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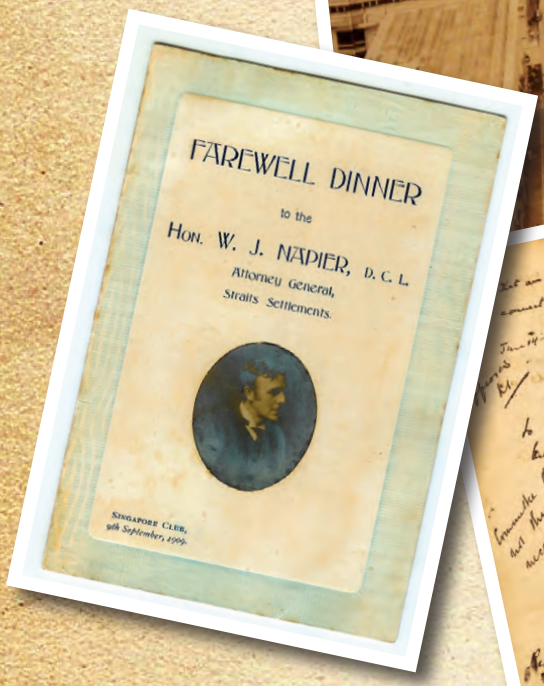

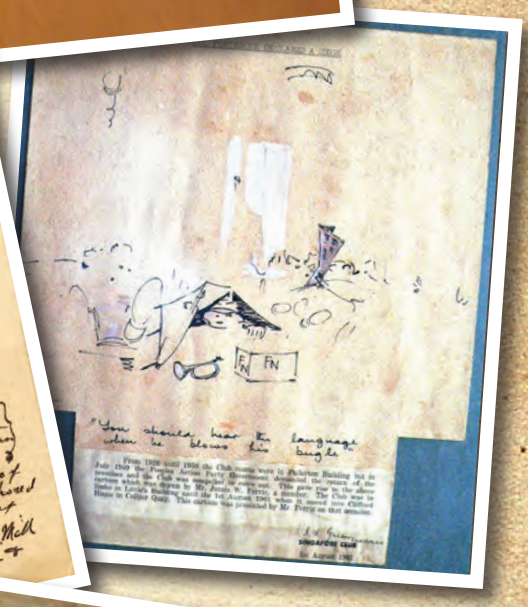

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EDITOR Angelina Phoon

SUB-EDITORS Joseph Maria Dawes
Kathryn Marian Lane
Suporn Arriwong

CONTRIBUTORS Chiam Ching Leen
Daw Win
Eunice Low
Ma. Theresa R. Milallos
Makeswary Periasamy
Roberta Balagopal
Sundari Balasubramaniam
Surin Pitsuwan
Vicky Gao
Zhang Liyan

DESIGNER AND PRINT PRODUCTION Viscion Media Group

Cover: Items from the Singapore Town Club Collection

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If you have any comments, questions or suggestions about this publication, please direct them to:

National Library Singapore
100 Victoria Street
#07-02 National Library Building
Singapore 188064
TEL: +65 6333 7977
FAX: +65 6333 7990
EMAIL: cis@nlb.gov .sg
www.nlb.gov.sg

Ms Ngian Lek Choh
Director
National Library

It is our pleasure to bring you a speech delivered by Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN, entitled "Knowledge Economy: Linchpin of ASEAN Integration". His speech highlights the importance of libraries in building a socio-cultural community in this region.

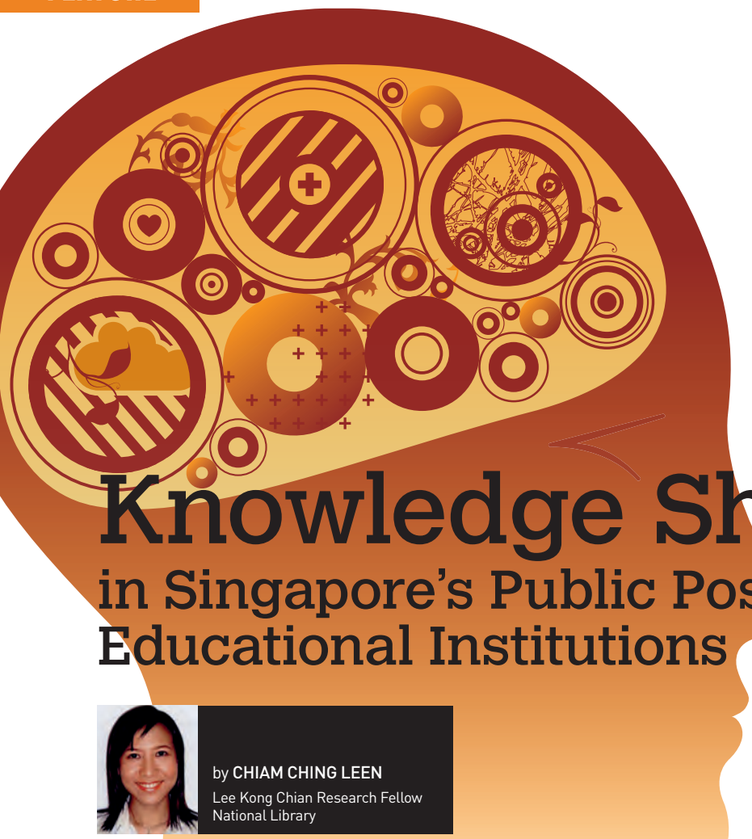
Four of our Research Fellows - Ms Chiam Ching Leen, Ms Daw Win, Ms Ma. Theresa R. Milallos and Dr Zhang Liyan - have contributed their research pieces to this issue. Ms Chiam's article, entitled "Knowledge Sharing in Singapore's Post-secondary Educational Institutions" provides interesting insights on the complex social negotiations that strongly influence the practice of knowledge sharing in Singapore's educational institutions. In another article, "Social Innovation in Singapore: Two Case Studies of Non-governmental Organisations", Dr Zhang examines the function of non-governmental organisations in Singapore by analysing the Chinese clan associations and grassroots organisations, which play significant roles to the nation-building of the city-state.

In Ms Daw Win's article, "Selected British Colonial Era Overseas Chinese Personalities and their Links to Communities and Establishments in Singapore, Penang and Yangon", she chose a few Chinese entrepreneurs from the three cities during the British rule to discuss the business empires they built, the legacies they left behind, and the lessons we could learn from them. In the article, "Women and Islam in Pre-nineteenth Century Aceh", Ms Ma. Theresa R. Milallos examined how Islam played a part in influencing gender relations in Aceh during the pre-19th century and highlighted that women in Southeast Asia and Aceh did enjoy more economic power and personal freedom before colonisation than their counterpart in the West, East and South Asia.

If you are interested to apply for the Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship, the brochure and application forms are available for download at HYPERLINK "http://www.nl.sg" http://www.nl.sg (click on "Site Map", followed by "Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship").

In this issue, we are also happy to present to you articles written by our Reference Librarians. In Ms Roberta Balagopal's article entitled "Building the Mosaic: In Search of Southeast Asian Contemporary Art Writing and Publications", she discusses the sources of Southeast Asian contemporary art writing and publications, its audience, and provides possible ideas on how it can be sustained. In our collection highlights, Ms Makeswary Periasamy brings us the Williams-Hunt Aerial Photograph Collection. This contains photographs taken mostly during and after World War II, while Ms Eunice Low contributes a piece on the collection of the Singapore Town Club, founded in 1862.

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue and we welcome your valuable comments and feedback.



Knowledge Sharing in Singapore's Public Post-secondary Educational Institutions

by **CHIAM CHING LEEN**
Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow
National Library

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The knowledge-based economy has ushered in a new era in which knowledge is at the center of productivity and economic growth. Against this backdrop, what is striking is that public post-secondary institutions, whose purpose is ostensibly for preparing our young people, who are essential to our nation's competitiveness and continuity, have now come under greater pressure to become more relevant in instilling knowledge sharing (Fullan, 2001; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004). Knowledge sharing has been promoted as a vehicle for greater knowledge productivity (Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 2000, Sallis, 2002). Notwithstanding this, evidence to date suggests that public post-secondary educational institutions are lagging behind in terms of knowledge sharing. A sense of this is revealed in Hargreaves' (2000) presentation at the OECD *de la Muette*, in which Hargreaveas has highlighted the dire lack of knowledge sharing in schools. Hargreaves reported, based on his anecdotal experience, that the principals he had engaged with admitted to having staff with several centuries of professional experience and yet only about 5 to 15 percent of their collective knowledge was shared by all the teachers. It was learnt that most of the teachers' professional knowledge is acquired through trial and error learning alone, in the isolated classroom, and therefore locked into their individual heads.

WHY DOES IT MATTER NOW, HERE IN SINGAPORE?

There are at least three reasons reinforcing the need for such a study in Singapore.

First, the changing demographic of the teaching workforce, in which a large pool of Singapore's most experienced teachers will retire in the next five years (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2005) highlights the need to make available the knowledge which is the legacy of these experienced teachers.

Second, there are clear indicators that regional countries have closed the gap with Singapore in terms of knowledge competitiveness (Bhaskaran, Khanna, & Giap, 2003, Huggins, Izushi & Davies, 2005). Singapore cannot afford to remain indifferent to such competition as the small nation has limited natural resources and that makes her vulnerable to world economic competition. Besides, there are stronger reasons for educational institutions in Singapore to promote knowledge sharing to remain competitive. The prospects of knowledge sharing in improving knowledge capacity, capability and competency seem much more possible in Singapore than elsewhere due to her "extra-educational" contexts and conditions, "because of scale of the system, because of concerted government and private sector and community commitment to education, because of synergies between ministries and sectors of the community" (Luke, 2003, p. 2).

Third, an examination of published articles retrieved from relevant databases[1] shows that no multi-institutional studies on knowledge sharing at the post-secondary (pre-university) have been undertaken.

There is so much riding on the need for knowledge sharing and that variations are likely across institutional contexts. Thus, the importance of an exploratory study, contextually-grounded in the naturalistic setting of post-secondary institutions to investigate how knowledge sharing is instantiated in Singapore's post-secondary educational institutions cannot be undermined. It is through continuing efforts at discussion, education, and demonstration that the necessary support for knowledge sharing studies in educational institutions can be obtained.

THE STUDY

This study begins with the effort in investigating and documenting portrayals of academic staff' and students' accounts of knowledge sharing experience at three public post-secondary institutions. The institutions were purposively selected to represent the three areas of Singapore's public post-secondary educational processes (i.e., the public polytechnic, junior college and vocational school level). Readers may refer to Table 1 for a summary of the three research-settings information. As the three post-secondary institutions cater to different groups of students and employ different educational strategies, it seems logical to expect that their requirements for knowledge will differ and so will their practices in sharing knowledge.

Since the focus is to obtain an understanding about the nature of knowledge sharing processes itself, as it is instantiated at three selected post-secondary institutions, case studies were deemed most appropriate (Yin, 1994, 2003), with the premise that knowledge sharing practice (a human affair that is tied to human behaviour) is a "complex instance," multi-dimensional and open-ended, often typified by multiple perspectives and competing judgments. Besides, underlying this is the recognition that human behaviours cannot be meaningfully understood simply as rule-governed acts; and that concrete, context-dependent knowledge is more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals (Cziko, April 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Each site constitutes a single case. The main data was collected from semi-structured interviews and supplemented with findings obtained from surveys, classroom observations, archival paper clippings on the institutions, community records and documents, institutional and governmental publications. A total of 65 interviews (average 40 minutes/interview) were conducted (although only 40 interviewees agreed to have their data published), and surveys were collected from 177 students and 49 staff. Fifteen classroom observations were made across the three sites. Findings from each case are used to determine if there exists a common set of institutionalised patterns across the different post-secondary educational settings. This blended approach is useful in providing fine-grained, detailed descriptions of classroom behaviours to generate more general assertions about ways staff can foster good

Table 1: Summary of the three research-settings information

Educational Institutions Understudied	Educational Approach	Predominant Learning Culture	Class Pedagogy	Modes Of Evaluation
Polytechnic (Org A)	Problem-based Learning (PBL) as exclusive educative approach	Task-centered	Student-led pedagogy	Team performance and individual assessment
Junior College (Org B)	Academic Lectures, Tutorial and Laboratory sessions	Examination-oriented	Teacher-led pedagogy	Mostly individual assessment, even in group work
Vocational Institute (Org C)	Technical Lectures, Tutorial and Practical Attachment	Activity-based	Teacher-led pedagogy	Team performance in project work and individual assessment

Note: Out of respect for the institutions, names used are pseudonyms

Table 2: Ranking of types of knowledge from (1) most important to (8) least important

Rank	Polytechnic (Org A)	Junior College (Org B)	Vocational Institute (Org C)
1	Knowledge about curricula	Knowledge on subject matter	Knowledge about general goals, purposes and values
2	Knowledge on subject matter	Knowledge on pedagogy	Knowledge on pedagogy
3	Knowledge about general goals, purposes and values	Knowledge about curricula	Knowledge about students' conceptions and difficulties
4	Knowledge about students' conceptions and difficulties	Knowledge about students' conceptions and difficulties	Knowledge about curricula
5	Knowledge on pedagogy	Knowledge about general goals, purposes and values	Knowledge on subject matter
6	Knowledge about parents' expectations	Knowledge from the reflections of other colleagues	Knowledge from the reflections of other colleagues
7	Knowledge from the reflections of other colleagues	Knowledge about parents' expectations	Knowledge about parents' expectations
8[1]	Knowledge about public's perception	Knowledge about public's perception	
8[1]		Knowledge about politics in the college	
8[1]		Knowledge from other related disciplines	
8[1]		Knowledge about staff's and students' emotional quotient	

Note: 8[1] These categories of types of knowledge were added by the academic staff and each had an equal number of respondents, hence, were ranked equally.

habits of knowledge sharing. Emergent themes were called into question or strengthened through triangulation.

FINDINGS

The findings yielded some individual differences as well as common features across the three cases. Of interest in this paper is the common feature they share. The common feature these organisations shared was that they took into consideration the needs and values of their students and the local communities of the school, although in Org A and B, the entrenched scheme of work (the subject matter) which usually ran along the contents of the syllabus often dictated the knowledge sharing practices in class. Another striking common feature was that most of them would not share their knowledge, unless they were asked or it was required of them as part of teamwork.

It was also evident across the survey findings from the three cases, that "knowledge from the reflections of other colleagues" and "knowledge about parents' expectations" were deemed to be less significant in terms of its importance (see Table 2). This finding provided empirical support to Hargreaves' anecdotal observations.

In triangulation of data, no instances in interview data contradicted the data from surveys, observations and documentations collected. Rather, interviewees' examples supported and clarified positions described by the survey evidence. Findings from the study clearly articulated participants' concerns with the assessors' influence and norms of the institutions (the persistence of educational "traditions").

In Org B, the academic staff generally perceived exam-oriented testing to be a primary inhibitor to knowledge sharing between academic staff and students. Academic staffs' accountability towards Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE) ranking system at Org B sanctioned a culture of putting priority on finishing the syllabus and favoured the transmission of explicit "testable" knowledge to seemingly passive students, at the cost of meaningful knowledge sharing sessions that could help further nourish students' knowledge. During the classroom observations, teachers' concern with the formal examinations was overriding and students generally did not seem to value "non-testable" knowledge. When efforts were made by certain teachers in sharing "non-testable" knowledge, students were seen to be disinterested, suggesting strongly that students were motivated by academic achievement which was much prized by students in Org B.

In the interviews, Org B's students further affirmed that testable content knowledge was valued more. Group work (such as the Project Work, which is part of the curriculum) was seen by the students as an activity that was felt to be inappropriate to be offered at the junior college level as it had been perceived as wasting time. Although a minority of the students saw the benefits of group work, the general sentiments of the students in Org B were that the Ministry would do better by offering the project work to those at the secondary school level. This finding was also supported in the survey, which clearly showed that Org B's students least valued the benefits of project work, learning communities and study groups when compared to students from Org A and Org C (see Table 3).

Another finding was that the Org B's students would only share their knowledge to those who approached them, rather than just share the knowledge with their peers whom they thought needed

Table 3: Self-reported student ratings of criticality of knowledge sharing mechanism in promoting knowledge sharing

	Average Evaluation*		
	Polytechnic (Org A)	Junior College (Org B)	Vocational Institution (Org C)
Project work	4.59	3.06	3.94
Learning communities	4.53	3.90	3.95
Story telling in promoting	3.03	3.37	3.48
Discussion forums	3.90	3.79	3.38
Student portals	3.92	3.31	3.16
Study groups	4.26	2.35	3.70

*The average evaluation is obtained by using the ordinal scale, 0=not at all to 5=critical.

that piece of knowledge. The general academic staff's sentiments from the interview data were that time spent on challenging non-routine problems and investigations would mean that they had less time to cover the syllabus for students to be adequately prepared for their examinations. Others had concerns with the time structure or work rhythm and how it affects knowledge sharing, with general sense that they would share their knowledge with their colleague if it is not thrust upon at the wrong time. Those were certainly pertinent issues that needed to be articulated if not addressed.

On the contrary, it was found that the group work assessment in Org A promoted knowledge sharing in Org A. It is interesting to note that at the beginning of the course, the majority of Org A's students had the tendency to hoard their knowledge as they were afraid that others would be on par with them or would perform better than them academically should they share their knowledge. The students confessed during the interviews that at the early stage, as freshmen on transition from having gone through all their educational activities through the traditional/mainstream didactic lecture styles, they had not been able to see the shared benefits of the Problem-based Learning (PBL) system and how they were mutually obligated to each other, and hence, were psychologically not prepared to share learning despite being in the same team. However, the students had generally, begun opening themselves up to knowledge sharing as they went through the system. When probed during the interviews (at Week 14 of their lessons), the students shared that the real need to share their knowledge began to gnaw at them. They revealed that as they attuned themselves to the requirement of the PBL environment, they saw the practicality of the need to share their knowledge/pool resources with other individuals. What is important to note here is that many students reported being able to surmount most of their initial adaptation problems and had come to terms with the requirements of the PBL pedagogy and become more open to sharing their knowledge. This change is apparently due to their realisation that the course demands in active PBL environment were more challenging and needed multidisciplinary knowledge to solve the problems. This in turn necessitates them to share their knowledge.

> Hoarding knowledge wouldn't really happen here because, after all, what we present will still affect our own grades. So, if we hide something, end up when we present something, the knowledge is not shared with the class then the grades will still be lower. So, most of the time, everyone will share their knowledge and try to make the best presentation out of it lor. (Transcript from Org A's student)

In fact, the reasons cited for the change in perspective was that knowledge sharing revealed the team's potential to accomplish the work in a timely manner and provided insights and the scope which was beyond the reach of the most capable individuals, as more often than not, the questions asked from the problem-based learning curriculum required multidisciplinary understanding of a domain rather than an understanding of a topic. Knowledge sharing enabled them to sharpen their desired understanding, skills and promote creativity, gain better grades and at the same time improve their learning. Some have also revealed that by sharing their knowledge, others tend to reciprocate, and this allows them to additional insights to solve the problem. However, when probed further, the underlying motivating factor was still the assessment as their grades were at stake.

Over at Org C, an interesting point was that almost all the academic staff had emphasised to the researcher that the students in Org C were a unique cohort. In their conversation, they always included references to the fact that they are teaching "the lower end that needs to be hand held. The Q4, the 25 percent of the population".

> They have low self-esteem, they are playful, attention seeking and their attention span is very short. So you must not force them to listen to you. Teacher talk is specific to most of the classes cause their attention span is only about 10 mins. So, if you want to tell them something, make it very short and make it very sweet. KISS - Keep it short and sweet. Cause the opposite is KILL. The students tell me this you know. They are very impatient, they want to learn, they want you to tell them quickly, then they will try to grasp the meaning and try to put it. They are not the type who will sit for hours and listen to you. They will show you their boredom by falling asleep on the table right in front of you. And they don't think it's wrong. So the approach must be very different from MOE. When it comes to academic learning, we are right at the bottom. Now, how do they learn? They learn by doing. They can't learn from the books. You try teaching them chalk and talk method arr, you will fail. So a lot of role play, a lot of experimentation, a lot of doing it, DIY (Do it Yourself). (Transcript from Org C's staff)

The academic staff also shared that they only taught practical knowledge that they deemed to be necessary to these students, while just mentioning the rest of the stuff in the curriculum. This perspective was very much the perspective that I heard presented in their classes. This perhaps was the underlying reason for the apparent, more subtle effects of assessment on knowledge sharing practice in Org C. The students provide evidence for this, as they perceive knowledge as something quite personal, the kind of experiential learning that can only be gained through experience, as described by the following quote:

> Knowledge to me is quite personal. Actually, in Org C most of the class go through things not just by book itself, but most of the time we will be practicing hands on. So, knowledge to me is very experience based. Because through books, you may understand, but when it comes to hands on, you might stuck there. You might not know how to do when you turn to the books, content in the book is quite limited to teach you how to do. It's more on one to one in showing the examples and the steps that needs to be done to obtain something. (Transcript from Org C's student)

Org C's students had varied and perceptive responses towards knowledge sharing, with some seemingly very open to knowledge sharing while some seemed utterly unbothered about making efforts to share their knowledge or for that matter, improve their own learning. They demonstrate that the students' thinking is affected by everyday life in the subjective postmodern world. The findings also reveal that family backgrounds, their current and previous geographical locations and other social factors influence the students' views.

When the student participants in Org C were asked for their views on what would motivate them to share their knowledge with others, a consistent consideration was the knowledge of the recipient 's personality and if the students sought the first move in asking. This finding is similar to those in Org B, in which the students revealed that they would only share their knowledge when they were approached, and not do it without someone initiating them to do so. However, students in Org C also implicitly spoke of the fact that their decision to share their knowledge was mostly mediated by their perception of the recipient's motivation in learning (if the recipient showed effort in learning) as well as their own confidence of the truth of the "knowledge" they held. They were also seemingly more open and more "mature" in their thinking about sharing their knowledge.

> Knowledge sharing from the lecturer down to students, it is certainly conducive. But between the peers ourselves, conduciveness of sharing knowledge is very low. Cause normally the people studying here, around 75 to 80 percent are not really motivated to absorb such knowledge. They just come here and let time pass by each day. So, it's very hard for us to share knowledge when you don't have knowledge as well. The level of knowledge for them is low and it's very hard for them to bounce back questions to us as well as their motivation is low as well. (Transcript from Org C's student)

It was also seen during the classroom observation that a variety of psychological factors such as the recipient's morale and negative attitude seemed to have affected the knowledge sharing practice in Org C. A recipient's short attention span, pride, stubbornness and resistance to change all affected the knowledge flow negatively. It was observed that the teachers generally stressed on building rapport and bonding with the students in order to open doors and to gain students' trust so as to try to change their low morale mindset. As one teacher shared:

> Once they trust you, and they know that you have a listening ear, whatever you ask them to do, they know it's for their own good and they will try their best for you. But the thing is never run them down you see. Even if they make mistakes, you have to point out very gently. Never never tell them you're stupid you know you can't learn blah blah blah so on. Try not to use any negatives la. Only positives. And our students most of them have problems. Most of them come from broken homes. So, in this school we have to counsel more than we teach. You have to give them some kind of mental strengths to fight obstacles. And one of the frame we use is "Children of Heaven". I think you lose your shoe, you have an old shoe, no shoe, but still you can win in the race. Just stay there and keep on running!

It is also interesting to note that most of the staff teaching in Org C were mostly former students of the institutions. As such they were feisty loyal to the school because they were brought up by this school and they understood what the students had gone through.

DISCUSSION

Taking the insights gained from this paper, it is apparent that the academic staff's and students' knowledge sharing practices varied due to the different arrangements of the workplace/field experience settings as well as the differences in the ways participants made sense of their various encounters in these settings. To put them in a continuum, Org A's academic staff role can be seen at the extreme end of the continuum. They typically viewed their role as primarily upholding the standards of PBL rather than realising individual potential, with learners responsible to a far greater extent for their own learning. It was found that Org B's academic staff generally felt that their primary responsibility lay with their students' academic welfare, with them being the guardians who were responsible for "spoon-feeding" their students through the conventional didactic lecture-tutorial approach with "testable" knowledge. This approach nevertheless, encourages the function of disseminating information and demonstrating methods and therefore, tends to promote learning by accumulation rather than promoting a collaborative climate for knowledge sharing to excel. The academic staff in Org C meanwhile generally saw their roles as one that shifted from academic communicators to that of advisers and mentors, where their tasks were to help their learners achieve the working and learning goals that they had set out and only secondarily, to act as academic authorities for their learners.

The type of assessment structures of academic staff and the students' perception of knowledge sharing practice were also apparent. As was seen from the findings in this study, the "task-centeredness" and "activity-centeredness" in Org A and C required the participants to draw on other learners' diverse backgrounds, prior knowledge and networks to solve their problems. This meant that participants needed to organise the subject matter around the task of solving the problem and not the discipline. In this manner, significant interdependence promoted active sharing, collaboration, cooperation and coordination. Conversely, although group work was promoted under the revised curriculum in Org B, given that the large proportion of the assessment was still largely based on individual evaluation, with academic staff accountable to school's ranking. This competition appeared to constrain knowledge sharing among students in Org B.

LIMITATIONS

This study is not without limitations. Two general caveats are worth mentioning at this point. First, it is worth highlighting that this study sought to obtain the portrayals of the academic staff and students in ways that revealed the "insider" rather than some external or objective voice. Those were unique views on the context described and that they were no more and no less than the self-reported views of the academic staff and students who were approached for the study. Hence, findings from this inquiry cannot be generalised to academic staff's or students' experiences in other institutions. Nevertheless, such understanding can help stimulate thoughts on the barriers to knowledge sharing in other post-secondary educational institutions with similar characteristics. Second, as this study relied on self-report data, it may very well be that participants perceived factors within their control and those that showed them in a positive light as being motivators whereas they perceived factors out of their control as opposed to factors that showed them in a negative light as being inhibitors of knowledge sharing.

IMPLICATIONS

This study provides some starting points for future research. The existence of differences in terms of knowledge sharing behaviour due to the assessment method employed and its associated teaching and learning practices across the three institutions, for example, raises more questions such as, which type of curriculum is desirable for knowledge sharing, given that the participants' knowledge sharing practices have been shown to be entangled by their institutions' representational production of what is most valued (i.e., what the assessment values).

As the insights gained showed that knowledge sharing is effectively a complex social practice, a systemic approach to research is needed to fully understand the nature of knowledge sharing behaviour of the academic staff and students to allow us to see the dependencies that exist between other factors affecting knowledge sharing as the current study is not able to do so decisively. As it stands, it is likely that efforts in policy recommendations that attempt to alter instruction or curriculum in educational reform effort that could improve knowledge sharing capability in Org B will likely face skepticism from the academic staff and students unless accompanied by explanation about how assessment will also be altered or is not a barrier, bearing in mind that the bulk of the A-level examination is set by the external board. This recognition means thinking about how others can get involved in producing the identities of the participants and the value they should hold towards knowledge sharing. This suggests that a deeper understanding of the topic be explored to broaden the investigation initiated by this study.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have attempted to present my rendering of the nature of knowledge sharing, grounded in the accounts of academic staff and students from three selected public post-secondary institutions in Singapore. Documenting the thoughts of these participants provides a window into the complex social negotiations in operation in knowledge sharing practices in Singapore's educational institutions. The insights found from these participants' account from differing institutional types provide a good staging ground of the influences on using student assessment in promoting/constraining knowledge sharing practices in their institutions. The insights from the study also provide a first small step towards understanding why knowledge sharing works for some educational institutional types, but not for others. This could be useful in informing curriculum designers, planners and developers about the crucial enactment aspects of the curriculum and its relations to knowledge sharing practices. The challenge then is in creating educational institutions context that are capable of optimally structuring the knowledge flow so that development from knowledge sharing can occur.

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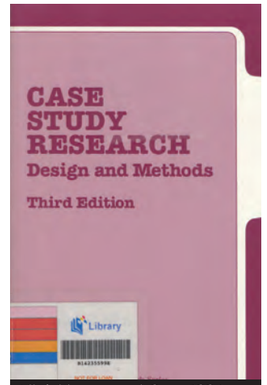

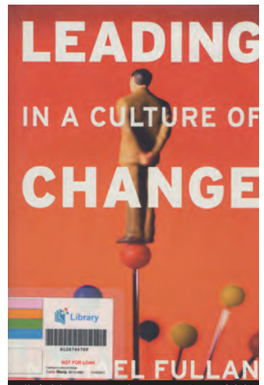

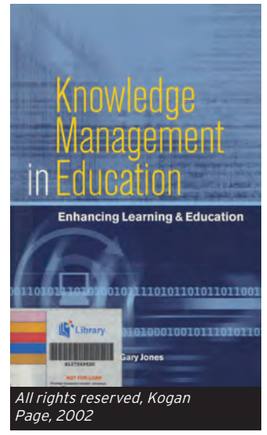

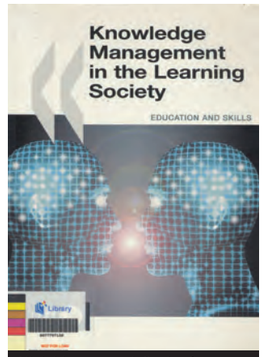

ENDNOTE

1. The following databases were accessed: Academic Search Premier (via EbscoHOST), Australian Education Index, British Education Index, ERIC (via EbscoHOST), Education Research Complete (via EbscoHOST), Singapore's National Institute of Education's Dissertations and Theses Abstracts, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, and ProQuest Education Journals.

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Selected British Colonial Era Overseas Chinese Personalities and Their Links to Communities and Establishments in Singapore, Penang and Yangon

by **DAW WIN**
Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow
National Library

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 19th century saw mass immigrations from mainland China. There were the "push" factors such as internal wars, famines and starvation, corruptions and struggles for power within the Qing courts on one side and on the other side, the "pull" factors of jobs and wealth opportunities in the Southeast Asian region under the British rule.

In this paper, we will discuss the migration of mainland Chinese into the British colonies in Southeast Asia with focus on Rangoon[1], Penang and Singapore.

The three cities were integrated during the British rule. Some road names are common; for example, "Armenian Street" and "Beach Road" are found in Penang and Singapore. There are also Burmese street names such Irrawaddy Road, Mandalay Road and Rangoon Road in Singapore and Jalan Burma in Penang.

The stories of Chinese entrepreneurs selected for this commentary showed how some humble mainland Chinese ventured into regions beyond their imagination. They had no financial means or assets but prospered in the second homeland, becoming leaders in their own right. Many left legacies which remain till today.

PENANG, MALAYA (1786)

This was the first of the British trading outposts in Southeast Asia when Captain Francis Light, a British naval officer and trader for the British East India Company, sailed into George Town Port on 17 July 1786 with a fleet of three naval vessels comprising a small civilian team and some naval staff. Penang became the first base for the company in Southeast Asia.

It was recorded that most of the inhabitants in Penang then were indigenous Malays and a sizeable community of some Chinese had already settled there prior to the British arrival.

SINGAPORE (1819)

In 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles landed on the shores of Singapore (then known as "Temasek" and later "Singapura") with an offer to the island's local rulers for a British factory to be established there. The offer looked too good to refuse as the island was then only a fishing port. Singapore soon grew to become the most important British colony and strategic trading post.

One of the reasons cited for this success is its geographically strategic and deepwater seaport position. The territorial separation from the Malayan Peninsula also made it an ideal and easy port of call for the merchant navies from East and West.

Together with Penang and other Straits Settlements territories, Singapore came under the direct administration of the East India Company from 1819–1867. In 1867, Singapore attained the status of Crown Colony asserting dominance over the affairs of the region.

Singapore retained the premier position as the seat of administration for the British colony until Rangoon was added to the Crown Colony in 1885. However, to this very day, Singapore remains a strategic entrepot and the Asian cross-road between the East and the West.

RANGOON, BURMA (1885)

It all began when the British launched the Second Anglo-Burmese war in 1852, seized control of Lower Burma and then transformed Rangoon into a commercial centre and political hub for British Burma.

During the peaceful and economically stable years in Southeast Asia under the British rule, more mainland Chinese ventured out and most landed in Rangoon where jobs and opportunities were in abundance. The Irrawaddy Delta region then referred to as the "Rice Bowl of Asia" received most of the migrants.

British Rangoon, with its spacious parks and lakes and mix of modern buildings and traditional wooden architecture, was then also known as "the garden city of the East". It was recorded as the most prosperous city in Southeast Asia. Towards the early 20th century, Rangoon had public services and infrastructure on a par with the City of London[2].

TRADE AND COMMERCE

After Britain restructured its crown colonies following the annexation of Burma, the Southeast Asia region became stable. Trade and commerce grew. Trading of rice and other staple food and commodities, especially teak wood from Burma, led the growth. Shipping became the essential transportation and communication infrastructure for the region.

Many shipping lines were established to transport people and goods[3].

Carriage of goods by sea complemented overland transportation modes. It was a faster option. A single journey, for example, from Rangoon to Singapore that would have taken months could be shortened to weeks by the sea-route.

The shipping industry helped to fuel the growth of commerce and communications, expanding trade within the region and China. However, control of trade and commerce still rested with the British and Europeans merchants and traders as they enjoyed preferential treatments and could influence the British Administrators.

THE BURMESE OVERSEAS – CHINESE SHIPPING TYCOON LIM CHIN TSONG (1867 – 1923)[4]

Lim Chin Tsong and his wife, Tan Gwat Tean, in Colombo, Sri Lanka 1920
Courtesy of Davey Lim
Copyright: Burmah Oil Company Limited

Lim Chin Tsong (LCT), a Rangoon-born Chinese merchant, became an important intermediary of the Burmah Oil Company[5].

His father, Lim Si Xing, a rice merchant, came from Tong An County in Fujian Province, China, in 1861 and settled in Rangoon. When conducting businesses with the British and Europeans, due to a lack of understanding in the English language, the elder Lim found himself handicapped. He therefore sent his son to St. Paul's College, then a premier English school in Rangoon. It was this education that laid the foundation for LCT and equipped him in his later years.

LCT operated his business from an office in China Street, Rangoon[6]. He had a network of oil distributors which extended throughout British Burma.

With some ocean-going vessels: SS Glenogle, SS Seang Bee, SS Seang Choon, SS Seang Kok, SS Seang Lee, among others, LCT established his *Seang Line of Steamers* ("The Chinese Steamship Company of Rangoon") plying from Rangoon to Singapore, Penang, Hong Kong, Swatow and Amoy (Xiamen).

Kim Keng Leong & Company (Chop Kim Cheong), Penang, was the agent for *Seang Line*. Soo Bee Kongsi (Rangoon Kerosene Oil), Ooi Saik & Company (Rangoon – Penang rice merchants) were also agents for LCT located at 127 Beach Street, Penang[7].

Chin Tsong Palace at Xie De Garden in Yangon, Myanmar
Courtesy of Edwin Tan

Seang Line Singapore agency was vested with Giang Hoe Company which was first located at 64 Japan Street (now called Boon Tat Street)[8], Singapore. It later moved to 129 Cecil Street, Singapore[9].

As a result of his shipping line and the growth in trade and commerce, LCT prospered and his influence grew. He became a member of the legislative council and was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by the British Throne.

In Rangoon, he built a palatial residence in one of the affluent quarters of Rangoon. It is shaped like a star and furnished with mural paintings. "Xie De Garden", as it was known, was graced by many rich and influential personalities and foreign dignitaries during that time.

The palace, still standing today, was home to former Burmese presidents and ministers. It is currently occupied by the Ministry of Culture.

AS AGENT FOR BURMAH OIL COMPANY (BOC)[10]

At first, LCT's exclusive agency with BOC got the British managers, seated at their control office in Glasgow, Scotland, gratified at having such an energetic man in full control of their kerosene sales. However, he lacked financial management ability, which became his downfall. His accounts were reported to be in such a mess that personally, LCT did not even know how much he owed and what his profits were. All he knew was that he was cash-rich.

From 1908 onwards, after being awarded the agency for the company's product sales in the province, he became a serious bad paymaster to Finlay Fleming & Company, BOC's managing agent in London, for the purchases he made. By the beginning of 1911 he reportedly owed several hundred thousand sterling pounds.

Apparently, as it was later found out, the transactions from all his different business activities were jumbled up. He was managing steamships and a match factory, rubber plantations and tin mining without keeping a proper audit of the transactions. It became impossible to distinguish where one account ended and another began. In those days, there were also no auditors.

Before the managers could terminate his services, LCT had resigned and was outside Burma. He had taken over one of his own ships, the SS *"Seang Bee"*, to fulfill a lifetime's ambition to visit London together with his family, friends and business associates; a trip that was crazy enough to inspire an ironic comment (would be good to quote that 'comment') due to his mounting debts. But, in reality, he recouped his expenses from the cargoes the liner carried.

In London he called on David Sime Cargill and other directors, who entertained him and his party at the Hyde Park Hotel. All business talks were carefully avoided until a formal meeting was later held in the office. A generous final settlement scheme was finalised and they parted in complete amity.

In November 1923, at the age of 53, LCT reportedly died from a

heart attack when the telephone company threatened to disconnect his telephone line for non-payment and aggravated by an untimely and unwelcome "communication" from his bank.

MEDIA AND NEWSPAPERS

When the shipping industry grew, it facilitated growth of the media, in particular, the newspapers. Several papers were established and these were meant to meet the needs of the Chinese communities which had grown in numbers. The overseas Chinese wanted to become more informed on the happenings in their regions and to foster communication links with the communities at large.

The newspapers also played important roles in maintaining communication links and educating the then migrant communities about their establishments such as the formation of clan houses where the new arrivals and impoverished migrants, who had fallen on hard times, could seek help from.

Many who had lost communications with their families in the mainland could also publish their news. The newspapers became links for lost relatives.

THE WORLD'S OLDEST CHINESE NEWSPAPER - KWANG WAH YIT POH[12] CH'NG YEEN AUN (1867 – 1938)[13]

Kwong Wah Jit Poh at Dr Sun Yat Sen Penang Base - 120, Armenian Street, Penang
Courtesy of Penang Heritage Trust

He was founder and Chairman of the Rangoon and Penang Kwong Wah Yit Poh[14], one of the surviving oldest Chinese language newspapers.

He was born in Quan-zhou village, Tong An County, Fujian Province, China. He migrated to Burma at the age of 18. At first, he stayed in a village in Lower Burma working as a paddy farmer. He later moved to Rangoon and set up "Chop Guan Kee", a grocery shop.

In 1904 he met Kang You-wei[15], a Royalist from the Qing Court in Rangoon when Kang visited Burma. Kang persuaded him to establish a base for the "Bao Huang Hui[16]" in Rangoon Chinatown.

In May 1905, Qin Li-shan, a Hunan-born Revolutionist, also visited Rangoon to spread the China Revolutionary ideology. Qin met with Ch'ng and exposed Kang's scheme to preserve the Qing's throne. Kang's selfish ambition was to stage a revolt against the Empress Dowager Cixi using the powerless Emperor Guangxu to assume control of the Chinese court.

After meeting Qin, Ch'ng abandoned the "Bao Huang Hui" and joined the Tung Meng Hui in Rangoon.

KWANG WAH YIT POH AND TUNG MENG HUI

In August 1908, Ch'ng Yeen Aun, Xu Zang-zhou and other overseas Chinese in Rangoon raised funds to set up Tung Meng Hui's political mouthpiece and called it "Kwong Wah Yit Poh", a name preserved to this very day. Ch'ng became Managing Director of the newspaper. He was able to spread revolutionary thoughts through various articles published in the newspaper. Dr Sun Yat Sen also recommended Ju-zheng, Yang Qiu-fan and Lu Zhi-yi as principal editors to assist Ch'ng.

On 20 November 1908, Tung Meng Hui Burma branch held its inaugural meeting at Rangoon. Ch'ng Yeen Aun was unanimously elected by overseas Chinese in Burma as Chairman[17]. Ch'ng quickly set up sub-branches in the main cities of Burma. In recognition of his active achievement Dr Sun Yat Sen personally wrote him a letter to express his delight and approval[18].

The British however raised their objections to the political contents of the newspaper and the involvement of Tung Meng Hui. As a result of this, Ch'ng packed up his operations in Rangoon and moved over to Penang where the newspaper remains to this very day.

THE CHINESE PATRIOT AND NANYANG SIANG PAU[19] TAN KAH KEE[20] (1874 – 1961)

Tan Kah Kee was invited by Mao Zhe Dong to attend the first China National Day celebration
Courtesy of Tan Swee Hoon

Much had been written about Tan Kah Kee as an entrepreneur and philanthropist who played a major role in the establishing of schools and universities to educate the young. The Chinese newspapers in fact played very central roles as the means for communication in the days before the proliferation of the radio and television as seen in the case of Kwang Wah Yit Poh.

Tan Kah Kee (TKK) was instrumental in the establishing of Nanyang Siang Pau, a major Chinese daily, on 6 September 1923 in Singapore. Nanyang Siang Pau reportedly became one of the most influential commercial Chinese newspapers in Southeast Asia.

It was reportedly the first commercial Chinese newspaper in Singapore and its influences was felt throughout Southeast Asia as well as China. The Chinese daily newspaper was distributed in Penang by Khiam Aik (Penang Branch) and in Rangoon jointly by Tan Kah Kee & Company (Rangoon Branch) and Aw Boon Haw's Tiger Balm Rangoon office.

In 1932, however, he lost control of Nanyang Siang Pau and the paper was acquired by his son-in-law, Lee Kong Chian. It was then merged with The Sin Kok Min Press.

EARLY DAYS AND THE SETTING UP OF BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

In 1890, at the age of 17, TKK came to Singapore and worked at Chop Soon An[21], a sundry shop and rice trading firm, owned by his father. He learned the trade and ventured out on his own when he was 30 years old.

During the time when he worked at Chop Soon An, his father taught him the rice importing trade. Rangoon, during the British Burma administration, was known as the "Rice Bowl of Asia" and rice grown there was exported to Singapore via Penang which was also under the British administration. He later diversified his operations further into pineapple and rubber.

Advertisement of Tan Kah Kee & Co. and its branches
Courtesy of Nanyang Siang Pau, 8 October 1923

He tried his hands at growing pineapple which was harvested and canned under his own brand "Sin Lee Chuan". He became successful in the pineapple canning business and was acknowledged the "Pineapple King".

He reportedly invested about $2,000,000 (Straits currency) in a rubber planting business and jointly set up the Khiam Aik Rubber Processing Factory with Penang Rubber Company. Khiam Aik was based in Penang.

Tan Kah Kee & Company had three other branches in Rangoon; one in the main capital of British Burma and one each in two other cities - Bassein (situated in the Irrawaddy Delta) and Mandalay (where the Royal Palace is located). At its prime, Tan Kah Kee & Company had a total of about 70 branches in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

However, when the Depression crept into Asia, his fortunes declined. In 1937, Tan Kah Kee & Company had to fold up.

THE PROMINENT CHINESE PATRIOT

Through Nanyang Siang Pau and his business enterprises, TKK displayed his Chinese patriotic spirit when he was actively involved with the Tung Meng Hui-Nationalist movement under Chiang Kai-shek. He was a member of the Tung Meng Hui in 1910 and his network of influence, besides mainland China, was spun around the region in Singapore, Penang and other parts of Malaya and Rangoon.

However, he was disillusioned with the rampant corruptions within the ranks of the Chiang Kai-shek movement. He later switched camp to support Mao Tzu-Tung's Chinese Communists Party.

Newspaper banner of Nam Kew Poo

TKK was a man who would not give up without a good fight. He loved literature and he understood the strength of the media and the written word. During the period 1946 – 1959, after losing control of Nanyang Siang Pau, he took control of Nam Kew Poo (南僑日報) and developed the paper into an equally influential media. He reportedly wrote many of the articles in Nam Kew Poo to pursue his political campaigns against Chiang Kai-shek.

Among the many articles he wrote in Nam Kew Poo, were famous headline articles: "美援蔣必敗", "祖國光明在望" and "辨匪".

He was relentless in his efforts to establish links with the overseas Chinese. For about nine months in 1940, he led the China Comfort Team from Nanyang and travelled throughout mainland China visiting no less than 15 provinces. The China Comfort Team was from the China Comfort Mission, which comforted the wounded and assessed the war conditions in China. Its leader Tan Kah Kee represented both the Singapore and the Southseas China Relief Funds. Among the other regions he travelled to were Mandalay and Rangoon in Burma, which was at the Yunnan border. The Chinese communities in Burma warmly welcomed him. He was reportedly a very charismatic speaker who could captivate an audience for more than three hours.

It was reported that on 22 December 1940, when he was in Penang, he met up with Wu Tie Cheng, a special envoy of the Kuomingtang Government, whose mission was to dissuade TKK from the Chinese Communist ideology. He firmly held his ground.

On 30 March 1941, TKK presented a reportedly powerful public talk at the Second Nanyang Cities Representatives Meeting attended by the Singapore and Malaya overseas Chinese communities. The speech was published in the Chinese newspaper 現代日報 in Penang.

During the Second Sino-Japanese War (7 July 1937 – 9 September 1945), TKK was regarded as one of the prominent ethnic Chinese Malayans who provided financial support for the Chinese resistance efforts in the mainland. He organised many relief funds under his name and that made him a target sought by the Japanese. When the Japanese landed in Singapore he fled to Java, Indonesia. There, he was protected and housed by many friends and past business associates and their families. While he was in Java he penned his two-volume autobiography, "Nan-qiao-hui-yi-lu"[22].

TKK's most famous charitable work was founding Xiamen University, which he privately funded until 1936. His grandchildren

commented that he left no inheritance for them and even took out personal loans to fund the operations of the university for 16 years, an act of sacrifice that is recognised and honoured even to this very day.

Besides Singapore, TKK had a very strong influence on the Chinese communities in Penang, Burma, several southern China cities and Hong Kong. When he passed away in 1961, the communities held memorial services to honour the man who had made a difference in their lives.

BANKING

When shipping and commerce grew, banking naturally developed alongside to provide the monetary support activities. Initially, banking activities were confined to foreign exchange and remittance services which catered for the traders paying their suppliers and sellers of commodities and also for the migrants who wanted to remit monies to their homes in the mainland.

Banks eliminated the risks of losing some hard-earned monies to robbers if the traders or migrants had carried gold and silver or cash. One could just deposit funds in one branch and then cable instructions to the other branch to pay to the order of a certain party in that country or locality. The creation of the Straits Dollars in the 1898 provided a uniformed monetary system managed by the banks to facilitate trade and commerce.

From the seat of government of the British Crown Colony in Rangoon, several banks were formed. Some of the names of banks remain to this very day but others were merged, bankrupted and driven out of business.

ENTERPRISING BUSINESSMAN, BANKER, PATRIOTIC CHINESE AND PHILANTHROPIST TAN EAN KIAM[23] (1881 – 1943)

Tan Ean Kiam
Courtesy of Berita OCBC

Born in China's Tong-An County, Fujian Province in 1881, Tan Ean Kiam came to Singapore with his father when he was 18 years old. He started out as a general worker and later ventured into business on his own. He became a successful businessman and merchant, and later as one of the first managing directors of the Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited (OCBC), currently Singapore's third largest bank that is publicly listed on the Singapore Exchange.

THE BUSINESSMAN AND BANKER

In 1908, Tan Ean Kiam set up Chop Joo Guan where he traded in rubber commodities which became very highly priced because transportation became difficult in World War I. His rubber trade became lucrative, providing him with handsome profits.

With the money he made from rubber, on 28 June 1919, he formed the Oversea-Chinese Bank Limited (OCB)[24], one of the component banks of today's OCBC, with Oei Tiong Ham[25], then known as "Sugar King" of Java, who subscribed a total of $1,000,000 (Straits Dollars) as the starting capital.

The bank unexpectedly fell short of liquid cash and so, to increase their capital, Tan Ean Kiam[26] and Ang Boon Kim, another smaller shareholder and employee of OCB, travelled to Penang and Rangoon to seek more funds to support the bank's working capital.[27]

To their surprise, it was the Chinese traders in Rangoon Burma, which was then under the British rule, who were most enthusiastic about investing in a bank. They reportedly subscribed large amounts of funds thus saving the bank from liquidation. Rangoon was no strange place to Ean Kiam; he was there in 1896 with his father and he knew the potential of the place.

After returning to Singapore with the funds to capitalise the bank, he proceeded to set up branches in Penang and Rangoon to facilitate the new investors and also in recognition of the support he received from the oversea Chinese in these two cities.

Two years later in 1921, The Oversea Assurance Company Limited, the insurance arm of the bank, was formed with the same board of directors and its branches were located at the same addresses in Rangoon and Penang.

However, on 31 October 1932 the world went into deep economic depression. OCB merged with Ho Hong Bank and the Chinese Commercial Bank to form OCBC. To recognise the efforts that Tan Ean Kiam had contributed towards the formation of the bank, he was made its first joint managing director together with Yap Twee who later retired in 1933 leaving behind Tan as the sole managing director (1934-1941).[28]

OCB had its branch in Penang in 1912. The bank is located on the main street of the banking district and easily recognised by its marble façade. OCBC was in operation in Penang from the day of the merger with the Ho Hong Bank, the Oversea- Chinese Commercial Bank in 1932.[29]

THE PATRIOTIC CHINESE

In 1916, Ean Kiam became a member of the Singapore branch of Tung Meng Hui, the nationalists' revolutionary movement of Dr Sun Yat Sen. As a successful businessman, he was able to donate financially to support the organisation. He was also reported to be instrumental in the acquisition of the land and property for the construction of the Wan Qing Villa which later became the Tung Meng Hui Singapore base.

When Yuan Shikai[30] proclaimed himself Emperor in 1916, despite universal objections especially from the Tung Meng Hui members, he donated towards the "Yuan Shikai Bei Fa" war campaign to overthrow Yuan Shikai.

THE PHILANTHROPIST

Ever mindful of his role in society, Tan contributed generously to many charities. When he passed away in 1943, he left behind a large sum of money and properties from which he willed the future earnings to be used for charity.

The Tan Ean Kiam Foundation was founded in 1956 and managed by his son, (the late) Tan Tock San, located at 15 Philip Street #09-00, near Raffles Place, Singapore 048694. A row of 30 shophouses, located next to the Katong Shopping Centre, appropriately named "Ean Kiam Place", was his bequest.

Among other donations, it was reported that 80% of the rental income generated from Ean Kiam Place funded:

- The Singapore Thong Chai Medical Institution
- Singapore Clan Association: Tong An Hui Guan
- The National Kidney Foundation
- The Lee Kuan Yew Scholarship Fund
- Tan Ean Kiam Kiam Service-Learning Resource Centre

THE "RAGS TO RICHES" BANKER AND THE FIRST OPEN UNIVERSITY OF MALAYSIA YEAP CHOR EE[31] (1867 – 1951)

Yeap Chor Ee
Founder of Ban Hin Lee Bank and land donor of Yap Kongsi and Yap Temple
Courtesy of Penang Yap Kongsi

Wawasan Open University, the first open university of Malaysia located in Penang, which opened its doors in 2007, was made possible because of a bequest by the late "towkay" Yeap Chor Ee.

At the age of 17, Yeap migrated from China with nothing more than the clothes he wore. Through sheer hard work, diligence and wise investment decisions over a period of about 50 years, he built his financial empire and provided for his descendents. The Wawasan Open University is a vibrant monument to Yeap Chor Ee's benevolence in the cause of providing education for the youth of the land from where he had made his fortune.

EARLY DAYS

Yeap Chor Ee was born in Nam-An, a small village town located in Fujian Province, China. When he landed in Penang, he started his living by working as an apprentice in a shop and lived a frugal life.

By a serendipitous meeting, he got to know Goh Teik Ji, who became his benefactor. Goh Teik Ji was then a Penang-based import/export agent of Oei Tiong Ham, the "Sugar King" of Java (Indonesia). Goh financed Yeap to start a small grocery shop of his own.

When World War I broke out, the price of sugar, which is an essential commodity, rose as a result of the disruption in the transportation services. Yeap's shop naturally became the exclusive dealer for sugar and thus began his journey into prosperity.

BAN HIN LEE BANK (BHLB)[32]

From the profits of the sugar deals, he invested in some other ventures, including tin smelting and rice trading[33]. In 1918, he also set up a remittance and foreign exchange business at his shop through a banking account with then Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank of Malaya in Penang. The business helped to seed the founding of BHLB, the first overseas Chinese commercial bank in Penang, Malaysia in 1935.[34]

BHLB indeed remained "the one and only Penang-based Chinese bank" for the next 70 years. Its landmark building, built in 1934, was designed by Ung Ban Hoe, the first Chinese architect, who was then practising with Stark & MacNeill, a British architect firm in then British Malaya.

BHLB had an original branch office building in Singapore along Upper Circular Road[35]. It was strategically located near the OCBC building in Chulia Street and the United Overseas Bank building along the Bonham Street. It had other branches in Sabah and Sarawak, East Malaysia. Yeap Chor Ee's marketing strategies at BHLB is reportedly used by May Bank and OCBC.[36]

The bank has since undergone several mergers and is now part

Commerce International Merchant Bankers at 43 Beach Street, Penang (former Ban Hin Lee Bank)
Courtesy of Penang Explorer

of the Bumiputra Commerce Holdings Berhad, the second largest banking group in Malaysia trading under the name of the Commerce International Merchant Bankers (CIMB Bank). By the time the merger took place, BHLB group had diversified into investments and property holdings and developments. The business is now managed by Stephen Yeap Leong Huat, his grandson.

HOMESTEAD – THE FORMER RESIDENCE AND CURRENT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE OF WAWASAN OPEN UNIVERSITY

Homestead, a grand mansion sited on a large piece of richly endowed open land, was designed by renowned British architect, James Stark of Stark & McNeil in 1919. It was originally built for Lim Mah Chye, an overseas Chinese merchant during that time. Lim Chin Guan, the son of Lim Mah Chye, reportedly controlled the Eastern Shipping Company in 1918 and according to historical records, the shipping company, which was formed in 1907, owned about 40 sailing ships.

Wawasan Open University (Homestead) in Penang
Photograph taken on 29 June 2008
Courtesy of Edwin Tan

The mansion was later acquired by BHLB and it became the home of Yeap Chor Ee and his descendants. In accordance with his will, his grandson, Datuk Stephen Yeap Leong Huat, recently handed the property over to the Ministry of Education for Wawasan Open University to commence its operations.[37]

The 30,000 square feet Homestead mansion, which sits on a prime 1.44 ha site, houses the campus chancellery, administration office and the new building behind houses lecture theatres.

A 2.4 metres high bronze statue of Yeap Chor Ee was placed at

the front entrance of the Wawasan Open University in memory of the Chinese philanthropist whose rags-to-riches story is an inspiration to many locals.

OTHER LEGACIES

In 1924, the Yap Kongsi building, designed by Chew Eng Eam, a Straits-born Chinese architect, was built on a piece of land donated by Yeap Chor Ee. The building and the Yap Temple are dedicated to the Yap Fujian clan ancestries and their patron deities.

Jalan Yeap Chor Ee or Yeap Chor Ee Road in Penang was named after his death to remember and honour his contributions. The Yeap Chor Ee Charitable & Endowment Trust was established in 1941, and in 1952 the Yeap Chor Ee Endowment Trust was set up.[38]

In Rangoon (Yangon), Burma, Yeap Yan Bin, the son of Yeap Swee Tong who was Yeap Chor Ee's nephew, built the three-storey building which is located at 372 Strand Road, Rangoon Chinatown. When Swee Tong's father died, Yeap Chor Ee became the guardian. He taught them to trade and supported them financially in business.

Swee Tong's younger brother Yeap Swee Ah[39] conducted rice exports from rice mills owned by Yeap Chor Ee. These were located in Wa-ke-ma Town, in the Irrawaddy Delta. During the period of the Japanese occupation, the Yeap siblings in Rangoon exported rice to Penang and Singapore on board Chinese junks owned by Yeap Chor Ee, who was appointed as provisions supplier for the Japanese military which had occupied Singapore.[40]

When Yan Bin took over Ban Lee Heng[41] in Rangoon (a firm with similar sounding name to Ban Hin Lee) he started importing "two fish" brand of cooking oil and other commodities from Singapore. Although the property is still occupied by Swee Tong's grandchildren, Yeap Chor Ee's tablet and photographs are still placed and honoured in this property.

CONCLUSION

What can we learn from these Chinese personalities? Firstly, they knew no fear when they set out from their familiar home ground. They were instinctively driven from comfortable surroundings to search for new frontiers in their hunger for success or desire to seek new riches. Secondly, for those who had already achieved success or accumulated riches, their home ground became too small for their entrepreneurial ambitions. They needed new trophies to add to their treasure chest. Thirdly, there were those ousted by circumstances beyond their control. They had to find new grounds to write their success stories for future generations. Finally, there were the glimpses of riches unknown to them. There is a certain mystery as to where the characters described here would have wanted to explore by choice, but by chance they were driven from their comfort zones by circumstances beyond their control.

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Dr Helen Reid, retired researcher in reviewing the paper.

ENDNOTES

1. "Rangoon" is the former name for "Yangon" during the British Rule until 1989 when "Burma" officially became known as "Myanmar".
2. Falconer, John et al. (2001), *Burmese Design & Architecture*. See also B.R. Pearn, "A History of Rangoon".
3. During that time there were also other shipping lines, such as Straits Steamship (founded 1890) controlled from Singapore; British India Steamship Navigation Company (founded 1856) controlled from Brisbane, Australia and the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company (founded 1865) controlled from Rangoon.
4. 林振宗
5. Burmah Oil Company was acquired by Castrol and later merged into British Petroleum.
6. Lim Chin Tsong had a very unique telegraphic address: "Chippychop".
7. Microfilm NL 1190, NLB Singapore: *The S'pore & Malayan Directory,* Penang- Merchants, Professions & Co., p. 310.
8. Microfilm NL 1192 & 1193, NLB Singapore: *The S'pore & Malayan Directory,* Singapore- Merchants, Professions & Co., p. 106 & p. 98.
9. Microfilm NL 1190, NLB Singapore: *The S'pore & Malayan Directory,* Singapore- Merchants, Professions & Co., p. 174.
10. A two-volume history of Burmah Oil Company written by T.A.B. Corley: A History of the Burmah Oil Company, Vol. I, 1886-1924, published 1983; Vol. II, 1924-66, published 1988. The Burmah Oil Company was founded in Glasgow, Scotland in 1896 by David Sime Cargill.
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Women and Islam
in Pre-nineteenth Century Aceh

by **MA. THERESA R. MILALLOS**
Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow
National Library

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on gender in Aceh has always been a site of tension. This paper seeks to understand how gender relations have changed and continue to be transformed by the dynamism of Islam's interpretation in Aceh. Considerable research[1] has already shown that women in Southeast Asia, including those in Aceh, enjoyed a higher level of economic autonomy and personal freedom prior to the colonisation period compared to those from West, East and South Asia. After the December 2004 tsunami however the discourse included how women may have been responsible for the disaster[2], and consequently how they should be controlled. How is it possible to rationalise these seemingly incongruent facts? In what ways and to what extent can this 'high status' of women be observed in Aceh historically and at present?

TRANSITION TO ISLAM IN ACEH IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

While the exact period of Islam's entry into Aceh is highly contested[3], recent discoveries of tombstones in Kuta Lubhok, Aceh Besar district give evidence of a Muslim community as early as the 12th century (McKinnon, 2006, pp. 30-32). The initial stage in this expansion and adoption process had been marked by intense interaction between Islam and local belief systems, culminating in the *wujuddiyah* doctrine of Hamzah and Shamsuddin made popular during the reign of the great Iskandar Muda. Here, Islam provided a powerful rationale for state-building under the authority of a mortal, but God-endowed, sultan. When Iskandar Muda[4] died however what followed was a tumultuous era of Islamic renewal and reformism. Aceh as a sultanate under the reign of Iskandar Thani was by then already a consolidated empire that had nothing more to prove. The entry and popularity of a more legalistic and scriptural brand of Islam promoted by Nur al-Din ar-Raniri[5] exhibited a more 'modern' and innovative sultanate, one that was increasingly intolerant of local influences, and more importantly had the end-view of pacifying the numerous and increasingly powerful foreign Muslim traders in Aceh (Reid, personal communication, 5/09/2008). The culmination of this stage was a 'fierce heresy-hunt' led by ar-Raniri against the *wujuddiyah* doctrine (Ito 1979).

By the 17th century, Aceh's power was waning. The sultanate was shrinking fast following the loss of many of its territories and the weakening of trade in its ports. Traditional power had shifted away from the sultan into the hands of *orang kayas*, who subsequently put four queens on the throne from 1641 to 1699 (Reid, 2005, p. 94-111).[6]

By 1675, with the death of Safiyyat al-Din, the first of Aceh's queens, the sultanate was confined only to north Sumatra (Djajadiningrat, 1979, p. 62). A more tolerant Islam, advocated by Abd al-Rauf al-Sinkili who had supplanted the increasingly unpopular ar-Raniri who had begun to lose favour with the court, characterised the long reign of the four queens. This period was marked by a return to 'syncretism and inclusiveness', however with *adat* gaining more ground in the countryside (Reid, personal communication, 5/09/2008).[7]

These 'waves' of Islamic adoption, reformism, and renewal had profound consequences to gender relations in pre-19th century Aceh. They raise some pertinent questions: to what extent had Islam become entrenched in the Acehnese sultanate during the early modern period, and to what degree was Islamic law actually observed? Which segments of the population fell squarely within the ambit of Islamic piety and practice during this time? Answers to these questions will hopefully clarify what it means for women during this period to enjoy 'high status.'

PATTERNS IN THE ADOPTION OF ISLAM AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES TO GENDER RELATIONS

Following the patterns of intensification and weakening of Islamic influence in Aceh, it is not surprising to encounter observations like those made by Francois Martin, who wrote in 1602 of women who could walk about openly with breasts exposed, or had ears adorned, heads uncovered, and who were even able to bathe naked in the river without fear of being accosted. Adultery received a high penalty – execution or the cutting off of body parts. By 1621, Augustin de Beaulieu noted that caning, a ubiquitous Islamic practice, was also a popular way to administer punishment (Reid (Ed.), 1995, pp. 57-60 & 66-67). Yet, Martin also recorded that sexual promiscuity appeared to have been acceptable in the early 17th century (Reid (Ed.) 1995, p. 58). This was corroborated in the 19th century by Hurgronje, who, even while stressing the social importance of a bride's virginity before marriage, also noted that there existed "comparative freedom of intercourse between the sexes in Aceh" (1906, pp. 328-346).

The early to mid-17th century was characterised by behaviours that may not have been acceptable to a more legalistic and scriptural interpretation of Islam. There prevailed a relatively permissive environment where 'hermaphrodites' abounded and prostitution was tolerated. The king of Aceh could keep more than 300 concubines, and women could literally venture into the masculine 'outside' world of commerce and trade. This kind of behaviour was not condoned among the elite classes, however, as notions of morality in their circles would certainly have been much higher.

Note the relative ease of gender intermixing in this late 19th century photo. Photo reproduced from C. Snouck Hurgronje. 1906. The Atjehnese. All rights reserved, Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1906.

Regarding the issue of female concealment, contemporary debate has been rife as to whether it is a traditional, and therefore 'indigenous', practice[8]. In many areas in Southeast Asia since the 16th century, the evolution of sovereign states and the economic gains from trade had produced increasingly stratified social structures. In 1602, for instance, the *orang kayas* in Aceh began to sport long fingernails on the thumb and little finger, a sign that they did not need to do work by hand (Lombard, 1991, p. 58). Their women, in turn, were also freed from labour, removed from the "sexually dangerous and aggressively masculine 'outside'", and thus concealed from the public gaze (Andaya, 2000, p. 241).

In Aceh, female concealment appears to have acquired a mystical quality during the era of the four queens (c. 641-1699). While Aceh is not unique in having placed four queens on the throne[9], it appears to be the only sultanate that had strict requirements for a queen to be "a maiden, advanced in years, and connected by royal blood with the ancient royal line" (see Marsden, 1986, p. 453-454). Unlike Hindu Java in the early 16th century, which Pires observed had numerous unmarried women (1944, p. 177), Aceh certainly did not have a comparable traditional regard for maidens who did not marry (Hurgronje, 1906, pp. 295, 343).

As in many Muslim societies, the notion of 'outside' (*keluar*) versus 'inside' (*dalam*) to delineate masculine and feminine spheres of activity appears to have been influenced to a large degree by the principles of Islam. Andaya (2000, pp. 231-253) has argued that the higher the social class of a woman and her family, the higher the societal constraints placed on her to withdraw from the 'outside'. As monarchs, however, the queens straddled both the 'outside' world of politics traditionally occupied by men, and the 'inside' world of mysticism and the home allotted to the female. While women could never be *caliphs* (the Prophet's deputy as the Messenger of God) because they belonged to the wrong sex (Mernissi, 1994), conditions of emergency may warrant their political ascendancy. In such circumstances, seclusion acts to balance the already dangerous situation of crisis, which precipitated female ascendancy in the first place. Indeed, this 'asexualisation', or the process by which one is rendered virtually sexless, is heightened by the insistence on a queen being an 'old maid,' the life stage when a woman is often regarded as least desirable. Having passed the childbearing stage, she is also considered to be wiser and "gender neutral" (Andaya, 2000, p. 236). At the same time, because royal power is held as highly masculine, these queens maintained large harems, like their male counterparts (Andaya, 2000, p. 244). For a male monarch, the possession of a large harem was obviously a symbol of prestige and

potency[10]. A sexless and undesirable female monarch, therefore, assumes mystical power through the display of a large retinue of women under her protection.

These notions about female power however were never static; they signalled the foregoing ideologies of the time. The deposition of sultana Kamalat Syah at the end of the 17th century due to a *fatwa* from the Chief Qadi of Mecca, for example, is very much reflective of the waves of Islamic reformism and renewal and the religious turmoil sweeping across Aceh.

One other issue complicated by gender is that of inheritance, which highlights the tension between Islam and *adat*. Beaulieu in 1621 noted that, "The king is heir to all his subjects if they have no male children." Thus, among the aristocracy, having a son appears to have been critical to ensure that wealth does not revert to the sultan upon the family patriarch's death, as a "father cannot bequeath any inheritance to his daughter" (Reid (Ed.), 1995, p. 70). While such an observation may have been applicable only during particular reigns of despotic rulers such as al-Mukammil and Iskandar Muda, it is still markedly different from the *adat* custom characteristic of Aceh, where parents pass on house and rice lands to their daughters. In the late 19th century for instance, Hurgronje (1906) observed that the pattern of inheritance regarding immovable property was through daughters.

On the matter of polygamy as sanctioned by Islam, it is commonly the upper classes, notably the aristocracy, royalty and state officials, who practiced numerous marriages, while the common man married a second wife only when he was divorced or widowed (see Hoesin, 1970, p. 56-57). When polygamy did occur, the man must give some of his property as inheritance to the new (and usually younger) wife in order to convince her parents to agree to the second (or third) union (see Lombard, 1991, p. 70).

The debate on *adat* and Islam has focused on the harmony and tension between the two, the alleged misogyny of Islam, and the bilaterality purportedly inherent in *adat*[11]. While 17th century Aceh did not yet have a tradition of codified laws as sophisticated as that which existed in 15th-century Melaka[12] (Hadi, 2004, p. 217), *adat* has been observed to govern the system of landholding and inheritance. However, unlike the development of *adat* in other areas of maritime Southeast Asia, *adat* Aceh has allegedly been imposed by the rulers rather than originating from the people themselves (Riddell, 2006). Both the village head (*keucik*) and the hereditary district chief (*uleebalang*) adjudicated using *adat*, while the *ulama* administered Islamic law when appropriate (Reid, 2006a, p. 9). Consequently, the tension between the two systems is not just theoretical or ideological in nature, but rather, strikes deeply at the core of their rationale. Such a consideration has implications on what 'indigenous' practices and laws mean vis-à-vis what are alien to the society, and more importantly, on how 'Acehneseness' may be defined (Reid, 2006a, p. 9).

As for their impact on women, Wazir (1992) believes that the major difference between *adat* and Islam is that generally the former provides the basis for women's power and autonomy, while the latter supports male power. The "overall pervasive norm of 'bilaterality'" (Wazir, 1992, p. 5) endowed in *adat* is most obvious in matters relating to land, economics, kinship and marriage, which reduces hierarchical differences based on gender. Thus, young unmarried women may be marginalised just as much as young unmarried men because of age, marital status and class, rather than simply on the basis of biology or sex (Wazir, 1992, p. 10).

FEMALE ROLES IN PRE-NINETEENTH CENTURY ACEH

The diversity of female roles in pre-19th century Aceh reflects the relatively active participation of women in society. Andaya (2006, p. 48) emphasised the role of wives and even concubines, not only in perpetuating royal bloodlines, but also in legitimating rule and brokering peace through intermarriages[13]. Unlike Melaka, however, where the wives of sultans were clearly supplied by the *bendaraha* line (Wazir, 1992, pp. 38-43), there is no clear indication about the origins of royal wives and even concubines in Aceh. Nonetheless, women's involvement in palace intrigues, rebellions and conspiracies have been numerous. The queens themselves are far from being mere figureheads. Indeed, the longevity of the reigns of the queens (Safiyyat al-Din ruled for 35 years, and both Zakiyyat al-Din and Kamalat Syah for 11 years each), with the exception of Nakiat ad-Din (1676-8), is comparable to the long reigns of earlier Acehnese sultans (see *Adat Aceh*, 1958).

Like other kings in Southeast Asia, notably Sultan Agung of Mataram and the king of Angkor, the sultans of Aceh have followed the practice of surrounding themselves with many women (Reid, 1988, p. 637). These women have played the roles of royal entertainers who were "not usually seene of any but such as the king will greatly honour" (Foster, 1940, p. 93, 131), "ambassadors of goodwill"[14], and guards. Women guards and attendants certainly enjoyed a reputation as being more loyal and trustworthy than men, and less likely to conspire against the king. Some sultans also observed the practice of giving away these women as 'partners' to their favourite allies[15].

Other sources of income for women came from being money-changers and funeral 'criers'. From Francois Martin, we learn that some women were hired to weep and grieve at funerals (see Reid (Ed.), 1995, p. 61). In addition, similar to accounts documented in places such as early Pasai, Cambodia, Siam, Cochin China, the Moluccas, and Melaka, women in the urban areas of pre-19th century Aceh ruled the markets (Reid, 1988, p. 634). Although there is a dearth of materials that address directly the role of women in the context of early modern markets, observations made by William Dampier in 1688-9 give anecdotal evidence of their involvement in the economic life of the sultanate[16]. Along the streets of Aceh, women 'money changers' sat and hawked cash. However, as most of them were slaves, these women were not entitled to keep any of the money traded.

In 17th century Aceh, slaves comprised those who were either too poor, or those who were brought back to Aceh as war booties. Being a slave, however, did not mean total bondage to the owner (Reid (Ed.). 1995, p. 114). A slave can theoretically pay off his bondage, otherwise whatever he owned reverted to his master upon death. However, it is unclear whether a woman bonded for labour can seek to redeem her freedom the same way as a man. The *Undang-Undang Melaka* (Liaw, 1976), on the other hand, is clear: the debtor can only be a man, and his onerous debt responsibilities did not extend to his wife and children if he dies. *Adat* Aceh demands that children borne of female slaves had the same rights as those of free women (Hoesin, 1970, pp. 51-52). In contrast to Islamic law, which

Women and young girls in late 19th century Aceh.
Photo reproduced from C. Snouck Hurgronje. 1906. The Atjehnese.
All rights reserved, Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1906.

considers the children of female slaves as slaves themselves, *adat* Aceh treats them as free. However, their names bear reminders of their shackled origins, and are dropped only after a generation or two later (Hurgronje, 1906, p. 22).

THE 'HIGH-STATUS' OF WOMEN

While it is certainly difficult to view women as one cohesive group in pre-19th century Aceh, it is very clear that those born into a higher class family enjoyed greater social status than lower-ranked men, both in terms of material wealth and social prestige (Errington, 1990, p. 7). However, high-born women had more social constraints placed upon them than low-born men or women. The waves of Islamic adoption, interpretation and implementation, as well as the historical processes that occurred during specific periods, resulted in a continuous process of clarifying social expectations, behaviours, and even aspirations among different groups of women bound together within particular social classes. Thus, in this sense, social 'status' as indirectly rationalised and supported by the different interpretations of Islam throughout Aceh's history appears to have been a double-edged blade for women.

Reid (1993b, pp. 71-72, 74) estimates the city population in 17th century Aceh to be at least 100,000, with the urban area measuring approximately 12km^2. If we consider this number conservatively, given that the sultan's palace itself housed at least 3,000 women (certainly during Sultan Iskandar Muda's reign), we could suppose that the direct impact of Islam would be highest on those who lived in the palace or the walled area, next among those residing within the general urban areas, and weakest in the rural or marginalised areas.

What is clear regarding gender relations in pre-19th century Aceh is that the advancement of urbanisation and modernisation brought with them concomitant social changes. That women actively participated in these changes is unquestionable. Bound within the expectations, constraints and opportunities accruing from their particular social classes, women are shown to have contributed to and gained from the perpetuation of prevailing social conditions.

CONCLUSION

Pre-19th century women in the Islamic sultanate of Aceh were certainly products of their specific time periods and circumstances. Although they did not necessarily experience either complete equality or inequality with men, they did enjoy relative economic leverage and self-autonomy that enabled them to live fairly independent lives. Of course, this statement has to be tempered by the fact that as the sultanate was progressing to become a highly stratified urban area, women from different classes enjoyed varying degrees of 'high status'. In addition, it is true that throughout cycles of social adoption and interpretations of Islam, social expectations also encounter change, to reflect prevailing notions. These changes, in large part, have contributed to the ambiguity inherent in Acehnese gender relations, which manifests until today.

Islam is shown to have flourished in Aceh's urban areas. Thus, it is not surprising that the most 'devout' are to be found in urban areas, where historical processes involving key figures emerged first, with consequences that subsequently reverberated to the rest of society. In contemporary Aceh, the use of the *jilbab* is ubiquitous in the cities, notably Banda Aceh, rather than in the more remote interior regions. In relation to the delineation between masculine and feminine roles, this would not necessarily have been a problem in areas where the need for labour was critical, regardless of gender.[17] In urban areas where social status and class freed some segments of the population from manual labour, gender differentiation became more stringent. Thus, it is not surprising to learn that community members and religious leaders around urban areas are the ones who generally blamed women for the 2004 tsunami.[18] After all, urban areas are fertile ground for both devotion and decadence, and the processes that start in the center typically lose intensity as they spread outward. Women themselves have been shown to actively support these discourses and ensure that social norms are followed. From the 16th to 17th centuries when Aceh emerged as an Islamic state, women were actively involved in the processes of social and political change. Far from being mere pawns in the life of the sultanate, they had contributed to the perpetuation and development of social expectations between men and themselves. It remains to be seen where these conflicting and ambiguous discourse on gender lead, and how Aceh today is able to balance Islam and societal expectations.

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ENDNOTES

1. See Andaya (2006 and 2000); Ong & Peletz (1996); Peletz (1996); Errington (1990); Reid (1986).
2. See, for instance, Cuevas (2006: 17), whose work for an international non-government agency encompassed gender issues in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami.
3. See, for example, Iskandar's Hikayat Aceh (2001).
4. For a comprehensive and intriguing discussion of Aceh's 'golden' age under the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda, refer to Hadi (2004), Lombard (1991), and Djajadiningrat (1979).
5. See Azra (2004) and Ito (1978) in their treatment of ar-Raniri in his capacity as inspired Muslim scholar and court adviser.
6. Also see Azra (2004) and Hurgronje (1906).
7. See also Reid (2007, p. 8) and Azra (2004). Reid (Ed.), 1995, pp. 55-63.
8. See, for instance, Noerdin (2002).
9. Mernissi (1993) counts at least 18 who had exercised considerable political authority over their kingdoms.
10. See, for example, The Ship of Sulaiman (1972, p. 178).
11. See, for instance, Hurgronje (1906, pp. 10-16); Wazir (1992); Peletz (1996); Rahman (2006).
12. For Melaka laws, see Liaw (1976).
13. See Andaya (2006, pp. 63-64); Hadi (2004, p. 13); Siapno (2002, pp. 55-59); Iskandar (2001); Davys (1970, p. 148).
14. See, for instance, Dampier (in Thomas Bowrey, 1905, pp. 308-309, Footnote 4): "she [referring to Taju al-alum?] sent also two Dancing Girls to shew him [a Captain Thwait] some pastime there". Francois Martin (in Reid (Ed.), 1995, pp. 56-57) wrote: "They [referring to the French delegation] were very well received by the King [of Pedir, son of the King of Aceh]....He asked if they wanted women".
15. More accounts of women guards may be found in Reid (Ed.), (1995), pp. 51-53, 64-80.
16. See Lombard, 1991, p. 67; Reid (Ed.), 1995, p. 114.
17. Hall (1992, pp. 183-272) points to the existence of abundant land and demand for additional labour, regardless of gender, as possible reasons. Religious and socio-cultural customs, traditions and practices must have mirrored prevailing social realities, and vice versa. Nonetheless, while women may have actively participated in agriculture, home, trade, diplomacy, warfare, entertainment, literature, and even statecraft (surely including those in early Lamri/Aceh), epigraphic records of female roles in early times are limited (Hall, 1992, p. 190).
18. Cuevas (2006) presents data from focus group discussions in Banda Aceh.

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Social Innovation in Singapore:

Two Case Studies of Non-governmental Organisations

by **ZHANG LIYAN**
Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow
National Library

ABSTRACT

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have long been a force for social innovation in Singapore society. Along with the government and the private sector, they have been an important part of the "Singapore model" that has built a prosperous, just and caring society with a high quality of life that is the envy of the world. This paper concentrates on two types of NGOs: Chinese clan associations and grassroots organisations (GROs), both of which are extremely important from the specific standpoint of social innovation in Singapore. The influence of Chinese clan associations was at its peak in the colonial period when Singapore was an underdeveloped society with an immigrant Chinese majority. Grassroots organisations became important during the post-independence period of nation-building, in tandem with rapid economic development.

Key Words: *Social Innovation, NGOs, Chinese Clan Association, Grassroots Organisation*

In this paper, I examine the phenomenon and role of social innovation in Singapore's historical and post-independence development by analysing two types of NGOs – Chinese clan associations and grassroots organisations. I chose to focus on these two types of NGOs for two reasons. First, the Chinese clan associations were the NGOs that affected the most people in Singapore during most of the colonial period, since the Chinese constituted the majority of the population then. Second, the GROs deserve special attention because they are the first community-based NGOs which represented the entire population of Singapore, and also because they have provided a unique platform for cooperation and feedback on social and economic development between the people and the PAP government. Using these two case studies, I will examine the role NGOs played in the social innovation of Singapore.

CASE STUDY 1: CHINESE CLAN ASSOCIATIONS

THE EMERGENCE OF CHINESE CLAN ASSOCIATIONS

The modern history of Singapore began in 1819 when Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles established a British port on the island. From 1824 to 1872, Singapore's trade greatly increased as it grew from a trading post to an important port city, attracting many people from China to migrate to Singapore. "In the 1840s, after China lost the Opium War, there was an exodus of Chinese migrants to all parts of South-east Asia". [1] The 1911 Revolution failed to solve China's political, social and economic problems, and wars subsequently broke out between the different warlords. The unstable social situation forced many Chinese to leave their homeland to seek a better life elsewhere.

Most of the early Chinese migrants arrived in Singapore virtually penniless and faced such problems as finding employment, lodging and friends. Hence the birth of Chinese clan associations, which offered humanitarian assistance to the early immigrants. These associations helped new immigrants to settle down and seek employment. The other main preoccupations of the associations were sponsoring education and helping destitute members (Wickberg 1994).

In 2005, the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations published a book entitled *History of Clan Associations in Singapore*.[2] This book documented 200 Chinese clan associations, comprising 116 kinship clan associations and 84 locality clan associations. More than 90% of these clan associations were set up before 1960. Table 1 provides information on the founding of some Chinese clan associations.

Table 1: Dates of founding of Chinese clan associations in Singapore

	1800-1900	1901-1940	1941-1959	1960-1965	1966-
Kinship clan associations (116)	13 (11.2%)	38 (32.7%)	51 (44.0%)	5 (4.3%)	9 (7.8%)
Locality clan associations (84)	21 (25.0%)	34 (40.5%)	21 (25.0%)	7 (8.3%)	1 (1.2%)

Source: Compiled by the author based on the book *History of Clan Associations in Singapore* published by the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations, 2005.

The development of Chinese clan associations was at least partly a result of colonial policy. Within the colonial structure, the British administration left the various ethnic communities alone to handle their own social, culture, economic and political affairs, seldom intervening at all. The non-interventionist policy of the British colonial government thus led to the necessity for and development of Chinese clan associations.

Before Singapore became self-governing in 1959, Chinese clan associations concentrated on humanitarian assistance, the religious needs and welfare of their members. The associations helped new immigrants find jobs and establish useful contacts, provided shelter and food, and ultimately, a sense of belonging to a community.

The clan associations also provided help to those in financial need. Early migrants had no social security, so clan associations provided welfare services to look after the sick, destitute and widows. The clan associations organised communal social and religious activities that offered much-needed interaction and breaks in the otherwise mundane and routine life of the coolies. One of the most important functions that clan associations served at that time was the offering of funeral services. Clan associations also acted as intermediaries in intra-community conflicts: "The familiarity of cultural practices reproduced in the alien colonial environment helped many to cope with the monotonous working life, loneliness and homesickness that came with their isolated migrant lifestyle" (Khun Eng Kuah-Pearce 2006:54).

As the Chinese immigrant population grew, education, cultural and other social needs also had to be met. From the late 19th century onwards, these clan associations not only helped newly arrived people in their community to settle down, but also financed schools and scholarships for the children of migrant families.

THE DECLINE OF CHINESE CLAN ASSOCIATIONS

At the Lee Clan General Association's 86th Anniversary Dinner on 28 October 1992, Brigadier-General Lee Hsien Loong said: "Since independence in 1965, many of the services the clan used to provide have been taken over by the Government and other civic organisations...the government took over the running of schools and public services. Thus the Chinese clan started to lose its appeal and purpose towards the community and thus they experienced a dwindling membership." [3] Furthermore, English was being taught as the first language in schools. This weakened the link between the clan associations and the younger generations. By the end of the 1970s, Singapore's housing and urban renewal programme resettled people in new public housing estates, and this further eroded the connectedness of the Chinese community. This was a major factor that led to the decline of Chinese clan associations, some of which became inactive or dormant.

THE REVIVAL OF CHINESE CLAN ASSOCIATIONS

Since the late 1970s, Chinese clan associations faced many obstacles in sustaining their existence. The associations tried to keep up with the changing practical and psychological needs of their members while adjusting to the growth of the nation-state and the changing socio-political environment. "Interestingly, the government suggested that clansmen organisations should take up a role in reinforcing Chinese values, 'Asian values' and Asian identity. Clansmen associations are viewed as the roots of Chinese culture and tradition, which in the government's view should be cultivated and preserved" (Selina Ching Chan 2003:79). Clan associations therefore were a good medium through which the nation could revive Chinese traditions and reinforce the Chinese identity.

In 1978, China started implementing economic reforms which resulted in rapid economic development, which in turn attracted the attention of the world. The revival of Chinese culture and traditions in Singapore became important at that juncture. The Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations (SFCCA) was formed in 1986, and marked a major turning point in the history of the clan associations.

In recent years, numerous clansmen fellowship meetings have taken place one after another in various countries around the world. The conventions have moved from their original emphases on clan ties and ancestral roots to cultural, economic, trade and academic exchanges. Cooperation between clan associations in Singapore and other overseas Chinese voluntary associations has also revitalised links with China, and networks have been reconstructed for investment and economic purposes (Liu Hong 1998). [4]

The changing social functions of Chinese clan associations reflect the corresponding changes in Singapore society, which was experiencing a new awareness of a Chinese cultural identity. This evolution more importantly demonstrates the resilience of cultural systems and their ability to respond to the changing needs of their members and the state.

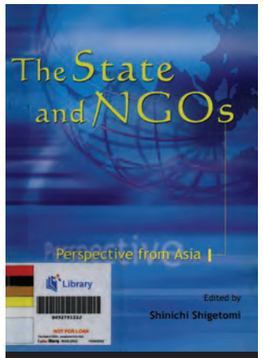
CASE STUDY 2: GRASSROOTS ORGANISTIONS

THE EMERGENCE OF GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS

Grassroots organisations (GROs) are uniquely Singaporean forms of NGOs that are guided and supported by the government and hence represent social innovation as a vehicle for government-people cooperation and feedback. When self-government was attained in 1959, the Singapore government had to overcome serious political, economic and communal problems to survive.

The People's Association (PA) was formed on 1 July 1960. In the words of its mission statement: "The People's Association brings people together to take ownership of and contribute to community well-being. We connect the people and the government for consultation and feedback. We leverage these relationships to strengthen racial harmony and social cohesion, to ensure a united and resilient Singapore." [5] To rally grassroots support and to promote better rapport between the government and its people, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew began a two-year tour of all the constituencies in Singapore in 1962. During this tour, PM Lee discovered the importance of support at the grassroots level and came across outstanding grassroots leaders, who were later chosen to head grassroots organisations. After the PAP won the election in 1963, PM Lee decided to institutionalise the grassroots organisations in Singapore. Grassroots organisations are community-based volunteer organisations with strong government support through the PA. They are thus a unique social innovation that connects people with the government through non-government initiatives, and facilitates social and economic development through cooperation and public feedback.

Before the PA was established in 1960, there were 28 community centres (CCs) "providing a place for local residents to participate in social and recreational programmes and more specifically to disseminate colonial government policies and information. The first two of these were opened in 1953 in Serangoon and Siglap constituencies (S. Vasoo, Winnie Tang, Ng Guat Tin 1983:1-2)." The PA took over these community centres. Unfortunately, the facilities of the centres then were few and far between (吴俊刚，李小林2000:



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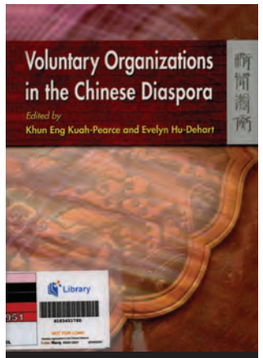

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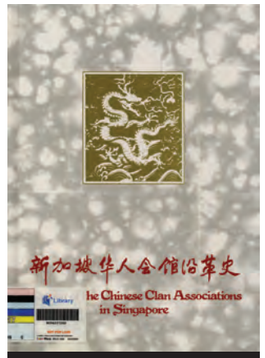

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39-44). Therefore, the first programme implemented by the PA after its inauguration was to set up a large network of community centres throughout the island. Each constituency had several community centres. "Besides debunking communist bogeys and providing government information these community centre also organised social, cultural and recreational programmes for the young and old living in various neighborhoods (S. Vasoo, Winnie Tang, Ng Guat Tin 1983:2)." Until the early 1970s, the members of the community were not enthusiastic about the activities at the community centres, as facilities were not adequate. From the mid-1970s, community centres were built with modern décor and state-of-the-art facilities. The community centres were called Community Clubs since 1990.

The Community Centre Management Committee (CCMC) was formed in 1964. CCMC was the first pure community-based volunteers' organisation in the system of grassroots organisations in Singapore.[6] The members and leaders of the CCMC needed, however, to be approved by the PA. Each CC had a CCMC to plan and organise the centre's activities following the rules of the PA.

The Citizens' Consultative Committees (CCCs) was formed in 1965 when Singapore gained independence. Each constituency had one CCC as the apex grassroots organisation in that constituency. At that time, the infrastructure was not well developed. The CCC connected the government with its residents and offered suggestions for improving Singapore's infrastructure. CCC also played an important role in promoting racial harmony and helping the poor.[7] For more than 40 years now, they have played an integral part in Singapore's social cohesion. CCCs were extremely important in the 1960s and 1970s when Singapore underwent its resettlement movement. During the resettlement process, Singaporeans had to get used to living in a new environment in close proximity to other racial groups. Some were not satisfied with the government's compensation package. The relationship between the government and these uprooted people then was very tense. The CCCs mediated by explaining the government's policies to the people and provided feedback to the government and the tensions were eventually eased.

In 1978, the first Residents' Committee (RC) was formed as a result of Singapore's housing and renewal programme to promote neighbourliness and harmony in public housing estates. The importance of CCCs declined after this. Each RC had an RC Centre to conduct meetings, programmes and activities for residents. In the private housing estates, Neighbourhood Committees (NCs) encouraged active citizenry and fostered community bonds.[8] As with the CCMC, CCCs, RCs and NCs were community-based volunteer organisations.[9] Members and leaders of these NGOs had to be approved by the PA.

Within the GRO system, the CCCs were at the pinnacle of each constituency and were responsible for planning and leading grassroots' activities to promote good citizenship among its residents. The CCCs presided over community and welfare programmes, channelled feedback between the government and its people, disseminated information, and made recommendations on the development of public amenities and facilities.

The functions of the RCs and NCs were: to promote neighbourliness, harmony and cohesiveness among the residents, to liaise with and make recommendations to governmental authorities on the needs of residents; to disseminate information and channel feedback on government policies and actions from residents; and to promote good citizenry.[10] The RCs and NCs organised residents' parties, conducted house visits and other neighbourhood activities to reach out to residents. Run by residents for residents, the RCs/NCs also worked closely with other grassroots organisations and government agencies to improve the physical environment and safety of each local precinct.

The GROs were structured hierarchically. At the constituency level, there was a CCC comprising volunteers. Under each CCC, there were several CCs composed of volunteers and PA staff. In addition to the activities mentioned above, CC staff members attended the RCs/NCs meetings. CC staff periodically reported to the CCCs, which provided feedback and guidance. Despite the hierarchy, the channels of communication between the government and citizens were multi-level. Citizens could approach CCs, RCs, NCs or Ministries of Parliament (MPs) at the Meet-the-People Sessions (MPS) whenever they had problems they wanted resolved.[11]

Since independence, the Singapore government believed that community issues needed to be managed by the community members themselves, and transferred some of the powers of the government agencies to the grassroots organisations, which formed the bases of the GROs' system. Grassroots organisations became pillars of the PAP government and part of PAP's political strategy. Over the years, many national movements, such as the National Courtesy Campaign and National Clean-up Campaign, were successfully implemented with the help of GROs. GROs drew on the traditional attitudes of community leaders and the assistance of community volunteers to form a network of organisations, and offered accessible venues and facilities for interaction and community services.

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS

Most of the challenges facing the communities required locally-driven and creative solutions rather than a heavy-handed top-down approach of traditional government bureaucracies and programmes. GROs were community-based NGOs that were closely linked to the government. The GRO volunteers were residents who were energetic, passionate and proposed activities, initiatives, services and processes to address the social and economic challenges faced by their communities.

Through the nation-wide GROs network, the social services delivered by the Singapore government addressed Singaporeans' needs comprehensively.

The two types of NGOs discussed in this paper successfully carried out their goals and functions under contrasting conditions of a relatively non-interventionist state during the colonial period, and a highly interventionist state and weak civil society in the post-independence period respectively. The Chinese clan associations adapted to changing economic and social conditions by shifting their emphasis to cultural preservation. Grassroots organisations, despite a weak civil society and a strong state made themselves indispensable to the state as much as they were ultimately dependent on state regulation. Both types of NGOs have over the years demonstrated their robustness and adaptability to varying economic and socio-political conditions, and have played no small part in helping Singapore evolve into the thriving city-state it is today.

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Dr Sai Siew Min, Assistant Professor, Department of History, National University of Singapore in reviewing the paper.

ENDNOTES

1. The Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations, National Archives, Oral History Department, 1986. "History of the Chinese Clan Associations in Singapore". Singapore News & Publications Ltd., p. 20.
2. This book's coverage of clan associations is not comprehensive, being limited to the Federation's members. However, since the Federation included most of the active associations, the information provided in this book is relevant. According to Ms Lim Boon Tan, Executive Director of the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations, there are currently around 300 clan associations registered under the law. However, less than 100 of these are currently active. (I interviewed Ms Lim Boon Tan on 2 July 2008 at the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Association).
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teochew_Poit_Ip_Huay_Kuan, accessed on June 20, 2008.
4. Liu Hong, 1998, Old Linkages, "New Networks: the Globalization of Overseas Chinese Voluntary Associations and its implications". *China Quarterly,* pp. 582-609.
5. Cited from the mission statement of the People's Association, http://www.pa.gov.sg/1146635937727/1153988278915.html
6. According to Mr Tan Kim Kee, the system of grassroots organisations in Singapore consisted mainly of CCCs, CCs/CCMCs and RCs/NCs. This system was initiated and supported by the PA. Therefore, although these NGOs could plan and organise activities by themselves, they had to follow the basic rules set by the PA. Residents of different races were welcome to participate in all activities, which had to be non-religious and non-political. Each grassroots organisation either organises activities by itself or cooperated with other organisations (On 17 July 2008, I interviewed Mr Tan Kim Kee, Group Director of Grassroots, at the PA).
7. Note: In the 1960s and 1970s, conflicts between different racial groups, especially between the Chinese and the Malays were a problem in Singapore. Leaders and members of the CCC were usually residents with influence in the society. Therefore, CCCs played an important role in promoting racial harmony and helping the poor. They took the initiative to volunteer and donate resources, and others followed suit.
8. Note: According to Mr Tan Kim Kee, the NCs were formed in 1998.
9. Note: PA staff worked at the CCs.
10. People's Association Neighbourhood Committee Rules and Regulations (amended, 15 September 2007). http://www.pa.gov.sg/1146635937727/1179997286746.html
11. Note: In Singapore, Members of Parliament hold MPS every month, to help citizens resolve any problems they had. For example, at Potong Pasir, MPS is held every Thursday at 7.30pm at the void deck of Block 108 void deck. Help provided by the MPs takes many forms, ranging from suggesting solutions to family discord, obtaining financial support in cases of emergency, to helping people obtain employment. The MPs explain government policies to the people as well, gather feedback, and channel the people's concerns to political leaders. MPs also visit people's homes regularly to see if they can offer any help and find out how they live. Grassroots organisations' network is supported by the PA, and is an important part of the PAP administrative system. MPS is organised by PAP and not by any grassroots organisation.

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Building the Mosaic:

In Search of Southeast Asian Contemporary Art Writing and Publications

by **ROBERTA BALAGOPAL**
Senior Librarian
Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow
National Library

Southeast Asian contemporary visual art, despite its vibrancy and visibility, suffers from a dearth of useful published information with which to interpret it. It is a challenge to find art criticism, biographies and histories of reasonable depth on the subject, requiring lengthy and skilled research.

Few would dispute the importance of gathering and preserving information on contemporary Southeast Asian artists. This is what forms the core of art scholarship – having a body of literature to draw upon and discuss. Currently, the information on Southeast Asian art is scattered, of varying authority and degrees of accessibility (both physical and linguistic). This is the difficulty, to some extent, of all contemporary art. The information being produced is great in volume and often of an ephemeral nature, and the only way for art critics and art historians writing in their separate echelons to have a meaningful exchange and move forward together is for everyone to read everything, or at least to read something from every genre (Elkins, 2003). For Southeast Asian contemporary art, the challenge is exacerbated by the lack of regularly published journals that focus on the region, and a simple lack of art historians and knowledgeable critics. The scattered bits that do get recorded are collected with varying regularity by museums, curators, academics, and other bodies such as archives and libraries.

WHO IS PUBLISHING IT?

Scholarly art publishing has a limited market at best, and even the more accessible 'coffee-table' genre of books, if produced well, are expensive to make. Items published in conjunction with an exhibition feature prominently, and have a high degree of authoritativeness by virtue of their panels of guest expert writers. Museum exhibits, however, have a national agenda, and the subject matter of these books, as they accumulate over the years, will reflect that. Private and school galleries also produce such catalogue-books, but the distribution is limited to their audiences and seldom reaches beyond.

WHO IS READING IT?

Without a clear knowledge of who is interested in reading such works, writers, publishers and collectors are working blind. Researchers will read on a needs-basis, as will curators, and probably a portion of art critics. Whether other artists read history and criticism regularly is less clear, though some certainly do. Two other groups of readers remain on the sidelines: student artists and interested laypersons. Student artists are apprentice artists in the process of acquiring skills and observing role models. The interested layperson is someone who knows something either of the region or of art in general. He or she may also have had some exposure to modern/postmodern art elsewhere in the world, but would be interested to obtain some regional context in terms of styles, movements and cross-border influences. These are the cross-disciplinary readers, or the informed non-specialists. It is via the readership of the above groups that interest in art is vitalised, publicised, and brought to the attention of those with the economic power to sustain it.

THE ART BOOK

The art book is, in essence, a democratising tool. Due to its reproducibility, it brings art within reach of those who may never be able to own (or possibly even see in person) the original artwork. However, art book publishing does not come cheap. Publishers estimate that an art history book produced today costs three times as much as other genres of scholarly books (Soussloff, 2006). It raises the question whether publishers who focus on Southeast Asian topics have the resources to produce quality art books, and if the market is large enough to recoup their investments. Very few publishers exist who can claim Southeast Asian art as a niche area, and the list thins even further if we were to only consider contemporary art of the region.

In Southeast Asia (as well as in Southeast Asian studies departments in Europe and North America), scholarly publishing on art has generally been sparse. Often it emerges in a thesis or in a collection of papers published by academic presses, and is frequently a type of ethnographic study, which treats art as an anthropological experience. The result may be a specialised report, integral to augmenting the research of a very narrow field, but presupposes a certain degree of advanced knowledge on the part of the reader.

The non-academic publication seems to emerge at its best when partnered with galleries and museums. Exhibition collaterals can range from low cost brochures to luxuriously-produced books combining quality scholarship and visuals. The content can be both a good marketing tool for the museum and a valuable resource for researchers, if done by knowledgeable curators and authoritative guest writers. When done well, such publications provide the next best thing to a guided tour, and they document and discuss the artworks in terms that are comprehensible to the layperson. However, the disadvantage of museum publications is the ever-present danger that "politics and curatorial egos" may override other considerations that are crucial to making readable and informative books. (Lyon, 2006).

Apart from the museum exhibition book, most other non-scholarly forms of monographs are targeted directly at the tourist market, in the form of inexpensive guidebooks and coffee-table books, which function similarly to tourist brochures and sales catalogues.

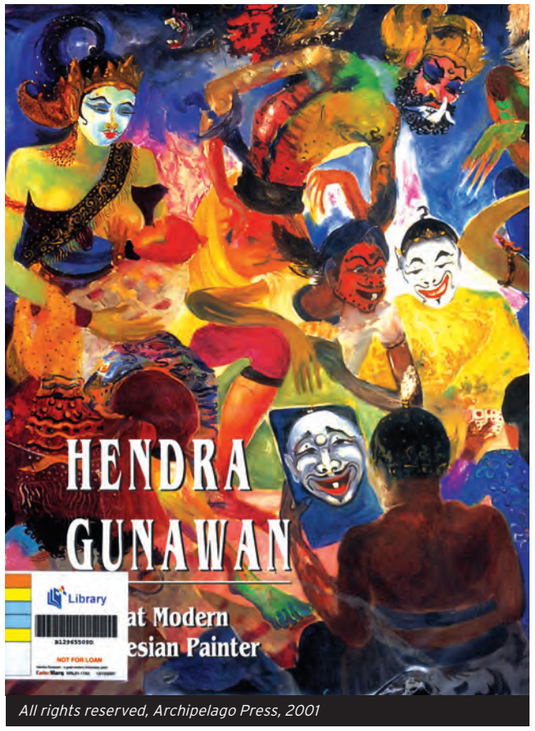
While works that provide comprehensive overviews of the region's art scene are few and far between, there are books that focus on a particular period of time in a particular country, or on a single artist. Such micro-approaches contribute to building the larger mosaic of Southeast Asian contemporary art.

BOOKS ON INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

These are beginning to emerge, as with the passing of first generation pioneer modern artists of the 1930s-1950s, there are compelling reasons to document their lives and works. While not primarily biographies, artist retrospectives also appear at intervals, often sponsored by galleries and museums to accompany a show of recently donated materials. This type of publication is especially common for painters from Indonesia and the Philippines, and is gradually expanding to Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and elsewhere in the region. Examples of such retrospectives include:
Edades: National Artist (1979)
Hendra Gunawan: A Great Modern Indonesian Painter (2001)
Convergences: Chen Wen Hsi Centennial Exhibition (2006)

THEMATIC BOOKS

These books focus on recurring themes or subjects in a country's art, often incorporated into a survey of the country's 'modern era'. Themes can encompass social or spiritual concerns, or notions of aesthetics and style. It can also serve as an expression of a country's cultural history as told through art. Such thematic books rarely make comparative studies of issues across nations, although parallels with other Southeast Asian countries do exist and are sometimes briefly acknowledged. Some examples of thematic works include:
Modern art in Thailand: Nineteenth And Twentieth Centuries (1992)
Soul, Spirit, and Mountain: Preoccupations Of Contemporary Indonesian Painters (1994)
Protest/Revolutionary Art In Philippines, 1970-1990 (2001)



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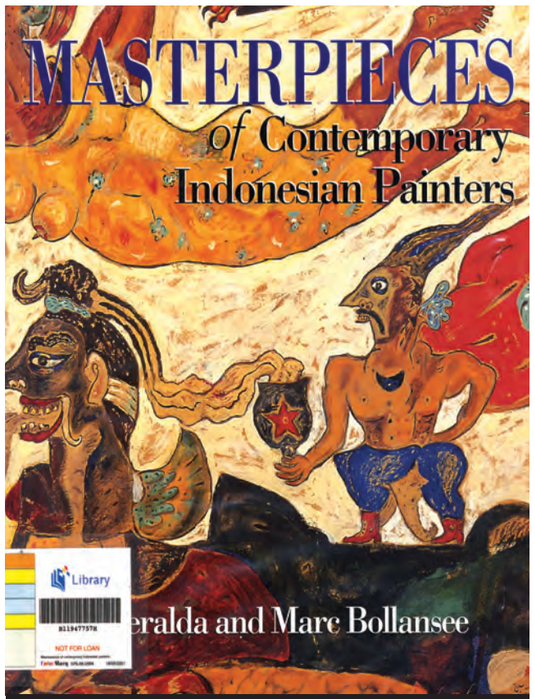

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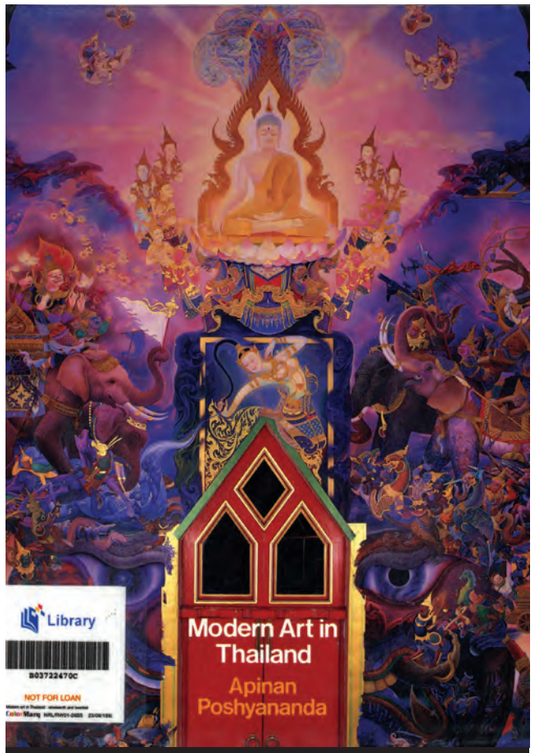

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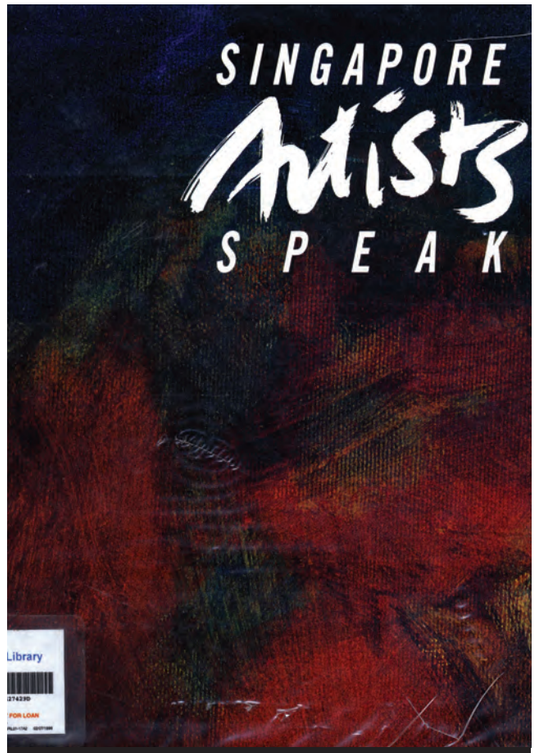

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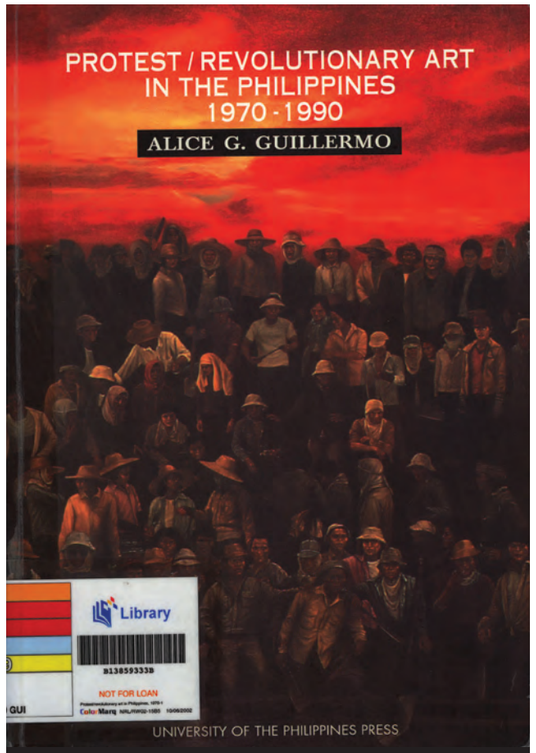

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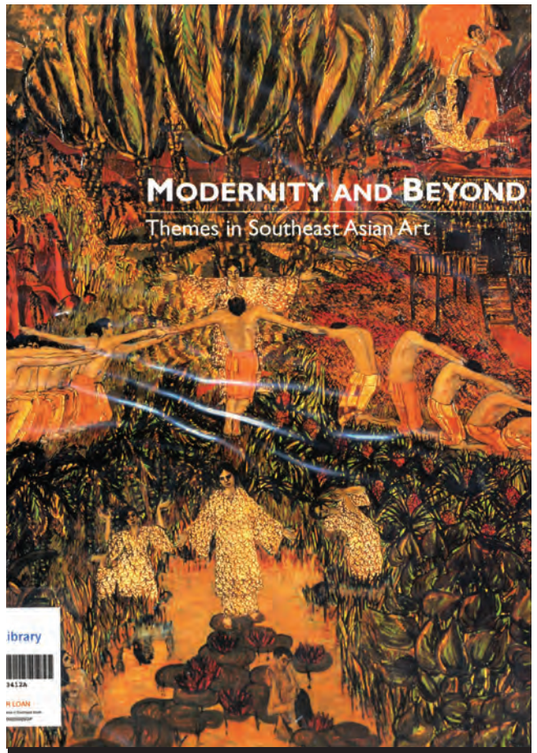

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BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES

Biographical dictionaries focus on artists of a particular country or region. They contain a brief biography, often a resume of sorts, as well as a quote or short interview, and some samples of the artist's works. The emphasis here is primarily on documenting the biographical details of the individual artists, and the authors/ contributors seldom draw parallels between the artists or works:

Southeast Asian Art Today (1996)
Masterpieces Of Contemporary Indonesian Painters (1997)
Singapore Artists Speak (1998)
Faith + The City: A Survey Of Contemporary Filipino Art (2000)

A 'STORY' OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN CONTEMPORARY ART?

As with thematic books, the chapters in these publications are still devoted to a single country, but certain trans-national themes may emerge. However, given that there are usually different authors for each chapter, a lack of a unified voice may result. Even so, a few books do come close to providing an overview of Southeast Asian modern/contemporary art:

Modernity and Beyond: Themes in Southeast Asian art (1996)
South East Asian Art: A New Spirit (1997)
Visual Arts in ASEAN: Continuity and Change (2001)
Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific (2004)
Art and AsiaPacific Almanac (2006)

THE ART JOURNALS AND NEWSPAPERS

Some of the best barometers of the contemporary art world are journals, a number of which have existed for decades or longer, while others appear for as few as one issue and then disappear.

The art journal has much more flexibility than the art book. It does not incur the same investment risks as printing a book, it can position itself at any point in a continuum between art-as-entertainment and serious art scholarship, and it can employ writers with a variety of credentials. Asian art is permeating the contemporary art world in North America and Europe, a fact that is apparent in journals like *Art and AsiaPacific quarterly*, which is a valiant effort to chart the highlights of the rapidly changing Asian art scene and situate it in the international art world. Another example is *AsianArtNews*, which is a similar tour of Asian art happenings and personalities. Both publications are filled with gallery advertisements, and the critical content, though present, is sometimes hard to spot. In terms of writing style, these publications are more akin to newspaper arts coverage than to scholarly journals.

The local newspaper is another source that can be relied upon to have some mention of regional contemporary artists, if they are actively showing their works. There are a couple of challenges to such sources of information, however. Firstly, they may require a competent reading knowledge of languages other than English. Secondly, news reports are intended to be brief and, regardless of the knowledge and authority of the author, can at best have time for only a cursory treatment of the topic. There are a few exceptions in newspapers with regular arts columns and dedicated critics, but, even in large markets like the United States, newspaper coverage of art is declining (Plagens, 2007). More significantly, there are difficulties in finding a suitable voice and a stable readership for such works. Columnists seem to be not entirely sure who is reading it and why, and it is not clear whether the situation calls for a critical voice, a marketing pitch, or a neutral description. While a worthwhile and often necessary resource, newspaper art coverage remains difficult to use for research purposes.

ART ON THE WEB

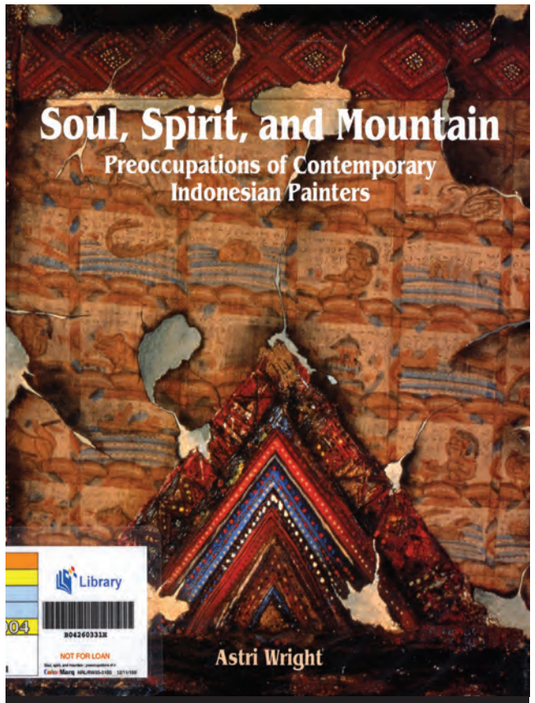
"Print publications have dwindled across the region over the last couple of years, magazines such as Singapore's Focas and Vehicle; transit and Art Manila Quarterly in the Philippines, and Malaysia's art corridor and TanpaTajuk. Increasingly, they have been replaced by artist websites, blogs and on-line publishing. One wonders what will become of the permanency of the printed voice as it is replaced by virtual dialogue?" (Fairley, 2006).

Freely available information on the Internet has two main drawbacks: it is chronically disorganised, and rigorous accuracy is not guaranteed. Nevertheless, it is often the only - and sometimes even the best - tool to find information on Southeast Asian contemporary artists.

Websites with good track records for authoritative information on art and artists are ones with reputations to build and protect, such as national galleries and art museums. These aim to attract discerning visitors, including scholars and writers, and accuracy is important. For the researcher who is unable to visit regularly in person, websites with catalogues of works online are invaluable. Examples of digital collections include the *Balai Seni Lukis Negara* (National Art Gallery Malaysia) and *Ateneo Art Gallery* in the Philippines. Other organisations such as the *Asia Art Archive* (www.aaa.org.hk) create online projects like their current feature on international Biennials.

Other useful web resources, which may be called "e-magazines", have emerged and remain active. For example, *The Substation magazine* (www.substation.org/mag), though updated sporadically, is one of the very few currently active sources for in-depth investigation of contemporary art in Singapore. Another example is *Kakiseni* (www.kakiseni.com), a portal of all manner of contemporary arts-related news and concerns in Malaysia, which also includes a searchable archive of about 800 articles and interviews with artists.

Artists themselves may have created their own websites, and these, at their best, can serve a purpose similar to personal journals or scrapbooks. Artists may also use the web as a simple shop front to promote and sell artworks, which is potentially



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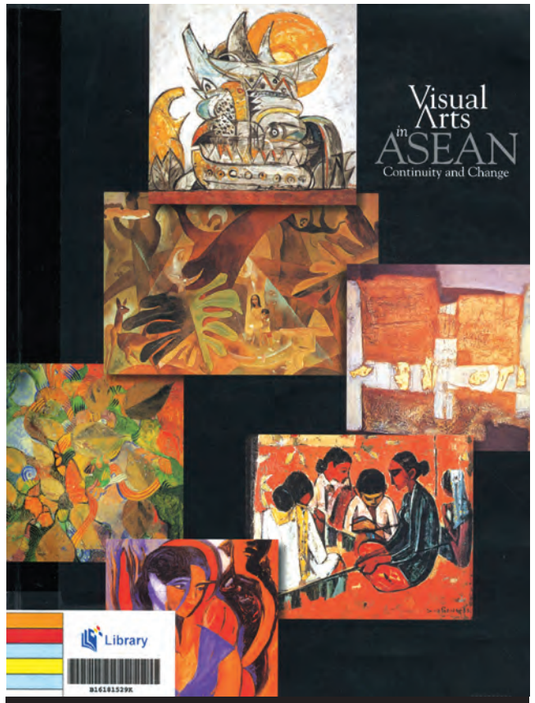

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useful for the collector but less so for the researcher. Online shop fronts of galleries sometimes yield important information, for example, the *Thavibu Gallery* website (www.thavibu.com) provides links to articles on Thai, Vietnamese and Burmese art, including ones from reputable print publications. The underlying purpose, of course, is to promote certain artworks and artists.

The internet also provides a platform for the amateur historian and critic via blogs, wikis, and informal information collectives. These sources are the most difficult to assess in terms of authority and informativeness. It requires the researcher to know the subject well already, and be able to sift through possibly irrelevant or erroneous information to find useful areas to investigate further. It also requires the researcher to be familiar with local languages, dialects, and cultural references. An interesting example of an informal information collective is the *Singapore Art* website (www.singaporeart.org), which introduces itself as follows:

"SingaporeArt.org emerged from an artist who realized that an online art resource would be appreciated by the Singapore Arts Community, because a significant proportion of electronically posted articles and press releases were deleted over time." (Singaporeart.org, 2007).

This type of web community effort is useful for information leads, but unfortunately for the researcher, its anonymous nature makes the cross-checking of information much more difficult.

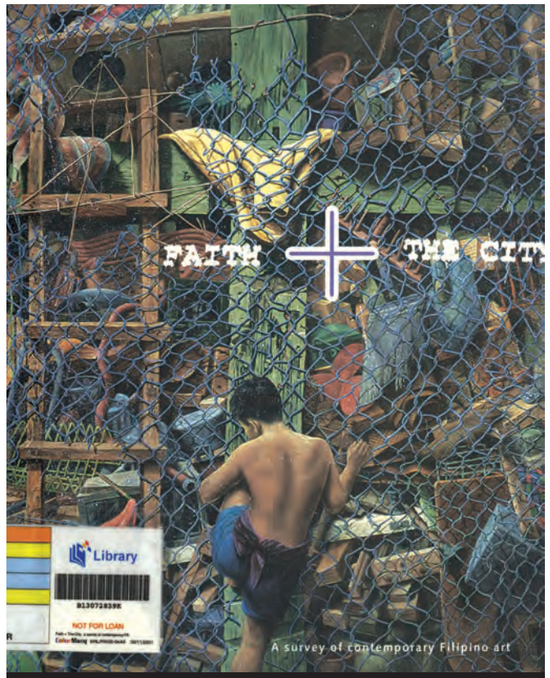
Despite its shortcomings, it is undeniable that web-based information is shifting the balance of power from printed to digital sources.

THE FUTURE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART WRITING & PUBLISHING

HOW CAN ART WRITING AND SCHOLARSHIP BE SUSTAINED?

Two areas have some power to help sustain critical thinking and investigation about Southeast Asian contemporary art. Firstly, writers and publishers can cultivate audiences, sharing beyond disciplinary boundaries to reach a wider readership. The difficulty of the current state of things seems to lie, with the exceptions of museum and gallery-generated materials and a handful of non-specialist books and journals, in the insubstantiality or inaccessibility of art criticism to the non-specialist reader and student.

For Southeast Asian contemporary art, a critical mass of information in a fairly accessible form has yet to be built. The history of Southeast Asian contemporary art in context needs to be read, criticised, studied, written and re-written by a wider audience. The notion of contemporary art in Southeast Asia as elitist is not without basis when discussion of any depth is held aloof from all but scholars. Admittedly, an overview of Southeast Asian contemporary art in the Western art history style poses a host of difficulties, not the least of which is that, in a non-European context, the notion of art having a 'history' is itself questionable (Elkins, 2002). However, there is an air of inevitability to this approach. As the birth of modern art in Southeast Asia starts to be researched and written about, it begins to take its place as a historical period and, rightly or not, a chapter in the story of Southeast Asian art. While this



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over-simplifies and imposes a linear element, contemporary art itself needs a past reference (if only to parody or deconstruct it) in order be innovative, and innovation seems to be an obsession with contemporary artists worldwide (Timms, 2004). Innovation also ensures that art writers and researchers take notice and record their interpretations. In short, without a documented and dissected past, contemporary art loses something of its purpose and identity.

Secondly, all organisations producing art writing can make a concerted effort to consolidate these writings in a durable format, and deposit copies with libraries or archives. Worldwide, art libraries face similar challenges in documenting contemporary art. In 2005, the Asia Art Archive organised an international workshop entitled "Archiving the contemporary", the results of which parallel concerns of art library associations in North America, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Multifarious formats make it challenging to build collections, though at the same time they also make the collection richer and more balanced, when taken in its entirety. Despite the difficulties, libraries and archives can and do take on the uphill task of preserving these art forms, and make room for them within limited budgets.

Together, these two strategies focus on improving access to information, by improving the quality of the materials themselves and by making them easily available to readers. As Southeast Asian contemporary art writing and publishing evolves over time, access to this information will remain the key to its continued survival.

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Knowledge Economy:
Linchpin Of ASEAN Integration

Keynote Speech by Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN, on 17 October 2008 (Day Two) at the "Bridging Worlds 2008 Conference", organised by the National Library Board of Singapore and the NGO Learning Summit, in collaboration with the Asia Dialogue Society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We celebrated the 40th anniversary of ASEAN last year here in this island state of Singapore with the inauguration of the ASEAN Charter. In December of 2008 we will celebrate the full ratification of the ASEAN Charter by all 10 member states. The Charter represents a new threshold of collective and collaborative integration on three definite fronts: the Socio Cultural Community; the Security Community and the Economic Community. In the last 40 years, ASEAN, driven by the exigencies of regional political and security circumstances, had focused on the security and economic community. The economic front gained momentum in the latter half of the last century and the better half of this decade, culminating in the ASEAN Economic Integration Roadmap. This meeting, which has brought the community of librarians, foundations and the NGOs together, is therefore timely. Let me congratulate the National Library Board of Singapore and the Asian Dialogue Society for this initiative.

The economic integration plans, however, will face several challenges given the current global financial crises. While we will weather this crisis together with the rest of the world, the one thing that remains a constant for ASEAN and Southeast Asia is their sociocultural heritage. The soul of ASEAN rests on this pillar and unmistakeably tops the Secretariat's agenda going forward. ASEAN is working towards developing a blueprint, and I believe this conference would contribute significantly in terms of ideas, inspiration and inputs into this blueprint.

ASEAN's perspective of the socio-cultural pillar is closely intertwined with the Security and Economic community and mutually reinforcing. To illustrate the intertwining or converging worlds of politics, economics and socio-cultural axis, allow me to highlight the issue of youth employment in ASIA and more specifically ASEAN. The Asia Development Outlook 2008 analysed that India, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand, together, account for close to half the young population in Asia – 33% from India and 12% from Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand combined. ASEAN's "Youth Bulge" provides an opportunity to reap a long term "demographic dividend" which is expected to peak in 2010. It can be a demographic curse if the vitality of the youth is not garnered for regional integration. By and large Southeast Asian countries have been slow to capitalise on engaging the youth productively in their own economies, and this opportunity will soon close its doors on Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. Countries can only yield demographic dividends when their young people are productively employed and as they grow older, accumulate assets and reinvest, thereby generating higher national income. But the enabling factors are not in place in many Southeast Asian countries.

The "Youth Bulge" can have negative consequences for governments that are largely administered by silver-haired politicians who maybe less sensitive to the changing demand patterns on the ground. ASEAN youth are more exposed today than before, but are less culturally integrated with their immediate neighbours compared to their predecessors. Each is living in isolation from the other. ASEAN's stability in 2010 will be contingent on socialcultural freedoms and not on economic freedoms alone. We need to urgently inculcate this in our younger citizenry. 2010 is not far away. Socio-cultural connectivity lags behind communication leaps in the region. My son recently shared that he had gone out for dinner with some of his friends and no sooner did he realise that all of them were SMSing and communicating with their friends on the other end of the world instead of communicating with each other while seated at the same table waiting for dinner to be served. The Singapore-led digitisation model in the region will have a social impact that needs to be balanced with community bonding initiatives of libraries.

I am glad that ASEAN is in the business of bridging worlds. ASEAN aspires to create an "operating system" for the region and we propose to build the region as a social compact premised on sound policies, strong political and social interrelatedness with people connectivity. What do we mean by socio-cultural freedoms?

While economic freedom and sovereignty defines the scope of economic and security community outcomes, socio-cultural freedoms underpin all three domains of economy, security and culture. How do we conceive of socio-cultural freedoms or what environment does it presuppose? May I propose some initial thoughts?

In my mind, socio-cultural freedoms can be exercised in an environment that bridges diversity. ASEAN's ability to embrace diversity has been a key determinant of our social and economic success as a region. The region in itself is a melting pot of a myriad of cultures, crusted by waves of religious and political influences from all over the world. The wider world's footprint is found in this single region with ASEAN as the paramount architect of ASIA's peace and security. ASEAN has created a platform for emerging and existing powers to dialogue and network, understand and collaborate with others while maintaining our rich diversity and savouring our differences. The region needs to regenerate its cultural creativity to compete with the larger continents. While we value diversity, we also need to bridge diversity. Tolerance enables a stable and peaceful ASEAN. ASEAN Cultural Exchanges, the ASEAN Virtual Museum Network and ASEAN INFO NET are early attempts at bridging diversity.

On this bedrock of diversity, the region needs to create an environment where human potential can be enhanced. The human development agenda is of primary concern to ASEAN at this point in time.

Socio-cultural freedoms can only be exercised in the context of a participatory environment. A strong participatory framework championed by civic institutions, NGO's and Foundations will enhance the ASEAN Secretariat's efforts to bridge the region's resources with its aspirations. Developing close ties between the governed and the governing, talent and capital, business-academia-government creates a networked impact fostering greater participation and ownership to the region. ASEAN citizens need to be stakeholders in this new enterprise and invest in their destiny. The participatory environment is best fostered through a networked secretariat where responsibility and accountability are devolved from the power centre in Jakarta to its constituencies in all 10 ASEAN countries. You the custodians of knowledge, the depositories of cultures, are one such constituency that we want to and must work with.

KNOWLEDGE AS STRATEGY

How can libraries and cultural institutions, therefore, play a part in this regional socio-cultural community building effort? Filipino analyst Serafin Talisayon argued that information, knowledge and values underpin community building and sustainable development. Knowledge is the supporting framework of societies and is undisputedly at the core of ASEAN's integration strategy. Firstly, libraries will be integral to the ASEAN Secretariat's human capital development agenda. Libraries and cultural institutions, as you know, serve as public education platforms. Public education in the areas of health, farming, crop extension, post harvest management, natural disasters, climate change, gender and religious issues etc are becoming increasingly important. While we can work with schools for early education, libraries on the other hand can offer a wider communication and public education outreach for the larger citizenry. The ASEAN Secretariat will be happy to work with libraries to promote not only an ASEAN identity but also to develop a shared understanding of ASEAN, and consequently a better life and living standard for our people.

Secondly, libraries offer affordable access to lifelong learning opportunities for the adult workforce through their services and literacy programmes. From remote rural libraries in rice communities of Thailand, the islands of Indonesia, fishing kampong of Malaysia, the rice farms of Vietnam, the monasteries of Myanmar, the peaceful valleys of Laos and the Kampung Ayer of Brunei to sophisticated hi-tech, hi-touch libraries in Singapore, librarians are at the forefront of community literacy, providing opportunities for those who need an alternative. Many people have said that their first experience with technology was at the libraries. The aggressive reading and storytelling initiatives in the region are a testimony to the fact that libraries can do a lot more if there was greater endorsement and support of their initiatives. Libraries in the region can cooperate and collaborate to achieve greater efficiencies in cost and quality of their service. Digitisation is another key activity that libraries could leverage on both in terms of cost and labour efficiencies. An integrated ASEAN must first be manifested in the way cultural institutions collaborate and share. The European Union's Cultural Commission serves as a good example and model to emulate.

Thirdly, libraries and cultural institutions are excellent vehicles for participatory networks and community bonding. I don't need to further belabour on this point as it is the focus of this conference. Libraries are at the forefront of social capital building, utilising new social media tools to enhance social proximity between communities in many societies. Libraries are actively experimenting on gaming and second-life alternatives to develop a new learning paradigm. The ASEAN Secretariat would be keen to tap into these networks and create opportunities for ASEAN citizens to embark on region-wide projects. And ASEAN citizens residing outside of the region need to be connected to the activities in the region so that our ASEAN community footprint, our cultural reach, our economic weight, our political influence go beyond our regional boundaries. They too need to be inspired by the ASEAN spirit, moved by the ASEAN pride, and contribute to the ASEAN community building efforts.

Libraries are our gateways; libraries are our bridges; they are depositories of our cultures, the guardians of our regeneration. NGO's and Foundations can collaborate with learning institutions to narrow the growing divide in the region. The ASEAN Secretariat will welcome proposals from the regional community to strengthen the role of libraries so that ASEAN's regional initiatives will have a wider reach and lasting impact. We hope to work with Foundations and Governments alike, businesses and academia together to ensure that ASEAN rides on the knowledge economy to create value for its citizens in the shortest time possible.

A shared platform is the key to the delivery of socio-cultural freedoms in the region. May I challenge libraries in the region to create this shared platform for regional integration in the knowledge sector. Knowledge strengthens the region and libraries serve as the cradle of this new renaissance that is emerging in Asia. Knowledge has the power to integrate and aggregate.

The ASEAN Secretariat looks forward to working actively with libraries and cultural institutions - The British Library included, to build the ASEAN socio-cultural community, and that will be a solid foundation for our ASEAN with a big "C" Community by 2015.

Thank you.

Singapore Town Club Collection

by **EUNICE LOW**
Senior Librarian
Heritage Collection Development
National Library

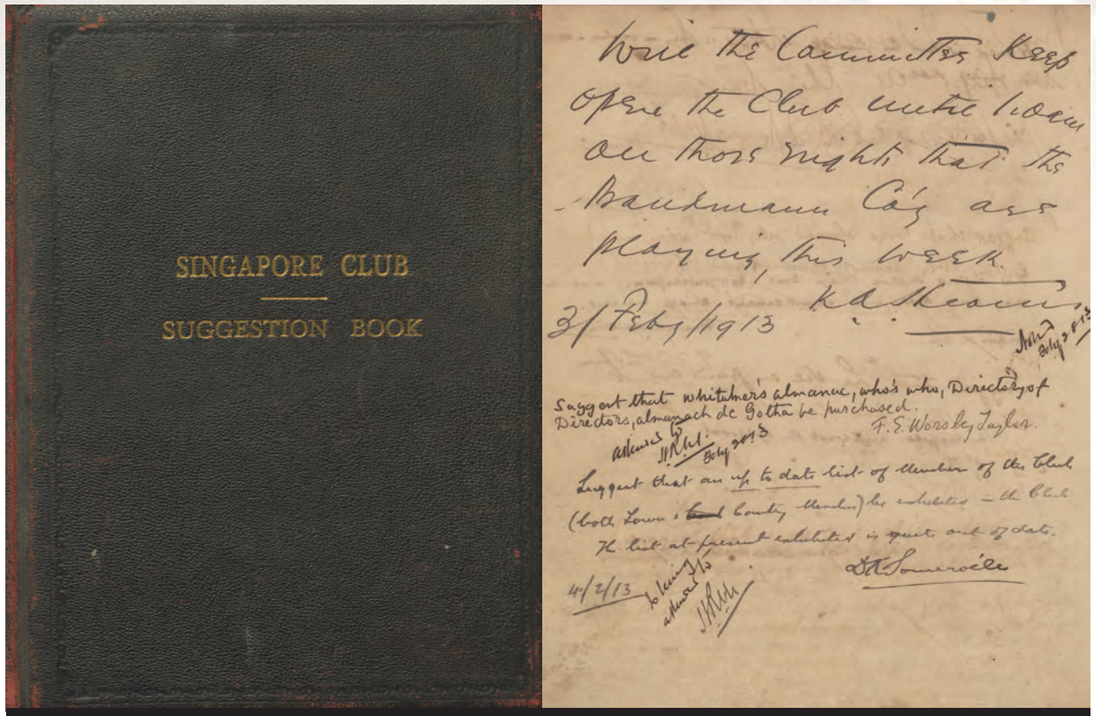
The National Library recently acquired heritage items belonging to Singapore Town Club, which includes photographs, portraits, sketches and World War I memorabilia. The Singapore Club, later known as the Town Club and then the Singapore Town Club, was founded in 1862 by William Henry McLeod Read (W. H. Read). Read came to Singapore in 1841 to take over his father's business and in the next 60 years became an integral part of Singapore society. A Municipal Commissioner, member of the Legislative Council and Justice of the Peace, he also founded the Singapore Sporting Club, the precursor to the present Singapore Turf Club, and was a trustee of the Singapore Institution. When he passed away in 1909, the *Straits Times* published an obituary hailing him as the *"Father of the Colony"* and *"Nestor of Singapore and the Straits"*. The premises of the Singapore Club were located in the Exchange Buildings within the hub of commercial activity in Singapore and Arnold Wright, author of *"Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya",* published in 1908, notes that it was the *"premier club in the settlement"*. Membership was limited to top civil servants, merchants and professionals including lawyers and doctors.

One of the highlights of the collection is a guest book of the Singapore Club. It contains members' suggestions and comments on the Club's facilities and services. The earliest entry is dated 3 May 1911 and the book was opened until January 1942. (The Singapore Club was taken over during the Japanese Occupation where it served as the offices of the Japanese Imperial Army). The original suggestion book was sent for restoration in London after the war and only reopened for members' suggestions in 1963.

The entries offer an interesting record of the social life, manners and customs of prominent Singapore residents in the early to mid 20th century. For example, some entries make reference to historical events. An entry dated 12 Dec 1911 and signed by seven members, suggests that the staff of the Singapore Club *"be made to bear some head-dress now that they have removed their Towchangs"*, referring to events where supporters of the Chinese Revolution in Singapore and Malaya had discarded their *towchangs* (queues or pigtails). In another entry, dated 28 July 1964, C. J. Stanbury, then Director of British Information Services, makes reference to the 1964 Racial Riots in Singapore: *"I wish to put on the record the praiseworthy behaviour of the Head Boy and the other staff during the racial disturbances which started on July 21. Although obviously very worried about their families and homes, they carried out their club duties with invariable politeness, efficiency and .. at the height of the rioting did their best for those few members, such as myself, who had to be in the neighbourhood, and who, in consequence, found the continuing availability of the Club facilities a great boon."* In addition, the entries provide a primary record of prominent 20th century personalities. Names include Peter Fowlie, a Municipal Commissioner, R. O. Winstedt, President of Raffles College and member of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, William Makepeace, owner of the Singapore Free Press and co-author of *100 years of Singapore,* Rowland Allen, founder of Singapore law firm, Allen & Gledhill LLP, Edwin A. Brown, Municipal Councillor and Chief Commissioner of Scouts, and G. K. R. Mugliston, a prominent sportsman.

Other items of notable interest are two sets of photographs taken of Singapore Town from the spire of St Andrew's Cathedral. These photographs are a well-arranged composite of several smaller photographs and afford a comparative view of almost one hundred years of development of the Town.

This collection will complement other significant National Library collections of early and pre-independent Singapore and will be made available through the National Library website (www.nl.sg) and at the Donors Gallery, Level 10, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library Building.



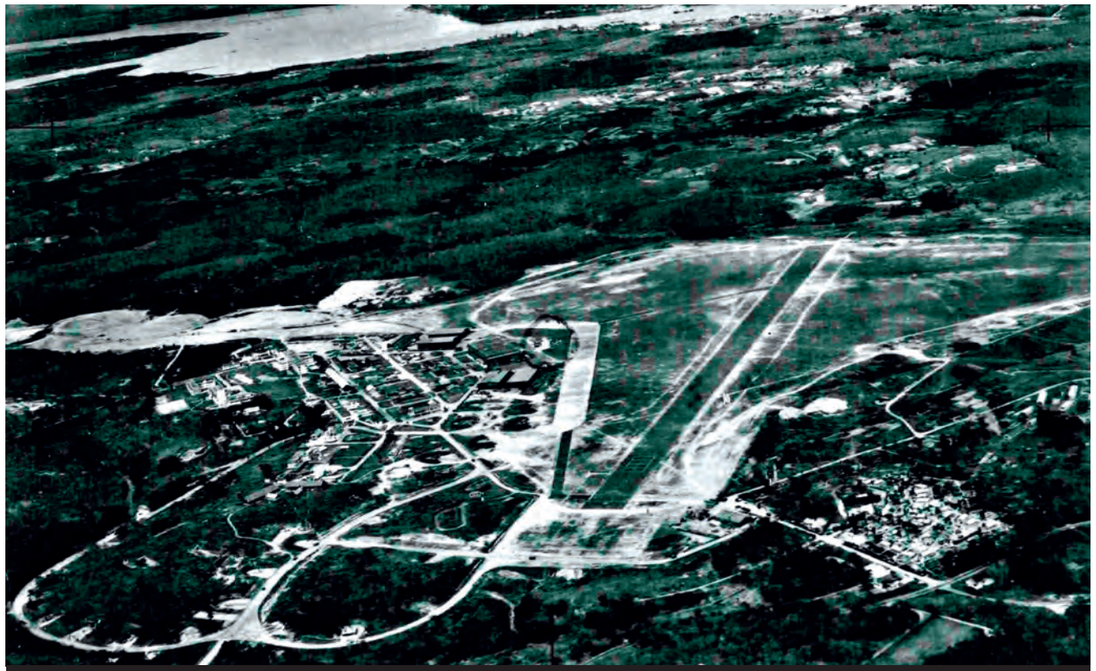
Members' entries in the suggestion book (these ones dated 1913) would receive a committee member's response next to the suggestion or comment


SINGAPORE CLUB.
Established 1862.
Beach Road.
W H Read,—Chairman
COMMITTEE.
T Braddell | Capt Protheroe
C H Harrison | ,, Tireman
A Schreiber
R B Read,—Secretary
A Bauer,—Treasurer

The first committee of the Singapore Club, established in 1862

The National Library is interested in receiving donations of heritage materials - both published and unpublished - on Singapore and Southeast Asia that will help enhance the Library's collections. These could include manuscripts, photographs, genealogical records, documents, letters as well as materials printed during the Japanese Occupation (1942-1945) or earlier. If you have a collection you wish to donate to the National Library, please email: ref@nlb.gov.sg.

View of the Singapore River with bumboats capturing the back of the Fullerton building, Cavenagh bridge and Anderson bridge
Copyright: Williams-Hunt Collection, SOAS



View of the Royal Air Force Sembawang Airfield
Copyright: Williams-Hunt Collection, SOAS

A View from the Top:
Williams-Hunt Aerial Photograph Collection

by **MAKESWARY PERIASAMY**
Senior Librarian
Professional Services
National Library Board

INTRODUCTION

The Williams-Hunt aerial photograph collection is a special historical collection of aerial photographs on Southeast Asia gathered by P. D. R. Williams-Hunt. Williams-Hunt worked as an aerial photograph interpreter for the Royal Air Force (RAF) during and after World War II. The photographs in the Collection were taken during the Royal Air Force's reconnaissance missions, mostly in the 1940s.

There are about 5,800 photographs in the Collection, out of which 240 photographs are on Singapore. The National Library of Singapore acquired copies of 174 of the Singapore images.

This article is a brief introduction to the aerial photographs that Williams-Hunt gathered, as well as a look at Williams-Hunt himself.

BACKGROUND

Many of the photographs in the Williams-Hunt collection were taken by the Allied Photographic Interpretation Service (A.P.I.S.). (Lertlum & Moore, [198-?], p. 3) It was a unit within the Royal Air Force that specialised in gathering photographic intelligence. A few of the photographs were taken by Williams-Hunt himself, who also had an avid interest in archaeology and anthropology.

Before his untimely death in 1953, Williams-Hunt had passed his aerial photographs collection to his colleague and friend, John Bradford in 1951. The collection was housed at the Pitt Rivers Museum. The Museum subsequently passed the collection over to the University of London, where the photographs were scanned to create negatives. Currently, these photographs are held at the University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). (Lertlum & Moore, [198-?], p. 1-2)

Dr Elizabeth Moore from SOAS found out about the collection when she was researching for her doctoral thesis on Northeast Thailand. Previously unorganised and without any explanatory data, Dr Moore helped to organise the photographs by the various major locations in Southeast Asia and came up with a database to identify and inventorise the photographs. (Lertlum & Moore, [198-?], p. 1)

The Center for Southeast Asia Studies (CSEAS) at the University of Kyoto has digitised the whole collection, making it accessible via a digital archive. (Lertlum & Moore, [198-?], p. 3). The digital archive, known as the "Geo-spatial Digital Archive for the Southeast Asia" is a collaborative effort between CSEAS, SOAS, the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy (CRMA) and the Inter-University Network of Thailand (UniNet). Such efforts in inventorying and digitising have facilitated access to the rich trove of information available within these images.

WILLIAMS-HUNT, 1919-1953

Williams-Hunt was born in Caversham, Berkshire on 2 July 1919 as Peter Darrell Williams-Hunt. He was interested in archaeology from a young age. While in his teens, he joined the Berkshire Archaeological Society and was actively involved in their fieldwork activities. By 1940, his name on the Society's membership list was indicated as "P.D. Rider Williams-Hunt, Royal Fusiliers, Hounslow". (Moore, 1984, p. 98-99). John Bradford notes that "Peter Williams-Hunt, F.S.A., F.R.A.I., A.M.A." was "self-trained in observation and recording" and his early experience with field archaeology in Berkshire proved useful when he was in Southeast Asia after the Second World War. (Bradford, 1953, p. 175). For his obituary, F. M. Underhill wrote that Williams-Hunt was admired for his "acute powers of observation as an archaeologist." (Underhill, 1953, p. 8)

P. D. R. Williams-Hunt
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Copyright: Williams-Hunt Collection, SOAS

During World War II, Williams-Hunt joined the Royal Air Force as an Intelligence and Paratroop officer and assisted in aerial photographic interpretation. At the end of the war, he was based at the Army Photo Interpretation Unit located at North Africa and Italy. To his initial regret, Williams-Hunt was posted to the Far East in June 1945. He became more involved in aerial photographic interpretation while based in Singapore, Bangkok and Saigon for the next two years. With his experience, keen ability and the extensive resources available, Williams-Hunt made several significant archaeological discoveries from the air. He was also put in-charge of a huge library of aerial photographs on Southeast Asia, and henceforth devoted himself to aerial photo interpretation and the "assembling of his photographic library". (Bradford, 1953, p. 175; Moore, 1984, p. 99)

In Southeast Asia, Williams-Hunt became increasingly interested in anthropology and ethnology, studying tribal settlements and land use from the air and highlighting key techniques in his article *"Anthropology from the air"*. (Bradford, 1953, p. 175) He also came into contact with the aborigines in Malaya. Upon demobilization in 1946 and with the rank of Major, he stayed on in Malaya, devoting his time to researching the customs and beliefs of the aborigines. He took up residence with them, and in 1950, married Wa Draman, the

View of the Causeway facing Johore Bahru from Woodlands
Copyright: Williams-Hunt Collection, SOAS

View of the waterfront buildings at the city centre which include Clifford Pier, Fullerton Building, Victoria Memorial Hall, Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, Union Building and Ocean Building
Copyright: Williams-Hunt Collection, SOAS

daughter of a Semai tribal chieftain. (Underhill, 1953, p. 8; Moore, 1984, p. 99)

The plight and suffering of the Malayan aborigines during the war went largely unnoticed. Their struggles were further aggravated by the Malayan Emergency. To help ameliorate their situation, Williams-Hunt recorded his observations of and interactions with the aborigines in his book *"Introduction to the Malayan Aborigines"*, published in Kuala Lumpur in 1952. It was an attempt to educate the Malayan government and the British security forces about the aborigines and their problems. Furthermore, he helped in the resettlement of the aborigines and "taught them improved farming methods and simple camp hygiene and showed the Army how to use them intelligently as guides and porters". (The Times, June 15, 1953, p. 5; Fagg, 1953, p. 8; Moore, 1984, p. 98-99)

Williams-Hunt is often cited for his pioneering work in locating both archaeological and ethnological sites from the air in Malaysia, Thailand and Australia. Although he had written only nine articles from 1946 to 1952 and mostly brief ones, he was regarded as a pioneer of scientific air photography. (Fagg, 1953, p. 8; Moore, 1984, p. 99)

Williams-Hunt was appointed as the Adviser on Aborigines and later as acting Director of Museums for the Federation of Malaya. (Bradford, 1953, p. 175). Interestingly, he had helped the British Museum collect aboriginal material culture, and had sent rare orchids to the Singapore Botanical Gardens and zoological specimens to the Raffles Museum. He had also assisted in the re-construction of the Kuala Lumpur National Museum that was demolished during the war. (Fagg, 1953, p. 8; Moore, 1984, p. 99 & 100; The Straits Times, June 13, 1953, p. 1)

On June 3, 1953, Williams-Hunt was in Tapah, Perak to attend the wedding of his wife's sister when he met with a fatal accident. He was crossing a wooden bridge when a rotten timber gave way and he fell. The bamboo pole supporting the bridge pierced him. Eight days after the accident, he passed away in Batu Gajah hospital, leaving behind a wife and three-week-old son named Anthony. (Moore, 1984, p. 100). The man who endeared himself to the aborigines and who was known affectionately among them as "Tuan Jangot" (Mr Beard) was buried in his wife's jungle village near Tapah, according to Semai rites. (The Straits Times, June 13, 1953, p. 1; The Straits Times, June 15, 1953, p. 1)

DETAILS OF WILLIAMS-HUNT COLLECTION

The Williams-Hunt collection at SOAS comprises the aerial photographs of the RAF gathered by P.D.R. Williams-Hunt, including some of his documents as well as maps and flight plans.

The main Southeast Asian countries represented by the photographs are Singapore, Myanmar, Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia. Majority of the photographs in the Collection are vertical aerial images while "about 20 percent...[are]...lower-level oblique photographs (notably of Bangkok, Ayutthaya, Singapore and Saigon)." (McGregor, 1996, p. 208)

Table 1 highlights the geographical coverage and major timelines of the photographs in the Collection, based on the inventory and description done by Dr Elizabeth Moore.

The largest portion of the photographs is on Peninsular Malaysia, shot between 1947 and 1949. The earliest photographs will be those of Myanmar, shot between 1943 and 1944. Interestingly, almost "300 photographs exist of Japanese-occupied Rangoon."

Most of the aerial photographs of Malaysia were taken by the British during the Malayan Emergency in order to discover "possible activity of Communist insurgents." The aerial photographs are a "good record of land use, but are difficult to locate in the absence of flight plans and recognisable settlements or transport arteries." (McGregor, 1996, p. 208)

Table 1: Geographical coverage and timelines

Location	Quantity	Major timeline of photographs
Thailand	**1,671**	**June 1944-May 1946**
North	187	
Northwest	602	
Central	396	
Bangkok	486	
Malaysia	**2,632**	**August 1947-August 1949**
Northwest (N)	901	
Northwest (S)	286	
Northeast	273	
Southwest	330	
Southeast	826	
General	16	
Burma	**821**	**October 1943-January 1944**
Upper Irrawady	73	
Shan Plateau	75	
Central: West	100	
Central: East	153	
Rangoon	282	
South Coast	138	
Singapore	**240**	**Various 1947-1948**
Cambodia	**151**	**January 1946-February 1946**
Angkor	128	
Phnom Penh	11	
Miscellaneous	12	
French Indochina	**140**	**December 1945**
Saigon	58	
Various	82	
Miscellaneous	**149**	**October 1944**
Pacific various	65	
Nicobar Islands	84	
Total in Collection	**5,804**	

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Copyright: McGregor, 1996, p. 205

DETAILS OF SINGAPORE PHOTOGRAPHS

The aerial photographs on Singapore were mainly taken between 1947 and 1948 and are "all obliques". (McGregor, 1996, p. 208) The Singapore images depict aerial views of various parts of the island, including coastlines, waterfront areas, ports, warehouses, airfields, rural and suburban areas, and government, commercial and residential buildings.

The inventory listing that accompanied the Singapore photographs is based on the list Dr Moore created to sort the photographs in the Collection. A sample is provided below to show how the photographs were organised within the list.

Table 2: Extract of inventory list of Singapore photographs

Box no.	Sortie	Serial	Location
81/30 Sing	81/30	0071	Singapore: Kallang: Airfield: Waterfront
81/30 Sing	81/30	0106	Singapore: Fishing trap: Waterfront
81/30 Sing	81/30	0131	Singapore: Causeway: Waterfront
VR-SCU Sin	VR-SCU	001	Singapore: Kallang: Flooded Residential Area
81/72 Sing	81/72	4108	Singapore: Warehouses: Waterfront: Boats

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The above list shows a broad organisation of the photographs by major locations in Singapore. Further investigation and research are required to identify the numerous details of Singapore landscapes evident in the images and to compare them with the current Singapore landscapes.

The National Archives of Singapore (NAS) holds a similar collection of Royal Air Force aerial photographs transferred to them by the Ministry of Defence, Singapore. These photographs span the period from 1946 to 1968. In their book, *Over Singapore 50 years Ago,* Brenda Yeoh and Theresa Wong researched on the aerial photographs taken between 1957 and 1958. They meticulously identified the places and buildings portrayed within these images, as they existed then in the 50s. The authors have also added a

View of the Kallang Airfield looking toward the city centre
Copyright: Williams-Hunt Collection,SOAS

View of the Royal Air Force Changi Airfield and the Selarang Barracks
Copyright: Williams-Hunt Collection, SOAS

current map of each of the areas studied, to better understand the changes that have occurred. (Yeoh & Wong, 2007, p. 7)

CONCLUSION

The aerial photographs of Singapore offer unique insights into how the island looked in the 1940s and 50s, and a view of the buildings that are long gone. They serve as a testimony to how Singapore's landscape has changed over the years. Though originally taken for reconnaissance purposes, the aerial photographs provide an important visual study of the historical and socioeconomic development of Singapore.

On the whole, the Williams-Hunt collection of Southeast Asian aerial photographs has been useful in researching into land utilisation in Southeast Asia, especially with the use of GIS technology. It has also proved useful for archaeological, anthropological and environmental studies. It is a unique and remarkable collection and "represents the oldest known freely available regional aerial photographic record of South-East Asia."(McGregor, 1996, p. 208)

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"知识创新与图书馆服务"
- 第四届上海国际图书馆论坛

by **VICKY GAO**
Senior Librarian
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library
National Library

高小行女士
高级参考与研究馆员
李光前参考图书馆

上海图书馆吴建中馆长主持论坛开幕式

李慧欣女士受邀为大会演讲嘉宾，介绍新加坡国家图书馆最新CRNS系统

2008年10月21日至22日，"第四届上海国际图书馆论坛"在上海图书馆召开。来自世界各地共有300多位的专家与学者围绕"知识创新与图书馆服务"主题，就数字时代的图书馆与情报服务、Web2.0背景下的图书馆、图书馆的核心竞争力与图书馆职业的未来、数字鸿沟与图书馆的责任以及数字图书馆与赛伯基础设施建设等议题进行广泛的学术交流和讨论。本届论坛恰逢上海市科技情报事业50周年(1958年–2008年)，使此次盛会倍添喜庆。

李光前参考图书馆的馆员向此次论坛提交了下面两篇论文: "Library Performance Indicators - A Case Study of Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library Singapore" co-authored by Law Lin Mui, Vicky Gao and Ng Hui Ling. "参考图书馆绩效评估 – 新加坡国家图书馆的实践". 合著者: 王连美、高小行、黄惠龄

该论文介绍了李光前参考图书馆所采用的与企业发展战略相关的关键绩效指标体系以及参考馆员绩效考评指标。新加坡国家图书馆依靠ISO国际标准构建先进的绩效管理理念引起了国际权威专业杂志<Library Management>的注意，这篇文章随后被该杂志录用（见<Library Management> 2009, Vol. 30; Issue 1/2, Page 77-87)。

"Repositioning Our Information Services in the Digital Age: A Study of the National Library Singapore Strategy" co-authored by Judy Ng and Ivy Lee. "数字时代如何定位参考咨询服务: 新加坡国家图书馆的策略". 合著者: 张碧玲、李慧欣

这篇文章介绍图书馆如何利用三个服务平台来推广参考与咨询服务。这三个服务平台就是: 1) 将馆员答复转变成特定网址，再用短信服务将网址发到读者的手机; 2) 让大众能直接从Google, Yahoo! 和MSN (GYM) 三大搜索引擎点击馆员编写的新加坡历史主题资料; 3) 让馆员在Collaborative Reference Network Services (CRNS) 的工作平台合作与讨论，从而达到提升咨询服务素质的目标。凭着紧扣创新与数字时代图书馆服务这一本届论坛的主题，该文章受到评委的青睐，作者之一的李慧欣女士 (Ivy Lee) 荣幸地受邀成为论坛演讲嘉宾。

会议期间，李光前参考图书馆王连美主任和高小行馆员也和上海图书馆读者服务中心的金红亚主任和张轶老师座谈，讨论

NEWS

来自李光前参考图书馆的馆员和上海图书馆读者服务部的同行们合影。

与王世伟教授（中）相聚。2005年5月，两位馆员曾陪同王教授参观李光前参考图书馆。王教授现任中国图书馆学会学术委员会副主任、上海图书馆学会理事长、上海图书馆党委副书记及国际图联(IFLA)大都市图书馆委员会常委。

新加坡国家图书馆的 Network of Specialists (NOS) 平台和上海图书馆的 Collaborative Online Reference Services (CORS) 平台具体合作事宜。

“上海国际图书馆论坛”每两年举行一届，至今已举办了四届。每届论坛都有国际图联高层领导、国内外图书馆馆长、全球图书情报界的专家学者和研究人员出席。两年一次的大会，已成为国际图书情报界重要的交流平台，也是馆员扩大与同行们的专业交流，结识新朋友，不忘老朋友的难得聚会！

SUMMARY

Intelligence, Innovation and Library Services

4th Shanghai International Library Forum

The 4th Shanghai International Library Forum (SILF) was held on 20 - 22 October 2008 at the Shanghai Library. The forum coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Institute of Scientific & Technical Information of Shanghai (1958-2008). The topic of this forum was “Intelligence, Innovation and Library Services”. To facilitate in-depth discussions, further subtopics are assigned as follows: Library and Information Service in the Digital Age; Libraries 2.0 and Web2.0; Core Competence of Library and Its Professional Future; Digital Gap and Responsibilities of Library; Digital Library and Cyber-infrastructure.

Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCRL) submitted two papers for this conference. The first paper was “Library Performance Indicators – A Case Study of Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library Singapore” co-authored by Law Lin Mui, Vicky Gao and Ng Hui Ling. It outlined how the National Library of Singapore utilised ISO standards to build an effective performance management system. This caught the interest of the prestigious journal, Library Management and was selected to be published in it. (See Library Management (2009), Vol. 30, Issue 1/2, Page 77-87). The second paper, “Repositioning our Information Services in the Digital Age: A Study of the National Library Singapore Strategy” was co-authored by Judy Ng and Ivy Lee. Both papers were accepted for the conference and published in the SILF 2008 conference proceedings, while the authors of the latter paper were invited to give a presentation.

The biennial forum also provided an opportunity for librarians to expand their network of contacts in the information industry as well as to catch up with old friends.

சிங்கப்பூர்த் தமிழ் இலக்கிய வளர்ச்சி

by **SUNDARI BALASUBRAMANIAM**
Librarian
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library
National Library

சுந்தரி பாலசுப்ரமணியம்
நூலக அதிகாரி
லீ கொங் சியன் மேற்கோள் நூலகம்
தேசிய நூலகம்.

பத்திரிகைகள் சிங்கப்பூர் இலக்கிய வளர்ச்சிக்குப் பெரும் பங்காற்றியுள்ளன. 1935 இல் சிங்கப்பூரில் தோற்றம் கண்ட தமிழ் முரசு, தன் வாசகர்களுக்கு நடப்புச் செய்திகளை வழங்கியதோடு, மலாயா, சிங்கப்பூர் தமிழர்களின் நலன்களுக்குப் பாடுபட்டு இவ்வட்டாரத்தில் படைப்பிலக்கியம் மலரவும் துணைபுரிந்திருக்கிறது. சிங்கை நேசன், மாலை மணி, தமிழ் நேசன், தமிழ் மலர் போன்ற பல பத்திரிகைகள் அக்காலகட்டத்தில் தோன்றி படைப்பாளர்களின் ஆற்றல் வெளிப்பட பெரிதும் துணைபுரிந்தன.

தமிழ் முரசு ஆசிரியர் திரு கோ. சாரங்கபாணி அவர்கள், இங்கு வாழும் தமிழர்கள் தங்களுக்கு இடையே ஜாதி, மத பேதங்கள் பாராட்டாமல் மொழி அடிப்படையில் ஒன்றுபடுவதற்கு 1952 ஆம் ஆண்டு தைத்திங்களில் தமிழர் திருநாள் விழாவைத் தொடக்கிவைத்தார். அப்போது மலாயாக் கூட்டரசு, சிங்கப்பூர் காலனி முழுவதுமாக மொழி உணர்வும், இனப்பற்றும் பெருக்கெடுத்தன. அந்தப் பொற்காலப் பின்னணியில்தான் இவ்வட்டாரத்தில் சிறுகதை, கவிதை இலக்கியங்களை வளர்த்தெடுக்க தமிழ் முரசு முனைப்புடன் செயல்புரிந்தது.

சிறுகதை

சிங்கப்பூரின் இலக்கிய வரலாற்றின் நெடுகிலும் வாழ்க்கை நிகழ்ச்சிகளைக் கதைகளாக வடித்தெடுக்க நடந்த முயற்சிகளைக் காணலாம். சிங்கப்பூர் தமிழிலக்கியத்தின் பொற்காலமாகிய ஐம்பதுகளில் துவங்கி இன்றுவரை அதிகமாக வாழ்க்கை நிகழ்ச்சிகளைக் கதையாகப் பதிவு செய்யும் கதைகள் வெளிவந்துள்ளன. அந்த சம்பவங்களை வெறும் சம்பவங்களாகப் பார்ப்பதோடு நின்றுவிடாமல் அதன் பின் உள்ள சமூக ஓட்டங்களையும் சிந்தித்து அந்த சிந்தனைகளை இலக்கியப் புனைவில் ஊற்றித் தந்தனர் படைப்பாளிகள்.

மலாயாச் சிறுகதைப் படைப்பாளர்களாக உஷா நாயர், வயி. சரஸ்வதிதேவி, மு. அப்துல் லத்தீப், கே. முகம்மது யூசுப், மு. பக்ருதீன், ஜி. பி. சாசரஸ், அ. கி. அறிவானந்தன், மெ. அறிவானந்தன், சி. கோன், தே. நவமணி, சி. கமலநாதன், வி. ச. முத்தையா, சி. காவேரிநாதன், சி. வடிவேல், செ. குணசேகர், என். துரைராஜ், ந. வரதராசன், மா. செ. மாயதேவன், கா. பிச்சைமுத்து, ப. சந்திரகாந்தம், ரெ. கார்த்திகேசு, மா. இராமையா, ஆர். சண்முகம், பூ. அருணாசலம், பெ. மு. இளம்வழுதி, நாரண. திருவிடச்செல்வன், முரு. சொ. நாச்சியப்பன் முதலியோரும், சிங்கப்பூர்ச் சிறுகதை எழுத்தாளர்களாக ந. பழநிவேலு, எம். கே. பக்ருதீன் சாஹிப், முகிலன், சே. வே. சண்முகம், மு. சு. குருசாமி, பாக்கியசிற்பியன், மா. செகதீசன், சிங்கை நிமலன், பி. பி. காந்தம், புதுமைதாசன், ரா. நாகையன், என். கே. நாராயணன், ஐ. உலகநாதன், அ. செருவப்பா, மு. தங்கராசன், இராம. கண்ணபிரான் முதலியோரும் தமிழ் முரசின் கதைப் பண்ணையில் வளர்க்கப்பட்டு, சிறுகதையின் தொடக்ககால வரலாற்றில் உள்ளூர் எழுத்துலக அணியைப் பிரதிநிதித்தனர்.

கவிதை

சிங்கப்பூரின் தமிழ்க் கவிதை எழுச்சிக்கு அடித்தளம் அமைத்தவர்களாகிய ந. பழவேலு, சிங்கை முகிலன் ஆகியோரின் படைப்புகளில் சாதிமதக் கொடுமை, கிழமணக்கொடுமை போன்ற பல சீர்திருத்த கருத்துகள் மிளிர்ந்தன. பொதுவாக அன்றைய கவிதைகளில் சாதி ஒழிப்பு, கைம்பெண் மணம், பொருந்தா மணம், மத ஊழல் எதிர்ப்பு, பிராமண எதிர்ப்பு, மதச் சீர்திருத்தம் முதலிய கருபொருள்களைக் கொண்டிருந்தன. இரண்டாம் உலகப்போரின் போது தளர்ச்சி கண்டிருந்த இலக்கிய வளர்ச்சி போர் முடிவுற்றபின் வளர்ச்சி அடைந்தது. அக்காலகட்டத்தில் எழுதப்பட்ட கவிதைகளில் ஜப்பானியரின் கொடுங்கோல் ஆட்சி சித்திரிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. 1953இல் நீலகண்ட சாஸ்திரியார் வருகையும் சிங்கப்பூரில் இருந்த மலாயாப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தில் சமஸ்கிருதத் துறை ஏற்படுத்த அவர் செய்த பரிந்துரையும் தமிழரிடையே கோபத்தையும் எழுச்சியையும் ஏற்படுத்தின. அதனால் கோ. சாரங்கபாணியின் தலைமையில் `தமிழ் எங்கள் உயிர்' என்னும் இயக்கத்தின் விளைவாக கா. பெருமாள், முகிலன் முதலானோர் தமிழ்பற்றூட்டும் கவிதைகள் எழுதித் தமிழர்களைத் தட்டி எழுப்பினர். 1963இல் கம்யூனிச மிரட்டல் நிகழ்ச்சிகள் இன ஒற்றுமைக்குப் பங்கம் விளைவித்தன. இக்காலகட்டத்தில் மலேசிய நாட்டுப்பற்றுப் பாடல்களை எழுத்தாளர்கள் எழுதினர். கவிஞர்கள் ஐ. உலகநாதன், முத்தமிழன், முல்லைவாணன், க. து. மு. இக்பால், கா. பெருமாள், ந. பழனிவேலு, அமலதாசன், முதலிய கவிஞர்கள் இத்தகைய பாடல்களைப் பாடினர். தமிழ் முரசில் தொடங்கப்பெற்ற வெண்பாப் போட்டியும் தமிழர் திருநாள் போட்டியும் கவிஞர்களுக்கு ஊக்கம் ஊட்டிக் கவிதை எழுதத் தூண்டின.

ஐ. உலகநாதன், முல்லைவாணன், சிங்கை முகிலன், க. து. மு. இக்பால், முருகதாசன், ஜமீலா, கா. பெருமாள், இளமாறன், தங்கராசன், பரணன், மணிவண்ணன், சித பழனிச்சாமி, வி. இக்குவனம், முத்துமாணிக்கம், பெரி. நீல பழனிவேலன், சுகுமாறன், ஏ. பி. சண்முகம், சுதர்மன், அமலதாசன், மலர் மாணிக்கம் போன்றோர் கவிதை வளர்ச்சிக்குச் சிறந்த பங்காற்றியுள்ளனர்.

அன்றைய மலாயா, சிங்கப்பூர்ப் பிரதேசங்களில் தமிழ் முரசு வளர்த்தெடுத்த தமிழ் இலக்கியத்தை ஆவணப்படுத்தும்

நோக்கில், சிங்கப்பூர்த் தேசிய நூலக வாரியம் தேசியக் கல்விக் கழகத்துடன் இணைந்து 1936 ஆம் ஆண்டு முதல், 1960 ஆம் வருடம் ஈறாக, முரசில் வெளிவந்த சிறுகதைகள், கவிதைகள் ஆகியவற்றைச் சேகரித்து வெளியிட உள்ளது. சிறுகதைகளுக்கு கதைச் சுருக்கங்கள் சேர்க்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. இந்த அரிய முயற்சி, இலக்கியத் துறையைச் சார்ந்தவர்களுக்குக் கவிதைகள், கதைகளின் மூலப் படிகளை நுண்படச் சுருள்களில் கண்டடைய ஒரு கைவிளக்காய்த் திகழ்கிறது. தம் ஆரம்பக் கதைப் பிரதிகளைத் தவறவிட்ட கதாசிரியர்கள், முரசுக் கதை, கவிதைகளைப் பிரசுரிக்க விரும்பும் பதிப்பாளர்கள், சிங்கப்பூர்க் கதை, கவிதைகளை மதிப்பிட விழையும் ஆய்வாளர்கள் போன்றோருக்கு இந்த விவரப்பட்டியல் நூல் உண்மையிலேயே நற்பயன்களை விளைவிக்கும் ஒரு கொடை நூலாகும்.

SUMMARY

Singapore Tamil Literature

Tamil literature is not restriced to the writings of people in Tamil Nadu. It has expanded beyond that geographical limit and has become global. Contributors to modern Tamil literature include not only Tamil authors from Tamil Nadu, but also the Tamil diaspora in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore , Europe, America, Australia and other Asian countries who are well-versed in Tamil. Contributions from cyberspace have also taken the Tamil language to new heights.

As an initiative to highlight Singapore's Tamil literature output over 70 years, we have published two volumes of a bibliography that lists shorts stories and poetry works over two periods. The first volume of *'Bibliography of Singapore Tamil Short Stories and Poetry'* covers work produced between 1930 and 1960. The second volume lists pieces from 1961 to 2000. Singapore Tamil literature does not only include those published in books, but also in other mass media. We have also selected Tamil newspapers as the National Library archives these in microfilm format and are made accessible to public for reference.

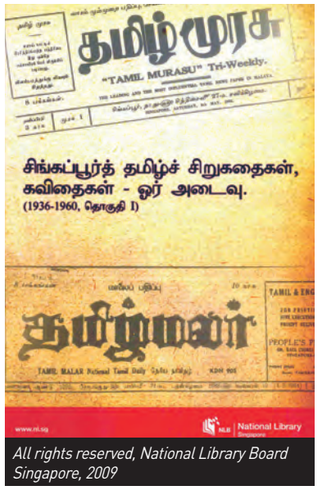
Short stories evolved during the 1930s and with the publication of the daily *Tamil Murasu* newspaper, many took the opportunity to channel their thoughts and feelings through their writings. Other now-defunct publications such as *Malai Mani, Singai Nesan, Tamil Nesan* and *Tamil Malar* also contributed to the proliferation of short stories. The themes of these short stories were influenced by real life situations and we can see the changes in the stories coincide with the changes in life. In the early 1930s, the stories mainly stressed on social reforms. Themes like widow remarriages, inter-caste marriages and condemnation of superstitious beliefs and practices were popular among the writers. During the Second World War, stories reflected the quest and yearning for freedom that the milieu stoked.

The period between 1959-1965 is seen as the renaissance of Tamil Literature in Singapore. Many activities like writing competitions, cultural events and religious events paved the way to a burst of short stories and poems. *Singai Nesan, Tamil Murasu, Malaya Nanban, Tamil Nesan* and many other newspapers encouraged people to write. *Tamil Nesan* conducted workshops on how to write stories. *Tamil Murasu* conducted story writing competitions, and many other activities that brought out the creativity and passion in people. During this period, the country went through political upsurges, social upheaval and financial instability and all these uncertainties kindled the quest for racial identity among the Tamils and lead to a string of short stories and poems reflecting their experiences in real life.

Some of the early pioneers like Na. Palanivelu, Ka. Perumal, Sarma, Mu. Ka. Gurusamy, Se. Ve. Shanmukam, Puthumaidasan, Na. Govindasamy, Rama. Kannapiran, Ma. Ilankannan, A.P. Shanmugam, Peri. Neela. Palanivelan and poets like Amalathasan, Murugadasan, Patheral Ilamaran, K.T.M. Iqbal, K. Jameela, Paranan, M. Thangarasan and many more have contributed to the growth of Tamil literature.

Since the 1980s there have been consistent contributions from authors and Tamil works have received recognition at the national level. Authors were commended by the government and various associations. The *Cultural Medallion Award*, and *Tamizhavel Award* are some of the cachets conferred. Another prestigious award is *The Southeast Asian Writers Awards* (SEAWrite), which is designed to honour leading poets and writers in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. The recipients of this award are Ma. Ilankannan, Paranan, Rama Kannabiran, Na. Govindasamy, K.T.M. Iqbal and Puthumaidasan. Their writings have morphed into new directions and now focus on such challenging themes as logic, education, creativity, science, politics, psychology, comedy etc.

This bibliography will serve as tool for literary enthusiasts, researchers and the public to identify the works of the authors and refer to their original works published in the newspapers. It is an honour for the National Library Board in collaboration with the National Institute of Education to collate the Tamil language works of Singaporean writers, which would have otherwise gone unnoticed.



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Research Fellows 2009

Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship Series

Mr Chia Yeow Tong (left) and Ms Liu Oi Yan (right) receiving their fellowships from Ms Ngian Lek Choh, Director, National Library

The Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship welcomes two new Research Follows, Mr Chia Yeow Tong and Ms Liu Oi Yan. They were awarded their fellowships by Ms Ngian Lek Choh, Director, National Library on 14 January 2009.

Mr Chia Yeow Tong graduated from the National University of Singapore with an honours degree in Bachelor of Arts in History. He holds a Masters in Education Management from the University of Western Australia. He received his Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. He is currently a PhD candidate and Graduate Assistant in Ontario Institute for Studies in Education from the Theory and Policy Studies in Education Department, University of Toronto. His research topic is "Citizenship and History Education in Singapore, 1965 to 1980".

Ms Liu Oi Yan has a Master's by Research in Chinese Studies and a Bachelor degree in Chinese Studies from Leiden University. At present, she is also a PhD candidate from the Department of History, Cornell University. Her areas of concentration are Southeast Asian History, Chinese History and Nationalism Studies. She will be researching on "Political Visions and Cultural Identity of Diasporic Chinese in British and Dutch East Indies".

The Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship invites researchers and scholars both in and outside Singapore to undertake collection related research and publish on the National Library prized collections. The Fellowship aims to position the National Library Board as the first stop for Asian collection services. It is open to both local and foreign applicants, who should preferably have an established record of achievement in their chosen field of research and have the potential to excel further.

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General Enquiries:
TEL +65 6332 3255

Reference Enquiries:
EMAIL ref@nlb.gov.sg
FAX +65 6332 3248
SMS +65 9178 7792

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National Library Board
100 Victoria Street
#14-01 National Library Building
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