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Thailand's "Good Coup": the Fall of Thaksin, the Military and Democracy

Guest Editors: Michael K. Connors and Kevin Hewison

The last time the *Journal of Contemporary Asia* produced a special issue on Thailand, in 1978, it was a response to the events surrounding the military coup on 6 October 1976. That coup marked the bloody end of an important three year democratic interlude that has come to be seen as a prelude to the democratisation of Thailand's politics over the following three decades. At the time the focus was on the destruction of democratic politics and the remarkable divisions in Thai society as rightists sought to crush the left.

That a second *Journal of Contemporary Asia* special issue on Thailand should be produced following another coup is entirely appropriate. Thaksin Shinawatra, the only Thai prime minister to win two successive general elections, was overthrown on 19 September 2006. Thaksin led a political party that had changed the nature of Thailand's politics while also generating remarkable divisions within the country. Since the coup, these divisions have become deeper as the palace, military and bureaucracy embed their power and stake out positions of dominance in Thai society.

This special issue presents an attempt to understand the Thaksin ascendancy, its ideological, class and institutional base, the oppositional movements that took shape against it, and the forces that eventually overthrew it. These stories are not a seamless linear narrative, and we hope that this collection will give rise to further work that attempts to unravel the political dynamics of the Thai social formation.

"This collection serves as required reading for anyone who wants to read an objective analysis of recent Thai political events that differs substantially from the sycophantic reports found in the country's two English-language dailies."

Daniel Ten Kate, *Asia Sentinel*

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