

## **Philosophies in Southeast Asia**

### **Roundtable**

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Dealing with Philosophy at an Area Studies conference permits two different approaches to the topic: one from the discipline of Philosophy and one from Area Studies. These approaches together help explain why the topic of “Philosophies in Southeast Asia” has so far been overlooked in academia. From an Area Studies perspective, we can trace why philosophy rarely has been included among the diverse disciplines that make up the field. This exclusion is especially acute in Southeast Asian Studies – there are not many Southeast Asianists with a philosophical background, and there is no philosophy taught in Area Studies curricula for the region. Therefore, Philosophy is nearly absent from the disciplines of Area Studies for Southeast Asia. Anthropologists, social scientists and historians with a focus on Southeast Asia sometimes venture into theory, but those attempts have been relatively unsystematic.

If we look from a Philosophy perspective instead, we find that “Philosophies in Southeast Asia” are not widely researched among Western philosophers either, although for different reasons. While philosophies of Asia have gained more and more attention in Western academia over the past two decades, this has been more the case for better-known canonical traditions, such as Indian or Chinese Philosophy. The regional philosophies have remained largely unacknowledged and under-examined.

Several scholars have argued, however, that a conceptualization of philosophies in Southeast Asia is both possible and necessary. This Roundtable tries to explore fundamental aspects of such a grouping, within both Philosophy and Southeast Asian Studies, to provide an international platform for this promising field.

Central topics will be:

- Philosophy in Southeast Asia or Southeast Asian Philosophy?
- Denominational problems: On labels and (non-)neutrality
- From thinking and theory to philosophizing
- The history of philosophy in Southeast Asia
- Figures of Southeast Asian philosophy
- The language issue
- Differences and similarities of Southeast Asian philosophies
- Southeast Asian philosophies in Southeast Asia and the West