

ANTHONY REID

CHARTING THE SHAPE
OF EARLY MODERN
SOUTHEAST ASIA



CHARTING THE SHAPE
OF EARLY MODERN
SOUTHEAST ASIA

ANTHONY REID



INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
SINGAPORE

PREFACE

The essays in this volume represent the evolution of my thinking on early modern Southeast Asia over a long period, from 1975 to 1996. Of the twelve chapters, nine have appeared already in some form, though in most cases in places not readily accessible to the broader community of Southeast Asia scholars.

Chapters 3, 5 and 11 were presented at conferences in 1994–6, the first two in Bangkok and the last in Canberra, but have not been previously published.

The chapters have been arranged in roughly chronological order of their themes, not the order in which they were conceived. In fact the last chapter was the first to be conceived and delivered, at a time when I was just beginning to contemplate serious writing about the early modern period. Now that that chapter of my life is concluding, it seems timely to bring some of the different writings together.

I am particularly grateful to Clare Guenther for having systematized the references, compiled a single bibliography, and established some consistency of format. Through her efforts this has become a book rather than a set of papers.

With gratitude I acknowledge the publishers of the original papers, for permission to reprint here: chapter 1, adapted from "Introduction: A Time and A Place," in *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era*, ed. A. Reid, Cornell University Press, 1993; chapter 2, "The Islamization of Southeast Asia," in *Historia: Essays in Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Department of History*, University of Malaya, eds. Muhammad Abu Bakar et al., Malaysian Historical Society, 1984; chapter 4, "The Rise and Fall of Sino-Javanese Shipping," in *Looking in Odd Mirrors: The Java Sea*, eds. V. J. H. Houben, H. M. J. Maier and W. van der Molen, Vakgroep Zuidoost Azië en Oceanië, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1992; chapter 6, "The Rise of Makassar," in *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 17, Winter/Summer 1983, Sydney University; chapter 7, "A Great Seventeenth Century Indonesian Family: Matoaya and Pattingalloang of Makassar," in *Masyarakat Indonesia* VIII (1), 1987, LIPI, Jakarta; chapter 8, "Early Southeast Asian

Categorizations of Europeans,” in *Implicit Ethnographies: Encounters between European and Other Peoples in the Wake of Columbus*, ed. Stuart Schwartz, Cambridge University Press, 1994; chapter 9, “Slavery and Bondage in Southeast Asian History,” in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. A. Reid, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983; chapter 10, “The Origins of Poverty,” in *Scholarship and Society in Southeast Asia*, ed. W. E. Willmot, NZASIA Occasional Paper 2, 1979; chapter 12, “Heaven’s Will and Man’s Fault,” Flinders Asian Studies Lecture 6, Adelaide: Flinders University, 1975.

Anthony Reid

GLOSSARY

<i>Arya</i> (J)	Aristocratic title
<i>Ata</i> (Mak)	Slave, subject
<i>Babad</i> (J)	Chronicle
<i>Bakufu</i> (Jp)	Tokugawa administration
<i>Berkat</i> (A/M)	Spiritual blessing
<i>Bupati</i> (J)	Royal representative, local governor
<i>Cakravartin</i> (S)	World-ruler
<i>Cash</i> (A-I)	Copper or lead-tin alloy coin
<i>Cultuurstelsel</i> (D)	[Forced] cultivation system
<i>Hikayat</i> (M)	Story, chronicle
<i>Idulfitri</i> (A)	Feast to mark the end of the fasting month
<i>Jong</i> (J/M)	Junk; large trading vessel
<i>Kadi</i> (A/M)	Judge in Islamic law
<i>Kafir</i> (A/M)	Infidel; unbeliever
<i>Katipunan</i> (Tag)	Abbreviation for <i>Kataastaasan Kagalangalang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan</i> , Highest and Most Respectable Sons of the People; revolutionary secret society
<i>Kiwi</i> (M, from Ch)	Travelling merchant
<i>Khalif</i> (A)	Representative (of the Prophet); head of the Muslim community
<i>Korakora</i> (Maluku)	Sailing galley with outriggers
<i>Kramat</i> (A/M)	Holy grave
<i>Kris</i> (M/J)	Dagger
<i>Mandala</i> (S)	Concentric diagram, Buddhist microcosm of the universe
<i>Naga</i> (S)	Mythological snake
<i>Nakhoda</i> (M)	Shipowner or owner's representative on the ship; super-cargo.
<i>Orangkaya</i> (M)	Aristocrat, generally with wealth from trade
<i>Orang asli</i> (M)	Indigenous population of Malayan peninsula
<i>Petak</i> (M)	Partition of cargo space on ship

<i>Pasisir</i> (J)	Coastal lowlands (specifically northern coast of Java)
<i>Patih</i> (J)	Title of governors, aristocrats
<i>Peranakan</i> (M)	Local-born
<i>Perang sabil</i> (M)	Holy war
<i>Priyayi</i> (J)	Aristocrat
<i>Puputan</i> (B)	Mass suicide
<i>Ratu adil</i> (J/M)	[Messianic] righteous king
<i>Sakdina</i> (T)	Merit points; system of social rank
<i>Sakti</i> (S)	Power, especially spiritual
<i>Sangha</i> (P)	The brotherhood of monks in Hinayana Buddhism
<i>Sejarah</i> (M)	History
<i>Syahbandar</i> (M)	Harbour-master
<i>Torok</i> (Ch)	Newcomer, China-born Chinese
<i>Ulama</i> (A/M)	Islamic scholars (plural in Arabic, but here used also for singular)

A=Arabic, A-I=Anglo-Indian, B=Balinese, Ch=Chinese, J=Javanese, Jp=Japanese, M=Malay, Mak=Makasarese, P=Pali, S=Sanskrit, Tag=Tagalog, T=Thai

CONTENTS

Preface	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	v
Maps, Tables, Illustrations	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	vii
Glossary	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ix
1.	Introduction: Early Modern Southeast Asia	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
2.	The Islamization of Southeast Asia	...	...	...	...	...	...	15
3.	Chams in the Southeast Asian Maritime System	...	...	...	...	...	...	39
4.	The Rise and Fall of Sino-Javanese Shipping	...	...	...	...	...	...	56
5.	Documenting the Rise and Fall of Ayudhya as a Regional Trade Centre	...	...	...	...	...	...	85
6.	The Rise of Makasar	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
7.	A Great Seventeenth Century Indonesian Family: Matoaya and Pattingalloang of Makasar	...	...	...	...	...	...	126
8.	Early Southeast Asian Categorizations of Europeans	...	...	...	...	...	...	155
9.	Slavery and Bondage in Southeast Asian History	...	...	...	...	...	...	181
10.	The Origins of Southeast Asian Poverty	...	...	...	...	...	...	217
11.	Changing Perceptions of the "Hermit Kingdoms" of Asia	...	...	...	...	...	...	235
12.	"Heaven's Will and Man's Fault": The Rise of the West as a Southeast Asian Dilemma	...	...	...	...	...	...	246
	Abbreviations	...	...	...	...	...	...	272
	Bibliography	...	...	...	...	...	...	273

MAPS, TABLES, ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

1	Political centres of early modern Southeast Asia	...	...	2
2	Indian Ocean ports	...	...	16
3	Spread of Islam in Southeast Asia	...	...	28
4	South Sulawesi languages and districts	...	...	104
5	Makasar about 1650	...	...	106
6	Reconstruction of Benteng Sombaopu	...	...	120

TABLES

1	Frequency of seaborne tribute missions to China	...	...	87
2	Ryukyu shipping to Southeast Asian ports	...	...	89
3	Red Seal ships sent out by Japan	...	...	93
4	Number of Chinese junks from Southeast Asian ports to Japan by decade	...	...	95
5	Chinese junks reported visiting Siam	...	...	97
6	Rulers of Gowa and Tallo'	...	...	115

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1	Early European depiction of a "hybrid" Sino-Southeast Asian junk	...	...	58
Fig. 2	French map of Ayudhya, 1686	...	...	91
Fig. 3	Stone figures on the royal graves of Binamu (Jenepono), South Sulawesi	...	...	103
Fig. 4	Dutch sketch of Makasar in 1638	...	...	108
Fig. 5	French officers depicted in a seventeenth-century Thai watercolour panel	...	...	158

Fig. 6	Three slaves of the Raja of Buleleng, Bali, 1864	...	...	187
Fig. 7	A slave auction in Batavia, c. 1800	...	...	190
Fig. 8	A domestic slave of a large Dutch household	...	...	197
Fig. 9	Two Toraja slaves being offered for sale in Palopo, South Sulawesi, 1895	...	...	198
Fig. 10	Dutch documentation of the last stand of Aceh resistance	...	...	255

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: EARLY MODERN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The early modern period is increasingly recognized as a watershed in human history. For the first time the world was physically united by the opening of direct trade routes between Europe and every other corner of the globe. Yet at least by the second half of the seventeenth century, it is now clear, northwestern Europe and Japan parted company from the other Eurasian civilizations to pursue their capitalist transformations. The relations between the countries of Europe's Atlantic seaboard and the rest of the world became ever more weighted with inequality, not only in military effectiveness (the first sign to appear), but in productivity, technology, scientific method and eventually self-esteem.

While Europe's "miracle" is difficult to disentangle from its military and economic domination of more populous quarters of the world, Japan followed a very different route. Isolating itself from all foreign contact save that provided by tightly-controlled Dutch and Chinese trade at Nagasaki, the Tokugawa shogunate unified the country, banned the use of firearms, and developed a flourishing urban economy which laid the basis for Japan's twentieth-century rise. By holding its population constant while substantially increasing productivity and welfare, Japan achieved economic advances in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which matched those of the most advanced European countries (Smith 1988, 15–49).

The Japanese case in particular, and the globalization of the issues in general by many of the most influential modern historians (Braudel, Wallerstein, Barrington Moore, Cipolla, Parker), have made it clear that the early modern period is critical for every part of the world. If the capitalist "miracle" was not limited to Europe, then each case needs to be studied with care to examine what happened and why. We can no longer think in simplistic terms of winners and losers, of capitalist Europe and a third world

doomed to stagnation and poverty, but rather of a variety of ways of coping with the explosive forces at work in the period.

Japan belatedly forced itself upon the attention of economic historians by its spectacular twentieth century performance, which undermined attempts to identify unique socio-cultural features of Europe which made capitalism possible. Although Japan was the first Asian country to complete the transition to industrial capitalism, it is certainly not the last. Southeast Asian economies too, led by Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, have recently grown as rapidly as any known to history. There too economic confidence gives rise to intellectual confidence. Instead of the question what was "wrong" with Asian cultures, as was frequently asked only a few decades ago, attention begins to be paid to what is "right" about them. Neither question is helpful, but it is no longer possible to assume that the place of Asia in the static or declining "third world" was ordained by environment or culture.

In the extraordinary period between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Southeast Asia played a critical role. The global commercial expansion of the "long sixteenth century" necessarily affected it immediately and profoundly, as the source of many of the spices in international demand and as a maritime region athwart vital trade routes. It was the region most affected by the explosion of Chinese maritime activity at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the source of the spices and much of the pepper that drew the Spanish to America and eventually the Philippines, and the Portuguese to India and Southeast Asia. The quickening of commerce, the monetization of transactions, the growth of cities, the accumulation of capital and the specialization of function which formed part of a capitalist transition elsewhere, undoubtedly occurred rapidly also in Southeast Asia during this period. The changes wrought in belief and cultural systems were even more profound. Islam and Christianity became the dominant religions of the Archipelago and pockets of the Mainland, while Buddhism was transformed by its alliance with centralizing states in Burma, Siam, Laos and Cambodia.

On the other hand no part of Asia suffered more quickly or profoundly the effects of European intrusion. Through warfare, impregnable fortifications and monopoly commerce, Europeans had by 1650 gained control of the vital ports and products which had previously linked the region to the expanding world economy. Although they remained minor, peripheral players in the ongoing life of the region, they had changed the delicate balance between commerce and kingship. Like Japan, yet even more abruptly, Southeast Asian countries all discovered the negative side of the expansion of global commerce and the rapid advance of military technology. Unlike Japan, they were unable to insulate themselves from it without fundamental change to their political systems.

A PLACE

For these reasons Southeast Asia is a region which has a vital place in resolving the crucial dilemmas of early modern history. But is it a region at all? Unlike western Europe, India, the Arab World, China or even "Sinicized" east Asia as a whole, it has no common high religion, language or classical culture (except those it loosely shares with India), and has never been part of a single polity. Its very name is an externally-imposed geographical convenience, which has only recently replaced even less satisfactory terms such as Further India or Indo-China.

Yet those who travel to Southeast Asia from China, India, or anywhere else, know at once that they are in a different place. In part this is a question of environment. Physically marked by its warm climate, high and dependable rainfall, and ubiquitous waterways, Southeast Asia developed lifestyles dominated by the forest, the rice-growing river-valleys, and fishing. Its people grew the same crops by the same methods, ate the same food in the same manner, and lived in similar houses elevated on poles against the perils of flood or forest animals. Its geography militated against the unified empires arising from great rivers or vast plains. It generated instead a multiplicity of political forms interlinked by the ease of waterborne transport.

Paradoxically, it is the diversity of Southeast Asia and its openness to outside influences which is its pre-eminent defining characteristic. Every state of the region was built on cultural trade-offs both internal and external. Overall population density was low, probably averaging no more than six per square kilometre in this period. Pockets of dense settlement around trading cities and permanent rice-fields were surrounded by forests thinly peopled by shifting cultivators. This created a fundamental dualism of hill and valley, upstream and downstream, interior and coast. In coastal waters boat-dwelling "sea nomads" had similar relations with rulers ashore. No state incorporated these peoples fully. They remained an "uncivilized", stateless, or "free" penumbra of the state, often indispensable providers of forest or sea products, messengers, warriors and slaves—tributary but distinct.

Despite their dependence on such hinterland peoples, rulers were more preoccupied by their relations with rival powers controlling other rivers and ports. Even if the stronger rulers claimed through their titles and the architecture of their capitals to be *cakravartin* world-rulers embodying on earth the Indic gods in heaven, they were all intensely conscious that they inhabited a pluralistic world. Political life was an endless struggle for people, for trade and for status between rival centres. The exchanging of envoys and letters was one of the finer political arts, and words and gestures were studied for the slightest hint of superiority or inferiority. Success in this competitive

world was measured by the number of ships in the harbour, of men, boats and elephants in royal processions, of tributaries from nearby and equals from afar who paid their respects to the king.

Between about 1400 and 1700, universalist faiths based on sacred scripture took hold throughout the region. Eventually they created profound divisions between an Islamic arc in the south, a Confucian political orthodoxy in Vietnam, a Theravada Buddhist bastion in the rest of the Mainland and a Christian outrider in the Philippines. Yet even in the process of religious change there was a common openness to outside ideas, a common need for allies from further afield in order to subordinate rivals closer to hand.

Perhaps the key fact that made Southeast Asia a region was that the barriers which separated it from China and India were more significant than any internal boundaries. The majority of outsiders who came to the region did so by means of long sea voyages. Malay-speakers (who in this period included maritime traders of every ethno-linguistic group) identified their region as "below the winds", in distinction to the world of outsiders (especially Indians, Arabs and Europeans) who came from "above the winds" by taking advantage of the prevailing Indian Ocean monsoon. For Chinese and Japanese, Southeast Asia was the "south seas", also reached by sea. Even adoption of outside faiths did not eliminate the distinctiveness of a region uniquely defined by nature. The mountain barriers across the north of the region, and the sea elsewhere, ensured that while Southeast Asians were endlessly involved in exchanges of territory, people, and ideas with each other, invasions from the rest of the Asian land mass were few and migrations gradual.

Vietnam's relation with China might appear to give the lie to the above. Ruled by the Middle Kingdom for most of the first Christian millennium, Vietnam acquired its writing system and consequently much of its literary culture from China. Yet alone of the southern regions conquered by the Han and Tang Dynasties, the people of the Red River delta retained sufficient of their identity to claim their independence in 939, and reclaim it on each subsequent occasion Chinese armies invaded. The last serious invasion was that of the Ming, who reoccupied Vietnam from 1407 to 1428 but were driven out by the Vietnamese hero Le Loi, founder of the most brilliant of Vietnamese dynasties. Under the Le rulers Vietnamese political institutions were rebuilt in a more Confucian mould than ever, but the centralized mandarin state which resulted was used to ensure that Vietnam remained permanently independent of China.

Vietnam thus became a barrier to any further Chinese southward expansion by land. Although the hills which formed its northern border were by no means impassable, they were sufficient to serve as a stable frontier for a thousand years. By contrast Vietnam's southern border was constantly

changing, as Vietnamese armies had the better of their ceaseless wars first with Champa and later with Cambodia. It is therefore impossible to draw a line round early modern Southeast Asia which excludes Vietnam. Despite its cultural and commercial links with China, Vietnam was Southeast Asian. Particularly so was the southern Vietnamese kingdom established by Nguyen Hoang on former Cham territory. Not only through its intermingling of Vietnamese and Austronesian (Chamic) peoples, but also through its physical environment, its place in Asian trade, and the timing of its rise to prominence, this kingdom was characteristic of early modern Southeast Asia.

A TIME

As historiography has begun to break out of a European mould and consider comparative questions on a broader basis, the category Early Modern has gained currency. As against such older terms as Renaissance, Reformation, or Age of Discovery, it has the advantage of being less culture-bound to a European schema, less laden with triumphalist values.¹ Nevertheless it has its own burden of associations, implying that it is in this period that we see the emergence of the forces which would shape the modern industrial world. That implication seems acceptable at the global level, provided there is no suggestion that all its constituents were somehow locked into the same path.

Definitions vary, but all those who use the term early modern include in it the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with more or less extension backward into the fifteenth² and forward into the eighteenth. Southeast Asianists are only now beginning to apply the term to their region,³ however, and some justification is required as to how we propose to apply it. In the past historians of Mainland Southeast Asia (and to a lesser extent Java) have typically periodized in terms of dynasties (e.g. "Late Ayudhya", "First Toungoo", "Le"), while the rise of Islam and the coming of Europeans have been seen as the major turning points in the islands. Despite the desire of a post-colonial generation to escape from Eurocentric assumptions, those who have generalized about the whole region have found it difficult to avoid the Portuguese arrival at Melaka (Malacca) in 1509 as a turning point.

Only in one respect can this be accepted without qualification. The sources available to the historian change in nature and increase greatly in quantity with the opening of the sixteenth century. The Portuguese, and still more their successors the Spanish and Dutch, chronicled and described Southeast Asia in far greater detail than the Arabs and Chinese before them. The bronze-plate inscriptions which had been the major indigenous sources were already becoming scarce in the fourteenth century. They are replaced by royal

and religious chronicles, poetry, and edifying texts written on ephemeral materials, increasingly paper. Virtually no such texts have survived from before 1500. The earliest substantial works surviving are copies from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with only a handful of sixteenth and seventeenth century texts preserved by chance in European libraries.

When we look with care at the factors critical to the early modern era in Southeast Asia, however, most of them begin before the arrival of European fleets. These are examined below under four heads: a commercial upturn; new military technology; the growth of new, more centralized states; and the spread of externally-validated scriptural orthodoxies in religion. While the sixteenth century materials can be read to reconstruct the fifteenth, it must be admitted that the evidence available to document these trends before 1500 remains unsatisfactory. I have argued elsewhere (Reid 1990a, 5-6) that 1400 is a more satisfactory beginning for this critical period of change than 1500, but the fragmentary nature of the evidence makes any such precision highly problematic.

COMMERCIAL UPTURN

The determination of the Portuguese and Spanish to find the sources of pepper, clove and nutmeg was a consequence of their growing importance in European life. In the 1390s about six metric tons of cloves and one and a half of nutmeg reached Europe each year from Maluku in eastern Indonesia. A century later this had risen to fifty-two tons of cloves and twenty-six of nutmeg. The spices were carried across the Indian Ocean by Muslim traders of various nationalities to markets in Egypt and Beirut where they were purchased by Italian merchants, predominately Venetians. This was of course only a small branch of Southeast Asia's trade, but its rapid expansion in the fifteenth century was probably replicated elsewhere. The fifteenth century was a time of expansion in population and international commerce not only in the Mediterranean but also in Southeast Asia's largest external market, China. The reign of the second Ming Emperor Yongle (1403-22) was a period of completely exceptional Chinese involvement with the region, which appears to have stimulated the pepper and clove trade, increased the circulation of silver and other metals, and given rise to a number of new port-cities.

While the economic history of the fifteenth century must remain speculative, a peak in Southeast Asian commercial activity in the early seventeenth century is clearer. England and Holland joined the Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese and Indians in competing to buy the products of the region—pepper, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, sandalwood, lacquer, silk