

CLOSER ACQUAINTANCE TO JAVANESE CHARACTER AND FORTUNE THROUGH *PAWUKON*

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Abstract

Pawukon is a Javanese study similar to astrology. Until nowadays, *pawukon* is still held by the societies in Java and Bali as the guideline for determining one's character, profession, as well as his/her good and bad fortunes. The definition of *pawukon* itself is based in *Serat Purwakandha* (The Letter of Purwakanda); it is derived from a *wayang* (Javanese puppet) story about Prabu Watugunung, the King of Gilingwesi, and his family who were defeated in the battle against Bathara Wisnu (the god Vishnu). The names of the King's family members are immortalized into 30 *wuku* names. The *wuku* names are initiated by Prabu Watugunung's first wife, *Sinta*, consecutively followed by his second wife *Landep*, his children: *Wukir*, *Kuranthil*, *Tolu*, *Gumbreg*, *Warigalit*, *Warigagung*, *Julungwangi*, *Sungsang*, *Galungan*, *Kuningan*, *Langkir*, *Madasiya*, *Julungpujud*, *Pahang*, *Kuruwelut*, *Marakeh*, *Tambir*, *Madhankungan*, *Maktal*, *Wuye*, *Manail*, *Prangbakat*, *Bala*, *Wugu*, *Wayang*, *Kulawu*, *Dhukut*, and concluded by the king, *Watugunung*. Each name of the *wuku* has a 7-day cycle, called the *saptawara*. The cycle begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday. Each day of the *saptawara* is paired with a day from the 5-day cycle called *pasaran* 'week' or *pancawara*. The cycle of one *wuku* period takes 35 days or *selapan dina*. Each pair of days in one *wuku* has its own characters, unlucky day, lucky day, best time to conduct a work or activity, suitable job, traveling direction, triumph and prosperity predictions, as well as the counter for misfortunes. Based on the observations, the calculations of the *wuku* are generally precise. Therefore, it can be temporarily concluded that *pawukon* is the result of Javanese society's multiyear, multisocial, multicultural, and multidisciplinary scientific observation which needs special attention from the observers.

Keywords: *Pawukon*, character, misfortunes, and good luck

1. Introduction

Pawukon is a Javanese technology conducting the calculation of period to recognize the character, nature, profession, luck, and the misfortune of a person. This technology is similar to astrology. Up to now, *pawukon* has been relied upon by the communities in Java and Bali as the guideline to determine when an event is set to avoid the misfortunes; the *pawukon* is also used as the guidance on determining human nature and characters. According to *Serat Pustaka Raja Purwa* authored by Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita, *pawukon* is related to a *wayang* (Javanese puppet) story about the King of

Gilingwesi, Prabu Watugunung and his family who lost a war to Bathara Wisnu (the god Vishnu). The names of the Gilingwesi King and his family are immortalized into 30 names of *wuku* (Padmasusastra, 1924). The *wuku* names begin with Prabu Watugunung's first wife, *Sinta* which is consecutively followed by the King's second wife, *Landep*, his children: *Wukir*, *Kuranthil*, *Tolu*, *Gumbreg*, *Warigalit*, *Warigagung*, *Julungwangi*, *Sungsang*, *Galungan*, *Kuningan*, *Langkir*, *Madasiya*, *Julungpujud*, *Pahang*, *Kuruwelut*, *Marakeh*, *Tambir*, *Madhankungan*, *Maktal*, *Wuye*, *Manail*, *Prangbakat*, *Bala*, *Wugu*, *Wayang*, *Kulawu*, *Dhukut*, and concluded by the king, *Watugunung*.

The Javanese society's reliance upon *pawukon* is estimated to appear at the Hindu era (Kuswa Endah, 2006: 1550). This is confirmed with Javanese beliefs towards their protector deities. Even though *pawukon* is a product from Ancient Javanese civilization, Javanese society nowadays still believes that the results of the *wuku* calculations remain relevant to the journey of life they lead. Taken from the interviews with several Javanese people, it is found out that they generally admitted the calculations are precise towards their birth characters and professions. Based on these facts, most likely, *pawukon* is indeed the result of scientific research done by the Ancient Javanese society in multiyear, multisocial, multicultural, and multidisciplinary manner.

2. Human Nature and Characters in *Wuku*

The *wuku* calculation uses a 7-day cycle for each period of *wuku* which is called one *dhapur wuku* 'one group'. The cycle of one group of *wuku* is named *saptawara*. The cycle begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday. Each day is paired with a cycle of 5 days called the *pasaran* 'week' or *pancawara*. The cycle of one *wuku* period takes 35 days or *selapan dina*. Each pair of days during one *wuku* has its own characters, unlucky day, lucky day, best time to conduct a work or activity, suitable job, traveling direction, triumph and prosperity predictions, as well as the counter for misfortunes. Each one of the 30 *wuku* has distinctive nature and character which are becoming the nature and character of a baby born on certain *wuku*. The depictions of the nature and characters are described through the symbols as follows: god as the symbol of guardian, building as the symbol of glory and fame, bird as the symbol of nature and skill, *jabung kala jaya bumi* as the symbol of direction and the time for luck and misfortune (Kuswa Endah, 2006: 158; Kamajaya, 1972: 233-341).

Besides through the symbols, the *wuku* depictions of a baby's nature and character can also be described by the attributes of the *wuku*: *saptawara* '7-day cycle or one week', *pancawara* '5-day cycle or one week', *sadwara* '6-day cycle' or called *paringkelan* 'misfortune', *asthawara* or *padewan* '8-day cycle', *nawawara* or *padangon* '9-day cycle', and the combination of *pancawara* and *saptawara* which is called *paarasan* and *pancasuda* (Kamajaya, 1971: 335).

Each *jejangkeping wuku* 'attribute of *wuku*' has details of elements which function to illustrate the nature and character of a human who is born on a particular *wuku*. The descriptions of each element are as follows.

a. *Saptawara*

Saptawara consists of 7 days; each day has *neptu* or value to be used as the guide to determine luck or misfortune and bad or good day to conduct an activity or work.

Saptawara begins on *Ngahad* or *Radite* 'Sunday' and ends on Saturday or *Tumpak*. Each name of day has certain value and character which are depicted as follows.

- a) Sunday or *Radite* has the value of 5, characters: pretentious or generous only during his/her birth date. This day is beneficial for sowing plants whose stems or trunks are expected.
- b) Monday or *Soma* has the value of 4, characters: likes to show off or should be good in all his work (perfectionist). This day is good for sowing plants whose leaves are expected.
- c) Tuesday or *Anggara* has the value of 3, characters: suspicious or skeptic. This day is beneficial for sowing plants whose flowers are expected.
- d) Wednesday or *Buddha* has the value of 7, characters: all-powerful, sufficient or should be appropriate in all work. This day is perfect for sowing plants whose young fruit are expected.
- e) Thursday or *Respati* has the value of 8, characters: sensitive or really think anything through. This day is beneficial for sowing plants whose fruit are expected.
- f) Friday or *Sukra* has the value of 6, characters: pure or well-behaved. This day is good for sowing plants whose roots are expected.
- g) Saturday or *Tumpak* has the value of 9, characters: arrogant, scornful, or love to be praised. This day is beneficial for sowing plants whose tubers are expected.

b. ***Pancawara***

Pancawara consists of 5 days; each day has *neptu* or value to be used as the guide to determine luck or misfortune and bad or good day to conduct an activity or work. *Pancawarna* begins on the day *Legi* or *Manis* (= sweet) and ends on *Kliwon* or *Kasih* (= love). Each name of day has certain value and character which are depicted as follows.

- a) *Legi* or *Manis* (= sweet), has the value of 5, characters: patient and easy to forgive, capable of performing any job.
- b) *Paing/Abritan*, has the value of 9, characters: has the desire to possess everything (greedy), has the desire for everything in sight.
- c) *Pon/Kuningan*, has the value of 7, character: loves to show off.
- d) *Wage/Cemengan*, has the value of 4, characters: steady (strong), obstinate, stubborn.
- e) *Kliwon/Kasih*, has the value of 8, characters: excellent speaker, flexible in language shifting.

c. ***Sadwara***

Sadwara consists of 6 days, each day has *neptu* or value to be used as the guide to determine luck or misfortune and bad or good day to conduct an activity or work. *Sadwara* begins with *Tungle* and ends with *Mawulu*. Each name of day has certain value and character which are depicted as follows.

- a) *Tungle* or *ringkel ron*, means the weakness of the leaves. Characters: Capable but disobedient. Benefit: for humiliating one's self. Taboo: do not plant trees whose leaves are expected.

- b) *Aryang* or *ringkel Janma*, means the weakness of people or human. Benefits: for making poison and toxins. Taboos: do not grow crops, get married, and build homes.
- c) *Warukung* or *ringkel sato*, means the weakness of the animals. Characters: forgetful and reckless. Benefit: for hunting. Taboo: do not cut down the forest.
- d) *Paningron* or *ringkel peksi*, means the weakness of the birds. Character: arrogant. Benefits: for attracting and shooting birds. Taboo: do not make birdcage.
- e) *Uwas* or *ringkel mina*, means the weakness of the fish. Character: desires to possess everything. Benefits: for making fish nets and traps. Taboo: do not breed fish.
- f) *Mawulu* or *ringkel wiji*, means the weakness of the seeds. Character: sickly. Benefit: for cultivating the rice fields. Taboo: do not spread (drop) seeds.

d. ***Astawara***

Astawara consists of 8 days, each day has *neptu* or value to be used as the guide to determine luck or misfortune and bad or good day to conduct an activity or work. *Astawara* begins its first day with the protector goddess *Sri* and ends with the goddess *Uma*. Each name of day has certain value and character which are depicted as follows.

- a) *Sri* or *Batari* (goddess) *Sri*. Characters: compassionate and affective. Benefits: for growing rice and coconuts.
- b) *Indra* or *Batara* (god) *Indra*. Characters: thorough and arrogant. Benefit: for learning all knowledge.
- c) *Guru* or *Batara Guru*. Characters: curious to try, to give presents, and corruptive. Benefit: for surrendering sacrifice.
- d) *Jama* or *Batara Jamadipati*. Characters: curious to try, to give presents, corruptive, merciful, and very lazy. Benefit: for trading.
- e) *Rudra* or *Batara Rudra*. Characters: generous and hedonic. Benefits: for sapping, making wells, and digging holes.
- f) *Brama* or *Batara Brama*. Characters: hot-tempered and impatient. Benefits: for cutting down the forest and cultivating the rice field.
- g) *Kala* or *Batara Kala*. Characters: bad, poor characters; greedy, deceitful, and pretentious. Benefit: for surrendering sacrifice.
- h) *Uma* or *Batari Uma*. Characters: compassionate to the needy but bad-hearted. Benefits: for making fences and borders.

e. ***Nawa-wara***

Nawa-wara consists of 9 days, each day has *neptu* or value to be used as the guide to determine luck or misfortune and bad or good day to conduct an activity or work. *Nawa-wara* begins its first day with *Dangu* and ends with *Dadi*. Each name of day has certain value and character which are depicted as follows.

- a) *Dangu* means stone. Character: still. Benefits: for making monument, cover, and deposit containers.
- b) *Jagur* means tiger. Characters: flexible, strong, and envious. Benefits: for building fences and gates.
- c) *Gigis* means the earth. Characters: strong, open-hearted, and trustworthy. Benefits: for planting and providing debts.

- d) *Kerangan* means the sun. Characters: thorough and settled. Benefits: for giving names to employees and soldiers.
- e) *Nohan* means the moon. Characters: compassionate but ill-fated. Benefits: for traveling commerce.
- f) *Wogan* means caterpillar. Characters: keen and loyal. Benefits: for forging war instruments.
- g) *Tulus* means water. Characters: desirous and has the subtlest way for achieving the goal. Benefits: for sapping, making wells, and digging holes.
- h) *Wurung* means fire. Character: hot-tempered. Benefits: to cutting down the trees and cultivating the rice fields.
- i) *Dadi* means wood. Character: competitive. Benefit: for planting trees in the field.

f. *Pa-arasan*

Pa-arasan consists of 12 days, each day has *neptu* or value to be used as the guide to determine luck or misfortune and bad or good day to conduct an activity or work. *Pa-arasan* begins its first day *Lakuning Bumi* and ends with *Lakuning Geni*. Each name of day has certain value and character which are depicted as follows.

- a) The value of 7, called *Lakuning Bumi*. Baby characters: quiet, hot-tempered, no relatives, blunt, a little impudent towards women (for man) and towards men (for woman).
- b) The value of 8, *Lakuning Geni*. Baby characters: hot-tempered, quarrelsome, slanderous, afraid of danger, and for woman: often disastrous.
- c) The value of 9, *Aras peksi Lakuning Angin*. Baby characters: quiet like a priest, has no power in his/her spell, does not like to be calm and still, sometimes heartening, often changes places, and likes to be praised.
- d) The value of 10, *Aras pepet Lakuning Pandita Sakti*. Baby characters: quiet, smart, supportive, sometimes blabbering, rarely achieves his/her ideals, can be famous in literature.
- e) The value of 11, *Aras tuding Lakuning Satan*. Baby characters: brave, not afraid of going into the night, has long arms, likes everything in sight, always wants to sell clothes.
- f) The value of 12, *Aras Kembang Lakuning Jejodoan*. Baby characters: loved, easy to get affection, not having many children, clever in thinking and working.
- g) The value of 13, *Lakuning Lintang*. Baby characters: quiet, tender-hearted, endures staying up late at nights, capable in trading, strong willed, hates calmness, and likes to change places.
- h) The value of 14, *Lakuning Rembulan*. Baby characters: skillful in every job, always pleasant, capable to lead a happy life, broad minded, lazy, loved by people, easy to teach, not rich.
- i) The value of 15, *Lakuning Srengenge*. Baby characters: nice in talking, often be praised, thinks about everything through, has low morality while fighting.
- j) The value of 16, *Lakuning Banyu*. Baby characters: firm-hearted, not reluctant, sometimes likes to boss around, fair complexion, often fight in (an unsuitable) marriage.

- k) Total value of 17, *Lakuning Bumi*. Baby characters: quiet, hot-tempered, no relatives, blunt, a little impudent towards women (for man) and towards men (for woman). The calculation of value is similar to point a).
- l) The value of 8, *Lakuning Geni*. Baby characters: hot-tempered, quarrelsome, slanderous, afraid of danger, and for woman: often disastrous. The value calculation is similar to point b).

g. Pancasuda

Pancasuda consists of 10 days, each day has *neptu* or value to be used as the guide to determine luck or misfortune and bad or good day to conduct an activity or work. *Pancasudha* has similar calculation pattern with *Pa-arasan*. *Pancasudha* begins its first day with *Lebu katiyub ing angin* and ends with *Tunggak-semi*. Each name of day has certain value and character which are depicted as follows.

- a) *Lebu katiyub ing angin*. Characters: uneasy, unsteady and sometimes encounters with unfortunate events, unlucky, meets unachieved goals, and has unsteady thoughts. Benefits: for hunting in the forest.
- b) *Wasesa-Sagara*. Characters: merciful, broad-hearted, capable to endure the goods and the bad, and has great dignity. Benefit: for growing crops.
- c) *Tunggak-semi*. Characters: always fortunate, always grows though cut. Benefit: for inaugurating employees.
- d) *Satriya-wibawa*. Characters: gets glory and charisma everywhere and always be sought as the source of knowledge. Benefits: for building houses and establishing matrimony.
- e) *Sumur-sinaba*. Character: always finds a way to gain versatility. Benefit: for building wells.
- f) *Satriya-wirang*. Character: frequently suffers from shame although having good intention. Benefit: for detaining bad people.
- g) *Bumi-kapetak*. Characters: strong, good-hearted, diligent, bears the hunger, thus causing his/her poverty. Benefits: for establishing poles and constructing waste disposal system (toilet).
- h) *Lebu katiyub ing angin*. Characters: uneasy, unsteady and sometimes encounters with unfortunate events, unlucky, meets unachieved goals, and has unsteady thoughts. Benefits: for hunting in the forest.
- i) *Wasesa-Sagara*. Characters: merciful, broad-hearted, capable to endure the goods and the bad, and has great dignity. Benefit: for growing crops.
- j) *Tunggak-semi*. Characters: always fortunate, always grows though cut. Benefit: for inaugurating employees.

3. How to Memorize and Trace Wuku

Memorizing the names of *wuku* in order is not effortless, given the quite huge number of the *wuku*. For that reason, certain techniques are needed to facilitate people to memorize the *wuku* without any mistake. The *wuku* memorization technique is among others done by singing or *nembang*. *Tembang* or the song used is a two-stanza *macapat* song. The example is *Pangkur* song as follows.

*Cacah wuku tigang dasa,
Sinta, Landep, Wukir tuwin Kuranthil,*

*Tolu, Gumbreg kang anusul,
Warigalit gumantya,
Warigagung, Julungwangi, Sungsang nusul,
Galungan, Kuningan nulya,
Langkir, Mandhasiya nuli.*

*Juhungpujud tuwin Pahang,
Kuruwelut, Marakeh, sarta Tambir,
Madhangkungan Maktal nusul,
Wuye, Manail nulya,
Prangbakat, Bala nuli sinusul Wugu,
Wayang, Kulawu anulya,
Dhukut, Watugunung Titi.*

In addition to *wuku* memorizing techniques, there is also the technique of memorizing the misfortunate locations or the avoided directions to stay away from any dangers while traveling. This technique also uses two-stanza *Pangkur* as below:

*Wuku ingkang tigang dasa,
ngolah-ngalih dungunge wuku iki,
binagi dadi sepuluh,
gerombol tiga-tiga,
keblat wolu tanapi ing ngisor ndhuwur,
prenahe kang wuku tiga,
iku awasana kaki.*

*Lamun sira mangsah yuda,
aywa sira ngadhepake wuku iki,
becik sira mapan lungguh,
dununge wuku tiga,
apan iku nglungguhi gigiring wuku,
nyingkurake kala dasa,
yeku Kala Dasa Bumi (Kamajaya, 1971: 341-378).*

Besides the *wuku* memorizing techniques and *jabung kala jaya bumi*, the technique of calculating the *wuku* also needs to be mastered. The *wuku* is determined by setting up the first and the last days of the cycle. The first day of the cycle is set on *Selasa Kliwon* or *Anggara Kasih* 'Tuesday Kliwon' followed by *Rebo Legi* and then followed by the next days in order. The cycle repeats for seven *pasaran* 'week' and ends on *Senen Wage* or *Soma Cemengan*. The cycle will continue to repeat for 210 days. 210 days are equal to 6 *wuku* periods, i.e. $6 \times 35 \text{ days} = 210 \text{ days}$, which means that the *wuku* periods have 6 *Anggara Kasih* days.

The 35-day cycle is called *selapan dina*. Although both consist of 35 days each, *selapan dina* in *pasaran* differs from *selapan dina* in *wuku*. The difference lies at the beginning and the end of the days of each cycle. In *pawukon*, the cycle always start on *Selasa Kliwon* and ends on *Senen Wage*, while the calculation of the beginning and the

end of days in *selapan dina* in non-*wuku* can be determined on the basis of personal birth date or the beginning of each person's work.

The cycles of *wuku* period during one year are 12 times with each period consists of 35 days. The cycle during one year takes $12 \times 35 = 420$ days or called *sadhapur masa wuku*. A year of *wuku* periods consists of 12 *masa* which is often called *pranata masa* and consists of: *Kasa, Karo, Katelu, Kapat, Kalima, Kanem, Kapitu, Kawolu, Kasanga, Kasapuluh, Dhestha, and Sada*. Of the 12 periods, each two periods or *masa* have parallel timeline with one *wuku*. *Masa Kasa* and *Kapitu* are parallel to *Wuku Mandhasiya*, *masa Karo* and *Kawolu* are parallel to *wuku Tambir*, *masa Katelu* and *Kasanga* are parallel to *Wuku Prangbakat*, *masa Kapat* and *Kasepuluh* are parallel to *wuku Dhukut*, *masa Kalima* and *Dhestha* are parallel to *wuku Kuranthil*, and *masa Kanem* and *Sada* are parallel to *wuku Julungwangi*. These calculations are continually kept in cycle. The calculation of *masa* is commonly practiced by farmers for setting the farming time and determining the suitable crop planted during certain period.

The technique for tracing the *wuku* can be performed in two ways: forward and backward. The example of *wuku* tracing: the *wuku* taken in 2005 for example, the beginning of *Wuku Galungan* falls on March 6 to March 12. From March 6 it can be traced backwards to *wuku Shinta* which falls on *Ahad Pahing* (Sunday Pahing) on December 26, 2004 to *Sabtu Pon* (Saturday Pon) on January 1, 2005. If traced forward, the tracing will results *wuku Watugunung* which falls on *Ahad Kliwon* (Sunday Kliwon) on July 17, 2005 to *Sabtu Legi* (Saturday Legi) on July 23, 2005 (Kuswa Endah, 2006: 184).

4. Conclusion

Thus the description of *pawukon*, one of Javanese studies used for recognizing the character, nature, luck, misfortune, glory, destruction, job matching, safe traveling direction, and deciding perfect day for holding an event as well as setting the farming time and determining the suitable crop planted during certain period. Although emerged from ancient era, this technology can be used as the guideline for safety and security nowadays. Therefore this technology still contributes to determine the work direction and path for children's development by regarding their natures based on their birth date. If a child is detected having bad characters, his/her family may certainly escort and direct the child to good things. On the other hand, when a child is detected to be well-natured, he/she should be guided therefore not to deviate from the right path. At last, the decision is left to observers and users how the good and evil of this technology are used for the society and country in order to live a harmonious life, or so called *Suradira jayaningrat lebur dening pangastuti* 'all evil will be destroyed by kindness'. For Javanese people, harmonious life is a desire; harmonious life with the society (humans) in which they live, and harmonious relationship with God (Mulder, Niels, 1984:41). The implementation of *pawukon* by Javanese people is one way to achieve harmonious life, Therefore it is unsurprising that the technology is still used in this super-modern era.

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