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Editors' Note

The November 2018 edition of *SOJOURN* will be the last in which a regular Editors' Note appears. The journal introduced this feature in March 2012, when it launched its twenty-eighth year of publication with the announcement that *SOJOURN* would begin to appear three times annually rather than two. That departure was grounded in the resolve of the Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme of what was then still the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies to bring to readers a greater range of important scholarship in the pages of the journal. It came at a time when, in an increasing number of disciplines, both junior and senior scholars had begun to approach patterns of social change in Southeast Asia from often startlingly new angles. The editors of *SOJOURN* were determined to deepen ISEAS's commitment to advancing the innovative work of such scholars — working in Australia and New Zealand, China and Japan and Korea, Europe and the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, and above all in Southeast Asia itself.

The present issue of the journal validates the resolve of nearly six years ago. It showcases, for example, the work of two of the most creative young historians of Southeast Asia, Michael Pante and Lisandro Claudio, and highlights the clear bearing of their scholarship — in each case on the Philippines — on understandings of social change in the region today. Pante's article addresses the mid-twentieth-century effort to create a new main campus for the University of the Philippines on the "university town" model. Embedding the history of that Diliman campus in the social history of Quezon City¹ and the political history of the Philippines, Pante pioneers a spatial approach to the study of the Southeast Asian university and of its relationship to society. It is an approach from which scholars concerned with contexts from Jurong to Pathein to Thủ Dầu Một to Padang might take inspiration. Pante's deftness in

assembling elements of recent Philippine history into a vision all his own ensures that his article and the instalment of the *SOJOURN* Symposium in this issue of the journal — devoted to Claudio's latest book — complement each other brilliantly.

Chan Chia Theow's article, on a puzzling 1937 Chinese-language short story by Lin Cantian, shares with Pante's a concern with the social significance of space or place. Exemplifying the flourishing study of Southeast Asian literature and the increasing integration of work drawing on Chinese-language materials into English-language scholarship on the region,² the article investigates what Chan usefully terms the "micro-dialectics of ethnicity" on the East Coast of interwar-era Malaya. It also suggests with extraordinary vividness the value of literary materials in the study of otherwise inaccessible dimensions of Southeast Asian experience. Readers captivated by that vividness, but without Chinese literacy, will be gratified to learn that Chan will soon publish an English translation of the curious and arresting story on which his article focuses, "*Xila Ren*" (The Man from Greece) (Chan forthcoming 2019).

Anthropological approaches to trade and scholarship on the social worlds of borderlands are natural foci for *SOJOURN*. The past half-decade has seen the journal publish a number of articles in these areas, including several at their intersection.³ Juan Zhang's contribution to this edition of the journal treats Chinese traders seeking their fortunes in trade along their country's border with Vietnam. It introduces patterns of flexible and informal regulation that structure both opportunities to prosper and relations between local authorities and traders. Zhang's informants allow her to bring perspective to the study of a borderland that is simultaneously national and regional. Her article thus enriches understanding of the broad and pressing issue of Sino-Southeast Asian relations and their determinants.⁴ As those relations continue to reshape Southeast Asian social worlds, *SOJOURN* is doubtless destined to publish additional scholarship on them, early and often.

Social and physical mobility have long been of a piece in Southeast Asia, as elsewhere. Migration is a central concern of *SOJOURN*.⁵

Hy V. Luong's enlightening longitudinal study of communities in Northern, Central and Southern Vietnam in this issue of the journal affirms the continuing importance of the relationship between migration and remittances. Through anthropological practice, Luong has been able to capture interactions between trends such as, on the one hand, the physical dispersal of factories in the country and rising levels of participation in post-secondary education and, on the other, flows of migrants and of remittances. One hopes that the publication of his article in *SOJOURN* inspires further submissions of scholarship that shares its concerns, both as these latter relate to Vietnam's dynamic society and to other parts of the region.

From Yangon and Penang to Silay, Negros Occidental, interest in both built and intangible "heritage" numbers among the striking currents in contemporary Southeast Asian societies. Scholars have not overlooked that current, and *SOJOURN* has been privileged to publish work in these areas.⁶ Yeo Kang Shua's article in this issue of the journal examines the conservation and preservation of a number of Chinese temples in Singapore. It narrates success in transcending narrowly materialist and positivist approaches to conservation that has proved elusive in other contexts. This success has depended on taking into account continuing cultural practices and beliefs associated with Chinese temples, as well as the complexities inherent in community ownership of elements of the built environment. Yeo's article thus addresses both built and intangible heritage. Its invaluable perspective stems not least from the author's participation in one of the projects that his article treats.

The *SOJOURN* Symposium for November 2018 considers Lisandro Claudio's *Liberalism and the Postcolony: Thinking the State in the 20th-Century Philippines* (2017). His is a challenging book, both as a revisionist approach to the history of the Philippines in the twentieth century and as a contribution to the current international — and even regional⁷ — resurgence in the study of liberalism. In their respective reviews, Walden Bello and Tomas Larsson address each of those facets of the book. Bello's comments and Claudio's response to them underline just how great a jolt to understandings

of the recent history of the Philippines, and indeed of the recent history of Southeast Asia as a whole, the publication of *Liberalism and the Postcolony* represents.⁸ The book is also a tremendously moving one, as readers ought to discover for themselves.

A strong set of book reviews, several of which reflect the growing focus on the arts among students of Southeast Asia and its constituent societies, follows the Symposium. Recent events in Malaysia also make the editors of *SOJOURN* particularly grateful for the chance to publish reviews of books by Lim Teck Ghee and Yao Souchou in this issue of the journal.

Ang Cheng Guan has kindly contributed his essay on Robert Taylor's decades of scholarship on Burma and now Myanmar to the Notes & Comment section for November 2018. As the study of Myanmar attracts ever-greater numbers of scholars, particularly young scholars, the record of Taylor's work on the country offers both innumerable leads for researchers and important challenges to presentist perspectives. In its variety and duration, that record also reminds us that the path of the Southeast Asianist is one of commitment, rather than of academic gimmickry, passing fashion or superficial, empirically thin writing on the region's participation in "global" phenomena.

This month sees Su-Ann Oh take the helm of *SOJOURN* as its new managing editor. She assumes leadership of a journal whose development since it began to appear three times a year rather than just two is due to the support of a large number of people. ISEAS's former director, Tan Chin Tiong, recommitted the Institute to the publication of a top-flight academic journal on Southeast Asian society in all its dimensions. His successor Choi Shing Kwok, now chair of the journal's editorial committee, has shown genuine appreciation for the way that *SOJOURN* fits into the astonishing range of activities of what is now the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Both Ooi Kee Beng, who chaired the editorial committee until his departure to assume leadership of the Penang Institute, and Lee Hock Guan have provided invaluable counsel. Successive coordinators of the Institute's Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme — Hui Yew-Foong, Terence

Chong and Benjamin Loh — have been unfailingly supportive of *SOJOURN* and of the effort to see the journal live up to its potential. The hardiness of the journal's book review section, along with the stature and calibre of reviewers, reflects Ben's energetic approach to the role of book review editor. The Symposium, the most important innovation that *SOJOURN* has introduced in the past half-decade, was Ben's brainchild, and its success is due to his finesse with both publishers and reviewers. That such a giant among Southeast Asian thinkers as Walden Bello has contributed to the latest Symposium typifies that success.

Editing an academic journal leaves one with no illusions concerning the dispiriting crisis of English syntax and expression that characterizes our times. (Dissertation supervisors, please take note, and please shoulder some pedagogical responsibility.) In the trenches at *SOJOURN*, the hard work and intelligence of editorial assistants Rebecca Ye, Michael Yeo, Veena Nair and above all Gerard Wong have been fundamental to efforts to ensure the editorial quality of scholarship appearing in *SOJOURN*. First coming on board in late 2013, Gerard redesigned the intensive processes that deliver that quality; to work in his company has been a privilege. As deputy managing editor during the past year, Su-Ann has also muddied her feet in the *SOJOURN* trenches; benefiting from her fresh sensibility, the journal will move in new directions in the years ahead.

No journal can survive without the generosity and professional commitment of the outside referees to whom it turns. Proponents of the naked Thatcherism that scholars in so many parts of the world have allowed functionaries to impose on their universities could never explain the role in and contribution to academic life of dedicated and uncompensated referees. It is best, then, that they do not try to do so, for among scholars there is indeed such a thing as society. Of course, in their deep anti-intellectualism, academic Thatcherites also take a dim view of "regional" journals. To paraphrase a local notable and naval strategist from Dutchess County, New York, we at *SOJOURN* welcome their condescension. We are proud to edit a journal focused on Southeast Asia that is actually published in

Southeast Asia. We also recognize that, without the partnership of the remarkable enterprise that is ISEAS Publishing under the direction of Ng Kok Kiong or the wisdom and miracle work of the journal's production editor Stephen Logan, that pride would be impossible to sustain.

Most of all, however, *SOJOURN* owes thanks and credit for its evolution during the past six years to the scholars who have entrusted their work to us. Their trust in the journal has opened new paths for *SOJOURN* to follow in the years ahead. The opportunity to work with them, typically with brutal intensity in the months preceding publication, has also made for a steady flow of intellectual excitement and personal reward.

Michael Montesano

NOTES

1. On that history, and for more of Pante's superb work, also see Pante (2017*a* and 2017*b*). Another recent *SOJOURN* article on Southeast Asian urbanism is Harms (2014).
2. Like Chan, Stenberg (2017) covers both bases.
3. On trade, see Bonnin (2015), Milgram (2015) and Trupp (2015); on borderlands Amporn (2016), Balčaitė (2016), Hyun (2014) and Walker (2014); and on their overlap Busarin (2015) and Endres (2015).
4. In this regard, it joins Endres (2015).
5. Recent articles include Carruthers (2017), Derks (2013), Groß (2017), Koh (2015), Missbach (2015), Suriya (2014 and 2017), Wajdi, Wissen and Mulder (2015) and Ueno (2013).
6. See Avieli (2015), Curaming (2017), Denes (2015), Girke (2015), Khoo (2017) and Peycam (2016).
7. On the case of Thailand, for example, see Larsson (2017).
8. For a sense of the historiographical and personal stakes, in the Philippine case, see Claudio (2012) and Reyes (2018) — both usefully read alongside Bello's contribution to the *SOJOURN* Symposium in this issue.

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