Indonesia has achieved a great deal in terms of promoting and encouraging the spread of its national language since independence. Intriguingly, however, Indonesia has not become a monolingual society: what has emerged, instead, is a nation of multilingual peoples. This presentation will briefly consider how multilingual societies have been formed in Indonesia over the course of the twentieth century, and then turn to the question of how language policy has affected the use of language in Sundanese society in West Java. It will be argued that Indonesia has always been home to a particularly rich and diverse blend of multilingual peoples and cultures—an element which looks very much set to continue into the 21st century.

Dr. Mikihiro Moriyama is Professor of Indonesian Studies in the Faculty of Global Liberal Studies, Nanzan University, Japan. He is the author of Sundanese Print Culture and Modernity in 19th-Century West Java (2005) and co-editor of Words in Motion: Language and Discourse in Post-New Order Indonesia (2012). His interests are language and literature in Indonesia, especially in Sundanese-speaking areas, since the period of the Dutch East Indies.