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Editors' Note

This issue of *SOJOURN* reflects very clearly our vision for the journal, as it both serves academic specialists on Southeast Asia and promotes understanding of the region among readers outside the academic realm.

The first research article, Thosaeng Chaochuti's study of recent film adaptations by a minor member of the royal family of two Thai literary classics with Oedipal themes, draws on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to highlight these films' deeply reactionary message. The appearance of her article here underlines *SOJOURN*'s commitment to publishing scholarship on the arts in Southeast Asia. A second article on Thailand reaffirms another of *SOJOURN*'s commitments, to featuring historical scholarship that informs understanding of contemporary Southeast Asia. James Warren's article on the effort of a French liquor firm to enter the Siamese market in the early twentieth century and the Siamese state's response approaches the still relevant debate over the country's "semi-colonial" status and its manifold legacies from a fresh and original angle.

These commitments notwithstanding, at the heart of *SOJOURN*'s mission is the publication of empirical work treating processes of social change in contemporary Southeast Asia. We are therefore proud to publish in this issue of the journal a set of five important articles with a shared focus on "Traders and Peddlers in Southeast Asia Today". These articles originated in papers presented at the 2013 conference of the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS) in Lisbon, and we publish them in partnership with Kirsten Endres of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle an der Saale, Germany.

Small-scale trade represents an arena in which many of the crucial social dynamics of contemporary Southeast Asia are manifest.

These dynamics include transnational and rural–urban migration; persistent patterns of ethnic specialization; regulation and the often blurry distinction between legal and illegal economic pursuits; the ways in which states and non-state actors use borders; informality and the future of the physical marketplace as a fundamental site of human activity in the region; changing patterns of consumption; relationships among growing prosperity, risk and uncertainty; and the embeddedness of economic activity. Both individually and jointly, the articles on small-scale trade presented here serve with great vividness to explore these dynamics.

Andrew Walker's 2014 article in *SOJOURN* emphasized the strategic *political* use of national borders during the so-called Shan Rebellion of 1902–4 in northern Siam. Both Busarin Lertchavalitsakul's and Kirsten Endres's articles in the present issue of the journal emphasize the strategic *economic* use that small-scale traders make of borders in Southeast Asia today. Busarin's article tracks the ways in which Shan women from Myanmar have navigated changes in the political and regulatory environments as they have participated in trade across the Thai border. Her attention to the cooperative relationships that have allowed and continue to allow these traders to move their goods both across considerable distances and across an international border is particularly striking. Endres's article also focusses on relationships central to small-scale trade. She considers the interaction of Vietnamese traders and their Chinese trading partners and customers in the Lào Cai central market on the Vietnamese side of the Sino–Vietnamese border. She emphasizes the role of the established stereotypes that members of each group bring to their dealings with members of the other group and the impact of these stereotypes on commercial transactions in this borderland.

Lynne Milgram's article examines the strategies pursued by Muslim migrants from Mindanao in the trade in illicit videos in Baguio. She deftly illustrates the usefulness of ambiguous demarcations of what is illegal, not only to these traders but also to the city's authorities. Milgram also considers these migrant-traders' record of collective action in pursuit of their interests. It has been

far too long since *SOJOURN* has published work on the Philippines. We are thus delighted to publish Milgram's article now. More work on the Philippines is in our pipeline.

Both Alexander Trupp's and Christine Bonnin's articles explore the participation of members of upland ethnic minorities in extra-local commerce. Trupp draws on ideas of embeddedness, agency and social capital to describe and analyse the activities of the female Akha souvenir vendors who cut such a striking image in tourist areas of Bangkok and other Thai locales. Close attention to the mechanics of migration and to the demands of conducting business in an alien setting distinguish his article. Bonnin's innovative article treats the commodification — indeed, the commercialization and branding — of alcoholic spirits produced by Hmong and Yao villagers in northern Vietnam. It studies not only the consequences of that process but also the links between the changing tastes of lowland Vietnamese consumers and the circumstances of their upland compatriots. Bonnin thus adds a significant new chapter to the long study of upland–lowland relations in Southeast Asia, a chapter reflective of just the sort of social dynamics whose study lies at the core of *SOJOURN*'s mission.

Mary Steedly's 2013 book *Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence* draws on ethnographic work in the uplands of North Sumatra to consider the Indonesian Revolution from a perspective with which historians of that event will from now on need to reckon. This book is the subject of the latest *SOJOURN* Symposium, which features reviews from Benedict Anderson and Leslie Dwyer and a response from Steedly. In addition to running *SOJOURN* Symposium in every issue of the journal, we continue to devote considerable effort to bringing a wide range of reviews of important new titles on Southeast Asia to readers. This issue of the journal is no exception, and Filomeno Aguilar's *Migration Revolution: Philippine Nationhood and Class Relations in a Globalized Age* (2014) ranks high among such titles. Our decision to commission the distinguished geographer Philip Kelly to review that book for *SOJOURN* further underlines our commitment to Philippine studies.

This issue of *SOJOURN* concludes with a note by Robert Taylor on the role of the Myanmar government's plan to hold a referendum on its newly drafted constitution in May 2008 in shaping international reactions to the damage inflicted on the country by Cyclone Nargis that same month. Appearing just as the second general election under that constitution has occurred, this note is — like the article on Myanmar's parliament by Renaud Egreteau in the July 2015 issue of *SOJOURN* — timely.

Terence Chong
Kirsten Endres
Michael Montesano

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