in the spectrum from simple to complex societies, we find religion’s

socio-political role changing from being primarily a way in which community is expressed to the way in which hierarchy is justified (and, we may add, resisted). It is perhaps useful to look at this spectrum first in terms of the evolution of social complexity, for the relationship between social and religious forms is clear and can be vividly illustrated in Indonesia. Indeed, in certain areas such as Lombok and East Java we can see a sort of archaeological layering of belief systems, representing historical choices made over hundreds of years and expressed in still-living cultural groups. We should be careful not to assume the relationship is a simple matching progression, however, for if we look at any case in detail we invariably discover that the development is much more complex, and by no means always in the same direction; some apparently primitive or archaic social systems turn out to be recent (re)inventions, while modern ideologies can be understood by their adherents in ways quite different to what we might imagine. The evidence makes clear that religion not only reflects but also determines social forms, change is not always in one direction, and belief is a weapon of the weak as well as the powerful.

At one end of the Indonesian spectrum we have simple societies such as the Sakkudei of Mentawai, whose belief system has been described by Schefold.² In this and other cultures comprising hunter-gatherers and subsistence cultivators, we find a lack of hierarchy both in the society and in people's imagination of the cosmos. Access to the spirits is direct; some people are seen as having a special gift in communicating with them, but this is a matter of individual prowess and does not reflect or establish any other kind of superiority. There is no felt need for mediation between man and nature or between man and the supernatural; the wilderness is his home, the gods are his ancestors. As we might expect of people who live in and from the natural world rather than from technologies that seek to alter it, nature appears as a familiar surrounding rather than a source of danger or something that must be tamed. Still, because it is the abode of the ancestral spirits, it is powerful, and great attention must be paid to keeping a proper relationship with its elements.³ A central purpose of the belief system is therefore to maintain the proper connections between people, the natural world, and the world of the spirits/ancestors, on which equilibrium the well-being of community and cosmos depends.

Pace Durkheim, such societies are not marked by a division between sacred and profane.⁴ Rather, the critical line is between the sphere of man and that of the ancestors/spirits, the seen and unseen worlds. They interpenetrate; the spirits are present in or reachable through natural phenomena. They are affected by our every action, which must therefore be undertaken in the proper way and with appropriate dedication so as to maintain alignment with the cosmic order. Consequently, all activity is in a real sense ritual activity; the world is enchanted. Certain people may be recognized as having particular access to the realm of the spirits, and are accordingly appealed to for advice or intercession, but this enhances rather than monopolizes contact with the world of the ancestors, which is available to all.

But once settled agriculture and trade make it possible to accumulate an economic surplus, we see the door to the spiritual begin to close. Social stratification begins, with charisma being invested in certain lineages and persons who are conceived as having claims to leadership. The man of prowess will, in consolidating his leadership, find it of great assistance to be credited with superior access to the divine, for this renders him more necessary to the community's well-being. The cosmos, too, becomes hierarchical: the leading spirits are ancestors of the leading families, who therefore have privileged communication with the world beyond. They become literally First Families, and to reject their primacy is in a sense to betray one's parentage. Such claims may well be imposed by force, but we should remember that people find it comfortable to believe that inequality rests on the superior virtue of those who dominate, and so they as well as their rulers may contribute to the myth.⁵

Thus true knowledge is no longer sought in communion between the individual and the enveloping world of the spirit but in a mediated exchange which emphasizes the distance and inaccessibility of the divine. Ritual becomes more formalized, set apart from everyday life; it is controlled by specialists from leading families and may increasingly centre on a hereditary chief. Nature becomes more hostile, as settled cultivation predicates a separate, man-imposed order; but it remains an abode of the spirits and therefore a source of knowledge and power.⁶

Although it is quite possible for leadership in small agrarian societies to remain informal, if concentrated on certain families

and men of prowess, sooner or later we are likely to see the beginning of the state. That set of institutions, based on force but accepted by members of the society as legitimate, lays down and enforces the rules of existence as a community. As such, it assumes control over a good part of the belief system, and thus begins the definition and constriction of religion's role.⁷

In Indonesia, the emergence of the state has usually been bound up with the evolution of leadership from the temporary ascendancy of the man of prowess into increasingly formalized chieftaincy and aristocracy and ultimately the emergence of a king. Indeed, the term *raja* was often assumed by people who were little more than chiefs (as was also true of early European kings) so that we must not see in this shift a qualitative institutional leap. Gradually, however, the chiefly entourage became the basis for a royal household and then a patrimonial bureaucracy. Hierarchy was increasingly emphasized, becoming the main ordering principle of society, and lineage gave way to class as the chief social divide. By the end of the process a profound ideological revolution had taken place, the lineaments of which still strongly influence Indonesian political thinking.

Control over religion is crucial to the emerging state. It may be that a strong man can obtain leadership over a community by virtue of his prowess and his following, but he cannot secure it for his family's inheritance except by persuading people that this is in accordance with natural law. Nor can he hope to extend his way very far beyond territories he can personally oversee unless some principle persuades local leaders that they should accept a suzerain. Emergent states are fragile things, their rulers' power little more than the fleeting ascendancy of paramount chiefs, with neither the economic resources nor the infrastructure necessary to enforcing their writ much beyond the capital. To bridge the gap between ambition and actuality one must use belief: people must be persuaded that the source of power and of alignment with the cosmic order resides in the king. The cosmos itself must be reorganized, so as to endorse the principles of royal power.

State-appointed or -endorsed specialists become the arbiters of religious truth; state ceremonies become not only occasions for demonstrating royal glory but also affirmations of the king's centrality as the main conduit of relations between heaven and earth. Royal claims are absolute in such states but royal power is

in fact weak. This is not a contradiction, because ideological assertion is meant to overwhelm and draw attention from physical vulnerability: the ceremonies of the 'theatre state' are not simply an end in themselves but a means of maintaining the centre's hold.⁸

The revelation of a new order of things was of course unlikely to go uncontested, particularly when (as we shall see frequently happened) the legitimating concepts came from outside. Those who lived at the margins of the state – geographically and economically – were likely to understand little and accept less of the royally-sponsored religion, and common folk generally would cling to the old ideas as both familiar and allowing themselves a much more direct role in the cosmos than that mediated by the king. It was thus necessary for the state to delegitimize folk religion, to open up the contrast between *agama* and *kepercayaan*. Elements might be taken which could be used to reinforce the authority of the new belief system, but those which implied the rejection of hierarchy and state power were (and are) portrayed as *klenik*, wrong knowledge, subversive superstition.⁹

In the Indonesian archipelago, the imagery of the royal cosmic order was generally drawn from India. Identification with what elsewhere had shown itself a powerful and efficacious thought system, a source of civilization, was in itself a source of power; moreover, the Indian cosmography accommodated a number of existing Indonesian assumptions about the nature of society and power and so made the transition less difficult.¹⁰ The central image was that of divine power, conveyed through the king, radiating with diminishing force out from the capital and down the social hierarchy.¹¹ Population accumulated around centres of power; cities were points of light in the darkness of human ignorance, sources of entry for the divine into the lower world of man. Raw nature is wilderness, the dangerous space beyond the light, which man traverses only with peril. People that live close to nature are of a lesser order, responding to the disorderly, animal aspect of humanity rather than the hierarchical discipline of civilization, man's reflection of the divine. Rural hinterlands are touched by order flowing from urban power centres, but to varying degrees; the more distant geographically and socially from the centre people are, the more they are children of darkness. The ruler's task is to preserve his alignment with the

cosmic order and to cast his civilizing light upon his people, whose task is to be instructed and obey.¹²

This vision differs from Eliade's contrast between nature and culture in that it does not conceive of civilization as a human artifact but rather as an expression and imitation of the divine order. It is divine will, channelled through the focal point of civilization/political order, which subdues the wilderness. In this sense the wilderness is something untouched by order, a form of chaos, the opposite of civilization and of beauty, which are expressions of order.¹³ Yet nature is also a source of power. Those who wish to gain spiritual strength remove themselves to the forest to meditate; princes ambitious for the throne withdraw to the wilderness not (we are told) to avoid the king's wrath and mobilize an army but to concentrate their spiritual power. Great kings and great teachers demonstrate their strength by commanding the forces of nature, taming and thus absorbing their chthonian power.¹⁴

In other words, the nature that is the abode of the spirits and a source of power lives on into the new cosmic dispensation. It is power that from the viewpoint of the ruler is essentially illegitimate – it gains recognition only insofar as the king can demonstrate his command of it – because it implies there is an arena beyond his control. Peasant attitudes tend to be profoundly ambivalent: as settled agriculturalists they experience the forest as something close but outside their familiar sphere, a source of predators and bandits and hence of disorder; but it is also a potential refuge, a counter to the claims of the state and of social hierarchy. Precisely because there was the possibility of 'taking to the woods' not only on the part of individuals but, in times of state weakness, for whole peripheral populations, political centres placed particular emphasis on the contrast between wilderness and civilization, chaos and order, as an ideological weapon for combating defections.

If centralized power dictated the opposition between wilderness and civilization, nature and order, equality and hierarchy, it also created beliefs and institutions that could be set against it. Within its sphere of imagination, the essential question was whether the centre of power was in fact the centre of civilization. That is, was the ruler indeed the conduit for the divine ordering principle or was his power merely the fleeting product of human

aggrandizement? To know this, other than through its revelation in the king's fall, required an understanding of the principles of cosmic order, and this was seen as the ultimate purpose of knowledge. Such knowledge could no longer be sought through direct contact between the individual and his ancestral spirits: only the king was vouchsafed this channel. Those who ruled did their best to persuade the populace that knowledge lay outside themselves and their communities; and indeed, as local populations were overwhelmed by influences and power from outside they lost confidence in the possibility of seeking an answer from within themselves. Knowledge thus became a matter for specialists, who not only assisted the ruler to keep his actions in line with the divine order but acted to spread the state's civilizational light more widely. Religious teachers were points of light, alongside the greater gleam of the capital, beaming order into the wilderness, spreading light upon the ignorant mass.

But religious practitioners, too, were an ambivalent source of orientation, for their interests were not always identical to those of the political powerholders, and in setting out standards for popular behaviour they also identified norms for proper rule and thus criteria against which those in power could be judged. There was thus the danger that the religious message that was supposed to link the population to the power centre would be interpreted to the ruler's disadvantage, and thus the question of the purity and motivation of religious interpretation became politically critical. Particularly the ascetics in the wilderness were open to suspicion, for their very distance from the capital might be a sign of their alienation from it and their intention to endorse a new focus of power.¹⁵

A belief system which posits the ruler as the sole earthly channel of divine energy does not allow more than one sovereign power, and there has been much scholarly comment on the political instability and proclivity for war which this implied. But whether it was theoretically permissible or not, there clearly were a multiplicity of states in the archipelago, making similar ideological claims to cosmic centrality; and though not everyone might know of the existence of such a competing power, the small size of most kingdoms and the long lines of trade would have ensured that many people – and certainly those who counted in a society – did. Rather than the single-centred system revolving

around a central sun which royal theory proclaimed, the world must have appeared more as a galaxy in which populations orbited around political stars of varying brightness. In practice if not in theory there was therefore the question of which available orbit one should enter, or whether indeed one's own course could be maintained between two civilizational suns.¹⁶ Let us consider some of the ideological possibilities this provided.

First of all, the existence of diverse civilizational models meant that it was easier to adopt new principles of order when technology, economic change, or political fortune made the old one seem no longer adequate.¹⁷ Moreover, the example set by a great power was in itself powerful: it was proof of spiritual force and the exemplar of what was widely recognized as civilized. Historically, India was the supreme source of this civilizational energy in the Indonesian archipelago (and in Southeast Asia generally), filtered often enough through its Javanese interpretation. The latter was in itself a source of power, for in many parts of the archipelago Java's image was a potent one, particularly as embodied in the kingdom of Majapahit. Long after the historical Majapahit was dead we find societies in distant parts of the archipelago tracing their ancestral line not (just) to a divine founder but to settlers or conquerors from the Javanese kingdom.¹⁸ Whether associated with Java or not, the Indian model was powerfully attractive to chieftains seeking to legitimize and extend their rule, and we find the term *raja* and various symbols of royal rule employed in very simple polities, which otherwise exhibited little sign of adherence to that civilizational model.

We should not underestimate the importance of civilizational reputation in preserving the power of the premodern political centres in the archipelago. Except in areas very close to the capital there was little way authority could be enforced save by securing the cooperation of local elites. Far more important for maintaining a political centre's centrality was its ability to attract outlying groups – for them to feel that this was their natural source of leadership, enlightenment, and wealth. Hence it was essential for a political centre to appear glorious, spiritually armed, and rich; outward signs of success were evidence of possession of a superior truth, and hence of being an appropriate object of respect and emulation.¹⁹

An outside belief system may also be adopted not just because it is prestigious or satisfies the interests of a ruling elite but because it is as a way of preventing the encroachment of others. In particular this was the case with Christianity, which to various groups in the archipelago appeared as a way in which to counter rival population groups and power centres which espoused Islam. Indeed, religious conversion might be a way of seceding from the claims of ruling groups in one's own society, either because it offered a different ground for legitimation or because it brought the prospect of outside support. Thus the princes of Javanese harbour states found in Islam both an ideological alternative to Indic royal centralism and a source of preference in international trade. In many places Islam has appeared as a way of denying the legitimacy of local 'feudal' elites, which, if they could not be accused of being overtly pagan, could be charged with insufficient orthodoxy by groups seeking to escape their control. In Toraja we find young people, unable to keep up the prestations demanded by the old belief system and unwilling to accept the social hierarchy it implied, turning to Christianity as a way of escaping its claims.²⁰ Just exactly what the adopted system may mean in its new context is not always self-evident: thus Communism might be accepted as an alternative to the prevailing order of things because it stood for egalitarianism and protected the poor or because it was seen as modern and against outmoded communal values.²¹

But if outside belief systems may appear as an ideological opportunity, most Indonesian communities have experienced them above all as a constraint, part of an order being imposed, directly or indirectly, by superior force. The question therefore was how to respond to this pressure. One possibility was to ignore it, an option which, needless to say, was more available to social groups living on the margins of the polity. Consequently we typically find less complex cultures and believers in older religious forms located in mountainous or otherwise inaccessible country, satellites whose distance and inconsequentiality permitted them to maintain an eccentric orbit. These may be composed of the remnants of autochthonous populations pushed aside by the spread of more highly organized societies, or participants in the mainstream culture which, as a result of the exigencies of their terrain and the lack of communications, did not

produce the surplus that permitted further organizational and technological development. They may have had their origins in followers of chieftains who lost out in the struggle for power that marked the establishment of a new dispensation; or some combination of these.²²

Whatever the historical origins of such groups, their cosmology is likely to be marked by an effort to reverse their relationship with the greater centre, to establish through ideology (an ideology intended as a comfort for their souls if not as a call to rebellion) an equality that everyday experience denies them.²³ Thus myths of origin will show their superior descent, and they will claim to be the custodians of old, true values which have been abandoned or distorted by the major power.²⁴

Such groups are also likely to place relatively strong emphasis on consensual values, and to contrast this with the mainstream practice of rule. This is not surprising, for lack of economic surplus and pressure from the main political centre will ensure that their leaders' authority is highly circumscribed and dependent on popular support. It may well result in a reverse evolution of social and ideological forms, as elites lose their authority, so that societies appear less hierarchical and complex than before. Indeed, resistance to the sources of inequality as well as fear of the loss of cultural cohesion generally encourage strong ideological sanctions against involvement in the market economy, and this question has been a prime source of defection from the old community. There tends also to be strong pressure on social leaders for redistribution, for the ideological terms of trade have turned against local elites, who at the same time no longer have as strong a grip on resources. They are increasingly hard put to satisfy demands for generosity; and, aside from losing wealth and following, they may well themselves decide that the future lies in identifying with the suzerain's belief system and finding a place for their lineage in the context of the new order.²⁵

Attempts by people nearer the centre of authority to simply drop out of its orbit are not unknown, the best-known manifestation of this in Indonesia being the Saminist movement in rural north Central Java early in this century. Here in what was clearly the invention rather than the preservation of earlier ideological forms, we see emphasis on a cosmology that substituted the centrality and equality of the common man for official stress

on hierarchy, a restoration of close contact between man, nature, and the divine, and a denial of the validity of any occupation other than that of subsistence cultivator.²⁶ We should note, however, that this was not simply a return to an imagined Javanese *Urzeit*: the Saminists' own name for their belief system, the Agama Adam, implied going back to first principles in terms of a world religion not local traditions, and it seems to have been not the only heterodoxy of its ilk within Islam.²⁷

Resistance to encroaching state power is more than likely to entail violence, and at least since colonial times – when the outside force has been particularly alien, disruptive, and invincible – such rejection has often been expressed in 'primitive rebellions'. A prime characteristic of these was their highly ideological content, offering both an explanation of why the world had been turned upside down and a vision for setting it right.²⁸ This might involve anything from the restoration of an idealized original local system to movements displaying at least in part modern ideological and organizational characteristics (as with the Communist uprisings in Banten).²⁹ Generally, these have been analyzed, rather mechanically, in terms of a historical evolution towards modern ideological and revolutionary organization, and thus, it is implied, from hopeless to potentially efficacious.³⁰ We might also see it quite differently, as an increasing concession to the ideological hegemony of the encroaching force, not through an organic acceptance of its values but because autochthonous ideas and sources of leadership had lost authority, and the ways of the outsider were seen to be powerful. In fact, movements of rebellion – and not least the Indonesian revolution – tend to pluck themes from a range of available ideologies, both in order to attract as broad support as possible and to mobilize the power emanating from diverse belief systems.

In the long run, an outside belief system which appears powerful, insistent, and accessible will find its local proponents, and the question will be who they are and whether the challenge faced by the society is so broad that it becomes a solution for the culture as a whole and not just one segment of it. Thus we see Islam being conveyed to Java first through trade connections, taking root among merchants in the port cities, then receiving the endorsement of local rulers who saw in it a source of popular support, commercial advantage, and justification for resistance to

the claims of central Javanese power; and eventually becoming the generally established religion.³¹ In each of these phases the social role of the religion changed, and so did its interpretation as it was adjusted to accommodate entrenched beliefs and the interests of its sponsors. This is not to deny constancy to divine truth, but to note that the way in which people glimpse it depends very much on their angle of vision. All belief systems – that is, all ways of apprehending eternal truth – adapt over time to their changing social environment. In the case of Islam and other world faiths the conflicts involved in this are accentuated because reform movements referring to outside sources of legitimacy air crises of interpretation that might otherwise be muffled by local leadership.

It is not only the receptivity of society to a new belief that affects its chances but also the willingness of the main vector of the faith to share its benefits with them. In the case of Java, Muslim proselytizers were eager to expand the community of the faithful and conceded broadly to local sensibilities and interests. Muslim traders gave immediate advantage to co-religionists, and Muslim states took adherence to the new religion as a sign of fealty on the part of their satellites. In contrast, in present-day central Kalimantan Dayaks find little willingness on the part of the main local bearers of Islam, the Banjar, to compromise with their customs in the interest of their conversion.³² We may suggest that the reason for the difference is that Dayak conversion is a relatively unimportant goal for the Banjar: Dayak paganism gives them a group they can feel is beneath themselves, a satisfaction reinforced by trading advantage. Their own ideological concern is to stress their Islamic orthodoxy, which has become a central symbol of their group's self and a means of resisting the claims of the Indonesian state. Christians, on the other hand, are happy to accommodate Kaharingan custom; they, in this time and area, do not have a community whose orthodoxy it is seen as important to defend. But a century ago in Java, when it was a matter that affected the beliefs and prestige of the European community, the reaction to local adaptations of Christianity was quite different.³³

In general, proselytization can be seen evolving through a series of social strategies: First, an effort to open people's minds to the belief (thus willingness to compromise with existing custom) then a struggle to consolidate the new religion (especially with

regard to obtaining state endorsement), and finally a drive to close people's minds to any other focus of belief.³⁴ Of course, some faiths may be seen from their formal thought to be more or less open to other ways of thinking: Islam the 'straight path,' is notably opposed to the absorption of other beliefs, while the Agama Jawa stresses it. But not too much should be made of this, for historically there is plenty of evidence that religious tolerance and syncretic tendencies change with the opportunities of the time, so that we need to look at social and political circumstances as well in explanation. We need also to bear in mind that ideological variants acquire a certain life of their own, so that what begins in a society as a 'modern,' reforming urban movement may later become the voice of the establishment, and still later appear as the representative of backward rural conservatism. Each of these roles will involve different social groups and different perceptions of what needs to be advanced and what defended.

In the pre-modern states of the archipelago, it was not difficult for heterodoxies to exist in spite of the close linkage between religion and the state. Beyond the core area near the capital, the ruler exerted only indirect control over the population, and local lords might well find it in their interest to protect or at least ignore cultural minorities that did not challenge their rule. Indeed, kings might grant recognition to wealthy or strategically important minorities as long as they acknowledged him as their protector. In the outer reaches of the realm, subordinate territories faded out into tributary states and minor allies, whose internal arrangements were very definitely their own affair. But all this changed with the advent of the modern state, which in Indonesia began in the late nineteenth century, for this new entity did not recognize the old segmentary model. For both the colonial and the nation state, authority was seen as extending evenly over the whole territory, not declining with distance from the capital; and, more important, these centres were generally able to impose their will and extend their vision to the far parts of the archipelago. This meant that there was less room for local variations of belief, let alone for groups which elected to opt out of the state's orbit.

The modern state is secular, in the sense that it is concerned with life in this world and sees religion as a distinct if not irrelevant activity. Nonetheless, it has a world vision. This centres on a striving for modernity, modelled by the advanced industrial

countries and believed to be the true source of prosperity and power. In the colonial version, as it evolved in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the state was expected to play a central role in achieving this goal, and one of its duties was to enlighten and modernize native society. There was a kinship in this to the Indic rulers' concept of the state's tutelage of the ignorant masses, which is perhaps one factor in the relative continuity of style between the precolonial Javanese, colonial, and postrevolutionary states.³⁵

A difference between the Dutch and royal Javanese approach to the enlightenment of the people was that the former held that it was possible ultimately to transform society through this effort, while the latter did not.³⁶ The colonialists shared the modern notion of progress and the perfectibility of man; striving, not being, was for them the essence of existence. Consequently they held up to the Indonesians, as a way of coopting them and of satisfying the Dutch self-image, the idea of general improvement in the popular condition resulting from the civilizing activity of colonial rule. Needless to say, the achievement of this goal tended to recede into the distance. It remained for the Indonesian nationalists to take up the idea, balancing the idea of enlightenment through state activity with the equally exogenous concept of the people as the ultimate source of legitimacy and power. Modern states, whether totalitarian or democratic, have shared this idea of popular sovereignty, differing only on whether they conceive the people as having a single will, and on the means of discovering the popular volition.

But in Indonesia, as in other countries where there is a sharp cultural difference between mass and elite, and where there are insufficient institutions linking the one to the other, the popular mass assumes something of the role of the wilderness in the earlier contrast between nature and civilization. It is an unknown, a source of danger, but also a vital source of power, demonstrated control over which is a sign of a ruler's legitimacy. (We remember how often, in modern times as well as ancient, the occurrence of untoward natural phenomena was taken as a sign of a leader's loss of spiritual energy.) How does one mobilize and control such a force? One approach, tried in Sukarno's time, was to emphasize mobilization, the leader as a charismatic man of prowess who alone was able to focus and command the will of the people. His

successor Suharto took the opposite tack, stressing demobilization: though the state acted for the people, they themselves were to be kept 'pure' of politics, would exist as a 'floating mass'. Guided Democracy's experience had shown that the force of nature, expressed in the populace, was a Pandora's box of chaotic and untameable demands. Therefore, in a return to something resembling the colonial approach, the state would have to do without popular energies, at least until conditions had been created which ensured their channelling. Nonetheless, the negation of this source represented a certain loss of dynamism and legitimacy; and it raised the question whether the floating mass was really as disengaged as the rulers intended – were there not signs from time to time that might be hints of rebellion? Certainly, those in power seemed to perceive them, and reacted sharply.

Consequently, Indonesia's rulers have paid considerable attention to discovering and controlling what goes on in the popular mass through the maintenance and manipulation of parties and representative institutions, and above all by holding elections. The tension that surrounds electoral events, the emphasis on their occurring smoothly (as opposed to concern for their outcome, which is not really in doubt), the concern that all participate fully are all reflections of the occasion's symbolic importance for demonstrating the ruler's continuing puissance and legitimacy, and the ability of the state to control the primal force of its populace.³⁷

Nationalism was, for leaders in the independence struggle, a means of claiming the power of modernity from the colonial state and also an expression of the values of an emergent Indonesian bureaucratic and intellectual elite. National leaders had to contend, however, with the fact that there were two other principal ideological orientations in the independence movement, Islam and Communism, both of which were major world visions and implied different ways of organizing society and the state.³⁸ In the revolution and early post-independence periods an attempt was made to tap their energies and ensure national unity by granting them theoretical equality with nationalism and allowing these three *aliran* (ideological currents) to compete with each other and mobilize popular support. In fact, this led to the exacerbation rather than the negotiation of differences, the politicization of all belief systems, and the crystallization of communal boundaries;

and from 1965 state efforts have been bent to removing or minimizing any sources of ideological leadership other than the state itself.

In some ways, Communism was closer to the nationalist mainstream than Islam, being in its Indonesian expression essentially a variant of the nation-state's message of modernization and secularism, and placing the same emphasis on the state's centrality; moreover, in its formative period Indonesian nationalism had itself absorbed much Marxist-Leninist terminology. But Communism's class advocacy aroused the fears of the tiny and precariously ruling bourgeoisie: to them, it represented (as was vividly illustrated in the propaganda of the immediate post-coup period) the 'wild' aspect of the people. It meant chaos, the abandoning of all civilized values. The discipline and puritanism which the Communists had displayed before the coup was revealed as a demonic disguise through which evil spirits could mobilize the animal energies of the populace against its rulers. The state's task, therefore, was not only to destroy the source of this chthonian power but to tame the population, so that it would not stray from its rulers again.

As we have seen, one way of doing this was to demobilize the masses, removing them from the eccitations and delusions of politics. Another, on which there was gradually increasing emphasis, was to teach the people values which supported the state's civilizing ideal. Nationalism pure and simple could not accomplish this, both because its mobilizational resonance was too strong and because the New Order was orientated politically and economically toward the outside world and therefore needed to modify its nationalist appeal. Instead, modernity (and thus the wellbeing of the people and the realm) was presented as the ruler's cardinal goal, this aim to be achieved by development – *pembangunan*. The effort to achieve *pembangunan* would necessarily be spearheaded by the state, but it also required the disciplined participation of a citizenry, not the raw energy of a populace. The Pancasila, whose five principles of nationhood, humanitarianism, democracy, social justice, and belief in a Supreme Deity had formed the national statement of purpose agreed on by the leaders of the revolution, formed a suitably general set of values. Exegeses on the Five Principles were therefore written, and state functionaries were subjected to indoctrination to enable them to convey these ideas to the masses.

The Pancasila, as it has been elaborated under the New Order, in part serves the main purpose of religion from a ruler's viewpoint: it enhances the state's legitimacy. It is proffered as a national *pegangan*, something for people to believe in, the lack of which was viewed as a terrible weakness of the first post-revolutionary decades. It can certainly be seen as an opiate of the people and of foreign interlocutors, insofar as the state's assertion of principles such as humanitarianism and social justice can substitute for action in these spheres. It presents the human face of *pembangunan*, assuring the people that, in the midst of the striving for modernity, the values of tradition and the revolution, of harmony and community, have not been replaced wholly by individual materialist striving. It emphasizes that the state is the guardian of these values, and therefore the protector of the people.³⁹

In the Pancasila, the requirement for belief in a supreme deity is the only concession to Islam, a far cry from the proclamation of a Negara Islam that the Muslim parties hoped to achieve through their support of the revolution. As an ideological orientation, Islam did not present the class threat to the ruling elite which Communism did, but it posed cultural and political problems which were grave enough. First of all, it did not share, or did not give much promise of achieving, the goal of modernity; and in Indonesia it was neither centred on the state nor sufficiently influenced by the state. The political leadership that came into power with the revolution was highly secular in orientation, in part because of its exposure to modern European-style education and in part due to a *pryiyai* suspicion of Islam which had its roots partly in tensions between *pasisir* Islamic ardour and Javanese court conservatism but even more in colonial discouragement of Muslim religiosity among native officials. The fact that Indonesia contained a multiplicity of religions and religious interpretations gave a basis on which to refuse an official acknowledgment of Islam, which the country's rulers were anxious to avoid as a possible thin end of the wedge for an Islamic state.

At the same time, Indonesia's leaders thought religion generally a good thing, as is common in modern states that do not see themselves as bearers of a great ideological vision, for it is a sign of acceptance of higher authority – a tamed rather than wild population – and of a willingness to subordinate individual satis-

faction for the sake of the greater good. If one could tap religion's energies and ability to give meaning to people's lives, one would have access to great power. The one time Muslim energies were mobilized by the state – in the campaign against the Communists – they showed themselves a mighty weapon. Indeed, almost too powerful, for the violence also reminded those in power of the danger that lay in arousing the primordial sentiments of the people.

Thus the religion appears in two ways to state leaders: as a potential source of power and discipline, and as the untamed, dangerous *Islam fanatik*. Suppressing it is not a practical or really desirable option, and therefore efforts have been concentrated on bringing it under the control of the state. This has involved, first of all, pulling its teeth politically, both by generally reducing the permitted arena for political and ideological expression and by manipulating political structures. The fact that the party that represents Islam is called the Development Party, affirming the state's goal rather than a religious one, is a perfect symbol of this. Gradually, the struggle to find political expression has come to seem not worth the candle to Muslim spokesmen, and there has been a general retreat of the religiously orientated from political to spiritual and social concerns, culminating in a decision by the Nahdatul Ulama, the most powerful expression of political Islam, to transform itself from a party into a social welfare organization.

The state has also worked to reduce the independence of religious leaders by circumscribing or controlling their sources of support. A particular target has been the rural *kiyayi*, religious teachers who exercised enormous influence and constituted a powerful alternative network of authority. In this effort the government had the invaluable assistance of Indonesia's general modernizing, urbanizing course, which has meant a decline in the popularity and prestige of the traditional religious schools and a reduction in the status and financial resources of the *kiyayi*. Increasingly, to rural Indonesians spiritual knowledge no longer seems relevant knowledge; an education that attempts to combine religious and secular instruction places a double burden on students, so that the trend is increasingly toward schools which provide secular training within an atmosphere (but little more than that) of religious and social concern. Under the New Order, too, the government has transformed the Ministry of Religion

from the bulwark of conservative political Islam into an instrument of state control. It is staffed by what might be called the McGill mafia, Western-trained modernists whose values conform to those endorsed by the state. Institutes of higher religious training have proliferated under state sponsorship, in order to provide future generations of modern-thinking religious leaders who are accustomed to act within the context of a secular state.

Quite aside from conscious efforts to reduce the independence of religious leaders and align them ideologically with the nation, the modern state's very character works to reduce alternative sources of authority. Rather than working through existing social structures in the manner of older polities, it imposes its own hierarchies and criteria, which gradually supplant local ones. Thus over time relevant levels of authority come to be seen as those of state administration; bureaucratic rank seems more relevant than that of *agama* or *adat*, and autochthonous leadership pales beside the hierarchy of local administration imposed by the state. The parameters this sets can be ignored only at the risk of becoming pushed to the social margins.⁴⁰

All this has brought a considerable reorientation within Indonesian Islam. It is further from political power and patronage, more turned in upon itself in some senses; yet the emphasis on good works within the Muslim community and the new distance from the state make it more possible for religion to appear incorrupt and a source of social justice. This in turn presents a possible danger to the state, which has less knowledge of what goes on among the pious. Consequently, the taming of political Islam does not remove the religion's threat as a source of subversion, a conduit for the popular inclination to disorder. Fear of this has been richly illustrated in the state's reaction to perceived Islamic involvement in acts of rebellion.⁴¹

At the same time, state policies have strengthened Islam in no small way since 1965. In particular, the post-coup requirement that all people have a religious affiliation and the suspicion that fell on groups whose religious profession seemed insufficiently orthodox, led to a massive movement toward acceptance of an increasingly standardized Islam. Local religions were placed in jeopardy by the fact that recognition as *agama* depended on such requirements as belief in a supreme deity and possession of a scripture; moreover, the penetration of outside ideas and a market

economy has decreased their ability to appear as relevant knowledge.⁴² Islam is the most available world religion for most Indonesians, and has benefited from the dissolution of local faiths and heterodoxies. Moreover, government officials exerted considerable pressure on nominal Muslims (*abangan* or *abangan* equivalents) in the post-coup period, seeing them as likely supporters of Communism; this, together with bullying by Muslim militants, led to the abandoning of old variants of Islam and the collapse of their sources of leadership.⁴³

Urbanization, the penetration of modern ideas and economic relationships, favour by administrators, and a declining economic base of support have all reduced the power of the rural *kiyai*. They now seem increasingly *kolot*, old-fashioned and irrelevant. This, together with the decline in the political representation of religious differences, has blurred the boundary between traditionalists and modernists which has been the Achilles heel of Indonesian political Islam. The whole argument over traditionalism and modernism seems increasingly beside the point as modern education and ideas penetrate the Muslim community and the questions religion needs to address no longer seem matters of party politics or proper form. An increasing number of urban people have found in religious observance an antidote for the excesses of materialist culture and social indifference, while separation from the state and parties has helped Indonesian Islam to look to a universal *umat* and the world revival of the faith.⁴⁴ In short, the New Order period, while seeing the political marginalization of Islam, has also seen Indonesia's increasing Islamization and the Muslim community's growing ideological consolidation.

Indonesia's other religions are in no way as politically critical as Islam, but it is worth considering briefly the state's relationship to them because it reveals a good deal about New Order assumptions concerning the nexus between civilization, development, and belief. Christianity has shared with Islam the advantage of being monotheistic, universal, and a religion of the Book, so that it satisfies the state's requirements for recognition as *agama*. Moreover, it has the advantage of being associated with being modern, and the presence of Christian high officials in the state hierarchy is evidence of its acceptability. It is thus an attractive alternative to Islam for people who have decided to abandon local

faiths. Indeed, in areas where Christianity is the major world religion we find officials granting it the same sort of preference that they elsewhere give to Islam in making appointments and recognizing local powerholders. In official eyes, a Christian member of the populace is more civilized, more modern, more presentable and reliable than is an adherent of local beliefs, and hence more worthy of promotion. Needless to say, this has an effect on people who are hoping for a career with the state or outside the locality.⁴⁵

The third major category recognized as *agama* is 'Hindu-Dharma', which was created to accommodate Bali. To reduce the religion of Bali to the status of *kepercayaan* seemed, at the least, impolitic. Therefore elements in Balinese belief had to be found which corresponded to the state requirements, in particular that of belief in a supreme deity. Within the Balinese community, religious reform movements developed, which have urged changes seen by their proponents – usually middle-class intellectuals, often with government jobs – as modernizing, which bring the religion more in line with the practices recognized by the state.⁴⁶

Elsewhere, proponents of local religions also strive to demonstrate their possession of the proper ideological and organizational attributes to be recognized as *agama*. On a practical level, this will protect them from the possibility of being labelled a *suku terasing* – an isolated ethnicity – which makes them liable to special civilizing attentions by the state. These involve attempts at resettlement in 'proper' houses, pressure to wear modern clothing and short hair, to give up tattooing and take up farming, and to send their children to the state school.⁴⁷ Needless to say the experience is stressful, attaining success with the effective cultural dissolution of the group. To avoid this, and to raise their claims to a place in the modern world (for to be *belum beragama* is to be hopelessly backward), proponents of local faiths have stressed their possession of the necessary attributes of *agama*, and in doing so have helped to re-cast their religion's meaning.⁴⁸

In a few cases, such as the Kaharingan of Central Kalimantan, local belief systems have succeeded in winning official recognition as *agama*. Kaharingan itself is an imposed term, having been invented in the 1940s as a blanket label for the beliefs of Dayak communities, which, in the manner of simple societies, did not themselves distinguish their faith from other aspects of their lives

and so had no name for their beliefs. Such a religion – more a category than a system – might seem a poor candidate for elevation to *agama* status; but political rather than doctrinal considerations guided the government. Southern Kalimantan had been an area of rebellion in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the state wanted to ensure that non-Muslim Dayaks would loyally balance strongly Muslim population groups. Kaharingan was placed in the Hindu/Bali *agama* category for reasons which related to bureaucratic perceptions rather than any of its own qualities: Javanese officials tended to see it as pre-Islamic and *ipso facto* akin to Hindu-Buddhism; moreover, putting Kaharingan in with the Balinese prevented the proliferation of categories and enhanced the Balinese claim to have a world religion.⁴⁹

But what may arise from political and bureaucratic convenience may have considerable effect on the way in which belief systems evolve. We find Balinese not only developing modernizing movements within their own religion that enhance its similarity to Islam and Christianity but also proselytizing among the Dayak, the Tenggerese of East Java, and other non-Islamic groups in order to persuade them of their Balinese spiritual and historical links. This involves not only re-writing the myth of origins of these peoples in order to secure an identification with Bali and Hinduism, but also conveying the very particular variant of the Balinese belief system advocated by those who participate in the missionary effort, who are concerned to produce a ‘modern’ Hindu *agama*.⁵⁰

While there is thus a strong drive to eliminate backward beliefs and to standardize religious faiths in ways that accommodate them to the national ethos, there is also a counter-current of state concern to preserve the cultural diversity that they reflect. In part, this is because ethnic variety is part of the national ideology and enhances the glory of the state by allowing it to be praised in many tongues. And in part – no small part, especially from the viewpoint of regional officials – it is because tourism is good business. In some particularly exotic areas, where adherence to local ways is dying fast, strenuous efforts have been made to ensure that picturesque ways are preserved.

Thus Toraja beliefs are now recognized as *agama* and taught in local schools, and official encouragement is given to keep funeral rituals going.⁵¹ This results in a certain mummification of

the culture; the ethnicity that bears it becomes a museum piece, to be preserved and displayed as part of the national heritage.⁵²

Indeed, from the regime's viewpoint, this is the optimum fate of all non-official belief systems: to become a ward and decoration of the state. The New Order itself professes no organised vision; it was because this was felt as a lack, given Indonesia's previous intense involvement with ideology, that regime leaders developed the Pancasila into a set of principles people were required to believe in. Yet we cannot say that the New Order is non-ideological. On the contrary, the preceding discussion has illustrated some major assumptions its leaders hold concerning the nature of man and society.

For one thing, their beliefs and their state are secular, concerned with this world and not that beyond. They are, by virtue of their military and bureaucratic origins and their colonial and pre-colonial heritage, convinced of the central, tutelary role of the state. They admire modernity, as expressed in Western capitalism, both for the physical power it gives the state and for its consumer culture. The accumulation of material wealth and power are for them supreme national and individual goals, the object of civilization.

For Indonesia's rulers, the source of true knowledge is located in this world but outside Indonesia; it lies in the scientific knowledge and expertise of advanced capitalist societies. It is something that cannot be apprehended directly by ordinary people (though through schooling they may learn enough to be able to act in accordance with it when properly directed). Rather, it is mastered by technocrats, the new priesthood, who advise (and legitimate) the leaders of state. The state mediates between the people and the source of true knowledge; it organizes the population for *pembangunan*, which will align it properly with the modern, materialist cosmos.

The triumph of this set of assumptions seems at present overwhelming; but since we may be sure that history will not cease at this juncture, we should remind ourselves of the contradictions it contains. For one thing, the increasing power of the state, which has been so marked a feature of Indonesia's transition to modernity, is probably more fragile than it appears. It is challenged from within: modern consumerism, individualism, the international spread of ideas, the growth of a middle class, and

the increasing importance of business all work to undermine the state's prestige and centrality.⁵³ The slogan of *pembangunan*, like other modern materialist ideological goals, rests on the promise of concrete improvements in the population's condition, and so is vulnerable to economic failure, whether resulting from internal or world market conditions. Tensions arising from the unequal distribution of prosperity and the ruling elite's intense pursuit of consumer satisfaction may not always be easy to suppress. Economic crises and social disorder in the advanced capitalist countries may cause people to question whether the source of true knowledge is indeed located there. Alternatively, consciousness that Indonesia's authoritarianism is out of line with the pluralism of the economically most successful countries is a powerful source of doubt concerning the correctness of the New Order's domestic arrangements.

In short, the greatest danger to the state's vision is contained within itself, and loss of faith in it may lead, among other things, to a reconsideration of earlier orientations. We have already seen this happening to some extent with Islam. We need only consider the upsurge of politicized Islam in Iran and of ethnic/religious nationalism in eastern Europe to remind ourselves that other roads may be taken from the ones the modernizing secular state lays out. Without too much warning, it may be the world defined by the state that comes to an end, rather than that of the populations being drawn into its sphere; and it may be official wisdom that becomes irrelevant knowledge.

Notes

1. The point is made by Lauro Martinez in *Power and Imagination; City-States in Renaissance Italy* (London: Allen Lane, 1980), p. 277. For modern Javanese debates concerning the source of valid knowledge, see Anthony Day, 'Ranggawarsita's Prophecy of Mystery', in David Wyatt and Alexander Woodside, ed., *Moral Order and the Question of Change: Essays on Southeast Asian Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1982), p. 166.
2. Reimar Schefold, *Spielzeug für die Seelen*. (Zürich: Museum Rietberg, 1980), and, especially in the present context, 'De wildernis als cultuur van gene zijde: tribale concepten van "natuur" in Indonesio,' *Antropologische verkenningen* 7:4 (1988): 5-22.

3. Schefold, 'De wildernis.' In Nias this is expressed by placing carved figures of forest animals in adat houses; these bring the power of the wilderness into the human sphere, protecting the house and its inhabitants. 'Introduction: Indonesian Religions in Society,' in Rita Kipp Smith and Susan Rodgers, ed., *Indonesian Religions in Transition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), p. 10.
4. R.N. Bellah, 'Religious Evolution,' *American Sociological Review* 29 (1964): 358-374. Bellah argues that the main division in 'primitive' religion is between the world of human life and the world of the spirits, the afterlife. This would seem to fit the Indonesian experience, insofar as the spirits are the relevant other and the preservation and management of contacts with them are a central ideological concern; at the same time, however, the relationship is intimate and the two worlds interpenetrate. For a discussion in an Indonesian context see Joseph Weinstock, 'Kaharingan and the Luangan Dayaks: Religion and Identity in Central East Borneo' (diss., Cornell University, 1983).
5. We might also remind ourselves that this is not a matter restricted to 'primitive' cultures. For a very explicit example, see Vicente L. Rafael, 'Patronage and Pornography: Ideology and Spectatorship in the Early Marcos Years,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32:2 (April 1990): 282-304. The Philippine president and his wife liked to portray themselves as Malakas and Maganda, the legendary first Filipino, in 1985 commissioning a group of Filipino academics to rewrite the legend so that it culminated in a celebration of their regime. 'To the extent that they were able to mythologize the progress of history, the First Couple could posit themselves not simply as an instance, albeit a privileged one, in the circulation of political and economic power; they also could conceive of themselves as the origin of circulation itself in the country' (p. 28). Generally, modern political leaders eschew reference to local origin myths, but we do not lack for Great Leaders, Fathers of their country (or of Development), and the like.
6. Thus Peter Just, 'Dou Donggo Social Organization: Ideology, Structure, and Action in an Indonesian Society' (diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1986): 'If ever there was a binary opposition between "culture" and "nature," it is the Dou Donggo distinction between *rasa* and *wuba*....' (p.203). Though this transition may seem relatively modest in terms of institutional change, it involves a drastic shift in life-style and ideas concerning man's role in the world. Studies which illustrate this include L.E.A. Howe, 'Hierarchy and Equality: Variations in Balinese Social Organization,' *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land-, en volkenkunde* (hereafter *BKI*) 195:1 (1989): 47-71; Martin Roessler, 'Religion and Social Organization of the Makassarese Patutung,' *BKI* 146:2/3 (1990): 289-324; James J. Fox, *Harvest of the Palm* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), esp. pp. 82-85; Gregory Forth, *Rindi: An Ethnographic Study of a Traditional Domain of Eastern Sumba* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981); Monni Adams, 'History in a Sumba Myth,' *Asian Folklore Studies* 30:2 (1971): 133-139.
7. For general discussions of the emergence of hierarchy and inequality and the process of state formation, see Eli Sagan, *At the Dawn of Tyranny* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), esp. Ch. 25; Aidan Southall, 'The Segmentary

State in Africa and Asia,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (hereafter CSSH) 30:1 (1988): 52-82; Cornelius Loew, *Myth, Sacred History, and Philosophy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), Section 3. The most illuminating reconstruction of the process of state formation and the emergence of kingship in Indonesia is O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982). See also Paul Wheatley, *Negara and Commandery; Origins of the Southeast Asian Urban Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1983), and Ina Slamet-Velsink, *Emerging Hierarchies: Processes of Stratification in the Indonesian Archipelago* (diss., University of Leiden, 1986).

8. The reference is to Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). For a succinct criticism of Geertz' divorce of ideology from interest, see Henk Schulte Nordholt, 'Negara: A Theatre State?' *BKI* 37:4 (1981): 470-47. This is not to say that ideology merely reflects interest, since interest is also comprehended through ideology. Therefore it may appear to a ruling elite that the best way to maintain domination is through ceremony, and this will be an accurate perception as long as the dominated also believe in ceremonial efficacy.

9. For the delegitimation of folk religion in the context of the early European state see Jacques La Goffe, 'Clerical Culture and Folklore Traditions in Merovingian Civilization,' in his *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 153-158. For a discussion of *klenik* and acceptable knowledge in the context of Javanese *kebatinan* movements see Harun Hadiwijono, *Man in the present Javanese Mysticism* (Baarn: Bosch Keuning, 1967).

The concept *kepercayaan* is a lineal descendant of *adat* as employed by the Dutch to determine indigenous custom, as a basis for native law and social organization. The distinction between *adat* and Islam was stressed by the colonial regime for political purposes, and *adat*'s claims to ideological equality with Islam were supported. At the same time the boundary between what was *adat* in the sense of acceptable custom, and what represented (unacceptable) pagan religious belief was critical for missionaries. See for example Toby Alice Volkman, *Feasts of Honor: Ritual and Change in the Toraja Highlands* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), pp. 33-37. In the post-independence period *adat* lost its political equality with *agama* and generally became a sign of backwardness.

10. One can see the blending of Austronesian, Indic, and Islamic ideas illustrated in Sven Cederroth, 'Symbols of a Sasak Community in Northern Lombok,' *Ethnos* 40 (1975): 169-184. The East Indonesian society described by Gregory Forth (*Rindi*, pp. 48-50) displays characteristics associated with ideology in Java, although it appears to be in a very early stage of state formation: the idea of a capital (chief village) as centre of civilization, radiating spiritual power, contrasted with the forest as wild space. Quite possibly this is an indigenous concept, but it may well have been reinforced by acquaintance with greater centres.

11. The classic statement is Robert Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1956).

See also Jan Wisseman Christie, 'Raja and Rama: The Classical State in Early Java,' in Lorraine Gesick, ed., *Centres, Symbols and Hierarchies: Essays on the Classical States of Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1983), pp. 9-44, and also her 'Negara, Mandala, and Despot State: Images of Early Java,' in David G. Marr and A.C. Milner, eds., *Southeast Asia in the Ninth to Fourteenth Centuries* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 65-93; Timothy Behrend, 'Kraton and Cosmos in Traditional Java,' *Archipel* 37 (1989): 173-187.

12. The idea of the ruler as a civilizing centre is not exclusive to Indian-influenced ideologies: see for example Michael G. Kenny, 'Mutesa's Crime: Hubris and Control of African Kings,' *CSSH* 30:4 (1988): 595-61. We can find the concept of the common folk as basically wild and in need of the domesticating attentions of the elite in European history; see for example Jacques La Goffe, 'Peasants and the Rural World in the Literature of the Early Middle Ages,' in La Goffe, *Time*, pp. 87-97. Nor is this exclusive to earlier times: we need only read recent newspaper accounts of the British scandal in which children were removed from a number of Orkney Island families by social workers who believed their parents were employing them in diabolical folk rites.

13. Denys Lombard, 'La vision de la forêt à Java (Indonésie),' *Études Rurales* 53/56 (1974): 473-485; Michael R. Dove, 'The Agroecological Mythology of the Javanese and the Political Economy of Indonesia,' 39 (1985), esp. p. 19. Compare Nancy C. Falk, 'Wilderness and Kingship in Ancient South India,' *History of Religions* 13:1 (1973): 1-15. For the reorganization of nature so as to bring it into line with a royally- and divinely-centred cosmos, see Mark Hobart, 'The Path of the Soul: The Legitimacy of Nature in Balinese Conceptions of Space,' in G. B. Milner, ed., *Natural Symbols in Southeast Asia* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1978) pp. 5-28.

14. See Benedict Anderson, 'The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture,' in Claire Holt, ed., *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 1-69. The figure of Sutasoma in Javanese and Balinese myth is a good example of the power to tame the (creatures of the) wilderness; see Angela Hobart, 'The Enlightened Prince Sutasoma: Transformations of a Buddhist Story,' *Indonesia* 49 (1990): 75-102.

15. Anderson, 'The Idea of Power,' and see as well his *Java in a Time of Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp.1-10.

16. For the metaphor of the galaxy, see S. J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) pp. 102-131.

17. The classic statement is Edmund Leach's account of Kachin oscillation between Kachin and Shan models of organization and ideology (*Political Systems of Highland Burma*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); for a useful qualification of his analysis see J. Friedman, 'Tribes, States, and Transformations,' in Maurice Bloch, ed., *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology* (London: Dent, 1975). A good discussion of the effects the encroachment of other groups has on the ideology of a simple society may be found in Jerome Rousseau, 'Ethnic Identity and Social Relations in Central Borneo,' in Judith Nagata, ed., *Pluralism in*

Malaysia: Myth and Reality (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 32-49. See also Judith L. Ecklund, 'Tradition or Neo-Tradition: *Adat*, Islam, and Local Control on Lombok,' in Gloria Davis, ed., *What is Modern Indonesian Culture?* (Athens Ohio: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1979), pp. 249-265. For an instance of cultural identity being completely absorbed by another in the process of ideological adaptation, see Weinstock, 'Kaharingan,' pp. 85-87.

We may note that it is quite possible for people to endorse two belief systems simultaneously, simply because they do not apprehend them as concerning the same things. Thus nineteenth-century Sumbanese embraced Christianity with no thought of abandoning their own beliefs, for in their eyes Christianity was a way of accessing education and government jobs. See Janet Hoskins, 'Entering the Bitter House: Spirit Worship and Conversion in West Sumba,' in Rita Kipp Smith and Susan Rodgers, eds., *Indonesian Religions in Transition*, pp. 136-160. Similarly, in the early 1960s young Dayak who had decided to give up their local religion because of its heavy obligations, often simultaneously converted to Christianity and joined the Communist party. Christianity, in their eyes, provided a ritual world that was much less demanding and hierarchical, while the PKI was seen as the most efficacious available source of political advancement and protection; they were both seen as representing the central goal of modernity (Alfred Hudson, private communication).

18. S. Supomo, 'The Image of Majapahit in Later Javanese and Indonesian Writing,' in Anthony Reid and David Marr, eds., *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational, 1979), pp. 171-185; Nancy Lutz, '"Java" as a Symbol of Power in Eastern Indonesia,' paper presented to the Association for Asian Studies, Boston, 10 April 1987; Adrian Vickers, 'Hinduism and Islam in Indonesia: Bali and the Pasisir World,' *Indonesia* 44 (1987): 31-58; Howe, 'Hierarchy and Equality,' p. 161, T. S. Behrend, 'The Serat Jatiswara' (diss., Australian National University, 1987); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, 'A Rhetoric of Centres in a Religion of the Periphery,' in Smith and Rodgers, *Indonesian Religions*, pp. 187-210. The last refers to a modern movement among the Meratus Dayak, which in addition to Majapahit called on *Sejarah* (History) as a source of authority and power. Presumably this was under the influence of nationalist/Marxist teachings concerning history as a source of truth.

19. I am grateful to Leonard and Barbara Andaya for stressing this point. Nor should we underestimate the continuing importance of civilizational reputation for holding together state systems. Technological and administrative advances may have greatly increased the area over which a political centre can impose its will, but we need only look at the crumbling of the Soviet system to see the importance of ideological credibility for holding lesser centres in orbit.

20. Toby Alice Volkman, *Feasts of Honor*, pp. 161-163.

21. Thus in rural 'Mojokuto' in the 1950s members of the Communist-orientated women's association Gerwani, mostly better-off villagers, saw it as 'progressive' (and easier on their purses) to condemn selametans and other redistributational customs as backward, while poorer villagers continued to

value them highly. Robert Jay, *Javanese Villagers* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1969), pp. 444-446. We find that perceptions (and self-presentations) of the PKI throughout Indonesia emphasized both modernism and the defence of custom/equality according to the social group involved.

22. It is also possible for subordination to be internalized, only to be reinterpreted later when the power equation changes. Thus the non-Muslim Sasak of Lombok and inhabitants of the Tengger hills in East Java have commonly called themselves Buda, which is in all likelihood an imposed title, as it was used by Muslim Javanese as a general word for pagan peoples. The Buda of Lombok continue to use it, but since independence those of Tengger have preferred to call themselves *Jawa asli*, or some such name indicating their centrality to Javanese culture rather than their marginalization from it. Robert Hefner, *Hindu Javanese* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 4 n.

23. A good description of the process may be found in Ronald K. Edgerton, 'Frontier Society on the Bukidnon Plateau: 1870-1941,' in Alfred W. McCoy and Ed. C. de Jesus, eds. *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982), especially p. 364. Compare the Javanese elite level response in Ann Kumar, 'The "Suryengalagan Affair" of 1883 and its Successors: Born Leaders in Changed Times,' *BKI* 138: 2/3 (1982): 252-284. She notes that later movements using the Suryengalagan theme originated outside rather than within the *kraton* and were messianic in character; 'the other characteristic of the later Suryengalagan movements and others, like them which is immediately striking is their reliance on supernatural assistance and their extreme voluntarism. That they were so soon suppressed is not entirely to be attributed to the increasingly effective control of the colonial government, but also to the wistful and already-disarmed nature of the movements themselves. They seem rarely to move beyond the tactics of prophecy, claims to supernatural powers, and sometimes a joint pilgrimage to a location traditionally associated with the coming of the Just King. These elements were not absent from earlier uprisings – they are found in the Java War – but seem now to have become dominant at the expense of the militant element, which has withered away. The ruler who will save his people has become part of a dream; the dream has become the faith of a people for whom old forms of activism are no longer effective and new forms are yet to be conceived.' (p. 274)

24. For examples see Jane M. Atkinson, 'Religion and the Wana in Sulawesi,' in Michael R. Dove, ed. *The Real and Imagined Role of Culture in Development* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), esp. pp. 54-58; Sven Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1981), pp. 2-3, 32-33, 79-83; Friedrich Seltmann, *Die Kalang: Eine Volksgruppe auf Java und ihre Stamm-Mythe* (Wiesbaden: Frans Steiner Verlag, 1987). In the same spirit, the Patutung brought forth the idea that the original location of Mecca was on their sacred mountain, thus claiming superiority to their powerful Muslim neighbours the Bugis (Roessler, 'Religion', p. 7).

A variation on the theme is the idea that foreign oppressors have stolen or kept from the people knowledge that was rightfully theirs. Thus Riau notables of the early twentieth century, having come to see *ilmu* (true knowl-

edge) as embodied in science and technology as well as religion, 'believed that such knowledge had become a Western prerogative only because the Western colonial powers had prevented its dissemination among Asians by denying them education. ... Those nations which were "civilized" were members of a select group, *bangsa yang berilmu* (countries possessing knowledge), to whom were unfolded all the secrets of the technological age, "the amazing things which have appeared in the world."' (Barbara Watson Andaya, 'From Rjm to Tokyo: The Search for Anticolonial Allies by the Rulers of Riau, 1899-1914,' *Indonesia* 24 (1977): 141. The theme of modernity being kept from the people by their colonial rulers, by depriving them of knowledge/education, was of course a powerful element in the Indonesian nationalist movement.

25. For the flattening of status differences for the sake of preserving local cohesion against outside pressures, and the efforts of a local elite to circumvent this, see Hefner, *Hindu Javanese*, pp. 160-174; also Weinstock, 'Kaharingan,' pp. 110-116. The Wetu Telu of Lombok previously had a king, but no longer do; nonetheless the idea of kingship remains central to their beliefs, as symbols of the community's unity and identity; at the same time they place heavy emphasis on equality and redistribution (Cederroth, *The Spell*). For the pressures this places on the Wetu Telu aristocracy see Albert Polak, *Traditie en tweespalt in een Sasakse boerengemeenschap* (diss., University of Utrecht, 1978), pp. 56-57, 186-187, 236.

26. The best study of Saminist ideology is Takashi Shiraishi, 'Dangir's Testimony: Saminism Reconstructed,' *Indonesia* 50 (1990): 95-120.

27. Gustav von Grünebaum, *Classical Islam* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), p. 113. Another Javanese sect which made use of the title was the postrevolutionary Agama Adam Makrifat (more commonly known as Pran-Suh), which also urged the return to first principles, the championing of the poor, and withdrawal from politics; it was suppressed precisely because these seemed dangerous (possibly Communist) ideas to the eyes of the state. Sartono Kartodirdjo, 'Agrarian Radicalism in Java: Its Setting and Development,' in Claire Holt, ed., *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 71-125. It is interesting to note that the movement not only referred to Hindu and Islamic symbols but adopted forms in accordance with modern Indonesian official practice, being headed, for example, by a Dewan Pimpinan Agama. *Kedaulatan Rakjat*, 4 September 1962, describes a ceremony in which it presented its Scripture (*kitab suci*), thus furthering its claim to being a proper *agama*.

28. The modernizing state's 'turning the world upside down' in the eyes of rural folk is well illustrated in Nathan Brown, 'Brigands and State Building: The Invention of Banditry in Modern Egypt,' *CSSH*, 32:2 (1990), esp. pp 269-271.

29. For a general discussion of such movements see Waldemar Stöhr, *Die Religionen der Altvölker Indonesiens*, in Stöhr and Zoetmulder, *Die Religionen Indonesiens* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1965), pp. 203-207; Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973); Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). The series of revolts in Banten has been particularly well documented, and it is interesting to compare the change and consistency in their ideology:

see Sartono Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888*. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1966); 'The Banten Report,' in Harry J. Benda and Ruth T. McVey, eds., *The Communist Uprisings of 1926-27 in Indonesia. Key Documents* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project (hereafter CMIP), 1960); Michael C. Williams, *Sickle and Crescent: The Communist Revolt of 1926 in Banten* (Ithaca: CMIP, 1982); Michael C. Williams, 'Banten: "Rice Debts Will Be Paid with Rice, Blood Debts with Blood,"' in Audrey R. Kahin, ed., *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1965), pp. 55-82.

30. The paragon of this approach is E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Praeger, 1963).

31. See M. C. Ricklefs, 'Six Centuries of Islamization in Java,' in Nehemia Levtzion, ed., *Conversion to Islam* (London: Holmes & Meier, 1979).

32. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, 'Politics and Culture in the Meratus Mountains' (diss., Stanford University, 1984), pp. 54-63. Weinstock notes that Luangan Dayak who converted to Christianity maintained their sense of identity, and many of their traditions were incorporated into church activity. Those who convert to Islam tend to 'become Malay' and lose their own identity. They may still speak Luangan, but they call it Bahasa Pasir and have 'forgotten' their Dayak origins. There are also some southern Kalimantan Dayaks who converted in the nineteenth century and who have formed a new ethnicity, the Bakumpai. They work as traders and have been active in proselytizing Islam upstream. Those they convert become Bakumpai and switch dialects to speak 'Bakumpai' ('Kaharingan,' pp. 89-95).

33. C. Guillot, *L'Affaire Sadrach* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981). Compare also the attitude of Dutch missionaries who first encouraged Sumbanese conversion and later placed demands that Christian Sumbanese abjure various indigenous practices the Dutch had decided constituted pagan rites. This made critical the boundary between Christian and non-Christian Sumbanese. In post revolutionary Indonesia, on the other hand, Christian Sumbanese have emphasized their role as mediators between indigenous *adat* and the national ethos, thus blurring rather than emphasizing the boundary between their religion and local beliefs. Hoskins, 'Entering the Bitter House.'

34. Cf. J. N. D. Anderson, 'Tropical Africa: Infiltration and Expanding Horizons,' in G. E. von Grünebaum, ed., *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, n. d.), pp. 264-265.

35. For an interesting discussion of the ideological role of 'modernity' in Southeast Asia see Richard A. O'Connor, *A Theory of Indigenous Southeast Asian Urbanism* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1983), esp. p. 8.

36. For the Indic understanding, '... in the discourse on the "conduct of kings," or *rājadharma*, in the *Mahābhārata* and elsewhere in Sanskrit texts, a virtuous king is called a *kṛtārāma*, or maker of the age" The king "makes" his age, it is said, by putting his stamp of order on it; having done so, he then

takes his order away at his death.' (Paul Greenough, 'The Death of an Uncrowned King – C. R. Das and Political Crisis in Twentieth-Century Bengal,' *CSSH* 28.3 (1986): 425.

37. This is strikingly illustrated in John Pemberton, 'Notes on the 1982 General Election in Solo,' *Indonesia* 41 (1986): 1-22. It is interesting to compare it with the state's stage-managing of a natural crisis: see Ward Keeler, 'Sharp Rays: Javanese Responses to a Solar Eclipse,' *Indonesia* 46 (1988): 91-101.

38. For an early statement of this see Soekarno, *Nationalism, Islam, and Marxism* (Ithaca: CMIP, 1970). In an introductory essay to this publication I have tried to elaborate on the relationship of belief systems to the state in the pre-1965 period.

39. For a discussion of the Pancasila which is at the same time an interesting example of an endeavour to bring a religion (Christianity) in accord with it, see F. Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society* (Leiden: Brill, 1988). For the general approach of the New Order regime, see R. William Liddle, 'Evolution from Above: National Leadership and Local Development in Indonesia,' *Journal of Asian Studies* 32:2 (1973): 287-309. For another aspect of the development of official ideology see John R. Bowen, 'On the Political Construction of Tradition: *Gotong Royong* in Indonesia,' *Journal of Asian Studies* 45:3 (1986): 545-565.

The idea of a "civil religion" is by no means peculiar to Indonesia or to polities which place a heavy overt emphasis on ideology. It is in fact fairly common for modern states to articulate sets of values which go to shape the image of the 'good citizen' and express the higher things that the nation is supposed to stand for, whether this is embedded in a formal ideology or not. In the past this would have been seen as the task of the established religion, but religion's sphere has been reduced to a very secondary supporting role in the modern secular state. Even in countries which express a fair degree of religiosity, this is so – the American slogan 'the family that prays together stays together' reflects very accurately this subordination of spiritual to social and civic purposes. For the general concept of civil religion see Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970)

40. Thus in Lombok urban-based Islamic modernism has made considerable inroads on the power of the rurally-based Waktu Lima, in good part because it is close both in location and thinking to officials, who show it favour. See Albert Leeman, 'Internal and External Factors of Socio-cultural and Socio-economic Dynamics in Lombok (Nusa Tenggara Barat),' *Anthropogeography*, 8 (1989).

41. For a very good account of the ideological visions involved in the reaction to the 1984 Tanjung Priok riots see Peter Burns, 'The Post Priok Trials: Religious Principles and Legal Issues,' *Indonesia* 47 (1989): 61-88. The suppression of an 'Islamic revolt' among peasants in Lampong (which seems in fact to have been occasioned by land speculation by politically-connected outsiders and to have had little to do with religion) provides an excellent illustration of the way in which fears of Muslim 'wildness' are utilized by those in authority. I have tried to deal with the role of Islam in New Order Indonesia in more detail in 'Faith as the Outsider: Islam in Indonesian Poli-

tics', in James Piscatori (ed.), *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 199-255.

42. For examples of the modern pressures leading to the collapse of popular support for local religion, see Victor T. King, 'Social Rank and Social Change among the Maloh of West Kalimantan,' in Dove, *The Real and Imagined Role of Development*, pp. 219-253; Polak, *Traditie*, esp. p. 236; Volkman, *Feasts of Honor*, pp. 116-171.

43. Robert W. Hefner, 'Islamizing Java,' *Journal of Asian Studies* 46:3 (1987), esp. p. 536. For an account of this pressure on the Wetu Telu of Lombok, see Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors*, pp. 77-78; Polak, *Traditie*, pp. 303-333. It is worth noting that this was not the first crisis of the Wetu Telu community, which suffered a major collapse of popular support early in the century, largely, it would seem, because their previous patrons, the Balinese, had been replaced by the Dutch, who (contrary to their common practice elsewhere in the archipelago) supported the more orthodox Muslims of the Waktu Lima persuasion. The resulting crisis of confidence among Wetu Telu supporters led to a series of salvationist movements culminating in the Dewi Anjani rising of 1920. A. W. L. Vogelgesang, 'Eenige aantekeningen betreffende de Sasaks op Lombok,' *Koloniale Tijdschrift* 12:4 (1923): 417-425.

44. See Sidney Jones, 'The Contraction and Expansion of the "Umat" and the Role of the Nahdatul Ulama in Indonesia,' *Indonesia* 38 (1984): 1-20.

45. For examples see Hoskins, 'Entering the Bitter House,' Atkinson, 'Religion,' pp. 41-61.

46. We should note that efforts to produce a modern Balinese religion are not new; already in the 1920s there was such a movement, aimed especially at civil servants and entrepreneurs. See Anthony Forge, 'Balinese Religion and Indonesian Identity,' in J. Fox et al, ed. *Indonesia: Australian Perspectives* (Canberra: ANU Research School of Pacific Studies), p. 222; also Clifford Geertz, "'Internal Conversion" in Contemporary Bali,' in his *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 170-189.

47. Reimar Schefold, 'The Mentawai Equilibrium in the Modern World,' in Dove, ed., *The Real and Imagined Role*, esp. p. 209. Note that efforts to civilize the Sakuddei did not begin with the New Order but, in independent Indonesia, in 1954. See also G. A. Persoon, 'Sago en rijst op Siberut (Indonesië): een vergelijking,' *Antropologische verkenningen* 7:4 (1988): 36-49; and Tsing, 'A Rhetoric of Centers.'

48. Atkinson, 'Religion,' pp. 50-58.

49. Weinstock, 'Kaharingan,' pp. 193-195. Toraja religion was also placed in this category (Volkman, *Feasts of Honor*), p. 167.

50. For efforts of the Balinese Hindu Dharma proselytizers among the Buda of Lombok, see Polak, *Traditie en tweespalt*, pp. 21-23.

51. Toby Alice Volkman, 'Mortuary Tourism in Tana Toraja,' in Smith and Rodgers, *Indonesian Religions*, pp. 161-170. See also Michel Picard, "'Cultural Tourism" in Bali: Cultural Performances as Tourist Attraction,' *Indonesia* 49 (1990): 37-74.

52. As Janet Hoskins ('Entering the Bitter House,' p. 160) notes, this means that once-holistic beliefs are broken up into the separate components of *adat*, *kesenian* (art), and *agama*. The way in which traditional art forms have been preserved and transformed is similar to what has befallen traditional religions – not surprisingly, since they generally were conceived as expressions of belief

53. Clifford Geertz, "'Popular Art" and the Javanese Tradition,' *Indonesia* 50 (1990), esp. p. 89. For discussions relative to the subversive potential of modern youth (or consumer) culture, see George Quinn, 'The Campaign against Melodrama in the Theatre State: Elite Institutions and the Aesthetics of Prose Narrative in Indonesia and Malaysia,' *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 21:1 (1987): 44-53; James T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 232-254.

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