ETHNIC RELATIONS AND NATION-BUILDING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
The Singapore Society of Asian Studies (SSAS) is a local academic association, which was established in 1982. Its aims are to promote research on Asian society and culture, focusing on the Southeast Asian region and the ethnic Chinese. It concentrates on organizing talks, seminars, and conferences as well as publishing books, monographs, and a journal *Asian Culture (Yazhou Wenhua)* in two languages: Chinese and English. Its objective is to contribute to the academic life in the city-state.

The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional centre dedicated to the study of socio-political, security and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic and economic environment.

The Institute’s research programmes are the Regional Economic Studies (RES, including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS).

ISEAS Publications, an established academic press, has issued more than 1,000 books and journals. It is the largest scholarly publisher of research about Southeast Asia from within the region. ISEAS Publications works with many other academic and trade publishers and distributors to disseminate important research and analyses from and about Southeast Asia to the rest of the world.
ETHNIC RELATIONS AND NATION-BUILDING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Case of the Ethnic Chinese

edited by Leo Suryadinata

NIAS Press

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES Singapore
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Contributors

A. Dahana is Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta; he is also a writer on Chinese affairs.

Lee Kam Hing is a director, Asian Center for Media Studies Sdn. Bhd. in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. He was formerly Professor of History at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

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Shamsul A.B. is Professor of Social Anthropology and Director of the Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA) and the Institute of Occidental Studies (IKON), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia, where he was formerly Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Sharon Siddique, a sociologist, was formerly Deputy Director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. She is currently a partner in Sreekumar, Siddique & Co. Pte. Ltd., a regional research consulting company based in Singapore.

Leo Suryadinata is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. He was formerly Professor in the Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore.

Tan Ern Ser is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, and Academic Convenor of the Singapore Studies Programme, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore.
Eugene K.B. Tan is Lecturer in Law at the Singapore Management University and, in academic year 2003–2004, Fellow with the Stanford Programme in International Legal Studies, Stanford Law School, USA.

Mely G. Tan, a sociologist, is currently affiliated with a number of civil society organizations, and is also on the faculty of the Program on the Study of Police Sciences of the Graduate Program of the University of Indonesia. Until August 2003 she was a Commissioner of the National Commission on Violence against Women. Other previous positions include Chair, Research Institute, Atma Jaya Catholic University and Senior Researcher (Ahli Peneliti Utama or APU), Indonesian Institute of Sciences.

Wang Gungwu is Professor and Director of the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore. He was formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong.

Frans H. Winarta, an advocate in Jakarta, is also a council member of the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute under the leadership of Nelson Mandela and one of the founders of the Indonesian Anti-Discrimination Movement (GANDI).
Ethnic/racial relations have been a perennial theme in Southeast Asian studies, and current events have highlighted the tensions among ethnic groups and the need to maintain ethnic/racial harmony for nation unity. The Singapore Society of Asian Studies (SSAS) organized an international conference at the end of November 2002 focusing on an analysis of ethnic/race relations in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, with special reference to the roles of ethnic Chinese in nation-building. It brought together a group of established Southeast Asian scholars to critically examine some of the important issues such as ethnic politics, nation-building, state policies, and conflict resolution.

The plan of the SSAS Conference Committee was to have the issues analysed from various perspectives. It therefore invited scholars of different ethnic origins, so that each could present the perspective from his own ethnic background. The arrangement does not imply that scholars cannot offer an accurate analysis of those outside their own ethnic group. Rather, the conference was to provide an opportunity for the scholars to deal with different facets of the issues involved as experienced or witnessed in their lives. Based on this objective, the committee invited nine scholars from three countries.

From Indonesia, the Committee invited Dr Mely Tan, a senior sociologist, to deal with the issue of Chinese ethnicity and nation-building; A. Dahana, an indigenous historian, to see the problem from a *pribumi* perspective; and Frans Winarta, a *peranakan* lawyer and an activist, to look at the legal aspect of the problem.
From Malaysia, the Committee invited Dr Lee Kam Hing, a historian who has done a lot of work on Chinese Malaysians to deal with nation-building from the perspective of a Chinese Malaysian; P. Ramasamy, a political scientist of Indian descent, to deal with Indian Malaysians; and Shamsul A.B., a prolific Malay anthropologist, to give a Malay’s perspective of the ethnic Chinese.

From Singapore, three scholars were invited. Eugene Tan, a young scholar trained in both law and political science, recounted the experience of nation-building in the island state; and Tan Ern Ser, a sociologist, presented a paper discussing current ethnic relations in Singapore based on survey data; while Sharon Siddique, also a sociologist, commented on Chinese Singaporeans from an outsider’s point of view.

The Committee also invited Professor Wang Gungwu, a leading authority on the history of Chinese overseas and a historian of China and Southeast Asia, to address the general issue on ethnic Chinese and nation-building in Southeast Asia, thus providing a crucial framework for the conference.

These ten interesting and most up-to-date articles were later revised to become this volume. I have not only edited this volume but also provided the concluding remarks to draw the various views together.

*Leo Suryadinata*

30 May 2003