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# biblioasia

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## 04 Singapore Artists, *Nanyang Style*

Learn about the unique style of  
Singapore's pioneer artists

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master's works

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automotive industry



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Singapore

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## Director's Column

As the world progresses towards a knowledge-based economy, useful information needs to be made easily available. Globalisation, connectivity and interactivity at all levels are flattening the world and changing the rules of national competitiveness. In such an economy, the creation of and access to information is a significant economic, social and cultural activity.

In supporting Singapore's aspiration to become a knowledge hub, the National Library strives to serve as a reference and research centre for all Singaporeans and foreigners. The "Find It" campaign, which will be launched on 11 April at the Library, seeks to bring greater visibility to and awareness of the reference services and treasure trove of knowledge found in the Library's collections. The campaign aims to support the Library in its effort to nurture independent information seekers and to become the preferred stop for Asian content and collection services. With the series of thematic info-literacy talks, panel discussions and specific programmes that target the four sectors of design, education, heritage and business, the campaign holds exciting promises for all who seek information and knowledge for various purposes.

Besides stimulating our grey matter, one also needs nurturing for the soul. In an extraordinary photographic exhibition, the long gone era of Singapore is revisited through the works of the late master photographer Mr Yip Cheong Fun. Running till 15 May 2006 and jointly organised by the Singapore Heritage Society, the National Library Board and the family of the late Mr Yip Cheong Fun, the exhibition features more than 130 of Yip's best photographs. Also, in conjunction with the Singapore Arts Festival, the National Library will bring the arts right to its doorsteps in June. Arts lovers will get to meet and interact with two groups of overseas artists in workshops organised jointly by National Library Board and the National Arts Council. Works by prominent local sculptors, including Ms Han Sai Por, will also be showcased at the Plaza. This issue of BiblioAisa captures the National Library's celebration of distinguished readers, artists, painters and photographers, their works and contribution to Singapore's society.

With nourishment for the mind and soul, we are not neglecting the body. The month of May will kick off a panel discussion on the upcoming 2006 FIFA World Cup. Made up of leading local and foreign football personalities, the discussion, together with other programmes, will study the various aspects of football and examine why this age-old sport continues to captivate us. Programmes that touch on gaming and extreme sports will also be featured in May. Look out for these events on our website at [www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg).

We look forward to seeing you at the Library and happy reading!

**Ms Ngian Lek Choh**  
*Director*  
*National Library*

# Singapore Art, *Nanyang* Style

By Alicia Yeo, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

“Why, it is asked, do Chinese artists paint in oils instead of their own fluid and sensitive medium?... The answer is that no art that is alive can stand still; it must be a direct expression of the times. As Asian civilisations have been reborn in the last half century, so must Asian artists reflect, and inspire, this rebirth...” Art historian Michael Sullivan, 1963

The *Nanyang* style of painting was practised by migrant Chinese painters in Singapore in the 1950s; yet its parameters as a term were only spelled out by art historian T. K. Sabapathy much later in 1979 (Koay, unknown). The *Nanyang* style refers to the pioneer Chinese artists’ work which was rooted in both the Western schools of Paris (post-Impressionism and Cubism for example) as well as Chinese painting traditions; styles and techniques of both were distinctively integrated in depictions of local or Southeast Asian subject matter (Singapore Art Museum, 2002).

More notably, the *Nanyang* art style is the result of these artists having departed from their roots – but not entirely – to try to produce something uniquely regional. They aimed to represent pictorially the *Nan Yang* culture and way of life – *Nan Yang* meaning South Seas in Mandarin. As art historian Michael Sullivan pointed out above, these painters could be striving to produce an “expression of the times”.

But what led the artists to strive to create this regional style? What were “the times” as such? Apart from highlighting the major artists of the movement and their works, this essay will also attempt to trace the proponents of the *Nanyang* style.

## Art World: Communities and Their Art Activities

The art scene in Singapore was a fledgling one in the late 1800s to early 1900s. The earliest works were oil paintings and lithographs made/commissioned by British settlers. The British however, concentrated on building infrastructure like housing, roads and hospitals in order to maintain a flourishing economy; they did not set up a specific art academy. Sir Raffles did have the intention to begin the teaching of art, but it was not executed until almost a century after his death, when the first English art teacher, Richard Walker, arrived in 1923 (Singapore Art Museum, 2002). It seemed, though, that Mr Walker was expected merely to fulfil the colonial school system requirements by teaching watercolour in art classes – art being one of the Cambridge examination subjects – and this frustrated him to no end (Purushotam, 2002; Kwok, 1996). The local art scene was therefore denied its development.

Singapore by 1840 had a huge influx of Chinese migrants. The overwhelming Chinese numbers were due to push and pull factors. There were the Opium Wars in the 1840s, which ended after the signing of the Nanking treaty that

ceded Hong Kong and other trading ports in South China to the British Empire. This disrupted the economy there and spelled hard times for many Chinese of the lower classes – the result was the bloody Taiping Rebellion, of 1851 – 64. Many Chinese fled the country, attracted by the Western expansion of the “Far East” after the Industrial Revolution. There were many growing Southeast Asian markets which meant an increased demand for labour, for example in tin mines, and rubber, palm oil, and pineapple plantations (Wang, 1991).

The Chinese community held their own art activities. The first art society, the Amateur Drawing Association, was set up in 1909 (Kwok, 1996). Its members painted mostly Western oils or sketches. They were Straits Chinese, second-generation Chinese born in the Straits Settlements, the offspring resulting from intermarriage among the races. Known as Peranakans, they upheld not only Chinese but Malay and British traditions, and they often spoke Malay or English (Kwok, 1996).

On the other end of the spectrum was the United Artists Malaysia group based in Kuala Lumpur. Started in 1929, its artists

concentrating primarily on Chinese ink painting and calligraphy (Kwok, 1996). Apart from the creation of art societies, the late 1920s to 1940s saw many travelling exhibitions being held in Singapore by China-based artists like Xu Beihong, Gao Jianfu and Liu Haisu (Kwok, 1996).

At this time, the trend for Chinese painting was called the “Shanghai School”. It followed the legacy of 19<sup>th</sup> century painters such as Ren Bonian and Wu Changshi, who painted with *xiyihua* – or the style of “writing ideas” – where the aim was to capture the essential meaning, or what one thought was the meaning, of a subject onto paper, rather than the reality of it. The style was much freer, bolder, and the artists liked to work with suggestion and omission hence the sparse, broad strokes and important consideration of empty versus filled space (Kwok, 1990). Chinese painters of this style who were based in Singapore include Fan Chang Tien and See Hiang To. Figure 1 shows Mr Fan’s rendition of a peach tree in this style, which he continued to paint in, late into his career. This *xiyihua* became the main form of Chinese ink painting practised in Singapore in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kwok, 1996), and can be traced as an important element of some of the *Nanyang* style artists’ works.

The Great Depression of 1930-34 hit Singapore however, and called a halt to most art activities. However after that, life resumed with local artists receiving even more exposure to art trends of Europe and China. There were European painters like Eleanor Watkins and impressionist Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur who lived or exhibited in Singapore (Kwok, 1996). There was also the creation of the Society of Chinese Artists in 1935. Its members, mostly the alumni of Shanghai art schools and other prominent academies, were inspired by Western art and its trends (Purushotam, 2002). This was a result of China’s May Fourth movement (1919) – an intellectual



Figure 1: Fan Chang Tien, *Peach Tree*, 1984, Chinese ink and colour, 136x67cm. Collection of the Singapore Art Museum.

Reproduced from Kwok Kian Chow's *Channels & Confluences*.

The term *Nanyang* itself was originally coined by newspaper critics of the late 1920s to early 1930s, to denote contemporary Chinese stories that were written based on local Singaporean subjects.

and political call for reform that aimed to revitalise the country through cultural change. The society also brought in exhibitions by painters from China and Hong Kong (Chia, 1982).

Then in 1938, there was the creation of Singapore's first art academy, the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA). This was not the work of the British, however, but that of Chinese migrant artist and teacher Lim Hak Tai who managed to get funding from rich businessman Tan See Siang, to start this school (Koay, unknown). The school, entirely backed by the Chinese community, was modelled after the Shanghai art academies in its curriculum of both Western and Chinese art traditions, and would prove to be crucial to the fostering of the *Nanyang* style – for the principal artists of this movement were also teachers there (Chia, 1982; Purushotam, 2002).

### The term *Nanyang*: Imparting Ideals of Regionalism

How did the idea of a *Nanyang* style come about? The term *Nanyang* itself was originally coined by newspaper critics of the late 1920s to early 1930s, to denote contemporary Chinese stories that were written based on local Singaporean subjects (Kwok, 1996). Gradually the term was taken further to impart the idea of a *Nanyang* identity and regional culture for the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. The dichotomy of Chinese nationalism and Southeast Asian regionalism grew: the emphasis by proponents of *Nanyang* ideals was on one's locale being one's new home,

and the need to forge a new identity in new lands.

However, exploring that ideal was suspended when World War II broke out and the Japanese occupied Singapore from 1942-5. However after the war, *Nanyang* regionalism strengthened even more amid growing anti-colonial sentiments. The British were drafting a Malayan confederation, but Singapore was left out to remain as a British colony despite its people warming toward the idea of independence (Xia, 2000). NAFA, which resumed classes then, began to draw artistic inspiration from its Southeast Asian surroundings, instead of its prior pro-China stance. The mid-40s to early 50s saw the growth of many painters alongside the growing patronage of exhibitors like the British Council (Kwok, 1996). With the renewed talk of a *Nanyang* identity, there also began the quest to find the quintessential *Nanyang* visual expression to go along with it. What was the *Nanyang* South Seas culture, and how could one pictorially express it?

### *Nanyang* Style Painters: The Pioneers

Several artists credited with forming and espousing the *Nanyang* style emerged during the late 1940s/50s. Their primary medium was either Chinese ink/colour, or oil on canvas. Four stand out from these, for their growth as artists was spurred tremendously by their trip to Bali in 1952 (Kwok, 1994). These painters are Cheong Soo Pieng, Chen Chong Swee, Chen Wen Hsi and Liu Kang. The artists were struck by the exoticism of Bali, and having gained inspiration from the bright colours, sights and sounds of Bali, they tried

to incorporate these in their formations of the *Nanyang* style. All four were graduates of Shanghai's XinHua Academy of Fine Arts, all taught at NAFA at some point, and all had exposure to the varied French schools of art – whether through self-exploration by living in European cities for periods at a time, or via art journals and communication with European artists based in Southeast Asia (Kwok, 1994; Chia, 1982). Each worked to articulate a Southeast Asian viewpoint through the integration of Chinese and Western elements in their works, yet we will see how each had their own individual style.

Among the four that went to Bali, **Chen Chong Swee (1910 – 1985)** can be considered the most realist of them. Trained in traditional Chinese brush painting, he was also one of the founding members of the Society of Chinese Artists. A firm advocate of the May Fourth Movement, he called for the marriage of the Western principle of creativity with the Chinese virtues of imitating the masters. He also believed in painting "in his time", drawing inspiration for meaningful pieces from his present surroundings (Koay, 1993). He was thus one of the first to paint local themes using a Chinese landscape painting format. But after Bali, he dabbled in oils as well. Figure 2 is one of the works resulting from that trip. He wrote: "Bali is indeed a women's empire; the robust beauty of Balinese women and the pastoral scenery form an excellent painting (Kwok, 1993)."

Despite this foray into oils, Chen Chong Swee's forte still lies in his "Southeast Asian" landscapes and vignettes in the traditional Chinese scroll format. Figure 3 shows one such example, done in Chinese ink but with a Western fixed perspective angling into the distant coconut trees. All of Mr Chen's realist works never strayed far into the murky waters of subjective expressionism because he believed that a painting's content must be understood for it to mean something and elicit a response from one's audience (Koay, 1993).



Figure 2: Chen Chong Swee, *Balinese Women*, 1952, oil on canvas, 74x59cm. Collection of the Singapore Art Museum.

Reproduced from Kwok Kian Chow's *Channels & Confluences*.



Figure 3: Chen Chong Swee, *Kampung Serenity*, 1949, Chinese ink & colour, 124x52cm. Collection of the Singapore Art Museum.

Reproduced from Chen Chong Swee's *Paintings of Chen Chong Swee*

Besides painting, he was a great writer and contributor to the press on art theories, espousing his conviction to realism in articles and the colophons in his paintings (Kwok, 1994).

The next artist **Chen Wen Hsi (1908 – 1991)**, however, did not care for active discourse on the *Nanyang* style, but rather was a staunch individualist. If Chen Chong Swee was the realist, he was the abstract cubist. In the early years and before retirement, he too painted primarily with Chinese ink and of local subjects in the style of *xieyihua*.

Later on though, he placed this Chinese aesthetic together with western pictorial composition, going so far in his later years to produce abstract iconic oils such as Figure 4 (next page), which depicts herons in an angular, Cubist manner – a work of Chinese ink and colour. Art patron and journalist Frank Sullivan has noted, “Although interested in angles, (Chen Wen Hsi) is not a cubist; although obsessed by shape, he is no abstractionist; he strays from reality, but not too far (Chen, 1956).” So, Chen Wen Hsi seems to have always remained true to his unique art philosophy and style.

The next *Nanyang* artist is **Liu Kang (1910 – 2004)**, and his work differs in that he is post-Impressionist and Fauvist influenced, but his choice of subjects is again, local. While he too was a XinHua student born in China, he graduated slightly earlier than Chen Chong Swee and Chen Wen Hsi, in the late 1920s, and went straight to Paris after that. He spent six years painting there, exposed to the works of Degas, Gauguin, and Matisse etc (Kwok, 1996). He then returned to Shanghai to teach

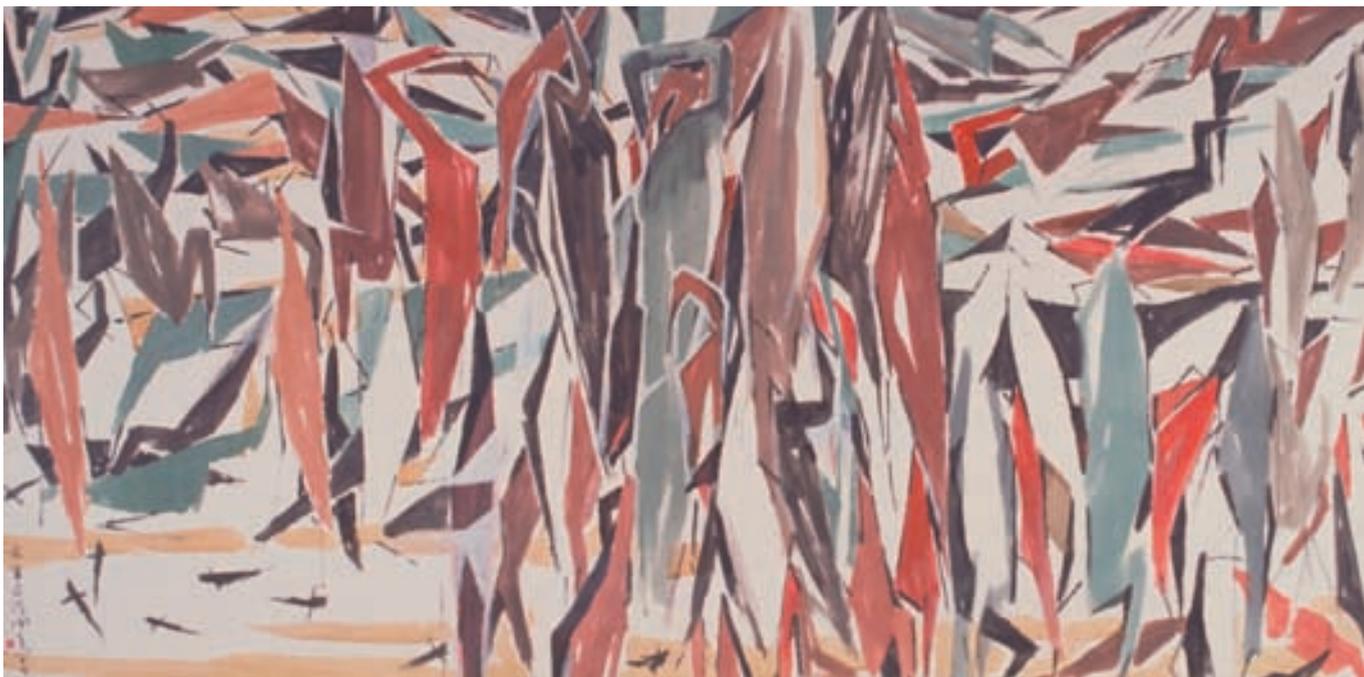


Figure 4: Chen Wen Hsi, *Herons*, 1990, Chinese ink and colour, 157x297cm. Collection of the Singapore Art Museum.



Figure 5: Liu Kang, *Life by the River*, 1975, oil on canvas, 126x203cm. Collection of the Singapore Art Museum. Reproduced from Liu Kang's *Liu Kang at 87*

Western art, before coming to Singapore in 1942 (Koay, unknown). Figure 5 which depicts a river *kampong* scene, is an example of his typical work being Fauvist in nature with the flat, broad sheets of colour, but he also used the arrangement of shapes rather than shading to achieve depth, and his arrangement of subject allowed the eye to travel instead of fixing on one point into the distance – both techniques are more in tune with the Chinese landscape format than Western art. Liu Kang's primary medium has always been oils on canvas. His works are always simple and realistic but without being naturalistic.

“...it seems that I have passed by many art trends such as Dadaism, Cubism and more recently kinetic, op, pop...I have just continued to be attracted by the people around me, their lives, objects and the glorious landscape of Mother Nature.”

Like Liu Kang, the next China-born artist **Georgette Chen (1907 – 1993)** was also post-Impressionist inspired and primarily worked with oil and pastels. She was not part of the foursome who went to Bali, but she too dabbled with the techniques of Chinese brushwork using oils. Georgette Chen was born to wealth and privilege, having been educated in France, New York and Shanghai. She had even exhibited in the Salon d'Automne in Paris in the 1930s (Chia, 1995). Her early works were Cezanne-influenced with strong textures and a predilection for top-down views. When she moved to Singapore in 1954, Georgette



Figure 6: Georgette Chen, *Still Life with Blue Vase*, 1960, oil on canvas, 33x46cm. Collection of the Singapore Art Museum.

Reproduced from Singapore National Museum's *Georgette Chen Retrospective*, 1985



Figure 7: Georgette Chen, *Tropical Fruits*, 1969, oil on canvas, 73x92cm. Collection of the Singapore Art Museum.

Reproduced from Singapore National Museum's *Georgette Chen Retrospective*, 1985

Chen taught at NAFA (Kwok, 1996) and painted more local subjects, whether landscapes, still-lives or portraits, such as Figure 6's *Still Life with Blue Vase*, which has the rough brushstrokes of post-Impressionism

but a faint touch of Chinese painting style in the thin outlines. In this insistence on an Asian context much like Liu Kang's own philosophy (Chia, 1997), Georgette Chen often chose familiar, commonplace

objects because of their cultural significance, such as mooncakes – icons of the Chinese mid-Autumn Festival or tropical fruit like rambutans. Georgette Chen herself once said, in 1979: "...it seems that I have passed by many art trends such as Dadaism, Cubism and more recently kinetic, op, pop...I have just continued to be attracted by the people around me, their lives, objects and the glorious landscape of Mother Nature." (Purushotam, 2002) Her later years in Singapore mark Georgette Chen's maturity as an artist, in her emphasis on pictorial composition, and in her search for new permutations of shapes, colours and textures. If you compare Figure 6 with Figure 7, you can see the sophistry gained in the latter and the more expressionist flavour in the former.

Last but not least of the *Nanyang* pioneer artists is **Cheong Soo Pieng (1917 – 1983)**. A XinHua graduate as well, he came to Singapore in 1946 and taught at NAFA until 1961 (Chia, 1982). These years saw him try to capture his new environment in all its colours and charms. Always experimenting with pictorial compositions, he was eager to try all sorts of mediums as well. Throughout his whole art career, he had dabbled with oil in impasto, Chinese ink on rice paper, oil with new effects, abstraction, mixed media sculptures, painting on tiles and porcelain, and Chinese painting on cotton (Kwok, 1996). Cheong Soo Pieng's visit to Bali saw him inspired to experiment with the depiction of the human form, resulting in the beginnings of an iconic stylised and abstract figure with large eyes and long limbs. He went on to dabble in abstract expressionist styles, but in his later years he drew renewed inspiration from Bali and further honed his iconic depiction of the Malay woman with elongated limbs, which he is now most famous for (See Figure 8). This has led to critics lauding Cheong Soo Pieng for his Balinese series of oils as being "modern and international in technique, Chinese in feeling, and Malayan in subject" (Cheng, 1956). The paintings all have mellow, earthy colours reminiscent of the Balinese

palette, but at times are highlighted with bright patches of colour.

### Conclusion

The history of Singapore with its blend of Western and Eastern influences yields many clues to the components of the *Nanyang* style. Chinese art trends (namely the Shanghai School's revitalization of *xieyihua*) were central to the *Nanyang* style and the politics of the post-war era had spurred the quest for depicting *Nanyang* regionalism in the first place. On the other hand, the May Fourth movement's Western ideals and British colonialism

brought with it more exposure to art trends of the West, namely the schools of Paris. It is interesting to note that *if* the British had been more eager to impart their artistic ideals by setting up an academy like the French in Indochina or the Dutch in Indonesia, Singapore's *Nanyang* style might have been a very different one – the coalescing of techniques might have resulted in a different outcome altogether.

Lastly, the budding infrastructure of art societies and institutions allowed the proliferation of exhibitions by foreign artists both Chinese and European, which thus ensured wide

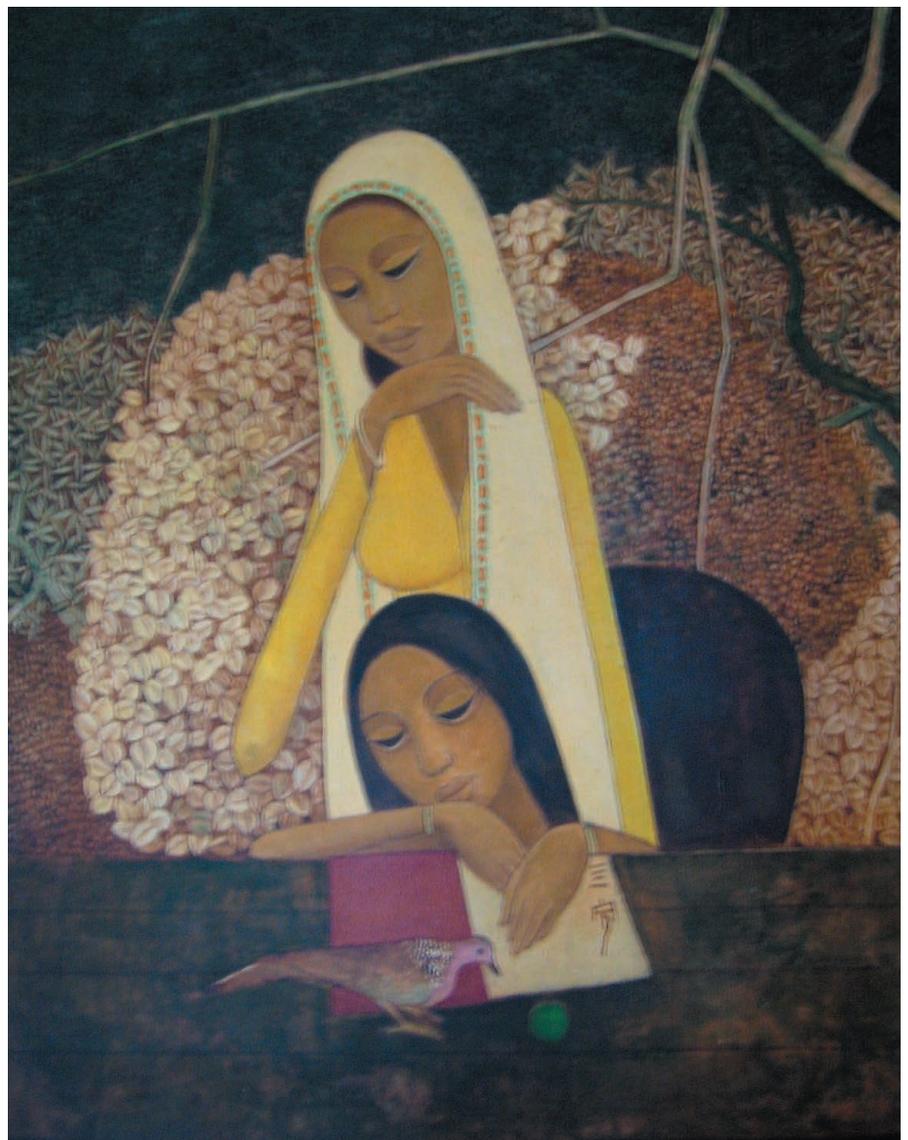


Figure 8: Cheong Soo Pieng, *Untitled*, ca. late 1970s-80s, oil on canvas, 101x81cm. Private collection.

## The history of Singapore with its blend of Western and Eastern influences yields many clues to the components of the *Nanyang* style.

exposure for Singapore artists to all sorts of manner of painting. Furthermore, without NAFA and the artists as teachers, the *Nanyang* style would not have been thoroughly fostered for later generations of artists in Singapore.

But has that fostering been effective? Art historian T. K. Sabapathy had once criticised that the younger generation of artists such as Yeh Zhi Wei and Choo Keng Kwang who continued the *Nanyang* style in the 1970s (Kwok, 1996) do not have the spontaneity and spirit of innovation as their forefathers, the results being “tiresome clichés” (Koay, unknown). But perhaps this is the artist’s natural result in again trying to reflect and express “the times” – in this case, society’s nostalgia of the old – for running concurrently then was the issue of how to tackle rising modernism and Western culture influences on Singapore (Xia, 2000). It would seem that harking back to the pioneer artists’ *Nanyang* style, turning their techniques into easy rules of painting, was itself a statement on this issue, however stiff and formal the actual result seemed.

Nevertheless, the proponents of the *Nanyang* style continue to resonate today. What is most noteworthy is the fact that this art style reflects the universal culture of migrants, who in this case adapted to and accepted a new mix of Western, Chinese and indigenous beliefs/practices. The lessons learnt from this art movement are therefore no less significant in this global age, with infinite possibilities nowadays for the cross-fertilisation of cultures in every corner of the world.

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### Further Reading:

*A Brief History of Malayan Art* by Marco C.F. Hsu.

Singapore: Millennium Books, 1999.

Call no: RSING 709.595 HSU.

Translated from Mandarin to English, this work discusses the various factors that have shaped the art scene in present-day Singapore and Malaysia. It traces the area’s art, personalities, events and organisations from the time of the early settlers. Topics covered include the spread of Islam, the transmission of Western cultures and the nurturing of painting.

*Channels & Confluences: A History of Singapore Art* by Kwok Kian Chow.

Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 1996.

Call no: RSING 709.5957 KWO.

A fully illustrated book which outlines the history of the visual arts in Singapore from about the twentieth century. The study highlights many historical and aesthetic themes and issues, which are vital to the understanding of the development of the visual arts in Singapore.

*The Evolution of the Nanyang Art Style: A Study in the Search for an Artistic Identity in Singapore, 1930-1960* by Tan Meng Kiat.

Hong Kong: Department of Humanities, University of Science and Technology, 1997.

Call no: RSING q709.5957 TAN.

This thesis studies the reasons and events behind the evolution of the Nanyang Art Style in Singapore, from 1930-1960. It is divided into two parts: the first covers the history of the country and the other analyses the art style itself.

*Georgette Chen* by Jane Chia.

Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 1997.

Call no: RSING q759.95957 CHI.

A detailed study on the life of Georgette Chen, the book also compiles a chronology of all her major exhibitions and the works featured in them.

*Journeys: Liu Kang and his Art* by Liu Kang.

Singapore: National Arts Council and Singapore Art Museum, 2000.

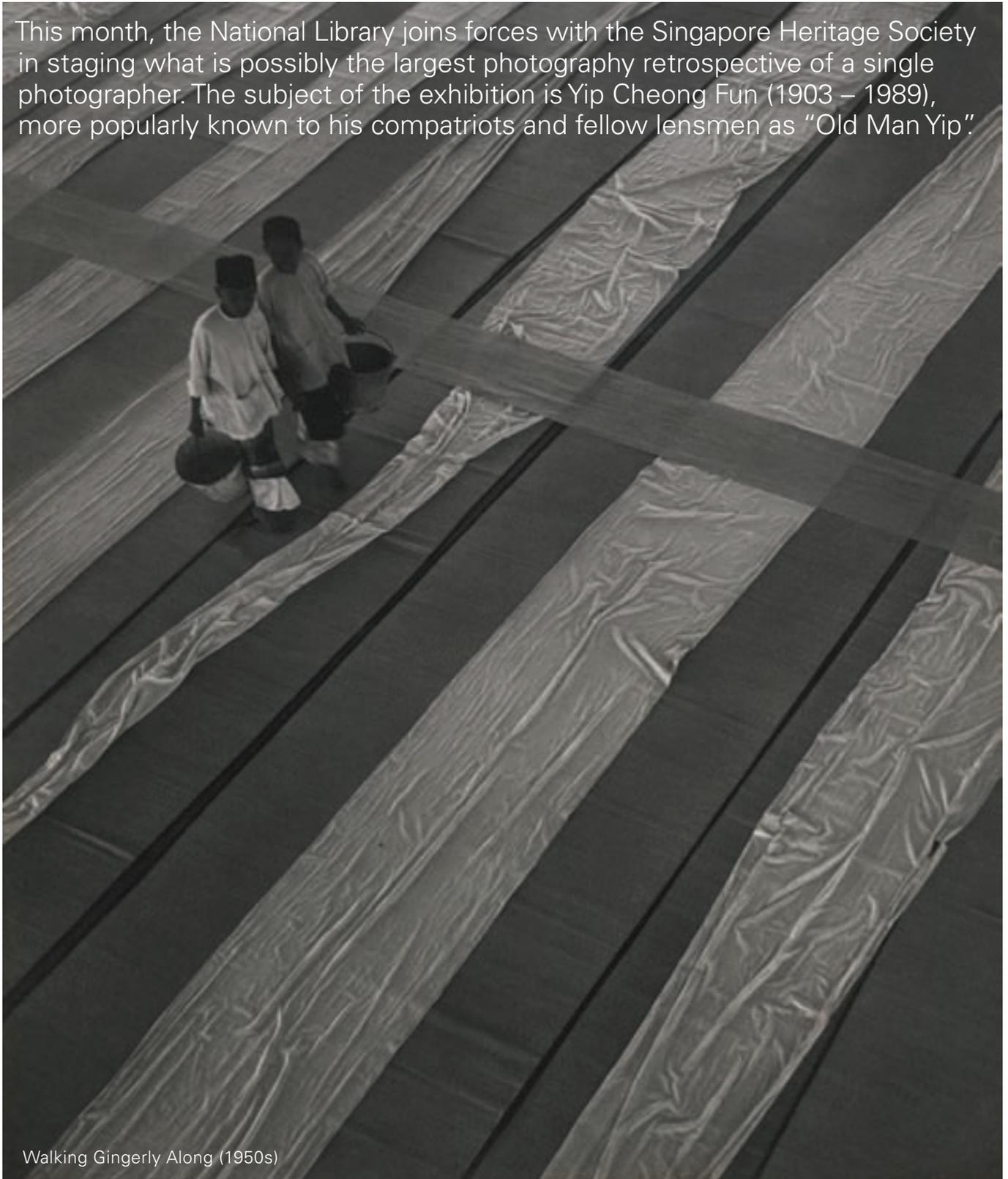
Call no: RSING q759.95957 LIU.

In commemoration of the diplomatic relations between the People’s Republic of China and Singapore, this traveling exhibition featured 50 key works from every notable period in Liu Kang’s career. Reflections on his paintings and art are expressed in both English and Chinese.

# Old Man Yip: Photography Master in Slippers

By Dr Kevin YL Tan, President, Singapore Heritage Society; Photographs by Yip Cheong Fun, Courtesy of Mr Andrew Yip

This month, the National Library joins forces with the Singapore Heritage Society in staging what is possibly the largest photography retrospective of a single photographer. The subject of the exhibition is Yip Cheong Fun (1903 – 1989), more popularly known to his compatriots and fellow lensmen as “Old Man Yip”.



Walking Gingerly Along (1950s)

## Life in Chinatown

Nothing in Yip Cheong Fun's early life suggests that he would become one of Singapore's most eminent photographers. He was born in Hong Kong in 1903, the son of a farmer. At the age of 7 months, his parents left Hong Kong for Singapore where he remained till 1909. His father died in 1907 and his mother, unable to cope with having to eke out a modest living and caring for her children, sent him back to China to be placed in the care of relatives. Unfortunately, his relatives neglected him and he returned to Singapore in 1913 after his relatives' neighbours alerted his mother to his plight. From then on, he stayed with his mother at 47 Kreta Ayer Street. This would be his home for the rest of his life.

Yip had a basic Chinese education in a private school in Chinatown. He was mechanically-inclined and apprenticed in an engineering firm where he picked up a number of technical skills that stood him in good stead over the years. After school, he worked for United Engineers as a supervisor but quit the firm in 1942 after discovering that it was making munitions for the Japanese. Yip then started an engineering workshop at the back of his three-storey Kreta Ayer Street house. His wife ran a provision store, named Cheong Loong at the front of the store while Yip, his nephew and some workers operated a machine shop, complete with die cutters, moulds and lathes in the back.

By 1936, Yip had married and established a family. He had a little spare cash and purchased a Rolleiflex camera; his very first. This was to be a start of a life-long love affair with the photographic arts. When he set up his workshop in 1942, he also set up a darkroom. Now that he was his own boss, he had more time for photography.

After World War II, Yip ventured into three other businesses, all of which failed. The first was the manufacture of tin toys (like cars and aeroplanes). Using his skill as a machinist, Yip made these toys out of tin, which

replaced the much heavier wooden toys of old. However, when plastics became popular in the 1960s, he gave up the business. He also began manufacturing joss-sticks in his Kreta Ayer shophouse. This business folded when his partner struck out on his own. Finally, Yip and his wife manufactured a tea-dust based shampoo which the Cantonese referred to as *char chye fun*. This powder was mixed with water to make a paste is applied to the hair much in the same way as shampoo. It was marketed under the shop's name, Cheong Loong and proved popular among the older ladies living in the area. However, with the advent of modern shampoo, that business also failed.

## Latecomer to Photography

Yip Cheong Fun was a latecomer to photography. He was already in his thirties when he picked up his first camera. In the beginning, he used it like any hobbyist and doting family man; to record images of his family and of his familiar surroundings. After the Japanese Occupation, Yip began taking more photographs of other subjects.

The devastation wrought by the war kindled in Yip a passion to record on film, his changing environs. He began taking photographs of the same site a few years apart; mostly around his beloved Kreta Ayer area, recording the changes that have taken place over the years. Yip was also much inspired by the vitality of the human spirit, and the ability of man to overcome hardships and setbacks. This can be seen in his photographs of people, especially his portraits of fisherfolk, *samsui* women and construction workers. The spirit of toil and endeavour shines through in each photograph. Yip felt deeply for the poor and the down-trodden in Chinatown. He explored every nook and corner of the area after the war and captured images of social activity of a time gone by. His ability to capture, what Henri Cartier-Bresson calls "the decisive moment" made him unique among the photographers of his generation.

## Master Yip

Yip's first success in photography was in 1952 when he began sending his prints for international competitions. A prudent man all his life, Yip processed and developed all his own black and white prints. His print, *Rowing at Dawn*, won for him a string of top prizes and gold medals in international salons and was exhibited in over 80 countries. Before long, Yip began winning other prizes and gained international recognition. In 1957, he was made Associate of the Royal Photographic Society, and four years later, Fellow of the same society. In Singapore, his photographic and technical skills earned him a job at Tien Wah Press in 1960. There, he was involved in commercial photography and also provided technical support and maintenance for the printing house's machinery.

In 1974, Yip was made Honorary Fellow of the Singapore's oldest photographic society, the Photographic Society of Singapore and in 1984, he was awarded the coveted Cultural Medallion. One of Yip's highest honours was to be named one of 10 'Honorary Outstanding Photographers of the Century' by the prestigious New York Photographic Society (NYPS) in 1980. At a special exhibition, Yip earned this distinction for his seascapes and four of his prints: *Tranquility*; *Rowing at Dawn*; *Early Morning*; and *The First Cast* which were exhibited alongside nine other photographers from Hong Kong, America, Poland, China, Argentina and Hungary. The citation of the NYPS stated that the honour was "... the world's highest tribute to a photographer".

From 1966 to 1974, Yip was Vice-President of the Photographic Society of Singapore and on 15 December 1978, he was conferred Honorary Life Membership of the Society. He also served as Advisor of the Kreta Ayer Community Centre Camera Club from 1976 till his death in 1989.

### Yip Cheong Fun (1903 – 1989)

**1903** Born in Hong Kong. Arrived in Singapore, aged 7 month.

**1909** Sent back to China to be cared for by relatives as his mother had to work to upkeep the family as his father died in 1907.

**1913** Returned to Singapore after his relatives' neighbours discovered that he was not cared for and notified his mother. Lived with his mother at 47 Kreta Ayer Road. Educated at a private school in Chinatown.

**1936** After working some time as a supervisor with United Engineers, Yip saved up enough money to buy a Rolleiflex camera.

**1942** Quit United Engineers and started small engineering workshop at the back of his house. Also built a dark room.

**1946** Continued operating engineering workshop. Branched into various other enterprises, including tin toy-making, joss-stick manufacturing and ground-tea powder shampoo.

**1952** First major success at an international competition. *Rowing at Dawn* won him a string of top prizes and gold medals in international competitions. Accepted for exhibition in over 80 countries.

**1957** Made Associate of the Royal Photographic Society, UK.

**1960** Joined Tien Wah Press as commercial photographer and technician.

**1961** Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society, UK

**1972** Honorary Excellence Distinction of the International Federation of Photographic Art (Seascape specialist)

**1973** Retired from Tien Wah Press.

**1974** Honorary Fellowship of the Photographic Society of Singapore

**1980** Honorary Outstanding Photographer of the Century, Photographic Society of New York

**1978** Honorary Life Membership, Photographic Society of Singapore

The spirit of toil and endeavour shines through in each photograph. Yip felt deeply for the poor and the down-trodden in Chinatown. He explored every nook and corner of the area after the war and captured images of social activity of a time gone by.



An Early Start (1948)



Chinatown 1955.

## The Master Wears Slippers



Despite his success, Yip remained a humble, self-effacing individual. Looking at him, sitting at his provision shop, no one could imagine that the old shopkeeper with a benign smile was one of the world's great photographers. He was always willing to share his techniques with younger photographers and was regarded by all his colleagues as a perfect gentleman. Dressed in singlet, shorts and slippers, Yip enjoyed nothing more than waking up before dawn in search of a perfect picture.

All his shots were carefully planned and executed. His deep understanding of lighting, and his uncanny ability to penetrate the soul of his subjects made him a true master. Yip was particularly fascinated by the sea and the old kampungs. In an interview published in 1986, he lamented the loss of kampungs to shoot in

Singapore. When he could still drive, he and his fellow photographers would take trips up to peninsula Malaysia to capture the scenery and the fishermen at work.

In 1986, Yip was persuaded by his friends and family to publish a book of his works. The result was a privately funded book, *Yip Cheong Fun's Pictorial Collection*, featuring 100 of his photographs from 1954 to 1986. It took him two years and \$26,000 to publish. He had hoped that the book would serve as a record of his work and a good reference for young enthusiasts. Yip was an amateur throughout his photographic career. It was his way of sharing his deep love for Singapore and the people who made it their home. When he died in 1989, he was clutching a fully-loaded camera, a fitting end for a man whose love for photography was an all-consuming passion.



Dragon Dance  
(1960s)

## The Man and His Machines

A bad workman blames his tools, but good tools in the hands of an expert can make all the difference between a mediocre photograph and a masterpiece. Yip Cheong Fun shot many of earlier photographs with his German-made Rolleiflex, a 6x6 camera that first appeared in 1929.

His next camera had an even bigger negative, the 6x9 Zeiss Super Ikonta-C. This camera is a classic legend and is one of the most unique cameras ever made. The beauty of this camera is its ability to be folded up into a very small package. It was a camera with the largest body-size to negative ratio in the market. These cameras were considered the best folding cameras ever made.

Yip's last medium-format camera was a Swiss-made Hasselblad 500C, one of the finest cameras ever made. The 500C was introduced in 1957 and was a single-lens reflex camera with a German-made Carl Zeiss lens with built-in leaf shutters. This camera is renowned for its superb optics, reliability and compact size. For portability, Yip used two 35mm cameras, the Leicaflex and a Nikon F.



An Old Chinatown Teacher  
(1960s)

## Further Reading:

### On Photographers

*Chinatown: Different Exposures* by Andre W Keye,  
Publisher: Fashion 21, 2004  
RSING 959.57 KEY

*Master of Light: Ansel Adams and His Influences* by Therese Lichtenstein,  
Publisher: Todtrich, 1997  
RU q770.92LIC

### On Technique

*Black and White* by Michael Freeman,  
Publisher: Lewes, 2005  
711 FRE - [ART]

### On Antique/Vintage Cameras

*Leica Collector's Guide* by Dennis Laney,  
Publisher: Hove, 2005  
RART q771.31075 LAN

*Fritz Henle's guide to Rollei Photography* by Fritz Henle,  
Publisher: Studion Pub & Crowell, 1956  
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*Rollei Manual: The Complete Book of Twin-lens Photography* by Alec Pearlman,  
Publisher: Fountain, 1960  
RU 771.31 PEA

# The Motor Millions – Towards Our Own Car Six Years to Assembling Cars in the Peninsula 1963 – 1968

By Eli Solomon; Photos are from the author's collection

This paper traces Malaysia's drive to establish a local automotive assembly industry during the exciting years of industrialisation from 1963 to 1968. It covers the tumultuous growth of this sector that would eventually lead to the production of Malaysia's own car in 1985.

References have been made to industry and company records and the newspapers of the day – in particular *The Straits Times*, *Malay Mail*, *Malayan Times*, *Nanyang*, *Sin Chew*, *Eastern Sun*, *Eastern Trade*, *Malaysian Trade Digest*, *Miri Daily News*, *The Borneo Bulletin*, *The Vanguard*, *The Kinabalu Times*, *Daily Express* (Kota Kinabalu) and *Sabah Times*. Given the volatile period of the 60s and the lack of easily available material on the automobile industry in Southeast Asia, this author humbly apologises for any inaccuracies in this paper.

## Political Backdrop and Automobile Framework in the Early 1960s

In May 1961, then Malaya's Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, suggested the formation of Malaysia – comprising the integration of the three Borneo territories on approximately the same basis as the existing state of the Federation of Malaya, along with Singapore merging with the Federation with somewhat more autonomy. Thus, Malaysia was established on 31 August 1963 with the purpose to reduce or eliminate the threat of communism and secure independence from colonial rule. Singapore, it had been feared, would, if permitted to achieve separate independence, become a 'Cuba' at the bottom of the

Peninsula (Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak in Washington, *Malayan Times*, 27 April 1963). Independence, it seemed, would mean industrialisation would be a necessary evil.

The seeds of what was to become a major industry in Malaysia were sown by then Malaysian Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr Lim Swee Aun, in 1963. On his way to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade Conference (GATT) in Geneva that year, Dr Lim confirmed that his ministry had received many inquiries from foreign and local firms regarding the possibility of setting up vehicle manufacturing factories in the Federation. The bigger plan, he subsequently announced, was to establish a motor vehicle industry in Malaysia by stages – from basic assembly with some local content, to chassis build, and finally to a fully local-made car.

## A Chronological Perspective 1963 – 1968

The Government blueprint for a local automotive market, established ahead of Malaysia's independence in 1963, was to utilise local manufacture as much as possible – tires made by Dunlop, cushions from Dunlopillo, electric cables, batteries and paints that were already being manufactured in Malaysia.

In June 1963, the *Malay Mail* ran an article titled "Foreign Firms Plan to Make Cars in Malaya". Survey teams from a number of foreign automobile manufacturers were reported to have reconnoitered the landscape for sites and were now looking for incentives such as

pioneer status and tariff protection before taking the next step. This was not just press hype. Ford had just purchased 100 acres of land on top of their existing assembly plant in Singapore, and other firms had had discussions with the relevant ministries in Malaysia. Dr Lim Swee Aun had already accepted proposals from several foreign car manufacturers and while uncommitted on government findings, he did give the assurance that if the proposals were reasonable, their requests for tariff protection and pioneer status would be considered.

That year, both Malaysia and Singapore were looking to encourage the establishment of automobile assembly plans handling completely knocked down (CKD) operations, plus progressive manufacture. Cycle & Carriage Co. Ltd. (C&C), which held the franchise for Mercedes-Benz, Chrysler and Jaguar, was keen to explore their options further, initially with car assembly in Singapore and heavy vehicle assembly in the Peninsula on the basis that a "common market" existed between the two. C&C eventually did begin assembly of both Mercedes-Benz and Mitsubishi cars five years later in 1968, with Mercedes-Benz at Petaling Jaya, Selangor and Mitsubishi in Tampoi, Johore under a reorganised Group structure to incorporate the separation between Malaysia and Singapore in 1965.

At the opening of the Made-in-Malaysia trade fair in Kuala Lumpur on 29 October 1963, Dr Lim Swee Aun announced the cooperation between the Central Government and the State Government of Singapore on working out a car industry program. The exhibition



A smiling Tenku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj sitting in the first Mitsubishi Colt off the Tampoi assembly line, 16 December 1968.



Rene Laude, Project Manager of Kelang Pembena Kereta2 Sdn. Bhd handing the keys to the first Mitsubishi assembled to Chua Boon Peng, Chairman of C&C Co. (Msia) Sdn. Bhd.

featured two Ford cars – the Consul and the Cortina, both provided and assembled by Ford Motor Company (Ford) in Singapore. Dr Lim acknowledged that local content of the car was, however, modest with only tires, seat cushions, electric cables, batteries, paints and windshield weatherstrips being locally produced by Dunlop, Associated Batteries, Malayan Cable, Kinta Rubber Works, P.A.R. and Dunlopillo. Ford, which had the only car, truck and tractor assembly plant in the Federation for more than 30 years (Wearne Brothers actually had a very modest assembly operation for Ford cars in Singapore in 1916), had ensured that all local components had met with its international specifications. Ford Malaysia's Managing Director (1947 – 1951, 1957 – 1964, 1985), Gordon W. Withell, had endorsed the use of local products as long as they met with internal quality specifications, delivery requirements and cost factors.

Ford already had an assembly plant in Bukit Timah, Singapore that had produced over 80,000 vehicles since it started production in November 1926. By 1965, Ford was assembling 16 models of cars, from the Anglia to the Cortina, although production capacity was a mere 13 units a day (with overtime they were able to push the figure up to 18 units a day).

The Central Government did realise that a Made-in-Malaysia car would take a long time to evolve. Their farsighted approach budgeted for up to 20 years before fruition of a locally manufactured car (which was exactly how long it did take), however the initial plan was to grant to a number of manufacturers/ventures licences to assemble vehicles similar to what Ford had been doing at their Singapore facility.

The Federation had seen 22,000 vehicles of all sorts imported into the country in 1961. China, for example, imported an average of 1,000 passenger cars per year from 1954 to 1965, mostly from Poland! For a viable car assembly plant in the Federation, annual output was estimated to have to top 3,000 units. Word amongst industry participants circulated that there were several very interested parties, from Australia, Europe to Japan, prepared to invest in building assembly plants in Malaysia. The industry waited with bated breath to see who would be the first mover.

The StraitsTimes headlines on Sunday, 10 November 1963 read: "The Motor Millions: Five Assembly Plant to Go Up in Big Car Deal."

Amidst rife speculation and concern about the extent of import duties and tariff protection to be imposed on vehicle imports, the "Motor



The first Mitsubishi Colt 1200 to roll off the Assembly line at the C&C Tampoi plant in Johore, 16 December 1968.

Millions" newspaper report revealed the first five motor agencies that were keen to establish assembly plants in Malaysia. The five firms were: Malayan Motors of the Wearne Brothers Group together with Borneo Motors and BMC-Far East (who would produce Austin, Morris and other BMC vehicles); Cycle & Carriage (who would produce Mercedes-Benz and Chrysler vehicles in two plants); Champion Motors (who would assemble VW and Rover, including Land Rover); and Orchard Motors (who would assemble Vauxhall and Bedford vehicles and possibly other General Motors cars and commercial vehicles).



**BRABHAM**  
**VIVA GT**



Now, to the delight of enthusiasts, the Brabham organisation has given the Vauxhall Viva a top speed of almost 90 mph with acceleration to match and exceptional road holding under extreme driving conditions.

Here's how it was done. The Brabham GT conversion consists of a fully modified engine to Brabham specification giving 60 bhp at 5,800 rpm. This is coupled to a new exhaust system and straight through silencer. The rear suspension is lowered and fitted with heavy duty adjustable shock absorbers whilst the front suspension has been ingeniously lowered and at the same time fitted with an anti-roll bar. Complete instrumentation is supplied with rev. counter, speedometer, oil pressure, water temperature and fuel gauges in a new instrument panel. The whole car is finished with contrasting body flash and Brabham G.T. badges.

**ORCHARD MOTORS**  
SINGAPORE & KUALA LUMPUR REPRESENTED ELSEWHERE BY BORNEO MOTORS

A Vauxhall advert featuring the re-badged Viva Brabham GT from 1966. Orchard Motors were the agents for Vauxhall in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur with Borneo Motors representing the brand elsewhere in the Peninsula.

The Japanese too were most keen to establish a foothold in Malaysia and by the end of 1963, Kah Motors, a subsidiary of Tan Sri Loh Boon Siew's Oriental Holdings Ltd., and Toyota Motor Co. (Toyota) of Japan had begun building an assembly plant for Toyota cars in Butterworth, Penang. In Oriental Holdings' prospectus (22 February 1964) for the public subscription of 2.6 million

ordinary shares of \$1 each, it was stated that negotiations were in progress for the construction and operation of the plant as a Joint Venture between Kah Motors and Toyota. Kah Motors had been appointed sole agents for the sale of Toyota cars and commercial vehicles in Malaysia, including Singapore, for five years up to September 1968.



**why does Repco go motor racing?**

REPCO Australia

A Repco advert found in a Grand Prix program. In this instance, the Singapore Grand Prix program for 1968.

At the end of November 1963, representatives from Australia's Repco Ltd \*, the biggest automotive spare parts manufacturer in the Southern Hemisphere, had spent a week in Singapore studying the possibility of setting up a spare parts plant. Repco was already supplying parts for Holden, Ford, BMC, Chrysler and General Motors vehicles.

The following year, 1964, was to be a very exciting one for car manufacturers and agencies prepared to assemble their cars in the Peninsula. The Central Government was confident that the first made-in-Malaysia (i.e. assembled) car would appear on the roads by the end of that year or in early 1965 (*The Malay Mail*, 24 January 1964). Several manufacturers had already invested in large tracks of land in Selangor, Perak and Penang. Toyota, as indicated earlier, was establishing their venture in Penang; Chrysler and VW were to set up theirs in a 700 acre site at Batu Tiga in Selangor; Orchard Motors, the Vauxhall and Bedford distributors, were keen on a plant in Kuala Lumpur; Asia Motors, agents for Peugeot, BMW and Borgward cars, were interested in a plant at the new Jurong Industrial part in Singapore;

It was also stipulated that no pioneer status would be granted in respect of motor vehicle assembly operations but the Government was prepared to grant pioneer status, and introduce the necessary tariff protection, for the local manufacture of parts and components.

and Cycle & Carriage, agents of Mercedes-Benz, Auto Union, DKW, Plymouth, Valiant, Chrysler, Imperial, Simca, Jaguar, BSA, Trojan and Willys, were interested in setting up assembly plants at a couple of sites in Malaysia (*The Straits Times*, 9 February 1964). It seemed that all that was needed was the green light from the Central Government.

At the end of May 1964 a number of headlines flashed across the press: "Batu Tiga: 200 acres Already Booked"; "Two-government Speed Up of Car Industry"; "Motor Men Keen on Assembly Plants"

It was now fairly clear that the Central Government and the State Government of Singapore had decided to speed up the development of the motor-vehicle industry. Applications for the setting up of such assembly plants would be opened for tender until 1 August 1964 (later extended to 1 September 1964).

Dr Lim Swee Aun reiterated the Central Government's call for the setting up of assembly plants in Malaysia (*Malayan Times*, 28 May 1964). The rules were laid down that all completely-knocked-down (CKD) vehicle packs were allowed to be imported free of duty except,

initially, tires, tubes and batteries. The government would give reasonable tariff protection by imposing duty up to a maximum of 30% Ad Valorem of full value and 15% Ad Valorem respectively on all completely-built-up (CBU) and semi-knocked-down (SKD) passenger cars, and up to a maximum of 30% Ad Valorem and 20% Ad Valorem respectively on CBU and SKD commercial vehicles. All imported or locally assembled vehicles would have to pay the existing initial Ad Valorem registration fee that would be based on the Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) process of identical CBU models. To encourage local manufacturing, an assembly tax of up to 3% (rising in 2% increments per annum to 12% by 1974) of the value of the car would be imposed on assemblers who did not use at least 8% (rising to 20% by 1974) Malaysian content by February 1968.

It was also stipulated that no pioneer status would be granted in respect of motor vehicle assembly operations but the Government was prepared to grant pioneer status, and introduce the necessary tariff protection, for the local manufacture of parts and components. The Government was very much in favour of ensuring the local manufacture of the following: trimming materials, seat frames, leaf and coil springs, silencers and exhaust pipes, radiator and radiator cores, fan belts, shock absorbers, sealing materials, brake lining and related parts, safety glass, sparking plugs, canvas hoods and bumper bars. The basic consideration for the adoption of this policy was primarily to encourage the use of parts and components made in Malaysia, to keep costs and prices of vehicles assembled in Malaysia at the lowest possible level, and continue a free and competitive market in motor vehicles. The benefits were substantial – the creation of an industry involved in the design and manufacture of spare parts for the automotive sector.

In June 1964, Nissan, another Japanese manufacturer, disclosed that it was studying a Malaysian offer to exempt duties on

automobile parts imported for assembly in Malaysia. The company was also considering plans to establish an assembly plant in Malaysia. Tan Chong Motors had become an appointed franchise holder of Nissan (Datsun) vehicles in Malaysia in 1957 but their first assembly plant would not commence production until 1976. In the meantime, Capital Motors' assembly plant in Tampoi, Johore was contracted to assemble the Datsun SSS. Honda too, were keen to establish an assembly plant in Malaysia and did so in 1969 with Kah Motors, after Kah had lost its Toyota franchise to Borneo Motors in 1969.

It appeared that everyone had wanted to get into the act. Australian manufacturing concern, Lightburn & Co. of Adelaide, was an exporter of hydraulic car jacks, washing machines and other white goods, cement mixers and fiberglass boats. The Adelaide company had perceived a need for a minicar and had come up with a hideous assemblage that they thought could pass off as a car. They called it the Zeta and it was priced in the Australian market at less than A\$600 (\$4,080 in local Straits dollars). Lightburn structured a package for the Government that included a complete car manufacturing plant in Malaysia that would cost about A\$250,000 and include a 30,000 sq ft pre-fabricated steel building, tooling jigs and moulds for the fiberglass Zeta bodies. What became of the Zeta is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice to say, it would have been interesting to know if there were any inquiries from the region, or even a single sale of the vehicle in the Peninsula.

Hitherto the Malaysian motor vehicle market had been the domain of British-built machinery. British domination in the car market, however, started to erode with the entry of the Japanese manufacturers. *The Sunday Times* ran an article titled "Japanese Second Invasion" on 13 September 1964. For British businesses in the Far East, it would be a fight to survive the onslaught of the tin tops from Japan. By May 1964, the writing was on the wall. The Nissan (Datsun) equivalent of the Austin 1100 had outsold its British counterpart by a factor of 161

In August 1966, the Malaysian Government eventually scrapped Commonwealth preferential rates on a wide range of articles, including cars. The underlying objective was to boost government revenues by \$27m to finance the First Malaysian Plan after independence. The result was a five to 25% rise in the cost price of imports from the Commonwealth.

to 124. Nissan had been producing the Austin A40 under license from 1952, which had enabled the Japanese to acquire Austin's valuable know-how (Nissan's first foreign assembly venture plant would however be a plant in Mexico in 1966). Apart from Nissan, Toyota was also emerging with competitive models. Despite punitive import duties on non-Commonwealth makes, the Japanese were able to increase their local market share to over 25%.

The effect of all this competition, together with the stark reality of the slippery slope the British car industry was descending into, was that local importers were forced to access their situation and consolidate their positions or lose market share. Or, as one local car executive had aptly put it, "If my principals don't agree to local assembly, I am sunk. Kaput. Out of business"

With the exception of Cycle & Carriage's overriding principal, Daimler Benz's insistence that C&C streamline their list of agencies down to just two (Mercedes and Mitsubishi), the others (such as Borneo Motors) were compelled to cast out a wider net of agencies. The Central Government was relishing every minute of this as it led to the promotion of competition.

In February 1965, Tan Siew Sin, the Malaysian Finance Minister, voiced a point of concern of the Central Government – the alarming rate of industrial development in Singapore. The uneasiness was that industrialists were now bypassing the Central

Government and dealing directly with the State Government of Singapore. A few days after Tan's speech, Singapore's Finance Minister, Dr Goh Keng Swee, warned that sniping in public and denigration of both the governments' efforts would not do either any good. Dr Goh's views on the matter were well articulated and carried by the local press. Resolution came not long after by way of separation and the establishment of the independence of Singapore, and what would amount to separate policies on either side of the causeway for a market that had thus far been considered a single market.

In Malaysia, the *Malay Mail* of 27 January 1965 had intimated that at least five international motor manufacturers would have their applications to build assembly plants in Malaysia approved by the government. The number of applications had totalled a massive 17!

The Japanese had studied the export market quite thoroughly and were looking to arrange the 'orderly sales' of their products in overseas markets. The Japanese trade ministry highlighted the need to minimise competition among themselves by organising Japanese motor manufacturers into groups instead of six firms heading their separate ways overseas. Without being able to replicate the *keiretsu*\*\* structure at home, the Japanese motor manufacturers were thus forced to innovate fairly early and establish the practice of using common suppliers while operating overseas, a practice they eventually brought home to Japan (Humphery et al, 2000).

During the first week of March 1965, the *Malay Mail* carried an interesting editorial that reflected a great deal of maturity and foresight. Titled "Towards Our Own Car" the last paragraph read, "Eventually this process of assembly merging into production will lead to a totally made-in-Malaysia vehicle; a vehicle... which should be comparable in price and quality with its overseas counterparts.

This is a goal so far removed from this week's foundation stone ceremonies [referring to the laying of the foundation stones for two motor vehicle assembly plants in Singapore and in Petaling Jaya, Selangor], but not too far for contemplation."

In August 1966, the Malaysian Government eventually scrapped Commonwealth preferential rates on a wide range of articles, including cars. The underlying objective was to boost government revenues by \$27m to finance the First Malaysian Plan after independence. The result was a five to 25% rise in the cost price of imports from the Commonwealth. British motor vehicles claimed around 50% of the Malaysian market and British cars such as Jaguars and Rovers would now cost at least \$1,500 more per car. Wearne Brothers found that selling prices would have to increase by \$600 (Straits dollars) for their smallest model to \$1,500 for their bigger ones. Sales started to slacken almost immediately for companies importing from the Commonwealth. Others were untouched by the withdrawal of preferential rates and Chua Boon Unn, Cycle & Carriage's Managing Director, was keen to highlight that the Mercedes-Benz was non-Commonwealth and therefore unaffected by the Malaysian Government's move and any price increases.

The Government applied a measure of encouragement and coercion when it arrived at determining policy for the automotive sector. It felt that a tariff on assembled cars with zero local content as well as a quota on imported cars was reasonable. Within a year, this policy was adjusted to pace the development of the motor assembly industry and a 30% duty on all

imported cars was shelved (*The Straits Times*, 11 July 1967) in favour of quota restrictions (set at 110% of 1964 – 1965 imports). Announcement of the 30% punitive tax had just been announced earlier in February that year that the Government had intended to implement within 18 months.

After much deliberation and numerous policy changes, the six companies finally granted approval in 1966 to assemble vehicles in Malaysia was announced. These were Asia Automobile Industries (making Peugeot and Mazda), Associated Motor Industries (making BMC, Ford, Holden, Renault and Rootes), Champion Motors (making VW, Mercedes, Toyota, Vauxhall and Chevrolet), Swedish Motor Assemblies (making the Volvo 122 and 144 models), Kilang Pembena Kereta2 (in association with Cycle & Carriage to make Mitsubishi Colts) and Capital Motor Assembly Corp. (making Opel and Nissan/Datsun).

## Conclusion

From 1966, the automobile industry in Southeast Asia evolved from one of British domination to one of Japanese domination. A rapidly growing population and the need for Malaysia to develop different industries also suited the establishment of a local automobile parts and assembly industry. The larger global automobile companies had wanted to capitalise on such growing economies and were prepared to invest heavily in such plants. The early 60's were therefore critical years in Malaysia as policies were formulated and waters tested for such industries. By the end of the decade, manufacturing and assembly plants were up and running and policies sufficiently polished to suit the turbulent economic climate. The period also saw the industry evolve and consolidate with the emergence of several bigger companies with local management and shareholding. Those that were able to adapt and develop new strategies to suit the formative years of government policy changes (Cycle & Carriage, Borneo Motors, Tan Chong Motors for example) were eventually to become major players in the following decades.

It would be exactly 20 years later that Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Berhad (PROTON) was incorporated (7 May 1983), and Malaysia's first locally built car, the Proton Saga, was launched on 9 July 1985.

\* *Repco Limited* – archives at the University of Melbourne (<http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/asaw/archives/A001376a.htm>)

\*\* *A keiretsu is a set of companies with interlocking business relationships and shareholdings. Taken from the Japanese term (系列) for "system" or "series."*

## Capital Motor Assembly Sdn. Bhd. (Capital Motors) – A case of a Singapore company setting up a plant in Malaysia

Capital Motors, the last and smallest of the initial six assembly plants, was established in 1967 by the following officeholders:-

**Tun Haji Suliaman bin N. Shah** – then Chairman UMNO

**Leslie Eu** – Managing Director

**Stanley Leong** – Singapore based Architect

**Liew Kai Choon** – KL businessman

**Lim Phee Hung** – Opel Penang Dealer Principal (Heng Guan)

The Opel Ipoh Dealer Principal

Singapore Motors were behind the formation of Capital Motors and had the Pontiac, Opel and Suzuki motorcycle agencies. The company's original owner was Chia Yee Soh, founder of United Motor Works, then Singapore's largest spare parts dealer. Chai passed the company on to his son-in-law, Robert Eu, who in turn passed it on to his son, Leslie Eu. Leslie Eu was the principal owner of both Singapore Motors and Capital Motors during the 1960s. Stanley Leong, one of the other office holders of Capital Motors, had no financial involvement in Singapore Motors and was the architect for the Capital Motors plant in Johore with Chew Cheuk Loon acting as contractor. Stanley Leong and Leslie Eu were brothers-in-law. Rodney Seow, cousin to Leslie Eu, designed and installed the plant equipment and ran the Johore operations.

Assembly in Tampoi commenced with the Opel Kadett & Rekord in 1968 with 120 workers and the first vehicles rolling out in July that year. The Olympia, Manta, Izuzu Pickup & the Harimau (Basic Transport Vehicle) was subsequently introduced, together with contract assembly of the Datsun SSS and Honda Life. Production capacity, according to plant manager Rodney Seow, would be 3,840 vehicles a year.

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The plant was then sold to General Motors (GM) in 1971 and the Holden range was transferred from the Associated Motor Industries (AMI - making BMC, Ford, Holden, Renault and Rootes) assembly plant in Selangor.

GM sold the plant to Oriental Holdings (Loh Boon Siew – Honda) in 1980 as the Malaysian government required Malaysians to have majority share holdings in the Assembly plant.

## Further Reading:

*Wheels of Progress – 75 years of Cycle & Carriage* by Eric Jennings  
 Publisher: Meridian Communications (SEA), 1975 Call No.: RSING 338.7629222 JEN

*Wheels of Change: The Borneo Motors Story* by Ilsa Sharp  
 Publisher: Borneo Motors, 1993 Call No.: RSING 338.76292095957 SHA

*The Borneo Story* by Henry Longhurst  
 Publisher: Newman Neame Ltd., 1956 Call No.: RSEA English 959 LON

*The Making of the National Car: Not Just a Dream*  
 Publisher: TASSMAG Publishing Sdn Bhd., 1994 Call No.: R629.22209595 THA

# 陈育崧先生与椰阴馆馆藏

By Jane Wee, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

新加坡早期的东南亚史及华侨史的学者当中，陈育崧先生是被公认的专家。虽然他是个商人，却在业余的情况下，专心历史研究，所累积有关东南亚史及当地华侨史的研究成果，比当时一些大学教授还丰硕。育崧先生发表过的百余篇中英文学术文章，由他一群在南洋学会的朋友，准备在为他祝贺80岁大寿时，汇集成书。然而陈先生来不及看到自己作品专辑的出版，在一套三卷的《椰阴馆文存》出版前的一个月，就与世长辞了。



## 从教育局视学官到创办南洋书局

陈育崧先生(1903-1984)出生于檳城，从小接受中、英文教育，精通中、英文，也略懂马来文。十八岁那年他到中国的集美学校读书，接着考入由陈嘉庚先生创办的厦门大学，成为厦大在1926年的第一批毕业生，获得商学士学位。回到新加坡后，他在政府教育局当了将近十年的视学官。当时海峡殖民地政府的教育局都是由英国人掌管的，属下有几个华人视学官，负责视察新加坡、马六甲和檳城的华校情况，给政府做报告，特别是有关学校老师与学生的政治思想情况的报告。一般文献都记载着陈育崧先生是自己辞职的，然而在联合早报的一篇悼念育崧先生的文章中，作者朱孟香记述先生是因积极鼓励蔡厝港和林厝港一带的私塾合并为小学，殖民政府认为他违反了教育政策而将他撤职的<sup>1</sup>。在廖文辉一篇谈论他与许云樵的文章中，也提及先生在七七事变后，因涉及鼓励青年参加抗日运动而与政府有所摩擦而辞职。有关报导是否属实，有待考证，但却看见先生对祖国和新马华人教育的热忱与关心。

战后，先生重新建设被破坏了的企业，努力不懈。日军投降退出东南亚后，新马的学校开始开课，但教科书严重缺乏，从中国来的书籍又被书商乘机牟利，抬高价格。先生于是开始大量编印南洋的教科书，廉价出售，以应付需求。

1935年，陈育崧先生在离开了教育局后，与朋友一起创立了南洋书局，次年设立编译所，从事编纂教科书和一般读物。他利用自己与各个华校原已建立起来的网络和关系，很快的把开始只有三千元资本的书局，在五年内从新加坡扩展到檳城、吉隆坡、吧城(雅加达)、仰光等地。后来，日本侵略东南亚时，南洋书局面临严重的破坏：许多分局被捣毁，仓库里所有的书籍被焚烧，吉隆坡的两名职员与檳城的一名经理甚至在局里被杀害了。



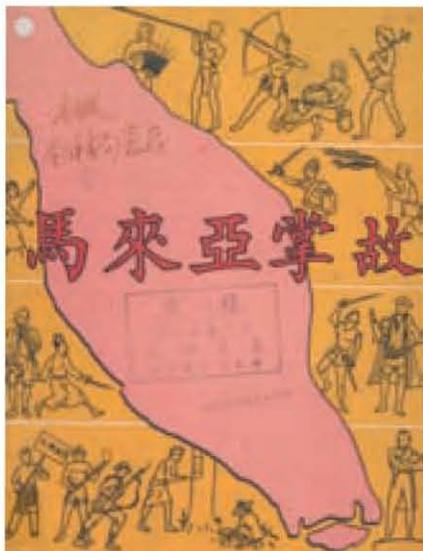
南洋书局，1950。

## 育崧先生在出版、教育及学术上的贡献

在编印南洋教科书时，先生提倡将教科书马来亚化，鼓励新马华人落地生根，思想可谓相当前卫，是发扬南洋文化的先驱之一。南洋书局除了编印教科书外，也出版了一系列南洋研究丛书，如许云樵的《北大年史》和张礼千的《东西洋考中之针路》都是深具参考价值的著作。先生还编辑出版了《南洋杂志》、《马来亚少年》等刊物，为儿童与青少年提供有深度和高知识量的读物。南洋书局是新马一带最早专门出版南洋史地著作的出版社之一，战后许多重要的东南亚史地的著述也多由南洋书局出版。

育崧先生也热心参与中正中学的创办，与林文庆、林惠祥等人同是发起人，又成为学校的筹备委员之一。曾是厦大校友会主席的陈育崧也强力地支持厦门大学的人类学博物馆的建立。除了热心兴办教育，他更热衷于学术研究。虽然他是个生意人，但和他熟悉的朋友，与他畅谈的不是致富之道，而是他对于南洋史地和早期海外华人的研究。最为友人欣赏的，是先生对历史研究的刻苦精神，以及他对后来者总是循循善诱，用心引导与帮助。他虽然不是南洋学会的发起人，但在学会创办后一直是个中坚分子，更在《南洋学报》曾发表过多篇历史研究作品。

育崧先生早期在檳城接受教育时上过南洋史地课程，兴致盎然。后来在厦门读



披立拿沙烈著;傅文楷译。  
必德张公司, 1956.

《马来亚掌故》是一本以马来亚为背景、从马来亚观点著述的教科书

书期间,跟过毛夷庚老师学习南明史,对明末期间许多华人流寓海外,仍大力支持明室复国的历史深为感动,这些体验都成为后来让他致力于研究与撰写海外华人历史的动力与坚持。先生认为历史的研究与写作有助于人类精神文明的建设,后人应“延续先人筚路蓝缕的脚步前进”。而文物的保存和累积有益于确定可信的历史,所以我们对历史留下来的宝贵踪迹,应该重视,“先人的遗爱,应该永保勿坠”。

《椰阴馆文存》汇集了育崧先生一生所撰写的大部分作品,主要学术性的研究文章包括了东南亚早期华人历史的考据、新马华文教育发展史的研究、和历史人物的评论。育崧先生一部颇为重要的文献是在与陈荆和与李业霖联合编著的《新加坡华人碑铭集录》里的一篇一万字的序文,讲述了有关新加坡华人与华社史。这部著作收集了新加坡华人社团、庙宇、宗庙、学校的碑铭帖共119篇,提供了研究新加坡华人与社团重要的原始资料。他经商出国,总不忘收集涉及中国与南洋的文献,和采集与研究有关的资料。他收集的藏书逐渐多了,他把自己的藏书室称为「椰阴馆」,代表他那些尽是南洋景物的收藏。海内外有学者或学生向他请教或找他借阅书籍,他也乐于以帮助,有时甚至是割爱让出,方便他人的研究。

椰阴馆馆藏

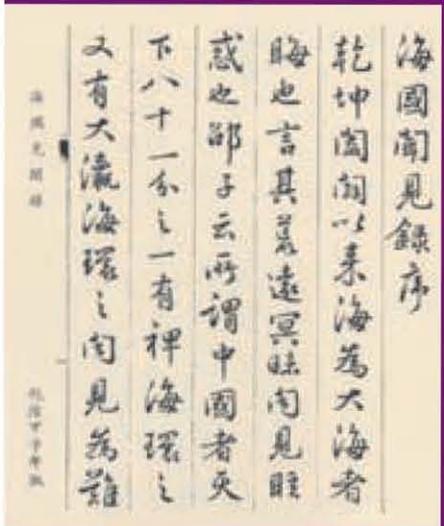
育崧先生是新加坡第一位将个人全部藏书捐献给图书馆的人。1964年,先生将他毕生收集的中、西、日文的史籍赠送给新加坡国家图书馆。他早已认识到东南亚处在世界的重要位置,当时又处于肇建新邦,开基定业的时代,将来必定需要整理与重新思考当年的历史。他在记录椰阴馆藏书移赠给新加坡国家图书馆的文章中指出,他这么多年来从事于东南亚历史的研究,但认识到自己年事已高,而对历史的探索“非一日所可成,一人所可就,自当公诸有众,寄望来兹”<sup>2</sup>。他希望把书赠给图书馆后,公众

人士可以阅读,而且在有专业图书馆馆员的帮助下,后人能继续有关东南亚史的研究。

椰阴馆馆藏的大部分藏书是在1920至1950年间出版,有关中国华侨南来的游记、华侨历史沿革、华侨教育发展、华侨信仰风俗习惯、南洋历史等,都是育崧先生生平研究的课题。馆藏也包括了刻于乾隆58年(1793)的《海国见闻录》,一部研究海交史的重要资料,和刻于道光19年(1839)的《厦门志》,厦门历史上第二部方志,和其他一些明清时代的线装书。陈育崧先生捐赠的书籍,现收藏于李光前参考图书馆十楼的阅览室。



选自外番容貌图书



选自海国见闻录与新加坡土风记



# Politics: Science or Art? The Political Science Collection at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

By Neo Tiong Seng, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

Singaporeans have been accused of being apathetic when it comes to politics, often taking for granted the political stability found in the country. Many believe that politics does not concern them at all, and only cast the occasional vote during the elections. The general belief is that only politicians need to be concerned about it. Some even think of politics as a dirty word, equating it with power struggle and corruption.

However, is that all there is to politics? Closer examination reveals that politics concerns everyone and anyone who is impacted by the political process. Can anybody truly say that topics like the system of government, the powers of the government, or government policy setting, do not concern them at all? It is therefore important for ordinary citizens to have a basic idea of what politics is, and its impact on their lives. This article therefore aims to introduce readers to the Political Science Collection found at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, and what kind of information is contained there.

The Political Science Collection at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, Level 7 hopes to become a starting ground for the concerned citizen to learn about the basic concepts in politics, and if need be, delve into certain topics in greater depth. To this end, the collection offers a complete spectrum covering the major areas in political science, which I will introduce below.

The main focus of the collection is on international relations, as Singapore is a country with no natural resources, and cultivating cordial international relations

with other countries is one of its top priorities. Although a small country, Singapore has been active in the international scene, often acting with other Southeast Asian states through The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and most recently in providing aid to disaster victims, such as the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

The scope of international relations is very wide, and covers issues such as the diplomatic-strategic relations of states, war and peace, conflict and cooperation. Books in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library cover the complete spectrum of international relations topics, and include foreign policy, diplomacy, and foreign relations of specific continents and localities, including Singapore. Books on the subject provide an understanding to what international relations is, and how nations and regions have managed peace and conflict over the years. Other books in the collection cover world politics and world order, and international relations between different countries and regions.

Another important focus of the collection is books covering political situation and conditions. Books in this collection look at the types of government, ideologies, which are practiced in different regions of the world. Available also in the collection are titles that compare the level of democracy which different states had achieved, including Singapore.

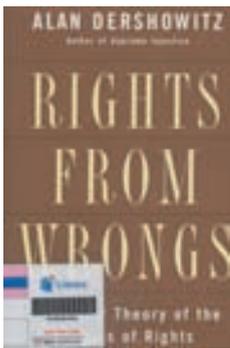
In addition, the collection includes books on civil and political rights, which have become more significant in the post-9/11 period, as America's War Against Terrorism wages on. Titles in this collection discuss



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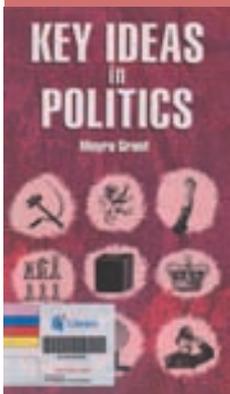
Chris Brown's *Understanding International Relations* introduces the subject of international relations in a concise yet broad-ranging manner, with a focus on events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Although a small country, Singapore has been active in the international scene, often acting with other Southeast Asian states through The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and most recently in providing aid to disaster victims, such as the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.



All Rights Reserved, Basic Books, 2004

Alan Dershowitz's *Rights From Wrongs* offers fresh insights on the question of where our rights come from, and discusses several controversies surrounding different rights.



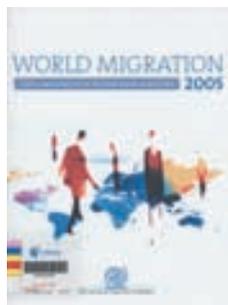
All Rights Reserved, Nelson Thornes, 2003

Moyra Grant's *Key Ideas in Politics* explains different political theories and philosophies in a clear and concise manner.

the theories and origin of human rights, and include materials published by the United Nations (UN) for imparting knowledge of various human rights to students from around the world. Such rights, as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, include the right to life, liberty and security of person, education, etc.

Other books are on the political process, such as those describing the political processes in different regions of the world, including Asia. Topics may include political oppositions in Asia, including China, and how the new technology and communication channels such as the Internet, are changing the political process.

The collection also deals with different political ideologies, such as anarchism, capitalism, communism, and nationalism, etc. These may be high-sounding words. However, publications will explain these ideas in simple terms, allowing even the layperson to understand them. Related to this are books covering systems of governments and states. Books here describe the systems of governments adopted by countries around the world, the concept of statehood, and how states are organised.



All Rights Reserved, International Organization for Migration/ United Nations, 2005

*World Migration Report* provides a geographic, thematic and statistical update of global migration today.

Another interesting area in the collection is international migration and colonisation. According to the *World Migration 2005*, an estimated 175 million persons currently reside outside the country of their birth. Some countries are also receiving refugees escaping from civil wars, political persecution, or other reasons. The topic is also of particular interest to Singaporeans, some of whom are debating whether to stay in Singapore, or to experience alternative lifestyles overseas. Colonisation and decolonisation are interesting topics too, with Singapore being a former British colony. There are books detailing the colonisation and decolonisation of countries, including Singapore and the Southeast Asian region.

In addition, we have a collection of yearbooks and periodicals, which provide more current reports on the political situation in different countries and regions. A small collection of CD-ROMs and various social sciences electronic database are also available for use in the Library.

Staff on duty at the Information Counter will be able to answer enquiries on the collection or on certain areas in political science. Reference Point, a remote enquiry service accessible by email, mail, fax or telephone, is also available to library patrons who require information on the collection. Examples of interesting enquiries answered previously include the political situation in Myanmar and its efforts at globalisation, and the inquiry into countries not in possession of any war weapons.

Indeed, there are many treasures to be found in the Political Science Collection at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. Do visit the collection and discover the exciting world of politics.

### Further Reading:

*Prospects of democracy: A study of 172 Countries* by Tatu Vanhanen  
 Publisher: Routledge, 1997  
 R 320.9 VAN

The publication contains an interesting comparative analysis of the levels of democratization of 172 states, including Singapore.

*Political Parties and the Internet: Net gain?* edited by Rachel Gibson, Paul Nixon, and Stephen Ward  
 Publisher: Routledge, 2003  
 R 324.202854678 POL

The book describes how the Internet can engage the public in politics, and how political parties are using it as a communication tool.

*The Nation-state and Global Order: A Historical Introduction to Contemporary Politics* by Walter C. Opello, Jr.  
 Publisher: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004  
 R 321.009 OPE

The publication describes the concept of the State, and how it has changed over time. Taking a historical approach to the state and global order, the book discusses the emergence of the territorial state. It also examines challenges to the state and questions if there is a need for a new world order.

*Perspectives On Politics*  
 Publisher: Cambridge University Press for the American Political Science Association  
 R 320.05 PP

A quarterly periodical, *Perspectives on Politics*, contains articles providing political insight on important problems, review essays on selected topics, and book reviews.

# National Library (NL) Distinguished Readers

By Rokiah Mentol, Reference Specialist, Publishing and Research Services

NLB is launching the National Library (NL) Distinguished Readers initiative to local experts and prominent personalities in Singapore. NLB is honoured that eight personalities have accepted these titles. They are Ms Meira Chand, Dr Andrew Chew, Ms Jennie Chua, Prof Tommy Koh, Mrs Jean Marshall, Mr Ngiam Tong Dow, Mr J Y Pillay and Prof Edwin Thumboo.



**Ms Meira Chand**, of Indian Swiss parentage, is the author of seven novels whose themes examine the conflict of cultures and the position of the outsider. Five of her novels, *The Gossamer Fly*, *Last Quadrant*, *The Bonsai Tree*, *The Painted Cage* and *A Choice of Evils*, are set in Japan. *House of the Sun* was set in India and was adapted for the stage in London where it had a successful run and was voted Critic's Choice. Her latest book, *A Far Horizon*, is also about India in the early days of the Raj. A volume of her short stories, *The Pink White and Blue Universe*, will be published next year by Weidenfeld and Nicolson/Orion, London. She is currently working on a new novel. Ms Meira Chand is an associate member of the Centre for the Arts, National University of Singapore and was Chairperson for the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the region of South East Asia and South Pacific 2000 – 2002. She has been involved with the Creative Arts Programme for gifted children under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and the National University of Singapore since 1997 and was recently a Visiting Fellow and Writer in Residence at Mansfield College, Oxford University. She was born and educated in London, studied art at St. Martin's School of Art and later specialised in textile design. She lived in Japan from 1962 to 1997, with a break of five years in India, and moved to Singapore.



**Dr Andrew Chew Guan Khuan** is currently Chairman of the Public Service Commission (PSC) since 1 August 1998 where he was appointed Member in 1997. He has had over 40 years of experience in Singapore's Civil Service. Before he retired in 1994 as head of the Civil Service (1984 – 1994), he was concurrently the Permanent Secretary (Finance) (Public Service) in the Ministry of Finance and Permanent Secretary (Special Duties) in the Prime Minister's Office. He was Chairman of the Central Provident Fund Board, Pro-Chancellor of the National University of Singapore, Chairman of the Lee Kuan Yew Exchange Fellowship, Lee Kuan Yew Scholarship Fund, Dr Goh Keng Swee Scholarship Fund, Institute of Defence and Strategies Studies and a Member of the Presidential Council for Minorities Rights and the Legal Service Commission. Dr Chew was conferred the Distinguished Service Order in 2002 in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Singapore and the public service. In 1994, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. Dr Chew attended St Andrew's School and graduated from the University of Malaya in Singapore with an MBBS.



**Ms Jennie Chua Kheng Yeng** is currently President and CEO of Raffles Holdings Ltd and Chairman of the Community Chest. A very successful woman in the corporate world, Ms Chua has received more than five awards and recognition for work done in the corporate and voluntary fields since 1997. She was one of the 25 Stars of Asia, 2003 (Business Week); Woman of the Year 1999 (Her World magazine); Singapore Repertory Theatre Champion of the Arts Award, 1999; 1999 Hotelier of the Year, Travel Asia magazine and Independent Hotelier of the World 1997 (1st Asian woman & 1st Singaporean). During the same period, she was Director of more than 15 companies. She was the first woman Board Member appointed to the Singapore International Chamber of Commerce in 1998. Ms Chua was the Chairman of the Media Development Authority Board in 2003, Co-chairman, ERC Subcommittee on Domestic Enterprises, and Committee on Singapore's Competitiveness (Subcommittee on manpower and Productivity). In the academic sector, she was a lecturer at the Asian Institute of Tourism, University of Philippines, President's Council of Cornet Women, Cornell University, and Councillor, Cornell University Trustees & Council, USA.



**Professor Tommy Koh Thong Bee** is an Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1990. He is currently Chairman of the Institute of Policy Studies, Chairman, National Heritage Board and Chairman, Executive Committee of the Chinese Heritage Centre. He was appointed Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (concurrently accredited as High Commissioner to Canada), New York from 1968 to 1971 and again from 1974 to 1984 (concurrently accredited as High Commissioner to Canada and Ambassador to Mexico). He was Ambassador to the United States of

America from 1984 to 1990. He was President of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea from 1980 to 1982. He was appointed the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to lead a mission to the Russian Federation, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in 1993 and was a member of three WTO dispute panels, chairing it twice. He was the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and Singapore's Chief Negotiator for the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. He was the founding Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation. Professor Koh was the Dean of the Faculty of Law in National University of Singapore (1971 – 1974) and the founding Chairman of the National Arts Council (1991 – 1996). Professor Koh has received numerous awards from the government of Singapore and overseas governments and organisations.

**Mrs Jean Marshall** (nee Gray) was born and brought up in UK. After studying at the London School of Economics she was trained in medical social work. In 1953 she took a job in Malaysia, in Pahang and then in Kuala Lumpur. Around this time professional training of social workers was starting at the University of Malaya in Singapore and in 1957 Jean was appointed to the staff. After her 1961 marriage to the former Chief Minister David Marshall Jean continued to contribute to social welfare development as a volunteer, mostly with the Singapore Children's Society. She was also concerned with many other aspects of national development, and her interests now also include aspects of local history.



**Mr Ngiam Tong Dow** is currently Chairman, Surbana Corporation Pte Ltd. Prior to this, Mr Ngiam had a long and distinguished career in Singapore's public service. He was Permanent Secretary in several key government ministries, including the Ministry of Finance, the Prime Minister's office, and the Ministry of National Development. He was chairman of various statutory boards and companies, including the Economic Development Board, Development Bank of Singapore, Central Provident Fund Board and Singapore Technologies Holdings Pte Ltd. He was the director of numerous companies including Yeo Hiap Seng Ltd, United Overseas Bank Ltd, Singapore Press Holdings Ltd, Precious Land Pte Ltd, Overseas Union Bank, Temasek Holdings Limited, Health Corporation of Singapore Pte Ltd and Singapore Airlines Ltd. He was on the board of the Port of Singapore Authority, SMRT Corporation Ltd, Post Office Savings Bank, Singapore International Foundation, and Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore. He was awarded numerous public service awards including the Distinguished Service Order in 1999. Mr Ngiam graduated from University of Malaya (in Singapore) in 1959 with a Bachelor of Arts (First Class Honours) in Economics where he was awarded the Departmental Book Prize in Economics. He obtained a Master of Public Administration (MPA) from Harvard University in 1964 and the Public Service Fellowship. In 1985 he was awarded the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowship in USA.



**Mr Joseph Yubaraj Manuel Pillay** is currently Chairman of the Singapore Exchange Limited Board (1999 – ) and Chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisers since 2 September 2005 (member since 2 January 2001). Mr Pillay was one of Singapore's top-ranking civil servants and was one of the pioneers who helped build Singapore's economy. He has served in the Ministries of Finance, Defence and National Development and as Chairman of the board of several government-linked companies including SIA, Temasek Holdings and DBS. He was the Managing Director of MAS and the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation from 1985 to 1989. Some of the organisations that he is currently involved in are the Singapore Indian Development Association, Investment Committee of the United Nations Pension Fund, the Board of Governors of Asia-Europe Foundation, the Assisi Home & Hospice, the Mount Alvernia Hospital, the Presidential Council for Minority Rights, and the Singapore Hospice Council. Mr Pillay obtained a Bachelor of Science (Hons) First Class in Engineering from the Imperial College of Science and Technology in 1965.



**Professor Edwin Nadasan Thumboo** is an academic, poet and critic. He was conferred Emeritus Professor in 1997 by the National University of Singapore (NUS) and was appointed Professorial Fellow in 2005 with the Dept of English Language & Literature, NUS. Prof Thumboo was the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS for more than ten years, and was the Director of the NUS Centre for the Arts (1993 – 2005). He was awarded the Southeast Asia Write Award (1979), Cultural Medallion (1980) and the ASEAN Cultural and Communication Award in Literature (1987). In the international scene, Professor Thumboo was appointed Chairman, Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, VII Triennium from 1983 to 1986. In 1987, he was a member of the International Advisory Panel, East-West Centre, Hawaii, USA, and Honorary Research Fellow, University College London. In 1993, he was a Visiting Fellow in the Dept of English, Australian Defence Force Academy.



# Queen Elizabeth II Tours the National Library

Arriving to the cheers of Singapore and British school students and library patrons, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II of England was indeed a rare sight on a Friday morning, 17 March 2006. On a three-day state visit, the Queen visited the Library, where she met winners of the Singapore Youth Commonwealth Photo Competition. The Queen was also shown the sights of Singapore at the Pod, Level 16, and later, the Library's Rare Materials Collection. She viewed works such as *the History of Trauayle in the West and East Indies*, which dates back to 1577, and an unpublished letter written by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819. Upon reading the letter, the Queen observed that Singapore was a busy port even back in 1819. Eliciting a smile from her, was a StraitsTimes supplement of her coronation in 1953. The library tour ended with her going back through the crowds of students who had been waiting anxiously in The Plaza and along the way, she stopped and chatted with a few of them.



Back: Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Defence  
Front (left to right): Ms Lim Soo Hoon, Chairman, NLB; Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II; and Dr N Varaprasad, Chief Executive, NLB

## NLB – NTU Memorandum of Understanding

By Veronica Chee, Senior Librarian, Publishing & Research Services

NLB and NTU SCI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 6 March 2006 to jointly publish an online journal on library and information science practices and management for Singapore. The e-publication aims to facilitate knowledge sharing in the field of library and information science between the academic communities in Singapore.

Over the years, NLB had the privilege to collaborate with NTU on many occasions and projects. Some of these include the Nanyang Business School's case study on the transformation of NLB, engaging NTU SCI faculty to conduct library skills training for NLB staff and jointly developing the curriculum for NTU SCI's Master of Information Studies programme.

This collaboration on the e-publication marks yet another significant

milestone in the relationship between NLB and NTU. The partnership enables both parties to leverage on each other's strengths to benefit the library and information science community, and also reflects the close rapport and warm ties that NLB and NTU have established so far. It is also timely as it supports NLB's strategic direction for the next 5 years, which is documented in the Library 2010 Report.

Through this collaboration, it is envisaged that Singapore will become the thought leader of library and knowledge education and innovation. At the same time, we also want to promote research in libraries and showcase Singapore libraries. NLB is indeed proud to partner NTU SCI in this e-publication collaboration and we look forward to identifying more opportunities and areas for collaboration along the way.



The MOU was signed by Ms Ngian Lek Choh, Deputy Chief Executive, NLB and concurrently Director, National Library and Professor Schubert Foo, Vice-Dean of the School of Communication and Information, NTU.

# Urban Libraries Council Visits NLB

By Stephanie Tan, Senior Executive, Professional and International Relations



Members of the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) visited the National Library Board (NLB) on 20 and 21 February 06. The ULC is a membership association comprised of over 150 of the largest public libraries in the US and Canada. Its purpose is to strengthen the public library as an essential part of urban life.

The visit was part of the council's study trip to Singapore and Hong Kong to learn more about library development in the two countries. The members consisted mostly of directors of public libraries in the USA and Canada. During their trip here, they visited Woodlands Regional Library, Bukit Timah Community Children's Library, Seng Kang Community Library, library@orchard, Library Supply Centre and the National Library.

Martin Gomez, President of ULC, expressed his excitement about the visit in a brief interview. He felt that NLB has done a "tremendous job" with the libraries in Singapore. Mr Gomez was interested to see that NLB has

created different libraries to complement the different communities in Singapore. He was also very impressed with the innovations that NLB has employed and the emphasis NLB has placed on multi-lingualism. When asked, if the members are looking forward to implement what they have learned during the visit, the answer was a resounding "yes".

Besides the visits, some of the council members also participated in an information exchange session with NLB and Library Association of Singapore (LAS) on 21 Feb 06. The themes for the session were Trends and Innovations in Library Buildings, and Trends and Innovations in Library Technology.

## F

Do you know that the National Library serves as a reference and research centre for all Singaporeans? The "Find It" campaign aims to bring greater visibility to the reference services and the richness of the Library's collections. The campaign also seeks to enable the Library to build autonomous information discoverers and become the first stop for people to look for information on Asia-centric content. The tag line of the campaign is "Your Trusted Source", which means people can trust the information found in the library and provided by the librarians.

The programmes start with the Find Series in **April**, which are thematic info-literacy talks, with a *User's Manual* launched during the campaign. Experts and subject specialists will be invited to give talks or panel discussions and specific programmes will target the four sectors of design, education, heritage and business.

The book "*What a Stupid Question?*" by the National Library Board's very own librarian, Sharmini Chellapandi, will also be launched during the campaign.

The campaign will be launched on 11 April 2006 and is targeted to run till middle of May. FIND IT if you must the programmes that interest you!

**F.A.T.** – this is a word that is taboo to a lot of people in the modern age, more so the fairer sex. Nobody wants to grow fat would they? So what would your reactions be if you were told that this is to be the theme for the National Library from April to June?

## A

By Wan Wee Pin, Acting Manager, INVENT

**Arts** – a phase that elicits polar reactions from one and all especially here in Singapore. There are those who hail it as a sign of the maturity of a society while others deride it as no more than an excuse for human indulgence. In **June**, to help you make your mind up, and in conjunction with the Singapore Arts Festival, the National Library will be working with our partners to bring the vibrancy of the art scene to town.

The National Arts Council will be bringing two groups of overseas artists to the National Library. Arts lover will get to interact and enjoy themselves in the workshops with these foreign artists. This will be followed by a display of works by prominent local sculptors, like Han Sai Por, at the Plaza. Audiences will be able to connect with these sculptors during the panel discussions held to discuss about their works, philosophies, inspirations and beliefs. Budding animators and designers will also be joining in by having forum and workshop to showcase their works. All this will end with Mr. Sun Yuli talking about his works, how life and soul is connected to the universe.

## T

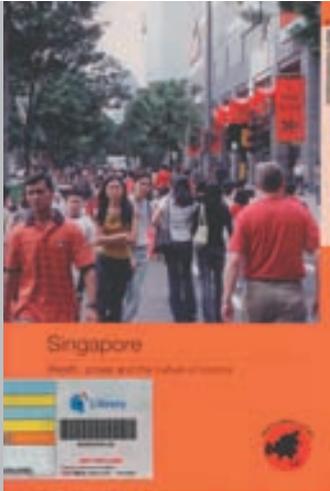
For football lovers, the month of June can only mean one thing: The World Cup! So join in the fervor as the National Library build up to that big event in **May** through the theme called "The Beautiful Game". There will be a panel discussion on the event made up of prominent local and foreign football personalities as well as other programmes that will touch on the various aspects of football and examine why it is able to captivate our souls.

Other programmes in May will also cover the new and growing areas of gaming and extreme sports.

So with all the richness and variety of programmes being offered in the coming months ahead, join in the buffet and gorge on the knowledge and information made available. And for the very first time, you will be glad that you are growing F.A.T.!

For more information, log on to [www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg)

# Book



**Singapore: Wealth, Power and the Culture of Control** by Carl Trocki  
Publisher: Routledge, 2006 Call No.: 959.5705TRO

This book is a history of Singapore from the perspective of power and conflict. It incorporates recent work done at the end of the 90s when the study of Singapore's history gained popularity. However, its value lessens when Trocki reaches post-1965 Singapore society. Perhaps this is because much work remains to be done in this field, particularly the cultural and social aspects.

The book is divided into two halves: pre-War colonial history and post-War Singapore. In each half, he devotes a chapter each to examining political, social and economic history. Given the size of the topic, this is a survey work that paints history in broad materialist sweeps.

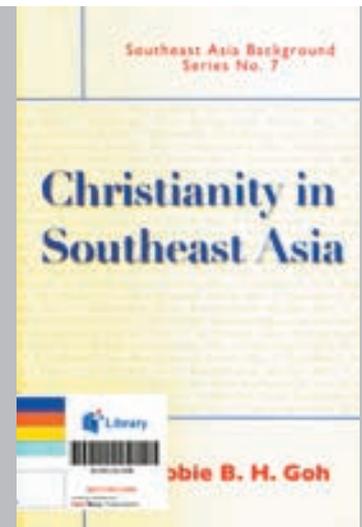
Singapore's colonial governors largely vanish from Trocki's colonial picture. Instead, merchants and community leaders take centre stage along with the economics of agriculture and trade while his earlier works were focused on the Temenggongs and Chinese society. Naturally, given his past work, he pays a lot of attention to the less savory side of history like secret societies and their ties with the merchant community. His approach is a fresh perspective in understanding Singapore's history and subsequent development.

## **Christianity in Southeast Asia** by Robbie B.H. Goh

Publisher: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005 Call No.: RSING 275.9 GOH

Archaeological findings suggest that there were Christian settlements in Southeast Asia as early as the seventh century. The definitive boost to the spread of Christianity in Southeast Asia came during the period of modern European colonisation from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They succeeded in establishing an enduring influence on the cultural, educational and religious life of significant parts of the region.

In his book, author Robbie Goh provides a brief but comprehensive account of the history of Christianity in Southeast Asia. The book has separate chapters on Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia – countries where Christianity has made significant impact – and a single chapter which briefly looks at Brunei, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, where the impact of Christianity has been less significant. In its conclusion, the book raises some important issues which lie ahead for the Southeast Asian countries as it expects Christianity to grow slowly but steadily in the region.



## **Smart Technology For Aging, Disability, and Independence: The State of the Science** edited by William C. Mann

Publisher: Wiley-Interscience, c2005 Call No.: 681.761 SMA

Memory aid for cooking. "Ambience intelligence." Visual sensors and In-home robot. Welcome to the futuristic world of smart technology.

This authoritative book, edited by William Mann, a recipient of many awards, showcases current research and advances in technological developments to enhance and promote continuing independence for the elderly and people with disabilities. Contributions were drawn from experts in the field of computer science, engineering and rehabilitation science. It also highlights the consumer and developer (or designer) perspective of important issues such as using the assistive devices and constructing a smart house. Particularly useful are the detailed product descriptions, illustrations, photographs and case studies of low-technology devices and cutting-edge technology in critical areas such as assistive technologies, community mobility, home modification and universal design.





# Microform Collection and Services at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

By Gracie Lee, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

Microfilming the National Library's collections began in the 1950s. It was initiated as a move to preserve and archive Singapore's documentary heritage. Beginning with a collection of old newspapers and manuscripts, microfilming activities were stepped up to include the filming of government records, as well as rare and out-of-print Singapore materials.

Over the years, this collection was further enhanced through the addition of titles acquired from the British Library, Malaysian libraries, National University of Singapore Library, University Microfilms International and the Library of Congress. Today, the collection has grown to an extensive archive of 24,000 microfilm reels and 12,500 fiches that forms an integral part of the Singapore and Southeast Asian collections at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library.

The collection, housed at Level 11 of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, is an invaluable and rich resource to many users, from the researcher of Singapore history, the student conducting social and business research, the heritage seeker pouring through Singapore's earliest imprints and Jawi manuscripts, to the individual tracing his family roots.

The microform collection can be broadly categorised into newspapers, rare and out-of-print books, periodicals and directories, government publications and dissertations.

## Newspapers

The most popularly used resource is the newspaper archives. The collection comprises approximately 100 Singapore/Malayan newspapers

dating back to 1827 with the publication of *Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register* (1827 – 1937). In addition to the English newspapers, papers in the vernacular, namely Chinese, Malay/Jawi, and the Indian languages (Tamil/ Malayalam/ Punjabi) are also represented.

The English-language press sources include major papers namely *The Singapore Free Press* (1835 – 1869, 1884 – 1962), *The Straits Times* (1845 – ), *The Singapore Daily Times* (1865 – 1882), *The Malaya Tribune* (1914 – 1951), *The Syonan Shimbun* (1942 – 1945), *Singapore Standard* (1950 – 1959) and *The Singapore Herald* (1970 – 1971) amongst others. The collection also contains a host of short-lived papers such as *Times of Malaya* (1938 – 1939) and *Eastern Daily Mail* (1905 – 1908) which appeared during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; *The Eastern Sun* (1966 – 1971) and *New Nation* (1971 – 1982) in the 1960s – 70s; *The Singapore Monitor* (1982 – 1985) in the 1980s and more recently, *Project Eyeball* (2000 – 2001) and *Streets* (2003 – 2004). The library also acquires Malaysian newspapers with bearings on the history of Singapore. An example is *The Malay Mail* (1896 – 1981) which carried news on federal proceedings in Kuala Lumpur.

The early English papers catered to the European reader and were largely commercial in orientation. Common features include shipping news, commodity prices, commercial activities, advertisements and social news. It was only with the establishment of *Singapore Daily Times*, the second English daily in Singapore, that the press began to engage more deeply into politics. International news also increased in numbers and scope with *The Straits Times* subscription of the Reuters News Agency in 1870.

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, non-Europeans had established a number of English papers. One of the more successful ventures was *The Malaya Tribune* which was strong competitor to *The Straits Times*. Supported by Dr Lim Boon Keng and a group of prominent Chinese and Eurasians, *The Malaya Tribune* aimed "to express the views and aspirations of the domiciled communities".

In the 1970s, the delicate political situation of post-independent Singapore saw the closure of a number of newspapers like *The Eastern Sun* and *The Singapore Herald*. In recent times, attempts have been made to diversify the newspaper business and to liberalise the Singapore media scene through the introduction of new papers like *The Singapore Monitor*, *The New Paper* (1988 – ), an afternoon tabloid, *Project Eyeball* which targeted the young, educated and savvy readers, and commuter papers like *Streets* (2003) and *Today* (2000 – ). All have since ceased publication, with the exception of *The New Paper* and *Today*.

Mirroring the increased development of Singapore, the vernacular presses flourished during the 1870s when the Straits Settlements came under the direct rule of the Colonial Office in London in 1867. The Library's holdings of Malay newspapers include the first Malay newspaper published in Malaya, the *Jawi Peranakan* (1876 – 1895). Edited by Mohameed Said bin Dada Mahyiddin, a Penang-born Indian Muslim and teacher at the Raffles Institution, the paper was credited with raising the social awareness of the Malay community and promoting Malay education and language. Other titles in the collection include: *Lembaga Melayu*

It was initiated as a move to preserve and archive Singapore's documentary heritage. Beginning with a collection of old newspapers and manuscripts, microfilming activities was stepped up to include the filming of government records, as well as rare and out-of-print Singapore materials.

(1914 – 1931), a forward-looking and temperate newspaper which enjoyed a following amongst the urban middle-class Malays. The paper was edited by Mohammad Yunos bin Abdullah who is widely acknowledged as the father of Malay journalism; and *Warta Malaya* (1930 – 1941), an important vehicle for the discussion of Malay affairs, founded by the Alsagoff family and edited by Onn bin Jaafar who became one of the founders of UMNO in 1951. Also within the Library's collection is one of the most complete runs of *Utusan Melayu* for the period 1945 – 1998 held in any Singapore library. *Utusan Melayu*, revived in 1938 by Yusof bin Ishak, Singapore's first President, was the leading Malay newspaper in Singapore and Malaya after the war.

The Library's collection also houses a rich selection of Chinese newspapers. It includes *Le Bao* [叻報] (commonly known as Lat Pau) widely acknowledged as the first Chinese newspaper in Singapore. The Library's holdings cover the period 1887 – 1932. Other leading



*Le Bao*, 1888

Chinese newspapers also available are: *Xing Bao* [星報] (1890 – 1898), *Tian Nan Xin Bao* [天南新報] (1898 – 1905), *Jih Hsin Pao* [日新報] (1899 – 1901), *Zhong Hui Xin Bao* (Union Times) [总汇新報] (1906 – 1946), *Zhong Xing Ri Bao* [中兴日报] (1907 – 1957). These papers represented a variety of viewpoints and editorial stances concerning the events which were taking place in China. Earlier papers like *Le Bao* were generally conservative papers which supported the Manchu and British governments. Later papers positioned themselves as progressive publications which promoted reformation within the Chinese community, Chinese nationalism, Confucianism and

even pro-revolutionary ideas. The other two major Chinese newspapers in the Library's collections are the *Nanyang Siang Pao* [南洋商報] (1923 – 1983) started in 1923 by Tan Kah Kee and *Sin Chew Jit Poh* [星洲日报] by "Tiger Balm King" Aw Boon Haw in 1929.

The Library's microfilm collection also contains Indian newspapers. *Singai Nesan* (1887 – 1890) was published in 1887 by Makadoom Saiboo to commemorate the Queen Victoria Silver Jubilee celebrations. *Kerala Bandhu* (1938 – 1964) and *Navjiwan* (1955 – 1976) are thought to be the only Malayan and Punjabi

To date, this collection numbers around 2,000. The dissertation collection brings together post-graduate and doctoral investigations that are of social, economic, cultural, historical significance to Singapore and Southeast Asia.



Microfilm readers in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

newspapers serving Malayan region respectively. Though many of the newspapers dealt with the news and concerns back home in India, they also provided an important avenue for creative and literary expressions, thereby fostering the birth and development of Singapore literature.

Today, the Library continues to film and archive all locally produced newspapers such as *The Straits Times*, *The Business Times*, *The New Paper*, *Today*, *Lianhe Zaobao*, *Lianhe Wanbao*, *Shin Min Daily*, *Berita Harian*, *Tamil Murasu* and youth papers like *Friday Weekly* and *Thumb Up Weekly*.

### Rare and Out-of-Print Books, Periodicals, Directories and Government Publications

Substantial volumes of the Library's rare materials as well as its pre-1970 Singapore imprints were also microfilmed. These comprise materials from Singapore's earliest mission

presses, religious tracts, Jawi manuscripts, Peranakan literature, travelogues, scholarly journals and entertainment magazines, business directories and almanacs, Malayan maps, language dictionaries and even school textbooks. Some of these gems include *Addresses etc. Presented to Mr. Raffles, on the Occasion of His Departure from Java* (1817), *Singapore Local Laws and Institutions* (1823), *A Vocabulary of the English, Bugis, and Malay Languages* (1833), *The Maritime Code of the Malays* (1877), *Jottings Made During a Tour Amongst the Land Dyaks of Upper Sarawak, Borneo, During the Year 1874* (1879), and many others. These collections are extremely valuable for historical research on Singapore and Southeast Asia. Besides microfilming materials from the mission and commercial printing presses, the Library also regularly microfilms official publications such as the government gazettes, parliamentary debates, annual departmental reports and statistical publications issued by past and present governments.

### Dissertations

To further develop the microfilm collection, the Library actively acquires dissertations from University Microfilms International (UMI). To date, this collection numbers around 2,000. The dissertation collection brings together post-graduate and doctoral investigations that are of social, economic, cultural, historical significance to Singapore and Southeast Asia. Some of the interesting titles include: *Performing Chinese Street opera and Constructing National Culture in Singapore*, *British Merchant Enterprise and the Chinese Coolie Labour Trade, 1850 – 1874*, *Kota Cina: Its Context and Meaning in the Trade of Southeast Asia in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries*, *Siam in British foreign policy 1855 – 1938: The Acquisition and the Relinquishment of British Extraterritorial Rights*, amongst others.

### Collection Access and Viewing Facilities

Patrons can search for titles using the Library's online public access catalogue (OPAC), as well as the onsite microfilm newspaper index and card catalogues. The Microform Collection is largely an open-access collection with small numbers of microfiches and dissertations on microfilm kept in closed access areas. For open access collections, patrons may retrieve the microfilms themselves before proceeding to the Information Counter at Level 11 to register for the use of a microfilm reader. The microform viewing room is equipped with ten microfilm readers and one microfiche reader.

### Reprographic Facilities

Reprographic prints can be made at the photocopying facility at Level 11. The current charges are \$0.60 for A4 size and \$0.90 for A3 size plain paper. Patrons may also place orders for reprographic prints on photographic paper at the Information Counter.

# Your Say...

We would like to hear from you! Please email your feedback, suggestions and compliments to:

Quality Service Manager (QSM)

Telephone: 1800-332 3370

Fax: +65 6332 3611

Email: qsm@nlb.gov.sg

## On Events at National Library

We enjoyed the workshop a lot. Gene Tan's (the facilitator) style is unconventional and has helped many of the participants break out of the traditional moulds that they had been used to."

*Adeline Yeo*

*On "CREED workshop" @ DSTA*

I will look out for other forthcoming talks and events. It is great to see the Library proactively pushing out information to the public and via other media instead of just having only books for people to borrow.

*Francis Ng*

*On National Library's Programme Publicity List*

Would like to thank Gene and Hong Li (the facilitators) for organising an exciting and challenging course yesterday. I really enjoyed the course. Now I have a better understanding of my teammates and the importance of teamwork.

*Gladys Koh Hwee Ying*

*On TEAMS workshop for LTA*

## 有关《红楼梦》私人藏书展

收藏丰富，让人耳目一新。希望今后能有更多这样的展览，特别是文学或艺术类的书籍与作品。

*张云翔，旅游业者*

身为中国人，在新加坡看到贵馆如此展览中国文学，觉得很感动，让我留下了深刻的印象。希望也能在中国做这样的展览。

*Emme，学生。*

贵馆与私人藏家联办这次《红楼》展，十分难得。希望贵馆继续努力，与私人藏家联办更多以其他中华文学经典为主题的展览，促进华文文化，造福华社。

*李先生*

## On Staff

I wish to thank Ms Azizah Sidek for the information she provided. The speed is remarkable. Truly a hallmark of NLB's efficiency and quality. I am most impressed! Thanks to you and all involved.

*Tan Teck Meng*

*For Azizah Sidek*

Mr Choy was incredibly patient and helpful. He even assisted me in searching for the relevant books and when none could be found, he volunteered to research and follow-up on my enquiry. Many thanks.

*Sheeren*

*For Choy Chee Wei*

Thanks for your email with the links on my research on the Chinese idea of Hell. I want to sincerely express my thanks for Ms Chew's help in going the extra mile for a customer, and it has left a very deep and good impression on me indeed.

*Karen Leah Lim*

*For Chew Lay Lek*

I wish to convey my sincere thanks to you for your successful location of the serialised reminiscences of my grandfather, R. J. Farrer. That you could do it so quickly with such little information from me is a testament to your skills and the admirable resources of the Library. Congratulations to the NLB of Singapore in having staff like you.

*John Farrer*

*For Tan Pei Jiun*

Thank you very much for your kind assistance. I realised you have gone beyond your call of duty when you went out of your way to locate other sources of reference for me to connect. I believe your professionalism will be of much help to our work at AVA in future. Appreciate your help and looking forward to working more closely with you in future.

*Catherine Tan-Teo*

*For Timothy Pwee Kok Ann*

Many thanks for digging up those books to share. Now, thanks to your effort, we have a better idea of how much literature there is (or isn't) on this subject. That will certainly help us drill this subject deeper!"

*Su Yin*

*For Ivy Lee Huey Shin*

Thank you very much for the additional information you've provided me with regard to my enquiries. I took a quick look into some of the websites provided and have found them useful and constructive for my research paper! In the meantime, I just want to convey my thanks and appreciation on the effort and time you have set aside through your hectic schedule to help me locate those information! A sterling performance indeed! Keep up the good work!

*Lilian Lyovarin*

*For Gracie Lee Siew Kheng*

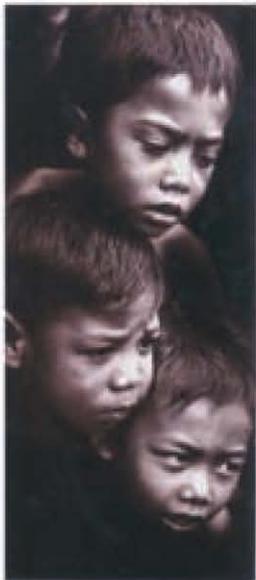
## AN INGENIOUS REVERIE: THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF YIP CHEONG FUN

### A Retrospective Photographic Exhibition

Venue: 10th Floor, National Library, 100 Victoria St

Dates: 15 Mar 2006 to 15 May 2006

Admission: Free and open to the public



The Singapore Heritage Society, the National Library Board and the family of the late Yip Cheong Fun are proud to present what is possibly the largest retrospective photographic exhibition by a single photographer.

This two-month long exhibition features more than 130 of Yip's photographs. Yip, who took up photography seriously at the age of 50 was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 1984. The exhibition is jointly organized by the Singapore Heritage Society, Mr Andrew Yip, and the National Library Board. It is sponsored by the National Arts Council, Pico Art International Pte Ltd, the Photographic Society of Singapore and Learning EDvantage Pte Ltd; and supported by Epiphany PR & Marketing, Colourgraphic (S) Pte Ltd and Brownsea Services Pte Ltd.

Ingenious Reverie showcases images of Singapore from the 1940s to the 1980s captured by Yip. These images document both Singapore's changing landscape and people, as well as his unique art.

Curated by Bridget Tracy Tan, Director for the Art Galleries and Theatre, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, the exhibition will feature many images never before seen in public.

