

Seminar Paper	Presentation
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# **Crowd, Vergadering, and Anticolonial Nationalism**

Rampogan Sima and  
What Made It Prohibited in  
Dutch East Indies



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*Tjrijosipoen tijang sepoeh: waos koela poenika bangsa sae, wani dateng sima. Mila pitados koela kala roemijin, sadaja sima ingkang kesenggol wilahing waos koela, pedjahipoen namoeng saking kamandèning waos koela pijambak, waosipoen tijang atoesan poenika namoeng toemoet natoni kémawon.*

*The tale of the elders: that metal blade of mine is the powerful one, it dares to fight a tiger. Thus, in the past I believed, that all tigers that were once pricked by the blade of my spear, would only be dead by this very blade, thousands of other blades would only leave them a wound.*

(R. Kartawibawa, *Bakda Mawi Rampog*, 1923)<sup>1</sup>

Almost 20 years ago, while reformation was ongoing in Indonesia, I borrowed and read a book whose cover was dominated by the colours yellow and black. The cover illustrated a man who is hastily walking in the middle of a plantation, wearing camouflage clothes and a tiger mask. The book, which was officially distributed to schools by the government, tells that by disguising as a tiger, the character stole the citizens' cattles. The stolen cattles, mostly goats, were taken to the river upstream and then slaughtered. The offal and blood left by the slaughtering were dumped and afterwards found by the citizens living near the upstream area. Within this book, it is told that the guise of tiger was something completely visible, people could see the tiger as a real creature that was present for the purpose of deceiving.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kartawibawa, *Bakda Mawi Rampog* (Bale-Poestaka, Weltevreden 1923). See <https://luk.staff.ugm.ac.id/itd/buku/bmr/Bibar.html>

<sup>2</sup> Azral Mohammad, *Menyergap Harimau Kedok* (Bandung: PT. Alma'arif, 1982).

The tale is interesting within the frame in which the tiger is positioned as a figure that has intruded *rust-en-orde* (tranquility and order). Other than such model of tale, there were also stories portraying humans who were able to disguise themselves as tiger. The interpretation of the latter type of story is directed more to the matter of one's divine power. As it was frequent to find the connection between tiger and human, there was even a view stating that tiger and human came from the same ancestor. Wessing (1995) once found a story telling that tiger, and crocodile as well, are the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad's son in law, Sayyidina Ali. It is claimed to be the reason why tiger has very unusual power.<sup>3</sup>

The mythical figure regarding the power of tiger was also described, and even used as the title, in the roman *Harimau! Harimau!* written by Mochtar Lubis. In a certain part, Mochtar Lubis wrote: "But it is also *nenek's* [literally: grandmother] place," said Sutan, "where there is a deer, there is *nenek*." He meant tiger. "Shh," said Wak Katok. "Don't call her name [*nenek*; tiger]."<sup>4</sup> This part suggests that the mention of the word "*nenek*" referring to the tiger was a taboo while one was in the forest, because calling out her name also meant summoning her to come. Within the fantasy of the Southeast Asian, forest is regarded as a dangerous, horrible place full of supernatural power. Even they held a belief that tiger could disappear amid the forest, it never appeared and always

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Wessing, "The Last Tiger in East Java: Symbolic Continuity in Ecological Change", in *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (1995), p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> Mochtar Lubis, *Harimau! Harimau!* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1975), p.84.

avoided making any contact with human.<sup>5</sup> However, by the land clearing for the sake of human's business, this supernatural nature gradually faded. The fading of tiger's system of meaning as supernatural and its supposedly terrifying power induced human to hunt for tiger as a certain challenge. Although tiger's gestation tends to be short, around 100 days, the hunting against it and its habitat as well were getting narrowed. It led to the Javan tiger's status of endangered in 1970s.

The tiger hunting was even already started in 1600s. Back then, tigers were hunted and kept for later being made the center of a ritual commonly performed in some kingdoms. The ritual was called *rampogan sima* (lynching the tigers with lances).<sup>6</sup> Wessing (1992) noted that the *rampogan* was attended by more than 2000-3000 people.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike what was written by Clifford Geertz (1973) about the cockfight in Bali which was not mobilized by the authority, *rampogan sima* is precisely the signifier of the presence of authority. Nevertheless, to call it a profound game of betting one's status is improper. Instead, in *rampogan sima*, status seemed to be disappeared by concentrating on the tiger that by any chance might go through the barrier of the spearmen.

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<sup>5</sup> Wessing, *Op.Cit.*, 1995, p. 196.

<sup>6</sup> In 2014, Peter van Dongen, a Dutch, recreated *rampogan sima* in a comic version. Strangely, he titled the book "*rampokan*" instead of "*rampogan*". "*Rampok*" in Bahasa Indonesia means "robbing", while the term "*rampog*" has completely different meaning, which is "killing with lance". See Peter van Dongen, *Rampokan Jawa & Selebes* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Robert Wessing, "A Tiger in the Heart: The Javanese Rampok Macan", in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 148 (1992), no: 2, Leiden, p. 292.

However, both *rampogan sima* and the cockfight have the similarity in terms of stimulating "the creative power of aroused masculinity and the destructive power of loosened animality fuse in a bloody drama of hatred, cruelty, violence, and death."<sup>8</sup>

The interesting thing is that in 1905 the ritual of *rampogan sima* was banned by the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government by reason of tiger's endangered population.<sup>9</sup> The ban on this ritual occurred at the time when the global anarchism wave was in its strongest period, meanwhile in Indonesia the anticolonial nationalism began to be politically developed by means of the establishment of Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI [Islamic Trade Union]), and followed by Boedi Oetomo in three years later. Therefore, this writing tries to see the anarchism and nationalism waves, instead of the endangered number of tiger, as the context framing the ban on the ritual of *rampogan sima*.

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<sup>8</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 420-421.

<sup>9</sup> Kartawibawa wrote that it was the year when the ritual was banned for the first time. However, the official document regarding the banning could not be accessed.

## Rampogan Sima and Its Changes

Around four centuries ago, a man named Edmund Scott, the head of the British Establishment, was invited to Banten city to attend a celebration in the sultanate. The celebration comprised a series of event regarding the circumcision of the Young Sultan of Banten. Within the celebration, there were many kinds of strange animal presented to the authority; one of those was *matchan* (tiger).<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, in a letter written by two Dutch men addressed to the Governor-General of VOC in Batavia, it was mentioned that Sultan Agung had commanded his people to capture 200 tigers within three months. Thereafter, the king—ruling over the area during 1613-1645—pitted the tigers against his citizens. Anyone winning the fight against the tiger would receive either a position in the kingdom, a woman, a kris, or any cloth provided by the king. Boomgaard (1994) argued that this fight of power suggested a fact that the Sultan gave an honour for those who were able to show exceptional prowess.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Peter Boomgaard, "Death to the Tiger! The Development of Tiger and Leopard Rituals in Java, 1605-1906", in *South East Asia Research*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (September 1994), p. 144,

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

However, the two aforementioned references cannot lead us to a comprehension that capturing and pitting tigers had been a sort of ritual in the kingdoms ruling around that era. A more reliable reference comes from Rijklof van Goens who had visited Mataram's celebrations five times. He told that Sunan Amangkurat I (ruling in 1646-1677) sometimes held some battles between buffalo or bull (*banteng*) and tiger, or between two bulls, in the tournament arena. He was very impressed by such battle he considered exciting yet cruel. The arena was certainly the square, a place easily found around the center of many Javanese kingdoms. It is recorded that such ritual had been conducted regularly until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and widely known as *rampogan sima*.<sup>12</sup>

It is recorded that after 1686, in each palace a permanent cage for tiger was built, such as in Kartasura, Surakarta, and Yogyakarta. The location of the cage was almost certainly at the west corner of the square; and since the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had been moved to the southeast corner. At least, the size of the cage was quite huge. In 1850, it was said that Surakarta Palace had a cage which was big enough to keep 7-9 tigers.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, no other tiger was indicated to be caged in Yogyakarta Palace, instead there were only leopards.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>14</sup> Leopard (*Panthera pardus*) is different from the Javan tiger (*Panthera tigris sondaica*). The Javan tiger's body size was larger compared to leopard. The weight of the Javan tiger stud reached 100-140 kilograms, with the length of 2-2.45 meters. Meanwhile, the female's size was smaller, weighed about 75-115 kilograms.

There are several important things to note regarding the ritual of *rampogran sima*. First, the change of ritual's coverage. Initially this ritual was only conducted in palaces, but towards the splitting of Mataram into Yogyakarta and Surakarta, the ritual of *rampogran sima* was also conducted by the regents. These regents duplicated what the rulers had done by capturing tigers and keeping them for the sake of ritual. Formerly, to have a tiger of their own was prohibited for them. They only captured tigers to be sent to the rulers reigning in Java. Nevertheless, the conduct of the ritual also aimed at inviting the visitors from Europe. It means that the ritual which had been previously used for selecting excellent soldiers, at a later time, functioned only for the sake of pleasure.<sup>15</sup>

The second is related to the kinds of animal being used. The earlier references show that bull was the important animal to present within a ritual, while at a later time (between 1739-1775) the frequency of the fight between tiger and bull was getting lesser and turned into the act of only stabbing the tiger. The captured tigers were intentionally set free in the square, with some soldiers lining up in a circle, holding spears, and trying to stab the escaping tigers.

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<sup>15</sup> Boomgaard, *Op.Cit.*, 1994, p. 162.

The third point, according to Robert Wessing's report, the decreasing number of tiger population was due to a new point of view regarding the nature and the position of human within it. Tiger was frequently considered as an alien figure that hindered human from conquering the nature, thus tiger should be slaughtered.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the decreasing number of tiger, Boomgaard recorded that during 1830 to 1860, 1250 tigers and leopards in average were killed in each year. The number decreased into 400 tigers being killed around 1900s. Meanwhile, the number of human killed by tiger was 120 in each year around 1860s. It decreased into 30 people in each year around 1900s.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, it does not mean that this ritual was the sole cause of the decreasing number of tiger in Java. The development of the *Jalan Raya Pos* (Great Post Road; *De Grootte Postweg*) in 1809-1810 under the regime of the Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels enabled more land clearings. These land clearings took place in 1830-1870, while the Culture System was ongoing, for the sake of increasing the amount of agriculture sector exports to indemnify the cost spent for the Java War (1825-1830) and the depleting capital of Dutch private companies. The system allowed land expansion and the irrigation system required for many plantations.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Wessing, *Op.Cit.*, 1995, p. 209.

<sup>17</sup> Boomgaard, *Op.Cit.*, 1994, p. 162.

<sup>18</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Agricultural Involution: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia* (California: University of California Press, 1963).

During the Culture System period, the population in Java increased. Geertz (1963) noted—although it tended to be quite speculative since there were no reliable data—that between 1830-1900 the population increased approximately 2% in each year. Such increase during the Culture System period emerged a byword saying about the Dutch growing in wealth and Javanese in numbers.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the increasing population required a wider land for settlements. The expansion of settlement narrowed down the space for the tiger that tended to stay away from the human settlement. As its habitat got narrower, the possibility of encountering any human got greater and thus tiger hunting could happen by any chance.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

## The Crowd that Do Rampog

While in the Dutch East Indies the ritual of *rampogan sima* was almost gone, a book written by Gustave Le Bon was published in France. The book entitled *Psychologie des Foules* (1895)<sup>20</sup> suggested an analysis towards the psychology of the crowd, particularly on how individual within a crowd tends to follow the agreement made by the mass. An individual within a crowd is like a grain of sand amid other grains of sand that will be easily blown by the wind.<sup>21</sup> With a little provocation, individuals will get moved massively.

This very massive movement is united by any common idea, belief, or ideology. Take for example what researchers noted regarding the *rampogan sima*. *Sima* was symbolized as the colonial power which would be resisted by the people power in an indirect manner.<sup>22</sup> However, such opinion is too speculative since no data were reliable enough to indicate that kind of interest. Notwithstanding its speculative nature, the opinion was finally considered logical by showing the fact that a large amount of people had gathered to celebrate the ritual altogether. Some had come to contend for strength, some to enjoy the spectacular situation, while some others had come for this ritual was a part of religious tradition. Hence, they had different interests with one similar purpose: enthusiasm atmosphere of *rampogan sima*.

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<sup>20</sup> The English version can be read in *Gustave Le Bon, The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York: Dover Publications, 2002)

<sup>21</sup> Le Bon, Op.Cit., 2002, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> For example, see Wessing, *Op.Cit.*, 1992.

In such crowd, people will easily allured to sacrifice themselves for the sake of defending the collective idea. The sacrifice is as how one is willing to die for the nation due to the presence of enthusiasm and the feeling of being honoured.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, it is undeniable that an individual within a crowd tends to be receptive to the idea superficially, and later turned it into a reason that leads to a revolutionary act. "He is no longer himself," Le Bon wrote, "but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will."<sup>24</sup>

There is an interesting story to be quoted in this section talking about the crowd. It tells about how enthusiasm presents in the middle of the atmosphere of *rampogan sima*. The following text is taken from the original text. It will be later paraphrased in the next paragraphs.

*Tijang katah makaten anakipoen tijang katah, dados inggih warni-warni polahipoen. Mila ningali gègèring tijang éwon waktoe sima ambabal makaten waoe méksa wonten tijang ingkang kober nindakaken leloetjon oetawi oegal-oegalanipoen. Inggih kala pambabalipoen sima ageng waoe wonten tangga koela tijang nénéman, nonton sawingkinging baris. Sareng sima babal, pijambakipoen maladjeng nerak dasaripoen tijang sesadéan ing pinggir aloen-aloen ngloempati lintjak dasaran sekoel, soekoe sasisih andoepak koewali wadah rawon, sisihipoen ngidak toemboe sekoel, ladjeng dawah ngroengkebi bakoel ingkang sadé sekoel waoe. Keleresan sima ingkang oetjoel kepanggih andelik ingandap lintjak ngrikoe, mila lintjak waoe ladjeng kakiter waos. Kotjapa bodjonipoen bakoel sekoel, soemerep manawi lintjakipoen dipoen brobosi sima, andjelih toeloeng-toeloeng, ngagar-agar pikoelan kagebragaken dateng lintjak. Inggih*

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<sup>23</sup> Le Bon, *Op.Cit.*, 2002, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8.

*mawoed sadaja sadéjaning bodjonipoen. Déné tangga koela waoe dangoe anggènipoen kroewelan kalihan bakoel sekoel, sabab soekoenipoen sasisih toemoempang ing lintjak, kesokan djangan rawon panas. Sareng soemerep poen laki anggebagaken pikoelan, nginten manawi badé dipoen pentoengi, djalaran andawahi, bakoel enèm waoe ladjeng tangi garégah, kagét soemerep waos sami ngatoeng dateng lintjak, noenten bakoel sekoel waoe dipoen glandang kagèrèd loemadjeng, oewalipoen sareng sampoen dateng ing margi: poen bakoel babak boenjak, tangga koela mlotjot soekoenipoen tengen, soekoe kiwa gaboel oepa panas, oedengipoen itjal. Sima ingkang ambabal ladjeng dipoen karotjok waos. Sadèrèngipoen pedjah, medal saking ngandap lintjak, ingrikoe bodjonipoen bakoel medal bramantyanipoen, anggebagi sima waoe mawi pikoelan, ngantos sapedjahipoen, sarwi akrenggosan angoedjar-oedjari sima, déné andjalari mawoeting dasaran sekoel sarta kawiranganing bodjonipoen.*<sup>25</sup>

It more or less tells about the situation where so many people coming from different backgrounds were gathering in a large mass. Some people were enjoying the atmosphere of *rampogan sima* by telling jokes one another, while some others doing some reckless acts. It was told jocosely by Kartawibawa (1923) that a tiger once had managed to escape the posse of spearmen. A man was frightened and ran carelessly towards the edge of the arena where there were many food stalls. Unintentionally, due to his overwhelming fear, the man—who was Kartawibawa’s neighbour—stumbled and fell down, stepping over some rice and *rawon* (a kind of traditional beef black soup). After tumbling down, the man got even more frightened since he saw the tiger was hiding under a bamboo bench adjacent to the ground he fell upon. He screamed for help hysterically.

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<sup>25</sup> Kartawibawa, *Op.Cit.*, 1923.

Kartawibawa described that the man clung tightly to the food trader, while his feet scalded because of the hot *rawon* soup. The man's right foot was leaning on the top of the bamboo bench under which the tiger was hiding. Meanwhile, in a humorous style, Kartawibawa explained that the foot was daubed with some hot rice he kicked earlier. The food trader's husband eventually had enough courage to scold the tiger—that finally died—notwithstanding his panting because of fatigue and fear as well as his wife's shame.

The feelings, as described by Kartawibawa, that comprised the nuance of fear, wonder, and mischief once again affirmed the common feelings of each person within the arena. Either a spectator, the *rampog* performer, or the food traders around the square, everyone had equal chance and persistence to feel either frightened or more powerful rather than the tiger. It was obvious by the moment the husband of the food trader yelled swear words to the dead tiger. Here, people tended to ignore the feeling regarding incapability or insignificance; such feelings were transformed into a sudden power that raised the feeling of having more power over the thing they were afraid of.<sup>26</sup>

However, unlike Le Bon, we can not simply say that what occurred in the *rampogan sima* was the reflection of a revolutionary and anticolonial ideas. Such notion, seemingly, had not completely manifested in a proper form of action leading to the mobilization of the awareness of anticolonial

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<sup>26</sup> Le Bon, Op.Cit., 2002, p. 22. "In crowds the foolish, ignorant, and envious persons are freed from the sense of their insignificance and powerlessness, and are possessed instead by the notion of brutal and temporary but immense strength."

nationalism. Nevertheless, the brutality of rebellions happened during 1800s had been presented in the ritual of *rampogan sima*. Regarding brutality, Gustave Le Bon stated that:

“... our savage, destructive instincts are the inheritance left dormant in all of us from the primitive ages. In the life of the isolated individual it would be dangerous for him to gratify these instincts, while his absorption in an irresponsible crowd, in which in consequence he is assured of impunity, gives him entire liberty to follow them.”<sup>27</sup>

If the brutality had been initiated in conjunction with the revolutionary anticolonial nationalism, it would have brought the authority of the Dutch East Indies government down. This was in parallel with the imagination of Indonesia described by Dr. Soetomo.<sup>28</sup> This was what the ruling authority considered as the most dangerous revolution. Jaap van Ginneken (1992) stated that an economic revolution would demolish the power of feudalism and gradually take it to capitalism. Technical revolution would increase agrarian income, but on the other side would also intensify the industry. Social revolution shifted the opposition between the land owner and the peasant to the one between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Meanwhile, political

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 241-270.

revolution would terminate the dignity of an absolute monarchy.<sup>29</sup>

Crowd, in Javanese reason, will be revolutionary by the concentration of Power by a charismatic person (the one having divine power [*kasekten*]). After the end of the Culture System which was replaced by the Large Plantation system, the last Javanese great royal poet, Raden Ngabehi Ranga Warsita, wrote *Serat Kala Tidha* (Poem of a time of darkness) (1873). In this very poem, Ranga Warsita showed that “the old conception of the world was no longer valid, the cosmic rhythm had come unsprung and Javanese Power was impotence.”<sup>30</sup> In their history, the Javanese had gone through the “times of darkness”. At the same time, they always hoped for the coming of a ruler who would be able to reconcentrate the Power and take them to a new “time of light”. This was precisely the time when the anticolonial nationalism started to ignite a new hope for the future of a new nation called Indonesia. It was the presence of the imagination of a nationhood that later enabled the crowd to transform themselves into a group of people having an expectation of the time of light and, thus, potentially threatening the colonial power.

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<sup>29</sup> Jaap van Ginneken, *Crowds, Psychology, and Politics, 1871-1899* (Cambridge, England, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>30</sup> Anderson, *Op.Cit.*, 1990, p. 243.

## From Crowd to People

Why should this collective resembling a *vergadering* be annulled? In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Java was encountering some social explosions. Nevertheless, the resistance against the colonial government had not grown into national scale. It means that the rebellions against colonialism were still conducted in local scopes. Moreover, the notion of nationalism had not yet been evidently present. Consequently, those rebellions would quickly be followed by exterminations. Still in the same century, raised diverse religious movements manifested in the forms of religious schools and mystic teaching.<sup>31</sup>

These rebellions occurred as a result of the replacement of traditional system by the modern one. In terms of agriculture and plantation, the Culture System (*Cultuurstelsel*) had lasted since 1830 as the impact of the colonial government's loss in the Java War. After its 10 years of implementation, many critiques and resistances were addressed to the issues of poverty and famine among the indigenous. This system, said C. Th. van Deventer in *Een Eereschuld* (A Debt of Honour), exploited the natural resources of the Dutch East Indies. The writing, published in the journal of *de Gids*, estimated that the Dutch Empire owed as much as 187 million guildens for the implementation of the system. Moreover, the incorporation of monetary system and politics supervision through the

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<sup>31</sup> Sartono Kartodirjo, *Pemberontakan Petani Banten 1888* (Transl. Hasan Basari) (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2015), chapter V. The English version is entitled *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888: Its Conditions, Course and Sequel. A Case Study of Social Movements in Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966).

Corporate Plantation System started to annihilate the old economic-political order.<sup>32</sup>

De Waal noted that rebellions were frequent during 1840-1875. According to the legal document of the colonial government, he stated that only in 1844, 1847, 1860, 1863, 1871, and 1874 rebellion did not occur. However, not all rebellions were documented by the colonial government. Some of those were the rebellions in 1864 in Klaten; 1865 in Cirebon, Tegal, Yogyakarta, and Kedu; as well as 1872 in Pekalongan.<sup>33</sup> On 9-30 July 1888, Kartodirjo (1966/2015) recorded the rebellion conducted by the peasants in Anyer District. They utilized the *tarekat* (Islamic congregation) for the sake of exchanging information. Under the guise of religion, the leaders might exchange their experiences and planned a revolt. People were obsessed with religious activities such as Koran recitation or Friday prayer by the presence of charismatic leaders, among others were Haji Abdul Karim, Haji Tubagus Ismail, and Haji Wasid.<sup>34</sup>

The joyful and enthusiastic experiences within the rebellions studied by Kartodirjo were also found by Takashi Shiraishi in

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<sup>32</sup> The Open Door Policy opened a way to the Dutch Ethical Policy initiated by van Deventer. It was this latest model of politics that promised a future of national consciousness. Frances Gouda wrote that, "Condraad van Deventer's goal was not to set the masses in motion himself. He clung to his conviction that 'Java's children' (*landskinderen*) should guide such movements themselves: they, alone, could bless their country, not European outsiders." See in Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900-1942* (Singapore: Equinox, 2008), p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25 footnote number 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193-229.

the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, the members of Sarekat Islam (Association of Islam) experienced the feeling of having power and being supported with solidarity through *vergadering*. They were mostly *kromo*, those who were illiterate, having neither position, status, nor wealth. Shiraishi (1990/1997) described the experiences as follows:

For *kromo*, the experiences they had at a rally were entirely novel, extraordinary, exciting, and odd. We may visualize their experiences by imagining, say, a peasant in a village, hearing something unusual about the SI by rumors, coming on foot together with his friends and relatives all the way to the rally site, and finding himself watching and listening to what he had never known or expected before. It was a new world where the hierarchical Dutch Javanese order was temporarily suspended and where SI leaders acted on equal terms with Dutch and native officials while telling the audience that all the natives were brothers and that they were as human as the Dutch. On the spot they paid entrance fees, joined the SI, and received membership cards. With their membership cards in hand, they returned home. Back home, they naturally talked among themselves of their extraordinary and unusual experiences. But they did not have a modern vocabulary with which to express it. The Dutch words that were so central to *kaum muda* consciousness simply did not make sense. The rally was called *vergadering* and the speech *voordracht*. Thus they expressed their novel, extraordinary, odd, unusual experiences of the rally in the languages they knew, including the language of Ratu Adil (Just King). In some studies on SI, it is common to find an explanation stating that people joined SI for the sake of “millenarian” and “messianic” hopes. But the logical explanation seems the other way around. It was the unusual and strange experiences

people had at the rallies that generated the language of Ratu Adil.<sup>35</sup>

In Shiraishi's analysis, what made a *vergadering* very enthusiastic was not merely the charismatic leaders. People flocked to SI in an expectation of encountering novel, odd, and extraordinary experiences. Such patterns had also happened in the ritual of *rampogon sima*, as described by Kartawibawa. He narrated that whenever the *rampogon sima* was held, since 6 in the early morning the street were overcrowded by people heading to the square—ceaselessly! He called this ritual a way of the ancient people to get their pleasure.<sup>36</sup> However, what he meant by the way of getting pleasure was quite serious; the stake was being chased by the tiger.

They came fearlessly to confront the tiger, that would not necessarily be speared and die. Perhaps, the tiger would break away instead; its claws and fangs might rip the flesh of anyone being around the square. The people's fearlessness, as well as clamor, within this ritual were illustrated by Kartawibawa in the *macapat* song entitled *Durma*. It says that approaching the afternoon, more people were coming. Some departed from the district by a gig. The district officers and their family rode a chariot. Their assistant rode a gig. The tycoons, described as Chinese or Dutch, rode gigs and preceding the *priyayi* (noblemen). The traders were selling

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<sup>35</sup> Takashi Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak: Radikalisme Rakyat di Jawa 1912-1926* (Transl. Hilmar Farid) (Jakarta: Grafiti, 1997), pp. 89-90. The English version is entitled *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912-1926* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990).

<sup>36</sup> Kartawibawa, *Op.Cit.*, 1923.

many kinds of thing, ranging from roasted corn to cigarettes from Turkey. Some people were playing some games and lit firecrackers.

Tiger became the symbol within which Power was concentrated and accumulated. By slaughtering the tiger, the Javanese logic of absorbing external strength was affirmed. The more tiger to *rampog*, the greater strength transmitted into the body of the *rampog* doer. By killing the tiger as a group, the extrication of lust might happen systematically. Benedict Anderson suggested that these killing rituals were the most extreme way of completing humane desire so that the Power of human could be reached without interruption.<sup>37</sup>

The kings ruling over the period of *rampogan sima* cannot be considered as the personification of the people's unity. Seemingly, through a reversed logic, it was the tiger that invited the people to the square. It was because of the tiger, a fantastic figure, being in between the real and mystical spaces, the people came. They wanted to witness how such a fantastic figure was vanquished. Even the spectator predicted the tiger's anxiety when it could only turn its head right and left like it was watching the situation.

Tjarijosipoen tijang malih, sima ingkang ageng oetawi sepoeh, sok wonten ingkang mrimpeni: boten poeroen karampog, jèn dipoen rampog badé ngobrak-abrik tijang sanagari. Sima

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<sup>37</sup> Anderson, *Op.Cit.*, 1990, p. 25. See also James T. Siegel, "Sembahyang dan Permainan di Aceh: Suatu Ulasan tentang Dua Foto", in Taufik Abdullah (ed.), *Sejarah dan Masyarakat: Lintasan Historis Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia), pp. 128-153. Siegel told that the games involving aggression were some ways of exercising reason and recognizing desire.

ingkang makaten, ladjeng dipoen pedjahi sarana kablebegaken ing lepen, oetawi kakintoenaken dateng Sala.

Poenapa inggih sima saged milih dedamel awon lan saé, oetawi milih pedjah wetah (sakétja) oetawi soroh amoek? Sakétja-sakétja poenapa, tijang dipoen sosog waos!? Jèn saged milih saestoe, poenapaa boten ngoental napas wonten inglebet delangkoep. Saking kinten koela, sadaja waoe namoeng pangatik-atikipoen tijang, mangsa wontena tijang soemerep dateng karenteging manahipoen sima: boten! Dados sima mladjeng moebeng-moebeng, oetawi andjrantal nerak pager waos waoe, sadaja koela anggep amoeng ngoepados margi badé ngoengsèkaken gesang, tanpa éngetan badé sakit étjaning pedjah.<sup>38</sup>

Other stories said, that the great or old tiger, sometimes haunted human in dreams: it did not want to be killed with lance, otherwise it would mess up the district. Such tiger would be killed by drowning it into a river, or drifting it to Bengawan Solo river.

Is a tiger able to choose between causing a bad or good fate, or to choose between dying normally or being murdered by amok? No matter how good, it would be speared after all!? If it were really able to choose, wouldn't it engulf its own breathe inside the cage. In my estimation, those were only people's gibberish. Is there anyone able to know what a tiger's heart contains: no! So the tiger went round and round, or quickly ran towards the posse of spear; I considered all as some ways to survive, clueless about whether it was going to suffer or die.

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<sup>38</sup> Kartawibawa, *Op.Cit.*, 1923.

This inverted logic reaffirmed that a tiger was potential of gathering the mass. With the thinking mode of “if one is looking at the time”—borrowing Dr. Soetomo’s term—coexisted with the global anarchism resistance movement against colonialism<sup>39</sup>, and also by looking at how subjects such as Kartini<sup>40</sup> and Tirta Adhi Soerjo<sup>41</sup> were shaped after the Culture System period, then it was not impossible that the crowd in *rampogan sima* would be immediately transformed into a group of people with a national imagination. This kind of imagination would enable millions of people to be willing to terminate not only other people’s lives, but also the lives of their own.<sup>42</sup>

Only three years after the ban of *rampogan sima*, the period called as Indonesian National Movement was affirmed by the establishment of Boedi Oetomo (1908) whose one of the figures was Dr. Soetomo. Here was precisely where the mass met another mass, and the people were born. What so called “people” had one aspiration regarding nationhood and it was revolutionary in nature. However, at a later time, people were merely an empty signifier used to legitimize the power of the regime. Within a national crowd, the inhabitant was not only the people. Other than them, there were functional people moving for the sake of perpetuating the power of the regime.

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<sup>39</sup> Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Panggil Aku Kartini Saja* (Jakarta: Lentera Dipantara, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Sang Pemula* (Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 2000).

<sup>42</sup> Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 7.

According to Kwee Thiam Tjing (2004), those groups of “people” had frequently existed in each state and nation. He mentioned and categorized them under the terms he borrowed from *ludruk* (a kind of Indonesian traditional performances), namely Djamino & Djoliteng-*gespuis* as well as Djamino & Djoliteng-*gepeupel*.<sup>43</sup> Siegel elaborated more that Djamino & Djoliteng came from a class slightly higher than the lowest class. They could be found in a class society within each culture.<sup>44</sup> *Gepeupel* (‘people’) do not have evil intentions or perpetrate evil acts, unlike *gespuis* (the rabble) who—in the revolution era—“became murderers, rapists, the persons who burnt innocent people’s houses, slaughterers that poured gasoline to the corpses and burnt them!”<sup>45</sup> And it was the victims of the slaughtering, like the *sima* being *rampog*, who felt that their interests were articulated.

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<sup>43</sup> Tjamboek Berdoeri, *Indonesia dalem Api dan Bara* (Jakarta: Elkasa, 2004), p. 292.

<sup>44</sup> James T. Siegel, “Review Essay: The Establishment of Revolutionary Violence”, in *Indonesia*, Volume 79 (April 2005), p. 171.

<sup>45</sup> It was difficult to translating this sentence: “mendjadi pemboenoeh, toekang perkosa, toekang bakar roemah pendoedoek jang tida berdosa, toekang sembeleh korban-korbannja jang majit-majitnja kemoedian ditoewangin benzine boeat dibakar!” As an Indonesian, we may find the aesthetics of this kind of *lingua franca* (low Malay).