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# Democratization in Southeast and East Asia

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# Democratization in Southeast and East Asia

*Edited by Anek Laothamatas*

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## **FOREWORD**

In 1994, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies held a Conference on Rapid Economic Growth and Democratization in East and Southeast Asia, inviting scholars from Northeast Asia (South Korea and Taiwan), ASEAN and Myanmar.

The objective of the Conference was to understand and analyse the phenomenon and process of political change in the region, linking this to the rapid and far-reaching economic growth taking place at the same time. While there have been many similar projects undertaken by scholars in different intellectual centres in Europe, North America and Latin America, involving scholars in the region, we thought it worthwhile to have regional scholars *take the initiative* to examine this process in light of the prevailing wisdom that a democratization wave is sweeping the world in the wake of the end of the Cold War.

Our project would be of special interest in that the study and analyses of the region are undertaken by scholars from the region who live and work there. Writing in 1994, and revising the manuscript in 1995 also gave the project the fullness of time to observe the direction of developments. The admirable volume, *Driven by Growth: Political Change in the Asia-Pacific Region*, edited by James W. Morley and published by M.E. Sharpe, Inc., New York, was started in 1986 and the papers were completed in 1990 just as some of the Southeast Asian economies reached the cusp of their take-off, shifting into a number of good years of rapid economic change. Holding another conference on roughly the same theme in 1994 gave the regional scholars more time to consider the empirical evidence and to discuss the direction and institutionalization of the political change.

This volume of nine essays highlights two directions for the region: one of increasing democratization which coincides with rapid economic growth and change; while the other does not indicate the same parallel changes, though political changes are observed.

On behalf of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, I wish to thank Anek Laothamatas for agreeing to co-ordinate the project and for making this publication possible. I would also like to thank Chandran Jeshurun for his contribution in supporting the project. To the authors of the essays, we would also like to express our greatest appreciation for participating in the project and making a contribution to the literature. The views carried in their essays are theirs and theirs alone.

Most of all, we would like to thank the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for so generously providing the grant for this project. It is their faith that the scholars in the region should be encouraged to put together a volume on democratization that has resulted in the conference and the publication.

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Director  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

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