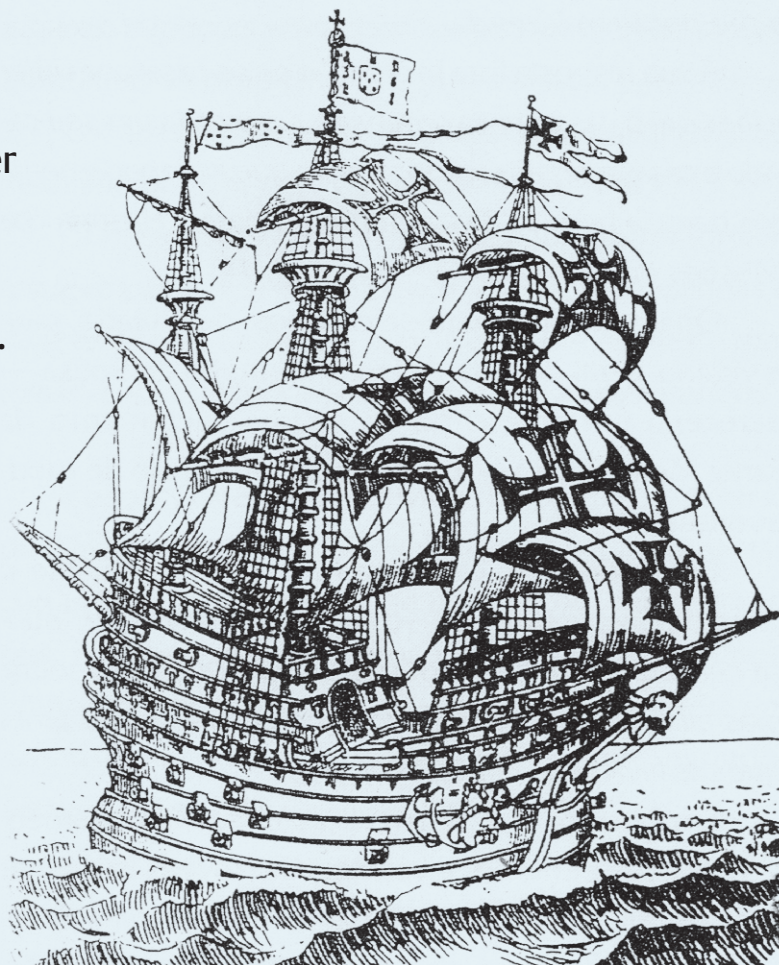


Melaka revisited

Based on a wide range of unexplored contemporary Portuguese sources, this ambitious study aims to reconsider and to expound the Portuguese expansion at the heart of political, social and economic structures in Asia. In doing so, it expects to open new paths in the study of contact between civilisations that began at the end of the 15th century. This is all the more promising as the fog of ideologies and of the nagging aftermath of colonialism has, according to Pinto, been dispelled (xxii).

Niels Mulder



substantive chapter expands upon the city of Melaka itself, tracing its population and society, its centres of power in the persons of its captains, bishops and resident Portuguese (*casados*), and its fortifications and resources. It is also the sad story of Melaka's metamorphosis from a cosmopolitan city to a ghetto-city during the period in question.

The substantive chapters are rounded off with Annexes that dwell on the genealogical questions and problems raised by the historical sources – local and Portuguese – on Johor and Aceh. To me, the interest of this query lies in the conflict between the occidental and the local (Malay) ideas of the writing of history to which I was introduced by my mentor, the Javanist C. C. Berg, who liked to talk about 'projective' or 'predictive history'. The purpose of the local histories (*babad, silsilah, sejarah, hikayat*) are not to provide the reader-reciter with 'objective' facts, but such works were commissioned to legitimate rulers with respectable genealogies, with prosperous realms, while seeking to praise them with noble character and great deeds. Whereas verifiable data occur in the stories, it will take the skill of a seasoned historian to skim the narratives of 'facts'.

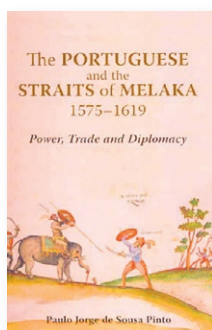
Following addenda list the Captains of Melaka (1567-1620), the Viceroys and Governors of India (1564-1622), present relevant maps, an appendix of documents and a glossary, of which the 60 pages of translated letters to the king, reports, opinions, advices and suchlike give us fascinating insights in the mentality and preoccupations of the age and the writers concerned.

The read

Even as this is a translation of an original text, the narrative would have been enhanced through competent, professional editing. The text as it stands is jumpy – painlessly going up and down historical sequences; we are presented with trees and more trees, but the integration of the forest often remains nebulous. This may have to do with what the author calls his analysis in concentric circles – an idea that I failed to grasp. Things would have been much clearer had an extensive synchronical table visualised and summarised the data on the main players, i.e., Johor, Melaka, Aceh, and some peripheral others who at least traded with these three. Because of the meticulous method of the author, the latter are often in separate foci, and so the same data are endlessly rehashed.

Whereas the reading is vexing, it is well worth doing it as we are presented with a treasure trove of documentary evidence. It opens the perspective on further explorations, and will hopefully stimulate the integration of Southeast Asian studies that has so far been missing.

Niels Mulder retired to the southern slope of the mystically potent Mt. Banàhaw, Philippines, where he concluded his swan song, *Situating Filipino Civilisation in Southeast Asia: Reflections and observations*. Saarbruecken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2012 (print-to-order ed., ISBN 9783659130830) (niels_mulder201935@yahoo.com.ph)



Reviewed publication:
Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto. 2012.
The Portuguese and the Straits of Melaka 1575-1619; Power, Trade and Diplomacy. Singapore: NUS Press. xxx + 375 pages. ISBN: 9789971695705 (paperback)

IN VIEW OF THE WORKS OF HISTORIANS of Southeast Asia, we are in dire need of integrating the scattered studies and source materials, as up to now, Portuguese historiography appears to be ignorant of Malay, Dutch and other regional sources (Chinese, Japanese, Acehnese, Gujarati, Thai, etc.), at the same time that most historians are equally ignorant of Portuguese sources. Consequently, the history of the area prior to the arrival of northern Europeans is lacunary at best and basically remains *terra incognita*. As a researcher and lecturer of Oriental Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal, the author hopes that his effort at integrating important historiography as well as a wide range of published and unpublished Portuguese sources will result in a more cosmopolitan historical view of the area; the current translation of his work is expected to be a major step in that direction.

The author approaches his subject through the analysis of the geopolitics of Melaka since it fell into the orbit of the Portuguese Estado da Índia and the local structures, especially Johor and Aceh, with which it interacted. The period in focus spans the half century from the lifting of the siege by Aceh and the loss of Ternate as the centre of the spice trade in 1575, and the founding of Dutch Batavia that spelled the rupture of Portuguese influence in the Straits. The analysis concentrates upon the political and geopolitical aspect to the detriment of an economic approach, even as trade, monopoly and profit were the driving force behind Portuguese and competing explorations, conquests and subsequent exploits.

Contents

The historical survey proper is divided into five substantive chapters that deal with (1) the economy of Melaka in its global context as part of the Estado da Índia, and its gradual decline, or exhaustion of the Portuguese imperial ambitions. (2) Then, in the same context, the political and military frameworks, their tensions, changes and erosion, are described. (3) Follows the relation of the regional context of the western part of the Archipelago, which is subsequently (4) deepened by the dynamics of the precarious equilibrium between the rival powers Aceh, Johor and Portuguese Melaka. (5) The last

Under Afonso de Albuquerque's orders, the Flor do Mar supported the conquest of Malacca in 1511.

Shaping Indonesia

This well-researched and cogently presented study shows how images of an idealized China came to occupy a central place in Indonesia's post-independence political discourse. Indonesian leaders during the Sukarno era, Liu contends, admired Mao's China and sought from it "conceptual and practical inspiration" for their nation-building efforts.

Lee Kam Hing



Reviewed publication:
Hong Liu, *China and the shaping of Indonesia, 1949-1965*, Singapore: NUS Press / Kyoto Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 2011

TO BE SURE, China did not lend itself easily to favourable representation. Even with expanding Sino-Indonesia ties in the period of study, unease remained among Indonesians towards a rising

Chinese power set against historical memory of past invasion of Java by Mongol-ruled China. This was compounded by the presence of an economically strong Chinese minority in their midst. It was a wariness arising also out of the scars of the communist-led 1948 Madiun rebellion and of a resurgent Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). There was also a struggle for power among political forces, including the PKI and anti-communists. And, in an Indonesia which was a functional democracy there were intellectuals critical of China's authoritarian system and the lack of freedom in Chinese society.

Nation building

Liu argues that to Indonesians during the Sukarno years, China became more than just another nation-state. China, through multiple and sometimes conflicting images, featured in their many intense nation-building debates. Although Indonesia and China emerged as modern states at the same time in 1949, Indonesian intellectuals asked how China could achieve so much in such a short time while their country continued to be plagued by economic stagnation and internal political

problems. Liu suggests that the China image when considered by Indonesian leaders alongside their competing visions and aspirations was transformed into what he called 'the China metaphor'. The metaphor in reflecting the disappointments of Indonesians also served as a model to realize what they aspired for in their country.

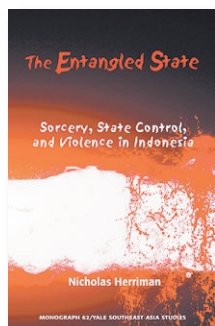
To capture Indonesia's China images, Liu who is one of China's leading scholars on Southeast Asia and presently Professor at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, went through what had been written about China by some sixty prominent Indonesians of the period. Some of the leaders were members of the PKI who, not surprisingly, viewed China favourably. Others were non-communists, among whom Sutan Sjahrir, a former Prime Minister, and Mohd Hatta who served as Vice-president. It was Indonesia's founding President Sukarno and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, its best-known novelist, who among all seemed most impressed by developments taking place in China.

For such a study, some may ask whether a sufficiently broad spectrum of views representative of important segments of society had been obtained and if these were drawn evenly from across the time period looked at. In this book, Indonesian writings cited came mainly from the 1950s with few references from Indonesia's Guided Democracy period when China featured strongly in Indonesian political consciousness and was itself encountering internal stresses. There is also no reference to the powerful Indonesian military whose views on China particularly those leading up to the 1965 PKI-linked Coup must have been pertinent to the China metaphor.

Social control from below

In *The Entangled State: Sorcery, State Control, and Violence in Indonesia*, Nicholas Herriman draws on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in East Java and as a result calls into question the common scholarly understanding of the Indonesian state.

Megan Brankley Abbas



Reviewed publication:
Herriman, N. 2012. *The Entangled State: Sorcery, State Control, and Violence in Indonesia*, New Haven: Council on Southeast Asia Studies at Yale University. 172 pages. ISBN: 9780938692980 (paperback)

SPECIFICALLY, HERRIMAN INVESTIGATES

community-instigated killings of alleged sorcerers in the East Javanese regency of Banyuwangi, a region which, in the wake of Suharto's fall, witnessed an outbreak of sorcerer murders. Herriman conducted participant observation fieldwork in one Banyuwangi village and complemented this in-depth research with scores of interviews throughout the regency on sorcery cases from 1998, as well as from past decades. From this material, he is able to paint a fascinating, textured picture of sorcery accusations and killings in contemporary East Java. Rather than attributing this sorcery-related violence to yet another form of state terror, Herriman positions sorcery as an ideal window into the multi-faceted and often times contradictory ways that the Indonesian state manifests itself at the level of the village. Looking at village officials in particular, Herriman elucidates how local state representatives faced an intractable dilemma between communal demands for (often violent) action against alleged sorcerers and a state logic of legality, rationality, and order.

Locally planned and popular violence

Herriman argues that village-level state officials are not only representatives of the Indonesian state but are also residents of their respective villages and are therefore deeply embedded within the social networks and norms of the community. As a result, these village officials are often sympathetic themselves to retributive actions against alleged sorcerers or subject to substantial communal pressure to allow such violence to occur. In attempting to navigate these village demands against the state imperative to maintain order, Herriman finds that local officials usually deploy one of three options: ignore the problem of sorcery altogether; seek to balance community demands with protection of the accused through re-location or protective custody; or openly side with perpetrators of retributive violence. In a majority of the cases he studied, Herriman notes that local officials "cave in to pressure from below" and therefore, to varying degrees,

compromise the state's absolute control over violence (99). For Herriman, this phenomenon of "social control from below" exemplifies the entangled nature of the state. In Herriman's words, "such entanglement produces a hybrid society in which local residents seek the state, rather than avoid it, adopting it into their lives on their own terms. In other words, the state is appropriated to local needs" (2). Therefore, the state is not separate and opposed to civil society; rather, the two are mutually constitutive with overlapping interests and claims to power.

Although Herriman grounds his analysis in the specific case of East Javanese sorcery killings, his concept of the 'entangled state' has broad implications for how to understand governance in modern Indonesian history. In this sense, the book serves as a welcome challenge to dominant academic accounts of the New Order as a violent, authoritarian state capable of terror and control at nearly every level of Indonesian life. Herriman criticizes such depictions of the New Order for being largely unsubstantiated and overly simplistic. Instead, he underscores the persistence of local participation and even initiative in *Reformasi*-era violence (from the East Javanese sorcery killings anti-sorcery to riots in Jakarta) as well as in the 1965-66 anti-communist massacres. While not denying oppressive behaviors on the part of the Indonesian state in either period, Herriman exposes locally planned and popular violence, thereby breaking down the false dichotomy between the immoral, authoritarian state and innocent, passive Indonesians. He therefore rejects the "overly sentimental" moral outrage which many academics have directed against the Indonesian state in exchange for a democratization of violence. On the sorcery killings in particular, Herriman writes: "my research indicates that local residents were not passive and peaceful Indonesians provoked into violence. They were not 'faced' with horror or 'living' with 'large armed groups dragging their neighbors away' or 'gripped by fear' at the 'bizarre and menacing' murders. Rather, they were actively involved in and leading these groups and were relieved to finally be rid of the 'accursed sorcerer' when they had finally killed them" (145). In this more democratic landscape of violence, ordinary Indonesians possess the agency to commit their own acts of terror. They are thus entangled in both collective violence and in the Indonesian state.

Discretion of the state

For the most part, *The Entangled State* is a convincing and much needed correction to prevailing depictions of the Indonesian state and of the New Order in particular. Nonetheless, there were moments when Herriman's argument would have benefited from

a more extended discussion of the legal role of the state in cases of sorcerer killings. Specifically, in which contexts were the killers of alleged sorcerers arrested and brought to trial? Who within the Indonesian state initiated these proceedings, and to what extent were representatives of the state divided over the legality and ethics of such cases? Moreover, the purported arbitrariness by which Indonesian state officials sought to prevent or, after the fact, to adjudicate the killings of alleged sorcerers perhaps points to an unexamined source of state power: discretion. Did the specter of potential prosecution for retributive violence against sorcerers exact any control over villagers? Over village officials? In order to make his argument about 'the entangled state' more persuasive, the book calls for a more detailed exploration of the mechanisms by which state power did exert itself, especially in the legal realm, in relationship to sorcery.

In his engaging examination of 'the entangled state', Herriman concludes that "local communities thus exert control over local state representatives, resulting in a breakdown of state control at the local level" (147). However, what exactly constitutes the local for Herriman? The book's fifth chapter provides a brief sketch of local village officials who reside in their constituencies versus 'supralocal' career bureaucrats who reside in towns; but, beyond the implication that villages are synonymous with the local, Herriman does not explicate the wider meaning of the term. Indeed, Herriman treats the local as a self-evident category – a problematic move given the significance of a 'local' perspective on the Indonesian state for the book's overall argument. At the core of this argument is Herriman's contention that local state officials are inextricably part of their local communities and therefore suffer from a dual loyalty to local concerns and state logics. Yet, are these aspects of 'local state representatives' confined only to villages? If so, then are mayors of small towns, provincial-level bureaucrats, or even ministry officials who work in Jakarta therefore *not* embedded in their own communities? Are they not subject to the demands of kin and neighbors? By extension, are the town, city, province, and nation then still governed by a self-contained and authoritarian state? By taking the category of the local as self-evident, Herriman continues to attribute state control to some undefined 'center' (for example, pg. 99), without taking the next logical step and questioning the autonomy of higher levels of state bureaucracy as well. In other words, how high up the ladder of state authority does the entangled-ness of the state go? Without a more critical discussion of the local as a category, Herriman allows the question to linger.

Despite the abovementioned critique, Nicholas Herriman's ethnographic study of sorcery in East Java provides both a nuanced glimpse into a fascinating moment in recent Indonesian history and contributes an important voice to the on-going scholarly discussion over state power in Indonesia. Filled with intriguing details of village politics, it thereby enriches our understanding of contemporary East Java, of sorcery, and of the relationship between violence and the Indonesian state.

Currently a doctoral candidate in History at Princeton University, Megan Brankley Abbas specializes in the study of Islam in South and Southeast Asia (brankley@princeton.edu)

Liu describes how leading Indonesians during the Sukarno years were invited to China as part of Beijing's efforts to win Indonesia's friendship amidst heightening Cold War tension in the region. These Indonesians returned with generally positive accounts of the country they saw. They found among the Chinese a sense of purposefulness, discipline and willingness to make sacrifices for the new nation. They saw cities that were clean and public services that worked. And entering China from Hong Kong, Indonesian visitors encountered a way of life they judged as less decadent. Liu sums up that China, to admiring Indonesians, was a nation undergoing economic growth with equitable sharing of wealth, of a populist regime supported by the people, and of intellectuals actively participating in nation-building.

For Pramoedya, it was universal humanism expressed by Chinese intellectuals that attracted his attention and on this he had much to share during his two trips to China in the late 1950s. Pramoedya was impressed too by the productive output of intellectuals and the higher rewards and status they were accorded compared to those in Indonesia.

Idealized image

Liu suggests that Indonesia's idealized image of China differed greatly from Western observers who viewed the country as a repressive, totalitarian communist state. Indonesians disassociated the China they admired from its communist ideology and instead credited the creation of a disciplined, cohesive and harmonious society to Chinese nationalism and the new democracy. Sukarno saw no incompatibilities between the ideas driving China and his

own views, and his interpretation of China's political experience served as a key rationale for the introduction of Guided Democracy that greatly concentrated power in the president's hands. Disenchanted with Western-style democracy, China as a model appealed to Sukarno.

In setting the discussion of the China metaphor within Indonesia's efforts at nation-building, Liu invites a relook at modernity theories beyond those that are Western-dominant. Elaborating on S.N Eisenstadt's reference to "multiple modernities" Liu asserted that a transnational and intranational flow of ideas and people encouraged the articulation of the idea of 'Asianism' and consequently the search for modernity in the Asian context. It was this two-way flow of ideas that led to an appreciation among Indonesia's political elite of another path to modernity which was Chinese in nature.

The Chinese metaphor in Indonesia's search for an alternative modernity route is a fascinating proposition by Liu. Nevertheless, in the wider Indonesian society deeply rooted in Islam and Javanese culture, one is reminded that there had always been competing sources of inspirations and strategies to overcome the country's economic and political challenges. That the Chinese model was most positively appreciated, as Liu noted, simply underlined "the complex characteristics and ambivalent nature" of Indonesia's intellectuals and politicians as well as of the political mood of the period.

More nuanced understanding

Indonesia's contemplation of the China route ended abruptly following the failed PKI-inspired coup in 1965 and the over-

throw of Sukarno. The China that captured the imagination of Indonesian leaders itself went through political convulsions during the Cultural Revolution.

Diplomatic relations between Jakarta and Beijing were restored only in 1990. But it is a different China that Indonesians today encounter. China has abandoned many of the features that once impressed visiting Indonesians and Beijing has since 1978 embarked on reforms and a more open economy. It is not world revolution that propels China's return to Indonesia but markets and natural resources. Indonesia too has changed to a politically freer and more competitive environment. Indonesian leaders, like those who preceded them, recognize the progress and potential of an emerging China.

Liu Hong's study draws together very complex sets of perceptions and perspectives into a coherent narrative. This is timely and helpful in enabling an understanding not only of evolving relations between China and Indonesia, but also how Indonesians view their country's development both in the past and the present. It brings new research approaches, drawing upon extensive and little used Indonesian and Chinese sources including recently opened records of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, to achieve a richer and more nuanced understanding not only of Indonesia's turbulent Constitutional and Guided Democracy years but also of a society's self-criticism amidst competing aspirations.

Lee Kam Hing is a Senior Research Fellow at the Social and Behavioural Science Research Cluster, University of Malaya (cckhlee@um.edu)