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# Imperial Systems of Power, Colonial Forces, and the Making of Modern Southeast Asia

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# Part 1

## Background





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# 1 Imperial systems of power, colonial forces and the making of modern Southeast Asia

*Karl Hack with Tobias Rettig*

Why do colonial subjects choose to enlist and to court death under the command of officers who come from thousands of miles away? Under what conditions do they stay loyal? When, why and with what results do they revolt?

Questions such as these can be answered only with the greatest difficulty. In part this is because comparative work on colonial forces is rare, restricted to a few short introductions to edited volumes, whose collections of articles at first seem to invite contrast, rather than comparison.<sup>1</sup> This is compounded by a second problem: the careless use of concepts. The terms colonial armies, colonialism and imperialism have been employed so loosely as to spread confusion.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, we must begin by examining the terminology surrounding ‘colonial armies’ and what we call ‘imperial systems of power’.<sup>3</sup>

## The linguistics of domination

First of all, colonialism must be distinguished from colonisation. ‘Colonisation’ is the settlement, by members of one cultural group, of a territory occupied by people distinct from them, when also accompanied by an attempt to dominate the space settled. Where fully successful, this constitutes a settler colony, as defined under Fieldhouse’s fivefold classification of colonies as: settler, mixed, plantation, occupation and trade (Table 1.1).<sup>4</sup>

Settlers have a strong interest in arming themselves, at their own expense, against people whose lands they intrude upon. When settlers win independence their armies can in turn become instruments of oppression against indigenous remnants, employing their own ‘colonial’ forces. One example of this is the Native Americans who were formally recruited as Scouts from 1866 by the United States Army, and used in campaigns against other Native Americans.<sup>5</sup>

Colonisation is thus one subcategory of the wider phenomenon of colonialism. The term ‘colony’ or colonial territory has come to mean a territory with three key attributes. First, it is ruled as a unit that is administratively distinct from a ruling power’s core territory. Or at least it comes to be treated differently, if only as a result of local revolt.<sup>6</sup> Second, there is a lack of consent from the population ruled.<sup>7</sup> Third, the majority of the colonial territory’s population is culturally distinct from that of the ruling power.



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Table 1.1 Fieldhouse's fivefold definition of colonial territories

| Typology                         | Description  | Examples   |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Pure settlement colony           | Often separating settler from indigenous lands to form a racial frontier of exclusion  | United States, Canada and Australia                        |
| Mixed colonies                   | Settlers have lower relative numbers and a higher requirement for indigenous labour  | Algeria  |
| Plantation colonies              | With a small, dominant settler core, often using slaves and/or bonded labour, and with a resulting mixed population category | Jamaica  |
| Colonies of occupation           | Dominated by small numbers of non-resident military and civilian personnel   | Philippines and Cochinchina                                |
| Trading settlements or factories | Enclaves where extraterritorial rights are granted, often for limited purposes   | International Settlements such as those set up in Shanghai |

With regard to the lack of consent, for settler and occupation colonies, this often means acquisition by force. For territories subject to formal agreements (such as protectorate treaties), it may mean submission in fear of violence (perhaps under the glare of gunboats) or by a narrow elite who take a collaborative role. The point where a distinct sense of identity exists, meanwhile, can vary from first contact to a time when the population of a previously quiescent area gains a new sense of sharply differentiated identity and interest.<sup>8</sup>

The core requirement for defining colonial forces is that they are raised from within territories that qualify as 'colonial' in the above sense; or they are raised from non-metropolitan populations for the purpose of dominating overseas territories. Additional tendencies include being at least part-funded by the territories such forces are raised in or stationed in. Colonial forces are not necessarily 'indigenous', however, either to the country of recruitment or to the country of posting. They may be, though. For instance, the Malay Regiment was constituted from Malays from British Malaya, and remained locally based. Timorese, meanwhile, were encouraged to form pro-Indonesia militia groups in East Timor in the 1970s to 1990s. A special case would be those colonial guardians who were local-born or resident but not 'indigenous', such as many of Singapore's nineteenth- to early twentieth-century volunteers (part-time territorial forces). These included separate companies for Europeans, Eurasians, Chinese, Indians and Malays, with rates of compensation differing by 'race'.

More often than not, however, colonial troops are not indigenous to the country they are serving in. Hence the Algerian *Zouaves* for France, like the



Gurkhas for Britain, were widely deployed outside their area of recruitment, notably in Indochina; likewise, the *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* in French West Africa and elsewhere, and also the Indian troops garrisoned in British Burma and Malaya. Similarly, Southeast Asians were also deployed in areas they were alien to: Vietnamese soldiers served in East Asia, Europe and Africa, while Moluccan, Timorese, Alfurian and Madurese soldiers took part in the Dutch conquest of Indonesia. In this way, the forces in any one colonial territory may include local conscripts, full- or part-time volunteers or militias (variously drawn from indigenous peoples, settlers, ‘mestizo’ recruits or even recent immigrants) and recruits from other colonial territories.

The important distinction for ‘colonial’ forces is thus the contrast between their recruitment at a periphery, in contrast to control emanating from a distant, and for the most part culturally distinct, core or ‘metropolitan’ territory. Their functions may vary greatly, from contributing to the security of a single colonial territory, through posting abroad in service of transcolonial security, to service in defence of the core territory that controls them, directly or indirectly as war industry labour and auxiliaries.

‘Colonial forces’ might thus be thought of as encompassing all who serve directly and indirectly in support of an imperial military system. This might require new typologies, which recognise a whole spectrum of forces, from the elite volunteer, through conscripts, militias, partisans, auxiliaries, coolies and defence labourers, to military and sexual slaves. In the Japanese case these categories encompass both the 250,000 Asian *romusha* (labourers inveigled by a mix of coercion through local leaders, and deception over conditions), of whom at least 60,000 died helping to build the Burma–Thailand railway in 1942–3, and the ‘comfort women’ or military sex slaves of 1931–45.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Core definitions of imperialism and colonialism***

Imperialism itself we take to be the domination by one state – a core – of the effective sovereignty of one or more separate areas – ‘peripheries’. Colonialism is a subcategory of imperialism. In colonialism, domination involves *de jure* or *de facto* metropolitan rights and responsibilities over the dominated area. This is described below as formal imperialism. As such, colonialism can be thought of as further subdividing into Fieldhouse’s five types of colonial territory, spanning from settler colony to protectorate and ‘factory’. Beyond colonialism, imperial policies may dominate other areas while disclaiming permanent or semi-permanent rights. This is another subcategory of imperialism, described below as informal imperialism.

Either way, the policy areas dominated may include either internal or external policies, or a combination of both. The ‘periphery’ so dominated may be contiguous, or lie over the seas. But it must constitute a separate administrative unit, be dominated without the explicit consent of most of its people and have a population that has, or develops, a distinct culture and sense of identity and interests. Imperialism encompasses the whole process of such domination.





### **Formal imperialism**

Formal imperialism or colonialism involves the core territory assuming responsibilities for a peripheral area. The area so dominated tends to be styled a colony if domination extends over both internal and external policies. If there is an agreement transferring more limited aspects of sovereignty – for instance, defence and external affairs only, or limited to the right to ‘advise’ – it is likely to be given a term reflecting this limited scope, such as protectorate.

Formal imperialism or colonialism is largely a matter of a legal or *de facto* international status, by which the core’s rights and responsibilities over the periphery are made manifest. But that does not tell us how a colony or protectorate is protected. The style of dominance can be further divided into methods of direct imperialism and of indirect imperialism.

### **Direct and indirect imperialism**

At its extreme, direct imperialism implies a monopoly or near-monopoly over the key functions of state in the peripheral area. Such functions include the use of force and judicial and tax-raising activities. Direct imperial methods include raising regular, and regularly paid and drilled, police and soldiers. Such soldiers might serve under non-indigenous officers down to at least battalion, if not company or platoon, level, with indigenous NCOs helping to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between foreigner and colonial recruit.

Indirect approaches to imperialism involve devolving significant aspects of state functions to subordinate, localised authorities. These authorities are as often as not declared to be traditional or entrenched ‘native’ representatives: sultans, rajas, chiefs, penghulu (village heads) or even Kapitan China (prominent Chinese allowed to hold sway over their own community in specified areas) and secret society leaders. The sub-contracting of state and military functions to a third party, such as mercenaries or companies, could also be classified under this rubric.

This means that ‘colonial armies’ also include ‘indirect’ colonial forces; that is, the enforcers enlisted by lesser, local authorities. In the nineteenth- to early twentieth-century Netherlands East Indies, some local officials relied on *jagos* (literally fighting roosters or cocks) or village toughs to help to enforce their decisions, while in the American-ruled Philippines prominent families developed what became virtually private armies.<sup>10</sup> In both cases, it has been argued that this left, and still leaves, a postcolonial legacy of non-state violence, which colours politics and governance for the worse.

In terms of colonial armies, the British East India Company on the Indian subcontinent took an increasingly direct approach from the mid-eighteenth century, recruiting Indians as sepoy (soldiers), directly in company pay, under British officers. Yet in nineteenth-century Malaya and Singapore the British initially took a more indirect approach, encouraging the cooperation of Kapitan China. The Portuguese in East Timor, meanwhile, still placed a significant



emphasis on raising native levies through local chiefs, the *liurai*, into the early twentieth century. These levies perpetuated militia ‘repertoires of violence’, which were later tapped by pro-Indonesia militias, right up to 1999.<sup>11</sup>

Direct and indirect approaches are not mutually exclusive. Territories might employ a mix of both, typically beginning with greater elements of indirect rule, and moving towards using more direct methods as state formation and increased tax revenues made this possible.

### ***Informal imperialism***

In addition to the contrast between direct and indirect techniques of dominance, there is a contrast between formal and informal imperialism. Formal imperialism involves assuming *de facto* or *de jure* responsibilities for an area; informal imperialism functions in the absence of these. It employs threats, financial dominance and ‘gunboat diplomacy.’

Domination is taken to mean the ability to influence policy in a fundamental and persistent manner, as and when needed; for instance, by enforcing extraterritorial rights or replacing unsatisfactory rulers. When people talk of a Pax Britannica, or of a twenty-first-century American Empire, or of a fifteenth-century maritime Pax Ming, it is informal imperialism that is meant, with its determination to dictate developments in ‘failed’ or ‘rogue states’, and states that are seen as threatening international norms of trade and diplomacy. Examples range from Western imposition of extraterritorial jurisdiction on a range of Asian states such as China and Thailand (allowing Westerners to be tried under their own laws), to American intervention in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003).<sup>12</sup>

Such ‘Pax’, informal imperialism and ‘spheres of influence’ tend to be a function of empires operating towards the outer reaches of their geographical limit, or of world powers wishing to avoid excessive accumulations of extra colonies and responsibilities. At this margin, the imperial powers tend to prefer informal domination to direct rule, and to keep the duration of any intervention limited.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Imperial systems of power***

Beyond these terms, we refer in this chapter to imperial systems of power. Why distinguish this extra layer? Here we note that some historians and political scientists have argued that imperialism should be distinguished from colonialism.

For Jürgen Osterhammel, ‘colonialism’ involves the intricacies of ruling individual colonies; it is the art of domination. By contrast, he argues that ‘imperialism’ is about creating systems of power, and the related attempt to exercise great power politics. For Dominic Lieven, an expert on Russia, empires are ‘very great powers’ that dominate many territories and peoples and influence global politics. For him, the greatest empires also espouse something like a high religion or culture. They seek to impose their worldview, not only by means of the stick and carrot, but also by providing an overarching hegemonic idea for emulation.





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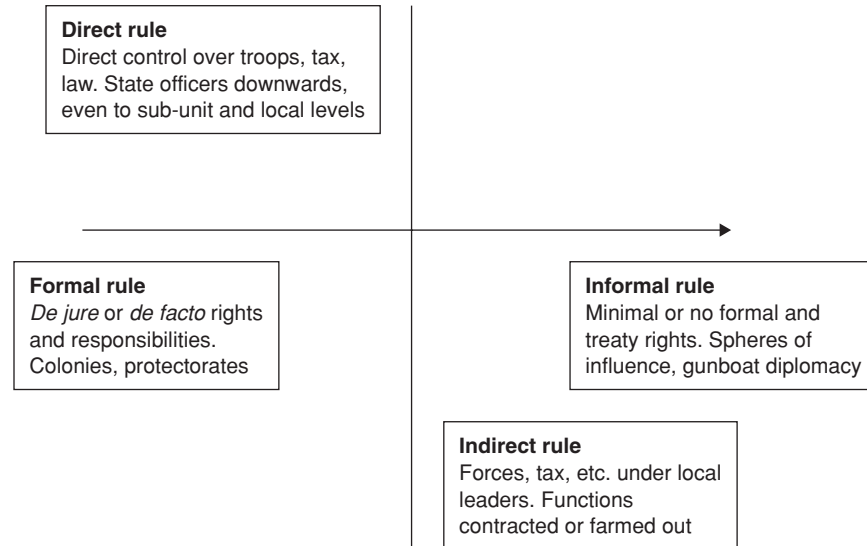


Figure 1.1 The spectrum of formal/informal and direct/indirect domination.

One thinks of Britain's economic globalisation (free trade imperialism) of the nineteenth century, and of George Bush's declaratory political globalism (supporting the spread of democracy and freedom). The latter was boldly stated at the swearing-in ceremony for his second term as President in January 2005.<sup>14</sup> For these authors, then, empire is more than colonial. It is transcolonial, and global: it involves relations between the parts of a wider imperial system. On this model, colonial security would be the art of dominating and protecting individual states, while imperial security would be the art of operating broad power systems. Colonial security would concern itself with this frontier and that garrison, while the imperial system broods over strategic reserves, and how to keep major shipping ways flowing, such as the Suez and Panama Canals, and Straits of Hormuz and Melaka.<sup>15</sup>

We hold that reserving the title of empire for these largest few systems, and the name of imperialism for their practice, is as philologically illogical as it is appealing in its clarity. Except for narrow heuristic purposes, it is doomed by its defiance of common usage and dictionary definition. It is also unsatisfactory in excluding events within a single colony, or acts by a minor power, from the category of imperial, and in focusing on scale more than the qualitative nature of imperialism. We reject this imperial versus colonial distinction. Instead we adopt a further idea – that of an imperial system of power – to describe the military–political–economic–diplomatic matrixes developed to preserve dominance on a wider scale.

If it is necessary to identify the very greatest superpowers from common or garden empires (superpowers that have built security systems spanning most of



the world known to them, such as Rome, Spain, Britain, the Soviet Union and the contemporary United States), one might define them as having, or seeking, global imperial systems of power. The idea of a system of imperial power is useful, because it also highlights how the term 'colonial armies' is too narrow in focus. In choosing to use 'colonial armies' in the title, we are not so much affirming traditional notions of their study as beginning a campaign to re-examine, redefine and relocate them. Imperial domination has as often as not relied upon complex and variegated complexes or systems of power, of which armies are but one part.

Imperial systems of power also have defining characteristics, despite not necessarily being self-consciously operated as systems. They are transcolonial or global rather than merely colonial, and they must be underpinned by financial strength.<sup>16</sup> They project power not only by metropolitan armed forces, but also by some combination of overseas reach in the forms of bases, aircraft, alliances, disbursements and, in the case of maritime empires, ships. In this regard, Chapter 2, 'The demography of domination', looks at the vital role steamships and gunships played in the 'new imperialism' of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The 'colonial army', then, is just one component of any given system, though one that remains vital if domination is to prove sustainable in manpower and financial terms.<sup>17</sup> Max Boot has argued that the lack of such 'colonial' or at least 'foreign legion' troops is a formidable barrier to the United States taking the challenges of world policing more seriously. Who is to do the dirty work of 'nation-building' in failed states, and of browbeating rogue states, as the body-bags flow from the likes of Iraq? He suggests that a foreign and illegal immigrant-manned 'Freedom Legion' can provide the shock troops for this. These politically expendable imperial forces – more acceptable body-bag fillers than boys from the Midwest and New York – could have citizenship as their reward. Why citizenship should be needed in addition to a good salary relative to their homelands is unclear, unless it is to avoid the tag 'mercenary'. Presumably such forces would fit into the larger post-2001 picture of the United States cobbling together 'coalitions of the willing' for specific interventions, and subcontracting military and intelligence functions to commercial companies and other governments.

Max Boot's British and French predecessors would have shuddered at this financial imprudence. For colonial armies were important not only for their willing and expendable recruits, but also because local salaries were cheaper than metropolitan. Even then the colonies usually paid. This reveals a serious tension in the contemporary American position. It has the most far-reaching system of imperial power the world has seen, but without colonies to fund a true 'colonial army'. Hence the core power has to pay for most things. Unless, of course, Max Boot and American neoconservatives revive Athens' wheeze in the Delian League, and have key allies' bankrolling of American-raised forces made regular, rather than *ad hoc*.<sup>18</sup>

Colonial troops in the narrow sense thus constitute a vital component of imperial power, but are still only one of several components. They are also just



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one way in which imperial territories can be turned into security producers, rather than mere security consumers, with others providing their hosting bases, providing labour and making financial contributions.

Taking all these definitions and issues together, this book does not merely take ‘colonial armies’ as unproblematic, and offer chapters on micro-aspects of such forces. Instead, it offers a series of chapters that provoke questions about the very nature of imperial force.

### **Three themes: imperial systems; discourses of loyalty and revolt; and Asian imperialism**

The chapters in this book fall into three broad themes, namely: imperial systems of power; discourses of ‘martial races’, loyalty and revolt; and the need to extend the imperial paradigm to Asian-run ‘colonial armies’ and to the ‘postcolonial’ era in Asia.

#### ***Systems and patterns of imperial power***

Several chapters touch on the issue of wider systems of imperial power: some by looking at the macro-picture; others by examining microcosms that reveal systemic stresses. Gerke Teitler’s Chapter 6, ‘The mixed company: fighting power and ethnic relations in the Dutch colonial army, 1890–1920’, shows how difficult it was for the Netherlands to raise enough troops to secure the Netherlands Indies. The Dutch had one of the smallest domestic populations. In 1900 this meant five million, compared to 40 million subjects spread over the several thousand islands in the Indies. The Dutch struggled as a result to find sufficient European officers – despite recruiting many non-Dutch Europeans – and to find sufficient troops from groups they trusted, such as the so-called ‘Ambonese’. The latter were mainly Christian converts from small spice islands over a thousand kilometres to the east of Java.<sup>19</sup>

Henri Eckert, meanwhile, shows how, in Indochina in the 1880s and 1890s, the shaping of colonial forces had as much to do with debates between republicans and royalists in France, between Navy and Army officers in Vietnam and between the French army and civilians as with events on the ground. His Chapter 5, ‘Double-edged swords of conquest in Indochina: *Tirailleurs Tonkinois*, *Chasseurs Annamites* and militias, 1885–1895’, shows just how far European games were played out in Asia, as well as revealing the tensions between direct and indirect approaches to early colonial armies. While Teitler’s chapter looks at recruitment issues and Eckert’s at issues of control, the editors tell in Chapter 2 of the French use of Indochinese soldiers and labour in Europe from the middle of the First World War.

Three chapters take a more explicitly macrocosmic approach to systems of imperial power. Abu Talib Ahmad in Chapter 9, ‘The impact of the Japanese occupation on colonial and anti-colonial armies in Southeast Asia’, surveys the impact of the Japanese period on Southeast Asia, covering anti-Japanese armies





as well as Japanese-sponsored forces, and militias as well as regulars. He shows how Japanese weakness as much as Japanese strength fuelled increased use of local militias after 1943, as well as permitting a growth in the scale and influence of anti-Japanese armies in Burma, Malaya and the Philippines. Both Japanese-sponsored and anti-Japanese forces were to mark the postwar period, and Abu Talib notes the importance of the Japanese emphasis on *seishin* in training, their version of disciplined, hardened, indomitable martial spirit that could make up for technological inferiority.

Karl Hack's Chapter 10, 'Imperialism and decolonisation in Southeast Asia: colonial forces and British world power', surveys a still broader period, from the nineteenth century to the present day. It argues that British territories in Southeast Asia produced as well as consumed security. It does this by showing how the area consumed security in the form of troops from India and Royal Navy protection, but produced it in terms of bases, agreements, guaranteeing the free flow of international trade in the Melaka Straits (then written 'Straits of Malacca') and being an empire 'dollar arsenal' to the 1950s and beyond.<sup>20</sup> That is, Malaya's dollar-earning rubber and tin helped to subsidise Britain's dollar-deficient trade from the interwar to the Cold War periods.

Hack's chapter further shows how only a systemic approach can make sense of British decisions and forces in the region. This ranges from Britain's use of indirect models of imperial security – for instance, using Chinese leaders to control Chinese subjects – to the decisions that led to a relatively benign post-1945 decolonisation process. The latter happened as Britain – once it had accepted that a gradual evolution towards self-government was inevitable post-Second World War – prioritised the development of working relationships with stable, friendly postcolonial elites. Such relationships were seen as the key to producing postcolonial states that would cooperate with Britain, and so underpin continuing British world power.

Perhaps even more intriguingly, Geoff Wade's Chapter 3, 'Ming colonial armies in Southeast Asia', takes the systemic approach back in time. His chapter challenges us to see fifteenth-century Ming Chinese expansion into western Yunnan and Vietnam, and the epic voyages of Admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho) across the South Seas and Indian Ocean, as Asian, and more specifically Chinese, forms of imperialism. As we will argue below, reflection on the chapters by Abu Talib, Hack and Wade leads to a further theme, which is just how the biggest 'global' systems of imperial power – Ming, Japanese and British – helped to shape Southeast Asia.

### ***Discourses of loyalty, revolt and 'martial races'***

The second big theme is discourses and practices of martial races, loyalty and revolt. Every imperial power wrestled with the fear that the main populations it ruled – Burmans, Javanese, Malays, Vietnamese and Tagalogs – might prove unreliable. Each constructed 'knowledge' about its populations, and the 'martial' qualities of these, in a way that was designed to underpin control. Put bluntly,





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Europeans in particular employed a ‘divide and rule’ approach that produced ‘plural armies’ to rule over plural societies.<sup>21</sup>

Hence Taylor writes in his Chapter 9, ‘Colonial forces in British Burma: a national army postponed’, that the true martial race of Burma, the lowland Burmans who were feared enemies of the Siamese, were marginalised. The British turned instead to Indian soldiers from the Raj, and Burmese ethnic minorities, notably hilltribes that had been converted to Christianity.

Burma was conquered in three phases between 1824 and 1885, and then made into a province of British India. By 1931 Burmans made up 75 per cent of the population but just 12 per cent of the indigenous troops, as opposed to Karens, Kachehs, Chins, Anglo-Burmese and Indians. The rise of nationalism seems to have made the British no less averse to recruiting Burmans, though Burma’s separation from the British Raj as a distinct colony in 1937 (with limited internal self-government), and the approach of war, made compromise inevitable. In 1939–41 the percentage of Burmans among new recruits rose to 28.5 per cent. But this still left a severe underrepresentation as a proportion of the regular army (19 per cent), and more so in the armed services as a whole (13 per cent).

Taylor notes that, in response to these limitations, nationalists raised militias. More famously, Aung San and the ‘thirty comrades’ left the country to receive Japanese military training in 1941, only to return with their Japanese sponsors at the head of what became a ‘Burma Independence Army’, and ultimately the ‘Burmese Patriotic Forces’ after they switched sides to the British in 1945. Taylor shows how parts of this predominantly Burman force were integrated into the postwar army, and its leaders rose to high position.

It seems that colonial discourse on martial races was a technique of ‘divide and rule’ that cemented control before 1941, but backfired afterwards. It helped to produce a postwar country where minorities possessed military traditions cemented by the British training, but where a Burman elite was determined to limit the former’s regional autonomy. This Burman elite also emerged with a distrust of the British who had refused to recruit them in large numbers before the war. This history helped to underpin endemic conflict between government and minorities from 1948 onwards.<sup>22</sup>

For French Indochina, Chapters 4 and 5 by Womack and Eckert, together with Rettig’s article on ‘French military policies in the aftermath of Yên Bái mutiny, 1930’, show how the French failed to recognise the ethnic Vietnamese (*kinh*) as a potential ‘martial race’. This despite a history of fierce anti-Chinese struggle, of an often bloody Vietnamese colonisation drive southwards and of internal wars.<sup>23</sup>

Locally recruited French forces in Indochina did come to be composed mainly of *kinh* soldiers. But this was a matter of grudging necessity, since France did not have a virtually inexhaustible ‘barrack in the eastern seas’, as the British did in India. Nor could they rely heavily on ethnic minorities, as the hill tribes were subjected after the conquest of the lowlands and delta regions. Instead, the French tapped into precolonial Vietnamese administrative traditions –



themselves Chinese-influenced – to conscript local soldiers. Even when hill tribes were recruited, notably from the 1920s when rising Vietnamese nationalism worried the French, their small numbers limited their potential.

The ironic exception to French refusal to use the Vietnamese as a ‘martial race’ is noted by Sarah Womack’s Chapter 4, ‘Ethnicity and martial races: the Garde indigène of Cambodia in the 1880s and 1890s’. Womack looks at French tactics in putting down a revolt in its Cambodian protectorate, in 1885–6. She argues that the French discourses on the Khmer and Vietnamese formed images of both as poor and untrustworthy soldiers. But despite this, Womack demonstrates how non-Khmer Vietnamese (then called Annamese) of the Civil Guard were deliberately deployed in Cambodia. Divide and rule temporarily took precedence over stereotypes of the Vietnamese as poor soldiers and police.

The Dutch in the East Indies and the Americans in the Philippines also had problems identifying acceptable ‘martial races’, as shown by Teitler’s Chapter 6 on the Netherlands Indies and Richard Meixsel’s Chapter 7 on the Philippines. Forty years of dogged resistance (1873 to the early twentieth century) turned the Acehnese, in Dutch eyes, into Muslim fanatics rather than a reliable martial race. Nor did the Dutch see the Javanese as made of the right stuff. The Javanese, who provided the bulk of the Indies’ population, could too easily turn out to be a threat to Dutch supremacy if predominant in the army.

Hence from the second half of the nineteenth century the Dutch nurtured Moluccans, peoples from the east of the archipelago who had been subjected during the conquest of the spice islands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In particular they turned the so-called ‘Ambonese’ into a privileged ‘martial race’. The Ambonese became so closely identified with Dutch service that they were sometimes referred to as black Dutchmen. As with the French, however, the preferred martial races were small in number compared to the overall population, and the result was grudging reliance on the Javanese as the largest recruiting pool for a colonial army that was also very much a plural army.

The United States also chose to minimise recruitment of Tagalogs as Scouts, the American term for their Filipino troops. The Tagalogs, the majority on the most populous island of Luzon, had been at the forefront of the Philippine rebellion against Spain from 1896, and then of the resistance against American takeover in 1898–1901. In 1924, only 5 per cent of the Philippine Division was Tagalog. The Americans preferred to recruit from other ‘tribes’, most notably the Macabebe, who had been recruited first for the Spanish in 1896.<sup>24</sup> Only the growing need to recruit more educated soldiers, and distance from the events of 1898–1901, allowed more Tagalog recruitment. Overall, however, the Americans appeared relatively uninterested in their local soldiers. Tours of duty for American officers were generally as little as two years, and these same officers were too often of mediocre quality, or demonstrated a lack of interest in the indigenous rank and file. The advent of the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1935 threatened more dramatic developments in local forces, but delivered little before the Japanese swept across the islands in 1941–2.



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For the most part, then, and in contrast to the British in India, the other European powers refused to see candidates for large-scale ‘martial races’. This was partly a matter of reluctance to overrely on recently conquered and pacified majorities, but was also partly due to cultural prejudices, which resulted in a kind of martial ‘orientalism’. Asians might be disparaged as effeminate or not steady in open, shock battle, or Asian martial traditions were written off as marauding and piracy.<sup>25</sup> Womack’s Chapter 4 describes, for instance, the perceived femininity of the longhaired and small Vietnamese soldiers. Europeans may have suffered from a superficial confusion between outward appearance and social graces, and martial ability. Local styles of warfare may also have played a part, by failing to conform to Western conceptions of manly behaviour. In many cases Southeast Asians did not seek open battle if they thought that losses might be excessive. This was in stark contrast to some colonial encounters in Africa or India.

This lack of appreciation of local styles of warfare, and the need to maintain European superiority by denying native soldiers manly qualities, meant that the majority of those recruited must have been aware of their colonial masters’ ambivalence. They would have felt that they were not being groomed as an honoured military caste, when contrasted to the more favoured troops from other colonies such as British-recruited Indians or French-recruited Zouaves, and from the minorities of their own lands. By contrast, the favoured few showed how a sense of being a military caste could be created. This was the case with Moluccan soldiers subject to high expectations and good pay.

It seems that colonial powers created for themselves a dilemma. The very nature of colonial rule – which required people to take higher risks in distant lands, and to endure absence from metropolitan career ladders and networks – required payment of a premium to secure ‘white’ officers. In addition, the recruitment of minorities, by their nature providing smaller recruitment pools, as rank and file and as NCOs often required their preferential treatment.

The result of treating Europeans and minorities differently was that colonial armies were plural armies, though the particular approach to plural forces varied from one European power to another. For instance, the British recruited groups into communally distinct platoons and even battalions, the Dutch did likewise to begin with, but then mixed different ethnic groups from the Acehnese war, and the Philippine Scout companies tended to see a single group predominate in each one, but were also mixed.

The reliance on minorities and specific groups could work well where indigenous martial traditions could be successfully drawn on, as in British India. But the reality by the 1920s and 1930s was that expanding armies increasingly had to rely on the majority populations for recruitment if they were to keep abreast of increasing domestic and international threats. That meant more Vietnamese soldiers in Indochina and more Javanese in the Indies. Britain found itself in a similar dilemma. It reluctantly increased recruitment of the Malays in Malaya (into the Malay Regiment from 1933), though it scarcely used the numerous Chinese there at all. In Burma, Burmans remained a small minority in the army despite their percentage in the military more than doubling between 1931 and 1939.





There was thus a tension between imperial ambivalence about majority populations and the need to increase their recruitment if colonial armies were to face the growing international threats of the 1930s. An additional tendency was the clash of the imperial prerogative of white control with the requirements of efficiency, and for colonial forces to become under par for modern warfare. The implications of all this were made clear by the Japanese onslaught, which crushed British, American and Dutch controlled armies between December 1941 and early 1942. In short, colonial armies were fine for policing, but a recipe for disaster in a modern war, weakened by racialised hierarchies, the absence of ethnic cohesion and a lack of a common sense of mission. There were echoes here of Habsburg Austria's performance during the First World War.<sup>26</sup> The catastrophic series of failures from December 1941 called the whole basis of the colonial paradigm into question.

We should not overdo the gloom or the deterministic slant. In many ways, the amazing thing is that the vast majority of colonial forces proved so loyal up to and including 1941. In the American Philippines, for instance, the only notable mutiny, of 1924, was a 'loyal' revolt for better pay and conditions. Meixsel's Chapter 7 shows that despite problems, including a dismal linguistic gap between American officers and Filipino rank and file, the Filipino elite rallied behind the Americans to condemn the 1924 Scout mutiny.

Perhaps even more pertinently, Philippine soldiers' main fear in the 1930s was that nationalism might undercut their relatively privileged position, in the sense of pay and security compared to the alternatives. The establishment of the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1935 with a large measure of self-government – and the new government's determination to build up its own defence force – raised the spectre of a larger local military, and so the erosion of their status and conditions. In fact, the Scout mutiny was soon forgotten, and remained neglected in American and Filipino narratives of the American colonial period. For colonial soldiers, the comparison that mattered was sometimes not their inferior pay and status to European officers, but their superior pay and security compared to alternative forms of employment.<sup>27</sup>

Even in what was arguably the most troublesome territory by the twentieth century, Vietnam, the colonial army performed better than a quick glance might at first suggest. A nationalist-inspired mutiny of February 1930 proved abortive, most dramatically at Yen Bay in northern Vietnam. Rettig's 2002 article on Yen Bay has already traced these themes. It shows how the vast majority of the army remained reliable, despite a history of localised revolts, notably between 1908 and 1918. The nationalist-engineered Yen Bay mutiny of 1930 represented something new. Though nipped in the bud by loyal forces, it was part of a Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD, Vietnamese Nationalist Party, along the lines of China's GMD) plan for simultaneous mutinies and insurrection. Rettig discusses the French paranoia and harsh surveillance and control measures that followed, including executions and imprisonment, dismissals, rotating the majority of soldiers, increased surveillance and largely futile attempts to keep a better balance between Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese troops. More than 4.5 per





cent of Tonkin's 12,000 indigenous soldiers received some form of punishment. But he also notes that Vietnamese militia forces (*Garde indigène*), and later troops as well, proved reliable when used against a communist-directed, rural-based revolt that followed hard on Yen Bay's heels: the 'Nghe-Tinh' revolt of May 1930 to August 1931.<sup>28</sup>

In Malaya, meanwhile, the British went one better. Both Hack's Chapter 10 and Kevin Blackburn's Chapter 12, 'Colonial forces and postcolonial memories: the Malay Regiment in Malaya and Singapore', demonstrate how the British, belatedly and in slightly sceptical mood, did test a majority Southeast Asian population against its criteria for a 'martial race'. Their chapters explain how the British, by tapping Malay traditions of martial valour, and loyalty to their Sultans, produced a small and initially experimental Malay unit in 1933. This blossomed into the Malay Regiment, whose 1400 men fought the Japanese bitterly in February 1942, even as white forces melted away around it.

Blackburn goes further still. He shows how discourses of loyalty and martial tradition have been harnessed by postcolonial states for nationalist reasons. The final stand of the Malay Regiment at Pasir Panjang, in Singapore, on 13–14 February 1942 became the subject of contrasting nationalist historiographies in Singapore and Malaysia. For Malaysia the Regiment became defenders of Malay culture, martial tradition and self-confidence. For Singapore the Regiment became one example of different groups who fought, each in their own way, in defence of what was to become a multiracial, meritocratic, independent Singapore.

Issues of colonial force thus remain relevant into the 'postcolonial era', in which they occupy places in memory in some cases as nationalist icons, as Blackburn shows, and in others as anti-independence fighters. Indonesia, for instance, offers examples of those who fought against independence as envisaged by core nationalists in Java and Sumatra. Three and a half thousand Moluccans (including Ambonese) notably refused assimilation into the Republican Indonesian army they had fought, and after independence in 1949 accepted temporary and eventually permanent exile in the Netherlands instead.<sup>29</sup>

Blackburn thus suggests a distinct area of studies, namely postcolonial discourses about 'colonial forces'. This theme remains a potentially explosive subject in East Asia as well as Southeast Asia, with, for instance, more than 130,000 Koreans having served directly in the Japanese military (many as volunteers), together with over 80,000 Taiwanese.<sup>30</sup>

To return to Hack's chapter, the British approach to martial forces fell hardest in 1942. The surrender of over 100,000 troops to Japan in Singapore, on 15 February 1942, dealt a terrible blow to the idea of imperial guardianship. The British response to the failure of their plural army in Malaya – it was almost half Indian and comprised only a small percentage of locally recruited Asian regulars – was dramatic. They returned in 1945, eschewing the model of trusteeship over largely passive plural societies, and seeking partnership with populations.<sup>31</sup> They aimed to turn Chinese, Indians, Malays and Eurasians into a 'Malayan nation', which would find a home in what might eventually become a 'Dominion of





Southeast Asia', and so underpin a 'Malayan' army comprised of men from all races. All this came at a time, in 1942–7, when Britain began to envisage Dominions such as Australia, and perhaps India after independence in August 1947, partnering Britain in the coordination of their regional defence.

In short, finally and rather belatedly, the British abandoned the Europeans' favoured mode of divide and rule, and instead aimed to 'unite and quit' by means of nation and state-building, in a way that would produce postcolonial states willing and able to cooperate in international defence. In fact it never quite worked. Malay insistence on retaining the 'Malay' character of the 'Malay Regiment' ensured that it continued to be both racially exclusive and the dominant core around which multiracial supporting arms were assembled.

The other European colonial powers were all but extinguished during the Second World War, and arguably had less developed images of postwar colonial armies and postcolonial defence cooperation. Their main task after 1945 turned out to be reoccupation – a second colonial occupation – and then fighting insurgencies that ultimately overstretched them, first the Dutch by 1949, then the French by 1954. The fact that neither Dutch nor French really recovered their colonies' rural and hill hinterlands re-emphasises the importance of the Japanese occupation, as described in Abu Talib's Chapter 9. It undermined colonial legitimacy, and produced large numbers of colonial subjects with the military training, spirit and organisation required to mount sustained guerrilla campaigns.

These issues, of discourses of martial races and colonial forces, thus persist across periods. The book emphasises this most forcefully by its choice of opening and closing specialist chapters, namely Chapter 3 by Geoff Wade on Ming China, Chapter 11 by Geoffrey Robinson on East Timor across the centuries and Chapter 12 by Blackburn on the postcolonial memory of the Malay Regiment. What these early and late chapters also have in common is that they raise issues of Asian imperialism, and Asian memories of imperialism. This forms our third overarching theme.

### ***Asian imperialism and Asian memory of imperial armies***

Colonial forces are not specifically a phenomenon of Western raising of Asian forces, but also one of Asian raising of forces in peripheries, and to police peripheries. Nor can imperial force be kept only as a category for analysing a supposedly colonial pre-1960s, as opposed to a mythically 'postcolonial' post-1960s. Whether or not the imperial paradigm is useful depends on the nature of core to periphery relations, not on questions of date or race.

While Blackburn's treatment of the Malay Regiment is alluded to above, Robinson's chapter on the genealogy of local Timorese, and on 'repertoires of violence' in Indonesia, demands additional explanation. His Chapter 11, 'Colonial militias in East Timor from the Portuguese period to independence', starts by asking how we explain pro-Indonesian militias' rampage of destruction in 1999 East Timor, around the time of that territory's vote for independence. His answer is that two things combined. First, there was political manipulation of



local forces by members of the Indonesian army intent on hiding behind subcontracted forces. Second, there was the nature of the Timorese militias themselves. Robinson argues that these drew on traditions, or violent ‘repertoires of action’, that can be traced back to Portuguese times and beyond. Local levies, historically raised under *liurai* or local chiefs, had repertoires of action stressing demonstrative display and destruction, and the taking of heads. The aims included terrorising and intimidation.

Robinson’s picture hints at a wider pattern of Indonesian manipulation of militias acquired in various anti-communist, anti-secessionist and anti-militant Islam campaigns. These were waged not only in outlying territories but in Java too. The generals and commandos who had been used in the massive purge of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965–6, for instance, included officers who had participated in the repression of the Outer Islands Revolt of 1956–8, the Darul Islam Rebellions and the infiltration of Dutch New Guinea in 1961–2, and who would later use this knowledge in the conquest of East Timor, the maintenance of Suharto’s regime and the fight for Aceh.

Robinson thus links precolonial, colonial and present-day Timor and Indonesia in a way that raises questions about the presence of ‘imperial’ forces in modern Southeast Asia. It was in this spirit of pushing the boundaries that Geoff Wade was invited to contribute Chapter 3, ‘Ming Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia’. Where Blackburn and Robinson push the boundaries of ‘colonial armies’ forwards in time, Wade pushes them backwards. He asks whether one can talk of Ming Chinese imperialism in Southeast Asia. Were the forces China sent south and west ‘colonial’, and if so to what effect?

We may find it easier to answer these questions, and to envisage in concrete form what imperial systems of power and discourses of martial races mean, by immersing ourselves in case studies. We now offer two of these, at opposite ends of the scale. The second case study looks at the colonial soldier as military careerist and part of an imagined military tradition, in the form of two Malay Regiment soldiers. The first, by contrast, examines a whole system. It describes Geoff Wade’s Ming China as an imperial system of power, makes comparisons to other systems and asks how the Chinese impact may have helped to shape modern Southeast Asia.

### **Case study I: Ming China and its impact on Southeast Asia**

In October 1407 Admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho) returned to China, two years after setting forth on the first of seven maritime expeditions. Having sailed as far as Calicut in India, he brought with him envoys, tribute and a captive: the Chinese ‘pirate’ Chen Zu-yi. The returning Ming Dynasty fleet reported that Chen had feigned surrender at Old Port, today’s Palembang in Sumatra, while plotting an attack.<sup>32</sup>

Chen had made a deadly mistake. Zheng He’s fleet boasted over 317 vessels. It included water tankers, 62 treasure ships and more than 27,000 men, including





10,000 ‘crack troops’. At its peak Ming China’s navy included 400 ships of the fleet, over 2000 coastal vessels and 250 huge treasure ships, each a gigantic, multi-masted junk with as many as 500 men on board. The biggest ships bristled with hand-guns, muzzle-cannon, fire lances and rockets.<sup>33</sup> This was the culmination of three centuries of development in maritime strength, from the Sung dynasty in the twelfth century, through the Mongol Yuan dynasty and its attacks on Japan (1281), Champa and Tonkin (1283–8) and even Java (1293), to the Ming Dynasty that replaced the Yuan in 1368.<sup>34</sup>

Zheng He, who was later to attack Sri Lankan rulers as well, spent two months hunting down Chen’s forces. Ten vessels were sunk, seven captured, and over 5000 people left for dead. The alleged ‘pirate’ chief – so-named largely because he had his own forces controlling the Straits – was hauled back to Nanjing, presented to the Emperor and decapitated. As for Old Port-Palembang, many Chinese ex-military and civilians from the southern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian already called it home. Old Port was recognised as a ‘pacification superintendency’ under Chinese Superintendent Shi Jin-qing. China soon established two *guanchang* (depots or staging posts) athwart the Melaka Straits, which divides Sumatra and the Malayan peninsula. Depots were established at the ports of Samudera and Melaka (the latter spelt Malacca for the British colonial period and Melaka for other times).<sup>35</sup>

There is a striking parallel between the resulting Ming maritime interlude of 1405–33, and the period between 1786 and the 1840s. In the latter period, increasing trade in the area preceded the British establishment of ‘factories’ in the Malacca Straits: at Penang, Malacca and Singapore, with the permission of local rulers whom they overshadowed. The British, like the Chinese, used select but overwhelming demonstrations of naval force to overawe, so that afterwards persuasion sufficed, before proceeding to attack piracy with new technology. British steamships took the place of China’s fifteenth-century supersized and gunpowder-armed war junks. The contrast between British persistence for well over a century and a half, and progression from establishing its own ‘*guanchang*’ to territorial rule, and the short-lived nature of China’s greatest fleets, is even more striking than the parallels between their outbursts of maritime dominance.

But Wade’s story can be taken further than the short-lived ‘proto-imperialism’ of Zheng He’s fleets: maritime proto-imperialism, Wade suggests, because it shared the mid-nineteenth-century British preference for intervention and influence short of territorial rule. Zheng He himself, the leader of the 1405–7 expedition, was arguably one of the most successful ever ‘colonial soldiers’. Originally named Ma He, he hailed from what is now the southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan, an area then hosting a number of small, independent kingdoms in its west, as well as Mongol remnants from the Yuan dynasty.<sup>36</sup> Wade’s chapter argues that the conquest and absorption of western Yunnan was itself an example of Ming landborne imperialism, featuring colonisation by military settlers and the recruitment of local auxiliary forces.

Wade thus suggests that Ming Chinese ‘imperial’ activity was characterised by three distinct types of expansion, namely: the ‘proto-imperialism’ of the maritime



fleets; colonisation in Yunnan; and conquest, albeit short-lived, in Vietnam, which briefly became the Chinese province of Jiao-zhi (1407–28).<sup>37</sup>

Zheng He's life could be seen as encompassing two, if not three, of these types of 'imperialism'. In the first place, Zheng He was an imperial victim. His capture and castration resulted from China's colonising movement to its west, further into Yunnan, initially to subdue remnants from the Mongol Yuan dynasty, which the Ming Emperors had ousted. Ultimately Yunnan would be incorporated into China, and the history of its Tai and hill peoples separated from that of other hill groups, who still range across much of northern and upland Southeast Asia.<sup>38</sup>

This absorption of Yunnan was part of a process whereby China's border and tributary states were gradually domesticated. Even today, when Yunnan's inhabitants have been absorbed and national minorities comprise just 8 per cent of China's total population, minorities occupy as much as 60 per cent of China's territory. These outer, less densely populated regions look, on a map, like a hand cupped over China proper. They include Nei Mongol (Inner Mongolia) to the north where the fingers would stretch out, Xinjiang to the northwest at the crook of the hand and Xizang (Tibet) to the mountainous midwest. The last named was the last acquired, or re-integrated, depending on one's perspective, in 1950.<sup>39</sup>

Just like other great land empires, then, such as Rome, or Russia with its drive to its south and east from the eighteenth century, China expanded and incorporated border areas inhabited by other peoples, with 'colonisation' by Chinese occurring both before and after, either peacefully or as a result of Chinese military successes and political domination.<sup>40</sup> As with Russia and the Soviet Union, China has also grappled with the problem of whether to downgrade or suppress minority languages and cultures, or to allow them space, and the dilemma that while suppression and homogenisation may breed resistance, greater autonomy can generate demands for more of the same, and ultimately for independence. It is noticeable, for instance, that Kazakhstan, one of the most successful Muslim successor states to the Soviet Union, borders the Autonomous Province of Xinjiang (absorbed into China in 1768), where disturbances and a distinct identity have continued to pose problems long after the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1949.<sup>41</sup>

China was an empire or imperial system itself, which reached its peak under the Manchu Qianlong emperor (1736–95). Thus conceived, as an imperial wheel with concentric circles, its core was central China, surrounded by a circle of colonies (Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, Manchuria and Taiwan), and this in turn by another circle of tributaries (Korea, Vietnam or Annam, Burma and for a time Melaka) towards the rim. Hence in 1428 Vietnam did not leave the Chinese system, but crossed from the first and second circles (as a 'province' in name and a colony in effect) into the third (as a tributary). Even the core, where non-Han emperors reigned for long periods, could be seen as an empire or imperial system, in the sense that it unified people of different languages and dialects, and regions and customs, by means of a unitary bureaucracy, while ruling these peoples without their consent. The Manchu Qing dynasty's army, with its elite banner cavalry divided into Manchu, Mongol and Han components, could be





seen as balancing different groups in order to preserve imperial rule. The de-imperialisation of the Chinese core might then be seen as a function both of gradual triumph of common cultural traits and lingua franca over particularism, and ultimately of the rise of modern Chinese nationalism. This culminated in the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911.<sup>42</sup>

The description of China's historical relations with its periphery, and with some minorities and areas within its borders, as 'imperial' does not to presuppose any further expansion is likely. Nor does it imply that devolution or decolonisation is inevitable, at least in the next generation or two. Roman imperialism lasted hundreds of years, absorbing non-Romans as Roman by citizenship, language and culture. China is on an upward curve of economic, and probably cultural, influence. Nor is this to deny that security, rather than a desire for conquest, may have driven a great deal of China's relations with its neighbours. But such debate is not merely semantic. Quite the opposite, the incorporation of neighbouring peoples into a Chinese imperial system, whether as notional tributaries offering little more than occasional exchanges of gifts (as Vietnam did into the nineteenth century), or as parts of China itself, has played a significant part in shaping not only China, but Southeast Asia.

Back in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, western Yunnan remained to be fully absorbed by the expanding Ming dynasty. Yunnan abutted powerful Tai kingdoms and these were subject to further Ming expeditions, following which traditional rulers or members of their family were recognised by the Ming court as Military and Civilian Pacification Commissioners. The latter's continuing rule had, as a *quid pro quo*, the meeting of regular Ming demands in terms of silver, gold, troops and labour. Classic imperial techniques also included disaggregating larger into smaller polities, over which local rulers were recognised as 'Native Officials', with freedom to rule their own peoples according to customary law. This was a form of Ming 'indirect rule', one used as late as the nineteenth century for people such as the Miao in Guizhou.<sup>43</sup> It opened these native officials to Chinese interference in their internal affairs, punishment and gradual incorporation into the Ming system of administration, every bit as much as it did for 'native states' in British India and Southeast Asia, and in the Netherlands Indies.<sup>44</sup>

It was as a part of this search for security on the western marches of the kingdom (and how many empires have expanded in the never-ending search for security on a 'turbulent frontier'?) that the future Zheng He was captured.<sup>45</sup> Castration destined the young Ma He to training as an imperial eunuch at the Nanjing Taixue (Imperial College), where he became a trusted servant of the third Ming Emperor Zhu Di (c.1403–24), known under his reign name as Yongle.

In turn, perhaps determined to act on a Chinese worldview that depicted itself as the 'Central Kingdom', receiving due homage and dispensing peace to peripheral areas and barbarians (referred to as *yi*), Zhu Di aimed to take this expansion further. He may also have been following a pre-existing Ming dynasty trend towards recapturing control of maritime trade for the state – and turning it into tribute – and of expanding sea power. The Ming had attempted to ban private overseas trade as early as the 1370s, while expanding state maritime



tribute missions. At the least, this might halt the tendency towards autonomous Chinese centres of power, wealth and possibly piracy growing up outside of imperial control. Without a doubt, the emperor planned to extend his reach to the west and south.<sup>46</sup>

Zheng He thus focuses attention on some of the manifold aspects of China's tribute and 'imperial system', and on China's overlap with the areas we now call Southeast Asia, but that China then conceptualised as its 'west': west by land and west by sea.<sup>47</sup> Wade's chapter thus implies that Admiral Zheng He, despite his stellar career, was in essence an imperial administrator-soldier, a eunuch-admiral plucked from the western borderlands, trained and sent to extend the Ming system of tribute relations to the western seas.

On a more prosaic level, Zheng He's status as a colonial and colonised servant of the Chinese emperor helped to fit him for the great expeditions he was to lead, at the head both of expert mariners and craftsmen, and of prisoners and prisoners' sons who had been sentenced to exile. His origin meant he was neither a Confucian traditionalist focused overwhelmingly on the harmony of the Central Kingdom itself nor a high bureaucrat needing to remain close to the central court. His grandfather was of Central Asian origin. The young man had almost certainly been brought up on stories of India and Arabia, and his last voyage, of 1431–3, was to be his own pilgrimage to Islam's most holy cities.

Wade argues that Zheng He's expeditions formed part of a wider Chinese policy of pacifying and exploiting the crucial trade routes through the Melaka Strait and associated routes between China and the Indian Ocean: dominating a kind of maritime silk route.<sup>48</sup> The aim may have been to assert Chinese dominance, as well as to establish tribute relationships, to encourage trade after the closure of the overland Silk Road or even to seek out a recently deposed and now vanished ex-emperor, but the result was a kind of a maritime Pax Ming, or Pax Sinica, from 1405 to the 1430s.<sup>49</sup> As with the Pax Britannica, and American interventions worldwide after '9/11',<sup>50</sup> this meant attacking 'failed' or rogue states – and perhaps overly independent rulers too, such as those of Old Port-Palembang and Sri Lanka – setting up bases and making clear a willingness to intervene.

Ming Chinese, as much as British and Americans afterwards, aimed to 'shock and awe' with the foremost weapons of their times. They labelled opposition 'pirates', terrorists or rebels at their discretion, and on this basis had them killed or carried overseas for extrajudicial detention, exile or execution. All three powers tried to mould the world in their own image by carrot, stick and threat. In China's case this included establishing a theatre of global domination, with foreign envoys encouraged to travel to the capital at Nanjing, and later at Beijing, with its newly completed imperial complex: the Forbidden City.

In short, this might be seen as an attempt at giving reality to claims to a 'world system' of power, centred on China as the central or Middle Kingdom. As with the Pax Britannica, large-scale trade by independent merchants had preceded hard, state-backed imperialism by many years, with Zheng He finding Chinese at Melaka and at Palembang. As with American and British systems, the degree of intervention used – trade agreements, persuasion or brute force – was the





minimum necessary to integrate areas into a global system of exchange, or to ensure that they did not threaten the hegemonic power's economic and military security. And finally, as with British and American imperialism, the degree to which empire or a system of world power supported, and how far it sapped, the home economy was, and is, open to lively debate.<sup>51</sup> The costs of Chinese imperial gifts – silver, gold and bolts of silk – and of treasure fleets may or may not have exceeded the tribute collected.

Wade's picture of a Ming China expanding westward by land and sea, and with some colonisation in Yunnan, raises interesting questions. Should China be considered a 'Southeast Asian' regional player or a foreign power? Should Southeast Asia be seen as a distinct, unitary area at all for much of this period? Should Chinese expansion into Yunnan, now part of the People's Republic of China, and into Vietnam be regarded as analogous to later Western imperialism? Some historians of China may balk at the language, since 'imperialism' long ago took its place in Chinese history as a pejorative term, mainly reserved for Western intrusion into Asia. Indeed, some Chinese historians, and also some contemporary Southeast Asians, may wish to see Zheng He more as 'friendship envoy' for China than a shock-troop of proto-imperialism.<sup>52</sup> That is a far more comforting image in what could yet turn out to be the Chinese century.<sup>53</sup>

It is certainly true that the eunuch-admiral and his fleets are not our normal idea of colonial forces. This term is normally understood to refer to non-Western forces employed in the pay of Western imperialism: the Sikh policeman or the Dutch-raised *Marechaussee* with his modern rifle and traditional *klewang* (short sword) for fighting in jungle and scrub. Indeed, it could be suggested that what Ming China conspicuously failed to attempt was the raising of truly colonial forces on the model of later maritime empires; that is, forces raised in and paid by overseas territories, and encouraged to view themselves as the loyal military caste of an advanced power.

Ming China can in this way be seen as an example of imperial power that failed to raise the overseas forces and taxation regimes necessary to maintain a cost-effective and durable maritime empire. This despite employing colonial forces in its landbound empire, in Yunnan, in the shape of the forces of the native offices.

It could be argued that Wade's chapter also suggests an important legacy of Chinese imperialism: it helped to delineate the region itself. It did this in several ways: by 'colonising' and incorporating some ethnic 'Tai' and hill-tribe areas into what is now Chinese Yunnan, so defining the eastern and northern limits of Southeast Asia; by intervening in the Melaka Straits in a way that facilitated the rise of Melaka, and protected it from depredations from Thailand (Siam) and from Java's state of Majapahit; and by its failure to consolidate itself in Vietnam, which then developed its own expansionary impetus, crushed Champa to its south and attempted to build its own empire.<sup>54</sup>

Each of these developments marked Southeast Asia in major ways. Melaka, with its Malay dynasty claiming descent from the preceding, Sumatran-based Empire of Srivijaya, stamped its mould on successor Malay States across Sumatra,





the Malayan peninsula and Brunei. These areas still bear that civilisational imprint. Yet in Zheng He's day, Melaka had only been a few years in the making, having been founded around the turn of the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries by a ruler fleeing Singapore in the face of Thai and Javanese hostility.<sup>55</sup> Melaka repeatedly sent envoys to the China. China in turn claimed the power to deter other tributary states, such as Thailand, from interfering with Melaka, and also claimed to have raised the 'chief' of Melaka to the status of king in 1405, and Melaka to a protected polity in 1410.<sup>56</sup> Melaka as a Muslim Sultanate consolidated itself and thrived precisely in an era of Chinese-led 'globalisation', which was gathering pace by the late fourteenth century, and peaked at this time. Melaka's later fall to the Portuguese in 1511 came at a point when China's interest and its capacity to project its power had waned.<sup>57</sup>

In this way a brief Chinese period of 'globalisation' was implicated in Southeast Asia's delineation. Arguably, it was China's turning away from this imperial moment, as from the 1430s it faced greater threats from the Asian plains to its north, that ensured Southeast Asia would be left as a sort of Asian Balkans, a fracture and splinter zone, beholden neither to India nor to China alone, but a crossroads where Indian and Chinese and Arab religions, and later a European veneer of bureaucratic norms, could produce kaleidoscopic variations. Ming China's 1407–28 conquest of Vietnam was also to be its last sustained period of rule there, and Vietnam's peculiar blend of Sinicisation (in script, Confucianism and more) but anti-Chinese nationalism was to leave it and its northern, mountainous zone of Tonkin a major barrier to any further Chinese march southward.<sup>58</sup>

In other words, the Ming's decision to limit its land and maritime reach may have been as important as its earlier decisions to extend it. On 9 May 1421, just after Zheng He set off on his last great trip – bar the Mecca pilgrimage of 1431–3 – the Forbidden City, another grand project of Emperor Zhu Di, went up in flames.<sup>59</sup> Some might have seen this as highlighting the strain, if not futility, of the emperor's mega-projects: canal extensions, colonialism, maritime fleets and the development of Beijing as the new capital with its Forbidden City. Even before the Yongle Emperor's death in 1424, and his son's backing for a more inward-looking, low-tax, conservative approach, the father's massive maritime fleets were falling out of favour among the mandarins.

Following this, there was a century-long continuation of the ban on private trading to the west, in addition to the absence of any further tribute fleets to maritime Southeast Asia. After the ban was lifted in 1567 with the official licensing of trading ships, the western seas were left to private Chinese traders.<sup>60</sup> Where the Chinese state retreated,<sup>61</sup> state-backed Portuguese interlopers were able to intercede from the late fifteenth century, and Dutch and English joint-stock companies from the seventeenth, leasing and seizing their own *guanchang* or 'factories'.<sup>62</sup>

Three further major imperial systems of power recommend themselves for study in the same way, as complexes that shaped Southeast Asia. These are the Dutch, the British and the Japanese. The Dutch United East Indies Company



from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries managed to siphon off much of the profits of international trade through the region, batter Bugis power in Celebes (Sulawesi) and prevent the emergence of any dominant Malay polity in the area. Both the Johor-Riau Sultanate and the Acehese, though still going concerns, had to settle for maintaining separate identity under difficult conditions. The British, meanwhile, joined the Dutch in bifurcating a 'Malay' cultural zone that had ranged across the Straits of Melaka (Malacca), notably by the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 17 March 1824. This recognised Dutch supremacy south of the Straits, and British north. The British also ended centuries of Burmese–Thai tension as British India expanded, gobbling Burma up in three stages between 1824 and 1885. It then played a key role in opening Siam (Thailand) up to low-tariff trade from the 1850s, and to western advisers and capital (especially British capital) under the late nineteenth-century reforming King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, reigning 1868–1910).

The dramatic impact of the Japanese from 1941 to 1945, meanwhile, has yet to be considered in systemic terms. Chapter 2 makes a genuflection in this direction. Specifically, it enumerates the Japanese colonial territories in 1940, and suggests a three circle model of the Japanese empire, with core colonies destined for a high level of integration and Nipponisation (Taiwan and Korea), a second tier or circle in Manchuria and China and a third outer rim in the *Nanyo* or South Seas. Each played different roles within the Japanese system, and what from 1940 emerged as a 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere'.

Hence first circle colonies featured the direct recruitment of more than 200,000 directly into the Japanese Imperial Army in wartime, and half as many women as 'comfort women', some by trickery, others by force. The different nationalities in the Imperial Army were not, in contrast to the British and French approach, formed into completely separate units.<sup>63</sup>

In the second, more informal or indirect, sphere, Manchuria was notable for the dominance of the *Mantetsu* (the South Manchuria Railway concession), the assertive Kwantung Army, the puppet state Manchukuo, with its own army after March 1932, and the presence of many Japanese (233,749 by 1930).<sup>64</sup> This second circle featured the use of indirect imperialism, with the notionally independent Manchukuo and the Chinese administration of Wang Jingwei being notable examples. The latter's 'National Government' of March 1940 to 1945 dominated the core China area around Nanjing and the River Yangtze, of over a hundred million people, and enthusiastically joined 'rural pacification' campaigns as a matter of anti-communism, and because it needed to extend its own sway in rural areas.<sup>65</sup>

By contrast, Southeast Asia was in the third circle, and despite its oil and raw materials, this meant it was difficult to justify giving it high levels of material. The Japanese Army spared only 10,000 troops for Java, for instance. Even this must have seemed a luxury once American island hopping across the Pacific started to head towards Japan in 1944. By that time declarations of 'independence' for Burma and the Philippines had confirmed, in 1943, that Japan would be willing to tolerate a high level of autonomy here, in return for collaboration.



Vichy-aligned French Indochina and Thailand had, after all, retained their independence. In 1944, Japan's increasing weakness persuaded it to increase the use of nationalists, and the raising of militias and youth groups and their mass inculcation with Japanese *seishin*, even in Indonesia, whose resources had at first been expected to remain under Japanese control indefinitely. The result was the training of tens of thousands of *pemuda* (youth) in the militias and auxiliary groups so well documented by Abu Talib's Chapter 9.<sup>66</sup>

Southeast Asia's systemic position as a third tier of colonies thus combined with the turning of the tide in the war to dictate a vast expansion of 'colonial' forces there: militias, *pemuda* youth groups, voluntary forces such as the *giyutai* and *giyugun*, *romusha* (forced labourers) and auxiliaries (*heiho*). It also encouraged and made possible a vast increase in activity by anti-Japanese forces. Both of these types of force consequently had major impacts on shaping postwar South-east Asian history. Together these developments not only frustrated French and Dutch attempts to recover fully their prewar power, but also ensured postwar insurgency in the Philippines, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia and Vietnam, providing the framework for Cold War and decolonisation alike.<sup>67</sup>

In short, the systemic view matters. It allows us to explain better both why colonial armies in the region took the form they did and how those forces impacted on the region.

### Case study II: Men of the Malay Regiment and martial races discourse

Now we need to swoop down to ground level, switching from the bird's eye or even satellite view of empire to a human scale. For Admiral Zheng He and his great fleets are not the normal image of colonial forces. The stereotype is of a non-Western man – always a man – commanded by a Western-controlled security machine.<sup>68</sup> Volumes on imperial forces look at such men, at their recruitment, management, loyalty, disloyalty and effectiveness in battle, and at the modernising, social and decolonising impacts on them of service in nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial forces.<sup>69</sup>

For our next example, we turn from the macro to the micro, and from the Ming dynasty to two twentieth-century Malay soldiers, who between them served in the British-raised 'Malay Regiment' as well as in Japanese wartime forces. The two men are Adnan Saidi and Ismail Babu, both soldiers of the Malay Regiment.

What was the Malay Regiment? Until 1932 the Malay States and Straits Settlements Colony (Singapore, Penang and Melaka, or Malacca as then known) – together referred to as 'British Malaya' – were sparsely defended. In addition to part-time volunteers, only one British and one Indian battalion garrisoned them. After the Singapore Mutiny of 1915 the latter was replaced by a battalion from Burma. Then in 1933 the British, partly under pressure from the Malay Sultans and also in the light of increasing nationalism in India and Burma, set up an experimental Malay company to test the 'martial qualities' of the Malays.



The British, having disarmed Malays since 1874, expressed doubt that the Malays were a 'martial race'.

Malay recruits were given modern training, but the Regiment's invented tradition and symbolism dripped with pseudo-historic 'Malayness'. There was Malay-style ceremonial dress, a Jawi-scripted badge, which lifted the motto 'loyal and true' from the story of the Malay fifteenth-century warrior Hang Tuah, and visits from the Sultans. Young recruits were told that they were a test for their race's valour. They were also an elite, since limited recruitment meant only the very best were selected from a flood of applicants. With British preservation of Malay Sultans as sovereign in their States – albeit with British-advised administrations – the Malay Regiment could remain loyal both to British officers and to Malay culture and Sultans.<sup>70</sup>

Shortly after Japanese landings in north Malaya, in December 1941, the Malay Regiment was expanded from one battalion to two. Its ultimate test was to come on 13–14 February 1942, when it was holding one of the last lines of defence before Singapore City, on the west coast of the island, at Pasir Panjang ridge. Blackburn's Chapter 12 discusses how the events of those two days have been enshrined in film, literature, school texts and books, and at heritage sites, as a part of the stories of Singaporean and Malaysian nation-building. This is where our two Malay Regiment men step into the picture.

The better known of the two is Lieutenant Adnan Saidi (1915–42), of Platoon number 7, 'C' company. His unit grimly held on to Opium Hill overlooking Singapore's West Coast before being overrun on 14 February, with an extremely high casualty rate on both sides. The infuriated Japanese reportedly shot, bayoneted and then hung him upside down from a tree. This was at a time when some British and Australian units were beginning to splinter, ahead of the British surrender on the following day. He is, in a sense, an ideal martyr both for Malays and for the British as a representative of a 'martial class' at last proven. It is his story that most underlines subsequent commemoration.

But Lieutenant Adnan was just one of several Malays decorated for their bravery in Singapore's final defence. Some others were later captured, and killed upon their refusal to switch allegiance. One, Regimental Sergeant Major Ismail bin Babu, was to have a more chequered career. For him, the military was a family tradition and the only obvious route to a more comfortable life. Ismail Babu was of mixed Malay and Pathan (Indian) parentage.<sup>71</sup> His Pathan father had served in the Indian Army, and died fighting alongside British forces on the Somme. Ismail Babu himself became a King's Scout, and was later awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for gallantry in 1947, for his part on 14 February 1942.

So far so good, but he did not die a martyr. After jobs as a railway labourer and charcoal factory clerk, he sought to improve his growing family's lot by joining the Japanese *giyutai* (volunteer militia corps) of Malaya. This deployed him against mainly Chinese anti-Japanese forces. Near the war's end he left this and joined Britain's Force 136, an organisation infiltrating to work alongside anti-Japanese fighters. Finally, after the war he rejoined the Malay Regiment,





retiring in 1967 as a major. Abu Talib recounts this fascinating career in his Chapter 9, so giving a glimpse into a world where military honour and calling blended with calculation to shape decisions taken under stress.

In some ways the very success of the British approach, of nurturing groups such as these Malays as ‘martial races’ or castes, had within it the seeds of ambivalence. In the case of many Indian Army soldiers captured in Malaya by the Japanese, this facilitated their recruitment into the Japanese-sponsored ‘Indian National Army’ (INA). That same army eventually fought the British in Burma under the nationalist slogan ‘On to Delhi’. The very success of the British model could thus produce loyalty, efficiency and a sense of calling. But the loyalty was not to King and officers alone, but more powerfully to ideals of military service, honour and a cultural identity that could take on its own impetus. In the absence of British control and officers, those same attributes could result in loyalty even to the death, or in dramatic realignments.

In the careers of both men, then, we see evidence that the British proved masters in the art of sculpting ‘martial races’. They used regional tradition, caste and historical memory to nurture a sense of military calling and honour, especially in India. As Womack hints in Chapter 4, the French sometimes viewed this with keen interest, if not envy.

Nor can the British creation of ‘imagined’ military traditions be seen as entirely arbitrary. When recruiting Sikhs in India, for instance, the British insisted on outward signs of the Khalsa Brotherhood, the wearing of the *kirpan* or dagger, keeping uncut hair in a turban and carrying the Guru Granth Sahib or holy book at the head of the unit on march. In other words, the British insisted on the elements that most sharply distinguished Sikhs from the Hinduism that originated their movement – or any chosen military group from its neighbours.<sup>72</sup> In addition to such manipulation of identity markers, and creation of regimental tradition, people from preferred recruiting grounds could be given precedence in civil suits, reliable pay or plots in retirement. The heart and the wallet were made to work together.

It is no surprise, therefore, that Omissi can argue that ‘The idea that some Indians were more martial than others was not a pure figment of the colonial imagination’.<sup>73</sup> It had roots in the customs and self-image of groups such as the Rajputs, castes such as the Kshatriya and notions of masculinity, which the British fostered and built upon.

Works such as Echenberg’s *Colonial Conscripts*, dealing with French colonial troops in Africa, echo these themes. Such soldiers became imbued with what Philip Mason calls *A Matter of Honour*, the title of his book on the Raj.<sup>74</sup> Omissi refers to this as ‘izzat’: a sense of honour and standing for the soldier, caste, family and regiment. One might, perhaps, add a sense of prestige and superiority from being attached to a modern organisation and given extra education and skills. These may in turn have helped soldiers to distance themselves from the crowd, especially when called on to do dirty ‘policing’ work.<sup>75</sup>

At the same time, the ‘martial caste’ approach could encourage essentialist and ossifying classificatory fantasies, and intensify divisions. Robert Taylor’s



Chapter 8 is revealing in showing the lengths the British went to in classifying Burma's so-called ethnic groups and subgroups. Such communally-based conjuring of categories was self-fulfilling in encouraging some groups, and discouraging others, from enlisting. It also, as we have already noted, tended to produce plural armies, which might reinforce divisions in society, with dire consequences for postcolonial states such as Burma (Myanmar).

Was it something akin to *izzat*, the Indian concept of honour, or a sense of being part of a 'modernising' and civilising empire, even a globalising force on a higher plane, that drove on Zheng He in 1407–33? How far did these same forces motivate the Gurkha rifleman or the 'Ambonese' in Dutch employ? Alternatively, how far were men driven by the need to use skills and traditions to ensure family survival in hard times, while escaping mundane lives for adventure, as with Timorese levies, or with Ismail Babu as he signed up as a *giyutai*? Are these factors the most central to colonial soldiers' behaviour, or should they be seen, for the most part, just as ordinary soldiers, motivated in battle by a more general sense of brotherhood under fire?<sup>76</sup>

It is not easy to answer such questions. But we do know that colonial forces remained, for the most part, loyal up to and even into the process of decolonisation. Even colonial troops from majority populations, often discriminated against in thought if not in conditions, usually underpromoted and sometimes underarmed, remained for the most part loyal and effective, at least up to the Japanese Occupation. Perhaps that sense of brotherhood in arms, plus the basic attractions of secure pay, promotion and pension, while serving in an institution modern relative to the rest of society, were enough for most men, in most circumstances.<sup>77</sup>

## Conclusion

This introduction provides three broad themes that link together what follows, and together constitute a clarion call for more comparative work on imperial power, together with greater terminological and conceptual rigour.

The first theme is that 'colonial armies' need to be located within bigger frameworks. These need to encompass both the broader security matrix in each individual territory – including naval, military, police and auxiliary labour power – and the overall imperial context. In thus locating colonial armies, studies need to be terminologically exact in how they describe types of imperial action, and in developing typologies for colonial forces.

The second theme is that of discourses of loyalty and disloyalty, especially as manifested in attempts to create martial races or castes, and to control supposedly unreliable groups. Study of this area needs to feed through into wider themes of identity formation within colonial contexts, and of nationalism. The category of military castes must be taken seriously as a distinct type of imagined community: imagined from above by imperial authorities, from below by subjects and from beyond the grave of empires and by postcolonial subjects.





This type of approach has to be careful to distinguish varying types of reason for loyalty – indigenous and martial traditions, the natural bonds of a martial ‘band of brothers’, disciplinary measures and more – and for revolt, especially as between ‘loyal’ and ‘disloyal’ revolt. The mutinies in French Indochina, which challenged the very *raison d’être* of the colonial state, are a good example of the latter; that in the Philippines in 1924, which sought better conditions, of the former. Finally, studies needs to be self-conscious about just how far aspects of force behaviour are specifically ‘colonial’, how far they are manifestations of more pervasive characteristics of military units and their men.

The third broad theme is that we need to extend the range of circumstances in which we apply the imperial or colonial military paradigm. Pre-European and post-European periods can sometimes benefit from such analysis. Asian-sponsored armies, Ming Japanese or contemporary, may sometimes be amenable to categorisation as imperial. At the same time, even when a situation becomes ‘postcolonial’, the issue of the memory of colonial forces, and the use of that memory politically, may remain salient. This can be seen for both the ex-colony, as in Malaysia and Singapore, and the metropolis, as in the case of ‘Moluccan’ and ‘Ambonese’ soldiers demilitarised in the Netherlands after 1949. However we look at it, to restrict the category of imperial almost entirely to examples of Western deployment of non-Western forces is in itself a sort of racism.

Last but not least, this chapter hints at the way studying not just ‘colonial armies’ but also ‘systems of imperial power’ can open up broader, and important, areas of analysis. First, it allows us to see how Ming China, nineteenth-century Britain, twentieth-century Japan and twenty-first-century America all wrestled, and in the last case still wrestle, with a similar problem: how to manage the very biggest systems of power without overstretch and underperformance. Policing the frontier, how to train local forces without losing control of them, who to choose as allies when one’s friend’s enemy will become your enemy too and how to turn ‘imperial’ areas into security producers in partnership, rather than truculent security consumers: these are perennial themes.

Another such broader theme is the impact of the very greatest imperial systems of power on Southeast Asia itself. Ming China clearly helped to protect the Melaka seedling from the Thai and Javanese attacks that destroyed its predecessor on Singapore, so setting the scene for six hundred years of Malay history. It also broke up a Tai cultural zone that had joined western Yunnan with what are now Thailand, Laos and upland Myanmar. Its manner of failure in Vietnam, meanwhile, could be seen as helping to form Vietnam into a bulwark against further Chinese expansion southwards. Ironically, its failed intervention there may even have helped to strengthen Vietnamese military organisation, and so set Vietnam off on its own expansion, including the conquest of Champa in what is now central and southern Vietnam. The Dutch clearly siphoned off the profits of much of the international trade passing through maritime Southeast Asia, and through naval supremacy probably prevented the rise of any new hegemonic, indigenous power in insular Southeast Asia, such as Srivijaya or Majapahit. Dutch and British control of international trade, and actions against local states,





seem also to have dispersed indigenous forces as ‘pirates’, so justifying further Western ‘policing’ of the seas and coastlines in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>78</sup>

The British also joined the Dutch in splitting a Malay cultural world, in which the Straits of Malacca had bridged rather than separated Sumatra and the Malayan peninsula. In 1824 everything south of the Straits (until 1871, excepting Aceh) was recognised as in a Dutch sphere, everything north as in a British sphere of influence.

All the major European powers, meanwhile, brought with them or later introduced traditions of imperial force, which included ‘divide and rule’ techniques. This meant creating plural colonial armies: armies where men were either put into different units according to ‘race’ or treated differently according to race, and where men of different origins met on the parade ground but remained socially separate castes. These plural armies could have negative impacts on postcolonial states, notably so for Myanmar. Beyond these, the Japanese imperial system helped to propel the peoples of Southeast Asia from a colonial to a postcolonial trajectory. Again, that it did this was due not just to Japanese aims, but to the particular position of Southeast Asia within the imperial system the Japanese were constructing. That is, it was for Japan the third of three circles, one where the Japanese resorted to lower metropolitan troop numbers and a greater use of Japanese-sponsored armies and militias, as the core homeland and first two tiers came under greater threat.

These are but crude hints of what more analytical, comparative and systemic approaches could achieve. Even then, this chapter does not go far enough in setting the scene for the individual dramas that the following chapters bring us. For colonial armies, and even imperial systems and patterns of power, are insufficient frames of reference in themselves. As the next chapter, ‘Demography and domination in Southeast Asia’, shows, the extraneous also has to be contextualised against the indigenous, the imperial against local populations and terrains.

## Notes

- 1 See, for instance, Jaap A. de Moor and H. L. Wesseling (eds), *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989); and David Killingray and David Omissi (eds), *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, c.1700–1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). For police and crime see also Greg Bankoff, *Crime, Society and the State in the 19th Century Philippines* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1998); Peter Zinoman, *The Colonial Bastille: A History of Imprisonment in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Cheah Boon Kheng, *The Peasant Robbers of Kedah, 1900–1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
- 2 Karl Hack, ‘Theories and Approaches to British Decolonization in Southeast Asia’, in Marc Frey, Ronald W. Preussen and Tan Tai Yong (eds), *The Transformation of Southeast Asia* (London and New York: Armonck, 2003), pp. 105–27, is one of the few works to tackle the terminology for imperialism and decolonisation with specific regard to Southeast Asia. See also Chapter 1, ‘Definitions’, in Nicholas Tarling, *Imperialism and Nationalism in Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 3–20.







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- 3 Sources informing the definitions that follow include: Marc Ferro, *Colonization* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1–23; Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Alexander J. Motyl, ‘Thinking about Empire’, in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds), *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 19–29.
- 4 David Kenneth Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century*, 1st edn 1966 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982, 2nd edn), pp. 11–13. Ideally we would add to this a sixth category, the ‘internal colony’, technically part of a core state, but in fact possessing a sense of separate cultural identity and/or treated differently, perhaps even with a ‘cultural division of labour’. Indonesia’s West Papua, if not Aceh, would be possible candidates. See Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1533–1966* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).
- 5 Native Americans also served in the mainstream army in surprisingly large numbers, relative to their proportion of the US population, in the two world wars. See John P. Langellier, *American Indians in the US Armed Forces, 1866–1945* (London: Greenhill Books, 2000); and Bruce White, ‘The American Army and the Indian’, in Nandor F. Dreisziger (ed.), *Ethnic Armies: Polyethnic Armed Forces from the Time of the Habsburgs to the Age of the Superpowers* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990), pp. 69–88.
- 6 A colony could be contiguous, or spatially separated, but is usually ‘peripheral’ at least in being on the outer reaches of control, as well as having clear claims to distinctness of territory and culture. One could argue that administrative separateness can be constituted by local revolt forcing the state to employ differentiated policing, or resulting in the loss of legitimacy by state forces, even within a unitary state.
- 7 Lack of consent does not necessarily imply lack of legitimacy. That is a separate matter. But the lack of wider consent to an initial agreement is often followed by indigenous violence in response.
- 8 Settler colonies complicate this issue. Clearly settlers begin as culturally similar to the core, being part of the ‘colonial’ subjugation of an indigenous population. But they are also subject to distant rule, and potentially develop their own, pseudo-indigenous, identity at variance with the core power.
- 9 The Japanese military saw this as a way of assuaging an overbrutalised and underrested and entertained (and we might add, conquering) army, and of minimising rape of local women and resulting anti-colonial sentiment. Koreans (formally colonial subjects since 1910) were accessible, and favoured due to Japanese-language proficiency. Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War Two* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); George Hicks, *The Comfort Women* (London: W. W. Norton, 1994). The use of Koreans as ‘colonial’ forces was on a vast scale in the Second World War. On top of an estimated 200,000 female military sex slaves, 700,000 men and women were sent to Japan as forced labour, four million were mobilised as labour in Korea and 365,000 were conscripted for military use.
- 10 For Indonesia, see Geoffrey Robinson’s Chapter 11 in this volume. See also Benedict R. O’G. Anderson (ed.), *Violence and the State in Suharto’s Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Studies on Southeast Asia no. 30, Cornell University, 2001); Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (eds), *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective* (Leiden: KITLV, 2002). For the Philippines’ politics as distorted by provincial families and their private armies and strongarm tactics see, for instance, Alfred McCoy (ed.), *An Anarchy of Families: State and Society in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1993).
- 11 See Robinson’s Chapter 11 in this volume. See also Robin Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Vol. V, *Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially Wm Roger Louis, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1–42 (pp. 21–3 for indirect





- rule) and Peter Sluglett, 'Formal and Informal Empire in the Middle East', pp. 416–36, for informal imperialism.
- 12 Dutch primacy in the East Indies, outside of a few coastal enclaves and small islands, also constituted informal imperialism enforced by naval power for most of the sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries.
- 13 For the United States, see Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2004); and Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).
- 14 Arguing that America had learned that tyranny abroad bred threats to the USA, Bush stated that 'All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: the United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you.' This was soon followed by an assurance that this did not imply any change in China policy. Demonstrative uses primarily refer to Afghanistan and Iraq.
- 15 Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997), argues that colonisation is a process of territorial acquisition, a colony a type of sociopolitical organisation, colonialism a system of domination and imperialism the creation of transcolonial empires as part of great power politics. For Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (London: John Murray, 2000), pp. xi–xii, empire is 'a very great power that has left its mark on the international relations of an era . . . that rules over wide territories and many peoples . . . not a democracy'. Also consider John Darwin's conception of British Empire as supporting world power in his *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-war World* (London: Macmillan, 1988).
- 16 Susan Strange, pioneer of international political economy, conceived of four different power structures that a twentieth-century power would have to dominate to be a truly global power: security, production, finance and knowledge. See her *States and Markets* (London: Pinter, 1994 edn).
- 17 See Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana, 1989), and Ferguson, *Colossus*, for the economic element.
- 18 Max Boot, 'Uncle Same Wants Tu', *Los Angeles Times*, 24 Feb. 2005, and on the website of his host organisation, the Council of Foreign Relations.
- 19 For more on Dutch policies, and the 'Ambonese', see Chapter 2 in this volume.
- 20 The colonial era spelling of Malacca has given way to Melaka, but the Straits are still called the 'Malacca Straits' in almost all sources. We use modern Malaysian spelling, except when talking of Malacca during the period of British imperialism in the region, roughly from 1786 to 1965.
- 21 John Sydenham Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and the Netherlands East Indies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), pp. 1–8, *passim*. For Furnivall this implied culturally distinct groups who met in the market place but did not mix, and who often had differentiated economic roles as well.
- 22 See Robert H. Taylor, 'Burma', in Zakaria Haji Ahmad and Harold Crouch (eds), *Military–Civilian Relations in South-East Asia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 13–49; Martin T. Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (London: Zed Books, rev. and updated edn, 1999); Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).
- 23 A substantially rewritten version of Rettig's article in *South East Asia Research* 10, 3 (2002), pp. 309–32, had to be left out of this volume to save space.
- 24 In both cases the Macabebe fought Filipino nationalists who sought independence. They came from southern Pampanga Province, and in effect simply transferred allegiance from Spain to America in 1899.
- 25 See Hack's and Blackburn's Chapters 10 and 12 for the way the British justified intervention in the Malay states because of 'piracy' and endemic conflict there,





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- disarmed Malays and then by the 1930s argued that the Malays might not have 'martial' qualities, due to a supposedly distant history of mere piracy and raiding.
- 26 The multinational nature of these forces with ten official languages is often cited as a cause of inefficiency. Solomon Wank reasserts this against revisionist scholars in his 'The Nationalities Question in the Habsburg Monarchy: Reflections on the Historical Record', University of Minnesota, Center for Austrian Studies, Working Paper 93-3 (April 1993), [www.cas.umn.edu/N\\_33\\_](http://www.cas.umn.edu/N_33_). A recent revisionist attempt argues that inadequate leadership and operational shortcomings rather than ethnic-based disloyalty was to blame for defeat: John R. Schindler, 'Steamrolled in Galicia: The Austro-Hungarian Army and the Brusilov Offensive, 1916', *War in History* 10, 1 (January 2003), pp. 27-59 (33), and 'Disaster on the Drina: The Austro-Hungarian Army in Serbia, 1914', *War in History* 9, 2 (April 2002), pp. 159-95.
- 27 Tarling, *Southeast Asia*, p. 303.
- 28 Rettig, 'French Military policies in the aftermath of the Yên Bay mutiny, 1930' (see n.23 above). Provoked by rigid taxes, poor harvests, grievances against landowners, corruption and communist agitation, Nghe-Tinh's peasants established 'soviets', redistributing land and food, and burning symbols of power such as village *dinh* (temples). From 1200 to several thousands of peasants died when *Garde indigène*, Colonial Infantry, Foreign Legionnaires and aircraft opened fire. Some 10,000 were imprisoned, identity cards were issued and the freshly formed Indochinese Communist Party was devastated. Vietnamese militia guards dealt with demonstrators until early September 1930, Vietnamese soldiers were sent in greater numbers only in early 1931. Nghe-Tinh is the compound for the north-central provinces of Nghe An and Ha Tinh.
- 29 Henk Smeets, 'The Consequences of a Failed Demilitarisation: Moluccan Soldiers in the Netherlands, 1951-2001', in Marie-Eve Blanc, Gilles de Gantès and Tobias Rettig (eds), *Armies and Societies in Southeast Asia, c.1750-2000* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, forthcoming).
- 30 The totals are over 207,000 Taiwanese (80,000 servicemen and 126,000 civilian military employees) and over 230,000 Koreans (110,000 servicemen including 90,000 conscripts from 1944 to 1945, and 130,000 civilian military employees). On top of this were many more voluntary and conscripted war labourers; for instance, over 200,000 Korean Women's Service Corps, including about 80,000 diverted to be 'comfort women'. See Chen Yingzhen, 'Imperial Army Betrayed', and Utsumi Aiko, 'Korean "Imperial Soldiers": Remembering Colonialism and Crimes against Allied POWs' in Takashi Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White and Lisa Yoneyama (eds), *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 181-98, 199-217.
- 31 See Hack's Chapter 10 in this volume.
- 32 See Geoff Wade's Chapter 3 in this volume, and 'The Zheng He Voyages: A Reassessment' (Singapore: Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 31, 2004): [www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps04\\_031.pdf](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps04_031.pdf). The Chinese Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) replaced the Mongol Yuan after a series of rebellions throughout China. Chen Zu-yi is Ch'en Tsu-I using the Wade-Giles system of transliteration.
- 33 Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan: 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores' [1433]* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1970), pp. 2, 10-11. Sun Laichen, 'Military Technology Transfers from Ming China and the Emergence of Northern Mainland Southeast Asia (c.1390-1527)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34, 3 (October 2003), pp. 498-9, has 1390s orders for large ships to each carry 16 handguns, four muzzle cannon, 20 fire lances, 20 rockets and other firearms. Ten per cent of Ming troops soon carried firearms, and a third of an army of 1.2-1.8 million by 1466.
- 34 Jung-Pang Lo, 'The Emergence of China as a Sea Power during the late Sung and Early Yuan Periods', *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, 4 (1955), pp. 489-503 emphasises the Sung move to coastal Hangzhou and consequent need to develop sea defences,





followed by Mongol responses, as a dynamic behind this, as well as militaristic states shutting off China's northward, land trade routes. According to Jung-Pang Lo, by 1403 the mere appearance of nine Chinese war junks could stop a Vietnamese invasion of its southern rival Champa.

- 35 Wade, 'The Zheng He Voyages', pp. 13–14.
- 36 The Mongols had taken much of Yunnan in the thirteenth century, and historically Yunnan-based states such as Nanchao and Tali had fought China. See Charles Patrick Fitzgerald, *The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1993, originally published 1972), pp. 39–78.
- 37 Wade's proto-imperialism appears to overlap with what historians have variously called gunboat, free trade and informal imperialism. See John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, 6 (1953), pp. 1–15.
- 38 Despite the incorporation of lowland Yunnan, minority sense of identity apparently increased after the 1970s, with the Pai regarding their language and culture as separate. Colin Mackerras, 'Preface', in Fitzgerald, *The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People*, pp. ix–x.
- 39 Suzanne Ogden (ed.), *China* (Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill, 2004), p. 25.
- 40 For instance, the Miao rebellion of 1795–1806 in Guizhou (one of several) followed increasing Han migration, and increasing absorption of tribal chiefs into the Qing bureaucracy. In effect migration and a move away from indirect rule prompted a backlash. Military action then included further military-agricultural colonists, much as in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Yunnan, and attempts to extend Chinese culture and education, as in the fifteenth-century occupation of Vietnam. Bruce A. Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 7–8.
- 41 Ogden, *China*, pp. 25–7. Xinjiang, Uighur/Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang, meaning 'New Frontier', first used 1768). Non-Chinese émigrés refer to this area of 1.6 million square km, originally settled by Turkic tribes from Mongolia, as Eastern Turkestan/Sharji Turkistan. There have been revolts, and periods when parts have been outside Chinese control. It was created Xinjiang/Uighur Autonomous Region in 1950; there have also been periods when Islam and local identity have been undermined. For Russia, see Lieven, *Empire*, pp. 201–341.
- 42 Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare*, pp. x–7.
- 43 See the n.40 above on the Miao Revolt of 1795–1806.
- 44 Christian Daniels, 'Consolidation and Restructure: Tai Politics in northern Continental Southeast Asia during the 15th Century', paper presented at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 'Workshop on Southeast Asia in the 15th Century and the Ming Factor', 18–19 July 2004.
- 45 For the 'turbulent frontier' – not just military insecurity but also moral and other disorder that empire finds intolerable – driving British expansion in the 1870s, see William David MacIntyre, *The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865–1875* (London: Macmillan, 1967). More generally, see Andrew Porter, *European Imperialism, 1860–1914* (London: Macmillan, 1990).
- 46 A naval defeat, with the loss of up to 300 junks, played a part, and by 1430 the Emperor was complaining of raids by Chinese pirates. Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan: 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores'*, p. 3.
- 47 Later, of course, China would change its view of the maritime west, or today's Southeast Asia, and know it as the South Seas, or *Nanyang*.
- 48 These views aroused controversy in Singapore, with some scholars preferring to see the Ming 'tributary-trade' system more as a benevolent form of exchange. It is possible that the hope of shaping China's future relations plays as big a part in this as any analysis of the past. *Straits Times*, 11 November 2004, p. 14.
- 49 Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan: 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores'*, pp. 1–2.



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- 50 The 11 September 2001 attacks on the New York World Trade Center's twin towers.
- 51 John Miksic, 'Archaeology, Ceramics and Coins: A Review of A. Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. II, *Expansion and Crisis* (New Haven: Yale, 1993)', in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, 3 (1996), pp. 287–97. Miksic argues that Chinese ceramics are prominent in Southeast Asian archaeological sites in the fourteenth century, decline in Ming years and pick up in the sixteenth century.
- 52 Kong Yuanzhi, 'Investigation on Temples of Zheng He in Southeast Asia', paper presented at Asia Research Institute, NUS, 'Workshop on Southeast Asia in the 15th Century and the Ming Factor', 18–19 July 2004, pp. 1, 6–7. This shows Southeast Asian officials exhorting Zheng He as a pointer to China's future peaceful relations. See *Straits Times*, 11 November 2004, p. 14, for the debate Wade's ideas spurred in Singapore.
- 53 Commemorative events for Zheng He's 1405 arrival in Malaya began in Melaka in 2004, with June 2005 plans for a Singapore Exhibition, Festival, Zheng He films and a statue at Labrador Park, where it is assumed Zheng He sailed past long-diminished rocks facing each other on Singapore and Sentosa Island just offshore, which it is assumed are 'the Dragon's Teeth' described in Chinese sources.
- 54 A more positive spin might be that the threat, and perhaps example, of China helped to force the pace of state-building in its mainland Southeast Asian neighbours. Geoff Wade, 'Melaka in Ming Dynasty Texts', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 70, 1 (1997), pp. 31–69. For instance, the Ming annals (*Ming shi-lu*) first mention the ruler Parameswara and Chinese envoys visiting Melaka in 1403. In 1419 an order was supposedly sent to stop Ayudhya (an empire in the area that is now Thailand) attacking Iskandar Shah at Melaka, noting that both parties had sent tribute, so grievances should be submitted to the imperial court, p. 34.
- 55 Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan: 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores'*, p. 110, n.1. This assumes that the title Megat Iskandar Shah, recorded in Chinese sources for 1413, marked the conversion.
- 56 Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 102–3. In one text the first ruler was 'Parameswara', in another, Sri Tri Buana. For recognition of Melaka as a country (1405), and as a protected polity (1410), see Ma Huan, *ibid*, p. 109, n.1.
- 57 Geoff Wade, 'Melaka in Ming Dynasty Texts', *passim*, for Melaka delegations (1405, 1411, 1414, 1415, 1419, 1420, 1421, 1423 etc. to the early sixteenth century) and the relations of Melaka's first rulers, Parameswara (who had fled Singapore) and his son (probably the first to convert), Sultan Iskander Shah. Post-1511 the 'Melaka' Sultanate relocated, continuing to be an important player as the 'Johor-Riau' Sultanate.
- 58 The issues of Vietnam, and of Southeast Asia's uniqueness, partly in continued openness to many outside influences and blends, are explored in Anthony Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 1999), p. 5.
- 59 Gavin Menzies, *1421: The Year China Discovered the World* (London: Bantam, 2002) surveys the Ming background with clarity, but shows even more brilliant imagination in having, for instance, stones with no Chinese script at all become evidence of Chinese fleets arriving in West Africa, and inventing an entire world transoceanic voyage that Ma Huan, the major chronicler of the voyages, neglected to mention. See also P. J. Rivers, '1421' *Voyages: Fact and Fantasy* (Ipoh: Perak Academy Monograph No. 1, 2004).
- 60 Bans are never wholly effective, but archaeologists note a mid-fifteenth-century slump in Chinese ceramics, followed by resurgence once legal trade resumed in the late sixteenth century. John Miksic, 'Before and after Zheng He: Comparing some Archaeological Sites of the 14th and 15th Centuries', paper delivered at Asia Research Institute, NUS, 'Workshop on Southeast Asia in the 15th Century', 18–19 July 2004, pp. 16–18. Miksic generally downplays the long-term effects of Zheng He, noting the acculturation of Chinese at Palembang.







- 61 The Manchus also defeated the one family that did build wide trade networks and challenge the Europeans in the seventeenth century, the Zheng family (not related to Zheng He). This was because the family's southern power base was a threat to the Manchus. Chuimei Ho, 'The Ceramic Trade in Asia, 1602–82', in Anthony John Heaton Latham and Heita Kawakatsu (eds), *Japanese Industrialization and the Asian Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 35–70.
- 62 The *haijin* (imperial ban on trade to the south), lasted from the fifteenth century to 1567, but Chinese junks continued to be important in Southeast Asia until overshadowed by European vessels in the nineteenth century.
- 63 Lewis Henry Gann, 'Reflections on the German and Japanese Empires', in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Meyers and Mark Peattie (eds), *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 348.
- 64 Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Louise Young, 'Imagined Empire: The Cultural Construction of Manchukuo', in Duus *et al.*, *The Japanese Wartime Empire*, pp. 71–96; and Y. Tak Matsusaka, 'Managing Occupied Manchuria, 1932–1945', in *ibid.*, pp. 97–135.
- 65 David P. Barrett and Lawrence N. Shyu (eds), *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932–1945: The Limits of Accommodation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001). Wang's government recognised Manchukuo, stationed troops in the north, gave economic concessions and accepted responsibility for minimising anti-Japanese activity.
- 66 See, for instance, Ken'ichi Goto, 'Cooperation, Submission, and Resistance of Indigenous Elites of Southeast Asia in the Wartime Empire', in Duus *et al.*, *The Japanese Wartime Empire*, pp. 274–304.
- 67 See Abu Talib's Chapter 9 in this volume, and also Hack and Rettig's Chapter 2 for more on Japan.
- 68 For the earlier original, Senegalese *Tirailleurs*, see Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857–1960* (London: James Currey, 1991).
- 69 Classics include Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*; David Omissi's *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860–1940* (London: Macmillan, 1994); and Philip Mason's *A Matter of Honor* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974).
- 70 See Kevin Blackburn's Chapter 12 in this volume. This emphasis on Malay tradition made it easier for the Malay Regiment to be revered in postcolonial as well as colonial times, as Blackburn shows.
- 71 The Pathans (also known as Pashtuns and other names) are a Muslim warrior and raiding tribe on the British Raj's northwestern frontier (today's Afghanistan and Pakistan). Charles Lindholm, 'Images of the Pathan: The Usefulness of Colonial Ethnography', in *European Journal of Sociology* 21 (1980), pp. 350–61 provides an extremely useful explanation for seemingly contradictory perceptions of the Pathans as both loyal and disloyal; the article can be viewed at [www.bu.edu/anthrop/faculty/lindholm/Pathan1A.html](http://www.bu.edu/anthrop/faculty/lindholm/Pathan1A.html).
- 72 Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, pp. 94–7.
- 73 *Ibid.*
- 74 Douglas Peers, 'Sepoys, Soldiers and the Lash: Race, Caste and Army Discipline in India, 1820–50', in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23, 2 (1995), pp. 211–47; Mason, *A Matter of Honor*, passim, e.g. p. 349; and Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, passim, e.g. p. 24.
- 75 Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, pp. 235–6. Omissi, drawing on *sepoys'* letters home, emphasises this rather than the bond between officer and man; though of course a skilful officer would manage this *izzat* adroitly, the officer lacking knowledge and linguistic effort could appear hapless, and offend.
- 76 Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E*





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*Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); Alfred W. McCoy, *Closer than Brothers: Manhood at the Philippine Military Academy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); David A. Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston: Little Brown, 1995).

- 77 Take the Dutch approach. Why the Dutch never felt they could develop loyalty more in Javanese troops is puzzling. Religion is hardly an excuse (think of Indian Army Sikhs and Pathans). This puts the spotlight on conditions, handling of troops and cultural issues. Jaap de Moor describes the Dutch inventing a tradition of Ambonese loyalty and martial qualities, then making it real with extra pay, pensions, praise and food from the 1830s, and recruitment from the 1870s. Better pay persisted even after ethnically distinct companies (battalions ideally having one European, one Christian Ambonese and one Javanese company) changed to mixed companies. The change began with the *Körps Marechaussee* in the 1890s, which found mixed companies effective, and accelerated in the 1910s and 1920s. Jaap de Moor, 'The Recruitment of Indonesian Soldiers for the Dutch Colonial Army', in Killingray and Omissi (eds), *Guardians of Empire*, pp. 62–4.
- 78 Classics that locate 'piracy' into broader contexts of politics and state-building include James F. Warren's *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981).

