

**MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP INTERNATIONAL**

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# **THE CHINESE OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA**

**AN MRG INTERNATIONAL REPORT • 92/6 • THE CHINESE OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA**

**Edited by Minority Rights Group**



# MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP

is an international research and information unit registered in Britain as an educational charity under the Charities Act of 1960. Its principal aims are –

To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.

To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and

To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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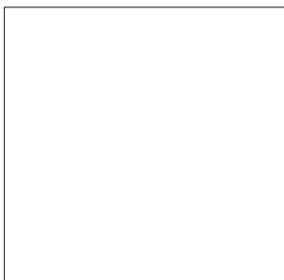
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A Chinese couple in  
Indonesia  
P. ZACHMANN/MAGNUM

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# THE CHINESE OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA

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# DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES\*

The General Assembly,

*Reaffirming* that one of the basic aims of the United Nations, as proclaimed in its Charter, is to promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

*Reaffirming* faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small,

*Desiring* to promote the realization of principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as other relevant international instruments that have been adopted at the universal or regional level and those concluded between individual States Members of the United Nations,

*Inspired* by the provisions of article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights concerning the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities,

*Considering* that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to the political and social stability of States in which they live,

*Emphasizing* that the constant promotion and realization of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as an integral part of the development of society as a whole and within a democratic framework based on the rule of law, would contribute to the strengthening of friendship and cooperation among peoples and States,

*Considering* that the United Nations has an important role to play regarding the protection of minorities,

*Bearing in mind* the work done so far within the United Nations system, in particular the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities as well as the bodies established pursuant to the International Covenants on Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments on promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

*Taking into account* the important work which is carried out by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in protecting minorities and in promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

*Recognizing* the need to ensure even more effective implementation of international instruments with regard to the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

*Proclaims* this Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

## Article 1

1. States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.
2. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.

## Article 2

1. Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.
2. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.
3. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner

not incompatible with national legislation.

4. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain their own associations.

5. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group, with persons belonging to other minorities, as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

## Article 3

1. Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights including those as set forth in this Declaration individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination.

2. No disadvantage shall result for any person belonging to a minority as the consequence of the exercise or non-exercise of the rights as set forth in this Declaration.

## Article 4

1. States shall take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.

2. States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards.

3. States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.

4. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.

5. States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country.

## Article 5

1. National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

2. Programmes of cooperation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

## Article 6

States should cooperate on questions relating to persons belonging to minorities, including exchange of information and experiences, in order to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

## Article 7

States should cooperate in order to promote respect for the rights as set forth in this Declaration.

## Article 8

1. Nothing in this Declaration shall prevent the fulfilment of international obligations of States in relation to persons belonging to minorities. In particular, States shall fulfil in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties.

2. The exercise of the rights as set forth in this Declaration shall not prejudice the enjoyment by all persons of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3. Measures taken by States in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights as set forth in this Declaration shall not *prima facie* be considered contrary to the principle of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

4. Nothing in this Declaration may be construed as permitting any activity contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

## Article 9

The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles as set forth in this Declaration, within their respective fields of competence.

\* As approved by the Commission on Human Rights at the forty-eighth session (Resolution 1992/16 of 21 February 1992).

# PREFACE

**The worldwide ethnic Chinese diaspora is one of the most extensive in existence today. There is probably a Chinese community, large or small, in every state or territory. Most of these communities are relatively recent, for few Chinese emigrated on a permanent basis until the 18th or 19th centuries, and many have established themselves only over the last century. The diaspora is only a tiny part of the greater Chinese world, perhaps 28 million people compared to over 1,000 million in China proper, 21 million in Taiwan and 6 million in Hong Kong and Macau. The majority of this diaspora, and the subject of this report, is concentrated in South-East Asia.**

The Chinese communities of the region were the subject of one of the earliest reports published by Minority Rights Group. In 1972, less than two years after MRG had begun publishing its successful report series and in the wake of ethnic tension in Malaysia and Indonesia, MRG issued *The Chinese in Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia*. A revised and extended edition was published in 1982. This completely new edition extends the subject matter still further and contains case studies of the six ASEAN states, the three Indochinese states, Burma (Myanmar) and East Timor. There is inevitably more information available on the Chinese in some of these countries than in others, and this is reflected in the differing lengths of the articles.

The report is the collective work of its authors: Ramses Amer (Indochina), Mary Somers Heidhues (the historical overview and the ASEAN states), Martin Smith (Burma) and John Taylor (East Timor). Sue Rabbitt Roff, formerly of MRG New York and herself an expert on Indonesia and East Timor, coordinated the management of the report.

People of Chinese ethnic origin have worked and settled in the societies of South-East Asia for generations. The longest settled communities live in the areas closest to China, where the Chinese empire once claimed (or attempted to claim) suzerainty or where trade links were strong, while the newer communities have settled further afield during the period when European colonial empires needed labour for their new industries or middlemen to facilitate trade. In some territories, such as Singapore and the Malayan states, the influx of Chinese immigrants decisively altered the population balance of the region.

Although large-scale Chinese immigration had finished before the beginning of the Second World War, and there are many examples of how Chinese enterprise and industry have contributed to the economic growth of the region, the record of the new independent states towards their Chinese communities has been mixed. State policies have ranged from outright discrimination to tolerance, from segregation to integration to assimilation. In a few cases, people identified as Chinese on ethnic, racial or cultural grounds have found themselves the victims of genocidal state policies.

Most South-East Asian governments have been concerned to limit the amount of economic resources (and power) concentrated in Chinese hands. Strategies for achieving this have ranged from restricted access to education and business activity to the forcible expulsion of ethnic Chinese. While in many states some Chinese communities

and families do hold a disproportionately large share in the urban economic sector, this disguises the fact that many ethnic Chinese are farmers, small traders and professionals. In response, many Chinese communities are accommodating towards their governments even where they feel that government policies have resulted in their suffering unfair discrimination.

Some Chinese communities are in a far more precarious position. In both Indonesia in 1959-60 and 1965 and in Vietnam in 1976-9, governments engaged in mass expulsions of ethnic Chinese as deliberate state policies. Many ASEAN countries, notably Malaysia and Singapore in 1979, have refused to accept refugees from the Indochinese countries, especially when these refugees were ethnic Chinese, as was the case with the first waves from Vietnam. Under the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia over 200,000 ethnic Chinese, half of the Chinese community, were killed through executions, starvation or ill-treatment and in East Timor most of the Chinese community were rounded up and executed in the first week of the Indonesian invasion in December 1975. In Burma (Myanmar) the Chinese community has been a specific target of the military government since 1962.

Nevertheless, for the various Chinese communities in most of the states of South-East Asia, the position is neither so urgent nor so vulnerable. The ending of the Cold War, and the relaxation of relations between the People's Republic of China and the states of the region (as well as superpower rivalry between China, the USA and the USSR) have produced more amicable relations between and within states. It is unlikely that Chinese minorities will again be regarded by governments as 'fifth columnists' for either the People's Republic or Taiwan. The relaxation of previous restrictions on citizenship for the Chinese minorities in Indonesia and the Philippines has created a more positive climate.

Today, in most states of the region, the ethnic Chinese are citizens and see their future as belonging to their country of citizenship. Their future and the future of their fellow citizens of other ethnic origins (whether indigenous or otherwise) is bound together, politically and economically, and probably also culturally. Every state in South-East Asia today is ethnically heterogeneous and most (although not all) are prepared to acknowledge the fact. The varied ethnic Chinese communities should therefore be encouraged to play a creative and positive role at all levels within the countries in which they have chosen to live.

**Alan Phillips**

Director

November 1992

# GLOSSARY

**Ali-Babaism** colloquial term to describe Malay-Chinese or Indonesian-Chinese partnerships, in which 'Ali' assures political benefits for 'Baba', the Chinese businessman.

**ASEAN** Association of Southeast Asian Nations – regional consultative body, with six member states (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand).

**Asli** lit. indigenous, Malay-Indonesian word, referring to citizens of indigenous ethnic group (see also pribumi).

**Baba** similar meaning to *peranakan* (see below).

**Bang** system of indirect rule over Chinese communities by the governments of pre-colonial Vietnam and Cambodia; a *bang* is a dialect or speech-group association.

**Barisan Nasional** lit. National Front, governing coalition in Malaysia.

**Batavia** former Dutch colonial name for Jakarta.

**Bumiputra** lit. sons of the soil, Malay term for citizens of Malaysia who are of Malay or other indigenous descent.

**Cochinchina** the southernmost part of Vietnam.

**Congrégation system** French colonial system in Indochina, based on laws of Vietnamese Emperor Gia-Long, establishing a special administration for ethnic Chinese which divided them into groups according to places of origin and under the jurisdiction of their own leaders.

**Cukong** lit. uncle, Hokkien word for wealthy Chinese patrons, godfathers, bosses, in Indonesia refers specifically to wealthy Chinese businessmen receiving government favours; but is less used today.

**Dayaks** diverse tribal groups, inhabiting the island of Borneo/Kalimantan.

**Emergency (in Malaya)** period of Communist insurrection 1948-60.

**Guangzhou** Chinese name for city commonly known to Westerners as Canton.

**Guomindang (Kuomintang)** Chinese Republican Party of Sun Yat-sen and later of Chiang Kai-shek, left the Chinese mainland for Taiwan after being finally defeated by the Communists in 1949 and has since ruled only in Taiwan. Some remnants of various Guomindang armies have been active in parts of Burma and Thailand.

**Hakka (Kejia)** distinctive Chinese dialect group who live mainly in parts of Guangdong and Fujian.

**Hoa** term used by the Vietnamese government to designate most Vietnamese citizens of Chinese descent.

**Ho Chi Minh City** formerly called Saigon, largest city of Vietnam and former capital of South Vietnam.

**Hokkien (Minnan)** dialect of southern Fujian.

**Khmer Rouge** lit. Red Khmers, fanatical Communist nationalists who ruled Cambodia from April 1975 to January 1979.

**Mandarin (or Guoyu, Putonghua)** standard Chinese language spoken in most of north and south-west China, later became language of communication for many Chinese in South-East Asia who spoke other Chinese dialects.

**Mestizo** lit. mixed blood, Spanish word for descendants of mixed unions, e.g. Chinese and indigenous Filipinos.

**Nanyang** lit. South Seas, Chinese descriptive name for South-East Asian region.

**NEP** New Economic Policy, economic goals introduced by government in Malaysia after riots of 1969, aimed at reducing poverty and increasing the role of the indigenous people (Bumiputras) in the Malaysian economy.

**NEZ** New Economic Zone, regions of mass resettlement designated by the government of reunified Vietnam from 1976 to 1979, they were especially used to resettle private traders, ethnic minorities (such as the Chinese) and political dissidents.

**ODP** Orderly Departure Programme, agreement between Vietnam and UN High Commissioner for Refugees to allow citizens of Vietnam, including those of Chinese descent, to emigrate with official approval from the Vietnamese government.

**Peranakan** lit. local born, Malay-Indonesian word which also implies a person with local affiliations, speaking Malay-Indonesian or a local language in preference to Chinese.

**Pribumi** lit. indigenous, Indonesian word for those of Indonesian ethnic descent.

**Qing (Ch'ing)** Manchu dynasty which ruled China 1644-1911.

**Siam** former name for Thailand (1781-1939).

**Sino-Thai** Thai citizens of Chinese or part Chinese descent.

**SLORC** State Law and Order Restoration Council, dictatorial ruling military of Burma (Myanmar), seized power in a coup in September 1988.

**Sun Yat-sen** first President of China in 1911 and leader of Guomindang, died 1925.

**Teochiu (Chaozhou)** dialect of north-eastern Guangdong province.

**Totok** lit. pure, Malay-Indonesian word for culturally 'pure' Chinese-speaking persons.

**UMNO** United Malays' National Organization – main Malay and leading national political party in Malaysia.

**Warganegara Indonesia (WNI)** lit. Indonesian citizen, usually used to refer to citizens of foreign descent, as WNI-Chinese.

**Vihara** lit. temple.

*In this report, Mandarin Chinese terms are transcribed according to the Pinyin system, except where another spelling is widely recognized (e.g. Hokkien, Sun Yat-sen).*

Sources for boxes at beginning of each section:

*Third World Guide* 1991/92, Instituto del Tercer Mundo, Montevideo, 1990  
1990 figures from *The World Bank Atlas 1991*, The World Bank, Washington DC, 1991.

# HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

by Mary Somers Heidhues

## Early Chinese Contacts and First Settlements

Fifteen hundred years ago, trade took Chinese merchants beyond their shores to South-East Asia, or the Nanyang as they called it. The monsoon winds carried enterprising individuals from China's south-eastern provinces, particularly Guangdong and Fujian, to this meeting point of long-distance commercial pathways, where they came into contact with a mix of peoples. Over time, some exchange passed under cover of the imperial tribute system, through which South-East Asian rulers paid symbolic homage to the Chinese emperor, but much contact was in the form of freelance, small-scale, privately organized trade.

The Chinese who stayed on became traders of all kinds and were well established in the service of various South-East Asian potentates, often as treasurers, tax collectors or harbourmasters, before the first Europeans reached the area in the 16th Century. The latter found settlements of Chinese, as well as other ethnically distinct trading groups such as Arabs, Indians or Bugis from the island of Celebes, each group living under its own headman in its own quarter of the town. Some Chinese took local wives and, over the centuries, some of their descendants became indistinguishable from the local population. The Chinese on the Malayan Peninsula or on the islands of Sumatra and Java sometimes became Muslims, while some of those in Siam (now Thailand) adopted Theravada Buddhism. In Vietnam in the 17th and 18th Centuries political refugees from China who had supported the Ming dynasty helped restore or refresh Confucian practices in the bureaucracy and in intellectual life.

In addition to trade, the Chinese entered agriculture in less developed parts of South-East Asia. For example, they planted and processed pepper and gambir and, by the 17th Century, were growing sugar for export or rice for distillation into alcoholic beverages in western Java. At the beginning of the 19th Century they introduced sugar into Siam, growing this export crop on plantations run with imported Chinese coolies (indentured labourers).<sup>1</sup>

They were also market gardeners on the outskirts of 17th-Century Batavia (now Jakarta), or near 19th-Century Singapore and Bangkok. Even today, they still help supply many modern cities of South-East Asia with fresh produce. Although agriculture was second to trade, it was an area of major innovations: the Chinese introduced an 'industrial' agriculture<sup>2</sup> in Java and, for that matter, in South-East Asia as a whole.

In thinly populated Borneo (Kalimantan), on the island of Bangka off the coast of Sumatra, and on the Malay Peninsula, the Chinese mined gold and tin, while communities of agriculturalists sprang up around the mining settlements. Some of the men married local women because few women migrated from China during this period. At the same time, Chinese were also artisans, skilled labourers and fishermen, while others came as pirates.

Chinese served local rulers – or even ruled themselves. For example, the 18th Century was a time of substantial rice trade from Siam to Canton, which Chinese managed on behalf of the Siamese court. Gold-mining areas of West Kalimantan became almost independent of the local sultans. Elsewhere, adventurers found a niche: the trader Mac Cuu controlled Cambodia's only seaport and established a small realm of pepper growers in the present-day area of Kampot.<sup>3</sup> In Siam, Taksin, son of a Chinese immigrant and a Thai mother, founded the city of Thonburi (now part of Bangkok) and helped re-establish the Siamese monarchy after a devastating war with Burma.<sup>4</sup>

Early European traders found Chinese useful commercial partners. They were middlemen, retailers and creditors in the villages, linking the local producers to the world economy; they ran revenue farms for opium, alcohol and gambling; they imported coolie labour and organized prostitution. However, Chinese were competitors of the Europeans, too, and Westerners often distrusted or feared them. Sometimes the Chinese seemed like a threat because they were more numerous, better acquainted with local conditions, 'heathens' and communicated in an apparently unintelligible language. As a result, the Spanish, for example, attacked the Chinese in Manila a number of times during the 17th and 18th Centuries, while the Dutch massacred them in Batavia in 1740.

## Immigration and Opportunity

In the early 19th Century, the Chinese could immigrate freely to South-East Asian countries and their communities had broad cultural autonomy. The colonial powers, the Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese and British, were now fully established in the area, and they exacted disproportionately high taxes from the Chinese as well as restricting their travel and settlement patterns. Limitations on immigration followed towards the end of the 19th Century, the most drastic of which were introduced in 1902 in the Philippines, when American 'exclusion' policy was extended to the islands, virtually preventing the import of Chinese coolie labourers. In the Netherlands Indies (now Indonesia) or in French Indochina, immigrants paid a substantial entry fee, but contract coolies were exempt. Immigration in Singapore and Malaya,<sup>5</sup> however, remained high until unemployment and the Depression of 1930 prompted the British to restrict admissions of adult males.

Since Chinese economic activities fitted well with the needs of early colonialists, these saw the Chinese as necessary cogs in the economy, but the local people considered them to be in the forefront of colonial rule. During the 19th Century, therefore, the Chinese consolidated their special position in the economy and society of South-East Asia. When Raffles founded Singapore in 1819, the settlement soon became a base for Chinese migration to the Nanyang and, in the long run, a trade and financial centre for the region. Within a few decades the British colony, Singapore, turned into a 'Chinese' city, a majority of its inhabitants being so to this day. After about 1850, Singapore became a trans-shipment point for coolies from China, who disembarked there before being sent on to the mines and plantations of Malaya and the Netherlands

map

Indies. Their employers were at first Chinese-owned and then, later, Western enterprises. Only a minority of this new wave of immigrants actually settled in the Nanyang during this period. The rest returned to China after a few years or died of mistreatment at work.<sup>6</sup>

Chinese immigrants replicated certain elements of Chinese society in their new locations. Not only were artifacts and furnishings imported but houses, temples and graveyards were built in imitation of those in the homeland. Various kinds of associations, based on clan ties, trades, cooperative enterprises, place of origin, burial insurance or ritual brotherhood grew up. Tiny traditional schools catered to children of those who settled and there were even a few Chinese hospitals. Initially, authorities tolerated these associations, even the 'secret societies', but gradually came to see the latter as criminal, engaging in the drug trade, prostitution, racketeering and armed conflict.

## Levels of Assimilation

By the early 19th Century there existed a fairly clear division within most Chinese communities in South-East Asia. One group, the settled population, consisted of families acculturated to local society in language, dress, and perhaps even religion and customs. The other group was typically immigrant – composed predominantly of adult males, speaking Chinese and often living in isolation in mines and rural areas or sometimes in urban concentrations, separated from the local population.

In different countries the Chinese communities adjusted in different ways to the majority population. Whether a group became completely assimilated or remained distinct was influenced by several factors: the legal situation, frequency and ease of contact with local people, the relative number of new immigrants (especially of women) and the receptivity of the local society itself.

In the 19th Century, in the Netherlands Indies, the Dutch required the Chinese to live in ghettos and discouraged their conversion to Islam, the religion of the majority. Despite some exceptions, this restrictive system combined with other measures (such as the land laws and the differentiated legal systems for Europeans, Chinese and 'natives') to maintain the separation of the *peranakan*<sup>7</sup> (settled) Chinese from natives. In the Netherlands Indies, after the mid-19th Century, it was virtually impossible for a 'Chinese', even if local-born, to become a 'native'.

In the case of Malaya, British policy reinforced differences between Chinese, even the local-born Malay-speaking *Babas*,<sup>8</sup> and Malays, but in addition the sheer numbers of new immigrants from China overwhelmed and reabsorbed ('resinified') the settled Chinese. As 'immigrants', even the local-born were not entitled to live in Malaya on the same terms as the Malays.

In other countries, however, settled Chinese were soon absorbed into local society. In Siam, for example, a Chinese might become a 'native' by changing his dress, habits and formal legal status. He quickly adjusted to local Buddhist practices.<sup>9</sup> Spanish colonial law in the Philippines allowed Chinese to marry native women only if they were Catholics. Their descendants, *mestizos*, might

in turn apply for legal status as 'natives'.<sup>10</sup> Between 1870 and 1930 the high numbers of immigrants from China, who seemed stubbornly to cling to customs of their homeland, made observers think that all Chinese, even local-born, were unassimilable. Increased migration, as well as the segregation of the Chinese, also set the stage for Chinese nationalism. First the imperial Qing government, then nationalists led by Sun Yat-sen, began to try to involve Chinese abroad in the politics and development of the homeland. New cultural influences from China and even from Christian missionaries made them more conscious of their own intellectual and religious heritage. Local groups built new temples, Confucianist societies sprang up, new kinds of community organizations formed and a self-conscious Chinese press appeared. Especially important was the influence, after 1900, of modern schools which taught in Mandarin<sup>11</sup> and introduced an array of new subjects, soon displacing traditional schools.

In an area like Java or the rural Philippines, the economic activities of the Chinese were subordinate to large Western export interests and consisted typically of trading activity by middlemen. When native agriculture changed to producing for export and taxation in kind was abolished, Chinese middlemen provided agricultural credit. Local Chinese sometimes organized export and import activities themselves (as with Siam's or Vietnam's rice exports), and they also were pioneers in light and consumer industry after the mid-19th Century: rice mills on the one hand, bottled water, soap and biscuits on the other. These industries frequently competed successfully with Western enterprises. Furthermore, in Siam they attracted capital from local sources, in particular from the nobility and the landowners.<sup>12</sup> In the Philippines, Chinese *mestizos* intermarried with the native landholding class. These economic alliances with powerholders continued in various forms into recent times.

## Political and Cultural Turnaround

The wave of new migrants brought other changes to ethnic Chinese communities in South-East Asia. For one thing, women began to arrive from the mainland. *Peranakan*, *Baba* and *mestiza* women wore an adapted form of Malay or Philippine dress; many chewed betel and followed other local practices. Immigrant Chinese women wore trousers; some even had bound feet. Their presence stabilized immigrant societies and, even in lands where assimilation was common, influences from China overtook those from local societies. Locally rooted Chinese began to reconsider what it meant to be Chinese, not just in dress but in religion, culture and politics.

New Chinese schools competed successfully with Western-language ones for the ethnic Chinese, but did not replace them completely. Some of the élite still chose Western education. Old-style Chinese schools, which had existed for decades wherever the presence of a few children made them possible, usually taught in the language or dialect of the place of origin in China: Hokkien (Minnan) for southern Fujian, Teochiu (Chaozhou) for north-eastern Guangdong province, Cantonese for the Guangzhou area, Hakka (who emigrated from various enclaves in Guangdong and Fujian), and so on. These lan-

guages (except Teochiu and Hokkien) were mutually unintelligible and speakers of various languages were often segregated from one another according to residence and occupation. Modern Chinese schools taught all pupils in Mandarin, China's national language, which in time became the language of communication for many Chinese in South-East Asia.

Through the schools and the Chinese-language press (in Indonesia a Chinese-operated press appeared in the Malay language), political influences from China increased, especially among young people. Some travelled to China to continue their education or to work, hoping to build a new country there. Philanthropists founded schools or business enterprises in China while ordinary working people sent money home. Tensions between China and Japan and the Western powers aroused patriotism and the will to help, which intensified after the outbreak of war between Japan and China in 1937.

## The Second World War and Problems of Adjustment

The Japanese occupation of South-East Asia in the Second World War brought humiliation, oppression and death to ethnic Chinese in the region, for the Japanese saw them as enemies. This common experience increased cultural and political solidarity but not all were, however, patriots. Some ethnic Chinese were profiteers, with Japanese help, or smugglers, despite Japanese death threats. Tensions with native peoples increased, especially where Chinese, as in Malaya, saw themselves as victims of the Japanese occupation, or as in Java, where anti-Chinese violence accompanied the withdrawal of the Dutch in 1942 and followed their return in 1945.

Chinese minorities faced new problems in the post-war period as colonial powers withdrew from the area, leaving political power in the hands of South-East Asian nationalists. After 1949, the Cold War complicated relations with China, given the presence of two competitors for the loyalty of Chinese abroad, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China in Taiwan. Cultural solidarity and politicization of Chinese culture were also typical of this period, while the number of Chinese schools and enthusiasm for the revolution in China, especially among young people, grew explosively.

During these same years, South-East Asian nationalism challenged the position of Chinese minorities. Immigration declined to a trickle. To South-East Asian states, China often appeared as a dangerous neighbour and Chinese minorities a 'potential fifth column', eager to extend Communist Chinese power to the Nanyang. Some states responded by making it difficult for Chinese to become citizens (Indonesia, Philippines, Malaya), and some by forcing them to do so (South Vietnam). Chinese law complicated the problem because it recognized Chinese born abroad as Chinese nationals or overseas Chinese, yet neither the People's Republic of China nor the Nationalist government on Taiwan were willing to admit all these supposed citizens to residence. Only students, professionals or the wealthy were welcome. As a result, alien Chinese could not be expelled from the South-East Asian countries, but they faced discrimination if they stayed.

Today, both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan have abandoned the idea that ethnic Chinese born abroad are necessarily Chinese citizens and they place good relations with friendly nations above any actions to 'protect' Chinese abroad. Thus, although the term 'overseas Chinese' (*Huaqiao*) is often used, these people are no longer nationals of China, and the term 'ethnic Chinese' more appropriately describes their status. 'Ethnic Chinese' includes all persons of Chinese or part Chinese descent who would, at least in a cultural or family sense, identify themselves as Chinese, even though they may be citizens of another country and also identify with that country.

Today, Chinese in the ten states of South-East Asia are part of the much larger diaspora of ethnic Chinese worldwide but it is not easy to estimate their numbers. In part, this is because of difficulties in deciding who is Chinese and in part because in some states it is not opportune for ethnic groups to advertise their distinctiveness. Ethnic tensions in some states have resulted in outbreaks of violence and mass expulsions, most notably in Indonesia in 1959-60 and 1965-7, and Indochina in 1976-9. Because of slower population growth and net emigration, however, the numerical proportion of ethnic Chinese in South-East Asian countries appears to be (with the possible exception of Singapore) steadily declining.

# THE ASEAN STATES

by Mary Somers Heidhues

Established in 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) originally included Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. Brunei became the sixth state at its independence in 1984 and Vietnam has expressed interest in association. ASEAN has functioned as a loose consultative body with a minimum of central organization or official common policy-making, and members differ in relative size, population, development and attitudes. Politically, these states have been anti-Communist internally, even where they have been externally non-aligned. Economically, they have successfully pursued rapid, export-oriented development with the help of foreign investment. Both their economic dynamism and their political conservatism have had repercussions for their Chinese minorities since their governments have pursued policies of wealth creation while at the same time inhibiting the accumulation of political power in the Chinese communities.

Although, in the past, Chinese in South-East Asia have been sentimentally attached to China and have hoped that good relations with their homeland would offer them protection while abroad, recent decades have shown that the best 'protection' lies in a successful accommodation to the country of residence. Some professionals have left for Western countries or sent their children abroad, causing a small 'brain drain', but most ethnic Chinese are probably hoping for a future in the area, if that means they can participate in its economic growth. For ethnic Chinese farmers, fishermen or the urban poor, restrictive policies have made their lives more difficult or even precarious for, unlike professionals or successful, internationally oriented businessmen, they have no quick or easy escape to another country available. Therefore, for most Chinese in the ASEAN countries, 'going home' to China is no real alternative today and the question is not whether, but how, they will adjust to life in the ASEAN countries.<sup>1</sup>

Rapid economic growth has expanded opportunities in many economic fields: export-oriented manufacturing, banking and finance, agro-industry, tourism and real estate, and ethnic Chinese have known how to take advantage of these opportunities. They have understood how to work with indigenous political and military powerholders to achieve their goals and as a result, some Chinese businessmen (there are few Chinese businesswomen at the level of big business) have become enormously wealthy, their success stories appearing in local and international media. At the same time, uneven development, increasing gaps between rich and poor in some countries, and competition with indigenous business groups have led to resentment. This is often directed more at the ethnic Chinese than at their partners, the political élite and foreign investors. In many instances, however, the most striking 'rags to riches' examples among businessmen come from the ranks of the China-born, who are actually a small proportion of all ethnic Chinese in South-East Asia today.

Finally, the fact that many second- and third-generation

Chinese parents still urge their children to enter business and that they relatively seldom enter the bureaucracy (except in Singapore), either by choice or because of restrictions, maintains their disproportionate role in economic life. If Chineseness is somehow related to business and to business success, and their disproportionate role seems to confirm that, then parents may encourage their children to emphasize that part of their background – and reject assimilation or even adaptation to the local culture.



# MALAYSIA

by Mary Somers Heidhues

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE: 1957

Constitutional status: constitutional monarchy, with revolving kingship (five year term) elected from the nine regents (sultans) as head of state, central bicameral parliament and a legislative assembly for each state

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: UN, Commonwealth

RATIFICATION OF:

*UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*: no

*UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child*: no

*Political/military alliances*: ASEAN, Five-Power Defence Arrangements

AREA:	329,750 sq.km
POPULATION:	17,752,000 (1990)
LITERACY:	73%
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	70
PER CAPITA GNP:	\$2,340 (1990)
ECONOMY:	largest sector is agriculture and resource-based, but manufacturing and services are a growing component
PRINCIPAL ETHNIC GROUPS:	Malay, Chinese (32%), Indians
RELIGIONS:	Islam (official religion), Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism
LANGUAGES:	Malay (official language), English, Chinese dialects, Tamil

Malaya gained independence from the British in 1957 and became the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. It is divided between the Malay Peninsula and, across the South China Sea, the two states of Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo. The western side of the peninsula, where the cities of Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Ipoh are situated, is the most developed part; pockets of poverty still remain in the country, especially in rural areas and in East Malaysia.

It is in the west that the concentration of ethnic Chinese is the highest, over 30 per cent, whereas they make up about 25 per cent of the population in East Malaysia.

In the 1950s the Chinese of Malaya were among South-East Asia's least assimilated groups. Most of their forefathers had arrived after 1850 as temporary migrants and settled in mining, plantation and farming areas or in urban sites far from contact with the Malay population. Since they were so concentrated, they had the resources to maintain a distinctive Chinese culture in the form of temples, schools,

community associations and political movements. British colonial policy considered 'Malays' (now known as Bumiputras) to have special claims as the pre-existing people. Malays, defined legally according to behaviour rather than descent, were those who habitually spoke Malay and adhered to the Islamic religion and Malay customs. However, the Chinese were, as a group, better educated and wealthier than the Malays. At the end of the colonial period they were also more urbanized and more integrated into the modern sectors of the economy. They were second only to foreign firms in control of mining and plantations and dominated much of small industry, retail trade and distribution. At the same time, a sizeable minority were farmers, market gardeners and fishermen.

By independence in 1957 about 50 per cent of the population were ethnic Malay, while 37 per cent were Chinese and most of the rest were of South Asian origin. Protection of Malay rights was enshrined in the constitution and meant numerical domination of the civil service, guarantees in education and political hegemony and, at first, limited access to citizenship for the non-Malays. 'Political power to the Malays, economic power to the Chinese' was a compromise on which independence was based and the government did little to interfere with this dictum. The government protected foreign investments and, in 1963, extended the Malay privileges of the constitution to natives of Sarawak and Sabah. During the first decade or so of independence, therefore, the Chinese had fairly free access to business activity.

In 1948 the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) launched a rebellion against the colonial government which continued in the jungles until 1960 and was called, because a state of emergency was declared, the Emergency. The fact that the MCP drew its support largely from the ethnic Chinese, although in fact only a small proportion of them were actively committed to the rebellion, made them seem to be of questionable loyalty. Forced resettlement of squatters (for the most part Chinese who had opened farms in undeveloped areas and who were thought to be supporting the Emergency) was not calculated to win their loyalty, especially where they were expected to earn their living as farmers, yet did not have access to secure land titles.<sup>1</sup>

In 1969, however, dissatisfaction with the distribution of wealth and political power led to serious race riots which centred on Kuala Lumpur. By that time, a growing number of educated and urbanized young Malays were no longer prepared to leave economic domination to the Chinese. It was not until 1971 that parliamentary rule was re-established after the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

Goals of the NEP were to lessen the differences in economic and social status between Bumiputras and non-Bumiputras and to reduce poverty, especially among rural Malays. It also promised more educational opportunities for Malays or Bumiputras and included a controversial attempt to redistribute control of share capital away from foreigners and non-Bumiputras so that by 1990, the target date, not less than 30 per cent would be in Bumiputra hands and 40 per cent in non-Bumiputra Malaysian. (In 1970 Bumiputras held less than 2 per cent of corporate shares, non-Bumiputra Malaysians 37 per cent and foreigners 61 per cent.)

In addition, electoral districts were redrawn to ensure Malay dominance of representative government. The constitution was amended to forbid public challenges, even in Parliament, to the position of the Malay rulers, to Bumiputra privileges, to the status of Islam as official religion, or to the citizenship of any ethnic group.

Crucial to these ambitious plans was rapid economic growth and provision of jobs to cut unemployment and poverty: the promise that growth would make redistribution possible without anyone having to face declining prosperity may have made the NEP more palatable to non-Bumiputras. By 1990 the redistributive goals were nearly reached when Bumiputras held 20.3 per cent of corporate wealth, while non-Bumiputras held 46.2 per cent and foreign corporations 25.1 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Yet this was not without cost to the ethnic Chinese. For example, government efforts to alleviate poverty were meant for Bumiputras and overlooked, many felt, impoverished non-Bumiputras (despite the predominance of this group in business, many did live in poverty).<sup>3</sup>

## Political Expression

The United Malays' National Organization (UMNO) has dominated the government since the 1950s and today plays a central role in the governing coalition called the Barisan Nasional (National Front). The Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) participates in this coalition along with a second largely non-Bumiputra party, the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Movement). Since independence, most Chinese have attained citizenship with full voting rights.

However, when it comes to defending minority rights, Chinese voters, especially those of the lower classes, see the MCA as tied to Malay interests and a majority of them will vote, as they did in October 1990, for the Chinese opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP). As a result, probably only a multiracial coalition could topple UMNO or the Barisan Nasional coalition since the issues which pull Chinese voters to DAP tend to repel Malays and those which pull Malay voters to PAS, a conservative Islamic party, tend to fend off Chinese, while UMNO (since 1988 UMNO-Baru) presents itself successfully as the party of all Malays.

In parts of East Malaysia, a different picture of inter-ethnic political expression has emerged. There has been a tendency for non-Malay Bumiputra groups to combine politically with the Chinese to oppose federal encroachments on local autonomy or favoritism for Malays in appointments to official posts.

## Business

The NEP has also affected the position of the ethnic Chinese in business. Various government measures such as requirements that shares be transferred, sometimes below market price, to Bumiputras, and quotas for employment of Bumiputras, have led Chinese businessmen to resort to a variety of strategies to circumvent government interference in business decisions. For example, they limit the size of their businesses, or divide them, because small businesses are exempt from employment

and ownership quotas. They also concentrate their investment in retailing, distribution, real estate development or speculative enterprises instead of, for example, manufacturing to escape favouritism for Bumiputras.

The device of 'Ali-Babaism' (collaborating with a Malay 'Ali' but keeping control for themselves, 'Baba' meaning a Chinese) has been used in the past, not just in Malaysia. Today, this arrangement is apparently not often used to circumvent share ownership requirements, but has grown in other fields where activities are reserved for Bumiputras, as in taxi licences or possibly landholding.<sup>4</sup> Bumiputra favouritism can tempt collection of illegal and extra-legal fees and observers believe that corruption has increased, which is not a good basis for mutual respect in inter-ethnic relations.

Malaysia has enjoyed high levels of foreign investment and economic growth in the past two decades but investors from abroad have tended to seek partners in state firms or among influential Bumiputras for joint ventures, and less among the Chinese. It has not been lost on ethnic Chinese owners of small- and medium-sized Chinese businesses, for example, that investors from Taiwan (whose numbers have increased almost explosively in the last few years) are exempt from requirements to employ or share ownership with Bumiputras since export-oriented industries can be up to 100 per cent foreign-owned. However, most ethnic Chinese-owned businesses, not producing for export, do not benefit from this kind of liberalization.

Some economists have argued that NEP has actually retarded economic growth. The government appeared to acknowledge this in mid-1991 when its new 'National Development Policy' was announced as a ten-year plan to emphasize growth more than ethnic redistribution.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, NEP favouritism for Bumiputra economic activities can be expected to continue into the 1990s.

## Education

Malaysia has South-East Asia's most comprehensive Chinese-language system of education, with publicly supported primary schools teaching in Chinese (the national language, Malay, is a required subject).<sup>6</sup> English-language primary schools were phased out in 1971.

Secondary schools changed to teaching in Malay in 1977, thus eliminating publicly supported English-language secondary education, which had increasingly appealed to the Chinese. However, there are about 50 privately supported Chinese-language secondary schools, which about 12 per cent of ethnic Chinese students attend.

Since 1983 university instruction has also been in Malay. The plan for setting up the Chinese-medium Merdeka University, first proposed in 1968, was finally scotched by the courts in 1982 with the argument that tertiary education must be in the national language.<sup>7</sup>

In 1987 the Ministry of Education tried to place non-Mandarin-speaking administrators in Chinese-language primary schools. In the same year the Senate of the University of Malaya refused to allow elective courses in Chinese, Tamil or English. The government, claiming that ethnic disorder threatened, intervened by detaining,

under the Internal Security Act, about 100 influential people, the largest group being from the Chinese opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP).<sup>8</sup>

Apart from limitations on Chinese-language education, the opening up of education to Bumiputras has reduced opportunities for the ethnic Chinese. In 1970, 44 per cent of Malaysian university students were Bumiputras but by 1977 this figure had grown to 68 per cent. During this period, Chinese numbers had dropped from 46 per cent to 26 per cent, less than their proportion of the population.<sup>9</sup> Today, more Chinese Malaysians study at colleges and universities outside the country than inside Malaysia, partly because of ethnic quotas.

## Prospects

Since the definition of 'Malay' is behavioural, based on religion, language and custom, a local-born ethnic Chinese, by becoming a Muslim and distancing himself from the Chinese community, could conceivably become a Malay and enjoy Bumiputra privileges. But only in theory. In practice, it seems only those who are adopted as Malays make the leap (infant daughters of Chinese are sometimes adopted and raised as Malays, which shows that racism is not an issue here); those who are not, cannot. Assimilation is closed to others; an adult Chinese who converted to Islam would normally remain a Chinese, not a Bumiputra.

Although ethnic Chinese have little chance of expressing their interests politically, except in greatly diluted form, the possibility that they might resort to violence is remote. The Emergency of 1948-60 was clothed in anti-colonial rhetoric but failed to attract genuinely widespread or multi-ethnic support. Furthermore, top posts in the army and police force are, not surprisingly, in the hands of the Malays.

Cultural loyalty to 'Chineseness' does not imply disloyalty to the nation. Ethnic Chinese identify with their birthplaces in Malaysia as well as with their sub-ethnic or dialect group (Hokkien, Teochiu, Hakka, Cantonese, etc.), and even the residents of the isolated and relatively homogeneous Chinese farming community of Pulai, Kelantan, think of themselves, concentrically, as 'Pulai Hakka Chinese Malaysian'.<sup>10</sup>

Although there is some emigration of ethnic Chinese, their share of the population continues to drop, primarily because of much lower birth rates than those of Bumiputras. Thus, the proportion of Chinese in the population fell from 37 per cent in 1957 to 32 per cent in 1990.<sup>11</sup> Bumiputras, including non-Malay indigenous groups, now make up about 61 per cent of the population.

Malaysia presents itself to tourists and other outsiders as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society. Yet frequent emphasis on the Malay and not the pluralistic nature of the nation, as well as concessions to Islam, leave the impression that the ethnic Chinese may become second-class citizens while Bumiputra politician-bureaucrats determine what they and their children will be allowed to do. Many Chinese perceive increasing, state-sponsored, discrimination.

# INDONESIA

by Mary Somers Heidhues

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE:	1945 (Dutch recognized sovereignty in 1949)
CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS:	authoritarian parliamentary government through Sekber Golker Party (from 1971) with strong military and presidential control
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:	UN.
RATIFICATION OF:	
	<i>UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights</i> : no
	<i>UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights</i> : no
	<i>UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i> : no
	<i>UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child</i> : yes
	<i>Political/military alliances</i> : ASEAN
AREA:	1,904,570 sq.km
POPULATION:	181,580,000 (1990)
LITERACY:	74%
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	62
PER CAPITA GNP:	\$560 (1990)
ECONOMY:	largest sector is agriculture and resource-based but manufacturing and services are a growing component
PRINCIPAL ETHNIC GROUPS:	Malay, Indonesian (about half Javanese, others Sundanese, Balinese, Minangkabau, Batak, etc.), Chinese (2.7%), Indians, various tribal ethnic groups
RELIGIONS:	Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism
LANGUAGES:	Bahasa Indonesia (official language), various local and minority languages and dialects

The largest of the ASEAN states, this archipelago of thousands of islands has ASEAN's lowest per capita income. Java contains about two-thirds of the population while other major but less densely settled islands are Sumatra, Kalimantan (three-quarters of the island of Borneo), Sulawesi (Celebes) and West Irian.

Indonesia's Chinese make up less than 3 per cent of the population, although in absolute numbers they are nearly as numerous as Malaysia's: four to five million. However, since the census counts only aliens, this number is a rough estimate and depends on the answer to the question 'Who is Chinese?' – a judgement based on name, descent, education, habits, and self-identification.

Like ethnic Chinese elsewhere, they are geographically unevenly distributed, being concentrated in urban areas of Java and in the cities and rural areas of eastern

Sumatra, the islands of Bangka and Belitung, the Riau Archipelago and West Kalimantan. On the whole, they make their living in business, trade, market gardening and the professions.

However, as the historian Wang Gungwu has pointed out, they differ from Chinese minorities elsewhere in one important respect: nowhere else in South-East Asia are relations between the indigenous people and the ethnic Chinese so brittle or so prone to violent outbreaks.<sup>1</sup> In 1959-60, for example, over 100,000 ethnic Chinese left Indonesia following the enforcement of a regulation prohibiting non-citizens from engaging in retail trade in rural areas (in some provinces even from living there). Similarly, after the attempted coup of October 1965, ethnic Chinese were among the hundreds of thousands of victims of violence. In particular, the organization Baperki, a left-wing organization which was founded in 1954 and called for cultural pluralism and the retention of Chinese identity, was forcibly disbanded. Former members are still branded as politically unreliable.<sup>2</sup>

In some areas, such as Aceh (northern Sumatra) or East Java, Chinese were driven from the hinterland when the ban on aliens living in rural areas was extended to these provinces for the first time in 1966. In 1967 attacks on Chinese by Dayaks in West Kalimantan forced thousands from the interior. They found refuge in badly equipped camps in coastal cities like Pontianak and Singkawang<sup>3</sup> but, because they were not Indonesian citizens, it was doubly difficult for them to find work or exercise a trade. Only gradually, with the extension of citizenship rights in later years, were more humane living conditions for these people achieved.

## Discrimination

Resentment against the ethnic Chinese erupted in the 1974 riots when the Japanese Prime Minister, Tanaka, visited the country. Although Japanese investment was probably also their target, students and other rioters destroyed thousands of dollars worth of vehicles and other property belonging to Chinese. About this time, a new word came into use: *cukong*, from the Hokkien for uncle or boss, describing wealthy ethnic Chinese who were patrons or 'godfathers', dispensing favours to bureaucrats and politicians. In fact, during the 1970s and early 1980s, some of the *cukongs* were recipients of substantial government favours: import monopolies, exclusive contracts and easy credit.

The fact that terms for ethnic Chinese change frequently is indicative of the sensitivity of the Chinese 'problem'. Even in colonial days, laws distinguished between 'native' and 'Chinese' and favoured the natives over the Chinese, for example in education and access to land. In the 1950s, *asli* (indigenous) received favours in business to help them compete against non-*asli*. In independent Indonesia, the colonial laws have been replaced by a modern definition of Indonesian nationality (*Warganegara Indonesia* (WNI)). In practice, however, 'WNI' means ethnic Chinese. *Orang Indonesia* (Indonesian person, in the sense of 'real' Indonesian) means an indigenous Indonesian in everyday usage. In the 1980s, *pribumi* (indigenous, related to *Bumiputra*) and non-*pribumi*, or

simply *pri* and non-*pri* came into use. In all cases, the distinction between Javanese, Batak, Sundanese and the other local ethnic groups on the one hand and Indonesians of Chinese descent on the other, was being emphasized. Thus, the ethnic Chinese are seen as different from other ethnic groups in Indonesia, and somehow less acceptable.

Yet, since the late 1970s, government policies have made naturalization easier and probably fewer than 10 per cent of ethnic Chinese are now aliens, as against over 50 per cent in the 1960s. Any discussion, therefore, of the situation of the Chinese minority in contemporary Indonesia has to take account of the differences between public attitudes and official policies: outbreaks of violence and other problems contrast with a policy which says all citizens are equal. In the long run, the opening of citizenship to ethnic Chinese should eliminate many excuses for discrimination or bureaucratic chicanery. Since restoration of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, the government has increased efforts to regulate the status of alien Chinese. In the future, since many aliens are now quite old and their numbers are diminishing, no one should suspect that a Chinese-looking person, or one with a Chinese name, is not a citizen.

However, this utopia is still distant since, in practice, ethnic Chinese are asked to prove their citizenship, which can mean paying a bribe and avoiding further questions. Corruption is often the nexus between the Chinese on the one hand and the bureaucracy, police and military on the other, and is a relationship which discourages mutual respect.

There is no 'Chinese' political party, as in Malaysia, but there are ways of protesting discrimination. Since many Chinese have adopted Indonesian names it is not always easy to tell from appearances who is indigenous. In order to distinguish the ethnic Chinese, officials of the Ministry of Interior began inserting the letter 'A', or, later, a code number, into the identity cards of those of Chinese descent in the 1970s. As a result, Bakom PKB, an officially linked but privately financed organization which descended from the so-called 'assimilationist'<sup>4</sup> group of the 1960s, reminded the Ministry that citizens of whatever descent were equals. The Ministry has since assured them that codes will be removed from the cards, and it looks as if this is now happening.

## Business in the New Order

Even during the Indonesian Revolution (1945-9), military officers formed business links with ethnic Chinese businessmen in order to break the Dutch blockade and smuggle raw materials abroad to exchange them for weapons. In that situation Chinese businessmen with contacts in Singapore were eminently valuable.

In the 1950s, some regional commanders also used Chinese confidants to export local products illegally or to engage in business on the side, in some cases to finance the welfare of their men during a period of rampant inflation. Since 1967 the so-called New Order government, under military leadership and with Suharto as President, has emphasized economic development. Their military connections have helped some of the ethnic Chinese to

take advantage of the new era, but some of the military have made use of Chinese partners to gain a foothold in business for themselves.

The fact that many of the most prominent Chinese businessmen are, in contrast to most Indonesian Chinese, China-born, China-educated or Chinese-speaking (*totok*)<sup>5</sup> adds to their foreign image. Relatively few of them are culturally *peranakan*. Some Indonesian observers fear, therefore, that they might siphon off substantial amounts of capital from Indonesia for investments in the People's Republic of China or other countries. Although that fear is certainly exaggerated, they are able to transfer funds through their international networks, some of which reach beyond South-East Asia and even to the developed nations. This international aspect distinguishes them from most *pribumi* businessmen.

Policy towards ethnic Chinese businessmen entered a new phase in the mid-1980s when planners and politicians realized that oil and raw-material exports would not suffice to keep Indonesian development going. Emphasis changed to non-oil, non-gas production and in particular to a greater diversity of exports, many taking advantage of the tropical forest as a resource, of other natural products, or of cheap labour. Chinese businessmen were welcomed for their expertise in finding foreign partners for joint ventures and export-oriented industries, financing and markets. Even capitalism ceased to be a bad word: *pribumi* businessmen were encouraged to accept and emulate those of Chinese descent and to do battle against a 'high-cost economy' which might inhibit exports.<sup>6</sup>

The attempt to rehabilitate ethnic Chinese capitalism, however, has not been entirely successful. If the word *cukong* has nearly disappeared from daily vocabulary, 'conglomerate' (used somewhat pejoratively for an individual person) has risen to replace it, since Chinese businessmen often do choose diversification rather than specialization in a single branch of the economy, building conglomerates.

The opening of the Jakarta stock market in 1989 raised the discussion of wealth and power to a new level. Stock-market fever gripped urbanites as a number of firms went public with share offerings, which were promptly oversubscribed. In a short time, share prices soared but firms going public had to disclose their assets. The press publicized the names of those richest entrepreneurs with assets of billions of rupiahs and, as a result, an incredible sum appeared to be concentrated in the hands of a few dozen conglomerates. The gap in wealth between a few very rich and many very poor seemed to be in reality a gap between ethnic Chinese and the rest of the Indonesians.

At this point President Suharto intervened. Having presented figures to show that distribution of wealth in the nation was actually becoming more equal, he proposed, in January 1990, a surprising solution. Public companies, he said, should turn over 25 per cent of their shares to cooperatives. The latter are, in theory, a basic form of economic organization in modern Indonesia but many of them, perhaps most of those at village level, do not operate satisfactorily because of undercapitalization and poor management. On 4 March 1990 Suharto lent force to his proposal and emphasized its relevance to Chinese by inviting 31

businessmen, 29 of them ethnic Chinese (a number of *pribumi* big businessmen were conspicuous by their absence) to his country estate to discuss implementation.

While it is difficult to feel great sympathy for the 'victims' of the plan, they faced genuine problems in complying. Most conglomerates are family-owned and run, and they did not want to jeopardize control of management by passing out shares. Furthermore, they did not want to dissipate the capital gained by going public. There was also the problem of finding recipients for the shares. In the end, major public companies promised to distribute 1 per cent of publicly issued but non-voting shares to carefully selected cooperatives. Further disbursement would await results of this distribution.<sup>7</sup> By the end of 1991, share prices had fallen sharply, problems of oversight and control plagued the stock exchange, and most people realized that passing out shares might not be the best means to overcome the weaknesses of cooperatives after all. The idea remains a sword of Damocles over businessmen's heads and, furthermore, the whole hubbub focused attention on the Chinese as wealthy businessmen. However, perhaps as many as 10 per cent of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are farmers, while others are labourers or live near the margin of existence in small towns or crowded into urban near-ghettos. More of them are agriculturalists than tycoons.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that not all wealthy businessmen are ethnic Chinese. Many government and military officials and members of President Suharto's family have extensive business interests.

## Cultural Differences among Chinese

The journalists' fascination with Chinese big businessmen as a group obscures differences within the Chinese minority. For example, they can be differentiated according to citizenship, though only a tiny proportion are still aliens, according to wealth, and also according to culture. Historically, they were divided between the locally rooted *peranakan*, who used a local language, and the *totok*, or 'pure' Chinese, who spoke Chinese and were oriented strongly towards Chinese culture.

One of the determinants of this difference was education. Indonesian policy, however, has made a clean sweep of a Chinese education system which at its peak in 1957 maintained about 2,000 schools. All children must now attend Indonesian schools and the last institutions which offered part-time instruction in Chinese were closed in 1975.<sup>8</sup> Some parents have their children tutored in Chinese, but public use of the language is discouraged. Chinese-language publications (except an official newspaper in Chinese published in Jakarta and Medan), even imported ones, are officially banned, as is Chinese-language advertising; shop signs in Chinese characters are forbidden, and even spoken Chinese is frowned upon. This is not only a matter of policy. Many young ethnic Indonesians are keenly resentful of these relics of Chinese language and culture, as conversations and letters to the press testify.

## Chinese Religion

Nearly 90 per cent of Indonesians are Muslim, making it

the world's largest Islamic population. Most of the ethnic Chinese, however, practise a mixture of Buddhism and traditional Taoism and Confucianism, though a significant minority are Christians. Officially, Indonesia recognizes the practice of Buddhism (and of Islam, Christianity and Hinduism) and traditional Chinese practices are subsumed under Buddhism. Their temples, shrines and graveyards do exist, but since the public use of the Chinese language is discouraged, the temples have no characters on the exterior and most call themselves *vihara* (Buddhist temples). Ceremonies are confined to temple precincts or to the home. As urban expansion is threatening graveyards, cremation is becoming more popular.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, even a casual visitor to Indonesia can testify that Chinese temples are being improved and expanded and government officials are present at dedication ceremonies. In an isolated instance in January 1990 the city of Bandung banned the use of Chinese characters in temples and cemeteries, as well as such external features as carved animal ornaments (common on Chinese temples) and elaborate graves (again, a frequent practice among wealthy Chinese). Commenting on the ruling, an Indonesian intellectual pointed out that implementation of the regulation would mean tearing down thousands of buildings of all kinds, especially along Java's north coast, where Chinese cultural influences have been absorbed by the native population and even mosques show Chinese influence. Two months later, the regulation was withdrawn.<sup>10</sup>

## Prospects

Inter-ethnic relations in Java (especially West Java) and in certain other provinces are often tense, but they are not uniformly bad. In many rural areas, as on the island of Bangka, where Chinese make up about 25 per cent of the population, inter-ethnic tension is low. Intellectuals seem to associate comfortably and Islamic business organizations have recently forged links with Chinese conglomerates. This may defuse the especially sensitive area of economic competition.

Official measures to promote assimilation may reduce the diversity among Indonesia's ethnic Chinese, but striking differences in wealth, education and adaptation to local society remain. Chinatowns, relics of a colonial system which required ethnic Chinese to live in certain 'quarters', are giving way to new housing developments, although some have almost exclusively ethnic Chinese residents. Schools follow an Indonesian curriculum, but some have a very high proportion of Chinese. The same is true of universities: ethnic Chinese are not freely admitted to public universities, but in some private universities they are the majority.

Furthermore, the gap between official policy and grassroots reactions remains. Factors behind outbreaks of anti-Chinese violence have included political and economic crises, perceived grievances and the complicity of local military or police authorities who hesitated to intervene in developing troubles or else allowed a vacuum of power to arise. The worst anti-Chinese incidents, for example, took place when there was a sudden change of rulers: when the Japanese replaced the Dutch in 1942, during the revolu-

tion of 1945-9 when territory changed hands between the Dutch and Republican forces, and in 1965-7 with the ousting of the political Old Order of Sukarno. Even if the government is determined to maintain security and to prevent outbreaks of violence towards the Chinese and other ethnic groups, this is not always easy, given the high proportion of volatile youth and unemployed in the Indonesian population. It is clear that there is a need for the authorities to foster and strengthen mutual respect in the coming years, if stable inter-ethnic relations are to be assured in the future.

# EAST TIMOR

by John Taylor

CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS: under Indonesian military occupation, the UN recognizes Portugal as the colonial power

AREA:	14,870 sq.km
POPULATION:	710,000 (1989)
LITERACY:	na
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	na
PER CAPITA GNP:	na
ECONOMY:	mainly agricultural
ETHNIC GROUPS:	Belu, Atoni, other indigenous ethnic groups, Malays, Chinese
RELIGIONS:	Islam, Catholic, various indigenous beliefs
LANGUAGES:	Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian official language), Tetum

Chinese contacts with the island of Timor date back to the 15th Century, when Chinese traders first began to purchase the island's abundant sandalwood. In subsequent centuries, following the entry of the Dutch and Portuguese into Western and Eastern Timor respectively, the Chinese maintained a prominent trading position. By the middle of the 20th Century, of approximately 400 retailing outlets in East Timor, all but four were owned by ethnic Chinese families. Many Chinese thus played the classic middleman role, buying grain or coffee from Timorese farmers and selling it to Portuguese administrators. None the less, despite their predominance in trading, large numbers of Chinese in East Timor were villagers who, alongside their Timorese neighbours, cultivated the land.

Historically, the ethnic Chinese have managed to maintain their cultural identity, speaking Cantonese (and a minority, Mandarin) as well as Tetum (the East Timorese *lingua franca*), educating their children in Chinese schools, stressing the importance of kinship ties and marrying within their community. The majority of Chinese lived in Dili, the capital of East Timor, and in the towns of Baucau, Ermera and Bobonaro.

Following the overthrow of the Caetano regime in Portugal in April 1974 and the emerging process of decolonization in East Timor, most ethnic Chinese either avoided involvement in political issues or tended to support the continuation of colonial rule. This was largely because the main indigenous political parties – the Timorese Democratic Union and the Timorese Social Democratic Association (later to become Fretilin, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) – were critical of the predominant role of the Chinese in trading, and aimed to undermine what they saw as 'Chinese monopolies'. On the part of some political leaders, these criticisms began to develop into a general hostility

towards the Chinese, regardless of their economic role. As the neighbouring Indonesian government began its attempt to annexe East Timor in 1975, and particularly after the Indonesian military had sponsored a coup attempt in August that year, many of the wealthier Chinese families left for Australia, concluding that they would benefit neither from an independent nor an Indonesian-controlled East Timor. Most Chinese remained, however, and relations between the Chinese community and the independence movement, led by Fretilin, improved markedly in the latter part of 1975, largely due to the acknowledgement by leading Fretilin members that many of their earlier views of the ethnic Chinese had been unfair stereotypes.

The position of the Chinese was altered profoundly by the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor, dating from 7 December 1975. The Chinese featured prominently in the brutal killings that took place in the initial days of the invasion, as Javanese racism was given a free rein by the Indonesian military. During the first days of the invasion, 700 Chinese people were killed. One eyewitness described how: 'At the harbour (in Dili) were many dead bodies...We were told to tie the bodies to iron poles, attach bricks, and throw the bodies in the sea. After we had thrown all the bodies in the sea, about 20 people were brought in, made to face the sea and shot dead. They were Chinese...more came later. After the killing stopped, we spent another one or two hours tying the people as before and throwing them into the sea.'<sup>1</sup> When Indonesian soldiers entered the towns of Liquica and Maubara, they killed nearly all the members of the Chinese communities.

In the years of Indonesian occupation since 1975, many Chinese families have tried to maintain their trading role but this has only been possible under Indonesian military tutelage, which has involved severe economic exploitation. Others have managed to leave East Timor by paying substantial bribes to military officers. A reporter visiting East Timor in 1985 concluded that the 1974 Chinese population of 20,000 (around 3 per cent of the population) had been reduced to 'a few thousand'.<sup>2</sup>

# SINGAPORE

by Mary Somers Heidhues

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE:	1965
CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS:	authoritarian parliamentary government (with People's Action Party in power since independence), president head of state
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:	UN, Commonwealth
RATIFICATION OF:	
<i>UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights:</i>	no
<i>UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights:</i>	no
<i>UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:</i>	no
<i>UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child:</i>	no
<i>Political/military alliances:</i>	ASEAN, Five-Power Defence Arrangements
AREA:	620 sq.km
POPULATION:	2,722,000 (1990)
LITERACY:	86%
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	74
PER CAPITA GNP:	\$12,310 (1990)
ECONOMY:	mainly commerce and services, manufacturing
PRINCIPAL ETHNIC GROUPS:	Chinese (76.4%), Malays, Indians
RELIGIONS:	Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism
LANGUAGES:	English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay, Tamil are all official languages

When Singapore was founded in 1819, the Chinese quickly appreciated its importance as a base. Its excellent harbour was a free port, useful as an entrepôt for raw materials from Malaya, Indonesia and elsewhere on their way to buyers in Asia, Europe and North America. The city soon became a financial centre as its businessmen developed networks of credit and investment reaching throughout South-East Asia. Singapore also became a place of cultural exchange where ideas and influences from China were passed on to Chinese throughout the region, and where Chinese schools, press and community organizations could develop with little interference from colonial authorities.

The People's Action Party gained a political majority while Singapore was still a British colony and it continued to govern the republic after its separation from Malaysia in 1965. It was led by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew from 1965 to 1991 and since then his successor, Goh Chok Tong, has emphasized continuity. The PAP's main policies have been to promote foreign investment while at the same time trying to balance the interests of the Chinese with those of the Indian and Malay minorities and to create one 'Singaporean' identity. Limited population growth has also been a feature as well as controlling the influence of opposition parties. Official policy has been

friendly towards the People's Republic of China, with extensive trade and also exchange of official visitors, but diplomatic recognition of Beijing came only in 1990, after Indonesia restored relations with the PRC.

Ethnic Chinese make up over 75 per cent of the population and thus they are not a disadvantaged group. In fact, their financial and trading success gives them a unique position in the Chinese community of the Nanyang. Per capita income (GNP) has grown from under US\$800 in 1965 to US\$2,500 in 1977 and US\$12,310 in 1990. Real annual per capita growth rates for 1980-90 averaged 5.7 per cent but climbed to 8 per cent in 1988-90. Population growth is only 1.2 per cent.<sup>1</sup> However, although all incomes have risen, housing has drastically improved and unemployment is low, critics believe income disparities are higher and opportunities less equal than they should be because of the strong emphasis on competition and high attainment.

In its early years, the multiracial People's Action Party united men like Lee, who had an English-language education, with those who were politically more radical and mostly Chinese-educated. This left wing broke with the party before independence and, as a result, the Chinese-language education system was associated with strong left sympathies and also, in the 1950s, with violent demonstrations. It is likely that this coloured the PAP government's attitude to the independent Chinese-medium school system and that is one reason why its educational and cultural policies now emphasize English as the first language of schooling, apart from the international importance of English. All Chinese children learn Mandarin as their second school language, while others learn Malay or Tamil.

English is also promoted as the language of national unity since it is not specific to any one ethnic group. On the other hand, the government has promoted Mandarin as a 'mother tongue' for the population of Chinese origin, whose actual mother tongues are Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Hakka and so on. Mandarin is widely accepted among Chinese, but is seldom learned by people from other ethnic groups.<sup>2</sup>

Government leaders and bureaucrats have, in the past, come from the English-educated group and they have usually had better job opportunities in the wider economy. This dominance of English is unlikely to change. The Chinese-language Nanyang University began teaching in English in 1975 and finally merged with the English-medium University of Singapore in 1980, thus bringing to an end the only institution of higher education teaching in Chinese in South-East Asia.<sup>3</sup>

Historic Chinese temples and typical shop-house residences have, over the years, fallen victim to urban development: most Singaporeans now live in high-rise public housing. Former rural settlements have also disappeared for the same reason. On the other hand, the government has recently displayed an admiration for Confucianism, in particular as a motor for East Asian economic development and for promoting family care for the aged (a necessity as the population ages). Chinese culture, in this case, seems to be being used as an instrument of economic and social policy, and not an end in itself.

Since Singapore's economy is already dependent on

imported labour and lacks space for much further growth, the island is looking to cooperate with neighbouring states, through ASEAN, in the formation of international industrial zones such as the growth triangle formed with Johor in Malaysia and Batam Island in Indonesia. These ventures enjoy government support but also depend on the cooperation of ethnic Chinese businessmen across international boundaries.



## THAILAND

by Mary Somers Heidhues

CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS: monarchy, with government alternating between military and parliamentary government, king head of state.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: UN.

RATIFICATION OF:

*UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*: no

*UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child*: no

*Political/military alliances*: ASEAN

AREA: 513,120 sq.km

POPULATION: 55,801,000 (1990)

LITERACY: 91%

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 66

PER CAPITA GNP: \$1,420 (1990)

ECONOMY: mainly agricultural, with growing industrial and service (including tourism) sectors

ETHNIC GROUPS: Thai, Chinese (8%), Malay, Khmer, Indians, Vietnamese, various hill tribal peoples (Karen, Shan, Meo etc.)

RELIGIONS: Buddhism (official religion), Taoism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism

LANGUAGES: Thai (official language), various minority languages

Approximate numbers of ethnic Chinese among Thailand's 56 million inhabitants are hard to estimate because of the long tradition of assimilation and because defining who is 'Chinese' presents difficulties. The number of aliens is given officially as fewer than 200,000 but it is estimated that 8 or more per cent (4-5 million) of the population are Sino-Thai, of which 50 per cent or more live in the Bangkok area.

Government attitudes and policies towards the Chinese minority have gone through several stages. In the 19th Century the economic activities of the Chinese were seen as complementary to those of the Thai. The successful ones were merchants, holders of opium and other revenue monopolies or provincial officials, and were allies of the crown. At this time, thousands of coolie labourers were imported to develop roads and railways, relieving Thai farmers of corvée burdens. This meant that most of those working in construction, plantations, mines and industry were Chinese, while some Chinese were cash-crop farmers. Above all, they established themselves as middlemen and creditors in the essential rice export trade.

By the early 20th Century a separate community of the Chinese was forming because of the rise in the number of immigrants (which included women from China) and because Chinese institutions, such as modern schools, were gaining influence. There were clashes between the Thais and Chinese. The Thai elite, in particular, began to resent the increasing numbers of apparently aloof Chinese in the country.

Twentieth century governments therefore promoted the assimilation and naturalization of the ethnic Chinese but restricted Chinese cultural influences. Although it was relatively easy for local-born Chinese to become Thai citizens, Chinese cultural and political influences on them, especially in education, were soon controlled. As early as 1919 regulations limited the amount of instruction in Chinese which private Chinese schools could give Thai citizens. In the end, this amounted to only a few hours a week. After the Second World War Chinese education revived strongly but, from the late 1940s, strongly anti-Communist Thai governments brought in more restrictive measures which virtually eliminated Chinese secondary schools and allowed only limited instruction in Chinese in other schools. By 1956 fewer than 200 Chinese schools remained and their pupils were being educated more in the Thai than in the Chinese language.

G. William Skinner's studies<sup>1</sup> of the Chinese in Thailand, which appeared over thirty years ago, emphasized the relative ease with which descendants of Chinese immigrants, in the course of three or four generations, melted into Thai society. Many prominent Thais, including the royal family, members of the cabinet or of Parliament, also intellectuals and technocrats, are of Chinese or part-Chinese ancestry. However, while the bureaucracy is open to Sino-Thais, 'the difficulties encountered by Thai citizens of Chinese parentage in acquiring immovable property and in entering national military and police academies' persisted as late as the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Only in 1975 did Thailand recognize the People's Republic of China. In 1979 Thai citizens with alien (meaning in most cases Chinese) fathers (perhaps a quarter of all voters in Bangkok) were excluded from the voting lists.<sup>3</sup>

## Political and Economic Transitions

Thailand has been a constitutional monarchy since 1932 but, during most of the post-war period, military (and former military) strongmen have dominated politics. For example, the elections of May 1992 were supposed to restore democracy after a military coup the previous year but the military took control of the system and a former general, Suchinda Kraprayoon, became Prime Minister. After large-scale pro-democracy demonstrations, which military elements attempted to suppress by violence, an interim civilian government took office and called new elections for September 1992.

Before the Second World War some of the Chinese (and Vietnamese) minority in Thailand supported Communist activities. The Communist Party in Thailand was an offshoot of that in China and coolies were a fertile recruiting ground. In the 1960s, however, the party began to diversify and launched activities in the regions and among minority tribes in the north or in the disadvantaged north-

east. In the south, Chinese disaffection with Bangkok linked up with the largely ethnic Chinese Malayan Communist Party, some of whose members had crossed the border into Thailand after being defeated during the Emergency. Then, in the 1970s, some students and urban intellectuals turned to Marxism. After a period of repression in 1976 many of the younger intellectuals fled to join the rebels in the 'jungle', only to find themselves as outsiders:<sup>4</sup> top leaders of the Communist Party of Thailand were said to speak Chinese better than Thai.

In the economic sphere, Thailand offers a good example of the changing roles of the Chinese minority in South-East Asia. The 19th Century positions of trader, official and coolie gave way to new activities in the 20th Century. Especially in the period from 1938 to 1957, Thai governments prevented non-citizens from exercising a variety of occupations and attempted to compete with ethnic Chinese businesses and to move economic power into the hands of the ethnic Thai by establishing state-owned industries. In the 1950s, therefore, the Chinese began to diversify their economic activities. Large-scale businessmen began to form alliances with Thai powerholders, above all in the military and police, by putting them on boards of directors, forming personal links and marriage alliances with them. When, after 1958, economic policy turned from state enterprise to import substitution industry, opening new fields to private businesses, Chinese entrepreneurs reaped the benefits. The transition to export-oriented manufacturing in the 1970s only increased their influence. Successful businessmen, having started in trade, moved to manufacturing, finance, real estate, travel and other fields.

Today, approximately 30 large business groups, all controlled by ethnic Chinese, are said to dominate most fields of economic activity in Thailand, with the exceptions of agriculture and wage labour, where ethnic Thai predominate. These companies, originally family-based, are now interlinked horizontally and vertically. Having outgrown the political patronage of the 1950s and 1960s, they nevertheless cultivate influence with political powerholders wherever possible.<sup>5</sup>

## Trends

Only in the last decade have Skinner's important findings on the assimilation of the Chinese in Thailand been challenged or revised, but his paradigm still influences many observers. Newer studies argue that assimilation has not been as sweeping as Skinner's widely accepted model predicted. Bangkok and other cities still have their 'Chinatowns'. The use of Thai names is common among second- and third-generation Sino-Thai (although some Thai names are recognizably Chinese), but some recent studies show that intermarriage between Chinese and ethnic Thais is not the rule.

One reason for this is the persistence of certain kinds of economic activity among the ethnic Chinese. On the one hand, Chinese or Sino-Thais prefer trade and business, while ethnic Thais, if they do not remain farmers, enter government service, the Buddhist monasteries and the military. Different life perspectives result yet little overt hostility disturbs inter-ethnic relations. A rival, ethnic

Thai business class seems not to exist and Sino-Thai businessmen interact freely with the Thai elite in business and in politics.

With Thais controlling the military and bureaucracy, ethnic Chinese are increasingly concentrated in a narrow range of economic activities. Conscious or unconscious restriction of professional opportunity could reinforce this as businessmen and traders intensify contacts with one another and Chinese parents urge their children to develop a 'Chinese' attitude to making money which would inhibit further assimilation.



## THE PHILIPPINES

by Mary Somers Heidhues

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE:	1946
CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS:	republic, parliamentary democracy, president head of state
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:	UN
RATIFICATION OF:	
<i>UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights:</i>	yes
<i>UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights:</i>	yes
<i>UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:</i>	yes
<i>UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child:</i>	yes
<i>Political/military alliances:</i>	ASEAN
AREA:	300,000 sq.km
POPULATION:	61,358,000 (1990)
LITERACY:	86%.
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	64.
PER CAPITA GNP:	\$730 (1990)
ECONOMY:	mainly agricultural, with growing industrial and service (including tourism) sectors
ETHNIC GROUPS:	Filipinos, Chinese (less than 2%), Moros, various tribal ethnic groups
RELIGIONS:	Christianity, Islam
LANGUAGES:	Tagalog (Pilipino) (official language), English, various minority languages

Over 80 per cent of Filipinos are Catholics, but there are important Protestant and Islamic minorities. American colonialism left a political system modelled on that of the United States and an economy and foreign policy largely tied to the USA; only in 1992 were the last US military bases closed. President Marcos (1968-86) scrapped North American-style democracy for martial law and dictatorship, bringing the economy to a near-standstill; from 1980 to 1990, GNP fell by an annual average of 1.5 per cent. After a relatively non-violent 'revolution', President Cory Aquino tried to restore a democratic system, struggling against élite infighting, growing poverty, financial difficulties and a restive military, elements of which staged several unsuccessful coups. Growth improved in 1988-90 to 2.4 per cent annually, but problems continue under President Fidel Ramos, a former military leader.

As in Thailand or Indonesia, it is difficult to estimate the number of ethnic Chinese in the Philippines since, unless they are aliens, they are not specified in any census. The number of aliens in no way corresponds with the Chinese community: some Philippine citizens feel very Chinese, while some aliens feel very Filipino. In the same way, descendants of Chinese immigrants have intermarried with Filipinos over generations and many members of the national elite are of mixed parentage. In a narrow sense,

estimates of the numbers of ethnic Chinese vary from 600,000 to 900,000, of whom fewer than 150,000 are foreign-born. Ethnic Chinese in this sense would probably speak Chinese, were only recently admitted to citizenship, belong to Chinese associations, and socialize with other Chinese. About half of them live in Manila, the rest in provincial cities. In a broad sense, however, because of mixed marriages, Filipinos of at least part Chinese ancestry may number two to four million.

Up to the late 19th Century the strong assimilative pull of the Spanish-Philippine society influenced local Chinese to become Filipino. Many intermarried with the landowning elite at this time. After 1902, however, the application of American 'exclusion' policy (forbidding Chinese immigration) sharply restricted their admission. Thereafter, it was possible only for a limited number of Chinese to enter the country, and virtually impossible for them to acquire Philippine citizenship. As a result, they tended to remain separate.<sup>1</sup>

During the 20th Century, these recent immigrants and their families have mostly concerned themselves with small-scale trade and money-lending, despite legislation from the 1930s to prohibit non-citizens from engaging in retail trade. They also, as in Thailand, provided the bulk of the urban labour force until replaced by Filipinos in the years before the Second World War. Since their wives and children, even where Philippine-born, were also aliens, the group faced continued barriers to eventual assimilation. As a result, their position invited various kinds of blackmail and bureaucratic corruption.

In 1975, shortly before recognition of the People's Republic of China, President Ferdinand Marcos made it easier to obtain Philippine citizenship by administrative action rather than court procedure, which was costly and took up to ten years. Most of the Philippines' relatively small minority of ethnic Chinese are therefore now Philippine citizens. They maintain limited cultural activities: a small Chinese-language press, Chinese organizations, and a few hours of Chinese instruction in schools (Chinese schools were 'filipinized' in 1973). At the same time, the larger society influences young Philippine Chinese, who speak *Pilipino* and English better than Hokkien and Mandarin.

Until the 1970s, the Philippines maintained an anti-Communist posture and official relations with the Nationalist government on Taiwan. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce and other major community organizations were Guomindang-influenced and resistant to any kind of assimilation to Philippine society. This led to much tension and to battles within the Chinese community, not only with pro-PRC people, who could be denounced to the authorities, but with younger ethnic Chinese, who favoured more integration. Since the recognition of the PRC in 1975, Taiwan's position has been anomalous; but its representation in Manila, the Pacific Cultural and Economic Centre, plays an important economic role in the country.

Although the Philippines has not quite matched the economic growth of other ASEAN nations, it, too, has spawned a group of active and successful ethnic Chinese businessmen in the past two decades. Besides the opening

of citizenship, two other factors contributed to their success. One was Marcos's policy of making use of ethnic Chinese to attack the entrenched positions of the old economic elites, which may have made enemies of them. This alliance with Marcos helped bring the change in citizenship laws in 1975. The second factor was the very rapid growth of investments from Taiwan. In 1987 Taiwan provided 1 per cent of total planned foreign investment; in 1989 investments from Taiwan were 18 per cent of planned foreign investment. Frequently, Taiwan investors cooperate with Chinese-Filipino businessmen; the fact that both groups speak Hokkien facilitates mutual trust.<sup>2</sup>

The local vocabulary contains derogatory expressions for Chinese, those who are not wealthy may especially face some discrimination, but the minority is relatively small and has not awakened the kind of resentment known in Indonesia. Naturalized citizens are not distinguished from others, thus making way for full acceptance of those who recently regularized their citizenship status. On the other hand, the rapid expansion of economic investments from Taiwan or Hong Kong, as well as from local tycoons, may cause strain and tensions. Ethnic Chinese businessmen have, thanks to links with these foreign investors, access to capital which local businessmen do not have. In addition, their growth in wealth and power may awaken resentment as gaps between rich and poor appear to increase. At the same time, their links with Chinese investors abroad may make them emphasize their Chinese and not their Filipino culture.

# BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

by Mary Somers Heidhues

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE:	1984.
CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS:	absolute monarchy, sultan head of state, state of emergency in operation since 1962.
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:	UN, Commonwealth, Organization of the Islamic Conference.
RATIFICATION OF:	
<i>UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights:</i>	no
<i>UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights:</i>	no
<i>UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:</i>	no
<i>UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child:</i>	no
<i>Political/military alliances:</i>	ASEAN
AREA:	5,770 sq.km
POPULATION:	256,000 (1990)
LITERACY:	77% (1985)
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	74
PER CAPITA GNP:	\$15,390 (1987)
ECONOMY:	main income is from gas and petroleum
ETHNIC GROUPS:	Malays, Chinese (24%), Europeans
RELIGIONS:	Islam (official religion), Buddhism, Christianity
LANGUAGES:	Malay (official language), Chinese, English

This tiny country measures only about 6,000 square kilometres and its total population is only a quarter of a million strong. The majority people are ethnic Malays but Chinese make up about 25 per cent of the population, perhaps 58,000 in all. However, the emphasis on the Malay and Islamic character of the Sultanate leaves ethnic Chinese little room to be other than outsiders.

Plans to link this former British protectorate with Malaysia failed in 1962 and it became fully independent in 1984, promptly joining ASEAN as the first non-founding member. Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and his relatives control government decisions and the Chinese are generally apolitical (the Chinese Chamber of Commerce is their largest organization). Perhaps this is not surprising when recent estimates say that anywhere from 50 to 90 per cent of them are not citizens. Indeed, one source says that 30,000 of them may be stateless, though an unknown number are citizens of neighbouring countries.

Before independence, Chinese living in the country were British protected persons (holding British travel documents but neither British subjects nor subjects of the Sultan). Today, it can be extremely difficult for non-ethnic Malays to gain citizenship. Even if the requirement of residence for 20 out of the past 50 years is met, the

language and culture test forms an extra barrier to naturalization. For those who remain stateless, having no passport can cause problems when travelling abroad or re-entering the country.

Most Chinese live in urban areas where they engage in petty trade and commerce or work as skilled labourers, for example in the oil industry (most of the country's wealth comes from oil and natural gas). At independence, non-Bruneians made up well over half of the labour force and most of these foreign labourers were ethnic Chinese.<sup>1</sup> However, by 1986, the share given to non-citizens had fallen to only 37 per cent, probably as the result of a conscious policy on the part of the government.

Unemployment among young ethnic-Malay Bruneians is now high. Aside from petroleum, there is little industry and, since the ethnic Chinese cannot be absorbed in traditional occupations like agriculture and fishing, there are some reasons to doubt whether the Chinese have an assured future in the country. Certainly, a number of them have expressed their uncertainty by moving abroad.

# INDOCHINA

by Ramses Amer

## Before French Domination

The Chinese ruled Vietnam directly between 111 BC and 939 AD and during this period two categories of Chinese migrants to the area can be distinguished. The first were those administrators, farmers and landlords who came to colonize Vietnam, and the second those seeking refuge from political upheavals in other parts of the Chinese empire.

Cambodia has not been part of the Chinese empire, nor has it had any common border with China. However, a sizeable Chinese community seems to have been based in Phnom Penh ever since its first spell as the capital in the 15th Century.

Political upheavals in China continued to lead to outflows of refugees to Vietnam even after Vietnam's independence from China and it was the fall of the Ming dynasty which led to Chinese refugees settling down in south-eastern Cambodia in the 1670s. From the 18th Century, a steadier flow of Chinese migration to both Cambodia and Vietnam began and, in response to the growing influx of Chinese migrants, the Vietnamese emperor Minh Mang (1820-41) introduced legislation regulating their migration to Cochinchina, the southern part of today's Vietnam.

In Vietnam, a system of indirect rule over the Chinese was introduced whereby they were organized into communities called *bangs*, according to their place of origin, and each group was placed under the jurisdiction of its own leaders. Furthermore, officers called *bang trung* were responsible for the good behaviour of the Chinese and the payment of taxes to the Vietnamese emperors. The Cambodian kings introduced a similar system.

The trading and agricultural activities of the Chinese migrants gained momentum in the 17th and 18th Centuries in both Cambodia and Vietnam. They played an important role, for example, not only in expanding Vietnamese control over the Mekong delta during this period, but also in overall development of the region.

## During French Rule

During the period of French rule in Vietnam, which extended fully throughout the country after the conquest of Tonkin in 1883, the Chinese were the subject of much attention by the French in the form of different attempts at taxation and measures aimed at controlling their migration to Vietnam. Furthermore, the system of *congrégation* was introduced, based on the indirect administration of the Chinese which the Vietnamese emperors had instituted in the previous century. In Cochinchina there were five such *congrégations* during the French period: Cantonese, Hainanese, Hakka, Hokkien and Teochiu.

In Cambodia a French protectorate was formally established in 1863 and in Laos in 1893, both countries administering the Chinese according to the *congrégation* system.

The Chinese in Cambodia and Vietnam were predomi-

nant in trade and industry. Important business, centred around rice, was controlled by Chinese merchants and Chinese syndicates. The Chinese were also the main money-lenders. In Laos they were mostly involved in commercial activities.

The number of Chinese immigrants to Cambodia and Vietnam increased substantially during the French colonial period. However, far fewer settled in Laos for geographical and economic reasons. Since Laos does not have a coastline, it was impossible to reach by sea and its mountainous terrain made internal travel difficult. Also, Laos was economically more backward than Cambodia and Vietnam and, as a result, did not attract many Chinese.

During the Second World War, the French authorities in Indochina were allowed to continue administering the region, even though it was occupied by Japanese troops, since they were loyal to the Vichy regime in France, which the Japanese regarded as a friendly government. Although the Japanese finally took over full administration of the area in March 1945, they did not hold it long and a puppet regime was installed under Bao Dai. Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Vietminh independence movement in Vietnam, swept away this regime and established a new Democratic Republic of Vietnam controlled by a Communist-dominated government. France refused to recognize the new republic and set out to reconquer the country in 1946, establishing a non-Communist state in the south in 1949.

The war affected all three Indochinese countries and Cambodia gained independence from France in 1953 and Laos and Vietnam in 1954. Vietnam was 'temporarily' divided at the 17th parallel until a general election could be held for the whole country in 1956. However, this never took place and the northern part, which was controlled by the Vietminh, formed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). In the southern part, Ngo Dinh Diem became chief of state and proclaimed the Republic of Vietnam (RV).

# VIETNAM

by Ramses Amer

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE: declared 1945, made effective 1954 under Geneva Agreement, Vietnam divided into two states, North (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and South (Republic of Vietnam). Reunited as Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976

CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS: one-party system under leadership of Workers' (Communist) Party, president head of state

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: UN

RATIFICATION OF:

*UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: yes

*UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*: yes

*UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child*: yes

*Political/military alliances*: treaty of friendship and cooperation with Laos

AREA:	329,650 sq.km
POPULATION:	66,473,000 (1990)
LITERACY:	84%
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	67 (1990)
PER CAPITA GNP:	na
ECONOMY:	overwhelmingly agricultural, now trying to encourage foreign investment
ETHNIC GROUPS:	Vietnamese, Chinese (1.5%), Khmer, various tribal ethnic groups
RELIGIONS:	Buddhism, Catholic Christianity, indigenous syncretic religions Hoa Hao, Caodai, Animism
LANGUAGES:	Vietnamese (official language), various minority languages

## The Chinese Community in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

The majority of the Chinese in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) lived in Quang Ninh province bordering China and were mainly fishermen, foresters and craftsmen. In the urban areas they were mainly workers and technicians. Taken as a whole, they played a role in the economy which was different from that of the Chinese in the RV.

The overall policies of the DRV aimed at a transformation of the country into a socialist society which would involve the nationalization of private trade, private enterprises and privately owned land. The ethnic Chinese in the DRV

seem to have had living conditions similar to those of the Vietnamese. Nevertheless, the fact that they were to a greater extent involved in the private sector of the economy meant that its suppression hit them harder.

In 1955 the Chinese Communist Party and the Workers' Party of Vietnam reached an agreement covering the rights and the status of the Chinese in the DRV. The essence of the unpublished agreement was that the Chinese in the DRV would gradually become Vietnamese citizens.

The prominent Chinese leader Zhou Enlai, during a visit to Hanoi in 1956, encouraged the Chinese to integrate into Vietnamese society. Furthermore, in 1961, the two states agreed that the Chinese embassy in Hanoi would no longer issue Chinese passports to the Chinese. It would only issue tourist visas to those who wanted to visit China, while the Vietnamese authorities were to give them travel documents and exit permits. Thus, by the early 1960s, the Vietnamese authorities had become responsible for the well-being of the Chinese. Furthermore, the members of the Chinese community in the DRV had become Vietnamese citizens or were going to be so in the near future.

Between independence and 1958 China had great influence over the education of the ethnic Chinese in the DRV, carried out under the auspices of the Commission of Overseas Chinese Affairs. In late 1958, however, authority over Chinese schools in the DRV was transferred to the Vietnamese and, in an effort to transform the Chinese schools, by the mid-1960s, the Chinese language was downgraded to the level of a foreign language.

## The Chinese Community in the Republic of Vietnam

In the RV, by contrast, the Chinese community formed a larger, more urbanized sector of society and played a predominant role in the economy.

Through a series of decrees, the RV authorities moved swiftly to turn the Chinese into Vietnamese citizens and to break their economic predominance. First, on 7 December 1955, Decree No.10 stated that all children born of mixed marriages between Chinese and Vietnamese were considered to be Vietnamese citizens. Second, on 21 August 1956, Decree No. 48 prescribed that all Chinese born in Vietnam were automatically to become Vietnamese citizens. Third, on 29 August 1956, Decree No. 52 ordered all Vietnamese citizens to take Vietnamese names or face a heavy fine. Fourth, on 6 September 1956, Decree No. 53 banned all non-Vietnamese citizens from engaging in eleven specified occupations: fishmonger and butcher; retailer of products in common use (*chap-pho*); coal and firewood merchant; dealer in petroleum products; second-hand dealer; textile and silk merchant handling less than 10,000 metres; scrap metal dealer; cereal dealer; transporter of persons and merchandise by surface vehicle or boat; rice miller or processor; commission agent.<sup>1</sup> If any of these occupations were carried out, the payment of a heavy fine or deportation was likely.

The first three decrees were discriminatory since they were directed only against the ethnic Chinese community

in the RV. The fourth, prohibiting certain occupations, although directed against all non-Vietnamese, affected the Chinese the most.

The authorities also tried to gain control over the Chinese education system. They required that the Vietnamese language be used in all Chinese high schools and that Vietnamese be appointed principals of Chinese schools. However, during 1957 adverse reactions by the Chinese community, in the form of demonstrations and the withdrawal of large sums of money from banks, made the authorities modify the decrees and the educational reforms in a way that was more acceptable to the Chinese. As a result, the foreign-born Chinese eventually did choose to become Vietnamese citizens.

The economic predominance of the Chinese community was not much affected. On the contrary, by becoming Vietnamese citizens they could freely continue their business activities and even expand them during the period up to 1975. A contributing factor was their success in creating economic activities which prospered from the larger influx of American aid to the country.

In the RV a militarized conflict began in the second half of the 1950s. By 1960 the Front de Libération National (FLN) had been formed by political groups opposing the RV government, and it obtained support from the DRV and its allies. The USA, on the other hand, provided the bulk of support for the RV, at first solely in the form of material aid, then through advisers and finally, from the mid-1960s, ground and air forces were committed in direct combat activities.

The involvement of American troops was ended through the Paris Agreement of January 1973 but, in spite of its provisions, the fighting continued until 1975 when the RV was defeated and its capital (Saigon) fell on 30 April 1975, thus ending the Vietnam War. Vietnam was officially reunified as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976.

## **The Ethnic Chinese in Vietnam since 1975**

The policies of the Vietnamese authorities between 1975 and 1978 were aimed at transforming the southern economy from a capitalist to a socialist one and hence were bound to affect the Chinese community to a larger extent than other population groups because of their important role in the economy. However, these policies proved unsuccessful so, in March 1978, harsher measures against the capitalist-dominated economy of the south were launched. Although the authorities claimed that their goal was to transform the whole economy, and not only the part controlled by the ethnic Chinese, the latter were nevertheless severely affected.

In response, and coupled with the threat of being transferred to New Economic Zones (NEZ), people tried to leave the country. From April 1978 those leaving Vietnam by boat for other South-East Asian countries increased steadily, most of them from the south of Vietnam.

Another problem for the ethnic Chinese was the issue of citizenship. According to the Vietnamese, immediately after the 'liberation' of southern Vietnam, a registration of

foreign residents was undertaken by the new authorities and officially no 'Vietnamese of Chinese origin' registered as such. However, it can be presumed that a certain number of ethnic Chinese refused to register themselves as Vietnamese citizens. Two important reasons were that as non-Vietnamese citizens they would be exempted from military service and as foreign citizens they hoped to be allowed to leave Vietnam. Because they refused to register they were treated as 'foreign residents', with all the restrictions this entailed as to their right to engage in certain professions.

By 1977, the plight of the Chinese community in Vietnam was beginning to attract attention from China. The first open reaction came on 30 April 1978, when the Head of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council in Beijing made an announcement that 40,000 Chinese had returned suddenly from Vietnam to China during the early part of that year. China continued to report a steady increase in the number of Chinese arriving from Vietnam and by mid-July the number exceeded 160,000. Most of these people came from the north of Vietnam.

Why did so many ethnic Chinese suddenly leave the northern parts of the country? The most important reason behind the exodus from the bordering provinces was the fear of a war between China and Vietnam. Relations between the two countries had been deteriorating over issues such as disputed borders as well as divergent views on relations with Kampuchea, and during 1978 the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam became aware of the mounting tension between the two countries. In this situation, many chose to leave in order to avoid getting caught in a war, thus triggering off the outflow of ethnic Chinese from the border provinces. In the rest of the north, rumours of war were somewhat less threatening since the border was some distance away. However, the clampdown on the still-existing private trade, as well as the problems of citizenship, affected many ethnic Chinese and contributed to the continuing outflow of people to China.

During 1978, the exodus of ethnic Chinese was the subject of talks between China and Vietnam. The talks ended without any agreement or understanding being reached but the exodus was to a large extent halted when China sealed off its border with Vietnam on 12 July. Yet, the alternative of leaving northern Vietnam by boat was still open. The outflow of predominantly ethnic Chinese by boat from the whole of Vietnam continued during the second half of 1978 and into 1979. From March to June 1979 the number of arrivals in other South-East Asian countries and in Hong Kong increased sharply.

The accounts given by refugees who reached Hong Kong from northern Vietnam during these months painted a picture of the policy of the Vietnamese authorities, which was tantamount to a large-scale expulsion of ethnic Chinese. Some refugees said that the Chinese had been assembled at information meetings by the Vietnamese authorities and told that, for their own security, they had one of two choices: either to be transferred to NEZ at a safe distance from the border with China, or to leave the country.

This forced exodus occurred in the wake of the Chinese military intervention in Vietnam in February-March 1979.

Several factors help to explain the Chinese military action: first, the disputed bilateral issues concerning border zones; second, China's displeasure with Vietnam's closer relations to the Soviet Union; third, China's condemnation of Vietnam's military intervention in Kampuchea in late December 1978.

The outflow of boat people from April to June 1979 led to a conference on refugees in Geneva in July that year. At this conference the Vietnamese representatives pledged to stem the outflow of people, while at the same time refuting all accusations of being involved in the departures. However, Vietnam seems already to have taken measures to halt the outflow by June 1979, as shown by the fact that the number of refugees arriving in neighbouring countries declined in July and during the rest of that year.

From the fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975 to the end of September 1979, an estimated 200,000-236,000 ethnic Chinese left Vietnam by boat for other South-East Asian countries and for Hong Kong. Furthermore, approximately another 230,000 ethnic Chinese left for China. Thus, an estimated 430,000-466,000 ethnic Chinese fled Vietnam during this period.

In this context, official figures of the numbers of ethnic Chinese in the country are relevant. In 1976 the figure was 1,236,000 'Hoa' (the term used by the Vietnamese for the largest group of ethnic Chinese). In the census of 1 October 1979 the Hoa numbered 935,074. In the most recent general census of 1 April 1989 the number of Hoa was put at 900,185. Thus, there has been a continuous decline in the number of Hoa in Vietnam.

The country faced worsening economic problems in late 1978 and 1979 and the authorities responded by liberalizing the economy in September 1979, which led to the re-emergence of private markets and private distribution systems. In spite of this, Vietnam's economic development has continued to be disappointing, leading to the implementation of more thorough economic reforms from late 1986.

Liberalization of the economy has given the ethnic Chinese a new opportunity to use their abilities and means to become involved in private business and other commercial activities. Their success in gaining control of a larger part of the economic life of the country has been made possible by the policies of the Vietnamese authorities towards them, which have shifted during the 1980s from perceiving and even treating the ethnic Chinese as a kind of 'fifth column' to attempts aimed at gradually reintegrating them into Vietnamese society.

Since mid-1979, most of those ethnic Chinese who have left Vietnam have been doing so legally through the 'Orderly Departure Programme'. Statistics indicate that the percentage of ethnic Chinese leaving the country has been diminishing because of changes in economic policies as well as changes in the authorities' attitudes towards them.

## CAMBODIA

by Ramses Amer

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE: 1953.

CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS: transitional multi-party/faction government installed in early 1992 under UN Peace Plan and with supervision from UN officials and troops.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: UN.

RATIFICATION OF:

*UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: signed but not ratified.

*UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*: yes

*UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child*: no

*Political/military alliances*: none for the moment

AREA:	181,040 sq. km
POPULATION:	7,870,000 (1988)
LITERACY:	75% (1985)
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	48 (1985)
PER CAPITA GNP:	na
ECONOMY:	overwhelmingly subsistence agriculture
ETHNIC GROUPS:	Khmer, Vietnamese, Chinese (%na), Cham, various tribal ethnic groups
RELIGIONS:	Buddhism, Catholic Christianity, Islam
LANGUAGES:	Khmer (official language)

### From Independence to 1975

The Chinese population at the time of Cambodia's independence in 1953 has been estimated at some 425,000 people. This figure remained roughly constant up until the mid-1970s with a ratio of rural- to urban-based Chinese of about 40 to 60. However the war, which began after the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk in 1970 and lasted until 1975, caused an influx of ethnic Chinese from the countryside to Phnom Penh. This war evolved into a conflict between Prince Sihanouk and the Cambodian communists, known as Khmer Rouge, backed by China and the DRV on the one hand and the Lon Nol led government backed by the USA and the RV on the other.

Two laws of the mid-1950s give a good insight into the attitude of the Cambodian authorities towards the Chinese. First, on 30 November 1954, a law on nationality was promulgated in which Article 22 stipulated that anyone with at least one Cambodian parent was to be regarded as a Cambodian citizen. Furthermore, anyone born in Cambodia with at least one of his parents also born in the country was to be regarded as a Cambodian citizen: this

rule was to be applied to all children born after 13 November 1954.

Second, on 19 March 1956, an Immigration Act was put into effect. Its Article 26 stipulated that all foreign nationals were prohibited from engaging in 18 specified occupations: customs agent; boat consignee or shipping agent; intelligence agent or private police; immigration or emigration agent; director of an employment agency; licensed general dealer; arms and munitions merchant; maker of, or dealer in private radio sets or parts of these sets; printer; hairdresser for men, either employer or employee; second-hand dealer or money lender; river or coastal ships' pilot; jeweller or goldsmith, either employer or employee; chauffeur of cars, taxis and transport vehicles; longshoreman; woodcutter; grain merchant; salt dealer.<sup>2</sup>

These prohibitions resulted in widespread unemployment among the ethnic Chinese since an estimated 90 per cent of their community was dependent on commercial activities for their living.

Compared with the decrees promulgated by the RV, the Cambodian regulations on nationality were less discriminatory against the Chinese since, in Cambodia, *all* foreign nationals were subject to the same rulings. Also, the latter were not enforced retroactively upon anyone born in Cambodia. However, the number of specified activities was more extensive than in the Vietnamese ruling.

In contrast to the reaction of the Chinese in the RV towards the nationality law, there was no negative response among the Chinese in Cambodia and, as a result, the naturalization process went ahead smoothly. By becoming Cambodian citizens, many ethnic Chinese were no longer affected by the prohibition on engaging in certain professions and consequently unemployment among them decreased.

During the civil war the Khmer Rouge gradually gained strength and took control over the rural parts of the country in spite of heavy American bombing. The latter did delay their advance on the capital Phnom Penh between 1973 and 1975 but eventually they did capture the capital in April 1975 and established a new administration under the name Democratic Kampuchea (DK).

As noted above, the civil war caused rural-based Chinese to seek refuge in urban areas. Here, the social life of the ethnic Chinese was not affected by the conflict and their associations continued to operate up to 1975, as did their Chinese schools.

### **The Democratic Kampuchea Years: April 1975 to January 1979**

The domestic policies of the DK authorities contrasted sharply with those of the previous administrations. One expression of the changes in policy were the forceful movements of people beginning with the evacuation of Phnom Penh in April 1975. All facets of Cambodian society were changed, including the dismantling of the health sector, radical changes in the education system and nationalization of all private assets including farm land. These radical and sweeping changes, coupled with the oppressive ways in which they were enforced, resulted in

a high number of executions and an obvious disregard for the human costs of malnourishment, overwork and disease. The result was an estimated one million deaths above the normal death rate.

In this context, attention will be focused on how the ethnic Chinese were affected by these policies. It seems they were targeted by the authorities because of their traditional commercial role in the society and because many of them were in Phnom Penh in April 1975 as a result of the war. Being viewed as both capitalists and urban dwellers they were therefore subject to the same harsh treatment as others in this situation. However, more ethnic Chinese than ethnic Khmers were affected by the authorities' policies.

When Phnom Penh was evacuated in April 1975 many of the ethnic Chinese went back to their villages of origin, mainly in the Eastern and South-Western Zones of the country. Later that year another large scale movement of people was carried out by the authorities and many of the evacuees from Phnom Penh were moved to the North-West Zone bordering Thailand.

It has been estimated that possibly as many as 50 per cent (some 200,000) of the ethnic Chinese in Cambodia perished between April 1975 and January 1979 and it seems likely that starvation and disease rather than executions were the main causes of their deaths. This can partly be explained by the fact that ethnic Chinese, whether of rural or urban origins, had not earlier been involved in agriculture and their new life of hard work in the fields, together with a scarce supply of food proved fatal for many of the evacuees from Phnom Penh.

At the same time, the ethnic Chinese as well as other ethnic minorities in Cambodia were denied their own cultural identity through the prohibition of the use of their own languages as well as the suppression of their religious practices (the latter being also the case for the Khmer majority population).

To sum up, the ruthless policies of the authorities were the main reason why such a high number of Cambodians of different social origins perished during the DK years. The ethnic Chinese do not seem to have been singled out for racial discrimination but nevertheless about half of them perished. As well as suffering from general maltreatment (along with the rest of the population), they were targeted because they were considered not to be of poor social origin.

### **The End of the Regime**

It was not the domestic policies of the DK authorities that led to its downfall in early January 1979 but their policies towards neighbouring Vietnam. Relations between the two countries can be summarized in the following way: border clashes between Kampuchea and Vietnam occurred in May 1975. A settlement was reached during a visit to Hanoi in June 1975 by a delegation of the Kampuchean Communist Party, headed by its Secretary-General, Mr Pol Pot, and a fairly stable situation prevailed on the common border during the remainder of 1975 and 1976.

In early 1977, Kampuchea started to 'patrol' disputed border areas, which they regarded as Kampuchean territory

but under Vietnam's control. From March, Kampuchea began artillery shelling and armed attacks against Vietnam. During the second half of 1977, the conflict escalated into a full scale war that continued during 1978 until the Vietnamese launched a military intervention on 25 December 1978. Phnom Penh was captured on 7 January 1979 and the overthrown DK authorities were forced to leave the capital and retreat to the western parts of the country bordering Thailand. In Phnom Penh a new administration was established with Vietnamese assistance and the country was renamed the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK).

## **The People's Republic of Kampuchea: 1979-91**

The PRK was denied a large measure of international recognition and badly needed international development aid to rebuild the country. Despite continued military activities by the Khmer Rouge forces as well as by two non-communist groups against the PRK the latter managed to restore a measure of stability and normality to Cambodia. There has been little information available since then about the situation of the remaining Chinese community in the country, although some general observations can be made.

First, it is known that an unspecified number of ethnic Chinese left Cambodia after the overthrow of the DK. Second, the PRK government aimed to rebuild the country and this has resulted in, among other things, the reconstruction of the health care and educational system. Rural life has been thoroughly changed through a process of recovery and reconstruction followed by reforms aiming to increase agricultural output and improve the living standards of the peasants. Religious freedom has been established and the cities have been repopulated. All these changes have been to the benefit of the Cambodian population as a whole.

Third, from 1979 onwards, the government allowed the elements of a market economy to begin functioning again although the overall economic policy was centrally planned. Since 1989 this centralized economic system has been gradually transformed into what is today a free market economy. Thus, from 1979, it has been possible for ethnic Chinese to resume some of their earlier commercial activities.

Fourth, relations with China were strained because the Chinese government had supported the Khmer Rouge, which may have been one reason why the Kampuchean government did not restore all the civil and religious rights of the ethnic Chinese until 1991.

In 1991 celebration of the Chinese New Year was officially allowed for the first time since the establishment of the PRK. Furthermore, an official Chinese Association was legally founded in 1991. According to representatives of this Association there are an estimated 200,000-300,000 ethnic Chinese in Cambodia today.<sup>3</sup> However, no official count has been carried out since 1979.

A UN sponsored peace agreement for Cambodia was signed in Paris on 23 October 1991. It was signed by the four major Cambodian parties as well as the major external powers, including the five permanent members of the

UN Security Council. The agreement provides for among other things a cease-fire, disarmament of 70 per cent of the armed forces of each of the four groups and the holding of free and fair elections to a new parliament. In order to assist and supervise the implementation of the agreement the UN has been assigned an extensive administrative and military presence in the country. At this stage it is premature to speculate about the possible political situation after a UN disengagement from Cambodia.

# LAOS

by Ramses Amer

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE: 1954 under Geneva Agreement.

CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS: one-party system under leadership of Lao People's Revolutionary Party, president head of state.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: UN.

RATIFICATION OF:

*UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*: yes

*UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child*: no

*Political/military alliances*: treaty of friendship and cooperation with Vietnam.

AREA: 236,800 sq. km.

POPULATION: 4,186,000 (1990).

LITERACY: 44% (1990).

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 50 (1990).

PER CAPITA GNP: \$200 (1990).

ECONOMY: overwhelmingly subsistence agriculture.

ETHNIC GROUPS: Lao, Vietnamese, Chinese (%na), various tribal ethnic groups.

RELIGIONS: Buddhism, Catholic, Christianity, Animism

## From Independence to 1975

At the time of independence from France in 1954 there were about 35,000 Chinese in Laos. By 1959 there were some 40,000, of whom the majority were living in urban areas (15,000 lived in the capital Vientiane). It is known that, for example, in the town of Pakse, the Chinese numbered 7,500 out of a total population of 8,000 while, in the town of Savannakhet, there were 3,500 Chinese out of a total population of 8,500. By the mid-1970s estimates of the number of Chinese in the country vary considerably. Western sources estimated that, by 1975, they numbered approximately 30,000, whereas a local Chinese estimate put the figure at around 80,000.<sup>4</sup>

Before 1975 the Chinese community was organized into associations based on the old *congrégation* system. The most important task of an association was to operate a school if a local Chinese community was large enough to support one. These schools were under the formal control of the Laotian government but, due to the fact that they did not teach French, their graduates had to go to China or Taiwan for higher education.

The ethnic Chinese were badly affected when the Laotian authorities followed the governments of Cambodia and the RV in restricting certain occupations to Laotian

nationals. This was done through a Royal Ordinance which became law in July 1959. The ordinance prohibited foreign nationals from engaging in fourteen specified occupations: customs (officials); land and water transport; immigration; trade in arms and ammunition; trade in radios and radio parts; printing; taxi-driving; lorry-driving; samlor-driving; the granting of forestry concessions; trade in firewood and charcoal; pawn-broking; butchery and fishmongering; hairdressing.<sup>5</sup>

The Vietnamese minority in Laos was exempt from this new law which meant that almost the whole effect of the ordinance fell on the Chinese community. However, Chinese businessmen were successful in adapting themselves to these regulations by becoming Laotian citizens and/or by engaging Laotian citizens as formal owners of their enterprises.

From the second half of the 1950s, there was a civil war in Laos which saw right-wing groups backed by the USA fighting against the Pathet Lao (Laotian Communists) who, in turn, were backed by China and the DRV. It was not until 1973 that a formal settlement and power-sharing agreement was concluded between the parties. From 1973 to 1975 the Laotian communists gradually took over more and more power.

## The Chinese Community in Laos from 1975

Partly as a result of the Laotian Communists' accession to exclusive power during May 1975, many Chinese merchants and businessmen were reported to have crossed the Mekong River to Thailand. According to local Chinese, about 90 per cent of the Chinese community left Laos during this period.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from the purely political reasons for leaving the country, the economic policies aimed at creating a classless socialist society also contributed to the outflow of ethnic Chinese. Nevertheless, the Chinese school in Vientiane, as well as the Chinese Association, functioned continuously during the post-1975 period.<sup>7</sup>

For those ethnic Chinese who remained in Laos, the situation must have been difficult, not only because of the government's policies but also because of the deterioration in relations between Laos and China in 1979 and the early 1980s which led to increased tension along the common border as well as termination of all kinds of Chinese assistance to Laos. The Laotian Communist Party had close political links to its Vietnamese counterpart which meant that, when relations between Vietnam and China deteriorated to open warfare in early 1979, Laos had to make a stand. It opted to side with Vietnam, which inevitably affected relations with China adversely.

However, by 1985, the situation along the border between Laos and China was back to normal and was followed by full restoration of relations between the two countries. Since the late 1980s a general liberalization of economic policies has taken place which has certainly benefited the remaining ethnic Chinese engaged in business. Thus, more normal living conditions have been restored for the Chinese in Laos and it is estimated that they now number some 8,000, of whom about half live in Vientiane.

# BURMA (MYANMAR)

by Martin Smith

CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS: military dictatorship. The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took control in 1988. Leader of SLORC head of state. Opposition National League for Democracy won elections in 1990 but was not allowed to take power.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: UN.

RATIFICATION OF:

*UN Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Opt. Protocol to the Int. Cov. on Civil and Political Rights*: no

*UN Int. Conv. on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*: no

*UN Conv. on the Rights of the Child*: no

AREA:	676,550 sq. km.
POPULATION:	41,609,000 (1990).
LITERACY:	71%.
LIFE EXPECTANCY:	61 (1990).
PER CAPITA GNP:	\$200 (1987).
ECONOMY:	mainly agricultural and resource-based (especially logging).
ETHNIC GROUPS:	Burmese, Karens, Kayan, Shan, Kashin, Nagas, Chinese (1%), Indians, various other minority peoples.
RELIGIONS:	Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity.
LANGUAGES:	Burmese (official language), various minority languages.

Despite their historic and economic importance, the Chinese are one of the least documented and researched of the diverse ethnic minority groups in modern-day Burma (Myanmar).<sup>1</sup> Chinese influence in the country can be dated back to 1287 AD and the fall of the ancient capital Pagan to the Mongol armies of Kublai Khan. In the following centuries, the imperial court in Beijing laid claim to suzerainty over large areas of Burma and Chinese invasion forces were repelled by different ethnic Burman or Shan rulers several times. Throughout these conflicts, the mountainous border region remained loosely defined and a steady stream of Chinese migrants (predominantly Yunnanese) and various hill-peoples moved back and forth across the unmarked frontier.<sup>2</sup>

The ethnic map then became even more complicated following the British annexation of Burma in the 19th Century when a flood of new (mostly male) Chinese labourers and migrants came by sea from Guangdong (Canton) and Fujian (Fukien) provinces to set up shops and businesses in Rangoon, Moulmein and other towns in central and lower Burma.<sup>3</sup>

After Burma's independence in 1948, Chinese claims for a 77,000-square-mile (200,000 sq. kms.) region of north-east Burma were continued by both the Communist government of Mao Zedong in Beijing and the Kuomintang (KMT) government of Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa (Taiwan). In the early 1950s refugee KMT forces from Yunnan province fought a fierce, undeclared war with the Burmese government as they secretly prepared a 12,000-strong army in Burma's eastern Shan State for an attempted re-invasion of the Chinese mainland.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, though in 1960 a joint 2,100 kilometre border demarcation was finally agreed between Rangoon and Beijing, even today maps in Taiwan continue to mark parts of Kachin State as Chinese territory.

Communist China's intrusion into Burmese politics has also persisted, largely through support for the insurgent Communist Party of Burma (CPB). In 1968 Chinese military instructors and Red Guards were sent into Burma to help build up the CPB's 20,000-strong People's Army which, for over 20 years, governed vast 'liberated zones' along the Burma-China border.<sup>5</sup> Following the break-up of the People's Army as a result of ethnic mutinies in 1989, a number of these Chinese volunteers, including Lin Ming Xian, Li Ziru and Zhang Zhi Ming, remained behind in Burma and have taken leading roles in new political movements which have negotiated cease-fires with the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in Rangoon.

As with other ethnic minority communities in Burma, present-day statistics are contentious and there has been no attempt to make an accurate survey of the Chinese population in Burma since the last British census of 1931.<sup>6</sup> The 1931 census, for example, recorded 193,594 Chinese inhabitants of Burma, comprising three major sub-groups, the Yunnanese, Fukienese and Cantonese, but in the 1950s a Chinese population of anywhere between 350,000 and 600,000 was more commonly mentioned. By contrast, the SLORC, which seized power in a military coup in September 1988, today quotes a 1983 figure of just 230,000.<sup>7</sup> Generally speaking, however, the Chinese have been calculated at just over 1 per cent of Burma's population which, with an estimated 42 million inhabitants in 1991, would mean over 400,000 citizens of Chinese ethnic origin today.

Part of this confusion over statistics can be attributed to the large number of Chinese families who have long since settled in Burma and intermarried. Such prominent national figures as the Burmese Army veterans, ex-Brigadiers San Yu and Aung Gyi, and the country's long-time military ruler, General Ne Win (Shu Maung), have mixed Sino-Burman ancestries. In addition, Burma's tough citizenship rules have encouraged many inhabitants to play down their ethnic backgrounds. Under the 1982 citizenship law, for example, which exempts 'indigenous races' such as the Burmans, Karens and Shans, the rights of full citizenship are, in theory, confined only to those who can prove ancestors resident in Burma before the first British annexation in 1824. On the basis of this law, ethnic Chinese and Indian holders of Foreign Residents Cards, even if born and brought up in Burma, are banned from studying 'professional' subjects such as medicine and technology at university. Not surprisingly, then, the children of

many Chinese, whose citizenship could be in question, prefer to register under different ethnic categories.

It is, however, in the turbulent Shan State that ethnic arguments have often been at their most extreme. Not only are there substantial Chinese-majority communities, notably in the Kokang substate, but Chinese remains a commonly spoken language for trade and travel in the hills.<sup>8</sup> Burma's illicit opium trade, for example, has for over two decades been largely controlled by KMT remnants and local ethnic Chinese or Shan Chinese militia leaders, such as Pheung Kya-shin, Lo Hsing-han and Khun Sa (Chan Shi-fu), who have frequently changed sides between different insurgent armies and Rangoon.<sup>9</sup>

This complex and dislocated history has left many Chinese communities, especially in the towns, with an uncertain place in Burmese society and, like the larger Indian community, the Chinese have often been portrayed by nationalist politicians as a relic of the colonial past. In the 1930s, the Chinese were several times the victims of communal violence in which hundreds of Indians (the main target of the crowds) were killed. However, in the short-lived parliamentary era of the 1950s, despite widespread anger over the KMT invasion, many Chinese business communities flourished and there were six Chinese-language daily newspapers and over 250 Chinese vernacular schools (split along pro-Beijing or pro-Taipei lines).<sup>10</sup>

Anti-Chinese resentment, however, swiftly resurfaced after General Ne Win seized power in March 1962 and introduced his idiosyncratic Burmese Way to Socialism. An estimated 100,000 Chinese merchants and traders left Burma in the years 1963-7 following Ne Win's mass nationalization of the economy. All Chinese schools and newspapers were closed down and the publication of Chinese literature was subject to tough censorship laws.<sup>11</sup>

The exodus was completed by violent anti-Chinese riots which broke out in towns across Burma in mid-1967. Many observers believe these disturbances, which included an attack on the Chinese embassy in Rangoon, were deliberately provoked by the Ne Win government. Dozens, and possibly hundreds, of Chinese were killed or injured and many Chinese properties and buildings were looted and destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

The violence was the cue for China's open military backing for the CPB insurrection which had begun back in 1948. Relations only started to thaw in the mid-1980s when, apparently as part of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, Burma was selected for a vast expansion of official trade with Yunnan province (there has always been a thriving, cross-border black market trade). Legalized trade, which was negligible in the early 1980s, had reached US\$1.5 billion per annum by 1988.<sup>13</sup>

This closing of ties with China was then hastened by three unrelated developments which brought military hardliners in Rangoon and Beijing together: the SLORC coup in 1988 in which hundreds of students and unarmed demonstrators were killed; the virtual collapse of the CPB in early 1989; and the crushing a few months later of student protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. By 1991, China was estimated to account for over 40 per cent of Burma's foreign trade, and this new partnership appeared to be cemented by Beijing's agreement to sell sophisticat-

ed modern weaponry, worth a massive US\$1.2 billion, to the SLORC.

As a result of this dramatic change in the economic climate many ethnic Chinese from China, Hong Kong and Thailand have already visited or returned to Burma. Since Western governments cut off virtually all official aid and investment to the SLORC in protest at the 1988 killings, in many parts of the country it has been largely the capital of Chinese entrepreneurs which has revived Burma's failing economy – especially in Mandalay and the north-east.

None the less, despite this improvement in SLORC's relations with its neighbours, for Burma's Chinese population the situation remains ambiguous. There has been no relaxation in the government's tough restrictions on the expression of ethnic minority languages, religions and cultures. The draconian publishing laws which existed under the Burmese Way to Socialism have been tightened in every respect, and the SLORC has consistently refused to hand over power to the National League for Democracy, headed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, which won a landslide victory in the 1990 election.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, since 1989 the SLORC, masterminded by Military Intelligence chief Major General Khin Nyunt, has been waging an openly xenophobic 'Cultural Revolution' campaign of its own.

Once again, Burma's Chinese and Indian communities appear to be a target, and the government's continued suspicion of their loyalties was expressed in a series of articles published in the country's only newspaper under the title, 'We Fear Our Race May Become Extinct'. One commentary was seen as particularly threatening: 'Many Burmese girls have become wives of Indians and Chinese. They have given birth to impure Burmese nationals. Foreigners marrying Burmese girls and trying to swallow up the whole race will continue to be a problem in the era of democracy in future.'<sup>15</sup>

In the face of official sanction of such discriminatory sentiments, many Chinese, mindful of the violence of the past, see uncomfortable signposts to the future.



## CONCLUSIONS

For centuries, the Chinese have been leaving China and settling in different parts of South-East Asia. Their reasons for doing so have been as varied as the languages they spoke and the areas they came from. Their circumstances today are equally varied. Yet this diaspora has often had a profound effect on the economic and cultural life of the ten countries of the region considered in this report.

This long history of settlement means that many thousands of ethnic Chinese have lived in the countries of South-East Asia for generations. Yet in none, except for Singapore, do they constitute more than a small percentage of the population.

Information on their numbers is difficult to establish, partly because in different circumstances people have been more or less willing to identify themselves as members of a minority in national censuses. Equally, there is a dearth of material available on the situation of women ethnic Chinese, and Minority Rights Group recommends that future researchers try to rectify this situation. There is also a need for more analysis of the different aspirations of older and younger generations.

Since the People's Republic of China no longer recognizes ethnic Chinese born abroad as Chinese citizens, the Chinese in South-East Asia have faced different degrees of access to citizenship. There are positive moves, for example, in Indonesia where the recent re-opening of diplomatic ties between the Chinese and Indonesian governments may lead to a resolution of the situation of stateless ethnic Chinese, while in Malaysia the constitutional rights of ethnic Chinese are being eroded.

The recently restrained role which China has played in not exploiting the issue of the 'overseas Chinese' has not prevented, during the last few decades, the ethnic Chinese from being perceived as a kind of fifth column for Chinese Communism: this was very much the attitude of the Vietnamese authorities towards them, for example, up until the 1980s. Territorial disputes, especially in Burma and Indochina, have often increased the local governments' and people's animosity towards them.

The perceived status of the ethnic Chinese in many of the countries of South-East Asia is often that of wealthy middlemen, with all of the jealousies and potential violence that that assumption entails. When the pressures become too great, the wealthiest do sometimes quit the country (taking their valuable skills and business acumen with them). Yet the majority are poor fisher-farmers who cannot afford to leave and have to deal as best they can with the prejudices bestowed on their whole community by the majority people.

There has been a major misunderstanding by the West of the origins of many refugees from Vietnam, and their ethnic Chinese composition. Too often it has been assumed that they were economic migrants seeking economic advantages in the West rather than people escaping prejudice and, on occasions, persecution in Vietnam because of their ethnic origins.

Co-existence does not mean assimilation and a loss of cultural identity, which is a painful experience for the generations who suffer it. Language and education are crucial to the maintenance of cultural identity. Traditionally, the ethnic Chinese have spoken the language or dialect from their place of origin in China, or in more modern times have used Mandarin amongst themselves. In the last few decades, however, many governments in the region, such as those in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, have placed limits on Chinese language education. Some have discouraged the public use of Chinese.

Article 1 of Paragraph 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) states that Special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups...shall not be continued after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved'. It might be argued, for example, that the special measures which the Malaysian government have taken in favour of the Malays were justified to redress social injustices. However, there is a serious danger in this case of the government continuing beyond CERD's defined boundary and excluding the poor ethnic Chinese from education and advancement.

As shown in this report, for example in Burma and Indonesia, a minority can be used time and time again as a scapegoat in times of major change, when the social order is threatened or when there is a new government. Yet a minority such as the ethnic Chinese can offer many useful things to the whole society, not least in this case their trading links, business skills and contacts. There is a need therefore to reinforce areas of cooperation, rather than conflict. There are examples in this study of scholars, teachers, businessmen and traders from all communities including Chinese working successfully together. In these circumstances, misunderstandings and prejudice are broken down and stability, trust and growth occur between the minority ethnic Chinese communities and the majority populations.

## NOTES

### Historical Overview, pp.7-10

- 1 Skinner, G. William, *Chinese Society in Thailand*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1959, pp.46, 112.
- 2 Lombard, Denys, *Le Carrefour javanais*, Éd. de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1990, Vol.2, p.213ff. Chinese agriculture was 'industrial' because its products were processed in small factories, such as sugar mills, arak distilleries, oil presses, for dyeing textiles, and so on, p.223. Also on Chinese frontier agriculture, Jackson, James C., *Planters and Speculators: Chinese and European Agricultural Enterprise in Malaya*, University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1968.
- 3 See Gaspardone, Émile, 'Un Chinois des mers du sud: le Fondateur de Hà-Tiên', *Journal asiatique* 240 (1952), pp.363-385; Sellers, Nicholas, *The Princes of Hà-Tiên (1682-1867)*, Thanh Long, Brussels, 1983.
- 4 Skinner, *op. cit.*, pp.20-3.
- 5 When the British colonies (except Singapore) on the Malayan Peninsula became independent in 1957, they formed the Federation of Malaya. The name was changed to Malaysia in 1963, when Singapore and the north Bornean states of Sarawak and Sabah joined the Federation. In 1965, Singapore left Malaysia, becoming the Republic of Singapore.
- 6 Compare Wang Gungwu, 'Patterns of Chinese Migration in Historical Perspective', in May, R. J., and O'Malley, William, eds., *Observing Change in Asia*, Crawford House Press, Bathurst, 1989, pp.33-48.
- 7 *Peranakan* is a Malay-Indonesian word meaning local-born; in contemporary usage it usually implies someone who is also locally rooted, speaking Malay-Indonesian or a local language rather than Chinese.
- 8 *Baba* is practically a synonym for *peranakan*; the largest settlement of Baba Chinese is in Melaka (Malacca), Malaysia, but they also lived in Singapore and Penang (Pinang) and the word was used in the Indies, too.
- 9 Skinner, *op. cit.*, p.128.
- 10 See Wickberg, Edgar, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1968.
- 11 Mandarin (*putonghua, guoyu*) is spoken in most of north and south-west China. South-East Asia's Chinese seldom or never spoke Mandarin before the advent of modern schools, and Mandarin-speaking teachers had to be imported.
- 12 Hewison, Kevin, 'The State and Capitalist Development in Thailand', in Hewison, K., *Power and Politics in Thailand*, Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, Manila, 1989, pp.32-3.

### The ASEAN States, p.11

- 1 See, for example, the remarks of Indonesian Chinese banker Mochtar Riady prepared in summer 1990 for the Cornell University conference 'The Role of the Indonesian Chinese in Shaping Modern Indonesian Life'.

### Malaysia, pp.12-14

- 1 Loh Koh Wah, *Beyond the Tin Mines*, Singapore University Press, Singapore, 1988, discusses the land problem at length.
- 2 According to a Reuters dispatch in *International*

*Herald Tribune* (hereafter *IHT*), 18 June 1991. The remaining 8.4 per cent was held by mixed groups. The official statistics may actually underestimate the Bumiputra share.

- 3 Jomo, K.S., 'Whither Malaysia's New Economic Policy?', *Pacific Affairs* 63:4 (Winter 1990-1), p.499, gives slightly different figures for the 1988 distribution of wealth. He also shows (p.494) that the incidence of poverty was reduced for all ethnic groups between 1976 and 1987.
- 4 This discussion of the NEP is based primarily on Jesudason, James V., *Ethnicity and the Economy*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1989 and Jomo, *op. cit.*
- 5 *IHT*, 18 June 1991, calls it the 'New Development Policy'.
- 6 An informant points out that Chinese and Tamil primary schools receive 'much less' state support than do schools teaching in Malay; in addition, the Education Act empowers the government to close vernacular schools, which raises suspicion among Chinese.
- 7 See Heidhues, Mary F. Somers, 'Chinese Education in Malaysia and Indonesia', in Rothermund, Dietmar and Simon, John, eds., *Education and the Integration of Ethnic Minorities*, Frances Pinter, London, 1986, pp.48-63, and Tan Liok Ee, 'Chinese Independent Schools in West Malaysia: Varying Responses to Changing Demands', in Cushman and Wang, loc. cit., pp.61-74. According to Tan, there were 37 independent Chinese (secondary) schools in West Malaysia in 1983.
- 8 Mauzy, Diane K., 'Malaysia in 1987', *Asian Survey* XXVIII:2 (February 1988), pp.219-20. It has been charged that the arrests were in reality an attempt to divert attention from a crisis in UMNO itself.
- 9 *Far Eastern Economic Review* (hereafter *FEER*), 16 July 1982. Later figures are more balanced, and, as noted, many Chinese study abroad.
- 10 Carstens, Sharon A., 'Pulai Hakka Chinese Malaysian: A Labyrinth of Cultural Identities', in Gosling, L. A. Peter and Lim, Linda Y. C., *The Chinese in South-East Asia*, Singapore, 1983, Vol. 2, pp.79-98.
- 11 Figures cited by Jomo, K. S., in a private communication.

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- 1 Wang Gungwu, 'Are Indonesian Chinese Unique? Some Observations', in Mackie, J. A. C., ed., *The Chinese in Indonesia*, Nelson for the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Melbourne, 1976, pp.199-210.
- 2 Coppel, Charles A., *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, OUP, Kuala Lumpur, 1983, pp.52-72. Baperki is an abbreviation for Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia (Consultative Body for Indonesian Citizenship).
- 3 Feith, Herbert, 'The Legacy of the Dayak Raids', *FEER*, 25 January 1968. Members of the military are thought to have instigated the anti-Chinese activities.
- 4 *Tempo* (Jakarta), 17 March 1990; *FEER*, 16 August 1990. Bakom PKB is an abbreviation of Badan Komunikasi Penghayatan Kesatuan Bangsa ('Communication Body for the Appreciation of National Unity'). The assimilationist group first propounded the idea that Indonesian citizens of Chinese

descent adopt Indonesian-sounding names and otherwise adapt to Indonesian life.

- 5 *Totok* is a Malay-Indonesian word meaning pure, here it means culturally more 'pure' Chinese and is the opposite of *peranakan*.
- 6 Yoon Hwan Shin, 'The Role of Elites in Creating Capitalist Hegemony in Post-Oil Boom Indonesia', in *Indonesia*, Special Issue on The Role of the Indonesian Chinese in Shaping Modern Indonesian Life, 1991, pp.127-44.
- 7 Tan, Mély G., 'The Social and Cultural Dimensions of the Role of Ethnic Chinese in Indonesian Society', *Indonesia* Special Issue 1991, pp.113-25; Heidhues, Mary Somers, 'From BAKOM to Prasetya Mulya', paper presented to 8th European Colloquium on Indonesian and Malay Studies, Kungälv, Sweden, June 1991.
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- 2 Kaye, Lincoln, 'East Timor Depends on Jakarta's Largesse', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 September 1985.

#### Singapore, pp.19-20

- 1 Statistics on population and income from *The World Bank Atlas*, 1991.
- 2 Riedlinger, Heinz, 'Die Bewegung zur Verbreitung des Hochchinesischen (Tuiguang Huayu Yundong) in Singapur' (the movement for propagation of Mandarin in Singapore), *ASIEN* 16 (July 1985), pp.75-83. Riedlinger asserts that 97 per cent of all Chinese in Singapore and 77.9 per cent of all Singaporeans understood Hokkien; in that case, Mandarin was not to replace English but to replace dialects.
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- 2 Special report by Rigoberto Tiglao in *FEER*, 15 February 1990, pp.68-72.

#### Brunei, p.24

- 1 Leake, David, *Brunei*, McFarland, Jefferson, 1989, pp.108-111; Suryadinata, China and the ASEAN States, op. cit., pp.120-122.

#### Indochina, p.25

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