Aan Anshori (ed.), *Ada Aku di Antara Tionghoa dan Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ananda Srva, 2018, xviii + 438 pp, 21 cm. ISBN: 9786027319028, price: IDR 125.000 (paperback).

This book is a collection of memories from 73 Indonesian authors focusing on their experiences of with Chinese-Indonesians. The contributors in this book come from various backgrounds, including artists, scientists, social-religious activists, and entrepreneurs. The idea of making this book came from Aan Anshori, the coordinator of the *Jaringan Islam Anti-Diskriminasi* (Anti-Discrimination Muslim Network), who is concerned about the increasingly sharpening relationship between the Chinese and non-Chinese society in Indonesia, particularly after the accusations of blasphemy that eventually incarcerated Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, the former Governor of Jakarta who happened to be of Chinese descent.

However, discrimination against Chinese-Indonesians has existed since the Dutch colonial period. One reason for the prevalence of animosity against the Chinese in Indonesia was the purposeful racial segregation of Chinese by the Dutch colonial government, being classified as 'Foreign Orientals'. The Dutch restricted the movement of ethnic Chinese by imposing discriminative ordinances of *passenstelsel* (travel pass system) and *wijkenstelsel* (residential zoning system). The *passenstelsel* was designed to limit Chinese access to the interior, while the *wijkenstelsel* restrained Chinese to live in segregated ghettos in various cities in Java. This legacy of anti-Chinese policies was politically exploited in later times, culminating during the Soeharto period. This regime outlawed all Chinese cultural and political activities, including the Chinese press and Chinese organizations. As a result, the Chinese found it increasingly challenging to navigate the complex bureaucracy that had taken root during this time. Another example of anti-Chinese policies was that Indonesia's public universities enforced a 10 percent quota for Chinese students. For some programs, the given quota was even much smaller. The medical school, for instance, only allowed a three percent quota of students of Chinese descent.

During the Soeharto regime—as Oey Tjin Eng, the former administrator of the Boen Tek Bio temple in Tangerang, quips—the Chinese-Indonesians were only allowed to have three Chinese zodiacs (*shio*), namely goat (*kambing*), rabbit (*kelinci*), and cow (*sapi*). This was the case because the government often treated the Chinese as scapegoats (*kambing hitam*), guinea pigs (*kelinci percobaan*) for discriminatory government policies, and cash cows (*sapi perah*) for the ruling classes (p. 393). These discriminatory policies have forged strong outgroup homogeneity effects, leading to the tendency to see other groups as

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uniform and similar in characteristics. The 1998 riots became a catalyst for Chinese-Indonesians to reassess their status as a minority in Indonesia. "That is the time when I realized I am different", said one of the authors (p. 391). Even today, there are still 64 laws in force that discriminate against Chinese-Indonesians.

In Madura, indigenous people often accuse rich or successful Chinese of seeking illicit riches (*pesugihan*), sacrificing their own children in the process (*tumbal*), mixed with other superstitious opinions that do little more than spark interethnic hostility. Halim Eka Wardana, for instance, reveals how his family was left in complete disarray after both of his parents were accused of being involved in BAPERKI (*Badan Permusjawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia*, The Consultative Body of Indonesian Citizenship), the largest organization of Chinese-Indonesians in the 1950s and 1960s. After the 1965 genocide, Halim's family were labeled as communists and suppressed and discriminated against (p. 138).

Chineseness generally became the most straightforward element to attack. Chinese-Indonesians have a long history of being regarded as the Other, and labeled with various negative stereotypes, such as provocateurs, apolitical figures, communists, anti-nationalists, and more. A few authors in the volume under review, too, had imagined and constructed Chinese people as psychologically introverted and only interested in associating with other Chinese-Indonesians, while others even considered them as 'alien' and not belonging to Indonesia. Therefore, whenever they met Chinese-Indonesians who were approachable and could easily mingle with the locals, they considered it a bizarre moment. On the other hand, many Chinese-Indonesians seem to affirm these negative stereotypes by adopting passive attitudes. They realize they are victims of a racist system, but do not strive to find solutions and minimize the gaps that separate them from other ethnicities.

On occasion, Chinese-Indonesians compete among each other and degrade fellow Chinese-Indonesians to show that they are more Chinese and therefore more authentic (*asli*). A number of Chinese in Tangerang, known as *Cina Benteng*, often experience discrimination because their physical appearance neither represents the Chinese nor the non-Chinese phenotype. Furthermore, Chinese-Indonesians are often regarded as having a stable income and high education. Thus, those who do not meet these requirements are discriminated against even more. Poedjiati Tan remembers how her proposal for an education waiver was rejected because of her Chinese background; the staff at her university considered all ethnic Chinese, including Poedjiati, to be wealthy. Handoko Wibowo, the recipient of the Yap Thiam Hien Award in 2015, recounts his struggle to defend peasants who have been oppressed and extorted by big com-

panies in Java. Handoko's actions were considered an anomaly by his fellow Chinese because he did not earn a lot of money from his idealism. Therefore, they portrayed Handoko as an economic failure and, hence, a failed Chinese.

Interestingly, this book also provides us with voices from Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). In the *pesantren* environment, ethnic Chinese are frequently considered the enemies of Islam (*kafir harbi*). Their economic success is perceived as a threat to the development of the local economy. Akhmad Siddiq mentions how some Islamic boarding school students (*santri*) in Pamekasan sometimes stole things from Toko Apollo, one of the largest grocery stores in the region managed by a Chinese-Indonesian, which they justified because the store-owner was an 'infidel'. Interestingly, the same students are good friends with Pak Dibyo, a prominent Chinese Muslim in the city. Despite his Chinese descent, the *santri* can easily accept Pak Dibyo because of his Islamic background, whom they portray as a perfect Chinese.

Despite a number of cynical Chinese stereotypes proliferating in several *pesantren*, some authors also demonstrate how *pesantren* can play a role in transmuting the discriminatory viewpoints toward minority groups. Supriansyah, for instance, recounts his experience as a *santri* in Marabahan, South Kalimantan, under the authority of K.H. Sibawaihi who has Chinese ancestry. K.H. Sibawaihi often invited his students to visit the houses of Chinese and other minorities. After such visits, the cleric would usually pray for their houses, which certainly raised questions among his *santri*. Most of them had been indoctrinated into thinking that it was forbidden to enter Chinese homes, and even worse, to pray with them. The *pesantren*, and even the general schools, do not teach any comprehensive history of the arrival of Chinese in the archipelago, and how they interacted with, acculturated to, and often assimilated into local populations. The discussion of Chinese, particularly in the *pesantren* curriculum, chiefly focuses on discussions around legal understanding (*fiqh*) and creed (*aqidah*), which generally associated Chinese with negative judgments and sentiments.

Kristianto Budiprabowo asserts that when ethnicity becomes a communal marker and is incorporated in social and political issues, it will emerge as a category of identification that resembles religion. It will not unite people but separate them. It will lack humanitarian aspects and become a corrupting tool of power. To dismantle thoughts so deeply rooted in racism, a direct encounter between Chinese and non-Chinese is required. Each group must be willing to open themselves up in order to know each other and minimize the barriers that have divided the two groups for several decades. The only way to minimize ethnic, cultural, and religious barriers is through open dialogue and honesty. In addition, the teaching curriculum also needs to be improved and

expanded with the comprehensive story of minority groups, so that young generations can learn more about tolerance and ethnic difference. The 1998 riots in Jakarta have often been treated as a stand-alone event, without correlating and comparing them to previous anti-Chinese violence in 1965, 1945–1950, 1942, and earlier. Rika Theo, one of the book's contributors, argues that the first step to understanding racial prejudice against Indonesia's ethnic Chinese is to examine what happened in 1965. Dede Oetomo goes even further and encourages Indonesian scholars to revisit and re-examine the colonial legislation to identify the roots for this discrimination.

The main shortcoming of this book is that the reader cannot find any categorization of terms for specific topics, contents, or time frames. As a result, some information in this book is repetitive and overlapping. In addition, there are quite a few typos and editorial errors. Despite these shortcomings, this book can provide a new dimension in understanding the complexities of relationships between Chinese and non-Chinese in Indonesia.

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