

Introduction

The lives of the peoples of Southeast Asia have been continuously shaped by a number of historical, political, sociocultural, economic and environmental forces in and outside the region.

The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines during World War II, and the widespread communist purge that followed the failed coup in Indonesia in 1965 are major political events in the two countries' histories that continue to be relevant foci of study, shedding light on the history of war, conflict and turmoil, and the role of the state, the military, and other key actors. In his paper, Gonzalo A. Campoamor II portrays how Japanese wartime intellectuals such as Kiyoshi Miki depicted the Filipino Oriental character and society in his writings. Demonstrating that Miki—in his writings—was not a mere propagandist in the Japanese war effort, he has helped broaden perspectives of the role of Japanese intellectuals during the Japanese occupation.

Darlene Machell Espena explores the violent communist purge in Indonesia in 1965 through four Indonesian films. She brings to the fore the perspectives not only of those who insist that the purge was necessary to “save the nation” but also those who oppose this view. In addition, the narratives of Chinese-Indonesians, the critical voices of students, and regional actors outside Jakarta were highlighted in some of the films. With the power of cinema to shape people's consciousness, the analysis of these films have opened up, and reflect—the variety of perspectives on, and re-interpretations of, this very painful event in Indonesian history.

Economic policies of other Asian countries have also had their repercussions on developments in the region. The rise of China with its adoption of neoliberal capitalism is also worth reexamining. Lerner Shayne Garcia's article interrogates whether Chinese development assistance in Cambodia, Myanmar, and the Philippines truly exemplifies South-South cooperation (as China claims) or simply a part of its expansion in the

region. At the same time, a closer analysis of the projects in these countries that had been put up with Chinese aid also reflects the reasons for their continued reliance on China for support.

Natural hazards in East Asia such as the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake in Japan also affected Filipino migrant students. Lisette Robles and Tomohiro Ichinose analyze how Filipino students, as temporary migrants, demonstrated their resilience, adapted, and survived the disaster by tapping their social capital.

The articles in this issue of *Asian Studies* delve into events and processes that have involved key actors and institutions in Southeast Asia, as well the social and environmental conditions outside the region that have influenced its development. Even as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) turns fifty this year, many problems besetting the region remain unresolved, given the diverse social contexts and historical conditions that have influenced member states' trajectories through the years. And with the region undergoing rapid change, this issue hopes to contribute towards encouraging greater interdisciplinary research and scholarship on Southeast Asia that is much needed at this time.

Maria Cecilia Medina
Editor