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**International Workshop on Cultural Diversity in Southeast Asia**

Organized by: Kota Kinabalu Liaison Office, ILCAA in TUFS

Date: Sunday, September 11, 2011

Time: 14:00-18:00

Venue: Manukan Room, Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu,

Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens, Sinsuran, Kota Kinabalu, 88000, Malaysia

**Batik dyed with “Chineseness”:**

**On Ethnic Chinese and their cultural representation in Post-Soeharto Indonesia**

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**Summary**

Ethnic Chinese had long been regarded as “a problem” for national integration of new-born Indonesia. Especially under Soeharto’s New Order (1966-1998), it had been strictly prohibited to express their “tradition” and “culture” publicly under “Assimilation Policy”.

Such severe atmosphere surrounding ethnic Chinese has drastically changed since the collapse of New Order. In the realm of cultural representation, ethnic Chinese are now allowed socially and politically to proclaim their uniqueness just as other ethnic groups such as Javanese and Balinese have been able to do so.

In this paper, I review the modern history of ethnic Chinese and the position of their culture in Indonesia, then introduce two ongoing cases from Central Java and West Kalimantan, where they try to incorporate “Chinese elements” in Batik designs.

By analyzing respectively how and by whom these ideas of including “Chineseness” into the very essence of the Indonesian culture are implemented, and how these attempts are recognized locally, I will show several features of cultural representation of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia today. Also, I will discuss the relation between ethnic Chinese and “Chineseness” by paying attention to the “Chinese elements” chosen in both cases.