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0521663709 - The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia: From c. 1500 to c. 1800, Volume Two

Edited by Nicholas Tarling

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
SOUTHEAST ASIA

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NICHOLAS TARLING



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NOTE ON SPELLING

The spelling of proper names and terms has caused editor and contributors considerable problems. Even a certain arbitrariness may have not produced consistency across a range of contributions, and that arbitrariness contained its own inconsistencies. In general we have aimed to spell place-names and terms in the way currently most accepted in the country, society or literature concerned. We have not used diacritics for modern Southeast Asian languages, but have used them for Sanskrit and Ancient Javanese. We have used pinyin transliterations except for some names which are well known in English in the Wade–Giles transliteration.

NOTE ON GENDER IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN LANGUAGES

Southeast Asian languages do not distinguish the sexes in general. Many references to individuals or groups of people in ancient indigenous sources leave it unclear whether women are meant or included. For example, we usually do not know whether a certain function is occupied by a male or a female. Even words borrowed from Sanskrit (which has genders corresponding to sex) are sometimes applied without observing this correspondence: Queen Tribhuanā (sic) or Tribhuanottungadewī is called *mahārāja* (a masculine word). These languages do not distinguish between brothers and sisters, but they do between younger and older siblings.

There also seems to have been little discrimination between sexes as far as functions are concerned. There were not only queens reigning in their own right in ancient Java, but also 'prime ministers', such as Airlangga's Mahārastrī *i* Hino with a name ending in '-Dewī'. As to Kērtanagara's four daughters, it seems that this king had no sons—at least they are never mentioned. Therefore what the sources tell us about the daughters provides no evidence of matrilineal descent. Apparently, both lineages were equally important. In some ways ancient Indonesian society was less 'sexist' than our own still is.

ABBREVIATIONS

AP	<i>Asian Perspectives</i> , Honolulu.
BEFEO	<i>Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient</i> , Paris.
BIPPA	<i>Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association</i> , Canberra.
BKI	<i>Bijdragen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</i> , 's-Gravenhage.
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> , London.
FMJ	<i>Federation Museums Journal</i> , Kuala Lumpur.
JAS	<i>Journal of Asian Studies</i> , Ann Arbor.
JBRs	<i>Journal of the Burma Research Society</i> , Rangoon.
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malay/Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i> , Singapore/Kuala Lumpur.
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i> , London.
JSEAH	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian History</i> , Singapore.
JSEAS	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</i> , Singapore.
JSS	<i>Journal of the Siam Society</i> , Bangkok.
MAS	<i>Modern Asian Studies</i> , Cambridge, UK.
MQRSEA	<i>Modern Quaternary Research in Southeast Asia</i> , Rotterdam.
TBG	<i>Tijdschrift van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten et Wetenschappen</i> , Batavia/Jakarta.
VKI	<i>Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</i> , 's-Gravenhage.

PREFACE TO THE PAPERBACK EDITION

Two ideas came together in the project for a Cambridge History of Southeast Asia. One was the concept of the Cambridge Histories themselves. The other was the possibility of a new approach to the history of Southeast Asia.

In the English-speaking and English-reading world the Cambridge Histories have, since the beginning of the century, set high standards in collaborative scholarship and provided a model for multi-volume works of history. The original *Cambridge Modern History* appeared in sixteen volumes between 1902 and 1912, and was followed by the *Cambridge Ancient History*, the *Cambridge Medieval History*, the *Cambridge History of India* and others.

A new generation of projects continues and builds on this foundation. Recently completed are the Cambridge Histories of Africa, Latin America and the Pacific Islanders. Cambridge Histories of China and of Japan are in progress, as well as the New Cambridge History of India. Though the pattern and the size have varied, the essential feature, multi-authorship, has remained.

The initial focus was European, but albeit in an approach that initially savoured rather of the old Cambridge Tripos course 'The Expansion of Europe', it moved more out of the European sphere than the often brilliant one-author Oxford histories. But it left a gap which that course did not leave, the history of Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia has long been seen as a whole, though other terms have been used for it. The title Southeast Asia, becoming current during World War II, has been accepted as recognizing the unity of the region, while not prejudging the nature of that unity. Yet scholarly research and writing have shown that it is no mere geographical expression.

There have indeed been several previous histories of Southeast Asia. Most of them have been the work of one author. The great work of the late D. G. E. Hall dates back to 1955, but it has gone through several editions since. Others include B. Harrison, *South-east Asia, A Short History*, London: 1954; Nicholas Tarling, *A Concise History of Southeast Asia*, 1966; and D. J. Steinberg, et al., *In Search of Southeast Asia*, 1971. The authors of these works faced difficult tasks, as a result of the linguistic diversity of the area; the extent of the secondary material; and the lacunae within it.

Given its diversity, Southeast Asia seemed to lend itself to the Cambridge approach. A magisterial single-volume history existed; others had also made the attempt. A single volume by several authors working together had also been successful. But a more substantial history by a larger number of authors had not been attempted.

The past generation has seen a great expansion of writing, but Southeast Asia's historiography is still immature in the sense that some aspects have

been relatively well cultivated, and others not. The historical literature on the area has become more substantial and more sophisticated, but much of it deals with particular countries or cultures, and many gaps remain. A range of experts might help to bring it all together and thus both lay the foundation and point the way for further research effort.

The Cambridge approach offered a warning as well as an invitation. There were practical obstacles in the way of histories on the scale of the original European histories. They got out of hand or were never finished. A summation that was also to lead other scholars forward must be published within a reasonable time-span. It must not be too voluminous; it must not involve too many people.

Practical indications of this nature, however, coincided with historiographical considerations. There were some good histories of Southeast Asia; there were also some good histories of particular countries; but there was, perhaps, no history that set out from a regional basis and took a regional approach. This seemed worthwhile in itself, as well as establishing a coherence and a format for the volumes.

In almost every case—even when chapters are the work of more than one person—authors have been taken out of their particular area of expertise. They were ready to take risks, knowing that, whatever care they took, they might be faulted by experts, but recognizing the value all the same in attempting to give an overview. Generally contributors felt that the challenge of the regional approach was worth the hazardous departure from research moorings.

Authors invited to contribute recognized that they would often find themselves extended beyond the span of the published work which has made them well known. The new history did, however, give them a chance—perhaps already enjoyed in many cases in their teaching—to extend into other parts of the region and to adopt a comparative, regional approach. The publishers sought a history that stimulated rather than presented the last word. Authors were the more ready to rely where necessary on published or secondary works, and readers will not expect equally authoritative treatment of the whole area, even if the sources permitted it.

At the same time, the editor and the contributors have had, like any historians, to cope with problems of periodization. That is, of course, always contentious, but particularly so if it seems to result from or to point to a particular emphasis. In the case of Southeast Asia the most likely temptation is to adopt a chronology that overdoes the impact of outside forces, in particular the Europeans. The structure of this history is not free from that criticism, but the contributors have sought, where appropriate, to challenge rather than meekly to accept its implications.

A similar risk is attached to the division of the material into chapters. The scope of a work such as this makes that all the more difficult but all the more necessary. Sometimes the divisions appear to cut across what ought to be seen as a whole, and sometimes repetition may result. That has been allowed when it seemed necessary. But it may still be possible to pursue certain themes through the book and not to read it merely in chronological sequence. Within the four major chronological divisions, chapters are in

general organized in a similar order. The work may thus in a sense be read laterally as well as horizontally.

Some topics, including treatment of the arts, literature and music, have been virtually excluded. The focus of the work is on economic, social, religious and political history. But it will still be difficult to pursue the history of a particular people or country. The work does not indeed promise to offer this; though it offers guidance to those who wish to do this in its apparatus, the footnotes and bibliographic essay to each chapter, the historiographical survey, the list of bibliographies, and the index.

* * *

The work was originally published in 1992 in two hardbound volumes. The paperback edition is a reprint in four volumes with minor revisions. While the work in its two-volume format has been quite widely welcomed, it is hoped that the new format will make it more accessible, and in particular bring it more readily within the reach of those who teach and are taught about the region, as well as those who are simply curious about it. The four paperbacks may stand on their own, though it is also the case that the whole is more than the sum of the parts.

The first volume contains an essay on the historiography of Southeast Asia and Part 1 of the original Volume 1, 'From Prehistory to c. 1500 CE'. The present volume contains Part 2 of the original Volume 1, covering the years c. 1500 to c. 1800. The third paperback covers the region from c. 1800 to the 1930s, and the fourth the period from World War II to the late 1980s. It also contains a bibliography of bibliographies on Southeast Asia.

The periodization of the present volume caused much of the discussion among the contributors when the work was being prepared. That reflected the new approaches that scholars were adopting to what some called the 'early modern' phase and the new research that was inspired by and sustained them. Periodization implies a choice of emphasis, and it was felt that choosing c. 1500 as in some sense a starting-point was to imply, if not to insist, that the advent of the Europeans was so significant that it should form some kind of division in Southeast Asian history. It was argued that more emphasis ought to be placed on the fifteenth century itself, in particular on the impact of the expansion of Chinese trade in the early Ming.

The closing date of the present volume also aroused some discussion among us, and indeed led the editor to seek the contribution of Professor Kathirithamby-Wells. The original scheme again risked over-emphasis on the role of the Europeans, and the eighteenth century took on the overtones of 'decline' that it had acquired in European history and that still survived the earlier revisions of the great Dutch scholar-administrator J. C. van Leur ('On the Eighteenth Century as a Category in Indonesian History', in *Indonesian Trade and Society* The Hague and Bandung: van Hoeve, 1955, pp. 265–89). After the crises of the middle decades, however, this was a period of reconstruction and innovation for the mainland kingdoms, driven partly by competition among them. Island Southeast Asia itself witnessed economic expansion and the Dutch and Spanish realms became more coherent.

The wider debate, to which Professor Kathirithamby-Wells thus contributed, has continued. In part it has focused on the work of another contributor, Anthony Reid. At the time *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* was being prepared, he was engaged in his masterly work, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, the first volume of which had appeared in 1988, and the second of which was to appear in 1993. That surveyed the whole region by way of major topics, also putting it into a chronological framework that emphasized the impact not only of the economic expansion of the fifteenth century, but also that of the economic decline of the later seventeenth century. For that he adduced a number of reasons, such as changes in the world's economy, perhaps, too, in its climate, the monopolistic pressure exerted by the Dutch Company, and the absolutism of Southeast Asian rulers. He offered an image of 'retreat' on the mainland.

Admiring the completed work, Vic Lieberman yet stressed the risk that it presented as valid for the whole region an interpretation that, stressing the impact of maritime trade, better fitted island Southeast Asia than the mainland: 'the thesis of a seventeenth-century watershed seems to be fundamentally inapplicable to the mainland' ('An Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia? Problems of Regional Coherence', *Journal of Asian Studies* 54, 3, August 1995, p. 801). He did not 'deny the value of regionwide syntheses', however. Indeed he suggested 'that the closest archipelagic analogies to Burmese, Thai and Vietnamese integration can be found in the early history of the Spanish and Dutch colonial systems'. Comparing them, he added, might oblige us 'to lay aside our recent distaste for colonial, as opposed to indigenous history' (pp. 804–5).

Lieberman has pursued this task in an essay entitled 'Mainland-Archipelagic Parallels and Contrasts, c. 1750–1850', which appears in a volume edited by Anthony Reid, *The Last Stand of Asian Autonomies. Responses to Modernity in the Diverse States of Southeast Asia and Korea* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997). In that Reid himself writes on 'a new phase of commercial expansion in Southeast Asia, 1760–1850', while drawing attention to the increased cohesion of the three major mainland states in the period, and their pressure on the intermediate Lao, Shan and Khmer states, rescued only by European intervention in the nineteenth century.

The inclusion of Korea in that volume suggests another thrust in the study of the 'early modern' period, in advancing which Lieberman has again been influential. There were advantages, he argued, in putting the history of the mainland Southeast Asian states in the context of other states in the 'early modern' period. Nor should those states be confined to Asia: the comparisons and contrasts should be on a 'Eurasian' basis. In 1995 the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London convened a workshop called 'The Eurasian Context of the Early Modern History of Mainland South East Asia, 1400–1800', and revised versions of the contributions appeared in *Modern Asian Studies* 31, 3, 1997. Lieberman's own essay, which the other contributors were invited to critique, was entitled 'Transcending East–West Dichotomies: State and Culture Formation in Six Ostensibly Disparate Areas'.

This ambitious endeavour did not amount to dislodging the 'regional' thrust in the study of Southeast Asia, though it related to Lieberman's

concern that such a thrust had tended to assimilate the experience of the mainland and the archipelago too closely. It suggested rather that historians and their readers should not allow their concern for the region either to ghettoise its history or to obscure the variety of experiences it contained.

In seeking to 'transcend' the 'East–West dichotomy', it had another positive aspect for the study of Southeast Asia, particularly in this period. The debate among our contributors had itself suggested the persistence of a division between what in the 1950s and 1960s were called, in terms put forward by John de Casparis and John Smail, 'Eurocentric' and 'autonomous' views of Southeast Asian history. Was there a tendency to overplay or to underplay the role of Europeans, particularly in the archipelago, in the first centuries of their presence in the region? The wish to 'transcend' an 'East–West dichotomy' was reinforced by Lieberman's initiative, but it was already under way, as he pointed out. The research of M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, M. C. Ricklefs, Anthony Reid, J. Kathirithamby-Wells, Barbara Watson Andaya, and Leonard Andaya was producing a consensus that, 'while the Portuguese commercial impact was indeed limited, by c. 1700 the Dutch had helped to transform economic and political life, as well as certain aspects of cultural development, in critical sectors of the archipelago' ('Local Integration and Eurasian Analogies: Structuring Southeast Asian History, c. 1350 – c. 1830', *Modern Asian Studies* 27, 3, July 1993, pp. 557–8).

That work is well represented in the present volume, and it has been continued in yet more recent publications. The difficulty in 'transcending' the 'East–West dichotomy' was not merely an attitudinal one: it was also a question of sources. The written data available are mostly European in origin, though not all, as we are reminded by Yoneo Ishii's translations from the Tosen Fusetsu-gaki (*The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia* Canberra: Australian National University, and Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998); and while, at least in the case of the largest collection, that of the VOC, it is less prejudiced than much of the material offered by the archives of the imperial phase, it is still difficult to avoid adopting a 'Western' view. 'Even when relying primarily on European documents', however, as the Andayas have pointed out, 'some scholars have still been able to discuss the interaction between Europeans and native communities from an indigenous perspective, and to provide significant information concerning the ways in which local societies changed' (Leonard Y. Andaya and Barbara Watson Andaya, 'Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Period: Twenty-Five Years On', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26, 1, March 1995, p. 95).

In some cases, they add, 'it has been possible to integrate European material with indigenous writings in order to analyze key events and cultural concepts as a basis for understanding the "internal view"' (p. 95). Their own work has advanced this approach: Leonard Andaya in *The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), and Barbara Watson Andaya in *To Live as Brothers* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993). M. C. Ricklefs has pursued a somewhat similar course. European sources are essential in the study of early modern Javanese history, he argues, though they are but a first step. 'Deeper understanding can only be sought in Javanese sources' (*The Seen and the Unseen Worlds in Java, 1726–1749* Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998, p. 345). Without

these voices, as Ann Kumar writes, 'any structure we may erect in the name of history is a silent shell, empty of human life' (*Java and Modern Europe* Richmond: Curzon, 1997, p. 4).

In these studies, historians are characteristically enough responding not only to the dictates of their discipline, but also to the wider changes in the society of which they form a part. In a post-Cold War world and in a phase of globalization, it was not surprising that it seemed possible to talk in terms of 'Eurasia'. Nor was it surprising that, as the struggle for national independence receded into the past, it was possible to pursue a more balanced view of the role of the Europeans. The end of the Vietnam War and the reunification of the state have been accompanied and followed by more sophisticated studies of its earlier history. Those have benefited from attempts to balance the 'Confucian' aspects of the state, traditionally emphasized in its historiography, and its 'Southeast Asian' nature. As a result the work of Keith Taylor, Nola Cooke and Li Tana offers us fresh insights into both Trinh and Nguyen Vietnam. The last-named published *Nguyen Cochinchina* in 1998 (Cornell Southeast Asia Program).

During the preparation of *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, we were made aware of the current significance of gender studies. A note in Volume One reproduced on p ix above, pointed out that many references in ancient indigenous sources left it unclear whether women were meant or included. Barbara Watson Andaya has since tried to make some headway with the problem. Her recent articles include 'The Changing Religious Role of Women in Early Modern South East Asia', *South East Asian Research* 2, 2, September 1994, pp. 99–116; 'Women and Economic Change: the Pepper Trade in Pre-Modern Southeast Asia', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, 2, 1995, pp. 165–90; and 'From Temporary Wife to Prostitute: Sexuality and Economic Change in Early Modern Southeast Asia', *The Journal of Women's History* 9, 4, February 1998, pp. 11–34.

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FROM c. 1500 TO c. 1800

INTRODUCTION

The second part of this work covers the period from the late fifteenth century to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of the Common Era. The opening chapter places the region in an international context, affected by changes of which the advent of the Europeans was only one. The three chapters that follow outline the political, economic and social, and religious changes that Southeast Asia underwent. A fifth chapter surveys the region on the eve of the phase in which it came almost entirely under European political control.

In the period 1500–1800 Indians and Chinese, who had visited Southeast Asia since the early Common Era, came in far greater numbers. In the seventeenth century the Japanese became involved in Southeast Asian trade for the first time. But the latest and most formidable arrivals were the Europeans. Chapter 1 deals with the arrival and establishment of these groups in the region. It also deals with the interaction between the foreign and Southeast Asian communities, and the innovations and adaptations that resulted. These included the establishment of European-controlled cities and the emergence of mestizo communities. The chapter also discusses developments in shipbuilding and firearms technology that had important repercussions for Southeast Asian societies.

This period also saw a slow movement towards larger political groupings, which subsequently were to form the basis of modern nation-states. This is the focus of Chapter 2. Neither increased participation in international trade, nor the incursion of the Europeans, necessarily worked against the fragmentation that characterized the region. By 1600 the basis for future consolidation in Siam, Burma and Vietnam had been laid down, and the Spaniards had established a strong position in Luzon and the Visayas. The existence of small units in the island world helped the Dutch. Even the most potentially cohesive island, Java, was divided into distinct spheres.

Many of the economic changes that characterized the period date back, Chapter 3 argues, to the fifteenth century. This is true of the surge in international commerce that lasted into the early decades of the seventeenth century. Whole communities came to engage in cultivating pepper, cloves, cotton, sugar and benzoin, and became dependent on the international market, and large cosmopolitan port-cities emerged. In a region then short of population, the mobilization of labour was crucial. There were sophisticated methods for investing capital in trade and securing an adequate return. But capital and fixed property in private hands enjoyed less security over against the state than in early modern Europe. The need to counter Dutch pressure added to absolutist trends that in the end might be counter-productive. That pressure, and the reaction to it, are to be seen in the context of the economic crisis that marked the mid-seventeenth century

in Southeast Asia as elsewhere. From the late seventeenth century, the direct involvement of Southeast Asian states with international commerce diminished. The Chinese communities secured new opportunities.

Chapter 4 takes up the account of religious developments in Southeast Asia from about 1500. European material, particularly from missionary sources, is used to survey indigenous beliefs in areas still in the sixteenth century little touched by world religions. The advance of Islam and Christianity, particularly in the island world, is then discussed. Their adaptation to the local context may be compared with that of Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism in the preceding phase. The eighteenth century, a time of disruptive economic and political change, was also a time of renewed religious activity.

Chapter 5 describes the region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as it began to be drawn into a new phase of world economic development and of European political aspiration. On the mainland three new dynasties were founded—the Konbaung, the Chakri, and the Nguyen—but their policies and their prospects differed. In Java reaction to growing interference by the Dutch led to the Java War of the 1820s. In the other Indonesian islands their inactivity facilitated British commercial enterprise, in turn stimulating the development of a number of indigenous states, as well as an outbreak of adventurism and marauding. The temporary British occupation of Manila in the 1760s forced the Spaniards to reappraise their policy in the Philippines. The islands were increasingly opened to world trade, and substantial economic and social change resulted.