Introduction

In August 2020, *The Royal Singapore* – a news platform “that celebrates the lives of interesting and inspiring Singaporeans and those who live in and contribute to Singapore” – shared a video of the local polyglot Mdm. Rasamal, better known as Auntie Rose.¹ In slightly over eight minutes, one can see her switch seamlessly between Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew, Bazaar Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil. As several netizens pointed out, this brisk, cheerful octogenarian symbolizes the “kampong spirit” of early Singapore: hybrid, plurilingual, resilient, kind, and tolerant to difference. Singaporean commenters were quick to point out that her Cantonese – or, for that matter, any of the other languages she spoke – was better than theirs, even though she was of mixed parentage and thus not “officially” Chinese in the nation’s dominant framework on race. Many were reminded of their own grandparents and expressed regret that such enviable levels of proficiency have decreased in recent times. But everyone agreed that the video was quintessentially Singaporean (and Malaysian, as some added). The Cantonese of Auntie Rose features delightful local expressions like *hung mou meng* 紅毛名 ‘Western name (as opposed to Chinese name)’, *yoeng me si* 羊咩屎 ‘goat’s droppings (the name of a traditional snack)’, and *tong yan* 唐人 ‘ethnic Chinese people’. It also contains the English words *auntie*, *card*, *happy*, and *RC* (resident’s committee), alongside several phonologically integrated loans from Malay: *aa daap* ‘nipa palm leaves’ (*atap*), *baa saa* ‘market’ (*pasar*), *daa bi* ‘but’ (*tapi*), *gam bong* ‘traditional village’ (*kampung*), *lo di* ‘bread’ (*roti*), and *o dang* ‘to owe money’ (*utang*).

Not so long ago, linguistic repertoires of such magnitude were the norm for many Southeast Asians – especially in families with ancestors from overseas – and for some they still are. This book highlights the language practices of Southeast Asia’s diverse Sinophone communities, paying attention to typological characteristics, sociolinguistic histories, and correlations with culture and identity. We aim to contribute, at once, to the scholarly literature on Chinese languages outside China and to the field of Southeast Asian linguistics, in which Sinitic varieties have received considerably less attention than languages deemed “indigenous” to the region. We adopt the term “Sinitic” (華 *hua*) for Chinese in a broad ethno-linguistic sense, and prefer the term regional varieties (方言 *fāngyán*) to “dialects”. The Sinitic languages, language histories, and sociolinguistic practices of Southeast Asia have yet to be analysed

1 <https://www.facebook.com/TheRoyalSingapore/> (accessed 5 August 2020). See also <https://youtu.be/m-SKgrLYnCs> (accessed 6 May 2021).

comparatively.² Many of Southeast Asia's unique Sinitic languages are now endangered, as fewer and fewer individuals retain fluency in the tongues of their grandparents, particularly amidst the hegemony of national languages, Mandarin, and English. Yet they constitute important linguistic heritage, are closely intertwined with (often equally endangered) localized cultural practices, and crucial to the region's grassroots histories.

The diverse stories of Southeast Asia's Chinese communities cannot be fully grasped by prioritizing their politics and socioeconomic trajectories over language and culture, nor through well-established yet ultimately reductive tropes such as "overseas Chinese" or the "Chinese diaspora".³ We believe the term "overseas Chinese" is to be avoided in reference to contemporary times, as it connotes people who reside overseas but are still intimately connected to China in terms of their political allegiance. Most Chinese-descended communities in Southeast Asia, by contrast, associate themselves predominantly with their country of residence. The expression "Chinese diaspora" suffers from similar limitations, but is also cryptic in a Southeast Asian context, where many ethnic Chinese have formed new diasporas – for example to Australia, Europe, or within Southeast Asia – in the face of precarity under hypernationalist regimes.

This book aims to contextualize the plethora of Sinitic linguistic practices and expressions – or "voices", as we have come to call them – in Southeast Asia by bringing together perspectives and empirical data from scholars of various geographical and disciplinary backgrounds. Each chapter approaches language in conversation with history and identity. This is especially useful in minority contexts, where the three components are often seen as interconnected nodes within the framework of heritage. Examining language, history, and identity together allows us to jump between different scales of perspective, linking specific localized idioms and language practices of certain families (or even individuals) to global patterns of Chinese migration, national Southeast Asian language policies, and enduring legacies of interethnic contact.

2 The only comparative study known to us is a descriptive, data-rich volume edited by Li Rulong (2000). For an insightful edited volume on multilingualism in Chinese-descended communities worldwide, see Li Wei (2015).

3 See Shih (2013) for a detailed argument against the usage of these terms.

1 Broadening the Sinophone

In the vibrant field of Sinophone Studies, which examines the cultural productions of Sinophone and Sinicized (漢化 *hanhua*) communities,⁴ Southeast Asia has by no means been ignored. Many of its proponents have advocated for a departure from what might be called mainland-centrism and an appreciation of the great internal diversity of those labelled as ethnic Chinese, in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.⁵ E.K. Tan's *Rethinking Chineseness: Translational Sinophone Identities in the Nanyang Literary World* (2013) is a pioneering study on Chinese-language writers based in Borneo, Malaysia, and Singapore that reflects on the notion of "Chineseness", identity, and the evolution of local cultures. Alison Groppe's *Sinophone Malaysian Literature: Not Made in China* (2013) highlights literary expressions on being Chinese forged in Malaysia. Brian Bernards' *Writing the South Seas: Imagining the Nanyang in Chinese and Southeast Asian Postcolonial Literature* (2015) examines the way Southeast Asia is described and imagined in China and Sinophone Southeast Asia. Chia-rong Wu's *Supernatural Sinophone Taiwan and Beyond* (2016) studies comparatively the Sinophone literature of Taiwan and Malaysia, providing insights into the dynamics of storytelling and religious beliefs such as the deification of ghosts. Hee Wai-Siam's *Remapping the Sinophone: The Cultural Production of Chinese-Language Cinema in Singapore and Malaya before and during the Cold War* (2019) explores Chinese-language cinema in Singapore and Malaya. Such studies illustrate the complexities of literature, film, and to some extent the interaction of Sinitic and non-Sinitic languages, although they have remained somewhat silent on Sinitic music, performed arts, and "folk" (民間 *minjian*) texts.⁶

This book adds language itself to this expanding range of topics. Doing so, especially with a focus on Southeast Asia, underscores the benefits, limitations, and future potential of the Sinophone as a concept-in-progress. Some may find that the term has become overtheorized, drifting away from other "-phones" – such as the Francophone or Lusophone – and prioritizing postcolonial literature and liminal cultural productions. To interpret what is found

4 Shih (2004, 2007), Tsu & Wang (2010), Shih et al. (2013).

5 This enterprise yielded the Cambria Sinophone World Series edited by Victor H. Mair, which foregrounds "Sinitic-language cultures and communities born of colonial and postcolonial histories that lie on the margins of geopolitical nation-states across the world". <http://www.cambriapress.com/cambriaserie.cfm?template=85> (accessed August 2020).

6 In contrast to the literary texts covered in Sinophone Studies, these folk texts – particularly those pertaining to still vibrant religious customs, traditions, and theatre – play a key role in Southeast Asia's Sinophone practices.

in Southeast Asia, we assert that linguistically encoded processes of hybridity and localization are crucial. At the same time, language-centric approaches add new layers of complexity. If one views language as the decisive factor in defining and demarcating the Sinophone, one would have to exclude the majority of cultural productions – including those dealing with Chineseness – by ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, as they are written in non-Sinitic languages.⁷ The position of mixed languages such as Baba Malay and Bazaar Malay (Aye, this volume) or plurilingual publications (Hoogervorst, this volume) would be ambiguous. Yet the Sinophone has also been characterized as the product of a “condition of exile, diaspora, minoritization, and hybridity that resists incorporation both into China and into the place of residence” (Shih 2004: 26). In that case, many modern Chinese-language productions from Southeast Asia are not Sinophone either, as their authors would actually welcome a long-awaited incorporation into the nation-state, while the PRC – at least in the 1950s and 1960s – was too indifferent about them to actively pursue incorporation into its literary canon.⁸

Yet more than delineating who or what constitutes the Sinophone, the chief task at hand is to explore the conceptual value of “Sinophone Southeast Asia”. A major epistemic advantage of the Sinophone, as we see it, is its potential to encompass both written and oral language practices, together with its openness to non-standard languages and regional variability.⁹ In this regard, Southeast Asia’s multifaceted storehouse of experiences and case studies – centring on transregional circulations, layered histories of mobility, and exceptional plurilingualism – invites a move beyond the common dichotomy of mainland China versus “the diaspora”. The voices we have gathered under the rubric of Sinophone Southeast Asia encompass cultural productions in various Sinitic and Sinitic-influenced languages as well as the underlying practices of language contact and plurilingualism. This fruitful combination unlocks new avenues to investigate not only textuality, but also the materiality of language, including the various ways in which Southeast Asia’s Sinitic languages can be written down or used in performances, and the different sociolinguistic implications of these choices. On a conceptual level, Sinophone Southeast Asia invites us to think more radically about geographies, routes, contacts, boundaries, and identities as embodied by the region’s Sinitic and Sinitic-influenced languages.

7 See Chandra (2015) on this point.

8 See Stenberg (2017) on this point in relation to Chinese-language literature in Indonesia.

9 This is amply demonstrated in the work of Tsu (2010). We must also call attention to the work of Leow (2016) and Tam (2020) for a radical reappraisal on the role of regional Sinitic varieties in, respectively, Malaysia and mainland China.

The above example of Auntie Rose and her extremely rich Sinophone repertoire provides a case in point. It reminds us that the Sinophone is not exclusively defined or produced by people categorized as Han (cf. Shih 2013: 7). If anything, it inherently extends to other ethnic groups, including non-Chinese, as various chapters of this volume instantiate.

We also propose that Sinitic varieties other than Mandarin merit closer attention in Sinophone Studies. Mandarin – also known as Huayu 華語, Guoyu 國語, or Putonghua 普通話 – has become the default lingua franca for Chinese communities inside and outside China. For the latter group, it may also serve as a reminder of their ethnicity, or the fact that their ancestors came from China. Regional languages or *fangyan*, by contrast, point specifically to one's ancestral province, county, or even village. They help speakers – and, to some extent, rememberers – relate to their local identity on a more intimate level. Regional languages also enable Chinese-descended Southeast Asians to experience and understand the cultural practices and customs that have been passed down to them intergenerationally. We must emphasize here that Sinophone Southeast Asia differs from other parts of the world in its remarkable linguistic diversity. Unlike early Chinese migration to Australia and the Americas, which was dominated by Cantonese communities, Southeast Asia exhibits a complex makeup involving speakers of Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hainanese, Hakka, Henghua 興化, Hokchia 福清,¹⁰ and many more.

2 Lessons from Southeast Asia

This is also a book about Southeast Asia. Whereas some volumes dealing with this part of the world start by problematizing the region, we simply remind our readers that this geographical unit made perfect sense to the ancient Chinese, who designated it as the “Southern Seas” (南洋 *Nanyang*). Sojourning or settling in the Nanyang – an activity once designated as “travelling overseas to [the land of the] southern barbarians” (*guofan* 過番) – provided opportunities not found in China. While a considerable part of these travellers never returned, China was frequently imagined, by them and their descendants, as the semi-mythical homeland, especially before the emergence in Southeast Asia of modern nation-states. More importantly for the purposes of this book, the Nanyang made regional Sinitic varieties mobile and eventually birthed mixed languages and cultures unique to what is now known as Southeast Asia.

10 Known in Singapore as *Hokchew*, this is a subvariety of Fuzhounese 福州話 (*Fuzhouhua*).

Inspired by Brian Bernards' concepts of "archipelagic imagination" and "continental imagination" (2015), we look at Southeast Asia as a maritime gateway, connecting with China but also facilitating regional networks that often transcended colonial and later national boundaries. By thinking "across the Southern Seas", we aim to look beyond official languages and national cultures, focusing instead on marginalized, creolized expressions of language and culture. For this reason, Chinese-descended Southeast Asians are not the only actors this volume takes interest in. In Chapter 2 on Timor Hakka, we are reminded that Creole Portuguese once served as a link-language between Timor and Macao. Meanwhile, Chapter 4 recalls that Bazaar Malay was the unofficial lingua franca of pre-independent Singapore, used by people of various backgrounds. Despite their marginalized status at present, these two non-Sinitic languages were once responsible for the interaction between Southeast Asia's innumerable ethnicities. They are relevant to the project of Sinophone Studies by virtue of their trans-ethnic, multicultural, and creolized characteristics, as well as their cross-pollination with the region's Sinitic varieties.

In addition to internal diversity, we believe that Chinese communities in Southeast Asia display a number of characteristics not seen to the same extent in North America, the Caribbean, Peru, Mauritius, South Africa, India, and other parts of the world. Southeast Asia and China have been connected since antiquity and increasingly so from colonial times, yielding processes of economic, cultural, and linguistic convergence of unparalleled time depth.¹¹ Unsurprisingly, Southeast Asia's Chinese communities have preserved various traditions forgotten and sometimes violently suppressed in the PRC, especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). They developed an even greater number of uniquely local ones, and at times spearheaded the introduction of foreign ideas and commodities into East Asia (Ding, this volume). Since overseas travel was historically a male prerogative, marriages between Chinese men and local women were common across Southeast Asia. These long legacies of admixture make it impossible to determine the precise number of ethnic Chinese in the region, but as a whole, Southeast Asia is certainly home to the largest Chinese-descended population anywhere in the world outside the PRC.

Across the Nanyang, Chinese migration consisted of different waves, with traders and sojourners (from medieval times), tax farmers, low-wage and

11 See Alves (2021) for an overview of linguistic connections between Southeast Asia and China. A similar argument could be made for Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, and other countries in direct proximity to China, yet in these instances Sinicization was also a religious, administrative, and/or expansionist project.

often indentured labourers (from the mid-nineteenth century), and craftsmen constituting some of the major demographics. Sinitic communities that might not have interacted much in China often lived side by side in Southeast Asia, even though most professions were monopolized by specific ethno-linguistic groups. Chinese urban groups typically had their own quarters, temples, cemeteries, schools, meeting halls (會館 *huiguan*), clan associations, and leaders (in colonial times often referred to as “captains”). Integration into local populations generally took place more rapidly in the countryside. While cultural exchange and friendly relations with non-Chinese groups were common throughout Southeast Asia, Chinese people have often been targeted for racialized violence in more tumultuous times. Colonial authorities regularly dismissed them as untrustworthy middlemen and exploited them through all sorts of ethnic quotas. After independence, several Southeast Asian regimes struggled to incorporate the ethnic Chinese minority into the nation-state. Mobilizing racialized mechanisms of exclusion – of the type that had infuriated the region’s first generation of anti-colonialists – policies to outlaw Chinese schools, newspapers, and organizations were implemented in several parts of postcolonial Southeast Asia and led to a dramatic erasure of local Sinitic languages and cultures. The economic and geopolitical “Rise of China” – and previously the economic prowess of Taiwan – heralded reconfigurations of Chineseness over the past decades. Yet these ongoing processes of “resinicization” have done little to arrest the marginalization of Southeast Asia’s hybrid Sinitic languages and localized cultural practices, and may in fact have contributed to it. Other developments, such as the PRC’s enormous infrastructural investments, expansionism in the South China Sea, and – especially in Cambodia and Myanmar – far-reaching political interference, have added to the complexity of contemporary (Sino-)Southeast Asian attitudes towards mainland China.

While Mandarin has been promoted and taught in Southeast Asia from the early twentieth century, and Yunnanese speakers of Southwestern Mandarin – a variety quite remote from what would later become the standard – arrived in the nineteenth century in parts of northern Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos, it is a relatively recent arrival to the region’s linguistic landscape (Wang 2012; Sai 2016). Maritime connections, which have long linked coastal Southeast Asia with China’s southern provinces, resulted in the large-scale immigration of Southern Min, Cantonese, and Hakka speech communities from early-modern into late-colonial times. In many cases, the survival of these Sinitic languages and cultural practices was ensured by new immigrants. There were also strong founder effects, in which newcomers had to adapt to existing norms and practices. Varieties of Southern Min gained a dominant status in much of Southeast

Asia, in particular those belonging to the “Hokkien” 福建¹² and “Teochew” 潮州 groups. But the situation soon became more complicated, as descendants of Chinese migrants gained greater fluency in Southeast Asia’s local languages. Even after adopting these new languages, however, Chinese families typically retained the cultural, culinary, and kinship terms from their ancestral Sinitic variety. The resultant manifestations of lexical borrowing form a recurring theme throughout the present volume.

3 Sinitic in All Its Diversity

As mentioned previously, we use the term “Sinitic” to refer to languages conventionally labelled with the more politically charged term “Chinese”.¹³ Most Sinitic languages discussed in this volume are the result of two variables: their specific regional origins in China and their history of language contact after migration. In addition to the overemphasis of Mandarin at the expense of *fangyan*, it must be kept in mind that Southeast Asia often exhibits specific subdialects rather than generic forms of “Hokkien”, “Teochew”, and “Hakka”, as will be pointed out in the individual chapters. These varieties subsequently underwent phonological and/or lexical influence from languages in contact, such as Malay, Thai, Burmese, Khmer, or Vietnamese, but also other Sinitic varieties. Needless to say, they also donated numerous loanwords to the non-Sinitic languages of the region. As a result, Sinitic varieties in Southeast Asia differ substantially from their counterparts in China, but also from each other. After several generations of language contact, lexical, phonological, and grammatical interference from the surrounding languages often makes it difficult for Southeast Asia’s Sinophone communities to understand each other even when speaking the same “dialect” (although such claims of limited comprehension also partly reflect social constructability). In addition to regional differences, many Sinitic languages – in Southeast Asia and elsewhere – distinguish between colloquial and literary registers, especially in performance genres. At the same time, increased contacts with mainland China, Hong Kong,

12 We use this term in its “exonymous” Southeast Asian sense. In linguistics, the Hokkien dialect continuum is known as the Quanzhang 泉漳 sub-division of the Southern Min (Fujian) varieties. To Hokkien speakers, the language might be designated as *Hok-ló-ōe* 福佬話 ‘Hoklo language’, *Bân-lâm-gú* 闽南语 ‘Southern Min’, or *Tâi-gí* 臺語 ‘Taiwanese’, whereas *Hok-kiàn* 福建 itself refers to the broader Fujian region and its many other languages.

13 A similar view is provided by Ng (2013: 89): “since the Chineseness of this language should not be emphasized, we may as well call it the ‘Sinitic language’”.

and Taiwan have created a situation of diglossia, in which generic East Asian varieties enjoy a higher status than localized Southeast Asian ones.

Word histories constitute another unifying thread across this book. Several categories come to the fore. Across Southeast Asia, the terms used for Chinese, indigenous, and other communities differ from their PRC counterparts. Auntie Rose's usage of *tong yan* 唐人 evokes the Tang Dynasty, with which people from China's southern provinces strongly identified.¹⁴ In a Southeast Asian (and Taiwanese) context, the term *Zhongguo ren* 中國人 'Chinese person' denotes PRC nationals rather than local Chinese, who may instead be designated as *Huaren* 華人. Since not all parts of Southeast Asia have been equally connected to China, a number of modern concepts exhibit distinct words in the Sinitic varieties of Southeast Asia, although closer contacts with China are now erasing this layer of unique, locally coined vocabulary (Churchman, this volume). Another clear point of divergence is the nomenclature for fruits, vegetables, and other locally specific products and commodities (see the chapters of McFarland and Churchman). Across the Sinitic varieties of Southeast Asia, these are often designated by loanwords or loan translations. If they are at all written down, the chosen characters might reflect a degree of phono-semantic matching. Consider, for example, Hokkien *kam-á-bit* 柑仔蜜 'tomato' (lit. 'tangerine honey') and *âng-mô-tan* 紅毛丹 'rambutan' (lit. 'red-haired crimson') – borrowed respectively from Tagalog *kamatis* and Malay *rambutan* – which have also spread to non-Southeast Asian varieties of the language (and in the case of *rambutan* to Mandarin). The element *âng-mô* 紅毛 'red-haired' has itself adopted a wide range of meanings related to light-skinned Europeans, as discussed in detail in the chapters of Ding and Churchman. The aforementioned use of Singaporean Cantonese *hung mou meng* 紅毛名 'Western name' is but one of many incarnations of this versatile term, which has also entered Singaporean English (*angmoh*). Another well-known example among Southeast Asia's Sinitic varieties is 巴剎 (*pa sat*, *baa saa*, *ba sha*, etc.) 'market', from Malay *pasar*. In addition, we encounter hybrid expressions, consisting of one Sinitic and one "indigenous" Southeast Asian element (see Aye, this volume).

Historically, Chinese-descended Southeast Asians had relatively low levels of literacy and most localized Sinitic tongues were confined to the oral domain. This has long been the case even in China's southern provinces, whose *fangan*

14 We may recall in this regard that China's southern provinces were frontier regions prior to their inclusion into the Tang cultural sphere. This is also exemplified by the related term "Tang Mountain" 唐山 for mainland China, which can be found in multiple Southeast Asian settings.

were not historically transformed – if not tamed – into written languages. For this reason, it makes sense to decentre the written word in order to gain a fuller grasp of the Nanyang's diverse Sinophone voices. That being said, we do not advocate for a complete move away from writing, as we believe the research community should pay attention to orality, textuality, and the interplay between them. In Hokkien varieties in particular, the co-existence of literary and colloquial readings for large numbers of words underline the importance of Chinese characters. In many cases, it was through the written word rather than oral transmission that Southeast Asian concepts found their way into the broader Sinosphere (Ding, this volume). As writing was not standardized, we find several non-mainstream characters in locally-authored sources. Some common examples of unique characters in Southeast Asian Hokkien include *ngé* 𪛗 – 'concubine' in Java (from Malay *nyai*) and *leng* 𪛗 'rubber' in Malaya. Vernacular words were often written down in a variety of ways. We can encounter multiple choices of characters, for instance, of Zhangzhou Hokkien *ka-choáh* 'cockroach' and *ńg-kong* 'grandfather'.¹⁵ For this reason, we have decided to also pay attention to the "heterogeneity of Sinophone writing" (Ng 2013: 76).

One topic that has received little attention thus far is the difficult enterprise of reconstructing Chinese words on the basis of romanized data, for example in texts by local Southeast Asians or foreign observers dealing with Chinese communities, or by Chinese authors using non-Sinographic scripts. Some of the manuscripts of Hokkien-language opera in the Philippines are a case in point (Chia, this volume). To accurately interpret such romanized data requires fluency in different registers and a deep understanding of the context in which they were produced. The same is true for occasional passages of Hokkien or Hakka in the Malay of Chinese-Indonesian authors, especially during the 1920s and 1930s. Lacking Chinese characters, such phrases can be quite opaque even for speakers of those varieties, as they occur in an unfamiliar romanization and lack tone marks, so that almost every word comes with several possible interpretations. These difficulties have led most scholars to ignore such texts, even though they were obviously understood at the time they were published. Arguably, they embody the Sinophone in its utmost diversity.

Of course this book has its omissions, which include relatively small Sinitic communities such as the Hainanese, Henghua, Hokchia, and Southeast Asian Chinese who have migrated to China or Vietnam. Five of the volume's chapters

15 *Ka-choáh* 'cockroach', for example, could be written as 𪛗, 𪛗, 𪛗, 𪛗, and 𪛗; and *ńg-kong* 'grandfather' as 阿公, 俺公, 映公, 安公, and 翁公. The pronunciations *ńg-kong* and *áng-kong* are also attested.

touch upon different Hokkien varieties. This reflects the historical importance of this language, but also academic priorities within Sinophone Southeast Asia. We believe that other regional languages and cultures are equally significant and hope that more data will be collected in future research. The written traditions of non-Sinitic languages in Sinographic scripts – such as Vietnamese and Zhuang – deserve a comparative study of their own and are not discussed here. We expect that continued attention to this field will fill some of these gaps in the future. Such an endeavour requires a fair deal of urgency, as many of the Sinitic varieties studied in this volume are on the brink of extinction and are unlikely to be passed on to the next generation. Even within the respective speech communities, some people deem the language of their parents and grandparents “impure” and best replaced by a standardized variety. At the same time, we were impressed by the levels of determination we saw among the various Sinitic communities in Southeast Asia to preserve their languages against the odds. In fact, in almost all cases, the communities themselves – both in Southeast Asia and in the “diaspora” worldwide – have encouraged and invited us to document their unique varieties, compare them with those of others, and detect regional patterns. They also made it clear that language, history, and identity cannot be separated if the academic output is to be meaningful for them.

Most chapters in this volume, hence, describe a poorly known local history, followed by data from an understudied linguistic variety, and sociolinguistic attitudes inside and outside the community in question. They also bring to the fore some of the agents shaping language history on a micro level, including translators, playwrights, authors of linguistic material, and fieldwork consultants. Though many of the volume’s chapters present ongoing and early-stage research, we feel their publication is of a highly timely nature. We hope to inspire researchers and communities to carry out additional research, encourage comparisons across Southeast Asia, and work with elderly speakers before their knowledge can no longer be passed on. The individual contributors have made an effort to explain their methods, reflect on them, and convince the interlocutors within the community that their linguistic varieties are worthy of structural attention. In view of this scholarly-community collaboration, we collectively found it important that this volume was made publicly accessible.

4 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 by Picus Ding delves into the historical context of Sinophone Southeast Asia, demonstrating how etymologies can illuminate the complex

trajectories – sometimes dating back to the fifteenth century – of a number of common words. It traces some of the earliest documented interactions between East Asian, Southeast Asian, and European communities and the resultant linguistic cross-pollination. While the economic contributions of Southern Min tradesmen are well understood – in Southeast Asia, the term “Hokkien” has ubiquitously come to refer to people from southern Fujian if not the whole of Fujian – their long-lasting sociolinguistic and cultural impact is not to be ignored. The two best known examples discussed in this chapter are the words “angmoh” and “pidgin”, which have a history of several centuries and were probably coined by Southeast Asia-based Chinese. Ding makes the original claim that the term “pidgin” is influenced by Southern Min.

Chapter 2 by Juliette Huber explores a lesser-known group: the Hakka 客家 or ‘guest people’ in East Timor (Timor-Leste). This now independent state – situated on the periphery of the Nanyang – has received little international attention beyond the political upheavals leading up to its independence at the turn of the twenty-first century. Timor Hakka is not recognized among the state’s official languages and is largely confined to the domestic sphere. In her pioneering description of the characteristics of Timor Hakka, Huber makes comparisons with Hakka varieties from other areas, including Meixian, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. Like many endangered Sinitic languages, the unique Hakka variety of East Timor constitutes a significant marker of the group’s identity, including for those who live abroad.

Joanna McFarland’s study of Cambodian Teochew, Chapter 3, fills an equally important gap. This sparsely researched variety is spoken by a “majority within a minority”: the Teochews constitute the largest group within Cambodia’s Chinese population but nevertheless remain a minority in the country. McFarland studies the linguistic features of Cambodian Teochew and examines its interaction with Khmer, the official language of Cambodia. The influence of Teochew on Khmer is a testimony to the historical importance of this community and their now endangered language. The chapter’s attention to Cambodian Teochew speakers of different age groups and sites of residence (within and outside Cambodia) provides important insights into the sociolinguistic differences of this community.

Chapter 4 by Khin Khin Aye explores Baba Malay and Bazaar Malay in Singapore, illustrating an important episode in the island’s linguistic history, especially before English became the lingua franca. Aye’s study foregrounds Hokkien as the major substrate language of Baba Malay and Bazaar Malay, as can be seen, among others, in the arenas of business and kinship. This chapter

underlines the importance of substrate languages, which arguably deserve more attention in Pidgin and Creole Studies, by calling attention to the historical predominance and ubiquity of Hokkien speakers in Singapore and their impact on its creolized Malay vernaculars.

The next chapters highlight additional facets of Southeast Asia's rich Hokkien legacy. Chapter 5 by Catherine Churchman describes a variety known as Penang Hokkien or Northern Malaysia Hokkien. This language exhibits influence from Malay, English, and other languages. In addition, it has coined several localized Hokkien terms. An examination of its vocabulary yields fascinating insights into the history of Penang and Malaysia in general. The linguistic versatility of its speakers is ongoing. Whereas older speakers use numerous terms unique to Penang, the vocabulary of younger speakers reflects influence from Sinitic varieties outside Malaysia. As such, the chapter's examination of Penang Hokkien adds ample substance to the observation that the Sinophone "is a place-based, local culture, in dialogue with other cultures of that location" (Shih 2013: 8).

Chapter 6 by Caroline Chia traces the development of *Kaoka* 高甲 or *Gaojia* opera in the Philippines. This theatrical form originates from southern Fujian and has spread to Southeast Asia during the late nineteenth century. Once a popular form of entertainment for the Chinese communities across the Nanyang, the Philippines is the only locale in which *Kaoka* is still performed to this day. The *Kaoka* playscripts, written in romanized Hokkien, offer unique and sparsely researched data on localized Hokkien. These sources exemplify how the Sinophone can be produced by different communities, including non-Chinese people. Their script provides rare insights into non-standard Sinitic writing practices in Southeast Asia.

Chapter 7 by Tom Hoogervorst unearths an early resinicization discourse. It compares a number of Mandarin textbooks published in Java during the first half of the twentieth century. Written with the aim to reconnect Indonesia's Chinese communities with their perceived ancestral heritage, these books feature surprisingly little of the standard Mandarin that we know today. Instead, they showcase the competing types of Mandarin historically taught in Indonesia. It is of additional interest – especially with regard to the plurilingual focus of Sinophone Studies – that the language of instruction was Malay. On the surface, the Hokkienized colloquial Malay in which these textbooks were written resembles Baba Malay as discussed by Aye in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, both the Malay and the Hokkien of Java display various local characteristics not found elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

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