

4:00 pm Wednesday 3 May 2006

Honouring Sites of Pain, Trauma and Resistance in East Timor

Michael Leach

This paper examines the way difficult sites of imprisonment, trauma and resistance are being remembered in the newly independent nation of East Timor. Most societies have their scars of history, and a range of places, sites and institutions that represent the legacy of these difficult periods. Following 450 years of Portuguese colonialism, and a traumatic 24- year struggle against Indonesian occupation, East Timor has a great many sites which chart a painful legacy of colonialism, civil war, and resistance against neo-colonial occupation.

These important, but often ambivalently regarded sites of historical memory recall traumatic episodes in the national history, raising difficult questions of heritage conservation, particularly where budget resources are limited. How are such places to be remembered? How do people and societies cope with painful memories? Should these aspects of national heritage be expunged or memorialised? This paper examines East Timorese responses to these difficult issues since independence in 2002.

Michael Leach is a Research Fellow in the Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. He has previously taught in Politics at the University of Queensland, and at South Thames College in London. His publications include Leach, M. and F. Mansouri. 2004. *Lives in Limbo: Voices of Refugees under Temporary Protection*. Sydney: UNSW Press; and Leach, M., G. Stokes and I. Ward eds. 2000. *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

**There is no entry charge and everyone is welcome.
Drinks and nibbles will be provided.**

The Blue Room , Building B, Room 2.. 20, Burwood Campus