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**The Role of Dukun in Contemporary East Java:  
a case study of Banyuwangi dukun**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

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## ABSTRACT

The *dukun*, or shaman, is an important figure linked with the esoteric world of spirits and mysticism. They are practitioners in the areas of alternative healing, sorcery, and traditional ceremonies and have played a major role in Indonesian society. The *dukun* of Java base their practice on Javanese mysticism, which is an essential element of Java's unique culture and identity. Geertz's 1950s studies of Javanese religion and culture contain comprehensive insights into the role of the *dukun*, however, since then literature regarding this role is limited. The 1998 murders of some 200 suspected *dukun santet* (sorcerers) in East Java is an indication of their existence and gives rise to questions as to their role in Javanese society today.

The aim of this research report is to consider the role of *dukun* in contemporary Javanese society and ascertain its significance as an aspect of Javanese culture. Field study was carried out in the district of Banyuwangi, East Java, and the data collected was used as a case study to determine the current role they play in Javanese society in relation to that of *dukun* in literature. Aspects, such as the varieties of *dukun*; their methods of practice; their client's reasons for consultations; their status; and their credibility in society, were examined. In addition, recent events, such as the *dukun santet* murders and the post-Suharto political and economic instability in Indonesia, were considered in gauging the effects they have had on the *dukun* role and public opinion regarding this role.

To achieve the aim of this research report, existing literature was reviewed, field study was undertaken and literature theories were applied to the results of the field study. The literature was considered in relation to the history and definition of *dukun*, the cultural, political, religious and ideological influences of Javanese, and the societal effects of the post-Suharto era in Indonesia. The field study involved conducting interviews with a variety of *dukun* from various subcultures, clients of some of those *dukun* and members of the public in regards to the role of the *dukun*. The data was analysed by comparing and contrasting various aspects of the role of present day Banyuwangi *dukun* to the observations and theories in existing literature.

The field research was conducted over a four-week period, during which time I was based in a village in a subdistrict of south central Banyuwangi. The host of my household also acted as my assistant in the capacity of driver and translator (when needed) and his local knowledge and social skills helped to put informants at ease and gain access to relevant information. By asking members of the public, we were able to establish the whereabouts of *dukun* as many were clients of them and were also willing to be informants for this research. In addition, some *dukun* directed us to their clients and some clients were already at the interview sites waiting for a consultation. A total of 40 informants, from villages in nine subdistricts of Banyuwangi, were interviewed with half of that number being *dukun*.

A qualitative methodology was applied for data collection consisting of two kinds of participant-observer techniques. One involved formally interviewing informants as an observer in the capacity of a research student, and the other involved posing as a client of *dukun* and participating in their treatment. Interviews with members of the public and clients of *dukun* were conducted both formally and informally. By way of these methods and by using different categories of informants, data was successfully collected and able to be verified. The interviews were based on separate questionnaires for each of the three types of informants, *dukun*, clients, and members of the public, and consisted of questions that were formed in response to issues arising from the literature review.

The data were analysed by first separating informants into the three samples types, *dukun*, patient of *dukun*, and member of the public, and grouping them into three subcategories, according to Geertz's (1960) typology of the different social classes and subcultures of Javanese people, *santri*, *priyayi*, and *abangan*. The survey questions were then summarised and separated into three tables with table 1 applicable to all the informants, and table 2 and 3 applicable to the *dukun* informants. The informant data were entered into the tables in the relevant positions and in accordance with which groups they belonged. Patterns and inconsistencies were noted and compared to theories and observations in existing literature, in terms of variations and confirmations. If differences and variations appeared, they were accepted as aspects and occurrences of the sample group. If similarities were found they were accepted as confirmation of continuing traditional characteristics of *dukun* mentioned in literature.

Theories and observations of various sociologists, in particular Geertz, Mulder and Beatty, were applied to the comparison of past and present roles of *dukun*, in terms of the characteristics of their practice; their status; and their political, religious, ideological and cultural influences. Also the theories of political, economic and social analysts were considered in reference to recent influences on the role and status of contemporary Javanese *dukun*. These theories were both challenged and substantiated in relevance to the role of *dukun*, and used as support in the speculation of the findings of this study.

In applying the relevance of these theories to the field study data this report found that the past role of *dukun* in East Java as practitioners of both white and black magic has evolved into two distinct roles; those that practice white magic and those who practice black magic. The generic term '*dukun*' is used for practitioners of white magic, which is based on forms of Javanese mysticism, who are basically curers and helpers. The sorcerers, or practitioners of black magic are now referred to as '*dukun santet*'. The altruistic duties of the *dukun* and an increase in demand for their services, has resulted in their practice becoming more defined as a trade. Characteristics of the *dukun* role, such as the varieties of *dukun*, their client's reasons for consultations and their methods of practice have largely remained the same, however, new kinds of *dukun* have come to light and distinct divisions were apparent among *dukun* in their various beliefs and ideologies, and in their projected status. *Dukun* still play a central role as priest and elder in traditional Javanese ceremonies yet the ceremonies have changed in how they are conducted.

Recent events such as the 1998 *dukun santet* murders, the Asian monetary crisis, the fall of Suharto and the ensuing economic and political turmoil, have caused a correlation of effects on the role of Banyuwangi *dukun*. The climate of instability and uncertainty in Indonesia has contributed to socio-political conflict and mass irrationality, of which the *santet* murders are an example, and raised the level of suspicion and fear surrounding *dukun*. Paradoxically, it is argued that the irrationality has caused people to seek help and refuge in the irrational powers of *dukun*, hence the increase in demand for their services. Furthermore, Indonesia's instability is predicted to continue, indicating a continuing increase in *dukun* trade and in the significance of their role in society.

In placing this case study of Banyuwangi *dukun* in the larger context of Javanese *dukun*, it can be concluded that the characteristics of *dukun* practice have largely remained the same and the essence of traditional Javanese mysticism has firmly been retained. However, the role of *dukun* has evolved, diversified and increased in significance as an aspect of Javanese culture.

In consideration of the limited time frame in which field study was carried out, it is recommended that further research be conducted on broader scale into the role of *dukun* in contemporary Java to verify the results of this report. More time for research would enable the researcher to immerse themselves into a community and in doing so, achieve a deeper level of understanding of societal issues and the social make up of Javanese through the relevant topic of *dukun*. With more time in the field, the sample size can be increased to include samples from other parts of Java in order to gain a greater perspective of this important aspect of Javanese culture. Through research on the Banyuwangi *dukun*, this report provides an insight, however small, into the Javanese psyche as a means to understanding the people of Java and their unique culture.

# The Role of Dukun in Contemporary East Java: a case study of Banyuwangi dukun

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*Dukun*, or Indonesian shamans, have been part of Indonesian culture since pre-history. They have played a major role in Indonesian society as curer, priest, magician, sorcerer, sage and basically one that can help alleviate or eliminate both physical and psychological problems. Indonesia has experienced major changes and influences in its turbulent history: in terms of religion, politics, ideology, economics and culture. Throughout these changes the *dukun* have maintained their significant role, one that has evolved, adapted and diversified, yet also retained its ancient roots.

### ***Aim***

The aim of this research report is to examine the significance of the present role of *dukun* in East Javanese society. In order to achieve this, existing literature will be reviewed to determine the relevance of the past role of Javanese *dukun* to that of *dukun* in Banyuwangi today. An assessment will be made of the effects of recent events on this role through identifying new or changed aspects and public opinion of the *dukun* practice in the post-Suharto era.

### ***Theoretical basis***

Research into the past and present roles of *dukun*, in terms of the characteristics of their practice; their status; and their political, religious, ideological and cultural influences will be based on the theories and observations of a number of sociologists, in particular Geertz (1960), Mulder (1978; 1998) and Beatty (1999). Also the theories of political, economic and social analysts will be considered in reference to recent influences on the role and status of contemporary Javanese *dukun*.

### ***Background***

The Javanese are the largest ethnic group in Indonesia and despite their religious diversity they have a culture and identity steeped in their own form of mysticism and magical-mystical

practices (Mulder 1978, p. 1). As such, the Javanese *dukun* are unique in that they base their practices on various forms of Javanese mysticism.

#### **Formulation of new issues**

Anthropologist, Clifford Geertz (1960), carried out extensive studies of Javanese culture throughout the 1950s that includes the Javanese *dukun*. Since then, literature about the role of Javanese *dukun* is limited. The 1998 killings of suspected *dukun santet* (sorcerers) in Banyuwangi recently brought them back into focus (Siegal 2001; Loveard 1998). Evidently *dukun* still exist, but questions as to the role they play in society today remain unanswered in contemporary recent literature.

#### **Use of research**

Taking into account recent events, such as the *dukun santet* murders and Indonesia's contemporary political and economic instability, research on the role of the *dukun* today and the credibility of their practice may well provide an important insight into the Indonesian psyche through a significant aspect of their culture.

#### **Location of field research and methodology**

The field research for this report was conducted in Banyuwangi, the easternmost region of Java and the heartland of where *dukun* are known to exist. Interviews were conducted with a number of *dukun*, clients of some of those *dukun*, and members of the public, the details of which will be applied to theories in existing literature in this report.

#### **Thesis**

It was found that not only do *dukun* exist in Banyuwangi they are abundant and thriving in this current period of uncertainty in Indonesia. The role of the *dukun* in East Java today is still one of significance and in many ways has remained unchanged. However, their practice has evolved and has been influenced by changing attitudes towards politics, ideology and religion. Furthermore, recent events, such as the Southeast Asian monetary crisis, the fall of Suharto, and the '98 murders of suspected *dukun santet*, have also had an effect on the role they play and the way in which they conduct their present day practice. This study suggests the demand for *dukun* services has increased, as such the significance of their role in East Java has increased, yet so too has suspicion surrounding them.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to study the role of *dukun* in Banyuwangi society today, it was necessary to consider existing literature in determining what role the Javanese *dukun* played in the past and trace its origins. As '*dukun*' is a generalised term for a practitioner of mysticism who fulfils a complex role, it was important to first establish the definition of *dukun* according to literature starting with the English meaning of the term. Literature about the role of the *dukun* was then reviewed in terms of their various beliefs, practices and characteristics. Political, religious and ideological influences of the Javanese are of further relevance to the Javanese *dukun*, as too are recent events in Indonesia in relation to how they may have influenced their role.

### 2.1 Definition and History

According to the dictionary, *dukun* is the Indonesian term for shaman (Echols & Shadily 1992, p. 151). The shaman is able to transcend the world of the living and communicate with spirits of the dead. A dominant figure in the pre-modern community the shaman's role is that of 'medicine man / witchdoctor', priest, mystic, poet and master of ceremonies, rites and rituals. Shamanism is based on the belief in the supernatural and spirit world, and coexists with other forms of magic and religion. It has its roots in 'primitive' or tribal societies in regions such as Asia, America, Africa and the Middle East. (Eliade 1964, 3-7,346-49)

Indonesia was once, and in parts is still, considered to be made up of primitive or pre-modern communities. Indonesian people have always believed in supernatural things such as ghosts, spirits and witchcraft. The origins of this belief can be traced back to pre-history and two forms of belief that were embraced by the population: animism and dynamism. Animism is the belief in spirits who reside in human beings, animals and plants, and dynamism is belief in supernatural power. (Geertz 1960; Mulder 1998)

#### **Dukun or Sorcerer?**

Current literature concerning the *dukun* is largely based on Geertz's (1960) studies of Javanese people and their unique culture. This work contains probably the most comprehensive studies

of the Javanese *dukun* to date. Geertz (1960, pp. 91,106-7) considers *dukun* and sorcerers to be one in the same, practitioners of both black and white magic, and suggests their power to cure was the basis of their prestige. This report focuses on the white magic aspect of *dukun* practice, curing and helping. Geertz (1960) further states that the *dukun*'s power to combat sorcery is no longer effective. Siegal's (2001) studies of the *dukun santet* killings, found that the role of the *dukun* has evolved into two separate entities: the sorcerers (*dukun santet*), and the healers or helpers (*dukun*). He also states that the *dukun santet* are more powerful than *dukun* and that their power is different from and beyond the spirit realm of Javanese mysticism. Siegal (2001) suggests that once *dukun* engage in black magic they are obliged to continue to do so as 'psychic demand' becomes overpowering and vengeance through the use of sorcery is the only possible way of alleviating the pressure.

### **Practitioners of 'Ilmu Java'**

'*Ilmu Java*', or Javanese mysticism is an essential element of Javanese culture that is relevant to the practice of *dukun* and an important aspect of the Javanese psyche. Mulder (1978; 1998) has conducted in-depth research into Javanese mysticism, or 'Javanism'. *Ilmu Java* has its roots in animistic thinking and the Hindu-Buddhist practices and doctrine of pre-Islamic Java, but it has also incorporated elements of Islam (Mulder 1998, p. 14). There is vast literature spanning a thousand years of which Javanese tradition is influenced (Mulder 1998, p. 14). Mulder (1998) and Geertz (1960) have differing notions about the practitioners of Javanese mysticism. Geertz (1960) considers that *dukun* are also referred to as '*orang tua*' (elder), whereas Mulder (1998, p. 50) makes a distinction between the two.

Mulder (1998, pp. 43, 50) refers to the masters and practitioners of Javanese mysticism as *orang tua* and separates them from *dukun*. Mulder (1998, p. 50) declares that *dukun* are shaman who 'cultivate contacts with an underworld of black-magical forces' and contrasts them with *orang tua*, whom he describes as respected father-like figures that provide benevolent advice and wisdom to their clients. Mulder (1998) further argues that although *dukun* also practice Javanese esotericism or mysticism, their power comes from without (the spirit world) as opposed to the powers of *orang tua* coming from their inner person, even though he says many *orang tua* also consult spirits.

## Santri, Priyayi and Abangan

The Javanese religious system, in terms of the different subcategories of *santri*, *priyayi* and *abangan*, is a significant factor in understanding elements of Javanese culture that influence not only the beliefs and practice methods of *dukun* but also in terms of their credibility in the eyes of their clients and society in general. As such it is important to place these subcategories in the context of the area in which this study was conducted. Andrew Beatty's (1999) recent anthropological studies, conducted in the 1990s, focus on varieties of Javanese religion and culture in the area of Banyuwangi. This research is relevant to this study of Banyuwangi *dukun* as it explains the complex ethnic, political, religious, ideological and cultural influences of Banyuwangi people.

There is much debate among anthropologists over the analysis and grouping of the different subcultures and social classes that make up Javanese society. This report will follow Geertz's (1960) typology when referring to the different subcategories. Geertz (1960) categorised the Javanese into three groups; *santri*, *abangan* and *priyayi*. He basically defines them as follows: the pious Muslims are *santri* and are usually among the landowners and more wealthy traders; the *abangan*, who make up the peasant masses, are moderate Muslims and have a culture that remains rooted in Javanese ancestral tradition and animism; and the *priyayi*, though also Islamic, are those who practice a form of pre-Islamic Hindu Javanese mysticism, from the south central Javanese civilisation of the royal courts and government elite. These religious influences and cultural patterns have fused and evidence suggests the beliefs and practices of *dukun* are spread throughout all subcategories of Javanese culture. (Geertz 1960, p. 86; 1973; Mulder 1998, pp. 1-12; Beatty 1999, pp. 28-30)

## Varieties of Dukun

Geertz (1960, p. 86) describes the many kinds of *dukun* as shown in table 1. According to Geertz (1960, pp. 86-7) one *dukun* usually practices several specialties and are mostly men, although women sometimes become *dukun tiban* and *dukun prewangan*. He further stated that *dukun pijat*, who are usually women, and *dukun temanten* are not considered true specialists.

DUKUN	SPECIALTY
<i>dukun bayi</i>	Midwives
<i>dukun pijat</i>	Masseurs
<i>dukun prewangan</i>	Mediums
<i>dukun tjalak</i>	Circumcisers
<i>dukun petungan</i>	Numerologists
<i>dukun sihir</i>	Sorcerers
<i>dukun susuk</i>	Specialist who cure by inserting golden needles under the skin
<i>dukun japa</i>	Curers who rely on spells
<i>dukun jampi</i>	Curers who employ herbs and other native medicines (remedies)
<i>dukun siwer</i>	Specialists in preventing natural misfortune (keeping rain away)
<i>dukun tiban</i>	Curers with temporary powers as a result of being entered by a spirit
<i>dukun wiwit</i>	Harvest ritual specialists
<i>dukun temanten</i>	Wedding specialists

Table 1: Varieties of dukun (Geertz 1960)

## 2.2 Role of Dukun: past

Geertz's (1960) observations provide relevant information regarding Javanese *dukun* of the past that is important in comparing and contrasting aspects of their role to those of the sample group of Banyuwangi *dukun* in this research. As such, this report continually refers to his studies.

### Reasons for Employing the Services of a Dukun

#### ***Master of Ceremonies***

Andrew Beatty's (1999) recent studies briefly touch on the subject of the *dukun*, in the role they play in the changing rituals and ceremonies of Javanese culture and tradition. The way the ceremony is carried out has evolved with changing ideologies and beliefs and can be large, small, formal or informal. Whatever form it takes, the obligatory prayer, of which is performed

by a *dukun* or *orang tua* with all present joining in, is an important aspect of the ceremony. (Beatty 1999, pp.30-32)

A common Javanese religious ceremony, in which a *dukun* or *orang tua* plays a central role, is the *slametan*. The *slametan* is a communal feast where participants from the community join as a social group in mutual support for whatever the occasion one wishes to celebrate, improve or sanctify, such as a birth, death, marriage, house moving, sorcery and illness. Traditionally, although women prepare the food, the ceremony itself is all male. (Geertz 1960, p.11-12)

### **Helper / Curer / Advisor**

People also seek the help of *dukun* for other aspects of their lives that may be a reflection of societal problems. Geertz's (1960, pp. 86-7) descriptions of the varieties of *dukun* and their specialties adequately illustrate the various reasons why one would seek their help in the past. (Table 1)

In reference to relationship problems of *dukun* clients it is relevant to note Beatty's (1999, p. 18) observation of the socialisation of the Banyuwangi Osing people, who live in very close quarters and have an emphasis on kinship values (Beatty 1999, p. 18).

It was reported in *Tempo* (2001, p. 26) that people such as politicians consult a *dukun* for help to get elected into positions of power, as in the case of Abdurahman Wahid and Megawati Surkarno Putri. Furthermore, and especially if they are successful, they will continue consulting a *dukun* for advise on their actions in order to keep their position. Many believe it is the war of power between certain *dukun* that determines who retains power. (*Tempo* 2001, p.26)

### **Methods of Practice**

As previously stated, Geertz (1960, p. 91) observed that a *dukun's* ability to cure is the major reason for their prestige. The treatment of *dukun* clients usually consists of two stages: first the diagnosis and choice of appropriate treatment; and second, the application of the treatment. Geertz (1960) describes numerous forms of curative techniques of *dukun* and also gives examples of the many things a *dukun* is able to do for clients with their supernatural powers.

However, he further states that most important part of the treatment is the spell or spiritual power of the *dukun*. (Geertz 1960, pp. 91-106)

### **Learned Skills**

A person who has several *dukun* specialties is known as *dukun biasa* or just *dukun*. The *dukun biasa* is typically the descendant of a similar *dukun*. The practice of a *dukun* is considered dangerous and one has to be spiritually strong when dealing with the realm of the supernatural. There is a danger of the *dukun* being destroyed or becoming insane. Thus having a *dukun* as an ancestor is an indication that the ability to handle such supernatural power may have been inherited. Despite inheriting the ability to become a *dukun*, the necessary skills of their practice need to be learnt and vary from *dukun* to *dukun*. (Geertz 1960, p. 87; Mulder 1998, p. 48)

### **The Dukun Trade**

Geertz (1960) considered the practice of a *dukun* as generally a part-time job and the *dukun* as neither poor nor rich; one did not have to pay a *dukun* unless they were successfully helped. Furthermore, although *dukun* are somewhat held in awe, they tend to be treated with suspicion as people often suspect they are either fakes or sorcerers. In the past, employing a *dukun* for sorcery or black magic usually came at a high cost and a well off *dukun* could be the sign of a sorcerer. He also noted that of his *dukun* sample group, all were at least middle-aged and that *dukun* generally draw clients from outside their village, possibly because their powers are more effective with clients whom they are not otherwise acquainted. Geertz (1960, pp. 89-91)

## **2.3 Recent Events**

### **Politics and Religion**

The views of a number of authors are considered in relevance to effects that recent events have had on the role of *dukun* today. In his essay, 'Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example', Geertz (1973, pp. 142-169) discusses the melding of various cultures that make up contemporary Javanese culture. He explains the politicisation of religions and ideologies

through the rise in nationalism, Marxism and Islamic reform and how modern Islam and religious nationalism of the twentieth century and has created divisions between groups of ideological like-mindedness. Geertz (1973) considers that as a consequence, political ideologies widened the gap between the economically and politically sophisticated trading classes (*santri*) and the labourers and farmers of the masses (*abangan*).

Research for this report was mainly conducted in the rural villages of south central Banyuwangi. Banyuwangi is a large area (*kabupaten*) situated in the easternmost part of Java, with mountains to the west and coastline to the south and east. The central Banyuwangi area is heavily 'Osing', Osing people are Javanese but what differentiates them from other Javanese, besides their unique dialect, 'Bahasa Osing', is their social organization and Balinese influenced performing arts (Beatty 1999, pp.17-19). This area is made up of rural farmland that has a high concentration of *pesantrens* (schools of Koranic studies) and mosques. Due to 150 years of immigration from other parts of Indonesia (and also Chinese and Arab merchants), starting in the 1800's, Banyuwangi has an ethnic mix of striking cultural variation. Madurese migrants predominantly inhabit north Banyuwangi, and the hill plantations, and Javanese migrants from central Java mainly inhabit the south. Hence there are various subcultures having a mixture of languages and forms of Javanese religion that coexist and interrelate elements of their diverse traditions. (Beatty 1999, pp. 1-4, 17-19)

Azra (2001) argues the fall of the Suharto regime and the following monetary, economic and political crisis has shaken Indonesia's national integration. He further observes that in the failure of the following succession of governments to re-establish political and economic stability, there has been further divisions among the social groups that make up Indonesian society. This increasing division has led to socio-political conflict not just between different religions but also between denominations and schools of thought of the same religion. (Azra 2001, pp. 84-92)

Soetrisno (1999) states that Indonesia's continuing economic and political instability since the 1998 monetary crisis has created wide-felt problems in the lives of Indonesians. Hardest hit have been the rural Javanese villagers and the major problems have been in food shortages, loss of employment, and loss of social services and agricultural assistance. (1999, pp. 163-9)

## Dukun Santet Killings

The effects of Indonesia's post-1997 political and economic instability have increased socio-political turmoil. Soetrisno (1999) states that Javanese villages tend to be more politically turbulent than those in other parts of Indonesia. The *dukun santet* killings are a recent significant example of socio-political conflict and violence that, not surprisingly, occurred mostly in the rural villages of Banyuwangi.

Siegal (2001) and Loveard (1998) discuss the theories and accusations as to who was behind the *dukun santet* murders, yet the truth remains elusive. Abdurahman Wahid, chief of Muslim organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), indicated a conspiracy against their organisation by powerful figures both in and outside the political structure. He believed the killings were organised by enemies among Islamists, the government, army and Suharto loyalists in order to entice NU to retaliate, which would discredit their organization. On the other hand, NU members and local villagers were among the murderers. The police maintained the killings were an act of revenge at the hands of communists for the killings of their members, which began in 1965, by local militias comprised of NU elements. Most people, however, concur the murders were politically motivated and the climate of instability subsequently led to an increase in violence and a 'surge of untamed impulses'. (Siegal 2001; Loveard 1998; Azra 2001)

Witoelar (2001, p. 45) ascertains that it is the few politically funded fringe radicals that drive the violence. Azra (2001, p. 90) further argues that political and economic motives are even behind religious violence in Indonesia and the instability since the monetary crisis will continue to fuel such conflicts and violence. Siegal (2001), Witoelar (2001) and Azra (2001) agree that violence is a result of the irrationality that comes to the fore in times of instability.

Meitzner (2001, pp. 29-44) analyses the troubling key issues under Abdurrahman Wahid's government while Bird (2001, pp. 45-65) discusses Indonesia's economic overview since 1998. Both agree there is link between political and economic instability and predict the instability to continue.

## 2.4 Literature Review summary

The literature provided theories and observations relevant to today's role of the *dukun* in East Java. *Dukun* are generally defined as Indonesian shaman. Although they also used to practice sorcery, *dukun* and sorcerers are now separate entities and the sorcerers are referred to as *dukun santet*. The beliefs and practices of Javanese *dukun* are based on Java's own form of mystical practice, '*ilmu Java*' or Javanese mysticism. Practitioners of *ilmu Java* practice white magic and are also referred to as *orang tua*. Javanese people have a diverse culture, steeped in mysticism, with a heritage made up of different religions, ideologies and social classes and can be basically grouped into three subcategories; *santri*, *priyayi* and *abangan*.

*Dukun* are mainly men and one man usually practices several *dukun* specialties. They play a central role as priest and mystic in traditional rites and ceremonies and also offer their services as helper, curer and advisor. *Dukun* practice methods are varied, however, it is the spell or power of the *dukun* that counts most. The capacity to become a *dukun* is typically inherited though the skills of practice need to be learned. *Dukun* usually practice their trade in a part-time capacity, are at least middle-aged and are neither rich nor poor. They are more renown outside their regions and are treated with suspicion, as people believe they are either fakes or sorcerers.

Religion in Java has become politicised and divisions have emerged among social groups of various ideologies. Since the fall of Suharto in 1998, there has been economic and political instability that has produced further divisions among social groups and created socio-political conflict. Indonesia's instability is the cause of mass irrationality that at times results in politically motivated violence, as in the case of the *dukun santet* murders. Economic and political instability in Indonesia is set to continue along with the associated socio-political conflict.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Methods

#### ***Materials used***

In reviewing the literature questions emerged as to whether the *dukun* role has changed, evolved or remained the same. Questionnaires were compiled for use in interviews with informants. The questions were in regards to the varieties of *dukun*, their methods of practice, their client's reasons for consultations, the current status of *dukun*, their credibility, and whether there has been an increase in consultations since 1998. Three different questionnaires were created for use in interviews with three types of subject samples: *dukun*; clients of those *dukun*; and members of the public.

#### ***Samples used and operational variables***

The time frame for data collection was four weeks and the *dukun* of Banyuwangi district were used as a case study with which to conduct the field research. The subject samples were informants from 22 different villages in nine subdistricts of Banyuwangi and consisted of 19 *dukun* of varying persuasions and abilities, a total of 13 clients of seven of those *dukun*, and eight other members of the public. The informants included employed, unemployed, educated, uneducated, and were of both genders ranging in age from 16 to 82 years. By interviewing three different groups of informants information was verified and a broad perspective of opinions was taken into account. Extracts from some of the interviews are used in the report with relevance to the context of issues discussed in various sections. All interviews formed the basis for the analysis of this research.

#### ***Method of data collection***

Research was conducted using a qualitative methodology with a naturalistic approach and included the use of two kinds of participant-observer techniques for data collection. The first technique, observer-as-participant, involved conducting interviews with various *dukun*, clients of some of those *dukun* and members of the public, in the researcher's capacity of a Western student. The second technique was participant-as-observer where I posed as a client of the

*dukun*, observed and underwent treatment and was able to ask the survey questions and collect data in a natural and unthreatening manner.

### **1. Village friends on return from the river**

### **2. Village friends farewell me**

#### ***Technique of sample collection***

During the field research I lived with a young family in a village, in the subdistrict of Rogojampi. A *slametan* was held in my honour to welcome and bless my stay there. Neighbours and extended family of my host family attended the ceremony and it was a good introduction to becoming a member the close-knit village community. I accepted countless social invitations from the friendly people of the village, whose main source of income is based on farming and basket weaving. Much of my time was spent weaving baskets, sharing meals, washing clothes and bathing in the river, and playing late afternoon volleyball. I gained their trust and friendship and benefited from their openness with some of them becoming informants for this research, through informal interviews conducted over time.

### **3. My host family**

My 'Bapak kos' (head host of the household), Pak Arif, offered his help as my research assistant and as such sought out *dukun* and some of their clients, took me to them and helped translate the interviews into Bahasa Indonesia for my benefit. Pak Arif's efforts were invaluable as his local knowledge, social and language skills were able to help put informants at ease, thus gaining access to relevant information. Furthermore, he helped remind me what information was needed from informants at interviews and also helped in recalling and expanding on details of the interview from field notes once we were home.

#### ***Devices used in data collection***

As well as note taking, a tape recorder was used to record some of the interviews in order to help recall what had been said. Photographs were also taken of some of the informants. However, because many of the interviews were conducted in a clandestine fashion the opportunity to record them or photograph was scarce. Hence, it was necessary to rely on both Pak Arif's and my own memory.

#### ***Techniques of analysis***

The research data were analysed by first categorising the informants into three groups: *dukun / orang tua*, clients of *dukun*, and members of the public. Then they were categorised into three groups according to Geertz's (1960) definition of the subcategories and social classes of Javanese: *santri*, *priyayi* and *abangan*. Once they were categorised, the survey questions were then summarised and separated into three tables (refer to chapter 4). Table 2 is applicable to all the informants, and table 3 and 4 is applicable to the *dukun* informants. Table 2 lists all the informants and their answers to some of the general survey questions. Table 3 was divided into the three sections according to the subcategories of which each *dukun* belongs, *santri*, *priyayi* and *abangan*, and pertains to the varieties of *dukun* and their specialties. Table 4 was also divided into three subcategories and pertains to the various *dukun* treatment methods, in general.

#### ***Acceptance and rejection decisions***

The informant data were entered into the tables in the relevant positions, in accordance with which groups they belonged. The data in the tables were analysed by discerning the patterns and inconsistencies and comparing them with existing theories outlined in the literature review. In general, when differences and variations appeared, they were accepted as aspects of the sample group and an indication of changes. If similarities and consistencies were found they

were accepted as confirmation of continuing traditional characteristics of *dukun* mentioned in literature. Further opinions and observations of informants were also applied to the theories in literature and the proposed theories in this report, and a subjective judgement was made in respect to the correlation of issues behind the changes in the *dukun* role.

## 3.2 Problems

Some problems encountered while conducting the research were quite substantial and warrant consideration in the evaluation of the findings: Firstly, the initial reaction of *dukun* to being interviewed by a foreign student was one of suspicion as it is an unusual occurrence. *Dukun* refused to be interviewed in three instances due to fears about the intentions of the research. It soon became clear that it would be best to approach some *dukun* as a patient or client. Both my assistant and I became adept at assessing the situation and deciding on which identity to adopt in each case, that of a research student or a client. Although basing the interviews on previously prepared survey questions, it was found that in a lot of cases some of the questions became irrelevant. However, in all cases they paved the way for further ‘impromptu’ questions gaining deeper insights relevant to this report. In posing as a client for many of the *dukun* interviews, I had to rely on memory to ask the survey questions. As a result, not all the questions were asked, especially in reference to methods of practice and reasons for client’s consultations. In most cases, answers to such questions were generalised and it should be noted that *dukun* might use other methods of treatment and help clients with other problems that were not included in the tables.

Secondly, as previously stated, the main language spoken in central Banyuwangi is the local dialect of Bahasa Osing, followed by Javanese and then Balinese rather than Bahasa Indonesia. People in general speak a mixture of all the above and quite a number of *dukun* informants were not well versed in Bahasa Indonesia. I only speak English and Bahasa Indonesia, and as such was most reliant on the translation and interpretations of Pak Arif. Thus the degree of information lost in the translation is of unknown quantity. Language was not a problem with the other informants as there was usually someone else around to help translate a word or two into Bahasa Indonesia and my time with them was less limited and more informal.

The subjectivity of what individual *dukun* considered white and black magic produced ‘grey areas’ where the practices overlap. Most *dukun* interviewed claimed to never use spells that were not ethically sound, for example, if a client wanted a spell to make someone they were attracted to fall in love with them, the *dukun* would first look up the birth dates of both parties in their Javanese numerology books to determine if they were suited. If they were not suited the *dukun* would refuse to help. Other *dukun* who also claim to be ethically sound had no qualms in helping a client whether the match was suitable or not. Such subjectivity could be extended to other matters of ethics like helping a political candidate win an election. (pers.com. informants 33; 2; 1; 11)

It was important to analyse aspects of the role of *dukun* in terms of their place in the Javanese religious system, *santri*, *priyayi* and *abangan*, as their varying belief systems fell naturally into these categories. However, the boundaries were again blurred, especially in regards to clients of *dukun* and members of the public, and the determining of which group each informant belonged can be considered subjective. As my research was only conducted in Banyuwangi and heavily relied on existing literature in comparing the *dukun* informants to *dukun* in other parts of Java, it can only be considered as a case study sample. Furthermore, as the majority of the *dukun santet* killings occurred in Banyuwangi, this factor may have had a greater influence on the informants of that area as opposed to elsewhere in Java. Therefore this research of *dukun* cannot be considered as typical of Javanese *dukun* in general.

## 4 RESULTS and DISCUSSION

As previously stated, *dukun* are practitioners in the areas of alternative healing, sorcery and ceremonies, and also act as both spiritual and practical advisors. Given that Indonesian culture has a history steeped in magic, mysticism and superstition, where traditional rites, rituals and ceremonies always have been and continue to be commonplace, it is reasonable to assume that the role of the *dukun* is one of significance and importance in Indonesian society. This chapter will present and discuss the results of this study. The first section of this chapter seeks to determine the definition of *dukun* today, in terms of their identity. The following section

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contrasts and compares various aspects and characteristics of present *dukun* practice with those of the past. The final section discusses the influences of recent events on the role of the Banyuwangi *dukun*.

Informant (Bu = Female, Mas/ Pak = Male)	Dukun (D) / Orang Tua (OT) Client (C) / Member of Public (MP) educated (ed)	Skills Learned Abilities Inherited (Ih)	Santri / Priyayi/ Abangan/ Other	Age	Full-time / Part-time Dukun	Occupation	Increase in clients since 1998 monetary crisis
1. Pak Z.	OT	Yes (Ih)	Santri	50s	Part-time	Teacher	Yes
2. Pak W.	D	No (Ih)	Buddhist	60s	Part-time	Farmer	Yes
3. Pak J.	C (2)		Abangan	50s		Farm worker	?
4. Pak N.	C (2)		Abangan	40s		?	Yes
5. Pak S.	C (2) (ed)		Santri	20s		?	Yes
6. Pak R.	MP/C's brother		Santri	40s		?	?
7. Pak K.	D	Yes (Ih)	Priyayi	50s	Full-time	Dukun	No always busy
8. Bu I.	D	Yes	Abangan	40s	Full-time	Dukun	Yes
9. Pak S.	OT	No (Ih)	Santri	40s	Part-time	Farmer	Yes *
10. Pak C	MP (ed)		Santri	50s		Farm / business	No
11. Pak S.	OT	No (Ih)	santri	40s	Part-time	Farmer	Yes
12. Pak S.	OT	Yes (Ih)	Santri	50s	Part-time	Farmer	No always busy
13. Pak F.	MP (ed)		Santri	20s		Teacher	?
14. Pak T.	D	No	Abangan	50s	Part-time	Farmer	Yes
15. Pak Y.	MP (ed)		Abangan	30s		Army soldier	No, always busy
16. Bu A.	D	No	Abangan	60s	Full-time	Dukun	No always busy
17. Pak H.	OT	Yes (Ih)	Santri	60s	Part-time	Farmer	Yes
18. Bu U.	MP (ed)		Santri	20s		Teacher	?
19. Pak M.	D	No	Priyayi	40s	Part-time	Farmer	No
20. Pak M.	D	No	Abangan	50s	Full-time	Dukun	Yes
21. Bu M.	D	No	Abangan	60s	Full-time	Dukun	Yes
22. Mas S.	MP (ed)		Priyayi	20s		Bank worker	Yes
23. Bu U.	C (21) (ed)		Santri	40s		Embroiderer	No, always busy
24. Pak B.	MP & C (ed)		Santri	30s		Farmer	No, always busy
25. Pak N.	OT	No	Priyayi	70s	Part-time	Farmer	Yes
26. Bu M.	C (25)/ MP (ed)		Priyayi	20s		Seaman	No, always busy
27. Mas A	C (25) (ed)		Priyayi	30		Farmer	?
28. Mas S.	C (25) (ed)		Priyayi	20s		Shop owner	?
29. Pak M.	C (1) (ed)		Santri	30s		Business owner	Yes
30. Pak A.	C (11) (ed)		Santri	20s		Seamen	Yes
31. Mas N.	MP (ed)		Santri	20s		Teacher	Yes
32. Pak H.	MP (ed)		Priyayi	60s		Cultural specialist	?
33 Mas N.	OT	Yes	Priyayi	20s	Part-time	Farmer	Yes *
34. Pak B.	OT	Yes	Santri	70s	Full-time		Yes
35. Bu S.	C's Mother (34)		Abangan	60s		Basket weaver	No, always busy
36. Bu S.	D	Yes	Abangan	30s	Full-time		Yes *
37. Pak J.	OT	Yes	Santri	40s	Full-time		Yes
38. Pak A.	C (9) (ed)		Priyayi	30s		Business owner	Yes
39. Pak R.	OT	Yes	Priyayi	80s	Full-time		Yes
40. Pak A.	MP (ed)		Santri	30s		Shop owner/ teacher	Yes

No's 1-40 = individual informant number. \* = Started practicing as *dukun* in 1998. ? = question not asked

**Table 2: General Informant Information**

## 4.1 Definition: present

### Dukun or Sorcerer?

The *dukun*, or shaman, is one who is closely linked with the esoteric world of spirits and mysticism and was an important figure in the pre-modern community. Literature and this study suggest the role of the *dukun* has not only survived its primitive origins but has evolved, diversified and adapted to modern Indonesian society. The people of Banyuwangi use the generic term *dukun* to define practitioners of white magic who help and cure. *Orang tua* (elder) and *orang yang menolong* (one who helps), are also generally referred to as *dukun*. Consistent with the theories of Geertz (1960) and Siegal (2001), people interviewed in Banyuwangi identified practitioners of black magic as *dukun santet* and not practitioners of *ilmu Java*.

Various informants are of the opinion that, while a *dukun* has the power and knowledge to practice sorcery, once they do, they relinquish their *dukun* powers and altruistic intentions and become solely a sorcerer. This view is consistent with Siegal's (2001) observations. It can be argued that Banyuwangi *dukun* may have further separated these roles through fear of condemnation and accusations of sorcery in light of the *dukun santet* killings. Nevertheless, in Banyuwangi, public opinion and the opinion of *dukun* today is that there is a clear distinction between *dukun* and *dukun santet*, with the former being altruistic and the latter known to be sorcerers. (pers.com. informants 22; 24; 26; 33)

38-year-old army soldier (member of the public), Pak Y., does not believe in doctors and said that was the view of most soldiers. He said that if he is sick or has a problem he would consult a *dukun* but not a *dukun santet*. He has been to many kinds of *dukun* and said that it's the usual thing to do. Pak Y. explained that there are *dukun* that consult spirits or *jin* but not satan as distinct from *dukun santet*, 'who are no good'. He said *dukun santet* do not make friends with neighbours and that is how you know if a *dukun* uses black magic or white – ask a neighbour. Pak Y. will only go to those using white magic (pers.com. informant 15).

### Practitioners of 'Ilmu Java': *dukun* or *orang tua*?

As previously identified in table 1 and referred to in table 3, there are many kinds of *dukun* of differing persuasions that use various methods of practice. The majority of *dukun* interviewed commonly base their practice on '*ilmu Java*'. There are numerous books associated with *ilmu Java* of which practitioners often refer. Literature includes mystical books of spells and mantera (chants); auspicious dates; *rajah*, symbols or 'designs with mystical properties'; Javanese numerology; and traditional medicine and remedies (Echols & Shadily 1994, p. 446). Such literature is typically written in high Javanese language and is available in bookshops in Java. There has been debate, both in literature and among *dukun* informants, over the title of practitioners of *ilmu Java* as to whether they are called '*orang tua*', '*dukun*', or 'sorcerer'.

Although the general public considers them to be *dukun*, 10 of the 19 *dukun* interviewed considered the term offensive and preferred to be called '*orang tua*'. Those preferring the title '*orang tua*', distance themselves from their perception of those who call themselves '*dukun*'. Furthermore, all *dukun* (and *orang tua*) interviewed, distance themselves from *dukun santet* or sorcerers. Interestingly, eight out of the ten *dukun*, who prefer the title *orang tua*, were comfortable in being interviewed by a research student. Other *dukun* were perceived to be more cautious of my presence and as such I opted to consult most of them as a patient or client.

Despite the differing views on the classification of the various practitioners of mysticism, *dukun* basically practice different forms of *ilmu Java*. This report will adopt the general public's terminology for *dukun*, *orang tua* and sorcerer; and use the generic term *dukun* when referring to both *orang tua* and *dukun*, and *dukun santet* for sorcerers.

### Santri, Priyayi and Abangan

Consistent with Geertz's (1960) observations, the differing cultural patterns and religious beliefs of *santri*, *priyayi* and *abangan* can still be identified among *dukun* informants. In some respects the boundaries have merged, however, various elements, namely their belief in mysticism, can be recognised in all of them. Yet in other respects, they are distinctly different in each subgroup, influencing how the various *dukun* conduct their practice and, more so, how they wished to be perceived. These distinctions are also reflected in the title preferences of

each *dukun*; *orang tua* or *dukun*. Their methods of practice can be broken up further to illustrate the distinctions and commonalities of the three groups. (refer to table 4)

Whether *santri*, *abangan* or *priyayi*, of the informants interviewed, all expressed a belief in mysticism and the possibilities of the supernatural, to varying degrees. The various beliefs of the *dukun* informants were reflected in their answers to the interview questions that, in most cases, clearly determined the subcategory to which they belonged. Seven of the *dukun* informants were *santri* and preferred to be called ‘*orang tua*’. Five were *priyayi* and three of those also preferred the title ‘*orang tua*’. The remaining *dukun* informants were *abangan*, with the exception of one Balinese Buddhist Hindu, and did not mind the title ‘*dukun*’, indeed some showed pride in their *dukun* status. (Table 2)

Several *santri* informants did not deny the possibilities of *dukun* powers but insisted they personally only believed in God and Islam and only ever sought the advice and help of *orang tua*. However, those particular interviews took place in the presence of *kiai* (teachers of Islam), including one *kiai* that was a *dukun* / *orang tua* and practiced elements of Javanese mysticism. This insistence suggests either an underlying fear of publicly revealing beliefs that may contradict Islam, or a righteous assertion of their faith and piety in opposition to such beliefs.

Pak C. (28 years old - member of public) is a *santri* and teaches English at a *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). He had offered to take me as a guide to a well-known *dukun prewangan* (table 1) in his village. I interviewed him at the *pesantren* where he works, about his views in regards to *dukun*. The interview took place in the presence of the *kiai* and another teacher at the school. He seemed nervous about my questions and kept saying it was the *kiai* I should interview.

Pak C. said he does not believe in the powers of *dukun* and says he only believes in fate, as God’s will. He acknowledges that *dukun* can speak to spirits but not satan. Once we were alone, however, he admitted to employing the services of *dukun* on three separate occasions; different *dukun* for different reasons. I went as a client to a *dukun prewangan* (table 1) with Pak C. and afterwards he said he was scared when the spirit spoke through the *dukun* – even though he thought the *dukun* was a fake (pers.com. informant 13).

## Varieties of Dukun and their specialties

The past varieties of *dukun* mentioned in Geertz's (1960, table 1) studies still exist today though this study observed variations and additional categories of *dukun*. It was further found that, in keeping with tradition, individual *dukun* have the ability to practice various kinds of specialties and that *dukun* are usually male. However, variations and exceptions were found to contrast with Geertz's (1960) theories in the gender roles of *dukun* and in what constituted 'true specialties' in the role of *dukun pijat* and *dukun temanten* (table 1).

SPECIALTIES	SANTRI	PRIYAYI	ABANGAN & OTHER
Love matters ( <i>dukun percintaan</i> )	9, 12, 34	7	2, 8, 16, 20
Use licking or sucking to cure ( <i>dukun jilat</i> )		19, 25	
Relationship problems	1, 9, 34	33, 39	2, 36
Business advice	1, 9, 11, 12, 17, 34	19, 25, 33, 39	2, 16, 20, 36
Invulnerability/power	1, 9, 11		
Cure with traditional remedies ( <i>dukun jampi</i> )	1, 9, 11, 12, 17, 34, 37	7, 19, 25, 33, 39	2, 14, 16, 20, 21
Find lost objects		33	8, 36
Tell /predict things about others eg. Identity of a thief	9, 11, 12, 17	7, 25, 33, 39	8, 16, 20, 21, 36
Medium ( <i>dukun prewangan</i> )	11	25, 33	14, 16, 20, 21
Divination through cards ( <i>dukun lintrik</i> )			8, 36
Heal through massage ( <i>dukun pijat</i> )	17, 37	19, 39	2, 20
Cast spells ( <i>dukun japa</i> )	11, 12, 17, 34, 37	7, 19, 33, 39	2, 8, 14, 16, 20, 21, 36

No's 1-39 = individual informant number

**Table 3: Dukun specialties**

It was found that members of the public often referred to a particular kind of *dukun* not mentioned in literature. The '*dukun percintaan*', or love specialist, who specialises in spells to bring together couples for marriage. Geertz (1960) identified *dukun susuk* as curers, today they are more renown for inserting golden needles under the skin to enhance one's attractiveness (table 1). The role of *dukun percintaan* could be considered merely a reclassification of *dukun temanten* and *dukun susuk*. If that is the case, the specialty practiced by *dukun percintaan* is commonly practiced by many *dukun* and it could be argued that some *dukun* may be more specialised in this area to warrant a title and thus be true specialists.

Another variety of *dukun*, not identified in the literature, is the *dukun lintrik*, who use cards, with mystical symbols on them, to divine answers to client's queries. *Dukun lintrik* can be compared to tarot card readers now prevalent in Western culture. Two *dukun lintrik* were interviewed, one of whom also practiced other specialties, and both were women. One further category of *dukun*, found in this study, is the *dukun jilat*, which is a term for one who licks or sucks as a form of treatment. Two *dukun* informants mentioned employing this technique, however, one of them in particular, informant 19, was commonly referred to as a *dukun jilat*. Although he does use other methods of treatment, he perhaps uses this technique often enough to warrant this title.

As in the past, an individual *dukun* usually has the ability to practice various kinds of specialties. Most of the *dukun* interviewed combined the specialties of *dukun pijat*, *dukun prewangan*, *dukun japa*, *dukun jampi*, and *dukun percintaan*. Although able to successfully practice various specialties, individuals were considered more skilled in particular areas of expertise. (Table 3)

In contrast to Geertz's (1960) theories, one particular informant was a male *dukun pijat*, which was traditionally a female role and not considered a true specialty. Furthermore, his two brothers were also *dukun pijat* and all three inherited their abilities from male ancestors. According to testimonies of other informants, his abilities to cure appeared miraculous and as such he is considered a true specialist with supernatural power.

Pak J. (*santri*) does not like to be referred to as a *dukun* but rather describes himself as one who heals through massage or *orang tua*. He is about 40 years old and is one of three

brothers who all have the gift of healing, however, Pak J. is the most famous of the three and said to be the most successful. His ability to heal was passed down from his male ancestors who also taught him the art. He is renowned for the ability to heal broken bones, at times, within days of them having been broken. Many villagers from his home village, Gintangan, testify to his amazing healing power.

When interviewed, some of Pak J.'s clients attested to his skills as they had personally experienced his healing power with full recovery. These patients included Mas Sutikno from Porwoharjo, who had suffered a broken collar bone, Dewi from Gintangan, who had a broken wrist, Rita from Gintangan, with hip displacement, and Ulva from Gintangan, with sick children of various illnesses. People also testified to other successful cases of healing including a man from Jakarta who could not walk or move freely for 3 years as a result of an accident. He was brought to Pak J. and stayed in the village for one month of treatment and completely recovered. Many accident victims are taken to Pak J. including people with open wounds, broken bones and paralysis and he is able to heal them. Interestingly, he also said he is able to cure people who are victims of sorcery using herbal remedies of traditional Javanese medicine. (pers.com. informant 37)

Except for four women, the *dukun* informants were all men. The two *dukun lintrik* both happened to be women, however, it was not certain if this role is specifically held by women. Two out of the six *dukun prewangan* interviewed were women and there was another well known female *dukun prewangan* that refused a request for an interview. From this small sample group it could be considered that today it is more common for females to fill these particular roles.

The varieties of *dukun* and their specialties have relatively remained unchanged and a few new kinds have emerged. Some variations have been noted, another one being a title change only; the title for circumciser is now more commonly known as *dukun sunat*. Most *dukun* informants in this study had the ability to practice various specialties yet may be more adept in one in particular field. The *dukun pijat* informant and his brothers may be an exception to the norm, in that this role was traditionally a woman's role and not considered to be a true specialty, yet could also be an example of changing roles. The role of *dukun* is still male dominated, however, today it is not unusual for women to be *dukun prewangan* and now *dukun lintrik*.

## 4.2 The Role of Dukun: present

### Reasons for Employing the Services of a Dukun

As well as healer, a *dukun* traditionally fulfils the role of priest and ‘go between’ to the spirit world at various rituals, rites and ceremonies. The *dukun* can also help solve the problems of clients in many areas of their lives and improve various situations. The *dukun* today still perform most of the specialties of past *dukun*. Problems of *dukun* clients that were typical in the past may still exist in the present but the needs and wants of *dukun* clients have naturally evolved with time and changing conditions.

#### **Master of ceremonies**

According to Beatty (1999, pp. 30-32), a *dukun* or *orang tua* plays a central role in the *slametan*, that is still a major tradition in Java, however, the way in which it is now conducted has evolved. In keeping with Beatty’s opinion, the two *slametans* that were held in the village for the occasion of my arrival and departure illustrated the key role of the *dukun* and the changes in tradition. They were both informal affairs and the second *slametan*, in contrast to tradition, was for women only, with the exception of the male *dukun*. Despite the informality of these *slametans*, the speech and prayer performed by the *dukun* were indeed the central part of the ritual.

#### 4. Slametan for my arrival

#### 5. Slametan for my departure

***Helper/ Curer / Advisor***

The reasons why people consult *dukun* relate to problems in their personal lives but can also reflect the current problems in society. Major problems today such as unemployment, loss of social services and food shortages, have resulted in financial difficulties, relationship breakdowns, poverty, stress, and illnesses. The main problem areas can be generalised into common themes. These themes were succinctly summarised by Pak B. who explained that there are five main areas in which people believe *dukun* can help: in love matters; business matters; strange illnesses believed to be caused by sorcery; social relationships such as disputes and problems with neighbours, friends or family; and desire for physical strength and invulnerability (pers.com. informant 24).

This study found that business and financial issues are major reasons why one seeks the help of a *dukun* today. Sometimes people believe sorcery, initiated by a competitor, can be behind such problems. Illness is another reason with most informants saying that if they became ill they would first go to a doctor to be healed before consulting a *dukun*. If the doctor's treatment proved unsuccessful or another illness emerged in place of the original illness, then the informant would seek the help of a *dukun*. Contrary to opinions of Siegal (2001) and Geertz (1960), *dukun* still have the power to combat sorcery and many informants testified to this. In some cases, people went directly to a *dukun* rather than a doctor. This occurs when clients have symptoms believed to be typical of sorcery, or considered 'strange' such as disorientation, confusion and fevers, or a bloated stomach. Some informants claimed that doctors sometimes admit they cannot help because they also believe sorcery to be the cause. Treatment by a *dukun* is also cheaper than going to a doctor and often more convenient. This may also be a contributing factor as to why one would go to a *dukun* rather than a doctor. (Siegal 2001)

From personal observation of Osing communities, there does not seem to be a term in Indonesian equal to Western perception of the meaning of the word 'privacy'. Despite the admirable tolerance levels of most Indonesians, problems regularly emerge in social relationships; between friends, family members, neighbours and work colleagues. *Dukun* are sometimes consulted in response to such problems and can advise on solutions, as well as help ease the tension, or dispel the volatility of the situation with a spell or two. Furthermore, as it is

usually a person known to the victim who initiates any sorcery it is best to resolve any differences (Geertz 1960, p. 110). (Siegal 2001)

Some *dukun* informants said they regularly consult clients seeking supernatural powers of invulnerability. Clients such as political candidates and those in the armed forces sought help to get them elected into positions of power or to make them invulnerable to physical dangers presented in their field of work or travel. (*Tempo* 2001, p. 26)

Pak S. has clients who come from Bali, Surabaya and Jakarta. People mainly come to him for reasons such as wishing for success in business or in getting accepted into university. If clients are sick and unable to be cured by a doctor he will bless some water for them to drink and claims this works. He said he has many clients from the armed forces asking for safe passage. He will not help cheating customers such as political figures wanting supernatural power as he deems this unethical. (pers.com. informant 11)

This research revealed that besides the requested presence of *dukun* at certain ceremonies, rites and rituals, the most common reasons for consulting *dukun* today are for business or money matters and illnesses, followed by social relationship problems. Basically these problems are typical of modern society, especially in consideration of the economic and political instability affecting Indonesia today.

### **Methods of Practice**

Whether *dukun* are *priyayis*, *santris*, *abangans*, or have other faiths, all use their own particular methods of practice in an attempt to achieve the same results. Geertz (1960) described various *dukun* techniques for curing but did not enter into detail on their practice methods for other problems. Nevertheless, the curing techniques and the stages of treatment (diagnosis and application of appropriate treatment) as described by Geertz, are still basically the same as in the past and vary from *dukun* to *dukun*. (Table 4)

METHODS OF TREATMENT	SANTRI	PRIYAYI	ABANGAN (& Other)
Chanting over water	1, 9, 11, 34	25, 39	20, 21
Remedies	9, 11, 12, 17, 34, 37	7, 19, 25, 39	2, 14, 16, 20, 21
Javanese Numerology	9, 11, 17, 34	7, 39	
Display Psychic Abilities	9, 11, 12, 17	7, 39	
Massage / Hot poker	17, 37	19,	2, 20
<i>Rajah</i> (mystical symbols)	1, 17, 34	19	
Devices for divination (cards, incense, etc)		19, 33	2, 8, 14, 16, 36
Spells	11,12, 17, 34, 37	7, 19, 33, 39	2, 8, 14, 16, 20, 21
Amulets		19, 25, 33	14, 16, 20, 36
Contact with Spirits	11	25, 33	14, 16, 20, 21
Licking / sucking		19, 25	

No's 1-39 = individual informant

**Table 4: Methods of Treatment**

**6. Santri dukun inf. 1**

**7. Priyayi dukun inf..19**

**8. Buddist-Hindu dukun inf. 2**

***Psychic abilities?***

The *santri* and the Balinese Buddhist-Hindu *dukun* considered in this research all insisted their powers and advice come directly from God and, with the exception of one, none communicated with spirits. Four of them, and one *priyayi orang tua*, had the ability to tell me accurate detailed things about myself and my friends and family from either looking at our names and birth dates or by just looking at me. This ‘gift’ is sometimes used in the diagnosis of problems. (Table 4)

Pak S. (*santri*) told me things about my partner and I from simply looking at me. He correctly said I was very ‘*keras*’, strong and determined, and that my partner was very patient and kind hearted. He said my partner was thousands of miles away and too busy with work at that moment to visit me. That was accurate as I received an email from my partner later that day saying he was having an extremely busy week at work. He was also correct in saying that my partner was a government official. When I asked if my partner would eventually come, he answered that he would in January next year. I showed my disappointment and he added that my partner, however, would go to Bali in October and I could meet him there (as was previously planned). My partner had also planned to visit me in Banyuwangi in January. (pers.com. informant 12)

Already knowing the answer, I asked Pak R. to tell me who had been stealing from my friend, Mas N. Pak R. wrote down the name of my friend and then concentrated on the name for a short time. He then said he did not know the name of the culprit but that he was short and stocky, bordering on fat, with very dark skin and around 34 years of age. This description was correct. He also correctly added that Mas N. already knew the identity of the thief but was remaining silent and that the thief was aware that Mas N. knew. He then did his own form of numerology from Mas N.’s name and proceeded to accurately describe his personality. (pers.com. informant 39).

This ability to ‘read’ a person could be attributed to psychic ability but all deny that they are psychic and say their information comes from God. Psychic ability is recognised among my informants but is considered a separate phenomenon from *dukun* abilities. Furthermore, when specifically asked, *dukun* denied being fortune-tellers and firmly insisted that they cannot predict the future but can only guess.

### **Santri dukun**

The usual methods of treatment by *santri dukun* include chanting specially adapted verses from the Koran (mantera) or burning *rajah* over glasses of water, which are then given to the client to drink; casting spells and blessings; using and making up traditional Javanese remedies; and using their own or traditional Javanese forms of numerology. There were only two *santri dukun* that used hands on treatment along with the other methods of treatment listed in table 4: a *dukun pijat*, and one that used a hot poker on the soles of patient's feet to cure them of rheumatism. (Table 4)

### **9. Santri dukun inf. 34**

### **10. Burning *rajah* over water**

### **Priyayi dukun**

The *priyayi dukun* also use the practice methods of the *santri* and, in general, say their advice and power comes from God. However, they use other methods also that includes providing amulets and using devices for divination. Two *priyayi dukun* communicated with spirits for their advice, though significantly both were from the far south of Banyuwangi; an area predominantly inhabited by central Javanese migrants who are strongly influenced by Buddhist Hindu Javanese traditions (Beatty 1999, pp. 150, 187-9). (Table 4)

One *priyayi dukun* informant was commonly referred to as a *dukun jilat*. Although a devout Muslim who does not communicate with spirits, he proudly admits to being a *dukun*. His methods of treatment were self-taught and were quite different from the methods of the other *dukun* informants.

Pak M. (*priyayi*) is well known in Rogojampi (my assistant testifies to this) and receive clients everyday. He is more renown outside his village with the majority of his clients coming to him to be cured of strange illnesses that are suspected to be the sorcery work of *dukun santet*. Clients also come with the usual problems associated with stress and business. When asked if he was successful in helping his clients he replied that it was up to God.

He uses a 'kris' to score a section of bamboo as a means of receiving a diagnosis and remedy from God. The kris is a small ceremonial knife that Javanese believe is inhabited by spirits (Lee Khoon Choy 1977). Pak M. said the particular section of bamboo he uses is very rare and has mystical properties. It has 2 shoots coming out of either side parallel to each other forming a crucifix and that is the state it was in when he found it. His remedies vary and depend on the problem of the client. Hence also the preparation of the remedy is dependant on the client's problem.

In his treatment of victims of sorcery, Pak M. usually licks the problem area or 'sucks out the illness' of the sick patient. For example, by licking the forehead of a patient with the usual sorcery symptoms of disorientation and confusion. Some other examples of remedies and treatments are as follows: if a female patient is suffering from illness in the abdomen area he takes some of his own faeces and rubs it on the patients stomach; if a male patient is suffering from abdominal problems he rubs his urine (or other genital excreta) on the stomach of his patient; and if a patient is suffering from sore eyes he writes rajah on a leaf of the betel vine, crushes it then rubs it on the eyes of the patient.

Patients return if they need more treatment or if they have other problems. Once a patient has been cured, he casts a spell on a clay pot, that he claims has God inside, and gives it to the patient to bury in the grounds of their house as an amulet or guard against the illness returning. (pers.com. informant 19; photograph 7)

The *priyayi dukun* informants in this research each use four or five methods of treatment that encompass the whole spectrum of the methods of treatment of *dukun*. (Table 4)

#### ***Abangan dukun***

The *abangan dukun* also utilise most of the methods previously mentioned, but were more inclined to rely on their communication with spirits for their information about people and advice, rather than the use of Javanese numerology. They employ a number of methods to

communicate with the spirit world that include, burning incense, meditation, using flowers as offerings, and in one case, using a torch. (Table 4)

*Abangan dukun*, Pak T., invited me in to talk to the spirit. We went into a small dark room with a chair against one wall with flowers on it and under it. He and his wife sat on the ground on opposite sides of the chair and I was told to sit in the middle. We all sat facing the chair. He started clearing his voice and flashing the torch on and off irregularly. Eventually a 'spirit' entered his body and he put his chin on the chair and spoke in a high voice of an old lady to his wife while his wife asked questions. The spirit, referred to as 'Buyut' (great grandparent), asked me what questions I wished to ask. I asked if my stay in Indonesia and my studies would be successful. The wife interpreted it to mean would I become fluent in Bahasa Indonesia. Then I had to face the east while he flashed the torch at me, then to the south and then west returning back to facing north again. He then placed some flowers in front of me and I had to slap my hand down on them three times and bow three times.

This ritual went on for some time with the spirit apparently coming and going in between times. As this process was becoming tedious I also asked when my husband would come to see me in Indonesia. Buyut asked me when had I asked him to come. I replied that I asked him to visit me in October. More torch-flashing followed and more turning to the east and west and bowing down. Then the spirit left and Pak T. said the spirit had gone to Australia to see my husband forcing us to wait for its return. Finally it came back and said 'yes he will come in October'. This was correct, as I knew his ticket was already booked for October.

After more similar ritual, Pak T. gave me two packets containing flowers. One was for me to carry at all times in order to become fluent in Bahasa Indonesia. The other was to be thrown into the river behind his house. That concluded the consultation. The *dukun's* son told me the price of the consultation afterwards and wanted four times the amount that other *dukun* were paid. The reasoning was that other tourists pay Rp 100,000. (pers.com. informant 14).

Two *abangan dukun*, Bu I. And Bu S., relied on cards to divine answers and advice for clients. They were referred to as *dukun lintrik*. I went as a client to these *dukun*, rather than as a student conducting research, and asked questions of which I already knew the answers. They gave very accurate details in their answers and said the answers were all in the cards, as opposed to

coming from God or spirits. One of the *dukun lintrik* also sold amulets and the other used spells and remedies as part of her treatment. (pers.com. informants 8 & 36)

All *dukun* informants of various persuasions use methods of treatment based on mysticism and esoteric knowledge. *Santri* are more inclined to use methods such as chanting, traditional remedies, numerology and spells, the *abangan* rely heavily on remedies, devices for divination, spells, amulets and contact with spirits, and the *priyayi* use some of all the methods mentioned previously (Table 4). Neither fortune tellers nor psychics, *dukun* are generally viewed by their clients, and themselves, as instruments of God and it is their spiritual power that most counts in the treatment of clients. (Geertz 1960, p. 93)

### **Learned skills**

Consistent with literature, skills of a practicing *dukun* may either have been taught to them by their *dukun* ancestor, another *dukun*, or derived from the study of Javanese mystical literature. Of those *dukun* observed in the field research, nine considered they had no teacher. Five out of that nine, however, said their abilities were inherited and of that five, three said they learnt their skills from books on *Ilmu Java*. (Table 2)

Some *dukun prewangan* (table 1) interviewed said their skills were taught to them by the spirits they communicate with, however, most said another *dukun* taught them how to initially make contact with the spirit world. In order to do this they employ various techniques including extended fasts, long meditation and chanting mystically interpreted passages from the Koran. Most *dukun* need to employ some sort of spiritual preparation especially for their first contact with spirits or with God. After that the preparation is less intense and some say they need none at all.

Mas N. initially went home and fasted for 3 days and then meditated for 2 days. A *Basumirahi*, or spokes person for the spirits, then came to him and became his teacher and spiritual adviser. He is able to see and hear the spirits as well as receive images from them. Since his initial connection he does not have to fast in order to connect with them. He does, however, need to have a calm mind without distractions for the connection to be strong and successful and as such usually communicates with spirits alone in the middle of the night.

He can connect with them during the day, however, the connection is not as strong as he can only hear them and does not like to rely on a weak 'connection' (pers.com. informant 33).

Bapak is aged in his 70s. He discovered his gift as a Medium in 1977 when his child became sick and could not be healed. He had tried doctors to no avail when one night at 2am a child, who had no legs, came to his house and told him to accompany him to Gunung Kawi where his teachers could cure the child. The teachers, five in all, communicate with spirits (*roh halus*) and ask them advice on how to heal. At the consultation with Bapak the spirits spoke and Bapak could hear them clearly although the other people that were present, teachers excluded, could not hear them at all. It was then that Bapak discovered his gift. Bapak considered his child was cured as a result of the consultation and afterwards Bapak fasted for 40 days in order to communicate with the spirit world. Since then he does not have to fast but meditates in order to call the spirits and communicate with them. Bapak has been practicing as a medium and healer since then. He said he did not have a teacher as such because he learns his healing from the spirits only. His gift was not inherited (pers.com. informant 25).

To receive his ability to help people Pak B. had to fast for 30 days, although he did admit to eating a little porridge during that time, and did not sleep for the duration. After 30 days he spent the next 15 days meditating without any food, water or sleep. When this period was over he said he 'went a little crazy' and was roaming the streets begging for food. After that initial period of disorientation, he was able to help and heal people and no longer needs to fast. (pers.com. informant 34; photographs 9 and 10)

It was found that seven *dukun* informants inherited their ability to become a *dukun*, which was typical in the past. It can be concluded that the necessary skills of *dukun* practice still largely need to be learnt, either from a teacher, the spirit world or from books.

## **The Dukun Trade**

The standard of living for all the *dukun* informants was relatively modest for Indonesia. Most were farmers and their accommodation ranged from small two-roomed huts with dirt floors to neat four to five-roomed concrete structures with tiled floors. *Dukun* practice traditions have continued yet their trade practices have become more defined.

According to literature *dukun* are treated with suspicion and today this is still the case, however, the reasons for such suspicion may have changed. As people generally differentiate between *dukun* and *dukun santet* the basis of their suspicion basically lies in whether *dukun* are fakes. Today the public, and most *dukun* alike, generally believe that a genuine *dukun* does not seek to benefit materially from their work and that their motives are purely altruistic. Thus people are more suspicious of *dukun* that are materialistically well off.

On return to our village we reported what had transpired with the *dukun*, Bu M., to Pak Arif's wife, and the neighbours in her company. Three of the neighbours present had heard of her and one neighbour said that she had been one of her clients and believed the *dukun* was a fake. All the neighbours agreed this was the case and said the proof was in her asking for money or gifts in return for being cured – a real *dukun* does not do so and just accepts what the client has offered. Indeed out of the *dukun* interviewed thus far, the two that I have strongly suspected of being fakes have asked for large sums of money, at least four times the usual price of the other *dukun* who have not actually asked for payment (field notes from interview with informant 21).

A number of *dukun* I spoke with were of the belief that their ability to help was a gift from God and they would lose their ability if they abused it through personal gain or unethical intent.

Mas N. communicates with spirits (*roh halus*) to help people. At 29 years of age he is relatively young for a *dukun* (although he does not consider himself a *dukun*). Mas N. is a farmer by day and helps people if needed at night. He does not profit monetarily from his spiritual work. Mas N. discovered his ability in 1981 at the age of 8. His interest was aroused when he was with friends discussing the spirit world and '*ilmu Jawa*' or traditional Javanese mysticism. This led to him seek knowledge and advice from a *kiai* on how to use *ilmu Jawa* and connect with the spirit world. The *kiai* explained how to connect with the spirit world, through fasting and meditation, and also emphasised the importance of not ever abusing this connection by benefiting from it materialistically or in a manner that is not honourable. Likewise, the *kiai* said he could not help people who wished to benefit from this help in such a way or who were not honest. He implied that the consequences of abusing his gift could be dangerous or result in the loss of communication with honest spirits thus rendering the advice from spirits as unreliable (pers.com. informant 33).

Pak J. never accepts money from the people of his village but accepts gifts from clients from outside his village thus having enough income to live modestly. Pak J., like many *dukun* that help people, does not wish to benefit materialistically from his efforts, he believes it is God's work and as such he benefits spiritually as God's helper. He has often been offered large amounts of money, cars and even a house in return for healing people but has largely refused these gifts. (pers.com. informant 37)

Consistent with tradition, the clientele of *dukun* informants are more likely to come from outside their home region. Geertz (1960) suggested that *dukun* may be more successful with clients they are unfamiliar with, but it could also be a matter of privacy for both parties. Many of the *dukun* interviewed draw clients from as far away as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and most often from Jakarta, Surabaya, Sulawesi and Bali. Many Western tourists to Bali hear about the reputation of Banyuwangi *dukun* there and in some cases come by the busload to particular Banyuwangi *dukun*. In turn some *dukun* informants travel to other parts of Indonesia to treat clients.

*Dukun* generally feel proud of their abilities and benefit spiritually through the job satisfaction they receive in helping someone. In contrast to literature, today it is customary for the client of *dukun* to give a token of thanks at the end of a consultation. This can be in the form of money in an envelope (discretely handed to the *dukun* in a handshake), cigarettes or tobacco, or any of the things the *dukun* uses in the consultation such as flowers and incense. These tokens of thanks are usually to the value of Rp 10,000 - 25,000 (AUS \$ 2 - 5). If a *dukun* gives the client a remedy or amulet it is customary for the client to give a more money to cover the costs of such things.

The *dukun* informants interviewed for this research receive up to 25 clients per day and, as opposed to *dukun* of the past, half of them practice as *dukun* in a full-time capacity. Many of those became full-time *dukun* in the last four years and three started practicing their trade in 1998. 15 *dukun* informants consider their consultations had increased since 1998 and a further three said they have always had a busy trade. Public opinion, in general, also considers the demand for *dukun* services to have increased (Table 2).

In contrast to Geertz's (1960) sample group, the *dukun* interviewed were aged in their 20s to 80s, with the average age being in the fifty-year bracket and many said they have been practicing as *dukun* for decades (Table 2). It is reasonable to assume these *dukun* are well known, given that members of the public recommended them and the number of their clientele, and that age is not a barrier to their reputation.

In summary, past aspects of *dukun* practice are still in place in Banyuwangi but the practice itself has become more established as a trade, in terms of job description and altruistic duties performed, the set value in payments (and the arousal of suspicion if payment exceeds the set perimeters), the work hours, accepted age of practitioners, and the increase in clientele.

### 4.3 Recent Events: effects on the role of dukun

Since the studies of Geertz (1960) and, more recently, Beatty (1999), events have occurred in Indonesia that have had an effect on the attitudes of the general public and *dukun* in regards to the practice of *dukun*. The Asian monetary crisis and the ensuing destabilising effects on Indonesian society, along with the 1998 murders of suspected *dukun santet* in Banyuwangi could be contributing factors in the increase of both *dukun* trade and the suspicion surrounding their practice.

#### Politics and Religion

The suspicion surrounding Javanese *dukun* has increased due to a complex matrix of varying factors. Besides wariness of fakery, and leaving aside suspicions related to sorcery, widening splits in factions of various ideologies, socio-political turbulence and religious conflict can be considered to be major factors behind such suspicion. Divisions of ideologies between the various *dukun* are defined by the insistence of some *dukun* to clearly align themselves with particular schools of thought and disassociate themselves from others. This insistence could be viewed as an attempt to guard against any condemnation from more politically powerful like-minded groups.

Pak Z. was a *pesantren* from Madura and is now a teacher of Islam. He refers to himself as 'orang tua' and has been conducting consultations since 1970. His ancestors were *kiai*. He stressed that he does not believe in *dukun* or the spirit world. Pak Z. said he acts like a

channel for *Allah* (God) and that all his prayers are up to *Allah*, who will grant wishes only if He deems them appropriate. Thus there is no preparation for consultations. He does chant over water for people and gives it to them to drink – especially if they are sick. (pers.com. informant 1; photograph 6)

Pak R. originates from Yogyakarta and Solo in central Java and although he is Muslim he does not follow *sholat* (ritual prayers, five times daily). He uses traditional *ilmu Java* to help people and has been practicing as an *orang tua* since 1980. Pak R.'s ability was passed down from ancestors and his father (who died at the age of 107 years) taught him how to use *Ilmu Java* through books and getting connected with God. He does not communicate with the spirit world and said his advice and information come directly from God. (pers.com. informant 39)

Pak M. is a farmer, aged in his late 40s, and proudly admits he is also a *dukun*. He has been a self-taught *dukun* for 20 years. He said his gift was not inherited and came directly from God. He does not communicate with spirits and emphasizes his work is God's work. (pers.com. informant 19; photograph 7)

Pak S. is in his late 40s and likes to be referred to as '*orang tua*'. He strongly denies being a *dukun*. His gift of offering good advice to clients and prayers on their behalf (that he claims are usually answered) is passed down from his ancestors. Pak S. said his advice is direct from God and that he also speaks with the ancestral spirits of his clients. (pers.com. informant 11)

Pak H. is aged in his 60s and considers himself an *orang tua* who helps and advises clients through prayer and reciting from the holy book. He also has knowledge of traditional Javanese remedies and numerology. He is also a farmer and has been an *orang tua* since 1967. His ability was passed down from his ancestors one of whom was a teacher of Islam in a Javanese town, Godus. He was taught by a *kiai* in Jember Kencon. (pers.com. informant 17)

The cultural, political, ideological and religious differences among social groups in Indonesia today are reflected in the rituals and practices of the various *dukun* in Banyuwangi. It can be argued that these differences are behind the divisions between the practices of *santri*, *abangan* and *priyayi dukun* and contribute to the suspicion surrounding the subject of *dukun*. The strong

Islamic influences of politically dominant groups could explain the reason why *orang tua* firmly distance themselves from *dukun*. These divisions could further explain why many members of the public are reluctant to admit they employ the help of *dukun* or insist they only consult *orang tua* or *kiai*. Despite the social divisions and some initial denials, it was found that all members of the Banyuwangi community with whom the subject of *dukun* was discussed, have either sort the help of a *dukun / orang tua* or believe in the possibilities of their supernatural abilities.

### **1998 Murders of Dukun Santet in Banyuwangi**

The socio-political conflict among Indonesians has intensified since the fall of Suharto creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and irrationality that has fuelled outbreaks of violence. The murders of suspected *dukun santet* is an example of the political manipulation of mass irrationality and can be considered to have raised the level of suspicion surrounding *dukun* and sorcery. Paradoxically, this irrationality can then lead people to seek help in the supernatural.

It is said that the murders of some 200 accused *dukun santet* that occurred in East Java, mostly in Banyuwangi, had political and religious implications and are connected with the crisis Indonesia was experiencing at that time. The large number of victims and the fact that the killings were well organised has led to suspicions that masterminds at the highest levels were behind them. The Banyuwangi regency compiled a list of suspected *dukun santet* in order to protect them from being murdered. Ordinary farmers and devout Muslims were listed among the accused, including many members of the 30 million strong Muslim organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). The list was circulated and got into the possession of opposing forces and in effect became a 'hit list'. (Loveard 1998; Siegal 2001).

The notion that anyone, *dukun* or not, could be accused of sorcery and be put on a 'hit list' has caused many *dukun* to cautiously deny their practice or, at least, distance themselves from sorcery. In turn, as it is the clients of *dukun santet* that initiate the sorcery, members of the public are less inclined to admit they use the services of *dukun*. Most guardedly stress their piety.

The fall of the Suharto government and the continuing instability in Indonesia has created more problems for Indonesians in terms of finance, family breakdowns, conflicts and illnesses, producing an air of uncertainty and irrationality. As a consequence, it is the irrational powers of *dukun* that many people turn to when the rational is threatened; hence the increase in consultations with *dukun* since 1998.

In regards to post-Suharto political and economic instability, authors of literature, up to 2001, anticipate its continuation along with the subsequent conflict and violence among social groups in Indonesia (Azra 2001; Meitzner 2001; Bird 2001). These predictions have proved correct up till now and may explain the continuing guarded attitude of *dukun* and members of the public concerning *dukun* practice. Furthermore, it may be a sign that *dukun* trade will continue to increase, thus also increase the significance of their role in Indonesian society.

## 5 CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Summary

Earlier literature considered the role of the *dukun* in Indonesian society as one of significance. Today that significance has increased. Many aspects of their role have largely remained the same, however, elements of their practice have been influenced and have evolved as a result of the changing climate of politics, ideology and religion. Furthermore, recent events such as the Southeast Asian monetary crisis and the '98 murders of suspected *dukun santet* in Banyuwangi has also had a significant effect on the role they play and how they conduct their practice in today's society.

Authors considered *dukun* to traditionally be sorcerers and curers, predominantly male practitioners of Javanese mysticism from the various subcategories of *santri*, *priyayi* and *abangan*, who practice a variety of *dukun* specialties yet may be more skilled in a particular area. Literature suggests *dukun* regularly played a central role as priest, spirit contact and respected elder in the many traditional Javanese rituals and ceremonies and that *dukun* were generally consulted as curer and helper in alleviating physical, mental and spiritual problems.

In the past, the capacity to become a *dukun* was more likely to be inherited from ancestors but it was necessary to learn the skills of practice. Furthermore, *dukun* of the past were usually at least middle-aged and practiced part-time.

In testing the relevance of these theories this report examined the views of *dukun*, their clients and the public in the easternmost Javanese province of Banyuwangi. It was found that although capable of sorcery, *dukun* today mostly practice as traditional curers and helpers and are separate entities from the sorcerers, commonly referred to as '*dukun santet*'. Aside from the few new kinds of *dukun*, such as *dukun percintaan*, *dukun lintrik* and *dukun jilat*, varieties of *dukun* and their specialties have remained the same. *Dukun* still commonly base their practice on traditional Javanese mysticism, however, several exceptions in their practice methods were found and distinct divisions in their various beliefs and ideologies were evident. Some practitioners prefer to be called '*orang tua*' and distinguish themselves from the common *dukun*, yet despite this, the public at large generally regard *orang tua* as *dukun*.

The role of *dukun*, as priest and elder, in traditional rites, rituals and ceremonies, is still one of importance though some ceremonies have changed in how they are conducted. Problems of *dukun* clients are of similar nature today as those in the past, however, *dukun* advice is sought predominantly in the areas of business matters and illness, followed by social relationship problems. These problems were seen to reflect the negative effects of today's environmental and societal conditions.

An increase in trade and the separation of the altruistic duties of *dukun* from the evil intentions of *dukun santet* has resulted in the *dukun* practice evolving into a more defined trade. In contrast to the literature, the age range of *dukun* is greater today than in the past and many *dukun* now practice in a full-time capacity.

Recent events in Indonesia have caused a cycle of developments that have had an impact on the role of *dukun*. The post-Suharto era of political and economic instability in Indonesia is considered to have created further factional divisions among groups of ideological like-mindedness. As such, this has affected the way in which *dukun* from various subgroups conduct themselves and their practice. The instability has further contributed to social conflict

and irrationality resulting in violence among Indonesians, that includes the *dukun santet* killings, and analysts predict this instability to continue. Both the divisions among social groups and the *dukun santet* killings have raised the level of suspicion and fear regarding *dukun*. Paradoxically, the negative effects of Indonesia's instability on the lives of its people and the climate of irrationality have caused people seek help in the irrational supernatural powers of *dukun*.

Thus it can be concluded that the characteristics of *dukun* practice have in general remained the same, retaining the essence of traditional Javanese mysticism; the sorcery practices of past *dukun* apply to *dukun santet* and no longer apply to the role of *dukun* in general; the way they conduct themselves and their trade has been influenced by recent events; and there has been an increase in their trade, thus an increase in the significance of their role and credibility in Javanese society. Furthermore, predictions of continuing trends could see the cultural significance of Javanese *dukun* increasing in the future.

## 5.2 Recommendations

It should be noted that this report is limited in terms of time, geography and sample size. To verify the results of this report it is recommended that further research be conducted on a broader scale. More time to carryout field research would enable the researcher to immerse themselves into the Javanese community and in doing so gain a deeper understanding of societal issues and the social make up of Javanese through the relevant topic of *dukun*. Furthermore, having more time would enable one to form more social relationships with members of the community and deepen the level of personal friendships and mutual trust. This, in turn would also lead to more *dukun* contacts and enable the researcher to increase the variety of sample informants.

A greater time frame for field study could also allow for research on *dukun* to be carried out in other parts of Java. This would increase the sample size and place the Banyuwangi *dukun* in a larger context with the rest of Java. Through comparing the similarities and differences of the various *dukun* roles and public opinion on the subject, a greater perspective of this important aspect of Javanese culture could be attained.

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## APPENDIX I

### Map of Banyuwangi district

## APPENDIX II

### Questionnaire for Dukun

1. Name? (Bu = Female, Mas/ Pak = Male)
2. Address?
3. Age?
4. Do you have another job besides practicing as a *dukun*?
5. How long have you been working as a *dukun*?
6. When did you know you had the ability to become a *dukun*?
7. What was the process you undertook to become a practicing *dukun*?
8. Are your abilities inherited?
9. Did you learn your *dukun* skills? If so, who was your teacher?
10. What methods of treatment do you use, for example, with illness problems etc?
12. What *ilmu* do you use? Do you practice '*ilmu Java*'?
13. What are your specialties?
14. What is the degree of success you have with your treatments?
15. Please give an example of how you have successfully helped a client.
16. Do you have many clients? Do you have many regular clients?
17. Why do clients come to you for consultations? What are the main reasons?
18. What kind of clients do you have, for example, young / old, female /male?
19. Do you communicate with spirits?
20. What process do you undertake to make contact with spirits?
21. What kind of preparation do you have to undertake before a consultation?
22. Has there been an increase in consultations since the 1998 monetary crisis? If so, why?

## APPENDIX III

### Questionnaire for Clients of Dukun

1. Name?
2. Address?
3. Age?
4. Occupation?
5. Level of education reached?
6. Have you been to Pak / Bu (*dukun*) before?
7. How often do you go to Pak /Bu ...(*dukun*) for a consultation?
8. What kind of reason/s do you consult with Pak / Bu *dukun*?
9. Do you go to other *dukun* / *orang tua* for consultations?
10. In your opinion, has there been an increase in demand for *dukun* services since the 1998 monetary crisis?

## APPENDIX IV

### Questionnaire for Members of the Public

1. Name?
2. Address?
3. Age?
4. Occupation?
5. Level of education reached?
6. Have you ever consulted a *dukun*? How often?
7. If so, for what kind of reason/s?

8. Is the *dukun* treatment usually successful?
9. What is your opinion of *dukun*?
10. If you are sick, are you more inclined to go to a *dukun* first, or a doctor, or both?
11. Do you think the demand for *dukun* services has increased since the 1998 monetary crisis?