Peace and Harmony in the World
Based on Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika
(Unity in Diversity)

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Abstract

Indonesia, the largest archipelago with over 17,500 islands, is the fourth most populated country and one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse nations composed of about 500 ethnic groups using 746 vernacular languages. For centuries an influx of peoples from South-East Asia, Indochina, India, Arabia, Polynesia, Europe, and the Americas has augmented its multiculturality. Yet, a majority of the peoples still live in fruitful coexistence. Thus, this paper seeks to show that the ideology of Pancasila (Five Principles) and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) is a valuable basis for interculture in cultural environments, peace and harmony not only for Indonesia but for the whole of humanity in the world. To do so, it will reflect on writings stemming from the work of former Secretary-General of the United Nations and President of the World Commission on Culture and Development Javier Pérez de Cuéllar on fostering a culture of peace and "Our Creative Diversity".

Keywords: *world peace, pancasila, bhinneka tunggal ika, unity in diversity, interculture in cultural environments*

Abstrak

Indonesia, kepulauan terbesar dengan lebih dari 17,500 pulau, merupakan negara terpadat keempat dan salah satu paling beragam secara kebudayaan dan linguistik terdiri dari sekitar 500 kelompok-kelompok etnis yang menggunakan 746 bahasa daerah. Selama berabad-abad masuknya masyarakat dari Asia Tenggara, Indocina, India, Arabia, Polynesia, Eropa, dan benua Amerika Selatan dan Utara telah menambah multikulturalitasnya. Namun, kebanyakan orang-orang masih hidup berdampingan secara produktif. Maka, makalah ini akan mencoba menunjukkan bahwa ideologi Pancasila dan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika adalah dasar yang bernilai untuk antarbudaya dalam lingkungan budaya, perdamaian dan kerukunan tidak hanya bagi Indonesia tapi untuk seluruh umat manusia di dunia. Untuk itu, akan merenungi tulisan-tulisan yang berasal dari pekerjaan mantan Sekretaris Jenderal Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa dan Presiden Komisi Kebudayaan dan Pembangunan Dunia Javier Pérez de Cuéllar tentang membudayakan budaya perdamaian dan "Our Creative Diversity" ("Keanekaragaman Kreatif Kita").

Kata kunci: perdamaian dunia, pancasila, bhinneka tunggal ika, unity in diversity, antarbudaya dalam lingkungan budaya

Introduction

In this era marked by the increasing movement of people between rural and urban areas, across regions and continents, practically all nations need to develop positive ways to work with the social reality of people from various ethno-cultural backgrounds with diverse languages and religious practices residing in, visiting, or journeying through their countries. This paper hopes to stimulate us to consider how the intercultural approach of Indonesia can be useful for the world now and in the future, as well as to identify formats that foster a harmonious religious life in contemporary pluralistic societies.

Known as the largest archipelago with over 17,500 islands, Indonesia is the fourth most populated country and one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse nations composed of about 500 ethnic groups residing primarily in villages and using 746 vernacular languages (Pusat Bahasa, 2009). For centuries an influx of peoples from South-East Asia, Indochina, India, Arabia, Polynesia, Europe, and the Americas has augmented its multiculturality (Ardika, 2004: 3–11). Yet, a majority of the peoples still live in fruitful coexistence. Thus, I seek to show that the ideology of Pancasila (Five Principles) and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) is a valuable basis for interculture in cultural environments, peace and harmony not only for Indonesia but for the whole of humanity in the world. To do so, I will reflect on writings stemming from the work of former Secretary-General of the United Nations and President of the World Commission on Culture and Development Javier Pérez de Cuéllar on fostering a culture of peace and "Our Creative Diversity".

Pancasila: Five Principles as Indonesia's Basic Philosophy of Culture

First, let us take a look at what Haryati Soebadio (1985: 12), during her tenure as Director-General of Culture of the Department of Education and Culture of Indonesia, termed 'Indonesia's basic philosophy of culture' which, in the Preamble of the Constitution, 'is contained in the five principles of the national ideology, Pancasila, sometimes translated as 'five pillars'. Considered inseparable and interrelated, these five principles can be roughly translated into English as:

1. *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* – Belief in One Supreme God / the Great Oneness of God;

2. *Kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab* – A just and civilized humanity;

3. *Persatuan Indonesia* – the Unity of Indonesia;

4. *Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan perwakilan* – The sovereignty of the people guided by the inner wisdom arising out of deliberations amongst representatives; and

5. *Keadilan sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia* – Social justice for all of the People of Indonesia.

Since the founding of the nation in 1945, Pancasila has been a topic of philosophical discourse – its content continually reexamined in view of changing social conditions. What makes it distinctive is that it embraces the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity of the people as expressed in Indonesia's national motto of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity).

The ways in which cultural and religious diversity in Indonesia has been handled in practice has, of course, varied

greatly. Also, as world history shows, no nation has been constantly and fully successful in efforts to maintain social harmony. However, it is worth noting that the roots of intercultural and interreligious values in the Nusantara archipelago can be traced to creative exchanges since the first millennium. So, next I would like to draw from my dissertation (Butler, 2011) to share some ideas about one of the initial literary sources of the phrase *bhinneka tunggal ika* (unity in diversity) and the practical relevance of this ethos for humanity today.

Unity in Diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika)*: Poetic Insight for Humanity Today

While the indigenous ethnic groups of the Nusantara archipelago are considerably varied, they have also demonstrated an exceptional ability to creatively integrate influences received due to inter-island contact or contact with peoples from abroad. For instance, Soebadio (1985: 10–11) summarizes the varied degrees of integrating Chinese, Indian (Hindu-Buddhist), and Arabic (Muslim) influences from the first millennium to the fifteenth century.

In the socio-religious life of the region then emerged the teachings of '*bhinneka tunggal ika tan hana dharma mangrwa*' (unity in diversity they are different while being one the truth cannot become two). This stanza, from the fourteenth century *Kakawin Sutasoma* text written by Javanese Buddhist sage Mpu Tantular, elucidated the means for the peaceful coexistence of two major religions of his time: Buddhism and Çiwaism. In essence, while the manners of religiosity vary – all constitute paths to a common Source (Santoso, 1975; Mantra et al., 2002).

In the dawn of this third millennium to hear the phrase *bhinneka tunggal ika* (unity in diversity) – as a sung poetic expression of religiosity and philosophical insight – conveys a time-honored intercultural and interreligious ethos. Yet, it differs from universalism or pluralism. *Bhinneka tunggal ika* reflects a <u>both-and</u> worldview in which *dharma* (truth) is one and its aspects are many-fold.

Seven hundred years after Tantular's fourteenth century poetic sagacity of *bhinneka tunggal ika* (unity in diversity) – 'interculturality,' writes president of the international Society of Intercultural Philosophy Ram Adhar Mall (1999: 2, 5; 2000: 2–3), 'advocates unity without uniformity … [it] … enlarges and diversifies the range of models, and points to principal similarities and enlightening differences' and thus 'frees us from our tendency to define truth in terms of one particular tradition'. Like Tantular, Mall also describes an interreligious ethos as the 'various ways to one and the same religious truth'.

Yet, Unity in Diversity has not merely been an ideology over the centuries. Thousands of heritage structures and sites, art forms and crafts in villages across the archipelago testify to the creative contributions of local genius and that traditions can transform via exchanges with other cultures or faiths yet still be rooted in local cultural values. What, then, can we learn from the wisdom and skillful means of the preceding generations of humanity? And, how can beneficial interculturality and interreligiosity be furthered today? In *The Intra-Religious Dialogue*, theologian Raimon Panikkar (1978: 91) posits that the ground for understanding among cultures and faiths needs to be created in the space between the traditions through the praxis of dialogue. He adds, 'a genuine dialogue, interculturally speaking, starts from the principle of reciprocity'. In Indonesia, this principle of sharing and mutual cooperation is the heart of the custom of *gotong royong* (see Butler, forthcoming).

So, given the multicultural reality of

many nations today, let us next widen the scope and briefly reflect on the writings of former Secretary-General of the UN and President of the World Commission on Culture and Development Pérez de Cuéllar.

The United Nations: Fostering a Culture of Peace and "Our Creative Diversity"

Faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person and the equal rights of all people, practicing tolerance, and living together in peace with one another as good neighbors has been at the core of the United Nations mission since its establishment in 1945. Of particular relevance for our discussion are two platforms that emerged from the two terms that Peruvian diplomat Javier Pérez de Cuéllar served as the fifth Secretary-General (1982 to 1991). One was the launching of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988–1997), which led to the initiation of the independent World Commission for Culture and Development in 1991 for which he served as the president. The other was UNESCO's approval of the action programme to promote a Culture of Peace in 1993. So, let us take a glance at some ideas conveyed in these two initiatives.

Firstly, this was the period when culture was defined as 'the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group … (encompassing), in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs' (UNESCO, 1982 see 2001: 12). Notably, this view acknowledges both the diversity and the universality of cultural values.

As for managing this diversity and fostering harmony, in looking at the history of the UN, one could say that Javier Pérez de Cuéllar put forth the notion of developing a 'culture of peace'. In his February 1994 keynote

address for the First International Forum on the Culture of Peace, he proposed that 'the coexistence of different cultural groups and communities with different identities' makes democracy and peace possible. Furthermore, that a culture of peace is 'the fruit of a true coexistence and cooperation among different cultures within one country or among nations'. In December of that same year, religious leaders, academics, representatives of religious NGOs, and policy-makers drafted and adopted the "Declaration on the Role of Religion in the Promotion of a Culture of Peace" during the first Interreligious Dialogue Meeting organized by UNESCO in Barcelona. This document acknowledges that 'cultures give religions their language and religions offer ultimate meaning to each culture'. It also maintains that peace is only possible if we recognize pluralism and respect diversity.

The cultural dimension of development was taken up by the World Commission on Culture and Development, which also aimed to affirm and enrich cultural identities, broaden participation in culture, and promote international cultural cooperation. In his role as President, Pérez de Cuéllar (1992: 2–3) expressed that:

> …The social and cultural dimensions of development and the environment must result in closer links between culture and development … [This] is the only source of new-born hope, out of which the real and concrete Utopia that we must build together through dialogue and co-operation may take shape. This new concept of development is - it seems to me - the keystone of that peace-building which, as proposed by the Secretary-General, should become one of the priority objectives of the United Nations.

He also stressed 'the rich creative

potential that culture offers' and that 'the diversity of cultures and their dynamism [is] nourished by exchange and by dialogue. It is in fact culture that holds the key to human, sustainable development based on sharing'.

General principles for dealing with diversity are also outlined in the Commission's report, "Our Creative Diversity" (Pérez de Cuéllar, 1995: 15–16, 54, 67), which asserts that 'respect goes beyond tolerance. It implies a positive attitude to other people and rejoicing at their different ways of life, at their creative diversity' and that 'there is an underlying unity in the diversity of cultures, which is defined in a global ethics'. As well, 'the diversity and plurality of cultures has benefits comparable to those of bio-diversity' and that a commitment to pluralism, including acknowledgement of different faiths, is of vital importance.

Now, at the dawn of this third millennium, the connection between cultural and religious diversity, creative diversity, biodiversity, and sustainable development appears to have substantiated the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (see United Nations, 2015).

Conclusion

Having shared this brief reflection on the very vast topic of the Indonesian ideology of Pancasila (Five Principles) and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) and on some texts associated with the evolution of the UN and UNESCO's approach to fostering a culture of peace and creative diversity – I would like to share some final thoughts.

First, that basically the modern urban concept of *kerukunan antar umat beragama* (interreligious harmony) in Indonesia stems from principles

and cultural practices that have been handed down through generations. And, as we know, dialogue is not just limited to verbal conversation. Actually, the process of fostering interreligious harmony is particularly palpable in the creative practices of traditional village societies in that the arts and religiosity are joined together to the extent that it is an integral part of daily life. Also, in villages throughout Indonesia there were/are various types of community *musyawarah* (deliberation) forums held for *kerukunan desa* or *kerukunan wilayah* (harmoniousness of the village or the district). This starts at the level of the *banjar* or *dusun* (a hamlet neighborhood association in a village), then at the village level, inter-village level, province level, and then the national level.

Second, it is interesting that in the *Learning to Living Together in Peace and Harmony* UNESCO-APNIEVE sourcebook, former Rector of Universitas Pendidkan Indonesia-Bandung Mohammad Fakry Gaffar (1998: 114–115) noted that '*Pancasila* contains values which are not only applicable to the national conscience and for meeting national needs, but are also quite universal' and that in essence these five principles 'are in accordance with the core values championed by UNESCO; that is, peace, human rights, democracy, and sustainable development'. Executive Chair of the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO, Arief Rachman (2004: 235–240), during the *International Congress of Education for Shared Values for Intercultural and Interfaith Understanding*, spoke of Pancasila as the binding unity among cultures and as the national cultural identity in Indonesia based on Unity in Diversity. Thus, he suggests that dialogue among the ethnic cultures, regional or local cultures, and national culture is important. In addition, that 'as citizens of the world, Indonesian youth also need to be aware of the need for synergy between nations and to believe in the equality of dignity among nations as

the base of international cooperation'.

Third, as I mentioned in my article on "Living Prayer: Its Contributions for the World's Ecosystems and Interreligious Harmony" (Butler, 2016) – the principle of unity in diversity, originating from the phrase *bhinneka tunggal ika* in the fourteenth century *Kakawin Sutasoma* text written by Javanese sage Mpu Tantular, nowadays is not only the motto of Indonesia – it has also been a theme in a number of global forums and publications.

Finally, the peoples of Indonesia have two thousand years of experience in developing positive ways to work with cultural and religious diversity to foster a harmonious life. So, could it be that the ideology of Pancasila (Five Principles) and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) and the custom of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) is a valuable basis for interculture in cultural environments, peace and harmony not only for Indonesia but for the whole of humanity in the world?

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