

Editorial Foreword

We introduce in the June issue a new type of article to mark the Diamond Jubilee Year of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (1960–1961). More modest in length than our normal research articles, these essays will present how Southeast Asian Studies is defined, institutionalized, and pursued by scholars in different Asian intellectual contexts. Rather than treating Southeast Asian Studies as the product of a single canon or an orthodox tradition that was established at a particular place in a particular time, scholars are encouraged to reflect upon the career of Southeast Asian Studies as it emerged or as it is currently evolving in their particular intellectual, institutional, and national settings. Of special interest is how the poetics and practices of Southeast Asian Studies in these Asian settings are as much expressions of local dynamics as they are reflective of more global interactions. Like Sugata Bose’s vivid framing of the Indian Ocean world as an interregional space that was experienced and viewed from a ‘hundred horizons’, Southeast Asian Studies might be viewed in a similar way; not as a monolithic heuristic field of study, but as a genre of knowledge and form of intellectual pursuit shaped by “human agency, imagination, and action” from different vantage points in the region.¹

The inaugural article by Kankan Xie presents an overview of recent developments in Southeast Asian Studies in China. Unlike in North America where Southeast Asian Studies mainly emerged as a product of area studies initiatives, Xie contends that the study of Southeast Asia in China developed earlier and independently of area studies conversations in the West. However, with the recent emergence of a newly configured ‘Area Studies’ trend in Chinese universities, Southeast Asian Studies in China is developing in ways that reflect a mixture of local, national, and transnational priorities. Xie’s essay provides an important assessment of the main factors behind these developments. Future installments of our ‘Southeast Asia in Asia’ series will feature essays from East, South, Southeast, Northeast, and West Asian settings.

While Xie identifies the rise of a new ‘Chinese’ Southeast Asian Studies in China today, the study of East Asian–Southeast Asian connections are an established trope for scholars of the region. Coincidentally, four out of the five research articles in this issue examine various dimensions of Southeast Asia’s interactions with China.

Christian Daniels’ article, ‘Nanzhao as a Southeast Asian kingdom, c.738–902’, draws our attention to the early polity whose territorial jurisdiction straddled the borderlands of contemporary Tibet, Yunnan, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia.

1 Sugata Bose, *A hundred horizons: The Indian Ocean in the age of global empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Through a fresh look Nanzhao's integration of the upper Irrawaddy and Mekong regions, Daniels proposes that the early polity was a Southeast Asian kingdom with Sinitic state features that functioned much like Dai Viet, adopting Tang forms of bureaucracy and state practices. Like the early state in Vietnam, the administrative integration of Nanzhao was achieved through personal allegiances reminiscent of the region's 'classical' or 'charter' states of the ninth to fourteenth centuries. By referencing Dai Viet's administrative patterns and a case study of Mon-Khmer consolidation, Daniels' research reveals Nanzhao's Southeast Asian characteristics that in turn ask us to reconsider not only the scale and nature of classical Southeast Asia, but the heuristic devices that have determined its character.

Just as Daniels' article highlights the combination of Tang and Mon-Khmer contributions to Nanzhao's territorial consolidation, so too did external-internal cooperation facilitate economic integration for semi-local actors in Central Java several centuries later. Shifting to nineteenth and early twentieth century Dutch Java, Peter Post's article, 'Profitable partnerships: The Chinese business elite and Dutch lawyers in the making of Semarang', examines Dutch-Peranakan Chinese collaboration in the building of Semarang, a major port city in Central Java. Through a close examination of '*sumbangan*' relations of patronage and reciprocal relations between Dutch lawyer-entrepreneurs and Peranakan Chinese tycoons over time, Post demonstrates that the colonial economy was not merely based on rivalry and competition between foreign and local capitalists, but dependent on their cooperation and collaboration based on trust and status.

The next article by Xiaorong Han looks at three Chinese revolutionary organisations that were active in northern Vietnam during the early years of the First Indochina War, before formal aid was sent by the People's Republic of China (PRC). In 'Revolution knows no boundaries? Chinese revolutionaries in North Vietnam during the early years of the First Indochina War', Han argues that Chinese communist interactions with local Vietnamese revolutionaries began well before formal arrangements were made to support the Viet Minh. Han's article examines three different kinds of bodies set up in this period to show the varying bases for Chinese alliance with Vietnamese resistance fighters. Where Post's article highlighted the need for elite Peranakan Chinese to cultivate relations with Dutch lawyers, Han's article shows how both the Vietnamese communists and their French adversaries regarded the Chinese living in Northern Vietnam as potential allies. Han's analysis reveals that this period of Sino-Vietnamese interaction was characterised by cycles of confrontation and cooperation. Just as collaboration in Dutch Indonesia between the Dutch and the Chinese challenges conventional perspectives of anti-Chinese sentiment, so too does Han's analysis demonstrate the substantial history of Sino-Vietnamese collaboration before 1949.

Where Han's research draws attention to the role of communist internationalism as a basis for Sino-Viet relations, Matthew Galway's 'Red-Service intellectual: Phouk Chhay, Maoist China, and the Cultural Revolution in Cambodia, 1964-1967', shifts our angle of vision to examine how Cambodian imaginations of China shaped the political aspirations of the Communist Party in Cambodia. Focusing on the intellectual life and political journey of Phouk Chhay, Galway shows a fascination with the Cultural Revolution and Maoism in 1960s Cambodia, encouraged by the PRC, and

how it was localised in collective imaginations by figures outside the Paris-trained corp of communist leaders. Through a close examination of Sino-Khmer newspapers, two political associations and the writings and ‘confessions’ of Phouk and other key leaders prior to their execution by Khmer Rouge comrades, Galway charts the rise of a Maoism in Cambodia that developed independently of Pol Pot’s brand of communism.

Our final article by Charlotte R.A. Wittesaele takes us to contemporary Indonesia and examines the way artists there engage the rhetoric of urban development through ‘green discourse’. Situating her analysis within the broader history of modern Indonesian art, Wittesaele examines two artworks about land reclamation by Tita Salina and Teja Astawa, to show how environmentalism is presented in contemporary art as a means to engage with urbanism and challenge state messages of modernisation and development. Close analysis of the artists’ subject matter, techniques, activism, and humour reveal for Wittesaele the influences of the global upon local practices. By comparing artwork that focuses on Jakarta and Bali, Wittesaele shows that such artistic ‘green discourse’ has the potential for application in Indonesian settings beyond urban centres.

Finally, David J. Welch provides a review article of three volumes that focus on the findings of one of the largest archaeological digs in Southeast Asia, at Ban Chiang in Northeast Thailand. As Welch relates, the discovery of metal (iron) artefacts among a range of other items led to the establishment of the site as a UNESCO Heritage site. Welch’s review article is followed by a substantial number of book reviews. We offer our thanks again to our international reviewers, referees, and authors who made this issue possible.

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