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Editors' Note

Thanks to the help and collegiality of Kristina Großmann and Guido Sprenger, this issue of *SOJOURN* presents a set of five research articles on the interplay of “plural ecologies” in contemporary Southeast Asia. In their essay introducing these articles, Sprenger and Großmann develop an understanding of ecologies that takes into account the relationships of both human and non-human beings. They situate their own and their fellow contributors’ investigation of hegemoniality and conflict among ecologies in relation to scholarship in political ecology and the anthropology of ontologies. And their essay argues for the particular importance of Southeast Asia as an arena for the application and further development of the study of social change through the prism of plural ecologies.

Each of the five research articles on plural ecologies that follow builds on — and highlights *SOJOURN*’s commitment to — intensive ethnographic field work in Southeast Asia. The articles also address central concerns of the journal — with ethnicity, with the use of and conflict over resources and with the forces, ideas, and developments that link the region’s societies to the wider world. Guido Sprenger traces the implications for ecological understanding of ongoing transitions from swidden agriculture to coffee cultivation and from animistic practice to Buddhism in upland southern Laos. Gertrud Hüwelmeier’s article addresses the role of spirits and other non-human beings in protecting urban space in Hanoi in the context of “urban renewal” and ever-stronger market forces; its focus on the interplay of ecologies in one of the region’s large cities sets it apart from the other articles here.

Kristina Großmann’s and Michaela Haug’s articles concern Central and East Kalimantan, respectively. The former treats a project to promote forest conservation and its apparent “failure”, and the latter the assertion of “culture” as a means of safeguarding access to the

forest in the face of a large-scale coal mining project. In the last of the five articles focusing on plural ecologies published here, Birgit Bräuchler develops an ontological perspective on opposition to land reclamation on Bali and its consequences.

The editors of *SOJOURN* are both pleased and proud to publish these five articles together — and together with Sprenger's and Großmann's enlightening and stimulating introduction to them.

Jayde Lin Roberts's 2016 book *Mapping Chinese Rangoon: Place and Nation among the Sino-Burmese* is the subject of the latest *SOJOURN* Symposium. The book employs the approaches of spatial planning and cultural geography in an ethnography of the Sino-Burmese who not only inhabit but also shape Myanmar's primate city of Yangon or Rangoon. Focusing on the city's Hokkien population, it explores the ways in which they had carved out an existence for themselves by the final years of military rule in Myanmar, when ethnographic work was particularly difficult.

Mapping Chinese Rangoon is an absorbing narrative of space, place and the history of a diasporic community. It represents a major contribution to research on one of the least understood, yet fastest changing, social landscapes in Southeast Asia. Roberts's book thus takes its place beside Eric Tagliacozzo's and Wen-Chin Chang's edited volume *Burmese Lives: Ordinary Life Stories under the Burmese Regime* (2014), Chang's own *Beyond Borders: Stories of Yunnanese Chinese Migrants of Burma* (2014) and Mandy Sadan's *Being and Becoming Kachin: Histories Beyond the State in the Borderworlds of Burma* (2013) — the last book the subject of the inaugural *SOJOURN* Symposium, in July 2014.

In reviews of Roberts's book, Yew-Foong Hui and Wen-Chin Chang consider the experience and conditions of Sino-Burmese as part of the larger Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia. They examine the ways in which members of the group have constructed an identity and created a sense of belonging in relation to the origins and development of Chineseness in Myanmar.

Amnuayvit Thitibordin's review of Bradley Davis's 2017 book *Imperial Bandits: Outlaws and Rebels in the China–Vietnam*

Borderlands in this issue of *SOJOURN* also concerns China's engagement with its Southeast Asian neighbours. Other important new titles, including Andrew Weintraub's and Bart Barendregt's edited volume *Vamping the Stage: Female Voices of Asian Modernities* and Sophornvay Vorng's *A Meeting of Masks: Status, Power and Hierarchy in Bangkok*, each also published in 2017, receive thoughtful and rewarding treatment from, respectively, Craig Lockard and James Ockey.

The Notes & Comment section of this issue of the journal offers readers two valuable contributions to changing understandings of contemporary Southeast Asia in relation to its distant and not so distant past. Patrick Jory considers the recently concluded and wildly popular Thai television series *Bupphesaniwat*. He argues that viewers' obsession with an historical drama set in late seventeenth-century Ayutthaya sheds light on the contemporary Thai middle class's views of proper manners, of gender roles and of nation, nationalism and monarchy. In her own essay in this section, Portia Reyes subjects to vivid consideration and historiographical scrutiny three volumes of memoirs published to mark the fortieth anniversary of Ferdinand Marcos's declaration of Martial Law in the Philippines on 21 September 1972.* She finds in these volumes a counter-hegemonic reading of Philippine history during the Marcos dictatorship and a signal contribution to the democratization of the writing of that history.

Benjamin Loh
Michael Montesano
Su-Ann Oh

NOTE

- * Readers who compare Reyes's contribution to this issue of *SOJOURN* to an earlier review of the same three volumes of memoirs in *The Manila Review* (Claudio 2012) will only gain greater appreciation of the significance — in realms beyond the merely scholarly or historiographical or “academic” — of the matters on which her contribution touches and of the vividness of that contribution.

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