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Amerta Movement of Java 1986-1997. An Asian Movement Improvisation

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Abstract: Amerta Movement is free bodily movement combining the wisdom of Asia with contemporary western dynamics. It is both a concept and a practice. Life is viewed in terms of flux. Based on ordinary daily movements as well as on working with awareness and attitudes, Amerta Movement employs a technique of great simplicity in attempting to gain understanding, facilitating human growth and developing potentials. The physical body is used as an instrument for exploring identity, self-expression, and communication, with the potential for artistic expression.

The majority of practitioners of Amerta Movement are Westerners or people from other parts of Asia and the Pacific. They come from all walks of life. Moreover, Amerta Movement has been applied to many fields such as movement education, health and therapy, art, including environmental and new ritual art.

Amerta Movement has been created by the Javanese movement instructor, spiritual performance artist and Buddhist, Suprpto Suryodarmo (b. 1945). Moreover, it carries the imprint of the multi-ethnic, multi-spiritual, and multi-artistic Central

Javanese society centered in the old court city of Surakarta (Solo). Physically Amerta Movement is rooted in the soil of Central Java, in its natural and cultural environment of temples and power-sites part of Indonesia's national heritage where a large part of the teaching takes place. Such sites are "books" for the students to read, including Candi Sukuh, a Hindu-Buddhist temple on the slopes of Mount Lawu, Borobudur, one of the world's wonders and perhaps its largest Buddhist temple and Parangtritis Beach, an ancient power-site on the Indian Ocean. At Suprpto's personal practice center, Padepokan Lemah Putih also called the Lemah Putih School, at Mojosongo village near Solo, the Javanese nature and its cultural environment have been recreated.

The present study is based on the Danish author, Lise Lavelle's, observations of and her participation in Javanese life and culture since 1977, as well as on her work with Amerta Movement as a participant observer since 1987 and as an observer between 1994-1997. The method used has been that of observer and participant observer, one based on a cross-disciplinary approach between humanities and art. The purpose of this study has been to ascertain whether Amerta Movement is a form of movement meditation, a type of healing, art, or something else. The conclusion has been that Amerta Movement transcends borders and is a unique expression in its own right. More specifically, this study focuses on the general basics of Amerta Movement, termed "Pribadi Approach" (i.e. individual/personal approach) taught in three courses, namely "Basic", "Vocabulary" and "Communication". In Indonesia Amerta Movement has spread to the outer islands. Outside Indonesia Amerta Movement is termed Sharing Movement.