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Cover: Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus, 1910s

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# Director's Column

Have you visited the Donors Gallery? It is now opened for viewing at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library located at Level 10 of the National Library. As the national library of the nation, we collect materials on our local heritage in all formats, preserve and organise them, and make them accessible to researchers and the general public. Hence, we warmly welcome donations of literary materials relating to Singapore and Southeast Asia.

At Level 10 of the National Library, you will also find the KaalaChakra exhibition on the early Indian influences in Southeast Asia up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Come and discover how Sanskrit and Tamil languages as well as Hinduism and Buddhism had influenced the region in those days.

The National Library Board recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Public Utilities Board. This partnership would help add to the richness of the library's collection of water-related resources. An exhibition and bibliography were also launched to promote public awareness.

The National Library had the privilege to organise the 10th IFLA Interlending and Document Supply (ILDS) International Conference recently. During the 3-day Conference, the library played host to more than 200 international delegates from different parts of the world. Do look out for the IFLA International Newspaper Conference 2008, to be held from 1 - 3 April 2008. The theme would be "Old Issues, New Issues: Impact of Digital Technology upon Contemporary and Historic Newspapers".

In this issue, you will find an article written by one of our Research Fellows, Kuik Cheng-Chwee. The article analyses the different strategies adopted by Singapore and

Malaysia when faced with a stronger and rising China in international power relations. Since the launch of the Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship in November 2005, we have received very encouraging response from researchers from all over the world. The closing date for the next Fellowship programme is 31 January 2008. The brochure and application form are available for download at <http://www.nlb.gov.sg>. Please send us an application if you are keen to make use of our reference and research collections to conduct your research.

Also in this issue, we bring you back in time to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. You will discover the challenges faced by the missionaries in the establishment of the Singapore Catholic Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as how photography in Singapore developed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and survived World War II to become an art form today. Also learn about the valuable contributions made by Chan Kim Boon and Khoo Seok Wan, who were instrumental in setting the foundation for modernising and indigenising the old curricula for local use in those early days.

The National Library Board subscribes to more than 140 electronic databases and you can access a large number of these remotely from your home or office. From this issue, we will be introducing our electronic databases to you in BiblioAsia. In this first article, we feature databases beginning with the letter 'A'. Do look out for the other electronic resources in subsequent issues. Meanwhile, do keep your comments and feedback coming. We look forward to seeing you at the National Library.

## **Ms Ngian Lek Choh**

Director  
National Library



# Rising Dragon, Crouching Tigers?

## Comparing the Foreign Policy Responses of Malaysia and Singapore Toward a Re-emerging China, 1990-2005

By Kuik Cheng-Chwee, Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow, National Library

### INTRODUCTION: BALANCING, BANDWAGONING OR HEDGING?

What do states do when faced with an increasingly stronger and/or potentially threatening big power?<sup>1</sup> For decades, mainstream international relations (IR) theorists have offered two broad answers to this central question: states are likely to either balance against or bandwagon with that power. The “balancing” school argues that, driven to preserve their own security, states are likely to perceive a rising power as a growing threat that must be counter-checked by alliance and armament.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly so if the power’s aggregate capability is accompanied by geographical proximity, offensive capability and offensive intentions.<sup>3</sup> The “bandwagoning” school, by contrast, opines that states may choose to crouch under – rather than contain – a fast emerging great power. That is, they may choose to accept a subordinate role to the dominant power in exchange for material or ideational gain. This could happen when they view the power as a primary source of strength that can be exploited to promote their own interests.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding the enduring centrality of these schools of thought in the study of IR, recent scholarly debates suggest that these propositions might not accurately describe the contemporary responses of East Asian states toward a rising China.<sup>5</sup> Empirical observations indicate that none of the regional states have adopted pure forms of balancing or bandwagoning. While most of them do pursue some form of military cooperation with Western powers (most notably the United States), these actions do not strictly constitute a balancing strategy toward China. This is because such cooperation actually predated the rise of China,<sup>6</sup> and there is no clear indication that the states' military modernisation has accelerated in tandem with the growth of Chinese power.<sup>7</sup>

In a similar vein, while East Asian states have all demonstrated an interest in developing economic ties and engaging China bilaterally and multilaterally, this should not be considered a bandwagoning strategy. Economic cooperation and diplomatic engagement are chiefly motivated by the pragmatic incentives of gaining economic and diplomatic profits and do not by themselves constitute an acceptance of power.<sup>8</sup> Bandwagoning, in contrast, reflects a readiness on the part of smaller partners to accept the larger partner's power ascendancy, mostly through political *and* military alignment. Empirically, however, none of the regional states (with the partial exceptions of Burma, Cambodia, and North Korea) have aligned politically and militarily with China.

There are several factors that explain why most regional states have rejected pure-balancing and pure-bandwagoning.<sup>9</sup> Pure-balancing is considered strategically unnecessary, because the Chinese power remains largely a potential, rather than actual threat. It is also viewed as politically provocative and counter-productive, in that an anti-Beijing alliance would certainly render China hostile, turning a perceived threat into a real one. Further, it is regarded as economically unwise, as it would likely result in the loss of trade opportunities that could be reaped from China's growing market. Pure-bandwagoning, on the other hand, while economically appealing, is deemed politically undesirable and strategically risky, as it is likely to limit the smaller states' freedom of action.

For these reasons, most of the East Asian states do not regard pure-balancing and pure-bandwagoning as viable options. In the case of the original member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), none of the tigers have chosen to contain or crouch under the dragon. Instead, they have taken a middle position that is now widely described as "hedging".<sup>10</sup> Borrowed originally

from finance, "hedging" is brought into IR to refer to an alternative state strategy distinguishable from balancing and bandwagoning. It has been used not only to describe smaller states' reactions to a major power but also big powers' strategies in dealing with one another.<sup>11</sup>

This article examines the former, with case studies of Malaysia and Singapore. By comparing their foreign policies towards a rising China in the post-Cold War era, it seeks to analyse how and why these smaller states have responded to their giant neighbour the way they have.

## HEDGING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The hedging strategy is defined here as a purposeful act in which a state seeks to insure its long term interests by placing its policy bets on multiple counteracting options that are designed to offset risks embedded in the international system.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, it is conceived as a multiple-component strategy situated between the two ends of the balancing-bandwagoning spectrum (see Table 1).<sup>13</sup> This spectrum is measured by the degrees of rejection and acceptance on the part of smaller state toward a big power, with pure balancing representing the highest degree of power rejection, and pure bandwagoning the extreme form of power acceptance.

In the context of Southeast Asia-China relations, hedging has five components: economic-pragmatism, binding-engagement, limited-bandwagoning, dominance-denial and indirect-balancing. Each of these components is distinguished not only by the degrees of power rejection-acceptance, but also by function and *modus operandi* (see Table 2).<sup>14</sup>

Hedging is essentially a two-pronged approach that operates by simultaneously pursuing two sets of mutually counteracting policies, which can be labelled as "return-maximising" and "risk-contingency" options. The first set (consisting of economic-pragmatism, binding-engagement, and limited-bandwagoning) allows the hedger to reap as many economic, diplomatic and foreign policy profits as possible from the dominant power when all is well. This is counteracted by the risk-contingency set, which, through dominance-denial and indirect-balancing, limits the hedger's loss if things go awry. Hedging, in essence, is a strategy that aims for the best and prepares for the worst. A state policy that focuses on merely return-maximising without preparing for risk contingency – and vice versa – is not a hedging strategy.

By concurrently adopting these risk-contingency and return-maximising options, smaller states such as Singapore and Malaysia hope to hedge against any possible risks associated with the rise of China and the resultant changes in the distribution of global power. Whether China will become weak and no longer be a potential, alternative power centre; whether Beijing will turn aggressive and become a target for containment by the U.S. and its allies; and whether China will grow even more stronger and gradually emerge as a key provider of regional public goods – the smaller states hope that their present strategy of counteracting one transaction against another will serve to insure their long term interests amid the structural change in the international system.<sup>15</sup>

This conceptualisation provides useful parameters to illuminate the similarities and differences between responses of the two ASEAN states. Our research findings indicate that while Malaysia and Singapore have both pursued a hedging strategy through economic pragmatism, binding-engagement, dominance-denial and indirect-

balancing, they have reacted differently toward limited-bandwagoning. While Malaysia, has embraced the policy by showing a greater deference to China and collaborating on several foreign policy issues, Singapore, has dismissed limited bandwagoning as a policy option because of its concerns over geopolitical complexity and the long-term ramifications of a powerful China.

These similarities and differences are illustrated in Table 1 below.

### MALAYSIA'S CHINA POLICY

The evolution of Malaysia's China policy illustrates how a previously hostile and distrusting relationship has transformed into a cordial political partnership over a short period of time.<sup>16</sup> As late as the second half of the 1980s, Malaysia still perceived China as a long-term threat, largely because of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s continued support for the outlawed Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), and because of Beijing's Overseas Chinese policy

**TABLE 1**  
**ASEAN STATES' RESPONSES TO THE RE-EMERGING CHINA**

Countries	Balancing Strategy (Pure form)	Hedging Strategy					Bandwagoning Strategy (Pure form)
		Risk-Contingency Options		Return-Maximising Options			
		Indirect Balancing	Dominance Denial	Economic Pragmatism	Binding-Engagement	Limited Bandwagoning	
Singapore							
Malaysia							

←

**DEGREE OF POWER REJECTION**

↑

**NEUTRALITY POINT**

→

**DEGREE OF POWER ACCEPTANCE**

and the overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea.<sup>17</sup> Malaysia's China policy then was understandably highly vigilant, cautiously designed to "manage and control" what was considered to be the "most sensitive foreign relationship."<sup>18</sup>

After the end of the Cold War, however, Malaysia adopted a much more sanguine outlook towards China. The dissolution of the CPM in 1989 effectively removed a long-standing political barrier. At the same time, the growing salience of economic performance as a source of authority for the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)-led coalition government, along

with Prime Minister Mahathir's foreign policy aspirations in the post-Cold War era, all contributed to the shift in Malaysia's perception of China from being the largest security threat to that of a key economic and foreign policy partner.<sup>19</sup> Such a perceptual change led to an adjustment in actual policy. In addition to strengthening its long-held economic pragmatism, Malaysia gradually adopted policies that can be considered binding-engagement and limited bandwagoning toward the second half of the 1990s.

Malaysia's economic pragmatism is best illustrated by its leaders' high-level visits to China, which have always

**TABLE 2****SMALLER STATES' POLICY OPTIONS IN RESPONSE TO POWER ASYMMETRY**

	FUNCTIONS	MODUS OPERANDI/ INDICATORS
<b>BANDWAGONING</b> (Pure form)  "Profit first"	To reap present or future rewards from a big power	Forging a <b>military alliance</b> with the big power, coordinating key foreign and defence policies
<b>LIMITED BANDWAGONING*</b>  "Grasp the opportunity for profit, but cautiously"	To reap present or future foreign policy rewards from a big power, but taking care to avoid the loss of its autonomy and any erosion of its existing relationship with another dominant power	Forming a <b>political partnership</b> with the power, coordinating external policies in selected areas, as well as giving deference to the dominant power on a voluntary basis
<b>BINDING-ENGAGEMENT</b>  "Socialisation matters"	To bind a big power in institutions, to increase voice opportunities and to socialise the power with the established norms, with the ultimate goal of encouraging it to behave in a responsible and restrained way	Creating and maintaining <b>regularised institutional links</b> with the big power through bilateral and multilateral diplomatic platforms
<b>ECONOMIC PRAGMATISM</b>  "Business first"	To maximise economic benefits from its direct trade and investment links with the big power, regardless of any political differences	Establishing and maintaining <b>direct trade and investment links</b> with the big power, as well as entering into bilateral and regional economic cooperation (such as a Free Trade Agreement) with that power
<b>DOMINANCE DENIAL</b>  "Ascendancy is okay, but not dominance"	To deny and prevent the emergence of a dominant power who might display a tendency of dictating hegemonic terms to smaller states	Making use of <b>other powers' balancing efforts</b> to offset the growing clout of the big power, by ensuring the involvement of other powers in regional affairs, and by giving political support to others' alliances and armaments
<b>INDIRECT BALANCING</b>  "Just in case"	To prepare for diffuse and uncertain strategic contingencies	Maintaining <b>military ties</b> (either a formal alliance or informal military cooperation) with another power, and modernising its own military, <b>without explicitly identifying any specific target of its military efforts</b>
<b>BALANCING</b> (Pure form)  "Security first"	To check and counter-balance the growing capability of a specific power	Entering into a <b>military alliance</b> with a third power and upgrading its own armament programme, <b>for the purpose of containing against a specific threat</b>

\* Limited bandwagoning (LB) is different from pure bandwagoning (PB) in three aspects. Firstly, PB often takes the form of military alignment or security alliance, whereas LB mainly involves political collaboration on selective issues. Secondly, PB signifies a zero-sum scenario for big powers, that is, when a state bandwagons with one power, it simultaneously distances itself from another power. PB often occurs when there is an intense rivalry between two big powers, and smaller states are forced to take sides between the competing powers. In LB, on the other hand, a smaller state bandwagons with a rising power while maintaining its traditional relations with the preponderant power. Finally, PB implies an acceptance of a superior-subordinate relationship between a big power and a smaller partner, whereas in LB, the smaller state tries to avoid the loss of its autonomy and to avoid becoming over-dependent on the big power. Simply put, PB is hierarchy-acceptance while LB is hierarchy-avoidance.

been accompanied by large business delegations. These visits often resulted in the signing of memoranda of understanding for various joint projects. Former Premier Mahathir made seven such visits during his tenure, while the current Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's visit to China in May 2004 was his first bilateral visit to a non-ASEAN country after assuming his premiership. Presently, China is Malaysia's fourth largest trading partner. Bilateral trade has increased more than eight-fold over the past decade, from US\$2.4 billion in 1995 to US\$19.3 billion in 2004.<sup>20</sup>

Binding-engagement is apparent in Malaysia's various diplomatic efforts to increase dialogue opportunities with

China. Having become the first ASEAN state to forge diplomatic ties with Beijing during the Cold War, Malaysia was also among the first regional states to establish a bilateral consultative mechanism between foreign ministry officials in the immediate post-Cold War era, as early as April 1991.<sup>21</sup> Kuala Lumpur has also tried to bind China at the regional stage. China's appearance at the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July 1991 as a guest of Malaysian government was Beijing's first multilateral encounter with the regional organisation.

After the mid-1990s, Malaysia's China policy gradually manifested elements of limited-bandwagoning. This was

first apparent in the Spratly Islands dispute. According to Joseph Liow, Malaysia and China reached a consensus in October 1995 that rejected outside interference or third party mediation in the dispute. Since then, it appeared that Malaysia “was willing to accommodate and accept, if not share in, China’s positions on the South China Sea.”<sup>22</sup> Not only did Malaysia echo the long-held Chinese assertion that territorial disputes should be addressed bilaterally, the two countries also seemed to take similar stance over the proposed code of conduct in the South China Sea.<sup>23</sup> In August 1999, while Manila vehemently protested Kuala Lumpur’s construction of structures on Terumbu Siput and Terumbu Peninjau, Beijing response was mild. Considering the fact that the Malaysian Foreign Minister was in Beijing just before the construction took place, “it is a matter of conjecture,” a well-informed Malaysian analyst writes, whether the minister was “actually dispatched to Beijing in order to ‘explain’ the latest development over Malaysia’s position.”<sup>24</sup>

Malaysia’s limited-bandwagoning behaviour is particularly apparent in the area of East Asian cooperation. Partly due to the shared worldview between the leaders of the two countries, and partly because of Beijing’s international influence, Malaysia considers China as valuable partner in pushing for its goal of fostering closer and institutionalised cooperation among the East Asian economies. This goal can be traced back to Mahathir’s East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG) proposal in December 1990, which advocated the protection of regional countries’ collective interests in the face of trade protectionism in Europe and North America. The proposal involved ASEAN members, Indochinese states and Northeast Asian countries, but excluded the U.S. and its Australasian allies. The EAEG concept was met with strong objection by the U.S., while receiving lukewarm responses from Japan, South Korea, and other ASEAN members, even when it was later renamed East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC). Malaysia was disappointed with Japan’s response as it originally hoped that Tokyo would play the leading role in the proposed group.<sup>25</sup> In due course, China stood out as the only major power who lent explicit support to EAEC despite its initial hesitance.<sup>26</sup>

In 1997, China, along with Japan and South Korea, accepted ASEAN’s invitation to attend an informal meeting during the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, against the backdrop of the Asian financial crisis.<sup>27</sup> The Summit was subsequently institutionalised as an annual cooperative mechanism among the East Asian economies, and marked the advent of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) process. In 2002, Malaysia’s attempt to set up an APT Secretariat in Kuala

Lumpur was opposed by some ASEAN members, but supported by Beijing.<sup>28</sup>

Malaysian and Chinese leaders clearly saw eye to eye on the need to accelerate East Asian cooperation and community building. In 2004, when Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah proposed to convene the first East Asia Summit (EAS) in the following year, he was strongly backed by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. In the run-up to the inaugural meeting, Kuala Lumpur and Beijing initially wanted to limit the EAS membership to the 13 APT countries. Later, when it became clear that India, Australia and New Zealand would be included in the new forum, both Malaysia and China proposed that the APT would be the main vehicle for East Asia community building, and the EAS a forum for dialogue among the regional countries.



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Beyond East Asian cooperation, the two countries have also concurred with each other over a host of regional and international issues, ranging from the welfare of developing countries to the pursuit of a multi-polar world.

The convergence of interests over these foreign policy issues, combined with the tangible benefits accruing from closer bilateral economic ties, somewhat assuaged the Malaysian leaders their earlier apprehensions about the potential ramifications of their powerful neighbour. At an event celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of bilateral relations, Prime Minister Abdullah remarked: “Malaysia’s China policy has been a triumph of good diplomacy and good sense. ... I believe that we blazed a trail for others to follow. Our China policy showed that if you can look beyond your fears and inadequacies, and can think and act from principled positions, rewards will follow [emphasis added].”<sup>29</sup>

Taking this stance, leaders from Mahathir to Abdullah have made efforts to reiterate and internalise Malaysia’s benign view of Beijing at various occasions, often citing example

of Chinese navigator Zheng He's peaceful voyages to the Sultanate of Malacca in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to underscore the benevolent nature of Chinese power. Thus far, the leaders' open rhetoric has largely been matched by the country's policy. Notwithstanding the lingering concerns over Chinese long-term intentions within the Royal Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) circle, there has been no clear indication of Malaysia pursuing internal or external balancing acts against China. An empirically-rich study on the bilateral relations suggests that Malaysia's defence modernisation program does not reflect a strategic priority that is targeted at China.<sup>30</sup>

To be sure, Malaysia has long maintained close defence ties with the U.S, and has been a participant in the Five-Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) that involves the U.K., Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.<sup>31</sup> These arrangements, however, should be seen as a manifestation of "indirect" rather than pure balancing, given that their *raison d'être* had more to do with the need to cope with diffuse strategic uncertainty than with a specific threat. According to Amitav Acharya, Malaysia's existing military ties with the West were created during the Cold War and therefore "might not be seen as a response to the rise of Chinese power."<sup>32</sup> This is certainly true for Malaysia's security cooperation with the U.S.. As Malaysian scholar Zakaria Haji Ahmad observed: "...[in] Malaysian conceptions of the future, there is no notion of the U.S. being a strategic partner to 'balance', counter or neutralise China's 'big power' mentality and actions."<sup>33</sup>

To Malaysian leaders, the idea of a China threat could prove a self-fulfilling prophecy. As Mahathir once remarked: "Why should we fear China? If you identify a country as your future enemy, it becomes your present enemy – because then they will identify you as an enemy and there will be tension."<sup>34</sup> In this regard, the defence cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by Malaysia and China in September 2005 was significant not only because it institutionalised the bilateral defence ties, but also because it signified that Malaysia was now more willing to see China as a security partner than a security threat.

That limited-bandwagoning has become part of Malaysia's China policy does not imply that Malaysia favours a Beijing-dominated regional order. In fact, dominance-denial continues to be an unwavering goal for Malaysia, as indicated by the country's efforts to maintain close relations with all powers. Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak recently remarked that acceptance of the reality of China's rise was "by no means a reflection of (Malaysia's) fatalism, nor did it indicate that Malaysia was adopting a subservient

position towards China."<sup>35</sup> Given Malaysia's sensitivity about sovereignty and equality, along with the complexity of its domestic ethnic structure – that is, the long-standing uneasy relations between the majority ethnic Malays and the minority ethnic Chinese - it seems reasonable to expect that Malaysia's bandwagoning behaviour will remain limited in the foreseeable future.

## SINGAPORE'S CHINA POLICY

The peculiarity of Singapore's China policy is that it is an ambivalent one – warm in economic and diplomatic ties but distanced in political and strategic spheres.<sup>36</sup> Specifically, while it concurs with Malaysia about the expediency of economic pragmatism and binding-engagement in dealing with China, it has firmly rejected limited-bandwagoning as an option.



Economic gain has always been a key driving force behind Singapore's China policy. As far back as the 1960s and through the 1980s, Singapore, under the leadership of the People's Action Party (PAP), already pursued an economically opportunistic policy notwithstanding political differences. The island-state actively promoted bilateral economic relations, especially after the signing of the bilateral trade agreement in December 1979 as well as the exchange of trade representatives in July 1981. The launch of China's open-door policy in 1978, together with Singapore's economic recession in the mid-1980s and the PAP's plan to develop a "second wing" of the Singaporean economy, provided additional incentive for Singapore to exploit growing opportunities in China.<sup>37</sup> Largely because of the complementary nature of the two economies, Singapore has long been China's largest trading partner in ASEAN. Apart from trade, the close bilateral economic cooperation has also taken the forms of direct investment and management skills transfer. A case in point is the flagship Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) project.

Singapore's economic opportunism persisted through the post-Cold War era. Its initial objective of economic gain,

however, was now meshed with the goal of engagement. Involving other ASEAN partners, Singapore's engagement policy is implemented both through economic incentives and regional institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).<sup>38</sup> By binding Beijing in a web of institutions, Singapore – the prime advocate of engagement policy – hopes to give China a stake in regional peace and stability.<sup>39</sup> As Evelyn Goh notes: "Singapore wants to see China enmeshed in regional norms, acting responsibly and upholding the regional status quo."<sup>40</sup>

Why does Singapore care so much about the regional status quo, and how China is factored in? To begin with, Singapore is a tiny state with an acute sense of vulnerability.<sup>41</sup> This could be attributed to its minuscule size, limited natural resources, demographic structure and geopolitical circumstances.<sup>42</sup> As Michael Leifer observed, Singapore has since 1965 addressed its vulnerability with a three-fold approach: the promotion of economic interdependence, pursuit of armament and alliance, and cultivation of a balance of power at the regional level.<sup>43</sup> Each of these approaches is in turn subject to the following pillars of "regional status quo-ness": regional peace and stability, freedom and safety of sea-lanes, a cohesive ASEAN and a stable distribution of power. For instance, if there was no safe and free navigation of commercial vessels, Singapore's economic viability would be severely affected; if ASEAN was weak and fractured, Singapore would not be able to play a disproportionate role in external affairs; and if there was no stable balance of power, Singapore's autonomy would be compromised by the emergence of a dominant power that was likely to limit the strategic manoeuvrability of smaller states.

This explains Singapore's concerns over the Taiwan Strait, the Spratlys and Beijing's escalating power. Given its high dependence on maritime trade and sea-lanes of communication, Singapore becomes apprehensive whenever there is any rising tension in the Taiwan Strait. During the 1996 crisis, Singaporean officials feared that any armed conflict in the region would "totally destabilise foreign trade and investment."<sup>44</sup> Similarly, although Singapore is not a claimant to the Spratlys, it is concerned that the dispute will have a direct bearing on the safety of navigation in the South China Sea.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the Spratlys case illustrates the extent to which China is willing to abide by regional norms and international law.

To Singapore, there is little doubt that China will be powerful enough to alter the strategic landscape of Asia. The question, however, is less about capability than intention – that is how a robust China will exercise its newfound power in the region.

In view of the uncertainty over Beijing's intentions, Singapore has cautiously adopted indirect-balancing as a "fallback position" should engagement policy fail.<sup>46</sup> Such a position is very much a reflection of a "classic anticipatory state", as described by Yuen-Foong Khong thus: "the time frame for Singapore's ruminations about China is not now, or even five years down the line; it is twenty to thirty years hence." PAP leaders therefore tend to "think in terms of possible scenarios for the future and how they might affect Singapore."<sup>47</sup> Given its relatively geographical distance from China, as well as the absence of territorial disputes, China does not pose any direct threat to the city-state. Singapore's musings about China thus are mostly cast over the mid- and long-term, and revolve around whether Beijing's behaviour will disrupt regional stability and prosperity, constrain Singapore's policy choices or drive a wedge between Southeast Asian states that would undermine ASEAN cohesion.<sup>48</sup>



Shanghai, China

Singapore's quintessence as an anticipatory state is clearly demonstrated by a decision made by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in the immediate post-Cold War era. In August 1989, when it appeared that the U.S. might have to close the Clark and Subic bases in the Philippines, Singapore announced that it would grant the Americans access to its bases. Lee's move was driven by his fear that the U.S. withdrawal would create a power vacuum in the Asia Pacific, which would lead to competition and conflict among regional powers seeking to fill the vacuum. If that happened, the ensuing instability would threaten Singapore's survival. To forestall this, Lee decided to "stick with what had worked so far," i.e. the American military presence that he saw as "essential for the continuation of international law and order in East Asia."<sup>49</sup> While Lee's decision addressed strategic uncertainty in general rather than China in particular, Beijing's subsequent action over the Mischief Reef a few years later gave rise to the strategic uncertainty he was worried about. In 1998, Singapore

further strengthened bilateral security ties with the U.S. by constructing a new pier at its Changi Naval Base, designed specially to accommodate U.S. aircraft carriers.

While Singapore's indirect-balancing has relied primarily on its military cooperation with the U.S., it would be wrong to link Singapore-U.S. ties entirely to China. In fact, Singapore's recent efforts to solidify its collaboration with the U.S. have less to do with China than with its new concerns over terrorism. According to Evelyn Goh, Singapore's concept of security changed significantly after the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. and the arrest of members of the Jemaah Islamiah (JI) group in Singapore in 2002. Terrorism has now been identified as the key security threat. Consequently, the new counter-terrorism agenda now acts "as stronger glue for the Singapore-U.S. strategic partnership than the China challenge."<sup>50</sup>

Such developments, however, do not mean that China has been relegated to the sidelines of Singapore's strategic concerns. In fact, despite Beijing's charm diplomacy in recent years, Singapore still cautiously guards against any potential repercussions of an increasingly powerful China. As Goh Chok Tong remarked in 2003: "China is conscious that it needs to be seen as a responsible power and has taken pains to cultivate this image. This is comforting to regional countries. Nevertheless, many in the region would feel more assured if East Asia remains in balance as China grows. In fact, maintaining balance is the over-arching strategic objective in East Asia currently, and only with the help of the U.S. can East Asia achieve this."<sup>51</sup> In this context, the Sino-Singaporean diplomatic feud that erupted right after Lee Hsien Loong's visit to Taipei in 2004 might have heightened Singapore's trepidation about the possible ramifications of a too powerful China.

Finally, Singapore's policy is also marked by its rejection of limited-bandwagoning. This is owing to its demographic profile and geopolitical complexity. Ever since Singapore gained independence after its unpleasant separation from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965, the island, with an ethnic Chinese population of 76 percent, has been reluctant to be seen as the "third China," especially by its larger neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia. During the Cold War, Singapore's declaration that it would be the last ASEAN state to establish diplomatic ties with Beijing was intended to dispel the image that it would be the "front post of China"<sup>52</sup>. Even after the end of the Cold War, Singapore still takes care to downplay ethnic affinity in its bilateral relations with China, and to avoid leaving any impression that it is promoting China's interests in the region.<sup>53</sup> For this

reason, Singapore set "a self-imposed limit" on the extent to which it can forge political ties with Beijing.<sup>54</sup> Hence, bandwagoning behaviour, even in limited form, does not appear to be a likely option for Singapore.

## CONCLUSION: EXPLAINING THE POLICY VARIATION

The preceding discussions suggest that the variation in Malaysia's and Singapore's responses to the rise of China is largely a function of the differing pathways of domestic authority consolidation, i.e. the differing sources through which the respective ruling elites seek to enhance their authority to rule at home.

In the case of Malaysia, the substance of its China policy mirrors the key sources of the UMNO-led government's political foundation. These include the promotion of Malay ethnic dominance, economic growth, electoral performance, national sovereignty and international standing. Pursuing a pure form of bandwagoning (an across-the-board alignment and an acceptance of hierarchical relations) is a non-starter for the Malay-dominated regime, as this option would likely result in an imbalance in domestic political configuration and an erosion of external sovereignty. The limited form of bandwagoning, however, is desirable and vital, for the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition government. Given Malaysia's multi-racial structure, any politically significant economic performance requires the ruling BN to concurrently attain two goals: the improvement of the Malays' economic welfare, and the enlargement of the overall economic pie for the non-Malay groups.<sup>55</sup> In this regard, a closer relationship with Beijing is crucial for Malaysia not only because it boosts the bilateral trade and investment flows, but also because China's support will strengthen Malaysia's ability to promote a new economic order for East Asia, with the ultimate goal of reducing the effects of the volatile global economy on its national economic performance. This ambition, if realised, is expected to elevate Malaysia's regional and international standing, which along with other legitimisation pathways would help consolidate its electoral base. Hence, a pure form of balancing against Beijing is not only unjustifiable, but would prove harmful to BN regime interests because such an option would call for a full-fledged alliance with the U.S., which would in turn reduce the credibility of the BN's claim of pursuing an "independent" external policy for Malaysia.

In the case of Singapore's China policy, the rejection of limited-bandwagoning despite the enthusiasm for binding-engagement and economic-pragmatism is best explained by the very foundation of the PAP elite's political power,

i.e. the imperative to cope with the island-state's inherited vulnerability. Singapore's close economic and diplomatic relations with China would serve to attain this goal (by contributing to Singapore's sustainable economic vitality and its external stability), but a strict sense of political and strategic partnership would not. In fact, any bandwagoning policies with China would only increase Singapore's vulnerability by causing its two larger neighbours to be suspicious. For a "little red dot" that has been viewed as a Chinese island in a Malay sea, such a scenario is likely to destabilise Singapore's immediate external environment and divert the attention of the PAP elite away from more crucial domestic economic tasks.

An inference can be drawn from the above analyses: how a smaller state is attracted to or alarmed by the aggregate capability of a rising power depends primarily on the state's distinctive sources of domestic authority consolidation. To the extent that the pathways of regime consolidation require the state elite to utilise opportunities provided by the growing ascendancy of a big power, and to the extent that the power's actions help rather than hinder the consolidation process, then the state (as in the case of Malaysia) would stress

return-maximising more than risk-contingency measures vis-à-vis the power. However, if the pathways of a regime's authority consolidation are not entirely compatible with the rise of a power, and if the power's actions further complicate that legitimisation process, then the state is expected to place more emphasis on risk-contingency options, as in the case of Singapore's China policy.

This study is significant for policy analysis. Given the fact that few states are adopting pure forms of balancing or bandwagoning vis-à-vis China, conceptualising the hedging strategy as a spectrum of policy options is a more realistic way to observe the change and continuity in policy choices of states over time. It allows policy analysts to ponder the possibility, direction, and conditions of a horizontal shift along the building blocks of the spectrum – for instance, from indirect balancing leftward to pure-balancing, or from limited-bandwagoning rightward to pure-bandwagoning. Considering that states are more likely to adjust their strategic posture gradually, such a "transitional" outlook would be useful in monitoring the vicissitudes of states' alignment choices amid the emerging structural changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## ENDNOTES

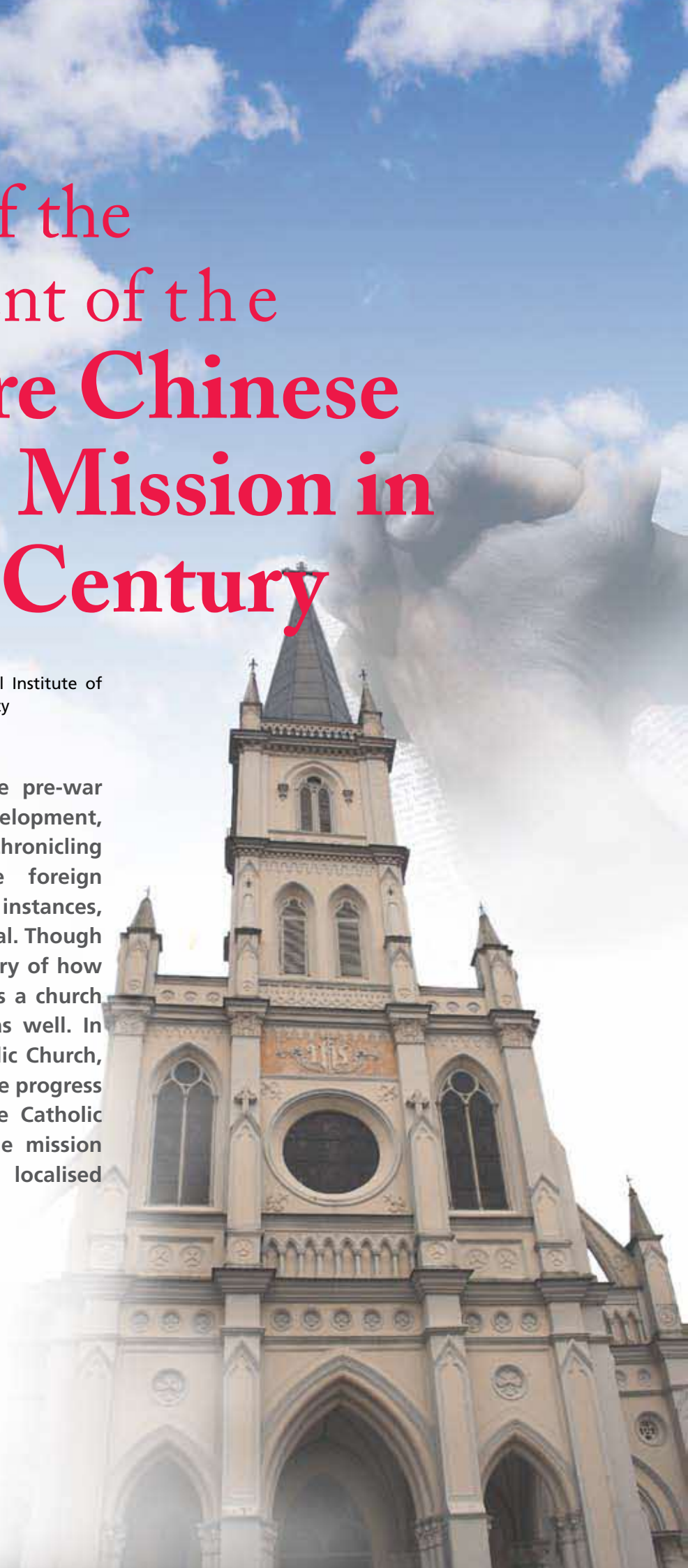
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8. Amitav Acharya has rightly cautioned that engagement cannot be viewed as bandwagoning "because it does not involve abandoning the military option vis-à-vis China", and that economic self-interest should not be confused with bandwagoning because economic ties "do not amount to deference." See Acharya, "Will Asia's Past Be Its Future," pp. 151-152.
9. This is not to say that the balancing and bandwagoning propositions are no longer relevant. Rather, it only reflects that balancing and bandwagoning do not prevail because the antecedent conditions of these behaviours are largely absent in the present world. These conditions are, inter alia, (a) an all-out rivalry among the great powers which compels smaller states to choose sides; (b) political faultlines that divide states into opposing camps; and (c) strategic clarity.
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12. This definition is adapted from Glenn G. Munn et al., *Encyclopedia of Banking and Finance*, 9th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), p. 485; Jonathan Pollack, "Designing a New American Security Strategy for Asia," in James Shinn, ed., *Weaving the Net: Conditional Engagement with China* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996), pp. 99-132; Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge*, pp. 2-4.
13. The need to go beyond the dichotomous terms was emphasized earlier by Amitav Acharya and Ja Ian Chong. See Acharya,

- "Containment, Engagement, or Counter-Dominance?" and Chong, *Revisiting Responses to Power Preponderance*, Working Paper No. 54 (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2003). These writings, however, have seemed to privilege one single "prime" policy on a multi-option continuum, thus overlooking the fact that smaller states may and often choose to adopt more than one policy option simultaneously in responding to a rising power.
14. For a more detailed account on each of these policy options, see Kuik Cheng-Chwee, *Regime Legitimation and Foreign Policy Choices: A Comparative Study of Southeast Asian States' Hedging Strategies toward a Rising China, 1990-2005*, a dissertation prospectus submitted to Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C., September 2006.
  15. By contrast, states that pursue pure balancing or pure bandwagoning are likely to face entirely different outcomes, depending on the changes in power structure. That is, they will be in a favourable position if the power they choose to bet on eventually prevails. Conversely, they will be in an unfavourable position if the power they choose to take sides with is vanquished by another competing power.
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  30. Liow, "Malaysia-China Relations in the 1990s," pp. 682-683.
  31. Mak Joon Nam, "Malaysian Defense and Security Cooperation," in See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Asia Pacific Security Cooperation* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 127-153.
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  44. Whiting, "ASEAN Eyes China," p. 308.
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# A Survey of the Development of the Singapore Chinese Catholic Mission in the 19th Century

By Clement Liew, PhD candidate, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

In the general discourse on the pre-war history of Church and Mission development, there exist too many accounts chronicling works and successes of the foreign missionaries, and in many instances, focusing mainly on missionary zeal. Though these tracts are valuable, the story of how a mission establishment becomes a church in Asia is a communal history as well. In the case of the Singapore Catholic Church, Mission growth had hinged on the progress and participation of the Chinese Catholic community, and this became the mission strategy for the planting of a localised Church in Singapore.



## THE GENESIS

Although the first Catholic clerics and their followers on the island were members of the Portuguese mission coming out of Malacca in the 1820s, they did not found a mission for the thousands of immigrants who had landed here. They had a “parish” but it was not certain that they had erected any church building even after the 1820s.<sup>1</sup> It was not until the arrival of the French missionaries of the Societe des Missions Etrangeres de Paris (MEP) in 1832 that the first Catholic chapel and mission for Chinese Christians were established.

The MEP was able to secure a piece of ground soon after their arrival to establish a French mission station as well as a Chinese Mission upon which they had hoped to build the future Church of Singapore. Both institutions were established within the Mission Ground, with the former occupying the front part facing Bras Basah Road and the latter at the back. Today, the entire ground roughly covers the space occupied by a national icon and a National Monument, the Singapore Art Museum and the Church of Sts Peter and Paul, respectively. The MEP completed their chapel in 1833, a simple 60 by 30 feet plank four-walled structure,<sup>2</sup> which they blessed and named the Church of the Good Shepherd.<sup>3</sup> It was only a year later that a Mission House (and catechumenate) for Asian Catholics was completed at the back of the Mission Ground,<sup>4</sup> and this was to become the seed of the future Chinese Catholic missions in Singapore.

## THE FIRST CHINESE CHRISTIANS AND THE FRENCH MISSION

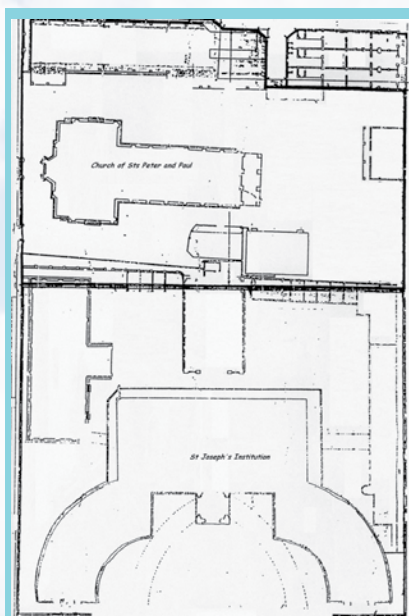
Many of the early immigrants who came seeking their fortunes originated from Siam, Penang, Malacca and the Riau Islands. They were closely followed by their brethren from China, particularly from Chao Chou in Kwangtung. Many of them were Teochew and Hakka speaking migrants who laboured in the jungles of Singapore as well as in the

dockyards along the coasts. It is among these migrants that the first resident MEP priest, Fr Etienne Albrand, assisted by a Chinese catechist from China, had found his first Chinese converts. His catechist had also come to Southeast Asia in search of a fortune. Having found the faith in Penang, he ventured from Borneo to Batavia and back to China to spread the “Good News”, before returning to these parts to serve with Fr Albrand.<sup>5</sup>

Both Fr Albrand and his catechist spent the day going about town preaching the Christian faith to the people along the streets, and some eventually turned up at the Mission Ground for instruction.<sup>6</sup> Every evening, from 8pm to 10pm, the Chinese catechist would instruct potential converts, most of them Teochews, in Fr Albrand’s house.<sup>7</sup> The French missionary at that time had yet to learn any of the Chinese dialects so he worked mainly among the Malays while this catechist taught the Chinese. Sometimes, to reward his new “students”, Fr Albrand would offer them tobacco and tea.<sup>8</sup> By September 1833, he had already a hundred Chinese converts (and Fr Albrand only arrived in May that year).

The Mission’s modest success was however, not without difficulties. The converts as well as the ones preaching conversion were constantly in “danger”. The French missionary and his catechist were shadowed by members of the local Chinese secret society on a daily basis. They had hoped to deter their fellow Chinese from listening to these evangelists. They called Fr Albrand, “the Head of the Devil”, and they threatened to cut the pigtails and tear the clothes off whoever dared to convert.<sup>9</sup> Protestant missionaries had also attempted to obstruct the work of the French Mission by “visiting” the class taught by the Chinese catechists.<sup>10</sup>

It is probable that without the aid of his Chinese catechist, Fr Albrand might not have succeeded in founding his Chinese Mission. The MEP had trained generations of Chinese catechists to assist their missionaries in Asia. The case of the Singapore MEP venture underscores the wisdom of this mission strategy.<sup>11</sup> The MEP had maintained a seminary, College General, outside of China since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> Originally established in Ayuthia, this seminary was relocated all over Siam till it found a permanent site at Penang in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fr Albrand’s catechist, who was also a Chinese physician, had received his training here. It was also this catechist who taught Fr Albrand Teochew, the dialect of many of his converts. In 1834, with the assistance of this catechist, Fr Albrand was



The Original Town Mission Ground in 1910

also able to convert 30 Chinese in the Riau islands.<sup>13</sup>

The MEP found it easier to convert the Chinese when they were overseas than in China. The missionaries had reported that in the Nanyang, detached from their traditional sociopolitical network, the Chinese had less fear of reprisal from the Chinese authorities or the objection from within their own home communities.<sup>14</sup> However, it was not simply because conditions overseas were more ideal, it was also partly because the Missions remained socially relevant to the overseas Chinese. Fr Albrand wrote in 1833 that he had to constantly help his catechumens who faced injustices. He would go to their aid and “protect them like the government”.<sup>15</sup> And when conversion meant that they would be rejected by their own Chinese community, the Church offered an alternative community from which they could seek aid and security, just as the missions in China had done.<sup>16</sup> In Singapore, the Chinese Catholic community had evolved outside the framework of the immigrant Chinese social order, where the Chinese secret societies had become the de facto government. In this scheme of things, the Chinese Mission, it seemed, had functioned as an imperium in imperio, while it was at the same time, part of a larger Chinese community that transcended political boundaries.

## THE EXPANSION OF THE CHINESE MISSION IN TOWN AND BEYOND

In 1839, the Chinese Mission received its first Chinese priest from China, Fr John Tchu. Like Fr Albrand's catechist, Fr John Tchu was also a respectable Mandarin. Fr Tchu was sent by a French missionary in his youth to the College General in Penang for his studies where he was to be trained as a catechist. Having exercised this ministry first in Penang, then in Siam, he was ordained a priest in Bangkok by Mgr. Courvey in 1838a physician.<sup>17</sup> Born in Canton of a Mandarin, and posted to Singapore in the following year where he served as a priest to the Chinese Mission till he died on 13 July 1848. It was acknowledged, after Fr Tchu's death in 1848, that his work with the Chinese Christians had had a great impact on the Chinese Mission in Singapore.<sup>18</sup> From 1840 to 1848, with the conversion of a great number of Chinese, the Church doubled in size.<sup>19</sup>

The Mission had grown so large in the 1840s that it became necessary to build a larger place of worship for the Catholics of Singapore. This new Church of the Good Shepherd was completed in 1846-47 across the road from the old Mission ground. All Catholics of the French Mission from thence worshipped there, though the Chinese Christians continued their activities on the old Mission ground. The old chapel

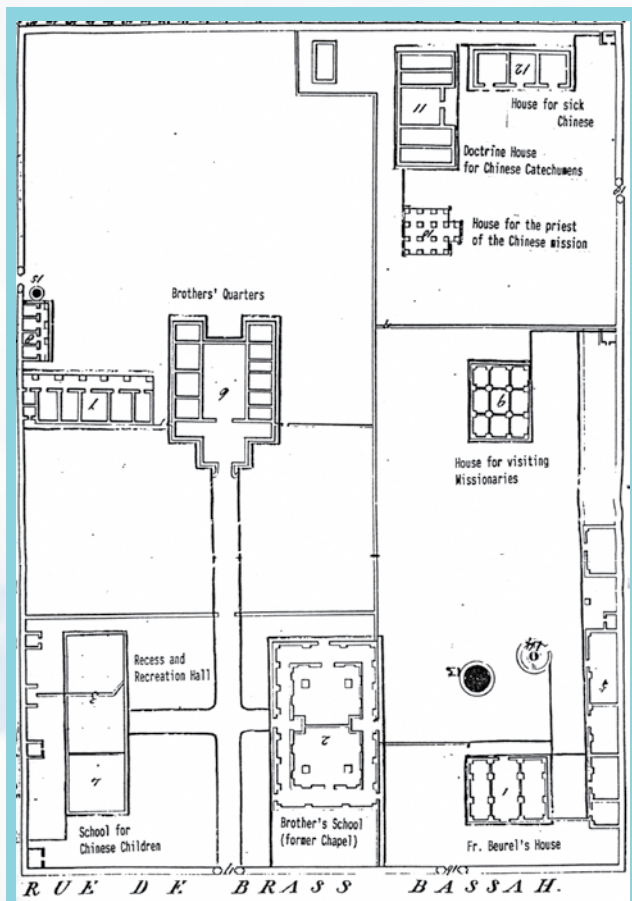
was then turned into a school for the Mission. In that same year, the Chinese Christians raised the funds to erect their own house of instruction on the old grounds.<sup>20</sup>

While the Chinese Mission in town grew in number, the French Mission commenced their mission in the jungles of Singapore in 1846. They started a mission outpost at Kranji for the many Teochew Catholic converts who had gone into the interior to grow gambier and pepper. This chapel was dedicated to St Joseph. In 1852, they shifted this station to Bukit Timah where it still stands today. A year later, another Chinese station was started at Serangoon for the Chinese Catholics of Kranji and town who had migrated there in the 1840s.<sup>21</sup> The French Missionaries christened this outpost, the St Mary's Church, and it was later renamed the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

These Chinese outstations were placed under the jurisdiction of the head of the Chinese Mission. The Catholics of these outstations themselves kept their close links with the Church. In fact, many of these Christians had turned to Fr John Tchu to arbitrate in their affairs. On major feast days, the Catholics of the outstations would also join their brethren for celebrations, often ending with a Chinese dinner on the Mission grounds.<sup>22</sup> The close link between the town and jungle missions cannot be more underscored than during moments of crisis. In 1849, when the secret society ran amok in the interior of the island, attacking Catholics, the converts of the outstations, numbering in hundreds, took refuge with their Chinese brethren.<sup>23</sup> In 1851, when a bigger and bloodier attack took place, it was speculated that 500 Chinese converts were massacred across the island.<sup>24</sup> Once again, the survivors had to seek refuge with their brethren in Town where the Chinese Mission had a house for the sick next to their catechumenate.

The Chinese Mission in the jungle ultimately survived and continued to grow, albeit at a slower pace in the following decades. In early February 1853, the MEP erected a small chapel at the end of Serangoon Road that cost \$800.<sup>25</sup> This mission station was, however, too small at this time to require a permanent missionary to be stationed there. Hence, the MEP missionary to the outpost's missionary was stationed in town from where he visited the Serangoon Catholics.<sup>26</sup> By 1859, although there were in all only 140 Chinese Catholics at this station,<sup>27</sup> it was constituted by an increasing number of Chinese Catholic families. Fr Beurel, the head of the Singapore Mission then, had made a request to the government in 1857 for a grant to a piece of land near the Serangoon chapel where he could settle these newly arrived Catholic families who could grow

vegetables there.<sup>28</sup> Although only 34 acres of the 114 acres of land requested was granted in 1858,<sup>29</sup> it was more than sufficient to plant a new Christian enclave at the far end of the island.



The Mission Grounds in the 1850s after the arrival of the Brothers



A mission chapel in the jungle, 1850s

## THE FIRST CHINESE CATHOLIC CHURCH

When the Christian Brothers of St John Baptist de la Salle arrived to found a Christian school for the boys of Singapore in 1852, the old chapel was given to the Brothers who then established St Joseph's Institution. Next to this new school (the old chapel), the Chinese Mission maintained a Chinese school for boys which had a branch for the Indians. The boys of the Chinese school were instructed by a teacher from China. At this point, the Chinese Mission shared the front part of the old Mission Ground with the Brothers. However, by the early 1860s, when the enrolment at the Brothers' school had grown so large that a new school building was needed, it became necessary for "spaces" to be more defined. At this time, the Chinese Catholic community had also grown enormously. It was then decided to divide the Mission grounds permanently with St Joseph's Institution (the Brothers' School) occupying the portion fronting Bras Basah Road. The Chinese school was then transferred to Kranji.<sup>30</sup> This separation in effect paved the way for the Chinese Christian community to finally erect a place of worship of their own, the Church of Sts Peter and Paul.

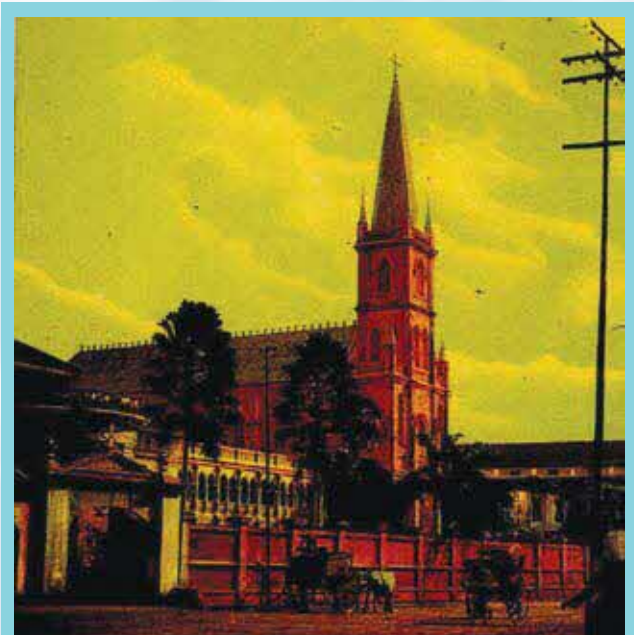
The missionary given the colossal task of building the Church of Sts Peter and Paul was Fr Pierre Paris. Fundraising was difficult as most of the Chinese Christians were poor. But fortunately, amongst them was a wealthy and influential Chinese Christian, Pedro Tan No Keah,<sup>31</sup> who managed to raise the necessary funds. The church was completed in 1870 on the site of the original Chinese Mission. It was from Sts Peter and Paul that Fr Pierre Paris continued to plant the seeds of the future Chinese Catholic (and Tamil) churches of Singapore. Every Sunday morning, he walked the length of Serangoon Road to say mass for his flock there (Nativity Church) before returning to Sts Peter and Paul to hold service for the Tamils at 11am. After that, he held mass at the jail before returning to his parish at 2pm in the afternoon to conduct catechism for the Chinese children. Then, at 3pm, he had Vespers in the parish. On Mondays and Wednesdays, he dealt with the temporal affairs of his Chinese in town. On Tuesdays, he visited the Chinese in the jungles. On Thursdays, he taught the catechumens at Serangoon who used to travel long distances to him. The last two days of the week were given to confession and other works.<sup>32</sup>

Fr Paris was also the first missionary in the Mission who spoke Tamil, a language which he picked up from Malacca. Thus, with him, the seed for an Indian Mission was also planted. For them, he started a school, the St Francis Malabar School, which was located along Waterloo Street.

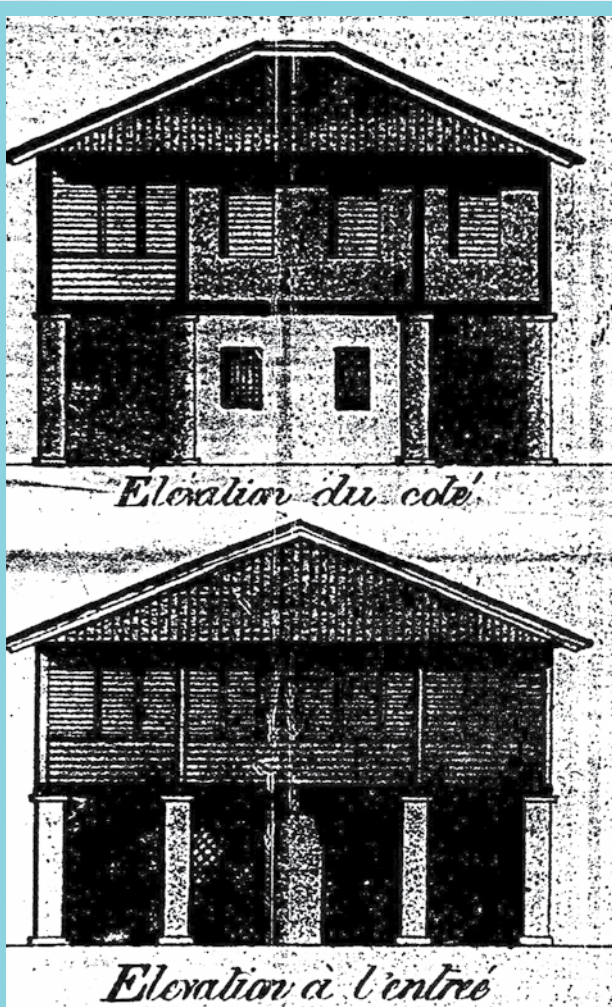
By the time of his death, there was already a small Indian congregation in the making. They too worshipped in the Church of Sts Peter and Paul together with the Chinese.

## PLANTING OTHER CHINESE CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

While the European and Eurasian Catholics of the settlement had remained “pastoral” and based mainly within the town churches of St Joseph’s (Portuguese Mission) and Church of the Good Shepherd (MEP), church growth was characterised by the growth of the Chinese Mission communities. Towards the mid-1850s, the planted Chinese Catholic communities of Singapore had already begun to impact the establishment of other Chinese Catholic communities in the region in a profound manner. The first instance of the Mission’s extension into Peninsular Malaya was in 1853, when Chinese Catholic families from the island were transplanted to Malacca to



Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus, 1910s



The Chinese School at the Mission Grounds, 1850s

form the nucleus of an agricultural community that was calculated to attract the Chinese there to convert.<sup>33</sup> In the 1860s, as the Mission at Bukit Timah was making inroads north of the island to Boo Koo Kangkar (Kranji), Catholic families from Serangoon had begun re-migrating to Johore where they found new economic opportunities planting gambier and pepper. By February 1861, the MEP decided that they should establish a Mission station for these Chinese Catholic re-migrants.<sup>34</sup> In July 1861, the Mission secured a grant from the Temenggong of Johore for a piece of land to start their station, and this led Fr Paris to begin his visits to the Chinese Christians there. However, nothing resulted from this evangelical endeavor.<sup>35</sup>

The more significant mission foray into Johore was actually achieved by Fr Augustine Perie from his stations at Bukit Timah and Boo Koo Kangkar where Chinese Catholics were beginning to migrate to Johore as well. St Mary’s Chapel, a chapel erected by Fr Perie at Kranji, had prospered for a while before an “accidental” fire razed it in early 1863. Fr Perie suspected that the Chinese Secret societies were behind it.<sup>36</sup> Coupled with this destruction and the general economic difficulties in the district, many Catholic families had begun to re-migrate to Java and Johore.<sup>37</sup> Fr Perie knew that in Johore, without a missionary, his Chinese converts would eventually give up Christianity. Hence, he made preparations to found an agricultural colony in Johore for the Christians.

Fr Perie’s goal was to transplant a portion of his Catholic community from Bukit Timah and Boo Koo Kangkar to this new agricultural colony to establish another Catholic

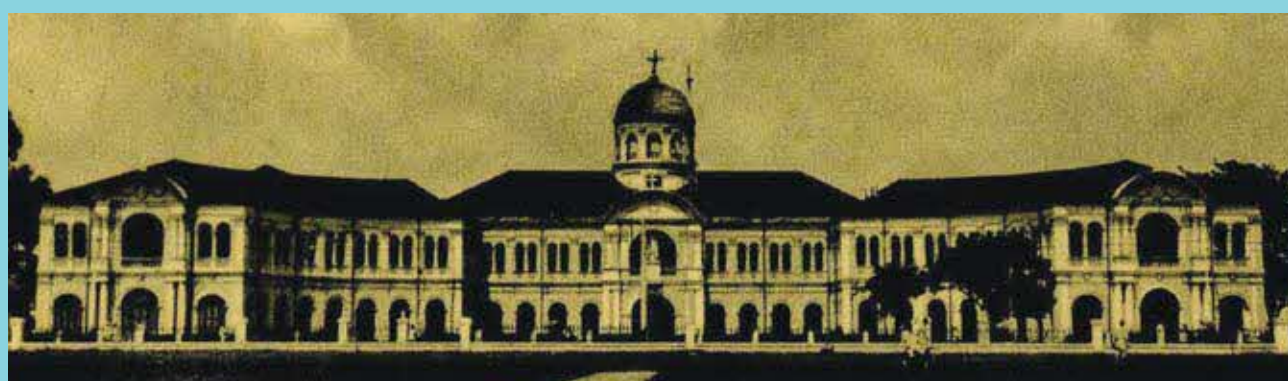
enclave up north. A piece of land at Pontian Kitsil, on the western side of Johore, was granted by the Maharajah of Johore in mid-1863. Fr Perie then set out with a few of his Chinese Christians on 18 August 1863 to survey the jungle plains of Pontian Kitsil for land clearance.<sup>38</sup> In all, 32 Chinese Christians set up plantations on both sides of the Pontian River, which ran down the middle of Pontian Kitsil. At the heart of this plain, Fr Perie established his Mission station with a vegetable garden, school and a house-chapel that he dedicated to St Francis Xavier.<sup>39</sup> In the agreement with the Maharajah, the land was granted to Fr Perie on the condition that he assumed the position of the *kangchu*, the headman or master of the river. A regular *kangchu* was responsible for the law and order of his district as well as the monopoly rights over trading, spirits, gambling and supply of opium. Fr Perie, however, forbade gambling and opium in his colony, and this turned many potential non-Christian Chinese settlers away.<sup>40</sup>

There were high hopes for this colony but the marshy terrain had made life extremely difficult, and that further deterred other potential settlers. In 1864, a great fear arose among the Christians of Singapore and Johore that the secret society was about to launch an all out attack against the Church. The fear of an impending attack, and the spectre of another "Bloody 1851", eventually led most of the Singapore Christian migrants to Pontian to abandon their plantations, leaving only 15 Chinese planters.<sup>41</sup> Discouraged, Fr Perie moved further inland in 1865 to work among the indigenous aborigines there. The Pontian station however, continued with missionaries from Bukit Timah visiting it intermittently. The register for St Francis Xavier's Chapel, from 1864 to 1873, is still kept in the archives of St Joseph's Church, Bukit Timah. On record, from those years, there were 22 infant baptisms, 85 adult conversions, 11 marriages and 30 burials.<sup>42</sup>

By the 1870s, numerous Chinese Catholic enclaves had already been established in the northern part of the island

and beyond. Located far apart and in very different environs, they remained similarly constituted. The Chinese Missions at Bukit Timah, Serangoon and in town had their own attached schools, hospitals (infirmaries) and cemeteries,<sup>43</sup> making them self-contained communities within their own districts. Given the historical ties with the Singapore Church, the Chinese Christians of Pontian and those in other parts of Johore, had always kept their links with their "mother" Church in Singapore by making annual pilgrimages to St Joseph's, Bukit Timah, on all major feast days.<sup>44</sup>

In 1881, the main mission initiative to Johore shifted from Bukit Timah to the Serangoon Mission, following Fr Laurent Saleilles' reassignment there. When Fr Laurent Saleilles arrived in 1877, he was first posted to Bukit Timah from where he visited Pontian several times a year.<sup>45</sup> In time, he included on his itinerary other parts of Johore where he initially found 36 Chinese Christians who had migrated from Singapore, scattered all over. From January 1881, after Fr Saleilles was posted to Serangoon, he concentrated his efforts at Johore Bahru. Pontian then, had become too far from where he was stationed. Fr Saleilles had initially gathered his first converts at his rented residence at Johore Bahru, and by early 1882, he had already converted 63 Chinese.<sup>46</sup> An application to the Maharajah for a piece of land to erect a church in Johore Bahru was made in September 1881. By May 1882, with the assistance of a Catholic British planter in Johore, three acres of land was granted, less than a mile from the town centre.<sup>47</sup> The foundation stone for this church, dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, was laid on 21 November 1882, and by 29 May 1883, the church was completed, blessed and opened, together with a Chinese catechumenate and a parochial house. Fr Saleilles subsequently established a Chinese school for the children of this Mission at the catechumenate.<sup>48</sup> The first Catholic institution in Johore was thus established, an extension of the MEP Chinese Catholic Mission in Singapore and modeled after Singapore's Chinese Catholic enclaves.



St Joseph's Institution, 1910s

The missionary outreach of Singapore Chinese Catholic community in the 1870s, it appears, had also reached Sarawak as Fr Saleilles had reported making visits there even before being stationed at Serangoon. In July 1880, Fr Saleilles accompanied the American Mill Hill Fathers to Sarawak to help them found their Mission. And even after the establishment of the American Fathers, Fr Saleilles continued his visits the Chinese Catholics there, although jurisdiction over the district had passed on to these new missionaries.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps, some Chinese Catholics from Singapore had migrated to Sarawak and Fr Saleilles simply followed them, just as Frs Paris and Perie did when their Catholics ventured into Johore. Following this pattern of Mission development in Malaya, where Catholics always preceded their missionaries, it was probable that the Sarawak and Singapore Chinese Christians were very much linked. It must be noted that as early as the 1840s, Chinese

catechists from Singapore had already been reported to have evangelised in Sarawak and Labuan.<sup>50</sup>

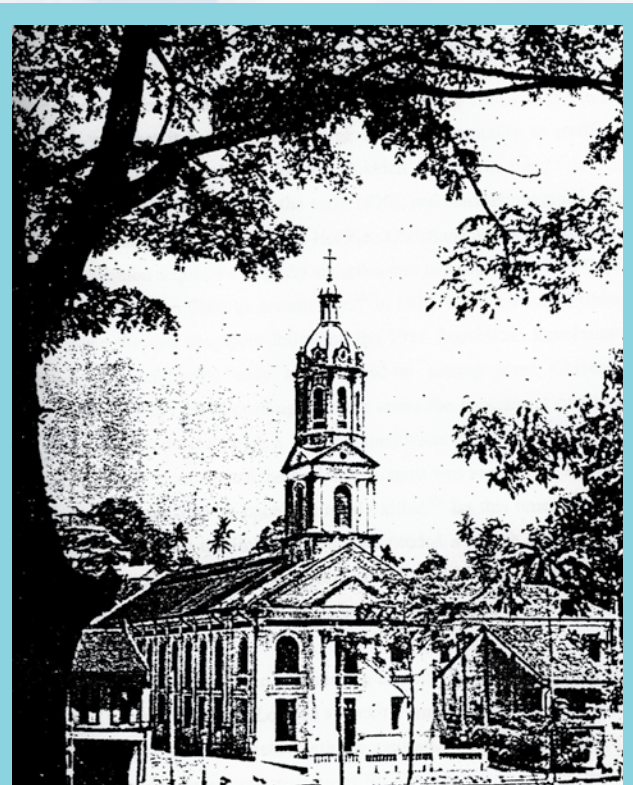
### CONCLUSION

The MEP's mission strategy in 19<sup>th</sup> century Singapore, and perhaps generally in Asia, was to plant Catholic communities throughout Asia as a precursor to the establishment of indigenous Churches. The distribution of bibles and mere street preaching, the *modus operandi* of Protestant

missionaries of the day, yielded little in a society that was still transient, mostly illiterate and more concerned with day to day affairs. In the Malay Archipelago, proselytising to indigenous Muslim Malays could only reap certain failure. There were also too few Eurasians and Europeans to form a rooted Church, and besides, they could hardly constitute a localised, or "Asianised" Catholic Church and community. It was left to the sojourning immigrants of East, Southeast and South Asia to provide the critical mass for the creation of a local Christian and Church community.

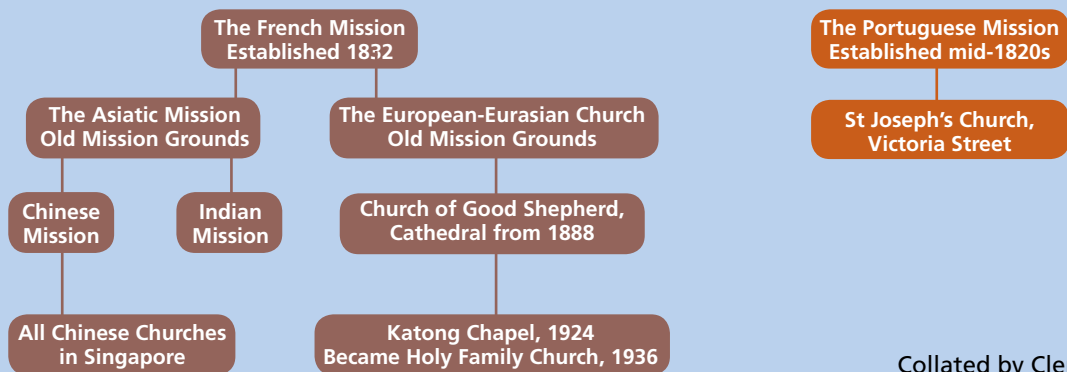


St Joseph's Institution, 1910s



The Church of the Sacred Heart (Cantonese/Hakka), 1910s

## OVERVIEW OF THE SINGAPORE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE PRE-WAR YEARS



Collated by Clement Liew

## ENDNOTES

1. See Straits Settlements Record (SSR), N2 1827, 23 Aug 1827; Manuel Teixeira, *The Portuguese Mission in Malacca and Singapore*. Vol. III. (Lisboa: Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1963), p.10.
2. JM Beurel, *Annales de la Mission Catholique de Singapore*, ecrites par le soussigne en ese moments de loisir , p.329; *Archives de la Missions Etrangeres (AME) 892*, pp.851-54, 23 Feb 1833.
3. Beurel, *Annales*, pp.11-12.
4. AME 892 pp.1035-37, 8 Aug 1834; pp.1051-54, Sep 1834; Joseph Ruellen, *Situation Generale en Asis du Sud-Est a Liarrivee de Mgr. P. Bigandet, Mai 1834 - Nov 1859*, (Singapore: MEP House, 1998). Compilation of manuscript correspondences from MEP Archives, Paris, AME, Siam, 27 Sep 1834, Fr Pallegoix to Mgr Courveyz.
5. *Annals de la Propagation de la Foi, Malaisie (APF)*, vol. XLII, Sep 1835, pp.124-34, 10 Sep 1833.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 22 Nov 1834.
9. Ibid., 10 Sep 1833 and 26 Dec 1833.
10. AME 892 pp.1051-54, Sep 1834; APF, vol. XLII, Sep 1835, pp.124-34, 22 Nov 1834.
11. (APF), vol. XLII, Sep 1835, pp.124-34. 10 Sep 1833.
12. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1964)*, p.191. As a measure to avoid the persecution of the Manchu Government, College General was located outside China.
13. Ruellen, *Situation Generale*, AME, Siam, 27 Sep 1834, Fr Albrand to Mgr Courveyz.
14. APF, Sep 1835, pp.124-34, 26 Dec 1833. Scholars have argued that overseas Chinese, "deprived of their accustomed family and lineage support", sought out alternative solidarities. Although for the Chinese overseas, "moral constraints of kinship village attachment remained strong", they were less direct. See Ng Chin Keong, "The Cultural Horizon of South China's Emigrants in the Nineteenth Century: Change and Perspective", in *Asian Traditions and Modernization. Perspectives From Singapore*, ed. Yong Mun Cheong (Singapore: Centre for Advanced Studies, National University of Singapore, 1997), pp.24-26.
15. APF, Sep 1835, pp.124-34, 26 Dec 1833.
16. Jean-Paul Wiest, "Catholic Activities in Kwangtung Province and Chinese Responses, 1848-1885". PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1977, pp.112.
17. AME 893 pp.975-77, 29 Mar 1842. Fr Tchu arrived in 1839.
18. Singapore Free Press (SFP), 27 Jul 1848.
19. Beurel, *Annales*, p.68. The number of Catholics had increased from 450, in 1838, to 800, in 1846. From 1839, the Chinese Catholics had already constituted half the Catholics on the island. Of a total of 443 baptisms from 1840 to 1846, 333 were of Chinese converts. See *Baptism Register, Cathedral, 1840-1846*. It was also during this period that they became more than self-reliant. When the bishop found that it became necessary to erect a wall to enclose the Mission Grounds in 1839, the most influential (European) Catholics of the Mission, having continuously subscribed to the Mission's building projects in the preceding years, refused to help. It was Chinese Christians who then came to the bishop's aid.
20. AME 904/21, 11 May 1845 and 904/32, 7 Oct 1845. This house was completed by Oct 1845 at a cost of \$550. See Beurel, *Annales*, p.126.
21. AME 90, pp.1401-1403, 8 Dec 1847; 902, pp.105, 5 May 1848 and p.175, 4 Jul 1848. In 1842, a number of Chinese Christians had started a nutmeg plantation of 17,000 trees with Fr Beurel at Serangoon. It was to raise an annual income of 400 francs from the produce to support the Christian Brothers' School when it was founded. In December 1849, a seminary was established at the end of Serangoon Road to prepare Chinese candidates for the priesthood, before sending them off to College General in Penang for training. In December 1849, Holy Mary College was established with twelve Chinese seminarians who supported themselves by cultivating nutmeg and coconuts. The college was transferred to Matang Tinggi (near Penang) a year later when eleven of the twelve seminarians withdrew their candidature. See AME 904/94, 18 Apr 1849; 902, 4 Dec 1849.
22. SFP, 16 Apr 1846.
23. SFP, 3 Jul 1849.
24. See JF McNair, *Prisoners Their Own Warders (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1899)*, p.68. Many historians, including CM Turnbull, Carl Trocki and Wilfred Blythe, have quoted this figure. This figure cannot be confirmed by any official sources. If this figure is near accurate, then the Church would have been wiped out!
25. AME 902, pp.1403-1405, 2 Feb 1853.
26. AME 903, pp.269-70, 16 Dec 1854.
27. AME 903, p.1515, 17 Oct 1859.
28. Straits Settlements Record, X16, 1858, p.23; W28 1858, 12 Oct 1858, p.58.
29. Beurel, *Annales*, p.490. (This page numbering is from the microfilm copy of Fr Beurel's journal, MEP Archives, vol. 907. Entries for the years from years 1852 to 1860s are missing in the original copy from which I have been quoting thus far).
30. The school for the Chinese Boys was called St Peter's School. See *Straits Settlements Annual Report, 1865-66*, p.24/7.
31. Tan No Keah was born at Fuyang City of Zhao'an County, Guangdong Province, in 1821. The family was poor and life was difficult at his hometown, so he borrowed a few pieces of silver and set off to the Nanyang. He first landed in Johore where he worked on a gambier plantation. After having saved some money, he ventured to Singapore where he started gambier plantations at Punggol. Eventually, he was able to build 14 warehouses at Boat Quay. His company was known as "Qianyi" Kongs, situated at No. 48 Boat Quay (or No. 33 River Valley Road). The company traded mainly in gambier and local produce. He later married a girl from the Convent of the Holy Innocent Jesus (Town Convent) and converted to Catholicism. This information was provided by Tan Keow Meng, great grand-daughter of Tan Tong Seng one of Tan No Keah's four sons, according to oral accounts provided by her aunt and grandmother in May 2002.
32. CB Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984)*, p.254.
33. AME 902 pp. 1525-30, 2 Aug 1853.
34. AME 904/217, 20 Feb 1861; 904/255, 5 Nov 1861.
35. AME 904/246, 20 Jul 1861. The land granted was most likely within the vicinity of the Johore town, Johore Bahru.
36. Augustine Perie, *Souvenirs de Malaisie, Onze ans sous l'equateur (France: E. Delsaud, 1885)*, Ch.7, p.19.
37. Ibid., Ch.8, p.23.
38. Ibid., p.24.
39. Ibid., p.26.
40. CM Turnbull, *Straits Settlements, 1826-67 (KL: Oxford University Press, 1972)*, p.152.
41. Perie, *Souvenirs de Malaisie*, Ch.8, p.25.
42. Register, St Francis Xavier's Chapel, Pontien, 1864-1873.
43. *The Straits Calendar and Directory, 1870*, p.16.
44. AME 905/97, 10 Jan 1878.
45. AME 905/236, 14 Sep 1881.
46. *Compte Reudu, Malaisie, 1882*, pp.82-86.
47. AME 905/304, 21 Jul 1883.
48. AME 905/342, 1884.
49. AME 905/236, 14 Sep 1881.
50. Graham Saunders, *Bishops and Brookes, The Anglican Missions and the Brooke Raj in Sarawak, 1848-1941 (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992)*, p.28; See AME 904/217, 20 Feb 1861.



# Picturing an Island Colony

A Short History of Photography  
in Early Singapore c. 1840-1860

By Alex Ong, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library

Most of us take photographic images for granted; they are found virtually everywhere. In addition, many of us own cameras, be it a single-lens reflex (SLR) or a digital camera. To some of us, photographs are our most valuable possession, irreplaceable visual records of the individual lives we lead as well as the societies and places we live in. Indeed, photographs and photography have come a long way, and this article presents a slice of its history within the context of Singapore, followed by an introduction to three specific titles related to early Singapore's photographic past.



Before embarking on a journey through time into the world of photography in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Singapore, the birth of modern photography deserves a brief mention. Photography as it is understood and practised today – made possible by the scientific discovery of methods to permanently fixate images directly formed by light onto either metal or paper – did not come into being until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many writers conventionally hail Frenchman Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851) and William Fox Talbot (1800-1877) in Britain as the founding fathers of modern photography. Daguerre and Talbot were the first to announce their findings publicly in 1839, though they were certainly not alone in the quest to permanently capture fleeting images.<sup>1</sup> Daguerre, after years of experimentation (much of it in collaboration with fellow contemporary Joseph-Nicéphore Niépce, 1765-1833), had taken his first successful photograph in 1837, which he proudly named after himself – the Daguerreotype, though it would be another two years before his invention was publicly announced. William Talbot's photographic process became known as the Calotype or Talbotype. His photographic technique, which became involved in the making of multiple positive prints from paper negatives, is significant because it paved the way for the development of modern-day photography.<sup>2</sup>

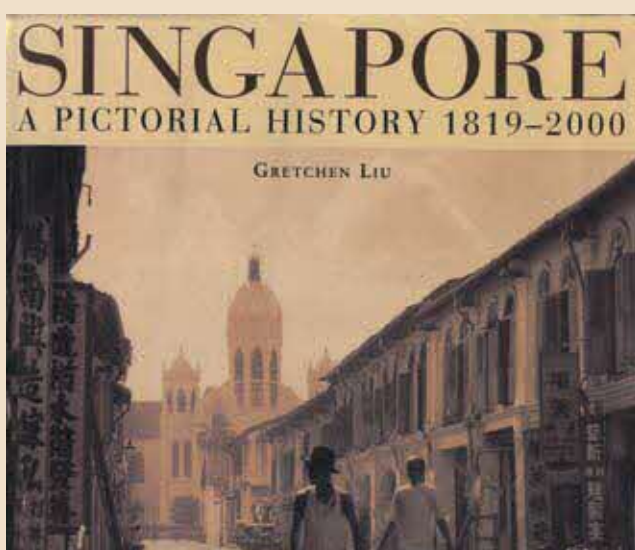
It is not known for sure when photography first arrived in Singapore. The earliest known daguerreotypes of the settlement were created by a Frenchman named Jules Itier (1802-1877), who first set foot in Singapore in July 1844

as part of a French commercial mission to Asia. Besides recording his impressions of the British colony in a journal (which was subsequently published in Paris in 1848, entitled *Journal d'un voyage en Chine en 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846*), Itier also photographed the island, producing a number of quarter-plate (8.3 x 10.5) daguerreotypes of the town area, including that of the Singapore River from Government Hill (present-day Fort Canning). Today, this daguerreotype is part of the collection at the National Museum of Singapore.<sup>3</sup>

This photographic history of colonial Singapore begins with Gaston Dutronquoy, a native of Jersey,<sup>4</sup> who arrived in Singapore in March 1839.<sup>5</sup> Starting off as a portrait painter and miniaturist (his advertisement, dated 27 March 1839, first appeared in the weekly *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* on 11 April<sup>6</sup>), he is more popularly known as the proprietor of the London Hotel, which first opened at High Street in May 1839.<sup>7</sup> It was in the London Hotel that Dutronquoy commenced his photographic business, first advertising himself as a daguerreotypist in the *Singapore Free Press* on 4 December 1843.

**DAGUERRIOTYPE PORTRAITS.**  
**M**R. G. DUTRONQUOY respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen at Singapore, that he is complete master of the newly invented and late imported Daguerriotype.  
Ladies and Gentlemen who may honor Mr DUTRONQUOY with a sitting can have their Likenesses taken in the astonishing short space of two minutes.  
- The Portraits are free from all blemish and are in every respect perfect likenesses.  
- A Lady and Gentleman can be placed together in one picture and both are taken at the same time entirely shaded from the effects of the sun.  
- The price of one portrait is ten dollars; both taken in one picture is fifteen dollars One day's notice will be required.  
London Hotel, 4th Decr. 1843.

Gaston Dutronquoy's advertisement publicising his newly-established photographic studio, 1843. It appeared in the *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*



**Singapore: A Pictorial History, 1819-2000**, A visual spread of Singapore history, compiled by Gretchen Liu. Among the numerous photographs contained in this volume are Jules Itier's daguerreotypes, including the earliest known surviving photograph on Singapore (p. 10) and John Thomson's "Coconut Plantation in Singapore" (p. 37)

Dutronquoy's assurance to potential customers that "a sitting can have their likenesses taken" in just two minutes was probably not exaggerated as by 1840, technical improvements made to the daguerreotype process had reduced exposure times from ten minutes to just one minute.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, his advertisement is a little misleading, because it does not sufficiently inform patrons about the entire posing process, which certainly took longer than two minutes. A detailed description of a Daguerrian photo-shoot provided by art historian Dr Naomi Rosenblum, based on an 1843 image entitled "Jabez Hogg making a portrait in Richard Beard's studio", gives readers an idea of what a

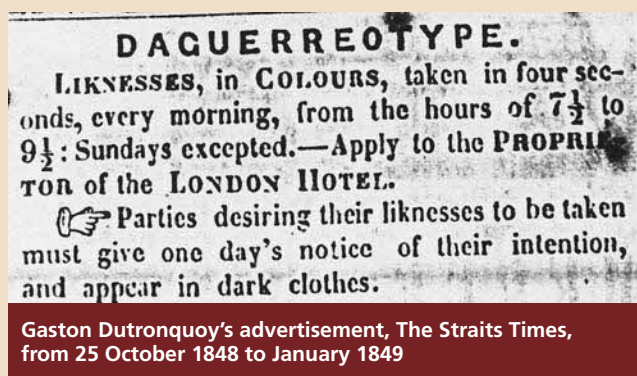
typical sitting in Dutronquoy's studio might have been like:

*A tripod – actually a stand with a rotating plate – supports a simple camera without bellows. It is positioned in front of a backdrop ... The stiffly upright sitter [or sitters] ... is [or are] clamped into a head-brace, which universally was used to ensure steadiness. He clutches the arm of the chair with one hand and makes a fist with the other so that his fingers will not flutter. After being posed, the sitter remains in the same position for longer than just the time it takes to make an exposure, because the operator must first obtain the sensitised plate from the darkroom (or if working along, prepare it), remove the focusing glass of the camera, and insert the plate into the frame before beginning the exposure ... In all, the posing process was nerve-wrecking and lengthy, and if the sitter wished to have more than one portrait made the operator had to repeat the entire procedure, unless two cameras were used simultaneously – a rare occurrence except in the most fashionable studios.<sup>9</sup>*

Some individuals who had their pictures taken at Dutronquoy's daguerreotype studio might have shared the same sentiments as Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American author, poet and philosopher, who had this to say about posing in front of the camera:

*In your zeal not to blur the image, did you keep every finger in its place with such energy that your hands became clenched as for fight or despair, and in your resolution to keep your face still, did you feel every muscle becoming every moment more rigid; the brows contracted into a Tartarean frown, and the eyes fixed in it, in madness, or in death?<sup>10</sup>*

Photography in 19<sup>th</sup> century Singapore was also done outdoors, though it is not known whether Dutronquoy provided such a service for customers wishing to have their pictures taken outside the studio. The Hikayat Abdullah, the autobiography of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Malay writer Abdullah Abdul Kadir (better known as Munshi Abdullah), gives a



vivid eyewitness account of a daguerreotype being made by an unidentified American doctor on Bonham's Hill (what is today Fort Canning Hill) in around 1841:

*... I walked up the hill, and the others joined us there. I saw the doctor go into a room and bring out a box. The box had an attachment like a telescope. The lens, about the size of a cent piece, could be pulled outwards. It had two components, the larger one inside. This larger lens magnified anything seen in front of it. One side of the box could be opened and closed. Then the doctor went and fetched a metal plate about nine inches long by six inches wide, thin and brightly polished. He rubbed the surface with a certain kind of reddish-coloured powder until it was a dull brown all over. Then he took a bowl which had been filled with another kind of powder, black in colour. He held the polished plate about four inches above the powder. After about ten minutes he lifted up the plate, and its colour had turned to a reddish gold. He took the plate and put it into the extensible box, which he then placed with the side of the apparatus with a sliding lens in the direction in which he wished to take the picture. The image of the scene passed through the lens and struck the plate. He said, "In strong sunlight it takes only a moment, but in a dull light it takes a little longer." After this he took the metal plate out and we noticed that there was nothing visible on it at the time. He then took it to a place in a shade and washed it with a chemical solution. Now he had a kind of frame with a vessel containing quicksilver fitted underneath it. He mounted the plate in position on top of the vessel, about six inches above the surface of the quicksilver. Below the vessel there was a spirit lamp which he lit. The quicksilver soon became hot and gradually its vapour rose and was allowed to condense on the plate for a certain length of time. Now the chemical with which the plate had been treated etched all the parts on which light had fallen, while it had not affected those parts on which no light had fallen. After a timed interval the plate was lifted out and at once we saw a picture of the town of Singapore imprinted on it, without deviation even by so much as the breadth of a hair, a fine reproduction of the actual scene. The plate with the picture on it was used as a block, and by contact with its surface prints were easily taken which faithfully reproduced the original without variation.<sup>11</sup>*

Another pioneer who worked with the daguerreotype camera was J. Newman, an American traveller who visited Singapore between 1856 and 1857. Although his stay in Singapore was short-lived, he played an important role in promoting the use of the daguerreotype in the settlement. As expressed by John Falconer, Newman's advertising approach "is characterised by a much more positive and



aggressive attempt to catch the public's eye".<sup>12</sup> All in all, the daguerreotype proved to be much more popular than Talbot's Calotype during the 1840s and 1850s. This was so in spite of the fact that the latter allowed multiple prints to be made from a single negative, a process not possible with the daguerreotype. One possible reason for this, Falconer explains, was that the daguerreotype was offered free-of-charge to the world, while Talbot's invention was patented (in 1840) and thus posed restrictions where its practice was concerned. In fact, Daguerre's photographic technique was so well received internationally that his original pamphlet of instruction was translated into nine languages!<sup>13</sup> Yet, in spite of its popularity, by the late 1850s, the daguerreotype was gradually replaced by another photographic technique, termed the wet collodion process, a paper print-based method invented commercially in Singapore by Edward A. Edgerton around 1858.

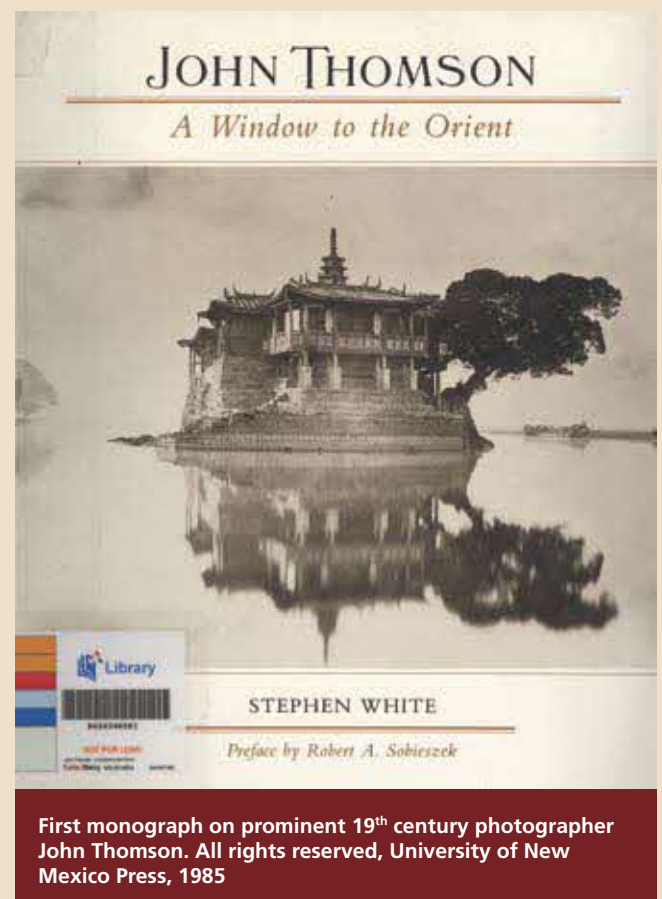
Perhaps the most renowned photographer in 19<sup>th</sup> century Singapore who made use of the wet collodion process was Scotsman John Thomson (1837-1921), who travelled extensively to many parts of Asia including Singapore. Judith Balmer provides a lucid description of what Thomson had to do to create a wet-plate collodion:

*First, he composed the scene, then focused it on the ground-glass screen. Next, he selected a perfectly clean, blemish-free glass plate (any marks showed up in the print) and, in the darkroom, evenly coated it with collodion. After waiting a few seconds for the collodion to set slightly, he sensitised the plate by immersing it in a bath of silver nitrate. He then put the coated plate in a light-tight wooden frame, and hurried out to the camera with it. Quickly he would recheck the focus on the ground-glass screen before replacing the screen with the frame and exposing the plate. After hurrying back to the darkroom, he removed the plate from its frame and continuously poured freshly made developing solution over the surface of the plate. When the image was sufficiently developed, he rinsed the glass plate with water and then chemically fixed it (if he did not properly fix the negative, the image would, over time, continue to darken when exposed to light). Finally, he washed the plate thoroughly to remove all traces of chemicals, and set it aside to dry. When dry, the negative could be packed away for printing later.*<sup>14</sup>

John Thomson loved to work in the early mornings, which according to him was "the time when the finest atmospheric effects may be caught". He had remarked, "The temperature is lower, and for an hour or two, nature enjoys the most perfect repose. ... there is not a breath of wind to stir even the leaves of the 'people' [pipal] tree."<sup>15</sup> Given such a

preference, it is not surprising why his "Coconut Plantation" in Singapore was taken in the early morning.

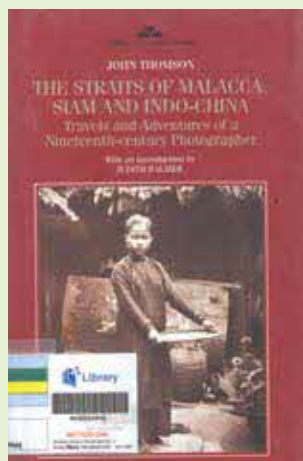
In retrospect, photography in Singapore was still in its nascent stage at the end of the 1850s, but it certainly marked the beginning of a development that would turn out to be revolutionary. Over the next few decades, photographic studios, most of them European-owned, sprang up throughout the British trading settlement, not only offering portraiture photographic services to the public but also providing an invaluable medium for capturing images of distant lands and Britain's expanding presence in them through imperialism. Photography did not come to a standstill with the outbreak of the Second World War; Japanese war photographers and photo studios both played their part in enriching Singapore's photographic record. The idea of photography as an art form began to take shape after the war, and continues to evolve to this day.



## Selected Titles on the History of Photography in Early Singapore Available at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library's rich collection of heritage materials on Singapore includes a number of works related to the history of photography in early colonial Singapore. In his book entitled *A Vision of the Past*, John Falconer, Curator of Photographs in the British Library's Oriental and India Office, concentrates on one European-owned famous studio that operated during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – G.R. Lambert & Co. (first formed in 1867, when Singapore became a Crown Colony). The book also provides a pretty detailed account of photographic activities prior to 1867. His 190-odd-page masterpiece is replete with images of not just classic studio portraits but also photographs of lush landscapes, majestic architecture, and colourful street scenes throughout Singapore, Malaya and other parts of Southeast Asia, from the Lambert collection. In addition, Falconer's inclusion of a biographical list of early photographers who operated in Singapore is an invaluable reference for any researchers interested in the beginning and evolution of photography in the then island colony.

Eminent travel photographer John Thomson recounted his travel experiences in his memoirs, which were subsequently published as *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China* in 1875. The first six chapters of this work, which include his journey to Singapore, were reprinted by Oxford University Press in 1993. Entitled *The Straits of Malacca, Siam and Indo-China: Travels and Adventures of a Nineteenth-Century Photographer*, it features a lucid introduction by Judith Balmer, outlining the life and achievements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century travel photographer.



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It is worthy to note that apart from European studios, there were also those owned by Chinese. The Chinese-owned photographic studios proliferated towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One example of a prominent Chinese studio that operated in Singapore was Lee Brothers,

whose photographic collection now resides mainly at the National Archives of Singapore. Gretchen Liu's *From the Family Album*, tells the story of Lee King Yan, the founder of Lee Brothers Photographers (1911).

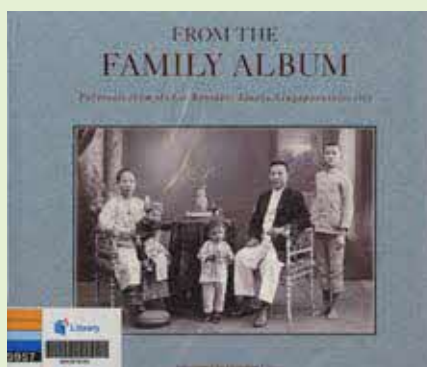


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Portrait of Song Ong Siang and his wife, taken by Lee Brothers. Reproduced from *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*. All rights reserved, Murray, 1923

King Yan was later joined by his brother, Poh Yan, and the dynamic duo developed their studio into a frontrunner in the competitive world of portraiture photography. Gretchen Liu mentions that Lee Brothers photographed many of Singapore's eminent personalities of the day; they included Dr Lim Boon Keng, Mr and Mrs Song Ong Siang, and even Dr Sun Yat-sen during his visit to Singapore. Liu added that a substantial number of the studio's photographs were used for the 1923 classic biographical work, *One Hundred Years of the Chinese in Singapore*, compiled by Song Ong Siang.<sup>16</sup>



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# 新加坡十九世纪 华人教育的改革

謝開九日白衣黃菊放兩行紅粉紫雲  
 得疏狂到處來  
 無題  
 如藕絲郎心亦冰雪藕  
 桃花夫人廟  
 堂上色偏饒肯共文成  
 清寥東風人而紅顏老  
 陵遺事又隋朝  
 人忘嬌歸楚以後不迹余斯左氏



A classroom scene of a Chinese school in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century  
 Source: 叶钟铃, 黄佟葆合编《新马印华校教科书发展回顾》。(2005). 新加坡: 华裔馆.  
 Call no.: RSING Chinese 495.107 HIS

新加坡国家图书馆李光前参考图书馆

参考图书馆员黄佟葆

新加坡十九世纪初的教育改革往往都与中国当时的政治变化挂钩。然而,当时在新加坡的一些人士的活动,对教育改革、以及整个社会的改革起着一股推动力。这些人士不仅受过教育,有些还游刃于中西文化。他们的多重文化背景使他们成为领导旧式教育改革的最佳人选。

在这群人当中,两位值得我们注意的人士包括了曾锦文(1851-1920)和邱菽园(1874-1941)。他们两位在海峡殖民地受过教育和工作,是当时文化界的活跃分子。

曾锦文出生于檳城,在檳城大英义学(Penang Free School)接受英文教育。<sup>1</sup>他不仅懂得英文和华文,也通晓马来文。1866年,其父亲送他回中国福州马尾水师学堂就读。毕业后,曾锦文续任该校的数学教师,一直到1872年。他首先回到檳城。两个月后,他到新加坡的某间律师楼任书记一职。曾锦文在业余的时候从事中国章回小说的峇峇马来文翻译工作(图一)。十二、三年内,他完成十八部作品。其中包括:《凤娇与李丹》、《五美人》、《三国》、《今古奇观》、《聊斋》、《包公案》、《施公案》等。当中, Chrita dahulu-kala di triak Song Kang 108 P'rompak

By Wee Tong Bao,  
 Reference Librarian,  
 Lee Kong Chian Reference Library,  
 National Library



图一：1985年5月16日，《海峡时报副刊》一篇有关 曾锦文的报道  
Man re-wrote Chinese classics in Baba patois



Two of Chan Kim Boon's works, bearing his pen-name, Batu Gantong



图二：《水浒传—宋江》，第二卷。Chrita dahulu-kala di triak Song kang 108 P'rompak atau Swui Hnoh di zaman "Song Teow". Vol II. 可参阅显微胶卷：NL10715.

atau Swui Hnoh di zaman "Song Teow" 《宋江》(图二、三、四、五)、Chrita dahulu-kala pasal Kou Chey Thian man-gawal-kan Tong Thye Chu pergi di negri Seh Thian C'hu Keng 等书目仍有存本保留在李光前参考馆。

邱菽园小时候寄养在澳门姑妈家，直到七岁才到新加坡来。在他15岁时（即1888年），他随父母返福建省海澄县应科举考试。<sup>2</sup>六年后，他科举中榜，考中举人。两年后，他返回新加坡。父亲不幸那年逝世。他送父柩回中国。事后，游长江及华北，就此，结识维新派人士。1897年，当他再度返新加坡后，与林文庆创办《天南新报》，鼓吹变法维新（保皇会）。当时的“丽泽社”和“会吟社”也是由他设立的。他也常应华文报章之邀，为每月撰文比赛之总裁判。邱的主要著作包括两部诗集：《菽园诗集》、《萧虹生诗钞》(图六、七、八)和两部笔记：《菽园赘谈》、《五百石洞天挥麈》。柯木林在书中称他为：“新华社会乃至东南亚华人社会之闻人”。<sup>3</sup>

当邱菽园在1897年再度回到新加坡时，他对当时的侨教做了一些具体的贡献。首先，他有感到受过教育的女子在抚育下一代时，起着关键的作用。于是，在1899年，他与林文庆等人创办新加坡华人女校（Singapore Chinese Girls' School）。是年，他还出版《浅字文》一书，以供该校的教学需要。此书从出版到1902年间，一共再版三次。邱菽园也觉察到旧式私塾所使用的《千字文》对当时的幼童来说，深奥难懂。《千字文》中的词汇，晦涩难解。学童即使念了几年，未能掌握此书，有些甚至还不懂得写自己的名字。邱菽园于是重编《千字文》，使该书成为适用的教材。<sup>4</sup>1902年，他利用了原书中的479字，另加上521新字，编写了《新出千字文》。身为一个科举举人，再加上他对诗文创作的造诣，相信《新出千字文》一书在当时也甚受欢迎。

从这两位文人的文教活动来看，在编著实际和适宜当时环境的教材和文艺书籍来说，他们俩可说是开了先河。他们的举动也拉近了当时新加坡中、西文化界彼此的距离。同时，为新式教育和社会对教育的要求，奠下基础。

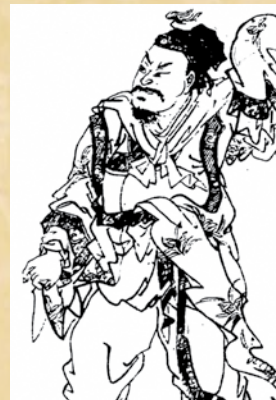
以邱菽园来说，普及教育，积极参与学校的创办和改编生硬难懂的四书五经，出版适合幼童学习的《浅字文》、《新出千字文》，是对当时侨教的实际贡献。学校有适宜使用的教材才能够持续。他与其他海峡殖民地华人创办的学校在当时相信也自然的成为其他华人社群建立新式教育学校的借鉴。



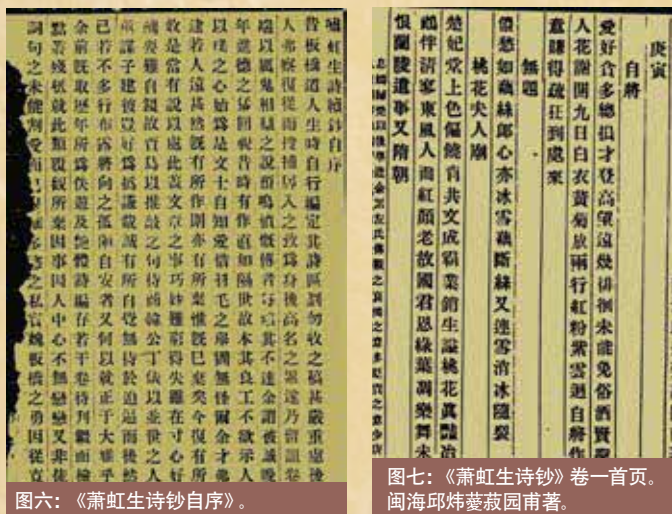
图三、四：《水浒传—宋江》书中一瞥。右页段末日期为：1899年11月10日。

另一方面，以曾锦文来说，他所翻译的中国章回小说或许对当时的教育事业并未有直接的贡献。但是，对整体的社会改革，提倡各文化的交流，有着一定的作用。列如在大约一个世纪后，1960年代，新马政治上“马来亚化”的阶段，马来文被誉为新马人民的“国语”时。曾锦文早在19世纪所翻译的中国章回小说，正符合了1960年代的政治、社会局面。

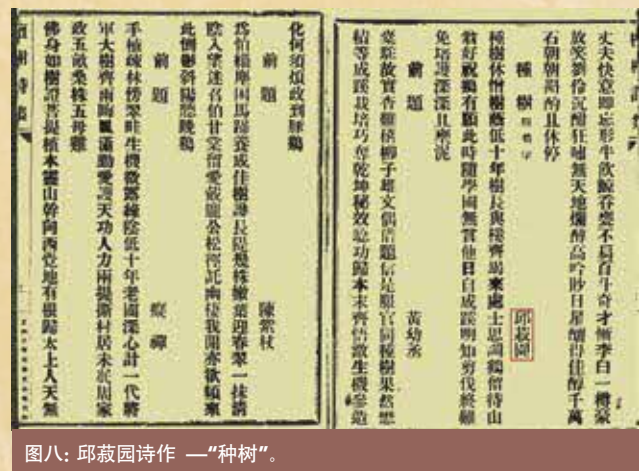
从曾锦文和邱菽园的文教活动过程中，我们可以看到新加坡在19世纪初，在教育以及社会改革方面，有着本土的领导先驱。



图五：书中林冲肖像图。



图六：《萧虹生诗钞自序》。



图八：邱菽园诗作——“种树”。

图七：《萧虹生诗钞》卷一首页。 闽海邱炜萋菽园甫著。

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## STRAITS CHINESE PIONEERING EDUCATION REFORMS IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Education reforms and the modernisation of education in Singapore and Malaya have always been identified as influenced by the political changes in China during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Few remember the contributions of the local intellectuals in as far as leading educational reforms before the 1900s is concerned. These reformers were multicultural both in their background and outlook, and were perhaps pioneers in setting the foundation for modernising and indigenising the old curricula before the winds of change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought about revolutionary transformations.

Two notable pioneers in this field are Chan Kim Boon (1851-1920) and Khoo Seok Wan (1874-1941). Chan Kim Boon had a command of English, Chinese and the Malay language. In his spare time, he translated 18 Chinese

vernacular novels into Bahasa Melayu-Tionghoa, a Chinese-style Malay language used by the Straits-born Chinese. Khoo Seok Wan was a scholar trained in the Chinese classics and who had sat for the Imperial Civil Service Examination in China. He wrote and revised two Chinese classics so that students at the primary schools here in Singapore could have some texts that they could really learn from instead of the difficult to understand classics in their original forms.

These pioneers were way ahead of their time in the creation of practical materials for education for local use. However, more pertinently, we can see that the path towards modernity, localisation and pragmatism with regards to Chinese educational matters was not entirely externally motivated. We had our pioneers.

# Karya Sastera sebagai tapak Ingatan sosial:

## Mengingati yang lalu pada masa kini sebagai peringatan pada masa depan melalui novel Mail Mau Kawin, Batas Langit dan Atas Nama Cinta

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

*"Maria meninggalkan Nadra di Malaya, tetapi dia tahu orang-orang yang dikasihinya di Malaya tidak akan dapat hidup bersama Nadra lagi, kerana Nadra kini hanya sebuah bayangan. Nadra kini hanya sebuah cerita manis yang tiba-tiba diberhentikan. Siapakah yang sanggup menceritakannya kembali kepada semua?"*

(ANC, ms 257)

Ingatan mempunyai peranan dalam kehidupan kita sama ada ingatan peribadi mahupun ingatan bersama kita sebagai sebuah kumpulan masyarakat. Ia memberi ruang untuk kita kembali ke masa lalu dengan mengingati kembali sesuatu yang pernah berlaku dan berlalu. Namun, ingatan bukanlah hanya sekadar ingatan. Ia memenuhi keperluan masa kini dengan

melalui proses mencapai dan membentuk bahan-bahan yang didapati pada masa lalu (Ritterhouse: 2003). Ia juga menjadi jambatan penghubung antara masa kini dan lalu.

Ingatan sosial atau ingatan yang dikongsi bersama sesebuah kelompok masyarakat atau sesuatu bangsa itu dapat membentuk jati diri masyarakat itu melalui satu proses penakrifan yang berterusan sejarah mereka.

Tempat, peristiwa dan watak adalah tiga unsur penting yang dapat mencetuskan ingatan sosial ini. Tempat mempunyai kesan yang amat mendalam kerana ia dapat menjadi lambang yang memberi makna kepada seseorang terutama jika tempat itu mempunyai kisah-kisah penting. Melalui karya-karya sastera, seseorang pembaca dapat kembali "melawat" tempat dan "mengalami" sendiri peristiwa sebegini



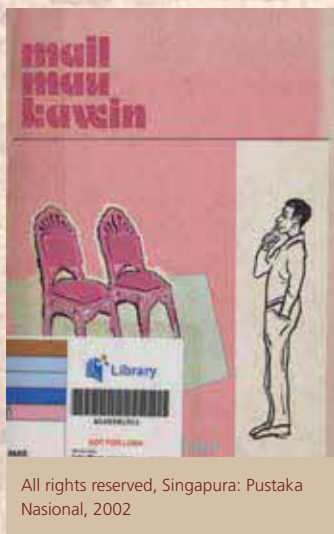
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yang dipaparkan penulis. Watak-watak tertentu juga dapat menjadi lambang bagi cetusan ingatan sosial ini. Oleh itu, karya-karya sastera adalah tapak penting bagi ingatan-ingatan sosial.

Cetusan-cetusan ingatan sosial ini terdapat di dalam ketiga-tiga novel yang telah dipilih iaitu novel *Mail Mau Kawin* (MMK) karya MAS atau Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, *Batas Langit* (BL) karya Mohamed Latiff Mohamed dan *Atas Nama Cinta* (ANC) karya Isa Kamari. Ketiga-tiga novel ini mempunyai unsur-unsur yang penting dalam mengimbas ingatan sosial masyarakat Singapura, terutama masyarakat Melayu melalui penceritaan tempat-tempat yang sering menjadi tumpuan dan juga peristiwa-peristiwa genting selain penampilan watak utamanya.

## INGATAN SOSIAL - TEMPAT

Walaupun ketiga-tiga novel ini ditulis oleh 3 orang penulis yang lahir dari generasi yang berbeza, apa yang amat ketara ialah penampilan tempat di dalam novel mereka. Ketiga-tiganya menggunakan tempat yang sama yang menjadi tumpuan masyarakat Melayu Singapura sebagai latar novel mereka. Ia sepertimengajak pembaca melawat ke tempat itu kerana ingatan terbina dan terikat pada tempat melalui interaksi ingatan-ingatan lalu pada tempat dan bangunan. Ia juga mendedahkan maklumat tentang masa lalu di kawasan atau tempat itu (Flores, 1998).



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Novel MMK dan ANC telah menampilkan kawasan Kampung Jawa atau Bussorah Street sementara novel BL telah mempunyai kawasan Geylang sebagai antara latar di dalam novel. Sebagaimana yang diketahui umum, tempat-tempat ini adalah tempat kunjungan masyarakat Melayu terutama ketika bulan Ramadan dan untuk mencari bahan-bahan keperluan. Contoh-contoh yang boleh didapati melalui novel-novel ini ialah:

*“Mini-minor 850 Cikgu Manaf merangkak dari Arab Street, masuk ke Muscat Street mencari parking lot. Semua parking lot penuh. Dia terus ke Kandahar Street, juga penuh. Terus menyusuri Kandahar Street dan membelok ke kiri, Pahang*

*Street; masuk kiri lagi, Sultan Gate. Di depan gerbang istana Kampung Gelam baru dapat tempat yang cukup-cukup untuk mini-minor. Di depan istana yang 146 tahun dulu menjadi tempat rakyat Singapura berdatang sembah itu, Cikgu Manaf meletakkan keretanya.”*

(MMK, ms 87)

*“Parks dan kumpulannya menuju ke arah Masjid Sultan melalui Beach Road dan kemudian memasuki Arab Street. Mereka berhenti sekitar tiga ratus kaki daripada masjid Sultan. Kumpulan Haxworth pula mendekati Masjid Sultan melalui Sultan Gate di hadapan tanah lapang dekat dengan bangunan Istana Kampong Gelam yang bersejarah itu. Livett memandu keretanya melalui Middle Road, North Bridge Road sampai ke Kandahar Street.”*

(ANC, ms 260)

Kini, Istana Kampung Gelam dan kawasan sekitarnya telah mengalami pelbagai perubahan. Istana Kampung Gelam telah diubahsuai dan kini menjadi Taman Warisan Melayu. Walaupun kini di halamannya tidak lagi menjadi tempat meletak kenderaan, namun ia tetap akan tetap terpahat di dalam ingatan sosial masyarakat melalui tapak yang telah tertinta di dalam novel-novel ini. Bagi nama-nama jalan seperti Kandahar Street, Sultan Gate dan Pahang Street yang masih lagi kelihatan, ia akan terus-menerus menjadi saksi perubahan dan akan terus menjadi lambang yang bermakna terutama bagi mereka yang pernah melalui kawasan-kawasan itu.

## INGATAN SOSIAL – PERISTIWA

Penulis pasca moden meletakkan penceritaan mereka dalam konteks sejarah untuk terus berhubung dengan masa lalu dalam menghadapi masa kini sebagaimana menurut wacana Linda Hutcheon (1988). Kemungkinan karya-karya ini digubah sebagai satu perbincangan yang objektif. Kalau perbincangan melalui buku-buku sejarah, ia akan membawa ke arus berlainan daripada perbincangan yang dilakukan melalui karya-karya sastera sebegini.

Teori *New Historisisme* (Mana Sikana, 2005), merenung sastera sebagai teori pensejarahan baru yang “menyusur masa silam dengan memberi makna kekinian”, namun karya sastera sebagai tapak ingatan sosial hanya membawa pembaca kembali mengenang ke masa lalu yang boleh mengugah perasaan pembaca, terutama bagi mereka yang pernah melalui zaman itu atau yang pernah mengalami sendiri peristiwa itu atau mungkin saja bagi yang pernah mendengar cerita-cerita itu. Sebagai contoh, kita boleh menukil kisah pendudukan Jepun di Singapura yang terdapat di dalam novel MMK ini.

*"Ketika itu; tahun 1943 (tahun Jepun 2603); Muin baru berumur kira-kira 15 tahun. Sudah setahun dia dibebaskan daripada menjadi buruh paksa sebagai pengangkut perkakas kuli kontrak; bekerja dengan pengontrak yang memindahkan barang-barang yang disebut "enemy property" dari gudang-gudang British ke khemah-khemah simpanan tentera Jepun."*

*Suatu hari, Muin kena Cika ketika dia sedang bekerja memunggah beberapa peti susu "Alpine" dari gudang ke lori, hendak dibawa ke tempat simpanan di khemah Jepun. Berpuntal-puntal rasanya perut Muin tidak keruan. Dia muntah serta buang air sekali. Kepalanya berat tak dapat ditegakkan. Pandangannya gelap; dirasakan semua yang dilihatnya berpusing-pusing tunggang-balik; matanya tak dapat dibuka.*

*"Tidak ada kuli-kuli lain yang berani menolong Muin kerana masing-masing sentiasa diawasi oleh mandur-mandurnya; dan mandur-mandur itu pula sentiasa dalam pengawasan askar-askar Jepun yang bertugas. Mereka takut kepada askar-askar Jepun kerana askar-askar itu bengkung, ganas dan ringan tangannya; barangsiapa yang tersilap sikit saja nescaya akan ditempeleng oleh askar-askar yang berkawal."*

(MMK, ms 34-35)

Menurut DeLyser (2004), ingatan sosial adalah satu proses yang berterusan dan aktif. Setiap pengalaman dan peristiwa memainkan peranan dalam membina ingatan sosial. Sering kali, melalui proses mengingati yang lalu, ia dapat membantu memahami masa kini. Umpamanya peristiwa menarik bagi memerikan ingatan sosial kita ialah tentang peristiwa Singapura berpisah dengan Malaysia seperti yang terdapat di dalam novel BL ini.

*"Adi terperanjat. Dia mendengar warta berita di radio. Adi rasa macam guruh menghentam telinganya. Adi rasa macam ada gunung berat menimpa dadanya."*

*"Singapura berpisah dengan Malaysia!" demikian suara juruhebah membawa warta berita. Adi panik. Ada takungan air mata di kelopak mata Adi.*

*Apabila dia membisikkan berita sedih itu pada Abang Dolah, mata Abang Dolah juga berkaca-kaca. Perlahan Abang Dolah membisikkan ke telinga Adi. Suaranya satu-satu.*

*"Gelap...lah...masa...depankau...kau...tidak...ada...masa...depan...lagi!"*

(BL, ms 188).



Peristiwa perpisahan di antara Singapura dan Malaysia ini telah "dihidupkan" lagi baru-baru ini apabila Encik Lee Kuan Yew, Menteri Pembimbing Singapura mencetuskan tentang kemungkinan Singapura bergabung dengan Malaysia kembali seperti yang telah disiarkan oleh akhbar-akhbar utama seperti The Straits Times terbitan Singapura dan New Straits Times terbitan Malaysia. Sebagai satu proses yang aktif, ia membangkitkan kembali peristiwa yang telah berlaku 42 tahun yang lampau. Tetapi kini sudah tentu kita boleh merenung kembali peristiwa perpisahan itu dengan pandangan dan harapan yang berbeza.

Tambahan pula, ingatan sosial boleh melakukan penggambaran di antara masa lalu dan masa kini kerana ia mengisi dan menunjangi pengalaman pembacaan sesebuah novel. Ia dapat dilakukan kerana penulisan novel dapat berulang-alik antara masa lalu dan masa kini (O' Connell, 2001)

## INGATAN SOSIAL – WATAK NADRA/MARIA

Watak juga memainkan peranan dan menjadi lambang kepada sesuatu peristiwa atau kejadian yang telah berlaku. Nadra atau Maria Hertogh adalah watak utama dalam novel ANC, yang mengisahkan tentang seorang gadis Belanda yang telah diserahkan oleh ibunya untuk dipelihara oleh seorang wanita Melayu. Selepas perang dan pendudukan Jepun, ibu bapanya telah menuntutnya kembali, walaupun dia telah hidup sebagai seorang Muslim dan bernikah. Kisah Nadra telah menimbulkan ketegangan kaum kerana keputusan dan perintah mahkamah yang berpihak kepada ibu bapa kandungnya yang beragama Kristian.

*"Mahkamah memutuskan untuk menolak rayuan Mansoor dan Aminah agar arahan mengembalikan Maria kepada Adelaine dibatalkan. Keputusan mahkamah itu menambahkan kemarahan kebanyakan penduduk Islam di Koloni Singapura. Berita mengenai perarakan besar-besaran ke biara The Good Shepherd menimbulkan rasa cemas kepada semua orang terutama pihak polis."*

(ANC, ms 255)

Bila disebut kisah Nadra, ingatan sosial kita kembali kepada rusuhan yang telah berlaku akibat perebutan kasih watak ini. Ia juga menyeret kepada isu sensitif seperti agama. Ramai yang telah menjadi korban di dalam kejadian ini.

*“Sepanjang rusuhan selama tiga hari di Koloni Singapura itu, 18 orang telah terbunuh. Kebanyakannya orang kulit putih, termasuk serani. 9 daripada mangsa tersebut pula ialah pegawai polis. 173 orang tercedera. 119 kenderaan musnah. 72 kes pembakaran berleluasa telah berlaku. Bangunan Cold Storage dan Singapore Traction Company, hangus dijilat api. Darurat dikuatkuasakan sepanjang rusuhan dan keadaan kembali reda pada 14 Disember 1950.”*

(ANC, ms 272)

## INGATAN – PERINGATAN

Ingatan sosial mempunyai peranan di dalam kehidupan kita pada masa kini. Ingatan yang kita kongsi bersama dapat membantu membina jati diri kita sebagai sebuah masyarakat. Ia menjadi tapak perkongsian sosial atau perkongsian pengalaman tentang tempat yang pernah kita kunjungi, peristiwa yang pernah berlaku dan watak yang pernah kita kenali, walaupun sekadar melalui penceritaan seperti yang digambarkan melalui contoh-contoh yang diberikan. Namun yang paling penting dalam pencetusan ingatan sosial ini ialah ia harus menjadi satu peringatan kepada sesebuah masyarakat bagi melalui dan menghadapi masa-masa mendatang seperti kata pepatah, yang baik dijadikan teladan, yang buruk dijadikan sempadan.

## PENUTUP

Ingatan-ingatan sosial yang terdapat dalam ketiga-tiga novel itu mencetuskan pelbagai perasaan terhadap pembaca. Ia bukan rujukan sejarah tetapi tetap merujuk kepada sejarah dan pengabungan sejarah dan sastera. Penceritaan begini dapat menjadi sumber yang dasar untuk kita memahami bagaimana sesuatu peristiwa yang lalu itu dibentuk dan prosesnya membantu dalam pencarian jati diri (O’Connell, 1998).

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## LITERARY WORKS AS SITES FOR SOCIAL MEMORY

Memory plays an important role in our life. It forms a bridge between the past and the present. Our shared social memories could help in the development of identity as a community in a continuous process. Places, events and characters are some elements that could trigger social memories, which are readily accessible through literary works. This is illustrated in the article through the three novels, *Atas Nama Cinta*, *Mail Mau Kawin* and *Batas Langit*.

# Hikayat Abdullah

By Azizah Sidek, Reference Specialist, and Mazelan Anuar, Reference Librarian,  
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library

**Title:** Hikayat Abdullah

**Author:** Abdullah Abdul Kadir, Munshi, 1796-1854

**Publisher:** Singapura: Mission Press, 1849

**Physical Description:** [443] p. : ill. ; 28 cm

This autobiography of Munshi Abdullah Abdul Kadir was written in jawi between 1840 and 1843, and published in 1849. The author was the interpreter and scribe to the founder of modern Singapore, Sir Stamford Raffles. This work serves as an important record of Singapore's early history and the most accurate account of Raffles' arrival.

Abdullah was the first local to give a written account of everyday life in Malaya and the first local Malay to have his works published. He was also the first Malay writer to depart from traditional Malay literary style. Unlike courtly writing, his style was realistic and lively, incorporating many Malay idioms and proverbs. In recognition of his literary contributions, Abdullah has been regarded by many as "The Father of Modern Malay Literature".



English translation of Abdullah's address to Lieutenant Colonel W. J. Butterworth

Terjemahan Inggeris pendahuluan  
Abdullah kepada Leftenan Kolonel W. J.  
Butterworth

*Hikayat Abdullah*, which means the “Story of Abdullah” in Malay, narrates the events of Abdullah’s life related to the activities in Singapore, which was changing under British rule. It describes this transformation and the prominent British personalities of the time, offering observations on political and cultural events.

In *Hikayat Abdullah*, Abdullah remarks on Raffles’ study of the history, customs and language of the people he came into contact with, and his efforts to treat all those he met with due respect and proper courtesies. He also described Raffles’ arrangements for collecting, preserving and recording books and natural history specimens.

From both the literary and historical perspectives, the *Hikayat Abdullah* is a milestone in modern Malay literature. This is a first edition and is very rare. It was produced by the printing technique of lithography, which was widely used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## REFERENCE:

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Frontispiece of the *Hikayat Abdullah*

Ilustrasi depan *Hikayat Abdullah*

## HIKAYAT ABDULLAH

Autobiografi Munshi Abdullah Abdul Kadir ini ditulis dalam huruf jawi antara tahun 1840 dan 1843, dan diterbitkan pada tahun 1849. Penulis merupakan penterjemah dan jurutulis Sir Stamford Raffles, pengasas Singapura moden. Karya ini merupakan rakaman penting sejarah awal Singapura dan rakaman paling tepat akan kedatangan Raffles ke Singapura.

Abdullah menjadi orang tempatan pertama yang memberikan gambaran kehidupan seharian di Malaya. Karya beliau ini merupakan penulisan Melayu pertama yang dicetak. Gaya penulisan beliau berbeza dengan bentuk penulisan tradisi Melayu. Atas sumbangan beliau terhadap kesusateraan Melayu, Abdullah telah diangkat sebagai Bapa Sastra Melayu Moden.

*Hikayat Abdullah* membincangkan persoalan-persoalan di dalam kehidupan Abdullah yang berkaitan dengan

kehidupan di Singapura yang sedang menjalani perubahan di bawah pemerintahan British. Ia menggambarkan perubahan ini dan juga personaliti-personaliti British yang penting, selain memberikan ulasan kepada kejadian politik dan kebudayaan pada waktu itu.

Di dalam *Hikayat Abdullah*, Abdullah memperkatakan tentang kajian sejarah, adat dan bahasa yang dilakukan oleh Raffles. Beliau juga menyebut usaha Raffles mengumpulkan, melestarikan dan merakamkan kitab-kitab serta spesimen atau contoh bagi kajian ilmu hayat dan alam.

Dari sudut sastera dan sejarah, *Hikayat Abdullah* merupakan karya penting dalam sastera Melayu moden. Ini merupakan edisi pertama dan amat berharga. Ia dicetak menggunakan teknik litografi yang luas digunakan pada abad ke-19.

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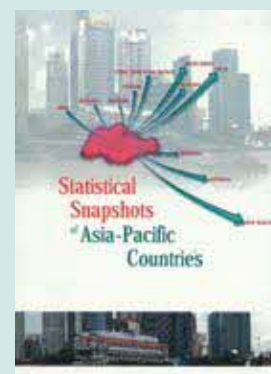
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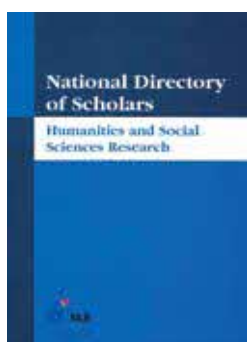
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This collaboration of NLB and the Arts, Humanities and Social Science faculties of universities and academic and research institutions in Singapore lists over 2,350 titles of research publications and papers by about 320 researchers. By aggregating a list of researchers in the humanities and social science disciplines in Singapore, the directory will help create awareness of the local research landscape.

It features the profiles of researchers with information on their positions in their respective affiliated institutions, educational profiles, contact information, fields of interest, areas of expertise, current research, proficiency in specific written and spoken languages and selected significant research papers and publications.



## TIES THAT BIND: SELECTED SHORT STORIES FOR READ!SINGAPORE 2007

Publisher: Singapore: National Library Board, c2007

ISBN: 978-981-05-8117-6

Price: S\$9.80 (including 7% GST)

READ!Singapore is an annual nation-wide initiative to promote a culture of reading in Singapore. It aims to create a common topic of discussion and conversation amongst the people of Singapore by providing an opportunity to rediscover the joy of reading, sharing it and, in the process, weave our social fabric through shared cultural experiences. The theme for 2007 was "Ties that Bind", chosen to cultivate community bonding.

The eight short stories that were selected are featured in this book. Each short story was translated into the other three languages to encourage reading across communities. The eight authors whose works were selected include Claire Tham, Ho Minfong, Huang Chun Ming, Soon Ai Ling, Kamariah Amat, A. Wahab Hj Hamzah, Rama Kannabiran and Ma Ilangkannan.



## GIVING BACK: WINNING STORIES AND POEMS FROM BEHIND BARS

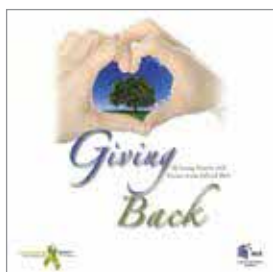
Publisher: Singapore: CARE Network and National Library Board, 2007

ISBN: 978-981-05-8882-3

Price: S\$13.00 (including 7% GST)

Have you ever wondered how other Singaporeans live, think and feel? Some have grown up in broken homes, others have drifted into addictions and became trapped, still others made foolish choices and are still paying for their mistakes.

"Giving Back" is dedicated to the family members of inmates and ex-offenders and to everyone who has presented a second chance to ex-offenders in one way or another.



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

Editor: Bridget Tracy Tan

Publisher: Singapore: National Library Board, 2006

ISBN: 981-05-5737-X

Price: S\$32.10 (including 7% GST)

The Photography of Yip Cheong Fun was an exhibition jointly organised by the Singapore Heritage Society and the National Library Board, Singapore, held at the National Library from 15 March to 15 May 2006. This publication was produced as a companion catalogue to the exhibition. It captures Singapore's changing landscape and people through the eyes of award-winning photographer Mr Yip Cheong Fun.



## NEW PERSPECTIVES AND SOURCES ON THE HISTORY OF SINGAPORE: A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Editor: Derek Heng Thiam Soon

Publisher: Singapore: National Library Board, 2006

ISBN: 981-05-5980-1

Price: S\$33.60 (including 7% GST)

This publication is the culmination of a workshop held on the 16 August 2005, entitled New Insights into Singapore History: Perspectives of



Emerging Scholars, organised by the Department of History, NUS and hosted by the National Library Board, Singapore. The workshop brought together 10 scholars from a variety of academic disciplines, including sociology, history, political science, education studies and archaeology, to address two issues - new approaches to understanding Singapore's past; and the untapped sources of information for the writing of Singapore's history.

Going beyond the established storylines and heroes, several papers delve into the culture and contributions of groups that played a key role in parts of Singapore's growth, from churches and Malay organisations to films. This publication provides a glimpse into the future possibilities of the historiography of Singapore.

## WHAT A STUPID QUESTION? 35 STORIES OF STUPID QUESTIONS WITH CLEVER ENDINGS

Author: Sharmini Chellapandi

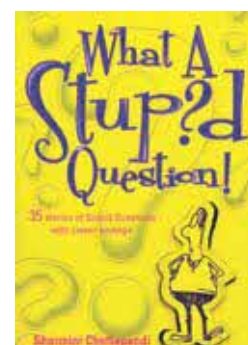
Publisher: Singapore: National Library Board, 2006

ISBN: 981-05-4879-6

Price: S\$15.25 (including 7% GST)

History is full of startling discoveries and exciting innovations. This book is a compilation of questions from diverse industries and disciplines, which aims to look for inventions, discoveries,

services and ideas that have some impact on the way we live or do things. More importantly, these had to be the result of seemingly stupid questions when the idea was first mooted. It is not meant to be an exhaustive listing of questions and ideas but offers a sampling of a variety of questions that most would never have considered giving another thought.



## CELEBRATING LIBRARIES

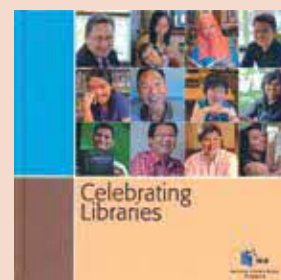
**Publisher:** Singapore: National Library Board, 2006

**ISBN:** 981-248-133-8

**Price:** S\$37.45 (including 7% GST)

Just how has the library transformed your life? In January 2006, the National Library Board posed this simple question to Singaporeans round the island. It received a flood of responses, as thousands of Singaporeans from all walks of life testified to

how this singular institution had help them learn, dream, explore and grow. Celebrating Libraries is a collection of these inspiring testimonials. From touching stories by well-known personalities to humorous tales by the man on the street, the short stories form a testament to the nation's love of reading and the transformative power of libraries in Singapore.



## ZHENG HE AND MARITIME ASIA

**Publisher:** Singapore: National Library Board, 2005

**ISBN:** 978-981-05-3904-7

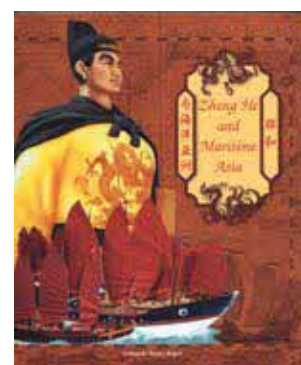
**ISBN:** 981-05-3904-5

**Price:** S\$33.00 (including 7% GST)

Published as a companion to the Zheng He and Maritime Asia Exhibition, Zheng He and Maritime Asia chronicles the development of China's maritime history before the Ming dynasty, with its beginning in the Tang dynasty, through the Song and Yuan dynasties.

Filled with colourful photographs and illustrations, the thread-bound book takes readers through the establishment of the

Ming dynasty and Emperor Yongle's ascendancy to the throne, as well as the birth of famed Chinese explorer Zheng He and his rise to Grand Eunuch. Accompanied by interesting details and little-known facts about the maritime trade, Zheng He and Maritime Asia offers a captivating insight into the building of the treasure fleet and ancient Chinese shipbuilding and navigation techniques, including the use of navigation chart and water compass.



## SINGAPORE'S TRANSFORMATIVE LIBRARY

**Author:** K K Seet

**Publisher:** Singapore: National Library Board, 2005

**ISBN:** 981-248-107-9

**Price:** S\$42.80 (including 7% GST)

Written by academic Dr KK Seet, Singapore's Transformative Library traces the history of Singapore's public library, from its early history in the 1800s to the opening of the new National Library at Victoria Street.

Covering the library's transformation, its rich and long history and its use of technology, the coffee-table book also highlights the National Library's new home at Victoria Street and features anecdotes from prominent individuals including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Dr Lee Seng Gee, son of the late Dr Lee Kong Chian and Chairman of the Lee Foundation.



# BOOKREVIEWS

## SINGAPORE'S MONUMENTS & LANDMARKS: A PHILATELIC RAMBLE

By Tan Wee Kiat

Publisher: Singapore, Preservation of Monuments Board: Singapore Heritage Society: Singapore Philatelic Museum, 2007

Call no.: RSING 769.5695957 TAN

This is a visually attractive book, full of large and colourful postage stamps that bear images of Singapore's past and present landmarks. It features various types of buildings and historical spots. The monuments, performance venues, museums, Singapore River, bridges, airports and nature parks carry interesting stories behind the significance of these places. It is an enjoyable walk down memory lane that is rich with the history of Singapore's natural and built environment.



## SMALL STEPS, GIANT LEAPS: A HISTORY OF AWARE AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN SINGAPORE

Publisher: Singapore: Association of Women for Action and Research, 2007

Call no.: RSING 305.42095957 SMA

AWARE stands for the Association of Women for Action and Research, a recognised and active women movement in Singapore. Founded in 1985, AWARE provides a helpline, legal counselling, and research on women's issues such as domestic violence, health and ageing. The book studies the history of AWARE, highlighting its founders, activities and contributions. It also features prominent women activists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879-1904), Qiu Jin (1875-1907), Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922), Hedwig Anuar and Dana Lam-Teo. There are also some women "firsts", and the stories are based on archival records, newspaper articles, published sources and interviews. Readers will also learn about the challenges and issues facing AWARE.



## TRANSFORMING YOUR BUSINESS INTO A BRAND: THE 10 RULES OF BRANDING

By Jackson Tai and Wilson Chew

Publisher: Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Business, 2007

Call no.: RSING 658.827 TAI

Asia is the focus of world attention now. While it brings about opportunities, it also poses threats for the venturing businessmen. Currently, the market is dominated by "economic tigers" like China, India and Korea. So how do businessmen from Singapore survive in the face of this intense competition?

Authors, Jacky Tai and Wilson Chew, branding experts in their own field, inform readers of the difference between "business" and "branding" in their book. They offer gripping advice on

why branding and positioning are important for companies to survive. Asian companies are traditionally great at trading but low in branding. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this will not work in the global marketplace.

They recommend 10 branding rules, which will transform Asian companies into world-class brands. Each rule is discussed in detail, using case studies and their own experiences, to identify potential pitfalls to ensure a smooth journey. This book is a must read for branding executives, marketing managers and anyone raring to venture abroad.



## 新加坡法律与税务手册

Publisher: 新加坡: 新加坡资讯服务公司, 2005

Call no.: RSING 349.5957 XJP

本书为有意来新加坡投资和经  
商者提供了新加坡的法律制度、  
公司和个人税务方面的基本知识。

内容概括了新加坡法律制度简介、商业  
主体、商业合同、知识产权、房地产、  
劳动与移民、进出口、个人与公司破产、  
债务追索、争议解决、个人与公司的税  
务。



《新加坡法律与税务手册》是《新加坡经贸投资指南》系列丛书之一。它是由新加坡国际企业发展局与中国驻新加坡大使馆经济商务参赞处，联合策划出版之系列丛书。

## வைகரைப் பூக்கள்

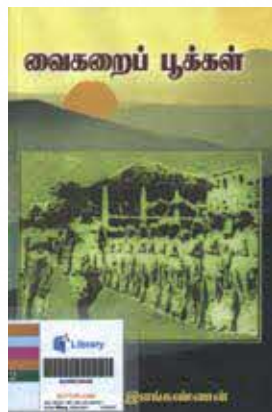
சிங்கை மா. இளங்கண்ணன்

Publisher: சிங்கப்பூர்: மா. இளங்கண்ணன்

Call no.: RSING 894.811372 ILA

சிங்கப்பூர் வெள்ளையர் அதிகாரத்திலிருந்து ஜப்பானியர் அதிகாரத்திற்குப் பட்ட  
காலங்களில் மக்கள் எதிர்கொண்ட வாழ்வை ஆசிரியர் விவரிக்கிறார்.  
இந்திய தேசிய இராணுவப்படை சார்ந்த நிகழ்வுகளைப் பின்னணியாகக்  
கொண்டு இந்நாவலைப் புனைந்துள்ளார். இதில் தமிழர்களின் பங்கேற்பை  
மிகையான மொழியில் பதிவுசெய்திருந்தாலும் அவர்களின் எதார்த்த  
உணர்வுகளைப் பிரதிபலிக்கிறது.

இந்நாவல் சிங்கப்பூரில் வெள்ளையரின் ஆட்சியில் ஆரம்பித்து ஜப்பானியர்  
ஆட்சியில் தொடர்ந்து பிறகு மீண்டும் சிங்கப்பூர் வெள்ளையர் வசம்  
ஆகும்போது முடிவடைகிறது. மிக அருமையான காதல் கதைபின் ஊடே  
மக்களின் தவிப்புக்கள், துன்பங்கள், நேதாஜியின் சுதந்திரப் போராட்டம்  
ஆகியவற்றையும் கலந்து ஆசிரியர் படைத்துள்ளார். இந்தியாவிலிருந்து  
வரும் அன்பரசன் சிறந்த குணவானாக காந்திய கொள்கைகள், பாரதியின்  
பெண்விடுதலை, நேத்தாஜியின் வீரம் போன்ற அனைத்து நற்குணங்களையும்  
கொண்டு அனைவருக்கும் முன்மாதிரியாக  
விளங்குகிறான். அவன் அன்பு  
கொடியவனான நல்லையாவையும்  
திருந்தச் செய்கிறது. துன்பம் வரும்போது  
அக்கம்பக்கத்தார் ஒருவருக்கொருவர்  
உதவும் பெரும் நற்குணமும் பாத்திரங்கள்  
வாயிலாக எடுத்துக்கூறுகிறார் ஆசிரியர்.  
பொருள் சார்ந்த இன்றைய உலகில்  
மனித நேயத்தின் முக்கியத்துவத்தை  
இச்சிறந்த நாவல் மூலமாக உலகிற்கு  
ஆசிரியர் எடுத்துக் கூறியுள்ளார்.



## SETITIS EMBUN SEMARAK API

By Shahnon Ahmad

Publisher: Shah Alam: Alaf 21, 2006

Call no.: R Malay 899.2830092 SHA

Setitis Embun Semarak Api adalah sebuah sumber rujukan bagi  
para peminat dan pengkaji karya-karya Shahnon Ahmad kerana  
ia dapat menyulam pemikiran penulis ini. Ia memuatkan 100  
tulisan ringkas Sasterawan Negara Malaysia ini yang menarik  
mengenai pengalaman dan proses beliau menghasilkan karya-  
karyanya.

Di dalam karya-karya sastera beliau, kisah kehidupan di  
kampung sering menjadi paparan buat hidangan masyarakat  
umpamanya, novel Ranjau Sepanjang Jalan yang memaparkan  
kehidupan sebuah keluarga miskin yang berlatarbelakangkan  
Kampung Banggul Derdap. Watak-watak di dalam novelnya  
juga sering ditimpa bencana seperti kemarau, banjir dan  
wabak penyakit.

Menurut penulis, beliau banyak mendapat ilham daripada  
kehidupannya dan juga ibunya yang sentiasa berkerja keras  
untuk keluarga sebagai bahan bagi karyanya itu. Pengalaman  
suka dan duka serta cabaran dan rintangan yang dihadapinya  
sering menjadi bahan penulisannya.

Di dalam buku ini juga, penulis telah menceritakan tentang  
karya-karyanya yang belum dibukukan. Antaranya ialah karya  
Kami Masih Ingat Lagi yang mendedahkan keluhan orang-  
orang kampung mengenai tanah sawah mereka yang hendak  
dibeli oleh kerajaan dan juga sebuah satira yang menonjolkan  
telatah orang-orang politik, yang telah ditolak para penerbit.



# NEWS

## KAALACHAKRA ('WHEEL OF TIME') EXHIBITION ON EARLY INDIAN INFLUENCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA 17 NOV 2007 – 16 MAY 2008

By Pushpalatha Naidu, Senior Executive, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library

Archaeological evidences and literary sources confirm that early Indian influences in Southeast Asia began about 2,300 years ago. Since then for centuries, Indian navigators and merchants have introduced their gods, their teachings and their techniques to our ancestors. Both Hinduism and Buddhism had profoundly influenced the religious art and architecture of this region. KaalaChakra, an exhibition on the early Indian influences in Southeast Asia takes you on a journey from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. The exhibition illustrates the cross-cultural interactions between the people of India and Southeast Asia. It showcases many beautiful and significant artifacts, some of which were borrowed from museums in other Southeast Asian countries.

Early religions of Southeast Asia were Hinduism and Buddhism. Siva, Vishnu and Buddha are still worshipped in many parts of Southeast Asia. The 6<sup>th</sup> century Sivalinga from Vietnam, a 5<sup>th</sup> century Vishnu statue from Southern Thailand and the 12<sup>th</sup> century Buddha Muchalinda from Cambodia are good sources for learning about the different aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism. The base of a Sivalinga referred to as the Yoni, a symbol of female creative energy, is on display at the KaalaChakra exhibition. Unlike the Yonis found in most places, this Yoni base is rare and special as it is elaborately designed with three serpent heads (Naga), a turtle and a mythical bird, Garuda, which supports the spout with his hands while standing on a Makara (mythical animal).



Yoni Linga



Model of Borobudur Temple (Central Java, Indonesia)

It is a known fact that no temples or religious monuments in Southeast Asia are exact replicas of Indian models. The models of the Borobudur, Prambanan and Chandi temples on display at the exhibition are examples of how Southeast Asian architects developed their own creative and beautiful new styles of architecture, modelled loosely on Indian concepts.

Visitors to the KaalaChakra exhibition are also given the rare opportunity to view various stone inscriptions written in Tamil and found in Southeast Asia. These were found mainly in Thailand, Indonesia and China and reveal the organised activities of Tamil merchant guilds, which were mainly non-political. Eight such inscriptions, written on stone wholly or partly in Tamil language using Tamil script, are on display at the exhibition.



The Neusu Aceh Tamil inscription attracts international scholars



Dr N Varapasad, Chief Executive, National Library Board, explains the significance of the Wat Prah Mahathat Inscription to Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong



Senior Minister of State Dr Balaji Sadasivan at the KaalaChakra exhibition



One will also be able to see the oldest writing in Southeast Asia called Brahmi, a variant of the Tamil language, on a small piece of pottery called the 'Thuravi Pottery' inscription. Another example is the 3<sup>rd</sup> century 'Perum Pathan Kal' (great goldsmith's stone) found in Krabi Province, Thailand. The National Library Board is also privileged to display some Brahmi seals with Tamil inscriptions, which were probably used in commercial transactions. These seals have never been displayed outside of Thailand.

Though commerce flourished in Southeast Asia, it was also marked by frequent battles arising from trade conflicts between major controlling powers. The strategic positioning of the statues of the three powerful kings speaks a thousand words about their alliances and rivalries that were evident during the medieval period in Southeast Asia.

Statue of Srivijaya King



Model of a Khmer chariot

A model of a Khmer chariot, made of gold studded with precious gems with metal wheels, is a major attraction at the exhibition. The Khmer king, Suryavarman, is said to have given a similar chariot to Rajendra Chola in order to win his friendship and thereby save his own kingdom. To confirm this, a model of a Copper Plate charter issued by the Cholas, which is fastened to a ring and sealed with the Chola royal insignia, is on display at the exhibition.

There are many more aspects of Southeast Asian history featured at the KaalaChakra exhibition. What was it that lured the Indians and others to Southeast Asia? Was it just trade or was there more than meets the eye. Why was this region referred to as Suvarnabhumi? What prompted Rajendra Chola to attack Srivijaya and some of the other commercial ports in Southeast Asia? Did the Cholas rule any of the captured territories?

Come and visit the KaalaChakra exhibition to find out the answers. The exhibition is held at Level 10 of the National Library till 16 May 2008. It is opened daily from 10am to 9pm. Upon request, the library will conduct guided tours for students, organisations, institutions and members of the public. For more details, please contact Ms Azlin Aziz at 63327995 or email [Azlin\\_Aziz@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:Azlin_Aziz@nlb.gov.sg).

## NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD AND PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD TO DEVELOP RESOURCES ON WATER AT LIBRARY

By Ivy Lee, Reference Librarian, and Chow Wun Han, Senior Manager, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library



Chief Executives of PUB and NLB, Mr Khoo Teng Chye and Dr N Varapasad signing the MOU

The National Library Board (NLB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Public Utilities Board (PUB) on 11 October 2007 to formalise a synergistic partnership in several key areas. They include building up a comprehensive collection of water related resources at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library for researchers as well as promote public awareness of water issues.

The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library currently houses more than 1,400 printed books and journals on water management, treatment methods, environmental issues and other areas of interest to researchers. With this partnership, the library will be able to further enhance its collection as well as provide value-added assistance to researchers and professionals in the water industry.

To mark the partnership, Dr N Varapasad, Chief Executive of NLB and PUB Chief Executive, Mr Khoo Teng Chye unveiled a bibliography titled *Active, Beautiful, Clean Waters: A Select Annotated Bibliography on Water Related Resources* compiled by Lee Kong Chian reference librarians and officers. An exhibition on the ABC Waters Programme was also launched at the National Library.

Interested patrons and researchers may obtain a free copy of the bibliography at the Information Counter at Level 7 of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library.



Unveiling the bibliography on water resources to commemorate the partnership

### Some Facts on the Water Bibliography

The water bibliography was conceptualised in view of the growing local and global emphasis on water and the water industry and is intended to provide water industry players and interested library users with resources on a range of water topics. It also commemorates the signing of the MOU between NLB and PUB.

The resources of the bibliography are categorised according to the theme of "Active", "Beautiful" and "Clean". It covers information on the PUB's ABC Waters Programme as well as topics ranging from water usage and conservations, water sports, water activities to waterscape design in an urban environment and water treatment methods.

## GET INSPIRED AND ACHIEVE MORE!

By Amy Gay, Deputy Director, Corporate Communications, National Library Board

'Get inspired @ your library' was revealed as the theme to this year's inaugural Singapore Library Week (SLW) at the press conference on 24 October 2007. Jointly organised by the National Library Board (NLB) and Library Association of Singapore (LAS), more than 40 academic, public and special libraries across the nation planned a series of activities under the SLW umbrella from 1 to 9 November 2007.

Primarily targeting the youth and young working adults, "SLW aims at creating greater awareness of libraries and their services and programmes," said Dr N Varaprasad, Chief Executive, NLB. "At the same time, SLW hopes to promote librarianship and information science as a preferred career choice," added Dr Varaprasad.

Ms Ngian Lek Choh, President, LAS, commented, "There are many other things that happen in libraries that people do not see. For example special libraries provide a lot of valuable information tools to their stakeholders. So it's important for people to see, through SLW, librarians in action, apart from just shelving books."

### SLW OPENING CELEBRATIONS

On 1 November 2007, TAG (Temasek A Cappella Group), made up of students from Temasek Secondary School, kick-started SLW with smooth and harmonious a cappella renditions of 'Lean On Me' and 'MMMBop'. Their rousing performance garnered loud applause from the large crowd gathered at The Plaza, National Library Building. It was truly a fantastic way to sync everyone into a celebratory mood!



The members of TAG in the midst of their catchy performance

Dr Varaprasad then welcomed the crowd with a little significant piece of history. "This year is especially significant as it is the 50th Anniversary of the Raffles National Library Ordinance, which back in 1957 marked the beginning of free library

services to the public," he shared. A commemorative pictorial book entitled *The People's Library* was launched in conjunction with the anniversary.

There are a total of 140 libraries in Singapore, with 24 libraries under the NLB network and more than 100 academic, government and special libraries. "All these libraries form an integrated information ecosystem that is critical to Singapore's knowledge-based economy," said Dr Varaprasad.

Guest of Honour Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, launched the SLW festivities. "Libraries have helped Singapore become a knowledge and innovation-based society," said Dr Lee on the importance of libraries. "Libraries also help us to imagine, to see new opportunities and contain the essence of lifelong learning," he further shared.



GOH Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister, MICA, along with Dr Varaprasad, CE, NLB, signing the Dream Wall

### ACHIEVING MORE THROUGH INSPIRATION

The opening celebrations certainly set out to celebrate libraries and the librarians who help manage them. Mrs Hedwig Anuar, affectionately known as the 'First Lady of the National Library'



Mrs Hedwig Anuar receiving the LAS Lifetime Achievement Award from Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister, MICA, as Ms Ngian Lek Choh, President, LAS, looks on

was honoured with the LAS Lifetime Achievement Award, following which, the guest speakers inspired the crowd with their success stories through their presentations at the youth forum, 'Dream inspired @ your library'.

Dr Varaprasad mentioned that, "...through SLW, we hope to offer everyone the opportunity to celebrate libraries and librarians, recognising the invaluable contributions they make, and to inspire people to use the library more in achieving their personal and professional goals in life."



Mr Nickson Fong, founder of Egg Story Creative Production Pte Ltd, sharing his experience as a library user

Keynote speaker Mr Nickson Fong, founder of Egg Story Creative Production Pte Ltd, who has worked as an animator for a bounty of Hollywood movies such as *Shrek*, *Godzilla*, *Starship Troopers* and *Stuart Little* to name a few, said, "My staff and I spend a lot of time in the library researching for our films, and it is with passion and a dream that keeps me going."

Indeed, the tremendous efforts that were made during SLW enabled the public to get glimpses into the running of a 'living' library. Yes, 'living' libraries, where resources, knowledge and staff are ever dynamic and in place to help users fulfil their aspirations and realise uncharted possibilities. So get inspired and achieve more in your life!

Ms Lavinia Tan, Singapore's very own Globe Trekker host from Discovery Travel & Adventure, shared her personal take on inspirations and dreams. "You're never too old to pursue your dreams, know what you want to do, go for it and surround yourself with people who care for you and your dream," she said.

Besides rallying the public to 'Get inspired @ your library', the crowd was also encouraged to make use of the opportunities offered throughout SLW as participating libraries open up their doors and offer 'sneak peeks' into the world of librarians and information specialists. Guided tours, book fairs, exhibitions, talks, movie screenings and even jazz performances were just some of the activities that were organised for SLW.

Fun competitions were also held in conjunction with SLW. For the media savvy, some of the online competitions included posting their stories on how the library or a librarian has made a difference in their lives, or uploading a 60-second video on SLW's theme of 'Get inspired @ your library'. Lastly, schools were invited to take part in the 'Prove It' contest, which aimed to make learning fun and challenging for students.



Singapore dreaming - young Singaporeans sharing their aspirations on the Dream Wall

## DIGITAL A TO Z DATABASES: A IS FOR ANCIENT, ART AND ASIA!

By Ian Bain, Senior Manager, Digital Resources and Services, National Library Board

### ABERDEEN ACCESS

Not from Scotland! This database is aimed at corporate executives adding tangible business value to their financial performance and competitive position, prioritise operational improvement areas, and leverage informational technology.

**Available at all libraries and from home**

### AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS JOURNALS

This is a collection of 22 technical journals focused on technical, educational and research issues of the worldwide engineering and technology community.

**Available at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library only**

### ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY ONLINE

Do ancient civilisations get you fired up? Are Africa, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Mesoamerica and Mesopotamia your idea of dream destinations? Do you want to hunker down with the early Hominids (3 to 5 million years ago) or mess around in the marvellous Middle Ages? Using subject entries, biographies, primary sources, images, maps and charts, and timelines, this database can take you there. Fasten yourself into the NLB Time Machine and click that mouse!

**Available at all libraries and from home**

### ART FULLTEXT AND ART INDEX RETROSPECTIVE

Are you art buff? Need to consult international art periodicals? Are you involved in Advertising Art, Architecture, Art History, Contemporary Art, Costume, Graphic Arts, and Photography. This is the database for you! Art Index Retrospective complements this by offering articles from 1929-1984. A must for any form of research in art or even in the social sciences. A great resource for the artistically inquisitive.

**Available at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (4 users can access the e-resource at any one time)**

### ARTS & HUMANITIES SEARCH

Need a quick route to 1,300 of the world's leading arts and humanities journals? Looking for social and natural science journals? This database draws on a wide selection of the major sources giving access to comprehensive and up-to-date view of the evolution of society and culture - its norms and its peculiarities.

**Available at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library only**

## SO WHAT DO I DO NOW? Registering as a NLB's Digital Library member?

Go to [www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg)

- Click on "Register" which is at the top right side of the homepage
- Sign up by providing some basic personal information such as name, address, etc.
- Provide your account Information to help you log in, manage your library account, etc.
- Click on "Submit" upon completion of the registration on the second page.
- Each time you login, you need to enter your User name and Password.

If you face any problems during the registration, please contact our Helpdesk at 6332-3255 or approach our library counter staff for assistance.

## ASIA INTELLIGENCE WIRES

Hot off the Newswire! Newspaper articles and journal articles from over 200 sources. Comprehensive geographic coverage of the Asia region including Cambodia, China, India, Hong Kong, Indochina, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Available at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library only**

## ASIA ROM

Straight from Australasia's leading agencies and institutions, Asia ROM offers a vast range of Australasian sources of information. It includes APECLIT, ASIANRES, BERITA, BIPE, INTAN MAS, INDBIO, PDIP, PDIR and Informit e-Library. A key resource for the serious researcher.

**Available at all libraries and from home**

## ASIA-STUDIES FULL-TEXT ONLINE

Asia Rom offers a vast drawing on the region's most prestigious research institutions and bringing together thousands of full-text reports covering business, government, economic and social issues - this is a peerless e-resource for the Asia region. Country coverage includes all of Asia, Australia/New Zealand, the Americas Pacific Rim countries, and Pacific islands.

**Available at all libraries and from home**

## HOW DO I LOGIN?

**You need to be a registered member at the Digital Library to be able to login.**

- Go to [www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg)
- Click on "Login" which is at the top right hand of the homepage.
- Type in your username and password.



## DONORS GALLERY

By Eunice Low, Manager, Heritage Collection Development, National Library

The Donors gallery, Level 10, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, was opened on 10 November 2007. The gallery was set up to display a selection of items donated to preserve local heritage content and fulfill the National Library's function of being the national memory and repository of Singapore heritage materials in all formats. The donor collections will be made accessible to researchers, contributing to knowledge and scholarship of Singapore and Southeast Asian heritage.

Through this gallery, it is also hoped that Singaporeans will be encouraged to donate their heritage collections to the National Library.

Occupying an area of 250 square metres, the gallery contains collections from donors relating to Singapore and Southeast



**Tongkangs at Singapore River. Photo taken in 1964. Donated by the family of the late Kouo Shang-wei**



Guest of Honour for the opening of the Donors Gallery, Minister for Community Development, Youth & Sports, Dr Vivien Balakrishnan with Encik Abdul Ghani Hamid, one of NL's donors whose items are displayed in the gallery

Asian heritage. The items on display in the gallery include a diverse array of materials in different formats such as printed materials, typed and handwritten manuscripts, sketch plans of residential estates, photographs, paintings, calligraphy, and printing blocks for temple publications. The gallery also includes a special exhibition area that highlights periodically significant or interesting items from recent donations.

The items featured in the gallery are organised into five key subject categories:

- Arts
- Education
- History and Geography
- Language and Literature
- Law and Legislation

Some of the present highlights of the gallery include the following:

1. Volume 1 of *Japanese-language Textbook for Adults*, compiled by the Japanese Military Administration of Singapore during the Japanese Occupation (1942-1945).  
- Donated by Mr Wong Han Min (Heritage Roadshow 2006)
2. The original Jawi (1958) and Malay (1959) translations of the novel *Pantun* by Ahmad bin Babji.  
- Donated by Encik Abdul Ghani Hamid
3. *War Damage Commission Plan of Mandai Tekong Rubber Estate Ltd* (dated between 1945 and 1950).  
- Donated by Ms Geraldene Lowe

4. *Indian Acts passed during the period extending from the 22nd day of April 1834 to the 31st day of March 1867 both days inclusive and now in force in the colony of the Straits Settlements, as determined by the commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor of the Straits Settlements under the provisions of "The Statute Law Revision Ordinance 1889"* (no. VIII of 1889).  
- Donated by the family of the late H L Wee

5. Printed ephemera (publicity posters, brochures etc) from the Arts Theatre of Singapore from the 1950s to the present.  
- Donated by Arts Theatre of Singapore

6. Metal printing plates mounted on wooden blocks for the printing of 《正道公據》 (Zheng Dao Gong Ju), a syncretic religious text and part of a larger collection of printing plates used to print Chinese Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and syncretic religious texts in the 1950s.  
- Donated by Feeha Cheng Seah Temple

The National Library is interested in receiving donated heritage materials on Singapore and Southeast Asia that will help fill the Library's collection gaps. These include manuscripts, old photographs, genealogical records as well as publications dating back to the Japanese Occupation (1942-1945) or earlier. If you have an item that you wish to donate to the Library, feel free to contact us at 6332 3255 or email: [helpdesk@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:helpdesk@nlb.gov.sg)

The National Library wishes to take this opportunity to thank all donors for their generous contributions of books, maps, manuscripts, art works, artifacts, photographs, and other items.



Hainanese theatre script. Donated by the family of the late Lin Lu San (林禄三)

Rediffusion 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary magazine (August 1951). Donated by Rediffusion



## IFLA INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER CONFERENCE 2008

1 - 3 April 2008, National Library of Singapore

Co-organised by the National Library of Singapore, IFLA Newspapers Section and IFLA Core Activity on Preservation and Conservation, this Newspaper Conference will bring international delegates together to share collective knowledge about how libraries tackle the theme **“Old Issues, New Issues: Impact of Digital Technology upon Contemporary and Historic Newspapers”**.

### CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Learn about the standards, good practices, and procedures needed to cultivate physical and digital preservation of newspapers.
- Look into some initiatives and collaborations from the perspective of Southeast Asia - going beyond policies to case studies on collections of Southeast Asian newspapers in other libraries as well as how indigenous newspapers have had a new lease of life and a wider audience through developments in technology.
- Explore the new issues surrounding online newspapers, while revisiting the on-going issues to meet long-term research needs.

Distinguished speakers from the following institutions and organisations would be presenting papers on the conference's theme:

- Bavarian State Library at Munich, Germany
- The British Library
- Center for Research Libraries (USA)
- Library of Congress
- National Library of Australia
- National Library of Netherlands

- National Library of Sweden
- National Library of Singapore
- New Asia College Ch'ien Mu Library, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- PERNABAS Surabaya Library (Indonesia)
- Singapore Press Holdings
- State Library of South Australia
- University of California
- Other institutions from the region

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Library administrators, librarians, information specialists and managers in the public, national or academic libraries who are working or interested in the aspects of newspaper librarianship.

Service providers who are interested in new projects/initiatives and approaches in newspaper librarianship.

### ONLINE REGISTRATION

Enjoy a discount on the conference fees if you register by **31 December 2007**. Please register online via the conference website [http://blogs.nlb.gov.sg/newspaper\\_conf08/](http://blogs.nlb.gov.sg/newspaper_conf08/).

#### Early bird conference fees: S\$100.00

(registration on/by 31 December 2007)

#### Conference fees: S\$120.00

(registration after 31 December 2007)

For information, please visit the conference website [http://blogs.nlb.gov.sg/newspaper\\_conf08/](http://blogs.nlb.gov.sg/newspaper_conf08/) or email your queries to [IFLA\\_newspaper@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:IFLA_newspaper@nlb.gov.sg).



# Singapore through Arab Eyes *Bouchaib Silm*

Just  
Published

سنغافورة بعيون عربية

شعيب سلم



*Singapore Through Arab Eyes*, written entirely in Arabic, aims to introduce Singapore to readers in the Middle East. Being a small island without any natural resources, Singapore offers its unique brand of education, healthcare, tourism, and trade to visitors from all over the world. The Asia-Middle East Dialogue hosted by Singapore in 2005 provided an opportunity for consultation and negotiation among politicians, business people and intellectuals from both regions. Since then, relations between Singapore and the Middle East have flourished through the exchange of high-level visits by both parties.

This is the first book about Singapore to be written in Arabic. The author is a Moroccan who has made Singapore his home since 1998. In this book, he presents Singapore from his personal experience and observations of life in a multi-cultural country.

*Bouchaib Silm* is Research Analyst at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

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