

# Director's Note

Shows such as *The Army Series*, *The Awakening* and *The Coffee Shop* were milestones for local Chinese-language TV that ushered in a new generation of entertainment royalty like Xiang Yun, Huang Wenying, Edmund Chen and Li Nanxing. It's quite remarkable that these well-produced local productions arose just 10 years after Singapore began broadcasting in colour.

Indeed, the story of the switch to colour from monochrome is itself a fascinating one. People today spend thousands on flat-screen TVs that promise vivid, eye-popping colour. Yet when it was first introduced, no one seemed that interested in moving on from their black-and-white sets. Do tune in to Mohamad Karazie and Tan Jie Ling's account of Singapore's transition to colour.

Fast forward to the 1990s, Singapore was a nation of couch potatoes, thanks undoubtedly to such gripping programming as *Triple Nine* and *Under One Roof*. To get people moving, the National Healthy Lifestyle Committee introduced the Great Singapore Workout with then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong gamely leading the way. Over the next 30 years, the message to "get out of your seat, on to your feet, get your body moving like mine" eventually caught on, if the number of yoga and pilates studios and gyms that have mushroomed around Singapore since is any indication. Lim Tin Seng flexes his writing muscle to bring us this story looking back at the origins and history of this mass exercise movement.

While Singaporeans had to be persuaded to exercise, they didn't need any encouragement to visit the zoo. The Singapore Zoo, originally known as the Singapore Zoological Gardens, has always been a big hit with people who wanted to be able to (safely) encounter wild animals. Choo Ruizhi ferrets out the zoo's early history and uncovers some of the hairy situations the zoo faced.

These are just some of the must-reads in this issue. Others include a look at our first foreign minister, S. Rajaratnam; Singapore's pioneer cartoonists; the Hawkins Road Refugee Camp; the new Laws of Our Land exhibition; the Singaporeanisation of Thai Buddhist temple Wat Ananda; the fate of the Persian Armenian community in Singapore; and the search for a "lost" towkay.

We are always on the lookout to bring you great stories about our past, so stay tuned for more!

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**On the cover**

Xiang Yun as Ah Mei and the late Huang Wenying as He Ah Shui in *The Awakening*, a local blockbuster drama series produced by the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation in 1984. *Courtesy of Mediacorp Pte Ltd.*

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National Library Board, Singapore, 2024.

ISSN 0219-8126 (print)  
ISSN 1793-9968 (online)

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