



Conference on

**Changing Research Styles, Methodologies and Perspectives on
Southeast Asia**

30 – 31 July 2018

The Institute of Asian Studies
&
The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Changing Research Styles, Methodologies and Perspectives on Southeast Asia Conference

Organized by
Jeremy Jammes and Victor T. King

Going back to the epistemological roots of any research in the social sciences and humanities, this conference aims to question the 'regime of truth' generated at the data-gathering level. Are there still some research areas to explore in Southeast Asia studies? Are there Southeast Asian societies and cultures still considered as 'exotic', not-yet-explored and ready for new scholarly investigation? Can we come up with new methodologies, research materials and concepts to understand the tumultuous and rapid transformation of Southeast Asian peoples and cultures? Out of these changes, what is new and exciting empirically and conceptually, and what has transformed our current understandings of the human condition in Southeast Asia? How have our changing approaches and the changing societies and cultures which we study influenced what we have discovered and how we have analyzed those findings in changing socio-cultural, economic and political contexts?

To tackle all these questions, our conference will give the opportunity to researchers in a range of disciplines embracing the social sciences and humanities to reflect on their personal relationship to the *terrain*, the fieldwork or the engagement with archives and library materials. But if a personal account might illuminate the motives and interests that could have inspired and edified research, it can also challenge our perceptions of the project of accessing and gathering research materials, the subject/object researched, and the societies themselves. We then need to incorporate changing approaches to field and library-/archival-based research: increasing team research, multi-site, trans-national, outsider-insider collaboration, multidisciplinary perspectives, increasing use of the internet and accessing materials beyond libraries and archives, the increasing importance of 'the visual', the materialities, the increasing concerns about reflexivity, the need to address the inexorable increase in the speed and complexity of change and the impulse of mobility (including the increasing urbanization of those populations which were primarily studied in rural contexts). Therefore, an important theme for conference participants will be based on a diachronic approach, encouraging researchers to reflect on and rethink their experiences of these changes both in their continuing personal and institutional research trajectories and in the ongoing need to address the ever-changing subjects of their studies.

Monday 30 July

9am-10am Welcoming Speech & Keynote

By the organizers (Jeremy Jammes and Victor T. King)

By the Guest of Honor (TBC)

Keynote:

The Importance of Being Wrong: Reflections on 35 Years of Methodological Blunders, Empirical Errors, Theoretical *culs-de-sac*, and Historical Misinterpretations

Jonathan Rigg

This paper, as the title suggests, is about more than three decades of 'being wrong'. In so doing, it partly highlights the point that we should expect to be wrong when it comes to research in the social sciences and humanities, and possibly be wrong more than 'right'. But I also want to make the case that being wrong is nothing to hide or being ashamed of: our ideas need to be sufficiently bold and audacious that they are exposed to being proved, in time, wrong. The paper will dwell on four aspects of this argument, focusing on the methods we use, the theoretical or conceptual framings we employ, our interpretations of the 'data' we generate, and the histories we recount. To make the case, the paper will draw and reflect on field research in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

10am-10:30 Tea Break

10:30am-1pm Session 1

Personal Narratives from the Inside

Moderator: Dr. Grace V. S. Chin

(Senior Lecturer, English Language & Literature Studies, School of the Humanities – Universiti Sains Malaysia)

Silencing as Method: Leaving Malay Studies Out?

Syed Farid Alatas

The idea of 'silencing as method' is taken from the 'Asia as Method' project. I suggest that while the persistence of Orientalism and Eurocentrism in the social sciences functions to silence or at best marginalize non-Western concepts, ideas, perspectives and voices, in short, the non-Western as knowing subjects, at the same time Malay world responses to Orientalism and Eurocentrism themselves had also been party to the process of silencing and marginalization. This is what I believe has happened to the field of Malay studies, particularly to Malay studies as it has developed at the National University of Singapore. This paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, I briefly discuss the problem of Orientalism and Eurocentrism in the social sciences and provide an overview of the response of Malay studies to the problem, which I argue does not merely exist but has been pioneering. I then turn to commentaries on the problem of the social sciences in Asia which, although make references to Singapore (where the Department of

Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore is located) or to the Malay world, do not make mention of the contributions of Malay studies. I conclude with a discussion of whether it is appropriate to refer such a phenomenon in terms of a politics of knowledge.

Engaging and Distancing: An Intellectual, Moral and Emotional Investment in the Field

Hoon Chang Yau

This paper is a critical reflection on my professional practice in doing ethnographic fieldwork with the Christian communities in Indonesia over the past few years. While my subject position as a middle class, western educated, Asian, Christian, male researcher has given me rare access into various Christian sites, including clandestine seminaries, my ability to gather data is contingent upon the amount of 'investment' that I committed to the sites and to my informants. Their mutually constitutive expectations on me and perceived benefits from my presence determined the level of trust and openness that I would receive. As there are no hard-and-fast rules about how much a researcher should 'invest' in the field, my experience demonstrates how a researcher might reflexively negotiate between engaging the field and distancing from it in order to maintain intellectual objectivity, moral boundary and emotional hygiene.

The Anthropology of Remembering: Memory as a Complementary Ethnography

Zawawi Ibrahim

The Malay peasantry was very much the subject of fieldwork research and ethnography among colonial anthropologists in Malaya. One such ethnographic classic is 'Malay Fishermen' by British anthropologist Raymond Firth based on his fieldwork in a Kelantan Malay fishing community. Born in 1947 in another Malay fishing village, south of Kelantan, I can now look back and remember details of this village over a kind of continuous time-frame. These details represent a form of ethnographic scape with its own sense of flow, movement and time, with selective memories of some events or characters over others, and very much, empowered by the anthropological gaze that I have acquired as a vocation. My paper will be on remembering, but also on some snippets of my memory which will also represent a more personal ethnography and anthropology. I will especially focus on the role of the village well (*telaga*), the rituals of Malay fisherfolks of low technology in wooing the spirits of the sea; the women who stood out in the village; the traditional games between male and female children; the social mobility via education and the role of teachers in the village and national politics.

Translating Brunei: Between Self-Reflexivity and Literary Study

Kathrina Mohd Daud

This paper offers critical reflections on the process of translating the seminal Bruneian novel *Pengabdian* by Norsiah Gapar from Malay into English, a novel about the widely experienced phenomenon of Bruneians studying overseas and subsequently returning. By sharing how I was drawn to this novel and this project and how I conceptualized, prepared and executed the

translation, as well as the administrative processes that are ongoing to bring this project to fruition, I offer critical insights into the state of Bruneian literary study. As a product of the Bruneian education system, studying literature first in a local government school before, as a government scholarship recipient, leaving to study abroad in the UK and US like hundreds of other local students, I self-reflexively interrogate how the postcolonial nature of the education I received locally and abroad both equipped and hindered me in the process of translating this novel. In doing so, I hope to offer some insights into how these reflections have shaped the way I now perform and teach literary scholarship to local students at Universiti Brunei Darussalam, including the personal considerations which inform the design of a local literature curriculum in preparing Bruneian undergraduates for a global market.

Addressing the Elephant in the Room: Islamic Governance and the Idea of Context

Azmi Mohamad

This paper expounds on my personal reflections on Islamic Governance and contemporary approaches to understanding and (re)constructing this abstract notion. As a millennial Muslim grappling with the tensions of tradition and modernity, I cannot help but comprehend Islamic Governance as not a single, undivided entity, but a sum of two different concepts challenged by the paradox of continuity and change. I believe that conceptualizing Islamic Governance as a dual existence (divine and human) allows one to “desacralize” it as a prerequisite to accepting that human involvement in reformulating it for the modern age means that it cannot be immune from errors. A constructive voice that is built upon the need to stay true to the transformative and reformative spirit of Islam is therefore pivotal in contemporary Muslim thought. My mixed educational background (having been raised in the Muslim world and trained in traditional Islamic learning within the first half of my life on the one hand, and having lived abroad for almost the entirety of the other half being immersed in contemporary Muslim thought) provokes me into giving weight to “context” (the inevitable reality) and to be critical of the prevailing downplaying of its importance as a (or even “the”) primary shaper of modern understandings of Islamic Governance. As millennial Muslims are to inherit and lead the Muslim world in the near future, serious attention must be given to “context” and its interplay with tradition in order to understand and bring Islamic Governance into existence.

1pm-2:15pm Lunch at UBD

2:15pm-5:30pm Session 2

Re-exploring Southeast Asian Studies from the Outside

Moderator: Dr. Magne Knudsen

(Programme Leader Social Sciences, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences – Universiti Brunei Darussalam)

Methodologies and Mishaps: A Sociological-anthropological Gaze on Changing Perspectives in Southeast Asian Studies

Victor T. King

This paper continues the story from where I left it in 2013-17 when I cast doubt on the possibilities of a distinctive methodology emerging from the multidisciplinary field of Southeast Asian Studies. My reasoning was based on my research experiences as a sociologist-anthropologist, engaging with scholars from related disciplines, but holding firmly to the position that my approaches, methods and concepts owed very little, if anything, to other fields of academic endeavour, and came from a cast of mind which had been instilled in me from my early training in sociology and anthropology. Most recently, in autobiographical and reflexive mode, I have been attempting to make sense of why I chose certain field-sites and projects over others, how I approached data-gathering and the analysis and understanding of what I chose to do, and how this influenced my changing perceptions of Southeast Asia as a region. In this enterprise where mishaps, contingencies, randomness and coincidences abound, I am not alone. It is of interest that the major contributions to the post-war construction of Southeast Asia came from such disciplines as history, geography and archaeology-prehistory, and then politics and economics, not from sociology and anthropology. Why?

Salem to Sumatra (and more improvised itineraries): Reflections on a Quarter Century of Shifting Tacks

R. Michael Feener

This presentation offers some personal reflections on a series of different, multi-disciplinary explorations in the academic study of Southeast Asia. It begins with some critical examination of what drew me to this field of study in the first place, and how my relationship to it has changed over time. It then pursues a series of vignettes on lessons learned, and assumptions questioned during the course of some of my earlier work in the fields of religion, philology, law, post-disaster reconstruction, history, development studies, and archaeology. Thereupon follow some thoughts – based again on personal experience – on the diversity of institutional contexts in which the global field of Southeast Asian Studies is conducted today, and ends with some critical interrogation of what the area designation might mean to future generations of students and scholars in a globalized world.

3:15pm-3:45pm Tea Break

Revisiting the Southeast Asian House: A Filipino's Perspective

Fernando N. Zialcita

Overviews of Southeast Asian houses often overlook Hispanized Philippine houses. We need a perspective that will include as well, not only such houses, but likewise vernacular houses using

brick or stone in Northern Vietnam and South Sumatra. Here are some points: First, because Southeast Asia is a recent construct dating back to 1944-45, defining frameworks should be flexible; secondly, to pursue the Austric-Tai hypothesis about the underlying unity of the three language families – Austronesian, Austroasiatic and Tai-Kadai – research in non-linguistic domains like architecture is needed; thirdly, we should be wary of the lingering tendency to prioritize Indianization as the key integrating motif and conversely to exclude Chinese and especially Western-influenced influences as an excrescence; fourthly, in the urban centers, new influences may have reshaped indigenous traditions, but these indigenous traditions in turn localized the foreign; and finally, the localization of once-foreign traditions could be analysed – in the future – on the basis of materiality, functionality, and symbolism. For instance, the 18th-19th century Philippine house and South Sumatra’s *rumah gedung* seem similar in being of wood above and stone below. What would differences be in construction methods, function and symbolism?

Race, Ethnicity, and Identity-formation in Southeast Asia

Lian Kwen Fee

Over thirty years working in the field, it has been impressed upon me that I should maintain the analytical distinction between race and ethnicity, racial formation and ethnogenesis. The significance of this has not always dawned upon me even if it appears to be self-evident. Given that most Southeast Asian societies have been colonized in the past, it may seem obvious to refer to race in making sense of political contestation. However in many parts of Southeast Asia, such as Borneo, it is just as appropriate to make sense of intergroup relations in terms of ethnicization. I conclude my paper by examining the relevance of Judith Butler’s work on identity – as narrative, performative, and dialogical – to specific cases in the region.

The Generational and Digital Challenges to Southeast Asian Studies

Liam C. Kelley

For as long as the field of Southeast Asian Studies has existed, scholars have debated about the future of the field. From arguing for the need for “autonomous histories” to proposing that “the center” of Southeast Asian Studies is moving from “the West” to the region of “Southeast Asia,” numerous ideas have been discussed and debated. Taking place within the field, these discussions have been understandably “academic” in nature. What I will argue in this paper, however, is that at present there are extremely important “extra-academic” factors that are influencing the future of Southeast Asian Studies, but which scholars in the field are not adequately addressing. Those factors include generational change and the digital revolution. Southeast Asian Studies as we know it today is largely the project of a single generation, a big generation born around the end of World War II. This generation was particularly productive in the “peak years” of Southeast Asian Studies from the late 1970s to mid-1990s. Today, meanwhile,

the world is witnessing the rise of another “big generation” – the millennials. Having come of age in the digital age, the world of the millennials is very different from the world in which the post-war generation developed Southeast Asian Studies as a field of studies. However, the field of Southeast Asian Studies today remains remarkably faithful in many ways to its pre-millennial past. What are the consequences of this faithfulness to the field in a time of dramatic change? That is the topic that this paper will seek to address.

7:30 Dinner

Tuesday 31 July

9am-12pm Session 3

Betwixt and Between: Fluidity as a Norm?

Moderator: Victor T. King

(Professor of Borneo Studies, Institute of Asian Studies – Universiti Brunei Darussalam)

Ethnography of the *Homo Secretus*: Inside Secret Societies and Societies with Secrets in Vietnam

Jeremy Jammes

In many ways, the researcher in the social sciences and humanities aims to “reveal” secrets, that is to say to divulge new and often hidden knowledge, known by a small number of people, or at least presented as such. Fieldwork must, like working in the archives, read between the lines, interpret the unsaid, refute lies, make the walls speak, gather clues finally to give meaning to the sociological whole. Facing family secrets, hidden personal agendas or alchemical recipes, the time, but also an effort of conviction, and qualities of listening and overlapping of information allow the researcher to unveil one’s terrain and the (non-)stories of one’s interlocutors, pushing the researcher constantly to open with a new look at one’s old notebooks.

To depart from transparency and to suggest the power of the invisible are an obsession of religious movements, *a fortiori* of groups described as ‘secret societies’ by the literature or the state. My paper will reflect on my two decades of research on Caodaism and the Minh spirit-medium groups in Vietnam, analyzing my own approach to these secret societies and societies with secrets. The contours of a paradigm of the *Homo Secretus* will be outlined, in which the secret – real or presented as such – becomes an inherent dynamic of the social bond, of power relations and of the work of a researcher.

Doing Fieldwork on the Sino-Vietnamese Border: Personal Experiences and Rethinking

Pan Yanqin

Based on a personal experience of long-term anthropological fieldwork in a Zhuang village on the Sino-Vietnamese border area, this paper explores the building of a trust relationship between

the researcher and the subjects of research in a fieldwork site. I argue that an anthropologist's fieldwork is more like the building of interpersonal relations with local villagers. The making and maintaining of a trusting and friendly relationship between the researcher and the subjects of research is a long and continuous process. For local villagers, an anthropologist's method of participant observation is a kind of emotional communication and interaction with them, which helps the anthropologist to overcome his or her role of "researcher" in order to become a "member" of the local community. However, even when a close relationship has been built between anthropologist and local villagers, the "tension" between them still exists on some occasions. In recent years, many villagers have engaged in illegal cross-border trade and the competition among villagers becomes fierce, and at the same time, the neighbouring states have strengthened their control of the border. As an outsider, an anthropologist's fieldwork on the Sino-Vietnamese border area is now facing more difficulties and challenges.

10am-10:30am Tea Break

Writing the 'Local', Provincial and Public into Regional-area Narratives

Mala Rajo Sathian

In this paper, I reflect on public histories of exclusion, mainly in the Thai-Malaysia border region, where I have conducted research in the last two decades. There has been a surge in public, non-formal narratives including personal histories as well as arts and visual representations of violence and hardship since 2004, following the re-emergence of the conflict in southern Thailand. Although, lacking the *de rigueur* archives and field work sourced information, these emerging narratives, provide crucial data and voice to the 'transforming' border-scape.

Approaching area studies through interacting connections rather than focusing on the common elements, provides a sense of area-community where particular forms shape the practice of culture, religion and everyday living. The provincialism of religion through faith networks (Luang Pho Thuad, Sufi, Tabligh) for example, inform of local particularisms specific to the provincial/border that relates, not with the centre or a mandala hierarchy, but the global. Core-periphery has morphed into core- *new core*- sub-core- and the *new core* needs to be understood as social constructs, beyond the binaries approach of contrasts and complementary, to understand the region. Leach and Barth observed these particularisms and gave us seminal works on understanding border society. The availability of the writings and voices of the border people, allow us to further this tradition of constructing knowledge of the border (provincial) regions in Southeast Asia. It also points to the necessity to engage with public/non-professional writings vis-à-vis academic/authentic works.

Researching Borneo Language Description, Language Maintenance and Language Shift: Issues of Nomenclature and Shifting Identities

James McLellan and Noor Azam Haji-Othman

This presentation addresses some methodological and epistemological issues that have preoccupied both authors since the 1990s: how we carve up the research territory; how we might avoid, or repair, the errors of earlier western-based scholars with their overriding urge to name and classify Borneo ethnic groups and their languages? In the colonial period the dominant methodologies were the collection and comparison of wordlists, exemplified by Ray's (1913) monumental output, and of traditional stories. These were based on assumptions of "fixity" rather than "flux" (Chua, 2007): that each distinct 'tribe' inhabited a specific geographical space and spoke their own distinct language or dialect. In the 1990s conferences and publications on Borneo were replete with urgent calls for fuller descriptions of Borneo languages, most of which to this day have no comprehensive dictionaries or grammars. The current century has seen the greater involvement of insiders - speakers and writers of the languages concerned, and an expansion of methodologies to include those of (post-)modern urban Sociolinguistics and Anthropological Linguistics. These can better account for mobilities and migrations of peoples across Borneo, and for the consequent maintenance or shift of their languages. In the presentation we offer a self-critical overview of what we ourselves (separately) have attempted for Basa' Tutong and other Brunei minority indigenous languages, and for the Bidayuh languages in western Borneo. We conclude with suggestions about potentially valuable approaches and methods that we and co-researchers in the field might usefully adopt.

11:30am-12pm The future directions of Southeast Asian studies & Publication Plan

12pm Lunch at UBD

Biography of the speakers:

Syed Farid Alatas is Professor of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. He also headed the Department of Malay Studies at NUS from 2007 till 2013. He lectured at the University of Malaya in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies prior to joining NUS. In the early 1990s, he was a Research Associate at the Women and Human Resource Studies Unit, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Prof. Alatas has authored numerous books and articles, including *Ibn Khaldun* (Oxford University Press, 2013); *Applying Ibn Khaldun: The Recovery of a Lost Tradition in Sociology* (Routledge, 2014), and (with Vineeta Sinha) *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon* (Palgrave, 2017) and "The State of Feminist Theory in Malaysia" in Maznah Mohamad & Wong Soak Koon, eds., *Feminism: Malaysian Reflections and Experience* (special issue of *Kajian Malaysia: Journal of Malaysian Studies*), 12, 1-2 (1994): 25-46. His areas of interest are the sociology of Islam, social theory, religion and reform, intra- and inter-religious dialogue, and the study of Orientalism.

Noor Azam was the first Director of the UBD-FPT Global Centre in Da Nang, Vietnam, which is UBD's first international branch that focuses on English language skills training for international students. As Director of the UBD Language Centre he helped introduce and develop the formal teaching of indigenous languages. In the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, he has helped introduce Professional Communication and Media studies, on which he continues to teach and supervise. He has published extensively and internationally on these subjects and has represented UBD and Brunei in various international bodies and platforms. He has published in both Malay and English and is a consultant on Brunei's language and culture for Erasmus Mundus and ASEAN research groups. His main research interests comprise the languages of Brunei within the multicultural landscape, their interactions with each other, and with government policies on language and education, and social policy. As Director of CARE, he directed social research in social welfare and poverty; youth and ageing; and health and obesity, with particular emphasis on the social impact of related issues on a national scale.

Lian Kwen Fee is Professor of Sociology, UBD-Institute of Asian Studies. He has previously held positions in Victoria University of Wellington and at the National University of Singapore where he was Head of Sociology. His research background is in political and historical sociology. He is currently working on two book projects, 'International Migration in the Middle East and Asia: Politics of Exclusion' and 'Landscapes of Brunei'.

R. Michael Feener is the Sultan of Oman Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, and Islamic Centre Lecturer in the History Faculty at the University of Oxford. He was formerly Research Leader of the Religion and Globalisation Research Cluster at the Asia Research Institute,

and Associate Professor in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. He has also taught at Reed College and the University of California, Riverside, and held visiting professor positions and research fellowships at Harvard, Kyoto University, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris), the University of Copenhagen, The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (Honolulu), and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands. He has published extensively in the fields of Southeast Asian history and Islamic Studies, as well as on post-disaster reconstruction, religion and development. He is currently also leader of the Maldives Endangered Heritage Survey.

Chang Yau Hoon *is Associate Professor of Anthropology at UBD-Institute of Asian Studies, and Director of Centre for Advanced Research (CARE) at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam. He is also Adjunct Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia (UWA), where he obtained his PhD (with Distinction) in 2007. In his previous appointment at Singapore Management University, he received the SMU Teaching Excellence Award in 2012 and SMU Research Excellence Award in 2014.*

Zawawi Ibrahim *received his PhD in social anthropology from Monash University, Melbourne. His current position is a joint appointment as a Professor at the Institute of Asian Studies (IAS) and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UBD. He researches and writes on new Malaysian cinema and contemporary popular music, indigenous communities and their storytelling, peasantry and rural labour, the new media, and multiculturalism in Malaysia. His current research is on popular culture in Brunei, Islamic cinema in Indonesia and religious diversity governance in Malaysia. Among the several books he has written/edited/co-edited: *The Malay Labourer: By the Window of Capitalism* (1998); and *Social Science and Knowledge in a Globalizing World* (2012).*

Jeremy Jammes *is Director of UBD-Institute of Asian Studies. He is a social anthropologist and completed his PhD research on Caodaism in 2006. He is an Associate Professor of Social Anthropology and Religious Studies in the IAS and has published widely on religious issues in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. Between 2010 and 2014, he served in Bangkok as Deputy Director, Head of Publications, and Strategic Adviser of the Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia (IRASEC, CNRS-MAEE), for which he has (co-) edited three regional outlooks on contemporary Southeast Asia geopolitics. He has also been the Editor-in-Chief of the IAS-Springer Book Series 'Asia in Transition' since 2016, and has regularly reviewed articles and books for academic journals on religions and on Southeast Asia.*

Liam C. Kelley *is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of History at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He will join the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam on August 2018. He received his BA in Russian Language and Literature from Dartmouth College, 1989, and MA*

and PhD. degrees in Chinese History from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1996 and 2001. He researches primarily about Vietnamese history. Trained as a pre-modernist, he is particularly interested in the ways that twentieth and twenty-first-century Vietnamese have reinterpreted the past for their own purposes. He has published a monograph and an edited volume on various aspects of Sino-Vietnamese cultural relations, and has published numerous articles on premodern Vietnamese history, Vietnamese nationalism, and Vietnamese intellectual change. Finally, he is also the co-organizer of an annual conference, Engaging with Vietnam, and is the co-editor-in-chief of the Journal of Vietnamese Studies.

Victor T. King *is Professor of Borneo Studies, UBD-Institute of Asian Studies. He is a sociologist-anthropologist and is also Emeritus Professor in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds; Professorial Research Associate in the Centre of South East Asian Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; and Senior Editorial Advisor in the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. During the last six years he has edited/co-edited seven books on topics ranging across tourism in Asia, UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia, ethno-development, Southeast Asian Studies, Borneo Studies, and human insecurities in Southeast Asia.*

James McLellan *is a Senior Assistant Professor at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam. He has previously taught at secondary and tertiary levels in Brunei, the UK, France, Malaysia, Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand). His research interests include language alternation online, Southeast Asian Englishes, Borneo indigenous languages, and classroom discourse in multilingual contexts. He has published co-authored articles with other Borneo-based researchers in Sarawak and Brunei Darussalam on threatened minority language maintenance, and has recently been conducting research that challenges traditional notions of languages as fixed and separate systems.*

Azmi Mohamad *is a lecturer at Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Centre for Islamic Studies (SOASCIS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam, and currently serves as the Centre's Deputy Director. He graduated with a Master's degree in Islamic Studies and a PhD in Theology and Religion from the University of Birmingham in 2011 and 2015 respectively. Building on his doctoral work on European Islam and reform, Dr Azmi conducts research in the field of contemporary Muslim thought, with a focus on the evolving discourses that continue to generate new readings of and approaches to Islam in the modern world.*

Kathrina Mohd Daud *is an Assistant Professor in the Literature programme at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. She has a BA in English (1st Class) from the University of York (2006), an MA in Writing (Distinction) from the University of Warwick (2007)*

and received a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Manchester in 2011. She has previously been a US State Department Scholar at the University of Louisville (2012), a Visiting Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (2013) and a Visiting Research Scholar at the Southeast Asian Center, University of Washington (2014). She is co-editor, with Grace V.S. Chin, of *The Southeast Asian Woman Writes Back. Gender, Identity and Nation in the Literatures of Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines ('Asia in Transition', Springer, 2018)*.

Fernando Nakpil-Zialcita obtained his BA Humanities and MA Philosophy at the Ateneo de Manila, and subsequently obtained a MA and PhD in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Hawai'i at Honolulu. He is a Professor Emeritus at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the Ateneo de Manila University where he also heads the Cultural Heritage Studies Program. In his writings and public speeches, he calls attention to the uniqueness and beauty of the urban tradition of Luzon and Visayas which fuses together indigenous, Spanish-Mexican, Chinese and American traditions. He also highlights the importance of public space as constituting the very essence of a true city. He works with private organizations in fighting for a more liveable and attractive city-life.

Jonathan Rigg is Director of the Asia Research Institute and Professor of Geography at the National University of Singapore. He works on issues of agrarian transformation, poverty, vulnerability, migration, disaster and livelihoods in the Asian region, and has undertaken fieldwork in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal and Sri Lanka. His book *Challenging Southeast Asian development: the shadows of success* was published by Routledge in 2015 and explores the underside of rapid economic growth and structural change. His latest book, *More than rural: textures of Thailand's agrarian transformation*, will shortly be published by Hawaii University Press and draws on three decades of field-based research in Thailand.

Mala Rajo Sathian is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur where she teaches courses on cultures of Southeast Asian society and politics of ethnic minorities. Her areas of research include the border regions of south Thailand and north Malaysia, relating to ethnicity and marginalization, diaspora, migrant trading networks, and histories of state formation. She has spent more than twenty years researching on Thai society, having lived in Chiang Mai, Bangkok and Pattani, Thailand, where she conducted field and archival research. In 2013 she founded and currently heads the Thai Studies Program at the University of Malaya supported by the Royal Thai Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

Pan Yanqin is an Associate Researcher at the College of ASEAN Studies of Guangxi University for Nationalities. She was awarded a Bachelor's degree in English at the Department of Foreign

Languages of Guangxi University for Nationalities in 1997; and a Master's degree in Ethnology at the College of Ethnology and Sociology of Guangxi University for Nationalities in 2004; and then a PhD in Anthropology in the Division of Humanities, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in 2014. Dr Pan Yanqin began her fieldwork study in a Zhuang village on the Sino-Vietnamese border area in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in 2004. Her research is about popular religion, social transformation, and mobility of the Zhuang and the Tay people in China and Vietnam. Her recent research is about popular religion and cross-border mobility of the Jing and the Yao peoples on the Sino-Vietnamese border. Dr Pan Yanqin is head of the Brunei Research Center of the College of ASEAN Studies, Guangxi University for Nationalities. She began her research on overseas Chinese in Brunei in 2017.