

Editorial JATI 22, 2017

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Welcome to the 22nd edition of *JATI*, one of the few indigenous journals, written primarily in the English language, to focus on the complex web of regional and international challenges that confront local cultural, religious and political practices in the so called century of the Asia Pacific. The papers Dr. Hanafi Hussin has assembled here, address the local, regional and international factors that impact upon and shape political and cultural responses. The selection of essays thus attempts to offer some insight into both the threats and opportunities that new technologies, the threat of terrorism and the rise of China present to the relatively weak states of South East Asia. The essays assembled fall into two discrete categories: the first deals with the regional multilateral grouping ASEAN; whilst the second part of the journal considers cultural, historical, sociological and political case studies in discrete South East Asian states, and shedding light on their cultural self-understanding.

Given the pertinence of regional change and economic development the first five essays discuss the manner in which members of the Association of South East Asian Nations have responded to threats and opportunities in the regional geo political climate posed by China's growing regional economic, political, soft and hard power influence and the perceived weakness of the US as a regional balancer in the era of the Trump presidency. Thus Bui Thong Hanh explores the complex changes in the US Vietnam relationship in the twenty first century in the context of both countries wider relationship with the ASEAN grouping. Leishangthem Bimolchand Singh examines ASEAN's attempts over the last thirty years to manage China's claim to the South China Sea, whilst Shirley V. Ramesh examines the progress made in the last decade in the endeavor to create an ASEAN single market for goods and services as well as the various regional practices that have hampered this development. Hadje Cresencio Sadjje considers the Rohingya tragedy that has emerged in the last year in Myanmar and questions ASEAN's ineffectual role in dealing with the issue. Elsewhere, Frida Rahmita examines how many ASEAN states continue to impose the death penalty for drug trafficking. As she points out, this ASEAN practice contradicts those constructivists who assume that global shared norms ultimately affect state behavior.

Moving from ASEAN as a regional group to discrete case studies of South East Asian states, four papers examine aspects of contemporary and historic culture and politics in the region and Indonesia. Afriadi Sanusi, evaluate the politics of colonial domination and popularization followed by a period of independence in the Malay lands by a ruler who tends to be dominated by secular Muslims on the grounds of nationalism and narrow nationality. Widjajanti M. Santoso discuss recent development in Indonesia, considers the impact of Korean soap operas on the perception of corruption in Indonesian culture through its popular representation on Indonesian Channel One TV. Somewhat differently, Meita Istianda examines the implications of President Jokowi's attempt to boost Indonesia's role as a maritime power, whilst Ahmad Farid Abdul Jalal and his co-authors consider the intellectual evolution of Muslim linkages between the historic sultanates of Aceh and Pahang and the sources of their contestation of European and

western power. Two essays on Thailand follow, Chaleomsak Bunnam, Idsaratt Rinthaisong and Anuwat Songsom Bunnam, evaluate the effectiveness of public sector actors working with community organizations to curb terrorism in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. Moving across the ASEAN states, Paolo Miguel M. Vicerra considers the reasons for the dramatic recent rise in teenage pregnancy in the Philippines, whilst Sajed Ingilan considers the representation of Muslim women in Filipino short fiction. Finally, three essays of historical and cultural interest conclude the volume and Reithy Chhem, assesses respectively, the light that new architectural finds shed upon the understanding of Buddhist medical practices at Angkor Wat, Finally, Siti Nor and Sarena Abdullah unpack the subversive strategy of photomontage in Malaysian artist Yee I-Lann's 2013 attempt at *Picturing Power*.

This wide ranging collection sheds an unusual and distinctively South East Asian perspective on contemporary and past practices in the region. I warmly recommend it to our readers.