

SOJOURN

Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia

Volume 31, Number 2

July 2016

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Editors' Note

Not least thanks to the kindness of Verso Books in making pre-publication copies of Benedict Anderson's posthumous memoir *A Life Beyond Boundaries* available to us, many pages of this issue of *SOJOURN* are devoted to marking that great Southeast Asianist's passing. It is thus fitting that the issue also presents work from a range of talented students of the region whose research testifies to the vigour of the field that Anderson did so much, for so long, to nurture.

One of Thailand's leading anthropologists, Amporn Jirattikorn, leads off with a consideration of the appeal for middle-class and wealthy urban Thais of the Thailand-born Shan monk and holy man known as Khruba Bunchum. She emphasizes the role played by mobile media technology in shaping this appeal. As Khruba Bunchum has spent much of his monastic career in Myanmar, where he also enjoys a wide following, Amporn's article opens up a much-needed transnational and comparative perspective on the study of Theravada Buddhism in Mainland Southeast Asia.

Following the recent release of James Mitchell's book, *Luk Thung: The Culture and Politics of Thailand's Most Popular Music*, his work on Thai popular music will be known to many readers of *SOJOURN*. Mitchell's article in this issue of the journal presents his pioneering discographical framework of Thai 78 rpm records. This framework allows him to illuminate in a remarkable and utterly unexpected way not only the musical history of Thailand but also aspects of the country's social history. Caroline Hau's article on two "Chinese women ethnopreneurs", Thailand's Chitra Konuntakiet and Malaysia's Lillian Too, also explores a new frontier in the region's recent social history. While advancing Hau's ongoing intellectual project on "Anglo-Chinese" Southeast Asians, the article at the same time exposes an emergent, revised and, not least, gendered understanding

of “Chinese” entrepreneurship and capitalism among people in the region. Hau thus forces scholars to reckon with the impact of social and economic change in Southeast Asia in refashioning popular understandings of social and economic life among its peoples.

The work of two veteran scholars rounds out the offering of research articles in this issue of *SOJOURN*. David Hunt uses RAND Corporation interrogation reports to argue for the existence of a “rural public” in the former Định Tường Province of the Republic of Vietnam during the Second Indochina War. Illustrating the operation of rumour and the grapevine among residents of the province and linking that operation to trends in the fighting there, Hunt lays the foundation for further historical research on the phenomenon of a rural public. And — speaking of phenomena! — Thak Chaloentiarana narrates the astonishing motor-racing career of a pair of Siamese princes in Interwar Europe to ask what it says about the nature of modern Thai nationalism that two expatriate “Westernized Oriental Gentlemen” of royal blood could serve as its...vehicles.

Thak’s teacher, and the mentor of so many others in our field, Benedict Anderson contributed a review essay on Mary Steedly’s *Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence* to the *SOJOURN* Symposium that appeared in our November 2015 issue, just weeks before he would pass away. *SOJOURN* editorial committee member Hui Yew-Foong gave a copy of that issue to Perry Anderson at the funeral in Surabaya, and the latter remarked to Yew-Foong that it was rare for his brother to have written a book review in recent years. Truth be told, Anderson was hesitant to commit to the task and requested to go through the book before deciding if he would oblige us with a review essay. We were pleased and honoured that he decided to go ahead and provide us with his piece. We resolved, too, that it would be a fitting tribute to Anderson to feature his final book in the *SOJOURN* Symposium when we learnt that Verso Books would publish his memoir. We are also honoured to have enjoyed Verso’s cooperation in making this possible.

A Life Beyond Boundaries and indeed its author himself are, therefore, the subjects of this issue’s *SOJOURN* Symposium. In this book, Anderson chose to discuss the ideas behind and inspirations

for his best-known work, *Imagined Communities*, and also to recount his life in academia and the world. He wrote of the joys of learning languages, the importance of fieldwork, the pleasures of translation, the influence of the New Left on his own thinking and on that of people around the globe, the satisfactions of teaching and his love for world literature. In making *A Life Beyond Boundaries* the focus of this instalment of the *SOJOURN* Symposium, we sought to feature essays from scholars who had interacted with him or at least long felt his influence. We sought essays that highlighted the impact of Anderson's worldview and work, especially on the reviewers' pursuit of Southeast Asian area studies. John Sidel, Danilyn Rutherford and Michael Montesano have thus contributed essays that both offer insight into the man, beyond his distinguished scholarship, and seek to place Anderson's scholarship and his final book into context. Hui Yew-Foong and Kathleen Azali have contributed the opening essay to the *SOJOURN* Symposium, an account of Anderson's funeral in Surabaya and their own reflections on his posthumous memoir.

In lieu of the usual author's response to the essays in the *SOJOURN* Symposium, and with the generous permission of Verso, we also run a short excerpt from the afterword to *A Life Beyond Boundaries*, in which Anderson reflects on his academic journey and offers advice to young scholars. The July 2016 *SOJOURN* Symposium thus not only accords homage to a scholar on his passing but also brings into relief the very real challenges of a changing academic environment. These challenges have redefined traditional conceptions of academic freedom and professionalism in universities. They will have had an unmistakable impact on the state of Southeast Asian area studies both today and into the future. The crisis now facing the field at one of Australia's great universities, an internationally crucial centre for the pursuit of scholarship on the region, serves as a stark reminder of what may lie ahead for the community of scholars committed to continued serious research on Southeast Asia.

Among the highlights of the book reviews in this issue of *SOJOURN* is Patrick Jory's assessment of Benedict Anderson's dear friend Charnvit Kasetsiri's *Studies in Thai and Southeast Asian*

Histories. It is fitting that a review of this collection of Charnvit's scholarship, undertaken over the course of many decades, should appear in the same issue of our journal with reviews of *A Life Beyond Boundaries*. In his review of the book, Jory revisits the issue of the Western origins of Southeast Asian area studies and addresses the need to develop scholarship on the region in the region, and not least in Thailand. Other important new titles, including Simon Creak's *Embodied Nation: Sport, Masculinity, and the Making of Modern Laos* and Michelle Antoinette's *Reworlding Art History: Encounters with Contemporary Southeast Asian Art after 1990*, are also the subject of thoughtful and rewarding reviews by such scholars as Oliver Tappe and Nora Taylor.

This issue of *SOJOURN* concludes with a vivid and innovative research note by Hart Nadav Feuer. Drawing on deep exposure to Cambodia's higher-education system, Feuer outlines the challenges that have resulted from the development of private universities in the country. He contextualizes those challenges in the ongoing push for ASEAN integration, including in the area of higher education. Feuer thus uses the Cambodian case to connect a pair of developments on the minds of close observers of social change in Southeast Asia: the privatization of tertiary education and the multifaceted official push for regional integration. His note will force readers to think about these developments and their relationship with new urgency.

Terence Chong
Benjamin Loh
Michael Montesano

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