

The Chinese Dilemma

YE LIN-SHENG

"All Malaysians, Chinese and Malay alike, should read both *The Chinese Dilemma* and *The Malay Dilemma*. Only by doing so would they understand the aspirations of the two races and strike a balance between them."

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as reported in the *Nanyang Siang Pau*

"*The Chinese Dilemma* relates comprehensively—and you would expect, confrontationally—to Mahathir's political manifesto of 1970, *The Malay Dilemma*, which was immediately banned then." Duncan Campbell, former Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Malaysia, *The Sunday Star*

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The Chinese Dilemma

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PREFACE

I HAVE DWELT on "the Chinese dilemma" in Malaysia ever since I read Mahathir Mohamad's *The Malay Dilemma* (1970) more than a quarter of a century ago. In 1990 I began to put my thoughts down on paper. My progress was tortuous as I lacked the necessary erudition and found it difficult to gather material.

In 1992, I came across Lynn Pan's *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese* (1990). Two thoughts struck me as I read this saga about the millions of Chinese who left the shores of China to seek their fortunes overseas. The first was that the persecution, cruelty and humiliation these Chinese suffered were perpetrated not by the indigenous peoples of the lands to which they had journeyed, but by the white colonisers—the Spaniards in Manila, the Dutch in Batavia, the British in Australia and Canada, and the white Americans in California.

My second thought was that if I could enlist Lynn Pan's assistance I might be able to tell my story and tell it better. I thought that if I could tap into her command of the English language and her familiarity with the history of the Chinese diaspora, my attempts to spell out the Chinese dilemma might get somewhere.