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04 Multi-ethnic Enclaves around Middle Road

Read about the
history of Middle Road

12 Tongkangs – Hybrid Ships

Learn about an important
player in Singapore's
maritime history

16 Beyond Readers and Folktales

Find out more on the
development of Singapore's
children literature



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Postcard from the Lim Kheng
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Director's Column

In recent years, the Singapore government has launched various initiatives to strengthen Singaporean's rootedness and sense of identity, for a stronger nation. With the Singapore 21 vision and the Remaking Singapore Committee, the government seeks to create in Singaporeans a sense of belonging and to make Singapore a place where we can call home. One of the strategic thrusts of these initiatives is the importance of knowing our heritage. The call to preserve and build shared memories and all things Singaporean feature strongly in these moves to shape national identity. The emphasis on National Education in and beyond schools is aimed at establishing a collective consciousness in Singaporeans. Singapore's journey to nationhood and the founding generation's dreams, struggles and success are major learning points in National Education.

In line with this, the National Library has organised campaigns and programmes to support these initiatives. The FIND IT campaign, launched in April 2006 at the National Library, embraces heritage as a theme. FIND Heritage sought to contribute to the sense of identity and rootedness of Singaporeans by helping library users to be more aware of our heritage through the Library's collections. The campaign aimed to introduce the rich plethora of heritage resources available in the Singapore and Southeast Asian collections, as well as the reference and information services provided by the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. Participants who attended talks during the campaign found them to be comprehensive and insightful.

In July, the National Library embarks on another learning journey on heritage. With a range of talks, panel discussions, public forums and documentary screenings that focus on the discovery and understanding of our heritage, we would like to encourage you and your family and friends to sign up for them at www.nlb.gov.sg.

In conjunction with National Day, the Library also plays host to a special exhibition, *Singapore Honours*, from July to the end of August. Paying tribute to some of Singapore's most distinguished citizens, the exhibition will showcase medals awarded to Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, Lt Gen (Retd.) Winston Choo, and Ms Elizabeth Choy, Singapore's only war heroine. Dr Alexandre Chao and Mr Heng Yeow Pheow, who both lost their lives while saving others, are also remembered.

9 August 2006 marks the 41st year of independence of Singapore. As we celebrate this momentous day, let us not forget how our heritage shaped our past and continues to influence our lives in the future. Please enjoy the articles featuring our short but rich history in this issue of BiblioAsia.

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

Ms Ngian Lek Choh
Director
National Library

Multi-ethnic Enclaves around Middle Road: An Examination of Early Urban Settlement in Singapore

By Lai Chee Kien, Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, School of Design and Environment, National University of Singapore

Many former British colonies like the Straits Settlements and peninsular Malaya had attracted diverse peoples from neighbouring areas upon their colonisation and establishment with the prospect of employment and economic opportunities. The colony of Singapore, in particular, was a major destination for southern Chinese migrants. If textual accounts are anything to go by, the human landscape after its founding in 1819 was cosmopolitan in character, although the exponential immigration of Chinese groups and their eventual possession of various spheres of influence would alter the course of the island's subsequent histories. Roland Braddell's 1934 work *Lights of Singapore*, for example, described the early composition of the "white people" in colonial Singapore as consisting "English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, Americans, Belgians, Danes, Dutch, French, Germans, Greeks, Italians, Norwegians, Portuguese, Russians, Spaniards, Swedes, Swiss and others" (Braddell, 1934:43-5). Braddell painted a similarly diverse composition of non-white communities on the island, but instead of country origin categorised them into particular ethnic groups and sub-groups as follows:

"Malays": "real" Malays, Javanese, Boyanese, Achinese, Bataks, Banjarese, Bugis, Dyaks, Menangkabau, people from Korinchi, Jambi, Palembang;

"Klings": Tamils, Telugus, Malabarais; "Bengalis" include Punjabis, Sikhs, Bengalis, Hindustanis, Pathans, Gujeratis, Rajputs, Mahrattas, Parsees, Burmese and Gurkhas;

"Asiatics": Arabs, Singhalese, Japanese, Annamites, Armenians, Filipinos, Oriental Jews, Persians, Siamese and others;

"Chinese": Hok-kiens, Teo-chius, Khehs, Hok-Chias, Cantonese, Hailams, Hok-Chius, and Kwong-Sais.

The convergence of denominations and dialect identities within larger ethnic groups was an attempt by British administrator to cognise the multifarious communities, as well as a way to map, survey and control the groups. In the process, distinctions that existed between the different ethnic sub-groups were blurred or neutralised, as the use of such categories for control and spatial division disregarded both the hegemonies that existed between the different dialect settler groups, as well as the dynamic nature of multi-ethnic enclave formation and definition. This essay is an attempt to examine two such sub-groups that settled in Singapore in the 19th century, and to explore the shape of their enclaves and built-forms.

The Early Ethnic Landscape

The formation of early ethnic landscapes in Singapore may be attributed to the will of its colonial founder, Thomas Stamford Raffles, whose career straddled Penang, Bencoolen, Java and Singapore. While recuperating from illness in Malacca in 1808, Raffles, then an assistant secretary in Penang, drafted a report to his Government in India advising it not to abandon Malacca nor divert its trade to Penang, as other European or local powers would only capture it to the

detriment of the British enterprise. The Governor-General was so impressed that Raffles was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Java at the age of 30. In 1818, Raffles was instructed to establish British interests in Acheh and in the Riau islands to further control trade in the Straits and to check Dutch encroachment. Arriving in Penang on December 31, he discovered that the Dutch had already occupied Riau, and was determined to stop their advance into Johore. Instead of travelling to Sumatra, he sidestepped protocol and sailed on his own accord to the island of Singapore, arriving there on January 28, 1819. Armed with the knowledge that the island was a thriving city until its destruction four and a half centuries ago, and assisted by his trusted former Malaccan colleague, Colonel William Farquhar, and ship carpenter, Chow Ah Chi, he signed a preliminary agreement with the Temenggong of Johore on January 30 to establish "a factory" on the island (Mills, 1867:60-69).

Raffles was aware of the shortcomings of Penang, Java and Bencoolen, and was determined that his next project would be financially and administratively viable to the directors of the East India Company. He thus advocated governing the island with a small, efficient establishment that worked with clear, effective decisions.¹ Returning from Bencoolen in October 1822 after an absence of 39 months, he was thus annoyed that the first appointed British resident, William Farquhar, had not heeded his instructions regarding the layout of the settlement and allowed private individuals to occupy land on the northern bank of the



Jackson's 1928 map showing the racial divisions.

showed, on the southern banks of the Singapore river, an area designated for the Chinese, with "Chuliahs" and "Klings" allocated the area further inland on the same side of the river.⁵ On the northern banks, a "European Town" was marked out occupying the space between the "Government Area" adjacent to the river, and the Sultan's properties to the northeast, which was flanked by an Arab and Bugis community on each side.

It was probable that funds for constructing public buildings were scarce. Hence, Raffles was prudent with his expenditure and commissioned, besides his residency on top of Forbidden Hill (Fort Canning Hill), only a school (The Institution, 1823) and a church (Saint Andrew's Cathedral, 1835) on one side of an open field (the Padang today) and esplanade.⁶ John Crawford, the new resident that Raffles had appointed in 1823, could still not develop government buildings around the Padang but could, with the plan, lease land to merchants to build houses. The administration rented John Maxwell's house for use as a Court House, Government Offices and Recorder's Office for 500 rupees a month.⁷ Other houses belonging to Robert Scott, James Scott Clark, Edward Boustead and William Montgomerie around the Padang served as residences and hotels until the land tracts were acquired to build the Town Hall (1862), the Municipal Offices (1926 – 1929) and the Supreme Court (1939) to establish the government cantonment.⁸

The "Smaller" Town

Jackson's 1822 plan for the European Town comprised four parallel roads laid out in the northeast-southwestern direction, and a major intersecting road. This perpendicular road is the present-day Middle Road, named because it either marked mid-distance between the Sultan's residential compounds and the Government Area, or between the Rochore and Singapore rivers.

Singapore River – areas he had designated for government use (Lee, 1983). Raffles had personally encountered the example of Penang, where undefined and unregulated landscapes worked against the administration. Within a week, he appointed a Town Planning Committee "in order to afford comfort and security to the different descriptions of inhabitants who have resorted to the Settlement

and to prevent confusion and disputes hereafter!"²

Philip Jackson's Town Plan of 1822 dictated the layout and structure of the city, but it also attempted to deal with the ethnic groups that had settled in Singapore.³ Raffles appointed the committee to mark out "the quarters or departments of the several classes of the native population,"⁴ and Jackson's plan

Despite the area's allocation as European Town, it is likely that Europeans subsequently vacated it because of several reasons. Firstly, the number of Chinese immigrants, perceived as "an industrious race" (Logan, in Hodder, 1953:27) useful for the enterprise, increased from 3,317 persons in 1824 to 86,800 in 1881, many of whom were settling near or within the European Town (Chan, 1976:48). Chinese dialect groups that were not Hokkien, Teochew or Cantonese – the three earliest groups in the southwestern side of Singapore River – were settling on its other side.⁹ Secondly, with the interiors of the island rapidly cleared by gambier farming, European settlers were able to build their bungalow houses there, and to dwell away from the urbanising city quarters increasingly accommodating mercantile and non-white populations.¹⁰

In deference to the earlier Chinese Town on the other side of the river, this later settlement was known colloquially by the Chinese groups as *Xiao Bo* (Smaller Town) relative to its counterpart *Da Bo* (Larger Town).¹¹ North Bridge Road and South Bridge Road were two parts of the same street (known as First Street or Big Street) connecting the two "towns" across the river. The parallel roads north of North Bridge Road in *Xiao Bo* were accordingly numbered, with Waterloo Street

called Fourth Street and Short Street near Mount Sophia designated as Seventh Street.

Like the settlement patterns established in *Da Bo*, prestige, advantage and opportunities were associated with proximity to the British cantonment in *Xiao Bo*. The distances of these enclaves from the cantonment also indicated the history of their settlement and enclave formation. The Hainanese were the earliest settler group there, followed by the Hakka, Hokchia, Foochow and Henghua groups (Hodder, 1953:35 and Tan, 1986:29). Together with the "Malay," "Indian" and "Arab" groups, a sprinkling of Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese groups, as well as the European groups who continued to reside in these areas, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious landscape was established this side of the Singapore River.

The Hainanese Community and Enclave

Of the Chinese dialect groups that occupied areas northeast of the cantonment, the Hainanese community was the largest. Its enclave was adjacent to European churches, army camps and Raffles Hotel, and extended from the seashore along Beach Road westwards towards North Bridge

Road.¹² The three streets that run perpendicular to these two – Middle Road, Purvis Street and Seah Street – were respectively called Hainan First Street, Hainan Second Street and Hainan Third Street by the Hainanese and other Chinese communities, and a street recognition system different from their "official" designations was thus employed.

Small Hainanese trading vessels were known to have reached Singapore as early as 1821.¹³ The first settler was recorded as Lim Chong Jin, who arrived in Singapore in 1841 (Chan, 1976:48). By 1881, the Hainanese had constituted about 10 percent of the Chinese population, numbering 8,319 (Tan, 1986:29). As they were late on the scene and their enclave located further from the main godowns at the Singapore River, most Hainanese settlers worked as plantation workers or sailors. Others worked in service-related industries and operated provision shops, ship-chandling and remittance services, hotels and coffee shops.¹⁴ It was in the food "business" that would bring them most regional fame.¹⁵ Ngiam Tong Boon, a Hainanese bartender working at Raffles Hotel first concocted a gin tonic called "The Singapore Sling" in 1915. Nearby, Wong Yi Guan adapted a rice dish served with chicken, which was made famous by his apprentice Mok Fu Swee through his restaurant "Swee Kee Chicken Rice." Later, this dish would be "re-exported" elsewhere in the region and East Asia as "Hainanese chicken rice."¹⁶ It is also generally acknowledged



The Smaller Town, with Prinsep Street at front. From an old postcard, ca. 1950s. Image courtesy of Lim Kheng Chye.



The old Hainanese association and temple at Beach Road. Image courtesy of Kiung Chow Hwee Kuan.



Junction of Malay and Hylam Streets. From an old postcard, ca. 1930. Image courtesy of Lim Kheng Chye.

that the Hainanese brewed the best coffee in Southeast Asia.

The main Hainanese association (Kiung Chow Hwee Kuan) and clan temple building was built in 1857 in three adjoining shophouses along Malabar Street.¹⁷ In 1878, it moved to its present location along Beach Road, and later underwent renovations in 1963. The Hainanese in Singapore were a close-knit and clannish society, as evidenced by the compulsory social initiation of new migrants, as well as the welfare and clan practices provided by the community within the enclave (Chan, 1976:50). Besides the main association and temple complex at Beach Road, 21 additional sub-clan associations can be found along the three main streets, differentiated not only by origin district on Hainan island, but also in combination with clan surnames.¹⁸

The location of the enclave, edged by a major street (Middle Road) and the water's edge with a docking pier and communal facilities, ensured the general prosperity of the enclave

until the 1980s, when urban renewal decanted a large portion of its original residential community. By this time, the population had grown and dispersed, mainly to villages and estates all over the island.

The Japanese Community and Enclave

In post-World War II ethnic census calculations in Singapore, the Japanese community occupies an "other" or foreign component. This is due to Japan's military occupation of Southeast Asian states during World War II and the repatriation of Singapore's non-military Japanese residents subsequent to the Occupation. In the period leading up to the creation of a new independent state in 1965, the former existence of a Japanese enclave in the Smaller Town, and its connections to commercial and everyday life in pre-war Singapore were displaced to ameliorate the memory of the "replacement" Asian colonisers. However, some distinction may be made between

these two Japanese groups of pre-war settlers and World War II military occupants, even if some may have assumed both identities. One such discernment of the two groups at the outbreak of war comes from Lee Kuan Yew, the first prime minister of Singapore:

"Later that same day, a Japanese non-commissioned officer and several soldiers came into the house. They looked it over and, finding only Teong Koo and me, decided it would be a suitable billet for a platoon. It was the beginning of a nightmare. I had been treated by Japanese dentists and their nurses at Bras Basah Road who were immaculately clean and tidy. So, too, were the Japanese salesmen and saleswomen at the ten-cent stores in Middle Road. I was unprepared for the nauseating stench of their unwashed clothes and their bodies of these Japanese soldiers" (Lee, 1998:54-55).

Although records of Japanese junks trading in Malacca and various other regional Southeast Asian ports existed as early as the 17th and

18th centuries, the local Japanese community heralds its first settler as Otokichi Yamamoto, who migrated to Singapore in 1862 and who died here in 1867 (Mikami, 1998:14-21). Uta Matsuda, the first female Japanese settler, ran a grocery shop with her Chinese husband in the 1860s. With the establishment of a trade consulate in 1879, an embassy in 1889, the introduction of the Japanese-made *jinrickshaw* in 1884 and setting up of Japanese shops and companies, the community increased substantially by the close of the 19th century. At the end of the Taisho period or the beginning of the 20th century, it was estimated that 6,950 Japanese were residing in Singapore and Malaya (Mikami, 1998:26-7).

The development of the Japanese enclave in Singapore is connected to the establishment of brothels east of the Singapore River. No Japanese brothels were in operation in 1868, but by the turn of the century, the group of brothels located along Hylam, Malabar, Malay and Bugis Streets had displaced the earlier brothel district in the Kampong Glam area operated by Malays and later by Chinese and Europeans (Warren, 1993:44-46). Unlike the Chinese brothels in Kreta Ayer area, which served only Chinese clients and differentiated into class types, Japanese brothels rarely discriminated against patrons on the basis of ethnicity, but were similarly divided into “higher and lower grade” houses (Warren, 1993: 50-51). The “success” of the brothels in the Southeast Asian region was followed by the migration of merchants, shopkeepers, doctors and bankers to bolster the economy of a country yet unable to compete globally as a modern industrial nation. Indeed, with the abolition of prostitution in Singapore in 1920, these trades replaced the brothel “business” and sustained the community that by then had its own newspaper (*Nanyo Shimpō*, 1908), a cemetery (1911), a school (1912) and a clubhouse (1917) (Mikami, 1998:22-3). By 1926, the Japanese community in Singapore had grown to occupy the area bound roughly by Prinsep Street, Rochore Road, North Bridge Road and Middle Road, alongside the Hainanese and other enclaves.

Middle Road, which connected the Mount Sophia area to the sea, was known to the community as *Chuo Dori* or Central Street. The Japanese prostitutes dubbed Malay Street *Suteretsu*, a transliteration of the English word “street”, and this was contrasted with another “Japanese” area known as *Gudangu* (from “godown”), located near the mouth of the Singapore River and Collyer Quay, where Japanese shipping lines had established offices and agencies (Mikami, 1998:28-29). Like the Hainanese, the Japanese created their own system of street names, layered over or corrupting official British ones.

Built Forms in the Enclaves

On both sides of the Singapore River, shophouses were the main form of residential and commercial buildings to accommodate the migrants and settlers as well as their trades. While their origin and accompanying architectural styles are of some conjecture, the use and design of the shophouse were also regulated by the dictates of the 1822 Town Plan.¹⁹ Raffles’ instructions to the Town Planning Committee indicated that “all houses constructed of brick or tile should have a uniform type of front, each having a verandah of a certain depth, open at all times as a continuous and covered passage on each side of the street” (Lee, 1984:7; Hancock, 1986:21). Besides sheltering pedestrians from inclement weather with the verandah (known as the five-foot way), the mandated co-ordination of these built forms also enabled the provision of collective sanitary services like drainage and waste disposal, and of course, permitted ease of administrative control. The ordained use of brick proved to be practical, as it reduced the risk of fire to the residential and commercial districts. Elsewhere in the Straits Settlements, severe fires destroyed areas in Georgetown in 1808, 1812, 1813, 1818 due to the use of non-permanent and combustible materials, and a major fire almost burnt down the entire town of Kuala Lumpur in 1881

(Tjoa-Bonatz, 1998:126). The use of the covered five-foot way for shophouses was only implemented gradually in Penang in 1849²⁰ and later in the states of Selangor (1890), and Perak (1893) (Lim, 1993:50-51).

These two- or three-storeyed buildings generally provided space for commercial activity at the pedestrian level and residential space above it, and were separated by structural, brick party walls. The width of each shophouse was limited by available spans of the timber floor and roof beams at about six metres, and the linear interior spaces were punctuated with air wells for light and ventilation. The brick and plaster façades accommodated simple timber-louvred windows as well as doors set within pilasters and other ornaments like architraves and mouldings. Local architectural historian Lee Kip Lin suggested that the ornamentation found on early shophouses were Chinese as evidenced by those in Malacca, but by the turn of the century these had transferred from “pure Chinese” to a lavish application of European classical details.²¹ The efficacy of the building type was to ensure its continued construction up till the 1940s in Singapore and Malaysia, while undergoing different “style” and functional adaptations.

While physically similar, the use of shophouses within the Hainanese and Japanese enclaves differed from those on the other side of the Singapore River. As a minor enclave, the Hainanese had to accommodate residential, communal as well as commercial functions within a smaller district area, with fewer shophouses. Unlike those clan associations at Club Street occupying entire shophouses, the large number of Hainanese clan associations was housed predominantly in the upper storeys, with the space at the ground-level reserved for remittance services, restaurants, and coffee shops etc. One could sometimes find multiple clan associations and businesses occupying the same shophouse, as two or more

businesses may share the same ground-level shop space, and two or more clans may share spaces above ground level. Wong Chin Soon, an enclave resident, recounted that of the 20 or so remittance companies that were found along Purvis Street, many doubled up as drapers, printers, shiphandling services, umbrella makers, confectioneries, and hotels (Wong, 1989:309). With the decanting of its residents in the 1980s, most of the clan associations have remained in the vicinity although the uses for ground level shops have changed.

Either as brothels or businesses, the pre-war Japanese also converted interior spaces of shophouses for functions relevant to their use, with attention to Japanese cultural and business practices. A 1910 description of the *Suteretsu* by an anonymous reporter is as follows: "Around nine o'clock I went to see the infamous Malay Street. The buildings were constructed in a western style with their facades painted blue. Under the verandah hung red gas lanterns with numbers such as one, two, or three, and wicker chairs were arranged

beneath the lanterns. Hundreds and hundreds of young Japanese girls were sitting on the chairs calling out to passers-by, chatting and laughing... most of them were wearing *yukata* of striking colours"²²

The spaces on the upper floors of the brothels were segmented into rooms or cubicles, but denoted by *tatami* sizes. Unlike those in the Kreta Ayer area, the Japanese brothels averaged six *tatami* mats in size, housed less women, and were thus more spacious.²³ The general functions of the shophouse were inverted: the upper floors were used for "business" while the ground level spaces were used as dwellings, waiting areas or offices. Rudimentary services included a common bathroom on each floor and a kitchen at the back of the house. When prostitution was abolished in 1920, these shophouses returned to commercial or other uses at ground level.

An example of a business space, for which records still exist, was the Echigoya draper that had its premises at Middle Road (Mikami, 1998:36-41 & 82-95). In its 1908 shop, textiles and clothing were stored in full-height timber cabinets

that ran along the lengths of the ground level walls, accentuating the linear space (see picture). On one length side a raised platform is also constructed, known as the *koagari*, where customers would sit while they examine the merchandise. For the sake of non-Japanese patrons, a circular marble table and chairs were also provided. When it moved down the road in 1928 to occupy two adjoining shophouses; the open, uncluttered aesthetic was maintained although waist-high timber-framed and glass-panelled display cabinets were used to enable customer circulation around the wares.

Multi-ethnic Societies – Past and Present

The Japanese community was repatriated after the end of World War II, and for the subsequent four years, no Japanese person was allowed entry into Singapore (Gubler, 1972:130). The enclave became dilapidated by the end of the 1980s and many of its shophouses have since been demolished. In the early 1990s, a Japanese developer leased the plot of land where the brothel district used to be and reconstructed most of the shophouses, adding glass roofs over the internal streets to create the first air-conditioned, "open-to-sky shopping arcade" in Singapore. Its new designation as Bugis Junction returned the spaces to commercial use and "reincarnated" the earlier shophouses, but by its very act of naming, the area's earlier multi-ethnic histories were subjugated.

In *Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore*, local geographer Brenda Yeoh argued that the existence of different systems of street names attested to competing representations of the urban landscape by its different communities rather than the acceptance of a municipally-imposed one (Yeoh, 2003:219-235). The use of their own designations for places and streets by the Hainanese and Japanese, as discussed above, confirms



The interiors of the Echigoya draper in 1908. Image courtesy of the Japanese Association of Singapore.



Purvis Street with new ground-level shops and restaurants. Image courtesy of Lai Chee Kien.

this argument. We may further observe that the original municipal naming of streets within that area as “Malay”, “Malabar”, “Bugis”, and “Hylam,” had only captured the settlement image at one particular moment of Singapore’s colonial history. The subsequent occupation by other sub-groups along those streets and the changing sub-group enclave boundaries or edges (if they existed) showed the failure of colonial mapping and naming along ethnic constituencies.

Hylam Street (Hylam: a transliteration of “Hainan”) was named for the early Hainanese settlers that lived around Malabar Street. No street was named for the Japanese community that settled later along the same streets. By the time the Japanese enclave was taking shape there, the Hainanese community had moved from Hylam Street to the Beach Road area to capitalise on sea frontage and pier facilities. Ironically, Hylam Street itself was later called Japan Street by the Hainanese community after they

had moved out as a subsequent rendering of that space. The municipality, however, did not rename the streets to register the changing ethnic complexion of the area.

The spatial and built forms of the two communities, as discussed, also showed the difficulty of generalising or characterising the nature of such enclaves as well as their built forms – especially shophouses which have been described in extant academic and official literature as “ubiquitous”. The builders and occupants of shophouses around Middle Road adapted them to suit the extant social and economic conditions they faced, and demonstrated the flexibility of such forms by converting their use when conditions changed or were altered. The shophouse spaces around Middle Road served the needs of not only their own respective communities, but also with regard to and in consideration of other ethnic sub-group members residing around it. Such uses by different ethnic groups represent important

aspects of multi-ethnic community formation and living in Singapore, or at least that, which is found in the Smaller Town.

By describing the history of enclaves and built-forms of these two sub-groups, I have privileged their discussion over the other groups that co-existed in *Xiao Bo*, the Smaller Town, and those in other areas of colonial Singapore. My attempts to discuss what I called “multi-ethnic enclaves” are limited to the available texts and expressions of these two groups. This is not intentional, and it is hoped that by beginning with two of them, a sketch of the urban history of the area between the Singapore and Rochore rivers may materialise eventually with the help of other scholars and researchers. It is also hoped that this essay serves in a small way towards the writing of Singapore’s larger multi-ethnic history that may be clarified when the nature of its constituent forms are further discussed and made available.

Notes

- ¹ J. Kathirithamby-Wells, 1969: 50-51. Also F.G. Stevens, 1929: 385. Raffles had suggested to his superiors that this manner of administration should be implemented for all British colonies in Southeast Asia.
- ² Town Planning Committee, as quoted in Hancock, 1986:16.
- ³ Lee Kip Lin noted that Raffles formulated his plan to divide the town into "neighbourhoods" or "campongs" as early as his second visit to Singapore in June 1819. From Lee, 1988:17.
- ⁴ J.R. Logan, "Notices of Singapore", *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 1854, as quoted in Hodder, 1953:27.
- ⁵ The Chinese were moved inland in 1822 to establish a "principal mercantile establishment" on the tongue of land adjacent to the river. From Lee, 1988:19.
- ⁶ Farquhar's residency was at the foot of the hill near the river, at a corner of High Street. Lee, 1988:149.
- ⁷ This building, subsequently bought by the government, was extended as a courthouse in 1874 by J.F.A. McNair and then as a parliament house in 1954 by T.H.H. Hancock of the Public Works Department. From Hancock, 1986:22-29.
- ⁸ The land where Scott's house stood was acquired to build Raffles Hotel by the Sarkies brothers. Lee, 1988:148-149.
- ⁹ There are also pockets of settlements of Cantonese-Hakka groups although the Kreta Ayer area is generally acknowledged as a "Cantonese" area.
- ⁹ There are also pockets of settlements of Cantonese-Hakka groups although the Kreta Ayer area is generally acknowledged as a "Cantonese" area.
- ¹⁰ Gambier farming employed shifting cultivation, and was destructive as forests were cleared for fuel to boil the gambier leaves. Lee Kip Lin noted that there were about 5,000 acres of gambier and pepper plantations owned mainly by the Chinese by 1841. He also noted that Europeans were moving to the "countrysides" as early as 1822, with James Pearl occupying Pearl's Hill in 1822 and Charles Ryan in Duxton Hill in 1827. From Lee, 1984:1.
- ¹¹ In contemporary descriptions of Singapore by academics and laypersons, Chinatown is acknowledged only by the area on the southwestern areas of the river. The indication of a "second" Chinatown can be seen on a map reproduced by Hodder, 1953, Fig. 5 on p. 31.
- ¹² A 1953 map shows that the enclave may have "expanded" in the northwest direction up to Bencoolen Street. Hodder, 1953:35
- ¹³ The trade was in wax, tiles, shoes, umbrellas, paper, dried goods and Chinese medicinal herbs. Chan, 1976:48.
- ¹⁴ They were "noted as waiters, cooks and domestic servants ..." in Hodder, 1953:34. This was also discussed in Chan, 1976:48.
- ¹⁵ From a 1976 address/telephone list provided in Chan, 1976:209-296, I counted 19 coffee shops/restaurants and 6 hotels within the enclave.
- ¹⁶ The restaurant was so famous that one can still find chicken rice stalls throughout Singapore and Malaysia bearing the similar name "Swee Kee chicken rice". The original restaurant was located at Nos. 51-53, Middle Road, recently demolished. Wong, 1992:51-60.
- ¹⁷ This was No. 6, Malabar Street. Like other coastal Chinese, the main deity for this temple was Ma Chor (or Tian Hou), goddess of safe passage at sea. Chan, 1976:9.
- ¹⁸ Compiled from a 1976 address/telephone list provided in Chan, 1976:209-296. These smaller clan associations, located mainly in Seah Street were started after 1920 when the ban on immigrant Hainanese women was lifted in China.
- ¹⁹ Both Jon S. H. Lim and Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz have discussed the possible origins of the shophouse in Southeast Asia, as a form that may have predated European arrival and have had accumulative influences since the 15th century. Lim, 1993 and Tjoa-Bonatz, 1998.
- ²⁰ Conversation with Jon S. H. Lim, 11 November 2003.
- ²¹ It was also likely that European or local architects were beginning to engage in the design of shophouses, abetted by the availability of pattern books. Lee, 1984:7-8.
- ²² As cited in Warren, 1993:41.
- ²³ Warren, 1993:52. He noted that there were 5-7 prostitutes in a Japanese brothel compared to 15-18 in Chinese brothels in Chinatown, p. 47.

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Tongkangs: Hybrid Ships in a Moment of Singapore's Maritime History

By Ngiam Tong Dow, based on a university dissertation ca. 1957; Edited by Aileen Lau
Captions and images reproduced from *Maritime Heritage of Singapore*

The history of the tongkang industry in Singapore is part of the history of enterprise in Southeast Asia. The history of the industry began with Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819. As soon as Raffles laid down the commercial foundations of the island, merchants around the region and beyond arrived and began operating from this rapidly expanding centre of trade. The Singapore merchants acted as the agents of exporters in China, selling on their behalf, the produce, mainly foodstuffs, of the coastal provinces of South China – Fujian, Guangdong and Hainan Island. The main ports for this export trade were Amoy, Swatow (Shandou today), and Hoi How, the capital of Hainan.



Access to tongkang moorings by sampan.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were relatively few steamships, so that the main part of the trade between China and Singapore was handled by Chinese junks, and later the tongkangs. These vessels were the chief means of sea transport,

The tongkang was built in such a manner that it could lie on river beds without tilting over when the tide was out.

carrying men and goods between South China and the *Nanyang* (South Seas) countries.¹ They also called at ports in Indo-China, Burma and Thailand. Excluding trade with Europe, which was carried by steamships and English lighters, the major portion of Eastern trade was carried by tongkangs.

Gradually, however, the shipping lanes, mostly European, gained control of this Eastern trade with faster and more efficient steamships. Faced with this competition, junks and tongkangs declined in importance but retained control of the coastal and inter-island trade. Being smaller vessels, they were able to negotiate small rivers and anchor in shallow waters. In fact, the tongkang was built in such a manner that it could lie on river beds without tilting over when the tide was out.

In the early part of this period, the junks plying between China and Singapore were owned by traders in China. As merchants in Singapore prospered, they acquired their own vessels built in China. From the initial role of agents, these traders began to fulfill a new economic role by providing shipping services.

Towards the end of the 19th century, these merchants began building



Riverine traffic navigating the mouth of Singapore River at Cavenagh Bridge.

their own sailing vessels locally. This was made possible by the migration of Chinese ship-builders and master craftsmen to Malaya who came with the general flow of immigrants. It is difficult to set an exact date when the vessels were built locally and thus determine the beginning of the tongkang industry proper. Records at the Singapore Registry of Ships showed that from about 1880 onwards, an increasing number of vessels registered were locally-built sailing vessels. They were called "tongkangs" and were anchored along the Singapore River, especially between Read Bridge and Ord Bridge, forming part of the Boat Quay. The first Chinese boatyards were therefore situated here or further up the Singapore River.² Most vessels registered in Singapore by the 1920s were built locally.

The building of bridges across Singapore River made it impossible, because of their low overhead, for tongkangs and other sailing vessels to sail up the river. Owners of tongkangs thus were compelled to shift their anchorage to the sea, off Beach Road and Crawford Street, which was the major anchorage for tongkangs until the building of the Merdeka Bridge in 1956. The Merdeka Bridge formed part of an important arterial road linking the East Coast areas to the city centre

and the Singapore River area. Yet again, another bridge – Merdeka Bridge – then prevented tongkangs from sailing up the Rochor and Kallang Rivers to discharge their cargoes to warehouses along Crawford Street and Beach Road, and except for timber tongkangs, they shifted again to a sheltered anchorage built by the Singapore government along the Geylang River to Tanjong Rhu (known as Sandy Point in the earlier part of the 19th century), slightly further east.

The Building of Tongkangs

The word “tongkang” is Malay, and is probably derived from *belongkang* (probably *perahu belongkang*), a term formerly used in Sumatra for a river cargo boat (Gibson-Hill, 1952:85-86).

Though the tongkang was Chinese-built, owned and manned, it was not of Chinese origin. Chinese boat-builders adopted the hull of the early English sailing lighter, building a hybrid vessel described as “a fairly large, heavy, barge-like cargo-carrying boat propelled by sail(s), sea-going or used in open harbours. In the immediate area around Singapore (Malaya), it signified a sailing lighter (or barge) with a hull of European origin, or a boat developed from such a stock” (Gibson-Hill, 1952:85-86).

There were generally two types of tongkangs in Singapore – the “Singapore Trader”, a general purpose cargo boat used mainly for carrying charcoal and fuelwood, with gross tonnage ranging from 50 to 150 tons. The second type was the “Timber Tongkang”, used exclusively for carrying saw-logs with gross tonnage of over 150 tons. The hull of both types of tongkangs was described as a “heavy, unwieldy, wall-sided affair, full in the bilges, with a long straight shallow keel, angled forefoot and heel, a sharp raked bow and a transom stern” (Gibson-Hill, 1952:85-86).

The modifications to the tongkang included a rectangular rudder pierced with diamond holes,



Constructing a tongkang

a square gallery projecting over the stern of the tongkang, and a perforated cut-water.

The “Singapore Trader” was 60 – 90 feet long with a breadth of 16 – 33 feet and a depth of only 8 – 10 feet whereas “The “Timber Trader” was much larger at 85 – 95 feet in length and had a breadth of 30 – 33 feet and a depth of 12 – 15 feet.

The small vessels had two masts – the main-mast and the foremast, whereas the large vessels i.e. those above 50 tons stepped three masts; that is, the main-mast, the fore-mast

and the mizzen-mast. In the 1950s, the main-sail costed between \$250 – \$300 each, while smaller sails were priced at \$150 – \$200 each.

Tongkangs were full utility vessels and about four-fifths of the space on a tongkang was used for storing cargo. A small area of deck at the stern of the ship, which was roofed, was used as the crew’s living quarters in the form of two small cubicles. The rest of the roofed area was taken up by the kitchen. A shrine to the goddess *Ma-cheh*, the guardian of seamen was always affixed on every vessel.

Capital and Recurrent Costs

In the 1950s, a new tongkang below 50 tons costed between \$10,000 to \$15,000 to build while those above 100 tons ranged from \$70,000 to \$80,000. Very few tongkangs were built by about late 1958 because of the trade recession which began in early 1957, and also the declining importance of tongkangs as cargo carriers. The few that were built were below 50 tons, for service as charcoal and fuelwood carriers.

Tongkangs were overhauled about three times a year, when barnacles were cleared from the hulls, minor repairs made and generally a spring-cleaning given, at the cost of between \$50 to \$200 depending on the size of the ship. Sails were changed once a year, unless they were badly torn as a result of tongkangs being lashed by storms.

Major repairs were carried out at periods varying from five to 10 years, involving the replacement of timber of some portions of the ship, changing masts and other costlier repairs. Properly maintained, tongkangs could last up to 50 years, though most vessels were scrapped after 30 years of service. Naturally the rate of maintenance depended on the volume of trade handled by tongkangs as seen during the Korean War boom, when tongkangs were regularly serviced. However by 1957, overhauling dropped to about twice a year, owing to their declining importance, and most were slowly being scrapped, without being replaced.

The Tongkang Hub

The centre of the tongkang industry was that part of the island bound by Kallang Road, Crawford Street, Beach Road and Arab Street where owners of tongkangs had their business premises. This centre was a compact area where seamen could be recruited and vessels chartered without difficulty.

“Timber Tongkangs” anchored and unloaded their cargo of logs into the sea, off Beach Road, the main

anchorage for tongkangs until the building of the Merdeka Bridge in 1956. Logs were towed into the Kallang Basin, where they lay submerged in water until required by sawmills, resulting in a distinctly unpleasant smell in the vicinity.

All other tongkangs unloaded their cargo of charcoal and fuelwood, poles, planks and sago at Tanjong Rhu. Though Beach Road was the hub of the industry, it was gradually replaced by Tanjong Rhu, where warehouses and wharves were constructed to accommodate the tongkang trade.

Tongkangs were used for coastal and inter-island trading, sailing to Indonesia, South Johore, Malacca, Perak and Sarawak. Much of the trade with Indonesia was mainly in the Riau and Lingga Archipelagoes which lay to the south and southeast of Singapore, the east coast of central Sumatra, namely Siak and Indragiri, and some of the major islands off the Sumatran coast.



Tongkangs in the Kallang Basin near Malay kampung settlements.



Fuelwood cargo carried by tongkangs.

The Trade of the Tongkangs

The trade handled by tongkangs was part of the larger and extremely important volume of trade between Singapore and Indonesia,³ Singapore’s best trading partner and valuable customer in the use of entrepôt facilities up to the end of 1957, when the Indonesian Government began to adopt policies to encourage direct trading with other countries, bypassing Singapore. However, in 1957, imports from Indonesia to Singapore amounted to S\$1,099,478 945 while exports to Indonesia were valued at \$250,274,272.⁴ Indonesia ranked highest in her exports to Singapore which were mainly re-exported. The value of Indonesian imports into Singapore was higher than the combined value of imports from the United Kingdom and the United States – two major countries.

Similar to the faster and more efficient means of sea-transport, tongkangs also played their part in carrying raw material into Singapore, to be processed and re-exported, thus adding to the national income of the island. The major items of the tongkang trade were fuelwood and charcoal, wood in the round, mainly saw-logs and poles, sawn timber, rubber and raw sago, all non-perishable in nature for which timing was relatively unimportant, unlike for foodstuffs and essential raw materials such as rubber. Other produce carried on

tongkangs included copra, coffee, tea, and spices. Being slower than steamships and freighters, tongkangs were particularly suited to carry non-perishable cargo more competitively than steamships and other faster means of sea-transport. These products were carried to attractive freight earnings for tongkang operators when there was a shortage of space on the steamships.

Demand, Supply and the Impact on Tongkang Cargoes

It is interesting to note that the earnings of the tongkang trade were affected by world events and politics such as the Korean War in the 1950s, the Suez Canal crisis in 1956 which impacted on demand, supply, and prices of goods and freight charges.

Local developments such as the housing shortage, the building of Singapore Improvement Trust flats and the shift to use of gas, power and kerosene as cooking fuels from charcoal and fuelwood also affected the tongkang trade. Both charcoal and fuelwood were then facing competition from gas, power and kerosene as cooking fuels. When people of the lower income groups, who were important users of fuelwood and charcoal, occupied Singapore Improvement Trust flats, they were compelled to use either gas or power for cooking. Other households were also increasingly switching to kerosene for cooking purposes. To meet the challenge, fuelwood and charcoal dealers argued that kerosene, besides being a fire hazard, was unsuitable for cooking. They claimed that food cooked over kerosene fire had an unpleasant smell and was not as nutritious as food cooked over charcoal fire! Though households were switching to kerosene, two major users of charcoal and fuelwood, namely coffeeshops and restaurants, still used charcoal and firewood, as they were cheaper than kerosene.

Elsewhere overseas, techniques to turn wheat or maize into starch powder caused the export of sago to fall – sago being one of the items

commonly carried by the tongkangs. European manufacturers of starch flour made out of maize, had the additional advantage of being nearer the export markets. As a result demand for and price of sago fell.

Similarly, Singapore sawmills consumed less saw log imports from Indonesia when overseas demand for sawn timber, and consequently their prices, fell.

The Demise of the Tongkang

The tongkang industry depended on the demand for the type of cargo a tongkang carried. Unfortunately there was a definite falling trend, with the local housing situation at the time and the low volume of demand from overseas markets. Besides, the demand for tongkang labour was a derived demand, being dependent on the volume of trade handled. The low rate of new recruitment into the tongkang labour force indicated that it was contracting as men who retired were not correspondingly replaced.

It was unlikely that tongkangs could have switched to carrying other types of cargo. Thus the then future of the tongkang industry was bleak. According to the Annual Report of the Registry of Commerce and



Tongkangs, in dwindling numbers, at their mooring.

Industry and the Registry of Ships, Native Sailing Vessels dropped from 399 in 1954 to only 299 in 1957.

It was obvious that the tongkang trade was losing out to modernisation, development and shipping technologies of the late 1950s and 1960s onwards.

The eventual decline of the industry was clearly seen in the increasing number of vessels which were being scrapped annually. As few new vessels were built, the size of the tongkang fleet in Singapore thus contracted, signalling the gradual demise of an old practical industry overtaken by modern shipping and port development.

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Notes

All statistical data from Statistics Department, Singapore, Annual Imports and Export, I. & E.

¹ *Nanyang* = southern ocean. Also used by Chinese migrants to mean Southeast Asia.

² Information from Mr Chia Leong Soon, Secretary of the Singapore Firewood and Charcoal Dealers' Association for this information. Read and Ord Bridges are known to the Chinese as the "fifth" and "sixth" bridge respectively. A large Chinese boatyard is situated in Kim Seng Road along the upper part of the Singapore River facing the former Great World Cabaret (today redeveloped as the Great World City complex).

³ Unless otherwise stated, the statistical data used in this chapter, were compiled from unpublished material in the Statistics Department, Singapore, and cited with the kind permission from the Chief Statistician.

⁴ Malayan Statistics: External Trade of Malaya, I & E 3, 1957

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Beyond Readers and Folktales: Observations about Singapore Children's Literature

By Fauziah Hassan, Senior Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library and Panna Kantilal, Senior Librarian, Professional Services

Multicultural Children's Literature

The study of multicultural children's literature has been making significant inroads into the domain of children's literature. However, what constitutes multicultural literature? According to Higgins (2002), the term "multicultural" is used to describe "groups of people from a nonwhite background, people of color, or people of all cultures regardless of race". In the context of this definition, a study of Singapore children's literature would definitely fall within the realm of multicultural literature.

One may ask, why is there a need to study multicultural children's literature or Singapore children's literature in the first place? Hazel Rochman (1993) succinctly explains that multicultural literature "can help to break down [barriers]. Books can make a difference in dispelling prejudice and building community". More importantly, "a good story lets you know people as individuals in all their particularity and conflict" (Rochman, 1993). For Singapore, an awareness of multicultural children's literature would help to throw light upon the different realities in a pluralistic society like ours, where "learning how people from other cultures do similar things in different ways can help children gain a sense of acceptance and appreciation for diverse cultures" (Hillard, 1995).

There are two ways of looking at this. Firstly, through exposure to multicultural literature, children would gain a better understanding of themselves as they "identify with characters that look like them"

and they would then be able to "participate in shared cultural traditions and daily experiences" (Pataray-Ching & Ching, 2001). Secondly, the existence of multicultural literature would have an empowering effect as it is written evidence of the contributions made by those not belonging to the mainstream white culture that is highly prevalent in the publishing industry.

Singapore Children's Literature

In the light of this, Singapore children's literature has an important role to play within the larger context of children's literature because it would ideally represent the authentic voice of the Singapore child. These stories that portray Singapore children with their worldview, realities and values, would capture the identity of the Singapore child and how they redefine themselves in the face of different cultural realities.

Our observations of Singapore children's literature has, however, shown that more often than not,

these larger issues are sidelined by the more basic issues such as authors getting their works published in the first place. Many children's authors in Singapore face the daunting challenge of self-publishing their works because local publishers, due to economic constraints, often overlook these works in favour of more lucrative materials. This is unfortunate as self-published books are sometimes put under scrutiny and suffer from a lack of credibility.

This lack of publisher support has existed for a long time. One reason for this is the utilitarian attitude towards reading and literature in Singapore, exacerbated by the fact that "literature in Singapore is not recognised as a source of vital, vigorous and possible change-bringing elements but as a simple auxiliary of life" (Tay, 1984).

Given this, it is not surprising that the children's publishing scene in Singapore has suffered with its children's literature comprising mainly supplementary readers

For Singapore, an awareness of multicultural children's literature would help to throw light upon the different realities in a pluralistic society like ours, where "learning how people from other cultures do similar things in different ways can help children gain a sense of acceptance and appreciation for diverse cultures."

short stories and folktales, and very few original works of quality and merit.

A Short History of Singapore Children's Literature

A rigorous observation of the Singapore children's literature scene reveals five distinctive categories of books – "the supplementary reader, the picture book, the folktale, the moralising idyll, and the creative fictional text" (Tay, 1995).

The colonial period of the 1950s and 1960s saw the blooming of children's literature in Singapore authored by foreigners. One particular book published in Singapore in 1965 is the *Street of the Small Night Market* by British children's author Sylvia Sherry. It is an absorbing tale of Ah Ong's struggle to survive in a menacing Chinatown.

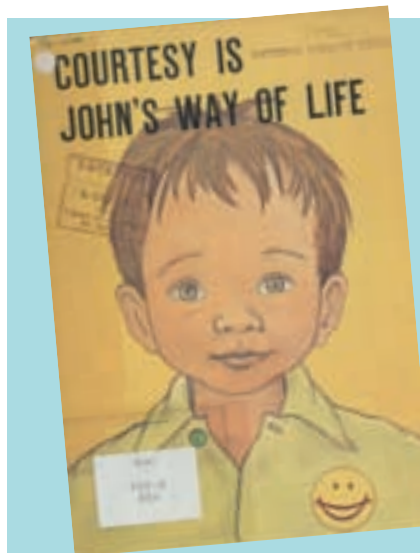


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Times Books International, 1985

In the 1970s, literature for children was skewed chiefly towards language acquisition. We could say it was the start of the "all for education" mentality of the parents, many of whom "tend(ed) to measure the worth of reading according to its usefulness in schoolwork and in the attainment of better grades" (Tay, 1995).

Literature was not employed as a heuristic mechanism for discovery and learning but as a didactic means of language instruction, used to inculcate desirable behavioural outcomes. One such book is *Courtesy is John's Way of Life* (1979).

In *Courtesy is John's Way of Life* (1979), the subject matter relates to the courtesy campaign that ran in the 1970s. The protagonist, John displays courteous behaviour at all times – in school, at home and with his friends. An unbelievable character indeed – nevertheless, it worked for the campaign.



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In *The Greedy Boatman* (Catherine Lim, 1979), we have the moralising idyll. The folktale, which relates the story of a greedy boatman who seizes an unfortunate event to get rich and learns a lesson the hard way, is another example of a book used to encourage good behaviour.

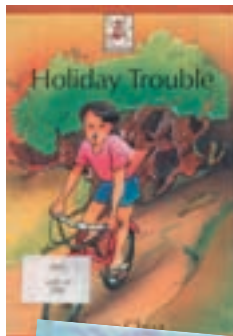
Coming under this category of didactic texts are picture books such as *Raju and his Bicycle* (1978). The simple prose and illustrations were meant to serve the language needs of the reader who was new to English. In addition, popular folktales such as the *Moongate* series by Chia Hearn Chek were written to transmit a sense of history and culture to the younger population. *The Raja's Crown: A Singapore Folktale* (1975) is one fine example in the series.



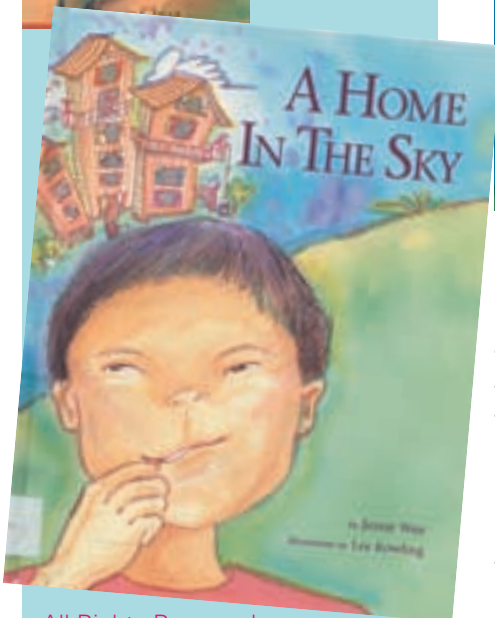
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Although "useful" reading materials continued to be published, children's books produced in the 1980s and 1990s did improve in content and presentation. Writing took on a contemporary edge and the publishing output improved as more writers and illustrators – both Singaporeans and foreigners – entered the scene. It could be said that the 1980s saw the advent of creative fictional writing.

Illustrations, however, have always been a distressing feature of locally produced books. For instance, the illustrations in the books discussed above (*Courtesy is John's Way of Life* and *The Greedy Boatman*) contain visuals that are dull, static and unimaginative. Because the literary scene for children in Singapore grew more out of a need for literacy rather than sheer creativity, the illustrations were uninspired. Bessie Chua's *Holiday Trouble* (1990), for example, traces the adventures of young Abdul and Aini in the *kampung* days. Written for older children, the book was aimed at improving their language proficiency and not to develop an appreciation of art.



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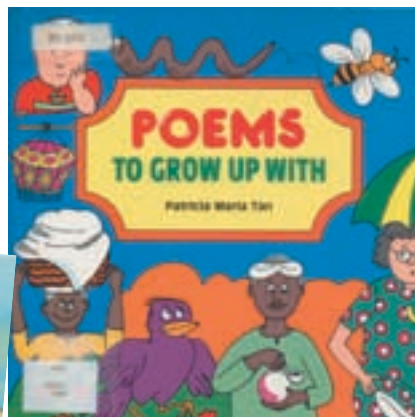


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Landmark Books, 1989

However it is not all bleak. Remarkable works, such as Jessie Wee's *Home in the Sky* (1989), can be found. In this book, Jessie Wee tells a heartwarming story of Ho Seng and his friends who

move into their "home in the sky" – the charming high-rise Housing Development Board (HDB) flats that are home to many in Singapore. The story explores the transition from simple *kampung* living to high-rise living. While the writing retains a Singapore flavour, the book has an international appeal with the illustrations showing maturity and an understanding for details.

In *Poems to Grow Up With* (1989) by Patricia Tan, the illustrations are localised to reflect the local characters like the *kachang puteh* man. Tan's works are suited for a range of readers – adult, young people and children. Some of published stories for children include *Spot and I* (1982), *Raman's Present* (1983) and *Huiming Visits the Zoo* (1984).



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The published materials around this time continued to develop the Singaporean flavour of story and structure. In Kelly Chopard's *Meow: A Singapura Tale* (1991), two Singapura cats, Petta and Larikins, escape from a cat show held at the Padang, and run into Kuching, a street cat at the Singapore River. Kuching lovingly relates the tale of Meow, the great-great-grandfather of the Singapura cats, whose heroism saved the life of his friend, Ah Kow a labourer. Chopard continued writing stories with Singapore's history and heritage in her two other books – *Terry's Raffles Adventure* (1996) and *The Tiger's Tale* (1987).

Into the Future

Beyond the supplementary readers, picture books, folktales, moralistic tales and creative texts, what else does Singapore children's literature have to offer? And where does this leave the reader – child or adult?

The Singapore reader, one would say, is left in a vacuum, which thus accounts for the popularity of the *Harry Potter* series, the *Lemony Snicket* series, the *Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew* series, and of authors like Roald Dahl. In all fairness, though, the local *Mr Midnight* series has been extremely popular with Singapore children as has been many Singapore ghost stories but these do not necessarily fall within the realm of quality children's literature due to their formulaic plots and prosaic writing style.

Ironically, Singapore children's literature scene is slowly evolving as an increasing number of expatriate writers enters the local writing scene, such as James Lee, Quirk A, DiTaylor and Joy Cowley.



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Angsana Books, 2005

It is hoped that with a global outlook, the publishing scene in Singapore will improve, but given the existing climate, children's authors, illustrators and publishers

The Singapore reader is left in a vacuum, which thus accounts for the popularity of the Harry Potter series, the Lemony Snicket series, the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series, and of authors like Roald Dahl.

in Singapore will have to strive hard for “the development of a locally authored literature... for such a literature can play a cardinal role in the perpetuation of indigenous cultural memories and heritages” (Lee, 1990/91). If the issue is ignored, Singapore’s society will lose a lot and “unless we create our own internal strength, have a sense of our own permanence and identity, we shall be little more than a half-way house for the rest of the world, a clearing house for cultures that come in and go out from us” (Lee, 1990/91). That permanence and identity can be created when we have our own Singapore children’s literature which children here can identify with and be proud of.

As Patary-Ching and Ching (2001) pointed out, we need “a multicultural library of children’s books” which acts as “an enabling museum of living culture through which children may travel and remember”.

The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library’s Asian Children’s Collection is a unique collection of 20,000 children’s titles. This collection is a gem as it comprises an extensive array of Singapore children’s literature. At the same time, it collects Asian children’s literature spanning the Asian region and beyond, including works on Asian diaspora.

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Sebuah Mercu Tanda Ilmu

By Juffri Supa'at, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

Pembinaan tamadun ilmu hanya mungkin terhasil jika ilmu diberikan status sebagai "the highest good" (kebaikan mutlak) atau menduduki martabat tertinggi dalam sistem nilai individu dan masyarakat.

ms 45, Budaya Ilmu, Satu Penjelasan
Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud

Perpustakaan Negara yang baru ini telah dibina sebagai sebuah perpustakaan yang moden dan unik bagi menghadapi cabaran dan keperluan generasi masa kini di dalam mengharungi dunia berteraskan ilmu.

Bangunan gah setinggi 16 tingkat yang terletak di Victoria Street ini dipenuhi dengan koleksi sebanyak 634,000 bahan. Ia juga menyediakan perkhidmatan dan kemudahan yang menyeluruh sesuai dengan visinya menjadi sebuah pusat ilmu. Dengan ruang seluas 58,000 meter persegi, bangunan ini lima kali lebih besar jika dibandingkan dengan bangunan lama di Stamford Road. Ia juga menempatkan Perpustakaan Pinjaman Central yang terletak di *Basement 1*.

Antara yang menjadi tumpuan utama bangunan ini ialah Perpustakaan Rujukan Lee Kong Chian, Nama Lee Kong Chian diabadikan sempena memperingati semangat kedermawanan Dr Lee Kong Chian, pengasas Yayasan Lee yang telah memberi sumbangan sebanyak \$60 juta kepada perpustakaan baru ini.

Perpustakaan Rujukan Lee Kong Chian yang memenuhi tingkat 7 ke tingkat 13 mempunyai koleksi melebihi 500,000 bahan di dalam pelbagai bidang dan format. Ia bersesuaian dengan tekadnya untuk menjadi sebuah pusat sumber maklumat utama bagi kajian dan rujukan terutama sekali yang berkaitan dengan Singapura dan Asia Tenggara untuk memenuhi keperluan informasi golongan pengkaji, karyawan dan juga para pengguna am.

Koleksi-koleksi di Perpustakaan ini disusun berdasarkan bidang-bidang berikut:

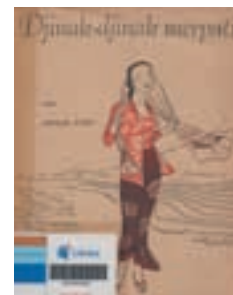
Tingkat 7	Koleksi Sains Sosial dan Kemasyarakatan Koleksi Sains dan Teknologi
Tingkat 8	Koleksi Seni dan Perniagaan
Tingkat 9	Koleksi Cina, Melayu dan Tamil
Tingkat 10	Koleksi Kanak-kanak Asia Koleksi Penderma
Tingkat 11	Koleksi Singapura and Asia Tenggara
Tingkat 13	Koleksi Bahan-bahan Nadir

Koleksi Cina, Melayu dan Tamil (Tingkat 9)

Koleksi-koleksi ini dibangunkan bagi memartabatkan peranan Perpustakaan Rujukan Lee Kong Chian sebagai sebuah pusat rujukan dan penyelidikan yang cemerlang dengan memenuhi keperluan rakyat Singapura mencari dan mengakses maklumat di dalam bahasa Cina, Melayu dan Tamil. Ia kini mempunyai sebanyak 67,200 bahan. Koleksi-koleksi ini mengetengahkan budaya dan nilai tradisional yang mencerminkan aspek-aspek sosio-ekonomi, kebudayaan dan kesusasteraan ketiga-tiga kumpulan etnik di Singapura.

Koleksi Melayu

Koleksi Melayu menyentuh segala aspek kehidupan masyarakat di Kepulauan Melayu, termasuk sosio-ekonomi, politik, kebudayaan, agama, bahasa, kesusasteraan dan pembangunan negara. Bahan-bahan Koleksi Rujukan Melayu Am ini membentuk bahagian yang besar di



Hak Cipta Terpelihara,
Balai Pustaka,
1953

Sebuah kumpulan naskhah-naskhah drama karya Armijn Pane, salah seorang sasterawan Indonesia Angkatan Pujangga baru.

antara keseluruhan Koleksi Melayu Perpustakaan Rujukan Lee Kong Chian. Koleksi ini mengandungi monograf, terbitan berkala, bahan-bahan pandang-dengar dan mikrofilem. Juga terdapat bahan-bahan khusus untuk rujukan seperti kamus, ensiklopedia, direktori, biografi, bibliografi, buku tahunan, peta, indeks dan abstrak.

Antara yang menarik yang boleh didapati di dalam koleksi ini ialah koleksi berkenaan kesusasteraan, bahasa dan Islam.

Koleksi Kesusasteraan merangkumi kedua-dua sastera Melayu tradisional/klasik dan moden. Koleksi ini diperkayakan dengan bahan-bahan yang menyentuh tentang teori dan falsafah kesusasteraan, puisi, drama, novel, esei dan kritikan kesusasteraan oleh penulis-penulis dari Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Filipina, Singapura dan Thailand.



Hak Cipta
Terpelihara,
Universiti
Kebangsaan
Malaysia
Bangi, 2001

Buku ini mengungkapkan isu-isu sekitar pemikiran alam melayu oleh tokoh-tokoh sarjana yang mencabar dan menduga keutuhan tamadun Melayu.

Koleksi Bahasa terdiri daripada bahan-bahan tentang bahasa Melayu dan perkembangannya. Bahasa Melayu merupakan bahasa perantaraan di Kepulauan Melayu pada suatu ketika dahulu. Ia juga adalah bahasa yang utama dan memainkan peranan penting sewaktu pengislaman Semenanjung Melayu. Bagi menghargai peranan yang dimainkan oleh bahasa Melayu dalam masyarakat, Perpustakaan Rujukan Lee Kong Chian cuba mengabadikan intipati bahasa ini dari berbagai aspek, termasuk falsafah dan teori, fonologi dan nahu.

Koleksi Islam tertumpu pada bahan-bahan berkaitan dengan ketamadunan



Hak Cipta
Terpelihara,
Akbar Media
Eka Sarana,
2003

Buku yang membicarakan tentang sejarah Islam sejak dari zaman Nabi Adam a.s. hingga kini. Ia juga membincangkan isu-isu orang Islam yang menjadi kumpulan minoriti di negara-negara bukan Islam.

Islam seperti nilai-nilai, amalan-amalan serta cara kehidupan dalam Islam. Penekanan khas diberikan kepada sumber-sumber berhubung Islam di Kepulauan Melayu.

Koleksi Asia Kanak-kanak

Koleksi Asia Kanak-kanak mengandungi bahan-bahan yang ditulis khas untuk kanak-kanak berkaitan dengan negara-negara Asia dan penduduknya. Koleksi ini merangkumi buku kanak-kanak dalam ke empat-empat bahasa rasmi Singapura dan merupakan sumber yang paling sesuai bagi para pendidik, pelukis ilustrasi dan sesiapa sahaja yang berminat dalam penggunaan dan penghasilan bahan-bahan bacaan dan tulisan untuk kanak-kanak dari perspektif Asia.

Koleksi Singapura dan Asia Tenggara

Koleksi-koleksi ini adalah sumber bahan penyelidikan sejarah yang bernilai. Keistimewaan koleksi-koleksi ini ialah karya-karya berkaitan sejarah, pemerintahan, budaya dan adat, bahasa dan sastera. Para penyelidik juga boleh merujuk kepada 24,000 unit bahan mikroform, terdiri daripada bahan-bahan terbitan sebelum tahun 1900, akhbar-akhbar tempatan dan majalah-majalah berkala keluaran lampau serta tesis-tesis. Terdapat juga peta meliputi Singapura, Malaysia dan negara-negara Asia Tenggara yang lain, serta poster-poster tentang Singapura dalam koleksi ini. Tambahan lagi, 15,000 unit bahan pandang-dengar seperti video, cakera padat, cakera laser, VCD dan DVD ditempatkan di sini. Sebahagian daripada bahan bercetak telah ditukarkan formatnya kepada bentuk digital dan kini tersedia untuk penggunaan ramai di Perpustakaan Digital kami.

Sumber-sumber Singapura

Di antara tumpuan koleksi di bahagian ini ialah bahan-bahan sumber Singapura dan juga Asia Tenggara. Ia terdiri dari bahan-

bahan berkaitan Singapura dan penduduknya yang komprehensif dalam semua format, termasuk sumber-sumber asas dan yang telah diterbitkan dalam berbagai disiplin. Ia juga merangkumi karya-karya berkaitan Negeri-Negeri Selat dan Malaya di mana Singapura pernah menjadi sebahagian daripada entiti politiknya.

Di samping itu, terdapat juga bahan-bahan yang mendokumenkan liputan penting tentang Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand, Kampuchea, Filipina, Timor Timor, Laos, Vietnam dan Myanmar, terutama dalam bidang-bidang sejarah, politik dan pemerintah, budaya dan adat, flora dan fauna serta ekonomi.

Koleksi Bahan-bahan Nadir

Sebahagian besar koleksi ini mengandungi bahan-bahan yang dicetak pada abad ke sembilan belas dan awal abad ke dua puluh. Kebanyakan daripada bahan-bahan ini diterbitkan oleh syarikat-syarikat percetakan akhbar yang terawal di Singapura. Koleksi ini juga mengandungi manuskrip Melayu bertulisan Jawi, kamus dalam bahasa Melayu dan bahasa-bahasa Asia Tenggara, direktori dan almanak, jurnal ilmiah, kisah-kisah pengembaraan di kepulauan Melayu dan Asia Tenggara, serta terbitan Cina klasik yang diceritakan semula dalam bahasa Melayu Baba.

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Waktu pembukaan:
Isnin – Ahad
(ditutup pada Cuti Umum)
10 pagi – 9 mlm

Untuk perkhidmatan rujukan,
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Fostering an Inventive Spirit in the City-State

By Sara Pek, Senior Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

Invention and Innovation

According to Fagerberg, Mowery and Nelson (2005), there is a distinction between invention and innovation: "Invention is the first occurrence of an idea for a new product or process, while innovation is the first attempt to carry it out into practice... In many cases, however there is a considerable time lag between the two. While inventions may be carried out anywhere, for example in universities, innovations occur mostly in firms... To be able to turn an invention into an innovation, a firm normally needs to combine several different types of knowledge, capabilities, skills and resources."

An example of an inventive person is Leonardo da Vinci. He embodies the very spirit of invention. Leonardo lived in the Renaissance Period (1400 – 1600 CE) where a time of great cultural advances and explosion of knowledge dissemination were brought on by printing techniques. This self-taught man researched and formulated ideas and plans in a multitude of disciplines that ranged over anatomy, botany, science and technology, and the visual arts. The unique record of "word and image" from his detailed manuscripts allows us a glimpse into his incredible mind. Most significantly, it expresses what men and women of the time felt and thought about the machines and tools and used for greater purposes such as constructing churches, palaces and machines for warfare and transportation. (Farago, 1999)

Vision, Motivation and Necessity

More often than not, invention stems from vision. In 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles saw the unrealised potential in a small fishing village and Singapore was founded as a British

trading post on the Straits of Malacca. From then on, Singapore grew from a colonial outpost into the world's busiest port (Drysdale, 1984; Turnbull, 1989; Chew & Lee, 1991).

Vision is followed by motivation, which encourages invention. The early Singapore settlers were inventive in their thinking – they endured hardship to build their lives in a foreign land as they saw opportunities for economic and social advancement.

Necessity breeds invention, bringing ideas to fruition. Early settlers were forced to build roads and towns to thrive in the harsh environment. During the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak, ST Electronics and the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) adapted a thermal scanner originally meant for military use. It was used at the airport, immigration checkpoints, ministries and hospitals to scan large groups of people simultaneously for high temperature and proved an important tool in the management



A walk-through thermal scanner originally meant for military use. Image courtesy of Singapore Technologies Electronics Limited Growing Ventures

of SARS. The system was named by *TIME* magazine as one of the coolest inventions in 2003 (Channelnewsasia, 11 Nov 2003). Singapore has greatly benefited from knowledge and technological transfers from multinational corporations and foreign talent from developed countries. In advancing towards a knowledge-based economy, the ongoing creation of ideas and inventions by institutions and people is crucial. This is recognised by the Singapore government, which invests heavily in research and development, and has expanded its initiatives in developing Singapore into a regional Intellectual Property Hub (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2006).

Schools also attempt to cultivate desired attributes and mindsets such as intellectual curiosity, self-reliance, ruggedness, creativity and community spirit. The Tan Kah Kee Young Inventors' Award, which has been in existence since 1986, has sparked imaginations among students and stimulated them to invent things. Tertiary education in science and technology fields at university and polytechnic levels is strengthened with the encouragement of research and knowledge creation.

A wide range of support initiatives is offered to individuals eager to develop functional prototypes or start up new ventures. Among them are: Venture Investment Support for Start-ups (VISS), The Startup Enterprise Development Scheme (SEEDS), Technopreneur Investment Incentive Scheme (TII), The Enterprise Challenge Scheme (TEC), Global Startup @ Singapore Business Plan Competition, Hub of Technopreneurs Spots (HOT Spots), Singapore Innovation Award (I-Award) and Global Entrepolis@Singapore.

Over the past decade, Singapore's intellectual assets have grown

significantly. Patent applications increased sharply from 1,818 in 1994 to 8,000 in 2003 (*Straits Times*, 18 Nov 2004). The 2004 annual R&D survey conducted by Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) reported that the “numbers of patent applications and awards increased by 26% and 30% respectively from 1,001 and 460 in 2003 to 1,257 and 599 in 2004”. In the same year, A*STAR filed over 120 patents worldwide (*Straits Times*, 29 Jul 2005).

It is often said that Singaporeans are risk averse and lack creativity. A prevailing culture of failure-intolerance may have quelled many a desire to experiment and make changes. To add economic value to a new or improved product or service, one needs to risk resources (natural, human and capital) to bring it to the market. Vandenberg (2003) claims “we are still at a very early stage of entrepreneurship compared to the United States. At the same time, because we lack the critical market size, we have to think globally almost instantaneously. What we need is to develop a more efficient capital market infrastructure for smaller companies”. He believes that entrepreneurship is a mindset that could be “nurtured and developed” by reaching out to students in schools and tertiary institutions, and by organising entrepreneurship programmes for the adult workforce.

Through the early years of industrialisation, the city-state has transformed itself into a thriving knowledge economy, supported by strong intellectual property laws, an educated workforce, quality research and development institutions, and low barriers to trade and foreign investments. There is a real sense of survival through innovation for both economic and security reasons.

A host of activities will be held at the National Library in August. Organised in collaboration with the Economic Development Board and its partners, the events comprise exhibitions, information sharing and talks on hot topics by homegrown inventors. The meetings will allow inventors to find out more about the support and guidance that is available to them, pick up tips and meet other inventors in an informal environment.

Resources for Inventors

There are hundreds of books, reference and online resources to help budding inventors better understand the invention and innovation process – idea generation, problem solving to business 101, general marketing to safeguarding intellectual property through patents and trademark. Here are some of the resources:

Books

A Complete Idiot's Guide to Cashing in on Your Inventions by Richard Levy
 Publisher: Indianapolis, Ind.: Alpha Books, 2002 Call No.: R 346.73048 LEV
 Levy shares his experiences in bringing his many products to market successfully. He offers tips on how to profit from one's invention and gives advice on how to avoid pitfalls, secure patent protection and licensing, develop prototypes and negotiate deals and contracts.



A Guide to Protecting Your Ideas, Inventions, Trade Marks & Products by Catherine Tay
 Publisher: Singapore: Times Editions/Marshall Cavendish, 2004 Call No.: RSING 346.5957048 TAY

This publication explains the “do’s” and “don’ts” and provides essential information on protecting ideas and inventions while helping one navigate the labyrinth of concepts, rules and laws in Singapore.

The 3M way to Innovation: Balancing People and Profit by Ernest Gundling
 Publisher: Tokyo: Kodansha International, c2000 Call No.: RBUS 658.4063 GUN
 3M has always been held up as the role model of an innovative organisation. This book provides invaluable insights into the principles and best practices that have kept 3M on the cutting edge.



Databases

Industry-specific journals as well as market intelligence are useful to gauge the market potential of your inventions. These are accessible from online databases at all multimedia stations in the Library: EbscoHost Business Source Premier provides full text business journals and publications in the areas of management, taxation, marketing, sales, economics and finance.

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) provides analyses of political and economic trends and a historical context of current events in nearly 200 countries. Includes a fortnightly business brief on doing business in Asia.

Euromonitor's Global Market Information Database (GMID) offers key business intelligence on countries, companies, markets and consumers.

Factiva allows access to a deep archive of news and business information.

Engineering Information Village (Ei Village) is a virtual community for engineers, created to provide information needed to solve problems and keep up to date with trends and developments in the field of engineering. Includes access to databases, websites and libraries.

Internet

The US Patent & Trademark Office and Patent & Trademark Depository Library Association are websites devoted to resources to help inventors.

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/iip/>; <http://www.ptdla.org/resources/assistance.html>

The Lemelson-MIT Invention Dimension website provides a wealth of inventor resources including patent guidelines and links to many online invention resources. <http://web.mit.edu/invent/invent-main.html>

License Finder allows one to search for the latest information on licenses granted and available licensors. It also features articles about licensing opportunities and trade shows.

<http://finder.licensemag.com>

Entrepreneur has many useful articles on getting started, inventors' success stories, smart ideas and more. <http://entrepreneur.com>

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Marching Through the Decades: Singapore on Parade, an Online Exhibition

By Nor-Afidah Abd Rahman, Senior Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library



Parades for All Seasons

...The ceremonies you have seen today are ancient, and some of their origins are veiled in the mists of the past. But their spirit and their meaning shine through the ages never, perhaps, more brightly than now...

Queen Elizabeth II. Excerpt from broadcast made on the evening of the Queen's Coronation, 2 June 1953.

Source: British Monarchy. (n.d.). *The Queen's speeches*. Retrieved May 10, 2006, from www.royalinsight.gov.uk

Most people love parades for they are festive and escapist; day-to-day tasks take a standstill as people congregate at common venues to treat themselves to a spectacle of precision, colours loud music and fireworks. Parades are timeless symbols of unity as they transcend ethnicity and age, and showcase icons of progress that everyone can identify and be proud of.

On 9 August every year, Singaporeans look forward to the National Day Parade (NDP) to celebrate their independence. Military drills, band performances, fly- and march-pasts and fireworks never fail to excite us. As Singapore prepares for her 41st NDP on 9 August 2006, we reminisce the country's commitment to this pageantry to commemorate the occasion through the *Singapore on Parade* online exhibition. This exhibition aims to recapture the fine moments and grandeur of the grand parades in Singapore from colonial to modern times. The ceremonies in pre-independence parades were of British conception and carried



1819: The Treaty and the Parade

messages of British empire-building. But traditions die hard and many of the parade rituals seen then have continued into present day NDPs. The main difference lies in the spirit and meaning; while pre-independence parades rejoiced at Singapore's patronage to the greatest empire on earth, NDPs celebrate Singapore's triumph as a nation united by the country's own defined ideals of progress.

Parades of Yesteryear

Perhaps it is not widely known that the history of parades in

Singapore is as old as the history of the settlement. The founding of Singapore on February 1819 was ushered in with a parade. Indian sepoy and European artillerymen were among the first to stamp their feet on the Plain (now the Padang) in cohesion, while offshore the guns from the ships roared when the Union flag was hoisted up. Pomp and gallantry certainly did not escape this historic ceremony. A hundred years later, another parade and other festivities took place in Singapore to mark the 100th anniversary of the colony's founding. The colony had survived and thrived, a milestone worthy of a Centenary Day celebrations. On



1919: Centenary Day Celebrations. Reproduced from Song's *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore* (p. 297). All Rights Reserved, Oxford University Press, 1984



Empire Day at Raffles Institution in 1947. Image from the Raffles Institution collection, National Archives of Singapore.

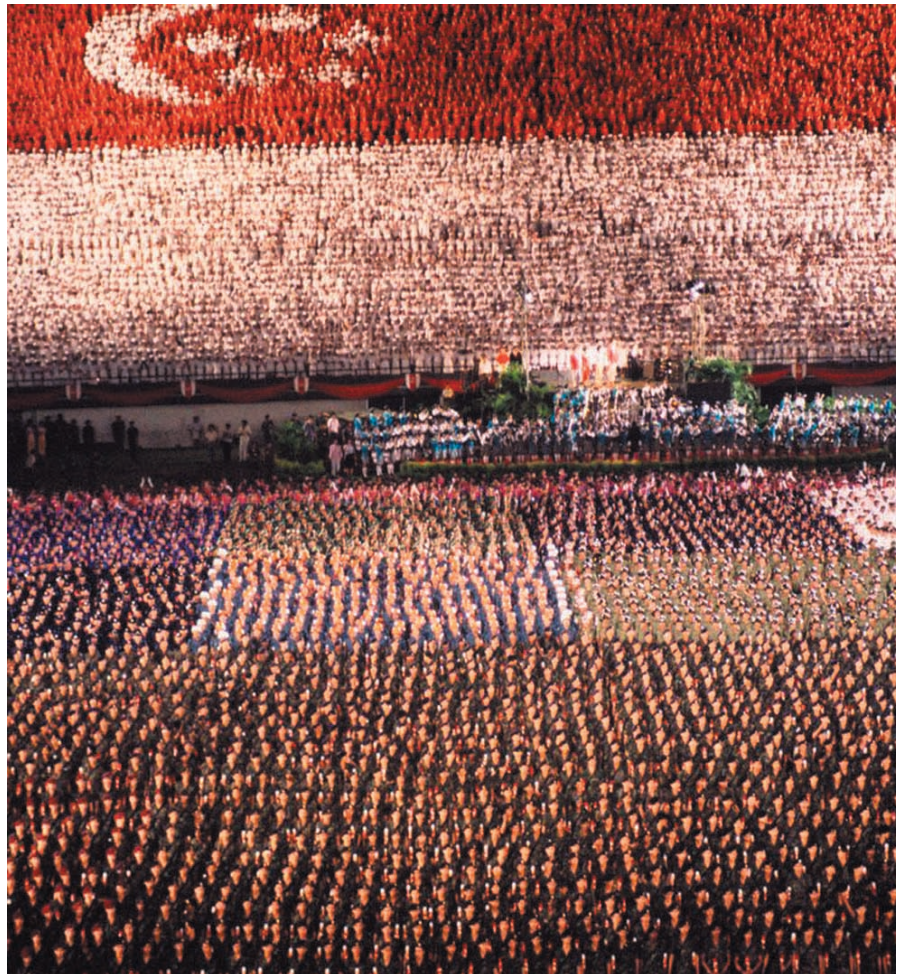


Coronation day decorations in Singapore for King Edward VII and Queen Alexander. Image courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

6 February 1919, the Centenary kicked off with a parade at the Victoria Theatre and Memorial Hall and the unveiling of a commemoration tablet on the newly relocated Raffles Statue. The statue was moved from the Padang to the Memorial Hall for this occasion.

Colonial parades burst into the streets in kaleidoscopic scale during Queen Victoria’s reign (1837 – 1901). She ruled the longest and was the most celebrated sovereign in Singapore though her successors were no less prominent. From Queen Victoria to Queen Elizabeth II, Singapore paid homage to her British sovereigns through countless parades; birthday parades, Empire Day parades, coronation parades, and Golden, Diamond and Silver jubilee parades.

From the late 19th century, the celebration of British royal events (coronation, birthday and jubilees) had spilled over from London to the various colonies. As shared occasions across the Empire, these



Mass Display during NDP
Image courtesy of MINDEF.

events were celebrated with a common style, involving banners and flags, speeches and street parties, military processions, the unveiling of statues or the opening of memorial halls. Not to be outdone, Singapore’s version of the celebrations had enough buntings and illuminations to turn the whole town into a magical fairyland. The newspaper became an important tool to announce the various programmes scheduled for the celebrations. Each ethnic group had their own way to show support to the sovereign on these occasions; the Arabs decorated an arch they constructed with “God Save The King” neon lights; the Jews held special prayers at the synagogue; the Chinese, Malays and Indians combined to organise a procession, even the Japanese community contributed firework displays.

People’s Parade: A Flawless Symphony

Over the decades, parades have become distinctly Singaporean. Modern day NDPs have evolved into “people’s parade” where everybody participates. From the mass displays and fireworks to the reciting of the National Pledge and singing of the National Anthem, everyone has a role to play. This hearty mobilisation



NDP 1991
Image courtesy of MINDEF.

requires high-level coordination and reiterations to ensure a flawless execution of NDPs. Riding on the adage “practice makes perfect”, rehearsals have become a must in every NDP. The *Singapore on Parade* online exhibition showcases the brilliant formations that were strung together by each participant, no doubt after many practices, as well as some behind-the-scene footages to depict the enormous preparations before the big event.

The Hosts of Parades

Parades in colonial Singapore were an important tool to brand British imperial rule on the colony. As the power and prestige of the British declined after WWII, the focus of parades shifted from the British monarchy to the nation-state. National symbols – the flag, the pledge and the national anthem – replaced imperial ones. One icon that bucked the trend was the Padang. The open field which



NDP at the Padang. Image courtesy of MINDEF.



Raffles statue at the Padang. Reproduced from Makepeace, Brooke and Braddell’s *One hundred years of Singapore*. All Rights Reserved, Oxford University Press, 1991.

hosted many grand parades in the past was still the venue of choice for NDPs until 1976, when Singapore held her first NDP at the National Stadium. Singapore experimented with the concept of “one parade many venues” for several years where NDPs were held at several stadiums. This “decentralised” celebration format lasted until 1984 (in alternate years); thereafter the government reverted to one venue for the NDP partly due to the huge costs of organising many mini parades. The Padang once again rose to the occasion when it hosted Singapore’s 40th NDP in 2005.

National Day Celebrations Fast Forward

As a city that is still fast evolving, the look and feel of National Day celebrations is also expected to move with the times. A new downtown at Marina (together with the proposed Integrated Resort) is one of the exciting developments in Singapore. It is also a site chosen by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to chart a new National Day celebrations experience. During his second National Day Rally speech on 21 August 2005, PM Lee treated Singaporeans to an advanced sneak preview of fireworks by the Marina Bayfront on 9 August 2015, Singapore’s 50th Birthday. The animation clip of the vision was put together by students from Nanyang Polytechnic.



Preview of NDP 2015 Fireworks at the Marina Bayfront.

All Rights Reserved, Urban Redevelopment Authority and Nanyang Polytechnic.

National symbols – the flag, the pledge and the national anthem – replaced imperial ones. One icon that bucked the trend was the Padang. The open field which hosted many grand parades in the past was still the venue of choice for NDPs until 1976, when Singapore held her first NDP at the National Stadium.

The “Singapore on Parade” online exhibition grew out of a related physical exhibition entitled “Nation on Parade”. “Nation on Parade” was on display at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCR) from 3 August 2005 to 16 October 2005, in conjunction with Singapore’s 40th year of independence. The extended and online version of this exhibition, now renamed “Singapore on Parade”, takes a broader overview of the significance of parades in Singapore’s history. “Singapore on Parade” will be available at <http://exhibitions.nlb.gov.sg/ndp/> from 1 August 2006.

Publishing and Legal Deposit for Posterity

The National Library Board (NLB) hosted the "Publishing & Legal Deposit Seminar" on 3 April 2006. The first in a series of seminars for publishers, NLB invited major Singapore publishers to the National Library, to provide updates and information on legal deposit, International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and International Standard Serial Number (ISSN).

Legal deposit is a statutory provision in the National Library Board Act 1995 that requires Singapore publishers to provide two copies of every publication to the Board, regardless of form or medium.

Calling on publishers to deposit their publications with the National Library, Dr N Varaprasad, Chief Executive of NLB, spoke about how the NLB needs to preserve and catalogue materials in both the electronic and print formats for the future.

The ISBN and the ISSN are both unique sets of numbers that serve as the fingerprint for publications. It was announced that from 1 January 2007, the ISBN will be extended from 10 to 13 digits in order to increase the numbering capacity of the ISBN system to handle the exponential growth in publishing.

The seminar also discussed the process of depositing the publications with NLB, and legal responsibilities.

Panel from left: Ms Cynthia Chong, Assistant Registrar of Newspapers, Media Development Authority; Mrs Lim Siew Kim, Deputy Director, LPS, NLB; Ms Ngian Lek Choh, DCE, NLB; Mr Raju Buddhharaju, Director, Digital Library Services, NLB; Ms Shaan Sathy, Legal Officer, NLB.



Lee Kong Chian (LKC) Research Fellows

By Lena Kua, Assistant Director, Publishing and Research Services

The Lee Kong Chian (LKC) Research Fellowship is established to encourage research into various aspects of Asian content; namely its culture, economy and heritage, this initiative is primarily to enrich the strong Asia-centric collections and resources of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library at the National Library, Singapore.

The fellowship has been awarded to Ms Adeline Melissa Koh, Mr Chan Chow Wah and Ms Soh Choi Yin.

Adeline Melissa Koh Shu Ling has a Masters of Arts, Comparative Literature, from the University of Michigan. A recipient of several awards, scholarship and funding, she is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and is writing her dissertation entitled *English Lessons: Education, Race and Englishness in Singapore and Malaysia from Colony to Nation*.



Adeline's research interest is in the area of English Language and the British Empire, Critical Race Theory, and Asian Studies, and has presented papers at international conferences as a result of her many distinct researches.

Chan Chow Wah has a Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA) from the National University of Singapore (NUS) and a Masters in Social Anthropology (MSc Social Anthropology) from the London School of Economics (LSE), UK. He is also a Fellow of The Royal Anthropological Institute, UK, and Member of the American Anthropological Association.



His interests include consumption, cultural marketing, Chinese cultural studies, relationship between religion and society, and issues of social identity and modernity. He has conducted seminars and workshops on a range of topics. Recent projects include 'Sculpting Compassion' (Singapore), 'River of Time' (Beirut, Lebanon), 'TeaTalk' (London, UK), and "FoodTalk" (Durham, USA).

Soh Choi Yin is currently pursuing her Master Program in Design (Honours by Research) at the University of New South Wales. Her research examines cultural identities in cyberspace among Chinese youth from Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore.



She graduated with a BFA in Computer Arts majoring in Interactive Multimedia from the Academy of Art College in San Francisco in 1998 and a Diploma in Visual Communication from Temasek Polytechnic in Singapore in 1995. Choi Yin has 8 years of experience as a designer/consultant with several multimedia companies. She also contributed digital graphics for *Zavtone Magazine*, a magazine for the digital age in Tokyo during 1998. Choi Yin does illustrations as a past time. Her drawings and doll design are exhibited and sold at Homespun located at The Arts House.

Application for the fellowship ends on 31 July 2006. We invite both local and foreign applicants whose research focus requires use of the National Library archived and preserved collections. For further information about the Fellowship, please contact Ms Lena Kua, National Library Board at Lena_KUA@nlb.gov.sg

National Library (NL) Distinguished Readers

By Lena Kua, Assistant Director, Publishing and Research Services

In the previous issue, we introduced eight of our Distinguished Readers. In this issue, we are pleased to announce that seven other prominent Singaporeans have been appointed as National Library (NL) Distinguished Readers.

Mrs Hedwig Anuar was the first Singaporean Director of the National Library and occupied this position from 1965 to 1988. Under her leadership, the library underwent many successful changes and development, including the implementation of children's programmes, services to teenagers and young people, expansion of the Southeast Asian collection, and a mobile library service. She was also a member of various committees of the then Ministry of Culture, including its Censorship Review Committee.

In 1969, she was awarded the Public Administration Gold Medal. Mrs Anuar was accorded honorary Life Membership by Persatuan Perpustakaan Malaysia (PPM) in 1973, honorary Life Membership of the Library Association of Singapore in 1980, and Honorary Fellow of the Library Association (Britain) and *Her World's* Woman of the Year 1993 award on March 1994.

Appointed Hon Secretary of the National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) when it was founded in 1969, Mrs Anuar was Chairman of NBDCS from 1988 – 1995 upon retirement. From 1989 – 1993, she undertook consultancy work for the International Development Research Centre and the Library Information Development Consultations (LIDC). Mrs Anuar is also a founder member of the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE), and served in various capacities on its Ex-co. She initiated the Women Learning English (WISH) Programme of the Society for Reading and Literacy (SRL) of which she was a founder member.

Mr Koh Seow Chuan, a retired architect, is a founder of DP Architects Pte Ltd, the firm that designed the Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay. He was appointed Chairman, Singapore Art Museum in 2005 and will serve as Board Member from 1 August 2005 – 31 July 2007.

Mr Koh helped to put Singapore on the philatelic map of the world. He brought prestigious exhibitions and competitions to Singapore and mounted important exhibitions. These included the late President Ong Teng Cheong's letters, as well as the 117th IOC Stamp Exhibition.

He is also a world-renowned philatelist and avid collector of social historical documents, maps, antique books and art books. Mr Koh and Mrs Koh gave a long-term loan of their private collection to the National Library Board. The collection includes unique and out-of-print titles, hand-carried letters and petitions in their original form with signatures. Comprising some 2,500 items, the collection is open to the public to view and access.

Mr Kwek Leng Joo is a well-known and respected member of Singapore's business community. Managing Director of City Developments Limited (CDL) and an Executive Director of Hong Leong Group Singapore, he contributes actively to the business and civic community. He is the Immediate Past President of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vice-Chairman of the Singapore Business Federation, Chairman of the National Youth Achievement Award Council (NYAA) Board of Trustees, Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, Management Committee of the Chinese Language and Culture Fund and the People's Association Chingay Advisory Council 2007/2008. Mr Kwek also sits on the Board of Trustees of the Nanyang Technological University, Chinese Development Assistance Council and National University Hospital Endowment Fund. He is also a member of the National Council on Problem Gambling.

A keen supporter of the arts and an avid photographer, Mr Kwek has produced many works of art. Some of these pieces have raised close to half a million dollars in fund-raising activities for the President's Challenge and Ren Ci Hospital. In addition, his love for the arts has brought about his role as a Council Member of the National Arts Council, Honorary Chairman of The Photographic Society of Singapore, Honorary Advisor to the Singapore Colour Photographic Society, Patron of the NYAA Young Photographers Network, Honorary Patron of the Photo-Art Association of Singapore and Honorary Patron of Tampines Photo Imaging Club. He also sits on the Board of Directors of the Singapore Tyler Print Institute.

For his many outstanding contributions to the community, Mr Kwek was conferred the Public Service Medal in 2000 and more recently, the Public Service Star in 2005, by the President of the Republic of Singapore.



Mr R. Ramachandran, is currently Executive Director, National Book Development of Singapore. He was awarded the “CONSAL Outstanding Librarian Award” at the CONSAL XIII Conference in Manila in March 2006 for his contribution to library development in Singapore and the region.

Mr Ramachandran, former Director National Library and Deputy Chief Executive, National Library Board, joined the National Library Service in 1969. He spearheaded the early development of Branch Libraries, National Library services and library education in Singapore. He later played a pivotal role in the modernisation of the library system when it became a Statutory Board in 1995. He helped to set up the CONSAL Secretariat and was appointed its first Secretary – General. As Secretary- General, CONSAL, he traveled widely in the region providing training and promoting libraries and library cooperation intensively. On an international level he served in several committees dealing with different aspects of library development. For several years he was Chairman of CDNLAO (Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania.) and President of the Library Association of Singapore. Following his retirement from the National Library Board, he was appointed as Secretary-General, International Federation of Libraries and Institutions (IFLA) in The Hague, Netherlands.



Mr Tan Swie Hian is Singapore’s most celebrated multi-disciplinary artist. He published his first collection of modern poetry, *The Giant*, in 1968, a landmark in the history of modern Chinese literature in Singapore and Malaysia. To date, he has published 50 titles of poetry, essays, stories, criticism and translated works. Mr Tan is multilingual and is the first person to have translated works by literary giants such as Henri Michaux, Jacques Prevert, Samuel Beckett, Vaslav Nijinsky and Marin Sorescu into Chinese as well as works by great Indian philosophers such as Ramana Marhashi, J.Krishnamurti, Sri Aurobindo, and N.Chaitanya. Mr Tan held his first art exhibition in 1973 at the National Library at Stamford Road and has since exhibited his works in numerous shows (solo and group) in Singapore and around the world.

Among his many achievements, Mr Tan was conferred the Chavalier de l’Ordre des Arts et Lettres by France (1978), the Singapore Cultural Medallion Award (1987), the World Economic Forum’s Crystal Award (2003), the Meritorious Service Medal by the President of the Republic of Singapore (2003), and the Officier de l’Ordre National de la Legion d’Honneur, the highest honour conferred by France (2006). He is the only artist in Singapore to be given this prestigious award. Mr Tan also won the Gold Medal in Salon des Artistes Francais, Paris (1985), the Marin Sorescu International Poetry Prize in Romania (1998), and the Seoul International Calligraphy Gold Medal (2002). Since 1987, Mr Tan Swie Hian has been the first and only Southeast Asian artist to be elected as a correspondent-member to The Academy of Fine Arts of the Institute of France.



Mr Tang Wee Kit, is currently Chairman & Managing Director of Tang Holdings Pte Ltd. He is also Board Member of the Singapore Hotel Association (SHA) for the period 2005 – 2007. Graduated from Menlo College with a BSc. in Business Administration, in 1976, Mr Tang started his career as Personal Assistant to the Managing Director of C.K. Tang Limited in 1979, rose to the rank of Deputy Managing Director/ Director of Stores in 1991 – 1993, before taking over the helm as Managing Director of Tang Choon Keng Realty Pte Ltd (now known as Tang Holdings Pte Ltd). During his illustrious career, he has held directorships in local as well as overseas including Indonesia and South Africa.

Outside of the business world, Mr Tang also holds appointments in civic community and educational organisations. He was member of the Barker Road Methodist Church Redevelopment Committee (1988 –1990) and was on the Board and Committees of various organisations including Anglo-Chinese Junior School (ACJS), ACJS Fund Raising & Building Committee and, Anglo-Chinese School Old Boys Association (ACSOBA). He was also Council Member of the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) for the period 2001/02. Mr Tang is an active member of the Young President’s Organisation (YPO), membership of which is by-invitation-only and held position of Chapter Chairman for the period 2001 – 2002. He is currently also a member of the World President’s Organisation (WPO).



Mr Yatiman Yusof was former Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, and MP for Tampines GRC. He served as a Member of Parliament for five terms. In his 22 years as an MP, Mr Yatiman has held several key appointments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts. He was elected the Member of Parliament (MP) for Kampong Kembangan Constituency in 1984 and served as one of the MPs for the Tampines Group Representation Constituency from 1988 to 2006. He played a big part in the progress of the Malay community together with the Malay MPs, under the different leadership of Dr Ahmad Mattar, Mr Abdullah Tarmugi and Assoc Prof Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, and has managed to create a more positive political environment among the Malay community.

Mr Yatiman also held key positions in *Berita Harian* and *Berita Minggu* up to 1986. He has been appointed Board Member of the 9th NParks Board with effect from 6 June 2006.



NLB's Executive Management Programme: "Perspectives in Web Intelligence and Terrorism Research"

By Ms Veronica Chee, Senior Librarian, Publishing and Research Services

The Publishing and Research Services Division (PRS), NLB, organised its inaugural Executive Management Programme on 10 April 2006. Executive Management Programmes are high-level conferences, forums, roundtables and briefings organised for management and business communities to interact, share ideas, exchange information and to keep abreast with the latest developments in specialised knowledge sectors.

Held at the Hotel Rendezvous, the conference *Perspectives in Web Intelligence and Terrorism Research* aimed to orientate practitioners and researchers to new technologies and approaches towards web intelligence, enable participants to understand the information landscape of political violence and terrorism, its current state and the amount of information available for public consumption, and foster a network of political violence and terrorism research learning community in Singapore.

With the sponsorship and support from the US Embassy and the Nanyang Technological University, the conference featured international as well as local speakers from Singapore. These included Professor Edna Reid, Terrorism Informatics Track Coordinator from the University of Arizona; Dr Brad Robison, Information Centre Director with the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism; Professor J. Srivastava from the University of Minnesota; Professor John Harrison, Head of Research at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, NTU; Dr K.I. Sudderuddin, Former Director with the Resilience Division of MICA and Mr Ronnie Tan, Reference Librarian with PRS. The keynote address was delivered by Mr R. Ravindran, former Member of Parliament for Marine Parade GRC and former Chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Defence and Foreign Affairs.

A total of 64 participants from organisations and ministries such

as the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, Internal Security Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Home Team Academy, Singapore Police Force and Ministry of Defence attended the conference.

For the remaining year, another three programmes will be organised focusing on the areas of copyright, impact measurement and Asian collection leadership.



Former Director of National Library Honoured

Mr R. Ramachandran, Executive Director, National Book Development of Singapore has won the "CONSAL Outstanding Librarian Award". The award was given by CONSAL – a regional organisation of librarians in Southeast Asian Countries founded in 1970. CONSAL, honoured Mr Ramachandran at its Conference Gala Dinner, in Shangri-La, Manila, on 27th March 2006, for his contribution to library development in Singapore and the region.

Mr Ramachandran paid tribute to his mentor, former Director National Library, Mrs Hedwig Anuar and his colleagues at the National Library Board and the Library Association

of Singapore "without whom libraries in Singapore could not have developed to a world class standard"



Mr Ramachandran receiving his award from Mr Alex Byrne, President, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

Commenting on library development in the region, he said, "libraries in this part of the world have great potential as the region develops and focuses on education and training. Libraries will play a leading role in life long learning and along with schools will become the most important institution, impacting education, developing the potential of readers, students and researchers by facilitating ready access to relevant and reliable content worldwide." Mr Ramachandran said, "the award was particularly meaningful as it was given by my peers whom I hold in high esteem and by CONSAL which has nurtured me since its formation in 1970."

Japanese Imperial Couple Visits the Knowledge Icon

On the second day of their three-day visit to Singapore, 9 June 2006, Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko visited the National Library. Waving flags, 700 students lined the walkway to welcome the Imperial Couple. As they made their way to the main lobby, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko stopped to greet many among the enthusiastic crowd.

The royal guests came to the library bringing their personal donation of 18 books that spoke volumes of their private interests. Some books are even penned by the Emperor and Empress themselves and will be displayed for public reference later.

The Imperial Couple watched a special performance put up by 13 Primary Two students from Concord Primary School. They are also members of the kidsREAD programme in their school. KidsREAD is a nationwide reading programme targeted at children from the lower income families.

A group of lower secondary and junior college students who take Japanese as a third language were

also specially selected to meet Their Majesties. Accompanied by Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Minister in attendance and his wife as well as Ms Lim Soo Hoon, Chairman, NLB, Dr N Varaprasad, Chief Executive, NLB, and other selected Board Members of NLB, the Imperial Couple proceeded to tour the National Library. They were shown the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library's Singapore and Southeast Asian

Collections, including a letter written by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819.

The Imperial Couple also signed the NLB's guest book before departing. To mark this visit, the Japanese Foundation also donated 500 books to the National Library. To promote cultural exchange between Singapore and Japan, the foundation has been donating books to the National Library since 1981.



Front row, 2nd from left: Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Minister in attendance, Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko.
Back row, 6th from left: Ms Lim Soo Hoon, Chairman, NLB and Dr N Varaprasad, Chief Executive, NLB engrossed with the skit performance.

Singapore Honours – An Exhibition

Join us in honouring some of our country's most distinguished citizens at the *Singapore Honours* exhibition at the National Library.

The inspirational and heart-warming exhibition features a glittering collection of medals that have been awarded to extraordinary Singaporeans like Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, Lt Gen (Retd.)

Winston Choo and Ms Elizabeth Choy, Singapore only war heroine. You will also get to see a whole array of medals from The Prime Minister's Office and the Singapore Civil Defence, amongst many others.

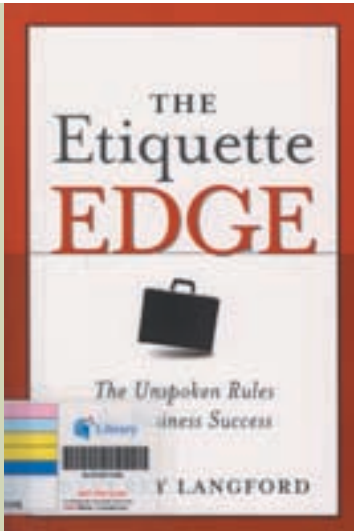
In the "Distinguished Citizens" hall, you will be touched by tributes to the late Dr Alexandre Chao and the late Mr Heng Yeow Pheow,

both of whom gave their lives selflessly while in the very act of saving lives. Also, learn more about how Singaporeans like Major Kadir (SCDF) and BG (Dr) Lim Meng Kin made major sacrifices to help others in time of tragedy and distress.

The exhibition is open to the public from June 22 to August 31 2006.



Book



The Etiquette Edge: The Unspoken Rules for Business Success

by Beverly Langford

Publisher: New York: AMACOM, 2005 Call No.: R 395.52 LAN

After years of bookish pursuits, graduates will certainly benefit from this crash course on manners in the business setting.

The first half of the book highlights the virtues of being gracious in our everyday dealings with people, while the second half showcases “best behaviours at work” that would have a positive impact on colleagues, bosses and prospective clients.

Written in plain, straightforward language, the bite-sized chapters plus the summary and action plan presented at the end of every chapter make this a highly readable book on business etiquette for both newcomers to the corporate world as well as for those re-entering it after some years away.

The Heart of Geylang Serai

Publisher: Singapore: Kampong Ubi Citizen's Consultative Committee, 2005

Call No.: RSING q959.57 HEA-[HIS]

This book honours the history and spirit of Geylang Serai, a cultural enclave and favourite place for Singaporeans to visit during the fasting month of Ramadan.

The evolution of Geylang Serai from a rural *kampung* settlement to the urban town it is today is wonderfully captured in these pages filled with pictures and anecdotes. Through the eyes of generations of Geylang Serai residents (including the *cheng tng** seller who set up his stall there in the 1960s), not only is the *gotong-royong*** of Geylang Serai vividly enacted, but also the tensions and havoc of the political and racial riots during the 1960's.

* popular Chinese dessert

** Malay phrase meaning “spirit of working and living together as a community”



Blossoms in the Wind: Human Legacies of the Kamikaze by M.G. Sheftall

Publisher: New York: NAL Caliber, 2005 Call No.: R 940.544952 SHE-[WAR]

This book explores “kamikaze” psychology while tracing the dramatic events that led to the frenzied attacks on the Allies during World War II.

The study of kamikaze pilots is especially relevant now with the proliferation of suicide bombing incidents in recent years. Sheftall, an American scholar residing in Japan, based his book on research and interviews with Japan's last remaining kamikaze corps survivors. While stressing that the kamikaze “cult” was ruled by a “fanatical devotion to a lost cause”, Sheftall nevertheless shows sympathy for the Japanese ideal of honourable death in his poignant accounts of the lives of the kamikaze pilots.

Reviews

Bibliografi Sastera Melayu Moden compiled by Safian Hussan, Siti Aisah Murad & Fadzil Agussallim
 Publisher: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1985
 Call No.: 016.8992305 BIB-[LIB]

Sebuah bibliografi yang mengandungi senarai karya sastera Melayu moden yang pernah diterbitkan dari tahun 1925 sehingga 1980. Ia merangkumi senarai antologi karya kreatif seperti novel, puisi, cerpen, drama dan juga kumpulan esei kritikan dan kajian sastera.

Buku ini telah dibahagikan kepada dua bahagian. Bahagian pertama adalah susunan mengikut abjad penulis/pengarang/penyelenggara dan bahagian kedua menurut judul buku. Ini memudahkan pembaca untuk membuat rujukan. Selain itu, kesemua judul karya-karya penulis tersebut telah dikumpulkan di bawah nama sebenar penulisnya walaupun terdapat juga nama pena mereka. Buku ini amat berguna sebagai sumber rujukan kepada orang ramai, khususnya para pengkaji sastera.



锦绣文章—中国传统织绣纹样 高春明著

Publisher: 上海: 上海书画出版社, 2005 Call No.: RART 746.440951

《锦绣文章—中国传统织绣纹样》分为上下卷。上卷对于传统织绣纹样在中国文化史上所扮演的角色有详细的解说，并以图文并茂的形式概括织绣工艺的发展状况及传统纹样的构成因素、时代特征等。下卷则收录了各式传统纹样图板，以龙蟒、凤凰、珍禽、瑞兽、花卉、虫鱼、人物、宗教、几何及寓意分类介绍。对于这些经常被采用的纹样，书中都有加以解释其纹样在历史上的演变及所代表的意义。书中收录的照片达上千张，不只有服饰的整体照，还有放大刺绣细节的照片。

书中还收录了中国织绣文物出土、收藏情况一览表及主要参考文献（包括中文、日文及西文文献），对于有兴趣钻研传统织绣纹样的读者有很高的参考价值。

著者高春明先生曾编撰《中国服饰》、《中国历代妇女妆饰》、《中国服饰五千年》等著作，作品大多已翻译成多种语文且荣获多个国内外奖项。

திரை இசை அலைகள் by வ.மணசு

Publisher: மணிவாசகர் பதிப்பகம், 2003 Call No.: R ART 782.420022 VAM

தமிழ்நாடு அரசின் முதல் பரிசு பெற்ற, துண்டு பாடலாக வெளிவந்திருக்கும் திரைப்பட இசை அலைகள், திரையிசையின் எழுபது ஆண்டு வரலாற்றைப் பற்றி சொல்லித் தரும் ஆய்வு நூலாக கருதப்படும் இது கருத்தியல் ரீதியாக திரைப்பட இசை அலைகளின் வரலாறு, வளர்ச்சி, தாக்கம் ஆகியவற்றை ஆய்வு செய்துள்ளது.

இக்கலை அலைகள் அரவே வெளியிடப்பட்ட அக்கலை திரைப்பட இசை அலைகளின் வரலாறு, வளர்ச்சி, தாக்கம் ஆகியவற்றை ஆய்வு செய்துள்ளது. திரைப்பட இசை அலைகளின் வரலாறு, வளர்ச்சி, தாக்கம் ஆகியவற்றை ஆய்வு செய்துள்ளது. திரைப்பட இசை அலைகளின் வரலாறு, வளர்ச்சி, தாக்கம் ஆகியவற்றை ஆய்வு செய்துள்ளது.



SMS Your Enquiry: SMS Reference Service @ the National Library

By NeoTiong Seng, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library Board

Imagine you are on the move, in a taxi, the MRT, or simply enjoying your coffee on the sidewalk. Something is bugging you. There is that report you have to submit in a few days' time, and you have no clue where to get the information. Why not simply take out your mobile phone, and SMS (Short Message Service) your enquiry to us at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library? The number is **9178 7792**.

The SMS Reference Service, the latest initiative from NLB, was launched during the FIND IT campaign on 11 April 2006 to bring convenience to our valued users. The service is targeted at educators, designers, entrepreneurs, researchers, consultants, academics and tertiary students who need to find the sources to answer their information, reference and research needs. This facility adds to a suite of email, fax, phone and onsite reference services currently provided by reference librarians, and gives customers the option to pose their queries from virtually anywhere.

Why SMS?

Worldwide, the trend to provide greater accessibility for library users has motivated libraries to post

online reference enquiries. So why the choice of SMS as a mode of reference enquiry service?

Singapore's mobile phone penetration rate for February 2006 stood at 99.8%, a 0.7% increase from January 2006. [Statistics on Telecom Services for 2006 (January – June): <http://www.ida.gov.sg/idaweb/factfigure/index.jsp>]. Current interest in e-communication suggests that SMS is an ideal way to reach out to a greater pool of potential users of reference enquiry service. Add to it the portability of the mobile phone, it becomes obvious that SMS is a convenient form of enquiry service for library users who may not have the luxury of visiting the library due to their busy schedules or simply because they are always on the move.

There is, however, one main constraint in using SMS. Each SMS message is limited to 160 characters. Therefore, longer messages will be broken up into two or more. To overcome this problem, the Library delivers longer answers through a URL link sent to the user's mobile phone. Upon opening up the URL link, either through the mobile phone directly or via a computer, the patron can view the reply for a period of two weeks.

Current interest in e-communication suggests that SMS is an ideal way to reach out to a greater pool of potential users of our reference enquiry service.

What to Expect?

This service aims to help users obtain information in the course of their work or learning. For simple fact-seeking questions, users receive quick answers via SMS within a short time. For longer enquiries, we reply through email by the next working day.

Response to the service has been very encouraging. We have received over a thousand SMS enquiries within two weeks from the launch. Users generally find the service helpful and easy to use. Examples of reference questions asked include:

- *Where can I find good resources relating to setting up an eco business in Singapore?*
- *What is the history of Hoover Park Estate in Singapore*
- *Who founded the Teochew Building in Singapore?*
- *What is the annual cargo tonnage handled by PSA?*
- *What is the lowest temperature ever recorded in Pluto?*

This service is free of charge and users need only pay their mobile phone service provider the usual SMS charges.

So what's stopping you? SMS your enquiry now!

Operating Hours

Monday to Friday: 9am to 9pm
Saturday: 9am to 5pm
Sunday: 1pm to 5pm
Closed on Public Holidays

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 and Exhibitions at the National Library

"Excellent and moving. Very inspiring! I hope more of such programmes (based on dreams and compassion) will be organised on a monthly basis. Bravo!"

Lee Mei Chuen

On "*Insights to Humanitarian Efforts in Southeast Asia*"

"More of such programmes should be organised to strengthen the presence of the research institutes in Singapore. Issues dealt with are real and relevant."

Anonymous

On "*China as A Global Power*"

"It is wonderful to have lecturers and students working alongside with the participants, sharing design techniques and ideas. I enjoyed the session very much. There should be more of such hands-on sessions to share with the public."

Jean Lai

On "*Temasek Poly Design Show 2006 - Fashion Makeover*"

"Very innovative and high-tech gadgets used. Singapore is certainly advancing at a rapid pace. We should have more of such exhibitions to remind us of how we have progressed."

Lan Zhiwen, Singapore

On "*From Books to Bytes: The Story of the National Library*" Exhibition

"Interesting concept of pull-out displays and good selection of books."

Mdm Foo

On "*The Singapore Literary Pioneers Gallery*"

On Staff

"Thank you for all your efforts in trying to locate the relevant press report I was looking for. The search was very thorough. Thank you very much."

Abdul Aziz Abdul Wahab

For *Ambika Raghavan*

"Thank you for successfully locating the Wilson translation of the *Vishnu Purana*. I needed to read this text for my work and you have made that possible. You are great!"

George Dahl

For *Lee Huey Shin*

"We (MOE) requested for a list of old books for reference and your staff were extremely helpful in facilitating the process. Would like to specially compliment your library officer, MsYap Lay Hong. She was very patient and helpful."

Angeline Jude Yeo

For *Yap Lay Hong*

"Many thanks for your help and the information! I really appreciate your effort and I will go today to the library to have a look at the books you have recommended. I look forward to researching the mentioned sources!"

Francisco

For *Yit Chin Chuan*

"Thank you very much for hosting our staff and students yesterday at NLB! We had a most invaluable time, learning about the systems and history of our National Library. A most heartfelt "Thank You" from the Business IT diploma team from Ngee Ann Poly!"

Nellie Chew

For *Balbindar Kaur Dhaliwal, Chris Tang, Lee Huey Shin, Janice Chia and Foo Sue Chuein*

"We would like to specially thank Mr Yeo Kim Hee and Mr William Loh for their insightful sharing session, Mr Corey Khoo for all the co-ordination to make our Learning Journey and Community Involvement Programme possible, Ms Chow Wun Han and Mr Neo Tiong Seng for the informative guided tour as well as all staff of NLB who helped to make our visit a fruitful and meaningful one."

Mr Gan Chin Huat, Deputy Director / Schools East, Schools Division, Ministry of Education

For *Yeo Kim Hee, William Loh, Corey Khoo, Chow Wun Han and Neo Tiong Seng*

For library enquires, please call:

T +65 6332 3255

Operating hours: Mon - Sun 8am - 9pm

For reference enquires, please visit:

W www.nlb.gov.sg

For loan status and renewal, please call:

24-hour Library Automated Service

T +65 6774 7178

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