# Editorial Foreword

This issue begins with three articles that advocate changes in the way tradition, identity, and culture in Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand are managed by state and non-state entities. In our lead article, Kathie Carpenter explores the way discursive practices by media, activists, and tourists contributed to the promotion of traditional dance performances by orphaned children in Cambodia. While initially regarded as a successful blending of cultural resource management and child welfare practices, foreign observers would come to view the performances negatively as notions of dignity and child rights changed in the 1990s. Carpenter's article traces the role of the aid, media, and tourism industry in cultural production and how 'the contingent nature of constructions of childhood' shaped how dance performances in post-civil war Cambodia are understood.

Where Carpenter's work examined the role of non-state organisations in the social construction of children and of traditional dance, Sharmani Patricia Gabriel directs our gaze towards state constructions of 'multiculturalism' and examines the dynamics that animate official practices of meaning-making as they relate to race and identity in Malaysia. At its core, the article shows how racialisation as a practice has shaped representations of cultural belonging in Malaysia through 'national and cultural policies, government slogans, campaigns, and official attitudes towards "race" and the "race relations" framework'. Arguing for more people-centred definitions of multiculturalism, Gabriel's analysis calls for the recognition of everyday 'invisible' entanglements that disrupt official categories of national identity.

Gabriel's critique of state discourses concerning race in Malaysia parallels Noah Keone Viernes' critique of Thai state censorship of film and broader issues of cultural governance. Focusing on the work of Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Nontawat Numbenchapol, the article examines the history of censorship in Thailand via the 1930 Film Act and the 2008 Motion Pictures and Video Act. Tracing the evolution of government intervention into the management of visual culture, Viernes' study is concerned with 'how governments watch films and how this official regime of vision changes over time'.

The three action-research articles are followed by four historical pieces that highlight the region's trans-Asian connections. Alexandre Barthel and Wasana Wongsurawat's research focuses on the Thai monarchy's support of transnational anti-communist efforts by European colonial powers in the 1920s and 1930s. In doing so, the authors suggest that the origins of the Cold War began much earlier than at the end of the Second World War, and that the ideological foundations of the Cold War need to be embedded within the context of early twentieth century Southeast Asian intellectual history.

Xie Kankan's contribution explores the role of Imperial Japan in the broader region and its effect on the construction of 'Chinese-ness'. The article reassesses how overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, concerned about the Sino-Japanese War of 1937, negotiated their affiliation to the National Salvation Movement and their own sense of identity. Arguing against a monolithic response by overseas Chinese, Xie demonstrates that diasporic communities in British Malaya and Dutch Java responded according to varying local circumstances and the differing positions of both colonial governments and local reformers who were increasingly becoming more politically self-aware.

Whereas Xie's article draws attention to East Asian–Southeast Asian interactions, Magdalena Kozłowska and Michał Lubina's article highlights West Asian–Southeast Asian connections via their study of the Namsang Project, an Israeli developmental settlement model adopted by the Burmese in the 1950s. The article focuses on the series of exchanges between Israel and Myanmar in the 1950s via a project that sought to develop new settlements for army veterans in the Shan state, one of the country's contested borderland territories. While much scholarship has focused on the domestic, anti-colonial origins of national identity, memory, and history in Myanmar, this research highlights how models across Asia provided references for new nations struggling to cope with the challenges of nation building at the end of the Second World War.

Our final research article by Shin'ya Ueda takes us back to early modern Vietnam and explores the shift from loosely organised social groups based on personal relations to more fixed, integrated village assemblages that highlight a more East Asian model of community formation. Drawing on both village records and ethnographic accounts, Ueda's anthro-historical analysis of Thanh Phuoc village focuses on this broader transformation that drew inspiration from Confucian-based models of social organisation between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Ueda's broader argument revisits older conversations concerning the distinctiveness of the region (and Vietnam) and urges a view of the region as one of continuing interaction between East and Southeast Asia.

Helen F. Siu and Angela Ki Che Leung offer a review essay of Wang Gangwu's two-volume autobiography *Home is where we are* and *Home is not here*. Their review essay is followed by a broad selection of book reviews. The journal continues to thrive as a result of the generous contributions from authors, our international referees, and book reviewers for which we are very much grateful.

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