

# A History of Modern Indonesia



**M. C. Ricklefs**

# **A History of Modern Indonesia** *c. 1300 to the present*

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MACMILLAN

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# Preface

This is a textbook designed for the serious student who wishes to investigate the history of Indonesia since the coming of Islam. It is intended to meet a need found by those whose study has been hampered by the large number and specialised nature of the major works on the subject, the high proportion of these which are written in foreign languages and the difficulty of gaining access to some of them. Students have also found that the existing literature sometimes over-emphasises either colonial aspects or the exoticism of Indonesia, and fails to provide a clear chronology within which to orient their study. This book therefore aims to provide a basic but detailed narrative of Indonesian history since *c.* 1300, an introduction to the major issues of the period and a guide to the most important published secondary sources (or primary sources where no adequate secondary sources exist). My aim is, thus, to facilitate students' progress to more advanced levels of study. The need for such a book has been evident for some time, but it is only recently that the study of Indonesian history has reached a sufficient level of coverage and sophistication over the whole period for such a textbook to be possible. Significant gaps remain in our knowledge, but the major lacunae have now been investigated.

Indonesia's recorded history does not begin where this book begins, but about a thousand years before. The earliest inscriptions of the Indonesian archipelago are on seven stone pillars from Kutai in East Kalimantan, which on paleographic grounds are dated to *c.* AD 400. Chinese references are also available from a very early time. Indigenous sources and Chinese records have enabled scholars to reconstruct much of the history of the pre-Islamic states of Indonesia, which included some of the major empires of the ancient world. One of the greatest of these, Majapahit, is discussed briefly in chapter 2 simply because it falls within the chronological limits of this book.

These pre-Islamic states were Hindu—Buddhist, and they left major literary and artistic legacies which, as will be seen in chapter 5, continued to be influential long after the coming of Islam. The social, administrative and political traditions of these states also had an abiding influence. This early period has many problems of evidence and interpretation and is in much need of further study. For this reason, I decided not to attempt to cover it in this book. Some important works on Majapahit are listed in the notes and references for chapter 2. On the other pre-Islamic states see Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche geschiedenis*; Coedès, *Les états hindouisés* (in English as *Indianized states of Southern Asia*); Wolters, *Early Indonesian commerce*; and van Naerssen's essay in van Naerssen and de Jongh, *Economic and administrative history of early Indonesia*.

The period since *c.* 1300 appears to me to make a coherent historical unit,

which this book calls Modern Indonesian History. There are of course significant sub-periods within modern Indonesian history, as is reflected by the division of the book into parts and chapters. Three fundamental elements give the period historical unity. The first is cultural and religious: the Islamisation of Indonesia which began *c.* 1300 and continues today. The second is topical: the interplay between Indonesians and Westerners which began *c.* 1500 and still continues. The third is historiographical: primary sources throughout this period are written almost exclusively in the modern forms of Indonesian languages (Javanese, Malay, etc., rather than Old Javanese or Old Malay) and in European languages. Between *c.* 1300 and *c.* 1500 these elements emerged, and have remained ever since.

The writer of any history textbook must decide whether to give preference to broad interpretative themes or to the detailed, and sometimes confusing, progress of events. My experience suggests that students find interpretative treatments more readable but less useful than detailed narratives. I also prefer a detailed narrative in principle, for if the basic evidence is presented, readers are more able to arrive at their own generalisations or to question others'. I therefore decided that this book should give first place to the detailed historical evidence. There is no attempt here to impose any new synthesis upon Indonesian history, although of course my views are implicit throughout the volume.

This book gives the history of Java greater precedence than it may seem to deserve. There are four reasons for this. First, Java has received more historical study than the other islands and is therefore better known. Second, its people represent over half the population of Indonesia. Third, it has been the centre of much of the political history of both colonial and independent periods and exerted an influence over other areas greater than their influence outside their own regions, and thus carries greater significance for the history of Indonesia as a whole. And fourth, it is the area upon which all of my own research has concentrated and this personal element has naturally coloured the book. Further research will undoubtedly make it possible to study outer island areas more adequately in the future than is now the case.

No scholar masters more than a small portion of the primary sources for the topics covered in this book, nearly seven centuries of history over the world's largest archipelago. Much of this volume is thus a paraphrase or summary of the work of others, whose publications are listed in the Bibliography. Like any textbook, this one may at times simply repeat, and even add to, the mistakes of others. To minimise this problem I have called upon several colleagues and friends for comments upon draft chapters. Very substantial parts of the book have been read by Prof. C. D. Cowan, Prof. C. Fasseur, Dr H. J. de Graaf and Dr A. J. S. Reid. Dr J. S. Bastin, Dr P. B. R. Carey, Prof. James J. Fox, Dr E. U. Kratz, Prof. J. D. Legge, Dr Ruth T. McVey, Dr P. Voorhoeve and Prof. P. J. Zoetmulder, S. J., have also given me valuable suggestions on sections of the book. To all of them I am deeply indebted. The errors which remain are, of course, entirely my responsibility. I owe special gratitude to my students who read most of the book in draft, helped me to decide what was needed and encouraged me to believe that the book was worth writing. Many Indonesians gave me information which was invaluable for the last chapters of the book, but mostly on the understanding that it was not attributable to them.

*M. C. Ricklefs*

# A Note on Orthography

The various Indonesian languages which appear in this book sometimes have differing transcription systems or orthography. For all words and proper names in modern Indonesian languages, I have used a standardised spelling based upon the reformed Indonesian system of 1972. Old Javanese appears in the standard Sanskrit transcription. For words which exist in both Indonesian and regional languages, I have ignored regional spellings (thus, Indonesian *dalang* rather than Javanese *dbalang*). For the twentieth century, however, there are exceptions which are explained below. Since the 1972 system does not distinguish among the different pronunciations of the letter *e*, I have added ě to represent /ə/ (like the *e* in 'fallen'). The character *e* is pronounced either /e/ or /ɛ/ (like either the *a* in 'fate' or the *e* in 'set'). In some names which are commonly used in English, I have used the conventional spelling (thus, Malacca rather than Mělaka and Java rather than Jawa).

Consonants have generally the same value as in English except for *c* which is pronounced like the *ch* in 'chair' and *sy* which is pronounced like the *sh* in 'share'. Vowels are also pronounced as in English, except for the *a* in Javanese words which is pronounced rather like English *o* when it appears in penultimate and final syllables without final consonants. Thus, Mangkunegara is pronounced 'Mangkuněgoró' but Mangkuněgaran is pronounced as it is spelled. As an aid to pronunciation, it is generally true that the stress in Indonesian languages falls upon the penultimate syllable.

As local scripts gave way to romanisation in the twentieth century, a variety of spellings was used. In this book I have followed the principle of spelling personal names and publication titles as they were spelled at the time. Organisations, however, have been spelled according to the standard 1972 system unless there is a clearly established convention in modern scholarly works (thus, Budi Utomo rather than the correct form Budi Utama).

In the twentieth century individuals used Dutch orthography and either pre-1972 or (now) post-1972 Indonesian orthography. Javanese commonly use *o* rather than *a* where the latter is pronounced 'o'. The pre-1972 orthographies differ from the 1972 system primarily in using Dutch rather than English consonants: *tj* rather than *c*, *dj* rather than *j*, and *j* rather than *y*. Dutch orthography additionally differs in using *oe* for *u*. Thus, in the twentieth century the Javanese name Sujana (pronounced 'Sujono') might be spelled Soedjana, Soedjono, Sudjono, Sudjana, Sujana or Sujono. In the last two cases, there is no way of knowing whether this is a person named Sujana using the 1972 system or one named Suyana using the pre-1972 system.

For Arabic words, names and titles, a conventional transcription system is used. Chinese names are given in Pinyin, but the first time a name is mentioned it is also given in the Wade-Giles transcription if this differs from Pinyin. Wherever I have been able to establish them, life- or reign-dates are given when an individual is first mentioned.

# Abbreviations

AD	<i>Anno Domini</i> , the Christian era
AH	<i>Anno Hijrae</i> , the Islamic era
AJ	<i>Anno Javano</i> , the Javanese era
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
b.	born
CSI	Centraal Sarekat Islam, Sarekat Islam Central (headquarters)
d.	died
DPR(—GR)	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (— Gotong Royong), (Mutual-Cooperation) People's Representative Council
f.	Dutch florins/guilders
HIS	Hollandsch-Inlandsche School, Dutch-Native School
ISDV	Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereniging, Indies Social-Democratic Association
KNIP	Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat, Central Indonesian National Committee
MIAI	Majlis Islam A'laa Indonesia, Supreme Islamic Council of Indonesia
MPR(S)	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (Sementara), (Provisional) People's Consultative Assembly
MULO	Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs, More Extended Lower Education (school)
NU	Nahdatul Ulama/Nahdlatul 'Ulama, Rise of the Religious Scholars (organisation)
OSVIA	Opleidingschool voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren, Training School for Native Officials
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia, Indonesian Communist Party
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian Nationalist Party
PNI-Baru	Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian Nationalist Education (party)
PRRI	Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia, Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic
PSI	Partai Sosialis Indonesia, Indonesian Socialist Party
PSII	Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Union Party
r.	reigned
Rp.	Rupiah
Ś	Śaka era
SI	Sarekat Islam, Islamic Union
SOBSI	Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, Central All-Indonesia Workers' Organisation
STOVIA	School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen, School for Training Native Doctors
UN	United Nations
VOC	Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, (Dutch) United East India Company

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# I The Emergence of the Modern Era



# 1 The Coming of Islam

The spread of Islam is one of the most significant processes of Indonesian history, but also one of the most obscure. Muslim traders had apparently been present in some parts of Indonesia for several centuries before Islam became established within the local communities. When, why and how the conversion of Indonesians began has been debated by several scholars, but no definite conclusions have been possible because the records of Islamisation which survive are so few, and often so uninformative. In general, two processes probably occurred. On the one hand, indigenous Indonesians came into contact with Islam and made an act of conversion. On the other, foreign Asians (Arabs, Indians, Chinese, etc.) who were already Muslims settled permanently in an Indonesian area, intermarried and adopted local lifestyles to such a degree that in effect they became Javanese or Malay or whatever. These two processes may often have occurred in conjunction with each other, and when a piece of evidence survives indicating, for instance, that a Muslim dynasty had been established in some area, it is often impossible to know which of these two processes was the more important.

The most reliable evidence for the spread of Islam consists of Islamic inscriptions (mostly tombstones) and a few travellers' accounts. The earliest surviving Muslim gravestone on which the date is clear is found at Leran in East Java and is dated AH 475 (AD 1082). This was the gravestone of a woman, a daughter of someone named Maimun. It has, however, been doubted whether the grave to which the stone belongs was actually in Java, or whether the stone was for some reason transported to Java (for instance, as ballast on a ship) sometime after the lady's death. In any case, since the deceased appears to have been a non-Indonesian Muslim, this stone sheds no light on the establishment of Islam among Indonesians.

The first evidence of Indonesian Muslims concerns the northern part of Sumatra. When the Venetian traveller Marco Polo touched at Sumatra on his way home from China in 1292, he found that Pĕrlak was a Muslim town, while two nearby places which he called 'Basma(n)' and 'Samara' were not. 'Basma(n)' and 'Samara' have often been identified with Pasai and Samudra, but this identification is open to question. It is possible either that 'Samara' is not Samudra, or if it is that Polo was wrong in saying that it was non-Muslim. For the gravestone of the first Muslim ruler of Samudra, Sultan Malik as-Salih, has been found, and is dated AH 696 (AD 1297). This is the first clear evidence of the existence of a Muslim dynasty in the Indonesian-Malay area, and further gravestones demonstrate that from the late thirteenth century this part of North Sumatra remained under Islamic rule. The Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta passed through Samudra on his way to and from China in 1345 and 1346, and found that the ruler was a

follower of the Shafi'i school of law. This confirms the presence from an early date of the school which was later to dominate Indonesia, although it is possible that the other three Orthodox schools (Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali) were also present at an early time.

Two late-fourteenth-century gravestones from Minye Tujoh in North Sumatra appear to document the continuing cultural transition there. The two stones are in the same form, but one has an Arabic inscription and the other an Old Malay inscription in paleo-Sumatran characters, both inscriptions being Islamic. They both date the death of a daughter of a deceased Sultan Malik az-Zahir, but although they have the same month, date and day of the week, they differ by ten years (AH 781 and 791 / AD 1380, 1389). It seems likely that there is an error in one of the years, that both inscriptions refer to the same woman and that she was therefore commemorated with inscriptions in two languages and two scripts. After this time, the documents from North Sumatra are wholly in the Arabic script.

From the fourteenth century survives evidence of the spread of Islam to Trëngganu (in what is now northeast Malaysia) and to East Java. The Trëngganu stone is a fragment of a legal edict. The date at the end appears to be incomplete, however, and the possible range of dates for this inscription is between AD 1303 and 1387. The stone appears to represent the introduction of Islamic law into a previously non-Islamic area, as is suggested by the predominance of Sanskrit over Arabic words, even for such an important word as God, which is given in one case as *dewata mulia raya* rather than *Allah*.

A particularly significant series of gravestones is found in the East Javanese graveyards of Trawulan and Tralaya, near the site of the Hindu-Buddhist court of Majapahit (see chapter 2). These stones mark the burial of Muslims, but with one exception they are dated in the Indian Śāka era rather than the Islamic *Anno Hijrae* and use Old Javanese rather than Arabic numerals. The Śāka era was used by the Javanese courts from Old Javanese times down to AD 1633, and its presence on these tombstones and the use of Old Javanese numerals mean that these are almost certainly the tombs of Javanese, as opposed to foreign, Muslims. The earliest is found at Trawulan, bearing the date Ś 1290 (AD 1368–9). At Tralaya is a series of gravestones extending from Ś 1298 to 1533 (AD 1376–1611). These stones carry Qur'anic quotations and pious formulae. From the elaborate decoration on some of them and their proximity to the site of the Majapahit capital, Damais concluded that these were probably the graves of very distinguished Javanese, perhaps even members of the royal family.

These East Javanese stones therefore suggest that some members of the Javanese elite adopted Islam at a time when the Hindu-Buddhist state of Majapahit was at the very height of its glory. These were, moreover, the first Javanese Muslims of whom evidence survives. Since evidence is so scanty, of course it cannot be said with certainty that these were the first Javanese adherents to Islam. But the Trawulan and Tralaya gravestones certainly contradict, and therefore cast grave doubts upon, the view formerly held by scholars that Islam originated on the coast of Java and initially represented a religious and political force which opposed Majapahit.

The likelihood or otherwise of Javanese courtiers embracing Islam before Javanese coastal communities did so is influenced by one's view of the relative

importance of traders and Sufis as the bringers of Islam; this issue is discussed below. There can be little doubt that Majapahit, with its far-flung political and trading contacts outside Java (see chapter 2), would have seen foreign Muslim traders. The problem is whether its sophisticated courtiers would have been attracted to a religion of merchants. Mystical Islamic teachers, perhaps claiming supernatural powers, seem a more plausible agent of conversion in Javanese court circles, which had long been familiar with the mystical speculations of Hinduism and Buddhism.

When Islam began to be adopted among the communities of the north coast of Java is unclear. In 1416, the Chinese Muslim Ma Huan visited the coast of Java and left a report in his book *Ying-yai Sheng-lan* ('Description of the Ocean Coasts', compiled in 1451) that there were only three kinds of people in Java: Muslims from the west, Chinese (some of them Muslims) and the heathen Javanese. Since the Trawulan and Tralaya gravestones show that there were Javanese Muslims at the court some fifty years before this time, Ma Huan's report suggests that Islam was indeed adopted by Javanese courtiers before coastal Javanese began to convert. An early Muslim gravestone dated AH 822 (AD 1419) has been found at Grěsik, one of the most important East Javanese ports. It marks the burial of one Malik Ibrahim, but since this gentleman was apparently not Javanese it merely confirms the presence of foreign Muslims in Java, and sheds no further light on the question of coastal Javanese conversion. Local traditions, however, say that Malik Ibrahim was one of the first nine apostles of Islam in Java (the *wali sanga*), a tradition for which there is no documentary evidence.

Around the beginning of the fifteenth century, the great Malay trading state of Malacca was founded. Its history will be considered briefly in chapter 2. Malacca was the most important trading centre of the western archipelago, and therefore became a centre for foreign Muslims and apparently a supporter of the spread of Islam. From Malacca and elsewhere survive gravestones showing this spread in the Malay Peninsula. The gravestone of Malacca's sixth Sultan, Mansur Syah (d. AH 822 / AD 1477), has been found, as has the gravestone of the first Sultan of Pahang, Muhammad Syah (d. AH 880 / AD 1475). From Pěngkalan Kěmpas in Něgěri Sěmbilan survives an inscription which appears to show that this region was in transition to an Islamic area in the 1460s. The stone is in two parts, one written in Malay with Arabic script, and the other in Malay with Indian-type characters. The stone uses the Indian Śaka era, and apparently records the death of a rebel named Ahmat Majana or Majanu in Ś 1389 (AD 1467–8).

Returning to North Sumatra, late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century graves document the establishment of further Islamic states there. The first Sultan of Pědir, Muzaffar Syah, was buried in AH 902 (AD 1497), and the second, Ma'ruf Syah, in AH 917 (AD 1511). At the very tip of North Sumatra, the state of Aceh was founded in the early sixteenth century; it was soon to become the most powerful North Sumatran state and one of the most powerful states of the Malay-Indonesian area. The first Sultan of the Achenese 'empire' was Ali Mughayat Syah, whose tombstone is dated AH 936 (AD 1530).

Outside of Java, Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, there is no evidence of the adoption of Islam by Indonesians before the sixteenth century. Two gravestones survive from Brunei, carrying dates of AH 835 and (probably) 905 (AD 1432, 1499), but on the first the deceased's name is illegible and the second refers to

a Sharif Hud, who was in all probability a foreign Muslim. It is quite clear, however, that Islam had spread to some points farther east, for near Jolo (in the Sulu archipelago, southern Philippines) there was a tombstone dated AH 710 (AD 1310) marking the grave of a Muslim who was apparently of foreign origin but who had become some sort of local ruler. Much later legendary sources from Mindanao and Sulu, the Islamic areas of the Philippines, describe the bringing of Islam by Arabs and Malays from the western archipelago. It seems probable, though, that Chinese Muslims also played a role in the spread of Islam in this area.

Before the sixteenth century, the fragmentary evidence shows that the spread of Islam began in the western archipelago. There does not, however, seem to have been a continuous rolling wave of Islam, with one contiguous area after another adopting the new faith. The evidence provides only a few brief hints of the process which was under way, but it was apparently complicated and rather slow. By the end of the thirteenth century, Islam was established in North Sumatra; in the fourteenth century in northeast Malaya, the southern Philippines and among some courtiers in East Java; and in the fifteenth century in Malacca and other areas of the Malay Peninsula. A few gravestones or travellers' accounts can only provide evidence about the presence of indigenous Muslims in a certain place at a certain time. The fact that no evidence of Islamisation happens to have survived from other places does not necessarily mean that there were no Muslims there. And the surviving evidence cannot answer more complex questions — such as, for instance, how many of the people of Samudra other than the ruler were Muslims in 1297, or how deeply the lifestyles or religious ideas of the first Indonesian converts were affected by Islam. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, Islamisation is a process which has continued down to the present day. It must not be assumed that once an area is known to have had a Muslim ruler, the process of Islamisation was complete. Indeed, this probably symbolises more the beginning than the end of Islamisation among the populace.

In the early sixteenth century, an extraordinary European source makes possible a general survey of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago. Tomé Pires was an apothecary from Lisbon who spent the years from 1512 to 1515 in Malacca, immediately after its conquest by the Portuguese in 1511. During this time he visited Java personally, and avidly collected information from others concerning the entire Malay-Indonesian area. His book *Suma Oriental* reveals a discriminating observer, whose descriptions are far superior to those of other Portuguese writers. It is full of invaluable material of many varieties, but in this chapter attention must be focused upon what Pires observed regarding Islam. His evidence cannot be presumed to be accurate in all details, of course. But so much of what he wrote seems consistent with the other fragments of evidence described above, and his description is so free of obviously erroneous statements about the area, that it seems to stand as one of the most important documents on the spread of Islam in Indonesia.

According to Pires, most of the kings of Sumatra were Muslims by his time, but there were still non-Islamic states. From Aceh in the north down the east coast as far as Palembang, the rulers were Muslims. South of Palembang and around the tip of Sumatra up the west coast, most of them were not. At Pasai there was a thriving international trading community and Pires attributed the



original establishment of Islam in Pasai to the 'cunning' of these Muslim merchants. The ruler of Pasai had not, however, been able to convert the people of the interior. Similarly, the Minangkabau king and a hundred of his men were reportedly Muslims, although the remaining Minangkabau people were not. But Pires said that Islam was winning new adherents daily in Sumatra.

The Sundanese-speaking region of West Java was not yet Muslim in Pires's day, and indeed was hostile to Islam. Although Pires did not mention the name, this was the area ruled by the Hindu-Buddhist state of Pajajaran, concerning which there are hardly any reliable records. The Islamisation of this area by conquest in the sixteenth century is discussed in chapter 4.

Central and East Java, the areas where the ethnic Javanese lived, was still claimed by the Hindu-Buddhist king living in the interior of East Java at Daha (Kĕdiri). The coastal areas as far east as Surabaya were, however, Islamised, and were often at war with the interior, except for Tuban, which remained loyal to the Hindu-Buddhist king. Some of the coastal Muslim lords were Javanese who had adhered to Islam. Some were not originally Javanese, but rather Muslim Chinese, Indians, Arabs and Malays who had settled on the coast and established trading states. Pires described a process of Javanisation under way among these latter groups, who so admired the culture of the Hindu-Buddhist court that they attempted to emulate its style and were becoming Javanese thereby. The fourteenth-century gravestones of Trawulan and Tralaya discussed above suggest that for its part the Hindu-Buddhist court was able, at least at times, to tolerate Muslims within its own circle. The warfare which Pires describes between coast and interior should not, therefore, be seen as necessarily a product of irreconcilable religious and cultural differences, for there was a process of cultural assimilation at work as Islam encountered the powerful high culture of Old Java. This process of assimilation and accommodation continued long after the vast majority of Javanese were at least nominally Muslim, and has made the Islam of Java rather different in style from that of Malaya or Sumatra. The warfare between coast and interior also continued long after both regions had adopted Islam, and its origins are probably to be sought more in the political and economic differences between the two areas which are discussed in following chapters. East of Surabaya, the Javanese coast was still pre-Islamic, and apparently Hindu, for widow-burning was practised. 'Thus,' said Pires, 'they lose their bodies in this life and their souls burn in the next' (*Suma Oriental*, 198).

In Kalimantan (Borneo), Brunei had a king who had recently become a Muslim. The rest of Kalimantan was non-Muslim, as were also the islands of Madura, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Solor and Timor to the east of Java. The Bugis and Makasarese of South Sulawesi (Celebes) were also not yet Islamised.

Islam was, however, spreading in the 'Spice Islands' of Maluku in East Indonesia. Muslim Javanese and Malay merchants were established on the coast of Banda, but there was no king there and the interior still contained non-Muslims. Ternate, Tidore and Bacan had Muslim kings. The rulers of Tidore and Bacan used the Indian title Raja, but that of Ternate had adopted the title of Sultan and the Raja of Tidore had taken the Arabic name al-Mansur.

All the evidence taken together gives a general picture of the progress of Islam from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth centuries. From a starting point in the north of Sumatra, it had spread as far as the spice-producing areas of East