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Views from the Ground: Reflections on Studying Indigeneity in Southeast Asia

Rusaslina Idrus, Liana Chua, Poline Bala, Kwanchewan Buadaeng, Kelvin Egay, Prasit Leepreecha, Dave Lumenta, Zanisah Man, Kendy Mitot, Oona Paredes, Shanthi Thambiah, Vilashini Somiah

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Roundtable

Views from the Ground: Reflections on Studying Indigeneity in Southeast Asia

26 April 2019

Convenors: Rusaslina Idrus (RI) and Liana Chua (LC)

Participants: Poline Bala (PB), Kwanchewan Buadaeng (KB), Kelvin Egay (KE), Prasit Leepreecha (PL), Dave Lumenta (DL), Zanisah Man (ZM), Kendy Mitot (KM), Oona Paredes (OP), Shanthi Thambiah (ST) and Vilashini Somiah (VS).

This roundtable took place at the end of a two-day workshop, 'Unpacking Indigeneity in Southeast Asia', which was held on 25-26 April 2019 at the University of Malaya. It was convened by the editors of this special section, Rusaslina Idrus and Liana Chua, as part of their British Academy/Newton Mobility Grant collaboration (NMGR1180433). The participants in the workshop were all Indigenous and non-Indigenous Southeast Asian scholars (mainly anthropologists) who were trained in different disciplinary centres and traditions, and who worked in various parts of the region. In the workshop, we considered how our own subject positions as Southeast Asian scholars working in Southeast Asia shaped our research, collaborations and fieldwork relations; the varied definitions, categories and politics of indigeneity at play in the region; intersectionality; our implication in and departures from disciplinary and colonial legacies; power dynamics in the field; the politics of knowledge-production and publication; and the question of who theorizes, and where from. Here, we present a condensed transcript of the roundtable discussion, which has been lightly edited for clarity.