

Göttingen, Germany  
18 October 2017

## **About the Materials on Bangka-Belitung**

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About thirty years ago I collected these books, photocopies and notes. I hope that depositing them in Singapore will make them more readily available to Southeast Asian researchers who might not be able to visit libraries in Europe and North America so readily.

Bangka and Belitung, now known familiarly as “Babel,” attracted my attention first of all because I thought we needed to expand our knowledge about Chinese Indonesians with more studies from outside of Java, where they lived in different host societies and had different migration histories. I was also intrigued because Bangka was one of the centers of Chinese settlement that I had not visited in the 1960s, when I was doing fieldwork for my dissertation (“Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia,” Cornell 1965). Finally, I met Tan Fay Tjhion (more about him below) briefly in the office of Professor G. William Skinner in 1964, and he said, “You should go to Bangka,” advice I delayed but did not forget.

For more about my motivation—and my research experience—see the introduction (and conclusion) to *Bangka Tin and Mentok Pepper* (see “related publications”). That book has a substantial bibliography listing the sources I used, including annotations for little-known items, which should help identify the materials included in this collection.

The published sources are mostly in Western languages, especially Dutch (obviously), but also German, English and even French (and one Swedish!). Some of the items are book-length; where possible I have made photocopies of journal articles. In addition, there are notes from the Algemeen Rijksarchief (ARA) of the Netherlands in The Hague, which was renamed Nationaal Archief in 2002. Also, some of the call numbers of archival materials in the Netherlands will no longer fit because they have since been reorganized. The libraries of the KITLV and of the Institut voor de Tropen, also cited, no longer exist, because they have recently been transferred to the University of Leiden library.

I also found some material in the Indonesian National Archives (Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, ANRI), which at that time was still in the historic building on Jalan Gajah Mada—a long time ago! These were the old colonial archives. The post-World War II archives in

Indonesia were not available to me at the time, nor were those of Billiton Metals, the tin company that mined on Belitung. I understand that the recent Indonesian archives, including those from the tin exploitation on Bangka, are now said to be accessible (I cannot confirm this). Billiton Metals subsequently transferred its archives (in part) to the National Archives. This means that using the bibliography in the book should be helpful, but a researcher looking for more information will need to consult the relevant catalogs and ask the archivists and librarians for help.

There are a few items in Indonesian or Chinese. Around the 1960s, scholars in the People's Republic of China became interested in the life stories of coolie migrants and collected some personal accounts. Indonesians began to be interested in demonstrations of early nationalism or anti-colonialism. Obviously, I visited Bangka, and local people helped me to find my way and to understand the island better. This was never, however, a field study. Its intention was to provide a historical background through the long period of colonial exploitation and, where possible, early Indonesian independence, not to offer an up-to-date analysis.

At the time of my research, I did not have access to the research notes of Tan Fay Tjhion, who was a research assistant for a project on Chinese Indonesians led by G. William Skinner in the 1950s. These are now available in the Cornell University Library as part of Skinner's collection, indexed by Hui Yew Foong and now available digitally. Tan kept a diary of his year in Belinyu, Bangka, and had easy access to the local people, since he himself had grown up in Belinyu. His notes offer an insight into life in a small town with a large Chinese population during a time of economic and political difficulties. I was able to utilize Tan's material for the article "Bangka in the 1950s" (see list) but in no way did I exhaust the possibilities of this source.

Finally, among Indonesian scholars who have published about Bangka and Belitung—and continue to do so, I should mention the important and continuing work of Erwiza Erman about local society, politics and economic issues. Andrea Hirata's novel about the rainbow brigade, *Laskar Pelangi*, has put Belitung on the tourist map. Other Indonesian scholars and authors, as well as non-Indonesians, continue to provide new insights about the twin Tin Islands of Babel.

Related publications based on these (and other) materials:

- "Bangka in the 1950s: Indonesian Authority and Chinese Reality," *Indonesia* 103 (April 2017), 1-24
- "Menengok Kembali Bumi Laskar Pelangi," *Intisari* April 2009, 130-137
- "Poor Little Rich Islands: Metals in Bangka-Belitung and West Kalimantan," in *A History of Natural Resources in Asia: The Wealth of Nature*. Greg Bankoff and Peter Boomgaard, eds. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 61-82
- "Karl Helbig's Arbeiten über die Chinesen in Südostasien: Entwicklungen seit dem II. Weltkrieg," in *Karl Helbig – Wissenschaftler und Schiffsheizer: Sein Lebenswerk aus heutiger Sicht*, Werner Rutz and Achim Sibeth, eds. (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004) 198-212
- "Chinese Mining Kongsis" and "Chinese Revenue Farmers", *Early Modern History*, Vol. 3, *Indonesian Heritage Series*. Anthony Reid, ed (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 1996) 102-3 and 124-5
- "Chinesen außerhalb Javas: Die andere Hälfte", in *Vom Wanderkrämer zum Towkay: Ethnische Chinesen im Prozeß der Modernisierung der asiatisch-pazifische Region*, Helmut Buchholt and Thomas Menkhoff, eds. (München: Weltforum, 1996) 141-155
- "Chinese Settlements in Rural Southeast Asia: Unwritten Histories", in *Strangers, Sojourners and Settlers: Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, Anthony Reid, ed. (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996) 164-182. Reprinted in *The Pacific World: Lands, Peoples and History of the Pacific, 1500-1900*. Vol. 13: *Agriculture and Rural Connections in the Pacific, 1500-1900*, James Gerber and Lei Guang, eds. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) 159-178.
- "When We Were Young: The Exile of the Republic's Leaders in Bangka, 1949", in *Making Indonesia*, Daniel S. Lev and Ruth McVey, eds., (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1996) 81-95
- "Dissecting the Indies: The Nineteenth Century German Doctor Franz Epp," *Archipel* 49 (1995), 25-44
- "Chinese Organizations in West Borneo and Bangka: *Kongsi* and *Hui*", "*Secret Societies*" *Reconsidered: Studies in the Social History of Early Modern China and Southeast Asia*, David Ownby and Mary Somers Heidhues, eds., (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993) 68-88
- Bangka Tin and Mentok Pepper: Chinese Settlement on an Indonesian Island* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1992)
- "From Orang Gunung to Orang Bangka: Changes in Bangka's Landscape in the 19th Century", in *Regions and Regional Developments in the Malay-Indonesian World*, Bernhard Dahm, ed. (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1992) 63-74
- "Company Island: A Note on the History of Belitung", *Indonesia*, April 1991, 1-20