

Editorial Foreword

It is a distinct honour to accept the editorship of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*. Like generations of scholars who have been trained in this field, I have regarded this journal as an indispensable pillar of Southeast Asian Studies (SEAS). I am grateful to Maurizio Peleggi for his intellectual guidance over the years, and for his warm collegiality and advice during my transition to the post.

While the origins of SEAS in North America might have been aligned with Cold War agendas, its subsequent global development — professional associations, research conferences, journals, graduate programmes, book series, research chairs, centres and funding initiatives — was and continues to be connected to a range of institutional motivations, intellectual preferences, and individual agency. *JSEAS* recognises this diversity, and will continue to provide a platform for the various perspectives that emerge.

The growth of SEAS in Europe and Asia, along with institutional links between the regions, has been complementing the role of the more established centres in North America and Australia. The expansion of the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies and the success of its recent conferences in Naples, Lisbon, and Vienna is one obvious indicator of this growth. The signature event of the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden), the International Conference of Asian Studies, will be held in Chiang Mai in July 2017. The new Saw See Hock Southeast Asia Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science is a clear indication that the region remains a strategic priority in the United Kingdom. To echo my predecessor, *JSEAS* will continue to feature the excellent scholarship emerging from Europe.

Within Asia, the establishment of new consortia, scholarly associations, Ph.D. programmes, and conference circuits has enabled scholars across the region to interact more frequently, highlighting the importance of new intellectual reference points on Southeast Asia. Based in Kyoto (Japan), the Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA) for one links institutions and scholars in Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines via regular conferences, symposia, and workshops. The twenty-year-old Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Program (SEASREP), based in Manila (the Philippines), has announced a new regional association (SEAS-n-SEA) and an online journal. The newly established Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Busan, one of several Korean SEAS centres founded in the last decade, hosts annual international conferences and workshops to forge its own network. The visions, activities, and objectives of all three examples differ in scale and scope despite their common SEAS affiliation. Such regional/international collaborations are producing new interpretative communities that will no doubt reflect their institutional configurations and priorities.

In comparison, funding for SEAS in North America (and Australia) has dipped, especially crucial federal funding supporting language study, yet there is a continuing influx of new scholars to the field — a curious but welcome counter-trend. A quick survey of both regional and country-specific postgraduate conferences in 2016 reveals students trained in institutions not normally associated with SEAS. This trend is perhaps due to the presence of Southeast Asianists working and teaching in non-area studies institutions and new regionally specific programmes at major universities in recent years.¹

This trend might also account for the new scholars who are also joining the field from different entry points (communications, environmental studies, journalism, international relations, and visual media). The diversification of training and orientation will no doubt enhance the quality and variety of SEAS research. *JSEAS* actively invites scholars to submit special-issue proposals to reflect the importance of these new sub-fields.

Fifty years ago, SEAS scholars promoted a coherent, unified vision of the region in an effort to shape the conceptual boundaries of a new field. Working upon the disjointed foundations left by colonial scholar-officials, the earlier generation of Southeast Asianists provided structure and direction, tracing and promoting the region's shared experiences, dynamics, and characteristics. Such approaches continue to have traction.

The postmodernist turn toward multiplicity, variety, and difference has fundamentally challenged these earlier conceptions from within and without via a shift to 'border-crossing', 'trans-Asian', and 'inter-Asian' approaches that depart from static categories and territorial boundaries. Stressing methods that transcend regional/national borders, these interventions encourage us to recalibrate our angles of view to focus more sharply on the spatial interconnections and linkages that move along and beyond the boundaries of Southeast Asia. Envisioning the region as a field of fluid assemblages linked by global flows could fundamentally transform how we understand and pursue the study of Southeast Asia.²

JSEAS will seek to promote these new and exciting ways of reconfiguring the field and we hope that scholars who do research on transnational topics will think of the journal as a first and final destination for their work. At the same time, we also appreciate that other scholars will continue to pursue research on Southeast Asia in more familiar ways. While some of these enduring conversations or questions may feel outdated to some, we feel that it is important to recognise that these earlier discussions will still appear fresh and inspiring in intellectual settings where the idea of the region is only now beginning to take root. While *JSEAS* is committed to pushing the field in new directions, we are equally committed to providing a platform for research that explores ongoing debates and issues that have defined SEAS for generations.

Moving forward, it might be worthwhile to think about Southeast Asian Studies as a constellation of institutes, universities, and interpretive communities, each with

1 In the last few years, new positions and programmes were established at non-NRC schools such as the University of Iowa, Northwestern University, Indiana University, City University of New York, and New York University.

2 *Asia inside out: Connected places*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo, Helen F. Siu and Peter C. Perdue (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

their own intellectual hinterlands, geo-political contexts, and local institutional priorities. By doing so we will be able to engage and appreciate scholarship produced in Ithaca, Kyoto, Kunming, and Copenhagen alongside scholarship cultivated in Manila, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Yogyakarta. Acknowledging these multiple genres of Southeast Asian Studies is a commitment this journal will express through the content we have the opportunity to feature. In doing so *JSEAS* will aim to broaden the conceptual and methodological parameters of our content and offer new spaces for scholarly communication in the years to come.

The six research articles in this latest issue of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* address classic themes of nation-building, state–society relations, identity, power, and place-making through individual case studies in Vietnam, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, and Thailand. A special review essay by Edward Miller, profiling David G. Marr's distinguished career and most recent book, precedes an ample book review section. I thank the previous editorial team, especially Associate Editor Portia Reyes, for giving me the privilege of writing the foreword to the issue they put together.

In the opening article, Gerard Sasges explores colonial modernity and identity through an examination of alcohol production and consumption practices in colonial and postcolonial Vietnam. Based on archival documents, print media, colloquialisms, and fieldwork, Sasges explores how notions of tradition/modernity, gender, class, and status were encountered, experienced, and understood through the social life of alcohol in Vietnam. In doing so, Sasges engages in broader questions about colonial interactions, the role of culture, and the various spaces associated with these encounters. By examining different moments in the histories of Vietnamese alcohol, Sasges' article demonstrates how alcohol, in its various forms and settings, came to represent aspects of Vietnamese identity by different communities over time and space.

The next two articles treat elections as the focal activity through which notions of modernity, political identity, and authority are expressed in Indonesia and Timor Leste, respectively. Edward Aspinall and Noor Rohman examine how local authorities in Central Java utilise new modes of electoral campaigning to assess the effects of broader democratisation at the village level. Focusing on two village head elections, Aspinall and Rohman chart the manner in which patronage distribution — encapsulated in the concept of *sangyu* payments — enable candidates to draw benefits from central authorities while acquiring votes and prestige from constituents. Their work explores how the devolution of power, opening up of political space, and election financing in *reformasi*-era Indonesia has reordered political relations, reconstituted intra-village competition, and enabled traditional rural elites to reassert their role in local governance despite apparently greater reliance on external financial and infrastructural support.

If the role of patronage networks is the important variable in the electoral politics of rural Central Java, sub-national spatial assemblages are the critical dynamic investigated in Elfie Shiosaki's article on Timor Leste. Her study examines the effects of deeply entrenched historical, geographical, and social divisions that exist between the 'eastern' and 'western' regions of post-independence Timor Leste. Shiosaki traces

the often violent legacy of this geographical–political division and its cumulative effect on the evolving political landscape. The result of perceived group and individual roles in the eastern and western zones during the resistance — a key source of political legitimacy in Timor Leste — the competing historical narratives in the construction of political identity continue to inhibit more inclusive forms of nationalism, requiring different strategies to foster reconciliation.

The fourth article by Edwin de Jong and Argo Twikromo seeks to understand how national campaigns to promote diversity and multiculturalism are understood and articulated in Yogyakarta, Central Java. They position Yogyakarta as a contested space where political and economic power is manifested through efforts to affix particular understandings of diversity to the city's image. The authors demonstrate how religious festivals, rituals and demonstrations are utilised as practices of 'place-making' by the royalty, regional government, and student-activists to inscribe particular visions of diversity. While recent episodes of crime and intolerance threaten to undermine Yogyakarta's peaceful public image, communities within the city have initiated different strategies to cope with these challenges. By referencing different secular, religious, historical, and environmental philosophies as sources for their diversity campaigns, stakeholders support a common civic identity by emphasising their own affiliations, boundaries, and claims to the city.

Competing notions of place also run through Michael D. Pante's article on the founding and development of Quezon City in the Philippines. Drawing from approaches in urban theory, Pante demonstrates how focusing on the production of place — in this case the establishment of a new national capital — provides insight into the way in which political elites in the Philippines negotiated and competed for power as they transitioned from colonial rule to independence during the Commonwealth period (1935–46). While the public rhetoric surrounding Quezon City emphasised a break from the colonial past and promoted a capital that would symbolise Filipino modernity, Pante shows that the project was part of a broader initiative by President Manuel Quezon to build chartered cities in an attempt to circumvent the electoral process and centralise direct rule. The making of Quezon City was not only a reflection of the Philippines's continuing affiliation with the United States (and its move away from Spanish Manila), but an illustration of how urban development provided Filipino elites with a means to extend and consolidate their power.

The final article by Sophorntavy Vorng takes readers to the borderlands of Northern Thailand in order to complicate ideas about hill peoples and their relationship to lowland state authorities. Extending beyond James Scott's seminal treatment of Zomia as an alternative, yet bounded space, Vorng focuses on two religious sites — a Buddhist monastery and a Christian Rehabilitation Centre — to demonstrate the nuanced and varied relationships between state and non-state communities in the highlands of Thailand. Vorng's study illustrates how the state-sponsored Buddhist monastery and the transnational NGO-administered Christian Rehabilitation Centre provide a platform for engaging and incorporating hill communities into either the broader state or transnational religious collectives. Through development programmes designed to provide treatment, education, and job training, highland groups choose to participate — not flee — from these centres. In both cases the interaction between these rehabilitation centres and highland peoples demonstrate that the

space associated with Zomia neither prohibits minorities from engaging with the state nor are their activities confined by the boundaries of non-state, highland zones.

In his extensive review article, Edward Miller assesses David G. Marr's recent *Vietnam: State, War, and Revolution 1945–1946* within the broader context of Marr's life, career, and influence on Vietnamese Studies. We close this issue with 15 book reviews. As usual, we thank the contributing authors, referees and reviewers for their continuing commitment to and support of *JSEAS*.

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