Pancasila and the Christians in Indonesia: A Leaky Shelter?

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Articles / 论文

The Study of Islam, Women, and Gender in China — Taking a Gender-Critical Turn
中国穆斯林、女性、与性别研究：开启一个关键的性别转折
Maria Jaschok, Shui Jingjun 1

Confucian Ethics, Economic Development and Ethnic Chinese Business: Some Reflections
儒家伦理，经济发展与华商事业的一些思考
Leo Suryadinata 15

Pancasila and the Christians in Indonesia: A Leaky Shelter?
“五项基本原则”与印尼的基督徒：一扇有漏洞的避难所？
Chang-Yau Hoon 29

A Discussion on the Late Ming Scholars’ Reception of Catholicism — From the observation on Xu Guangqi’s social network
晚明学者对天主教的接受——从徐光启的社交网络考
Xijuan Shi 47

The Revitalization of Confucian Cultural Ideals
儒家文化理念的返本开新
Tan Eng Chaw 62

Chinese Without Association: The Rescue Organization for the Unemployed Chinese in Penang and its Internal Dispute
中国无协会：马来西亚槟城失业华人的救助组织及其内部纠纷
Goh Leng Hoon 68

Tan Kah Kee’s Mobilization of the Chinese in Malaya and Singapore for Anti-Wang Jingwei Movement
陈嘉庚号召马来亚及新加坡华人反汪精卫运动 (1938–1942)
Yeap Chong Leng 85

The Sirius Poetical Society and the Proliferation of Malaysian Chinese Modern Literature in the 1980s
天狼星诗社与80年代马华现代文学的传播
Chiah Seng 94

A Survey on the Century-old Temples and Contemporary Worshipping of the Goddess of Mercy in the Kinta District of Perak State
霹雳州迈打县百年观音庙及当代观音信仰调查
Tan Ai Boay 111
The diversity of Indonesia was celebrated in the 1945 Constitution in the national motto, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" which proclaimed "Unity in Diversity". The national ideology of Pancasila – the five principles of belief in One Supreme God, humanism, nationalism, popular sovereignty and social justice – further upheld harmony across Indonesia’s diverse populations. Recognition of and respect for different religions, the Indonesian Constitution (UUD 1945) accorded “all persons the right to worship according to their own religion or belief” (Chapter 29). Six religions are officially recognized under the Constitution; Islam, Christianity (Protestantism), Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. The spectrum of religions given official recognition points to an acceptance of diversity as inherently Indonesian.

According to the 2010 census, approximately 87 percent of the population of 238 million are Muslim, 7 percent are Protestants, 3 percent are Catholics, less than 2 percent Hindus; with Buddhists, Confucians and others accounting for less than two percent (Sensus Penduduk 2010).

The state ideology of Pancasila plays a pivotal role in the unification of the diverse, religious, ethnic and linguistic groups of Indonesia. However, while it articulates the philosophical foundation and noble aspiration of the nation, it is far from being reflective of the social reality of Indonesia. Pancasila can be hailed as the model for the diverse communities in the archipelago to imagine themselves as a nation. To borrow Charles Taylor’s notion of “social imaginary” – which he refers to as the ways in which people imagine their social existence in relations to the existence of their fellows – Pancasila can be seen as embodying the “modern social imaginary” of Indonesians (2007: 171). This social imaginary is powerful as it proposes an ideal moral order which can determine how members in a moral community should live. However, every community, and, every individual is entangled in a web of varying and contested social imaginaries, so that there will be always be resistance, in varying degrees, to any injunctions to conform. Thus, Pancasila, although an important social imaginary, is subject to reception and rejection. How Pancasila is negotiated and related to is a useful key to the reading of the evolution of Indonesian society in the face of new forces of modernity and globalization.

The idealism of the ethnic and religious harmony, as proclaimed in the national motto “Unity in Diversity,” had, in time to be realized on the ground through state and institutional intervention. Ethnic and religious plurality was never seriously dealt during Suharto’s “New Order” period (1966-1998) as public discourses on social differences or SARA (ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group differences) were officially prohibited. Assimilation was the dominant discourse. Multiculturalism was only endorsed after the fall of Suharto in 1998 (Suryadinata 2004; Hoon 2006), but the lifting of the top-down strong arm tactics deployed in the interminable 32 years of New Order government; freedom to express ethnic and religious diversity also meant the opening of the door to inter-communal challenges (Parker and Hoon...
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Conflicting perspectives on the economic and political implications of China's growing economic power. Some argue for a "China-first" approach, emphasizing the potential benefits of increased trade and investment. Others, however, advocate for a "China-last" approach, highlighting concerns about sovereignty and strategic balance.

The debate continues as China's rise increasingly shapes global economic and security dynamics. The question of whether to "China-first" or "China-last" becomes a critical consideration for policymakers and industry leaders alike.

The differences between "China-first" and "China-last" approaches are nuanced and multifaceted. "China-first" advocates argue for strategic engagement, emphasizing mutual economic benefit and the potential for shared prosperity. They believe that deepening trade ties and fostering business relationships with China can lead to substantial economic gains.

On the other hand, "China-last" proponents are more cautious. They stress the importance of maintaining autonomy and sovereignty, advocating for a balanced and controlled approach to engagement with China. These advocates argue for the need to safeguard national interests, prevent dependency, and ensure that the strategic balance is not tilted towards China.

In summary, the "China-first" and "China-last" approaches represent different strategies for navigating China's growing influence. Each carries its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and the choice between them will depend on the specific context, objectives, and strategic priorities of the nation or entity involved.

The debate reflects broader shifts in global economic and security dynamics, as nations and regions reassess their strategic positioning in the face of China's ascent. Understanding and navigating these differences is crucial for formulating effective policies and strategies in an increasingly interconnected world.
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Confrontation

People of every age and position in society have been actively engaged in the fight for freedom. The struggle for democracy and human rights continues to be a global issue.

The struggle for freedom is not limited to any one country or culture. It is a universal battle to ensure that every person has the right to live in peace and security, free from oppression and discrimination.

The fight for freedom is not just a matter of individual rights, but also a collective effort to uphold the principles of justice and equality. It is a struggle that requires courage, determination, and a willingness to stand up for what is right.

In conclusion, the struggle for freedom is a constant reminder of the importance of upholding human rights. It is a call to action for all of us to work towards a better world, where every person can live in dignity and freedom.

References


Appendix

[Chart: Human Rights Violations by Country]

[Table: Key Events in the Struggle for Freedom]
Note:

This page contains notes and references related to the text on the previous page. The notes include discussions on the importance of environmental education, the implementation of environmental policies, and the role of technology in promoting sustainability. The references cite various studies and reports that support the arguments made in the text. The notes also highlight the need for collaboration between government, businesses, and communities to address environmental challenges.


