Preface

This book examines an important area of political economy to which not many publications have so far been able to give any convincing account. By taking an interdisciplinary approach on such critical issues as industrialization, economic crisis and reform, inequality, industrial relations, environment, civil society and distributional conflicts and free trade agreements, the book attempts to fill a lacuna in the existing literature on the political economy of Southeast Asia.

The book grew out of dissatisfaction among many scholars that a sufficiently exhaustive account of Southeast Asia that addresses these issues in a political economy and social change perspective has been missing. By limiting the analysis to single countries, existing books tend to miss important influences that drive social political and economic transformation in the region. As a consequence, the Danish Development Agency (Danida) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved funds that led to the hosting of a number of workshops where the components of the book were deliberated and charted.

The book is important reading for both undergraduate and graduate students at universities and colleges across the world who are interested in understanding the social, political and economic transformation of Southeast Asia. It will particularly appeal to those seeking a detailed account of the historical and contemporary issues of social change in the region.

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