



## Historical Treaties of Southeast Asia

A research program in global diplomatic history

### Treaty-Making and Cross-Cultural Diplomacy in Asia (16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries)

Manila, Philippines (on site only), 29 February – 2 March 2024

#### Call for papers

Recently, historians of imperialism and global history have begun to turn their attention to diplomatic encounters and treaty-making in the context of imperial and colonial expansion, particularly in South, East and Southeast Asia from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In doing so, they have challenged the orthodox view of such treaties merely as obsolete, “unequal”, “fraudulent”, or “colonial” instruments of imperialism. Historians of international law have also in recent years begun to shift their attention from the traditional focus on European developments in international law to the contributions of non-European actors and to the role of negotiations and encounters between Europeans and non-Europeans across the world.

Against this background, treaties between European and other imperial powers on the one hand and Asian states and rulers on the other are no longer understood exclusively as impositions by the imperial powers, but also as the result of accommodation and cross-cultural negotiations. Asian and other non-European actors often appear to have been more well-informed and astute in such diplomatic exchanges than previously acknowledged, and many of them took active part in the treaty-making processes. Influenced by methodological advances in the field of New Diplomatic History, historians of imperialism and international relations in Asia have also begun to explore previously understudied themes in diplomatic relations, including gender, personal relations, translations, rituals, and diplomatic gifts. Taken together, these developments have the potential to produce new and innovative theoretical frameworks and perspectives for understanding how colonial domination was established and maintained in different parts of Asia and beyond.

The conference *Treaty-Making and Cross-Cultural Diplomacy in Asia* aims to stimulate the discussion and exchange of ideas about these topics and about the theoretical and methodological challenges involved in writing new global histories of imperialism, international relations, cross-cultural diplomacy, treaty-making, and international law from the onset of the European expansion until the end of colonialism in Asia. Themes to be explored include, but are not limited to:

- the exploration of unconventional sources for the study of diplomacy and treaty-making;
- comparative studies between different regions, treaty-making parties, time periods etc.;
- the complex relationship between, on the one hand, violence, conquest, and coercion, and, on the other hand, negotiation, compromise, and conviviality in treaty-making processes;
- the role of translation, literacy, oral traditions, and potential linguistic barriers;
- the role of intermediaries (e.g. interpreters, secretaries, witnesses) and informal actors;
- the relation between traditional Asian instruments of inter-state relations, such tributary systems, and the practice of treaty-making
- the role of symbols, rituals, ceremonies, and gifts in treaty-making processes;
- new concepts and frameworks of analysis for understanding treaties in imperial contexts;
- new methods for studying treaty-making and cross-cultural diplomacy.



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The conference is organised by the research program [Historical Treaties of Southeast Asia](#), financed by the [Swedish Research Council](#) and hosted by the [Linnaeus University Centre for Colonial and Postcolonial Studies](#), in collaboration with the [University of the Philippines](#) at Diliman.

## Panel Proposals

Proposals for panels should focus on a coherent theme, concept, theory or method. Comparative perspectives across regions, countries and time periods are especially welcome. Panels should consist of between three and five presentations. In addition, a chair and a commentator may also be included in the panel. Proposals for panels should be submitted as Word document and include the following information:

- Panel organiser and contact person (name, affiliation, e-mail)
- Panel members (names, affiliation, e-mail, function in the panel)
- Panel title
- Panel abstract (200–400 words)
- Individual papers (title, name/s of presenter/s, abstract of 100–300 words per paper)

## Individual Paper Proposals

Individual papers may be combined to form panels or be included in open slots in accepted panels. Paper proposals should be submitted as Word document and include the following information:

- Paper presenter/s (name, affiliation, e-mail)
- Paper title
- Paper abstract (100–300 words)

## Submission Format and Deadline

All proposals should be sent as a Word document to [2024conference@sea-treaties.org](mailto:2024conference@sea-treaties.org). Deadline for submission is *1 October 2023*. Applicants will be notified by the end of October.

## Costs and Scholarships

The conference is free of charge for participants who present a paper or participate actively in a panel in another capacity (e.g. chair or commentator). Interested scholars and students who do not present a paper or participate in a panel may attend by paying a fee when registering. All participants will be expected to pay for their own travel and accommodation. Several accommodation options will be available, ranging from inexpensive student housing to hotels.

A limited number of scholarships intended to cover travel and inexpensive accommodation may be available for scholars from Asian low or mid-income countries. PhD students and young researchers will be given priority. The call for scholarships will open after the deadline for submissions and will be open to scholars and students whose papers have been accepted.

## Inquiries and more information

General inquiries should be sent to [2024conference@sea-treaties.org](mailto:2024conference@sea-treaties.org).

For more information and updates, see the [conference website](#).

Organisers: [Stefan Eklöf Amirell](#), Linnaeus University & [Ariel Lopez](#), University of the Philippines