

SOJOURN

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Editors' Note

This issue of *SOJOURN* features research articles on religion and politics, the sociology of elites, internal and international migration, historiography and tourism studies. Its Notes & Comment section includes contributions to debates about professional ethics and the discipline of anthropology and about the state and future of higher education in Southeast Asia.

The opening article, by Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid and Che Hamdan Che Mohd. Razali, is a well-informed and carefully considered analysis of the place of Islam in Malaysian politics, especially during the current premiership of Najib Razak. It calls attention both to the clout of conservative and rigid religious bureaucrats and to trends towards greater pluralism in Malaysia's Islamic politics. It thus offers invaluable perspective on a significant dimension of the country's present impasse. Renaud Egreteau's analysis of the sociological profiles of the military members of Myanmar's first post-2010 parliament represents path-breaking scholarship. It treats actors on Myanmar's political scene who are often discussed but poorly studied. It will be required reading for scholars and others interested in the elections for Myanmar's next parliament due later this year.

The article on interregional migration flows in Indonesia by Nashrul Wajdi, Leo J.G. van Wissen and Clara H. Mulder reflects our ambition to publish work in the field of demography in *SOJOURN* more regularly. In its close analysis of recent census and survey data, the article frames trends in population distribution and redistribution that social scientists working on Southeast Asia's largest country must take into account. Similar research on other countries in the region would be very useful indeed. As understanding of tragic crises of migration in both the Mediterranean and Andaman Seas has centred increasingly on the role of human traffickers, Antje

Missbach's study of the biographies and activities of two Afghan traffickers involved in sending migrants from Indonesia to Australia could not be more timely.

Porphant Ouyyanont presents a corrective to the royalist historiography concerning the creation of the Siam Commercial Bank and the Siam Cement Company, each among the principal holdings of Thailand's Crown Property Bureau. Seeking to understand the formation of these concerns in the context of the early twentieth century, Porphant highlights both the roles of Danes in Southeast Asia and of considerations other than the storied farsightedness of the Thai monarchy. Victor King's article is an intervention in a debate about approaches to the study of tourism in Southeast Asia. Drawing on King's decades of research in that field, the article stresses the continued usefulness of the concept of "encounter" in regional tourism studies. We hope that this article provokes continued debate, perhaps even in the form of responses published in *SOJOURN*.

Just such a response to an article published in the journal is to be found in Glenn Petersen's comment. An anthropologist who has devoted much of his career to the study of American colonialism in Micronesia, Petersen challenges the reading of the "Thailand Controversy" among American anthropologists in Hjørleifur Jonsson's July 2014 *SOJOURN* article. Petersen's comment both speaks to the "national uses" of that controversy highlighted by Jonsson and makes vivid the concerns of anthropologists working in Mainland Southeast Asia only a generation or two ago. Rattana Lao's comment, which originated as a lecture given during events to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Khon Kaen University earlier this year, both examines the issue of "autonomy" for state universities in Thailand and lays out the broad challenges facing institutions of higher learning across Southeast Asia.

The instalment of the *SOJOURN* Symposium in this issue is devoted to Jean Langford's remarkable *Consoling Ghosts: Stories of Medicine and Mourning from Southeast Asians in Exile* (2013), on Kmhmu, Khmer and Lao exiles' experiences of sickness and dying in America. The book explores "the social life of the dead"

in a context to which such an idea is alien. Langford's response to reviews from Danielle Tan and Patricia Symonds will leave readers eager both to read her book and to follow her work in the future — perhaps even in the pages of *SOJOURN*.

Terence Chong
Michael Montesano

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