

Editorial Foreword

This double-issue marks the second year of the journal's four-issue per year publishing cycle, a response to the continuing growth of the field of Southeast Asian Studies. New centres and initiatives devoted to the pursuit of Southeast Asian Studies are emerging throughout Asia, marking a new chapter in the history of the field. We hope to support this increased interest in Southeast Asian Studies within Asia while continuing to serve as the preferred international platform for featuring research on the region. The articles featured within this issue represent this global expansion of Southeast Asian Studies research with contributions from colleagues based in Australia, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, United Kingdom, and United States. The bulk of the articles fall within three thematic clusters, broadly focused on health/healing, text/solidarities, and social networks.

With the COVID-19 pandemic still a global threat at the time of this issue's production, it is perhaps timely to highlight the strong tradition of scholarship on public health research focused on Southeast Asia. Our lead article by Anna Bræmer Warburg and Steffen Jensen draws attention to state–society relations in the Philippines through their case study of President Duterte's drug war and the everyday implications of national public health/security policies at the local level. Their examination of the production, dissemination, and consumption of public health discourses by various stakeholders provides insight into the tensions between local and central authorities on the one hand, and the effects of those relationships on the communities they seek to protect.

Just as Warburg and Jensen's article highlights responses by local authorities and citizens to the Philippine government's anti-drug campaign, Abdul Wahid's article examines the efforts of Christian missionaries and doctors in the Dutch Indies to address the inadequacies of government-sponsored anti-opium policies and programmes under the Ethical Policy. The slow attempt by the Dutch colonial government to declare the widespread practice of opium consumption as a 'public' health issue prompted Christian missionary groups to expand the campaign and develop the medical infrastructure to deal with the widespread addiction. While Warburg and Jensen's article reassesses the basis of popular support for Duterte's drug war, Wahid's research demonstrates how dissatisfaction with initial government anti-drug policies galvanised public health campaigners who would provide a basis for the rise of civil society groups in the post-Second World War era.

Céline Coderey's article takes our understanding of public health more deeply into the Southeast Asian context by focusing on the ways communities in Myanmar's Rakhine State frame everyday matters of health and healing. Arguing that conceptions of health and illness are understood and treated via a plurality of medical-religious beliefs and practices, the article proposes a broader conception of

healing that transcends boundaries between biomedicine and traditional notions; between the body-social and the physical body; and between the needs of the mundane and the spiritual. While the Warburg-Jensen and Wahid articles focused on the expansion of biomedical notions of public health, Coderey's article reveals a vastly different articulation of what constitutes categories such as the 'public' and 'health' based on extensive ethnographic research in a peripheral, borderland zone in Myanmar.

Just as the earlier public health articles draw attention to state–society relations, Erik Cohen's article promotes a comparative perspective of state–society relations through the state's interaction with spirit medium cults across Southeast Asia. Focusing on spirit medium cults in contemporary South Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and China's Southwestern provinces, Cohen explores how the state manages these cults and their practices. Rather than viewing the continuing relevance of these cults as a 'revival' of older traditions, Cohen argues that the cults' dynamic and adaptive nature is a response to state attempts at integration and expansion.

Our second cluster of articles is linked by a concern with textual sources, the contexts in which they were produced, and the audiences for whom they were written. These essays complicate our understanding of what we mean by concepts such as 'local sources', 'indigenous voices', or 'Southeast Asian perspectives' by demonstrating how textual content circulated among — and was understood differently by — different communities over time and space; how texts indexed varying cultural orientations, political affiliations and literary traditions; and by examining the role of local actors in the production, translation, and transmission of texts. Collectively, the four articles provide detailed examinations of Southeast Asian writing and writers that diversify understandings of what 'Vietnamese', 'Khmer', 'Javanese', 'Confucian', or 'Javanese' texts might mean at particular times and places.

K.W. Taylor's article argues that a court poem conventionally understood to be a seventeenth-century Restored Lê Dynasty text was actually the product of the earlier sixteenth-century Mac Dynasty who the Lê supplanted. Taylor meticulously reassesses the poem's origins, its features, the Mac scholar-official who wrote it, and the epistemological development of the text in Vietnamese vernacular literary history. Just as temples, rituals, and natural landscapes are potential sites/subjects of contest by rival communities, Taylor's research asks us to consider the way texts (and the authority they conveyed) were the subject of competing claimants in an era of political turmoil, instability, and change.

Taylor's textual puzzle references the broader contest between the eclectic Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian elements of the Mac with the Restored Lê Dynasty's commitment to more doctrinal Confucianism, a process of cultural interaction that finds resonance in the next article by Yen N. Vu, whose research focuses on the writings and intellectual orientation of Phạm Quỳnh (1893–1945), a Vietnamese official in French Indochina whose writings have led scholars to associate him more closely with the French. Vu re-examines the contexts within which Phạm Quỳnh worked to suggest a different profile and authorial intent than what is conventionally attributed to him by scholars. By highlighting linguistic nuances in his French language responses to some colonial policies, Vu challenges the current view that Phạm Quỳnh was a collaborator, and argues that his writings and experiences compel

us to revisit existing notions of political activity and the binary framing of reform versus revolution.

In a similar vein, Theara Thun's contribution traces the institutions, individuals, and intellectual currents that characterised the 'epistemological transition' from the Khmer chronicle (*bañsāvtār*) tradition to Western forms of representing the past via the genre of history (*pravattisātr*) during the early twentieth century. Thun focuses on the role of scholar-officials, Buddhist teachers, and translators — figures who were key mediators in the intellectual exchanges that were circulating through Thai and French centres of knowledge. Through his multi-sited approach, Thun connects the various locales, platforms, and media through which a new genre of historical production took root in Khmer society.

Transitioning to the Javanese context, Oiyen Liu examines the process of Confucian revivalism in the Dutch East Indies and reconsiders how Confucian elements were translated and disseminated in the region. Through a close reading of a key text, the *Kitab Tai Hak-Tiong Iong*, Liu demonstrates that the translation and transmission of Confucian ideas throughout the region was accomplished through multiple points of dissemination and argues for an 'East Indies' interpretation of Confucianism that differed from versions emerging out of the Straits Settlements in British Malaya. Liu's examination of the 'creolisation' and 'de-creolisation' of Confucianism in Java draws attention to the various stages and sites of localisation that are implicitly raised in the earlier studies by Taylor and Thun.

The final three research articles are historical in nature, raising questions concerning the evidentiary foundations of intellectual, familial, and economic networks in early modern Melaka, twentieth-century Thailand, and Japanese-occupied Singapore in the Second World War respectively. Peter Borschberg's article explores the history and historiography of Malacca/Melaka, drawing particular attention to the epistemological connections and disconnections among different scholarly communities in Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia. He shows convincingly that scholars of Southeast Asia in continental Europe were asking different types of questions about Melaka than their English language counterparts, revealing debates and discussions about the famous entrepôt that were often neglected by post-colonial scholars in Malaysia and Singapore. Just as Liu examines the spread of Confucianism in Java in reference to Singapore and China, Borschberg reminds us of the need to think about the history and historiography of Melaka in reference to the interconnected histories of Temasek/Singapore and Palembang. By extension, Borschberg suggests that colonial boundaries and the language of scholarly exchange had a direct effect on the way Melaka was both understood and studied by both colonial-administrators and the generations of domestic scholars that have followed.

Where Borschberg examined scholarly networks in relation to the historical construction of Melaka, Yoshinori Nishizaki's research focuses on cremation volumes to highlight the role of intermarriage and familial ties that structure the vast network of Thailand's royalist elite. Building upon existing scholarship that emphasises the monarchy's more recent role in establishing elite patronage networks and the ideological bonds that unite this collective, Nishizaki's mapping of former prime minister Anand Panyarachun's family demonstrates that this network is defined by kinship; and that it came into being well before the 1932 coup via one of two 'bureaucratic' (*khunnang*) or

‘princely’ (*ratchasakul*) family lineages and continues to exist within contemporary political units. Nishizaki’s analysis underscores the persistence of deep ‘superstructures’ that remain present in Thai (and by extension Southeast Asian) society despite political modifications to relations between the monarchy and its elite supporters.

The theme of historical networks continues through Gregg and Gillian Huff’s study of Second World War Singapore, which examines the socioeconomic conditions and policies of occupation under the Japanese. Scaled down, the Huffs provide a careful and empirically rich examination of how the occupation drained the island of basic necessities yet avoided significant resistance from the local population by instituting food-for-work programmes and other dependency-generating arrangements that tied the island’s communities to their new patrons. Scaling up, the article situates Singapore within a broader regional network of commercial links, demonstrating how wartime occupation policy disrupted existing food supply chains while creating the opportunity for new ones — albeit illicit and barely sufficient — to emerge to fill the city-port’s needs. Where Borschberg and Nishizaki focus on scholarly and family networks respectively, the Huffs’ focus on Singapore during the Japanese Occupation raises the potential of studying the region’s broader history of food via the supply chains, circuits, and communities whose lifeways were intricately linked to its control and circulation.

Our research articles are followed by Andrea Acri’s review essay, ‘Recent publications on Indonesian manuscripts’ and a substantial selection of book reviews. As always, this issue is the product of an ongoing collaboration between our colleagues in the field and a committed team of editors, graduate student fellows, and undergraduate research assistants.

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Editor