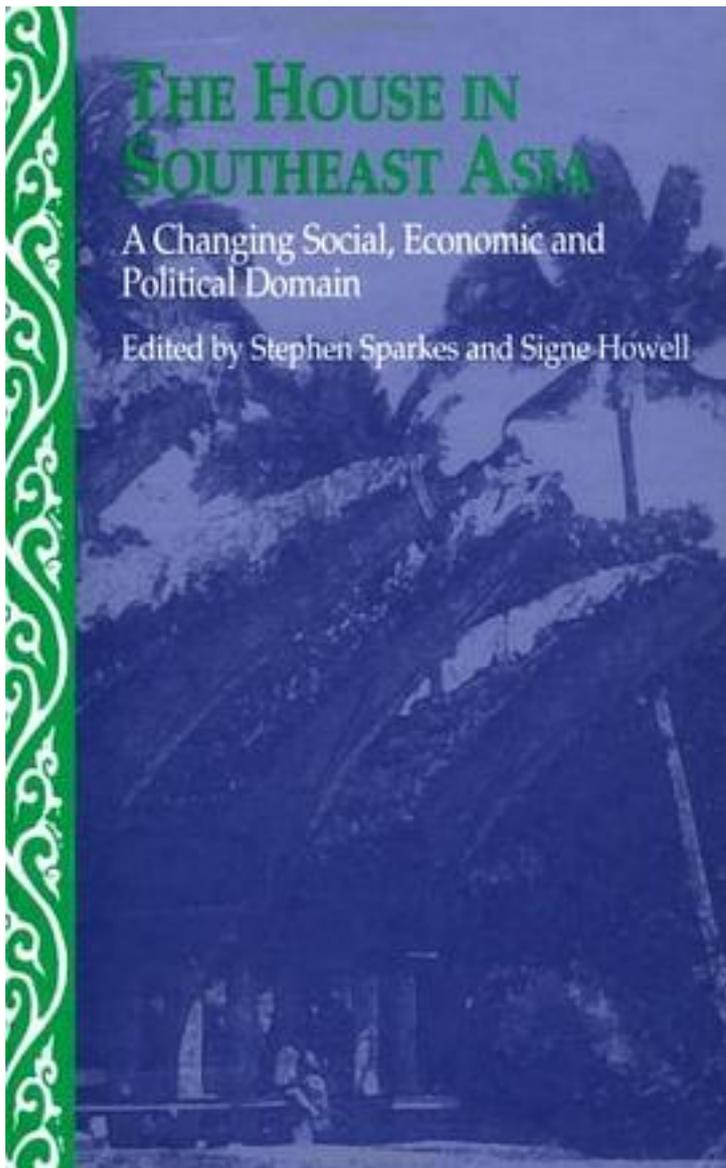


The House in Southeast Asia



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This diverse collection of articles, based on the papers presented at a conference of the same title, aims to further explore the concept of 'house' in the context of Southeast Asia. Levi-Strauss' idea of the house as a link between kinship-based societies and class societies has been developed further into an examination of a conjuncture of architecture, people and symbolism. These articles strive to test whether the house can be used as an analytical means of exploring numerous peoples in mainland and insular Southeast Asia from social, economic and political perspectives. Common themes occurring in this collection include gender concepts, commensal relations, cultural change, identity and kinship. Women often appear as central figures in the continuity of traditions, forming the fixed points in the kinship system and having ritual responsibility on behalf of the group. Further, food not only sustains the members of a household but establishes the relationship between the living and the dead. Other important threads are change and identity relating to the house. With increased urbanization, migration and the abandonment of traditional lifestyles, houses have come to represent an idealized past as well as social and psychological security in a rapidly changing world.

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