

## **Department of Asian Studies**

### ***Call for Papers***

#### **3rd Prague Conference on Southeast Asian Studies**

## **Islam, Society and Politics in Southeast Asia**

**March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Prague, Czech Republic**

From a Central European perspective, Southeast Asia is arguably one of the most overlooked and understudied parts of Asia, be it due to the relative physical distance or a general lack of knowledge of this strategically located territory on the crossroads of Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific and Australia. This fact is also reflected in many stereotypes concerning how this region is perceived by the mainstream media as well as the general public.

One of the typical notions of Southeast Asia among Europeans may be that of a “mystical Indochina”, boasting a multitude of Buddhist temples, an abode of peace and promise of enlightenment. As far as religion is concerned, however, few people realize that, unlike predominantly Theravada Buddhist Mainland Southeast Asia (i.e. Indochina at large), the major religious force at play in maritime Southeast Asia is Islam.

As opposed to North Africa and Andalusia, Islam reached the Malay world in a peaceful manner along the ancient sea lanes, brought into the archipelago by merchants and proselytizers from various parts of the Middle East, South Asia and perhaps also China.

The further progress of Islam into the hinterlands, however, was not without friction and conflict. Nevertheless, history has also witnessed interesting adoptions of the new religion to the local beliefs and values, thus forming unique syncretistic forms.

Today, in two important countries of the insular half of Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia, Islam is undoubtedly the majority faith and poses a crucial factor in the countries’ societal and political developments. At the same time, Islam appears to be perceived as a background for the ethnic and separatist conflicts in two other large countries where Islam is a religion of minority – Thailand and the Philippines.

While our last annual conference addressed Southeast Asian regional objectives in a global context, this year the focus is on the individual countries' home affairs in interaction with Islam, both on the national level as well as within the world's Muslim community.

Therefore, we kindly invite primarily Central- and Western-Europe-based scholars and experts on Islam in Southeast Asia to share their ideas and research outputs in order to provide a more precise notion and deeper understanding of the interaction of Islam, society and politics in the region of Southeast Asia.

**Travel and expenses:**

The organizers guarantee to refund the speakers' expenses for an overland (or economy air) journey from a nearby European country and accommodation for two nights in Prague.

**Submissions:**

Please submit your paper proposals (max. 500 words) and your CV via e-mail ([petru@mup.cz](mailto:petru@mup.cz)) by February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011. We will notify all submitters by February 25th, 2011 at the latest. Presentations should last approx. 20 minutes and leave 5-10 minutes' space for discussion. All (relevant) papers selected for the conference will be included in the peer-reviewed collective monograph *Contemporary Southeast Asia: Politics, Society and Religion* (editor: T. Petru), published in due time after the conference.

**For further details please contact dr. Tomas Petru, Head of the Dept. of Asian Studies and guarantor of the Southeast Asian Studies' Initiative at Metropolitan University Prague:**  
**[petru@mup.cz](mailto:petru@mup.cz).**