

Editorial Foreword

This latest issue of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* contains five research articles along with a review article and the usual rich book review section. Among the research articles, the first three have a contemporary focus and are concerned with the interface between the state and ethnic, social, and religious groups, respectively; the last two articles, instead, tackle colonial history and the historiography and historical memory of anticolonialism.

The opening article deals with the region's youngest country, Timor-Leste. Since traumatically regaining its independence from Indonesia in 1999, Timor-Leste has experienced a revival of its indigenous cultures. Nick McClean's article examines the recent designation of much of the ancestral land of the Fataluku-speaking community as a national park. It discusses the mixed reactions of the Fataluku people to this government initiative as a manifestation of their intrinsic cultural identity as well as reflecting broader cultural patterns in Timor and eastern Indonesia as a whole, whereby 'tradition' is invoked to both support claims to cultural autonomy and sovereignty and map paths for negotiation and collaboration with the central government.

Next, Say Sok's article discusses the limitations of state power from the perspective of the fragmentation of social control in Cambodia's fisheries sector. The article shows how concessionaires and operators of fishing lots have been able, through collusion and illegal dealings with state agents themselves, to hinder the proper management of the country's inland fisheries and fishing industry, thus negatively affecting the state's appropriation of resources and jeopardising its quest for sustainable development. In addressing tensions in the management of the Cambodian fisheries, the author challenges state-centric theorists and supports the counter-theory that, especially in developing countries, the state and social forces are engaged in a struggle over the control and use of human and material resources.

The article that follows considers another facet of the interface between state and social groups by providing a detailed ethnography of a non-mainstream Islamic intercession ritual (*manakiban*), which has acquired visibility since the collapse of the Suharto regime. Julian Millie, Greg Barton, Linda Hindasah and Mikihiro Moriyama show how, in the context of loosening normative definitions of Islam, increasing competition for moral supremacy among Islamic groups, and media deregulation, religious expressions and practices previously excluded by the state, including *manakiban*, are now taking place in state-owned mosques in West Java and even in the capital. By examining the causes of the state's increased inclusiveness toward a variety of Islamic expression, the authors provide novel insights into the use and meaning of Indonesia's contemporary public space.

In the following article, Ruth de Llobet reconstructs an episode in the Philippines' colonial history: the implementation of Spain's Liberal Constitution the year after its metropolitan enactment in 1812, as seen through a clash that erupted between natives and Chinese mestizos over seating arrangements at a parish church in Manila's outskirts. This seemingly petty controversy provides a window into the Constitution's role in empowering the political aspirations of subaltern ethnic groups for autonomy from the hegemony of metropolitan and locally-born colonists. While the initial struggle over church seating, and rights, was limited, it would go on to affect struggles for self-determination and political reforms in the Philippines during the second constitutional period (1820–23).

Finally, Tuong Vu discusses changing historiographical perspectives on the Vietnamese revolution that have emerged in recent years. In contrast to the two established narratives of a nationalist revolution (according to Western scholarship) or one ongoing nationalist–socialist revolution (according to state historiography), the latest perspective identifies two distinct revolutions — one nationalist (1945–46), the other socialist (1948–88), with only the latter having been conducted under the Vietnamese Communist Party's leadership; but both having been defeated. Stressing national agency without triumphalism, this new narrative intervenes in the current politics of historical memorialisation where the 'democratic' ethos of the 1945–46 revolution is now celebrated by the Party and dissidents alike, while the superseding of socialism by state capitalism since the 1990s that has confounded many old cadres remains off-limits as a subject of analysis.

As with recent issues of *JSEAS*, this too features a review article by a senior scholar. Craig J. Reynolds discusses two publications in Thai that are likely to cause a stir in the kingdom's conservative academia and media for they openly address homo-social relationships at the court of King Vajiravudh (1910–25). In addition, the issue contains fifteen reviews of books about Asia, the region generally, and on Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam specifically.

As always, we offer this issue to our readers in the belief that the variety of scholarly concerns and positions that transpires from the articles and book reviews will nurture a continuing academic conversation on the region.

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