Chapter 6
A Determined Ethnologist: Interview with Professor Tan Chee-Beng

Chee-Beng Tan, Chow Bing Ngeow and Tek Soon Ling

Abstract This interview transcript covers a brief professional and intellectual history of Professor Tan Chee-Beng, an eminent anthropologist who has made scholarly contributions to the studies of Chinese overseas, ethnic minorities in China, indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia, southern Fujian, food culture, and others. Professor Tan discusses his intellectual upbringing, methodology in research, research agenda, views on Malaysia’s society and China’s developments, and so on in this interview.

Keywords Tan Chee-Beng • Malaysia • Chinese studies • Chinese overseas • Malaysian Chinese

Ling: Has anyone interviewed you before? About your background, the growing up experience, etc.?

Tan: I did my degree in Penang, at that time the university was called Universiti Pulau Pinang (Penang University). It was a new university then, now it is called Universiti Sains Malaysia (Science University of Malaysia). It had a good academic environment back then. When the government changed the name (from Universiti Pulau Penang to Universiti Sains Malaysia or USM), we students protested against

Interviewers Dr. Ngeow Chow Bing and Dr. Ling Tek Soon
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C.-B. Tan (E)
Department of Anthropology, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China
e-mail: chengtan@gmail.com

C.B. Ngeow • T.S. Ling
Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
e-mail: peterngeow@hotmail.com

T.S. Ling
e-mail: lingteksoon@um.edu.my

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