

Studies on the Chinese Religion in
Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia

Chinese Beliefs and Practices in Southeast Asia



Edited by Cheu Hock Tong

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Preface

THE AIM of this book is to provide reading material for students taking introductory courses in the social sciences, particularly in Anthropology and Sociology of Religion, or Comparative Religious Systems in institutions of higher learning. It also meets the need of general readers who wish to know about the trends of Chinese belief systems in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

The collective efforts of thirteen contributors from nine countries—two each from Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the United States, and one each from France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, and the Netherlands—have made this book possible. I take this opportunity to thank them for their contributions and their forbearance in awaiting its publication.

In editing this book, I have retained the format of Chinese transcription, either in the Wade-Giles Mandarin Romanization system or in the New Pinyin system, adopted by each writer. A character list is appended at the end of the book to guide readers who wish to identify the original characters transcribed in the text, based on either dialect or standard Chinese pronunciation. Where dialects are used, an alphabetical symbol is used to indicate the actual dialect grouping. For example, "C" for Cantonese, "H" for Hokkien, "Ha" for Hakka, and so forth.

As far as Malay and Indonesian languages are concerned, variations between them as well as between the old and the new spelling system have been retained. This is to preserve their originality and historicity as well as their social, cultural, and linguistic contexts. For instance, old forms of spelling of Malay or Indonesian words such as "*bantuan pengobatan*" instead of "*bantuan pengubatan*" and Indonesian forms of spelling for words such as "*satoe*", "*Junus Jahja*", "*peladjaran*", etc. will be printed in the same way as they appear in the text.

Cheu Hock Tong

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Published by
Pelanduk Publications (M) Sdn Bhd
24 Jalan 20/16A, 46300 Petaling Jaya
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Malaysia.

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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
Chinese beliefs & practices in Southeast Asia:
Studies on the Chinese religion in Malaysia,
Singapore and Indonesia / edited by Cheu Hock Tong.

Bibliography: p.353-362
ISBN 967 978 452 5

- 1. Chinese—Malaysia—Religion. 2. Chinese—Singapore—Religion. 3. Chinese—Indonesia—Religion. 4. Chinese—Malaysia—Religious life. 5. Chinese—Singapore—Religious life. 6. Chinese—Indonesia—Religious life.

I. Cheu Hock Tong.
299.51

Printed by
Eagle Trading Sdn Bhd
81 Jalan SS25/32, 47301 Petaling Jaya
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Malaysia.



299.51
CH1

Contents

- Preface* . . . v
Acknowledgement . . . ix
Introduction . . . xi

PART I SOUTHEAST ASIA

1. Chinese Religious Practices and
Customs in Malaysia and Singapore . . . 3
Tadao Sakai
2. The Festival of the Nine Emperor Gods
in Peninsular Southeast Asia . . . 17
Cheu Hock Tong
3. Islam and Chinese Assimilation
in Indonesia and Malaysia . . . 59
The Siauw Giap

PART II MALAYSIA

4. Malaysian Chinese Folk Religion:
With Special Reference to
Weizhen Gong in Kuala Lumpur . . . 103
Kok Hu Jin
5. The God of War and the Vagabond Buddha . . . 143
Jean DeBernardi
6. Two Faces of Buddhism: Chinese Participation
in the Thai Temples in Kelantan . . . 165
Mohamed Yusoff bin Ismail

PART III SINGAPORE

7. The Dynamics of Chinese Religion:
A Recent Case of Spirit Possession in Singapore . . . 187
Ruth-Inge Heinze

Chinese Beliefs and Practices in Southeast Asia

8. Religious Pluralism and
Chinese Beliefs in Singapore . . . 199
John Clammer

PART IV INDONESIA

9. From Christian Mission to Confucian Religion:
The Dutch Missionary Union and the Chinese
of West Java, 1870-1910 . . . 225
Charles A. Coppel
10. Confucianism in Indonesia: Past and Present . . . 251
Leo Suryadinata
11. Cults Peculiar to the Chinese in Java . . . 279
Claudine Salmon
12. The Cult of Surya Kencana in Jakarta:
New-Style Peranakan Chinese Spirit-Mediumship . . . 307
Ingo Wandelt
13. Death and Burial Rituals among
the Chinese in Karawang, West Java . . . 329
Ninawati Hendilihadja

- List of Contributors* . . . 351
Select Bibliography . . . 353
List of Chinese Characters . . . 363
Index . . . 381