

***Hugging the Coast* Interview Transcript**

Field notes:

The village was welcome relief after the difficulties of our previous stop. It stood out from others for us because the land seemed more verdant, and there was more agriculture. We were offered lots of fresh fruit when we arrived, which we welcomed greatly as it was difficult to find in other places. The river was clean, the spring water was well protected by a fringe of forest. The village seemed very clean.

‘W’ was one of two female village heads on the island. She felt she had not chosen the occupation, but rather the villagers chose her because she was a good organiser. Regional rule had favoured development here: they had free health care, education to SMA level (high school), and abundant rice. W felt her greatest achievement was in raising the level of education, reducing the waste problem and stealing from gardens, and overcoming drunkenness with a penalty or ‘denda’ of 2 bags of cement and mandatory road building. The denda resolved the drunkenness issue, she thought, as people were embarrassed by the public shame associated with it. There were many other local laws in force. Pigs were tethered and not able to run free, rubbish was burned. W said her major concern was the river, it had been a metre higher in years gone by, and while still plenty for local needs, she did not like the prospect that it would continue to dwindle further. W was a 40+ woman, her daughter ‘B’ was present. We interviewed W and B in their home. The interview lasted about 40 minutes.

[‘Int’ is the researcher]

Interview transcript (excerpt):

W: Something we are known for in Indonesia that is a good thing is ‘gotong royong’ or ‘kerja sama’ – that is working together. So why is my house here so good? Because of us all working together. But this village is also a little different because women are in positions of power here, the village chief is a woman, the head of the church is a woman, the

head of the high school is also. Yes it is different from other places because women here are dominant. Women don't just go through high school here, many end up at university. Many of the civil servants are women. Yes, women here do get educated to high levels. Here this has been true for a long time. Many teachers come from here, there are some that go away to work and some stay here.

Int: So is the village very different, or seen as being very different in how it is run?

W: No, not at all, there are really no difference in how this village is run.

Int: Is it easier or more difficult to live in the village nowadays?

W: It is better now. People like to work here, but then many people don't work here but go away to work nowadays. Regarding activities here, there is really only the harvest from agriculture, and life here hasn't changed. Yes it's easier to work away from here now. People who work away send money back to the village, send money back to their families. For example, my husband, if he was to work here for example, there wouldn't be much for him to do, not much benefit.

Int: So people who work here do what?

W: Farming and fishing

Int: And those that work away do you mean in other parts of Indonesia? What do they do?

W: My husband works on boats in the Philippines and further afield, some people work in Singapore or the Philippines, some in Manado in Indonesia, some go to Jakarta to find work. People from here that go far away are usually sailors.

Int: So women don't go to sea?

W: Oh no, women don't do anything in the sea. Only men, not even fishing! Women look after the homes and sell the fish.

Int: Have the conditions for fishing, or the environment changed over the years?

W: Oh yes. Very much. When I was a child we used to play with canoes in the river here. The river does not flow like that anymore. There is not much water anymore.

Int: Is that because it doesn't rain as much or something else?

W: Here there are two seasons only, wet and dry. And there is not so much of a wet season anymore. The two seasons are very different from what they used to be.

Int: Before, we visited the spring where the water comes from the mountain, and this is your main drinking water. Has the amount of water coming from the spring changed?

W: No. The spring water is still good.

Int: Oh! Do you have any thoughts about why the river has changed, but not the spring?

W: I think maybe the people have cut the trees down to make houses. I think climate... that's the biggest change that we notice. The seasons are different now. The dry season is often longer, and from time to time the wet season is longer. It used to be more predictable.

Int: What are the main crops here and has how've you grown them changed because of this?

W: No change really. We grow nutmeg, cassava, coconut, cloves, lots of nutmeg - the nutmeg is very good here, not like other islands nearby as it doesn't grow so well as here. We also grow snake fruit (salak), and here is well-known for snake fruit. We can go and see some salak and nutmeg trees if you wish?

Int: Yes

W: We sell, some are sold to traders who take to Manado. There are different classes of nutmeg, the black is class one, the price is higher and it fetches a higher price. This one here is class one, the highest standard.

Int: Why do people work away from the village if there is so much here?

W: I think they want to work away, but also the seasons are changing. It is still good for fruit.

Int: Is this village doing any better than other villages?

W: No, about the same really.

Int (turning to 'B', the 14 year-old daughter of 'W'): So 'B' – do you want to go to university?

B: Yes! I want to study computing

Int: You have a computer here?

B: No, but we have 6 units at school.

Int: So you have internet here or at school?

B: No, well, with hand-phones we have connection, but not with the computer, no. The signal isn't strong enough.

Int, (to W): Is there something you think we should know about this village, something you would like people we meet know about?

W: Yes: tell them to come here! We would love tourists here, to see my farm and my village.

END OF INTERVIEW EXCERPT

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