



# Extinct or still around?

## Javanese Large Mammals (the Javan Tiger, Rhinoceros, Elephant) and Their Histories

No  
Reservation  
required

16 October 2025, Thursday

12:00-13:00 (Japan Time)

Tonan-tei (No.201)

Inamori Foundation Memorial Building, CSEAS, Kyoto University



### ABSTRACT

With some 732 mammal species, Indonesia has, along with Brazil, the highest richness of mammals in the world. The high level of endemism is one of the factors behind this rich biodiversity, which also covers the famous megafauna, such as the Sumatran tiger, Sumatran elephant, and several orangutan species in Sumatra and Borneo. In my talk, I will focus on the history of human-animal relations in Java, which is one of the most densely settled islands in the world. I will discuss mainly two Javanese species, considered extinct today: the Javan elephant and the Javan tiger. The Java elephant roamed the island of Java until the 16th century CE, but its genes still live in a population “transplanted” to Borneo in the historical past. The Javan tiger, believed to have become extinct in the late 1980s, has recently been reported by Indonesian zoologists to be still around. The analysis of its fur remains may prove this assumption. Now, both the Javan tiger and the Javan elephant are depicted on early Javanese temples, including Borobudur, the largest Buddhist stupa in the world, built in the 8th century CE.

### PRESENTER

Jiří Jákl

Palacky University Olomouc  
Visiting Research Scholar, CSEAS

Jiří Jákl is a historian of Southeast Asia, specializing in the culture and society of pre-Islamic Java and modern Bali. He studied Indonesian studies in Leiden (Old Javanese language) and did his PhD at Queensland University in Brisbane. He is primarily interested in the history of human-animal relations, the perception of nature, and the ecology of Indonesia before 1800 CE.



Chair: Tomohiro Machikita (CSEAS)

CSEAS colloquium 2025