

CHINESE INDONESIANS

Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting

edited by
Tim Lindsey
Helen Pausacker



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INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES, Singapore

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The **Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)** was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional research centre for scholars and other specialists concerned with modern Southeast Asia, particularly the many-faceted problems of stability and security, economic development, and political and social change. The Institute's research programmes are the Regional Economic Studies (RES, including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS).

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Preface

The pressure on *peranakan* Chinese themselves to forget and the tendency of others to distort or neglect their role are giving way to a constructive remembering [of] the part which they have played in the development of Indonesian literature as a whole.

(Charles Coppel 1995)¹

This volume honours, and reflects on, the life and work of Charles Coppel, who retired from the University of Melbourne in 2002. Throughout his academic career, Charles researched aspects of Indonesian Chinese, but his interests — as reflected in this volume — were broad, ranging from history, politics, legal issues, and violence against the Chinese to culture and religion.²

As students, colleagues, and friends of Charles, the authors of the chapters in this volume have all been influenced by his work and his interest in our research. The chapters in this volume have been chosen both because of the authors' personal links with Charles and because they reflect his own areas of interest within the field.

The chapters also all reflect the theme “remembering, distorting, forgetting”, as used in Charles' article “Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting: Sino-Malay Literature in Independent Indonesia”. In his work, Charles emphasized this theme to draw attention to misrepresentations of the Chinese, seeking to locate the realities behind the myths which form the basis for the racism and xenophobia they have often experienced in Indonesia. The chapters selected for this Festschrift reflect the same themes.

Jemma Purdey analyses incidents of violence against the Chinese in Indonesia during the *reformasi* period and in particular the rape of Chinese women in Jakarta in 1998. She queries whether there has been any “improvement” in attitudes towards the Chinese. Can traditions of violence towards the Chinese be forgotten?

Tim Lindsey focuses on changes to the Indonesian legal system post-Soeharto and the effects of these changes on the Indonesian Chinese. Successive governments since the New Order have pointed to reforms they claim have removed formal discrimination. This chapter asks whether this is a distortion of reality and whether New Order discrimination is still legislatively “remembered”.

Leo Suryadinata details the changing role of Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism in the past and reviews changes which have occurred

since *reformasi*. The use of religion to define the Chinese has politicized their belief system, thereby distorting it. As politics change, so do Chinese beliefs.

Arief Budiman details the debate about assimilation or integration of the Chinese from a historical perspective and questions the direction this will take in the current *reformasi* or post-Soeharto period. Will Chinese identity be remembered or forgotten?

Mary Somers Heidhues discusses the Makam Juang Mandor monument in West Kalimantan, which commemorates the victims of Japanese atrocities in World War II, and subsequent reinterpretations of the event, in particular the role of the Chinese. Her chapter looks at how memory has reinvented the Chinese in the revolutionary period, at their expense, and ties it to post-Soeharto Indonesia.

Claudine Salmon examines the involvement of political radicals in Confucianist religion in the late colonial period. She considers how the Chinese managed their relationship between their political and religious identity as Chinese and the inevitable distortions created by their roles as members of colonial East Indian society.

Jean Taylor analyses the role of the Chinese in the spread of Islam in Indonesian societies, suggesting that the Chinese played an important part in connecting those societies to an Islamic network, thereby exposing the people to Islamic people, ideas, and knowledge. Her chapter suggests that this link has been deliberately “forgotten”, edited out of accounts of Indonesian Islam.

Christine Pitt examines the distorting impact of modernity on the courting patterns of the Indonesian Chinese in the early decades of the twentieth century. Her chapter follows choices made by Chinese men and women between European and local modes of expression when writing to newspaper “agony” columns.

Helen Pausacker contests the stereotype of the Indonesian Chinese as solely concerned with business by exploring their involvement in Javanese *wayang* (shadow puppetry), usually viewed as the pinnacle of an entirely “indigenous” Javanese culture. The dominant paradigm in accounts of *wayang* has forgotten the Chinese, her chapter argues.

The editors of this volume are both former undergraduate and post-graduate students of Charles Coppel. We have also taught his courses and worked for him as research assistants. We wish to acknowledge the ongoing influence of Charles on our academic and professional work, and, in particular, his rigorous historiography and his attention to detail in research. Most important, however, is Charles’ loyalty as a friend and

mentor. As with many of his former students and colleagues, Charles has maintained an ongoing interest in our professional lives and writing, supporting and encouraging us for decades after the formal teaching relationship has ended. For this we (and countless others) are grateful. It has been a privilege to edit this volume.

We would like to thank Kathryn Taylor, Administrator of the Asian Law Centre at the University of Melbourne, and Claudine Salmon for their assistance with the Chinese words in this volume. Our gratitude is also due to ISEAS for their strong support for this project.

Ultimately, however, this volume is not just a tribute to Charles Coppel. We believe it stands in its own right as a reflection of current writing on the Chinese in Indonesia.

Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker
Melbourne
February 2004

Notes

- ¹ Charles Coppel, "Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting: Sino-Malay Literature in Independent Indonesia", first published in *Asian Culture* (Singapore), 19 June 1995, pp. 14–28 and reproduced in *Studying Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia* (Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 2002), pp. 191–212.
- ² See this volume for his biography (p. x) and bibliography of his work (p. 9).

Charles Coppel

A Brief Biography

Charles Antony Coppel was born in Melbourne on 6 July 1937, the son of Elias Godfrey “Bill” Coppel (1896–1978) and Marjorie Jean Service (1900–70), both of whom had strong links with the University of Melbourne, recognized by their inclusion in the university’s *150 Years: 150 People* sesquicentenary publication.

Charles was educated at Caulfield Grammar and Geelong Grammar. In 1955 he became the first (and, perhaps, the only!) male student to study at Merton Hall (Melbourne Girls Grammar), attending French classes with other students, as well as additional classes with a private tutor in the Botanical Gardens.

After matriculating in 1954 in classical European languages, pure and applied mathematics, and English expression and literature, he matriculated again at the end of the following year, this time in modern European languages (French and Italian) and British History. During this second year Charles travelled to Europe, where he studied at the University of Grenoble and the University for Foreigners in Perugia, and travelled more widely in France, Italy, England, and Wales. On his way to and from Europe in 1955, he stopped over very briefly in Jakarta, his first contact with Indonesia.

In 1956 Charles commenced studies at the University of Melbourne for his undergraduate degree in Law. As one of his first year non-law subjects, he chose Economic Geography where he made his first Indonesian friend, Zainu’ddin, later an academic colleague.

In 1960 Charles graduated with his Honours LLB degree, in the company of future Supreme Court judges, Stephen Charles and John Batt. Soon after, he commenced articles with Phillips Fox and Masel, a prominent Melbourne firm of solicitors. In 1961 Charles was called to the Victorian Bar and became one of the first tenants of the new building for barristers, Owen Dixon Chambers. As counsel, Charles appeared in a range of courts, from Petty Sessions (now the Magistrates Court) to the High Court, twice led by his father.

During his student years, Charles was called up for compulsory National Service training. While he was still a member of the Citizens Military Force, an appeal was made for volunteers to study the Indonesian language. Charles volunteered, thinking that this would be more

useful than shouldering a rifle, but abandoned this idea when compulsory National Service was abolished. In 1963, however, Charles joined the University of Melbourne's Summer School Indonesian language programme, taught by Pieter Sarumpaet. The following year, he commenced Indonesian studies in earnest in the Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies and in 1965, under Jamie Mackie's guidance, began to research the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia for the first time. He was commencing more than three decades of research in this field.

By the end of 1965, Charles found that Indonesian studies had become more interesting than the practice of the law and so he left the Bar. He supported himself and his family by tutoring in the Monash Law School (Teaching Fellow, 1966; Senior Teaching Fellow, 1967), while undertaking an M.A. (Prelim) in Political Science at Monash (1966–67). At the same time he studied Indonesian language and literature with Idrus, Harry Aveling, Rabin Hardjadibrata, and others. His closest academic relationship then was, however, with his supervisor Herb Feith who in 1968 persuaded him to convert what was by then a full M.A. candidature into a Ph.D. candidature. Charles was inspired by Mary Somers' seminal work on *peranakan* Chinese politics to do more in this area.

Over 1968–69 he spent a full year doing fieldwork in Indonesia. This was still a tumultuous and difficult time in Indonesia. Soeharto had just been confirmed as President and the New Order was being created in the wake of violence and killings. The ethnic Chinese felt themselves to be in a precarious position and Charles' work focused on their ethnic and political identities.

After his return to Monash in 1969, he worked on his contribution to *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays*, edited by Jamie Mackie, followed by another four months' fieldwork in Indonesia in 1970. In 1971 he tutored in Politics and then, in 1972, lectured in Indonesian Politics, during Herb Feith's absence on study leave. In 1973 Charles was appointed to a continuing position at the University of Melbourne as Lecturer in Indonesian Studies in the Department of East and Southeast Asian Studies (a merger of the former departments of Indonesian and Malayan Studies and Oriental Studies), where his Indonesian colleagues included Sarumpaet, Slamet, Zainu'ddin, Hendrata, and others.

In 1975 Charles' Ph.D. was completed and it was later published as *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, still a leading text in the field.

In 1978 Charles was promoted to Senior Lecturer and appointed Deputy Chairman of the Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies (which had regained its independence in 1976). In 1979 Charles became Chair-

man of the department, a position he held for almost a decade through its further 1983 *mutasi* (permutations) to become the Department of Indian and Indonesian Studies (a strictly alphabetical order, he advises), until that department too ceased to exist at the end of 1987. He then moved to the somewhat more resilient Department of History. The university's error in closing down a department for Indonesian studies was realized a decade later, when it was revived as part of the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies, of which Charles became an adjunct member.

Charles also held positions as Associate Dean in the Faculty of Arts from 1979 to 1981 and was Deputy Chair of the School of Asian Studies in 1987. In fact, for much of the 1980s and 1990s, Charles played a leading role in the development of Asian studies across the university. In 1992 he was appointed Associate Professor, in connection with his joint appointments as Co-ordinator of Asian Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Associate Director, Asian Business Centre (1989–92). With Professor Malcolm Smith, Charles thus became responsible then for co-ordination and policy development of Asian studies across the university. The current strong standing of Asian studies at the University of Melbourne owes much to Charles' persistent advocacy and energy.

In 1994 Charles was formally promoted to Associate Professor and, in the same year, became one of the early convenors of the Indonesia Interest Group (now the Indonesia Forum). For almost a decade the Forum has been the largest and most active country interest network on the campus. This is in large part a result of Charles' work both as Convenor and later as Deputy Convenor and, in particular, as the manager of his widely received e-mail Indonesia news service, a major contribution to the development of Australia as an internationally recognized centre for Indonesian studies.

Charles can now reflect on an illustrious career as a leading scholar of Indonesian studies, the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, and broader issues of race and identity. He has also made a lasting contribution to the development and administration of Indonesian studies at the University of Melbourne. He has been a generous colleague and supporter of countless younger scholars, both in Australia and internationally.

Tim Lindsey
October 2002

Contributors

Arief Budiman was born in Jakarta in 1941. Arief initially trained as a psychologist and then became a sociologist. He is currently Foundation Professor of Indonesian and Head of the Indonesian Programme in the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies at the University of Melbourne, researching the political-economic problems of the transition to democracy in Indonesia since 1998. He has known Charles Coppel since the 1960s, when Charles was in Indonesia, collecting data for his Ph.D. thesis on the Chinese Indonesians.

Tim Lindsey is Director of the Asian Law Centre and an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Melbourne. Tim's doctoral thesis was on Indonesian history and he now specializes in Indonesian law and Islamic legal systems. His publications include *The Romance of K'tut Tantri and Indonesia*; *Indonesia: Law and Society*; and, with Howard Dick, *Corruption in Asia: Rethinking the Governance Paradigm*. Tim was a student of Charles Coppel, first as an undergraduate and then during his doctoral studies. He later became a colleague, teaching with him in the History Department at the University of Melbourne. They have since published articles in books edited by each other.

Helen Pausacker studied *wayang*, both as performance art and a research topic, in Solo, Central Java, for about four years, over the period 1976–98. Her publications include *Behind the Shadows: Understanding a Wayang Performance*. She currently works as a research assistant in the Asian Law Centre at the University of Melbourne. Helen was a student of Charles Coppel in the 1970s and has worked with him in an administrative capacity, as a research assistant, and lecturing in one of his courses.

Christine Pitt was a student in the Department of Indonesian and Malaysian Studies at the University of Melbourne when Charles Coppel began lecturing there in 1973. She recently organized a thirty-year student reunion to mark his retirement. Christine wrote the article in this collection when she returned to study an M.A. Prelim. with Charles in 1984. She is currently an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher, having maintained a wide interest in Indonesian and other languages and cultures.

Jemma Purdey completed her Ph.D. on “Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia, 1996–99” at the University of Melbourne. Her interests include representations of violence in Indonesia, human rights, and the legal position of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia today. She has contributed articles to a number of publications, including *Asian Survey* and *Asian Ethnicity*. She is a former student, supervisee, and colleague of Charles Coppel.

Claudine Salmon is Director of Research Emeritus at the CNRS, Paris. She graduated from the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, then studied history at Beijing University (1964–66). Claudine conducted fieldwork in Indonesia (1966–69) and took her Doctorat-ès Lettres in 1970. She has written extensively on the history of the relations between China and Southeast Asia and of the Chinese in Insulinde. She has been a colleague and friend of Charles Coppel for almost thirty years.

Mary Somers Heidhues has taught in Germany and the United States, most recently as Visiting Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Passau. Among her publications are *Southeast Asia: A Concise History* (2000) and *Golddiggers, Farmers, and Traders: The Chinese in West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (2003). With Charles Coppel she shares a decades-long fascination with Indonesia’s *peranakan* Chinese.

Leo Suryadinata is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore). He was formerly Professor, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore. He was a postgraduate student at Monash when Charles Coppel was doing his Ph.D. there. They jointly published a paper on the Indonesian Chinese in Indonesia in September 1970. His most recent books include *Elections and Politics in Indonesia* (2002) and *Indonesia’s Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (with Evi Arifin and Aris Ananta, 2003).

Jean Gelman Taylor is Associate Professor of History at the University of New South Wales. She teaches general Southeast Asian History and the seminars Understanding Indonesia, Chinese in Southeast Asia, Southeast Asian Historiography, and Islamic Worlds. Her research focuses on the social history of colonialism, particularly the interactions of Asians and Europeans in Indonesian history; and the uses of costume, painting,

and photography in writing the history of Indonesia. Her most recent book is *Indonesia: Peoples and Histories* (2003), and she is a contributing author to *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, edited by Norman G. Owen (2005). Her relationship with Charles Coppel goes back to the first day of Indonesian language class at the University of Melbourne when both were students of Jamie Mackie and the late Pieter Sarumpaet.

Glossary

Chinese words list Hokkien first, with the Chinese characters and the Hanyu Pinyin transliteration following, in italics. Titles of publications are also listed in italics in the left-hand column.

Adi Buddha	Great Buddha
Agama Khonghucu	see Khonghucu
ang pao (紅包 <i>hongbao</i>)	red envelopes containing money, often given to children at the Chinese New Year
asli	“original”, indigenous
Ba Xian (八仙)	the Eight Immortals
babad, hikayat	metrical chronicles composed in Javanese and Malay, which narrate the history of societies in the Indonesian archipelago
Badan Kordinasi Masalah-Cina	Chinese Problem Co-ordinating Body
bahasa Indonesia	Indonesian language
bahasa Melajoe	so-called Sino-Malay or low Malay, used in the marketplace, frequently by Chinese Indonesians
bangsa	nation, race, ethnic group
Banteng Muda Indonesia	Young Wild Bulls of Indonesia (paramilitary organization associated with PDI-P)
Baperki (Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia)	Consultative Body for Indonesian Citizenship
Barongsai (獅子[舞] <i>shizi [wu]</i>)	lion [dance]
Begawan	title given to a spiritual master (often a hermit, priest, or ascetic)
Boen Bio	see Bun bio

Bulog (Badan Urusan Logistik)	National Logistics Agency
Bun bio (文廟 Wen miao or Kong miao 孔廟)	Temple of Literature; also called Temple to Confucius; see also Lithang
Bun Su	see Haksu
Burgerlijke Stand	Civil Registration Offices, now known as Kantor Catatan Sipil
Burgerlijke Wetboek	Code of Civil Procedure, now known as Kitab Undang-undang Hukum Dagang
buta	demons in <i>wayang</i>
camat	regional administrative sub-district
Cap Go Me (十五夜 Shiwu ye)	the fifteenth day of the first lunar month (Lantern Festival); alternative spelling: Cap Go Meh
cempala	wooden mallet used to tap on the puppet chest to call for particular musical pieces in a <i>wayang</i> performance
Cina	official state term for Chinese and China in the New Order — considered insulting by many Chinese; see also Tionghoa
commies	clerk in the Dutch colonial administration
cukong	financiers (usually ethnic Chinese) who engage in illegal practices and co-operation with the authorities
Dalmas (pengendali massa)	crowd control troops
dhalang	puppeteer (Javanese spelling. Indonesian spelling is <i>dalang</i>)
DPR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat)	People's Representative Council, the Indonesian legislature

ekonomi rakyat	people's economy
FKS (Forum Kepedulian Sosial)	Social Welfare Forum
gamelan	traditional Indonesian percussion music, performed in a number of regions, including Java and Bali
gereja aneh	strange church
gereja karismatik	charismatic church
Giok Hong Siang Tee Sioe Tan (玉皇上帝壽誕 <i>Yuhuang shangdi shoudan</i>)	birthday of the Emperor of Jade celebrated on the ninth day of the Chinese New Year
Goan Tan (元旦 <i>Yuandan</i>)	the first day of the Chinese New Year (New Year's Day)
Guangfu hui 光復會	Society for the Return of Light, a short-lived revolutionary movement, founded in Japan in 1904
gunungan	see kayon
Guru Agung	Great Teacher
Haksu (學士 <i>xueshi</i>), Bun Su (文士 <i>wenshi</i>), and Kauw Seng (教生 <i>jiaosheng</i>)	Sino-Indonesian organization of Confucian priesthood, with three different ranks (Top Priest, Confucian teachers, and missionaries)
Hansip	community security guard
Hezhong xuetang 和中學堂	School of Harmony and Equilibrium, established by supporters of the movement <i>Zhonghe tang</i> (see entry in this glossary)
hikayat	see babad
Hokkien Kong Tik Soe (福建 功德祠 <i>Fujian gongde ci</i>)	Fujian Temple of Merits, founded in 1862, to promote Chinese culture and revive Chinese customs in weddings and funerals
Hongmen hui 洪門會	a secret society