



IKMAS Seminar Series No.2/2016

The Power of Words: “Nusantara”

Speaker:

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ABSTRACT

'Nusantara' is a concept to which different meanings have been attached throughout Southeast Asian history. It made its first noticeable appearance in texts of the fourteenth century, disappeared for a while, and then resurfaced after hundreds of years, when it was (re)discovered in the early nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. This presentation explores how the meaning of 'nusantara' has changed over time. In 1334 Gadjah Mada, the chief minister of the Majapahit Empire, swore an oath (sumpah palapa) that he would conquer a number of kingdoms on the maritime fringes (the Nusantara) of the Majapahit Empire. The concept Nusantara re-emerged during the anti-colonial struggle, when it captured the imagination of writers, novelists, poets and politicians in Indonesia and British Malaya. The term eventually disappeared as a political concept from public debates, to resurface in the 1990s, when it became widely used to adorn company names, newspaper reports, policy briefs, scholarly articles, and political organisations. More recently, "Nusantara" has become very popular throughout Southeast Asia with the emergence of a Nusantara Youth culture and "Islam Nusantara". The paper concludes by drawing attention to the importance of a Malaysian Nusantara concept for settling disputes in the South China Sea.

BIODATA

Hans-Dieter Evers, emeritus University Professor of Development Planning, Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn is Visiting Professor, IKMAS, UKM. Before his academic career he worked in a German shipping company, a shipyard and as midshipman in the German merchant navy. Later he taught sociology at Monash University, at Yale University, where he was also Director of Graduate Southeast Asia Studies, University of Singapore (Head of Dept.) and Bielefeld University (Dean and Director). He also served as Visiting Professor in various universities, lately as Eminent Visiting Professor at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. His current research is concerned with maritime conceptions of space, the maritime economy, the South China Sea and knowledge management. He has published a large number of books, refereed journal articles and book chapters on these topics.

Dr. Alinor Abdul Kadir is a fellow of Institute Darul Ehsan (IDE), an NGO of the Selangor state government that focusses on social and economic issues and an adjunct instructor at Permata Pintar, PPSM and FST, UKM since 2009. Previously, he was a lecturer at the mathematics department of the Faculty of Science and Technology at UKM. His current research concerns the intellectual history of the Malay world, with a focus on ethnomathematics and ethnoscience. Among his publications are Hubungan Kecendekiawanan Terawal Melayu-Cina, dalam Hubungan China dan Dunia Melayu Awal Masihi Hingga Kurun ke-15: Satu Kajian Sosiobudaya dan Politik, Minden : Penerbit USM, Mengupayakan Bahasa Melayu Indonesia dan Malaysia Sebagai Bahasa Ilmu dalam Bidang Matematik. KESTURI 22(1):1-14, (with Shaharir) The Need for A New Definition of Sustainability. Journal of Indonesian Economy and Business 28(2) 2013 : 251-268, 18, Tahap Ke-Sanskrit-an dan Keaslian Bahasa Melayu : Ulasan Buku James T. Collins, Bahasa Sanskerta dan Bahasa Melayu, 2009. Kesturi 20 (2) 2010, and (with Abdul Razak Salleh and Harry Ramza). April 2015. Diaspora Adat dan Kekerabatan Alam Minangkabau. Jakarta : Kemala Indonesia.