

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND SEMINARS

Workshop on Religious Revivalism in Southeast Asia, 28 August 1991, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

Is religious revivalism in the region a counter-movement to modernization or is it rather an expression of modernity? Social scientists from the region and beyond met to address this question and related issues at a workshop on Religious Revivalism in Southeast Asia organized by the Social Issues in Southeast Asia (SISEA) programme of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, on 28 August 1991. The workshop was organized with support from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany. This summary focuses on the main points which emerged in the workshop. The various views expressed at the workshop have, for the most part, been summarized here without attribution.

The workshop was chaired by Dr Sharon Siddique, Deputy Director, ISEAS, and was organized around a presentation by Professor Hans-Dieter Evers of the Sociology of Development Research Centre, Bielefeld University. Professor Evers provided the initial stimulus for discussion by outlining points raised in a paper which he presented in Germany in 1990, entitled "Religioeser Revivalismus und Modernitaet". A summary translation of the points raised in that paper had been distributed earlier to participants at the workshop in the hope that it would provoke discussion and lead to the identification of critical issues in the study of revivalism in the region, and topics for research that could be undertaken in the future.

In his opening presentation, Professor Evers highlighted the absence of discussions of religious trends and activities that cut across religious boundaries, and noted that ethnographic evidence suggests that there

might be common denominators which beg analysis. He also provided a brief summary of present attempts to explain religious revivalism. He suggested, moreover, that a salient point for discussion, often ignored by analysts, is Weber's observation that a given religion can itself (internally) be subjected to ongoing processes of rationalization.

Are there differences in meaning and nuance in clusters of words such as renewal, resurgence, reformulation, and rediscovery, which have been used to describe religious activity? What terms have been offered in other languages such as Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Indonesia, or Thai, to address these phenomena? Can one consider "revival" as a theoretical construct which could be used to refer to similar phenomena across religions? These were some of the questions initially confronted by the participants in the workshop.

In addressing these questions, participants at the workshop drew a variety of distinctions and provided a number of ethnographic examples in support of some distinctions. It was felt that "revivalism" implies an attempt to restructure the past in a form relevant to contemporary concerns, and it is thus a general term which can be applied outside the religious sphere. In the search for authenticity, it was argued, revivalism addresses a central dilemma of the post-colonial state. The discussion also touched upon the problem of the sociological (etic) versus self-applied (emic) usage of such terms. It was noted, however, that conceptual lines are often blurred because sociological terms are adopted and debated by the people studied by social scientists, and vice versa.

Opinions were divided as to whether religious phenomena could or should be compared across religions. Some participants argued that Islam was unique, and could not be put into a comparative framework. For these participants, this situation was at least partly attributable to Islam's immediate reference to Western cultural contexts and challenges, in response to which Muslim intellectuals fashioned unique ideologies. Islam, it was asserted, managed to "restructure" itself under the pressures of modernization, and renewal has thus been shaped by the discovery of the specificity of Islam. These assertions, however, were questioned by other participants who noted that the entrance and confrontation with Western science and rationalization was not unique to Islam. Buddhism,

for example, was similarly affected.

Having fleshed out some of the salient issues clustered around the use of terms such as revivalism, the discussion turned to complex questions dealing with the crisis of modernity, the “positivistic religion” of the secular state, and the phenomena of ethnic identity, individualism, millenarianism, and political opposition. Some of the more interesting issues raised at this juncture of the discussion concerned the need to address whether or not religious revivalism is individual-centred or community-centred in the Southeast Asian context; and to what extent are religious revival movements a reaction to bureaucratization and the establishment of state regulatory powers. Various ethnographic examples, of considerable interest, were also highlighted during the discussion, including examples of the role of animist and/or non-world religions in the evolution of religious and ethnic identity among the Karen of Thailand and the Orang Asli of Malaysia.

Participants also expressed considerable interest in the various linkages between different socio-economic groups and different interpretations of religion. Along these lines, it was noted that cultural, ethnic, and religious identity are often inter-twined with cults, and other forms of popular and folk religions. As a case in point, the development of a focus on certain Hindu festivals as religious events and a way of establishing Indian identity was cited. It was also suggested that religious phenomena such as the proliferation of spirit-medium cults could be understood as “safety valves”: cults not only reconstitute non-everyday life culture, but they also channel leisure-time activities. This aspect of leisure-time usage led to a discussion of the “gentrification” of religion in urban contexts through the participation in, and management of, religion by young, educated, middle-class professionals. Taoism in Singapore, for example, appears to represent a case of a folk religion which is attempting to reclaim its traditional clientele, in competition with Buddhism, by re-organizing its organizational structures and “repackaging” its beliefs. Various participants also felt that there was a significant link between forms of religious revivalism and the urban context. For example, the *dakwah* movement in Malaysia has been described as largely inspired by urban middle-class concerns. It was noted

that because urban religious groups are more vocal and more visible, they tend not only to generate dichotomous tendencies associated with the state: they may attempt to integrate themselves with the state *or* act in opposition to the interests of the state. It could be argued, accordingly, that identification with the state and its interests, or the lack of it, may in fact become more important than class in explaining participation in revivalist movements.

Out of this discussion emerged an interesting issue, namely, the evolution of definitions of religious “correctness” by the secular state resulting in the emergence of “competing areas of correctness”. It was argued that at the point where the state wishes to impose one version of “correctness” it must develop a system to define and maintain it — in the sense of “correct” moral codes and their related expressions, that is, “correct” behaviour. In other words, the state must translate its definitions of “correctness” through a process of bureaucratization of religion and the “disciplining” of religious groups.

Much of the discussion was also taken up with questions regarding the relationship between religious activities and economic and market factors. It was pointed out that in traditional societies, politics and economics were linked with, and legitimated by, traditional religious practices. Since traditional society appears to be a mirror of a rather holistic (religious) world-view, it was suggested that religious revivalism is, in most cases, linked with some sort of attempt to deal with elements of modernity (viewed as a force impinging upon traditional forms of religion from the outside). Questions were also raised about the commercialization of religion and the generation and dissemination of alternatives to mainstream religions. It was noted that religious revivalism seems particularly open to market conditions, and revivalist groups undoubtedly operate within such conditions. The importation of Tibetan Buddhist Tantric rituals by Chinese businessmen in Malaysia was offered as an example. This phenomenon, it was felt, to a certain extent belies the process whereby capital is generally “secularized”, that is, freed from religious management and the need for religious legitimation. This led to a discussion of related issues concerning the re-appropriation (or gentrification) of religious space as a counter movement to increasing

encroachments of government into public space.

Finally, the discussion on the commercialization of religion ended with a brief examination of the repercussions that flow from the fact that religious activities and religious sites are often the subjects and/or venues for tourism. The competing Islamic/Buddhist interests in a site in southern Thailand were given as an example of how the pressures of tourism can generate the need to define and defend religious activities and sites in the face of such pressures. Such sites, it was pointed out, become quite literally, theatres for the renegotiation of religious and even ethnic identity, through the use of “symbolic capital” to promote the interests of a particular group. Tourism grants the resources to acquire this capital.

ISEAS is pleased to have been able to hold this workshop on Religious Revivalism in Southeast Asia and would like to express its appreciation of the support it has received from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

**Workshop on Modernity, State, and Religion: A Comparison
of Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia, 13 September 1991,
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore**

On 13 September 1991, the Social Issues in Southeast Asia (SISEA) programme of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, held a workshop on Modernity, State, and Religion: A Comparison of Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia, with support from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany. The aim of the workshop was to explore, taking comparative perspectives, the transformations effected by the coming of “modernity” in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey, all of which have large Muslim populations. In particular, the workshop sought to generate discussion on the nature of the interaction between modernist state ideologies and the variety of world-views and belief systems characterizing the cultural “periphery”; the peculiarities of modern state-building; the religious reaction to modernization from above by secular élites; and the actual operation of religious forces in the market-place of both physical goods and ideas in Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It was hoped that this discussion would

point to issues and themes for further research.

The workshop was organized around a discussion paper presented by Associate Professor Hasan Ünal Nalbantoğlu of the Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, and Research Fellow at ISEAS. The participants at the workshop were Dr Syed Farid Alatas (University of Malaya), Mr Andrinof Chaniago (Universitas Indonesia), Dr Helmut Bucholt (Bielefeld University), Dr Ian Chalmers (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), Professor Michael Hill (Victoria University of Wellington), Mr Jalil Miswardi (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), Dr Kusnaka Adimihardja (Pajajaran University), Dr Lian Kwen Fee (National University of Singapore), Emeritus Professor Trevor O. Ling (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), Dr Noraini Abdullah (Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia), Dr M. Dawam Rahardjo (Institute for the Study of Philosophy and Religion, Indonesia), Dr Ananda Rajah (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), Ms Maria Luisa Seda-Poulin (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), Associate Professor Shamsul Amri Baharudin (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), Dr Sharon Siddique (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), Dr Somboon Suksamran (Naresuan University), Ms Suchira Payulpitack (Payap University), Ms Suriani Suratman (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), Dr Toh Han Shih (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), and Associate Professor Wan Zawawi Ibrahim (University of Malaya).

ISEAS is pleased to have been able to hold this workshop on *Modernity, State, and Religion: A Comparison of Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia*, and would like to express its appreciation of the support it has received from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

The programme of the workshop was as follows:

Opening Remarks

Sharon Siddique

Ananda Rajah

“Modernity, State, and Religion: Theoretical Notes towards a Comparative Study”

Hasan Ünal Nalbantoğlu

SESSION I

“Comparative Perspectives — Malaysia and Indonesia”

SESSION II

“Comparative Perspectives — Malaysia and Indonesia” (continued)

SESSION III

“Research Issues, and Possible Themes for Collaborative Research and Research Projects”

Concluding Remarks

Sharon Siddique

Ananda Rajah

**The Fifteenth International Taniguchi Foundation Symposium
on Spirit Cults and Popular Knowledge in Southeast Asia,
7–13 November 1991, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka**

Programme

7 November 1991 (Thursday)

Opening Remarks

Tadao Umesao

Director-General

National Museum of Ethnology

Katsumi Tamura

2nd Research Department (Southeast Asia)

National Museum of Ethnology

SESSION I

Chairperson: Ananda Rajah

13.20–14.30 “Between Centre and Periphery: Spirit Cults among the
Buddhist Burmese”

Katsumi Tamura

National Museum of Ethnology

14.30–15.15 Discussion

- 15.15–16.30 “Officially Recognized Pantheon in Eighteenth-Century North Vietnam”
Koichiro Uno
Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales
- 16.30–17.10 Discussion

8 November 1991 (Friday)

SESSION II

Chairperson: Shigeharu Tanabe

- 9.30–10.10 “The Way of Sickness and Death: Ritual and Practical Understanding among the Hmong”
Nicholas C. Tapp
Department of Anthropology
Chinese University of Hong Kong
- 10.10–11.10 Discussion
- 13.20–14.00 “Popular Strategies of the Lisu in the Ordering of Spiritual Universes”
Otome Hutheesing
Department of Anthropology and Sociology
School of Comparative Social Sciences
Universiti Sains Malaysia
- 14.00–15.00 Discussion
- 15.30–16.10 “Spirit Cults among Akha Highlanders of Northern Thailand”
Cornelia A. Kammerer
Department of Anthropology
Brandeis University
- 16.10–17.10 Discussion

9 November 1991 (Saturday)

SESSION III

Chairperson: Nicholas C. Tapp

- 9.30–10.10 “The Politics of Not Knowing and Rituals of Knowing: Spirit Cults, Popular Knowledge, and the Problem of Power in the Karen Ethnography”
Ananda Rajah
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
- 10.10–11.10 Discussion
- 11.30–12.10 “The Birth of Belief (*Kepercayaan*): The Struggle of the Minority Religions in Indonesia”
Masato Fukushima
Institute of Oriental Culture
Tokyo University
- 12.10–13.10 Discussion

11 November 1991 (Monday)

SESSION IV

Chairperson: Masakazu Tanaka

- 9.30–10.10 “Sacrifice and the Transformation of Ritual: The Pu Sae-Ya Sae Spirit Cult in Northern Thailand”
Shigeharu Tanabe
National Museum of Ethnology
- 10.10–11.10 Discussion
- 11.10–12.10 “Spirit Cults of the Muang and Lua at the Boe Kluea Salt Mine of Nan Province”
Cholthira Satyawadhna
Department of General Education
Faculty of Liberal Arts
Rangsit University
- 12.10–13.10 Discussion

Chairperson: Cornelia A. Kammerer

- 14.30–15.10 “From Forest to State: Village Guardian Spirits among the Thai-Lao in Northeast Thailand”

Yukio Hayashi
National Museum of Ethnology

15.10–16.10 Discussion

12 November 1991 (Tuesday)

SESSION V

Chairperson: Otome Hutheesing

9.30–10.10 “Enchanted Gardens and Deconstructed Deities: Buddhist
Tantrism in the Globalization of a Malaysian Chinese Healing
Cult”

Susan E. Ackerman
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

10.10–11.10 Discussion

11.30–12.10 “Changing Power and Positions of *Mo Muang* in Northern Thai
Healing Rituals”

Anan Ganjanapan
Department of Anthropology
Chiang Mai University

12.10–13.10 Discussion

Chairperson: Katsumi Tamura

14.30–15.00 General Comments
Masakazu Tanaka
Institute for Research in the Humanities
Kyoto University

Chairpersons: Katsumi Tamura and Ananda Rajah

15.00–17.00 General Discussion

13 November 1991 (Wednesday)

10.30–11.30 Business Meeting

**Workshop on Reconceptualizing the State, Civil Society,
and Citizenship in Southeast Asia, 29 November 1991,
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore**

Recent developments such as the emergence of the newly industrializing economies (NIEs) in the Asia-Pacific region, the role of the state in economic development, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union have led to a resurgence of scholarly interest in understanding the contemporary state. Such attempts have yet to draw systematically on the diverse experiences of modern Southeast Asian states with particular reference to the notions of civil society and citizenship. It was with this in mind that the Social Issues in Southeast Asia (SISEA) programme of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, held a workshop on Reconceptualizing the State, Civil Society, and Citizenship in Southeast Asia, with support from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The objective of the workshop was to generate discussion on the concepts of civil society, citizenship, and the state with a view to re-assessing the utility of existing approaches to the study of states and state systems in the region, to explore alternative conceptual frameworks and theoretical approaches, and to identify areas for possible future research in the SISEA programme. Recognizing that the analysis of these concepts might benefit from an interdisciplinary approach, specialists were brought from various fields in the social sciences — sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics. A wide variety of queries and issues were raised and explored at the workshop, including the prospects for the emergence of civil society in Southeast Asia, the meaning of the concept of civil society within the Singapore context, the implications of theories of state behaviour in economics for the concept of civil society, and the meaning of the notions of state, civil society, and citizenship within the larger context of international relations.

ISEAS is pleased to have been able to hold this Workshop on Reconceptualizing the State, Civil Society, and Citizenship in Southeast Asia and would like to express its appreciation of the support it has received from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

The programme of the workshop was as follows:

Opening Remarks

Sharon Siddique

Ananda Rajah

SESSION I

“State and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia: Some Preliminary Remarks”

Clive Kessler

School of Sociology

University of New South Wales

Comment

Geoffrey Benjamin

Department of Sociology

National University of Singapore

Discussion

SESSION II

“The State, Civil Society, and Citizenship: Singapore”

Lian Kwen Fee

Department of Sociology

National University of Singapore

Comment

David Brown

Department of Political Science

National University of Singapore

Discussion

SESSION III

“Neo-Classical Theories of the State and Governance”

Tilak Doshi

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Comment

Frank Huynh

Department of Econometrics

La Trobe University

Discussion

SESSION IV

“Southeast Asian States, Civil Society, and Citizenship in a System of Nation-States”

Ananda Rajah

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Comment

Leonard Sebastian

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

General Comments

David M. Jones

Department of Political Science

National University of Singapore

Discussion

Concluding Remarks

Sharon Siddique

Ananda Rajah

Symposium on Urban Images: Cities and Symbols, Symbols and Cities, 6–9 January 1992, Centre of Non-Western Studies, Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands

The Organizing Committee consisted of Professor J.T.P de Bruijn, Professor W.L. Idema, Dr P.J.M. Nas, Dr J. Oosten, and Dr W.J. Vogelsang.

Programme

6 January 1992 (Monday)

Chairman: Dr P.J.M. Nas (Leiden)

9.15–9.30 *Opening Remarks*

Professor W.L. Idema, Director, Centre of Non-Western Studies, Leiden University

9.30–9.45 *General Introduction*

Dr P.J.M. Nas (Leiden)

- 9.45–10.45 “The Circle and the Square: Symbolic Space and Symbolic Time in the Cities of Asia and Africa”
Professor A. Southall (Madison)
Discussant. Professor W. van Binsbergen (Leiden and Amsterdam)
- 10.45–11.00 Coffee
- 11.00–12.00 “Signifying Urban Space: Vitória, Brazil: Cultural and Political Discourses behind Urban Imagery”
Professor G.A. Banck (Amsterdam)
Discussant Dr H. Vogel (Leiden)
- Chairman: Dr A. Raulin (Paris)
- 13.15–14.15 “Symbolic Aspects of Capitals in Early States”
Professor H.J.M. Claessen (Leiden)
Discussant. Professor P.C.W. Gutkind (Warwick)
- 14.15–15.15 “Icon, Illusion, and Reality: Images of Urbanism”
Professor P.C.W. Gutkind (Warwick)
Discussant Dr A. Raulin (Paris)
- 15.15–15.30 Tea
- 15.30–16.30 “When Symbolism Has Gone Underground: Explorations in Francistown, Botswana”
Professor W. van Binsbergen (Leiden and Amsterdam)
Discussant Professor B. Kapferer (London)
- 16.30–17.30 “Rituals and Symbols in Buenos Aires, 1806–1910”
Dr H. Vogel (Leiden)
Discussant: Dr P.J.M. Nas (Leiden)

7 January 1992 (Tuesday)

Chairman: Professor A. Southall (Madison)

- 9.15–10.15 “Urban Deities in Sri Lanka”
Professor B. Kapferer (London)
Discussant. Professor H.-D. Evers (Bielefeld)

- 10.15–11.15 “Tôto/Tokyo: Metropolis *anno* 17-Something – 19-Now”
Dr M. Forrer (Leiden)
Discussant. Dr P.N. Pieke (Leiden)
- 11.15–11.30 Coffee
- 11.30–12.30 “Baghdad: The City of Learning and Pleasure”
Professor Wadya al-Najim (Vienna)
Discussant Dr R. Korff (Bielefeld)
- Chairman: Professor P.C.W. Gutkind (Warwick)
- 13.45–14.45 “The Aesthetic and Sacred Dimension of Urban Ecology:
Paris’s Little Asia”
Dr A Raulin (Paris)
Discussant Dr M. Forrer (Leiden)
- 14.45–15.45 “Images of Protest and the Use of Urban Space in China’s
Tradition of Protest”
Dr P.N. Pieke (Leiden)
Discussant Professor G.A. Banck (Amsterdam)
- 15.45–16.00 Tea
- 16.00–17.00 “Kathmandu City as a Sacrificial Arena: Ritual Divides in the
Sacred Geography of an Ancient Urban Centre in Nepal”
Drs B. van den Hoek (Leiden)
Discussant: Professor B. Hauser-Schäublin (Basel)

8 January 1992 (Wednesday)

Chairman: Professor B. Hauser-Schäublin (Basel)

- 9.15–10.15 “Jakarta, City Full of Symbols. An Essay in Symbolic Ecology”
Dr P.J.M. Nas (Leiden)
Discussant: Dr J. Leclerc (Paris)
- 10.15–11.15 “Murder in Batavia, or the Ritual of Power”
Dr G. Termorshuizen (Leiden)
Discussant· Drs F. Colombijn (Leiden)

- 11.15–11.30 Coffee
- 11.30–12.30 “Batavia through Javanese Eyes”
Dr W. van der Molen (Leiden)
Discussant. Dr G. Termorshuizen (Leiden)
- Chairman: Dr R. Korff (Bielefeld)
- 14.00–15.00 “The Meaning of Monuments and Great Works in Sukarno’s Jakarta”
Dr J. Leclerc (Paris)
Discussant. Dr V. Houben (Leiden)
- 15.00–15.30 Tea
- 15.30–16.30 “Images of a Sumatran Town: Padang”
Professor H.-D. Evers (Bielefeld)
Discussant. Dr W. van der Molen (Leiden)
- 16.30–17.30 “Urban Symbols as the Expression of the Balance of Power in Padang”
Drs F. Colombijn (Leiden)
Discussant. Professor Wadya al-Najim (Vienna)

9 January 1992 (Thursday)

- Chairman: Professor H.-D. Evers (Bielefeld)
- 9.30–10.30 “Lucknow: The City of Palace Culture”
Professor G. Ansari (Vienna)
Discussant. Drs B. van den Hoek (Leiden)
- 10.30–11.30 “Bangkok as a Symbol? The Ideological and Everyday Life ‘Constructions’ of Bangkok”
Dr R. Korff (Bielefeld)
Discussant. Professor G. Ansari (Vienna)
- 11.30–11.45 Coffee
- 11.45–12.45 “Keraton and Temples of Bali: Transcendental Organization of Rulership”
Professor B. Hauser-Schäublin (Basel)
Discussant. Dr A. Southall (Madison)

Chairman: Professor G. Ansari (Vienna)

14.00–14.30 *Concluding Remarks*
Professor A. Southall

14.30–15.00 *Concluding Remarks*
Dr P.J.M. Nas

15.00–16.00 General Discussion