TITLE
Islamisation in Java, past and present: Does history rhyme?

SPEAKER
Prof Merle Ricklefs

Day, Date, Time, Venue
Wednesday, 2 April 2008, 3 pm, AS1-04-01

Abstract
The Islamisation of the Javanese is a process that has been going on at least since the 14th century, with many twists and turns to the story. From the point of view of those who have promoted deeper Islamisation, there has been both progress and opposition. This history is the subject of a series of three books by Merle Ricklefs. The first two have been published: Mystic synthesis in Java: A history of Islamisation from the 14th to the early 19th centuries (2006) and Polarising Javanese society: Islamic and other visions, c. 1830-1930 (2007). Research on the period since the 1930s is ongoing, with the current focus on the period since c. 1998. This is a history which may have implications for our general understanding of when religion is a force for social harmony and when it may generate social conflict and violence.

This seminar will provide an overview of some of the issues which have arisen in this research and ask whether the past can shed light on current dynamics within Javanese society.

About the Speaker
Merle Ricklefs is Professor in the NUS Department of History. He previously taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) and was Professor of History at Monash University before becoming Director of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University. In addition to the two books mentioned above, his recent publications include the books War, culture and economy in Java, 1677–1726: Asian and European imperialism in the early Kartasura period (1993); The seen and unseen worlds in Java, 1726–49: History, literature and Islam in the court of Pakubuwana II (1998); and A history of modern Indonesia since c. 1200 (4th edition forthcoming 2008). He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and Southeast Asia sectional editor for the 3rd edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam (16 vols).

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