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The End of Personal Rule in Indonesia: Golkar and the Transformation of the Suharto Regime

MASUHARA AYAKO

Kyoto: Kyoto University Press; Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2015, xviii+286p.

In the revised version of her doctoral dissertation, Ayako Masuhara offers a fine-grained analysis of the collapse of President Suharto's New Order regime (1965–98). The author brings out the paradox that despite Suharto enjoying political patronage from the ruling Golkar party, the party made a 180-degree turn, a measure backed by the parliament and the fragmented reformist forces that compelled the President to resign. In a succinctly written introduction, Masuhara states her argument by throwing down a gauntlet before those political analysts who characterize the Suharto regime as a "sultanistic regime" (Aspinall 2005). Instead, she argues that the New Order regime was a "co-opting-style personal rule" in which the Golkar party accommodated political opponents (pp. 3, 15).

Chapter 1 contextualizes the New Order regime within the broader context of Indonesian and area studies. She categorizes personal rule into four types based on the level of state surveillance and violence within the broader framework of comparative politics with examples from different countries: (i) isolated type, (ii) terrorizing type, (iii) dividing type, and (iv) co-opting type. Masuhara conceptualizes the Golkar party as a political space where vast number of Indonesian social elites competed against each other, paving the way for the rise of soft-liners within the New Order regime that eventually undermined the authority of Suharto. Chapter 2 comprehensively describes how the Suharto regime, as an example of a co-opting type of personal rule, ran the country based on political and economic patronage and violent oppression whereas Chapters 3, 4, and 5 collectively describe how the Golkar established and structured itself as the ruling party during the New Order. In Chapter 6, Masuhara argues that the more Golkar became independent from the Indonesian Armed Forces, the more heavily it had to depend on Suharto, and this reliance eroded the autonomy of the party by the late 1980s. In Chapter 7, Masuhara observes that due to the preference

accorded to Suharto's children in the allocation of political posts within the Golkar, former student activists and Islamic group members within the party were sidelined, leading to a rift within the Suharto regime. Furthermore, the Asian Currency Crisis that began in July 1998 and led to the depreciation of the rupiah only served to expose the differences between the Minister of Finance Mar'ie Muhammad and the President (pp. 190–191).

The conclusion contains one substantial claim by Masuhara that the Suharto regime concluded in a packed transition, that refers to multilateral negotiation between the political elites from the authoritarian regime and the democratic opposition that leads to a compromise (p. 235). From the very beginning of the reformist movement in Indonesia, reformist forces tried to influence the New Order elites through dialogue and negotiation, in an attempt to avoid confrontation. By adopting the strategy of not making Suharto lose his face, the reformist forces won many New Order elites to their side, facilitating a smooth transfer of power.

Masuhara succeeds in answering the question of how the New Order era sought to achieve a delicate balance between personal rule of Suharto and national interest. Every chapter of the monograph is provided with a roadmap and a concise summary of the argument. But the book is not without its shortcomings. I found the author's interpretation of *pembangunan* (development) problematic. During the earlier Sukarno era *pembangunan* stood for multiple possibilities such as national reconstruction and enhancing Indonesia's respectability on the world stage whereas during the Suharto era *pembangunan* was narrowly associated with economic development. It would be erroneous to state that Suharto introduced *pembangunan* to depoliticize a public politicized during the Sukarno era and make them focus on the development targeted by the state (p. 10). The writing style is not always engaging. There are repetition and grammar issues throughout the monograph that make it difficult for the reader to follow the narrative. For example, "The reformist forces led by students and intellectuals started the reformist movement in pursuit of the reform of the political system to overcome the economic crisis" (p. 235). Masuhara's cast of characters is large but she fails to introduce them at the very beginning of Chapter 3, or the role they played in power brokering. Also largely missing from her narrative is the role played by the then Vice President B.J. Habibie in making decisive choices towards the end of the New Order.

The monograph demonstrates the ability to ask the right kind of questions. The systematic categorization of the four types of "personal rule" and situating the nature of the Suharto regime within the perspective of comparative politics enable readers to grasp the uniqueness of political transition in Indonesia in the late 1990s. *The End of Personal Rule in Indonesia* is an indispensable book for historians and political analysts working on change of regimes.

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***Les Oracles du Cao Đài: Étude d'un mouvement religieux vietnamien et de ses réseaux* [The Cao Dai oracles: Essay on a Vietnamese religious movement and its networks]**

JÉRÉMY JAMMES

Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2014, 614p.

This book, which I would describe as monumental, is the adaptation of an academic dissertation. It distinguishes itself from previous work (French and Anglo-American) on the subject because it does not situate that subject in a single isolated perspective: neither that of ethnology nor that of historical sociology. With this book, Jérémy Jammes has responded to the archaeologist Bernard Philippe Groslier, who in 1960 called for a necessary alliance between history and ethnology in the study of Asian countries (Groslier 1960), and he has done so by linking, and even closely intertwining, the ethnological approach with the historical.

The author identifies and highlights three vectors of Caodaism: the historical vector, by inscribing the phenomenon in several religious traditions of the beginning of the twentieth century: a matrix of Sino-Viêt mediums (phoenix writing or *fuluan* 扶鸞) (Do 2003) combined with French-Viêt spiritualism, Freemasonry, and Theosophy; the sociological vector, by describing and analyzing the socio-professional environments (the urban and rural bourgeoisie of southern Vietnam) from which Caodaism originated, as well as the networks of kinship and patronage (somehow nepotistic) that it wove or reinforced in order to take root and spread; finally, the author does not neglect the political vector, in particular French colonial domination and the post-independence period.

Far from contenting himself with an analytical description of Caodaist beliefs and faith, Jammes seeks to grasp their meaning: the affirmation of an original identity while simultaneously claiming equality with the colonial masters. This led the founders, the clergy, and the faithful (whose number swelled to the hundreds of thousands in the aftermath of World War II) to follow the Catholic model with regard to ecclesial organization. These initial goals of the new religion's promoters lent Caodaism a subversive character that made its actors sensitive to the temptation of political engagement—first against the French colonization, then against the communist hegemony within national resistance and today within the reunified nation and state.

Jammes does not limit his historical investigation to the past; he continues it in a history of the present day of the Caodaist religion, a history that has unfolded in time (since 1975) and in the