

CHAPTER V

THE CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR BUILDING PEACE

“Nothing can ever replace your loved one”
(Desmond Tutu, 1999:61)

5.1. Considering the Roads to Reconciliation

From the analysis of the previous chapter, there are some discourses which should be considered. First, there is the need to disclose the truth regarding the Solo riot, something strongly urged by the young survivors. In fact, disclosing the truth could encourage the youth to undertake forgiveness. Their reference was to the fact that they continue to experience discrimination and mock as persons of Chinese descent. Second, the old survivors feel as if disclosing the truth is useless. It will open the old injuries and create further hatred and resentment. They believe that a cultural strategy in the form of social actions can be more effective. Third, there is the need for *pribumi* neighbors involved in the looting and burning of the CI's properties to apologize. This apology will facilitate the survivors in undertaking forgiveness and open the way of reconciliation.

It is not realistic, of course, to compel those involved in the Solo riot to publicly admit their involvement in the Solo incident in order to manifest the truth. As I describe in chapter one (p. 8), it is not easy to reveal the truth of Indonesia's past. There are several reasons. First, there were other cases that occurred before 1998 and have not yet been resolved. It is crucial to reveal the truth of the 1998 riots, if the earlier cases have not yet been finished. Second, there is the possibility that those involved in the riot are now actively holding political positions. Of course, such active political figures will become barriers to

the revelation of an objective truth. They will even refuse any efforts to seek information on the riot. Third, there is the possibility that other riots will follow if those in charge to do the jobs of disclosing the truth are incapable of doing so. It is very risky to do this project without ample preparation and organization. Fourth, truth is never absolute; it always depends on certain perspective.

Therefore, enacting cultural strategies, as suggested by the old survivors, is a more realistic and effective way to build harmonious living in Solo. However, this does not mean that disclosing the truth regarding the Solo riot is useless. Disclosing the truth is very important in healing the social damages caused by the Solo riot. It is significant to ensure that similar incidents will not occur again in the future. It is also required as an important step in reconciliation. So, we find, disclosing the truth should be placed in the context of reinforcing the harmony of the people of Solo. Emphasis should be laid on the participation of the people of Solo in telling their own stories about the riot. As such, disclosing the truth is intended to write a new history of Solo, through which reconciliation will be manifested.

This chapter will explore the roads to reconciliation. I consider those ideas to be the effects of discourses regarding forgiveness, disclosing the truth, and building harmony to the social practices, as described in figure 6 of the explanation above (p. 86). The first part will elaborate on the cultural strategy, and the second part will expose the importance of writing new history to manifest justice and reconciliation.

5.2. Cultural Strategy

Gungwu (1991b), in the article entitled “Among Non-Chinese”, illustrates how the ethnic Chinese survived in trading, working, studying, and living with non-Chinese. He underlines that the Chinese, to survive in non-Chinese society, distinguish between Chinese culture and government. They kept close to the Chinese culture, rather than the Chinese government. Although they do not live in their homeland, they still have a personal attachment to the Chinese culture – but not to the Chinese state. Two things in which they believe more are education and the interdependent world economy. Gungwu (1991b) also drew a map of how the migrant Chinese integrated and assimilated themselves into the destined land. According to Gungwu, there are two approaches, namely political and cultural ones. The political approach ends at the formation of Chinese racial identities, with emphasis on the juridical rights, whereas the cultural approach results in the growth of a consciousness of the Chinese historical identity where they live. Gungwu proposed that political approach should be secondary, after the cultural one.

In this regard, the cultural strategy of the old survivors is in accordance with Gungwu’s proposal. The following will expose some activities through which the cultural strategy of the survivors is manifested.

5.2.1. Association of Surakarta Society (*Perkumpulan Masyarakat Surakarta*)

The old survivors, especially those from PMS and its predecessor *Chuan Min Kung Hui*, learnt from their long experience living in Indonesia that the cultural strategy is very effective. The head of the PMS, Mr. Marto (57),

following the vision and mission of PMS, stated that natural assimilation works better than forceful assimilation. He also declared his belief that "If I was robbed, it means my social donations to others are still lacking. So, I should donate more." This belief is also applied in leading PMS. After the Solo riot, PMS did more social activities, and will do increasingly more in the future. Such can be read in the memorial book of the *80th Anniversary of PMS*.

PMS was founded on 1 April 1932 with the name *Chuan Min Kung Hui*.¹ It was merger of six Chinese social organizations, namely Kong Tong Hoo, Hiang Gie Hwee, Hap Gie Hwee, Kong Sing Hwee, Sam Ban Hien, and Tiong Hoa Poen Sing Hwee. Originally, the organization focused on helping its members who experienced a death in their family by providing supplies for cremation and keeping the ashes of the deceased. The Thiong Ting House, granted by the King Pakubuwana VII, was their first headquarters in Solo. Scope of activity was later extended to three areas, namely (1) *societeit*, which provided facilities for meeting, sports, Javanese traditional dance, gamelan and keroncong music; (2) education, which organized kindergarten classes, foreign-language teaching, and libraries; (3) social work, which offered financial support for Tsi Sheng Yua Hospital (now Dr. Oen hospital), and established the Commission for Helping the Unemployed (*Komite Penolong Kaum Pengangguran*). During Indonesia's fight for independence, PMS formed Chinese Troops of Indonesian Republic (*Barisan Pemberontak Republik Indonesia Tiong Hoa*), and Commission for Helping the Dangers of War (*Panitia Penolong Bahaya Perang*).

¹ For the above description of PMS, I refer to Rustopo (2007) and the *80th Anniversary of PMS*.

On 1 October 1959, *Chuan Min Kung Hui* changed its name to be *Perkumpulan Masyarakat Surakarta* (PMS). There were two reasons: (1) the enthusiasm of the society and the members of PMS on the fusion and assimilation; (2) the enrolling of *pribumi* as member of PMS. In the New Order Era, PMS was the only Chinese organization which was permitted to operate. PMS took a role in promoting the spirit of assimilation through stage shows, Javanese dance, *keroncong* music and other cultural performances. The art section of PMS, then, was important in bearing prominent figures in Javanese traditional culture, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

After the Solo riot, social activities of PMS were extended. Some extravagant activities which won a prize from MURI (*Museum Rekor Indonesia* or Indonesian Record Museum) included organizing breakfasts throughout the month of Ramadhan in 2005 for an incredible number of 5333 people; and creating the tallest Christmas tree, with a height of 25 meters, in 2006. Other activities included holding the Solo International Ethnic Music on from 1-5 September 2007; holding the World Heritage Cities Conference in 2008, with participants from 156 cities and 32 countries; holding a seminar to criticize SBKRI with the topic "*Tiong Hoa dalam Cengkeraman SBKRI*" (Ethnic Chinese in the Claws of the SBKRI); and regular social activities such as offering scholarships and helping the victims of disasters. These activities were usually held in collaboration with other Chinese social organizations and communities.

PMS and its activities are a manifestation of the CI cultural strategy to ensure peaceful living in Solo. It is the realization of their spirit to eliminate the conception that Solo is a short-fused city which can easily to be ignited as a riot.

5.2.2. Warga Education Foundation (Yayasan Pendidikan Warga)

The emergence of Social Organization of the Chinese (Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan, THHK) in Batavia on 17 March 1900 was the signal of the resurgence of the Chinese nationalism. It was backgrounded by the resurrection of nationalism in China, and triggered by the condition of the ethnic Chinese in Batavia who were considered uncivilized in terms of education and knowledge. As mentioned in its statutes, the aim of the establishment of THHK was to improve the quality of education and civilization of the Chinese, especially through establishing schools.² After in Batavia, branches of THHK were then established in many cities in the archipelago, including Solo.

THHK Solo focused more in organizing education or schools. It was declared on 30 November 1904, a day commemorated with beginning of construction of the school building. While the school building was under construction, the educations of its fifty students were given at Tien Kok Sie Temple (near Pasar Gedhe) and in the house of Sie Twa Bak (in Coyudan). Year by year, the number of the students increased. When the school building was finished in 1908, there were 200 students. After that, the dynamics of the THHK school followed the dynamics of socio-political life in Solo and the archipelago at large. For instance, when the Dutch opened a Dutch-language school for the ethnic Chinese, it challenged THHK to maintain the students, because some Chinese parents wanted to transfer their children to the Dutch school. During the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), seven THHK schools in Solo were temporarily

²² For the information about the THHK, I refer to the memorial book entitled *100 Tahun Yayasan Pendidikan Warga* (100 Years of Warga Education Foundation) and an interview with Mr. Thomas, one of the board, on 6 March 2013.

closed, but four months later, one school was allowed to operate again, under the supervision of a Japanese officer named Kakiyo Sokai.

The Indonesian struggle for independence also changed the socio-political landscape. After the second clash in 1949, the board made a crucial choice, when they organized the school in the line of with the Indonesian government's policy rather than as a foreign school. Afterwards, the Ministry of Education, Teaching, and Culture (*Kementerian Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Kebudayaan*) selected some schools as experimental models for a people's school (*Sekolah Rakyat Percobaan*); THHK was also appointed. In 1955, a general election was held, and many people of Chinese descent decided to become Indonesian citizens. As such, the THHK changed its name to be *Sekolah Warga* (School of the Citizens). In 1960, the Indonesian government proclaimed the assimilation program, which recommended that Chinese schools accept non-Chinese students. *Sekolah Warga* was one of the pilot schools appointed for the program.

Now more than 100 years old, the *Warga* Education Foundation has more *pribumi* students rather than students of Chinese descent.³ It has seven units of educational institutions, namely a playgroup, kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, vocational school, and an academy of technology. Mr. Thoms said: "We concretely work for the betterment of the people through education." He proudly told how the students of *Warga* Vocational School (*SMK Warga*) could assemble cars, even before the *Esemka*

³ Mr. Thoms, one of the board members of *Yayasan Pendidikan Warga*, sent me a short message on 2 September 2013, that only 3% of their students were CI.

Car⁴ became famous in 2012. He said: “After the visit of the Counsel General from the People’s Republic of China in 2004, we got a project to assemble car. It was wonderful that our students could do it. We exhibited the product in Solo Square in 2010.” *Warga* Education Foundation has close relations to and works together with other CI social organization, especially PMS.

Warga Foundation is a real manifestation of the CI’s work for the development of Solo society. It is cultural strategy of the CI for building peace by offering real contributions to improve the education of the people.

5.2.3. Solo Together Forever (*Solo Bersama Selamanya*)

On 4 August 2013, I joined a social event of the Solo Together Forever (*Solo Bersama Selamanya*, SBS) at Kota Barat Square, Solo. In this activity, 76 social organizations and communities, without carrying political or religious flags, distributed 11,000 (eleven thousand) packages of donations for the poor of Solo. This was intended to help the poor be able to celebrate Eid ul-Fitr with sufficient food. The packages, each of which cost of 80,000 rupiah, consisted of rice, sugar, tea, coffee, cake, and cooking oil.

In this activity, the people of Solo from all walks of life – the youth, the old, the officials (*pejabat*), the ordinary people, the nobles from *keraton*, the students, the bosses, the workers (*pegawai*), of all ethnic backgrounds (Chinese, Javanese, Arabic, etc.) – were involved as volunteers in distributing the packages. There were eight stands, where around 400 volunteers were prepared to do their

⁴ The *Esemka* Car was a car assembled by the students of a vocational school (SMK) in Klaten, which was then widely promoted as a national car.

jobs. The old and sick poor were facilitated with cars to take their allotments. The distribution process was organized well and carried without any accidents.

The 2013 SBS chose the theme of *Solo Berbagi Rayakan Lebaran 1434H./2013M* (Solo Shares to Celebrate Eid ul-Fit'r 1434H/2013M) is the 7th occasion of this activity.⁵ It was first held in 2006, and distributed one thousand packages. Year by year the number of donated packages increased, reaching a peak of 12,000 pieces. One of the initiators is Mr. Achmad Purnomo, the acting deputy mayor in Solo, who is also the chairman of the *Amal Sahabat* community and several other foundations. The vision and mission of SBS is to organize social organizations and communities in Solo together to helping those in needs, without paying heed to narrow interests such as political or communal interests. According to Mr. Muslich, the head of the distribution committee, the establishment of SBS is related to the Solo riot in May 1998. With the name of Solo Together Forever, SBS intends to build a peaceful Solo, and thus eliminate negative depictions of Solo as a *Sumbu Pendek* (short fuse) or *Barometer Politik* (political barometer) which is easily provoked to commit violence. The heads of social organizations and communities in Solo which are included in SBS are automatically under the coordination of SBS. They often met each other for various meetings. Therefore, it is very easy to communicate with each other. If there is conflict or incident, it will be easily handled or resolved together. Mr. Muslich gave one example, about a clash between one mob with the *kampung*

⁵ This information regarding *Solo Bersama Selamanya* I got from Mr. Muslich, a member of the distribution committee. The interview was done at his house in Nusukan on 30 July 2013. I got information about this activity from Ms. Vero, the Public Relations Manager of Paragon Mall, in interviews on 6 March 2013, and 4 August 2013. From them I got the proposal "*Solo Berbagi Rayakan Lebaran 1434H./2013M*" (Solo Shares to Celebrate Eid ul-Fit'r 1434H./2013M).

people in March 2012. He was able to communicate with both sides and persuade them to not commit violence. As an illustration, Mrs. Oka said that Solo people nowadays are not so easily to be provoked. She explained: “When there was suicide bombing on 25 September 2011, the people of Solo were not afraid to come to the location. It would have been impossible in the past.” For the expansion of SBS, in August 2013 the *SBS Muda* (The Young SBS), chaired by Mr. Tanu Kismanto, was established. It is clear that a peaceful Solo in the future is a serious goal of society. In his speech at the Solo Share on 4 August 2013, Mr. Achmad Purnomo, the Deputy Mayor of Solo and one of the initiators of the SBS movement, said that Solo Share is the real manifestation of Solo’s societies efforts to build a harmonious and peaceful city. Mr. Asnawi, in his prayer, expressed hope that “*Solo yang tenteram akan menular ke seluruh Indonesia*” meaning ‘the peaceful Solo will spread all over Indonesia.’

SBS is a concrete action of the CI to work together with all elements of Solo society to build harmony. The strong influence and involvement of the CI in this activity is a realization of their cultural strategy for building peace.

5.2.4. Sudirapraja Carnival and Chinese New Year Celebration

On 3 February 2013, I joined *Garebeg Sudirapraja* (Sudirapraja Carnival), which began at the Pasar Gedhe intersection near the Tian Kok Sie Temple, then passed through Jenderal Sudirman, Mayor Kusmanto, Kapten Mulyadi, RE Martadinata, Cut Nyak Dien, and Juanda Streets before finishing at Pasar Gedhe. It circumambulated the district (*kalurahan*) of Sudiraprajan. There were various Chinese traditional arts, such as *Wushu*, *Liong* and *Barongsai*, as well as Javanese

traditional arts such as *Jathilan*, *Jaran Kepang*, and *Barong Kemambang* performed together along the carnival, behind the *gunungan* of *Kue Keranjang* (cakes for celebrating Chinese New Year). The Sudirapraja Carnival of 2013 was its 7th incarnation.

Garebeg is actually Javanese *keraton* tradition which is held in alun-alun (*keraton* square) to bring in a procession the agricultural products which are formed in the shape of a mountain (*gunungan*). *Gunungan* itself is a symbol of life. After the procession, the agricultural products are fought over by the people who are in the square.

Garebeg Sudirapraja was firstly held in 2006 by the people of *Kalurahan Sudiraprajan*. It was consciously created to integrate Javanese and Chinese traditions in welcoming Chinese New Year or *Imlek*. The people of *Kalurahan Sudiraprajan*, which includes the former Chinese quarter (*pecinan*) of kampung Balong, are 50% ethnic Javanese and 50% ethnic Chinese. Therefore, the integration between Chinese and Javanese culture is truly manifested in *Garebeg Sudirapraja*. Through this activity, in the long run there will be no separation between people of Javanese and Chinese descent in Sudiraprajan, or Solo at large. “We want to show that this village is successful in changing its differences into unity. We present the spirit of unity, togetherness and *gotong royong*,” said Sarwanto, the coordinator of the Commission.⁶

Garebeg Sudirapraja is held one week before Chinese New Year. For some weeks, the area around Pasar Gedhe is decorated with Chinese nuances, including paper lanterns and other decorations in shades of red. The ambiance of

⁶ *Tribun Jogja*, Monday, 4 February 2013. I refer also the information about *Garebeg Sudirapraja* from *Kompas*, 18 January 2012.

China Town is conditioned with the purpose to allow many people (whether of Chinese or non-Chinese descent) to know and enjoy Chinese New Year. The peak of celebration takes place on midnight, before the date of Chinese New Year, with a sparkler festival. Thousands of people come and gather in the square waiting the festival while enjoying *wayang putehi* (Chinese puppet show) and Javanese music (*gamelan*).

Malls in Solo are also decorated to create the impression of China Town. In Paragon Mall, there was special area decorated as “*Kampung Tiongkok*.” There was Chinese food, fashion, toys, and decoration completed with Chinese paper lantern. Mr. Bieng Bieng (fictitious name) said: “Look! All people from all strata and races enjoy it,” while pointing to many people who took pictures in front of Chinese decorations or those who looked around the “*Kampung Tiongkok*.” According to him, this is a concrete social action which creates harmony and understanding between the CI and *pribumi*.

Elsewhere, was organized *Imlek Mass* in Purbayan Catholic Church, in which CI and indigenous Catholics celebrate a special mass in the Chinese style. For the year of 2013, it was held on 18 February 2013. The church building is decorated with Chinese decorations and the liturgy is presented in Chinese language and Indonesia. There are also *ang pau* (gifts) for the children. The first *Imlek Mass* was held in 2003. According to Mr. Thoms, *Imlek Mass* is a time for the CI and the rest of the congregation to thank God that “we can live in this country”. “We specially intended for the CI *totok* to be interested in joining us and involve themselves in the Indonesian Catholic Church. This is one way to be more

Indonesian. There are many CI *totok* who are not involved in the religious activities like this.”

5.2.5. Konimex, Roti Ganep, and Other CI Enterprises

Companies and enterprises owned by CI in Solo support various events in Solo, whether through SBS, PMS, HFS, or other CI social organizations. They have sponsored events such as the anniversary of Solo City, Independence Day, Batik Festival, Chinese New Year, as well as numerous events of the national or international scope. In relation to this, an interesting comment was written in *Kompas*:

In the last six years Solo has truly blasted off like rocket. Collaborations between stakeholders and society have brought Solo national and international recognition. Not only has it become a comfortable and peaceful city, but Solo has become a magnet which attracts public attention. Solo has repeatedly become the host of national and international events. Over the past few years, there have been art performances which attracted thousands of visitors, including Solo International Ethnic Music, Solo International Performing Arts, and Solo Batik Carnival....”⁷

Supporting and participating in events in Solo is a cultural strategy of the CI companies, which work to build Solo as a peaceful and pleasant place.

⁷ Dalam kurun waktu enam tahun terakhir nama Solo benar-benar meluncur bagai roket. Kolaborasi antara pemangku kepentingan (stakeholder) dan masyarakat membawa Solo dikenal, baik di kancah nasional maupun internasional. Tak hanya menjadi kota yang nyaman dan tenteram, saat ini posisi Solo bagaikan magnet yang menarik perhatian publik. Mulai dari keberhasilan menata kota dan pedagang kaki lima secara humanis, perlahan Solo mengukuhkan diri sebagai kota industri kreatif yang melahirkan berbagai karya inovasi. Tak hanya menjadi rujukan daerah-daerah di Tanah Air, berbagai penghargaan pun mengalir ke kota ini. Solo bahkan berulang kali jadi tuan rumah kegiatan skala nasional dan internasional. Pemerintah dan masyarakat Solo juga berkolaborasi menyelenggarakan berbagai kegiatan. Beberapa tahun terakhir, di Solo diselenggarakan pergelaran seni yang menyedot ribuan pengunjung seperti Solo International Etnic Music, Solo International Performing Arts, serta Solo Batik Carnival yang mengangkat potensi batik.

Furthermore, the CI companies in Solo prefer using a cultural strategy in running their business. Two examples, from the *Konimex* and *Roti Ganep* enterprises, follow.

Konimex is the biggest medicinal company in Solo, with a thousand workers and hundreds of products.⁸ It is owned by Djoenaedi Joesoef, or Joe Djioe Liang, and his wife Juniati Joesoef, or Sie Jauw Nio. Its fairness, honesty, and strong adherence to moral principles have been publicly acknowledged. Some testimonies follow: Kwik Kian Gie, the prominent economist and former Minister of Development Planning, said: “The business developed by Mr. Djoen is *ceng li* ... Giving priority to fairness and rational. From the beginning it was formulated in justice” (Atmowiloto, 2005:29). Politician and researcher from CSIS (Centre for Strategic and International Studies), Harry Tjan Silalahi, stated: “His business could revive the national economy. Small businesses join in its success, beside thousand workers. And the state gets taxes from it. Mr. Djoen can be a model for other business persons” (Atmowiloto, 2005:31). Vice President of Niaga Bank, Gunarni Soeworo, said: “Even when there was economic crisis in the business world, Mr. Djoen always paid his taxes and the interest on time” (Atmowiloto, 2005:31). Mr. Djoen himself said: “If you have a business, whatever it is, you must truly have the official permission. Otherwise, you will have difficulties later. You should have become accustomed to begin everything with the truth and honesty” (Atmowiloto, 2005:119). Because of his excellence in fairness, Mr. Djoenaedi Joesoef was named “Entrepreneur of the Year 2003” in Jakarta and “The World’s Best Entrepreneur” in Monte Carlo, Monaco.

⁸ For information regarding *Konimex*, I refer to Atmowiloto (2005) and my interview with Mrs. Ninik Dyah Ningrum, the daughter-in-law of Mr. Djoenaedi Joesoef, held on 5 March 2013.

Mr. Djoen also strongly applies a cultural approach. He speaks Javanese. Even his Javanese speaking was his source of attraction when he was salesman in the markets (Atmowiloto, 2005:70-73). He always considers local culture and tradition when he establishes his policies. For instance, he observed his pharmacy and found that patients never bought all the medication prescribed, but only half. It means that a package of ten pills, like in European product, was not suitable for Indonesians, because it is expensive. Based on this observation, he began producing packages of four pills (Atmowiloto, 2005:121). He also appreciates humanity more than capital. He said: "Capital is important, but not absolute. Being acquainted as good business man and becoming better and better is also capital" (Atmowiloto, 2005: 111). He has never fired his workers and replaced them with modern machines, because (according to him) employing employees in certain divisions does cost more. In regards to the name of his company and products, he also considers the cultural aspects. The name "Konimex" for his company came from the Javanese word "*kondang*" meaning 'well-known' and "*export-import*". The combination of the words became *Konimex*, a well-known name. The names of the product, such as *inza*, *inzana*, *konidin*, *anakanidin*, and *paramex*, are based on cultural considerations as well.

His closeness to the social environment is further shown by the fact that, during the Solo riot, Konimex was not attacked, although it was only guarded by around thirty workers. During the riot, Konimex was closed for a week. Only some workers came and guarded the building. Mrs. Ninik said: "What was heartwarming was the fact that some workers, managers, even operators, returned the *ang pau* or gifts which we gave to them as an expression of thanks because

they had guarded the company. When they returned the gifts, they said that it was also their responsibility to protect the company.”

Roti Ganep is not a big company like Konimex, Sritex, and Batik Keris etc. However, it has a strong Javanese cultural character. The name *Ganep* was given by Sunan Pakubuwana X to Auw Liek Nio, the woman who first sold the cake in 1881.⁹ That time the cake made by Auw Liek Nio was the favorite foods for the nobles in palace. The prince, who later became Pakubuwana X, said to Auw Liek Nio: “*Jenengmu Nyah Ganep*” meaning ‘Your name is Mrs. *Ganep*.’ *Ganep* is Javanese word which means ‘complete, perfect, healthy, even.’ Since that time, the name *Ganep* has been used for the cake made by Auw Liek Nio and her descendants.

Their specialty is *roti kecil*, a small cake the size of the seed of sapodilla or in Javanese “*sawo kecil*.” For promoting the cake, the company uses a cultural strategy. For instance, the words “*sawo kecil*” are related to another Javanese term with a similar sound: “*sarwo becik*” meaning ‘completely good.’ Through this connection, *roti kecil* produced by *Ganep* are said to be completely good. The word “*kecil*” is also related to the 1990’s slang word “*kece*”, meaning ‘handsome, beautiful’. So, *roti kecil* of produced by *Ganep* is considered a handsome and beautiful cake. They promote their products through exhibitions, visits, and by sponsoring social activities. With these media, *Roti Ganep* becomes close to its customers.

Now more than 130 years old, *Roti Ganep* is managed by the fifth generation, Mrs. Oke. When celebrating the company’s 130th anniversary on 24

⁹ For this information about *Roti Ganep*, I refer to my interview with Mrs. Oke, the owner of *Roti Ganep*, and also the book by Peni R. Pramono and Wiwied Esmaningtyas (2012).

April 2011, Mrs. Oke held the Javanese tradition of *kirab budaya* or procession from the shop on Sutan Syahrir Street to Sriwedari Square. In the procession of around three kilometers, the stack of *roti kecil* arranged like a mountain (Jv. *gunungan*) was in front, followed by other traditional groups. The peak of celebration was *potong tumpeng* or the cutting of the ceremonial dish of yellow rice served in a cone shape, and *andum* (Jv. sharing, or distributing) the cakes, accompanied by Javanese music of *gamelan*. Through events such as this, *Roti Ganep* has become the iconic cake of Solo. The cultural approach is also manifested in various social activities that Mrs. Oke, the manager, is involved in, such as Christian meditation, liturgical music, yoga, interreligious forums, and even *Temu Kabatinan* or traditional Javanese religious meetings.

According to Rustopo (2007: 342) the CI in Solo have become Javanese. Many CI figures embrace Javanese culture. Therefore, the anti-Chinese riots which have repeatedly occurred in Solo and became a looming danger over their existence has never stopped the CI from becoming Javanese. In this context, the old survivors apply a cultural strategy, rather than a political one, in responding to the Solo riot of 1998.

5.3. Writing New History

As described above, the cultural strategy is very effective in building harmonious living in Solo. However, it does not mean that disclosing the truth regarding the Solo riot is useless. Rather, disclosing the truth is very important to repair social damages caused by the Solo riot. It is important to prevent similar incidents in the future. It is also required as a significant step in reconciliation.

Therefore, disclosing the truth should be placed in the context of building harmony in the society of Solo. Emphasis should be laid on the participation of the people of Solo in telling their stories about the riot. In this regard, disclosing the truth is intended to write a new history of Solo.

I propose that writing a new history of Solo is possible. It is a fact that some CI figures in Solo are very well-received and influential in Solo society. Of course, this is because of long history of CI in Solo, where the CI have cultivated the Javanese culture and even become like the Javanese (Rustopo, 2007). The spirit of SBS, as described above, where all elements of Solo society are involved in the social project, can be viewed as an experiment showing that cooperative work towards the betterment of Solo is not impossible. In the spirit of SBS, I am sure that writing the new history of Solo can be realized.

In this subchapter, I will explore my idea of writing a new history of Solo, which is a possible step in attaining reconciliation. In the first part, I will present some principles to be followed, and in the second I will give some notes regarding technical procedures.

5.3.1. The Principles

In the context of cultural strategy described above, I find that disclosing the truth behind the Solo riot should be done for the purpose of writing a new history of Solo, rather than for the judicial process. In this regard, disclosing the truth is not for finding punitive justice, in which the perpetrators are punished because of their wrongdoings in the past, but for restorative justice, with emphasis on the restoration of Solo society at large (Zehr, 2005). This project should

involve many people in Solo society. In line with Botcharova's cycle of violence, I find that writing a new history is an important step towards reconciliation (1998: 302).

There are several activities included in this program. First, the survivors must tell their stories regarding looting, burning, suffering, and the help they experienced during the riot. Story telling is good chance for the victims to recover their mental wounds. Through this storytelling, victims will get respect and their suffering will be acknowledged by those responsible for it, especially the perpetrators and the government. In this regard, they rediscover their dignity, which they had lost because of the riot in the past.

Second, the three types of actors: (1) those who were passively involved as spectators; (2) those who actively involved in looting, burning, throwing stones at shops, etc.; and (if possible) (3) provocateurs, persuaders etc., should tell their stories, explain how and why they involved themselves in such activities. As mentioned above (p. 53), perpetrators also need self-reparation, since they have lost their dignity as human beings because of violence and abuses they committed in the past. By telling their stories, the perpetrators express their motivation behind what they have done. It is an important step toward reconciliation: confession that they are wrong or right in past actions. It is a step towards willingness to apologize for what they have done. In this way, they show respect and empathy for the wronged persons (Engel, 2001: 12).

Storytelling from the both sides (the survivors and the perpetrators) will push aside the "narrative lie" which can become the barrier for reconciliation. As mentioned above (see p. 72), the "narrative lie" of the community and the nation

should be reduced and replaced by the historical truth of the community and the nation. If it is possible, through this program the perpetrators should express their contrition and apologize for what they have done. The victims, for their part, should manifest their forgiveness. Therefore, this new history will help approach the stage of reconciliation.

Looking to South Africa, for instance, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee assessed the suffering carried by the victims and urgent need for reparation and rehabilitation (Tutu, 1999: 61-63). In order to make a proper recommendation, the Committee made correct records about the circumstance of the victims and their real needs. Then, there were five categories of reparation: *urgent interim* for victims who were old, sick, or in dire needs; individual reparation grants ranging from R17, 000 to R21, 000 per person, annually, over six periods of six years; the improvement of community services; symbolic reparation; and institutional reparation. The case of Solo is different than that of South Africa. No financial compensation is needed, because there are the CI enterprises that were attacked in the Solo riot developed faster afterwards (see p. 160), but building a harmonious and peaceful society is. Financial compensation will make the people of Solo even more jealous. The program of writing a new history described above, therefore, is suitable in the context of the Solo riot.

5.3.2. Technical Procedures

The first step to be done to realize the project is establishing the commission. It should not be a commission of Truth and Reconciliation like that

of South Africa, because its main task is not to seek truth and reconciliation, but to write a new history. The main task of the commission is collecting as many stories as possible from the people of Solo regarding the Solo riot. The duties of the commission should be clearly defined in the act of the regency, and before the commission starts work, news of it should be widely socialized to the people of Solo. Strong emphasis should be put on the goal to build harmonious living in Solo.

There are various methods to collect as many stories as possible. These include at the neighborhood meetings (*Jv. sarasehan Rukun Tetangga*), the meetings of social groups such as *ibu-ibu PKK* (women for family prosperity), the youth of *kampung* (*pemuda-pemudi kampung*), NGO forum group discussions, inter-religious forum, etc. It can also include storytelling competitions for the general public and students. There is also the possibility to make individual statements or send written testimonies to the commission. Referring to the experience of South Africa, there were 21,429 statements, and about 2,000 public hearings were held.¹⁰

Considering the goal above, it will be more effective if the commissions are established at the regency and district/subdistrict (*kecamatan* and *kelurahan*) levels. At the district and subdistrict level, the commission will cover the group activities in that district or subdistrict, whereas the commission at the regency level will handle group activities at higher levels. Learning from South Africa, the members of the commission should come from various elements of Solo society.

¹⁰ *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, Volume 3 1998, p. 3.

The report of the commission should be published and disseminated throughout Solo society. Hopefully, it will become part of the collective memory of the people of Solo regarding the Solo riot. It will strongly contribute to and motivate the activities of various social groups in Solo, particularly SBS, which has the goal to build a peaceful and harmonious Solo.

With this project, Solo will become the pioneer for conducting such projects all over Indonesia. The Solo riot occurred fifteen years ago. Many witnesses and actors are still alive. As such, it is the right time to start the project. Desmond Tutu mentioned three elements which enhanced the ability of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in coping with the transition in South Africa.¹¹ First, the political leaders “who were ready to take a risks to put their political careers and their lives on the line to commend peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.” The most prominent was Nelson Mandela, the embodiment of African National Congress’ commitment to peace and reconciliation. Second, is the important role of Church leaders in influencing people to prefer peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. Third, is the traditional wisdom of *ubuntu*, which referred to the virtue of considering harmony, friendliness, and community as great goods. Solo has the similar elements. First, the strong leadership of Solo regency; second, social organizations (such as SBS) which are very influential; and third, a strong Javanese tradition of harmonious living (*hidup rukun*) and mutual aid (*gotong royong*).

Michael Lapsley, S.S.M., a victim of a letter bomb who lost his hands to the apartheid government, pointed out the qualitative results of the TRC in South

¹¹ Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, p. 42-43.

Africa.¹² First, it promoted a national belief that the whole truth must be told. Second, it provided the opportunity for all people “to repent of our own complicity as well as what we failed to do to stop the evil apartheid. Apartheid damaged all of us. The commission provides opportunity for healing our wounds.” Third, it helped the South Africans create a shared memory as a nation, which then became the background to found national reconciliation. Paralel to Lapsley’s reflection, writing the new history of Solo will provide opportunities for Solo society to express its generosity, to heal its wounds, and to create a shared memory which will become the background for the reconciliation of the whole society. The new history of Solo, of course, will answer the perpetrators’ need to apologize, which then will facilitate the survivors in undertaking forgiveness.

5.4. Involving the Youth in Social Activities

As mentioned earlier, the youth are not very optimistic in regards to the future of harmonious living between the CI and the indigenes. They tend to study abroad and build international networks. Their reference is their experiences of discrimination and being mocked as persons of Chinese descent. That is why they reject forgiveness of those involved in the Solo riot.

To respond to the remonstrance of the youth, I suggest that they must be more involved in social and religious activities. Through religious activities, the youth will become open-minded and learn to undertake forgiveness. SBS is a good media for the youth to cultivate their sense of solidarity and empathy.

¹² Michael Lapsley, S.S.M., “My Journey of Reconciliation in South Africa – From Freedom Fighter to Healer” in *New Theology Review* 10 (1997):22-23.

Besides, the Youth Club, as mentioned by Mr. Rudy (see p. 158), can accommodate the need for communication among the youth.

The more young people involved in social activities, the more they will be assimilated into the local culture and people. With good relationships with the local people, I believe that discrimination and mock will be minimized. With good relationships with the neighbors as well, I suggest that the young survivors will feel at home in their own homeland and build harmonious lives with their own communities.

5.5. Concluding Remarks

In CDA, the social practices of the survivors are the effects of discourses regarding forgiveness, surrender to God, disclosing the truth, and building harmony. The young survivors urge a disclosure of the truth of the Solo riot, whereas the old survivors do not. The old survivors prefer carrying out social actions as a cultural strategy to ensure harmonious living. Some manifestations of their cultural strategy are PMS, Warga Foundation, SBS, *Sudirapraja* Carnival and Chinese New Year Celebration, *Konimex* Company, and *Roti Ganep*.

Disclosing the truth regarding the Solo riot is important in understanding what really happened in the riot, what was the background, and who were the actors. However, in the context of Solo, disclosing the truth is recommended to be done not for the purpose of finding and punishing the actors behind the riot, but to write a new history of Solo. It is done not for getting punitive justice, but restorative justice, that is, mending social damage caused by the riot. Writing a new history will facilitate the survivors in healing their mental wounds, especially

because of the acknowledgment of their suffering and of the actors' wrongdoing. Besides, involving the young survivors in the social and religious activities will encourage the youth to build a harmonious life with their own communities in Solo, rather than to orient themselves towards life abroad.