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Editors' Note

The research articles in this issue of *SOJOURN* include two innovative contributions on Thailand and three important pieces on Indonesian Chinese.

The articles on Thailand discuss absences. In a pioneering work of intellectual history, Tomas Larsson explores the absence of a tradition of liberalism in Thai thought, despite Thai thinkers' decades-long interest in Rousseau. Larsson wonders if liberalism might not soon grow more prominent on the country's intellectual landscape, perhaps as a means of approaching its interminable socio-political crisis. Drawing on intensive field work in provincial Thailand, James Ockey discusses the apparent absence of national political parties from direct participation in local elections. His article will engross readers concerned with the likely contours of Thai politics following the end of the military regime that currently holds power in Bangkok.

A pioneer in the field in her own right, Mary Somers Heidhues surveys a half-century of scholarship on Indonesian Chinese. Her attention to changing concerns in that scholarship over time — citizenship, assimilation, violence, identity and economic roles, for example — will force scholars writing both on Indonesia and on Southeast Asia more generally to examine the roots of their own concerns. Josh Stenberg uses his masterful consideration of contemporary Indonesian writing in Chinese to discuss recent ideas about the “Sinophone”. He argues convincingly for the poor fit between contemporary Indonesian literature in Chinese and those ideas, and thus for their perhaps limited applicability. Evi Sutrisno's article analyses a series of Indonesian biographies of Confucius to track the ways in which Indonesian-Chinese understandings of Confucianism have interacted with both the sources on which the authors of those biographies have drawn and changes in the socio-political context. Not least, her exhaustively researched article

illustrates the persistent influence of the New Order on religious life in Indonesia.

Jan Breman's *Mobilizing Labour for the Global Coffee Market: Profits from an Unfree Work Regime in Colonial Java* is the subject of this issue's *SOJOURN* Symposium. In view of the Symposium's mandate to identify recently published books of critical importance and to feature discussion of their contributions, we are pleased to note that Professor Breman's book was the winner of the 2017 ICAS Book Prize for best specialist publication in the social sciences. We congratulate its author on this honour.

Breman's book treats the Dutch East India Company's mobilization of land and labour in the Priangan region of West Java, its recourse to forced cultivation, and the effects on that region's peasant economy and society of the brutal system that resulted. In their reviews of *Mobilizing Labour for the Global Coffee Market*, Nancy Lee Peluso and Adrian Vickers engage with Breman's treatment of the division of labour within the peasant household, the place of colonial Java's coffee on the world market and revisionist views of the Cultivation System (*Cultuurstelsel*) more generally. Breman offers responses to Peluso and Vickers.

The eight book reviews in this issue of the journal include Patrick Jory's consideration of Chris Baker's and Pasuk Phongpaichit's *The Palace Law of Ayutthaya and the Thammasat: Law and Kingship in Siam*. Michael Yeo and Véronique Degroot, respectively, also review Anthony Reid's *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads* and the volume on *Nalanda, Srivijaya and Beyond: Re-exploring Buddhist Art in Asia* edited by Gauri Parimoo Krishnan.

The issue concludes with Mok Mei Feng's research note on "Chinese Newspapers in Chợ Lớn, 1930–1975" — a valuable introduction to a long-neglected resource for historians, on which the author herself drew with great success in her recent, path-breaking University of Washington dissertation.

Benjamin Loh
Michael Montesano

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