

2025 – 2026
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Economics • Politics • Social Issues

Bringing Southeast Asia to the World



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The *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies (JSEAE)* is a peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary journal focusing on economic issues in Southeast Asia.

JSEAE features articles based on original research, research notes, review articles and book reviews, and welcomes submissions of conceptual, theoretical and empirical articles preferably with substantive policy discussions. Original research articles and research notes can be country studies or cross-country comparative studies.

For quantitative-oriented articles, authors should strive to ensure that their work is accessible to non-specialists. Submitted manuscripts undergo a rigorous peer-review process—two reviewers for original research articles and one reviewer for research notes.

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Contemporary Southeast Asia (CSEA) is an internationally refereed journal on the politics, international relations and security-related issues of Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic environment. Serving as a reliable and up-to-date source of information on events and trends in international relations and security affecting Southeast Asia, CSEA publishes the results of original research.



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- CSEA attained SCOPUS CiteScore of 2.0 (2023), JCR Journal Impact Factor of 1.0 (2023), and ranked 19th by Google Scholar Metrics 2022 in the Asian Studies and History category.
- CSEA is published three times a year in April, August and December.
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SOJOURN is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to the study of social and cultural issues in Southeast Asia. It publishes empirical and theoretical research articles with a view to promoting and disseminating scholarship in and on the region. Areas of special concern include ethnicity, religion, tourism, urbanization, migration, popular culture, social and cultural change, and development. Fields most often represented in the journal are anthropology, sociology, and history.

SOJOURN is indexed in SCOPUS.

SOJOURN is published three times a year—in March, July, and November. The annual subscription rates include electronic delivery as well as the printed copy by air.

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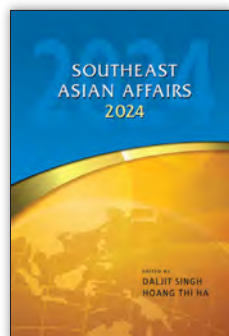
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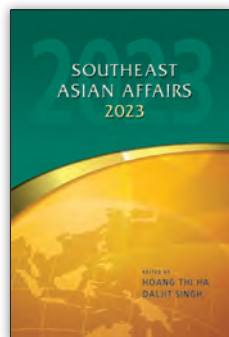
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General Secretariat of Public Financial Management Reform Steering

Coordinating the work with the Public Financial Management Reform Working Group of the line ministries and all entities under the Ministry of Economy and Finance and coordinating the cooperation between the Royal Government and development partners under public financial management reform program and coordinating the work with the other reforms of the Royal Government.

Vinel Yeth, editor

Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cambodia, and Deputy Secretary General of the General Secretariat of Public Financial Management Reform Steering Committee (GSC), overseeing the overall implementation of the PFM reforms program in the country.

Youthy Um, editor

Head of Administration, Finance, Monitoring, and Evaluation Division of the PFM Reform Steering Committee, Cambodia.

Penghuy Ngov, editor

Freelance consultant for the General Secretariat of the PFM Reform Program (GSC), where he provides support and advice on a wide range of economic issues.

The book starts with an overview of PFM in Cambodia, with a brief introduction to the discipline of public financial management. It then discusses Cambodia's experience in implementing PFM reform and its impact on public finance in general. After that, it also shows how PFM has reformed the government budgeting process and the challenges in its implementation.

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(ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute/Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cambodia)



Chinese Investments in Southeast Asia: Patterns and Significance

Evelyn Goh

Shedden Professor of Strategic Policy Studies, Australian National University, Director, Southeast Asia Institute.

Liu Nan

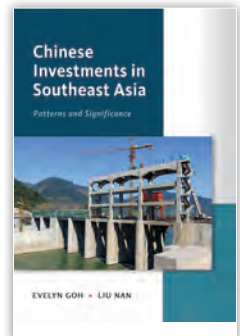
Received her Master of Business Information Systems from the Australian National University's College of Business and Economics, and her Bachelor of Economics and Finance from the University of Hong Kong.

This study provides a fuller picture of Chinese investments in Southeast Asia for those seeking to understand its significance and impacts. From their carefully constructed dataset, Goh and Liu provide a regionwide, multi-sectoral analysis quantitative survey and analysis of key changes in Chinese investments in Southeast Asian economies over fifteen years, from 2005 to 2019. Additionally, they provide a qualitative assessment of the geopolitical significance of these trends and patterns.

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The Dragon's Underbelly: Dynamics and Dilemmas in Vietnam's Economy and Politics

Nhu Truong, editor

Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and Public Affairs at Denison University, a Mansfield-Luce Asia Scholars Network Fellow, a Rosenberg Institute Scholar, and a Center For Khmer Studies Senior Research Fellow.

Tuong Vu, editor

Professor and Head, Political Science Department, University of Oregon.

This book shows why Vietnam has not become the dragon it is often touted to be. The team of authors include both long-time observers and junior scholars who present cutting-edge research on the latest trends as well as major challenges facing the country's economy and political system. As Vietnam seeks to escape from poverty and the legacies of mistaken socialist policies, its economy has become fully integrated into the global economy. Yet, without an effective and far-sighted leadership, it is still occupying a low position in the global value chains and becoming increasingly dependent on China.

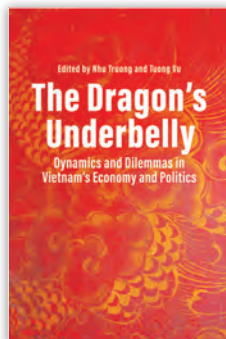
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Stability, Growth and Sustainability: Catalysts for Socio-economic Development in Brunei Darussalam

Aris Ananta, editor

An economist-demographer, currently Professor, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia and Visiting Professor, Centre for Advanced Research (CARE), Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

Chang-Yau Hoon, editor

Associate Professor, Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, and Adjunct Research Fellow, University of Western Australia.

Mahani Hamdan, editor

Assistant Professor, UBD School of Business and Economics, and Director for the Institute of Policy Studies and Simpurn Herbal Café Sdn Bhd in Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

As in many other oil and gas dependent countries, Brunei Darussalam—a country with a small population but the second highest income per capita in Southeast Asia—has been diversifying its economy in three sectors: from oil and gas to other sectors of export/economic growth; from the dominance of public sector employment to a more balanced public and private sectors employment; and from heavy dependence on foreign labours to development of local talents. This book examines the current socio-economic development in the journey toward a diversified social economy, as targeted in Brunei Vision 2035.

2023 : 347 pp : BM619

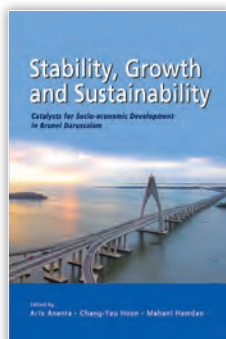
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Learning from Covid-19 in Southeast Asia: Restriction, Relief, Recovery

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Senior Fellow and Co-Coordinator of the Malaysia Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

Siwage Dharma Negara, editor

Senior Fellow, Co-Coordinator of the Indonesia Studies Programme, and Coordinator, Singapore APEC Study Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

Jayant Menon, editor

Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

“The Covid-19 pandemic was unprecedented in its impact and repercussions which are still being felt today. The Southeast Asian region is no exception with the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, economic contraction, and increased poverty. The impact varied across the region. Some countries were more effective than others at implementing lockdowns and delivering public health interventions. Pandemic responses were also differentiated by the efficacy of communication, policy coordination, and leadership. Policy evaluations have highlighted the need to improve institutional capacity as well as global and regional cooperation to respond to future public health crises. This timely and crucial volume, authored by leading regional scholars, thoroughly explores these issues and more. It is indispensable reading for anyone interested in Southeast Asia and broader international development challenges.”

Mari Pangestu,

*Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank (2020–23);
Former Minister of Trade and Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Indonesia*

2025 : PIC306

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President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Singapore Lecture series was inaugurated in 1980 by the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute (formerly Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) with a founding endowment from the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), and augmented by a generous donation in 1983 from ExxonMobil Asia Pacific.

The Singapore Lecture is one of the intellectual highlights of Singapore. It provides an opportunity for distinguished statesmen and leaders to reach a wider audience in Singapore. The presence of such eminent personalities will allow members of the civil service, business community, diplomatic corps, academic community, media, and other interested parties, the opportunity to hear from leading world figures speak on topics of international and regional interest.

The 46th Singapore Lecture was delivered by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on 24 May 2024, under the distinguished Chairmanship of Mr Teo Chee Hean, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, Singapore.

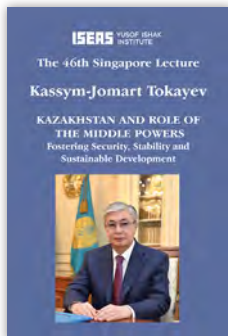
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The 47th Singapore Lecture was delivered by Yoon Suk Yeol, President of the Republic of Korea, on 9 October 2024, under the distinguished Chairmanship of Mr Teo Chee Hean, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, Singapore.

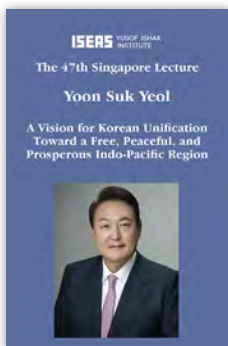
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Praetorian Kingdom: A History of Military Ascendancy in Thailand

Paul Chambers

Lecturer and Special Advisor on International Affairs at the Center of ASEAN Community Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Naresuan University (Thailand).

"Paul Chambers has written, arguably, the most comprehensive and detailed book on the evolution of Thailand's military power from the post-World War II era to the present day. This lucid book is a compelling read for anyone seeking to gain insight into the transformation of the country into a praetorian kingdom, where the monarchy and the military are the most powerful institutions. His delicate exploration of the various plots, methods, strategies, twists and betrayals provides readers with valuable perspectives on the inner workings and dynamics of Thailand's praetorian system. One of the book's strengths lies in its use of declassified and leaked documents from the US administrations, adding a sense of excitement and credibility to the analysis."

*Puangthong Pawakapan, Chulalongkorn University,
author of Infiltrating Society: The Thai Military's Internal Security Affairs*

2024 : 705 pp : BM623

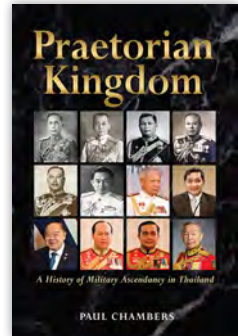
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new



Governing Urban Indonesia

Edward Aspinall, editor

Professor, Department of Political and Social Change, ANU Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, the Australian National University.

Amalinda Savirani, editor

Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and Government, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta.

Indonesia has become a majority urban society. Despite the classic images of rice fields, volcanoes and rural life we often associate with the country, now almost 60 per cent of Indonesia's people live in cities, towns, suburbs, gated communities and other urban areas. Urbanisation has brought with it a familiar range of problems, including some of the worst traffic jams and air pollution in the world, housing scarcity, periodic flooding and dramatic land subsidence. These problems pose massive challenges to Indonesian governments as they try to provide clean water, public transport, housing, garbage disposal and other services to urban dwellers.

Governing Urban Indonesia brings together scholars and practitioners with diverse backgrounds to examine how urbanisation is remaking Indonesia, and how governments are responding. It focuses on how varied political patterns are shaping urban governance, enabling some cities to pioneer improved service delivery and better public amenities for their citizens, while others stagnate. And it brings to bear multiple perspectives on how historical legacies, changing residential patterns, social inequality and myriad other factors are combining to produce a new social and political landscape across urban Indonesia.

2024 : 339 pp : BM634

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Rising China's Soft Power in Southeast Asia: Impact on Education and Popular Culture

Leo Suryadinata, editor

Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore; formerly Professor, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore.

The book addresses the issues of China's soft power in Southeast Asia during the rise of China. This soft power includes Chinese language education and popular culture. With regard to Chinese education, prior to the rise of China, Chinese schools were catered to mainly overseas Chinese children. Non-Chinese seldom received Chinese education. However, the rise of China and the export of Confucius Institutes (CIs) changed the landscape as CIs are meant for the non-Chinese population as well. China's educational soft power penetrated the larger non-Chinese community, making Chinese soft power more effective. Chinese popular culture has also infiltrated the non-Chinese population.

Various chapters in this book show that rising China's soft power in Southeast Asia has grown quite significantly, particularly in terms of the Chinese language and Chinese popular culture. Nevertheless, its popularity still lags behind American soft power. The Chinese language is still not as popular as the English language. The same could also be said for Chinese popular culture. The growth of China's soft power faces tremendous challenges in the Southeast Asian region. Its further growth would depend on China's continuous economic power and cordial relations with the Southeast Asian countries.

2024 : 282 pp : PIC302

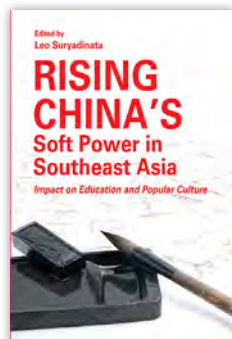
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ISBN 9789815203042 (EBK)

S\$35.90 (S\$39.13)/US\$29.90

S\$29.00 (S\$31.61)/US\$24.00

new



A Myanmar Miscellany: Selected Articles, 2007–2023

Andrew Selth

Adjunct Professor, Griffith Asia Institute, Brisbane, Australia and a member of the Australian National University's (ANU) Emeritus Faculty.

Andrew Selth has been watching Myanmar for 50 years. During this time, he has published 10 books and more than 400 other works about the country. In 2020, he released a collection of almost 100 articles that had been posted on the Lowy Institute's Interpreter website. This second anthology brings together another 72 articles, written for a range of outlets between 2007 and 2023. This period saw the installation of a "disciplined democracy" under Aung San Suu Kyi, the 2021 military coup, and the country's descent into a bitter civil war. Many of the articles in the book deal with international relations and security issues, but there are also works on Myanmar's history, politics and culture, as well as some personal reminiscences. Together, they make a unique contribution from an Old Myanmar Hand with wide ranging interests and insights.

2024 : 472 pp : BM633

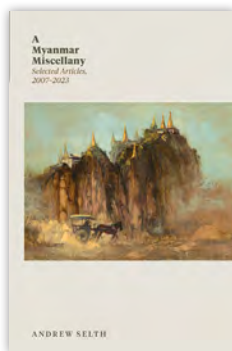
ISBN 9789815203363 (SC)

ISBN 9789815203370 (EBK)

S\$45.90 (S\$50.03)/US\$38.90

S\$37.00 (S\$40.33)/US\$31.00

new



S. Rajaratnam, The Authorised Biography, Volume Two: The Lion's Roar

Irene Ng

Authorised biographer of S. Rajaratnam. She was formerly an award-winning senior political correspondent and a Member of Parliament in Singapore.

"Irene Ng's biography of S. Rajaratnam is a monumental and painstaking record of the life, beliefs and moral courage of a core member of Singapore's founding generation of leaders. Rajaratnam's significance is more than a matter of history. The principles he advanced as our first foreign minister to secure a small country's interests remain central to how Singapore shapes its destiny in a tumultuous world. So too his inexhaustible optimism, even in the darkest of times, as this compelling narrative brings to life. Yet Rajaratnam's deepest imprint was in his vision of a multiracial Singapore, encapsulated in the national pledge for which he was principal author. It was his most powerful conviction: that we can and must be one united people, regardless of race, language or religion. The diversity of our cultures gives Singapore strength. But Rajaratnam's conviction that Singaporeans could create a national identity that transcends and takes priority over other affinities remains what we must live up to. *The Lion's Roar* should be read by new generations, today and tomorrow."

Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of Singapore

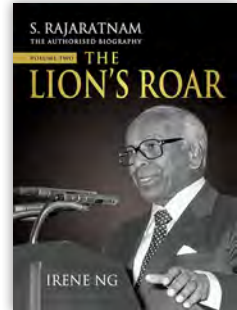
2024 : 776 pp : BM627

ISBN 9789815104646 (SC) **S\$55.90 (S\$60.93)/US\$45.90**

ISBN 9789815203288 (HC) **S\$65.90 (S\$71.83)/US\$55.90**

ISBN 9789815104653 (EBK) **S\$45.00 (S\$49.05)/US\$37.00**

new



Games, Changes, and Fears: The Philippines from Duterte to Marcos Jr.

Aries A. Arugay, editor

Visiting Senior Fellow and Coordinator, Philippine Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore; Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Jean Encinas-Franco, editor

Professor and Assistant Chair, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Rodrigo Duterte's rise and the Marcoses' return to power have captivated Southeast Asia watchers and the rest of the world. That the spectacle of strongman rule has allured most Filipinos is no longer in doubt, with the strong electoral mandate garnered by Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in 2022. Whether their capture of state power is in any way connected and what this portends about the country's democratic future is a key theme marking *Games, Changes, and Fears*. In this volume, Filipino academics and practitioners provide much needed analysis about this political succession and what it means for Asia's oldest republic. Packed with thirteen chapters depicting insightful trends and prognosis on the Philippine economy, domestic politics, foreign policy, and society, this volume offers scholars, students, and policymakers with the analytical repertoire to understand developments in the Philippines.

2024 : 361 pp : PIC304

ISBN 9789815203172 (SC) **S\$39.90 (S\$43.49)/US\$29.90**

ISBN 9789815203189 (EBK) **S\$32.00 (S\$34.88)/US\$24.00**

new



Social Media and Political Communities in Malaysia

James Chin, editor

Professor of Asian Studies, University of Tasmania, Australia; Senior Fellow, Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia, Sunway University, Malaysia; Vice President, Australian Institute of International Affairs (Tasmania); and Adjunct Professor, Monash University.

Pauline Pooi Yin Leong, editor

Head of the Department of Communication, School of Arts at Sunway University, Malaysia.

"Social media has emerged as a definitive tool for the production and dissemination of sociopolitical narratives that engender sweeping tides of change and transformation in our world today. This expertly and ably curated collection of essays helps us better understand this phenomenon as it has unfolded in Malaysia, where politics has undergone a sea change in recent years, and it is essential reading for those of us who are interested in the trajectory of Malaysian society and politics."

Joseph Chinyong Liow, Tan Kah Kee Chair in Comparative and International Politics, Nanyang Technological University

2024 : 248 pp : PIC303

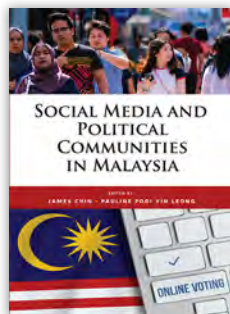
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S\$32.90 (S\$35.86)/US\$29.90

S\$26.00 (S\$28.34)/US\$24.00

new



Contesting the Philippines

Steven Rood, editor

Fellow-in-Residence, Social Weather Stations and Visiting Fellow, Australian National University.

Veronica L. Taylor, editor

Veronica L. Taylor, a socio-legal scholar and Professor of Law and Regulation, School of Regulation and Global Governance (RegNet), Australian National University.

The Duterte administration (2016–22) marked the return of an authoritarian style of rule in the Philippines. It was also accompanied by an economic recovery that was better than many expected, at least until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both during and following the Duterte period, the country was buffeted by a series of internal and external shocks that called into question the state's legal and social policy contract with its citizens.

This period of "contesting the Philippines" was an intense, normative and practical struggle to shape (or reshape) some of the Philippines' most critical institutions: the Constitution, the presidency, the Supreme Court and the rule of law, the free press, regional autonomy and independent regulatory institutions. These developments energized many domestic policy actors: technocrats, the business sector, civil society organizations, the police and the military, armed groups and religious leaders across the spectrum of Filipino politics. This volume considers some key sites of contestation between and among domestic policy actors, including the executive, during this eventful period for political and legal institutions in the Philippines.

2024 : 300 pp : PIC300

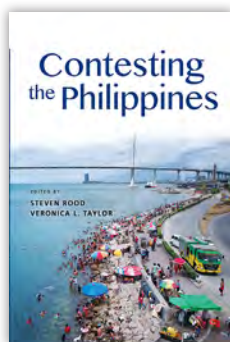
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S\$35.90 (S\$39.13)/US\$32.90

S\$29.00 (S\$31.61)/US\$26.00

new



He Who Is Made Lord: Empire, Class and Race in Postwar Singapore

Muhammad Suhail Mohamed Yazid

PhD candidate in History from Trinity College, University of Cambridge.

In June 1959, the British established the office of Yang di-Pertuan Negara (He Who is Made Lord) to replace the colonial governorship and represent Queen Elizabeth II in Singapore. Muhammad Suhail explores the divergent attempts to invest meaning in the Yang di-Pertuan Negara. In doing so, he weaves a rich story about the contesting ideas of sovereignty during the global age of decolonization. *He Who is Made Lord* is a captivating take on Singapore's emergence as a postcolonial nation, providing a gateway into the island's past as part of the Malay World, the British Empire and the Commonwealth of Nations.

2023 : 251 pp : LH30

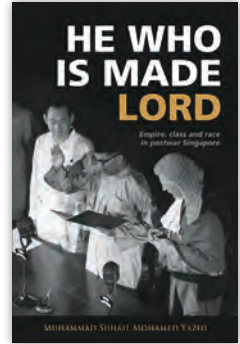
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S\$29.00 (S\$31.61)/US\$24.00

(ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute/University of Hawaii)



The Road to Nusantara: Process, Challenges and Opportunities

Julia M. Lau, editor

Senior Fellow and Co-Coordinator, Indonesia Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, and editor of ISEAS's commentary and analysis website, fulcrum.sg

Athiqah Nur Alami, editor

Head of the Research Centre for Politics at Indonesia's National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta.

Siwage Dharma Negara, editor

Senior Fellow and Co-Coordinator of the Indonesia Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Yuanar Nugroho, editor

Visiting Fellow in the Indonesia Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, Senior Lecturer at Driyarkara School of Philosophy, Jakarta, and Honorary Research Fellow with the University of Manchester's Institute of Innovation Research, UK.

The collective research effort of senior and junior scholars from Indonesia and beyond, *The Road to Nusantara: Process, Challenges and Opportunities* examines the political, economic, socio-cultural, security and environmental implications of President Joko Widodo's historic plan to move Indonesia's national capital from Jakarta to Nusantara, East Kalimantan. This volume will be of interest to policymakers, Indonesia's neighbours near and far, prospective investors, and students of Indonesia who wish to understand the complex challenges underlying this megaproject.

2023 : 282 pp : PIC294

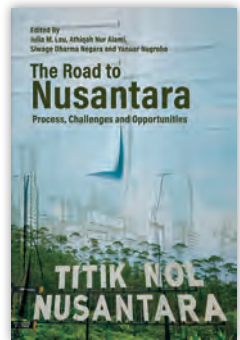
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S\$29.00 (S\$31.61)/US\$24.00

(ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute/ National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN))



Port Security and Preman Organizations in Indonesia

Senia Febrica

Knowledge Exchange Associate at the One Ocean Hub, the University of Strathclyde, Scotland

The global war on terrorism created pressure for Indonesia to improve its security measures for dealing with maritime terrorism. Following the 9/11 attacks and the 2002 Bali bombings, Indonesia has improved the security of its major ports and entered various international agreements to ensure its trading activities are not impeded. At the same time, in a bid to secure small ports and coastal areas in various parts of the country, *preman*—self-supporting, autonomous paramilitary—organizations began to play a greater role. This book explores the involvement of *preman* organizations in securing ports and coastlines in Jakarta, North Sulawesi and the Riau Islands. The security of ports and coastal areas in the three provinces is of international importance because of their proximity to major sea lanes of communication. This book carefully maps out the tensions, contradictions and implications of the use of *preman* organizations in the realization of Indonesia's efforts to be a truly democratic civil society.

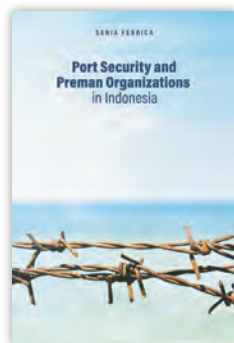
2023 : 177 pp : BM621

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S\$29.90 (S\$32.59)/US\$25.90

S\$24.00 (S\$26.16)/US\$21.00



Blue Pawn, Red Pawn and the Communist Party of Vietnam's Gambit for Legitimacy

forthcoming

Nguyen Hoang Thanh Danh

Teaches Politics of Southeast Asia at Hosei University and Vietnamese at Showa Women's University.

"This is a long-awaited book discussing systematically the political system in Vietnam: why has the present political regime continued for such a long period, and what are the resources of legitimacy concerning the communist rule. The book also covers the recent development in the political scene, including the anti-corruption campaign and the frequent changes in the top leadership."

*Shiraishi Masaya, Emeritus Professor, Waseda University;
Former Chairman, Japan Society for Vietnamese Studies*

"As a business journalist at Forbes Vietnam, understanding shifts in socioeconomic trends and policymaking processes is crucial for my work. I am pleased to endorse this research book on Vietnam politics and the legitimacy-building of the one-party state's leadership. The book delves into the intricate dynamics of the Communist Party of Vietnam's legitimacy, which are instrumental in understanding the economic policies and reforms that have shaped Vietnam's growth, especially since the *Doi Moi* era. The exploration of current challenges, including Western influence, corruption, governance issues and territorial disputes, offers a comprehensive understanding of the pressures faced by the CPV. While the book may not be an easy read for the general public, it remains a valuable and rare contribution to the study of Vietnam politics, an area that, in my opinion, has not been covered well or frequently enough."

Nguyen Trong Nam, Journalist, Forbes Vietnam

2025 : IU42

ISBN 9789815203950 (SC)

ISBN 9789815203967 (EBK)

Towards the Indonesian Republic: Marxist Lineages in the National Revolution

forthcoming

Geoffrey C. Gunn

Emeritus Professor, Nagasaki University, Japan, and Adjunct Professor, Centre for Macau Studies, University of Macau, China.

Drawing on little known archival sources, this work brings to the fore the salience of a schism in the Indonesian communist movement between pro-Moscow loyalists and “national-communists” reaching back to the 1920s, which survived even the Japanese occupation and surfaced in the throes of the National Revolution (1945–49). At the heart of the rift lay contrasting visions of revolutionary tactics, the salience of Islam in an Islamic majority society, the vexed question of alliance between leftists and other anti-colonial forces, and even the concept and definition of state and national ideology. As such, we cannot ignore the lineages of Marxism in the National Revolution, which trace their roots to the pioneer actions on Java by Dutch communists, themselves influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution. Contrary to the image of a non-revolutionary peasantry and a nationalist leadership broken or tamed by colonial carceral practices, the picture that emerges is one of acute agency on the part of an awoken population at a critical historical moment at the end of World War II.

2025 : BM630

ISBN 9789815203004 (SC)

ISBN 9789815203011 (EBK)

Wee Kim Wee: President, Diplomat, Journalist and a True Singaporean

forthcoming

Cheong Suk-Wai

A lawyer by training, and a writer by choice. A former ASEAN Scholar and Thomson Foundation Scholar, she has been a construction litigator, a journalist and a public servant.

Dr Wee Kim Wee was a pioneering Singaporean journalist and diplomat with a most improbable rise and rise in life. Among his many other accomplishments, he helped end a regional war; kept one of the world’s oldest newspapers alive till today; and rescued the presidency of the Republic of Singapore from a spell in the gutter. Just as water softens stone, he overcame the grimmest odds with his winsome ways and unimpeachable character.

This meticulously researched book brims with fresh insights about the man most Singaporeans claimed as “my President”. They include telling facets from the author’s interviews with more than 30 people who knew Dr Wee best in every decade of his storied life. Dr Wee started out being too poor to complete secondary school to holding Singapore’s highest office. His lightly worn shrewdness and genuine regard for all living things plucked him out of obscurity and thrust him into moments that shook Singapore, eventually making him a beloved household name.

Dr Wee was the embodiment of Singapore exceptionalism and this biography is the last word on a sort of man that Singapore will rarely, if ever, encounter again.

2025 : BM635

ISBN 9789815203202 (SC)

ISBN 9789815203225 (EBK)

forthcoming

My Turbulent Life and 21 Years of Exile in the People's Republic of China

Pridi Banomyong

(Luang Praditmanutham) was the Former Regent and Prime Minister of Siam (Thailand).

CONTENTS

1. My Farewell to the People's Republic of China
 2. My Revolutionary Youth
 3. My Meetings with Mussolini, Pierre Laval, Sir Samuel Hoare, Hjalmar Schacht, Cordell Hull, and Japanese Emperor Hirohito
 4. The Underground Kingdom of Siam
 5. The Southeast Asian League
 6. My Meeting with President Chiang Kai-Shek and His Vice President Li Zongren, President Roxas, President Truman, King George VI, and President Léon Blum
 7. The Reactionary Coup D'état and My First Escape from Siam to Singapore and China
 8. The Defeat of the Grand Palace Insurrection (26 February 1949)
 9. The Adventure of My Second Escape from Siam to the People's Republic of China
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 11. Present at the Creation of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949
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 29. Issues of Pollution and Automobile Accidents in the People's Republic of China
 30. The Former Chinese Emperor Who Became a New Citizen of the People's Republic
- Conclusion

2025 : BM637

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ISBN 9789815203868 (EBK)

The Power of Sustainable Development in Vietnam: Environmental Narratives, NGOs and the State's Environmental Rule

Julia L. Behrens

Holds a PhD in Southeast Asian Studies from Humboldt University, Berlin.

Sustainable development is present everywhere in Vietnam. This book analyses the Sustainable Development narrative and its uses by different actors in Vietnam. It examines how narratives are used to establish environmental rule in the socialist state. By focusing on NGOs and their positions in the Vietnamese context, the book illustrates how different actors use the Sustainable Development narrative to navigate power relations with the authoritarian state and the international donors, and how the narrative differs from theory to the actual practice on the ground. The book will be of interest to scholars of Vietnam who wish to understand development and state-society relations in environmental governance. It is an important read for development practitioners.

2025 : 189 pp : IU41

ISBN 9789815203479 (SC)

ISBN 9789815203486 (EBK)

S\$29.90 (S\$32.59)/US\$25.90

S\$24.00 (S\$26.16)/US\$21.00

new



Shariah, Society and Stratification: Muslim Lifestyles in Southeast Asia

Norshahril Saat, editor

Senior Fellow and Coordinator of the Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Sharifah Afra Alatas, editor

Research Officer, Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Since the Islamic resurgence hit Southeast Asia in the 1980s, Muslim societies now have greater aspirations for adhering to the Shariah, the body of laws meant to govern Muslims' day-to-day lives. At the institutional level, the desire for this compliance manifested in the establishment of various institutions such as Islamic banking and financial programmes. At the personal and societal levels, there are increasing demands for the provision of halal-certified goods and services, most commonly in the food and beverage industry. However, increasingly, compliance to the Shariah is no longer limited to laws or ensuring that food and beverages are halal, but has become an entire lifestyle. The rise of the Muslim middle class in Southeast Asia has catalysed this preference. Muslim consumers now demand that products in other industries, such as fashion, sports, tourism, medicine and personal hygiene, should also be Shariah-compliant and even reminiscent of the time in which Prophet Muhammad lived. This book analyses the various social, economic, and political forces that have contributed to such trends across many countries in Southeast Asia. In identifying these trends and the forces that shape them, it discusses the potential consequences of such a lifestyle on society, specifically in entrenching various forms of stratification.

2024 : 230 pp : PIC301

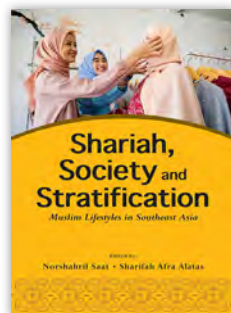
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S\$35.90 (S\$39.13)/US\$29.90

S\$29.00 (S\$31.61)/US\$24.00

new



History, Economy and Religion: Mainland Southeast Asia c. First Century CE– Fourteenth Century CE

Birendra Nath Prasad, editor

Assistant Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

This book probes two broad themes: the socio-economic and cultural ramifications of trade between India and Mainland Southeast Asia; and the processes behind the localization of Indian religio-cultural influences in Southeast Asia. The areas covered in the book stretch from the Yunnan area of China in the north to the southernmost borders of Thailand in the south, and the Andaman Sea coast of Thailand in the west to the eastern coast of Vietnam in the east.

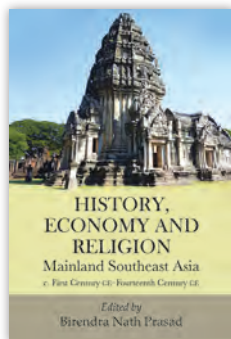
2024 : 351 pp : BM636

ISBN 9789815203752 (HC)

S\$39.90 (S\$43.49)/US\$32.90

(ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute/Manohar Publishers & Distributors)

new



Malaysian Crossings: Place and Language in the Worlding of Modern Chinese Literature

Cheow Thia Chan

Assistant Professor, Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore.

Malaysian Chinese (Mahua) literature is marginalized on several fronts. In the international literary space, which privileges the West, Malaysia is considered remote. The institutions of modern Chinese literature favor mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Within Malaysia, only texts in Malay, the national language, are considered national literature by the state. However, Mahua authors have produced creative and thought-provoking works that have won growing critical recognition, showing Malaysia to be a laboratory for imaginative Chinese writing.

Highlighting Mahua literature's distinctive mode of evolution, Cheow Thia Chan demonstrates that authors' grasp of their marginality in the world-Chinese literary space has been the impetus for—rather than a barrier to—aesthetic inventiveness. He foregrounds the historical links between Malaysia and other Chinese-speaking regions, tracing how Mahua writers engage in the “worlding” of modern Chinese literature by navigating interconnected literary spaces. Focusing on writers including Lin Cantian, Han Suyin, Wang Anyi, and Li Yongping, whose works craft signature literary languages, Chan examines narrative representations of multilingual social realities and authorial reflections on colonial Malaya or independent Malaysia as valid literary terrain.

Delineating the inter-Asian “crossings” of Mahua literary production—physical journeys, interactions among social groups, and mindset shifts—from the 1930s to the 2000s, he contends that new perspectives from the periphery are essential to understanding the globalization of modern Chinese literature. By emphasizing the inner diversities and connected histories in the margins, *Malaysian Crossings* offers a powerful argument for remapping global Chinese literature and world literature.

2024 : 298 pp : BM631

ISBN 9789815203219 (SC)

S\$29.90 (S\$32.59)/US\$25.90

(ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute/Columbia University Press)

new



Understanding the Role of Indonesian Millennials in Shaping the Nation's Future

Ju-Lan Thung, editor

Senior Researcher, Research Center for Society and Culture, the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia.

Maria Monica Wihardja, editor

Visiting Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore and a former World Bank Economist, World Bank's Poverty and Equity Global Practice. She was the recipient of the Nikkei Asian Scholar 2023.

This book is a compendium of writings to provide a broad picture of the role of millennials in Indonesia's future. One chapter covers generational differences in life course events; two chapters cover the role of millennials in changing the political landscape; two chapters delve into generational differences in risk-taking behaviours in the financial sector and digital competency among MSME entrepreneurs; two chapters examine millennials' religious views on the cryptocurrency economy and generational differences in the spiritual process of self-discovery; and two chapters study participatory art among millennials and how millennial artists respond to NFT technology.

2024 : 280 pp : PIC299

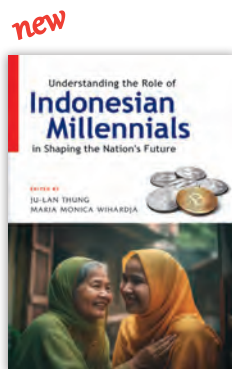
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S\$35.90 (S\$39.13)/US\$29.90

S\$29.00 (S\$31.61)/US\$24.00

(ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute/National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN))



Visiting Sexual Exploitation: How Should Indonesia Strengthen Its Policies to Curb Sex Work in Response to Its Extramarital Sex Criminalization

Jason Hung

Final-year PhD in Sociology candidate, University of Cambridge. He is a columnist at The China Global South Project.

This book responds to Indonesia's latest legislation that passed the criminal code of criminalizing any act of extramarital sex. The book presents how cracking down on the local or regional (i.e., Southeast Asian) prostitution industry cannot be accomplished by simply taking legislative actions.

The book examines and analyses how sex work is socio-economically and institutionally constructed. This book presents the underlying unequal power of relations in Indonesian society that facilitates sexual exploitation, especially against disadvantaged children and women. The highlights of this book are the policymaking discourse on how local Indonesian policymakers should respond to such an unequal power of relations and the prevalence of sex work. The book, moreover, visits the anti-extramarital sex legislation in order to explain how the Indonesian government should endeavour to crack down on its domestic sex industry in order to uphold the values of human rights and lower the prevalence of the practice of commercial sex.

2024 : 105 pp : BM629

ISBN 9789815104707 (SC)

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S\$25.90 (S\$28.23)/US\$19.90

S\$21.00 (S\$22.89)/US\$16.00



Putting Women Up: Gender Equality and Politics in Myanmar

Netina Tan, editor

University Fellow and Associate Professor of Political Science at McMaster University, Canada.

Meredith L. Weiss, editor

Professor of Political Science, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, State University of New York, USA.

For the duration of Myanmar's experiment with electoral democracy, why did some women run for political office, and not others? What role did gatekeepers such as party leaders play in those decisions, and using what criteria in selecting candidates? How did experience of domestic violence or harassment affect women's likelihood to participate in politics, especially beyond the local level? And what implications might these earlier patterns have for a post-coup Myanmar, should meaningful elections be restored? The contributors to *Putting Women Up: Gender Equality and Politics in Myanmar* answer these questions by examining the internal politics of nine political parties in Myanmar and both men's and women's attitudes towards and experiences of political leadership. Drawing on extensive interview, survey, and focus-group discussion data collected from across Myanmar in 2017 and 2020, this book offers a mixed-methods approach to explain how factors from party rules to formative personal trauma to patriarchal biases to ethno-religious context shape women's and men's likelihood to join local and national politics.

2024 : 206 pp : PIC298

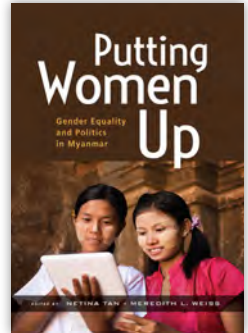
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S\$32.90 (S\$35.86)/US\$29.90

S\$26.00 (S\$28.34)/US\$24.00

new



Maritime Southeast Asia: History, Culture and Religion; c. First Century CE–Fifteenth Century CE

Birendra Nath Prasad, editor

Assistant Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Often serving as an important node through which West Asian and South Asian maritime trade with China were maintained, maritime Southeast Asia remained exposed to various extra-local influences that accompanied maritime trade with and through this area. Yet, as the research articles in the book indicate, it was not just an appendage to the two great agrarian and maritime civilizations of Asia: India and China. It imbibed extra-local influences and transformed them to suit local needs. The book looks into the issue of complex interactions between local and extra-local influences in maritime Southeast Asia. It traces the processes through which extra-local influences were localized.

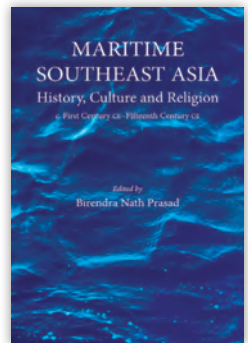
2024 : 283 pp : BM624

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new



Myanmar in Crisis: Living with the Pandemic and the Coup

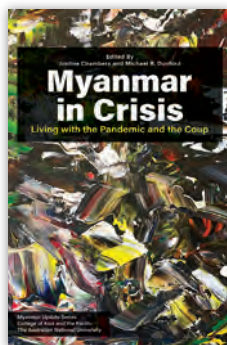
Justine Chambers, editor

Postdoctoral Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) and a Research Fellow, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University.

Michael R. Dunford, editor

PhD candidate in anthropology, Australian National University.

Myanmar in Crisis brings together scholars from across the social sciences to analyse the dual crises of COVID-19 and the 2021 military coup. All of the essays address one of four themes around the concept of crisis: society in crisis, a state in crisis, an economy in crisis, and international relations in crisis. Several authors examine the contested nature of state authority in the post-coup revolutionary context, including the emergence of new governance dynamics; others discuss heterogeneous forms of resistance and the potential for building a more inclusive, just, and tolerant society in the future of Myanmar. The volume also explores the economic crisis caused by the pandemic and the coup and its devastating effects on people's lives and livelihoods: the authors provide a deep dive into the impacts of restrictive COVID-19 prevention measures on local communities, the growing livelihoods crisis since the coup, and the impacts of both crises on foreign trade and investment. Scaling up from that local perspective, the book also looks at Myanmar's history of foreign relations, the response of the international community to the coup and the challenges faced by foreign governments and regional bodies in navigating the deteriorating political situation. Held together, the volume highlights the ongoing state of crisis in Myanmar, its impact on society and the possibilities for recovery and reform, amidst a powerful new revolutionary movement. Beyond providing crucial insights to Southeast Asian area specialists, the book offers deep insights into the way that multiple crises interact, amplify one another, and open up possibilities for hope amidst tragedy.



2023 : 345 pp : PIC297

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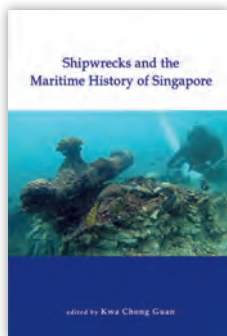
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Shipwrecks and the Maritime History of Singapore

Kwa Chong Guan, editor

Senior Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University; Associate Fellow, Temasek History Research Centre; and Adjunct (Hon.) Associate Professor, History Department, National University of Singapore.

On 16 June 2021 the National Heritage Board announced the successful conclusion of the archaeological excavation of two shipwrecks at the eastern approach to Singapore. This maritime excavation, the largest in Singapore's waters, was conducted by the Archaeology Unit of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute over a six-year period. This book documents the two shipwrecks and their findings, complemented by essays on Singapore's larger maritime history through time, from Temasek in the 14th century through the emergence of country trade to the late 18th century. Beyond the finds recovered from the bosom of the sea, the positioning of the shipwreck in the contexts of the past challenges us to rethink Singapore's history as a globally entangled one, determined by what was happening on the seas in and around the island.



2023 : 114 pp : PIC295

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Populations and Precarity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Southeast Asian Perspectives

Kevin S.Y. Tan, editor

Sociologist and Cultural Anthropologist. He is an Instructor at the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Centre, National University of Singapore.

Steve K.L. Chan, editor

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Keimyung University, South Korea.

This volume is a collection of articles that examines how the COVID-19 pandemic affected and intersected with various Southeast Asian contexts in the broad areas of migration, education and demographic policy. At the height of the pandemic from 2020 to 2022, the resulting restrictions to international travel, ensuing nationwide lockdowns and eventual economic crises formed part of what many commentators referred to as a “new normal”. Apart from being a global health crisis, the pandemic disrupted and transformed the experience of everyday life at all levels of society, where many of its effects are now likely irreversible. In particular, the impact of the pandemic certainly affected the most vulnerable individuals and communities throughout the region, especially when taking into account the demographic transformations in countries that are experiencing rapid ageing such as Singapore and Thailand. Examples of the most affected include low-wage migrant workers, the disabled and the children of impoverished families. For many who were already living in a state of precarity, the structural “side-effects” of the pandemic were at times more deadly than the coronavirus itself as it often negatively impacted livelihood, social-emotional ties and overall well-being. At the same time, the “new normal” has further created conditions that raise the likelihood of occupational precarity even for long-term professionals within established fields like education. In other words, few experienced the COVID-19 pandemic without encountering both tangible and intangible challenges, regardless of where one was situated.

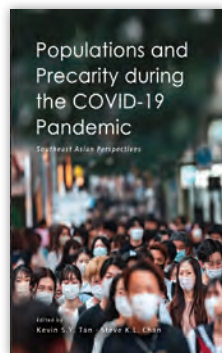
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Strangers in the Family: Gender, Patriliney, and the Chinese in Colonial Indonesia

Guo-Quan Seng

Assistant Professor of History, National University of Singapore.

In *Strangers in the Family*, Guo-Quan Seng provides a gendered history of settler Chinese community formation in Indonesia during the Dutch colonial period (1816–1942). At the heart of this story lies the creolization of patrilineal Confucian marital and familial norms to the colonial legal, moral, and sexual conditions of urban Java.

“In bringing together an expansive array of primary materials and scholarly literature, Guo-Quan Seng introduces readers to new ways of interpreting the intimacy of gender relations involving the creole Chinese of the Dutch East Indies.”

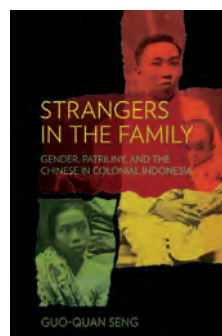
Yew-Foong Hui, author of Strangers at Home

2023 : 253 pp : BM628

ISBN 9789815104677 (SC)

(ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute / Cornell University Press)

S\$29.90 (S\$32.59)/US\$25.90



Gender Equality and Diversity in Indonesia: Identifying Progress and Challenges

Angie Bexley, editor

Head of Technical and Partnerships, KONEKSI, Indonesia.

Sarah Xue Dong, editor

Fellow, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, Canberra.

Diahadi Setyonaluri, editor

Head of Gender in Economic and Social Inclusion Research Group, Institute for Economic and Social Research (LPEM), Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia.

Over the past 20 years, gender relations and the expression of power and authority between men and women in Indonesia have been shaped by the forces of *reformasi*, decentralisation, a reassertion of central power, and economic transitions. These changes have given rise to policy reform, an increase in women's political representation, and new expressions of diverse gender identities. But to what extent has the "gender order" of the New Order, where women's role as a mother was the basis of citizenship, been challenged or just found new articulations? What shape do contemporary contestations to gendered power take? The chapters in this volume bring gender to the centre stage and provide reflections on the political, economic, social, and cultural progress and barriers in achieving gender equality and diversity in Indonesia.

2023 : 316 pp : BM625

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Transforming Borneo: From Land Exploitation to Sustainable Development

Goh Chun Sheng

Research Fellow at Sunway University, Kuala Lumpur and an Associate at Harvard University Asia Center.

Lesley Potter

Visiting Fellow in Resource Management in Asia-Pacific, Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University, Canberra.

"There is an energizing boldness in this synthesis: the right big-picture questions aligning all the way down to the right complexities on the ground, and across the diverse territories that comprise contemporary Borneo. A manifesto for the kinds of cross-sectoral and applied research that can make the difference to the future of Borneo."

Cynthia Ong, Chief Executive Facilitator, Forever Sabah

"A surgical and timely compendium on the transformation of Borneo's forests and land use with clear regional implications. If you care about the future of conservation in this part of the world, you will find all the key ingredients here for its salvation."

Gopalasamy Reuben Clements, Professor at Sunway University, Co-founder of Nature-Based Solutions

2023 : 358 pp : BM618

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ISBN 9789815011654 (EBK)

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S\$32.00 (S\$34.88)/US\$26.00



Trending Islam: Cases from Southeast Asia

Norshahril Saat, editor

Senior Fellow and Coordinator of the Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

A'an Suryana, editor

Visiting Fellow in the Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme (RSCS), ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, and Lecturer in Political Science, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII), Depok, Indonesia.

Mohd Faizal Musa, editor

Visiting Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore and Research Fellow, Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA), National University of Malaysia (UKM).

What are trending Islamic ideas in Southeast Asia; how are they transmitted and who transmits them? These are questions that linger among the minds of policymakers, diplomats and scholars interested in Islam in Southeast Asia. *Trending Islam* maps and discusses key personalities, groups or institutions that influence Muslims in the region. This book dedicates more space to discuss the role of the Internet in disseminating religious discourses. Internet's role, in particular the use of social media either to advance interpretations of Islamic ideas or to gain influence in the public sphere, is becoming more significant as it allows information to spread faster and wider. While not discounting traditional issues such as extremism and terrorism, matters that continue to affect many people's lives in the region, the book delves into the interaction between violent and non-violent extremism and the liberal and progressive responses to them. *Trending Islam* covers the transmission of Islam in several countries and some case studies.

2023 : 232 pp : PIC296

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Just Another Crisis? The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Southeast Asia's Rice Sector

Jamie S. Davidson, editor

Associate Professor of Political Science, National University of Singapore, and head of the Food Politics and Society cluster at the Asia Research Institute of the same university.

"This timely volume chronicles and analyses the intersection of rice policies and the pandemic through case studies of a diverse range of Southeast Asian countries: rice exporters, rice importers and city-states. There is no group of eminent researchers better suited to carrying out this work, and they conduct the analysis by illuminating the historical context that is essential to an understanding of rice policies in the region. This volume is a must-read for anyone interested in rice policies and politics in contemporary Southeast Asia."

David Dawe, Former Senior Economist with the International Rice Research Institute and the Food and Agricultural Organization

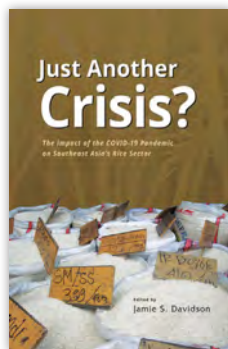
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Wider Bagan: Ancient and Living Buddhist Traditions

Elizabeth Moore

Formerly Emeritus Professor of South East Asian Art and Archaeology, SOAS (London) and In-Region Liaison for the SOAS Alphawood Programme (SAAAP)

Wider Bagan: Ancient and Living Buddhist Traditions is the first book to define the area outside the renowned Buddhist capital where vestiges of Bagan era cultural traditions can be found. From nearly six hundred attributes inventoried in Wider Bagan, thematic and geographical analysis of the Wider Bagan data reveals a related but different trajectory from that of the capital. The Sasana of the court was honoured, and though its economy profited many places across Wider Bagan, local resilience was foremost. While the capital and Wider Bagan existed in relation to each other, their aims and narratives differed. Much has been written about Bagan, but little attention on the ground has been devoted to areas beyond the capital. These places have stories to tell—ones of the past and of the present—that are narrated in this book.

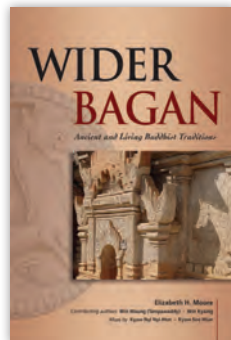
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The Straits Philosophical Society & Colonial Elites in Malaya: Selected Papers on Race, Identity and Social Order 1893-1915

Lim Teck Ghee, editor

Social Science Chair, University of Malaya and a Visiting Fellow and Professor at various universities.

Charles Brophy, editor

An independent scholar with a focus on the political and intellectual history of modern Malaysia and Singapore.

Founded in Singapore in 1893, the Straits Philosophical Society was a society for the "critical discussion of questions in Philosophy, History, Theology, Literature, Science and Art". Its membership was restricted to graduates of British and European universities, fellows of British or European learned societies and those with "distinguished merit in the opinion of the Society in any branch of knowledge". Its closed-door meetings were an important gathering place for the educated elite of the colony, comprising colonial civil servants, soldiers, missionaries, businessmen, as well as prominent Straits Chinese members. Notable members included the botanist Henry Ridley, the missionary W.G. Shellabear and Straits Chinese reformers like Lim Boon Keng and Tan Teck Soon.

Throughout its years of operation, the Society left behind a collection of papers presented by its members, the vast majority of which conformed to the Society's founding rule that its geographical position should influence its work.

By republishing these papers, *The Straits Philosophical Society & Colonial Elites in Malaya* seeks to contribute to the intellectual history of colonial and post-colonial Malaysia and Singapore, and to expand our understanding of the ways in which colonial thought has shaped governing systems of the past and present.

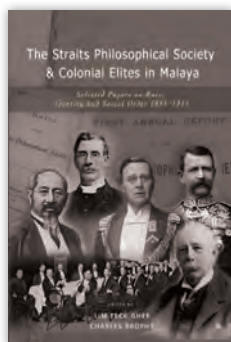
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Rising China: China's Culture and Its Transformation in Southeast Asia

forthcoming

Leo Suryadinata, editor

Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore; formerly Professor, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore.

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2025 : PIC307

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Raden Saleh (c.1811–1880) in Java and Europe: The Long Journey of a Cosmopolitan Painter

forthcoming

Marie-Odette Scalliet, editor

Former Curator of South- and Southeast Asian Manuscripts and Rare Books, Leiden University Library.

Hélène Njoto, editor

Researcher, EFEO Jakarta, and Research Associate, Centre Asie du Sud-Est (Paris) and UMR AUSSER (Paris).

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Trends in Southeast Asia Series



Trends in Southeast Asia

The economic, political, strategic and cultural dynamism in Southeast Asia has gained added relevance in recent years with the spectacular rise of giant economies in East and South Asia. This has drawn greater attention to the region and to the enhanced role it now plays in international relations and global economics.

The sustained effort made by Southeast Asian nations since 1967 towards a peaceful and gradual integration of their economies has had indubitable success, and perhaps as a consequence of this, most of these countries are undergoing deep political and social changes domestically and are constructing innovative solutions to meet new international challenges. Big Power tensions continue to be played out in the neighbourhood despite the tradition of neutrality exercised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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ISSN 0219-3213

Timor-Leste in ASEAN: Is It Ready to Join?

Joanne Lin

Co-coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Sharon Seah

Senior Fellow and Coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre and Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Sithanonxay Suvannaphakdy

Former Lead Researcher (Economic Affairs), ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Melinda Martinus

Lead Researcher, Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.



After more than a decade of deliberations, ASEAN leaders agreed on 11 November 2022 in principle to admit Timor-Leste as the eleventh member of the regional organization and to grant Timor-Leste observer status to attend all ASEAN meetings. Timor-Leste has demonstrated positive developmental progress, and fact-finding missions across the three ASEAN Community pillars have returned generally optimistic results.

However, an assessment of Timor-Leste's ability to fulfil its commitments and obligations reveals that the country will need to close the gap with the ten existing members on matters such as the ratification and implementation of legally binding agreements and derivative work plans. Creating enforcement mechanisms and finding ways to implement commitments at the local level will be important.

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China as a Rising Norm Entrepreneur: Examining GDI, GSI and GCI

Manoj Kewalramani

Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. He is Chairperson of the Indo-Pacific Research Programme and Fellow – China Studies, Takshashila Institution.

This paper discusses Chinese President Xi Jinping's flagship global initiatives' normative implications for the world order.

It argues that the Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI) and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), which are key pillars of China's proposal to build a community of common destiny for mankind, are driven by Beijing's desire to cultivate authority in the international system.

Analysing the speeches by Chinese leaders, policy documents, media and analytical discourse in China, along with policy decisions, this study provides an assessment of the Chinese leadership's worldview. It places the launch of GDI, GSI and GCI within this context, before detailing the elements of each initiative and offering a critical analysis.

This study concludes that through GDI, GSI and GCI, the Chinese leadership hopes to shape an external environment that not only ensures regime security but is also favourable to China's development and security interests. In doing so, however, it is reshaping key norms of global governance towards a fundamentally illiberal direction.

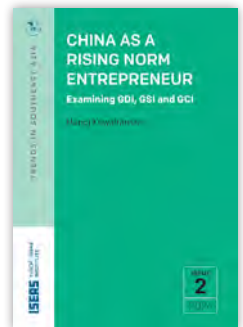
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Trends in Southeast Asia Series

Enhancing ASEAN's Role in Critical Mineral Supply Chains

Sharon Seah

Senior Fellow and Coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre and Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Mirza Sadaqat Huda

Lead Researcher (Energy/Climate), Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

The clean energy transition momentum is gathering pace globally, and in Southeast Asia as well. The transition is dependent on an uninterrupted supply of critical minerals and metals that are essential for the production of low-carbon technologies.

The supply of critical minerals is impeded by several constraints. First is the dominance of a handful of countries in both the upstream and downstream parts of the supply chain. Second is the current geopolitical race to secure supplies leading to greater protectionist behaviours, exhibited through export bans and trade impediments.

This study focuses on four selected critical minerals which are important to the region. Two criteria are used in determining a mineral having high significance: (1) There are significant deposits of it which can be tapped on to bolster Southeast Asia's strategic position in the supply chains; and (2) It is an essential input in industries and sectors of importance in Southeast Asia. The four critical minerals examined in this study are: copper, nickel, bauxite (alumina), and rare earth elements (REEs).

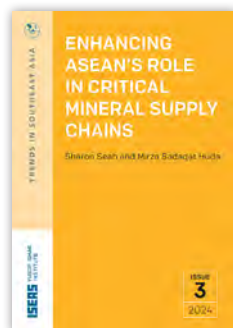
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China's Cultural Diplomacy in Indonesia: The Case of a Transnational Singing Contest

Chang Yau Hoon

Professor of Anthropology, Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. He is currently Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Ardhitya Eduard Yeremia

Faculty Member, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Indonesia.

The emphasis on cultural connectivity in China's growing presence and involvement in Southeast Asia highlights the importance China places on people-to-people exchanges as part of its global engagement strategy.

The remarkable ascension of China over the recent decades has precipitated a proliferation of anti-China sentiments, particularly galvanized within the crucible of a "discourse war" with Western powers, as expressed in the latter's "China threat" narrative.

In response to such challenges, China has made substantial investments in cultural diplomacy, to augment its soft power through orchestrated global outreach initiatives.

This article examines Chinese cultural diplomacy in the realm of entertainment, specifically "The Melody of Spring: Transnational Spring Festival Gala" hosted in Nanning, Guangxi, and disseminated globally each Chinese New Year.

2024 : 20 pp : TRS4/24

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How Thailand's Move Forward Party's Fandom Strategy Shaped the 2023 General Election

Alexandra Colombier

French Social Science researcher, specializing in political communication, digital media, social groups and identities in Thailand.

The concept of political fandom, the state of being fans of a politician or of a political party, played a crucial role during Thailand's General Election in 2023. Fandom contributed to the popularity on social media of politicians, such as Pita Limjaroenrat, the Move Forward Party's leader and prime ministerial candidate.

The strategies involved in achieving celebrity status for politicians are varied. This paper provides a case study of the factors behind the success of Pita and the Move Forward Party and contrasts these with reasons why Pita's key political opponents were less effective.

It argues that the digital age and the transcendence of politics into pop culture, where celebrity status and fandom can drive electoral outcomes, signify a profound shift in democratic participation, political engagement and the very fabric of Thai politics.

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ISBN 9789815203271 (EBK)

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Prosperity or Predicament? Decoding Certification Challenges in Malaysia's Palm Oil Industry

Serina Rahman

Associate Fellow, Malaysia Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore and Lecturer, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore (NUS).

Lee Poh Onn

Senior Fellow, Malaysia Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Oil palm was brought to Malaysia from West Africa as part of British colonial agricultural development initiatives, but the refining of crude palm oil only began in the 1970s as part of the move by the Malaysian government to industrialize the country's agrarian economy.

Malaysia is the world's second-largest producer of palm oil, after Indonesia. Both countries account for about 85 per cent of total exports. Incidentally, smallholders produce about 40 per cent of the total output of palm oil in Malaysia.

The palm oil industry is mired in controversy. Global campaigns originating in Europe and the US have branded the crop the biggest cause of deforestation, with proposed bans to follow in December 2024.

Certification has been proposed as the solution to address gaps in sustainability. Sabah is used as an illustrative case study of an effective approach for statewide certification using both the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) and Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) schemes.

2024 : 45 pp : TRS6/24

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Trends in Southeast Asia Series

ASEAN Post-2025: Reimagining the ASEAN Economic Community

Julia Tijaja

ASEAN, trade, and global value chain specialist and Associate Senior Fellow, ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Simon Tay

Public Intellectual and Advisor to major corporations and policymakers, and is currently Chairman of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, a globally ranked think-tank.

Sanchita Basu Das

Economist with the Economic Research Department, Asian Development Bank. She was the Lead Researcher for Economic Affairs at the ASEAN Studies Centre of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute from 2008 to 2018.

ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) building is a long journey. For continued relevance and impact, the AEC must remain dynamic while taking into consideration evolving contexts and emerging opportunities and challenges.

Notable progress has been made under the two AEC Blueprints (2015 and 2025), particularly in laying down the frameworks for regional economic integration and community building. Nonetheless, gaps remain in implementation, calling for a more streamlined but result-oriented agenda and stronger institutional coordination.

Today, the AEC is faced with a markedly different context and unprecedented challenges resulting from a poly-crisis, involving geo-economic fragmentation, supply chain restructuring, and climactic changes. Without adjustment, ASEAN's pillar and sector-centric approach can be expected to fall short in effectively responding to these challenges.

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Scrutinizing the DAP's Success in the 2023 Malaysian State Elections

Ong Kian Ming

Senior Visiting Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. He was a former Member of Parliament representing the DAP and former Malaysian Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry (MITI).

Following the formation of the Unity Government in December 2022, two of its component coalitions, Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Barisan Nasional (BN), jointly campaigned during the state government elections held in August 2023. A key question arising from this cooperation between PH and the BN lead party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), was the extent to which it would strengthen the appeal of both coalitions, especially among Malay voters.

Using granular polling station and polling stream data for forty-seven seats contested by the PH member Democratic Action Party (DAP), this paper explores the effect of this relationship on voter support. This *Trends in Southeast Asia* finds that, contrary to expectations, DAP actually gained voter support from campaigning with UMNO.

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Shifting to a Higher Gear: The Saga of Malaysia's National Carmaker Proton

Pritish Bhattacharya

Research Officer under the Regional Economic Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Francis E Hutchinson

Senior Fellow and Coordinator of the Malaysia Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Proton has been a vital part of Malaysia's industrialization journey and a key pillar of its modernization drive.

Launched in 1983 to fulfil then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's vision of a pride-infused national car company, the state-owned Proton grew quickly and captured a dominant share of the country's domestic car market, aided in no small measure by generous protective measures and subsidies.

However, in the subsequent decades, the car giant lost market share and power due to a variety of challenges, such as non-market performance requirements, less effective protection, and growing competition from a second national car firm and from global car companies.

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Beyond Slacktivism: The Dynamic Relationship between Online and Offline Activism among Southeast Asian Youths

lim Halimatusa'diyah

Visiting Fellow, Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore; Senior Lecturer at Islamic State University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah; and Deputy Director for Research, Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Jakarta.

As digital platforms continue to evolve, youths increasingly employ social media, online forums, and digital campaigns to advocate for social and political change. While this phenomenon is often considered disparagingly as slacktivism, recent studies find that individuals engaging in digital activism often also participate in other conventional forms of activism.

Despite a surge in youth activism across Southeast Asian countries, comparative analysis in this region remains scarce. Using data from the World Values Survey of several studies, and case studies on Indonesia, this article examines the extent to which online political activism serves as a catalyst for mobilization, awareness and community building among young people in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Additionally, it examines the interplay between online and offline political activism and its impact on traditional forms of activism.

The study argues for a reciprocal relationship between online and offline political activism, particularly noting the potential for digital efforts to influence real-world action, especially on cohesive issues such as corruption.

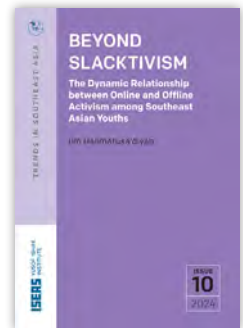
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Myanmar's Resistance and the Future of Border Trade: Challenges and Opportunities

Jared Bissinger

Visiting Research Fellow with the Myanmar Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Since the start of Operation 1027, Myanmar's resistance groups have gained control over large parts of key overland trade routes and a number of important border crossings, fundamentally changing the realities in the control of border trade.

Despite these losses, the State Administration Council (SAC) retains control-of-trade-related institutions that are vital for accessing an international trading system characterized by state-to-state interactions—giving them significant influence over trade even if they do not control trade routes and border crossings.

International precedents from territories such as Palestine, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia show that non-state actors face significant challenges engaging in trade, and are vulnerable to frequent changes in trading arrangements. Perhaps the most important factor shaping trade in these territories is the state of their relationship with either the state of which they are nominally a part, or a neighbouring state.

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Why Young Malay Voters in Malaysia Are "Turning Green"

Syaza Shukri

Visiting Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore and Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, International Islamic University Malaysia.

There is an increasing trend among young Malay voters in Malaysia to support the Perikatan Nasional coalition, with a particular emphasis on the Islamist party PAS.

Despite recognition of the weak economy as a significant national concern, young Malay voters continue to place a higher emphasis on Muslim leaders who assert their commitment to safeguarding the rights of Islam in Malaysia.

Consistent with theories on political socialization, the influence of family members significantly affects young Malay voters in Malaysia, particularly due to their limited political awareness of alternative channels like formal schooling.

Young Malay voters acknowledge the significant impact of social media and TikTok, particularly in how these shape the voting patterns of their peers. They nevertheless maintain a perception of their own impartiality in this regard.

Interestingly, the influence of Islamic institutions, with their own educational philosophy, on the political behaviour of Malay youth is minimal, as their political ideas are already shaped by their early experiences.

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Malaysia's Responses to Issues Pertaining to Palestine

Mohd Faizal Musa

Visiting Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore and Research Fellow, Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA), National University of Malaysia (UKM). He also contributes to the Global Shi'a Diaspora, Project on Shi'ism and Global Affairs at Harvard Divinity School.

Malaysia's support for Palestinian independence has always been based on religion. Historically, Malaysia has had warm relations with Palestinian leaders including the Palestine Liberation Organization—during Hussein Onn's and Mahathir Mohamad's administrations—and Hamas since Najib Razak's administration.

However, Malaysia's support is not just based on their affinity to Palestinians as fellow Muslims but is also a matter of domestic politics. Support for Palestine has been used as a political tool for various quarters to prove that they are more Islamic than the other.

Malaysia is now led by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, a former student leader who rose to prominence in the 1970s for his activism on issues regarding the Muslim *ummah*, including Palestinian independence. Over the years, Anwar has demonstrated consistency in his support for Palestinians, and this has especially been the case since the outbreak of Israeli aggression against Gaza which began on 7 October 2023.

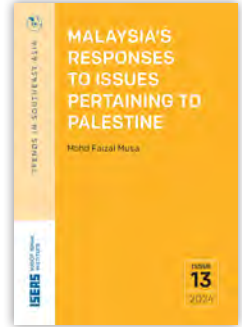
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Delivering Development, Enforcing Shariah: PAS's Dilemma in Terengganu

Azmil Tayeb

Associate Professor of Political Science, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang and former Visiting Research Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Whenever the Islamist party PAS comes to power in Terengganu, its political agenda has been to combine populist-type development programmes with the wish to turn Terengganu into a shariah-compliant state.

Terengganu's state budget is however heavily dependent on the federal government, to the tune of 80–90 per cent. This hinders the state government's policymaking and implementation, especially when the federal government is controlled by its political opponents.

This article argues that the politics of development play a more central role in determining the durability of the PAS state government in Terengganu than it does in neighbouring Kelantan. In other words, PAS cannot simply carry out its Islamic agenda without being complemented by tangible economic progress if it aspires to govern beyond a single term; PAS's loss in the 2004 election after being in power for one term is a prime example of this dynamic.

One reason that the current PAS state government managed to get re-elected in 2022 was the unimpeded flow of oil royalty payments into state coffers since 2018, which allowed the state government to fulfil its campaign promises; PAS's inclusion in the Perikatan Nasional federal government in 2020 further improved the state government's financial standing.

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Party of Hardship: The Evolution of Malaysia's Parti Keadilan Rakyat

James Chai

Visiting Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore and a columnist at MalaysiaKini and Sin Chew Daily.

The People's Justice Party (PKR) may in many ways be synonymous with its larger-than-life leader, Anwar Ibrahim, who, although only president for six of the party's twenty-five years, has always been its de facto leader and adviser. However, PKR is much more than only about Anwar, and this paper traces the evolution of the party independently of Anwar as a person.

PKR's evolution can be broken down into four main periods: 1998–2004 (formative), 2005–13 (golden era), 2014–18 (all-in for power), and 2019–22 (lessons on restraints). From 1998 to 2022, PKR tended to adopt a big-tent approach (internally and externally), ideological synthesis to find a middle ground, and a loose organization led by a charismatic personality at the top and self-organization at the grassroots.

PKR was born out of a major crisis when Anwar, then deputy prime minister, was sacked in 1998 and subsequently jailed twice in the following two decades. For the most part, the party operated with its figurehead in jail, thus learning how to rely on coalition strengths, working with civil society, mass movements, and political parties to survive and win power.

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Understanding Vietnam's Foreign Policy Choices Amid Sino-US Rivalry

Hoang Thi Ha

Senior Fellow and Co-coordinator of the Regional Strategic and Political Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Vietnam's foreign policy towards China and the United States (US) involves a delicate process of reconciling and balancing competing perceptions, goals and interests within the country. This leads to foreign policy decisions that may respectively lean towards either China or the US, depending on specific circumstances and issues, while trying to maintain an overall equilibrium between the two powers.

Vietnam's foreign policy adopts the paradigm of "cooperation" and "struggle" in its relations with major powers, and defines "national security" as encompassing both national sovereignty and regime security.

Given the common ideology and imperative of preserving political control of their respective communist parties, China may be a critical partner for Vietnam in terms of regime security but is often an "object of struggle" on national sovereignty. On the other hand, the US is Vietnam's partner in the South China Sea but an "object of struggle" when it comes to regime security.

The Vietnamese public's favourable sentiments towards the US, contrasted with their distrust towards China, pose a challenge for the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in mobilizing public opinion to bolster its legitimacy while preventing any potential threat to its political authority.

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Who's Doing What? A Closer Look at Methane Climate Impact and Commitments in Southeast Asia's Energy Sector

Qiu Jiahui

Research Officer, Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

This article draws from a database of asset-level emissions to identify key methane-emitting coal, oil and gas facilities in Southeast Asia while taking stock of the methane commitments of their owners.

Coal mines account for around a third of fossil fuel methane emissions globally, but in Southeast Asia they make up more than half of tracked fossil fuel methane emissions.

Over half of emissions from the coal mining subsector is traced to its top ten emitters, mostly in East Kalimantan, Indonesia; while some coal mines in North Vietnam have high emissions intensities.

Though the global discourse on fossil methane focuses on oil and gas, coal mine methane remains crucial for Southeast Asia due to the region's lack of decisive coal phaseout plans.

As countries begin to tackle coal emissions at the power generation stage, a gap still remains when it comes to coal mining emissions. Methane monitoring and abatement actions are urgently needed for coal mines that will continue to operate, as well as those slated for closure.

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From Paper to Practice: Utilizing the ASEAN Guide on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance and Ethics

Kristina Fong

Economist and Public Policy Specialist. She is currently the Lead Researcher for Economic Affairs, ASEAN Studies Centre in the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Prior to this, she worked in the financial services industry, as well as in international organizations such as the World Bank.

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has been nothing less of awe-inspiring. Policymakers are put in a bind as debates over how the deployment of these AI systems is to be managed—with good governance and ethical considerations in mind, and without stifling innovation.

ASEAN's response has been the formulation of the ASEAN Guide on AI Governance and Ethics, or the ASEAN AI Guide. This Guide serves more as a "practical guide" for organizations involved in the development and deployment of AI for commercial and non-military or dual-use applications, as opposed to a policy playbook for governments. Though voluntary in application, it does have some positive attributes including laying out the groundwork for regionwide discussions around AI governance and ethics issues, promoting human involvement in AI system management and having an ecosystem approach to policy.

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Generational Divides in Understanding Thailand's History Grow Amid Political Polarization

Panarat Anamwathana

Visiting Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. She is also a lecturer at the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Thammasat University, Thailand.

Amid political polarization, knowledge and understanding of Thailand's history have also diverged radically. This divide is especially evident between younger and older generations.

Driving this phenomenon is the growing rejection by students of the traditional history taught in public schools, which in the past had been a means for the Thai state to instil in the young a sense of nationalism, national pride and shared values. Poor pedagogy that emphasizes memorization, and that discourages discussions and critical thinking, has alienated many from the subject. Education professionals and student activists have also been critical of this development.

Moreover, the democratization of information and the availability of alternative sources of historical knowledge have allowed young people to learn about history in ways that challenge the traditional narratives taught in classrooms. The alternative sources include social media, websites by historians and enthusiasts, as well as books printed by independent publishers.

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The Evolution of Economic Reforms across Myanmar's Administrations

Winston Set Aung

One of President Thein Sein's economic advisors at the start of the USDP's term in office, then served as deputy minister for national planning and economic development (2012–13) and as deputy governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar (2013–17).

Myanmar's economic trajectory has shifted across various governmental regimes, transitioning from socialist to democratic systems and from planned to market economy structures.

The economic policies implemented by successive governments often lacked coherence and were characterized by ad hoc measures aimed at short-term solutions rather than addressing underlying issues.

Policymakers since 1989 have endeavoured to guide Myanmar towards a market-oriented economy, characterized by what could be termed the "Burmese/Myanmar Way to Market Economy", which includes significant restrictions and controls.

Both the military-backed Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP) and civilian-led National League for Democracy (NLD) administrations made significant efforts to enhance liberalization and strengthen market economic principles, despite multidimensional challenges including inadequate capacities for policy formulation and over-reliance on past domestic experiences rather than international lessons.

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Mitigating Carbon Emissions and Haze in Southeast Asia's Peatlands: Opportunities and Challenges in Integrating Policy and Governance

Helena Varkkey

Associate Professor, Department of International and Strategic Studies, Universiti Malaya.

Matthew Ashfold

Associate Professor, School of Environmental and Geographical Sciences, University of Nottingham Malaysia.

Gusti Anshari

Professor, Soil Science Department, Universitas Tanjungpura, Indonesia.

Alex M. Lechner

Landscape Ecologist and Professor, Monash University Indonesia.

Sharon Seah

Senior Fellow and Coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre and Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Nurisa Wijayanti

Research Assistant at Monash University Indonesia.

Fatimah Tuzzahara Alkaf

Research Assistant at Universiti Malaya.

Siti Asdiah Masran

Former Research Assistant at Universiti Malaya.

Peatland ecosystems in Southeast Asia are globally important as carbon sinks, rich in terrestrial and aquatic fauna and flora, and important sources of livelihood for local communities. However, agribusiness-driven land-use change and drainage cause peatland degradation and peat fires, which generate "haze" air pollution and lead to significant economic losses and health impacts. Disturbed peatlands also become substantial sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

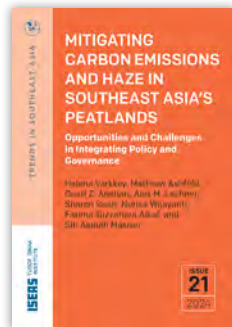
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Prospects and Challenges in Promoting Humanitarian Islam: Nahdlatul Ulama's International Social Partnerships

Sara Loo

Research Officer, ISEAS –Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

A'an Suryana

Visiting Fellow in the Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme (RSCS), ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

Humanitarian Islam refers to the efforts of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) to promote peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths in the world, with a focus on rahmah (universal love and compassion).

The main vehicles for promoting Humanitarian Islam have been North Carolina-registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs), namely Bayt ar-Rahmah (Home of the Divine Grace) and the Center for Shared Civilizational Values. Key advocates of this campaign include current Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) chairman Yahya Cholil Staquf and North Carolina native Holland Taylor.

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Trends in Southeast Asia Series

Learn from Your Comrades: Understanding Authoritarian Diffusion between Vietnam and China

Nguyen Khac Giang

Visiting Fellow in the Vietnam Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Since the normalization of relations in 1991, Vietnam and China, two of the five remaining communist regimes, have established a robust framework for mutual learning and cooperation. This collaboration has primarily centred around party governance and cadre training.

Vietnam has actively studied and adopted elements of China's successful model, which combines economic reform with strict political control. This approach has allowed Vietnam to maintain communist rule in the face of increasing global pressure for democratic reforms.

The process of learning from China involves two key dynamics: desirability versus capability, and effectiveness versus appropriateness. While Vietnam desires to achieve the same level of effectiveness as China in certain policy areas, it has been cautious in fully replicating the Chinese model, and shown consideration for its appropriateness to Vietnam's unique circumstances and for China's underlying motivations.

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The Rising Role of Chinese Firms in Southeast Asia's Automotive Supply Chain

John Lee

Director at East West Futures consulting, a researcher at the Leiden Asia Centre, and research lead on the European Union-funded China Semiconductor Observatory project.

Chinese firms have become global leaders in the electrification, networking and intelligentization of vehicles. They are globally dominant in minerals extraction and processing and battery production for electric vehicles (EVs) and are becoming internationally competitive in the enabling microelectronics, components and systems.

This report covers the role of Chinese firms in Southeast Asia across five segments of the EV supply chain, namely minerals extraction and processing; battery manufacturing, energy storage and charging; original equipment manufacturer (OEM) production of complete vehicles; microelectronics design and manufacturing; and research and development activities.

The report focuses on Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam. These are the five ASEAN economies where activities relevant to EV production are concentrated and where Chinese firms are involved in the supply chain.

The report concludes with policy considerations for ASEAN governments. EVs and connected vehicles have become a new front in the technology contest and political tensions between China and the US, with other big players like the European Union now also moving towards measures to shield their automotive sector markets and companies.

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Managing State-Federal Relations: Growing Pressure on Malaysia's Madani Administration

Tricia Yeoh

Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore and Associate Professor of Practice at the School of Politics and International Relations, University of Nottingham Malaysia.

Since the Sheraton Move in 2020 which led to the fall of the Malaysian government, many state governments in the federation have held their elections separately from the central government. This has resulted in a dynamic political situation in which coalitions have been formed in different ways at different times in different states.

At present, there are seven states ruled by the Pakatan Harapan–Barisan Nasional (PHBN) grand coalition, while four states are under the Perikatan Nasional (PN) coalition.

States have increasingly demanded greater political and policy autonomy over the last few years, particularly in the area of fiscal revenue-sharing between the federal and state governments.

Progress has been most forthcoming for issues related to the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak, and the federal government's newly set-up Malaysia Agreement 1963 Implementation Action Council has been meeting regularly.

Contentious state-federal issues remain for states apart from Sabah and Sarawak, to which the federal government has not seriously responded. Limited space exists for formal state-federal negotiations that can result in firm decisions.

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Malaysia's Motorcycle Sector: Past and Present Possibilities in an Era of Energy Transition

Sara Loo

Research Officer with the Malaysia Studies Programme, ISEAS –Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Malaysia has traditionally adopted an intensive automotive industrialization model and created its own vehicles under national brands. The national car project started with Proton in 1983, and the national motorcycle project with Modenas in 1995.

While policies and scholarship have focused on national car projects, the two-wheeler sector has stood in their shadow. Modenas witnessed early growth and remains a popular brand after Yamaha and Honda; it has however failed to hit export targets, owing to limited technology transfer and the inability to scale.

In recent years, there has been renewed interest in the two-wheeler sector, focusing on phasing out combustion motorcycles in favour of electric two-wheelers (E2Ws). Still nascent, Malaysia's electric two-wheeler (E2W) sector appears to prioritize an extensive model of assembly and distribution rather than the protection of home-grown brands.

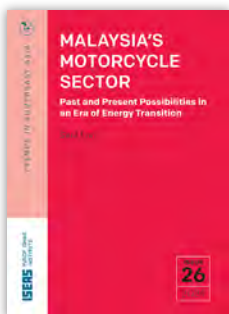
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Building upon Deep Trust: ASEAN-Japan Ties at a Crossroads

Joanne Lin

Senior Fellow and Co-Coordinator of the ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

ASEAN and Japan share a robust and multifaceted partnership that has evolved over five decades, and that is grounded in mutual respect, trust and shared values. The establishment of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2023 further solidifies their commitment to advancing cooperation in traditional areas while expanding into emerging domains such as digital transformation and sustainability.

In the security domain, Japan has consistently prioritized ASEAN's centrality in the regional order, even as it aligns with the United States and participates in frameworks like the Quad. Initiatives such as the Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Initiative for Enhanced Defense Cooperation (JASMINE) and the Overseas Security Assistance (OSA) framework demonstrate Japan's evolving approach, transitioning from traditional capacity-building to a broader focus on enhancing maritime security, conducting joint exercises, and providing non-offensive defence equipment to ASEAN countries.

The partnership's new emphasis on "co-creation" marks a transformative shift through public and private sector collaboration to address pressing socio-economic challenges. By fostering innovation and co-developing solutions in areas like green energy, digital trade, and healthcare, the co-creation model underscores ASEAN and Japan's shared commitment to inclusive and sustainable development.

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Autonomy in Sarawak and Sabah: Different Paths and Diverging Outcomes

Arnold Puyok

Formerly Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. He is a Senior Lecturer in Politics and Government Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

When Malaysia was formed in 1963, the Borneo states of Sarawak and Sabah were granted special provisions under the Malaysian Agreement 1963 (MA63) to safeguard their autonomy.

However, centralization measures pursued by the federal government over time have eroded these rights, particularly pertaining to education, development spending and revenue sharing.

Despite being on the same island and sharing a history distinct from Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah have evolved very differently in asserting their autonomy. Sarawak has managed to attain a greater degree of self-government, while Sabah has been more influenced by priorities pursued by Peninsular Malaysia.

These varying outcomes are due to three differences between the two states: distinct historical developments in the run-up to independence; varying degrees of political control attained by the parties in power; and different priorities pursued by state leaders.

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Online Campaign Narratives in Thailand's 2023 General Election: An Ecosystem Analysis

Surachanee Sriyai

Visiting Fellow, ISEAS Yusof – Ishak Institute, Singapore.

This article explores the intricate dynamics of election-related narratives and ideological shifts that characterized Thailand's 2023 general election during a pivotal moment when the salient issue transcends the economy, encompassing a profound ideological shift that cuts across social cleavages.

Leveraging an original dataset comprising over 2,500 posts disseminated by major parties on Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) one month prior to the election to two days afterwards, the findings show that while parties have different posting strategies and a predetermined platform of choice, their campaign narratives can be categorized in general terms.

Although economic and populist policies are the most prevalent campaigning narratives for most parties, the victory of the Move Forward party, gained through highlighting social issues and structural reforms, suggests that promises to address deep-rooted societal issues might have been more appealing to the Thai voters in this election.

Distinct engagement patterns for some types of posts are also observed, alluding that netizens' reactions can be different based on the types of content posted by parties. However, apart from the Move Forward Party's followers, discrediting narratives did not receive much reaction from other parties' followers.

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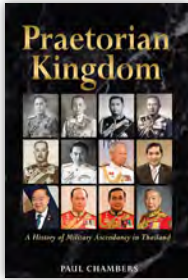
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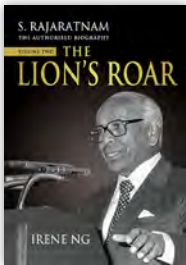


"How Thailand developed such a coup-prone military is the subject of Paul Chambers' *Praetorian Kingdom: A History of Military Ascendancy in Thailand*, which deftly combines the personal motivations and military ambitions of the generals to establish a protected and privileged military class. Chambers, a Thailand-based U.S. academic, describes step-by-step how the military established itself as the kingdom's second-most-powerful political institution after the monarchy."

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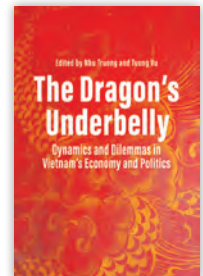


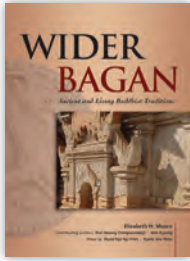
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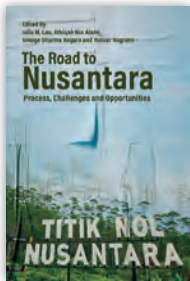


"This research contributes to a building body of evidence that suggests a fresh paradigm to replace the long-standing concentric circle model most often used to explain state formation throughout the region. In this new paradigm, the contradiction between urban and rural settlements is dismantled as the stories of the smaller villages and towns re-enact the iterative process between places, communities of users, and social memory of Wider Bagan, demonstrating, in the process, an ecology of resilient settlement that has endured through generations of political, social and economic upheaval."

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Robert W. Hefner,
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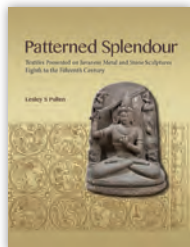
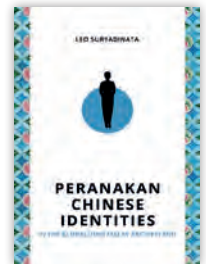


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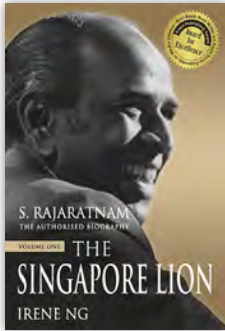
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Anthropos 118.2023.2., January 2024



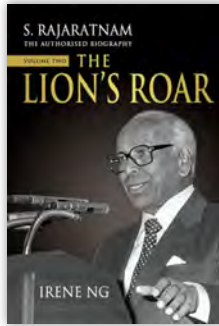
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Dr James Bennett,
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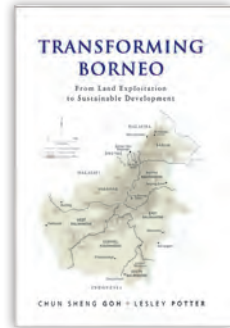
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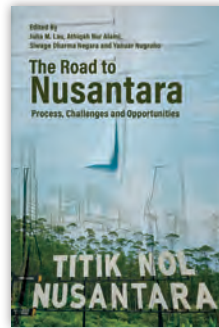
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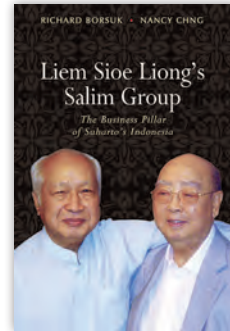
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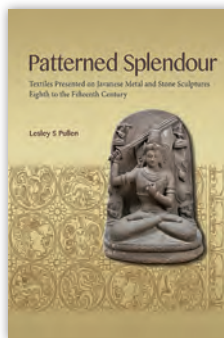
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