Ethnic Chinese Business in Asia

History, Culture and Business Enterprise

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Ching-hwang Yen

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Preface

This book represents a major shift of my research interest from political history, such as Yen Ching-Hwang, *The Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1976), to diplomat history, such as Yen Ching-Hwang, *Coolies and Mandarins* (Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1985) to social history, such as Yen Ching-hwang, *A Social History of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya, 1800–1911* (Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1986) and then to business history and management. This shift of interest began in 1989 when I was attached to the History Department of the University of Hong Kong. The early result of that shift was the publication of a long article titled “The Wing On Company in Hong Kong and Shanghai: A Case Study of Modern Overseas Chinese Enterprise, 1907-1949”, first published in *Proceedings of Conference on Eighty Year’s History of the Republic of China, 1912-1991* (Taipei, 1991), Vol.IV, English Section, pp.77-117, then was re-published in Yen Ching-hwang, *Studies in Modern Overseas Chinese History* (Singapore, Times Academic Press, 1995), pp.196-236.

This book is partly based on the lectures given at my semester course entitled “Enter the Dragon: Ethnic Chinese Business in Asia” which was taught as a history subject at the University of Adelaide from 1996 to 2001. But the course attracted more students from commerce, economics, law and other disciplines in Arts Faculty as well as international students. The course was the first of its kind taught in Australian universities. The principal aim was to help Australian students to understand Ethnic Chinese Business in Asia. The lectures of this course have been extensively revised and they form about a quarter of this book.

The idea of writing a book combining history, culture, economics and management is intended to provide in-depth knowledge of

history and culture that have affected the business organisations and behaviour of the Ethnic Chinese. Prevailing works on Chinese business which are mostly written by economists, management experts and sociologists lack of historical and cultural depth that would not have explained Chinese business behaviour and organisations satisfactorily.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wife, Mrs. Kwee Ying Yen, for her support and encouragement without which this work might not have been sustained to its eventual publication.

Yen Ching-hwang (Ching-hwang Yen or Yen Ching Hwang)

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9 July 2013

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