

**“WORKING TOGETHER” FOR PEACE AND
PROSPERITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, 1945 – 1968: THE
BIRTH OF THE ASEAN WAY**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
THESIS DECLARATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
ABBREVIATIONS	viii
FIGURES	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
The history of international relations in Southeast Asia	2
The thesis	5
The structure of the thesis	7
1 THE ASEAN WAY – HOW HAS IT BEEN IDENTIFIED?	10
The ASEAN Way	10
Scholarly discussion of the ASEAN Way	13
(i) The principle of non-interference	14
(ii) Face-saving behaviour	18
(iii) Consultations	20
(iv) Informality	22
(v) The spirit of working together	23
The influence of Southeast Asian cultures on the ASEAN Way	24
ASEAN and its precursors: The origin of the ASEAN Way	26
Concluding remarks	29
2 AN AWAKENING OF REGIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS	31
Southeast Asia after the Japanese surrender	31
The advent of the Cold War	32
Towards self-reliance	41
The birth of regional consciousness	47

The political situation in Indonesia	49
The development of the plan	54
The significance of the establishment of the ASA	56
Concluding remarks	59
3 THE ATTEMPT TO FIND A REGIONAL SOLUTION TO A REGIONAL PROBLEM	60
The declaration of the Malaysia plan	60
The regional situation in a broader context	66
The reaction from potential claimants	67
Starting the verbal war	75
Seeking peaceful coexistence	83
The beginning of discord	97
The significance of the Manila agreements and Maphilindo	107
Concluding remarks	114
4 THE SETTLEMENT OF THE REGIONAL PROBLEM AND THE FORMATION OF ASEAN	115
The Malaysia issue after the establishment of Malaysia	116
Suharto's rise to power	120
Indonesia's new foreign policy	122
Towards reconciliation	128
Post-Bangkok talks	134
Towards regional cooperation	137
From 'antagonising each other' to 'working together'	148
Concluding remarks	155
5 THE CORREGIDOR AFFAIR	156
The killings in the Corregidor Island	156
Reaction from Kuala Lumpur	159
Tempering an international dispute	160

Bangkok talks	161
The Jakarta agreement	162
The Annexation Law and the further deterioration of relations	164
Towards re-establishing the Jakarta agreement	167
The significance of the Corregidor affair	170
Concluding remarks	175

6 THE NATURE OF THE ASEAN WAY **176**

The ASEAN Way and traditional culture	176
The ASEAN Way and the principle of non-interference	180
What is the ASEAN Way?	184
Four conventions for ‘working together beyond difference’	188
The formation process of the ASEAN Way	192
ASEAN, the ASEAN Way and the goal of ASEAN	195
Concluding remarks	200

CONCLUSION **202**

BIBLIOGRAPHY 205

ABSTRACT

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is the first organisation of such scope in the region, and one of the oldest in the world. Explaining its longevity are the principles and working methods that have been embodied in the organisation since its inception in 1967. Amongst the most prominent, and least studied, of these has been the so-called ASEAN Way. This thesis traces the troubled origins of ASEAN as an organisation, and the place in it of this paramount principle. It does so by examining its watershed period, defined here as 1945-1968. This is achieved by focussing on the many sources of dissonance and disharmony that had characterised the Southeast Asian region before ASEAN's inception, and most strongly so in the Cold War period. Despite this, the thesis suggests, the countries of the region were constantly searching for ways in which some degree of harmonisation, and solid forms of working relations between quite diverse states, could be achieved.

The thesis looks at the historically important staging posts of regional cooperation by examining interactions between countries in ASEAN: the formation process of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) and Maphilindo, both of which should be regarded as the forerunners of ASEAN, in addition to the formation of ASEAN itself. In the ASA, the practice of 'consultation' was regarded as important to ensure regional cooperation. The practices of 'face-saving behaviour' and 'informality' were added to these through the subsequent association of Indonesia, Malaya and the Philippines (Maphilindo). Maphilindo also introduced the idea of 'working together', this being written in its charter. In the period between the ending of the three-way dispute after the collapse of Maphilindo and the formation of ASEAN, the working method of 'shelving thorny issues', on which no compromise could be achieved, emerged. The thesis shows that the latter was first brought into the settlement process of the territorial dispute over Sabah, which was in important respects the catalyst for the formation of ASEAN. The thesis also looks at the settlement process employed in the so-called Corregidor affair, which occurred only one year after the

establishment of ASEAN, and was most important in shaping the working nature of the new association. In the course of the settlement process of the Corregidor affair, ASEAN first exercised in a loosely, and flexibly, integrated way all four of the above-mentioned practices, and did so under the overarching principle of ‘working together’; a notion that in some significant ways defines the ASEAN Way.

DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or either tertiary institution to Kazuhisa Shimada and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMDA	Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement
AMM	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASAS	Association of South East Asian State
ASPAC	Asian and Pacific Council
CAB	The British Cabinet
CO	The British Colonial Office
DC	The British Defence Committee
ECAFE	The United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
FCO	The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FO	The British Foreign Office
ICJ	International Court of Justice
KOGAM	Crush Malaysia Command
MCEDSEA	Ministerial Conference on Economic Development in Southeast Asia
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MPRS	Indonesia's Provisional People's Consultative Assembly
NKKU	Unitary State of North Borneo
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
PMO	The British Prime Minister's Office
PRRI	Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia
SEAFET	Southeast Asian Friendship and Economic Treaty
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
TR	The British Treasury
TUNK	North Borneo National Army

FIGURES

Fig. 1 The ASEAN Way (Concept and conventions)

Fig. 2 ASEAN, the ASEAN Way and the goal of ASEAN