

After a brief hiatus the CSEAS newsletter returns in a new digital-only format. In order to evolve and meet the challenges of reaching out to the global Southeast Asian academic community, our newsletter will bring more topical research initiatives from our Center, and faculty, as well as fellows and researchers from institutions in our network. Since CSEAS's reorganization last year, faculty have been working together on new projects and initiatives both within and outside of Japan.

As of the end of March 2018, Prof. Kono Yasuyuki completed his four-year tenure as director. During this time, he oversaw the transition of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) and the Center for Integrated Area Studies (CIAS) merge together to create a stronger more internationally outward looking institution. As of April 2018, we welcome Prof. Hayami Yoko as our new director. Along with our vice directors, Mieno Fumiharu and Koizumi Junko, we look forward to deepening our commitments to multi-disciplinary research within Southeast Asia and other regions where our researchers work.

In this issue, we introduce a series of articles from recent fellows. Robert Taylor, writes about the military in Southeast Asian politics and takes a deeper historical look at civil-military relations in the region to question to role of military forces that have presided over nations in the region during the 20th – 21st century. Amporn Jirattikorn (Chiang Mai University), introduces us to the production, consumption and sharing of Thai television dramas within Southeast Asia and China. In recent years a huge fan industry has developed for Thai dramas and this article looks over recent trends in their circulation and consumption in China.

On 16 – 17 December 2017, CSEAS was one of the co-organizers of the second Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA), held at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. A resounding success, over 450 participants attended the conference from 29 nations, further cementing SEASIA's reputation as a regional and global hub for scholars to come together. Christina Warning and Michiko Yoshida (Chulalongkorn University) offer a detailed overview of this successful event. Prof. Chaiwat Satha-Anand (Department of Political Science, Thammasat University), was honored as one of the keynote speakers at this conference and gave a deeply thought-provoking talk on the politics of naming and the power embodied within names themselves. His address is carried in this newsletter.

Miles Kenney-Lazar, a Hakubi Researcher based at CSEAS, is currently conducting research in Laos and provides us with an introduction to his work on politics and power relations among foreign investors, the Lao state, and Lao peasants shaping access to land and driving agrarian-environmental change. Kevin Hewison (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), discusses current debates concerning businessification and the varying processes of managerialism, commodification, privatization and customerization that play out influence civil society and businesses. Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi (LIPI) has been conducting long-term research on Muslim women political leaders; in her article she provides us with a detailed overview of her current project on women's leadership in Indonesia examining notions people hold of female politicians.

Finally, Nishaant Chokshi (JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow) introduces us to some unique observations from a recent fieldtrip to Luang Namtha province, Laos with Associate Prof. Nathan Badenoch. Nishaant is a scholar who primarily works in India, however he shares with us how Laotian villagers consume a Thai-dubbed version of an Indian drama and the broader media circulations taking place between South and Southeast Asia.

The Editor
Mario Lopez