



Mahidol University
Wisdom of the Land



Multiculturalism in Asia

Peace and Harmony



VIETNAM

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SINGAPORE



MYANMAR



Edited by
Imtiaz Yusuf



Mahidol University
Wisdom of the Land



**Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung**

Multiculturalism in Asia - Peace and Harmony

*Edited by
Imtiyaz Yusuf*

Multiculturalism in Asia-Peace and Harmony

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Preface

Clin. Prof. Suwat Benjaponpitak, M.D.
Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs,
Mahidol University
and
Acting Dean, College of Religious Studies.

It gives me great pleasure to see the publication of the proceeding from the “International Conference on Multiculturalism in Asia - Peace and Harmony” which was held at the College of Religious Studies on 25th-26th August 2016 as a cooperative activity between the CRS International Center for Buddhist-Muslim Understanding of the College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand, and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Thailand.

The contemporary age is an age of clashes based on the fault lines of cultures, languages and religions, which are seen as being incompatible or irreconcilable by both the secular-modern and religious nationalists. The worldwide occurrence of intra- and interreligious and ethnic conflicts is seen as a failure of the multiculturalism project in Germany and other Western countries. The emergence of religious exclusivism, terrorism and wars resulting in the migration of the vulnerable who have lost hope for a future in their own countries has made multiculturalism a global challenge. The world today is facing the challenge of responding to and building multiculturalism amidst the rise of politically radical interpretations of religious and ethnic identities, as well as religious fundamentalism and religious nationalism.

The main objectives of the conference were: (1) to discuss the challenge of building multiculturalism in the age of clashes along the fault lines of ethnicities, cultures, languages and religions; (2) to explore strategies and

methods on which the ASEAN countries can cooperatively address the challenge of building multiculturalism within their territories and the region; (3) to redefine the concepts of ethnic/cultural/religious identities in light of fast changing local and global realities in today's fragmented world system and their implications for the future shape of ASEAN cultural pluralism.

The 2016 conference exposed the participants firstly to the challenges of living multicultural lives in a globalized age which is causing much strife and disrupting social harmony and peace around the world. Humans are naturally multicultural, but the contemporary age of a fast-paced life with advancement in communications, technologies and global trade is affecting nearly all dimensions of life in both positive and negative manners. It is placing new demands on religions, cultures and societies to relook at their inherited traditions for constructing peaceful and economically sustainable living amidst national and global diversity.

The scientifically critical research papers and speeches presented at the conference by both Thai and international researchers are now made available for wider distribution through this publication. The two days of conference was attended by about 200 participants from Thailand and foreign countries, comprising of academics, students and the general public.

This international conference was the third successful event organized by the CRS International Center of Buddhist-Muslim Understanding, College of Religious Studies. I hereby thank our partner, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Bangkok, for providing a generous grant towards the publication of this volume. I believe the research articles in this volume will serve as a source and guide for future critical research and studies about multicultural life in the globalizing age both in Asia and at the international level.

Salaya, Nakorn Pathom
Thailand

November 2018

FOREWORD

Georg Gafron

**Resident Representative to Thailand
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung**

It's been two decades since the American philosopher Samuel Huntington dared to make a bleak prophecy in his book "Clash of Civilization." In the long term, it kept a clash of different cultures on Earth as a result of globalization and informal revolution resulting from global information technologies.

He puts particular emphasis on the major religions. In his opinion, they determined the thinking, feeling and thus the values of billions of people. For Huntington, these were Islam, Buddhism, the Byzantine Orthodoxy Church, and Christianity, with all their respective forms and expressions. In the end, Samuel Huntington sees the cause of a self-preservation struggle that could lead to devastating wars.

Once dismissed as apocalyptic, Huntington can see himself confirmed today. Powerful anti-Western movements dominate above all the Islamic world. Some even speak of a "holy war" against the pernicious influence of the "Great Satan", which means the West along with Christianity, but above all the USA. It is obvious that religious beliefs are exploited for political purposes.

It is a fact that economic elites find their decisions almost based exclusively on rational criteria only for optimizing profits without any thoughtfulness of the cultural, traditional and historical circumstances. The result of this is very often frustration and even aggression.

(8) FOREWORD

Therefore, it is all the more important to promote mutual understanding and to look for similarities. The ultimate goal should be the commandment of tolerance! This consensus can create a climate based on reasoning rather than argument, commonality rather than demarcation.

The College of Religious Studies at Mahidol University provides a foundation for achieving this goal through its scientific work. It is a goal to which the Konrad Adenauer Foundation from Germany is committed, and therefore it has supported this publication.

Bangkok
Thailand

November 2018

INTRODUCTION

Imtiyaz Yusuf

The vast continent of Asia and its maritime countries have been historically multicultural; this is evident from its landmark cities, religious and cultural sites and trade routes such as the Silk Road, the sea trade from China via India to Arabia, Europe and Africa. We also learn about this from pre-modern age Greek, Chinese, Arab and European travelers who were Buddhists, Muslims and Christians and who visited different parts of Asia and Africa by land and sea routes. They have left behind writings informing about the multicultural and the multi-religious Asia. Among them are the Greek Megasthenes (302-298 BCE); the Chinese Faxian (337-422 BCE), Xuanzang (Hsuan-tsang) (600-664 CE), Yijing or I-Tsing (671-695 CE) and Zheng He (1371 – 1435 CE); the Arab al-Masudi (957 CE); the Persian al-Biruni (1024-1030CE); the Moorish/North African Ibn Batuta (1333-1347 CE); the Syrian Shihabuddin al-Umari (1348 CE); the Persian Abdur Razzaq (1443-1444 CE); the Venetians (Italians) Marco Polo (1292-1294 CE) and Nicolo Conti (1420-1421 CE); and the Russian merchant Athanasius Nikitin (1470-1474 CE).

This historical cosmopolitan aspect of multicultural Asian life is exhibited in the mystic synthesis of its religious traditions, inter mixed languages, cuisines, and intercultural patterns of life which formed the basis of the dynamics of the region until the coming of the colonial age, which for the first time separated Asia along ethno- religious lines. This replaced languages, religions and cultures by ethnicity as markers of local identities similar to race as in Europe. (Coedes, 1968; Muḥammad Rabi' ibn Muḥammad Ibrahim, 1972; Reid, 1988, 1995; Ricklefs, 2006; Zoetmulder, 1995) (Elverskog, 2010, 2018; Foltz, 2010; Suryadinata, 2005)

The Two Debates Of Multiculturalisms

a) European

The post-colonial and the current globalizing eras marked by territorial wars, rise of ethno-nationalisms which recently have transmuted into volatile religious nationalistic conflicts that employ religions as political ideologies for “othering” and discriminating against those who do not belong to the majority ethno-religious groups. This political ideologizing of religions diverges from their original objective to universally alleviate the suffering of humanity in different ways around the world. This new development is one of the side effects of the modern age’s materialist epistemology and ontology of violence, threatening multicultural living and peace around the world. (Juergensmeyer, 1993, 2017; Milbank, 2006)

The global rise of religious nationalists is the new stage in the conflict between the religious fundamentalists and the secularists which began with the 1960’s European religious crisis which has now become global. (Juergensmeyer, 1993; McLeod, 2010) This phenomenon has been described as the failure of multiculturalism; it is threatening the survival of the religious minorities around the world by raising an unfounded fears of the small numbers and triggering revengeful geography of anger. (Appadurai, 2006) It is an outcome of the modern age expelling religion from the public sphere and its vengeful return led by the religious fanatics who engage in the politics of religious populism. (Fukuyama, 2018; Kimball, 2008)

The post-colonial era also saw the migration of Asian and African labor to the West as “guest workers” who would one day eventually return to their home countries. The arrival of the guest workers changed the profile of the European nations which were hitherto mono-racial, mono-cultural and mono-religious. It has impacted the social, cultural and religious makeup of the European and American demographic profiles and their socio-cultural-religious landscape. It has raised the challenge of how to assimilate and integrate the guests into European and American lands. But the guest workers did not return to their home countries, and new non-European generations of Asians and Africans were born in the West. They practice the non-Christian religions of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Confucianism and African religions, etc.

Furthermore, the Cold War and the post-Cold War era along with the yet unresolved wars in the Middle East, the rise of communistically-capitalist China, and the rise of religious extremists in the Middle East, Africa and Asia put further multicultural pressures and challenges to the Western nations. It led to the emergence of five types of responses: one, the liberal multiculturalists; two, the rightist nationalists opposed to multiculturalism; three, the religious conservatives who opposed the presence of non-Christian religions and their symbolisms in the public sphere; four, the religious accommodationists who support interfaith coexistence; and five, the ultra-secularist who dislike the presence of religions in the public sphere. (Asad, 2003; Jürgen Habermas, 2004; Jürgen Habermas, 2008; Stepan, 2000; Taylor, 2018)

The end of the Cold War along with the collapse of communism and the beginning of the new current wars in the Middle East such as the two Iraq wars of 1990 and 2003, the rise of the al-Qaeda, the Taliban and the ISIS, the collapse of the Arab Spring, the ongoing wars in Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan along with the anti-Tamil separatist war in Sri Lanka and Africa involving regional and global powers have caused political and economic havoc and new massive migrations of the war refugees and the displaced people to the West. (Haass, 2010) This has raised the “Muslim Question” (Norton, 2013) leading to the present rise of the anti-migration European ultra-nationalists and anti-Semitism in the UK, Hungary, Poland, Austria and Brazil. (Davies, 2018; Dodd & agencies, 2018; “Jair Bolsonaro threatens us all - The Boston Globe,” 2018) These developments along with the fast rise of materialist communist turned materialist capitalist China raises important challenges to multiculturalism – the politics of recognition which will accord both respect for human dignity, non-discrimination and respect of human rights around the world. (Grassley, 2018; “We can reach you wherever you are,” 2018)

In the aftermath of the above critical developments for the future of Europe, there have emerged different views about multiculturalism in the West. Some have proclaimed its death while others propose development of policies that will foster multicultural or intercultural citizenship social renewal or through regulation and limits of accommodating national minorities. (“Chancellor Merkel says German multiculturalism has ‘utterly failed,’” 2010; Connolly, 2010; Rattansi, 2007, p. 136)

The European debate about multiculturalism between its supporters and detractors continues on unresolved. (Kymlicka, 1995; Kymlicka & Opalski, 2002; Malik, 2014; Modood, 2007; Murphy, 2012; Parekh, 2006; Taylor et al., 1994)

b) Asian

Unlike Europe, the debate about multiculturalism in Asia revolves around the question of how postcolonial states rife with ethno-nationalist debates and conflicts centered around the questions of language, ethnicity and religious identities can become cohesive multicultural nations. Nearly all Asian countries are embroiled in conflicts centered around invented politico-ethnic identities such as the Sunni-Shia sectarianism in the Middle East and the rise of Hindu and Buddhists ethnoreligious nationalists in India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka (Grant, 2010; Jerryson & Juergensmeyer, 2010; Juergensmeyer, Kitts, & Jerryson, 2015; Nasr, 2016; Sharma, 2015, 2015; Tharoor, 2018); (Yusuf, 2017)

The challenge of multiculturalism in Asia has a different face. It faces the task of accommodating ethno-cultural-religious differences in post-colonial countries in states in face of disrespecting constitutions which makes the minorities exposed to violence. How to establish models of democracies which recognize multicultural differences rooted in the diversity of languages, ethnicities and religions amidst rising religio-political nationalists calls for the dismantling of the parliamentary systems which in their view benefit the minorities more than the majorities? (Yusuf, *Can Islam and Buddhism coexist peacefully in SE Asia?*, 2014); (Yusuf, *Rising fundamentalism threatens culture of tolerance*, 2015); (Hefner, 2001)

The globalizing age is an age of crisis of identity marked by increasing xenophobias, ethnoreligious exclusivisms, conflicts and wars challenging the building of a multicultural world. This development is placing constraints on respect for basic human freedoms and accepting diversity of peoples and values as natural facts and not threats. The recent rise of religious fundamentalisms coupled with nationalisms in the form of religious exclusivism in Southeast Asia is a formidable challenge facing the construction

of a cohesive ASEAN Socio-Cultural community which is ethnically diverse, multilingual and multi-religious, and which will “lift the quality of life of its peoples through cooperative activities that are people-oriented, people-centred, environmentally friendly, and geared towards the promotion of sustainable development to face new and emerging challenges in ASEAN.” (“ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025,” 2016)

The hitherto Asian cultural coexistence often cited as its hallmark is under tremendous pressures for survival amidst the growth and spread of unfounded intercultural biases and prejudices propagandized through cultural ignorance and misinformation. It raises urgent concerns for national security and for sustaining peaceful coexistence.

It was in the view of the above described global challenges to multiculturalism and its unpredictable implications for Asia that the CRS Intl Center for Buddhist-Muslim Understanding, College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Thailand organized an International Conference on “Multiculturalism in Asia - Peace and Harmony” which was held on 25th-26th August 2016. The articles in this volume are collated from that conference and presented here for further reflection, research and seeking of solutions for the dangerous threats concerning sustainability of multiculturalism in Asia.

This volume contains the posthumous publication of one the most inspiring philosophical keynote address with important practical recommendations by the late Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, who was a political scientist by training, a politician and a diplomat by vocation, and who once served as the foreign minister of Thailand and also former Secretary General of the ASEAN group of nations. He delves on the topic of how shared common humanity can serve as the foundation for building multiculturalism, integration and interfaith peaceful coexistence in Asia.

It is followed by an important article by Khunying Professor Dr. Suriya Ratanakul on the philosophy and practice of royal benevolence of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) of Thailand as a practical and successful convention applied towards the inclusion of ethno-religious minorities in

Thailand. Ven, Prof. Mahinda Deegalle's article reflects on how a sacred site in Sri Lanka with a long-established pilgrimage tradition helps establish communal harmony that embraces the plurality of religions, beliefs and practices. Dr. Rizal G. Buendia discusses economic cooperation as a source for building multiculturalism in ASEAN region. The next three articles, by Professor Osman Bakar, Professor Arnold T. Monera and Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Ahnaf, offer a Malaysian, a Filipino and an Indonesian perspectives on creating multiculturalism amidst diversities in the three important Southeast Asian countries while Sabir Naz from Pakistan describes and illustrates how celebrating Hindu festivals in Lahore, Pakistan – a country founded on Muslim nationalist identity – preserves Hindu identity in a Muslim-majority country. I thank all the contributors for their articles.

Special thanks go to both Assoc. Prof. Thanya Subhadrabandhu, M.D. Acting Vice President, Mahidol University and also Clin. Prof. Suwat Benjaponpitak, M.D. Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, Mahidol University for their moral support, encouragement and advice in making this publication project a reality during their tenures as former and current acting deans of the College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University. And particular thanks to Mr. Georg Gafron, Thailand Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) for offering generous financial support for the publication of this book. I also thank Ms. Orapan Suwanwattanakul, Project Assistant at KAS, for her assistance and guidance in helping complete the project in time.

Very special thanks to Mr. Francis Chan for his meticulous job in proofreading and copy-editing this, our second joint publication, activity.

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November 2018

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Keynote Address
ONE THING IN COMMON IS OUR COMMON HUMANITY
The Contemporary Challenges of Multiculturalism,
Integration, Assimilation and Interfaith
(Posthumous Speech)

Surin Pitsuwan¹

Respected Venerables, Dr. Preecha Soontranun, Vice President for Student Affairs and Alumni, Assoc. Prof. Thanya Subhadrabandhu, Acting Dean, College of Religious Studies, Assoc. Professor Wathinee Boonchalaksi, the former dean of the College Of Religious Studies, Dr. Azizan Baharuddin, Director General, *Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia* (IKIM); Your Excellency Dato' Nazirah Hussain, Ambassador of Malaysia to Thailand and my two very senior professors and academic colleagues Prof. Dr. Khunying Suriya Ratanakul and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pinit Ratanakul and Satrajarn, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

When Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf contacted me a few months ago to come to this conference, every week he has been on my back, on my phone, on my Line, on my email, all sorts of communication channels that we have, reminding me that today I have an appointment here at the College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University. I asked him how many audience he said about 10,000. I said I prefer to speak to a smaller group of people and he said yes, the audience will be a collection of people who are very much interested and committed to and very concerned about the issue of multiculturalism all

¹ This keynote address is the transcript of Dr. Surin Pitsuwan's oral speech.

around the globe today, not only in Southeast Asia, not only in Thailand, not only in Asia. But standing in front of my former Professor Dr. Pinit Ratanakul, I feel very humble sir, because the first course of philosophy, that I was introduced to and exposed to at Thammasat University, was under the tutorship and professorship of Dr. Pinit Ratanakul, thank you very much sir.

Since then I have traveled the world of intellectual pursuit, inspired by what I learned at Thammasat by Professor Pinit, "that each and every one of us must be aware of the fact that, actually we know very little of anything." That is called philosophical humility, meaning you are forever humble, always thirsty for knowledge or in the words of Steve Jobs, "always be hungry, always be stupid", meaning you are always dissatisfied with what you have and what you know, always open to new ideas, new information and new knowledge.

So if we begin with philosophical humility, and in Islam the last statement that the teacher would say before closing the text after reading to the students is always "*Wallahu a'lam*" - God knows the best, what I know is just a fraction of God's knowledge. So forever we are humble, we know there is a lot more out there than we need to know. That the world is extremely diversified that there is room for more knowledge of each other and for better appreciation of the differences among us and certainly appreciation of the commonality among us. So I have traveled this road of intellectual pursuit and I have used that philosophical humility all along, knowing that everyone has something to teach and to share and to educate if we are open with that humility in our hearts and in our souls.

The subject that you all want to talk about and that is multiculturalism, peace and harmony in Asia, is a very timely subject precisely because Asia and the Pacific have become more and more important in the global community the last 30 years, definitely more than the last century. So anything that happens to Southeast Asia, anything that happens to the center of gravity or what Hillary Clinton calls the fulcrum of emerging architectures of cooperation in the region and what others have

called us locomotive of growth, locomotive of recovery for the global community, anything that happens to us in terms of war, whether violence, misunderstanding, tension, religious conflicts will have further and stronger repercussions and implications in the global community. Over half of humanity lives in this part of the world in East Asia, with China and India alone having almost 3 billion out of 7.3 billion and yet the diversity in this part of the world is very extreme.

If you start to count from the shores of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and as you move eastwards to the islands of the Pacific, this vast region is full of contradictions, full of diversity and definitely full of fault lines for creating misunderstanding and conflicts if we are not careful.

A few years ago the BBC did a series; they sent a team around the world and to ask experts in population studies - demography, in economics, in sociology, in agriculture and food production to ask the question how many people can this little blue planet host or sustain? All of them calculated together and gave the answer about 15 billion at the maximum. But with the condition that every man and woman of the 15 billion consumes uses natural resources equal to the people of India. But if the people of the world consume and use natural resources equal to the people of North America as the standard of progress, of consumption, of ownership and utility of resources around the world, then this planet can only sustain 1.2 billion people.

This means by the middle of the century, we will need 5 more planets, meaning we need a space vehicle to take us somewhere else. This means we have to work on a migration plan, which I am not aware anybody is doing. So the world has become, in the words of Tom Friedman of the New York Times, crowded; the world has become hot because of climate change and the world has become flat, borderless. Right now there are 65.3 million people who are migrants around the globe, including 1 million who went into Europe last year in 2015. Out of this 65.3 million people about 21 million people are refugees running away from conflicts, running away from

confrontation and violence, seeking peace and security for themselves and for their families and for their children. As you have seen the photo of a 3-year-old child washed ashore in southern Greece, a refugee from Syria became a symbol of death, conflict and violence in that part of the world, particularly Syria.

And recently there was another 5-year-old boy. Danish his name, he was bloodied with bombs and shrapnel from the conflict and violence in his hometown in Syria. So we will see a lot more of this tension, conflicts, over-crowdedness, movement of people, lack of appreciation, lack of understanding among us and between us. So the future is extremely worrisome for all of us and for those souls who are concerned who are worried. We must get together and try to find a way to a better future for all of us, not just here in ASEAN, in Southeast Asia, but in the rest of the world.

As far as ASEAN is concerned we also have a tremendous diversity - 10 countries, 620 million people; we have all civilizations of communities here. We have 4 Theravada Buddhist countries next to each other - Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. We have the largest Muslim country in the world here i.e. Indonesia, and also Malaysia and Brunei, plus Singapore and the Muslim minorities of southern Thailand, southern Philippines and Myanmar. I mean that the largest Muslim countries are not Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, or Egypt but Indonesia. Then we have the only Christian country in ASEAN, namely, the Catholic Christian country of the Philippines with 104 million people. There are also pockets of Confucianism and Brahmanism, 95% of the island of Bali is still Hindu.

So how do we manage this diversity? Well ASEAN is trying to manage this diversity because when ASEAN was born 49 years ago on the 8th of August 1967, the 5 countries who got together in Bangkok pledged to bind themselves together with efforts and cooperation in order to secure for themselves prosperity and the blessings of peace, and freedom and prosperity.

So we created a larger frame for ourselves, so that each and every member state shall belong to a larger identity and that identity shall work out how to manage this diversity among us and between us. ASEAN is that one platform, so that among this diversity we create unity, we create a new identity, and that is the identity of ASEAN. You can be a Thai and an ASEAN too, you can be a Indonesian and an ASEAN too, you can be a Malaysian and an ASEAN too, you can be a Filipino and an ASEAN too. So you have a larger identity among yourselves of 620 million and a vision of the future together rather than being held back by our own national identities. We shall have that larger vision in front of you and be inspired by that vision, we leave the differences and the diversity to be managed carefully by each state government and we do it differently.

Malaysia is very much structured, made up of the Malays, the Indians and the Chinese, and the constitutional structure allows for all the 3 groups to live together and to partake in the public affairs together and space in the public life together and keep personal identities to the families, to the smaller communities, to the *Kampong*, to the mosque, wherever you belong.

In Indonesia, they are fond of or proud of this, even their national emblem refers to "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" which means "Unity in Diversity" because there are 17,000 islands inhabited by human beings not counting the ones inhabited by only monkeys and orangutans. So Indonesia itself is a tapestry of diversity that has to be managed by Indonesians, that has to be somehow handled very carefully inside.

In Thailand, the head of state is the monarchy, the supreme patron of all religions in the country. Every time we write a constitution there's this issue whether there should be a national religion. I think it is known that His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej himself wishes that the monarch is a Buddhist (พุทธมอญ); that's already adequate. There is no need to introduce a religious element into the constitution.

So we handle our diversity differently, some have been successful, others are still struggling and trying. In Myanmar you have this problem with the Rohingyas and the 135 different ethnic groups and they are trying to manage that diversity; they are still in the discussion. The Union of Myanmar is namely the union of various ethnic groups and tribes. They are still trying to find an effective formula to create a relationship that would be beneficial to all of them, they are still in the process of state building.

How to create a structure that would allow everyone a comfortable space inside? There is no other way to manage this diversity except by accommodating each other and better understanding of each other and appreciating the diversity among us and value the commonality between us. There is no other way.

The tide of globalization is connecting us to everyone else, every other country, every other state, every other 192 members of the United Nations, we are all connected through this wave called globalization. But globalization is not making us all the same, globalization is actually bringing the diversity among us out. Globalization is encouraging each and every one of us to maintain our separate group identities. So in the new ASEAN, in the New East Asia the secret is how to maintain, how to create and how to accommodate identities that individuals carry.

I am a Thai citizen, born a Muslim, in a traditional Muslim school called *Pondok Bantan*, went to a Buddhist temple school. I had to ride a bike down to school in the city, 10 kms down and 10 kms up. Then I got a scholarship to go to America, from learning everything about my own immediate culture Islam as a Thai Muslim and having to learn all that I need to learn as a primary school boy in a Buddhist country, my first teacher was an abbot of a Buddhist temple – *Wat Bantan*. I went to America for a year. There I decided to go to a Sunday school at a church, to learn about Christianity. Along the way, I picked up the differences and commonalities among us and between us, that's only 3 main religions. Venerable monks,

academics and diplomats, I found what I have learned that there is a transcendental unity of religion. (Schuon & Smith, 1984)

The late Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a famous and influential Thai ascetic-philosopher of the 20th century, distinguished between two types of human languages, 1) the human languages (ภาษาคน) which makes us think that we are very different but 2) when we speak the Dhamma language (ภาษาธรรม) we realize that we are very close to each other. (Jackson, 2003) So I think if we take that as a guiding principle in our roadmap forward for humanity within this diversity, we have apparently among us different identities. I told you about that part of my biography to say that I have so many identities in myself. A Muslim *Pondok* student who went to a Buddhist temple school, attended Sunday school in America and came back to Thammasat university to study with Dr. Pinit. After that I went back to America to study Liberal Arts, then on to Harvard University to study Middle East Studies and next Political Science for my Ph. D. As a person I carry within myself multiple identities - a Thai Muslim with Middle Eastern Islam, a member of parliament, a diplomat, a foreign minister and then a secretary general of ASEAN. There is not one Surin Pitsuwan, there are many dimensions of Surin Pitsuwan. I think the challenge for all of us is how to handle all such dimensions and be true to yourself at the same time, which is very difficult. But such is the challenge of globalization, maintaining your diverse identities, being true to yourselves and your traditions, but also being instrumental in connecting the diversity that you have found in your life, in your career and in your work. That's the challenge. So I guess all of us in the ASEAN group of nations and East Asia will have to begin with identifying what is the core of our identity and what are the other identities that we carry within ourselves so that we can be connected with the rest of the region within ASEAN, within East Asia and find that we have something in common. And then we try to create a platform or a network of cooperation and relations which will draw the strength of the diversity rather than having to live in conflicts because of those differences we have among us.

My friend sitting here in the front is from MIT, he is an economist, I don't know why he is here for but it shows that an economist from MIT is also concerned about this problem. We also have here present among us this morning military officers because they are also concerned about this problem. So, I think the secret is how to manage the diversity within yourself and find the commonality among those diversities that you have in yourself, in order to connect with others who happen to have similar dimensions and diversity within themselves. Only then can we talk about peace, we can talk about harmony, after all we are all human beings, after all we are a humanity, we have been placed here as one group among 7.3 billion people in order to make sense of our existence. What are we here for? Are we here just for ourselves, myself, my family or are we here for a larger group of humanity?

Every animal can survive by itself but Aristotle said if you want to be a virtuous man (*by the way, this is from Dr Pinit*) if you want to be a virtuous man you have to live in a society. Meaning you can only practice your virtues with your fellow human beings. You can't live alone and be virtuous. Your virtuosity will come out only when you are interacting with other human beings with whom we live in society.

So we must try to identify what we have in common with others and why are we different and how we can reconcile those differences, so that we can find certain dimensions of commonality among us as Thais, Chinese, Indians, Buddhists, Muslims, Confucianists, Shintoists, Christians, Hindus, Muslims here at this International Center for Buddhist-Muslim Understanding at Mahidol University. It is fantastic, that in all of ASEAN such a center exists only in Mahidol University. Why? Because we need it. Why? Because of the diversity that we must understand among us and between us. So more than just identifying what we have or who we are, we need to find what is really deep down in us, what is the core of our existence and what we have in common and how are we diverse with others and among others. We also need to reach down to our own cultures and civilizations.

In Islam, as the professor just recited, God creates man and woman to form a pair - Adam and Eve - two human beings, one couple whose descendants multiplied into tribes and ethnic nations, so that we shall get to know each other and learn from each other.

In Buddhism, you know that every aspect of Buddhism and this is my training at temple school in Nakorn Si Thammarat, the head monk taught us about the four sublime states of mind as taught by the Buddha:

Love or Loving-kindness (*metta*)
 Compassion (*karuna*)
 Sympathetic Joy (*mudita*)
 Equanimity (*upekkha*)

If you are aware of the four sublime states of mind and practice the พรหมวิหาร 4 (เมตตา กรุณา มุทิตา อุเบกขา) you will be born into the realm of *brahma-viharas* or “sublime attitudes,” which are the Buddha’s primary heart teachings—the ones that connect most directly with our desire for true happiness. The term “brahma-vihara” literally means “dwelling place of brahmas” (จะเกิดในโลกของพระพรหม). *Metta* (เมตตา) meaning good will - good wishes for everyone; *karuna* (กรุณา) meaning identifying with the sufferings of others; *mudita* (มุทิตา) meaning happy with happiness of others; *upekkha* (อุเบกขา) - neutral, impartiality, serenity. We have to go into Hinduism, Hinduism says all of us are reflections of the way of *paramatman* (ปรมาตมัน) - the highest being, the only one being, the only true being *paramatman* (ปรมาตมัน), we are all reflections of that existence. We are not real, we are not here today nor yesterday, we are not going to be here tomorrow, we are just temporal, the only thing permanent is *paramatman* (ปรมาตมัน). Therefore, we are equal, therefore we are connected through it and therefore we must appreciate and respect each other.

Christianity is the same thing, only God’s Son being sent to redeem humanity, we are united in him, we are all created by him, we must love each other because we are all his children.

But, if we look deep down in the teachings of our own particular culture, we will find that there is that commonality, transcendental unity of religion. But once we are down here and speaking human languages (ภาษาคน) we are different, we think we are different because we speak in symbolism. The example is when you use your index finger pointing to the moon in the early evening and there is a dog next to you, your own dog whom you have trained well, where do you think that dog is going to look? He is going to look at your index finger because he doesn't understand symbolism. But if there is a child or a human being next to you, that human being is going to look at the moon because your finger is pointing to the moon, that's why its called index finger.

Human languages are nothing but collections of symbolisms and we can misunderstand and understand, we can get into a fight because of the language; we can appreciate each other because of the language. But the human languages are a collection of symbolisms. We say a word, we utter a sound, we agree it means something. And it depends on the levels of understanding of what that word means, what that sound means and we can be different there too. So first we have to manage and we have to know that within ourselves we have multiple identities. And that we have a lot more in common within this multiple of identities in the depth of our culture individually, whatever religious communities we belong to. There is always something common between us and among us, beginning with our humanity.

So let me end by reciting a poem about the transcendental unity of man, by a transcendental English poet by the name of John Donne who died in 1631, in a poem called "No man is an island," meaning no man is entirely by himself or herself (ไม่มีใครอยู่ได้โดดเดี่ยวตายด้วยตัวเอง). Every man is a piece of a continent, a part of the main (มนุษย์ทุกคนถ้าเปรียบเสมือนเกาะก็เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของทวีป). And John Donne said any man's death, meaning any woman's suffering, meaning any child's hunger, meaning any person's illness, any man's death diminishes me (มันกัดกร่อนตัวผมด้วย). It takes away something from me. Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind

(เพราะฉันคือส่วนหนึ่งของมนุษยชาติ). And Ernest Hemingway said, not to ask “For Whom the Bell Tolls” (ไม่ต้องส่งใครมาถามหรือว่า message ว่าข้อเท็จจริงนี้ ว่า truth นี้ ว่าเราคือหนึ่งนี้), it tolls for you (ระฆังแห่งความจริงนี้ มันดังเองเพื่อพวกเราทุกคน).

With all the diversity we have among us, with all the misunderstanding that we have among us, with all the differences, the suspicion, the mental suspicion, the disrespect, with all prejudice we have for each other, at least we have one thing in common, that is our common humanity. Send not to ask “For Whom the Bell Tolls,” it tolls for everyone.

I wish the proceedings in the next two days success because this challenge is not easy to be resolved. It is a challenge that is now engulfing the entire world; everywhere there is the problem of multiculturalism, integration, assimilation, interfaith. In spite of the strong flow of globalization, this problem is everywhere, we are supposed to be one connected. But each and every one of us somehow feel alienated from the main, from the flow, from the tide. It is not beyond our capacity to come together like this one, like this gathering here, like this international gathering. To look forward into the future where we find more mutual respect, more commonality and more sense of philosophical humility, that we can share and learn from each other, only if we keep our minds open to each other.

Good luck, thank you very much.

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Ethnic-Religious Minorities and Royal Benevolence: A Preliminary Remark

Emeritus Professor Suriya Ratanakul, Mahidol University

First of all I would like to thank the organizers of the conference for this opportunity to participate in this important conference. It is an honor to be invited here, thank you very much.

Now, let me turn to the subject of my presentation.

For more than 200 years the monarchy has been the highest national institution persistent in Thailand amidst socio-economic and political changes. This year of 2016 is special year for us marking the 70th year of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's reign in the Thai kingdom. During his long reign the King has been a royal initiator of change and progress in the country and a promoter of overall social cohesion and harmony dedicating himself to the happiness and welfare of all people irrespective of race, culture and religion. The purpose of my presentation today is to share with you my preliminary remarks on the role of the monarchy in fostering peaceful co-existence between different ethnic-religious minorities and Thai Buddhist majority in present-day Thailand.

Ethnic Minority and Language Family

Like other countries in Southeast Asia Thailand is a heterogeneous society with linguistic and religious diversity. Apart from the Thai and their culture there are more than 20 ethnic groups with their own languages and distinct cultures. These minorities are migrants from neighboring

countries such as China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Some of them such as the Karen have been residing in Thailand for nearly 300 years. These ethnic migrants are categorized into 5 groups according to the language family they are speaking. These are the Tai, the Malayo-Polynesian (the Austronesian), the Sino-Tibetan, the Mon-Khmer (the Austro Asiatic) and the Hmong (Meo)-Yao.

Apart from the Thai, formerly known as the Siamese until 1949, the Tai-speaking groups in Thailand are the Phu Tai, Tai Phuan, Tai Kalaeng, Back Tai (Song), Tai Saek and Tai Nyo. These ethnic Tais have their own unique cultures expressed by their warm hospitality, dresses and the ways they are related to members of their communities and to nature.



TAI PHUAN



BLACK TAI (SONG)



TAI SAEK



TAI NYO



PHU TAI

Though the ethnic Tais are small groups in Thailand, they are more numerous in adjacent countries such as China (southwestern Yunnan, Kwangsi Kweichow, and Kwangtung), India (Assam), Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia and the four northern-most states of Malaysia. To differentiate them from the Thai in Thailand linguists and anthropologists customarily use Thai (with h) to denote the Thai in Thailand and Tai (without h) to denote other Tai-speaking peoples outside Thailand including the migrants.

Other linguistic minorities in Thailand are the ethnic Malays in the deep south speaking a Malay dialect and several ethnic groups speaking the Mon-Khmer, the Tibeto Burman (subgroup of the Sino-Tibetan) and the Hmong-Mien (Yao) language families. The Mon-Khmer speakers are the Thin (who call themselves Mal or Pray and are called Lua by the northern Thai or Lawa by the central Thai), the Khmu and the Mlabi (Spirit of the Yellow Leaf) in the north; the Mon in the central, the Khmère and the Suai (Kui) in the northeast.



THIN (MAL/PRAY/LUA/LAWA)



KHMU



THIN (MAL/PRAY/LUA/LAWA)



KHMU



KHMERE



KUI (SUAI)

Speakers of the Tibeto-Burman and the Hmong-Yao language families are put under a general category of “hill tribes” or “hill people” (chao khao). These hill tribes are the Lahu or Mursur (the Red Lahu, White Lahu, and Yellow Lahu), Akha, Lisu, Hmong (Meo in Thai, Meo in Chinese), Yao and Karen.



LAHU (MURSUR)



AKHA



LISU



HMONG (MEO/MIAO)



YAO

While other hill tribes dwell on the marginal mountainous areas in the north the Karen prefer to live in lowlands. The Karen are divided into 2 main groups, Sgaw in the north and Pho along the western borders. There is also a small number of the third group. This new minority are the Paduang known as the long necked Karen inhabiting the Thai-Burmese border.



SGAW KAREN



PHO



PADUANG KAREN

These so-called hill-tribes number over half a million people, only about 1% of the total Thai population. Their communities had little contact with one another and practice slash-and-burn agriculture which was destructive to the environment. Those in the area of the Golden Triangle were engaged in illegal drug trade. These created tensions with Thai authorities. As the state's efforts to relocate them in lowlands and to abandon slash-and-burn agriculture and to stop opium production were largely unsuccessful, the tensions went on and on until the King's intervention.



KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ

Royal Benevolence and the Role of the Monarchy

a) Hill Tribe Development Projects

As mentioned before His Majesty King Bhumibol is a selfless man who always lives not for himself but for the welfare of the people. Known as the “People’s King” he travels exclusively to meet them no matter who they are and where they are.



The main purpose of the visits was to see with his own eyes the conditions in which they live and to learn first hand about their needs. When needed, he devised development projects to uplift their quality of life. In these exclusive travels he also visited the hill tribes in remote areas of the Golden Triangle which was in the 1960s the world’s main source of opium and heroine.



POPPY FIELD

In his encounter with the hill tribes he never looked down on them nor blamed them for deforestation and engagement in drug trade. He saw with his own eyes that what ailed these hill tribes was not drugs but poverty, poor health and lack of education. He also recognized their land rights as many of them lived in the forests long before the forests became the state's properties. To give them a better life the King skillfully encouraged them to abandon slash-and-burn cultivation and to turn attention to growing local lucrative fruits such as peaches that could earn them more money than trading opium with the Chinese traders (*Chin Haw*) who exploited them giving their opium a low price. To empower the hill tribes in charge of their lives the King initiated a Royal Development Project for them to free them from poverty and drug trade and drug barons. In the Project an agriculture research station was established. Through its work local fruits were improved, new cash crops such as lychees, strawberries, kidney beans and Arabic Coffee were introduced, and hill tribe villagers were trained to improve farming methods and to restore their degraded forest lands. It took many years for the Royal Project to come to fruition. The success of this long-running project was witnessed by the reduction of poppy fields and the increase of crop growing and eventually the eradication of drug trade in hill tribe villages. The King's crop substitution makes Thailand the world's most successful example of eradicating opium production at its roots.



The King's compassionate concern for the welfare of the neglected hill tribes was shared by the late Princess Mother and by Her Majesty the Queen.



THE PRINCESS MOTHER



QUEEN SIRIKIT



DOI TUNG

The Doi Tung Development Project (DTDP) was initiated in 1988 by the late Princess Mother for the Doi Tung mountain in Chiangrai province near the Golden Triangle. In these areas six ethnic groups lived in dire poverty, ill health and ignorance. Many of them were in the drug trade. To help them having a better life the Princess Mother used the King's crop substitution program as a means to boost up their livelihood and to encourage them to abandon opium production. To such end the DTDP offered training programs in agriculture and healthcare and made education accessible to their children. The DTDP also help market their cultural product and artistic work such as handicrafts. The success story of DTDP is another example of royal benevolence making it possible for ethnic people to change their life-conditions and to live in peace and harmony with each other.

Along the line with the late Princess Mother and the King out of compassion Her Majesty the Queen put tireless efforts to uplift the quality of life of people in remote areas inaccessible to government's help. Following her visits to the hill tribe villages she saw their dire life-conditions and devised a development project to improve these conditions. As a means to convince the hill tribes



of the benefit of crop substitution and forest preservation she set up an experimentation station to prove that with crop substitution and environmental conservation they could have higher income and live in harmony with nature as wanted. As a result participants in the two programs gradually increased crop growing while the slash-and-burn cultivation and opium trading decreased.

Seeing the artistic talents of the hill tribes in making handicrafts the Queen promoted their artistic work and provided the hill tribe artisans with extra income by having them create small patches of their most unique fabrics to sell in her SUPPORT Foundation with the benefit going back to the villager.

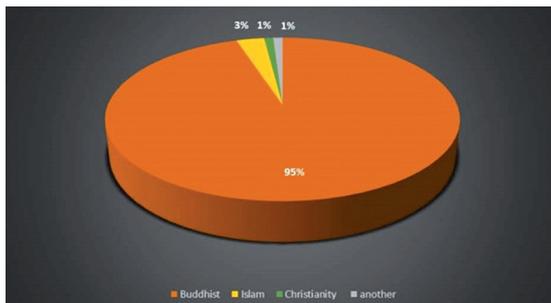
At present, there are now 22,530 hill tribe artisans from 620 villages who are benefitting from this foundation, and as seen today, hill tribe fabrics are found in contemporary fashion. Those of you who are interested in the hill tribe arts and handicraft please see the on-going exhibition “Crafts from the Hands of the Hill to the Hands of the Queen” being organized in Bangkok by the SUPPORT FOUNDATION marking Her Majesty the Queen’s 80th Birthday Anniversary.



It is clear by now that the Royal Family plays a crucial role in helping the hill tribe minority live in peace and harmony with the Thai majority. The royal development projects are not aimed at assimilating the hill tribes into the main Thai culture. The primary aim of the projects is to help them have better life-conditions empowering them to be in charge of their lives and accessible to education, health care and other social services.

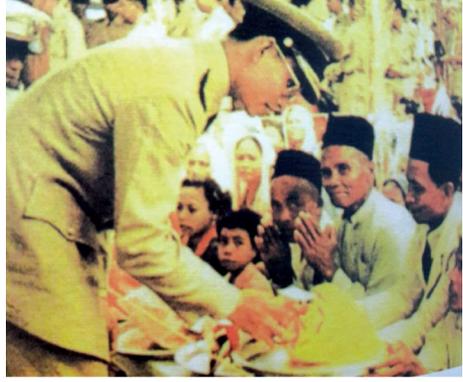
b) Religious Diversity and Peaceful Co-Existence

There are 5 officially recognized religions in Thailand, namely, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Brahman-Hinduism and Sikhism. Out of the population of 63 million, 95% are adherents of Buddhists, 3% Islam, 1% Christianity and another 1% are followers of other religions including animism.



By religion Buddhism is the majority religion except in southern provinces where Islam forms the majority. Other religions are scattered throughout the kingdom with concentration in Bangkok and the central part of the country. Compared to other multi-racial and multi-religious societies the Thai kingdom is peaceful, free from racial strife and inter-religious confrontation. For a long time the five religions have been co-existing peacefully and harmoniously. This may be attributed to the spirit of tolerance in the Thai culture undergirded by Buddhism and also to royal benevolence. It is this benign spirit of tolerance and royal benevolence that have made it possible for non-Buddhist religions to flourish on the Thai soil without interference from the Buddhist majority.

The King is a constitutional monarch. According to the constitution the King has to be a Buddhist and at the same time a supporter of all religions. Beyond his constitutional obligation His Majesty the King, a devout Buddhist, has compassionate concern for the happiness and welfare of all people, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. This is witnessed by the benefit people of all faiths and in all regions get from more than 4,000 royally initiated development projects that are both preventive and remedial; by his visits to religious organizations and to faith communities to see their life-conditions and learning about their needs; and by his gifts to different religious communities. These gifts were in different forms depending on the need of each community. For example, for the Muslims, the King regularly officiated at recitals of the Qur'an, particularly on the anniversary of the Prophet (Mawlid) and sponsored the first Thai translation of the Qur'an making it accessible to the Thai public. He also brought land for them to build a new mosque and provided scholarships for needy Muslim students. For the Sikhs the King donated money to repair the Sacred Hall of Worship. Realizing the crucial role of religion in moral and spiritual development of Thai people the King encouraged adherents of different religions to study and faithfully practice the teachings of their respective religions to become better persons, good members of their communities and good citizens of the nation.



The King's warm relationship with non-Buddhists is a concrete form of both the spirit of tolerance in the Thai culture and compassion in Buddhism. The King's solicitude to the non-Buddhists has set an example of acceptance, tolerance and respect for the beliefs and spiritual autonomy of non-Buddhists to Thai Buddhist majority. His compassionate work for people of all faiths reminds the Thai of different religious traditions, which have their goal the well-being of mankind, that apart from peaceful co-existence they should be able to co-operate with one another in solving social and environmental problems and in alleviating the suffering of the poor and the disadvantaged despite their differences in race, culture and religion.

The role of the monarchy in fostering peace and harmony between different religions should not be underestimated. Although as a constitutional monarch His Majesty the King has no absolute power, he is at the cultural level the basic pillar of national virtue and integrity. His position in the Thai culture as a righteous monarch (*dharma rājā*) and the prestige linked to his person have made him the symbol of unity in cultural and religious diversity in the Thai kingdom.

Postscript

King Bhumibol passed away in October 2016. The King is remembered as the “Father of the Nation” and the “Strength of the Land”. Among 67 Thai million people the late King is honored as a modern Buddhist righteous monarch (*Dhammaraja*) who ruled the Kingdom with the ten guiding principles for governance (*rajadhamma*). These are (1) generosity (*dana*), (2) high moral character (*sila*), (3) self-sacrifice (*pariccaga*), (4) honesty or integrity (*ajjava*), (5) kindness and gentleness (*moddava*), (6) austere self-control (*tapa*), (7) non-anger (*akhodha*), (8) non-violence (*avihimsa*), (9) patience (*kanti*) (10) non-deviation from righteousness and conformity to the law (*aviroddana*).

As a “Development King” in his extensive travels to rural areas where 80% of Thai population are with their welfare in mind, he reached out to the poorest and the most valuable people—regardless of their status, ethnicity and religion—listened to their problems and patiently and tirelessly worked to help them by various means particularly by initiating appropriate development projects to uplift the quality of their lives and to empower them to take their lives in their own hands. The King’s countless rural development projects benefited millions of people across the country.

As a visionary thinker the late King Bhumibol devised Sufficiency Economy Philosophy as a new philosophy of life in a consumer society and as a new paradigm of development. This philosophy-emphasizing

moderation, responsible consumption and resilience to external shocks-is the King's gift to Thailand and the world at times of rapid globalization and enticement of materialism and consumerism.

The ideology of multiculturalism has a noble goal to prevent tyranny of the majority and to protect human dignity and human right. It allows people of different ethnic, religious and cultural identities to assert themselves and to maintain their differences. Despite this lofty ideal implementation of multiculturalism policy in many countries have led to affirmation of the superiority of the majority's culture, unequal treatment of minorities, ethnic tensions and even violence. While searching for other models beyond multiculturalism King Bhumibol, his moral character, personal integrity and benevolent work for human wellbeing at all levels, inspires a new model of political leadership. In this model moral integrity is an essential requirement of political and governmental leaders. Apart from supportive political and administrative structures moral qualities of these leaders are needed for building and maintaining peace and harmony in the nation. As evident in country after country, when these leaders are corrupted they give birth to many social problems that make such aspiration unreachable. The ten Buddhist guiding principles which King Bhumibol faithfully followed for 70 years of his reign can be applied and adhered by political and governmental leaders in Buddhist and non-Buddhist countries to ensure peace and harmony in their societies.

As King Bhumibol played a vital role in enhancing peace and harmony in the nation and became the unity of people of different religions and believes, and as moral virtues cannot be commanded, the urgent question for Thailand without King Bhumibol, and for other nations as well, is how to motivate political and governmental leaders to develop themselves morally to become incorruptible, good leaders working not for their own benefit but for the welfare of others and the public good.

Śrī Pāda Sacred to Many: Sufi Mystics on Pilgrimage to Adam's Peak

Mahinda Deegalle

*"Apē Budun*¹: *Api Wañdinḍa* . . . All day long the pilgrims' haunting hymn, with its loudly vociferated chorus of "*Sādhu! Sādhu!*" throbs in the air . . . Ahead of his flock marches the "*gurun[n]ānse*" . . . book in hand, chanting texts . . . an experienced Buddhist *gurun[n]ānse* waits in the entrance . . . before shepherding them all in, one close behind the other, with a united chorus of praise

. . . As they press through the opening, palms reverently joined aloft, and heads bowed forward, many fall upon their knees in a silent ecstasy of prayer, while women sob and laugh hysterically, crying "*Sādhu! Sādhu!*" without cessation, though so emotionally stirred and worn with fatigue that they are completely unconscious of their actions."

R.H. Bassett, Romantic Ceylon

¹ "*Apē Budun: Api Wañdinḍa*"—"We Go to Pay Respect: Our Buddha." This expression frequently heard in the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage communicates well the reverential and pious attitudes of most Buddhists who make time annually to participate in the arduous climbing of Mt. Samanala. The overwhelming personal affection towards the Buddha is well expressed by the use of the possessive adjective 'apē' ('our') to qualify the noun '*Budun*' (Buddha). The phrase "*Api Wañdinḍa*" can be translated differently to connote various aspects that involve in the pilgrimage such as "We come to pay respect," "We go to pay respect" or "We are paying respect now." It is indeed a rare and emotionally rich and evocative public expression of the manifestation of Buddhist religion in practice.

Co-existence in Multicultural Societies

The long history of Sri Lanka testifies to the presence of a tradition of many centuries of warm respect and hospitality towards diverse ethnic and religious groups. Differences that obviously manifested as a result of cultural, religious or ethnic diversity did not always and necessarily exclude those who were different from outward appearance, beliefs and practices. The culture of acceptance was wide-spread. Recognition and warm hospitality were hallmarks of the Sri Lankan traditional heritage. Generous and positive attitudes and caring practices towards the 'Other' were largely shaped and moulded by the cultural and religious values of the dominant community, i.e., the Sinhalese and Buddhists.

Unpleasant incidents of persecutions and deliberate expulsions of certain ethnic and religious minorities by two European masters during the colonial period were fatal blows to those communities themselves and posed significant challenges to the very cultural ethos of what Ceylon was in those days. As a religious community, coastal Muslims (known then as 'Mohammedans' or 'Moors') suffered heavily with Portuguese persecutions. It was the Kandyan King Senarat (1604–35) who came forward to provide amnesty to persecuted Muslims. He gave them land for agriculture and settled them down in the Batticaloa area of the island; as a result now a thriving community of Muslims can be found in that eastern region of the island (Deegalle 2007: 121–125).

When the Dutch persecuted Catholics on the basis of religious differentiation in the maritime regions of the island, it was again the Kandyan kingdom that provided amnesty to persecuted Catholics. These brave decisions taken on the basis of compassion and caring attitudes of course remain today merely historical episodes known to a few and good for occasional citation to show greatness of the past glory and lost civilization. Nevertheless, there are many lessons that one can learn from those episodes that are relevant for a multi-cultural context that we aspire and envisage. When there are burning issues of co-existence in today's society, occasional revisits of those narratives are really refreshing. To examine ideas and sacred spaces relevant for

co-existence and recognition of diversity of religious beliefs and practices, this chapter will concentrate on beliefs and practices related to the pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda—fondly known to the west as Adam's Peak—for more than a millennium (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Śrī Pāda (Adam's Peak) as seen from Nallatanniya ('Clean Water'; Dalhousie) of the Hatton Route in a late afternoon in December 2016

Pilgrimage Sites Educating on Plurality

"There are four places, Ānanda, that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence."

Siddhārtha Gautama, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*

Over many centuries, the presence of four living world religions—Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam—and their crosscurrents in Sri Lanka have constructively paved the way to the development of recognition of shared religious practices, spaces and heritage. Modern Sri Lanka stands out among Theravada Buddhist societies of South and Southeast Asia in having at least two prominent sacred spaces in the island that are accessible to the Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist population as a place of pilgrimage and shared cultural and religious heritage.

The two distinguished sacred sites well-known for centuries are Śrī Pāda and Kataragama. They are located on the lower half of the island in Ratnapura and Monarāgala Districts. Out of the two, Śrī Pāda has unparalleled records of accounts written by locals as well as foreign travellers over one and a half millennium.² Known to the outside world as Adam's Peak, Śrī Pāda inherited a long history of pilgrimage that welcomes many pilgrims of various religious and secular persuasions.

Even after occasional tensions, conflicts and communal riots in the post-Independence Sri Lanka, the importance of Śrī Pāda as a sacred space for diverse pilgrims has still not dwindled even a bit; more and more pilgrims of various orientations and persuasions still make the arduous overnight pilgrimage and share many experiences, spiritual insights and a heritage that can be easily shared by many communities without sliding into a particular religious orientation.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on and share some of the insights and observations that two important pilgrims of Islamic persuasion of Sufi orientation from Persia and Morocco expressed on the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage over many centuries ago. Both Sulayman and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1304–1368), though lived in different times with shifting lifestyles, shed some interesting lights through their observations that enhance our understanding of Śrī Pāda and its rich pilgrimage. Their perspectives on beliefs, customs, habits, and practices of many communities that they encountered during their arduous journey to Śrī Pāda in an age in which modes of transportation were undeveloped, political affairs rather arbitrary and tribal, and religious contexts and concerns were different and complex are quite breath-taking and rewarding.

² For example, the fifth century travel account of the Chinese pilgrim monk Fa Xian, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (1965).

Sulayman's Account of Śrī Pāda

"Thereon the high peak of the hill Samantakūṭa there are the footprints of the Buddha."

Maṇimēkhalai

The first foreign pilgrim account of Śrī Pāda that reached swiftly to the west was that of Sulayman al-Tajir. His original travel account of the Indian Ocean written in Arabic is now well preserved at *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* (National Library of France) in Paris.

In 1718 its first European translation in French—*Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine*—was published in Paris. In 1733 little over a decade later, it was translated into English and published in London as *Ancient Accounts of India and China by Two Mohammedan Travellers*. This English translation reached deeper corners of the west. These two European language versions—French and English—in addition to the Arabic original have informed European readers on the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage from the eighteenth century onwards. Like the two eighteenth-century European translations, Sulayman al-Tajir's original work in Arabic might have reached a wider readership of all sorts of persuasions in the entire Arabic speaking world of the Middle East and beyond. It may have been a useful guidebook and appealed to those who were keen in ocean travels.

It is likely that Sulayman's Arabic work paved the way for later travellers such as the fourteenth century Ibn Baṭṭūṭa from Morocco and Venetian Marco Polo (1254–1324) as well as mystics such as Muḥyīuddīn 'Abdul Qādir al-Gīlānī (1077–1166 ce) in their travels to visit Śrī Pāda. Persian mystic Gīlānī is venerated today at a pre-historic forest cave in Kūragala³ (Ratnapura District, Sabaragamuva Province). Existing legends credit Gīlānī for resting in the cave on his pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda. Kūragala is located on the path from the

³ Deegalle's chapter: "Kūragala: Religious and Ethnic Communities in a Contested Sacred Heritage Site, Sri Lanka" (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) examines the contested nature of this prehistoric site in relation to a legendary account of a visit of Gīlānī to Kūragala.

southern coast of the island to Śrī Pāda. Because of Gilānī's rest in Kūragala, that ancient site has become a sacred space for Muslims of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, in particular to Sufi followers of the Qādiriyyat order. (Figure 2) Apparently, two centuries later, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had taken the same route on his return from Śrī Pāda to Deundara (Dīnawar) in the southern coast of the island and when he embarked his journey from Chilaw in the northwest of the island. (Figure 3)

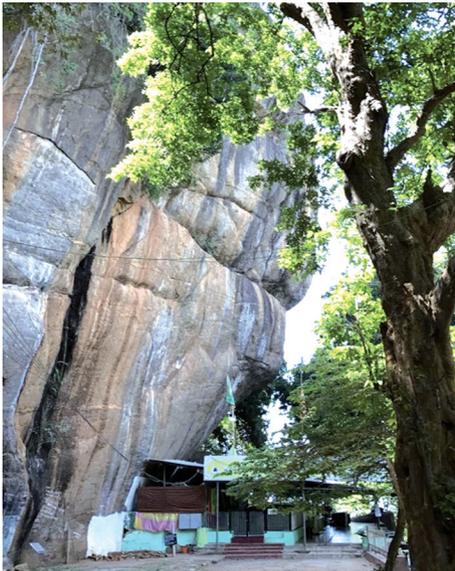


Figure 2:
The pre-historic Hīṭuvangala (standing rock) cave of the Kūragala site hosting the controversial Daftar Gilānī mosque in July 2017



Figure 3 :
A Muslim family of pilgrims descending from Śrī Pāda in the morning hours of December 2016

The name of Sulayman al-Tajir is written variously as Sulaiman and Soleiman. The Arabic word *tajir* (تاجر) attached to his name means the 'trader.' Sulayman was a Persian merchant⁴ who is credited for traveling via Sri Lanka to India and China by departing from Bandar-e Sīraf in modern day Iran. It is thought that he wrote his account of voyages around 850 ce. When Sulayman visited India, it was a prosperous time in the early years of the reign of the Pāla dynasty (750–12th century ce); the rulers of the kingdom were ardent supporters of Buddhist institutions and learning. Sulayman identified the Pāla kingdom as 'Ruhma' and attested its military might. Returning from China Sulayman landed at Basra and travelled to Baghdad.

Sulayman's account of the Śrī Pāda, though brief (description of less than one page), became the earliest narrative that reached swiftly to the west. Sulayman used "Sarandib" to describe the island, a name that was familiar to ocean travellers from the Arabian world to identify the Island of Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka):

Beyond these islands, in the Sea of *Harkand* [Indian Ocean], is *Sarandib*, or *Ceylon*, the Chief of all these Islands, which are called Dobijot. It is all encompassed by the Sea, and on certain parts of its Coast they fish for Pearl.

Up in the Country there is a Mountain called *Rahun*, to the top of which it is thought *Adam* ascended; and there left the Mark of his Foot in a Rock, on the top of this same Mountain. There is but one Print of a Man's Foot, which is seventy Cubits in Length; and they say that *Adam* at the same time stood with his other Foot in the sea.⁵ About this Mountain

⁴ Sulayman's journey to Ceylon can be contextualized in light of the following comment of Arasaratnam (1964: 117) that makes a historical trade connection between Persia and Sri Lanka: "In the earliest phase of this direct trade with Ceylon, Persians appeared as the traders. There is evidence of a seventh-century Persian Christian colony settled for purposes of trade in Ceylon."

are Mines of the Ruby, Opal, and Amethyst. This Island, which is of great extent, has two Kings; and here you may have Wood-Aloes, Gold, precious Stones, and Pearls, which are fished on the Coast; as also a kind of large Shells, which they use instead of Trumpets, and which they much value.

In this same sea, towards Sarandib, there are other Isles, but not so many in number, tho' of vast extent and unknown name. (Sulayman 2010: 2–3)

This description locates Ceylon (Sri Lanka) as an island surrounded by the Indian ocean. We learn the name of the country as “Sarandib” as then known to visitors to the island, mainly from Arab world. Sulayman highlighted treasures that the island could offer to the world. He noted that in certain parts of Sarandib's coast, people gathered pearls. In particular, the mountain “*Rahun*” [Śrī Pāda] contained mines of “Ruby, Opal, and Amethyst.” Four centuries later, Marco Polo (1254–1324) wrote “Maabar and Ceylon between them produce most of the pearls and gems that are to be found in the world” (Marco Polo 1958: 260). Another century later, Ibn Battūṭa (1953: 257) reported: “In the island of Ceylon rubies are found in all parts . . . Some of them are red, some yellow [topazes], and some blue [sapphires].”

To the ocean navigator the typical landmark in the island of “Sarandib” was Śrī Pāda (Adam's Peak). The “blessed foot” (Śrī Pāda) on the top of the mountain had been a sacred space for many centuries. Sulayman identified Śrī Pāda as “*Rahun*.” He used the name *Rahun* to identify Śrī Pāda perhaps because the mountain was situated in the Kingdom of *Ruhuna* in the south of the island. Sulayman's usage of “*Rahun*” for Śrī Pāda appears to have a long history in the Arabic pursuit of knowledge in world geography. This particular usage may have derived from the early Islamic historian Hishām ibn al-Kalbī

⁵ Sulayman's this account of Adam's foot needs to be compared with Fa Xian's description given in the fifth century: “When the Buddha came to this country [of Singhala, Ceylon], wishing to transform the wicked *nāgas*, by his supernatural power he planted one foot at the north of the royal city, and the other on the top of a mountain, the two being fifteen *yojanas* apart” *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* (1965: 102).

(d. 819 or 821) who wrote in Arabic *Kitāb Al-Asnām* (The Book of Idols). Much later the Arab geographer of Greek origin, Yaqut Al- Hamawi (from Hamah, Syria, 1179–1229 ce) employed the term ar-Rahūm to refer to Śrī Pāda in his *Mu'djam Al-Buldān* (The Dictionary of Countries): "Ar-Rāhūn is a mountain . . . the same on which Adam . . . was thrown down From this comes the expression the Rāhūnian Rock". (Aksland 2001: 118–19) These and other instances may illustrate well the Arab traders had acquired a significant knowledge of Sarandib and other Indian Oceanic countries at the time when Islam emerged in the Arab world.

Śrī Pāda's attraction for a Muslim like Sulayman was its association with the Biblical narrative of Adam and Eve found in the Genesis. Sulayman also recorded what he had heard from people: Adam placed this large foot on the top of the Mountain "Rahun" by ascending it while having the other foot in the ocean. Sulayman mentioned the size of the foot as seventy cubits in length. He also mentioned briefly political matters by citing the existence of two kings in the island. Sulayman's observation on the practice of using large 'conch shells' (Sin. *hakgediya*) as trumpets is quite fascinating. It refers to conch shells that are used as a musical instrument in the Sri Lankan traditional music.

As Arasaratnam (1964: 118) noted below the link between pilgrimage and trade is a significant one:

The mountain known as Adam's Peak, sacred to Hindus and Buddhists, now became a place of pilgrimage for Muslims⁶ as the abode of Adam, their primitive father. These pilgrimages were evidently utilized for trade operations as well, to make contact[s] with the interior, especially with the reputed gem country which was on the road. The Sinhalese kings realized

⁶ The number of pilgrims from Hindu and Muslim backgrounds has not been large as much as that of Buddhists. In the late nineteenth century it was noted: "The pilgrims came and went All found quarters, any where and every where, as best they could. Amongst them were a few Hindus, and a sprinkling of Moormen. Some of these latter, with an eye to business, had extemporized a bazaar, where almost everything in a small way could be bought by those were so disposed" (Skeen 1870: 158–59).

the value of this increasing Arab interest in the island and encouraged more and more Arab settlements. One feature which eased their path greatly was the tolerance shown by the Sinhalese in matters of religion. A number of settlements arose on the western coast at points suitable for the berthing of ships.

Traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda

"One of the most sacred places . . . is the mountain called Adam's Peak . . . Pilgrims and travellers climb to the sacred summit of Adam's Peak by means of an iron chain . . . The pilgrims, who come to pay their homage to the footstep, bathe themselves in this purifying stream, . . . Sitegangele [Sītagaṅgula] . . . [T]here is a footstep, which they call Siripade [Śrī Pāda]. It is much larger than that of a common man, and seems an impression upon the stone like that of a seal upon wax. Innumerable pilgrims flock to this spot from the most distant regions; and even the natives of Persia and China come to experience the virtues of these purifying waters."

Robert Knox, *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*

First of all, I will give below a brief description of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa who visited Śrī Pāda around 1347.⁷ On 24 February 1304, Shaykh Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was born at Tangier, Morocco. He died there in 1368 (or 1369). The famous name, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa" was his family name. We know Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travels to India, Sri Lanka and China from notes and records made by Muhammad Ibn Juzayy. On 9 December 1355, the records were completed

⁷ William Skeen (1870) maintained a time period after 1347 for Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's visit to Śrī Pāda assuming the capital of the island at that time was located in Kankār (Gaṅgasiripura), modern day Gampola and its inception was in 1347 (Skeen 1997: 282). The actual date of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's visit could be earlier than that date since the time line for Gampola Period is now set from 1341 to 1415 (Mudiyanse 1965: 1). Since 1341 King Bhuvanekabāhu IV (1341–51) ruled from Gampola. Mudiyanse (1965: 2) placed Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's visit to 1344 CE.

(Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 2, 41, 339). When returned to Morocco after his travels, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was appointed *qāḍī* (judge) in one of the Moroccan towns.

On 14 June 1325, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa set out alone from Tangier for pilgrimage to Muslim holy sites of Mecca and Madina. Then Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was just a twenty-two years old young man, according to the counting of his age by lunar years.

Early in the book, *Travels in Asia and Africa* (1929), Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentioned a rather powerful, miraculous story. The story shows intelligence and capabilities of elephants in relation to pilgrims who are on the pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa heard the miraculous story of much respected imam 'Abdallah Ibn Khafif (d. 982),⁸ whose tomb was found in Shiraz, from the inhabitants of that city:

One day he [Ibn Khafif] went to the mountain of Sarandib [Adam's Peak] in the island of Ceylon accompanied by about thirty darwishes [Sufi aspirants]. They were overcome by hunger on the way, in an uninhabited locality, and lost their bearings. They asked the shaykh [Sufi master] to allow them to seize one of the small elephants, of which there are a very large number in that place, and which are transported then to the king of India. The shaykh forbade them, but their hunger got the better of them and they disobeyed him and, seizing a small elephant, killed and ate it. The shaykh however refused to eat it. That night, as they slept, the elephants gathered from all quarters and came upon them, smelling each one of them and killing him until they had made an end of them all. They

⁸ It has been noted that Ibn Khafif's visit to Śrī Pāda is not found recorded in any of his biographies. This silence from biographers on mystics of Persia is rather odd and makes Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's work even more important. Ironically, most academic writers today (e.g., Hanif 2017), who write about Ibn Khafif's contribution to mysticism, do not refer to Ibn Khafif's pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda or Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's narration of the miraculous story with wild elephants. Recently it has been pointed out that an anonymous hero's tale is found, however, in Rumi's *Mathnawi* (Mackintosh-Smith 2002: 305)

smelled the shaykh too but offered no violence to him; one of them lifted him with its trunk, put him on its back, and brought him to the inhabited district. When the people of that part saw him, they marvelled at him and came to meet him and hear his story. As it came near them, the elephant lifted him with its trunk and placed him on the ground in full view of them. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 95–96)

This story of marvellous survival of Ibn Khafif is surprising and attractive. It highlights miracles that often alleged to occur on the pilgrimage route to Śrī Pāda. In the traditional pilgrimage etiquette that is followed in Sri Lanka, eating of any animal product, including fish and eggs, is taboo and strictly advised to avoid during the pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda. (Figure 4)

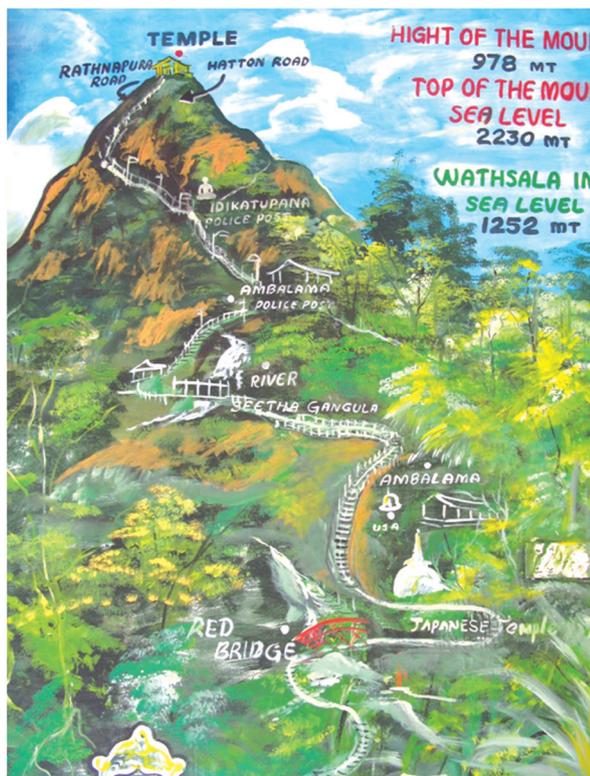


Figure 4:
The pilgrimage route and important stations on the Hatton Route which Ibn Baṭṭūṭa identified as Māmā track as now seen from an artist's perspective at Watsala Inn, Nallatanniya in December 2016

The theme of vegetarian diet as an essential for the journey is very much highlighted in many narratives proliferating in the literature. This particular story fits very well both to Hindu and Buddhist worldviews and practices concerning sacred sites and engagements with divinities. At least, the avoidance of meat products at least three days prior to the journey is required as essential for the successful pilgrimage.

The story of killing and eating meat of a baby elephant by pilgrims and its immediate consequences right there as narrated by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa fits well into the etiquette to be followed in forest journeys to Śrī Pāda. The jungles that connect pilgrim paths to Śrī Pāda were havens for wild elephants in the bygone era. Even in 1870, William Skeen wrote:

In the higher parts of each of the mountains we had descended, we saw numerous traces of elephants, and were at first puzzled to make out why their paths through the cane brakes on either side of our track were so frequent and so close We once thought we heard their trumpeting in the distance; and all along the region of their tracks the pilgrims shouted and chanted lustily [as already highlighted by R.H. Bassett in the epigraph above], evidently with the view of keeping them out of the way. (Skeen 1970: 237)

Even in these days, in the immediate vicinity of Śrī Pāda there are many elephants as well as other wild beasts since the forest land that holds Śrī Pāda connects with the largest natural forest called Siṅharāja Forest Reserve, a World Heritage Site recognized by UNESCO.

The requirement of vegetarian diet in the story suggests the idea of observing the first of the five precepts, abstaining from taking any life. It is required of Buddhist pilgrims who climb Śrī Pāda to take the five precepts in several stations of the path and observe them.⁹ There is a strong belief here that the adherence to the principle of non-violence (*ahimsā*) itself capable

⁹ This essential requirement of observing the five precepts is highlighted several times in verses 58, 63, 80, 85, 91 and 111 of the Purāṇa Himagata Varṇanāva, a poetry text of four-lined rhymed verses (*sivupada kāvyaya*) composed in Sinhala to be used in the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage.

of protecting pilgrims from attacks of wild elephants and other beasts. It is noteworthy here that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa expressed the practice of non-violence by elephants towards pilgrims with a different emphasis attributing such non-violence as proof of miraculous power of the Shaykh Abu 'Abdallah (known also as Mohammad Ibn Khafif, al-Shaykh al-Kabir and Shaykh al-Shirazi died in 982 and) buried in Shiraz, who was a well-respected Persian mystic and Sufi. If Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's record is accurate and its veracity can be verified this Shaykh Ibn Khafif becomes the first Muslim who has a literary account of his arduous pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda:

After passing the small town of Bandar Salawat [Chilaw Port] our way lay through rugged country intersected with streams. In this part there are many elephants, but they do no harm to pilgrims and strangers, through the blessed favour of the Shaykh Abu 'Abdallah, who was the first to open up this road for the pilgrimage to the Foot. These infidels used formerly to prevent Muslims from making this pilgrimage and would maltreat them, and neither eat nor trade with them, but since the adventure that happened to the Shaykh as we have related above [p. 95], they honour the Muslims, allow them to enter their houses, eat with them, and have no suspicions regarding their dealings with their wives and children. To this day they continue to pay the greatest veneration to this Shaykh, and call him "the Great Shaykh." (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 256)

During the pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda, the necessity of protection from elephants and other wild beasts is still there today. Buddhists see the protection of pilgrims comes from the compassionate favours (*S. karuṇā karanava*) granted to the pilgrims who climb the mountain by the deity Sumana Saman (Figure 5 and 6). Belief in favours of the deity Saman¹⁰ accumulated over centuries is so strong among locals. William Skeen recorded:

¹⁰ The deity Saman rides on a white elephant.

Happily no accident occurred . . . with the exception of what happened to one of the coolies . . . carrying a nitrate of silver bath . . . a slight leakage followed . . . the brown skin of his back and chest become covered with stripes and streaks of black . . . and he was very nearly believing he had been bewitched, or was undergoing punishment from Saman for venturing through his territories at so unwonted a season At this same ford, . . . one of our coolies became completely panic-stricken. He stood trembling on a rock in the middle of the stream, perspiration pouring out at every pore from sheer dread: move he could not; and we had to send two men to relieve him of his load . . . but he would go no further, he had had enough of the pilgrimage, and we were obliged to proceed without him. (Skeen 1870: 153–54)

This aspect of boon granted by the deity Saman is highlighted very much in the extensive pilgrimage literature written in Sinhala poems such as the *Purāṇa Himagata Varṇanāva* and *Tun Saraṇaya*. For example, a Sinhalese verse as found in the *Purāṇa Himagata Varṇanāva* is below to that effect:

gosin vañdimu siripā muniñdunnē
Saman devinñduṭa da bārava innē
Saman deviñdu mattaṭa budu vannē
patme vañdinnāṭa pihiṭa lābennē (*Purāṇa Himagata Varṇanāva*, v. 62).

Let us go to worship the lotus foot of the Buddha.
 We make petitions to the deity Saman.
 The deity Saman will become future Buddha.
 [We] receive blessings to worship the lotus.¹¹ (my translation)

¹¹ The Sinhala word *padme* translated here as 'lotus' is the most common term used today as a reference to the footprint of the Buddha found on the top of Mt. Samanala.



Figure 5:
The deity Saman as depicted in the inner sanctum of Śrī Pāda. This photo was taken on the first day of the six-month pilgrimage season on 27 December 2016



Figure 6: The act of seeking the deity Saman's "*karuṇāva*" (compassionate aid) written in Sinhala characters on the back window of a commuter bus from Ginigathēna to Nāvalapīṭiya on 3 January 2017

There are some observations, which are historically valuable. It is notable even in the fourteenth century ocean navigation was well developed in Ceylon. Ibn Battūta knew the fact that elephants could be transported as gifts as well as for sale to India.

From Ibn Battūta's previous description of the story of elephant meat eating, we learn about another important facet related to the etiquette of Śrī Pāda pilgrimage. We learn that "about thirty darwishes" who "accompanied" the shaykh in the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage did not listen to the well-meant advice of the shaykh forbidding eating meat which actually resulted in the unfortunate death of all of those who disobeyed the leader. This idea of reliance on the wisdom of the wise and following wise instructions without abrogating them are essential requirements ingrained in the pilgrimage etiquette of Śrī Pāda. The story shows that not listening to the wise words of the shaykh was an open invitation for trouble and subsequent death during the pilgrimage. Each pilgrimage group that climbs Śrī Pāda is led by an experienced guide called *naḍē gurā* (group leader) as vividly illustrated by R.H. Bassett in the epigraph above. *Naḍē gurā* is a wise, experienced individual who guides the team and coaches its members throughout the journey on-route to the top of the peak preventing them from facing unfortunate circumstances. In terms of etiquette, all fellow pilgrims must listen to wise advice of *Naḍē gurā*. Failing will bring discomfort and misfortune to oneself and the group. The *Naḍē gurā* knows how to prevent troubles and protect the pilgrims from danger. This ancient custom of seeking wise advice of *Naḍē gurā* is a peculiar old pilgrimage custom still prevails in the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage. This story of the shaykh and his "thirty darwishes" highlights the main focus of having a leader and the necessity of following instructions without violating them.

As the story narrates, it is typical and natural that elephants look for their babies when they are missing. It is also natural that they chase whoever assaults them. In Sri Lanka, there are many examples, including the *Jātaka* stories, where elephants act wisely and lead the group protecting them. The famous story of the elephant tusker Panāmurē (Panāmurē Ätrājā) shot on 9 August 1950 for defending the herd against the elephant kraal that existed successfully there since 1896 became a best seller narrative for popular songs. Famous lyricists such as Chandrarathna Mānawasinghe

(1913–1964), Ānanda Rājakaruna (1885–1957) and Sugathapala Malalasekara composed lyrics for songs bearing titles *Panāmurē Ali Viraya* (Elephant Hero Panāmurē), *Āṭgālē Darupema* (Affection towards Children at the Elephant Kraal) and *Panāmurē Ātrājā* (Elephant Tusker Panāmurē).¹² The last song became the most popular hit. The elephant Panāmurē became even a theme for a discussion on issuing a postal stamp after the elephant's death is a poignant case.¹³ Of protective elephants such as Panāmurē as well as social practices accounted by ethicists such as Peter Singer¹⁴ show how wise and intelligent elephants can be in acting on behalf the herd and defending it when needed. In the story of the shaykh and elephants in Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's case, it is natural that elephants return in the night looking for the lost baby elephant and punish those who killed and ate the baby elephant.

The culmination of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's narrative is that the elephants reward the shaykh for his virtuous behaviour (a common, popular ethical theme of reward among Buddhists) of not resorting to violence and not eating elephant meat. As narrated by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, one elephant apparently carries the shaykh to an inhabited village. This act is as if the elephant was able to read human minds and understand what an isolated human being needs when all his companions are already dead. The story thus portrays elephants as wise, ra-

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OVjftOm17Y>

¹³ The song made about the elephant at Panāmurē and the proposed museum of the elephant kraal can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN6bWjwHd3o>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWmmNDywi_Q; a discussion on issuing a postal stamp can be found at <https://www.pressreader.com/sri-lanka/daily-mirror-sri-lanka/20120402/283085591152698>. Famous novelist Piyasena Kahadagamage (1938–2003) wrote a book titled *Panāmurē Ātrājā* (Colombo: Sarasavi, 2013). For more details on the book see also <http://www.udawalawenational-park.com/index.php/destinations/panamure/index.html>.

¹⁴ In "Tiger Mothers or Elephant Mothers?" (11 February 2011), Peter Singer stated: "Tigers lead solitary lives, except for mothers with their cubs. We, by contrast, are social animals. So are elephants, and elephant mothers do not focus only on the well-being of their own offspring. Together, they protect and take care of all the young in their herd, running a kind of daycare center." <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/tiger-mothers-or-elephant-mothers?barrier=accesspaylog>

tional and ethical beings.¹⁵ The elephant knew the shaykh was hungry and could not be left out alone in the forest. Thereby elephants act intelligently and act like human beings who are grateful to each other and conduct in responsible manner. The narrative illustrates elephants have the ability to judge right from wrong and protect those who need protection. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's narrative of elephants and the shaykh is insightful and can be elaborated with many examples relating to customs connected to Śrī Pāda pilgrimage.

After narrating the story of elephants and the shaykh, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa went on to tell his own experiences with etiquette related to meals and customs among people that he encountered in his pilgrimage in Sri Lanka:

I visited the island of Ceylon. Its people still live in idolatry [a reference to Buddhists (and perhaps, Hindus, too)], yet they show respect for Muslim darwīshes [Sufi aspirants], lodge them in their houses, and give them to eat, and they live in their houses amidst their wives and children. This is contrary to the usage of the other Indian idolators [Brahmans and Hindus], who never make friends with Muslims, and never give them to eat or to drink out of their vessels, although at the same time they neither act nor speak offensively to them. We were compelled to have some flesh cooked for us by some of them, and they would bring it in their pots and sit at a distance from

¹⁵ Highly valued honour and respect as well as virtuous qualities are still attributed to Rājā (c. 1913–1988), the tusker of the Tooth Relic Temple, Kandy. Rājā was declared to be a national treasure in 1986 by the government of former President J. R. Jayawardene (1906–1996). The United National Party (f. 1946) that he represented has elephant as the logo. In memory of Rājā a postal stamp was issued in 1989. There are many stories of Rājā as a devoted, ethical, wise and rational elephant who served the Tooth Relic Temple for fifty years and was the bearer of an unprecedented record of carrying the relic casket for thirty-seven years in the final day of the annual Āsala Perahāra (procession). Rājā's remains are still preserved in a special museum next to the Tooth Relic Temple. Even wild elephants seem to have ennobling characters such as defending the herd and paying last respect to the fallen hero as recently (September 2018) witnessed from Kalāvāva where an attack ensued with a tusker in defending the herd: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeVYaFGS-OI>; <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2018/09/16/matriarch-of-elephant-herd-killed/>; <http://www.hirunews.lk/116925/elephant-tusker-fight-results-in-death>.

us. They would also serve us with rice, which is their principal food, on banana leaves, and then go away, and what we left over was eaten by dogs and birds. If any small child, who had not reached the age of reason, ate any of it, they would beat him and make him eat cow dung, this being, as they say, the purification for that act. (Ibn Battūta 1953: 96)

As in the previous case, Ibn Battūta made here an observation with regard to the consumption of meat by Muslims. When visitors request, meat is cooked and given to guests but, no matter what, the left-over meat will not be consumed by the natives and left all of it to dogs and birds for eating. In the worst case, if a child not knowing ate meat from the left-over food, the child will be subjected to punishment and purification rituals by making the child eat cow dung. Ibn Battūta's observation indicates clearly the community at large, whether Buddhist or Hindu, attempted to remain purely vegetarian in their daily lives. This lifestyle of being vegetarian may have been challenged and drastically changed with the arrival of Europeans in 1505. The taboos against meat eating may have gradually been broken down by providing more facilities for easy purchase and consumption of meat products.

Ibn Battūta (1953: 254) recounted his entrance to Ceylon via sea. Though it was usually a three-day journey from Ma'bar (Coromandel), because he did not have an experienced navigator the trip extended to nine days. On the ninth day, he reached Ceylon. The name Ibn Battūta gave to Ceylon was "the island of Saylan." The first sight he had from the ocean was the sacred place he was looking for: "We saw the mountain of Sarandib there, rising into the heavens like a column of smoke" (Ibn Battūta 1953: 254). The sacred mountain that we identify today as 'Samanala'¹⁶ (mountain of 'butterflies'), Ibn Battūta identified

¹⁶ The awe-inspiring sacred mountain 'Samanala' ('butterfly'), though in the traditional Sinhala folklore closely associated with as the pilgrimage site of butterflies, it was noted in the nineteenth century, "Of butterflies, although supposed to be in the region of their homes, we saw but a few: they were principally of the large-winged blue and purple-coloured varieties" (Skeen 1870: 238). In popular literature, however, pilgrimage of butterflies (*samanala vandanāva*) is frequently repeated. A recently published narrative aimed at primary school kids entitled *Samanala Siripā Vandanāva* (Ajit Rājapakṣa. n.d. Pānadura: Pasiñdu Prakāśana) tells how the pilgrimage of butterflies began.

as “*Sarandib*.” Five centuries ago Sarandib was the name given by Sulayman to identify the country. One can see in this description, Mt. Samanala (“*Sarandib*”) that contains Śrī Pāda (Blessed Foot) had been identified by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa as the unique landmark of Ceylon “rising into the heavens” (Figure 7).



Figure 7:
“Śrī Pāda” has become a popular theme for several postal stamps of the colonial British Government and post-Independence Sri Lanka. The first postal stamp depicting Śrī Pāda appeared on 1 October 1935. The above stamp issued on the eve of the inauguration of the New Constitution appeared on 25 November 1947. This, as well as several others, show that “Adam’s Peak” has been on the spotlight for centuries. These appearances may support Ibn Baṭṭūṭa identification of Śrī Pāda as the unique landmark of Ceylon “rising into the heavens”

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s further description of Mt. Samanala—how clouds often cover its appearance as viewed from the bottom as well as the top of the mountain during day time and its surroundings including climate and various beautiful plants—seem to be accurate.

The mountain of Sarandib [Adam’s Peak; Mt. Samanala] is one of the highest in the world. We saw it from the sea when we were nine days’ journey away, and when we climbed it we saw the clouds below us, shutting out our view of its base. On it there are many ever-green trees and flowers of various colours, including a red rose as big as the palm of a hand. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 254)

On those days, when one travels from Ma'bar the major sea port in Sri Lanka appears to be in Puttalam in the west coast since Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had landed in Puttalam. That province was under the jurisdiction of Ārya Cakravartti¹⁷ who supported Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travel within Sri Lanka. Once requested, it was Ārya Cakravartti who made possible Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda. To that effect, acknowledging Ārya Cakravartti's support, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1953: 255) wrote:

The sultan [Ārya Cakravartti] then gave me a *palanquin*, which was carried by his slaves, and sent with me four Yogis, whose custom it is to make an annual pilgrimage to the Foot, three Brahmans, then other persons from his entourage, and fifteen men to carry provisions. Water is plentiful along the road. On the first day we encamped beside a river, which we crossed on a raft, made of bamboo canes. Thence we journeyed to Manar Mandali [Minneri-Mandel], a fine town situated at the extremity of the sultan's territories. The inhabitants entertained us with a fine banquet, the chief dish at which was buffalo calves, which they hunt in a forest there and bring in alive. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 255–56)

In knowing various pilgrimage routes to Śrī Pāda, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account is useful. He mentioned their difficulty levels as perceived and evaluated by the wider community at that time. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa also explained how tracks are physically organized to facilitate pilgrims to experience minimum discomfort during the arduous journey.

There are two tracks on the mountain leading to the Foot, one called Bábá track and the other Mámá track, meaning Adam and Eve. The Mámá track is easy and is the route by which the pilgrims return, but anyone who goes by that way is not considered by them to have made the pilgrimage at all. The Bábá track is difficult and stiff climbing.

¹⁷ The northern Kingdom of Ārya Cakravartti extended to Puttalam in the south of the island.

Former generations cut a sort of stairway on the mountain, and fixed iron stanchions on it, to which they attached chains for climbers to hold on by. There are ten such chains, two at the foot of the hill by the "threshold," seven successive chains farther on, and the tenth is the "Chain of the Profession of Faith," so called because when one reaches it and looks down to the foot of the hill, he is seized by apprehension and recites the profession of faith for fear of falling. When you climb past this chain you find a rough track. From the tenth chain to the grotto of *Khidr* is seven miles. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 258).

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa identified that it was seven miles from "the tenth chain to the grotto" of *Khidr*. From "the grotto" of *Khidr* to the summit where the actual foot print located, according to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, the distance was two miles. He gave further details of "the grotto" of *Khidr* and its surroundings (Skeen 1870: 228),¹⁸ which are useful in knowing further about the pilgrimage route:

[T]his grotto lies in a wide plateau, and nearby it is a spring full of fish, but no one catches them. Close to this there are two tanks cut in the rock on either side of the path. At the grotto of *Khidr* the pilgrims leave their belongings and ascend thence for two miles to the summit of the mountain where the Foot is.

The blessed Footprint, the Foot of our father Adam, is on a lofty black rock in a wide plateau. The blessed Foot sank into the rock far enough to leave its impression hollowed out. It is eleven spans long. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 259)

¹⁸ William Skeen (1870: 228) appeared to have identified "the grotto" of *Khidr* mentioned Ibn Baṭṭūṭa: "To this my companion and I forced our way through the jungle, and came to the conclusion, that this was the cave of *Khizr*, where, Baṭūṭa says, 'the pilgrims leave their provisions.'"

From this account, we learn the actual shape of the foot print. The existing foot print on the rock today is similar to the description given by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. The practice of leaving belongings of the pilgrims at “the grotto” of Khidr is also notable.

Then Ibn Baṭṭūṭa proceeds to tell a rather strange episode related to the Chinese: “In ancient days the Chinese came here and cut out of the rock the mark of the great toe and the adjoining parts. They put this in a temple at Zaytún, where it is visited by men from the farthest parts of the land.” (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 259)

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa noted popular beliefs and practices at the site of the foot print and participated in them like other pilgrims with enthusiasm:

In the rock where the Foot is there are nine holes cut out, in which the infidel pilgrims place offerings of gold, precious stones, and jewels. You can see the darwishes, after they reach the grotto of Khidr,¹⁹ racing one another to take what there is in these holes. We, for our part, found nothing in them but a few stones and a little gold, which we gave to the guide. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 259)

Once on the mountain Samanala, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had noted older customs and practices that were carried out there. For example, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa wrote:

It is customary for the pilgrims to stay at the grotto of *Khidr* for three days, visiting the Foot every morning and evening, and we followed this practice. When the three days were over we returned by the Mámá track, halting at a number of villages on the mountain. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 259)

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa recorded about an important, ancient tree of unusual character: legends tell that its leaves can never be found. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa commented on the veracity of such stories told about that unusual tree:

¹⁹ In Arabic, “Khidr” or “al-Khidr” refers to a Quranic figure, who is a righteous servant of God and possesses great wisdom and /or mystical knowledge.

At the foot of the mountain there is an ancient tree whose leaves never fall, situated in a place that cannot be got at. I have never met anyone who has seen its leaves. I saw there a number of Yogis who never quit the base of the mountain waiting for its leaves to fall. They tell lying tales about it, one being that whosoever eats of it regains his youth, even if he be an old man, but that is false. Beneath the mountain is the great lake from which rubies are taken; its water is a bright blue to the sight. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1953: 259)

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account of the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage routes raises some important questions for the researcher in the history, archaeology and folklore of the Sri Lankan Buddhist pilgrimage traditions. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa must be commended for his detailed descriptions on the pilgrimage sites, people that he talked to and his accounts of their beliefs and practices and writing own experiences and insights in that arduous journey.²⁰ His candid and penetrating observations are valuable and welcome. They will be extremely valuable for future researchers on Śrī Pāda. His fourteenth century account of Śrī Pāda surpasses all other previous accounts such as that of Sulayman (9th century), Marco Polo (13th century)²¹ and the Chinese pilgrim monk Fa Xian (337–422).²²

²⁰ A few centuries after Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, in 1870, writing Adam's Peak, William Skeen reflected upon his own difficulties in the journey to Śrī Pāda: "Cold as we were, and fatigued as we felt . . . [T]he going down was a very different matter to the going up;—then, it was only the lifting muscles that were brought into action, now it was the lowering ones, with the whole weight of our bodies to be sustained, at each descending step, upon our already strained ankles and troubled knees. With the perspiration streaming from every pore, and with feet swollen and inflamed, we hobbled and stumbled on our way . . . for though I perseveringly hobbled on, upon the principle that each step brought me nearer to my journey's end, when about three-quarters of a mile from Palābaddala, both ankles and knees had so completely given way, that even with the assistance of a coolie and my staff, I could scarcely move a step. Supported under the arm pits on either side, and gently forced forward from behind, I at last reached Palābaddala" (Skeen 1870: 225–33).

²¹ Marco Polo's account of Śrī Pāda can be found at Marco Polo (1958: 281).

²² A brief account of Śrī Pāda can be found in Fa Xian's *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (1965: 102).

At this point in my research on Śrī Pāda, I am not in a comfortable situation to provide conclusive answers to questions that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account raise for serious researchers. A few important places that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentioned such as "the grotto" of Khidr, the ten chains that pilgrims used to reach "the grotto" of Khidr, an ancient tree whose leaves never fall," and most importantly a historical statement that the Chinese "cut out of the rock the mark of the great toe and the adjoining parts," took away from Sri Lanka and displayed "in a temple at Zaytún" etc. are hard to be answered conclusively without significant historical and archaeological research not only in Sri Lanka but also in China.

In the absence of even a single archaeological exploration commissioned by the Department of Archaeology in Sri Lanka on the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage route and its diverse sites on the route until today, how is it humanly possible for one to answer conclusively to any of those questions that arise from Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account of Śrī Pāda? Detailed and fact-based in-depth research on Śrī Pāda and its pilgrimage routes (already counted as six existing routes beyond the two major ones that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa took in the fourteenth century), some of which are allegedly have an oral history of operation running over two millennia, cannot be envisaged in the foreseeable future when one considers status and prospect for archaeological and historical research of sacred sites in Sri Lanka.

Over the centuries, unplanned and non-consulted building constructions, arbitrary and ad-hoc changes made to the existing pilgrimage routes, removal of old ambalams (road-side sheds for pilgrims to rest) and constructing new ones (Figure 8), introducing new monuments replacing old ones, cutting and removing trees from the path and sites, building new roads and in general changes and many alterations made to the entire landscape what we identify today as Śrī Pāda Aḍaviya (Śrī Pāda wilderness) during the British colonial period and afterwards have significantly muted history, silenced voices, robbed ancient practices and deprived archaeology in telling a narrative as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had vividly narrated for us in the fourteenth century.



Figure 8: The refurbished Kehelgamuva Ambalama (pilgrim rest) on the Hatton Route in December 2016

Conclusion

This article has examined and attempted to capture aspects of the sacred that Muslims were in particular attracted to in the arduous and strenuous Śrī Pāda pilgrimage. Two early Persian and later Moroccan travel accounts of Sulayman and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa were considered in greater detail to understand their orientations in the pilgrimage and how they coped with issues of security as well as difficulties in the journey. Their narratives provided many useful and fascinating details of the journey to Śrī Pāda as well as customs of the natives who lived along the path in those times separated by six centuries. What they witnessed during those times is fascinating and remarkable. In particular, they demonstrated some convincing and established beliefs with regard to their own faith.

This situation of a deity's favour in the journey is not dissimilar to the dominant current beliefs and convictions of Buddhist pilgrims on the deity Saman as the protector of pilgrims from wild beasts and other dangers while on the pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda as well as when one dwells and conducts business in his abode, i.e., Sabaragamuva. The accounts communicate a

strong belief in their venerated saints (in the case of Ibn Battūta, famous Sufi mystics). The power of their venerated saints had transformed local society so that natives in local areas as well as wild beasts such as elephants on the forest respected them and protected their lives; natives extended hospitality to Muslim travelers only after marvels and miraculous conduct of their saint when they were embarking on the pilgrimage. Their accounts contrast their religion (Islam) from the religion of the locals (Buddhism and Hinduism).

A strong conviction on non-harming and not eating meat is conveyed in Ibn Battūta's accounts. This belief in avoiding the consumption of meat products during the pilgrimage to Śrī Pāda has been a strong conviction and taboo even today. Following the dietary code of vegetarianism appears to be the secret of protection during the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage. What we learn in this is that the Śrī Pāda as the dominant visible sacred mountain site with a long-established pilgrimage tradition in the island welcomes everyone without discriminating on the basis of religion or ethnicity. In the Śrī Pāda pilgrimage, one can find a deep-rooted resource for communal harmony; it also embraces plurality of religions, beliefs and practices.

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Multiculturalism and Economic Cooperation in ASEAN

Rizal G. Buendia

Introduction

The plurality of societies and diversity of people in Asia, even Southeast Asia (SEA) alone, offer vast opportunities for economic growth and challenges to democratic rule and governance. The diversity of the region's patterns of economic and political development has been conditioned by historical circumstances as well as international events that laid an impact on individual member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Southeast Asia has been one of the most dynamic regions in the developing world. Economic change has been accompanied by many other attributes of modernization and globalization, including the widespread availability of education, modern transportation, and the mass media. The region's impressive economic performance and prosperity gave ASEAN countries a common interest in working together towards promoting and maintaining regional stability.

Nonetheless, the economic gains and political achievements of the region have been threatened by the intensification of rivalries and escalation of ethno-religious conflicts in Southeast Asia for the past decades like the Buddhist-Muslim tensions in Myanmar, southern Thailand,

Malaysia, and Indonesia. Subnational conflicts are the most deadly, widespread, and enduring violent conflicts in Asia.

Parks, Colleta, and Oppenheim (2013) conclude that more people have died in the region's 26 subnational conflicts in South and Southeast Asia than in international conflicts over the past 20 years (1992-2012). The contemporary international geopolitical landscape is witnessing the simultaneous processes of globalization and localization, in which revival of ethnic identities and associated conflicts is the main concern. Barnett and Cavanagh (1994) contend that the process of globalization is inherently disruptive and that an increasing incidence of conflict is an inevitable bi-product of it.

Explanations for diverse governmental responses are found in geography, history - including colonial policies of divide and rule - and the nature of post-colonial governments. Some of the region's governments have shown great skill in devising peaceful methods of accommodation. But several governments, unsuccessful at nation-building, have seen the forceful suppression of ethnic rebellions as their only option.

While the diversity of the region and conflicts associated with the politicization of ethnic groups in some countries have imperiled peace and harmony in the region, they are deemed to be resolved through a multicultural policy that harness peace and socio-economic and politico-cultural approaches that promote collaboration among ASEAN member states.

This paper examines current issues, concerns, and challenges confronting the region in line with multiculturalism as it relates to economic cooperation. It argues that the volatile political and economic conditions transpiring in the region have to be tackled with stronger states, multicultural policies, and synergistic state-society partnership among ASEAN member states. It concludes and proposes that the ASEAN rather than continue to be a collection of Southeast Asian governments must enjoin the

participation of diverse peoples to resolve not only domestic but also regional problems.

Multiculturalism: Brief Conceptual Exploration

Multiculturalism is as old as humanity — different cultures have always found ways of co-existing, and respect for diversity was a familiar feature of many historic empires, such as the Ottoman Empire. The term has been most often used in reference to Western nation-states, which had seemingly achieved a de facto single national identity during the 18th and/or 19th centuries (Timelli & Minerva, 2011).

In the last 30-40 years, multiculturalism became a dominant theory in some countries of Western civilization and had been the official policy in several Western nations since 1970s as a result of international migration (Berkes 2010). Song (2017) states that:

Multiculturalism is closely associated with ‘identity politics,’ ‘the politics of difference,’ and ‘the politics of recognition.’ It is also a matter of economic interests and political power: it includes demands for remedying economic and political disadvantages that people suffer as a result of their marginalized group identities. (The claims of multiculturalism section, para. 1).

Multiculturalism is also a social doctrine which takes into account diversity and cultural differences not only among immigrants in host countries but also cultural minorities and indigenous peoples living in almost all countries of the world.

Kazancigil writes in Ingles’ (1996) preface’s policy paper:

The ‘rediscovery’ of ethnicity and cultural identities created an awareness of the need to cope with the management of ethnic and cultural diversity through policies which promote ethnic and cultural minority groups’ participation in, and access

to the resources of society, while maintaining the unity of the country. That diversity characterizes the great majority of the countries in the world, and that with the end of the cold war and bipolar international order, identitarian claims of ethnic, religious and cultural varieties are becoming stronger, are well-known facts (p.6).

Toffler (1990) recognized that diversity and heterogeneity in society will lead toward mosaic democracy, replacing mass democracy, as states had been confronted by sporadic communal violence caused by ethnic and cultural conflicts whose struggles were fought under the banner of nationalism, religion, and civil and political rights. Huntington (1996) argued that post-Cold War nations are to be distinguished not politically, ideologically, or economically, but culturally. Non-Western societies particularly, assert strongly their own cultural values and reject those that the West had forced upon them. As a result, now the deepest, most important and most dangerous conflicts emerged between nations belonging to different cultural entities.

Multicultural claims include a wide range of entitlements involving religion, language, ethnicity, nationality, and race. It is about transforming both the vertical relationships between minorities and the state and the horizontal relationships among the members of different groups. It is both a philosophy and public policy, and beyond demographic pluralism. As a philosophy, it is centered on recognizing, accommodating, and supporting cultural pluralism. Thinkers argue that social equality is enhanced when governments explicitly recognize diverse interests of cultural minorities, valorize pluralism, and accommodate the cultural needs and entitlements of groups.

As a policy, it is a systematic and comprehensive response to cultural and ethnic diversity, with educational, linguistic, economic and social components and specific institutional mechanisms – a democratic policy response for coping with cultural and social diversity in society (Inglis,

1996). Multiculturalism requires governments and institutions not only to encourage diversity and pluralism but also manage peoples' differences through adoption and implementation of laws, formulation of legislative or administrative measures, and rules. These have to promote unity, racial harmony, cross-cultural understanding, hence resolve conflict arising from diverse interest. It is a critical policy in harnessing the full potential of the country's cultural diversity and its latent influence on one's social and economic future; offering protection to minorities and ensuring them that they are part of the nation-state.

More than international intervention to mitigate ethnic conflict, national policies that promote multiculturalism both in the economic and political fields are far more significant in solving conflict and managing diversity. Strictly understood, multiculturalism can be workable as a basis for social cohesion and integration. Any effort to formulate and implement policies of managing ethnically and culturally diverse societies needs to consider social context in which they have to be framed.

The principle of multiculturalism has to go hand in hand with democracy and a broad regional autonomy. In fact, only democracy can really accept multiculturalism as a concept of state and nation building. It is through a more democratic structure, institution, and process that empowerment of the people, including and especially minorities, be strengthened, enhanced, and promoted.

Besides democratic rule and polity, successful management of multiculturalism and multiethnic societies requires efforts against social and economic inequalities and exclusion. An important innovation in the specification of the dimensions of multiculturalism is the inclusion of economic development. Economic productivity which follows from this dimension involves utilizing the cultural skills and talents of people from diverse cultural backgrounds to extend the state's economic initiatives both locally and internationally. The use of economic advantage as a basis for achieving legitimation and national acceptance of multiculturalism is not fortuitous but created.

The diversity of Southeast Asian states in terms of cultures, political systems, resource and skill endowment, comparative advantages, and scope and breadth for trade and investment flows, are among others, a resource rather than a limitation to economic growth and development as a community of nations in the region. Diversity is an instrument of promoting economic growth. Pluralism and multiculturalism unfolds society's creativity, catalyzes discoveries and breakthroughs in knowledge, creates new technologies, and configures new institutional arrangements in the realm of governance and inter-state relations.

Economists Ashraf and Galor (2011) find that cultural diffusion has played a significant role in giving rise to differential patterns of economic development across the globe. The study draws the following conclusions: first, the lack of cultural diffusion diminishes the ability of societies to adapt to a new technological paradigm; second, societies that are geographically isolated all the way back in pre-industrial times continue to be less culturally diverse today; and third and most meaningfully, cultural diversity has a positive impact on economic development in the process of industrialization, from its inception through modern times. The research confirms that diversity propels economic development while homogeneity slows it down or hampers development.

In as much as regional economic cooperation is one of the conceivable drivers of growth and development, it is imperative to appraise the implications and challenges of economic cooperation to multiculturalism as an approach in building a peaceful, just, and democratic ASEAN.

The State of Economic Cooperation in ASEAN

Economic cooperation is one of the central goals of the ASEAN as conceived by its founding members, viz. Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) of 1967 expresses its aims as:

To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of South-East Asian Nations. (The ASEAN Declaration, 1967).

In 1976, the first ASEAN Heads of State Summit in Bali, Indonesia produced two important agreements that represent the two dimensions of ASEAN's fundamental basis of cooperation. One is the Declaration of ASEAN Concord which establishes the political, economic, social, cultural, and security framework of ASEAN Member States (AMS). Article 1 states that:

The stability of each member state and of the ASEAN region is an essential contribution to international peace and security. Each member state resolves to eliminate threats posed by subversion to its stability, thus strengthening national and ASEAN resilience. (Declaration of ASEAN Concord, 1976).

The second agreement, the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation (TAC), articulates in its Article 2, the cardinal principles and norms that governs the relationships of AMS. These are values and tenets generally respected and upheld until now and thought to be responsible in the largely continued peace, stability, and cooperation in the region. These are:

- a. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations;
- b. The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;
- c. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
- d. Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means;
- e. Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and f. Effective cooperation among themselves (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, 1976).

Aforesaid is the ASEAN's code of conduct for regional relations embodying the standards and beliefs not only of the founding AMS but other countries which may join the ASEAN in the future. Also known as the *ASEAN Way*, the norms and values form the core of ASEAN inter-state relation and cooperation between and among the AMS which had since expanded to 10 in 1999.

Intra-ASEAN trade

Trade among the member countries was insignificant when it was established. Estimates between 1967 and the early 1970s showed that the share of intra-ASEAN trade from the total trade was between 12 and 15 percent. Thus, some of the earliest economic cooperation schemes of ASEAN were aimed at addressing this situation. However, the initiation of schemes and specific projects during the 1970s and 1980s failed to achieve their predetermined objectives due principally to the lack of shared interests in cooperation amongst essentially competing economies, exacerbated by the adoption of essentially inward-looking economic policies in most member states (Bowles and MacLean, 1996).

The expansion of ASEAN membership with the addition of Brunei (1984), Vietnam (1995), Laos (1997), Myanmar (1997), and Cambodia (1999), nonetheless did not expand intra-regional considerably despite ASEAN being the world's third largest trading group after North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU). Levels of trade hovered between 20 and 25% of the region's global trade during the 1990s. A significant portion of this trade comes from the bilateral trade ties between Singapore and Malaysia, and between Singapore and Indonesia. Without Singapore, intra-regional trade would range between 2% and 5% of ASEAN's global trade. The low intra-ASEAN regional trade were due to various factors including differences in the tariff structure of ASEAN economies and the ineffectiveness of support for various regional preferential trading schemes. (Daquila, 2002).

Not until the advent of the second major phase of regional economic cooperation, the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) of 1992, adopted at the 4th ASEAN Summit in Singapore, that intra-ASEAN trade relatively improved as it partly addressed the issue of tariff and trading arrangement, but not without difficulties in its implementation. AFTA's strategic objectives are fundamentally twofold. One, it intends to create a regional market as a building block for a global trading system and to attract foreign investment to the region and two, to increase the region's competitive advantage as a single production unit by eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers/measures (NTMs)¹ among AMS through the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) scheme. This is envisioned to promote greater economic efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness.

The CEPT reduces tariffs on goods traded within the ASEAN region, which meet a 40% ASEAN content requirement, to 0-5% in the year 2002/2003 for the six older ASEAN member countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Brunei). The new ASEAN members were given longer time to reduce their tariffs – 2006 for Vietnam, 2008 for Laos and Myanmar, and 2010 for Cambodia. The flexibilities, i.e., 'stagist' tariff reduction approach, incorporated in the agreement allowed the new and less-developed ASEAN countries to gradually take in deeper commitments, build up trust between and among AMS, and foster consensus at the domestic level. This is the usual pragmatic and harmonious pattern of ASEAN relationship which does not exert pressure on other countries to engender closer cooperation.

¹ Non-tariff measures (NTMs) refer to any measure, other than tariffs, that distorts trade. NTMs are not limited to measures designed to restrict trade (e.g., quantitative restrictions) but include border and behind-the-border measures that arise from government regulatory policies, procedures and administrative requirements which are imposed to serve a particular purpose. They can also include restrictive business practices which have the potential to become barriers to trade (NTBs). See Baldwin, R., 1970 for details.

Although the CEPT led to a significant increase in intra-regional trade at least in absolute terms (US\$43.26 billion in 1993 to almost US\$80 billion in 1996, an average yearly growth rate of 28.3 percent), it remained at around 25% of ASEAN's global trade. In 2001, Lwin (2001) discloses that beyond economic reasons, specifically tariff reductions, the creation of an amiable milieu through political, social, and cultural policies is significantly necessary for AFTA to realize its goals. Lwin says that, "[h]aving macro-economic and political stability and more market friendly environments especially in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar would be the more important factors for [the] achievement and [shaping] prospects of AFTA" (p. 195).

Okabe and Urata (2013) and Austria (2013) similarly attributed the existence of disparity on NTMs between new and old ASEAN members for the inability of AFTA to vigorously promote intra-ASEAN trade, the former nonetheless argues that the Agreement had developed a production network involving ASEAN and China, which has become an increasingly important destination of ASEAN exports of intermediate and capital goods. The latter on the other hand concludes that a highly integrated production network offers an opportunity in unlocking the prospect of an integrated regional economy beyond free trade.

Towards regional economic integration and ASEAN identity

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, AMS concluded agreements to liberalize trade in services, encourage investments by ASEAN-based investors, strengthen transportation links, harmonize product standards, and promote the enforcement of Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) to bring about an integrated economic region. The 1997 financial crisis accelerate SEA regionalism. It highlighted the regional interdependence of Southeast and East Asian countries which led to a number of initiatives for regional cooperation such as the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI)² among others, launched within the framework

² This is a multilateral currency swap arrangement among members of the ASEAN, the People's Republic of China (including Hong Kong), Japan, and South Korea or the ASEAN + 3 which was concluded in 2000 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. It is an attempt to manage regional short-term liquidity problems and to facilitate the work of other international financial arrangements and organisations like International Monetary Fund.

of ASEAN+3³ (AMS + Peoples' Republic of China [PRC], Japan, and Republic of South Korea), thereby steering the conception of the East Asia Free Trade Agreement (EAFTA). More wide-ranging and multilayered agreement with 16 other countries followed after the 2nd East Asia Summit⁴ in 2007 with the unveiling of the East Asian Economic Partnership Agreement also known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership for East Asia (CEPEA). Likewise, several FTAs were forged between ASEAN and six non-ASEAN countries: Japan in 2008 and five other countries in 2010, viz: Australia, New Zealand, China, S. Korea, and India.

In less than 20 years after the Asian meltdown, ASEAN bounced back and had grown; regarded as one of the success stories of modern economics. The World Economic Forum ranked the region as the seventh-largest economic power in the world and third-largest economy in Asia, with a combined GDP of US\$2.6 trillion – higher than in India in 2014. Between 2007 and 2014, ASEAN trade increased by a value of nearly \$1 trillion. Nearly one-fourth (24%) was trade within the region, followed by trade with China (14%), Europe (10%), Japan (9%) and the United States (8%). In the same period, foreign direct investment (FDI) rose from \$85 billion to \$136 billion, and in share to the world from 5% to 11%. ASEAN is also the world's third largest market and labour force with 622 million people, behind China and India (Lechacher 2016).

At the 21st ASEAN Summit in November 2012, EAFTA and CEPEA were replaced by the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Expected to be signed during the 32nd ASEAN Summit in Singapore

³ ASEAN+3 (APT) cooperation started in 1997 and institutionalized in the 1999 Summit in Manila through the Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation at the 3rd APT Summit. In this meeting, leaders expressed their common interest to further strengthen and deepen East Asia cooperation at various levels and in various areas like energy, transport, and information and communications technology (ICT).

⁴ The East Asia Summit (EAS) is a forum held annually by leaders of, initially, 16 countries in the East Asian, Southeast Asian and South Asian regions, and expanded to 18 with the U.S. and Russia joining at the 6th EAS in 2011 held in Bali, Indonesia.

between 28 April and 5 May 2018, the RCEP is foreseen to account for about 40% of world's trade, with the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of RCEP member states to roughly \$21.3 trillion (Sinha & Natarai, 2013). Total GDP is predicted to swell to over \$100 trillion by 2050 given the growth of China, India, and Indonesia (Hubbard & Sharma, 2016).

The financial catastrophe similarly configured the ASEAN identity as a community. The vision of an ASEAN Community was articulated in 1997 at the 2nd ASEAN Informal Summit where *ASEAN Vision 2020: Partnership in Dynamic Development* was adopted. It commits ASEAN leaders "to moving towards closer cohesion and economic integration" as a "community of caring societies" where "equitable access to opportunities for total human development" is realized by reducing the development gap among member economies (ASEAN Vision 2020, 1997, pp. 3-4).

Launched in 2003, the ASEAN Community was affirmed through the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II or the Bali Accord II. It was designed to have three (3) pillars: the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), ASEAN Political- Security Community (APSC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) (Declaration of ASEAN Concord II [Bali Concord II], 2003). Initially conceived to be concluded in 2020, it was fast-tracked to 2015 as agreed at the 12th ASEAN Summit in 2007 (Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015, 2007). The Community presupposes a strong ASEAN integration, a culmination of the region's resilience and dynamism reflective of its economic and cultural development, social progress, regional peace and security.

While there is the impression that ASEAN economic cooperation would lead to economic integration in a Western fashion, the reality depicts that it is not forthcoming. Notably, the philosophies that underlie the formulation of Eastern and Western FTAs are contrasting. Dent (n.d.) reflects that the former emphasizes regulatory co-operation while the latter focuses on regulatory rights. Southeast and East Asian countries generally conceive FTAs more broadly on economic co-operation and capacity-building

endeavours while Western FTAs are devised on complex and lengthy provisions on commercial regulatory areas such as trade and investment control and supervision and intellectual property rights (IPR). Less-developed ASEAN economies are confronted with certain development capacity restrictions arising in technocratic, institutional, regulatory and industrial contexts that make it far more challenging to implement legislative commitments following the usual Western-type FTAs. Thus, the heterogeneity of ASEAN as a region in terms of political, economic, social, and cultural circumstances reflects the diverse nature of its FTAs.

Asian societies are functioning in much more pragmatic ways; institutional set-up is loose and basically provides or renders support for cooperation to thrive. Structures, either domestic or regional, do not precede action but follow it. The compliant and malleable structures are actually the best guarantee that these will function effectively, adapting themselves to the needs and imperatives of the future.

Known as the “ASEAN Way,” a concept of inter-state relation and regional cooperation that consists of avoidance of formal mechanisms and legalistic procedures for decision-making, and reliance on *musyawarah* (consultation) and *mufakat* (consensus) to achieve collective goals (For details see Acharya, 1997), it has instilled peace and collaboration and resolved trans-boundary political, economic, and social issues in the region.

Though critics say that the “ASEAN Way” has restrained the achievement of regional goals and does not seem to contribute in accelerating the process of integrating AMS economies, it is a distinct approach in regional economic cooperation that harmonizes divergent interests and manages conflicts essential in multicultural societies of ASEAN. It makes regional cooperation sustainable and fruitful in areas with great diversity of culture, ethnics, religion and uneven social-economic development. In fact, much of the economic development in ASEAN has been achieved not through rules, laws, and regulations, but through discussion, consultation and consensus (Harding as cited in Davidson 2004).

The “ASEAN way” relies to a large extent on the personal approach in contrast to the Western way of dependence on structures and their functions.

Conclusion: Lessons and Prospects

As in the past, ASEAN bilateral and multilateral relations with various governments and international organizations have been developed and strengthened through the years under several agreements and plans of action. Given the interlocking nature of the different forms of regional cooperation in the ASEAN, lessons and prospects are dealt with in this concluding part.

Synergistic state-society partnership

In all types of cooperation, horizontal partnership between and among countries, development agencies, and CSOs/NGOs brought about mutual benefit and obligation to key players and stakeholders in human development. Partnerships have been invaluable in rooting regional programs in the realities of the participating countries and in complying with mission statements of institutions and organizations. Although the process is slow, the medium-to-long term value with regard to stimulating ownership and commitment to all stakeholders and partners creates the assurance that sustainable results are achieved.

Political commitment to goals and plans

Historically, regional cooperation programs take their mandate from political commitments made by regional/sub-regional/intergovernmental organizations. The sustained commitment of AMS in promoting the multi-disciplinary aspects of development and belief in the shared values behind regional plans, agenda, agreements are critical in development. This signifies the importance of political leadership in steering, organizing, and attaining measurable results in development.

Political neutrality and presence of opportunity, support and stimulation

The political neutrality of all modes of cooperation allows intra-and extra-regional development agencies to exploit the intellectual potential and institutional capacities of the AMS that enabled them to conduct human development activities in a “safe” space. The neutrality of cooperation offers the ASEAN greatest return in terms of value added in enhancing their regional role in peoples’ development. Cooperation arrangements have provided the opportunity, support and stimulation to facilitate contracting parties to collaborate and develop further national and regional capacities in pursuit of human development.

Cultural variation, multiculturalism, and ASEAN doctrine

Building a community of any geographical size (e.g. a village or town, nation, or multi-national/regional) that shares common values is most desirable but daunting, yet possible. It is viewed that fostering a sense of “community” among people of varied ethnicities, cultures, religions, and ways-of-life in ASEAN through inclusive multicultural and sound economic policies that are broadly shared yield durable relations not only within one’s national boundaries but also beyond. It fortifies social identity, practice, and regional vision that eventually mitigates conflict and promotes social harmony. In a globalized world, “community” is regarded not simply limited to national and international communities but likewise includes virtual communities that transcend physical borders.

The rich diversity of the region provides both opportunities and challenges in securing economic growth and development. Although cooperation and coordination of efforts among AMS to respond to regional problems have been impeded due to the differing institutional capabilities, accessibility of resources, and levels of socio-economic and political development of countries, the closer communication and broadening of human interaction and network among the AMS will gradually transcend over divergence of cultures, religions, customs and even ideologies.

Governments and peoples in Southeast Asia should further promote regionalism by overcoming their weaknesses and shortcomings, learn from the useful and applicable experiences of Europe, Africa and the Western Hemisphere, and more importantly indigenize these lessons in Southeast Asian context. Southeast Asians have to create a community based on the ideals of democracy, freedom, good governance, justice, and human rights to better respond to current regional and global challenges. ASEAN must become ASEAN of the people as they are basically the ultimate stakeholders of the region.

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Multiculturalism: A Malaysian Perspective

Osman Bakar

Introduction: The Phenomena of Diversity, Natural and Cultural

In the real world in which we live, we basically experience two types of diversity. One is natural diversity, and the other cultural. Natural diversity, which is the most obvious feature of the world of nature or what philosophers call the natural order, is not of human making. It is neither planned and determined nor brought into existence by the human will. Rather, it is something that is given to man independently of his will and choice. Indeed, the whole of nature with its permanent display of diversity exists long before the coming into being of the human species, as the study of natural history, classical and modern, has clearly shown.¹ Religions, particularly those of the Abrahamic family, would claim that nature with all its inimitable diversity of wonders is a creation of God the Absolute and the Infinite or the Supreme Divine Reality that transcends the natural reality itself.

¹ Islam is not silent on this particular issue of natural history. Its sacred scripture, the Quran, affirms this scientific view by posing the following question and by implication answering it in the affirmative: "Has there not been over man a long period of time when he was nothing – (not even) mentioned?" *The Quran*, 76:1. This verse has been interpreted by some classical Muslim scientists, including al-Biruni (973 CE – 1050 CE) as referring to the long cosmic, including geological history preceding the appearance of the first human being on the planet Earth.

As for cultural diversity, which is the most obvious feature of the human world, its existence and perpetuity involve but are by no means limited to the role of human will and human making. It has two parts. The first part refers to the diversity in the ethnic makeup of the human race, particularly as demonstrated by the existence of a great variety of spoken languages and people with different physical characteristics, psychological temperaments and group behavioral patterns, and ways of life. The second part refers to the diversity in the mainly tangible cultural products that have been created by these different branches of the human family. It is very clear from the descriptions of both parts of this cultural diversity that the human role in its creation, though central by virtue of the nature of human freedom, is necessarily complemented by the role of nature. Religion, especially Islam, even insists on a divine role in the creation of cultural diversity, which is through both physical laws in the natural order and historical laws in the human order.

The role that the world of nature plays in the creation of cultural diversity is a significant one. Nature does so in two main ways. Firstly, there is the influence and impact of natural environment, particularly climatic conditions, on the physical and psychological dimensions of ethnic makeup that necessarily varies from one geographical region to another. In other words, natural diversity is a significant factor in shaping ethnic and hence cultural diversity. The fact that the creators of cultures come from many different ethnic backgrounds with their respective creative and artistic geniuses could only be a sure guarantee to cultural diversity. Secondly, the natural environment is known to be the constant factor in conditioning the nature, characteristics, and evolution of cultural works, tangible or otherwise, produced by the people who lived within the environment concerned, independently of their ethnicity or ethnicities. Traditional agriculture, architecture, and the art of dress are good examples of man's cultural products that have been significantly influenced by the natural environment.

As pointed out earlier, central to the creation of cultural diversity, however, is the human role itself. Both religion and social science affirm this fundamental truth. From the perspective of religion, at least as

emphasized in Islam, the centrality of the human role in the creation of cultures is dictated by man's unique position in the cosmos as a theomorphic being and his providential role on earth as both God's servant ('abd) and His trustee (*khalifah*).² In conformity with this particular perspective of looking at man's terrestrial role and functions it may be asserted that it is the purpose of human existence to create cultures or civilizations ('umran).³ This is so, because it is through the creation and preservation of cultures that human servanthood and trusteeship for God would find their true expressions and realization. Thus, in the Islamic perspective, there is always a spiritual dimension to human cultural creativity understood in its broadest sense. There is also a spiritual dimension to the meaning of cultural diversity. As the Quran puts it, it is the destiny of the human race to be divided "into nations and tribes that they may know one another."⁴ Through this quoted verse, Quranic anthropology thus explains the source and the purpose of cultural diversity. Its source is ethnic diversity, and its purpose intercultural understanding. Since the Quran maintains that the ultimate source of ethnic diversity is divine, it also defines its higher purpose, which is to know the divine criteria in judging the comparative worth and dignity of human beings in spiritual and

² This dual human role is clearly spelt out in the Quran. See, for example, the verse 51:56 on man's servanthood role in relation to God as his Lord, and the verse 2:30 on his trusteeship role on behalf of God.

³ The Muslim idea of the human species as cultivators of cultures and civilization-builders has its roots in the Quran. The Quran refers to past human societies that built mighty civilizations through their acquisition of wealth and power. It illustrates this historical fact with the use of two of the most important symbols of human earthly achievement, namely prosperous cultivation of the earth and large settled populations. See *The Quran*, 11:61 and 30:9. The word used in the Quran, '*amaru*', meaning 'they populated,' is derived from the root word '*amara*', which conveys the key meanings of 'to build, to inhabit or settle, and to be prosperous and to be civilized.' Interestingly, Ibn Khaldun (1332 CE – 1406 CE), the celebrated historian and founder of modern sociology, used the word '*umran*' to connote culture or civilization. For his original treatment of the semantic field of '*umran*', see Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, London, Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, vol. 1.

⁴ *The Quran*, 49:13.

moral terms.⁵ It is also the higher purpose of cultural diversity to demonstrate the truth of divine unity in diversity. In fact, a major theme of the Quran that is repeated over and over again is the human need to realize the fundamental truth of unity in diversity.

As far as the perspective of modern social science is concerned, cultural diversity is generally understood to embrace the social phenomena of ethnicity and religion as expressed in their varieties of types, forms, and societal relations, although the several different understandings of these two terms could only mean that a certain amount of overlapping of meanings in their current usage is inevitable. The line of separation between the notion of ethnicity and that of religion is rather blurred, particularly in the domains of beliefs, rituals, and social organization. For this reason, many scholars of religion and religions would insist that if the whole phenomena of what we call religion is to be subsumed under culture then a fine distinction should be made between beliefs, rituals, and social ethics that are claimed to be of supra-human or divine origin and those that are accepted as originating from purely human cultural experience. Notwithstanding this problematic conceptual issue, we may still proceed to emphasize the point that language is a core element of ethnicity or ethnic identity and it is the numerous languages found in the world that largely account for the phenomenon of what we call ethnic diversity.

In this article, ethnic and religious diversity understood in the sense that we have just explained constitutes the core content of cultural diversity with which the notion of multiculturalism is basically concerned, particularly as applied to the Malaysian national context. The foregoing introductory passages in which we purposely make references to the

⁵ For our more detailed discussion of the spiritual significance of ethnic diversity from the perspective of the Quran, see Osman Bakar, *The Quran on Interfaith and Inter-Civilization Dialogue : Interpreting a Divine Message for Twenty-first Century Humanity*. Kuala Lumpur: Institute for Study of the Ummah and Global Understanding (ISUGU) and International Institute of Islamic Thought Malaysia (IIIT). 2006. pp. 15 – 18.

religious dimension of cultural diversity, particularly to Islam, are meant to provide a pertinent background to our current discussion. Ethnic and religious diversity and pluralism and the challenges it poses to nation-building is a lingering issue in Malaysia ever since its independence from the British in 1957. Central to the national concern for peaceful ethnic and racial relations is the issue of the special rights and affirmative policies for Malays and other Bumiputera⁶ ethnic groups and the place and role of Islam vis-à-vis other religions in the country, particularly in the legal domain where there exists frequent tension and conflict between Islamic law (*Shari'ah*) and civil law. Since almost all Malays are Muslims, these delicate issues help propel Islam to the center stage of the national discourse and debates on ethnic and religious diversity and pluralism.

By virtue of being followers of the religion of Islam, the Malays are influenced to a certain extent by Islam in their attitudinal responses to the challenge of ethnic and religious diversity. Their past and present responses to multiculturalism or cultural pluralism generally may have fallen below the ideal standard set forth by Islam. However, notwithstanding their shortcomings as an ethnic and religious community, it is still worth noting that just over sixty years ago the Malays set a historical precedent in modern times when they collectively agreed to accept the granting of full citizenship *en masse* to more than a million immigrants of ethnic Chinese and ethnic Indian origins from China and India respectively.⁷ In so doing, especially in the context of the time, they demonstrated the rare example of “ethnic grace” ever to be shown by an indigenous population toward their foreign “guests,” though this admirable collective Malay act is usually presented to the world as an obligation, which the Malays had to honor as part of their “social contract” with other ethnic groups that was to serve as the foundational pillar of the newly independent multicultural Malaysian state.

⁶ Literally, “sons of the soil,” though generally understood as referring to the indigenous ethnic groups.

⁷ These immigrant workers were brought to Malaysia by Britain to serve the latter's colonial economy in the country.

Regardless of how one would like to interpret the agreement of the Malays to this historic social contract that includes the official recognition of the use of languages other than Malay and the official recognition of religious freedom for religions other than Islam, in addition to the granting of full citizenship *en masse* to immigrants in question, the significance of this Malay act of “ethnic grace” for Malaysian cultural pluralism and its future was not lost.⁸ The passage of time has not devalued its significance, including for our own times, since ethnic strife and conflicts are a glaring feature of the contemporary global scene that await lasting solutions, but, sadly, even most of the advanced countries in the West are not seen to be ahead of the countries they used to colonize in addressing the challenge of multiculturalism. It is our point of contention that the Malays’ act of “ethnic grace” is not unrelated to the impact that the Islamic worldview and values have left in the general Malay mind and their communal ethics. As for the future Malay-Muslim response to cultural pluralism in the country, it would depend to a great extent on their ability to access the treasury of universal ideas in the teachings of Islam that would be deemed the most relevant to the country’s engagement with the issue of ethnic and religious diversity and pluralism and to put them into practice. As such, a restatement of the Islamic perspectives on ethnic and religious diversity and pluralism as we have done at the beginning of this section would serve the useful purpose of reminding ourselves the societal ideals in the light of which the Malay community is supposed to deal with the ongoing challenges of multiculturalism.

⁸ The significance in question would be better appreciated if one were to compare Malaysia’s response to ethnic and religious pluralism with those of its two neighbors, namely Thailand and the Philippines. While Malaysia allowed for a greater democratization of ethnic and community rights and thus freer expressions of cultural pluralism such as the freedom to use mother tongues other than Malay and ethnic-based personal names, Thailand and the Philippines on the other hand opted to impose cultural assimilation on their ethnic minorities. Thus, ethnic Chinese in Thailand and also ethnic Malays in its southern provinces adopt Thai names and the majority of them only speak the Thai language. In the Philippines, in like manner, ethnic Chinese adopt Filipino names and only speak the indigenous Tagalog language.

Cultural Diversity and Pluralism: The Concept of Multiculturalism

The idea of multiculturalism is a general intellectual response to the prevailing phenomena of cultural diversity and pluralism in the modern world as contextualized by societies or nation-states. In the post-colonial era, both the newly independent nation-states and their former colonial masters find themselves facing a common formidable challenge, namely the problems posed by the multicultural character of their societies. The general experience of these nation-states shows that it is much easier to bring multicultural societies into existence than to manage them in order to turn them into united and peaceful countries. Each multicultural country tries its own way of dealing with cultural diversity. However, in this respect there are not that many successful stories to tell. In this new century, which is now in its second decade, former colonial rulers, which are grouped among the advanced countries in the world, have yet to demonstrate that they are the most advanced in the cultural domain as well such as through having the most enlightened forms of pluralism in both theory and practice.

Multiculturalism has been defined in several different ways. If we collect all the definitions that have been given to this term as found in the dictionaries and other sources and then we proceed to discern their core meanings, we would find that they are reducible to two categories of statements. The first category comprises statements that are of factual or descriptive nature. These factual statements about multiculturalism refer to such aspects of cultural diversity and pluralism as the state or condition of being multicultural, the social fact of the coexistence of diverse cultures in a particular society or nation, and the visible characteristics of a society that has many different ethnic or national cultures mingling freely together. The second category comprises statements that are of prescriptive or judgmental nature. These statements are intended to convey what are perceived to be the objectives and goals of multiculturalism, preferences in approaches to issues that arise from cultural diversity, and preferred political or social policies which support or encourage a peaceful coexistence of diverse ethnic and religious groups. For example, at least

in theory if not in practice, it is the goal of the government of every multicultural nation to preserve the rich diversity of its different cultures or cultural identities that are found within its borders and to a united and harmonious society create out of this diversity. It has been maintained that in an enlightened multiculturalism there would be in place a clear-cut “policy or practice of giving overt recognition to the cultural needs and contributions of all the groups in a society, especially of those minority groups regarded as having been neglected in the past.”

Since the term multiculturalism does not signify any specific practical mechanism of treating problems associated with cultural diversity but rather simply a general point of view in which cultural diversity is to be accepted as a social fact almost everywhere in our contemporary world and needs proper treatment especially from governments, and given the fact that cultural diversity is unique to each multicultural country it is meaningless to speak of the failure of multiculturalism as such. It is possible that multiculturalism as understood and practiced in one national context has not succeeded in addressing problems posed by its cultural diversity. But if that is really the case, then the country or society concerned needs to look at alternative approaches and models of addressing cultural diversity and pluralism. In this article, we affirm the view that Malaysia’s multiculturalism is quite unique both in its cultural landscape and in its decades-old treatment of cultural diversity that destiny has imposed on it.

Malaysia’s Multiculturalism: The Contemporary Cultural Landscape

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country with Muslims forming 61.3% of its population of just over 30 million (2015 population census). The other religious groups are Buddhists (19.8%), Christians (9.2%), Hindus (6.3%), and Confucians, Taoists and other followers of the traditional Chinese religions (1.3%). In terms of ethnicity, the Malays and other indigenous groups constitute 67.4% of the population, the ethnic Chinese (24.6%), the ethnic Indians (7.3%), and others (0.7%). Malaysia thus displays its distributive pattern of cultural diversity in its demographic map in a way that is quite unique among modern nation-states. Its pattern

of cultural diversity is particularly distinguished by the fact that there is a close identification of religion with race. Most of the Muslims belong to the largest ethnic group, namely the Malays, while most of the Buddhists are the ethnic Chinese, and most of the Hindus are ethnic Indians. This close identification of religion with race has the important effect of making the two issues of inter-ethnic and inter-religious peace closely intertwined. The issue of religious tolerance, which is the main pillar of Malaysian multiculturalism, is therefore closely related to that of inter-ethnic peaceful coexistence. The two are intricately dependent on each other.

Relations of the Malaysian State with Islam

The Malaysian state's relationship with Islam is quite unique in the Muslim world.⁹ It has evolved over the decades in a dynamic way beginning from the time of Malaya's independence in 1957¹⁰ when it adopted a national constitution that made certain provisions concerning the position of Islam. The constitutional provision that 'Islam is the religion of the Federation' makes Islam an integral component of the state. By virtue of this constitutional provision, Malaysia already possesses a certain Islamic character that makes it inappropriate to be labeled a 'secular state.' This provision also means that the state has a certain responsibility toward Islam. Since it is stated in the same provision that "other religions

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Osman Bakar, 'Islam and political legitimacy in Malaysia,' Shahram Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed, eds. *Islam and Political Legitimacy*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurson. 2003. pp. 127 – 149.

¹⁰ Malaya, which became independent as a Federation on 31 August 1957, comprised eleven states in the Malay Peninsula with nine of them each headed by a hereditary Malay ruler and the other two headed by Governors appointed by the King who himself is elected to the post of Head of State ("Yang DiPertuan Agong") by fellow Rulers on a rotational basis for a five-year term. Once the rotation is over, it may well be possible for a Ruler with a long life to be elected King for the second time in the succeeding rotation as had happened to the late Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (1927 – 2017) of the state of Kedah. In 1963 Malaya merged with Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak to form a larger Federation known as Malaysia that survives to this day. However, in 1965 due to political conflicts between Singapore

may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation," the state in consequence also has a responsibility in ensuring freedom of religious worship for all religions. However, contentions persist until today concerning the right interpretation of "Islam as the official religion" of the country. Notwithstanding these ongoing contentions, the role of the state in the promotion and implementation of Islamic programs has been expanding steadily over the decades, right through from the Administration of the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman to that of Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, the sixth Prime Minister.¹¹

The Malaysian state bears another form of relationship with Islam through its institution of constitutional monarchy. Every five years the Sultans and Rulers of nine out of its fourteen states elect a King on a rotational basis. They are Heads of the religion of Islam in their respective states while the King is the Head of Islam in the five states that do not have Sultans or Rulers. Through the Islamic religious establishment in each state what survives of the traditional Malay-Islamic monarchy still exercises considerable influence on the religious life of Muslims.

The Evolving Face of Malaysian Multiculturalism: Islam as a Determining Factor

Viewing the national scene of ethnic and religious relations in the early years of independence, it may be said that the government was then pursuing a philosophy of religious tolerance that was primarily aimed at promoting national unity and sparing the nation of religious extremism,

¹¹ When the draft of this article was first written and presented at the cited Conference at Mahidol University, Thailand in August 2016 Najib Razak was still Malaysia's Prime Minister. The country's General Elections on 9 May 2018, however, saw Najib voted out of power at the hands of the Opposition coalition, Pakatan Harapan (PH) ("The Pact of Hope") led by a former Premier, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. On the consensus of PH's coalition partners Mahathir became Prime Minister for the second time at the advanced age of ninety-three, making him the oldest world leader ever. There are early signs that the newly Mahathir-led ruling coalition will herald a new and more enlightened era in Malaysia's ethnic relations and cultural pluralism.

tensions, and conflicts. The face of religious freedom and religious tolerance first in the then Federation of Malaya and later Malaysia, to the extent that it existed, had two important features.¹² The first feature was avoidance of mutual encroachment or interference in religious matters by the different religious communities, and the second feature the subordination of policies on interreligious understanding and harmony to ethnic perspectival preferences. As for the first feature, the cultural observance in question was explained as implying mutual avoidance of the religious sensitivities of the other, which were generally considered as not healthy for the political stability of the country.

In practical terms, this particular government stance had the lasting impact of discouraging or even intimidating interreligious dialogue. Despite of more than sixty years of national independence, interreligious dialogue has not taken roots in the country's multi-religious society that would enable it to become an important aspect of Malaysian culture. On the contrary, opposition to interreligious dialogue from the conservative religious establishment in particular has appeared to be growing stronger in recent years. In the absence of such a kind of dialogue, one could hardly expect to a significant improvement in mutual understanding between religions. Instead, what prevails in the public mind is the state-nourished view that religions are in reality far more separated from each other than they are united. In other words, the prevailing view is that there are more differences between religions than there are similarities or commonalities and these differences are irreconcilable no matter how hard one tries to bridge the gaps that separate them from each other.

In the light of this prevailing view, past governments sought instead to appeal to the general public to help nurture attitudinal virtues and

¹² For our more detailed treatment of this theme, see Osman Bakar, 'Report on issue of religious tolerance: national dialogue on Islam and democracy 2009,' Ibrahim M. Zein, ed. *Islam and Democracy in Malaysia: Findings from a National Dialogue*. ISTAC-IIUM: Kuala Lumpur. 2010.

promote religious tolerance through an inculcation of respect for existing differences between religions. But for some reasons, the respect that was sought to be inculcated by the nation's political leaders was without real substance as it was never properly explained and thus left vague in the public mind. Without a concrete positive content and a strong ideational foundation, the respect in question could only be a formalistic and a fragile one. True respect for religious diversity has its own demands. It is only on the basis of commonalities between religions that can help nurture true mutual respect. However, these commonalities can only be unveiled to the public mind through an accumulative process of mutual understanding such as can be attained through interreligious dialogues. Since such dialogues have been almost absent, religious tolerance could hardly be developed on the basis of commonalities or shared perspectives, which in the context of the social reality of the times remained largely hidden from the public eye.

One consequence of the first feature of the Malayan and later Malaysian face of religious tolerance was thus the conscious avoidance of a national discourse on commonalities in religious ideas and shared religious values. This particular consequence brings us to the second feature of Malayan/Malaysian religious tolerance, namely its subordination to ethnic relations considerations. Past national leaders have argued that inter-ethnic issues ought to be given priority over interreligious issues. The prevailing wisdom in the then government circles was that, once healthy inter-ethnic relations were realized through peaceful resolutions of the conflicting ethnic demands, religious tolerance would automatically follow suit. Religious tolerance was thus seen as a logical and necessary by-product of a healthy inter-ethnic relation in the sense they had defined it. However, subsequent developments in inter-ethnic relations, both before and after the 13th May 1969 tragedy of ethnic violence, did not lend support to the belief in question and its assumptions despite the fact that the focus of national policies was on social justice for all ethnic groups.

The two features of Malayan (and later Malaysian) face of religious tolerance just discussed have gone a long way in showing that interreligious relations and their underlying issues never occupied a central place in national discourses on inter-communal peace and national unity. While the country may be said to have an “enlightened” and a pragmatic policy on inter-ethnic cooperation and peace, even by world standard, it could hardly claim to have one on interreligious understanding and peace. Indeed, until now it does not have one. When the new Federation of Malaysia was formed in 1963 that resulted in the emergence of a new national entity that was more diverse and more complex in its multiculturalism the need for such a policy became even more apparent. With the addition of a new demographic component to Malaya’s already complex national cultural landscape that was remarkably diverse and distinctive in its ethnic and religious distributive pattern the new nation-state became an even more complex cultural entity to manage. Yet an enlightened and pragmatic policy on interreligious understanding and cooperation somehow did not emerge to serve as a fitting response to the new national challenge in multiculturalism.

True enough, Malaysia has been spared of religious strife and conflict in the last sixty years. It is also true that Malaysians of different religious groups have interacted with each other peacefully in their daily lives – educational, business, political, and the workplace – but all these achievements that are noteworthy when compared to the records of many other multicultural societies have nothing to do with some well-defined policy on inter-religious understanding and cooperation that the government of the day had put in place and enforced. It is to the credit of the Malaysian people that in spite of the absence of such a policy over the decades relative interreligious peace has prevailed in the country. But as our brief discussion in the following section clearly shows there are disturbing trends and developments in the country’s interreligious relations that must no longer be ignored if its relatively commendable record of the absence of religious strife and conflicts were to be maintained.

Contemporary Developments Affecting Interreligious Relations in Malaysia

Religious consciousness in Malaysia has been on the rise since the 1970s when the so-called Islamic revival waves swept the country and the rest of the Islamic world. The Islamic revival among the Malays, especially during the period when Mahathir was Prime Minister (1981 – 2003), helped to generate a parallel religious consciousness among the non-Muslim communities. This sort of social phenomenon was not surprising. In fact, it was only to be expected. Sociologically speaking, it is quite the norm that, at least when viewed within the same multicultural society, a rising religiosity in one religious community would have the contagious effect of inducing and heating up religiosity in the other communities. When Malay-Muslims in the 1970s, young and old, began to flock to mosques in huge numbers for their prayers and other religious services following the first impact of Islamic revival in the country, similar trends could be observed among other religious communities. Christians began to fill the churches and Buddhists and Hindus their respective pagodas and temples.

As a consequence, more expressions of religiosity became visible as the followers of each religion sought to observe its tenets with greater intensity and fervor. On the whole, it could be said that each religious community became more religious than ever before since the coexistence of these religions in modern Malaysian history. In other words, the country as a whole became more religious with all that this would imply for its 'brand' of religious tolerance. Thus, not long after the 13th May tragedy, Malaysia began to experience a new epoch of multi-religious consciousness with Islamic consciousness taking the center stage.

The kind of pluralistic religious consciousness that gradually developed in the country in the last four decades is an entirely new cultural phenomenon that has not been seen before in the history of the country.¹³

¹³ See Osman Bakar, 'Report on issue of religious tolerance: national dialogue on Islam and democracy 2009,' pp. 123 – 127.

In the sense of a cultural process that was primarily generated, fueled and sustained by the inner forces within the new religious consciousness that were peculiar to each religious community independently of the government's role and policies, it is possible to claim that religionization or spiritualization has taken place in each community at an increasing pace: Islamization in the Muslim community, Christianization in the Christian community, Buddhistization in the Buddhist community, and Hindunization in the Hindu community. For the active missionary religions like Islam and Christianity, this religionization often flowed across the boundaries of their respective communities to the point of generating tensions between them.

With a typical pre-1970s mindset that is unaccustomed to the new religious environment with its own mentality and characteristics, coupled with political expediency, contemporary national leaders – political as well as religious – fail to provide an enlightened leadership that would help to bring the different religious communities together in a spirit of dialogue with the view of promoting genuine mutual understanding and an exemplary religious tolerance. In the absence of such an enlightened kind of leadership, the different religious communities were found to be more or less on their own on how to respond to the challenges of living in a multicultural society. Following their own instincts, the different religious communities tended to lead their respective social lives among their own kind, and develop their thoughts in a parallel and sectarian fashion. They were rarely being guided to the path of dialogue where they could meet and talk to each other about what religions can do to advance the pursuit of the common good. As a consequence, what we could observe was a kind of unintentional tolerance of diverse religious pursuits in the country. But one could then argue that this was certainly religious tolerance of the wrong kind! For in such a climate it was sectarian religiosities that tended to dominate the thinking of each religious community at the expense of the universal elements of religious consciousness, which alone have the appealing power and the efficacy to bring the different religious communities together to work for the common good.

In the longer run, this sort of poorly managed religious development would not be good for Malaysia or for that matter for any other multi-religious country. If left unchecked or deprived of moderating influences such as from the universal elements of religious consciousness, then these parallel sectarian religiosities would only grow and expand to the point of generating destructive societal tensions that could easily culminate in a cultural disaster in the form of religious conflicts and violence. Many political leaders did not help matters when out of political expediency such as the eagerness to secure political support from their own religious community they did not hesitate to patronize sectarian religiosity and sectarian religionization thereby aiding its unhealthy and dangerous development.

To be sure, Malaysia is still far away from what we might call a critical stage of inter-religious relations. But symptoms of religious tensions and of a religious conflict in the making are noticeable here and there in Malaysian society today. If present trends are not quickly reversed through the implementation of an enlightened and pragmatic policy on interreligious understanding and peace, then this country would likely be heading for a cultural disaster of the kind to which we have just referred. It remains to be seen whether or not both religious and political leaders will rise to the occasion by helping to put in place such a religion policy.

Another important contemporary development that has soured Malaysian interreligious relations is the western-originated human rights movement, which has now gone global. This movement has generated a global discourse on a wide range of human rights issues on the basis of postmodernist thought. No country in the world has escaped its influence and impact. Compared to many developing countries, however, the impact on Malaysia has been much more extensive given the fact that it is more developed socially and technologically speaking, and thus more open to outside influences. Moreover, the culturally pluralistic and diverse nature of Malaysian society as well as its relatively wide democratic space help to make it a fertile ground for the human rights discourses.

Prior to the arrival of postmodernist human rights discourse in the Malaysian social scene, an indigenous discourse has been going on for some time on the issues of individual and group rights and privileges. But this latter discourse is more about ethnic than about religious rights, which to this day may still be viewed as the mainstream national discourse on the subject, though increasingly undermined by the new human rights discourse. Furthermore, it is more about group and community than individual rights. Religion is generally excluded from this discourse. The main point of contention in the earlier indigenous discourse pertains to the special rights and privileges enjoyed by the ethnic Malays and other *bumiputeras*. Non-Malay or non-*bumiputera* Muslims are not entitled to these rights and privileges, while non-Muslim *bumiputeras*, including many Christians, are. This inter-ethnic feud clearly shows that the earlier indigenous discourse on group rights was basically formulated in ethnic rather than in religious terms.

The Future of Malaysian Multiculturalism

The arrival of the western-dominated human rights discourse has an important effect on inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in the country. The perspectives of this discourse, which affirm ethnic, religious, and gender equality and the idea of the supremacy of individual rights over collective rights in all domains of life have proved to be a serious challenge to the “traditional” indigenous perspectives on the national discourse on ethnic and religious issues. The ethnic Malays have reacted to this challenge in numerous ways and at various levels of their community. A significant minority within the community has abandoned the old discourse in favor of the new one. It is a heterogeneous group comprising many subgroups with diverse political, religious and social inclinations. But they are united on a number of issues. On the issue of ethnic rights, this group seeks to justify its preference for the new discourse by appealing to such democratic values as equality before the law, social justice, and meritocracy. Another justification advanced by the group is what it claims as the abuse of the rights and privileges in question by certain segments of the Malay or *bumiputera* political establishment at the expense of the

Malay community at large. As Muslims, members of this group also argue that their position on Malay rights and privileges finds accord with the teachings of Islam since, in their view, the religion teaches equality, meritocracy, and social justice.

On religious issues, the group favors a more liberal interpretation of Islam. It is pro-interreligious dialogue as this term is widely understood today. It argues for greater religious freedom both in the specific context of Islam and in the larger national context of interreligious relations as a whole. In fact, some aspects of the freedom as demanded by this group have already been “unilaterally” put into practice by its members much to the dismay of the Islamic religious establishment. These aspects include the right and the freedom of each Muslim, male and female, to interpret the Quran and the right of non-Muslims to speak about Islam. The group also argues for a religious pluralism, again of the kind that is very much in vogue today. Members of this group, especially among the female ones, are generally critical of the religious establishment in their “conservative” interpretations, rulings, and administrative policies on Shari’ah laws, which they argue are contradictory to the Islamic spirit of gender justice.

Though a minority and a loose social group, this segment of the Malay community is large and significant enough to influence national politics, government policies, and to even upset the traditional ethnic balance of political power which used to favor the Malays. Their wide influence, which appears to be disproportionate to their numerical strength, owes much to their ability to articulate issues and to their dynamism. It is further reinforced by the active works of their national partners in the new discourse from the other ethnic and religious groups.

Needless to say, the great majority in the Malay community are deeply concerned with these contemporary developments the impact of which they have begun to feel with much unease, and which they have viewed with considerable alarm. They perceive the new discourse and the various challenges that it has posed as a big threat to traditional Malay political and religious dominance, which they seek to protect. The religious

establishments in particular are passionately defending the conservative view that discourses on Islam must be exclusive to Muslims. They argue that non-Muslims have no right to participate in discourses on Islam. The religious establishments are therefore strongly opposed to the democratization and universalization of discourses on Islam that would allow for non-Muslim participation. It is for this reason that they are also opposed to interreligious dialogue, which they see as another ploy by the non-Muslims to gain access to discourses on Islam. They also see interreligious dialogue as largely a Christian initiative with the view of spreading Christianity among Muslims.

The religious establishments and many Muslim non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are opposed to the idea of religious pluralism in all of its forms. They see in this idea an ingenious attempt to place Islam on the same level with all other religions whether in respect to their theological or their societal worth and standing. They reject the attempt as simply unacceptable. Theologically, they are defending the view that Islam is the only true and valid religion in the sight of God. From the societal point of view, they are defending the constitutional position of Islam as the sole official religion, which therefore cannot be equated with the other religions in terms of their place and role in society. They thus see in the movement for religious pluralism a threat to the position of Islam as the official religion of the country as well as to its claim as the only true religion.

If Malaysia is now passing through a new phase of uncertain interreligious relations that are characterized by greater tension than ever seen before, it is partly because there is a clash between the perspectives of the 'traditional' discourse and those of the new discourse on a number of religious issues, particularly the issues of religious freedom and religious equality. Many Malay-Muslims see an increasingly prominent non-Muslim role in the interreligious dialogue and religious pluralism movements in the country, which they view rather negatively. However, by casting a negative role for the non-Muslims in these movements, especially for the Christians, in terms of their perceived threats against Islam, this major segment of the Malay-Muslim community would only help sharpen differences between

the Muslim and the non-Muslim communities. The opposition by many Malay-Muslims to the human rights discourse and the various movements associated with it, particularly those advocating religious pluralism, interreligious dialogue, and Islamic feminism, has emerged as an important factor in influencing inter-religious relations in Malaysia. The general climate of religious tolerance in the country is going to depend much on the outcome of the present clash between the two discourses on a wide range of ethnic and religious issues. However, there could yet emerge in years to come other perspectives on discourse on interreligious relations and dialogue in Malaysia that would offer their own principles and approaches while integrating the best in the other two perspectives.

Concluding Remarks

There are early signs that what is now dubbed as the “New Malaysia” that emerged from the General Election results of 9th May, 2018 could be a major turning point in the history of the country’s experimentation with cultural pluralism. *The National Front* (“Barisan Nasional”), a coalition of ethnic-based political parties that has ruled Malaysia for the last sixty years, lost the Election to the great surprise of the whole world. The winner, *Pact of Hope* (“Pakatan Harapan”), was also a multi-party coalition. But in terms of the number of component parties, the new ruling coalition is much smaller. More significantly, however, it is its political agenda and promises as contained in its Election Manifesto that, if implemented, are likely to help secure a brighter future for Malaysia’s cultural pluralism. Viewed from the perspective of cultural pluralism, the *Pakatan Harapan government* appears to be in a better position than its political foe and predecessor to generate confidence among the people regarding its ability to manage ethnic and religious diversity. To start with, the *Parti Keadilan Rakyat* (“People’s Justice Party”) (PKR) and the Democratic Action Party (DAP), the component parties in the *Pakatan Harapan* with the largest number of Parliamentary seats, are both multiethnic and multiracial in their composition.

Moreover, Anwar Ibrahim, the PKR's leader and Prime Minister-in-waiting to succeed Mahathir, is well-known for his progressive views on cultural pluralism and ethnic justice. He is duly recognized as a leading international voice on intercultural dialogue. With these credentials, Anwar as Prime Minister is widely believed to be able to provide the kind of leadership that is needed for a multicultural society like Malaysia. The political fortunes of the *Pakatan Harapan* seem to be multiplying, both real and apparent. The majority of Malaysians seem to approve the general performance of the *Pakatan Harapan* government under Mahathir's leadership in its first hundred days in power. Without doubt, one of the most important factors that contributed to the public approval of the new government's performance to date is its perception that there is fairness and justice in the ethnic sharing of political power as displayed in the distribution of Federal Cabinet as well as State Executive Council members. Viewed as a whole, the political scenario arising from the May 2018 General Election is perhaps the most conducive thus far in Malaysian history to the advancement of the country's cultural pluralism. A promising future for Malaysia's cultural pluralism is thus in sight.

Creating Multiculturalism Amidst Ethnic, Linguistic and Religious Diversity: A Filipino Perspective

Arnold T. Monera

Introduction

Multiculturalism is one of the major characteristics of our globalized world. It “assumes that different cultural groups have unique histories, customs, traditions, values that members of the group should be allowed to express and uphold and that should be respected by other cultural groups” (Bernardo, 2016, p. 232). It could also pertain to policies carried out by the state to manage its plural society (Noor & Leong, 2013, p. 714). Kim observes that “[d]espite the cultural diversity within the aboriginal groups and a large population of foreign residents, a discussion about multicultural policies is absent in the Philippines” (2014, p. 176). The Philippine society, because of its historical past, is heterogeneous, hence in essence multicultural. The various waves of migration and colonization – from Hindu, Arab, Chinese, Malay, Spanish and American – have produced a unique mixture of cultures that we know as Filipino today (Dacumos, 2015). The Philippines, to appropriate Victor King’s description, “has a long history of cultural connection with other parts of the world demonstrating the importance of physical migrations and cultural flows into, across and out of the region, which have generated cross-cultural encounters and social intercourse” (2016, pp. 30-31). These encounters have resulted in cultural hybridization or mixed (*mestizo*) communities. The migration and

colonial history still has enduring expressions in contemporary Philippines society. Given the above historical and social context, the Philippine society becomes an example of cultural diversity and openness.

One of the challenges in nation building is how to happily integrate the various groups without sacrificing ethnic, linguistic and religious diversities (Ocampo, 2011, p. 17). In the process of cultural encounters and assimilation, there is always the risk of the majority or dominant groups dictating their terms on the minorities and categorizing them as “marginal,” “undeveloped,” and “unsophisticated.” While foreign immigrants in the Philippines are never seen as culturally discriminated peoples, the minority Indigenous Peoples and Muslim groups who did not convert to Catholicism during the long Spanish colonial era face “cultural discrimination.” Thus, the ticklish issue of multiculturalism in the Philippines cannot be discussed in abstraction from material circumstances and concrete historical specification. To miss the historical context is to overlook the dynamics of conflict and contingencies. As a multi-ethnic and pluralistic culture, the Philippines, just like its neighboring nations in South East Asia, “struggles to come to terms with its socio-cultural identity, pre- and post-colonial legacies, and the necessities of economic and political survival in increasingly global contexts” (Chung, 2007, p. 80).

The Philippines in a Nutshell

The Philippines is an archipelago consisting of some 7,107 islands and islets with a total area of 111,803 square miles (307,055 square kilometers) and with a population of over 100 million. Its geographical structure has resulted in a great diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups. The country ranks eighth among 240 countries in terms of ethnic diversity (Yeoh, 2012, p. 170).

Brief Historical Background. According to Filipino anthropologist Felipe Landa Jocano, the present Filipinos are products of the long process of

evolution and movement of people (2001, pp. 34-56). Even before the coming of Spanish colonizers, the indigenous peoples had already a dominant political organization structure called *barangay*, headed by a *datu* or village chief who was also known as *raha* or *rajah*. The term *barangay* was derived from the Malay word *barangay* or *balangay*, which means sailboat (Junker, 2000, pp. 74 & 130). The chief or *datu* was the chief executive, the legislator, and the judge. Alliances among *barangays* were common and these were formalized in a ritual called *sangduguan* (blood compact). Conflicts between or among *barangays* were settled by violence; those who win by force are always right.

The large-scale migrations of Chinese to the Philippines happened during the Spanish colonial era. When the Spanish conquerors of 1570 founded Manila as a Spanish settlement, they found a small settlement of about 150 Chinese (Wickberg, 2002, p. 4). By 1603, the Chinese population in Manila (alone) was estimated at 20,000 (in contrast to perhaps 1,000 Spaniards) who “had achieved a virtual monopoly in the retail commercial and industrial life of this settlement” (ibid., p. 6). Thus, in areas penetrated by the Spaniards there quickly came to be multi-cultural communities of Spaniards, *Indios* (the Malayan natives of the Philippines), and ethnic Chinese. Inter-marriage between the groups happened especially in the urban areas. The rate of inter-marriage between Chinese settlers and indigenous Filipinos is among the highest in Southeast Asia, exceeded only by Thailand. In 1998, ethnic Chinese (i.e., pure Chinese descent) made up 1 to 2% of the population of the Philippines (Chua, 2003, p. 3). The Philippines has one of the most assimilated Chinese communities in Asia.

Islam was first brought over by Arab seafarers and proselytizers in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, at least 200 years before Spanish conquistadores introduced Christianity to the archipelago (Koerner, 2005; Ocampo, 2011, p. 21). When the Western colonizers came to the archipelago social institutions based on Islam – polity, economy and family – had already been established. By 1565 Islam had already reached the Manila area. The Filipino Muslims, called *Moros*, are found mostly in the Southern

Philippines: Maguindanaos, Tausugs, Samals, Yakans, among others. Thus, the “Morolandia” embraces Mindanao, Sulu and Southern Palawan. Like the pre-colonial Filipinos, the ancestors of the Filipino Muslims came from other parts of Asia, e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and the Pacific Islands (Rasul, 1979, pp. 11-12; Mercado, 2006, p. 131). While they are racially related to other Filipino groups, their distinguishing difference is the Islamic religion.

The circumnavigator Ferdinand Magellan landed on Cebu on March 16, 1521 and claimed the land for Charles I of Spain. After Magellan's fateful death from the hand of a local chieftain, the Spanish crown sent several expeditions to the archipelago in the following decades. In 1543, sighting the islands of Samar and Leyte, the explorer Ruy López de Villalobos called them *Las Islas Filipinas* in honor of the prince of Asturias, Philip, who eventually became King Philip II who reigned from 1556 to 1598 (Galang, 1957, p. 39). The permanent Spanish settlement was finally established in 1565 when Miguel López de Legazpi, the first royal governor, arrived in Cebu from New Spain (Mexico). In 1571, however, Legazpi moved his headquarters to Manila, making it the capital of the colony. Armed with their experiences in Latin America in colonizing the Indians, the Spanish friars enticed many Filipinos to settle in towns, in *pueblos* under the rule of both Spanish colonial government and the Catholic Church (see Constantino, 1975, pp. 58-63). The establishment of towns started the distinction (and consequently the discrimination) between those who came under Spanish and Christian influence and those who refused to be ruled. Those who lived outside the *pueblos*, the indigenous peoples, and who refused to be covered by Spanish land laws, had no right to their own land (Ty, 2010).

The Spanish colonial rule for more than three centuries left indelible marks on the Philippines. Spain introduced a centralized government and Catholicism as unifying factors in creating a national identity. For the first time, a single political and religious authority ruled over major portions of the archipelago. By the end of Spanish rule, Filipino society had schools, colleges (including the oldest university in Asia, University of Santo Tomas), hospitals, theaters, churches, orphanages, roads and bridges. Filipinos

adopted Spanish names and Spanish became the official language. Spain opened the Philippines to the world. The long Spanish regime was punctuated by “wars” until the Philippines was granted independence in 1898. Spain ceded the Philippines (along with Guam and Puerto Rico) to the United States in 1899 at the amount of 20 million dollars.

The American colonial rule (1899-1935/1946) initiated the Filipinos to democracy and self-government. The Americans introduced the public school system, English as the language, Protestantism as a religion, music and sports. They came to the islands primarily to conduct business by encouraging the Filipinos to sell them their raw materials cheap and buy expensive manufactured goods from America. In brief, the Filipinos were educated to become a big market for American products, ideas, way of thinking, and way of democracy. After so much pleading from Filipinos, the Americans granted the Philippines a commonwealth status inaugurated in 1935; it was a semi-independent government under the American colony. Its first Commonwealth President, Manuel L. Quezon, is known for this quote: “I would rather have a government run like hell by Filipinos than a government run like heaven by Americans.”

The Japanese invaded the Philippines on December 8, 1941, ten hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese occupation lasted until 1944 with the return of the U.S. Forces. On July 4, 1946, the US government restored full independence in the Philippines. This long colonial experience helps us to understand the historical and social contexts of the Philippines today.

Multi-ethnolinguistic Philippines. The Philippines has a total of 182 ethnolinguistic groups; around 110 of which are considered as indigenous people (IP) groups (Reyes, Mina, and Asis, 2017, pp. 5-6). The eight major ethnic groups (Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, Bisaya, Hiligaynon/Ilonggo, Bikol, Waray, and Kapampangan) account for about 85% of the total population, occupying most of the lowland areas in the country. All eight belong to the Malay-Polynesian language family, but no two are mutually comprehensible

(Dolan, 1991). According to the 2010 National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) report, there are more than one hundred indigenous communities, about 61% of the IPs are in Mindanao, 33% in Luzon, and 6% in the Visayas. The indigenous groups in the northern mountains of Luzon (Cordillera) are collectively called *Igorot*, while the groups on the southern island of Mindanao are collectively known as *Lumad*. Maranao and Maguindanao are spoken predominantly by Mindanao Muslims.

When Filipino, which was actually Tagalog *de facto*, the *lingua franca* of imperialist Manila and surrounding provinces, was imposed alongside English as the national language of the nation, the Visayan populace, mainly found in the Visayan region and also in some parts of Mindanao refused to use it. The acceptance of Filipino as the national language is still far from being realized in non-Tagalog-speaking regions. Many Filipinos had not accepted a national language at the expense of their regional languages. Nor was there complete agreement that regional languages should be subordinated to a national language based on Tagalog. But because of political centralization, urbanization, and extensive internal migration, linguistic barriers are slowly eroding, and government emphasis on Filipino and English (at the expense of local dialects that are being abandoned and becoming extinct) have also reduced these divisions. Efforts to nativize the Philippine national language were unrealistic since words of English and Spanish origin had become an integral part of the language used in the everyday and intellectual discourse of the people.

Religion in the Philippines. The pre-Hispanic Filipinos were very religious. Religion for them was part of life. Religious pluralism was already the pervading climate among the natives. They were basically animists. In their practice of religion, the profane and the sacred are woven together. Religion was the core of culture and touched every aspect of people's lives. Rituals and prayers were inseparable from everyday life, from birth, planting, harvesting, and so forth (Mercado, 2006, p. 154). Much of their basic (animistic) belief structure persists even to the present day. It is still seen among ordinary lowland Filipinos.

The introduction of the Christian religion was instrumental in Spain's history of conquest as the colonizers embarked on a policy of forced conversion. Under the *Patronato Real*, the Spanish crown gave financial support and protection to the Church in the Philippines as missionaries travelled to the archipelago in the king's ships (Kroeger, 2002, p. 33). The Spanish missionaries destroyed the religious pluralism that was the pervading climate among the early Filipinos. The colonial masters not only required the natives to swear allegiance to the Spanish monarch, but to worship a new God. Backed by strong political force, the Spanish Church had an easy task of dissolving the animistic religion of the indigenous peoples whom they considered paganistic and idolatrous. The lowland Filipinos were Christianized in a rather uniform manner by the different Catholic orders (Augustinians, Recollects, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits), which also controlled local society and politics in most of the regions (Jocano, 2001, p. ix; Scott, 1997, p. 276). Many inhabitants were converted, some forcibly and others by convenience, into Christianity. Catholicism, as a consequence, became the normative bond that united the lowland Filipinos. The Muslims of Mindanao and some Indigenous Peoples, however, resisted colonization by and religious influence of the Spaniards. Because of the union of Church and State, the Catholic Church became equal to and coterminous with the State. By Christianizing the Filipinos, the Spanish friars were in effect remodeling Filipino culture and society to the Hispanic standard by teaching them the trades, manners, customs, language and habits of the Spanish people (Bauzon, 1991, pp 195-196). These influences, for good or bad, have become permanently embedded in Filipino culture.

Heavily influenced by Spanish colonization, the country is one of only two predominantly Catholic countries in Asia (the other is Timor-Leste) with 81% of the population as Catholics. Another 11% are from other Christian denominations and 5.6% are Muslims, and the remaining belongs to the animistic religion of the Indigenous Peoples. Thus, the two major religions in the Philippines are Christianity and Islam.

In brief, through centuries of migration, colonization, and intermarriage, Filipinos had become a unique blend of Negrito, Malay, Chinese, Spanish, and American. Social scientists take delight in claiming that the Philippines is a culture of diversity, hybridity, and creative assimilation. The Filipinos, as some commentators ascribe, “look Asian, think Spanish, and act American” (San Juan, 2006, p. 149). Thus, the Filipinos are multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious.

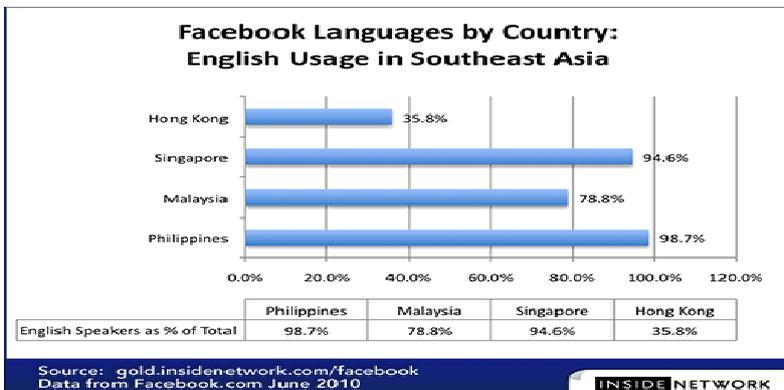
Multicultural Challenges in the Philippines

The long years of foreign colonization brought, on the one hand, many positive benefits and values to the Filipinos. On the other hand, they also caused negative consequences that have enduring expressions in contemporary Philippine society. The colonizers saw the Filipinos as savages that needed to be controlled, civilized, and Christianized. In a political cartoon published in the U.S. in 1898, President William McKinley remarked: “There was nothing left for us to do but to take them all and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift, and civilize, and Christianize them” (*Minneapolis Tribune*). Thus, they forced the Filipinos to adopt their colonizers’ beliefs and values at the expense of their own dignity.

Colonial Mentality. The feeling of inferiority that Filipinos developed throughout those four centuries resulted in a colonial mentality. The colonizers had imposed and institutionalized a “we are superior – you are inferior” colonial mentality. The Spanish colonizers called the indigenous people as *Indios* and indolent, while the Americans named them “little brown Americans.” The dark-brown skinned *Indios* belonged to a less civilized society. According to the Spanish philosopher and writer, Miguel de Unamuno, “To almost all Spaniards who have dallied in the Philippines, the Indio is a little boy who never reaches the age of maturity” (Retana, 1907, Epilogo). Throughout these centuries of Western colonial domination, the Spaniards and Americans drilled one singular message into the psyches of the Filipino people: “White Rules.” Although most Filipinos are born with nut-brown skin, influenced by genes from their brown Austronesian forefathers, society has taught them not to be proud of it. The Filipino

fixation with the *mestiza* standard of beauty is one of those cultural influences inherited from colonial history: a woman who has fair skin is beautiful (Gonzales, 2013; Hunter, 2007, pp. 237-254). Dark skin was associated with poor laborers who had to work under the sweltering heat of the sun. Thus, maintaining light skin is one way Filipinos try to avoid looking like members of the “underclass.” Thus, even the Catholic images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints venerated in Catholic churches look like Caucasians. No wonder, skin whitening products (lotions, capsules, vials) are one of the top grossing items in the Philippines. This “flawless beauty and skin” mentality, which is a form of internalized racism, may seem superficial but it has resulted in the marginalization and discrimination of the Indigenous Peoples. These descendants of the Negritos whose skin is darker are considered less capable, less beautiful and regarded as inferior.

A big percentage of the population have the mindset that using the Americanized language makes a person who he or she is. English is deemed as a language superior to their own. Thus, English has become the language associated with the rich, the educated and the powerful. It is the medium of instruction in schools. Because the Filipino language has an impoverished technical and scientific vocabulary, Mathematics and Science are taught in English, while other subjects are taught in Filipino. Filipino immigrants in the United States do not even encourage their children to learn and speak Filipino. They want their children to assimilate early into the American culture (Ong, 2016). Again, this goes back to the Philippines’ colonial history.



Marginalization of the IPs and Muslims. The alienation and exclusion of the Indigenous Peoples and Muslims had already started from the colonial period. The 2011 Report of the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) based in Copenhagen, Denmark, aptly describes the vulnerable situation of the Indigenous Peoples, who number more than four million, with more than 40 ethnolinguistic groups:

Indigenous peoples in the Philippines generally live in geographically isolated areas with a lack of access to basic social services and few opportunities for mainstream economic activities. They are the people with the least education and the least meaningful political representation. In contrast, commercially valuable natural resources such as minerals, forests and rivers can mainly be found in their areas, making them continuously vulnerable to development aggression.

Despite the efforts of the government's Commission on National Integration (CNI) in the 1960s, "for all practical purposes, the non-Christians [=Indigenous Peoples and Muslims] are excluded from the designation 'Filipino'" (Grossholtz, 1964, p. 53). Even with the creation of National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in 1997, the Indigenous Peoples have been to a large extent neglected by the government. These IPs have been vigorously fighting for the right of self-determination and defending their ancestral domain for years now (Villanueva, 2015). Laws to protect the IPs are not wanting, but what is needed is the political will to effectively implement them for the betterment of these minority groups.

In a study done by the NCIP, it was revealed that 60% of Ethnic Tribe Graduates are not accepted for jobs because of their ethnicity. Most of the graduates are teachers. 80% of ethnic minorities are deprived of proper education, jobs, health and shelter; 60% are out of school youths; and only 3% finish tertiary education. The Indigenous Peoples suffer from social inequality and have been victimized by government and private agencies. It is not surprising why the Indigenous Peoples have been sympathetic and even joined insurgent groups, like the Communist New People's Army (NPA).

The secessionist problem that we face today about the Filipino Muslims of Mindanao, a marginalized group of some 5-6 million people, is still a residue of the Spanish and American colonial past. The origin of this conflict, like many neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, is unmistakably ethnic, religious, and cultural (Magdalena, 2003). The outrageous atrocities experienced during the Spanish and American occupations have created deep wounds difficult to heal among the Mindanao Muslims. The flare-up of the Christian-Muslim hostilities in the 1960s, climaxing in the years after 1972 with the battle of Jolo, Sulu, had resulted in the death of tens of thousands. Based on several studies, San Juan (2008) comments, "From 1946 to the present, the general social condition of the Moros has deteriorated, with their lands, labor-power, and natural resources lost to predatory settlers, bureaucrats, military occupiers, and foreign corporations."

According to a study conducted by Ateneo de Manila University on "Current Issues in Filipino Muslim," 60% of the Muslim population said they are being discriminated by other Filipinos because of their appearance and religion; 20% indicated they were bullied in class, while 30% mentioned they weren't accepted to jobs because of their religious belief. These ethnic/religious tensions and antagonisms have led to the Muslim secessionist movement to re-affirm their unique identity and to establish an independent Bangsamoro state. One of the reasons why the Mindanao Muslims, particularly those belonging to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), want to secede from the Philippine government is because they claim it is Christian. Their fight, according to Peter Gowing, is a struggle "for deliverance from a tyrannical, oppressive Christian Filipino 'colonialism'" (1979, p. 201). They feel that they have been forced to live in a Christian structure and Christian way of life. They want their own form of government based on Islamic law.

The bias against the Muslims is deep-seated. They were depicted as socially problematic by nature and dangerously disloyal because of their long history of armed enmity toward Filipino Christians (McKenna, 1998, p. 142). When the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) was created

in 2010, by virtue of Republic Act 9997, some of the radical Muslims objected to the name because they did not want to be called Filipinos, although they were born and raised as Filipinos. They simply want to be called Muslims, not Filipinos.

Problem of Governance. Although the Philippines is a fully democratic country, which is supposedly the ideal setting to mitigate inter-ethnic conflict, sadly the country's democratic setting has failed miserably in the management of multiethnicity by its inability to integrate the Muslim minority of Southern Mindanao and the Indigenous Peoples into the mainstream of Philippine society. The root causes of internal armed conflict in the Philippines are identified as poor governance, lack of basic social services, corruption, inefficiency in government bureaucracy, injustice, violation of human rights, and poor implementation of laws (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005, p. 1; Durante 2012, p. 15). According to San Juan, "the present conflict [in Mindanao] is not religious as usually construed, but fundamentally political and economic in terms of the division of social labor and its satisfaction of developing human needs" (1982, p. 6; also Bauzon, 1991, p. 57). The Philippines' mismanagement of multiethnicity has equally provoked violent resistance from the indigenous communities in the Cordillera region of Luzon. The dragging on of the peace-process will further consign Muslim Mindanao to economic neglect and poverty, deepening communal discord, and fueling a culture of insurgency and banditry.

As long as Philippine politics is still due a large extent to kinship politics of an oligarchic nature, the marginalization of the Muslims and Indigenous Peoples continues. Francisco Sionil Jose, a renowned Filipino living author, gives an apt description of the Philippine setting:

We are poor because our elites have no sense of nation. They collaborate with whoever rules – the Spaniards, the Japanese, the Americans and in recent times, Marcos. Our elites imbibed the values of the colonizer.

And worst of all, these wealthy Filipinos did not modernize this country - they sent abroad their wealth distilled from the blood and sweat of our poor...

How do we end this shameless domestic colonialism? The ballot failed; the bullet then? How else but through the cleansing power of revolution. Make no mistake about it – revolution means the transfer of power from the decadent upper classes to the lower classes. Revolution is class war whose objective is justice and freedom (2004, pp. 48 & 50).

Conclusion

The Filipino experience shows the challenge of living in a multicultural society. Harmony and solidarity amidst religious and cultural diversity is still a goal to be desired. Peace and development is indispensable for a nation to survive. Pope Paul VI states, “Development is the new name of peace” (Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, 5). Promoting development, the new name of peace, in the Philippines requires the collective intervention and responsibility of government, churches, private sector and the entire society. The inclusive peace that we want to achieve in the country, especially among the Muslims in the south, is not the silence of the cemetery; not even just the absence of conflict, but is comprehensive and holistic. Peace is total when it includes the whole well-being of our people (food on the table of the poor, secure employment for the millions in the country, low-cost medicine for the families of workers, scholarships for the poorest and decent homes for squatters and slum-dwellers, harmony with other people and nature). After all, the Southern Philippine problem is an amalgamation of interconnected problems that involves poverty, inequality, political corruption, environmental exploitation, negative images held by Christians, Moros, and Lumads of each other, and the failure of government to integrate the Moros and Indigenous Peoples into a national Filipino identity.

An important ingredient to peace and development is social justice, which requires respect for human dignity and human rights, religious pluralism, the promotion of the common good, and the constant practice of solidarity. The promotion of social justice is the minimum requirement of love. Love, the greatest commandment for Christians who compose the overwhelming majority of the Philippine population, entails the valuing of religious pluralism and zealously pursuing interfaith dialogue (e.g., The Bishops-Ulama Forum, the Islamo-Christian Silsilah Dialogue, Forum for Muslim-Christian Solidarity). Love necessitates a shift from hostility to respect for other faiths, from explicit projection of superiority to critical reflection, from proselytism to dialogue, from biases to trust. Military campaigns all these years have not brought about peace, but displacement of hundreds of thousands who simply want to live peaceful lives. Christians, Muslims, Indigenous Peoples, government and nongovernment institutions – all have a role in moving towards a peaceful, just, inclusive, and democratic Philippines. The situation of Mindanao Muslims (and, if we may add, the Indigenous Peoples) “reflects a fundamental issue the Philippines faces as a society – a weak sense of nationhood and the inability of the government to develop among the archipelago’s inhabitants the sense that they share and belong to the Filipino nation” (Lingga, p. 11). Multiculturalism prescribes that all peoples have to be assimilated into the overarching vision of the Philippine nation without prejudice to their respective religious beliefs and customs. This is not only a challenge to co-exist side by side with each other; we are called, by virtue of our common heritage, to provide a space or opportunity for people of different languages, ethnicities, and religious beliefs to interact with each other and thereby be mutually enriched and transformed by one another.

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Socio-Ethical Origin of Multiculturalism in Indonesia

Mohammad Iqbal Ahnaf

Introduction

Indonesia's multiculturalism has its root in the long history of intercultural and interreligious contacts across the nation. As a strategic trading route in the past contacts between local communities with migrants formed plural societies in coastal area which eventually moved into inner areas. The transmission of Islam to Indonesia in peaceful and acculturative manners laid the foundation for an open and moderate nature of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia (Drewes, 1968; Ricklefs, 1993). Even though Islam is the religion of the majority, the fact that not all Muslims in the archipelago live as a majority encouraged the nation's founding fathers to find a common ground for a multicultural state.¹ In founding the large nation, national leaders sew the fabric of national unity by establishing a moderate national ideology that recognizes both the religious and diverse nature of the nation. This consensus mediated two extreme aspirations of a strictly secular and theocratic state. Indonesia became a country that acknowledges the primary place of religion or belief in God without giving one particular religion a dominant state authority. This ideology for multiculturalism, called Pancasila (five pillars of mostly universal values to guide the Constitution), has gained legitimacy across the major cleavages of societies.

¹ Even though Muslims constitute 87 percent of the total population of Indonesia, in some provinces Muslims are minorities. These include Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, North Sumatera, Papua, and parts of Sulawesi.

Certainly, such a moderate consensus did not always run uncontested. Over seventy years since the founding of the nation, Indonesia has experienced a number of military uprisings that carried Socialists and Islamist ideologies.² Even though such movements have been militarily defeated, the aspiration for making the country into an Islamic state is still alive. Against the military struggle many Islamists are using political freedom to make the nation more Islamic, which may affect the bases of the nation's long history of peaceful and plural societies.

This foundation of multiculturalism faces a growing test from the rise of religious and ethnic sectarianism that is made possible by political opening since the fall of Soeharto in 1998. In this context, this chapter suggests that the national fabric of Indonesia's multiculturalism that has been the key in national unity now needs more grounded bases at the local level. Pancasila as a 'high level' language does not always resonate with local communities that have their own languages, histories and narratives. It is worth remembering that Indonesia is not only a large nation, but is also the home of thousands of ethnic groups that speak different languages and live different cultures. As an archipelago many regions in Indonesia are separated by seas and straits that make access and connection still a major gap until today. Even though the national language is spoken by almost all Indonesians, daily life of local communities is often driven by their distinct culture and tradition. Speaking about normative work of multiculturalism in one national language is therefore not enough. This task of localizing national fabric of unity is more prevalent

² Indonesia survived a number of armed rebellions that sought to replace Pancasila with other ideologies including Islamic State and Socialism. The Islamic state movements occurred in the period of 1949-1962 in West Java, Sulawesi, parts of central Java and Aceh. In 1965 Communists tried to seize power but they were unsuccessful. Today the proponents of the Islamic state ideology have transformed their movement into a political struggle within the framework of democracy and Pancasila. They have repeatedly sought to re-insert a clause in constitution called "Jakarta Charter" that would oblige the state to ensure Muslims practice Islamic laws; this campaign has yet to achieve success as the majority of senators (including those from Islamic backgrounds) see the aspiration as harmful to the unity of the nation.

in today's context of democratization that decentralizes power and results in the resurging politics of identity. Based on the experience of Indonesia, I call for the broadening of our discussion about multiculturalism beyond political or government affairs.

Indonesia's management of diversity: past and present

For over thirty years during his rule, Soeharto rallied on national unity by enforcing the state ideology of Pancasila. To promote Pancasila, the regime required schools, universities and state institutions to run specific training on how to implement Pancasila. The government provided a standard guide book used nationwide on the elaboration and interpretation of the five pillars of Pancasila which is used as a training manual across the nation. This enforced promotion of Pancasila played an important role in raising nationwide awareness about the importance of Pancasila as a national fabric. At this period, the state was very central in controlling public life including those of religious and social affairs through uniform politics. The state provided simplified channels of political expression by limiting the number of political parties. In this way religious political aspiration was moderated and kept marginal. The government also controlled non-political religious activism by cooperative policies to ensure the leadership of key religious organizations under the influence of the government (Porter, 2002). In this way, and with the help of repressive role of security forces, the government was able to press communal tension as well as political opposition under the surfaces.

The state invented a taboo called "SARA" (an abbreviation of religious, race and ethnic sentiments) to prevent the use of communal identities in public or political affairs. This helped the government in dealing with communal polarization and at the same time keep political religion in the periphery of political contest. Political opposition including those based on religious grounds faced the choice of cooperating with the dominating state or marginalization in case of taking the side of the opposition. Major Muslim organizations which have been the backbone of moderation and national integrity were split, leaving Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest

Muslim civil society, outside the circle of power for the pro-democratic aspiration of many of its leaders.

After the fall of Suharto, being replaced with expanding political freedom and resurgence of identity politics, repressive or state centered approaches were no longer feasible. This took in the democratization period that is characterized by decentralization of power. At the time of raising identity politics, public space is filled with social and political contests which are often mobilized on communal grounds. Migration and the advancement of information technology exposed communities to a more intense diversity. In this development, many local communities feel that they are being marginalized by the increasing presence of migrants who speak different languages and practice a different culture. The more skillful migrants were supported by capital and this made many local communities see themselves as 'foreigners' in their homelands. Politicians make the situation worst by using religion and ethnicity as instruments for electoral mobilization or for securing their rule (for an example of how migration changes the fabric of multiculturalism in Indonesia see McGibbon, 2004).

As a result, communities which were open in the past became sensitive and suspicious of migrants. Diversity is no longer recognized as a normal part of daily life but is seen as a threat. In societies where interaction with diversity is less physical, communication technology allowed communities to learn about narratives of threats of other religious and ethnic groups from digital sources. Hateful propaganda easily reached members of rural communities through gadgets. A violent incident in metropolitan Java or a remote village in Papua can quickly draw attention across the nation. This has often motivated 'negative solidarity' in the form of retaliation by other members of communities who live as majority.

The most destructive impact of this development is the erosion of local resources of multiculturalism. Reproduction of the normative works of peaceful interaction between different ethnic groups is therefore crucial in this changing circumstance. The following part elaborates on examples of local resources of multiculturalism, how they were affected by changing

situations and what may be done to reproduce the culture of peace. It is this different ability to reproduce the local resources of multiculturalism that makes different regions in Indonesia more or less resilient to communal tension.

Before going into this local context, it is important to include here the norm at the national level that is fundamental in sustaining multicultural Indonesia.

Normative Base of Indonesian Multiculturalism

Indonesia is a nation that united many kingdoms across the archipelago. The shared experience of the struggle against the Dutch occupation motivated local kings to join the nation in 1945 following the departure of Dutch and Japanese colonial rule. Even though Muslim rulers ruled many of these kingdoms, they did not follow strict Islamic constitution and acculturated Islam with local culture. Other local warlords and rulers who were diverse religiously and ethnically also supported additionally Indonesian struggle for independence. It was this origin that led to the search for an inclusive foundation of the nation. Ultimately, the statecraft of Indonesia is based on a compromising and yet continuously questioned consensus among the nation's founding fathers about the place of Islam and religion in the state's ideology. The consensus established the status of Indonesia as a neither secular nor (Islamic) theocratic country. This norm manifests in the choice of democracy and Pancasila as the foundation of living together for the nation's multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies. This choice solved the diverging goals of major cleavages of civil society in Indonesia. This includes the recognition of the aspiration of religious role in Indonesian independence by making the norm "belief in the oneness of God" as the first pillar of Pancasila. Other pillars of Pancasila are a guarantee to equal rights of citizens regardless of religion and ethnicity. This ideology of multiculturalism became dominant not only because of its inclusive nature, but most importantly because it gained legitimacy from major forces of civil society, including the two largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. The two Muslim

organizations stand as the backbone of Indonesia's multicultural orientation because they do not only see Pancasila as a historical necessity, but also elevated it into a religious norm (Ramage, 1997; NU Online, 2015; Muhammadiyah, 2015).

Scholars like Casanova (1994) may equal this to the notion of "public religion" due to the centrality of the norm in the awareness of the people of Indonesia across religious and ethnic boundaries. Within the context of the so called "Godly nationalism" (Menchik, 2014), the legitimacy from major religious organizations is crucial in sustaining the multicultural nature of Indonesia.

The problem is that religion is not the only source of identity in Indonesia. In many places other cultural courses of identity such as ethnicity and regional origin play an important role in public life. Additionally, different experiences, contexts and histories often affect the way religion is understood and practiced at the local level. In this context, universal values like those in the five pillars Pancasila need more grounded justification at the local level.

Limit of Tolerance?

Pancasila as a normative foundation of Indonesian multiculturalism is better seen as the most basic platform of multiculturalism most prominently in terms of acceptance of the non-theocratic form of the state, adoption of Pancasila as national ideology and democracy as a political process. Within this framework, Muslim groups are varied on the extent of the role of the state in public affairs. This ranges from the conservatives who demand the state enforce religious obligations and morality and the so-called liberals who propagate a bold wall of separation between state and religion. Even though the conservatives are not explicitly promoting an Islamic state, their demand for a greater role of the state in religious affairs often leads to discrimination and persecution of minority groups. For many, atheism, communism, and other forms religious heterodoxy (like Ahmadiyah and liberals) are excluded in the framework of Pancasila. Some scholars

consider this as the limit of Indonesian multiculturalism. Menchik for example calls Indonesian nationalism “Godly nationalism” based on the fact that the role of religion is dominant to the extent that it does not tolerate anti-religious, heterodoxy and liberal thoughts in religion (Menchik, 2014).

On paper, this limit of tolerance manifests in a number of regulations that are often used to justify violence and discrimination against minority groups. Even though the Indonesian Constitution grants freedom of religion and treats citizens equally regardless of their religious orientation, the freedom is not without limits. The 1965 PNPS law for example states that it is punishable with five years imprisonment for publicly expressing feelings of hostility, hatred, or contempt against religions with the purpose of preventing others from adhering to any religion, and targets those who disgrace a religion. The most controversial clause of the law is the item that prohibits so-called “deviant interpretations” of religion. This makes religious heterodoxies such as belief in a prophet after Muhammad as addressed to Ahmadiya unlawful. The term religion itself is exclusively used for the six recognized religions namely Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (Bagir, 2013). This practically discriminated against indigenous religions, which take the form of difficulties in gaining government services in various areas such as certification of marriage, religious education and civic administration (recognition of non-recognized religions in national ID card) (Maarif, 2017).

Adding on the limits of freedom, recently in 2006 the government issued a regulation on the building of houses of worship. The regulation was actually meant to prevent social disputes in the building of houses of worship by requiring a signed paper of support from at least 90 members of the congregation and 60 non-congregation members of the surrounding community. Instead of preventing tension, this often caused tensions because it gives justification for militant members of the majority community to reject the presence of a minority’s house of worship in the neighborhood (Ali-Fauzi, et al.2014).

It is important to note however that these regulations do not necessarily translate into discrimination and violence against minority groups. Local dynamics or different histories of multiculturalism play an important role in the freedom of religion. For example, Ahmadis suffered persecution in some places in West Java and West Nusa Tenggara but they are safe in many places such as Yogyakarta and Wonosobo (Central Java). People of indigenous religions are struggling to gain recognition in civic administration but are allowed freedom in practicing their traditions and rituals. While disputes over houses of worship have become more frequent recently, traditional practices of interreligious collaboration in the building of houses of worship are still prevalent in many places. These are evidence of the need for new ways in sustaining Indonesian culture of multiculturalism.

In Search for Local Resources of Multiculturalism

In 1999, when political transition from Soeharto's New Order to the Reform era began, communal violence erupted in a few places which have been historically calm. The civil war between Muslim and Christians in Ambon and mass violence against Madurese in Kalimantan are the most referred examples. Beyond these, communal tensions at a smaller scale exploded into physical violence in a more widespread and frequent manner. The loosening of state power, which is natural in the early process of democratization, is partly responsible.

A good illustration of such explosion is resurging cases of disputes over land or claims of territorial boundaries based on customary laws (see McGibbon, 2004; Barron, Kaiser, and Pradhan, 2014). In Soeharto's era the government enforced the so-called transmigration program that moved people from more populous regions such as Java and Sulawesi to less populous areas like Kalimantan, Sumatera and Papua. In this program, land occupation was often carried out by using forceful methods. Without official certification, local communities could not defend their customary territories from land grabbing organized by the state. Tensions were more imminent because the transmigration program was carried out by creating

new villages separated from the communities. The new villages became enclaves because occupations were created based on ethnic groups without creating mechanisms that might connect the settlers with local communities. At that time tensions did not manifest in communal violence only because of the repressive approach of the state.

In the new context of democratization, such a repressive measure is no longer acceptable. This allowed ethnic communities to raise and reclaim their customary lands. They claimed that occupation of their lands was unjustified because cultural mechanisms for transferring rights over the lands did not take place. As time ran, claims over lands were not only about defending customary rights but also a matter of power and economic struggle. Lands which were isolated in the past and might be seen as worthless economically are now located in strategic areas due to expanding trading development and mining exploration. Lands are now not only valued as social capital but also economic capital.

This does not mean that the transmigration program was a complete failure. In many places contacts between migrants and local communities took place in a more constructive manner and have formed a culture of coexistence. Mixed-marriages and extended family bonds left memories of peaceful interethnic and interreligious relations. In 2015, I went to a remote village in Papua recently and found a developed migrant neighborhood that is now relatively mixed or connected with native Papuans. However, these are often isolated cases that are confronted with a sense of marginalization at a broader scale. Such a feeling is entrenched because the economic gap has run for a very long period. And now, as they found opportunities to reclaim what they feel were taken away unjustly, the government has to find a democratic measure to deal with the communal uprisings. The process of democratic or peaceful resolution is not always fast and this allows the time for the erosion of the norms of peaceful coexistence. The culture of peace has to compete with social changes and political processes that are often polarizing in nature. In these changing circumstances, peace values, which were usually tied to old traditions and mythologies, are unable to maintain their relevance for the new generation.

Gaps between old narratives of peace and new narratives of competition are growing.

Indonesia's rich experience of "unity in diversity," as the state's motto, is partly grounded in the diverse sources of identities. Even though the majority of Indonesians are religious, religion is not always the only dominant source of identity. In many places mixed culture and families played an important role in creating what Varshney calls bridging social capital or civic engagement (Varshney, 2003). Cultural bonds often defreeze religious boundaries without making the members of the communities less religious.

It is these bonds that make some Muslims in Fak Fak, West Papua, feel it is legitimate to participate in the Christian religious Easter festival. In this event, Muslims members of the community do not only watch the parade but also allowed their brothers to join the group carrying the Cross for the Easter ritual. The long history of a peaceful tradition made Muslims in this community found such a practice religiously tolerable. In this multicultural community, one religious ceremony became a social event of all members of the community. The Easter festival in Fak Fak is both a ritual and a cultural tradition. Similar experience can be seen in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, one of the few Christian majority areas in Indonesia. In this deeply religious region, exchanges of support and participation in religious festivals of Muslim and Christians became a public norm. This is illustrated in two prominent religious events in the town, namely Quranic reading competition, locally called *Musabaqoh Tilawatil Qur'an* (MTQ), and Easter festival. The MTQ is usually attended by representatives of sub-districts. The representatives will stay for a few days in the areas of the competition. Traditionally, many Christians take part in the organization of the MTQ; in some cases even the advisory board of the committee is chaired by a community leader who happened to be a Christian. The inclusion of Christians in the organization of MTQ is not merely symbolic but is also meant to help ensure the participants of the MTQ live in the homes of Christian families. With Christians in the committee

it is not strange for Muslims to see choirs from church or Christian schools perform in the opening ceremony of the competition (Ahnaf, 2017).

In the famous Easter festival of Kupang Muslims are also at the center of the event. Youth organizations of mosques usually mobilize communities to provide drinks and meals for the participants of the Easter parade. They also take part in ensuring the security of the parade, especially in the routes that pass Muslim neighborhoods. These examples of civic engagement are not a unique experience of Kupang but may also be seen in other areas in Sulawesi. Indonesian history is marked with a few tragedies of mass riots that targeted Chinese. In these tragic points of history, Lasem stood as one of the safe haven for Chinese. Javanese Muslims in Lasem believe that they have Chinese blood in their bodies as the result of interethnic marriage that was not uncommon in the past. They acknowledge that many of early Muslim preachers in their lands were a mixture of Arab, Chinese and Javanese in blood. With these memories of peaceful relations, the culture of peaceful coexistence in Lasem survived critical periods of communal tensions that targeted Chinese in 1965 and 1998 (Ahnaf, 2013; Ahnaf, 2016).

Not all communities however survived critical periods as Lasem exemplifies. In Madura island's Sampang district, members of a small Shiite community were forced to leave their homes after groups of militant Sunnis accused them of deviating from Islamic orthodoxy. The Shiite community in this area had been peacefully coexisting with the majority Sunnis since 1970s. However, the Sunni-Shiite turmoil in the Middle East was transmitted to Indonesia, which brought about a wave of anti-Shiite campaign never seen before. In many places this sectarian campaign was successful in damaging the long history of moderate Islam like that in Sampang. Theological difference between Sunni and Shiism which was tolerated in the past is now seen as a threat. As a result, many Sunnis could no longer bear the challenge of living together with Shiites. Local politicians exploited the growing schism and mobilized the masses to expel the Shiites. Mass vigilantes burnt the homes of the Shiites and forced them to leave their

villages. It has been over five years and the expelled Shiites are now still living as internally displaced people (Ahnaf, 2014).

The state that is responsible to protect their citizens regardless of their belief has to deal with the local politicians that are often a party to communal tensions. Decentralization has a side impact of providing political opportunities for political elites at the local level to exercise identity politics and thus damage the local resources of multiculturalism.

In some places, mainstream civil societies that have been the backbones of democracy and tolerance in Indonesia found themselves weakened in the share of economic and political resources. Small militant groups are often more organized and more aggressive in building patronages with political elites. Moderate civil societies are traditionally critical of government and therefore gain little access to resources. In contrast, militant groups do not hesitate to eschew criticism to corrupt officers as long as they can seize access to political and economic resources and with these resources they gain a better opportunity to propagate their intolerant norms (Ahnaf, 2017).

Such a challenge to multiculturalism is best illustrated in the social change that is taking place in Yogyakarta in the last five years. As one of the centers of Indonesian cultural and intellectual development, the province has been characterized as a barometer of Indonesian multiculturalism. Now this special region is witnessing a growing influence of militant groups. They unofficially control specific territories in urban Yogyakarta and use their power to gain economic benefits from fast-moving industrialization. Their hold on unofficial power is maintained by using intimidation and terror. What is most worrying is that they use intolerance against minorities as a tool to publicly display their muscle, which have proven effective in the contest for power. It is in this context that violence against minority groups has become more frequent in the last five years. Their intimidating public presence is almost without challenge because the police are often left unable to enforce the law. The groups are prepared for physical fights and this deters law enforcement against them (Ahnaf, 2017).

The historical culture of tolerance that has been the trademark of Yogyakarta is now facing increasing pressure from the strengthened militants. Unfortunately, this is not a unique experience of Yogyakarta. If communities with strong histories of peaceful coexistence could be broken by aggressive intolerant campaigns, those with lack of experience with diversity could be more vulnerable. Over three hundred years under colonial power and decades of politics under authoritarian government have left many communities with legacies of tension and communal polarization. These have also brought regions with different levels of resilience to communal tension. What caused this gap then?

Answers to this question may point at many factors such as the need for law enforcement, just structures and consolidated democracy. Beyond such a structural perspective, the experience of Lasem, Kupang, Papua and Yogyakarta as elaborated above underlies two factors, which is necessary to make multiculturalism work in a democratic context.

The first is the importance of reproducing culture and memories of peace that live in many local communities. Such a localized resource for peace is especially essential for an archipelago like Indonesia that is consisted of thousands of islands which have distinctively diverse languages and traditions. Memories and culture of peace are usually embedded in the customary system and become the norm for living together. In facing social changes that bring about new values and authorities, social capital for multiculturalism needs an organized process or reproduction that is tuned with changes in lifestyle, political climates and pattern of living. An ideology for multiculturalism at the national level like Pancasila is irreplaceable; but in the context of democratizing Indonesia where powers are decentralized normative work for living together also requires decentralization.

The second is the importance of ensuring the existence of what Luc Reyckler calls "critical mass of peace enhancing leadership" (Reyckler, 2006). Social changes do not only bring about new values but also new authorities. With political freedom highly valued, militant leaders are

actively contesting for public influence. The state cannot easily disband radical organizations as long as they do not perpetrate actual violence or terrorism. Memories of past authoritarianism make many human rights activists in Indonesia very sensitive to government restriction on political freedom. Therefore, law enforcement against proliferation of hate propaganda has been controversial despite the fact that these campaigns are damaging Indonesian the culture of tolerance.

In this situation, sustenance of multicultural societies needs strengthened moderate and peace-promoting leaders. It is true that moderate voices have been the mainstream in Indonesia at least in terms of numbers; but the level of critical mass as suggested by Reyckler should be understood more substantially beyond numerical strength. As illustrated in the case of Yogyakarta, moderate leaders do not meet the criteria of critical mass in the sense of public influence as they could not provide an effective counter discourse against the small but vocal and aggressive militants. The majority moderates are weakened by their lack of access to power.

Without meeting these two requisites, the future of multiculturalism in Indonesia is at stake.

Closing: Toward 'Unofficial' Multiculturalism

What does it take for a democratic multicultural state to manage diversity? Literature on multiculturalism has given much emphasis on the role of the state in providing political climate and policies that recognize and accommodate what Kymlicka calls "group-differentiated rights." (Kymlicka, 2010). Proponents of multiculturalism believe that in a democracy the state has the obligation to treat individuals in an equal manner regardless of his or her background. However, they argue that accommodation of diversity often requires specific treatment of essential aspects of identity groups as long as this does not violate national laws. Multicultural policies are essential to make people "safe from difference and safe for difference."

Locating discussion on multiculturalism at the level of high politics and the sphere of policy is obvious in prominent writings about the topic. Kymlika, the widely referred proponent of multiculturalism, emphasizes the need of the state to provide autonomy to national entities. He supports the initiative of providing a multicultural policy index to measure multiculturalism. All questions in the index are concerned with policies such as constitutional affirmation of multiculturalism, adoption of multiculturalism in school curricula, inclusion of ethnic representation in public, exemptions from dress codes, and so forth. Chigateri exemplified discussion about multiculturalism by taking constitutional debate about the legality of cow slaughtering in the country like India where the animal is considered sacred by a segment of the population (Chigateri, 2001). In the same lines, Bowen considers legal and political debate about whether or not a secular country like France should ban the veil of Muslim women as an example of contentious meaning of multiculturalism (Bowen 2008). Secularism is also central in Stepan taking of the issue of multiculturalism (Stepan, 2011).

Without neglecting the important legal basis for multiculturalism, the experience of Indonesia as elaborated above shows that promoting multiculturalism from below at the social level is no less essential than measures at the state level. The basis of tolerance at the local level may help in contextualizing normative work of multiculturalism at the local level. It is this different strengths of multicultural bases that make for different patterns in the enforcement of national regulations. For example, Indonesian Ministries of Religious Affairs, Law and Internal Affairs made a joint regulation on the requirements of the building of house of worship. The law requires signed support of 90 members of congregation and 60 members of surrounding communities. Different contexts make for different regions to implement this regulation in different ways. In Aceh for example this anti-Christian sentiment made the local government raise the number of external support. In contrast, areas with a long history of peaceful coexistence would rather prefer a cultural mechanism than this legal requirement in administering plan for building house of worship.

By broadening the scope of discussion on multiculturalism, we may find richer practices of multiculturalism. These multicultural traditions may be called anything but multiculturalism. Fleras calls such a practice “unofficial” or “indirect” multiculturalism (Fleras, 2009: 203).

Grounding the concept of multiculturalism such unofficial processes in societies may also help clarify critical views that suggests multiculturalism diverts attention from politics of distribution. There is a concern that the focus on cultural accommodation serves as a superficial or symbolic cure that covers the real issues of injustices and discrimination. The experience of Indonesia shows that unjust distribution of resources often benefit migrants at the expense of local communities. The case of disputes over land rights between migrants and natives illustrate that resolution of the dispute should not only address customary concern but also consider the changing value of the land. Cultural claims are now interconnected with struggles for access to economic resources.

In conclusion, the Indonesian experience gives a lesson that the meaning and form of the term multiculturalism should not be uniform. Its propagation and implementation should be grounded on local resources for tolerance. This is especially important if multiculturalism is promoted in the context of democratization.

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Celebrating Hindu Festivals in Lahore Past and Present

Sabir Naz

1. Introduction

The religion of *Sanatana Dharma* - the original name of Hinduism - is a festivals-rich tradition. The philosophy behind these festivals is providing happiness and sharing in the overcoming of hardships of life.

The Services & General Administration Department (Welfare Wing) of the Government of the Punjab issues a notification for Public and Optional Holidays every year. The optional holidays are mainly for the non-Muslims. The list of optional holidays includes the festivals of the Hindus and also the Sikhs i.e. *Basant Panchami, Shivratri, Holi, Dhulandi, Baisakhi, Krishna Janm Ashtami, Durga Puja, Dussehra, Diwali, Guru Nanak's Birthday, Guru Valmik Swami.*

A legend based on oral traditions holds that Lahore was known as Lavapuri (City of Lava in Sanskrit). It was founded by Prince Lava, the son of Sita and Rama.

The history of Lahore reveals that the Hindus had all along been celebrating their festivals here with pomp and circumstance. Most of the Hindus enjoy their festivals at homes and a few of them gather at Krishna

Mandir located on Ravi Road to celebrate the same. Sometimes the community arranges the functions either at local hotels or other places with the help of some organizations.

The celebration of *Holi* and Dewali are also arranged by the government of the Punjab at Governor's House, Chief Minister's Office and other places. Representatives of the Hindu community are invited to join throughout the province. Every year the Government of Pakistan sends its greetings to the members of the Hindu community on the occasion of the Hindu religious festivals, thereby reassuring its recognition of diversity in Pakistan.

This article discusses the Hindu festivals celebrated in Lahore during the past and today.

2. The Hindu Festivals of Lahore in the Past

In the olden days, following were the chief fairs or festivals of Hindus celebrated in Lahore:¹

2.1. Kali Devi Fair

2.1.1. *Kali Devi* fair was used to be held in honor of Hindu goddess Kali Devi at her temple at Niazbaig, Lahore. This temple was situated on the left bank of the Ravi river about seven miles from the walled city. The devotees used to place offerings at the feet of the goddess. The offerings usually took the form of coconuts, flowers, colored thread, sweetmeats, money, etc. All such offerings were appropriated by the *pujari* in charge. The edible items were distributed amongst the masses as *prasad* (religious offerings).

2.1.2. The fair was used to be held between the 15th of May and the 15th of June every year. People belonging to Lahore city and other areas attended the fair. The number of visitors mostly varied between 30 thousand and 60 thousand each year. All of them worshiped and enjoyed the fair. It had

¹ Walker, G. C., & Esquire. (2006). *Gazetteer of the Lahore District 1893-94*. Lahore, Pakistan: Sang-e-Meel Publications. p. 77.

been a devotional service of the Hindus for the goddess as well as an occasion of amusement for the people.

2.2. Basant Panchami Fair

Basant Panchami is a day of religious importance. *Basant* fair has been held in January at the tomb of Hakikat Rai near the village of Kot Khwaja Said, three miles outside the walled city of Lahore. "According to public announcement (*rubkar*) issued by John Lawrence, Acting Governor General and Resident at Lahore informing general public that the *Mela Basant Panchami*, was celebrated in Lahore from time immemorial and that in the year 1848 it will be observed for seven days instead of customary one day in the month of February".² *Basant* means yellow and the fair is held during the blooming of the mustard plants and people adorn yellow-colored attire.

2.3. Dusshera

Dusshera is the another most popular Hindu festival. The word *Dusshera* is derived from two Sanskrit words, *Dush* means "Ten" and *hera* means "to conquer". So, *Dusshera* is the conquest of *Ram* (a symbol of virtue) over *Ravan* (a symbol of evil). In pre-partition days, the *Dusshera* festival was celebrated with great enthusiasm. It was celebrated generally in October and lasted about ten days. It commemorates the conquest of good over evil – *Ram's* victory over *Ravan*, the king of Lanka. It is symbolically represented by the burning the effigies of *Ravan*.

2.4. Diwali

Diwali is the most cherished festival of the Lahore Hindus. *Diwali* is celebrated just after a few days of *Dusshera*, usually in November. *Laxmi* Devi and Lord *Ram* are worshiped in particular, on the day. The city was decorated with clay lamps on the eve of *Diwali*. Special worship services were arranged. Different stage dramas on the subject of *Diwali* and *Ramayan* were also enacted in the city and the villages around Lahore. Lighting of the lamps symbolized the light of virtue and justice and over darkness of ignorance.

² Dar, R. S. (2010). *Crafts of Lahore*. Lahore, Pakistan: Directorate of Handicrafts and Design, Punjab Small Industries Corporation. p. 181.

2.5. *Holi*

Holi also known as festival of colors was celebrated on *Purnima* (full moon) of the month of *Phalguna* of the Hindu calendar. According to Gregorian calendar, the date varied and usually fell in the month of February-March. Men, women, boys, girls, children and elders of Lahore enjoyed playing the colors of *Holi*. Brilliant and florescent colours were sprinkled on each other; singing of song was accompanied by serving delicious sweet meats. Actually the celebration of *Holi* lasted for two days. The first day was *Holica Dahan* and the very next day there was *Dhulandi*. On *Holica Dahan*, after the sunset, people burnt the pyre of *Holica* (replica), to symbolize elimination of a female devil i.e. the sister of King Hiranyakashipu. The second day was celebrated by *Dhulandi* when people sprinkled water or dry colors on each other. The ritual symbolizes the victory of good over evil. This festival may be interpreted as burning of all negativity and bringing positivity in life. People gathered around the fire to sing and dance. *Bhajans* (religious songs) or songs of happiness were sung.

3. The Main Contemporary Hindu Festivals of Lahore

Following are the festivals which are mostly celebrated by the Hindus in Lahore these days:

1. Basant Panchami
2. Shiv Ratri
3. Holi and Dhulandi
4. Ram Navmi
5. Krishna Janm Ashtami
6. Rakhsha Bandhan
7. Durga Maa Nav Raatray
8. Dussehra
9. Guru Valmik Swami Ji's appearance day
10. Varat (Fast) of Karwa Chauth
11. Diwali

3.1. *Basant Panchami*

Basant Panchami is a seasonal festival, the harbinger of the spring. It is celebrated on Magh Shudi Panchami³ (5th of the waxing moon). Magh falls between the months of January and February in Gregorian calendar. The Hindus congregate at the temples and make special arrangements for Puja. In Bhagvad Gita, Chapter 10, Text 35, Lord Sri Krishna says, "...and of seasons I am flower bearing spring."⁴

G. C. Walker mentions,

*"Basant ka Mela, held in this district in January at the tomb of Hakikat Rai near the village of Kot Khawaja Said, three miles out of Lahore. The same fair is held in other parts of the Punjab. Basant means "yellow," and the fair is held about the time that the yellow leaves of the mustard plant are in bloom. Some four or five thousand people assemble, mostly Hindus from the city. Many of them wear mustard seed in their turbans in token of the day."*⁵



Fig. No. 1.
Celebration of Basant
Panchami

³ Sharma, P.V. (2016). *Mufeed Aalam Jantri*. Jalandhar City, India: Pt. Devi Dyal Publications. p. 60.

⁴ Prabhupada, A.C.B.S. (1998). *Bahgvad-Gita*, As it is. Mumbai, India: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. p. 545.

⁵ Walker, G. C., & Esquire. (2006). *Gazetteer of the Lahore District 1893-94*. Lahore, Pakistan: Sang-e-Meel Publications. p. 78.

3.2. *Shiv Ratri*

3.2.1. This is the festival celebrated every year in the month of *Phalguna* on *Chudash Badi* (14th of dark nights — the waning moon). According to Gregorian calendar, it falls mostly in February-March. A god, *Shiv Maha Dev Ji*, is worshiped on this day. Men, women and children observe fast and make special arrangements to worship Shiv Ji and decorate the temples as well.

3.2.2. In Lahore the Hindus mostly celebrate this festival at their homes. A few persons proceed towards *Katas Raj* (a village in District Jhelum). It is very significant sacred place for the Hindus with reference to *Shiv Ji*. There is a pond of holy water where the Hindus take a bath. A large number of *Yatri* (pilgrims) visit there from all over Pakistan, India and other parts of the world. From Lahore, the Hindu community also throngs *Katas Raj* to celebrate the festival. Bhajans are sung and Prasad is distributed there.



Fig. No. 2. *Shiv Ratri Puja at Katas Raj*

3.3. *Holi and Dhulandi*

3.3.1. *Holi* is popular as a festival of colours. It is celebrated on *Purnima* (full moon) of the month of *Phagan* according to *Vikram Samvat* (Hindi) calendar. Going by the Gregorian calendar, the date varies and usually falls in the month of February-March. Men, women, boys, girls, children and elders all enjoy the colours. People, especially youngsters enjoy this festival the most. Brilliant and florescent colours are sprinkled on each other, songs are sung and delicious dishes enjoyed. Actually the celebrations of *Holi* last for two days. The first day is *Holica Dahan* and the very next day is *Dhulandi*. On *Holica Dahan*, after the sunset, people burn the pyre of *Holica* (replica), a devil and sister of King *Hiranyakashipu*. People gather around the fire to sing and dance. *Bhajans* (religious hymns) or songs of happiness are sung. The very next day is *Dhulandi*, in which people sprinkle watery or dry colours on each other. The ritual symbolizes the victory of good over evil. The festival also represents burning unconstructiveness and bringing righteousness in life.



Fig. No. 3. *Holi Celebration at Lahore*

3.3.2. Vedic literature reveals that there had been a devil king Hiranyakashipu in *Satt Yug*. The capital of his kingdom was the city presently known as Multan (Pakistan). He claimed to be 'God' and forced his subjects to worship him instead of God. His son *Parhalad* was a little boy who preached the people to worship only one God, who is the Creator of this universe. At this, the king forbade his son *Parhalad* to preach the Oneness of God; even he made many attempts on the life of his son. As the boy was a true devotee to the Lord, having firm faith in Him, he refused to obey his nasty father. Ultimately, the Lord in the form of *Narsingh*, appeared, killed the king *Hiranyakashipu* and consoled his devotees. (Canto 7, Chapter 8)⁶

3.3.3. In Multan (Pakistan), there was a temple, known as *Parhalad Puri Mandir*. Being a place of appearance of *Narsingh Bhagwan*—an incarnation of God, this is a very significant place for the Hindus. The temple was demolished by a Muslim mob after the desecration of Babri Mosque (India). Now this ruined temple is under the custody of Evacuee Trust Property Board, an autonomous body under the federal government. The administration intends to rehabilitate the temple but still no signs of reconstruction are visible. If the government reconstructs this temple, a large number of Hindu pilgrims throughout the world may come to Pakistan to visit the holy place. In this way it may earn huge foreign exchange as well.

3.3.4. In Lahore, a ceremony is arranged by Evacuee Trust Property Board to celebrate the *Holi* at Krishna Mandir every year after the sunset. The people who do not go to the temple celebrate this festival individually at their homes with their families. *Parsad* (sacred food) is distributed at end of the function. *Hindu Sudhar Sabha*, an organization working for welfare of the Hindus, also arranges functions for Holi celebration. On 18th March, 2018, Government of the Punjab also arranged a function

⁶ Veda. V. (Urdu translation by Munshi Swami Dayal). (1974). *Shrimad Bhagvat*. Lakhnanau, India: Raja Ram Kumar Book Depot. p. .237

to celebrate *Holi* at Banquet Hall, Aiwan-e-Iqbal, Edgerton Road Lahore. Mr. Kanji Ram, an MPA from Punjab, was looking forward to the guests on the occasion while Mr. Khalil Tahir Sindhu, Minister for Human Rights & Minorities Affairs, was the chief guest there. People from all over the Punjab participated there. It was a colourful celebration first time in Lahore arranged by government of the Punjab. Many occasions in the name of celebrations of *Holi* were earlier arranged in the Governor's House but they were customary with nothing special. But on that particularly occasion people enjoyed art & cultural performances by the Hindu artists who had come from different parts of the Punjab. All the guests were served with vegetarian dishes as lunch. The vegetarian food was arranged on demand of the community because it was their religious festival and any type of meet was not religiously lawful for them. Banners displayed on the roads showed Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, the then Chief Minister of Punjab, greeting the Hindus on *Holi*.



Fig. No. 4. Banners displayed on Edgerton Road Lahore show Punjab Chief Minister wishing *Holi* to the Hindu Community.

3.4. *Ram Navmi*

3.4.1. *Ram Navmi*, as per *Vikrami* calendar, is celebrated on *Chait Shudi Navmi* (9th of the waxing moon in the month of *Chait*). According to Gregorian calendar, it often falls in the month of March. This festival is celebrated in commemoration of manifestation of the *Lord Ram* -- an incarnation on the earth. He appeared at the palace of *Raja Dashrath*, the king of *Ayudhya*. *Raja Dashrath* had three wives. He was issueless in the beginning but later by benediction of a saint, he was blessed with four sons, namely *Ram*, *Lakhshman*, *Shatrughan* and *Bharat*, born to the three wives. As *Shri Ram* was the eldest, he was handed over the throne by his father, *Raja Dashrath* during *Raja's* life.

3.4.2. On the occasion of *Ram Navmi*, the Hindus gather at the temples for worship. They chant the holy names and sing *Bhajans*. In Lahore, the festival is celebrated every year at Krishna Mandir, Ravi Road. The Hindus chant *Bhajans* there, recite texts from the *Ramayan*, perform *Atri* and distribute *Prasad* (sacred food) at the end of the ceremony. The persons who cannot attend the special worship at the temple perform *puja* at home.

3.5. *Rakhsha Bandhan*

3.5.1. *Rakhsha Bandhan* is celebrated on *Sawan Purnima* (full moon in the month of *Sawan*). According to Gregorian calendar, this festival falls in the month of August. It is an impressive festival to promote love among brothers and sisters. Sisters tie *Rakhi* (a decorated string or thread type) on their brothers' wrists, to symbolize a shield for protection of their dear brothers. On the other hand, brothers vow to prove as protector of their sisters forever. Brothers reciprocate this gesture of sisters with gifts or pocket money.

3.5.2. In Lahore, the ceremony is arranged at Krishna Mandir every year. Sometimes, the community arranges the celebration at some other places. *Rakhis*, sweetmeats, vermillion (*sindoor*) and a small lamp

(*diya*) are kept in a plate. The vermillion is used by the sister to apply tilak on the brother's forehead and a small lamp (*diya*) is lit for *arti* of the brother. After *arti*, she ties *Rakhi* around the wrist of the brother's right hand.

3.5.3. In the year 2013, Mr. Amarnath Randhawa arranged the ceremony at Native School System, Bibi Pak Daaman, Lahore on 20th August, 2013. A large number of the Hindus gathered there to celebrate the festival. Mr. Mohsin Latif, a Pakistani Muslim and Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) from Punjab, also participated in the function as chief guest. This is a sign of national integration of the Muslims with the Hindus in Pakistan. A Hindu girl, Miss Mohini tied Rakhi on the wrist of the MPA. Such type of participation of the Muslim representatives not only encourages the Hindu community but also promotes love between the communities and strengthens them as one nation.



Fig. No. 5 Rachna Devi is tying rakhi to Mr. Kanji Ram, MPA, and Mr. Khalil Tahir Sindhu, Minister (HR&MA) is standing on his left side.

3.5.4. In the year 2016, celebration of the festival *Raksha Bandhan* was arranged on 17th August, at Ambassador Hotel in Lahore. Different Hindu families participated and enjoyed the festival. Mr. Kanji Ram and Mr. Khalil Tahir Sindhu (the then MPA and Minister for Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Punjab) were the chief guests of the ceremony. Hindu students from different colleges and universities of Lahore performed on the stage as well. The Hindu ladies tied *Rakhi* on the wrist of their brothers and the chief guests as well.

3.6. *Krishna Janam Ashtami*

3.6.1. Krishna Janam Ashtami is another ostentatious festival of Hinduism celebrated by the Hindus the world over. The Hindus worship and fast for Lord Krishna the whole day. According to the Hindu calendar (*Vikram Sammat*), this falls in the month of *Bhadu*, *Badi Ashtami* (eighth of the waning moon). This festival is celebrated to pay tribute to the day when *Lord Krishna* appeared on the earth.



Fig. No. 6. Deities of Lord Krishna & Radha

In Lahore, the Hindus gather after the sunset at Krishna Mandir to observe the festival. A ceremony is arranged there by Evacuee Trust Property Board. Some people celebrate at home with their families. *Prsaad* (religious offerings) are distributed at the end of the function.

3.7. *Durga Maa Nav Raatray*

Dura Devi is a goddess with eight arms that rides on lion. She appears on the earth to kill the devils when they create hurdles for the devotees of God. The goddess is particularly worshiped by the Hindus for nine days and nights during the *Asoj Shudi* starting from appearance of the moon of the month of *Asoj* till *Asoj Naumi Shudi* (9th of the waxing moon). The said days, according to Gregorian calendar, usually fall in October.

3.8. *Dussehra*

3.8.1. *Dussehra* is celebrated by the Hindus throughout the world. It comes every year on *Shudi Dashmi* (10th of waxing moon) in the month of *Asoj*. This is why the festival is also known as *Vijay Dashmai*. According to Gregorian calendar, it falls mostly in October. *Dussehra* is the combination of two *Sanskrit* words—*Dush* and *Hra*. *Dush* means ten; *Dush* is also the name of *Ravan* which is a symbol of sin, cruelty and unjust, while *Hra* means victory. *Ravan* was ten-headed. When he imprisoned *Mata Sita* in *Ashok Vatika* (a very beautiful garden) at his palace in *Lanka*, *Bhagwan Ram* approached *Lanka* with an army of monkeys and bears (*Baanar Sena/ Bhalo Sena* commanded by *Hanuman Ji*—a god) to get *Mata Sita* free from him. At end of the war, *Bhagwan Ram* killed *Ravan*. Thus this festival is celebrated in the commemoration of victory of virtue/truth over sin and cruelty.

3.8.2. Like the whole world, in the areas of Pakistan where the Hindu community is residing in a large number, puppets of *Ravan* are burnt there symbolically. They also arrange stage dramas to display story of the *Ramayan*. People worship at the temples and *prasad* is distributed. The Hindus chant *bhajans* to pay tribute to the victory of *Ram*. The twelve years of *Ram Chandra's* exile had been completed on the very

day when He killed *Ravan*, so they set off for *Ayodhya*. Simultaneously, in Lahore, an event is arranged at *Krishna Mandir* where the Hindus gather in the evening to celebrate the day. They worship at the temple, chant *Bhajans* and distribute *Prasad*. As there is not much space at the temple, the puppet of *Ravan* is not burnt there.

3.9. Guru Valmik Swami Ji's Appearance Day

Maha Rishi Valmik Swami Ji is a great sage and spiritual master and the writer of *the Ramayan*. The biography of *Ram* had been written in this book millions of years before his appearance on the earth. *Maha Rishi* gave right direction to the whole humankind through his teachings. *The Ramayan* is a code of life which depicts how to live a virtuous life in this material world. *Maha Rishi Valmik's* appearance day is celebrated each year on *Purnima* (full moon) in the month of *Asoj*. In Lahore the event is celebrated at *Balmik Mandir*, Bheem Streen, Anarkali Bazaar and *Krishna Mandir* too. The Hindus arrange big programmes on the occasion. They chant *Bhajans* to pay homage to the *Maha Rishi Valmik Swami Ji* and distribute *Prasad* (sacred food).

3.10. Varat (Fast) of Karwa Chauth

3.10.1. *Varat* (Fast) of *Karwa Chauth* is an annual festival. This is celebrated on *Badi Chauth* (4th of Waning moon) in the month of *Kartak*. According to Gregorian calendar, it comes in October. On this festival, only the married women observe fast from early dawn till appearance of the moon at night. The purpose of this fasting is to pray for health, long life and prosperity of the husband. When the moon appears, the *Suhagan* (married woman) sees the moon first through a sieve and then sees her husband's face in the same way through net. Then she performs *Arti* of her husband before eating something. She also prays to God for health, prosperity, protection and long life of her husband.



Fig. No. 7 A Hindu woman seeing moon through net during Karwa Chauth puja ⁷

3.10.2. *In Sanatan Dharm* (Hinduism), it is emphasized that a woman must respect her husband as if he were a god. Women are taught since their childhood that they have to be faithful with their husbands throughout the life and stand by them through thick and thin. Some husbands too observe fast on the occasion of *Karwa Chauth* to show their love to their wives, though it is not a part of their religion.

3.11. *Diwali*

3.11.1. *Diwali* is also known as *Depa-wali*. It is a festival of lights and lamps (*Deep*). To light up the lamps is basically a lesson for us to enlighten the inner-self and remove ignorance in life. It is considered that the lamps of *Diwali* bring brightness, prosperity and success in our life. The festival is celebrated every year on *Amavas* of the month of *Kartak* (last dark night of *Kartak*). According to the Gregorian calendar, it comes in November. It is also the most popular festival in Hinduism. People gather for worship and light clay lamps at homes and temples in the evening.

They put on new dresses and exchange sweetmeats and gifts. Pocket money is given to the children. Relatives and friends invite each other for feast.

3.11.2. *Diwali* is, basically, a collection of different events celebrated for five days. Following are the main events related to *Diwali*:

- a. Mostly, the Hindu businessmen close their business accounts on the day of *Diwali* and the very next day they start their new year.
- b. Once, *Mata Parvati* became angry with *Shiv Maharaj* and went to her father's home. *Maharaj* brought her back on the very day.
- c. The goddess of luck and prosperity, *Maha Devi Lakhshmi Ji* appeared on the day of *Diwali* when gods and devils blended the *Jheer Saagar*. This is why the Hindus worship *Lakhshmi Devi* on the eve of *Diwali*.
- d. God bestowed rule of *Paataal* (underground planet) to Raja Bali on the day of *Diwali*.
- e. The most popular event of *Diwali* relates to *Ram Chandr*, an incarnation of God. When He was exiled and sent from *Ayudhya* to the jungles for 12 years, His wife Sita and brother *Lakhshman* also accompanied Him. He killed many devils and protected His devotees there. Three of them spent 12 years in the jungles. He killed *Ravan*, the king of *Lanka* on the very day when 12 years of His exile had been completed. So, they set off from jungle to *Ayudhya*. When they returned to their kingdom, people of *Ayudhya* welcomed them warmly, lit clay lamps, distributed sweetmeats and enjoyed themselves a lot. The festival is celebrated every year by the Hindus throughout the world in commemoration of *Shri Ram Chandar*.

3.11.3. In Lahore, the Hindus celebrate the event at *Krishna Mandir Ravi Road, Balmik Mandir, Bheem Street Anarkali Bazaar* and their houses as well. On the occasion of *Diwali*, a carnival is arranged

every year by Evacuee Trust Property Board at *Krishna Mandir* in Lahore. Hindu Sudhar Sabha, an organization working for welfare of the Hindus, also arranges to celebrate the festival of *Diwali* at Lahore. On 2nd November, 2013 the organization organized a program to celebrate *Diwali* at Sun Fort Hotel, Liberty Lahore. Similarly in the year 2017, *Diwali* get-together was arranged by the organization on 25th October, at Loyala Hall Lahore. The whole of the feast was vegetarian. It is a unique feature of the organization that it always serves the guests with vegetarian foods at religious events. Every year, the festival is celebrated in Lahore peacefully with full excitement.

Conclusion

Almost all the major Hindu festivals are celebrated in Lahore. These festivals are arranged in a congenial environment. The government provides support to facilitate the arrangements. Two temples, Krishna Mandir at Ravi Road and Balmik Mandir, Bheem Street in, Anarkali Bazaar are the centers of festivities on these occasions in Lahore. These celebrations are not confined just to the Hindu families living in Lahore. People from almost all communities are invited to participate. Functions are also arranged by the Hindu community with the help of some non-governmental organizations and NGOs. Hindu Sudhar Sabha is a Lahore-based organization plays an active role in organizing these festive events. Overall the Hindus are free to celebrate their festivals anywhere in Lahore and other Pakistani cities with Hindu populations.

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Dr. Surin became the 12th Secretary-General of ASEAN (2008–2012). He contributed much to the development of ASEAN not only when he was its Secretary-General but also when he was the Foreign Minister of Thailand. Two of his most recognized accomplishments in dealing with ASEAN affairs were [1] first, spearheading the Asian countries to help restore law and order in East Timor during the violent uprising in the aftermath of the Referendum in August 1999, and [2] second, leading the ASEAN Member States and the United Nations and other international institutions such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and various other International NGOs to enter Myanmar to rescue that country from the catastrophe of Cyclone Nargis in May

2008 and remained there until the mission was accomplished in December 2010.

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