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0521663717 - The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia: From c. 1800 to the 1930s,

Volume Three

Edited by Nicholas Tarling

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
SOUTHEAST ASIA

VOLUME THREE

From c. 1800 to the 1930s

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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.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, Burma.
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations.
BKI	<i>Bijdragen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 's-Gravenhage.</i>
BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party.
BWS	Burmese Way to Socialism.
DAP	Democratic Action Party, Malaysia.
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
GCBA	General Council of Burmese Associations.
ICP	Indochina Communist Party.
ISDV	Indische Sociaal-Demokratische Vereeniging (Indies Social-Democratic Association).
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
JAS	<i>Journal of Asian Studies</i> , Ann Arbor.
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malay/Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i> , Kuala Lumpur.
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.
MCP	Malayan Communist Party.
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front.
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army.
NLF	National Liberation Front, Vietnam.
NPA	New People's Army, The Philippines.
PAP	People's Action Party, Singapore.
PAS	Partai Islam se Tanah Malaya (Pan-Malayan Islamic Party).
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party).

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PNI	Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Association).
RVN	Republic of Vietnam.
SEAC	South-East Asia Command.
SEATO	South-East Asia Treaty Organization.
SRV	Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
UMNO	United Malays National Organization.

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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

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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

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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 second volume contains Part 2 of the original Volume 1, covering the years c. 1500 to c. 1800. The present volume covers the region from c. 1800 to the 1930s. The fourth deals with the period from World War II to the late 1980s, and also contains a bibliography of bibliographies on Southeast Asia.

Discussions about the work, both in the course of its preparation and since, have raised questions both about its regional approach and its periodization; questions that are indeed of enduring interest to historians and their readers but are not susceptible of enduring answers. The second volume entered a debate about 'early modern' Southeast Asia that has questioned the cohesion of the region as a unit of study and the appropriate periodization of that endeavour. The current feeling is that 'Southeast Asia' remains a useful concept, provided that we do not overplay its homogeneity, that we take the opportunity to contrast the history of the mainland states with those of the archipelago, and that we allow ourselves to compare the experience particularly of those states with that of states elsewhere in Asia and in Europe itself in the 'early modern' period. Delimiting that period, it is also agreed, should be determined not only by the impact of outside factors, including the commerce of China as well as of the Europeans, but also by the changes brought about by initiatives within the region, in particular the competition among the mainland states. These albeit tentative conclusions offer us the chance of a more appropriately differentiated history of the region and limit the risks that it remains a ghetto within historical studies as a whole. We also have the opportunity of reaching sound conclusions about the impact of the Europeans, accepting that it differs from place to place within the region and from time to time.

That problem also faces the study of the period encompassed by the present volume. In his famous article, 'On the possibility of an autonomous

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history of modern Southeast Asia' (*Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 2, 2, July 1961, pp. 72–102), John Smail pointed out that, while the pioneering Dutch scholar J. C. van Leur had been able to envisage a new and better balance between the Dutch and the Indonesian factors in the history of the early modern period, he had said little about the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the implication was, however, 'that the Indonesian world grows more and more insignificant', and we therefore 'have less and reason to want to look at things from an Indo-centric point of view' (p. 84).

Certainly most of Southeast Asia was in this period brought under some form of European rule, and all of it was affected by what Van Leur called 'the magic poison of modern capitalism' (*Indonesian Trade and Society* The Hague and Bandung: Van Hoeve, 1955, p. 285). Much of the writing on Southeast Asia tended, consciously or not, to reflect that, whether it was inspired by the triumphalism of the Europeans or the rallying of their opponents. But, while the winning of independence initially tempted historians unduly to diminish the role of the Europeans, it also stimulated them to study their opponents more fully. It then became possible to differentiate among the Europeans, and also to distinguish among their opponents the dynastic and the popular elements, those who wished at least temporarily to collaborate and those who wished to resist, those who relied more on outside support and those who drew more on their own resources.

Nor did the 'magic poison' affect all equally or simultaneously. Historians are inclined to accept c. 1870 as marking a shift in the process by which Southeast Asia became, without ceasing to supply jungle and marine produce for a range of markets particularly in Asia, much more a supplier of minerals, raw materials and commodities for world markets. But the date is only an approximation, and the changes were highly differentiated, both as a result of the distribution of resources and the policies of different governments. No colonial government, it is true, was likely to take the steps needed to spur industrialization, and that view was shared by the independent Thais, partly, as Ian Brown has shown in *The Elite and the Economy in Siam, c. 1890–1920* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), because they wanted to retain their independence. In the interwar period, however, and particularly in the depression, parts of Netherlands India and Indo-China were also differentiating themselves in this respect.

The nature of both political and economic change suggests the advantage for this period, as for the previous one, of admitting that our periodization must have jagged edges. The inclusion of the whole region in these changes must again not lead us to over-emphasize their similarity. Nor, though with that caution we can see the region as a satisfactory unit of study, should we be led to avoid comparisons with developments outside the region. Historians of empire have too often neglected Southeast Asia, though it offers a wide-ranging taxonomy of imperial rule. The closer study of its economic history—prompted in part by a reaction to a preoccupation with political issues during the struggle to set up independent states, and in part, too, no doubt, by witnessing the economic transformation of the area in a new 'age of commerce'—also suggests that the history of the region may contribute to a wider debate, that on the relationship between the two developments, the creation of colonial states and the spreading of the

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'poison'. In an article on Dutch expansion in Indonesia, J. Thomas Lindblad has suggested that we look for the interaction at the local level as much as the central, if not more ('Economic Aspects of the Dutch Expansion in Indonesia, 1870–1914', *Modern Asia Studies* 23, 1, 1989, pp. 1–23). His new book, *Foreign Investment in Southeast Asia in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998)—one of the first monographs in a series on the modern economic history of Southeast Asia jointly published by Macmillan and the Australian National University—starts out with the same theme (p. 12).

A review of the first edition of the present work suggested that the opening chapter 'would have found more resonance in a compilation of essays on English imperial policy' (*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, 1997, p. 113). My recognition of the power of the British in the nineteenth century, both political and economic, may have led to over-emphasis. An interesting debate has indeed been developing among Dutch historians, focusing on such works as Maarten Kuitenbrouwer's *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism* (Oxford: Berg, 1991), and summarized by Elsbeth Locher-Scholten in 'Dutch Expansion in the Indonesian Archipelago around 1900 and the Imperialism Debate' (*Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, 1, March 1994, pp. 91–111). One issue at least, however, is the 'lack of the "foreign factor"' adduced in explanation of imperialism. 'As a European "dwarf" but a colonial "giant", the Dutch had always been dependent on the protection and cooperation of the British' (p. 100). The history of British imperialism certainly belongs elsewhere. That the experience of Southeast Asia is in some sense part of it, and that its discourse can also help in understanding the history of Southeast Asia, is the theme of my book, *The Fall of Imperial Britain in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993), and the completion of the *Oxford History of the British Empire* in which Southeast Asia in this phase is covered by Tony Stockwell, a contributor to the fourth volume of the present work, should offer additional perspectives.

Carl Trocki, author of the second chapter in the present volume, is one of several scholars who have drawn attention to the significance of the revenue farms in the states of the nineteenth century: they were at once an indication of the administrative weakness of those states, and contributed to the capital formation that promoted, for example, the opening of the Malayan tin mines; and in the latter sense were an example of the 'microlevel' interactions between the political and the economic, to which Lindblad has drawn attention. One of the most recent works in the field is *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elites and the Emergence of the Modern State in Southeast Asia* edited by John Butcher and Howard Dick (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993).

Among the contributors to the Macmillan–Australian National University monograph series is the author of the third chapter in the present volume. In his new book, *The End of the Peasantry in Southeast Asia* (1997), Elson accepts once more 'the ever-present danger' in a regional study 'of over-reaching one's expertise' (p. xix). The compensation is a study that, generalizing without precluding particularising, expounds the role of the peasantry in our period, 'when peasant labour and production sustained, as

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never before, the economies of the region', and suggests its demise in more recent decades: '[t]he progeny of the late-nineteenth-century peasant still live in the countryside, but not with the permanence, rural focus and sense of local identity their forebears had' [p. xxii]. The project is also to include one-country works as well as those with a regional thrust. The first, Anne Booth's *The Indonesian Economy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1998), adds to the considerable volume of recent work on the economic history of Indonesia, the largest state in the region.

Indonesia is also the country that has attracted the greatest attention from those who study nationalism and the nationalist movements in Southeast Asia. Among them are a number of Japanese scholars, putting in a new form, perhaps, a long-standing interest. Though our colleague, the late Ben Batson, is alas no longer able to contribute to it, a vigorous debate on Thai nationalism has also taken place, precipitated in part by the revival of a 'radical discourse' in the 1970s, and also more recently influenced by post-Marxist deconstructionism, as with Thongchai Winichakul's *Siam Mapped* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). The debate among Philippines historians again takes place both in a public and a professional context, stimulated by centennial celebrations of the revolution.

Reynaldo Ileto took up in a regional context a topic he had tackled in a Filipino one, with his pathbreaking work *Pasyon and Revolution* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1979). In that he sought to distinguish the nationalism of the élite and the millenarian aspirations of the 'masses'. The detail of that work has since been challenged by Glenn May in *Inventing a Hero. The Posthumous Re-Creation of Andres Bonifacio* (Madison: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1996), but its general argument still stands. Work done on other countries, for example by Sartono on Indonesia and Hue-Tam-Ho Tai on Vietnam, underlines the significance of millenarianism in the region. It is also a topic that once more reminds us that while Southeast Asian history is a proper unit of study, its experience is shared with that of other parts of the world.

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INTRODUCTION

This volume of the work deals with Southeast Asia between the late eighteenth century of the Common Era and World War II. The opening chapter, which is in a sense complementary to the closing chapter of the previous volume, describes and endeavours to account for the incorporation of most of the region within the frontiers of European empires. Subsequent chapters describe the political structures, the economic and social life, and the religions and popular culture of the region. A final chapter includes a discussion of nationalism and nationalist movements.

In the previous phase, Spanish and Dutch realms had been established in maritime Southeast Asia. By the end of the nineteenth century, only Siam (Thailand) stood outside the formal empires of external powers. Those powers sought to avoid conflict among themselves by settling the frontiers of their territories. In so doing they took more or less notice of the previous history and present condition of the lands and peoples over which they claimed authority. Yet the frontiers had a degree of rigidity unusual in Southeast Asia.

Chapter 1 describes this outcome. It also endeavours to describe the process by which it was reached, and in particular to take account of the role within it of the rulers and peoples of Southeast Asia as well as the Europeans. Within the emerging framework, there was further interaction in many fields of human endeavour. This is in a sense the subject of the subsequent chapters in this volume, which also pursue lines of investigation that parallel chapters in the first volume. Chapter 5, too, deals with the emergence of nationalism within the colonial framework. The statecraft of the imperial period came under challenge.

Within the emerging framework of that period new political structures were established. This topic is the prime focus of Chapter 2. Though still necessarily relying on the collaboration of élite elements among the Southeast Asian populations, the structures set up by the outside powers were characteristically centralized and bureaucratized. By the early twentieth century the state was capable of reaching into the ordinary life of every inhabitant to a degree and with a persistence rarely known before in the region. This, indeed, applied in Siam, as well as in the territories the external powers acquired. But neither there, nor elsewhere, did centralization or bureaucratization necessarily produce uniformity: in some cases

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indeed what came to be seen as 'minority groups' within a realm containing a 'majority' gained a new degree of institutionalized cohesion.

None of the developments described in chapters 1 and 2 can be understood without placing them in the context of economic change. This is the subject of Chapter 3. Southeast Asia had long been affected by international commerce. In the period between 1800 and the Great Depression it had an unprecedented impact, particularly after 1850. This resulted from the development of the Industrial Revolution and the drive of Western capitalism. They contributed to the growth of state power, its centralization and bureaucratization. The relationship of governments and peoples were transformed. Migration to Southeast Asia reached new levels; so did migration within Southeast Asia. Cities expanded, often providing an extraordinarily unhealthy environment, but there was no call for substantial industry. The end in the 1930s of the long period of expansion in the world's economy exposed the narrow and dependent nature of the region's economy. The poor were hit hardest.

Intensified European penetration, political consolidation of the dominant states, and economic transformation especially mark the period from the mid-nineteenth century; it is marked also by a multitude of resistance movements, rebellions, and acts of insubordination. Those are the focus of Chapter 4. It seeks to present them in their own terms: not as the disturbances or dacoity of the apologists of colonial conquest; nor even as the precursors of more modern opposition movements. The movements are considered in terms of their thought, their perceptions of change, of community, of leadership. Religion, the other focus of the chapter, is seen as a crucial matrix for peasant interpretations of experience.

The popular movements of the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries interleaved but did not coincide with more modern nationalist movements that emerged within the colonial framework. Nationalism and its alternatives are the subject of Chapter 5. There it is argued that there were alternatives to the nationalist movements that aimed to secure control of the colonial states and that were ultimately able to do so after World War II. There were those who favoured more gradual change. There were also nationalist movements among minority peoples, and there were movements, too, that sought to transcend the externally imposed frontiers of the imperial phase. Each of the colonial powers reacted in a different way. They were all to be swept aside by another external power.