

The Berita Database:

An Online Treasury on Brunei,
Malaysia and Singapore

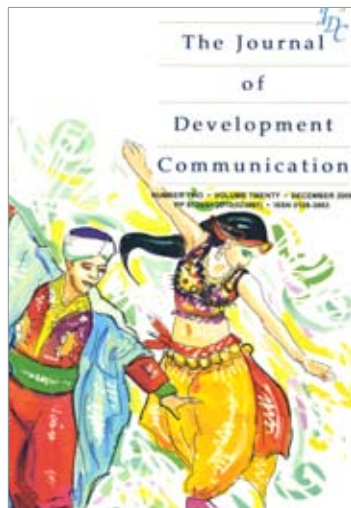


By **Jeffrey L. Ferrier**

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Many scholars, students and other researchers in the United States are unsure of where to turn when researching topics related to Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore. Even at Ohio University, which is fortunate to have a rich library collection on Southeast Asia, investigations into this particular subject can be daunting. Additionally, it is increasingly obvious that most students and faculty prefer to conduct their research online and not necessarily within the physical confines of the library. While many online databases have at least some content related to the Malay World, few actually make it the primary focus. The *Berita* Database, which is maintained by the staff at the Southeast Asia Collection at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, is a noteworthy exception.

This online database allows researchers to find references to relevant books, book chapters, journal articles and conference papers on a wide array of topics in the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences related to the nations of Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore. Malay language materials are included along with those in English and other Western languages. The database now contains over 46,000 records of resources published from 1990 to the present and may be searched at no cost by any researcher with Internet access from around the globe. The “scholarly usefulness” of *Berita* online was rated as essential by the *Asia-WWW-Monitor* in June 2010.



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Berita includes many important periodicals, which cover a wide variety of subjects related to Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore, including titles published in Asia, Australia, the United States and Europe. These indexed periodicals include: *Aka-demika*;



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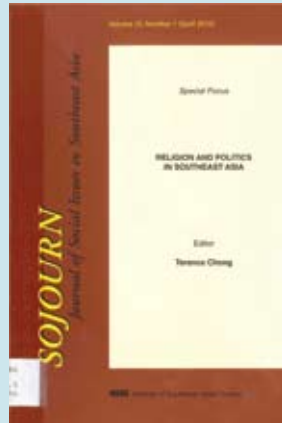
Art and Asia Pacific; *Asian Studies Review*; *Borneo Research Bulletin*; *Contemporary Southeast Asia*; *Dewan Bahasa*; *Dewan Sastera*; *Indonesia and the Malay World*; *The Journal of Development Communication*; *Journal of Tropical Forest Science*; *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*; *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*; *Sarawak Museum Journal*; *Jurnal Institut Perkhidmatan Awam*; *Singapore Economic Review* and *Sojourn*. A complete list of the serials that *Berita* covers is available online.

In addition to periodical articles, the database also includes individual book chapters, books, and selected conference papers. The diversity of publication formats and languages it offers, combined with the free access for researchers worldwide, makes *Berita* an especially valuable research tool.

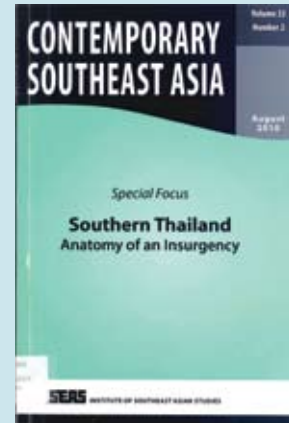
Berita (cicdatabank.library.ohiou.edu/opac/berita.php) can be searched by keyword, author name and Library of Congress subject headings. Retrieval may be limited by publication date or to items in the Malay or English languages, and desired citations may be downloaded, printed or sent to a convenient email address. While the article's full text is not available in *Berita*, users who are affiliated with any institution that provides interlibrary loan services may request materials, which cannot otherwise be accessed locally,



A rare Thai book, titled *Áthit kap phāēndin Thai*, on the Thai resistance to the Japanese invasion during WW II. All rights reserved, Samnakphim Sahakit, 1949.



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from Ohio University Library. In many instances, journal articles and other shorter publications can be conveniently transmitted in an electronic format.

The staff at Ohio University Libraries is particularly well positioned to compile *Berita* as the Library has served as the North American Depository for Malaysian publications and government documents since 1987. As part of this arrangement, the Southeast Asia Collection receives library resources from the National Library of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur each year, a practice which ensures that the holdings on Malaysia are particularly robust. The staff also actively seek out publications about Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei from other sources such as university presses and commercial publishers. This wealth of information is a boon to researchers who take advantage of *Berita* and the Ohio University Libraries online catalog (library.ohiou.edu/find/).

Berita is only one of the valuable electronic resources that can be found through the *Center for International Collections (CIC) Databank* (cic-databank.library.ohiou.edu/opac/index.php) maintained by Ohio University Libraries. For instance, the *CIC Databank* also provides free access to the *Database for Publications on Overseas Chinese* and the *David K. Wyatt Thai Database*.

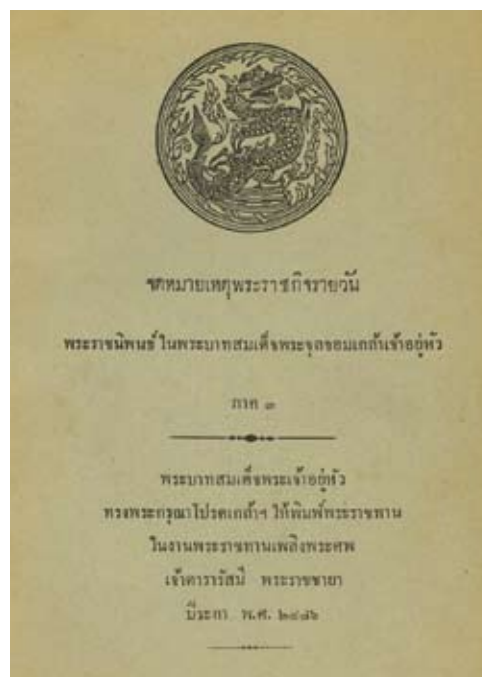
The *David K. Wyatt Thai Database* (cicdatabank.library.ohiou.edu/opac/thai.php) contains descriptive information on approximately 1,800 publications related to Thailand. Besides many of the standard works on Thailand and Southeast Asia, a substantial number of the Thai Royal chronicles, many of King Chulalongkorn's diaries and letters as

well as other monographs, memoirs, and cremation volumes are included. Some of these works are very rare and often not found outside of Thailand. Ohio University Libraries is coordinating efforts to digitise selected titles; these will soon be available online at no cost, even for users outside the United States.

Another unique and exciting resource for those interested in the Chinese Diaspora is the *Database for Publications on Overseas Chinese* (cicdatabank.library.ohiou.edu/opac/overseas.php). Researchers can locate references for periodical articles, books, and book chapters on the overseas Chinese in many parts of the world. Its wide geographic and linguistic scope makes this database a critical research aid to all those interested in this subject. Published works on the diasporic Chinese in Mandarin, Japanese, English, Dutch, Malay, Thai and other Western languages can be found here.

The far reach of these online resources is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the *CIC Databank* was accessed 18,958 times by users from 136 different countries between January 2009 and January 2010, according to data gathered by Google Analytics. For many these databases open doors to a wide variety of rich historical resources.

Individuals who would like additional information on any of the databases mentioned in this article may contact Jeffrey Ferrier, Curator of the Center for International Collections, Ohio University Libraries, at ferrier@ohio.edu. ■



Third volume of King Chulalongkorn's 24-volume diary, an important primary source on Thai history. All rights reserved, Rōngphim Sayām Phānitchayakān, 1933.