

## Editorial Foreword

This is a shorter foreword than those that preceded it; it is also my last, for my term as editor of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* ends with the current volume.

Editing the oldest journal in Southeast Asian studies at a time of momentous transformation in this field has been both stimulating and challenging. No longer tied to Cold War cultural politics, and increasingly marginal in the American universities where it originated as a subset of area studies, Southeast Asian studies is now animated mainly by academics in the region itself. In addition, and remarkably, given the trend in the United States and even Australia (where Southeast Asian studies is on retreat, even in research-oriented universities), the pool of European scholars studying the region has been expanding during the past decade outside the ex-colonial strongholds. Our regular readers would have no doubt noticed a reflection of the changing academic geography of Southeast Asian studies in the most recent articles.

To welcome this development — Southeast Asian studies becoming a predominantly Southeast Asian academic endeavour — as a nativist vindication of history would be puerile, for there is no automatic linkage between a scholar's nationality and the quality of her or his scholarship. A welcome development is that increasing resources are available for research in several Southeast Asian countries and that the number and visibility of women academics in this field is growing, too. But statism looms large in the region, hence the risk of parochial concerns dictating research, especially in the more policy-oriented of the social sciences. Southeast Asian academics' predominantly domestic focus is underscored by the still very small number who take a sustained research interest in a country that is not their own.

Based in Singapore since its founding in 1960, *JSEAS* is itself a testament of the early postcolonial era's progressive regionalism. As editor over the past six years I have sought to not only keep *JSEAS* relevant amidst growing competition through several improvements (thematic clustering of articles, expanded book review section, editorial foreword, and, allowing some immodesty here, stunning covers, for which we are indebted to the photographers who make their work freely available to us), but also to try to anticipate where the future of Southeast Asian studies may lie. Thus, while maintaining its characteristic attention to historical and ethnographic studies, *JSEAS* has widened its scope by publishing more articles in such areas as environmental and development studies, and the arts and media.

I have no doubts *JSEAS*'s renewed dynamism will be sustained under my successor, Maitrii Aung-Thwin, and the editorial team comprising Portia Reyes (associate editor) and Ho Chi Tim (book review editor), expertly supported by Eileen Shen (editorial assistant) and Dayaneetha De Silva (copyeditor). I will continue to make a contribution as a member of the editorial committee. Now, it is time for the two guest editors, Miriam Stark and Stephen Murphy, to introduce what is another first for

*JSEAS*: a monographic issue devoted to archaeology — ideal follow-up to last year's The Arts Issue. Enjoy!

Maurizio Peleggi