Call for Proposals
SEASIA 2017 Conference

Unity in Diversity: Transgressive Southeast Asia

Date: 16 - 17 December 2017
Venue: Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, THAILAND
Organizers: Chulalongkorn University Conference Committee for SEASIA 2017 (CUCC) and SEASIA Secretariat
Proposal deadline: 5 October 2016

'Unity in Diversity' seems to be a popular excuse for grouping impossibly diverse entities together under one overarching all-inclusive theme—the grouping of ten impossibly diverse nations of Southeast Asia under the ASEAN banner is one prime example. When it comes to organizing the second Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA) conference, organizing all proposed sub-themes under one unifying mega-theme appears to be exactly one such impossible tasks. Yet, upon considering each and every proposed sub-theme more closely, an underlying tendency should become apparent. There is a unity in transgression. The communal intellectual desire to cross borders, break boundaries, engage in taboos and violate all sorts of common practice is apparent in nearly every aspect of scholarly investigation, discussion and debate that this conference aims to encourage and promote—historians question time, political scientists question state boundaries, linguists question language barriers, even artists break all sorts of artistic traditions. To remain relevant in the rapidly transforming world of the globalized era, one must refuse to remain obedient to the old boundaries of the past. Southeast Asian Studies is no exception, therefore, 'Transgressive Southeast Asia' is the answer, not only to the impossibility of the main title 'Unity in Diversity,' but also to the future the field and of area studies as a whole.

Focusing on the dilemma of the transgressive nature of Southeast Asia within the theme of unity in diversity, SEASIA 2017 encourages submissions of both panel proposals and individual presentations in the following sub-themes;

I. Re-conceptualizing Region in Southeast Asia

Coordinator: Professor Ikrar Nusa Bhakti

Re-conceptualizing Region in Southeast Asia explores the constant and continuous transformation of the Southeast Asian region as a field of studies, from the rising tendency towards the 'Asianization' of Southeast Asian Studies to the various comparative studies approaches that have appeared to gain momentum in the field since the dawn of the present century. How should Southeast Asian Studies fit or not fit into the new ASEAN paradigm? How does the Chinese-rising century affect Southeast Asia as a region? How is Southeast Asian Studies evolving as a field with more scholars from the region becoming involved in research and the production of knowledge relating to Southeast Asia?

II. New Perspectives on Southeast Asian Pasts

Coordinator: Professor Sunait Chutintaranond

New Perspectives on Southeast Asian Pasts presents an attempt to rescue the history of ancient Southeast Asia from the Southeast Asian nation-states of the present day. How do we make sense of the pre-nation-state history in the era of nation-states and despite the strong national narratives of each and every Southeast Asian nation that incessantly claim ownership of ancient kingdoms and empires within or related to their realm. How might this intellectual exercise also lead to a more successful integration of the ASEAN community in which national boundaries are supposed to be made more fluid and blurred?

III. Southeast Asian Circulations: Conjunctures and Disjunctures

Coordinator: Professor Tong Chee-Kiong

New Perspectives on Southeast Asian Pasts is the quintessential migration theme, focusing not only in the constant flow of people both within the region and beyond through much of known history, but also the processes of circulation in which ideas, practices and texts travel unpredictably across time and space. How do these constant and continuous movements of people, materials and ideas influence the various cultures in this region as well as identity-building processes within the numerous nation-states from time immemorial to the contemporary?

IV. Environment and Society

Coordinator: Professor Yasuyuki Kono

Environment and Society focuses on major environmental issues that affect societies in Southeast Asia, including but not limited to significant changes in the environment that may or may not contribute to new and reoccurring natural disasters. This theme would also explore how the trend towards de-agrarianization in parts of Southeast Asia as well as the rise of energy crop cultivation across the region might also have drastic repercussions on both environment and society in the twenty-first century.

In summary, this theme entails a great variety of socio-political and cultural aspects related to the change/deterioration/transformation of the environment, including but not limited to food and energy security, the concept of private vs public properties, and heritage conservation.

V. Law and Politics

Coordinator: Professor Eduardo Tadem

Law and Politics is perhaps the most transgressive of the 'Transgressive Southeast Asia' themes. This theme will provide an all-inclusive arena for debate and discussions on all controversial issues relating to law and politics. This may include the role of the military in Southeast Asian politics, a comparative studies of the future of democracy in the region, potentials and challenges for civil society in Southeast Asia, regional integration and the likelihood of a truly functional ASEAN community, and the rise of religious fundamentalism and its influence upon law and politics in Southeast Asia.

VI. Innovation, Knowledge Transfer, and Social Transformation

Coordinator: Professor Liu Hong

Innovation, Knowledge Transfer, and Social Transformation focuses on knowledge production and transfer within Southeast Asia and beyond as well as the making of new innovative modes of government in the region. What is the relevance and significance of Southeast Asian Studies in the age of globalization and how might these innovations and transferring of new knowledge and technology influence various forms of social transformation in the Southeast Asia?

VII. Literature, Film, Media, the Arts and Cultural Studies

Coordinator: Professor Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao

Literature, Film, Media, the Arts and Cultural Studies represents the strong determination to have a more humanities-oriented theme that appeared to be conspicuously missing from the first conference in Kyoto. This theme should provide a broad and diverse platform for expression, discussion and debate concerning the rise in popularity, significance and influence of the above-mentioned tools of individual expression, communal strength, and state soft-power both within the region of Southeast Asia and beyond.

Aside from conventional panels, this theme could also bring other forms of artistic expressions, including but not limited to film screenings and discussions, artistic and cultural performances.

VIII. Language and Linguistics

Coordinator: Professor Theraphan Luangthongkum

Language and Linguistics explores an important area of tremendous intellectual and cultural diversity within the region of Southeast Asia. While the language barrier seems to be one of the most daunting obstacles to regional integration, what appears to be an awe-inspiring level of linguistic diversity is also a great asset of Southeast Asia. Language and linguistics are among the fundamental defining characteristics of Southeast Asian culture and identity. It is at the core of the region's amazingly tolerant and cosmopolitan nature. It therefore deserves a theme by its own rights.

IX. Faith, Religion and Philosophy

Coordinator: Professor Suwanna Satha-anand

Faith, Religion and Philosophy is another area that is fundamental to the cultural diversity, spiritual history and politics of the region of Southeast Asia since time immemorial. At the present day in the globalized age, this has become one among the most sensitive matters in the field of Southeast Asian Studies. It poses great potential for positive and integrative tendencies through teachings of tolerance, acceptance, peace and good will. At the same time, the great diversity in spiritual beliefs have also become one among the most explosive obstacles to peaceful coexistence and region integration in Southeast Asia. How might we possibly navigate through the dangerous sensitivities of these matters and make the most of these treasured traditions and profound faiths despite what seems to be a trend towards the intensification of clash and conflicts related to faith, religion, and philosophy across the globe?

X. Humanitarian and Development Work

Coordinator: Professor R. Michael Feener

Humanitarian and Development Work establishes a comparative rubric under which to engage emerging critical conversations on modern projects for the

improvement of social conditions in the region's modern history. While scholarly work on 'development' and 'humanitarianism' has been generally pursued in distinct sub-fields, there is considerable potential for the opening up of new lines of discussion by bringing together current scholarship on their respective ideologies and institutional forms. This theme thus not only affords room for technical studies of work in each these two important spheres, but also makes space for panels examining some of the diverse ways in which the discourses, practices, imaginations and consequences of humanitarian and developmentalist work – both within and across different Southeast Asian countries, as well as the entanglements between localized examples of humanitarian and development work with broader global trends.

XI. ASEAN Economies: Challenges and Prospects

Coordinator: Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit

"ASEAN Economies: Challenges and Prospects" examines the present and the future of the region's economies in a world of growing complexity and uncertainty. What are the drivers, internal and external, that will determine the economic future of the region's population? Possible topics include: investment flows within the region; the impact of migration, both internal and external; the role of Japan, China and India; evaluation of prospective trade agreements; the roles of corruption, rent-seeking, and illegal economies; the impact of climate change and the transition to renewable energy; and reforms for improving distribution and economic development.

Guidelines for Submissions

Using the attached Application Form, panel and individual proposals should be submitted via email to <seasia2017@chula.ac.th> before the deadline on 5 October 2016.

1. Panel Proposals
   1) Due to time limitation, each panel should not consist of more than 5 members. This could include 3 or 4 paper presenters, 1 chairperson, and 1 discussant.
   2) Paper presenters could also serve as chairperson and/or discussant within the same panel.
   3) It is advisable for each panel to have a discussant, but not required.
   4) The panel proposal must indicate which sub-theme the panel is proposed to be considered in.
   5) The panel proposal must include a panel abstract (word limit >300) as well as individual abstracts for each paper to be presented (word limit >250).
   6) Proposed paper presenters, chairpersons, and discussants are not allowed to be involved in more than 1 panel proposal.
   7) In the case that a certain research project involves more than 5 members, it is advisable for applicants to submit back-to-back panels, breaking the presentation up into panels of 3 or 4. In this case, the two panels (which are presumably parts of the same project) could share the same or have related titles. They will be considered together (i.e. if selected, both would be selected, if rejected, both would be rejected)

and if selected, the two related panels will be allotted time slots next to each other in the same room so as to form a back-to-back panel.

2. Individual Proposals
    1) Each individual proposal must indicate the sub-theme in which the applicant would prefer to be considered in.
    2) Each individual proposal must include an abstract of the paper to be presented (word limit >250).
    3) Applicants who chose to submit individual proposals must not also be a part in any panel proposal and each applicant is allowed to submit only 1 individual proposal.