(1) Southeast Asian Diasporas and Heritage: Crafting the Past in the Transnational Future of Diasporas

(2) Convener:

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(3) Format

Single session (1 x 90 min) where the panel will consist of 3-4 presentations of 15-20 minutes each, followed by 30 minutes of discussion. This will allow thematic synergies between presentations to be teased out and further discussed to generate new ideas.

(4) Description of panel

Abstract:

Migration has unsettled and settled different ethno-cultural groups around the world, and in the inter-connected world today, diasporas continue to form and re-form. While some of these groups may be fully absorbed into the political ecology of nation-states as ethnic minorities, diasporas and their transnational connections continue to define Southeast Asia and beyond for two major reasons. First, the time-space compression articulated by David Harvey has taken a disruptive digital turn that has made it possible for diasporic subjects to keep up their transnational assemblage of relationships and interventions. Second, migration today is hardly terminal and usually involves an ongoing movement among geographical nodes that keeps diasporic consciousness salient.

In view of the above, heritage plays an important role in connecting diasporic subjects with notions of home (wherever that may be) and the experience of being in diaspora. This panel explores how various diasporas in and from Southeast Asia relate to their heritage in crafting their transnational futures. Some issues that will be considered include: the role of heritage in formulating identities and negotiating inter-ethnic relations; heritage as a medium for mobilizing diasporic subjects; and diasporic heritage as an idiom for facilitating/revitalizing transnational connections. Through critical examination of these issues, this panel will foreground the role of heritage in the positioning and transitioning of diasporas in and from Southeast Asia.