



Yearning to Belong: Malaysia's Indian Muslims, Chitties, Portuguese Eurasians, Peranakan Chinese and Baweanese

Patrick Pillai

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Malaysia is among the most ethnically diverse and culturally rich nations on earth. Yet much of its cultural wealth lies buried beneath the rubric of its main Malay, Chinese and Indian "race" categories; the dazzling diversity within and outside these groups remains largely unexplored. This book uncovers some of this fascinating diversity through the stories of five little-known acculturated ethnic groups in Peninsula Malaysia. The author, a Malaysian sociologist, delivers an insightful and lucid study of these groups, with some surprising findings. These communities illustrate how much more cross-cultural mingling, sharing and co-dependence there is within Malaysian society than we care to recognize, admit or celebrate. This raises various questions: Is a similar process of spontaneous inter-ethnic interaction possible between larger ethnic groups today? How can we foster such acculturation, and can it by itself contribute to ethnic harmony? The author also discovers that despite their long settlement and deep acculturation, segments of these groups are anxious about their future, and pine for an indigenous identity. What are the implications of this trend for ethnic relations, and how can it be resolved? This book traces the acculturation journey of these communities and draws lessons for ethnic relations in one of the most complex multi-ethnic nations in the world. It will appeal to scholars, students, laymen and visitors interested in migration, history, culture, ethnicity and heritage in Malaysia and the region.

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