**Panel title**: Ghosts and Hauntings in Southeast Asia

**Conveners:**

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**Panel format:**

The panel will be relatively ‘regular’, in that we aim to have presentations followed by questions. We chose this format as it is well-known to researchers worldwide and allows for an exploratory and open discussion. As we already have received several expressions of interest, we expect that we will not be short of participants or interested audience. We would hence like to request a double session. Our intension with this comparative panel is to come to a publication of some sort. Most likely an edited volume, but perhaps also a podcast or series of podcasts. For that reason we aim to invite ‘listening discussants’ to the sessions to help us find points of comparison, major themes and ‘red threads’ running through the material. They will provide short comments at the end of the sessions.

**Abstract:**

Ghosts. They often appear – in different settings and also during fieldwork. Their appearance haunts specific locations, objects or situations, their inherent presence demands certain behaviour of those in the environs. Yet they are not necessarily a terror, or vindictive entities. They may come by to correct or to support the living, or to protect and confirm what is already there.

In this panel we seek to explore and analyse the role of place in hauntings. What are the actual sites where ghosts make themselves felt? Where is their appearance a shocking surprise and where is it almost expected, for example? Why does the supernatural has a place here that it does not elsewhere? And what happens if that elsewhere becomes part of the Southeast Asian present – be it as current visitors, colonial spectres or the spectral echoes of Asian immigrants who travelled abroad?

In addition to spatial dimensions, the panel is also concerned with temporal ones by posing the question how ghosts fit in 21st century Southeast Asia. We intend to explore the realm of ghosts, that of the living and the links between these in the present, but also in bygone settings. It is clear that they intermingle and interact, but what does that result in in particular historical moments? We seek to go beyond ‘ghost stories’ and mysterious incidents and ask for interpretations in context. What is the place of ghosts in modern societies, and what are the consequences of their presence – in practical, ethical and cosmological/ontological terms? Which registers of the uncanny and ambiguous do they evoke?

The panel seeks to attract a variety of papers and welcomes different theoretical approaches, ethnographic foci and (cross-)regional comparisons. Its aim is to re-visit an ‘old topic’ of research in Southeast Asia by exploring it through novel and unexpected angles.