

Reiterated Encounter : On a Reconciliation Ceremony at the Urban Settlement in Dili, Timor Leste<Special Theme : Nationalism in Timor-Leste>

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Reiterated Encounter: On a Reconciliation Ceremony at the Urban Settlement in Dili, Timor-Leste

Toru Ueda*

何度目かの邂逅

—東ティモール・デイリの都市集落における和解儀礼について—

上 田 達

This chapter examines a reconciliation ceremony held at an urban settlement in Dili, Timor-Leste. The ceremony was aimed at ending violence caused by Martial Arts Groups, which had made the settlement notorious in Dili. Previous concerted efforts to curb this violence had been unsuccessful; despite the several programmes established in attempts to tackle the problem, violence became a part of daily life. Cruz Joven—the practices of piety (*exercitia pietatis*) introduced to Timor-Leste during the Indonesian era—was brought to the settlement to commemorate 500 years of the presence of the Church. This became a central point of the ceremony, and reconciliation has since been effective. Elements from two belief systems, Catholicism and traditional beliefs, were employed in the ceremony. Following the event, the situation changed dramatically, although some incidents have continued to occur. Catholic faith has been held firmly by the people of Timor-Leste, especially after Indonesian occupation. Conversely, traditional beliefs formed and adopted from the local context also have an appealing power for locals.

本稿は東ティモールの首都デイリにある集落で行われた和解儀礼について考察する。若者たちの暴力は、同集落で長らく社会問題となってきた。こうした問題を解決するために和解儀礼が開催された。インドネシア時代に東ティモールにもたらされた青年の十字架とよばれる信心業が、カトリック伝来500周年

*Setsunan University

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を記念して同集落で開催されることになり、暴力に終止符を打つ道が模索された。和解儀礼では、青年の十字架というカトリックの人々の信仰を深めるための信心業と、人々が伝統と呼ぶものの二つが主要なモチーフとなった。和解儀礼の後、状況は今日まで改善するに至っている。持続する和解が可能になったのは、信心業に代表されるカトリックに対する東ティモールの人々の篤い信仰があった。しかし、それぞれの出身地によって異なる伝統が、都市集落という社会的コンテキストにおいて伝統として語られ直すことで、和解は実効性を得るに至ったのである。

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1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the resolution of the social problem of youth violence in Dili, Timor-Leste. First, I present a general overview of the site, the Motamutin settlement, in which this research was conducted starting in 2014¹⁾. Motamutin has gained notoriety as a place of conflict, especially during the 2006 crisis when rioting flared up in Dili, and also because of violence perpetrated by youth groups known as Martial Arts Groups (MAGs). I then introduce a ceremony of reconciliation that was held in the settlement to mark an end to the period of violence. I will focus on the cultural factors present as well as their social impact on residents.

This chapter has two objectives: first, to explore how two years of frequent and notorious violence in the urban areas of Timor-Leste (especially in Dili) has ended; second, to understand the emerging logic of national integration. Even after the country proclaimed independence from the 24-year Indonesian occupation, dissent among the people resulting from differences in attitudes under the Indonesian regime became a social problem. The treatment of criminals during the Indonesian era and conflicts over belongings, which remained after locals fled to Indonesia, divided the nation. A violent incident in Dili in 2006 displaced many people²⁾. Though violence was curtailed by the intervention of UN troops, the cause of the conflict was still latent³⁾.

After independence and the 2006 crisis, people in Timor-Leste attempted to repair strained social relationships, not only with judicial settlements but also through daily local practices. For example, Babo-Soares (2004) analysed the local concept of '*nahe bititi*', which is often used in the process of reconciliation. According to Babo-Soares, '*nahe*' means 'open', and '*bititi*' is a term for a local mat

in Tetun. Babo-Soares explains this idea as ‘a local East Timorese equivalent of “reconciliation” which embraces the notion of meeting, discussion and agreement to reach a consensus among opposing factions’ (Babo-Soares 2004: 15).

Tara bandu is another local concept that is used during reconciliation. Hicks (2013) points to *tara bandu* as one of the *adat*⁴⁾ in the local community. A report by Belun and The Asia Foundation explained *tara bandu* as ‘a traditional Timorese custom that enforces peace and reconciliation through the power of public agreement to define social norms and practices acceptable to a given community. *Tara Bandu* is one aspect of ‘customary practice’ or ‘*lisan*’ in Timor-Leste’ (Belun and The Asia Foundation 2013: 10).

Attempts have been made to resolve social conflicts using these concepts, especially to promote the repatriation of refugees who fled to Indonesia after 1999, as well as for social integration, which has been a source of crisis between Easterners and Westerners since 2006 (cf., Maria 2015). This chapter focuses on an event of reconciliation in which local concepts were used and examines its social effects.

The other objective of this chapter is to view the emerging logic of national integration in Timor-Leste. The Timorese Catholic faith is the central point of the case study examined in this chapter. Catholicism slowly became widespread in Timor-Leste after Portuguese missionaries landed around 500 years ago. As Molnar (2010: 28–31) found, more than 70% of the population did not identify as Catholic when Indonesian forces began their intrusion into Timor in 1975. Catholicism succeeded in taking root in Timor-Leste during the Indonesian era because people were encouraged to have faith in the official state religion as defined in the official national ideology, *Pancasila*. The local language of Tetun, spoken around Dili, was chosen over Portuguese and Indonesian as the language of Catholic liturgy, which aided the spread of Catholicism among the people. Catholicism became a unifying force for resistance to Indonesian occupation, especially as it involved the use of the national language.

The Catholic Church has had a generous attitude toward local beliefs. Julius Bautista (2014) commented on the spread of Christianity in Southeast Asia as follows:

Southeast Asians had understood and practiced Christianity in ways that were made to correspond with traditional and customary belief systems [...] Southeast Asian conversions did not always mean that the Christian message was accepted in ways that coloniser or missionary could expect (Bautista 2014: 227).

This affinity is evident in Tatsumi’s (2014: 263–265) account, as he states that Catholicism and the local belief system do not have a clear point of separation. He reported that the people of Timor-Leste kept the cross and the holy book inside their sacred house as ‘*lulik*’ items (sacred objects). Molnar also explained that the

two belief systems are regarded as a united whole, stating that ‘the cross and statues of various saints, Jesus, and especially of Mary, are also imbued with spiritual potency and thus are *luli*’ (Molnar 2010: 22).

The Catholic Church built a good relationship with followers of local belief systems in each district and played an important role in national integration. In this chapter, I attempt to show the inverse vector to this syncretism by examining the dynamism between Catholicism and local beliefs and exploring the place of the two beliefs in daily contexts.

2 Conflict in Motamutin

The research site (known as Motamutin) is an urban settlement in the Comoro district of Timor-Leste’s capital, Dili. Although the settlement has five administrative sub-districts and three *bairo* in the parochial division, the inhabitants and visitors usually refer to the whole area as Motamutin. The residents of Motamutin have various places of origin; the settlement is known as a place in which ‘people from 13 districts in Timor-Leste live’.

Motamutin is often mentioned in conjunction with violence and riots in Dili. It was the site of large-scale destruction that took place after the 1999 referendum and was one of the locations in which conflicts between so-called Easterners and Westerners erupted in 2006. When I travelled to downtown Dili from the airport by taxi, my driver said, ‘this is a dangerous area due to *ras* in past days and *organisasi* nowadays’. I have often encountered this stereotypical expression, and the residents of Motamutin themselves have described the area to me in this way. ‘*Ras*’ is a loanword from the English ‘race’, but suggests ethnolinguistic rather than physical differences. The difference refers to that between the island’s Easterners and the Westerners. The former originate in the three districts of the island, Lautem, Baucau, and Viqueque, where most people speak the Papuan language. Meanwhile, the latter occupy the other ten districts of the island where the majority of people speak various languages categorised as Austronesian.

‘*Ras*’, in the driver’s words, is used to refer to the main issues in the conflict that broke out, especially around Dili in 2006, between Westerners and Easterners. It is estimated that 150,000 people evacuated their homes for security reasons during this violent period in which two thousand houses were destroyed and two hundred people were killed (Moxham and Carapic 2013). Other factors were involved, such as dissent in the PNTL (*Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste*: National Police of East Timor) and F-FDTL (*Forças Defesa Timor Lorosae*: The Timor-Leste Defense Force) and power struggles among the factions of pro-independence groups. Motamutin in particular faced serious problems with violence.

Even after the intervention of UN troops stabilised the violence, Motamutin remained unsettled. The problem of the ‘*organisasi*’, as described by the driver,



Photo 1 A MAGs logo drawn on the wall of a destroyed house inside Motamutin (photo taken on August 23, 2016 by author).

surfaced. *Organisasi*, the term most prevalent in Motamutin, is synonymous with Scambary's (2006; 2013a; 2013b) term, Martial Arts Groups (MAGs) (Photo 1)⁵).

MAGs were originally formed in Indonesia as groups trained in the art of defence. Most of the groups developed connections with the police and army to control social order. In Timor-Leste, organised efforts to gain control over the people in the Indonesian regime began as early as 1975. After independence, MAGs attracted the attention of many youth who faced problems with unemployment or had dropped out of formal education. These groups have been a key factor posing a threat to social order.

According to Scambary, MAGs emerged at the centre of the security problem in Dili. MAGs were formed various informal groups, the members of which were former soldiers for independence who had lost popularity after independence was gained (cf., Molnar 2004). They were so aggressively active that the government prohibited them from gathering in public (Scambary 2013a: 211). According to an NGO worker dealing with youth problems in Timor-Leste, it is still difficult to control their activities despite government directives because the groups do not function in a top-down fashion. Leaders at the branch level sometimes act against orders from above.

An informant who has lived in Motamutin since the Indonesian era described the problem as follows:

The problem of *organisasi* has taken such a strong hold on this place. They fight with knives and throw stones. Sometimes, the stones hit my house. They are eager to show their strength. It is the reason for the clashes. They do not care about whether their opponents come from East or West; they are totally mixed.

His wife described her trouble with the *organisasi* as follows:

Two months ago, the stone-throwing was terrible. It happened even at the front of my house. Our children ran away from the house to another building. I slept here alone at night for a while. This was all caused by youth. They did not target us, but sometimes the stones were misdirected. I was afraid and really annoyed, but I have to protect my house. Who on earth cares about an old lady like me?

This type of displeasure was frequently voiced during my stay.

The most terrible incident in Motamutin occurred between the MAGs PSHT (*Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate*) and Seven-seven in 2006. Many youth from both sides committed acts of violence, and one youth was victimised in the chaotic situation. Though a life has not been lost since, minor clashes are frequent in Motamutin. Even though MAGs were prohibited from public activity, they were still active in Motamutin as of 2015. An informant offered a view of their activity as follows:

I took part in PSHT before 2015. I was not a formal member; I only supported them emotionally. I just followed them. Usually, the fight began from something trivial, such as 'you're staring at me' [...]. It was the same thing in the incident three months ago. They sometimes record the fights (with smart phones) and upload them to the web on sites like Facebook, but these are minor things that are not serious. Until some time ago, there was always a fight if we met a member of the rival group on the street or saw them spitting. If we just glared at each other, nothing may happen, but a fight would definitely begin if they spat. They used weapons like swords, knives, and hand-made slingshots. (T: Anything else, for example, a wooden stick?) Never. They fought everywhere, even at school. I have never stabbed anyone or been stabbed. I have only thrown stones at people and used slingshots. The result is always dangerous, and sometimes people have to be brought to the hospital.

Like the accounts of other informants, this interview made it clear that the youth who committed violence were not exceptional and were usually active in normal daily life. A trivial quarrel in Motamutin could become a large-scale fight and would sometimes result in bloodshed.

3 Cruz Joven

The residents of Motamutin were not idle bystanders. Several attempts were made to resolve the problem, sometimes in conjunction with religious organisations and local NGOs. However, their efforts were unsuccessful. Although the Catholic facility located in the settlement attempted to play an active role several times, nothing changed. A staff member of the facility told me the following, almost resignedly:

These attempts of reconciliation among the youth groups have been made many times by various agents after 2006. International agencies have tried, too, but nothing happened. A small shrine was built to create a place of gathering, but they are happy to throw stones if the people gather at the place [...] it (violence) starts again.

Contrary to this informant's resignation, however, the reconciliation event in 2015 made a difference. The other informant told me about the changes after the 2015 event. She said, 'We had Cruz Joven a couple days ago. We have seen the arrival of peace'.

According to Father Silverio⁶⁾ in the diocese, Cruz Joven was brought to Timor-Leste in 1991 by Father Belo, a Nobel Peace Prize winner. It is a practice of piety (*exercitia pietatis* in Latin) in Timorese society. Practices of piety are intended to raise conversion and reverence for God and to promote enthusiasm for dedicating oneself to Jesus Christ. (cf., *New Catholic Encyclopedia*). These practices vary in time and place according to the social context.

Cruz Joven was introduced to Timor-Leste to strengthen the peoples' belief in the Catholic Church as they began to engage in their struggle for independence. It began in Baucau, the eastern part of the island, to encourage youth involved in the struggle for independence. A wooden cross was carved in commemoration of this beginning and was transported to other locations in Timor-Leste for the same purpose. It is usually placed at a certain parish for a year and then taken around the area within it. Afterwards, a replica of the cross is made.

According to Carey (1999), the Catholic Church initially kept its distance from the struggle for independence. The Church was wary of the communist-like insistence made by FRETILIN, a major party of the struggle. However, it came to support them in the 1980s and was permissive of local Timorese beliefs centred on ancestor worship (Carey 1999: 81)⁷⁾. The church was able to publicly support the social struggle for independence from Indonesian control because Catholicism was recognised as one of the five official religions in Indonesia⁸⁾. Since Cruz Joven was seen as a religious activity, it was never disturbed by the Indonesian regime, even if it contributed to the struggle against the regime.

Although Cruz Joven is a Catholic practice, the cross that is replicated after a visit takes shape in a mixture of Catholicism and local Timorese beliefs: a *belak*, a local ornament, and a *tais*, a local woven cloth, are placed on the cross⁹⁾. Since

2015 was the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the mission on the island, Cruz Joven was scheduled to traverse the whole of Timor-Leste in 2015 and would travel with the statue of the Pilgrim Mother¹⁰.

4 Cruz Joven and the Ceremony of Reconciliation

Father Silverio stated that the Church first scheduled Cruz Joven to stay for two nights at the area around Motamutin. However, when some Motamutin youth learned of the visit, they spoke to the Church about its social significance and attempted to invite it to Motamutin. They wanted the visit to be an opportunity for reconciliation among the youth. They negotiated with the Church, including Father Silverio, and finally obtained a positive answer. During the visit, it was intended for them to swear ‘to become one with full love toward others in front of Maria and Jesus’.

António and Ricardo, residents of Motamutin in their 30s and 40s, respectively, played important roles in the event. António explained the motive for the event as follows:

Until now, some government agents and the police have come to order them to stop the violence. However, the violence has recurred after a week or month. It happens again and again. I wanted to put an end to this situation.

António recalled seeing the power of Cruz Joven in his home around ten years ago. As in Motamutin, some youth had joined MAGs and had become involved in crime. However, António witnessed a dramatic improvement after Cruz Joven was brought to the place. He said, ‘I thought it was suitable for this settlement. Rather, it was the only solution we had’, he said. Since secular attempts continued to fail, António aimed to encourage the youth to swear with ‘the spiritual virtue (*nilai spiritual*)’.

A committee was organised, and each *chef aldeia* (the leader of each area) was named. Some members of the Church committed to the process, and António and Ricardo worked on the committee. According to them, the agenda of the event was:

August 3, 2015

- * Animals are sacrificed (one goat, one pig, one cock).
- * The youth gather and drink a local liquor, *tuak*, together.
- * The blood of the sacrificed animals is gathered on a palm leaf and splashed on each member and on the pillar built at the site.
- * The meat of the sacrificed animal, which is cooked traditionally (boiled without any seasoning), is eaten by those present.
- * The youth concerned hug each other.

August 4, 2015

* A mass is held with Father Silverio.

The ceremony was held on August 3–4, 2015. The cost for the event was covered by donations from the people of Motamutin and those involved in parish work. No government funds were received for the ceremony. According to António and Ricardo, all youth were invited to the event. António explained, ‘the youth came to the place as if it were in Baucau in 1991 (when this practice of piety was started)’. There were a considerable number of participants at the event, as António told me, ‘I think more than six thousand in this settlement where ten thousand live. Many people came’.

As described above, the ceremony was based on the practice of Catholic piety; thus, Catholicism played an important role, although it was not only one of the belief systems used in the event. António and Father Silverio both described the significance of what they call the ‘traditional’ aspect in Timor-Leste. These traditional aspects were explained in various ways, such as ‘*tradisi* (tradition)’, ‘*adat* (custom)’, ‘*kepercayaan alam* (belief in the world)’, and ‘*kultura* (culture)’. The two belief systems contributed to the event in contrasting ways: one was held at night, and the other on the morning of the next day.

Isidro, *ketua adat*, a ritual leader who lives on the edge of Motamutin, was invited to the night event, in which he played the lead role. An informant explained the reason for including traditional beliefs in the event:

We are not penalised by the Church. Since the God always accept us, it is not dangerous, but *alam* do not accept us. We will surely die. *Alam* do not play with us. They deprive us of our lives.

As he stated, traditional beliefs were emphasised to play an important role in the event held in the name of Cruz Joven, which is traditionally a Catholic practice. Above all, oath swearing was conducted to make reconciliation effective. Oath swearing reinforces power for the youth, as Isidro explained:

If they do not follow their promise, they must sacrifice themselves, and even their seventh descendants will suffer. They have to follow this oath because they have sworn to it. If not, they have to bring seven cows and seven pigs. How can they pay such a large amount?

The traditional session continued until the end of the night. Mass took place the following morning. During mass, Father Silverio announced a new name for Motamutin if residents would welcome a peaceful situation. The new name was created from the first letter of each area inside Motamutin. As Father Silverio repeatedly explained, ‘Just as the Christians who are baptised, we will be reborn with the different name. It is a new hope’.

After the ceremony of August 2015, a commemorative monument was built in Motamutin (Photo 2). The monument is located close to a small shrine that was built for gathering, but that eventually became the place of a violent encounter. There are three objects at the monument: first, a replica of Cruz Joven;



Photo 2 The replica of Cruz Joven (photo taken on February 19, 2018 by author).

small shrine of the Maria; and third, the *Ai-tos*, which is the symbol of local beliefs. The skull of the animal that was sacrificed in the Cruz Joven ceremony can be seen resting atop the *Ai-tos* (Photo 3).

I heard some cynical opinions when I visited Motamutin in 2015, just after the



Photo 3 *Ai-tos* built for the event (photo taken on February 19, 2018 by author).

event. Some were sceptical about the effects the ceremony would have, since many programs held to bring an end to the violence had failed. However, people seemed to welcome the coming of peace. The first-year anniversary of reconciliation was celebrated on August 19, 2016¹¹⁾. The local newspaper reported Father Silverio's congratulatory address as follows:

When Cruz Joven was not here, the youth provoked, beat, and sometimes even hurt each other, but a year has passed, and crime has decreased. They are afraid of breaking their oaths.¹²⁾

Why did the reconciliation event have such an effect? One answer can be found in the belief of Cruz Joven among the people; they fear its power. As one informant explained, 'Oath-taking has the power to scare us. They swear in front of Cruz Joven, so they feel that they will die if break the ban'. Cruz Joven has immeasurable power for Christians, who see the image of Jesus in the cross.

However, this is not the only explanation for the end to the violence. Traditional local beliefs also made reconciliation effective. When I asked him about the power of Cruz Joven, António pointed to *Ai-tos*, saying, 'We have it, too. It is *kultura*'. He explained that Catholicism and *kultura* are juxtaposed.

António told me that only one incident had occurred by 2016. In June 2016, a teenage high school student quarrelled with another boy. Although they had taken a vow not to mention the name of certain MAGs, one of them uttered the name during the quarrel. Both boys' parents took the matter seriously and visited António at his home, bringing their sons with them. After discussing the matter, the parents from each side decided to pay for the incident together and sacrificed a goat. Since it was a first offence for the boys, a serious penalty was not applied. However, it was agreed that they were obligated to pay more, including a cow, a pig, and cash amounting to 350 US dollars. These penalties were imposed to ensure that such an event would not happen again. António explained that if there is a similar conflict between groups instead of individuals, the amount of the penalty must be larger, and the local area leaders (*tokoh mayarakat*) will discuss the matter formally. This case exemplifies the validity of oath-taking. It is still in effect among people in Motamutin.

During my stay in August 2017, I learned of a May 2017 murder in Motamutin. A youth who was a member of a MAG was shot by a policeman at a scene where a quarrel had emerged. They were pressured to voice the name of the group in the squabble, and some of the youth disobeyed the policeman when he repeatedly ordered them to return home. Another account indicates that some of the youth began throwing stones at the policeman. The policeman then shot the youth.

Supposedly, this was a serious incident that threatened the peace. However, in António's explanation, the fighting did not break the oath because it did not occur between groups. It is unclear whether his interpretation is shared in Motamutin as a

whole. Violence has remained under control, at least among MAGs, since the incident of May 2017. The reconciliation, motivated by Catholic practice, was still effective in collaboration with local beliefs.

5 Conclusion

Reconciliation in Timor-Leste has been designed to resolve conflicts after the referendum in 1999 and also to ease the tension between the East and the West in 2006. Timor-Leste has suffered from social divisions between the city and countryside, and youth and elders¹³). These social divisions may be catalysts for social problems resulting from the formation of informal groups such as MAGs. In fact, the MAGs had been the main threat to social order even after group activity was banned in 2011.

The reconciliation was successful because it employed two axes of belief. As stated above, several attempts at reconciliation conducted by the government, international agents, and private sector organisations proved to be ineffective. The Catholic Church's programme did not improve the situation, either. Conversely, Isidro, the leader of the *adat* with local prestige who boasts of a lineage that can be traced back more than 300 years, explained that while he was always worried about youth violence, he did not intervene.

As described by Inoue (2014) and Scambary (2013b), people living in Dili share beliefs and norms centred on the traditional ritual house, or *uma lulik*, located in each local area. They do not generally share this norm in Dili. The Cruz Joven ceremony was successful because it involved a collaboration between two systems of belief and happened to occur during the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Catholicism.

This case can also suggest a way to imagine the nation in Timor-Leste. Various events commemorating the 500th year of the arrival of Catholicism were held throughout the country over the course of that year. Cruz Joven shows us that there was a solid foothold gained by the Church in Timor-Leste society.

At the same time, we can see that traditional belief systems also serve as symbols of integration for the people, although they were referred to differently: for example, as *kultura*, *alam*, *adat*, and *tradisi*. Leach also showed that traditional belief cannot be underestimated when considering nationalism in Timor-Leste (Leach 2017: 230–231). The strength of traditional factors is seen in cases in which traditional houses have been broken in the age of conflict but are being rebuilt in many places on the island (Brown 2009; Bovensiepen 2014)¹⁴).

Differences in traditional practices are seen as a threat to social order, especially in urban areas such as Dili, where residents come from different cultural backgrounds (Scambary 2013b). In contrast, this chapter describes how traditional beliefs can play an important role despite differing in practice. In a way, this case

may justify the Asia Foundation's suggestion that 'some process inclusive of all ethnolinguistic groups that draw on multiple cultural practices and the innovative use of unifying symbols (e.g., the concept of nationhood, the national flag, religious messages etc.) have proved to evolve successfully and gain significance within more diverse, often crowded urban spaces' (Belun and The Asia Foundation 2013: 4).

António decided to introduce traditional methods as a central point in Cruz Joven events, since he believes that many things are shared through their differences. Tradition was incorporated as an element that is opposed to external values, and as an icon indicating the distinctiveness of Timor-Leste society. In the form of Cruz Joven, Catholicism took local belief into its practice (Bautista 2014; Molnar 2010). Moreover, local society has accepted Catholic objects such as the bible or sacred statues, as reported by Tatsumi (2014) and Molnar (2010). This kind of encounter between two belief systems was replayed in urban areas. However, as described above, local tradition, which can be a counterpart to Catholicism in each district, does not exist in urban settlements such as Motamutin since people there come from districts across the country and, therefore, have different cultural backgrounds. Facing the absence of tradition shared among the people of Motamutin, António framed a cultural format that was able to be called traditional and was considered to be shared. Replaying the encounter between two belief systems, tradition in urban settlements succeeded in attracting support from residents. This repeated encounter led to the event's success.

This affirms Leach's argument that traditional as well as Catholic factors play an important role in the logic of national integration. We can see that Catholicism holds the basis of nationalism in Timor-Leste and that local beliefs still exist firmly beside Catholicism. Furthermore, 'the traditional' was formed and adopted out of certain local contexts for people from various cultural backgrounds. We must continue observing the trajectory of this kind of tradition-making in the new nation-state, looking for the national logic of integration.

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Notes

- 1) Motamutin is a pseudonym. During fieldwork at Motamutin in the summers of 2014–2017, I mainly communicated with people in Indonesian, except for a few informants who preferred to use English.
- 2) Though it is often stated that there were social and cultural differences in the background of the conflict, there are several other factors, which are described below.

- 3) Shiosaki (2017) emphasised that the dissention between the East and the West can still be seen in the analysis of voting in 2012.
- 4) I.e. customary rules and regulations.
- 5) During interviews, some used different names for this, such as ‘*bela diri*’ (‘self-defence’ in English).
- 6) Silverio is a pseudonym, as are the personal names referred to hereafter.
- 7) Indeed, there is always discussion about this kind of syncretism. Not all local factors are accepted peacefully; for example, the practice of bride wealth is controversial.
- 8) Anderson explains, ‘Making them “Indonesian” meant “raising” them from animism to having a proper religion, which, given existing realities, meant Catholicism’ (Anderson 2001: 238).
- 9) The other image shows *kaebauk*, the crown, on the head of the cross.
- 10) The national event for the 500th year anniversary was held at Tasitolu, near the city of Dili, on August 15, 2015.
- 11) *Timor Post*, the local newspaper in Timor-Leste, reported this event under the headline, ‘*Prezensa Kruz Joven Konsege Reduz Konfliktu*’.
- 12) *Timor Post* on August 19, 2016.
- 13) Shepherd and McWilliam (2013) discuss this division, such as between national elites (*ema bo’ot*) and farmers (*ema ki’ik*) and elites who were fluent in Portuguese on the ruler’s side and those who were educated in the Indonesian era.
- 14) McWilliam (2008) also emphasized that traditional factors played an important role after independence, especially in remote areas.

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