

Pleading for more „*musyawarah*“ in the academic dialogue about the *Future Indonesia*

When, after 1945, **Indonesia** had entered the scene of international politics as a newly independent nation its leaders surprised their colleagues from other formerly colonized people of Asia and Africa at conferences by occasionally referring to the tradition of *musyawarah* in the Indonesian political dialogue as a backbone of village democracy.

Compromises facilitated bridge-building between antagonistic political camps, which, because of their biases, often did not find a solution of problems, even though – with a little bit of good-will – many of these problems could be solved. For this reason the tradition of *musyawarah* was praised for instance by Sukarno in his Pancasila speech on the 1st of June in 1945, or by Indonesian colleagues in the preparatory conferences leading to the famous Bandung-Conference in April 1955.

The practice of *musyawarah* was indeed the major reason of what is often referred to as the proverbial Indonesian tolerance and a convincing explanation of the fact that through the centuries of the past people with different beliefs and views could and did live together in peace! The practice of *musyawarah* often helped to avoid confrontations and the rigidity of an either-or.

What then has happened to this respectable tradition in the years following these promising beginnings in the 1950s ? Instead of a scenario, showing Indonesia leading a growing number of neutralist states in the direction of a peaceful coexistence as was demanded in the Bandung-Conference we see an increase in the camps of the big powers with a growing arsenal of atomic bombs at their disposal... Instead of abstainment from interference in political affairs of third world countries - another demand agreed upon at Bandung - we find increasingly attempts of corruption, following the device “money buys everything”

This was also a widely used practice in Indonesia, where Suharto tried to stabilize his power after the turbulent consequences of the coup attempt of 1965. And what were the consequences of this decline of morals in politics? Criticism of corruption led to the strengthening of the forces of radicalism and the radicals, in turn, tried to abolish what was left in Indonesia of the tradition of tolerance and persuasion on the village-level...

Therefore, what is needed at the begin of the discussion about the role of **future Indonesia** is a radical departure from corruption and the attempt to revive the democratic institutions of the past. What is needed is, first of all, to convince people of the necessity of change, secondly a return to the proven method of reasoning, to the *musyawarah*-tradition of sounding out alternatives and the possibility of their implementation. Indonesia can capitalize on the merits of its own traditions only, when it is guaranteed, that they can work again, unthreatened and unmolested by radicals, politically or religiously motivated: After all: The implementation and furtherance of peace is one of the most precious gifts of god to mankind...