



# The President Impromptu Visit



# **INCOGNITO**

The President Impromptu Visit

MAHPUDI



Yayasan Harapan Kita

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**PUSTAKA PERDANA**



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# FOREWORD

Publishing  
Company

**T**he book you are reading is actually a collection of photographs which were part of the documentation on the impromptu visits by President Soeharto in 1970. We consider it important to publish a book about the time when the president traveled incognito in an effort to directly meet the people, in line with his mandate to serve them well.

A year after he was named the country's president by the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS), HM Soeharto, or Pak Harto as he is affectionately called, launched on April 1, 1969 a program called Five Year Development Plan (Repelita).

A year later, starting on April 6, 1970, he began his journey to meet the people in the remote areas of Java. The whole journey comprised two phases. The second phase which

started in July was conducted incognito. Pak Harto basically went undercover so everything he did would not catch wide publicity although several journalists did accompany him during the visits to various places.

The visits basically were impromptu ones because as a president he was not closely guarded by his security personnel and no state protocols were applied throughout the long routes that he covered. This way, Pak Harto managed to have his lunch freely on the sidewalk restaurants along the Cianjur-Sukabumi road in West Java. He could talk freely as well to the students and teachers of an Islamic boarding school in Lebaksiu, Tegal, Central Java, and spent the night in the house of a village head in Dolopo, Madiun, East Java. Without any barriers, he chatted with his childhood friends as well in Wuryantoro, Central Java.

From these trips, Pak Harto gathered a lot of feedbacks about the development programs that he ran. He made use as well the visits to various places to directly monitor the progress of the government's development activities, especially in the sector of agriculture. Along the way, Pak Harto directly listened to people's aspirations, hopes and complaints. He continued to use such a leadership model long after he conducted the visits.

Unfortunately, information about the travel and visits—nowadays popularly called *blusukan*—was not made widely available to the public during his years as the president of the Republic of Indonesia. Actually, there were many lessons that people could learn from the historic move by Pak Harto. This book, written by Mahpudi who previously already authored several books on Pak Harto, should be seen as an effort to reveal Pak Harto's unique ways of running his administration.

Mahpudi did not present “raw” photographs only from the incognito travel. In 2012, he even went on a trip himself to trace back the routes explored by Pak Harto. Together with his team members, he verified data and information on places that Pak Harto visited and conducted interviews with people he met during his undercover journey. These people included local leaders, the journalists in Pak Harto's entourage, and a number of ulemas (Muslim scholars) who directly talked to him.

As a result this book has become more than just a photograph album. The effort to trace back Pak Harto's journey between April and June 2012 led to the stories and captions accompanying the pictures, making this book very worth reading. Apart from the main

content, this book also includes an article by Try Sutrisno, a major player in the country's long history who once served as adjutant to Pak Harto and later as vice president. He accompanied Pak Harto throughout his incognito travel. Also there are articles by political analyst Sukardi Rinakit, by management expert Arissetianto Nugroho and by well-known historian Ahmad Mansyur Suryanegara.

Our hope is this book can enrich the list of many books about Pak Harto and his endeavor to develop Indonesia as a nation-state based on the Pancasila state ideology and on the 1945 Constitution published earlier. It is expected as well that this book will become a source of inspirations for those looking for a role model on how leadership in a country must be implemented. Pak Harto Travels Incognito also serves as an example on how a president leads his country based on the mandate from his people. ●

# Message From The Author

**T**he Purna Bhakti Pertiwi Museum which is located nearby the Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park (TMII), in East Jakarta, was built by Ibu Hj Siti Hartinah Soeharto (Ibu Tien) with the purpose of putting souvenirs presented by various state guests, prominent leaders and relatives, to the Indonesian President (1968-1998), HM Soeharto, in one place so they all can be well-preserved. The museum is open to public and houses thousands of books, newspaper and magazine clippings, stamps, and numerous photograph albums. I found the photograph albums very attractive.

No less than 5,000 photograph albums are kept at the Purna Bhakti Pertiwi Museum. Many contains pictures of Pak Harto and his administration while some others contain pictures of Pak Harto as an independence fighter and as an active military member . There

are also ones on limited family activities or when he spent times for his fishing hobby in the waters of Kepulauan Seribu and when he attended the wedding ceremonies of his children. Some of the pictures are black and white, some others are already in color. Wise men say a picture is worth a thousand words. The sentence reflects the stories that all those albums can tell. Yes, we can understand Pak Harto better by closely looking at the photographs in the album.

It was with the mission of understanding Pak Harto better that I visited the Purna Bhakti Petiwi Museum in 2008. I planned to collect materials to write my first book on Pak Harto with the title of *The Footsteps of Pak Harto on Stamps*. As I gathered information for the book, I found many photograph albums with the theme of incognito travel. Honestly, I was amazed by what I found. I did not realize it before that Pak Harto frequently traveled undercover, in an unofficial way, to various villages to directly monitor development projects and talked freely with ordinary people about life matters.

For me who was born by the end of the Old Order era and grew up when the country was under Pak Harto's administration, the pictures were new and interesting. When I was a journalist, I was not fortunate enough to be able to meet Pak Harto in person. I only gathered information about him from the media like newspapers or television broadcast, including when he passed away. I spent practically the whole day in front of my TV set and hooked myself to several different channels alternately. Obviously, at the time I was saddened by the fact that the nation has lost one of its leaders. Frankly, I did not have deep emotional ties related to his demise. I only knew that I had suffered from a loss. I was just one of many Indonesians, his people. I was also far away from him physically so I did not know what he usually did on a personal basis. However, I respected the villagers of Wringin Telu Village, Balung, Jember, East Java. I visited the village in 2012 and one villager told me that the people of Wringin Telu, mostly farmers, were dumbfounded they day they learned that Pak Harto had passed away. They did not merely feel sad but also did not know what to do. No one went to their farmland on the day, but some went to the village hall and recited prayers while looking with teary eyes at the TV screen which ran reports on the demise of Pak Harto.

In the meantime, the photograph albums of the incognito trip, tingled my journalist instincts and drove me to find out more about the activities of Pak Harto at the time. Unfortunately, the pictures mostly did not come with detailed captions while the people

in them were mostly complete strangers to me. I could recognize only one or two. It came across my mind to make those “valuable findings” public in a way that a small kid thought he or she had found something very attractive.

While working on the book entitled Pak Harto on Stamps, I started to share my findings with a number of people including some seniors who were also my resource persons for my book. I was surprised to learn that they were actually familiar with the way Pak Harto frequently conducted impromptu visits. However, I later realized that they all lived during era of Pak Harto administration, therefore, it was only logical that they understood how Pak Harto conducted his activities. I became more enthusiastic when I found out that they did not know that there were many pictures about the early blusukan days of Pak Harto. As far as they knew, the visits were never revealed in advance so officials in the areas that were visited did not learn about it until Pak Harto’s entourage arrived.

All these facts made me even more eager to share my findings with the general public. When the book, Pak Harto on Stamps was finalized in 2009, I started to plan the publication of a book on the unscheduled and unannounced visits. However, at the same time, together with some colleagues, I also have to deal with the authoring of a book on mostly “behind-the-scene” stories of people who had the opportunities to interact with Pak Harto. The book was then published in 2011, bearing the title of Pak Harto: The Untold Stories.

Only after the book was finished I had the chance to concentrate on the book about how Pak Harto went incognito to various places. I started with digitally documenting the pictures because the originals could not be taken out of the museum. Moreover, I also needed the time and space for myself to better learn about the pictures while trying to meet people who probably had better information about the events surrounding the pictures.

Fortunately, I then met Bapak Soehardjo Soebardi and Ibu Bressinah Soehardjo, a close relative of Pak Harto who were enthusiastic about what I found. The endless support and the motivation they gave me then made it possible for me to turn the pictures into a book. They also allowed me to use their house to better study the pictures. On many occasions, their guest room became so messy because I also installed a big screen and an LCD projector there, invited a number of resource persons who I expected to be able to provide more information and inputs about the impromptu visits of Pak Harto. To Bapak and Ibu Soehardjo, I extend my gratitude and respect for all the supports they extended

to me while writing this book.

The support and facility became even more meaningful when the eldest daughter of Pak Harto, Ibu Hj Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana also gave her blessings to me and my team in conducting an expedition back in 2012 for the book. The expedition was mainly aimed at tracing back the routes taken by Pak Harto at the time and made verifications about the places he visited, the people he met, and at interviewing some people who are still alive today and at the time were eyewitnesses to the events. More importantly, the expedition was expected to relive the events and to help me in better writing the book. Frankly, at first, I still did not have any idea on what to do with the pictures and what kind of book I would produce.

Only after I finished the expedition that I knew to give meaningful information about the pictures. I then decided to put the pictures into 30 different chapters and did not provide too much textual information aside from short captions because I wanted the pictures to speak for themselves and readers could also feel and enjoy the impromptu visits of Pak Harto. All I provided were information on the name of the place, the time of the visit and the main activity as seen in the pictures.

I believe I should also extend my gratitude to Bapak Subianto. When Pak Harto went on his incognito journey “Pak Bi”, as we affectionately called him, was an official at the State Secretariat who was tasked to prepare the car and to make sure that the car could function properly throughout the journey. Pak Bi could still remember many events clearly and identified people and places in the pictures easily. It was even more fortunate for me because Pak Bi, although he was already pushing above 80 years, would still be willing to join my expedition team and provided valuable information about places that Pak Harto went to including about how the situation was at the time.

Pak Bi and the staff of the Purna Bhakti Pertiwi Museum like Ibu Nyoman Tjakri Arwati, Ibu Indrawati Wahyu Widodo, Ratna Mayasari, Mas Gunawan and Pak Ridani extended so much help in the process of writing this book. I thanked them all.

I am also very grateful to Bapak Eddie Nalapraya. He was a close aide to Pak Harto during the impromptu visits. “I was practically the bodyguard of Pak Harto,” he joked. At the time, officially, he was the commander of the personal security guards team of Pak Harto.

He, however, admitted that there were many things he could no longer remember. Still, he was an important resource person because he could still recognize most important people in the pictures. He also helped in opening up the doors to meet Bapak Solihin GP, at the time Pak Harto went incognito, he was the governor of West Java.

It was proven to be uneasy to ask Mang Ihin, as Solihin GP was affectionately known, to revive his memories about the visits of Pak Harto as he was determined to just bring to his grave, all the memories he had about his life. I had to convince him many times that he must share what he knew, eventually, with some encouragement from Pak Eddie Nalapraya, he was willing to do so. Therefore, my gratitude and respect also go Pak Solihin GP.

My next gratitude goes to a number of senior journalists like Mr Sudjarwo (a reporter of RRI) and Mr Suryohadi (a reporter of Sinar Harapan daily) who took part in the visits of Pak Harto. I received a lot of feedback, corrections, and supplementary information which were very useful for the preparation of this book. Similarly, Ms Koos Arumdanie (a senior journalist) who took a close look at the original manuscript and contributed his written opinions in the process of finalizing this book for the completeness (I attached the written opinions in the appendix).

I became prouder when Pak Try Sutrisno, formerly the vice president of the Republic of Indonesia, also agreed to give a note to this book especially about the experiences and lessons he acquired when he accompanied Pak Harto on his unannounced and unscheduled visits back in 1974. Mr Ahmad Mansour Suryanegara—a leading historian who became my teacher in learning about various things—also agreed to write an introduction for this book. I am very grateful to him for that.

My thanks, I believe, should also go to Pak Arissetyanto Nugroho, Rector of the Mercubwana University, Jakarta, who provided notes for the editing of this book as well as to Pak Sukardi Rinakit, who despite his tight schedules, was still willing to provide a foreword to this book with the inspiring title of *With A Few Words*.

I don't think it is fair if I leave out all members of the editorial team of this book: Lutfi, Nana BK, Uud Udiyana, Rimansyah, Akhmadi Krishna, A Saeroji. I thanked them all. I am also thankful to my beloved wife Leni Prestiani and my son Syahrazad Muhammad Muthahari whom with patience accompanied and motivated me during the writing process.

I would like to thank friends who continued to provide supports for the completion of this book: Mbak Donna Sita Indria, Mas Bakarudin, Mbak Anita Dewi Ambarsari and Mas Dwitri Waluyo. My special gratitude, obviously, goes to Ibu Hj Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana with all the extended family members of the late Pak Harto. I believe the love to the late Pak Harto is undying and becomes the noble intention behind the writing of this book. To Pak Sulaiman Tubagus with the management and staff of the Harapan Kita Foundation who published this book, there will be no end of my gratitude.

Above all, I render thankfulness to Allah SWT as without His blessings the wide road provided for me in authoring this book would not have been possible. There was no other purpose behind the production of this book except to recognize the kindness and good deeds of one of the country's best sons including when he traveled incognito as the president to meet his people.\*\*\*



# EXORDIUM



**Hj Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana**

**General Chairwoman  
of the Harapan Kita Foundation**



**I** vividly recall the bustle that occurred in the house when father would get ready to travel incognito in the 1970s. It was almost like the time when we were about to see off Bapak—the way we called our beloved father HM Muhammad Soeharto—for some military operations. Mother prepared everything that Bapak would need, from his clothes to his personal needs which all were then put into bags. Some side dishes were also made available to be consumed during the impromptu visits. In the meantime, we, sons and daughters, were also busy running here and there, sulking, and trying to shake off the feelings that we were about to be left behind by someone we loved very much for many days. Outside our house, in the front yard, we saw, a white van which was made ready by several mechanics and officials who would accompany Bapak during his journey.

If only cellphones were already in existence back then, obviously we would be happy because it would mean we could contact Bapak although he was traveling in unannounced and unscheduled way to various places. We surely missed him at the time. Why wouldn't we"? He would be away for days with no communication with us at home. When asked, people at home would only say, "Bapak was still in incognito trips."

However, we also understood, that as a leader of this country, he was very attentive to his people. Bapak would never let his people face difficulties in life. Bapak always thought about ways to make Indonesians live in peace, face no famine, enjoy sufficient clothing, and have shelters above their heads. That was the reason, Bapak always told us, why he frequently went on his incognito trips. Such trips were the best way to find out what people needed and whether development activities had gone as planned. We understood, but deep in our heart we could only wish that his trips would not take him to faraway places as they would mean long absence from the daily life of his sons and daughters.

The most enjoyable day was when Bapak returned home from such trips as it made us very excited. Mother would usually told us in advance that Bapak would return home and we should greet him as a family. We became even more happier when on one occasion, the welcoming was held at the Tampak Siring Palace as it meant we would be happy to have Bapak among us again in the beautiful island of Bali. The long awaited day eventually came and we saw Bapak entering the palace with his entourage in his usual neat outfit with no traces of fatigue and he smiled all the way. It was only a week earlier that he went to the remote areas across Java island on a four-wheeler where the roads were not as smooth as they are today. We shared stories on how we missed him. Everything was then followed by a dinner party and a dance show. Unfortunately, we could not enjoy them for long because the next day we all had to return to Jakarta. Bapak already had state schedules to meet.

All those wonderful memories flashed back to my mind when I received the manuscript of a book entitled Pak Harto Goes Incognito: The Impromptu Visits of the President to Meet His People written by Mahpudi. There were also sad moments because the book was filled with pictures depicting the journeys. What actually happened along the way, we knew only a little. We could only clearly remember the days we saw him off and the days we welcomed him home. However, the author of the book, following an expedition to trace back the routes covered by Bapak, managed to relive what happened at the time. The photographs were arranged in a chronological order and provided with related information.

making it easy for readers to enjoy and feel the atmosphere during such trips. For us, this book also contains strong messages about how Bapak as a president always showed his care and attention to his people. He did not hesitate to directly meet them and these made us even more respectful and proud of him.

This book is mainly about a historic journey where words are limited but pictures are evocative. We are grateful to Allah SWT that the original pictures were properly stored at the Purna Bhakti Pertiwi Museum, Jakarta. This means, anyone can have the chance to appreciate the incognito journeys of Pak Harto. The photographs present irrefutable documentary on the President of the Republic of Indonesia who happened to be our father and always made us proud: HM Soeharto.

Publishing this book, therefore, reflects our respect and appreciation to our beloved father which would also like to share with many people, especially the people of Indonesia. Our hope is that as the new generation we would also be proud of him as he was an exemplary leader who devoted his time for, and attention to, the creation of peaceful and prosperous Indonesia. Even if doing it also means leaving the family he loved behind. The important thing was to meet the people and listen to their aspirations without binding state protocols. Happy reading!

Jakarta, April 2013

The Harapan Kita Foundation

**Hj Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana**  
Chairwoman

# EXORDIUM



**DR ARISSETYANTO NUGROHO**

**Editor**

Assalamualaikum Wr Wb

First of all I would like to express my gratitude that this book Pak Harto Travels Incognito: The Impromptu Visits of the President to Meet His People , authored by Mahpudi, can finally be presented to the readers. We hope this book will increase and enrich public knowledge about the many life facets of the late HM Soeharto. Although he was the president of the Republic of Indonesia for a long time, there were many activities and evidences of his dedication to his country and people which are not publicly known. It was because of the complexities of the tasks as the head of state and head of government at the time and also because of the rapid changes in the passage of time that there were many things that did not attract public attention.



Incidentally, recently the word blusukan, which originates from Javanese language made its way to the mainstream Indonesian vocabulary. It started when the media frequently reported the activities of Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo who on many occasions toured the capital city and visited certain areas without prior announcement or preparations. Keblusuk, the adjective of the word, means to be at lost, but blusukan also means to go to places with the aim of getting direct information or inputs from the field. What the governor did caught wide attention because lately there were not many leaders who did such visits.

Meanwhile, the book written by Mahpudi, should be considered something valuable to read and digest. The book, after all, tells and reminds us that the way to directly meet the people was also applied by President Soeharto during the early years of his presidency (1970-1973). The only difference is at the time, the impromptu and undercover visits were described as going incognito instead of going blusukan. Incognito is originally a Latin word, *incognitus*, meaning someone who does not want to have his or her real identity revealed. Aside from that, in the past there were also special words known as *turba*, meaning going down under, and *sidak*, meaning sudden inspection.

In the past, not many people realized that blusukan was already applied because during the Soeharto era, there were not so many media organizations. The national television company, TVRI, has not covered all areas across Indonesia while newspaper circulation was also limited. All these made the activities of the President were not widely reported and could not reach all layers of the society. Today, the situation is totally different because there are widespread television stations and print media while social media are widely available that each and every movement or activity of any leaders can quickly be informed to the public.

In the meantime, in leadership and management science, a direct visit to various places and an effort to get information through an unconventional way actually years ago had been put into practice, as well. Many books have revealed that there are at least two ways to conduct check and recheck. The first is through a formal or official way in an organization including to get reports from subordinates. And the second is through informal channel or by going directly to the fields. The first way bears the risk of getting only reports aimed at pleasing the leader. While the second way, despite its less formal nature, will lead directly to all information which is needed. There is a smaller possibility of deviation in the second

way, therefore, decision making process can also run in the right way.

In knowledge of management, what Pak Harto did is also known as a “walking around management” which basically is spending some part of a leader’s time listening to problems and ideas of his or her people.

As far as we know, this direct, unscheduled and without official protocols, had also been conducted by Pak Harto when he was still in the army.

During the country’s independence war, in Yogyakarta when he led the “Wehrkrise,” he regularly checked on his troops in various places across Yogyakarta on foot. After the Independence Declaration, as a lieutenant colonel and chief of the Diponegoro Military Command, Soeharto, also checked on his troops on a routine basis. The territorial responsibility of the military command, covers the whole province of Central Java.

When he was later the commander of the Mandala Operations to liberate what was then known as West Irian, Pak Harto also toured the area covered by the operations on a routine basis. The areas comprised almost a third of the Indonesian archipelago, spanning from Morotai to the north of the Aru Islands in the south. He visited every important post, held dialogs with the troops especially those manning the border lines and attended all ceremonies to see off the troops to be deployed to West Irian, which today is known as Papua.

It is obvious that such visits have been part of his leadership style even since he was young. Pak Harto was never the type of a leader to adopt an elitist style or to live in an “ivory tower.”

However, there might be questions on why the impromptu visits were mainly done in the first three years of Pak Harto’s presidency only. The answer is, at the time as a president he was still building a system to effectively check and re-check everything. In 1970, the presidential office later known as the Bina Graha, was not established yet. Later it became some kind of a command center with which could apply 24 hour monitoring system on development activities across Indonesia. Moreover, there was also no official appointed as Secretary of Development Operations Control (Sesdalopbang) yet. Sesdalopbang reported directly to Pak Harto, and it had systems and equipment which allowed his office to carry out activities and make decision as necessary quickly.

It was the Sesdalopbang team which then performed the visits to various places across Indonesia. Sesdalopbang became an effective organization but Pak Harto occasionally still went to certain areas himself and held dialogs with some farmers and rural people through, among others, a forum called Kelompencapir. This forum basically grouped media listeners, readers and viewers with farmers, villagers and fishermen as members. They regularly met and discussed their problems which sometimes Pak Harto also attended so he could talk directly and informally with his people.

The dialogs with the people were similar to the ones that Pak Harto held during his incognito visits although this time they would be covered by the press especially TVRI so people in different places in Indonesia could also get information from the dialogs.

It is never too late to learn anything which may become an important lesson for us. Therefore, although this book by Mahpudi was mainly about a chain of events that took place about 44 years ago, the pictures and stories it reveals make them “new” to us.

Once again I congratulate the author of this book and also the decision to publish it. I am confident it will be useful to the readers, especially those holding public offices, and also to those active in the private sector and the younger generation interested in leadership issues.

Happy reading.

Wassalamualaikum Wr Wb

Jakarta, March 2013

**Dr Arissetyanto Nugroho**



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**PAK HARTO,  
A TRUE STATESMAN  
AN ALL OUT AND DEMOCRATIC  
LEADER, A CAPABLE MANAGER**

By Try Sutrisno



**A**s a great nation, whose people are always faithful and cultured, it is only proper that all Indonesians try to understand their leaders well. Only with such an attitude, the spirit to fight for the right causes and to support all development activities can be maintained from generation to generation. With the same spirit, the national values to reach all the objectives of the country can be achieved. However, it must also be understood that an effort to know the country's leaders means an effort to turn the leaders into cult figures.

As a nation which is already mature, all Indonesians, I believe understand that it is dangerous and perverting for a nation to get lost in the habit of producing cult figures, especially if the figures are also known as leaders. It is against such a background that I want this book about Pak Harto be written in a careful way, with full consciousness, and be based on the intention to fully comprehend all his thinking, statements and actions while leading Indonesia.

I was once Pak Harto's adjutant representing the Indonesian Army. Therefore, I had the opportunity to closely watch him as the head of state, the head of government, and as all out yet democratic leader whose words always reflected his deeds. Once during the second Pelita (Five Year Development Plan) period, Pak Harto went on an unofficial visit which was not publicly announced to some areas in West Java, Central Java and East Java. It was not announced and was known only to the team who accompanied him because he did not want his schedules to be public information. Even the vice president did not know that he would go to certain places. Members of the Armed Forces including the commander and heads of Kowilhan, Korem, Kodim and Koramil military institutions did not know, nor the governor, regent, sub-district head and village chief. Only the head of the National Intelligence Agency was informed about the unofficial visit.

Members of the team accompanying Pak Harto to West Java, Central Java and East Java, were Army ADC, Colonel Try Sutrisno, who was also the driver of Pak Harto's vehicle, personal physician, Col CKM Dr Mardjono, Head of the Presidential Giard Col CPM Munawar, Major CPM Ucu Sapri, Head of Vehicle Unit Br Subianto and several others. The team members held firearms such as the AK rifles and radio communication equipment. They also brought foodstuff like rice, noodles, some side dishes including traditional dishes like sambal goreng tempe and dried fishes. Some food was specially prepared by Mrs Soeharto because the entourage would not cause any problem or be burdensome to the people in the visited areas.

While Pak Harto did the impromptu visits, his adjutants were given different tasks. Navy Col Subagyo, for example, was told to look after his house in Jakarta. Airforce Col Sumakno was assigned to make sure that a helicopter is available on call. Police Col Sumadi was told to prepare the advance team, while Army Col Try Sutrisno was on active duty accompanying Pak Harto throughout his journey while also driving the car used by the president.

Pak Harto as Head of State and Head of Government was a populist leader. Contrary to what some people believed, he was not an authoritarian leader. I was his close aide for five years, and I never saw him talked or behaved in an authoritarian way to anyone. I had always thought that he was a kind leader and being his adjutant, I could closely witness it when he went on trips to many areas.

Pak Harto always spent time to centers of activities of local farmers, traders, rural people, youth and students as well as Muslim leaders apart from local cooperatives, community health centers, village head office, district head office and sub-district head office. He would then took a look at public facilities and infrastructures, road construction and irrigation system projects. He did not review the physical activities of his people only but also tried to understand what they felt, especially farmer, civil servants and those responsible for public services.

He also noted and paid attention to various aspects of development, such as whether there were delays in the distribution of needs of farmers including fertilizer. Pak Harto always spent time to be directly involved in conversations with rural people and officials of local public service offices so he could get the information on whether or not development projects in the areas had been successful and gave them motivation to carry out their role and function properly.

During the visits to West Java, Central Java and East Java, Soeharto always showed that he lived in a simple way and he did not need luxury accommodation. That was also the reason he never spent the night in a hotel as he was satisfied enough just to stay in the house of a local resident or village head. When he had to take his meal or needed to take a break, he could just eat anywhere or leaned on the fence of a village house to enjoy his food as prepared by Ibu Tien Soeharto.

Not only his attitude which was far from anything complex. The way he talked was also always easy to understand. For example, if one of his subordinates reported a problem, he would only said: “continue it”, “finish it” or “stop it.”

He was a man with a strong sense of solidarity and patience and was also very democratic. Along the journey, I frequently turn on cassette records with traditional songs from East Java, including those known as Ludruk and Jula-Juli. However, Pak Harto never criticized my choice or rebuked me from playing such records although in his mind, he might want songs from Central Java, the province where he came from. Despite our different taste, he showed acceptance to what I liked, he never made any comment about it or prohibited me from playing the records. As a leader he clearly showed appreciation to what other people liked and provided the opportunity to anyone to express his or her own personal pleasure. I then realized that Pak Harto was never an authoritarian leader.

# INCOGNITO

## The President Impromptu Visit

It is fact that that not many did realize that the late H.M. Soeharto, or pak Harto as he was widely known, had frequently performed impromptu visits or incognito trips to meet his people throughout his tenure as the President of the Republic of Indonesia. Sadly, however, only few information too that can be dragged from such visits. It is also a fact such information were tightly restricted while pak Harto was in power. Pak Harto himself shunned publicity on his unofficial and closed activities.

INCOGNITO—The Impromptu Visits of the President to Meet His People is brainchild of Mahpudi—in a bid to show evidences of such visits. The evidences are no other than a bulk of old photographs secured in numerous state photo albums which are maintained at Purna Bhakti Pertivi museum, Jakarta. The pictures, in fact, monumentalize pak Harto first Incognito trip in 1970, not so long after he was sworn in as the President according to the mandate of the People's Consultative Assembly. The trip consisted of two episodes as pak Harto and entourage walked down kampongs and villages outspreading from Jakarta to Banyuwangi in East Java.

It is through the hands of the writer that such photos are neatly constructed and scrutinized so as to bear meaningful sequence of information. More than that, through a trace back and interviews with those directly involved in incognito trip, the writer presents us with interesting stories kept behind the pictures. Generally, almost all the pictures show how with humble heart has pak Harto been engaged in conversations with farmers, santri, clerks, village officials, hose wives up to the governor. The pictures show how pak Harto has stayed at very simple guest house, had his meal at the roadside using his hand. How he also longed to meet his old friends in Wuryantoro-Wonogiri, Central Java whereas is incognito trip was actually meant to directly monitor the development programs carried out by his administration.

The book is undeniably inspiring for you to know how a leader of a country has performed the leadership style has chosen. It is a cold hard fact too that pak Harto, the best son the country has ever had, has, through his incognito trip, been the wellspring for anyone thirsting for wisdom in leadership. ●

