

powers to interfere in China's affairs. The result was intense competition over access to Chinese resources that weakened the Qing state, but also prevented China from suffering complete collapse and becoming the colonial dominion of any one interest. In the latter period, the rising cost of intervention led external actors (with the exception of Japan) to accommodate the development of a growing central government (p. 112).

Chong's argument that external intervention plays a critical role in state formation is an important one; but he's less persuasive when insisting that foreign actors are the primary agents in that process. He dismisses local actors as comparatively inconsequential since oftentimes weak polities contain many evenly matched rivals whose success depends on their ability to win financial assistance from powerful outside patrons (p. 3). This approach causes him to downplay the role of nationalist leaders in the formation of the Indonesian state, since both the Dutch and the Japanese managed and suppressed nationalist movements. While this is true, Chong fails to acknowledge that domestic actors (in this case, Sukarno) successfully manipulated both countries in turn. Indonesian independence is presented as an example of his point that sovereign governments emerge only when external forces decide their access to resources is best served by sponsoring, rather than suppressing, local interests. The book credits the United States for Indonesia's independence since the Americans pressured the Dutch with the promise of Marshall Plan aid (p. 184). But if, as Chong asserts, foreign powers stand back when the cost of intervention becomes too high, do nationalist groups not deserve some recognition for raising the price?

In his penultimate chapter on Siam/Thailand, Chong effectively dismantles the royal-nationalist narrative that Thai independence was the product of diplomatic efforts to play British and French interests against each other. The evolution of the Thai state confirms that foreign intervention served to shore up central authority in Siam rather than cause its disintegration (p. 225). For the Chakri monarchy, nationalism and modernisation did not create statehood; rather, the achievement of statehood allowed those two processes to eventually reach maturation. While Chong is not the first to make this argument, his analysis of Siam's foreign relations provide convincing evidence of its viability.

SHANE STRATE

*Kent State University*

Indonesia

*The roots of terrorism in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jema'ah Islamiyah*

By SOLAHUDIN, translated by DAVE MCRAE

Sydney: UNSW Press and Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2013. Pp. xx + 236. Notes, Index.

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This is a valuable book by a well-informed author, translated well and presented in a style that non-specialists and specialists alike will find accessible. Solahudin is a senior journalist who has researched Indonesia's violent terrorist movements since the

Bali bombings of 2002. His book was originally published in Indonesian in 2011. The translator, Dave McRae, is now with the Lowy Institute; he holds a Ph.D. from the Australian National University and spent several years in Indonesia with the International Crisis Group and World Bank. His own book on interreligious violence in Poso (*A few poorly organised men*) has just been published.

Solahudin's principal contribution is to set out the ideological and family lines that lead from and link independent Indonesia's first Islamist terrorist movement — the Darul Islam of the 1940s–early '60s — to the extremist groups that have become more prominent since the end of the Soeharto regime in 1998. It is, as the author says, 'a history of the *jihadi* movement in Indonesia, from Darul Islam through to Jema'ah Islamiyah'. While these links are familiar to specialist scholars, there is, I think, no other book-scale discussion that sets them out as clearly as Solahudin does here. By following both the people and the ideas, Solahudin fills a gap in the literature.

The book seeks the deeper roots of Salafism and jihadism in Islamic tradition, reaching back to Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328). In Indonesia, the story begins with the Padri movement in West Sumatra over two centuries ago, from which Solahudin quickly moves to the reformist movements of the early twentieth century. This earlier history is a small part of the book, but an important one, for it reminds readers that the ideas that motivate extremists are not something recent, that they have roots in religious thinking which is validated by a long history — as, of course, are the contending Islamic traditions that reject such interpretations.

There are inherent risks in writing about such a topic, for this is a field plagued by secrecy, misinformation, and disinformation. Solahudin relies on a wide range of sources, including interrogations of captured individuals and interviews with major players. The book is about clandestine, violent movements that engage in criminality and mayhem, whose enemies include repressive governments and their agents (who sometimes infiltrate or befriend terrorist groups if it suits them) — including police of legendary levels of corruption and brutality — the records of whose interrogations are subject to grave doubts about their veracity and the likelihood of whose interviews being candid and reliable must be doubtful. Solahudin is clearly aware of all that and proceeds cautiously, but has to do what he can with what he has. Recognising that, a reader cannot help feeling uncomfortable when a source is described as, for example, an 'unknown person's interview with Sunarto and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir'.

It would be rare to find a book that is free of errors, but there are only few here: a reference to the Suharto 'state's recognition of traditional Javanese mysticism as a religion (p. 103)', which never happened; instead, it was recognised as 'belief' (*kepercayaan*) and therefore a matter of 'culture' rather than religion. There is no 'mausoleum built for the Suharto family in Yogyakarta' (p. 122): that grand site is on the slopes of Mt Lawu near Solo. There is also confusion about the fate of the 1979 terrorist Warman: on p. 73 he is shot dead in a dramatic shoot-out in 1981, but on pp. 90–1 'not long after [1979], Warman was captured by security forces' and imprisoned. I do not know what Solahudin is referring to when he says (p. 80) that in 1973 the government 'removed religion as a foundation for development in the Broad Outlines of State Policy'; the Soeharto regime sought to manipulate and control religious life, but I am not aware that it had once nominated religion as 'a foundation for development'. There is no mistranslation here, for Dave McRae has

correctly rendered Solahudin's original statement that the government *tak lagi menempatkan agama sebagai landasan pembangunan*.

For all of the book's virtues, an important aspect that is not adequately discussed, unfortunately for non-specialist readers, is the broader social context. These extremist movements operated in a context of deepening religiosity, of an ever-more Islamically defined social, cultural, and political order. It is that which has given them greater potency than they might have if they were trying to operate in a secular society. Readers interested in the issue of Islamic extremism may therefore find it useful also to turn to a fine book which lacks Solahudin's longer historical perspective, but gives more attention to the wider social context since the late Soeharto era: Andrée Feillard and Rémy Madinier's *The end of innocence? Indonesian Islam and the temptations of radicalism* (2011). According to Feillard and Madinier, by the way, Warman was 'captured and killed in 1981' (p. 304).

M.C. RICKLEFS

*Professor Emeritus, The Australian National University*

Myanmar

*Reconfiguring women, colonialism, and modernity in Burma*

By CHIE IKEYA

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011. Pp 239. Illustrations, Notes, Glossary, Bibliography, Index.

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This is one of the most important books on colonial Burma to have emerged in the last century. It addresses aspects of modernity originating with certain categories of local women, thus altering the male-dominated past; furthermore, it is derived from indigenous sources as well as colonial records, going beyond the archives of British Burma to reinstate a sense of agency and dynamism with which to counter notions of colonial passivity. Ikeya states in the beginning that her study will 'broaden the understanding of colonialism and modernity in Burma beyond the level of politics and enable a fundamental revision of the reigning nationalist and anticolonial master narratives of political culture and society in colonial Burma' (p. 4), and she does not disappoint the reader.

This is the first in a triumvirate of scholarly works on women in Burma to emerge more or less simultaneously (the others are Jessica Harriden, *The authority of influence: Women and power in Burmese history* [Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, 2012] and Tharaphi Than, *Women of modern Burma* [London: Routledge, 2013]). One is a *longue durée* perspective (unsettling to North American-trained historians who are encouraged to direct their focus narrowly but with depth) that necessarily has a broader purview than the current work under review, and the other has not been released; yet their existence shows that there has been a momentum building over the past decade to augment the history of women in Burma from 'a footnote in the official nationalist Burmese history' (p. 4). Ikeya has achieved exactly that with *Reconfiguring women*. Those of us who