

**Interview by Jemma Purdey with Thung Julan, Jakarta, 25 April 2014**

**Phd, Anthropology, Latrobe University, 1994-1998**



**PART 1**

[00:00:28]	Born in Jakarta, in 1958, but grew up in Citeureup, between Bogor and Jakarta. Went to a primary school in Bogor that had been set up by the Thung family. Her father drove her but the car was old and often broke down and the road was sometimes blocked by landslides. She is the eldest of eight. The family moved to Bogor when she started junior high school. Her father worked for a rubber plantation but it was destroyed in 1965 and her father lost everything. Then her parents opened a small shop, selling different things. She remembers 1965, people saying the Chinese should go home, it was really scary.	Childhood; Family background; Early education
[00:05:00]	The family moved to Bogor in about 1973 and her father bought a bemo and hired a driver. He was from a rich family so it was hard for him when they had problems. They kept their house in Citeureup until 1981 when her father had a stroke. After that the children had to support themselves and the family. Thung was at university and supported herself by tutoring children. They didn't have extended family in Bogor to help.	Family background; Undergraduate education
[00:07:53]	They sold the bemo because they couldn't afford to repair it and then her parents bought cookies wholesale and packaged them to sell in the suburbs. Thung supported herself at university and sometimes sent money home to her mother. The family circumstances got better as the children grew up and got qualifications. They still all help each other. Her father always said education was important so they were all expected to go to university. Her mother didn't go to university but her father did. When Thung was in high school her father promised that she would go to the US, he couldn't keep that	Family background; Early education; Scholarship opportunities

	promise but after she graduated from the University of Indonesia (UI) she worked for the government for a few years then got a scholarship to the US.	
[00:11:49]	Studied Sinology at UI, but realised that she wouldn't use it much when she started working at Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). At UI she did sociology and anthropology and thought she could work on the Chinese Indonesians so went to Purdue University [Indiana] to do a master's in race relations. She was there for two years, from 1987 to 1989, on a World Bank scholarship organised by the National Planning Board, Overseas Development Aid BAPPENAS.	Undergraduate education; Early career; Studying overseas; Scholarship opportunities
[00:14:46]	When she came home she worked at LIPI and looked for a scholarship to do a PhD. There were fewer US scholarships and LIPI offered her an application for an Australian one.	Career; Scholarship opportunities

## PART 2

[00:00:00]	She had a connection with Charles [Coppel], from the books, and told him she wanted to study sociology and anthropology rather than history. Charles referred her to La Trobe and introduced her to Joel [Kahn]. She had an interview and then they sent her, no training or anything, in June 1994. First she had a bridging program at Monash for a month, learning English and about life in Australia. She hated it at first, she was used to the American way and found the Australian accent awful, couldn't understand what people were saying for six months. Luckily, Joel was American. There was 30 or 40 people doing the bridging course, all Indonesians, but only one or two went to La Trobe. Other Indonesians helped her find somewhere to live. Living in Melbourne was not a problem, just the accent was hard.	Existing connections with Australia; Scholarship opportunities
[00:04:47]	University and relating to Joel? She had to adapt, get some anthropological training, so she sat in on lots of classes and joined in with discussions. She made friends and tried to mingle, went to the pub with people. In the US she went to church with people from the welcome committee, even though she wasn't Christian.	Supervisor-student relationship; Studying in Australia; Socialising in Australia; Friendships
[00:08:07]	After eleven months she went back to Indonesia for a year. She finished in three and a half years, couldn't get an extension so forced herself to	Studying in Australia; Living in Australia

	finish it, working late night, until the last bus. She rented a house not far from the uni, only a few stops on the bus. Travels around Melbourne? Saw kangaroos and went to the Gold Coast when her best friend visited from Indonesia. Went into Melbourne city and to the mountains with her roommate. She liked adventures, the only thing she didn't want to do was go to the snow. She'd had enough of snow in the US.	
[00:11:17]	Wanted to keep connected to the Indonesian community so went to barbecues and gatherings with them but also mingled with other groups. Got invited to parties. The PhD students were a close group because Joel got them all to play softball together, students against lecturers. Thung was the 'gatekeeper'. Joel invited them to his house.	Indonesian community in Melbourne; Friendships; Supervisor-student relationship
[00:14:24]	Thesis topic was identity, gender and family studies – 'Identities in flux: Young Chinese in Jakarta'. Joel's mother-in-law was her editor. Felt supported doing her PhD. Liked being in La Trobe because there weren't too many Indonesians there, she could choose whether to mix with them. Every month she went to see Charles. She asked for him to be her associate supervisor but didn't realise he wasn't getting paid. Joel provided theory, a framework and methodology, and Charles talked about Indonesian history.	Studying in Australia; Living in Australia; Friendships; Supervisor-student relationship
[00:18:34]	[Comments about Charles's and Joel's different approaches.] Finished in exactly three and a half years, at the end of 1997. Had to ask her friend to print and submit it for her after she left. The assessment was sent to her just after the 1998 riots so she had to do the corrections during that difficult time.	Studying in Australia; Returning to Indonesia
[00:21:15]	In the US, Thung developed a habit of having the TV on while she was working and she did that in Melbourne too. Still does it now. Mostly watched movies, it helped with language. Still watches movies in English. Ethnic Chinese identity in Australia? Didn't mingle with the Chinese, difficult to talk to them because her Chinese language was deteriorating. Cooked for herself with ingredients from the Asian grocers.	Leisure activities; Living in Australia
[00:23:47]	Arrived back in Indonesia during the political and economic crisis. Her family needed some help and Thung helped her sister meet the repayments for her house. There was talk among	Returning to Indonesia; Career; Leadership

	<p>the Chinese about whether to leave Indonesia but Thung believed they should stay, they could fight back, and none of the family left. On 12 May she was in Jakarta and went to work then went home to Bogor, with two colleagues, and saw the burning etc. She joined the LIPI delegation to the [peoples?] council. Didn't go to work from the 13th to 15th May, just waited. It wasn't too bad in Bogor, none of her family or friends were affected.</p>	
[00:27:47]	<p>After the May riots the ethnic issue became very important but Thung felt it was unfair to suddenly expect a solution. For a long time LIPI had no study of ethnic issues, she started a group of 12 people to work on ethnic issues but they didn't know anything so it was hard. After that she started getting invitations to speak outside LIPI, mostly to Chinese groups, about her thesis. (In 2003, when a project about conflict studies started at LIPI, she was chosen as the coordinator.) Young people responded positively, could relate to what she was saying, but the older people didn't like it, criticised her use of the word China rather than Tionghoa. Not everyone understood her focus on identity. She tried to help everyone, Chinese and Indonesians, to be aware of the issue and that it wasn't a one-sided problem.</p>	Career; Leadership; Community service
[00:32:33]	<p>After the 2009 election, the issue started to slow down and the invitations to speak became fewer. [Comments about Thung's message, the influence it may have had and the action she advocates.] Promotion at LIPI? As well as speaking she also published a lot of articles, was asked to write, so she fulfilled requirements for credits and recently completed the nine steps and could get a professorship. Feels ambivalent about this because, at LIPI, it is a research professor, not like a university professor.</p>	Career; Community service; Leadership
[00:37:39]	<p>Has been back to Australia a few times, in 1999 was invited to ANU, and also for Joel's retirement. Charles sends people to study the Chinese in Indonesia. Still has contact with some friends from La Trobe, mainly through an Indonesian friend because she's not very good at keeping in touch. Was invited to the embassy last year to speak about La Trobe but she doesn't really like doing that sort of thing. [Discussion about it and putting a student in touch with Trevor Hogan.] Gets sent the La Trobe alumni newsletter but doesn't read it. Finds it hard to</p>	Returning to Australia; Ongoing connections with Australia; Alumni network; Professional network

	keep in touch with too many groups but will respond if there's a personal connection.	
[00:42:28]	Thung is quite senior at LIPI now but isn't part of the leadership, executive group. She lets them know what she thinks anyway. She was in it once, it wasn't useful and she's happy with her current position. Young people listen to her; she's been mentoring since 2003, when she joined the conflict studies project. Let's other people deal with bureaucracy and policy, she's more of a teacher, helping young ones to find themselves, work out what they want to do. [Discussion about trying to get government to consider her report and the people in the conflict studies group.]	Leadership; Career; Mentoring; Professional network
[00:47:39]	Why is it important for young researchers to go overseas to study? Because they need to learn the framework, concepts and theory. They're good at making descriptions and collecting data but the framework is very bad. Resources? Now they can download from the internet but they still need to develop critical thinking. [Comments about Thung being a bit harsh and lack of supervision of postgraduate students at UI.]	Studying in Australia
[00:52:04]	[Discussion about whether overseas alumni are affecting the education system, introducing more critical thinking, in Indonesia.] Public role? Speaks about her work in conflict studies and Chinese but hasn't had much published in newspapers, her writing is very serious, she prefers to write papers when she's invited to speak, at home and overseas.	Leadership; Career; International mobility
[00:55:07]	Lots of demands but mostly they come from herself, she's very free. Except that LIPI now expects staff to clock on and be at work certain hours, until 5.00. Thung has to write a letter if she arrives late or goes to Jakarta etc.	Career
[00:58:07]	Wouldn't consider working outside Indonesia at the moment because her mother is old now. Also, LIPI won't grant leave to be away for more than a year. She's looking, applied for a fellowship in Kyoto. Also wants to try in the Netherlands. Her sister is in Amsterdam. In 2007 she was in Singapore for three months, Kyoto in 2008 and Thailand for a month in 2009.	Family; International mobility; Professional network
[01:01:09]	A colleague recently asked her to be on the board of the Japan Foundation. She's been doing a project with them about Chinese soft power. She's also involved with Natalia Subagyo and	Leadership; International mobility; Professional networks

	the Centre for Chinese Studies, going to conferences overseas.	
[01:04:21]	Has been trying to write a book about multiculturalism but hasn't had time. [Comments about the time lobbying takes, how tiring it is working on many scattered things and saying no to things.]	Career
[01:07:21]	The influence of anti-Chinese sentiment and violence on the China–Indonesia relationship? [Jemma explains that after the film <i>The Act of Killing</i> got a nomination for an Oscar there were articles in the Chinese press calling the anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia in 1965 and 1998 genocide.] Nobody really talked about 1965, until now.	Career
[01:09:31]	END	