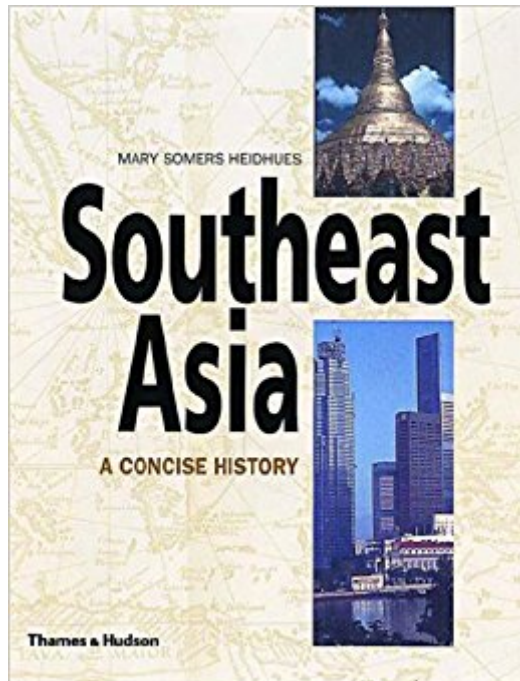


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# Southeast Asia: A Concise History



## Synopsis

Southeast Asia is an important global crossroads. A melting pot of cultures, religions and peoples, it has seen the rise and fall of many mighty empires. This book guides the reader through the history of the region, from the earliest prehistoric peoples to the late 20th-century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This superb popular history ranges from Southeast Asia's prehistoric times to the most recent political developments in Indonesia. Heidhues (Univ. of Hamburg, Germany) divides her study into seven well-balanced chapters, touching on the political history, economics, society, and culture of Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The transition between historic periods and locales is logical and smoothly accomplished.

Heidhues's narrative focuses on historic fact and avoids excessive interpretation. The author brings a detachment to her understanding of this unique region, and her work is accurate, richly illustrated, and well written, displaying great care in construction. Heidhues's popular history of Southeast Asia is a work of sustained intellectual credibility that will appeal even to the most highbrow academic reader. Recommended for public and academic libraries. DJohn F. Riddick, Central Michigan Univ. Lib., Mt. Pleasant Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A work of sustained intellectual credibility that will appeal even to the most highbrow academic reader. -- Library Journal --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

To cover the history of Southeast Asia, a region that stretches, depending on your geographical

predilections, from Northeast India and Southern China to the furthestmost islands of the Philippines and the borders of Australia, is monumental. There are several multi-volume histories that attempt to do exactly that, and my bookshelves are filled with country and era-specific texts that enlarge on this canon as well. However, for a very general introduction, it would be hard to beat Heidhues' single and easily readable introduction to the area. Her organization is more or less thematic and chronological, moving from the known or theorized prehistory of the region up to roughly the very late 1990s. The volume is heavily illustrated with more than 130 images and maps. Its style and easy prose, as well as the level of generality, makes this a useful introduction and could serve well as an undergraduate textbook or a basic primer for an interested reader or traveler. The text itself is less than 200 pages and could easily be read in just a few sittings. Having said that, and as a Southeast Asianist, there are several volumes I could recommend that would make good continuing texts. *The Languages of East and Southeast Asia: An Introduction*, while a problematic text in that it attempts to cover too much, does provide interesting information that treats the historical linguistics of the area and speculation about some of the earliest waves of settlement in Southeast Asia and would supplement the first chapter of this text. *A History of Early Southeast Asia: Maritime Trade and Societal Development, 100-1500* by Kenneth Hall is an well researched and serious scholarly treatment of the earliest histories that form the first two chapters of Heidhues' introduction. *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680: Volume One: The Lands below the Winds* as well as the second volume deal with the advent of European forays and the early colonies and expands on what forms the early parts of Chapter 4 of Heidhues's text. And finally the fine collection of scholarship, edited by Cambodian expert David Chandler, *The Emergence Of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*, covers much of the same ground as Chapters Five and Six of this text. Also, the three volume *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* (volume two is in two parts) provides a deeper introduction that is possible in a single short text such as Heidhues' and covers the early history up to modern times well. There are of course numerous country-specific texts that provide the interested reader with more focused treatment of different regions and times. But for its length and the scope of look, in terms of the vast geographical area, history, and the many peoples of Southeast Asia, *Southeast Asia: A Concise History* manages to be just that.

Although "Southeast Asia: A Concise History" is scholarly and well written, it is not as informative as many of its competitors. The author provides a good framework and introduces the reader to key concepts, for example, the difference between Land-based Kingdoms and Maritime Kingdoms. However, the book is centered around Indonesia and other countries are neglected.

Brunei is barely mentioned and East Timor was not yet in existence when the book was published in the year 2000. I would recommend "Southeast Asia in World History," by David Chandler instead. But... both together would be great, too.

This is a shortened history of the region north of Australia and south of China. This is a pivotal area for America with what happened in Vietnam and the Philippines. The author provides a standard overview of the history of the countries that are in this area, and what influences they have had from the rest of the world. This region has been influenced from China and India, but also from the Middle East and Europe. These influences still predominate today in these 13 countries. Religion, culture, and politics are the focus in this book. I was a little disappointed that the current strife in Indonesia was not covered in this book. East Timor is now a nation, but the author just passes it in mention. Also, the separatist tendencies in both Indonesia, Burma, and the Philippines are only mentioned. One does not get a complete picture. This is indeed a concise history and provides a lot of information. For more detail, read elsewhere.

Great book!

I always like to learn a little bit of the history of the area I am going on vacation. I found this concise introduction to be just what I wanted.

This book has an ambitious goal in bringing the reader information ranging from the very earliest to the most recent history of a vast area we know as Southeast Asia. I found it scholarly and interesting.

The description of the state of the book was accurate.

This item arrived on time and it was just as described! Highly recommended and great to do business with! Thanks.

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