# POWER AND IDENTITY IN THE CHINESE WORLD ORDER

Festschrift in Honour of Professor Wang Gungwu

Edited by

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# Introduction

Billy K. L. So

o honour Professor Wang Gungwu on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, the present fourteen studies were brought together in a volume that underscores, in its variety, issues surrounding the modern Chinese world order. The term 'Chinese world order' may remind students of modern Chinese history of the influential and classic volume, *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, edited by the late John King Fairbank over thirty years ago.¹ Professor Wang Gungwu contributed a seminal study of Ming China's relations with Southeast Asia to that volume.

Since then, much has happened in China and elsewhere. The Chinese perception of world order has presumably evolved accordingly. The concept underlying the term remains, for all that, a fundamental and yet ambiguous aspect of China's civilizational inheritance today — the more so as China engages openly with the world and interacts more closely and frequently with other states and civilizations at the start of a new millennium. This volume contributes to an ongoing exploration of the diverse meanings of the Chinese world order through a variety of original studies in modern Chinese history and society, framed around concerns that have animated scholarship since the publication of the Fairbank volume three decades ago.

The Chinese world order is essentially a Chinese perception of the world.<sup>2</sup> In the 1960s, the overarching concern of scholarship on this subject was China's perception of the world under an imperial system that guided its foreign relations and its policies towards other countries over time. One of the fundamental questions arising from this kind of analysis was why China failed, as a state, to respond positively to the Western impact of the

mineteenth century By the turn of the twenty-first century, this kind of question might well be broadened to embrace social and cultural dimensions outside the framework of the international relations of the empire. For a start, the term Chinese is no longer confined to citizens of the Chinese state. Professor Wang's concern for Ming relations with Southeast Asia has now been amplified many times over in research into Chinese communities around the world. Chinese communities now have a more assured place in the Chinese world order.

Secondly, the Chinese perception of world order need not be considered homogeneous. In the imperial era, as Benjamin Schwartz pointed out some time ago, there was a diversity of attitudes towards non-Chinese within 'the overriding Chinese perception' of the empire.<sup>3</sup> Attempts to enforce conformity of perceptions in the modern era (as in the Cultural Revolution) have not had a lasting effect <sup>4</sup> Our task here is, in any case, not to construct an alternative or expanded Chinese world order, past or present, but to explore the complexity of that world order in diverse contexts. To this end, the volume is organized around the two categories of power and identity.

The term 'power', as it appears here, indicates both the power structure of the Chinese state and the power of China in relation to other states, that is, China as a power in itself. The two dimensions are closely interwoven into the history of modern China. On the one hand, shifts in the domestic power structure have often created decisive effects on China's position visàvis other powers or countries. On the other, the changing role of China in the international arena has also produced an enormous impact on political processes within China. A key point of convergence between power in domestic politics and power in world politics has been the sense of crisis and humiliation that has captured the imagination of many in China over the past two centuries — a sense of national crisis arising from international humiliation. This sense of humiliation has arguably been the most powerful driving force behind relentless Chinese efforts to restructure state power in the modern era <sup>5</sup>

One of the most important focuses of national reconstruction was the effort to construct a constitutional framework for setting central and local governments in order. This constitutes the first theme of our volume (Part I). All four chapters in this section deal with the interaction between central authority and local political concerns in relation to national territories or conflicting forces, in the context of international politics. The second theme (Part II) also concerns power, although in this case power seen from a micro

or social perspective. The three chapters in the second section explore relations between state power on one side, and the economy and society on the other.

Identity is the second major category in the volume.<sup>6</sup> The issue of Chinese identity has long been a concern of Chinese letters. The more traditional expression of this problem is drawn in the distinction between Chinese and non-Chinese, huayi zhi bian. Its modern representation turns on the classification of China as a nation of many nationalities, and of Chinese people as sharing a common cultural identity across divergent cultural contexts. The issue has been further complicated over the last few decades with recognition of previously neglected peripheries of Chinese culture, including Chinese abroad.<sup>7</sup> The problem of Chinese identity thus constitutes another significant if ambiguous problem — a defining issue in relation to Chinese perceptions of world order in so far as the concept of world order turns on relational identities. The present volume provides empirical and micro studies on the broader issue of Chinese identity from traditional, religious and intellectual perspectives (Part III). Four other chapters investigate specific cases concerning Chinese identity, as community and in relation to questions of self and other in the contexts of gender and equality (Part IV).

The two categories of power and identity correspond with major concerns of Professor Wang Gungwu's scholarship over the past half century. The fruits of his work are succinctly and intimately documented in Professor Philip Kuhn's prologue. In the prologue, Kuhn surveys Professor Wang's writings over a span of fifty years, revealing how his thought developed in response to the historical events of his time, but revealing as well the consistency of certain fundamental concerns over a lifetime of scholarship. At the core of these concerns was a liberal idealism that rejected narrow communalism in any shape or form. In the epilogue, Lee Guan-kin offers an oral history of Professor Wang to help us locate his scholarship in his personal experience. The epilogue is based on nine in-depth interviews conducted with Professor Wang in 1999, ranging over his family background, his childhood and youth in Ipoh, his life and education in China and Britain, and his subsequent ten years of teaching at the University of Malaya, eighteen years in Australia, nine and a half years in the University of Hong Kong, and his directorship of the East Asian Institute in Singapore since 1996. The chapters sandwiched between the prologue and epilogue reflect the work of graduate students taught and advised by Professor Wang over his years in Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Lee Kam-keung examines the revolutionary leaders and their followers who formed the vanguard of the anti-Qing movement in Fujian Province, with a view to evaluating the social character of the Republican Revolution. He argues that after the First Sino-Japanese War, Fujian became the target of political and economic ambitions by Japan, France, Britain, the United States and Germany. In the perception of its inhabitants, the province was under imminent threat of being partitioned by foreign powers. Although the Qing Court as a central government tried to maintain and defend its sovereignty, it failed to withstand foreign encroachment, resulting in further loss of sovereign rights. The Fujianese, like their compatriots elsewhere, gradually lost confidence in the Qing government, which they held responsible for national misfortune and humiliation. The chapter details who, precisely, took up the challenge of revolution in Fujian, and why they did so.

In Chapter 2, So Wai-chor probes the territorial identity of the modern Chinese state under the Chiang Kai-shek regime by examining the concept of 'Chinese territories' in the writings and decisions of the Nationalist (KMT) government from 1928 to 1945. Chiang Kai-shek, the paramount Nationalist leader of the period, inherited with his peers a vague idea that Chinese territories included all regions once ruled by the Manchu dynasty. Taiwan, the Ryukyu Islands and even Korea were, in this sense, territories belonging to China. But Chiang was too much a realist to ignore the fact that China was too weak to defend all these territories by force if confronted by foreign powers. He was prepared to compromise — notably in the case of Outer Mongolia. The author concludes that this realist attitude eventually defined the boundaries of China's national territory, and that Chiang's concept and rationale of 'Chinese territories' retains its relevance today.

The third chapter by Huang Jianli is a detailed examination of the KMT peace mission of April 1949, on the eve of the Chinese Communist takeover of the Mainland. This last major negotiation between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) before the founding of the People's Republic of China has hitherto received little scholarly attention, in contrast to the peace talks mediated by Patrick Hurley and George Marshall in 1945–6. It commenced on 1 April and its eventual failure created an impression that the whole exercise was no more than an April Fool's Day joke. Was it merely a prank? If so, who was the perpetrator and who the victim? Huang examines the interplay of forces that set the stage for the peace mission and its eventual collapse, and explores the political dynamics of China on the eve of the Communist takeover.

The next empirical case is a contemporary one, examining Hong Kong's repositioning after reunification with Mainland China in 1997. Jane Lee attempts to explore the history of Hong Kong's positioning in the period over the twelve years of political transition from 1985 to 1997, and over the first two years after reunification with China. She argues that the unique positioning of Hong Kong depends on the capacity of the Hong Kong leadership to maintain a degree of ambivalence within the context of 'One Country, Two Systems' — specifically to position Hong Kong both as a city of China and as a separate and autonomous part of the country. The success of Hong Kong's autonomy is dependent on maintaining a degree of flexibility that allows both sides to make adjustments in response to developments in the domestic and international environments.

In the opening chapter of Part II, Ho Hon-wai addresses the issue of state power and the economy as these are embodied in the life of one individual across the historical divide separating the late Qing and the Republican eras. He threads together available fragments of historical information to reconstruct and uncover the life and career of Liu Xuexun (1855–1935), a colourful, mysterious and somewhat controversial Guangdong gambling operator, tax-farmer, mandarin-capitalist, secret agent and emissary. Ho positions his narrative of Liu Xuexun in the broader context of historical change over the period, seeking to elicit greater understanding of Liu's relations with other political forces over his lifetime.

In Chapter 6, Terry Narramore explores the fragile status of the professions during the Republican period. Taking up the neglected issue of journalism as a profession, Narramore explores the place of professional autonomy within a commercially based press. Journalists, he argues, underestimated the restrictions imposed upon them by commerce and politics. The expansion of the commercial press coincided with the rise of Chinese nationalism and the crisis of Japanese militarism. Historical events conspired to convert the earnest wishes of journalists for professional autonomy into futile dreams.

Edmund S. K. Fung scrutinizes the well-known thesis of Chinese philosopher Li Zehou, that 'anti-imperialist nationalism prevails over enlightenment' (jiuwang-qimeng), in the context of nationalism and pressure for democratic reforms in wartime China, from 1937 to 1945. Fung maintains that while this thesis offers insights into the relationship between anti-imperialist nationalism and democracy in pre-Communist China, it is imprecise conceptually and empirically oversimplified. While the thesis is useful for understanding Chinese intellectual and political developments

during the Sino-Japanese war, its dichotomous implication should not be over-stretched, as did Li and those who supported this thesis. To rectify it, Fung argues for modification of such a thesis by taking into account further the attempts of the liberal opposition to reconcile the external imperatives of *juwang* with the internal prerequisites of *qimeng*.

Part III deals with the broad issue of Chinese identity. It begins with my own account of identity as reflected in the narratives on the non-Han rulers of the Five Dynasties, written in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. The narratives are drawn from the two standard histories by Xue Juzheng and Ouyang Xiu. In my argument, Chinese identity in the traditional sense is a self-perception that engages constantly in the interactive and hermeneutic perception of others over time under various forms of negotiation. It has been a category open and subject to cultural and political change, and thus to redefinition.

In Ng Chin-keong's chapter, the abstract issue of Chinese identity is addressed in a more specific historical context where Christianity and its interaction with Chinese culture are put to the test. Christian missionaries played a significant role in the process of contact between Qing China and the West. One such encounter that occurred in Fuzhou in the early 1850s was marked by hostile confrontation between the indigenous and the exogenous. Western-language literature has long viewed the affair as a showcase of Chinese anti-foreignism and anti-Christianity. Chinese writings have been critical of the capitulationist attitude among the local Qing officials. Ng argues that both theses oversimplify the complex situation in which different contending forces, domestic and foreign, were at work. He investigates the milieu in which the missionaries lived and worked, and the operation of local diplomacy

Chinese identity also involves the perception of Chinese by others. Adrian Chan looks at this dimension and provides a detailed critique of Orientalism in Sinology. He analyses a number of texts by selected modern translators, and maintains that these Sinologists retain the evangelical position of the founders of Western Sinology, while imposing a Christian deist cosmogony on the reconstruction of China's culture. In particular, Chan is critical of the Christian Orientalist distortion of Chineseness, which he finds ethnocentric

The issue of Chinese identity has grown more significant with the rise of overseas Chinese communities around the world. Chinese identity, as cultural identity, also faces challenges when it confronts the realities of cultural contexts in which these communities live and evolve. As the first

of four chapters in Part IV, James Chin provides a detailed study of the socalled 'Returned Overseas Chinese Community' in Hong Kong, which makes up over 5 percent of the local population. Returned Overseas Chinese did not form a cohesive community in Hong Kong until the early 1980s. Currently there are forty-six Overseas Chinese associations registered with the Hong Kong government, and Indonesian Chinese (who make up 90 percent of all Returned Chinese in Hong Kong) have been preponderant in most of these associations. The returned Overseas Chinese community of Hong Kong is a very special Chinese community, which has developed its own culture distinct from that of other Chinese ethnic groups in Hong Kong. In contrast to most other overseas Chinese communities, familiar indicators such as lineage, dialect and ancestral homeland no longer play a decisive role in formation of community identity among the Indonesian associations in Hong Kong. New bonds such as Southeast Asian (Nanyang) homeland ties, alumni ties and Southeast Asian language ties (e.g., Bahasa Indonesian) have become new organizing principles for community association.

Jennifer Jay looks to the literature of the Chinese Canadian diaspora to explore issues of cultural and national identity among North American Chinese communities. Jay finds that for authors in this genre, writing is frequently a dual mission to reclaim the history of Chinese settlement in Canada and to reconstruct their Chinese Canadian identity and culture. She explores the historical and multicultural contexts of this process, and questions the extent to which issues of identity and culture in Chinese Canadian literature can be said to represent a Confucian value system.

The final two chapters focus more narrowly on personal narratives of Chineseness. Antonia Finnane situates the question of self in Chinese identity within the paradoxical constraints of gender inequality and cannibalism, in contrast to Confucian family values. Selecting a tale written in the Ming and set during an extended siege of Yangzhou in the dying decades of the Tang, she suggests that the story can be read for its narrative form and for its social significance as a product of late Ming political and cultural anxieties. Finnane provides a reading of the story from the perspective of its actual setting, Yangzhou. This location not only provided the author with certain cultural clues for the development of her narrative, but also came with a living history that hums away in the background as the story unfolds. Since another terrible siege of Yangzhou took place in 1645, this story was destined to have a readership for whom the tale would present an allegory for the fall of the Ming.

John Fitzgerald attempts to draw connections between Chinese national identity at home and abroad through an account of a famous Chinese tourist who found his way to Australia in 1900 and 1901. Liang Qichao wrote a classic nationalist tract during a six-month tour of Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. By focusing in particular on Liang Qichao's writing on the subject of 'slavery' during his sojourn in Australia, Fitzgerald situates China's struggle for national liberation in debates about the relative merits of hierarchy and equality among intellectuals of the late imperial era. And by situating Liang's writings in Australia, he suggests that Liang was engaging in a dialogue not only with his own literary traditions but with a progressive variety of Western liberalism that was itself paying increasing attention to issues of equality in nationalism.

#### Notes

- 1. John King Fairbank, ed., The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Benjamin Schwartz has given a succinct account of the complexity of this Chinese perception in history and its modern implications. See his 'The Chinese Perception of World Order, Past and Present', in *The Chinese World Order*, edited by John King Fairbank, pp. 276–288.
- 3. Schwartz, p. 281.
- 4. See, for instance, John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1998, pp. 431–46.
- 5. For instance, see Immanuel Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- 6. For the problem of cross-cultural comprehension of the word 'identity' between the English and Chinese languages, see Wang Gungwu, 'Questions of Identity during the Ch'ing Dynasty'. Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Sinology, held at Academia Sinica, Taipei, 29 June to 1 July 2000.
- 7. The most salient and well-known aspect of this is of course the issue of the Overseas Chinese, but one may also include other provocative discourses such as the one on Cultural China. See Tu Wei-ming, 'Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center', in *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, edited by Tu Wei-ming, pp. 1–34, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.

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# Prologue

# Wang Gungwu: The Historian in His Times

Philip A. Kuhn

an it be coincidence that the historian of the Overseas Chinese¹ who has achieved the most comprehensive view of his subject, is also the one most firmly grounded in the history of China itself? Professor Wang Gungwu: sojourning Chinese, Malaysian, Australian, and Sinologue, is a living example of how, in an ideal world, a historian of the Overseas Chinese should be trained. If such training could be duplicated, it would include early education in classical Chinese, fluency in several Chinese dialects, professional training in Sinology, and personal experience of living in many cultures. Few such candidates can be spotted on the scholarly horizon. In what follows, I should like to explore how Gungwu has brought together the specialities of Chinese history and the Overseas Chinese, for the combination is not common in contemporary scholarship.

## Mapping the Terrain

By his own account, Gungwu's early education in Malaya was a nourishing mix of classical Chinese (taught him by his father, an educator trained in China), English-medium schooling, and immersion in the diverse languages and cultures of his Malayan surroundings in Ipoh. As the son of 'sojourning' Chinese intellectuals, study in China was naturally attractive to him, and he entered National Central University at Nanjing in 1947. The fast approaching civil war closed the university, however, and he returned the following year to enroll at the University of Malaya (then located in Singapore).<sup>2</sup>

C. N. Parkinson, who assumed the professorship of history there in 1950, turned the curriculum away from Europe and towards Asia, particularly Malaysia, as was appropriate in the run-up to independence. Although the reference point was still the British colonial period, students began to reach beyond the colonial focus and search for new ways to interpret the history of their own region and of their nation-in-the-making. In this pursuit, Gungwu's MA thesis investigated the early history of China's relationship with the peoples of Southeast Asia.3 His PhD training, at London's School of Oriental and African Studies,4 however, had nothing to do with the maritime frontier: Instead he tackled the tumultuous history of the 'Five Dynasties', a period of civil war, when the chaos among rival power-claimants masked a slow institutional growth that made possible the later reintegration of the empire (a not wholly unsuitable parallel, ceteris paribus, to China's recent history). With that dissertation he demonstrated mastery of the dynastic histories, their many exegeses and the high literati culture that produced them; and established himself firmly in historical Sinology's great tradition.

Upon his return to Malaya in 1957 to teach at the University, he confronted the question, now more compelling than ever, of how Chinese history could be related to the educational needs of the newly independent state in which he now lived. Gungwu recalled how deeply he and his colleagues had been 'involved in the process of educating our students for nationhood'. He recognized that historians in the new nation, including British-trained scholars like himself, needed to transcend colonial models of scholarship by dealing with 'fundamental problems of Malaysia's location's and its involvement in the larger Malay world and Southeast Asia as a whole. 'Few of us knew how long it would take for this new multiracial and multicultural country to establish full national identity'.6

Actually, Gungwu's own contribution to this historical reorientation had been emerging since the early 1950s in response to the changing Malayan scene on the eve of independence. His return to Malaya from China in 1948, and the events leading up to Malaysian independence, had naturally led him to the history of China's relationship with Southeast Asia. This in turn led him to enquire into the contributions that overseas Chinese communities had made, and were to make, to the development of the region. Their place in the Malayan scene was complicated by the rejection of the British proposal to create an ethnically neutral framework for Malaysian independence and by the Malay nationalist backlash that resulted.<sup>7</sup>

Events in Malaya now imposed their own logic upon scholarship. The prospects for the large Chinese community in an independent Malaysia, its chances of sharing citizenship with the increasingly assertive Malays, and its range of attitudes toward the China homeland: these urgent topics could be addressed only by careful study, free of cant and stereotype. For such a task, a professional historian nurtured in both Malayan society and Chinese culture was in a strategic position.

Where did Chinese history fit into this task? Gungwu's *The Nanhai Trade*, which he had completed while still an MA student, was published shortly after his return to Malaya from London. This story, from Qin–Han times down to the beginning of the Song, he reconstructed from the fragmentary records in dynastic histories, encyclopedias and travel accounts. It demonstrated how China's impact upon Southeast Asian peoples had been unofficial and commercial, and largely unconnected to Chinese state power. China's knowledge of Southeast Asia, and its early trading relationships there, were peripheral effects of the gradual expansion of ethnic Han political, military and economic power southwards to the China coast, the establishment of an administrative centre near Hanoi, and the gradual buildup of demand for South Sea luxuries by China's royalty and aristocracy.

Gungwu concluded that, although the resulting trade whetted the appetite of the Chinese élite for exotic goods, it constituted a rather slight attachment to the world outside. This was due to the passivity of Chinese merchants in that early age. Until Song times, 'the initiative the Chinese merchant seemed to have had on land, he did not then have at sea.'8 Not until the acculturation of the Yue civilization by the southwards-moving Han did the maritime aptitude of the coastal peoples become part of Chinese economic life. Chinese impact on Southeast Asian peoples before the eleventh century was minimal; compared with the impact of militarybureaucratic control and agrarian settlement on China's continental frontiers, the role of 'mere trading ...was completely insignificant'. 9 The Nanhai Trade, then, recounts how a bureaucratic-agrarian civilization groped tentatively towards the maritime world, but shows that the Chinese state was never an expansionist maritime force. Expansion of Chinese influence, when it came, was the work of private merchants, and this awaited the greater age of maritime trade from Song times onward.

The story of that age, as it emerged from Gungwu's historical research over the next thirty years, revealed dual perspectives. There were the successive imperial courts and their bureaucratic staffs, which viewed foreign trade largely from the standpoint of dynastic security and prestige, and tried to control it by encasing it in a system of 'tributary' relations. And there were the mercantile interests, generally connected with southern China and its coastal ports, for whom foreign trade was profitable and (in the case of the land-poor province of Fujian) increasingly necessary for survival. The interplay between these perspectives defined the texture of China's relations with Southeast Asia over the course of a millennium. The Yuan and Ming empires form a striking contrast, with the Mongols' relatively open attitude toward overseas trade and foreign traders, and the Ming regime's heavy-handed government control in the opposite direction.

It was a simplistic notion that China had been wholly in thrall to 'Confucian' hostility towards trade and to imperial attitudes of arrogant self-sufficiency toward foreign peoples. Firstly, even the imperial perspective had its commercial side: the 'tributary system' was, to be sure, designed to enhance the prestige of the throne (as much at home as abroad). Yet tribute missions were also trading ventures, channelling foreign luxury goods and private profits to the court and its staff. Secondly, the imperial Confucians, both at court and in the provinces, learned how profitable foreign trade was to the realm and to themselves. Not until the late sixteenth century, however, could the private commercial perspective begin to move decisively out from under imperial control. China's commercialization had propelled this development, but ambiguities within Confucianism and the imperial institution itself had permitted it. Thus began the great age of the Hokkien sea-traders, those 'merchants without empires' who became the principal Chinese presence in the Nanyang.<sup>10</sup>

'Without empires' described the general shape of Chinese impact on the peoples of Southeast Asia after the abandonment of the great imperial maritime voyages in 1435 and the failure to subdue Vietnam. After the Ming court wheeled about to confront the Mongols on its inner-Asian border, China never again launched military force seaward. The 'tributary' system was ritualistic and defensive in nature, and the Chinese impact on Southeast Asia was accordingly entirely commercial. Chinese merchants were not only without empires but also without political power of any kind: they operated under the patronage of local rulers, particularly the European empire-builders and the monarchies of mainland nations such as Siam. Except for the 'tributary system', which was largely defensive and ritualistic, and in any event an increasingly empty form, 'China' as an imperial 'power' in Southeast Asia had little historical reality. How were these insights to be related to Malaysian nation-building and to the difficulties of Southeast Asian Chinese as they adapted to the fall of colonialism?

#### China, Chinese Migrants and the Region

Dispassionate scholarship and passionate engagement often seem an ill-matched pair, so most professional scholars try to keep the two in separate halves of their minds. The dangers of allowing political commitment to tilt the playing field in historical research are obvious. Yet how rigidly can the separation be maintained in real life? When injustices and even disasters grow from myths, and when these can be corrected by studying the evidence, we are justly summoned to battle. In Gungwu's case, the dangerous myths to be corrected involved the social-political identities of the Chinese overseas and the nature of China's relations with her maritime neighbours.

As a public-spirited intellectual in Malaysia at the time of independence, Gungwu became involved in defining the new Malaysian state in relation to its ethnic components. Ethnic Chinese might prove to be part of the new state, either as one communal group negotiating with others, through their upper-class leaders, about the division of rights and responsibilities (the 'Alliance' model); or as citizens of a truly non-communal polity in which universal citizenship and political participation cut across ethnic boundaries. How suited were the Chinese of Malaya for one or another of these alternatives, and how much choice would they really have between them?<sup>11</sup>

During the stirring events surrounding Malaysia's emergence as an independent nation, Gungwu found himself strategically placed: a Chinese whose education had been uniquely balanced between Chinese and English 'streams', an historian with Sinological training and a local resident with an upbringing that enabled him to sympathize with many language and ethnic groups and to move comfortably among them. He could write authoritatively on Chinese history, on the long-term historical relation between China and Southeast Asian societies, and on the historical evolution of Chinese minorities. In the Malaysia of the 1960s, all these topics were bedevilled by long-term and deeply ingrained misunderstandings. If Malaysia was to become a viable nation, these had to be clarified on the basis of historical research.

Since the end of the Second World War, a powerful tide of nationalism among Malays had posed tough choices for Malayan Chinese, many of whom understandably believed that their future was at risk: What was to become of their language and customs if, for example, they were not to be permitted to educate their children in Chinese-medium schools? Malays, for their part, resented the economically dominant position of the Chinese and clung ever more tenaciously to the politically privileged position

bequeathed to them by the departing British. Amid such intense communalism, what hope was there for building a pluralistic society in which national loyalty could coexist with cultural variety? Gungwu and likeminded compatriots were not prepared to give way to the communalism of either Malays or non-Malays, but envisioned instead a special form of Malaysian nation. Gungwu's life experience drew him to the pluralistic model: the liberal principles 'of freedom, of democratic representation, and of equality before the law', some of the 'finest ideals of modern history', were what the world expected Malaysia to uphold, he wrote in 1964. <sup>12</sup> In the Southeast Asia of the 1960s, what nation could be better suited for this mission? Certainly these bequests of British liberalism were not likely to be championed anywhere else in the region.

Many sympathized with these ideals: men who could not abide the evernarrower political corners into which the communal parties were painting themselves. As alternatives, several new parties were formed in the run-up to the 1969 elections. Among these, the Malaysian People's Movement ('Gerakan') was the most resolute in appealing to all ethnic groups on the basis of non-communalism, moderate socialism and democracy. Gungwu, by now Professor of History at the University of Malaya, was a founding sponsor of this party.<sup>13</sup> Gerakan, alone among the new parties, accepted the special position of the Malays that was written into the national constitution, yet championed education and language policies that would permit non-Malay groups to educate their children in their own languages. The vision was that national consciousness would emerge from slow, organic growth. It would grow out of 'existing communities', without 'artificial experiments' designed to impose cultural conformity. 'Common experience and the sense of a common destiny', rather than the cultural hegemony of any ethnic group, were to be 'the decisive essentials of nationhood'. 14

Could such an organic, evolutionary growth of national consciousness, based on shared citizenship yet maintaining the integrity of separately inherited cultures, actually work under the conditions then prevailing? Given the intransigence of the Chinese-educated and the nationalistic fervour of the Malays, seeking mass support for such a moderate, liberal position either in the Malay or non-Malay communities was daunting.

The alternatives, however, seemed unacceptable. Was the identity of Overseas Chinese to be expressed only through communal politics and a dogged defense of Chinese-language education? If such was to be their future in Malaysia, what of the rest of Southeast Asia? Were they to remain a purely commercial minority, as under colonialism, 'economic men' whose business

skills led their non-Chinese countrymen to tolerate them but never to include them as full participants in national life? Gerakan's refusal to accept this outcome, to identify with either the increasingly narrow, strident culture of the Chinese-educated, or with the envious hegemonism of the Malays, left the party little room in mass politics.<sup>15</sup>

Attracted to a setting where he could study and teach about China more freely (Malaysia was then in the throes of the 'Emergency' — the armed insurrection led by the Malayan [actually ethnic-Chinese] Communist Party), Gungwu moved to the Australian National University in 1968 as Professor of Far Eastern History. Yet his thinking could not have been unaffected by the broader Southeast Asian scene. How was the liberal idealism of his Malaysian years to be carried forward into his later work? His central concerns were consistent: How China's history affected the development of its relations with surrounding peoples; and how Chinese overseas had been affected by events in China, by colonialism, and by post-colonial conditions. Still at the fore was the question of how Chinese overseas were to reconcile their Chinese identities with their participation in the national life of their adopted countries.

His historical studies of the pre-Song Nanyang trade and of the later emergence of the Hokkien 'merchants without empire' had revealed that the period in which the Chinese state took an active, even an intrusive interest in compatriots overseas was really an historical anomaly. Beginning with the late nineteenth-century appointment of consuls to foreign capitals, with a specific remit to look after the interests of Chinese living abroad, the last imperial dynasty abandoned the old view that they were mostly traitors with low tastes and unreliable characters. The Qing government now sought their money and their loyalty, as did the government's reformist and revolutionary rivals. At this time was coined the term huagiao, meaning 'Chinese sojourning outside China', as a rhetorical bond between China and its (purportedly) loyal subjects abroad.<sup>16</sup> Many Chinese communities around the world responded enthusiastically to all this attention, and their resulting feeling for China-as-nation provoked some apprehension among colonial governments in Southeast Asia. As China's revolution gained momentum, awareness of China as a modern nation was spread throughout the Nanyang by teachers sent from the homeland, who stirred commitment and enthusiasm among many Chinese overseas. Here was a Chinese presence that seemed to governments in the region to be a potential threat to their security. This apprehension took different forms as the twentieth century progressed. As European powers withdrew from Asia after the Second World War, those who felt it most keenly were the insecure 'new nations' with Chinese minorities. When the communists took command in Beijing, apprehension grew.<sup>17</sup> Such fears put Chinese communities at the mercy of resentful, suspicious former colonial peoples. Gungwu's scholarly response to such fears was, firstly, to disaggregate the Overseas Chinese; and, secondly, to demonstrate the historically non-expansionist character of the Chinese state.

Rather than being 'essentially' focused on their land of origin, Overseas Chinese reflected the varied conditions of the lands they were actually living in. In an influential *China Quarterly* article of 1970, 'Chinese Politics in Malaya', '18 Gungwu pointed out that West Malaysia's Chinese communities were by no means united in their attitudes towards the homeland and towards their own Chineseness. Three groups could be distinguished. 'Group A' were consistently oriented toward China and its politics; 'Group B', the 'hard-headed and realistic majority', focused on local concerns such as commerce and community organizations and were inclined to appear apolitical; 'Group C' were a small contingent whose ties to British culture (generally through long residence — the 'Straits Chinese' or Babas — or through British education) tended to identify rather painfully with the emerging nationalism of the new Malaysian state. This last group faced enormous challenges in dealing with their own identities in relation to both Malay and Chinese cultures. 19

Two years later, Gungwu generalized this analysis temporally to the entire period since the early nineteenth century, and spatially to all of Southeast Asia. Group B were, always and everywhere, the numerically and economically dominant group, in a sense the long-term ballast for the Chinese community. Group C were useful to both the other groups as intermediaries with the colonial power-holders, and were the group most committed to fitting in, politically and culturally, within their adopted homelands. As the group that had aroused the deepest suspicion among Southeast Asian peoples, Group A had faced painful choices: to dampen their China fervor and essentially join Group B; to retain it covertly and await their time; or to return to China itself. Practically nobody now believes that China will intervene in Southeast Asian politics, so Group A have lost one reason for existence.

Even Group B's situation, however, raises doubts that the Chinese will, by and large, simply 'melt into' the local scene. Group B may be content to go about their economic business and 'fit in' to the extent their neighbours will let them. But, Gungwu wrote: Although they appear to

be resigned to being more or less cut off from the mainstream of Chinese history, they still wish to stay Chinese in their culture and language and preserve not merely their lives, their families and their properties but, to some extent, also their identity as an economic community.<sup>21</sup>

The point to be emphasized was that 'Chinese nationalism', after all, had never seized Chinese overseas with a uniform grip. There was a difference between one's feelings for China as a culture, and feelings for any particular regime that might currently control the Chinese state. If (as was sometimes the case) regimes in power acted in ways that injured Chinese culture, they were hardly in a position to claim the affections of Chinese abroad. Even the ardent Tan Kah Kee of Singapore complained that Chinese nationalism in the Nanyang was a mile wide but an inch deep. Among locally-born Chinese, the prospective usefulness of the China tie was offset by the risk of its making overseas Chinese seem disloyal or even subversive in their countries of residence. Generally, political activists within China tended to be disappointed with the divided and lukewarm responses of Nanyang Chinese to appeals in the name of Chinese patriotism. Though the stirring events of the 1920s and 1930s heightened overseas Chinese identification with China, strong countervailing forces in the colonial world made Chinese living there think twice before throwing themselves into the nationalistic commitment that China seemed to want from them. What is more, Gungwu pointed out, the Chinese overseas never developed a spontaneous Chinese nationalism among themselves; it required repeated prodding and persuasion from within China itself, and even that was not always enough.<sup>22</sup>

The 'merchants without empires' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been, in effect, putting themselves under the patronage of empires ruled by others. Their successors — those of the mass migration that began in the mid-nineteenth century — were in the same boat: though their ties to China were firmer and their sense of Chinese politics keener, most had to make their futures where they found themselves. If they were to play a part in the politics of their adopted countries, China could not be a major factor in their political lives. For practical people struggling to survive and prosper far from China, the concrete realities of their new homes left only a modest space for involvement in affairs of the old country, however sympathetic they may have felt. For most of them, 'China's politics was obviously important and had to be watched, but these men were normally grateful that they could watch it from afar.'<sup>23</sup> To this fact must be added the assurance that Chinese in Southeast Asia are not a unified force and could never become one: the salient fact about Southeast Asian Chinese is

'their variety, their lack of unity, and their tendency to act as fairly discrete groups depending on the circumstances and occasions'. Dispassionate historical scholarship on the origins and social structure of the overseas Chinese was the best disproof of ethnic Chinese collusion in China's interest.<sup>24</sup>

#### The Meanings of Chinese Identity

'Chinese' identities outside China have been a troublesome subject, because there has been no general agreement on the acceptable content of a 'Chinese' identity. Or is the content so various or mutable that 'Chinese' is not a useful term in this context? Gungwu's approach to this question, as it has evolved since the 1960s, has been consistently local and contextual. In a symposium he edited along with his Australian colleague, Jennifer Cushman, in 1988, he proposed that 'Chinese' identities varied within a four-axis normative scheme, according to the particular local circumstances in which Chinese found themselves. Moved in varying degrees by the demands of physical (i.e., racial), political, economic and cultural norms, Chinese were pulled or pushed among multiple identities. Generally no one norm could impose its identity upon anybody in pure form, so that every shade of variation was possible. The essential points of this scheme are, firstly, that identity is largely situational, adaptive, and responsive to the many local scenes in which Chinese live; and secondly, that it is non-teleological: there is no assumption that Chinese must evolve in one direction or another with some irresistible historical tide. This distinguishes Gungwu's outlook from both the 'assimilation' theory developed in an American context, and the 'middleman minority' theory in which an immigrant group is trapped in an ethnic economy by the interplay of host-community hostility and its own sense of ethnic solidarity. Assimilation in the course of industrialization would lead to a dilution and ultimate disappearance of immigrant culture; while the 'middleman' role would trap the immigrant indefinitely on the margins of society, both culturally and economically.<sup>25</sup>

Variability and non-determinism were at the core of Gungwu's view in 1988, and his writings on identity continued to stress these two factors. Chinese abroad could 'be Chinese' for several reasons: because of colonial policies encouraging (or even requiring) them to do so; because of convenience for doing business; or because of parents' desire to pass on to their children the attitudes and personality traits they associate with

Chineseness. Before the Second World War, many overseas Chinese were led to re-establish or preserve their Chineseness in response to the teachers and political operatives who came out of China to mobilize them for their own purposes. However, as emigration to Southeast Asia ground to a halt in the second half of the last century, millions were forced to rethink their situation and ask how 'Chineseness' actually contributed to solving their real-life situations. By the last third of that century, the situation had been transformed still further, as the bulk of new emigration flowed towards North America.

That transformation, as Gungwu describes it, brought about important shifts of attitude. In the process of trading, working, living and studying among non-Chinese, the Chinese identity has begun to lose its hard boundary. It remains useful for doing business, but intensive contact with non-Chinese is making it more situational and more personal. The search is on for ways to retain Chineseness as a comfortable personal and family culture, rather than as a hide-bound group culture. In this respect, the tolerant multiculturalism that has overspread North America, Australasia and parts of Europe since the 1970s begins to look like a setting in which immigrants can maintain cultural lives of their own choosing. In such societies, to be fully participating members of the polity and economy of one's adopted homeland does not require that one give up the comfortable aspects of Chinese culture in personal and family life. In short, the 'multicultural' West seems not badly suited to the liberal idealism so deeply rooted in Gungwu's own long-cherished hopes for Chinese migrants.

Here Gungwu introduces the theme of 'autonomy': the freedom to be as Chinese as one wants, without feeling coerced either by zealots to be more so, or by bigots to be less so. Autonomy involves migrants' freedom from pressure by China to be politically loyal and financially responsive to China's needs; as well as freedom to remain 'Chinese' in some way, to some degree and for some period, according to individual choice. The easy-going cultural atmosphere, along with legal protection of individual rights and property, leads immigrants to expect that they and their descendants will be permitted 'to be Chinese in their own ways as long as possible'. This in turn becomes an unexpected reason for choosing the liberal democracies of North America and Australasia as favored venues for migration: not that these societies have such admirable cultures per se, but that their very cultural indeterminacy will exert least compulsion on immigrants to forsake their own cultural identities. That 'autonomy' should have become most attainable in the (former) lands of exclusion is a welcome historical redemption.

The contrast here is striking: between the newly tolerant ways of the Anglo-American West and the behaviour of the post-colonial peoples of Southeast Asia, where Chinese minorities serve as a lightning-rod for centuries-old resentments and as scapegoats for the frustrations of persistent poverty. Ironically, the societies where Chinese were treated worst before the mid-twentieth century are now beginning to look rather appealing by comparison. Not having been traumatized by colonialism in the recent past, the New World, in an unlooked for way, is again coming to the rescue of the old.

But how does the *content* of Chinese identity vary according to time, place and circumstance? In the late twentieth century, the trends seem to have gone in two directions: Firstly, the flow of highly educated migrants to the West has resulted in a kind of self-confident Chinese culturalism among intellectual émigrés who have 'taken on the mission to preserve high standards of Chineseness among Chinese everywhere'.<sup>27</sup> Some of these new migrants, however, have such high cultural standards that their message is not easily accessible to Chinese born abroad. If the 'high standards of Chineseness' espoused by transnational Chinese intellectuals will not work for the more assimilated, does that mean that 'Chineseness' will play no part in their lives?

Here we must compare the situation in China itself, where 'Chineseness' is undergoing momentous change. Since early in the last century, the old culture has been mercilessly attacked as 'feudal', oppressive and incompatible with modern life. Since 1949, whole generations have grown up with minimal knowledge of the classical written language, or even of the 'complex forms' of Chinese ideographs. Kinship has been reshaped by social revolution and by industrialism, and religious belief and practice have been scorned as 'reactionary' and 'superstitious'. Under these circumstances, what does 'Chineseness' really mean? It may be, writes Gungwu, that the efforts of intellectuals to preserve China's 'Great Tradition' will not seem particularly helpful or relevant to ordinary Chinese within China. 'But for many Chinese today, it will be enough if certain core values remain strong', values that 'could bind the Chinese people together ... [and] play a key part in fostering a culturally united country'. These 'core values' he defines as: respect for education and meritocracy; hard work and thrift; and 'loyalty to family networks'.28 These values are striking in several respects: they are devoid of political content; they rely on no particular textual authority; and are free of class content and literati exclusiveness. They are attainable by anyone, in any walk of life. They are also, as it happens, famously qualities of the

Chinese overseas, as values to which anyone of Chinese descent can comfortably remain attached, whether or not he knows the Chinese language, and even while participating in the society and politics of his or her adopted society. The question of whether these values are preeminently Chinese (as opposed to, say, Jewish?) is of less consequence than their accessibility to all. In this respect, their unifying power could be impressive.

#### China and the World in the Contemporary Age

If there is one theme that has emerged most frequently in Gungwu's writings, it is the confusing relationships among 'China', 'Chinese', and 'Chineseness'. The confusion arises from history. In the early centuries of Chinese migration to Southeast Asia, migrants were hardly emissaries or agents of 'China', because China as a state did not recognize their existence. Their persisting cultural 'Chineseness', as a self-identification, grew from their own preferences and survival needs, and from the policies of colonial powers who wanted to keep them as a separate, functioning part of the colonial system. The emergence of a modernizing Chinese nation state in the twentieth century, however, changed this situation. Now 'Chineseness' was not only cultural, but for many became political as well. In the minds of some migrants as well as those among whom they lived, the boundaries of 'China' became blurred. Perceived as a linked pair, 'China and the Overseas Chinese' looked threatening. Historical events, such as the mobilization of overseas support for China under Japanese attack in the 1930s, the Communist (and ethnic Chinese) insurrection in Malaya and the sympathy of some Indonesian Chinese for the Indonesian Communist Party, seemed to add credibility to this fear-by-association. More recently, an alleged connection between China as an economic dynamo and overseas Chinese business 'networks' has been sensationally played up in some Western writings. Taken together, these fears have once again made China look threatening and the overseas Chinese insidious. Hostility to both, and to the imputed combination could become an unsettling factor in the world scene.

Gungwu's studies have addressed this problem from several angles. The questions of China's historical attitudes toward Southeast Asia and of overseas Chinese attitudes toward China I have already discussed. How the People's Republic has viewed its role in the world, whether under the ideologically aggressive Maoist regime, or the economically dynamic Dengist one, has

been an understandable concern of its neighbours. In The Chinese Way (1995). Gungwu shows how the foreign view of China is partly a reflection of China's own vision of itself. 'China is not a "normal" country, not even a "normal" communist country'. Indeed, its identity as a modern nation is complicated by 'its rich heritage as a civilization and empire'. This heritage has been the source of some uneasiness. China's present boundaries are essentially those of the old Qing empire. They embrace a number of non-Han peoples that were subjugated by the Qing: most notably Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongols, all of whom have rich cultural heritages of their own. Therefore China has had trouble dealing with the concept of the 'nationstate' in the modern sense, a state that is ethnically more or less homogeneous within its sovereign boundaries (rather than a polyglot mix of many peoples as in the pre-modern empires of the Ottomans, Austria-Hungary, Tsarist Russia and, of course, China itself). China is accordingly wise to 'leave the concept [of "nation"] broadly and inclusively defined'.29 As a result, there is a certain ambiguity about PRC attitudes towards the 'Chinese' nation. which admittedly cannot be defined by reference to a 'Chinese People' alone. Could such a 'nation' with trailing remnants of 'empire' wholeheartedly accept the national sovereignty of its neighbours?

Gungwu pointed out that such fears are not consistent with the historical record. In his 1977 work, China and the World Since 1949, he wrote that China's truculent rhetoric in foreign relations is wholly explainable by its insistence on defending its hard-won independence. 'China has been militant, but it has been so mainly because it had long suffered humiliation by not having been sufficiently so in the past'. Ending foreign domination, a 150-year struggle, had generated such momentum that virtually every aspect of PRC state policy could be related to it in one way or another, including the split with the USSR. This was, he wrote, 'qualitatively different from the traditional isolationist arrogance'. 30 These views were written at the end of the Maoist period. Since that time, China's economic recovery and its vigorous re-entry into world markets has set off another alarm among peoples who feared China as a potential superpower: the 'Greater China' myth. This Gungwu was at pains to demolish, because it involved the old fears, both of China itself and of Chinese overseas. 'Greater China', a sensationalist buzzword of the 1990s, suggested not only an economic powerhouse based on Taiwan, Hong Kong and South China, but also an insidious network in which ethnic Chinese businessmen everywhere were combining their resources and their mysterious ethnic ties to dominate world markets. This repellent revival of 'yellow-perilism' could,

perhaps, be seen as an atavistic reverse spin on the 'Asian Miracle'. In any event we have, mercifully, heard less of it lately.<sup>31</sup>

Gungwu's concern to allay fears about China and the Chinese overseas is of long standing and forms a consistent part of his historical calling. The nervousness of Southeast Asian peoples about both, so obvious and so disturbing to anyone who had grown up among the Chinese minority in the region, had originated in the period of China's emergence from dynastic rule and foreign oppression. But those times were past. By the 1960s the jus sanguinis and patriotic appeals to 'Huaqiao' had been abandoned. 'New nations' might oppress their Chinese minorities, but behind such oppression lay economic envy and postcolonial resentment, not fear of China or suspicions about overseas Chinese loyalties. To put the record straight was a historian's challenge that required an understanding of China's long-standing relationship with the Nanyang, and of the hard-headed, skeptical and practical character of Chinese migrants living there. It is hard to imagine a situation where a conscientious historian's work could be more essential than in the Nanyang of Gungwu's professional lifetime.

Gungwu has not neglected the contemporary history of migration, sometimes subsumed under 'globalization', which characteristically he has sought to place in historical context. Indeed, all his earlier work could be said to constitute a powerful qualification of the idea that a 'global' world civilization is the product of the past several decades. That global scope was already being limned by the Hokkien merchants of the seventeenth century and by the colonialists with whom they collaborated. What is more, globalization has not made regional distinctiveness any less pronounced. To illustrate this, Gungwu points to the long-standing differences between the relatively 'open' environment of insular and peninsular Southeast Asia, where migration has been an accepted fact of life up until quite recent times; and the relatively 'closed' society of Mainland China, with its traditional (and persisting) hostility to migration, both out and in. 'Far from confirming the "global village", the longer perspective will always be there to remind us that the roots of difference are still with us underneath the surface similarities.'32 He is thus leading the way towards applying Chinese and Southeast Asian histories to the critical study of contemporary migration theory.

Looking back over four decades of scholarship, one cannot miss Gungwu's unifying theme of Maritime China. In lectures delivered at Harvard in 1997 (now collected as *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Search For Autonomy*), 33 he traced the slow emergence of China's

consciousness of the oceanic world, a consciousness always heavily overbalanced by the needs and interests of the bureaucratic-agrarian order. Consequently the exploration of the maritime frontier was left largely to private merchants and, eventually, to emigrants. In striking contrast to the European experience, the state itself had little to do with either the exploration or the commercial exploitation of that frontier. Later in the book, the maritime world is associated with China's hopes for modernization and with the 'search for autonomy' by the Chinese who made new lives outside China.

This unequal interplay of 'Maritime China' and 'Earthbound China' has been seen a good deal in recent Chinese thinking. It was expressed metaphorically in the hugely successful television documentary *River Elegy*. The blue-water world of the oceans versus the silt-laden water of the Yellow River symbolized the sharp divide between the hopes for a forward-looking, outward-reaching China in the post-Mao era and the persisting dread of change among the more culturally conservative. Reviewing Gungwu's corpus of writings, however, one can see Maritime China as a much subtler construct.

Maritime China had been part of the Chinese scene from very early times. The divide between it and 'Earthbound China' had never been absolute, because the courts and their officials were able to profit from overseas trade, even while they sought to contain it in a framework of 'tribute' symbolism. Nor were the perspectives of north China able to dampen the commercial energies of the southerners who profited from private maritime trade. At various points in Chinese history, these southern interests were able to pursue their maritime calling with only nominal interference from imperial authorities.

As it emerged from the mercantile world of the twelfth century, Maritime China comprised a network of relationships between the China coast and the commercial entrepots of Southeast Asia. Foreign traders, as well as Chinese, participated in these relationships. China's maritime frontier, in other words, had become a maritime zone, in which the Chinese economy intersected with the economies of other peoples. Chinese living (or 'sojourning') abroad made this zone function. By the late sixteenth century, we can see the zone developing into an extension of the southeast-coastal economy, with continuous traffic in goods, money and people.<sup>34</sup> That there was minimal state involvement was advantageous to the merchants and migrants who traded and lived in the zone, for they found more promising prospects under the patronage of European colonialists than

they would have under a Mandarin-dominated polity. As Maritime China solved the livelihood problem of the southeast coast, it also developed an ecology of its own in which Chinese migrants adapted their regional versions of Chinese culture to the task of surviving and even prospering in foreign lands.

China's early twentieth-century efforts to mobilize these migrant Chinese, rather short-lived in the perspective of history, inspired many of them but also endangered them by raising suspicions among host populations. Now that political zealotry has given way to a more acceptable, purely commercial relationship, Maritime China is becoming a powerful agent of change in the mainstream of China's history. Chinese overseas are finding new ways to interact with China — or to construct their own versions of cultural Chineseness in their adopted homes, free of political constraints. Meanwhile, the commercial relationships of the old Maritime China zone, centred on southeast China society, have been succeeded by a much broader intersection with the maritime world, backed now by state policy. Just as southeast China once relied on Maritime China for its economic survival, now China as a whole is relying on maritime ('global') links to raise itself out of poverty. With enormous financial interests arrayed behind it, this national policy is unlikely to be reversed.<sup>35</sup>

When I first came to know Gungwu in London in 1954, while we were students together at the School of Oriental and African Studies, I was aware that I was with an extraordinary person. Just how extraordinary, however, was revealed to me only by degrees, as I watched his fascinating interweaving of scholarship and statesmanship take shape over the following decades. It is a typical narrative error (retrospective causality, or reasoning backwards) that makes it seem that only Gungwu, or someone exactly like him, could have filled the indispensable roles of authoritative historian, cultural intermediary, academic leader and teacher-mentor that the times and the region required. It would be no less reasonable to say that he conceived of those roles and thereby created them, or that we perceive them because of him. However that may be, each of us has excellent reasons to be grateful to Gungwu on the occasion of this well-earned tribute: The students and colleagues whom he inspired; the university that he guided in a difficult time; the peoples of the region for his resolute liberalism amid what must have been heavy discouragements; and myself personally, for having enjoyed the steadfast and generous friendship of Gungwu and Margaret over half a lifetime.

## **Notes**

- In this chapter, I use the term 'Overseas Chinese' to mean 'Chinese, and their descendants, living outside China' (where 'China' is understood to include Taiwan).
- 2. Gungwu's account of his own life appears in *The Chinese Way China's Position in International Relations*, pp. 79–86; and in 'Imagining the Chinese Diaspora: Two Australian Perspectives', pp. 1–10.
- 3 Published in 1957 as The Nanhai Trade
- 4. It was at SOAS where he and I first met, as students in Ronald Dore's class in intermediate Japanese.
- 5. 'The Use of History', in Community and Nation (1981), p. 9.
- 6. The Chinese Way, p 81
- 7. 'Malayan Nationalism', in Community and Nation (1991), pp. 187-96.
- 8. The Nanhai Trade, p 113
- 9 The Nanhai Trade, p 114.
- 10. 'Song-Yuan-Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: Some Comparisons'; "Public and Private" Overseas Trade in Chinese History'; 'Ming Foreign Relations: Southeast Asia'; and 'Merchants without Empires: The Hokkien Sojourning Communities'.
- 11. On communal politics in Malaya, consult Heng Pek Koon, Chinese Politics in Malaysia. A History of the Malaysian Chinese Association. Singapore: Oxford Umversity Press, 1988.
- 12 'Malaysia: Three Essays.' Introduction, in Community and Nation (1981), p. 216.
- 13. R. K. Vasil, Politics in a Plural Society A Study of Non-communal Political Parties in West Malaysia. London and Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1971
- 14. Vasil, p. 306, quoting a Gerakan circular.
- 15. With the notable exception of Penang, where the party succeeded in capturing the state government.
- 16. 'A Note on the Origins of Hua-ch'iao', in Community and Nation (1981), pp. 118–27.
- 17. A Short History of the Nanyang Chinese. Reprinted in Community and Nation (1992), p. 33.
- 18. 'Chinese Politics in Malaysia', reprinted in Community and Nation (1981), pp. 173–200.
- 19. Where Gungwu would fit himself, in this three-group system, is not clear. His cosmopolitanism and his British training, along with his liberal political sympathies, seem compatible with Group C. On the other hand, his high level of Chinese cultural attainment makes him more like the top levels of Group A. He is perhaps representative of a Group D, or *sui genens*.
- 20. 'Political Chinese: Their Contribution to Modern Southeast Asian History', in *China and the Chinese Overseas*, pp. 130–46.

- 21. 'Political Chinese: Their Contribution to Modern Southeast Asian History', in *China and the Chinese Overseas*, p. 142.
- 22. 'The Limits of Nanyang Chinese Nationalism, 1912-1937.'
- 23. 'The Limits of Nanyang Chinese Nationalism, 1912–1937,' in Community and Nation (1981), p. 150.
- 24. The Chinese Minority in Southeast Asia. Community and Nation 81 (1974), p. 264.
- 25. 'The Study of Chinese Identities in Southeast Asia' and the comment by Charles Hirschman that follows, in Wang and Cushman, Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese Since World War II, pp. 1–31.
- 26. 'Among Non-Chinese', in *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, edited by Tu Wei-ming, p. 144. 'Autonomy' is introduced in Gungwu's latest work, *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy*. Harvard University Press, 2000.
- 27. 'Among Non-Chinese', p. 145.
- 28. The Chinese Way, p. 66.
- 29. The Chinese Way, p. 50.
- 30. China and the World Since 1949, pp. 128, 140.
- 'Greater China and the Chinese Overseas', China Quarterly 136 (1993): pp. 926–48.
- 32. 'Migration History: Some Patterns Revisited' in Wang Gungwu ed., Global History and Migrations (1997), p. 7.
- 33. Harvard University Press, 2000.
- 34. An argument could be made that the Nanyang be added to China's southeast-coast 'macroregion', in the paradigm devised by G. William Skinner in *The City In Late Imperial China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977, pp. 211–49.
- 35. One is reminded of the sixteenth-century pressures upon the Ming regime to end the ban on foreign trade. Backed by powerful economic interests, in which officialdom had a share, this pressure proved irresistible; the ban was lifted in 1567, a date that marks the beginning of early modern trade and emigration to the Nanyang.

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