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Editors' Note

The first three articles in this edition of *SOJOURN* — edited, in the first instance, by Michael Herzfeld of Harvard University and Hui Yew-Foong of Hong Kong Shue Yan University, and originally presented at a January 2014 conference held at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, and in cooperation with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the National University of Singapore and the International Institute of Asian Studies — focus on the cultural politics of heritage-making. In the first article, Alexandra Denes treats with great perceptiveness and sensitivity the efforts of the Thai state to incorporate the ethnic Khmer folk music genre of *kantrum* into Thailand's national intangible cultural heritage. Her article represents a brilliant case study both of Thai official nationalism as viewed from the remote periphery and of processes of “folklorization” and their impact. Nir Avieli, whose book on foodways in the Vietnamese town of Hôi An was reviewed in the July 2014 issue of *SOJOURN*, devotes the second of these three articles to a thoughtful and impassioned critique of the designation of the historic centre of that same town as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Scrutinizing the implications of this designation for tourism and for the historic town, he emerges pessimistic about the ability of the World Heritage Site programme to protect cultural and material heritage, above all in less-affluent countries. Equally sobering are Felix Girke's study of debates surrounding the future of Yangon's colonial-era court buildings and his innovative articulation of a “thick” approach to heritage studies. This approach resists poorly informed and aesthetically focused understandings of the built environment and the marketability of heritage and instead valorizes the historical production of space. Girke's arguments have relevance across Southeast Asia and beyond, at least where it is not “too late”. These three pieces will provoke much thought and, we hope,

much discussion. Readers can also look forward to the conference volume, with similarly exciting in-depth studies from across East and Southeast Asia, currently being edited by Hui Yew-Foong, Michael Herzfeld, Daniel Goh and Philippe Peycam. At the same time, this discussion on heritage politics can continue in the pages of *SOJOURN* by means of short pieces submitted for publication in the “Notes & Comment” section of the journal.

In keeping with *SOJOURN*'s commitment to publishing important new scholarship on the changing role of Islam in Indonesia, this edition of the journal also includes an article by Chiara Formichi that exhaustively surveys the historiography of Darul Islam leader Kartosuwiryo (1905–62). Formichi uses this survey to gauge evolving understandings of and attitudes towards political Islam in Southeast Asia's largest country. Complementing Jean-François Bissonnette's November 2013 article on oil palm smallholdings linked to large estates, Afrizal's contribution to this issue of the journal considers contestation over land rights between local people and an oil palm plantation company in Sumatra's Riau Province. He uses this case to develop and advance an understanding of conflict resolution that highlights structural factors. In the final research article in this edition of *SOJOURN*, Priscilla Koh examines policies encouraging overseas Vietnamese to work and invest in the country and the range of factors, from the official to the personal, affecting the experiences and sentiments of second-generation Việt Kiều in Ho Chi Minh City.

In his comment, a revised version of the keynote address delivered to the 2014 Cornell Southeast Asia Program Graduate Student Conference, Thomas Pepinsky makes a robust case for the importance of the disciplines in “Southeast Asian studies”. Using the field of political science as an example, he argues both for greater awareness of tensions within — rather than just between — academic disciplines and for the possibility of a more pluralistic understanding of the Southeast Asia field. The note contributed to this edition of the journal by Kathleen Azali and Ulla Fionna — ISEAS Research Officer and ISEAS Fellow, respectively — reports on the ambitious

roundtable on current developments in Indonesian studies held at the Institute in May 2013 under the auspices of its Indonesia Studies Programme. The event brought a large number of distinguished Indonesian scholars together to discuss emerging scholarship in the fields of sociology and demography, politics and political economy, and the study of decentralization. Among the participants were Professor Andrinof Achir Chaniago, recently appointed National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) Minister in President Joko Widodo's Working Cabinet, and Professor Faisal Basri, currently head of the Oil and Gas Governance Reform Team of the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry. This note represents an indispensable primer for interested scholars.

Complementing that note, the latest instalment of *SOJOURN* Symposium includes reviews of the recent Cornell Southeast Asia Program book *Producing Indonesia: The State of the Field of Indonesian Studies* from John Sidel and Adrian Vickers and a response from the volume's editor, Eric Tagliacozzo.

Terence Chong
Hui Yew-Foong
Michael Montesano

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