

CultureTalk Indonesia Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>  
**On Conflict and Harmony**

**Indonesian transcript:**

Pewawancara: Ee... apakah Indonesia sudah demokratis sekarang? Kira-kira?

Agus: Dalam konteks eee... politik, demokrasi politik iya. Tapi dalam konteks ekonomi dan sosial saya kayanya masih ragu.

Pewawancara: Apakah kerukunan agama saat ini sudah terjamin dengan baik di Indonesia?

Agus: Sebenarnya orang Indonesia itu orang yang sangat ramah lho.. Yang tidak suka perang, ga suka eee... mengusilin agama orang lain hmmm tapi, persoalannya kemudian konflik agama di Indonesia lebih didasari oleh konflik eee.. kepentingan-kepentingan elit politik di Indonesia yang menjadikan agama sebagai alat untuk berkuasa.

Pewawancara: Hmm.. apakah itu teridentifikasi dari partai-partai yang mengatas namakan agama ?

Agus: Salah satu iya, kedua dalam beberapa konflik yang ada di Indonesia itu eeee... ada kesan kemudian eee... adanya kepentingan kekuasaan untuk bermain ee.. misalnya pada satu tempat eee.. disitu.. yang barangkali kaya tempat itu dengan sumber bumi dan sumber alam, mineral tambang, dan ehmmm... ada konflik yang.. eemmm Misalnya saya tadi agama ini, nah saya bagaimana mengupayakan dukungan dari..dari..dari.. kaum saya seagama saya untuk bagaimana saya berkuasa dengan mengangkat sentimen, etnik, ras ketika yang hari ini berkuasa itu dari etnik lain atau dari agama yang lain.

Pewawancara: Apakah kerukunan antar beragama merupakan pertanda bahwa negara itu sudah demokratis?

Agus: Kerukunan beragama saya pikir tidak.... Lebih dekat dengan persoalan culture, persoalan budaya. Persoalan bagaimana nilai-nilai budaya kita mengajarkan kita untuk menghargai orang lain. Saya yakin pada tingkatan budaya kita tidak ada masalah, karena saya ingat saya besar di Palembang, di lingkungan Cina, Buddha, setiap lebaran kami saling eee...mendatangi, memberikan makanan, begitupun ketika ada eee seperti eee.. Natal atau Cap Go Meh.

Pewawancara: Hmm menarik sekali melihat ee kerukunan antar beragama di Palembang. Hmm bisa bercerita sedikit tentang masyarakat Palembang itu seperti apa?

Agus: Masyarakat Palembang itu eee... Palembang itu kota tua, lebih dari seratus ee.. seratus...seribu mungkin, seribu tahun ketika dihitung sejak periode eee... Sriwijaya. Eee.. disitu dia masyarakat yang sangat plural. Ada Cina, ada kemudian turunan Arab, ee... ada turunan India, ada juga Melayu, ada Jawa. Eee dalam.. dalam konteks pluralitas

ini eee.. ada sebuah identitas yang dibangun yang terikat pada faktor ekologi sungai. Jadi masyarakat sungai itu masyarakat dengan kultur air. Kultur bukan pesisir pantai tapi kultur air sungai.

Ini memungkinkan kemudian eee... kalau filosofi sungai itu semuanya bergerak mengalir nah begitulah masyarakat itu, dalam relasi sosial mereka sangat cair, tapi sering juga terjadi gesekan tapi saya pikir toh itu hal yang wajar. Nah, berbeda halnya ketika eee... keberbedaan itu kemudian dimanfaatkan untuk kepentingan-kepentingan tertentu. Tapi Palembang tidak punya sejarah seperti itu dalam hemat saya.

### **English translation:**

Interviewer: Eeee . . . Is Indonesia already democratic now? What do you think?

Agus: In context of . . . eee . . . politics, political democracy, I think it is. But in the social-economic context, I don't think so. I am still not sure.

Interviewer: Is religious harmony guaranteed and protected in Indonesia nowadays?

Agus: Actually, the Indonesian people are very friendly. They don't like to fight. They don't like . . . eee . . . to involve themselves in other people's religions hmmm . . . but the problems of religious conflicts in Indonesia are more based on the conflict . . . eee . . . in terms of the political interest of the Indonesian elite, who would use religion as a power-gaining tool.

Interviewer: Hmm . . . Is that identified from political parties that are started in the name of a certain religion?

Agus: One of the reason, yes. The second is in some conflicts in Indonesia, there is a sense that then . . . eee . . . there are interests of the powerful at play . . . eee . . . for example in one place. Maybe this particular place is rich with natural resources, mining, and there are conflicts that . . . for example, are based on religion. Well, I try to get support from . . . from . . . from . . . the people who are of the same religion as I am in order to obtain power by bringing up the sentiments, ethnicities, and race when the person who is currently in a position of power comes from a different ethnic group, or holds a different religion.

Interviewer: Is religious harmony a sign that those countries are already democratic?

Agus: I don't think that religious harmony . . . It's closer to cultural issues, cultural problems. The problem is how our cultural values teach us to appreciate others. I believe that this is not a problem at all with our culture, because I remember growing up in Palembang,<sup>1</sup> in a Chinese environment, Buddhist, and we would visit each other every

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<sup>1</sup> Palembang is the capital city of the South Sumatra Province in Indonesia

*Lebaran*<sup>1</sup> day, they would give us food, and take turns when they celebrates Christmas or *Cap Go Meh*.<sup>2</sup>

Interviewer: Hmmm, it's interesting to know that religious harmony exists in Palembang. Could you please tell me a bit more about the people of Palembang?

Agus: Palembang people are ... hmmm ... Palembang is an old city, it's more than a hundred ee ... a hundred maybe a thousand years old if we count its existence since eee ... the Sriwijaya<sup>3</sup> era. Palembang consists of plural communities. There are Chinese people, then people of Arab ancestry ... eee ... Hindi ancestry, and there are also the Malays, the Javanese. Eee ... In the context of plurality, eee ... there is an identity and that identity is bound to ecological factors related to the river. A river community is a people with water culture. It's not a seaside culture, but it's a river culture.

This culture, then, produces a river's philosophy; in this philosophy everything moves and flows (smoothly), that is the community, in social relations they are very flexible, but there are also small conflicts, but I think it's a normal thing. Well, it's different when the differences are then used for special interests. However, I think Palembang does not have that kind of history.

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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<sup>1</sup> *Lebaran* is *Idul Fitri* day in Indonesia. It's the day when Muslims celebrate Id after the fasting month.

<sup>2</sup> *Cap Go Meh* is the 15th day in the Chinese Lunar Year, the first full moon of the year. This year it falls on February 21st. In China it is also known as the Lantern festival. In South-East Asia. *Cap Go Meh* is sometimes called the Chinese Valentine Day, because it is a day when young unmarried women gather to toss tangerines into the sea, in a hope that their future spouse will pick it up.

<sup>3</sup> Sriwijaya is an ancient Malay kingdom that existed around the sixth or seventh century. This kingdom was based in Palembang, South Sumatra.