

**“Beyond Chineseness: Impetus, Incentive and Imagination in Mandarin Learning in Contemporary Indonesia ”**

Thursday, 8th February 2017 at 2:30 p.m.

IAS Meeting Room 2.27, Level 2, FASS Building

**Abstract**

The political events of May 1998 that forced Suharto to step down opened up a new space for the public articulation of Chinese identity, which was previously prohibited under Suharto's assimilation policy. Following the decrees that lifted the ban on Chinese, Chinese language classes experienced an unprecedented boom in Indonesia. Many Chinese-Indonesians who have lost almost all of their affinity with their Chinese origin are beginning to re-discover their “Chineseness” and voluntarily identify with their Chinese “roots” – an act sometimes described as “resinicization”. This paper reflects on this post-1998 phenomenon, and argues that this trend needs to be read in the wider geopolitical context of the economic rise of China and the promotion of Chinese soft power, as well as the market forces that reward Mandarin competency in contemporary Indonesia.

**Speaker's Profile**



Chang-Yau Hoon is Associate Professor at the Institute of Asian Studies and Director of the Centre for Advanced Research, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, as well as Adjunct Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia. He is the author of *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Media and Politics* (Sussex Academic Press, 2008), and the co-editor of *Chinese Indonesians Reassessed: History, Religion and Belonging* (Routledge, 2013), and *Catalysts of Change: Ethnic Chinese Business in Asia* (World Scientific, 2014). He has also published the recent articles: “Mapping Chineseness on the Landscape of Chinese Churches in Indonesia” (*Asian Ethnicity*, 17(2), 2016; 228-247) and “Aspirations among Urban Christians in Contemporary Indonesia” (*International Sociology*, 31 (4), 2016: 413-431).