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**An Overview  
of Singapore's  
Education  
System from  
1819 to the  
1970s**

SPOTLIGHT 04

**Pantun: Sumber  
Rujukan  
Sosiobudaya  
Masyarakat  
Melayu**

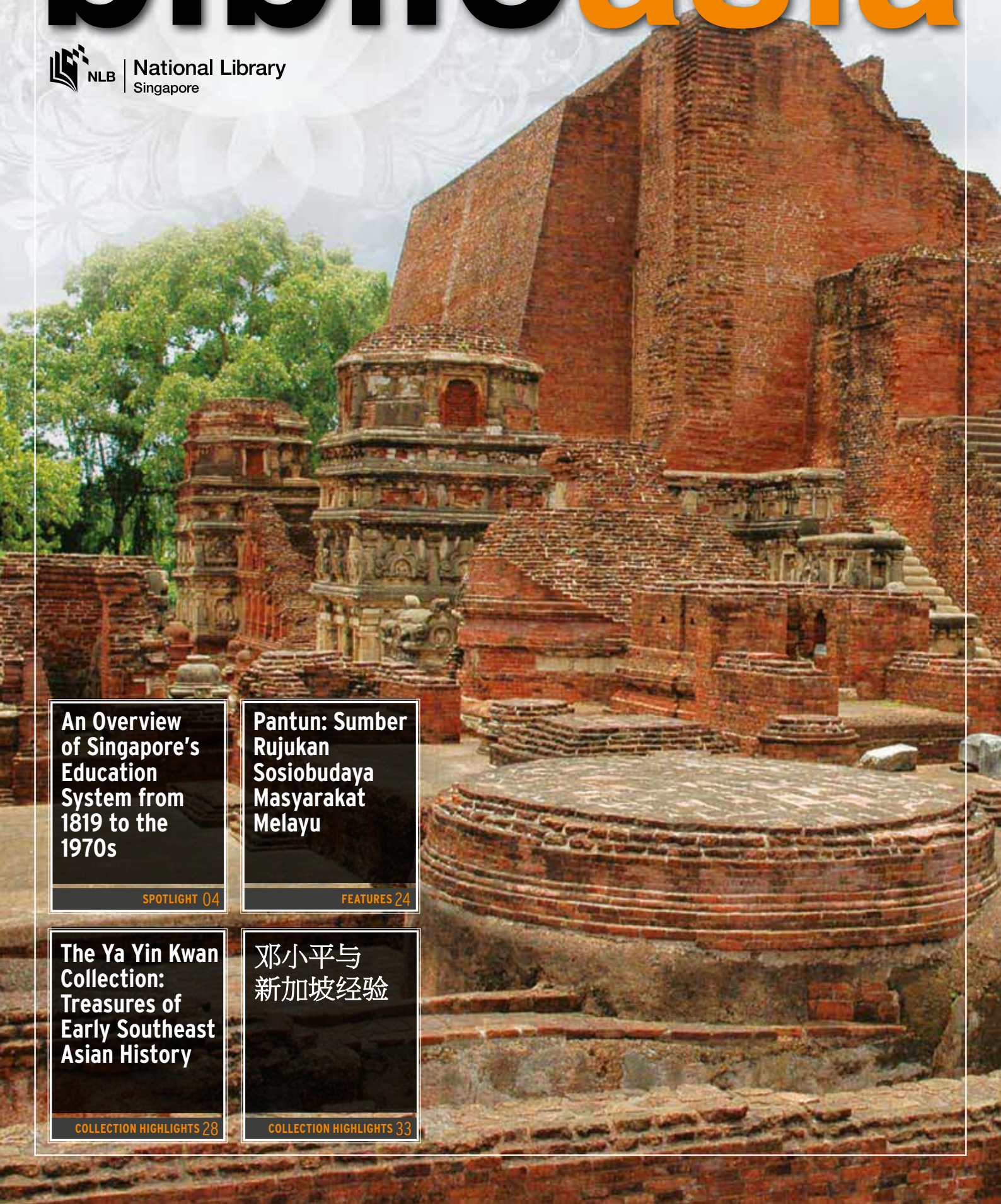
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# Director's Column

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Welcome to another exciting issue of BiblioAsia. In this issue, we introduce a new section "Spotlight". The article featured provides an overview of Singapore's education system from 1819 to 1970s by examining the various policies and papers that were published since the founding of modern Singapore. These are available for reference at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library Singapore.

Three of our Lee Kong Chian Research Fellows – Prasani Weerawardane, Khoo Sim Lyn and Tay Thiam Chye – have completed their fellowship and we are pleased to publish their research findings in this issue.

Prasani Weerawardane gives an account of three Chinese Buddhist monks, Faxian, Xuan Zang and Yijing, and their travels from China to India in their quest to locate the Buddhist *Tripitaka*. Much closer home, Khoo Sim Lyn introduces us to children's books in English which depict World War II in Singapore. She has highlighted some interesting titles such as *Roise's War* by Rosalind Sharbanee Meyer and *Aishabee at War* by Aisha Akbar, which are available for research at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. By using the faction as the unit of analysis and a simple model based on narratives, Tay Thiam Chye examines why politicians leave a dominant party.

The Ya Yin Kwan (Palm Shade Pavilion) Collection was donated to the National Library by Tan Yeok Seong in 1964. The collection covers a broad spectrum of subjects such as philosophy, education, economics, archaeology, ceramics, geography, history and culture. From the collection, one can obtain insights into the perspectives of various writers on Southeast Asia and the Chinese overseas from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-1960s. Find out more about the Ya Yin Kwan Collection from this issue of BiblioAsia. The collection, located at Level 10 of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, is available for research and study only.

*Pantuns* or traditional Malay verses (quatrains) are important social and cultural sources of reference of the Malays. We are pleased to present an article written in Malay, which features some interesting *pantuns*. In this issue, we also highlight some Chinese books and resources on Deng Xiaoping, former leader of the Communist Party of China, and his visit to Singapore in 1978, which are available at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library's Chinese Collection.

The National Library Board has recently published a bibliography with the Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, titled *Singapore Literature in English: An Annotated Bibliography*. Edited by Professor Koh Tai Ann, this is the first annotated and comprehensive bibliography on Singapore English literature. Read a review of this bibliography in this issue.

This year's Heritage Road Show commemorates 50 years of Singapore's self-governance by tracing the journey of Singapore's history from 1959 till 2009. Look out for the interesting events we have lined up for you. Last but not least, do make it a point to view the exhibition *Early Travels and Voyages in Southeast Asia* located at Level 10 of the National Library from 25 March to 24 September. The exhibition tells the story of voyages and travels made by early Europeans, Arabs, Indians and Chinese to Singapore and the region.

Happy reading! We look forward to your comments and feedback.

**Ms Ngian Lek Choh**

Director

National Library

# An Overview of Singapore's Education System from 1819 to the 1970s



by WEE TONG BAO

Librarian  
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library  
National Library

Among the little known national treasures on the shelves of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library is a large collection of government reports and reviews on various subjects. One subject on which the Library has a wealth of documents and tracts is the history of Singapore's education system. When the policies and inquiries that had been published from the founding of modern Singapore till 1978 are examined chronologically, one can see the evolution of Singapore's education system from a laissez-faire arrangement to a nationally centralised system by the late 1970s.

In the beginning, British administrators were concerned only with providing primary education in the schools they had established. Missionaries and communal leaders had also set up schools of their own using money that the government provided, in the form of "grants-in-aid". From 1870 till the start of World War II, the colonial government paid more attention to the island's schools when it commissioned inquiries into the different aspects of education. Many committees were formed to review teaching and other aspects of the education system in the English and Malay vernacular schools. Reports were written on how funds were disbursed to schools, recommendations for the curriculum for government Malay vernacular schools as well as the provision of tertiary education in the English school system. Many of these reports were later named after the respective chairpersons heading the inquiries.

## THE EDUCATION SYSTEM BEFORE WORLD WAR II

The founder of Singapore, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, had professed that:

*"...our stations not only become the centres of commerce and its luxuries, but of refinement and the liberal arts. If commerce brings wealth to our shores, it is the spirit of literature and philanthropy that teaches us how to employ it for the noblest purposes."<sup>1</sup>*

The British presence on the island was represented by the East India Company, which was mainly concerned with trade. This being so, the British administrators initially focused on commerce, leaving most of the other social concerns such as education to the different communities on the island. In 1858, the colony, along with two other settlements (Penang and Malacca) in the Malacca Strait, was put under the control of the Governor-General of India. The administrators maintained their laissez-faire approach to education in the Straits Settlements. Things begin to change with the transfer of oversight from the India Office to the Colonial

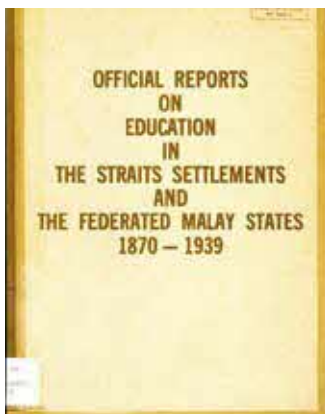
Office in London in 1867. The new British administration became actively interested in the affairs of the Straits Settlements and forced various committees to look into various sectors. In 1870, the Woolley Committee compiled a report on the state of education in the colony.<sup>2</sup> In 1872, the position of inspector of schools was created to take charge of educational matters in the Strait Settlements. The first person to fill this position was A. M. Skinner.<sup>3</sup>

After the publication of the Woolley Report in 1870, another committee chaired by E. E Isemonger was formed to look into the state of vernacular education in the colony.<sup>4</sup> The impetus for this inquiry was the depressed trade conditions in the 1890s as a result of which the administration wanted to find out how best to expend the decreased revenue. The Isemonger Report was completed in 1894. Subsequent committees tasked to review and make recommendations concerning the disbursement of grants produced the "Report of the Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor and High Commissioner to consider the working of the system of Education Grants-in-Aid introduced in 1920 in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States" by E.C.H. Wolff in 1922 and the "Report of the Committee to Consider the System of Grants-in-Aid to Schools in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States" by F. J. Morten in 1932.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the British administrators wanted to find out more about the education that was being provided, especially post-primary and technical education. This was almost one century after they founded the Singapore Institution (later renamed Raffles Institution) in 1823 to educate the children on the island. The government had provided only primary education up to then, and the British rulers felt that it was time to consider post-primary education in the form of secondary or technical education. In 1919, a committee led by F. H. Firmstone was formed to propose the groundwork necessary for the "advancement of education preparatory to a University in Singapore".<sup>5</sup> The "Report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on Higher Education in Malaya" (McLean Report) followed in 1939. The main objective of this report was to assess the Malay education that had been provided and to propose how higher education could be introduced. Another objective of the McLean committee was to look into the conferment of degrees to graduates of Raffles College and King Edward VII College of Medicine as there was increasing dissatisfaction that the certification was not recognised by many organisations as full degrees.

It was around this time that the British rulers felt that the

system of education in the Straits Settlements needed a new focus, once they realised that many students were not able to find jobs as clerks in the government service or with private companies. Several committees were commissioned between 1917 and 1938 to review and make recommendations on vocational and industrial education, which would equip students with practical skills. Four known reports on vocational and industrial education were published during this period. R. O. Winstedt conducted two such inquiries in 1917 and 1925. Winstedt reviewed vernacular and industrial education in the Netherlands East Indies in 1917 and recommended that government Malay schools teach “three basic subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic, (with) special attention ... to the Malay traditional pursuits of husbandry and handicraft”.<sup>6</sup> The objective of his second review in 1925 was to determine the viability of industrial and technical education in Singapore, which built on the Lemon Report of 1919, a study of technical and industrial education in the Federated Malay States before the implementation of a higher education system in the colony.



*Official Reports on Education in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, 1870-1939*  
All rights reserved, Pan Pacific Book Distributors, 1980

It was the 1925 Winstedt Report that convinced the government that the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements were both ready for vocational training. In 1927, B. W. Elles was asked to plan for a school of agriculture, and to recommend the courses to be taught there. Vocational education was further supported by the publication of “Report on Vocational Education in Malay” by H. R. Cheeseman in 1938. Cheeseman’s committee recommended increasing the number of trade schools, introducing workshop craft for boys and domestic science for girls, including science in the curriculum of all secondary schools, and emphasised the “importance of gardening in schools and of agricultural training for vernacular school teachers”.<sup>7</sup>

It must be noted at this juncture that much of the curricular “reform” or “rethinking” of the Education Department concentrated on Malay and English education because the Malayan Government had little control over Chinese schools. Hence, the official reports and reviews published during this period placed a strong emphasis on vocational and technical education for Malay students in the government Malay primary schools throughout Malaya.

### **POLITICAL INFLUENCES ON EDUCATION POLICIES BEFORE WORLD WAR II**

Education policies before World War II were not formulated solely with the economic situation in mind. The government was also influenced by political forces. For example, the 1920 Schools Registration Ordinance not only marked a big step forward in British direct involvement with the education of all children in Singapore, it also heralded the end of the British non-interference approach towards Chinese vernacular schools. With this ordinance, the local government sought to “gain control over all schools in the Colony”. The government officially declared the following:

*“Firstly, that the schools shall be properly conducted as schools; secondly, that the teachers in them have efficient training for teaching, and thirdly, that the teaching shall not be of such a kind that is against the interest of the Government of the Colony.”<sup>8</sup>*

Although the ordinance applied to the island’s mission, government and other schools, it was introduced also as a result of the socio-political conditions prevailing in 1919 and 1920. Many local Chinese were caught up with the political upheaval in China, exacerbated by the unfair terms of the Versailles Peace Conference, which ceded Shandong to Japan. A number of students and teachers in Malaya organised demonstrations and boycotted Japanese goods in protest. In Singapore, mass demonstrations and open violence broke out on 19 June 1919. Demonstrators attacked Japanese shops and destroyed Japanese goods. In response, the British authorities declared martial law.<sup>9</sup> These disturbances disrupted the economic progress of Singapore and the rest of British Malaya, and Chinese students and teachers were identified as the key agitators in these incidents.

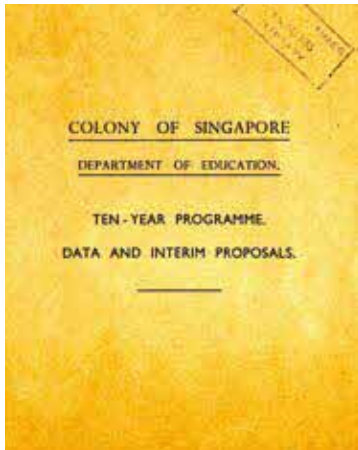
The ordinance was first presented as the “Education Bill” to the Straits Settlements Legislative Council on 31 May 1920. It met with strong objections from some factions of the Chinese community, which felt that the government’s attempt to remove the political element from Chinese education was as good as putting an end to Chinese vernacular education. They were “full of fear and suspicion”, and sent their petitions through Lim Boon Keng, the Chinese representative of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council. Despite their objections, the ordinance was eventually passed in October 1920.<sup>10</sup>

Under this ordinance, both managers and teachers of all schools were required to register with the Education Department within three months for existing schools, and one month for new schools. Any changes in the teaching staff or committee of management of the registered schools had to be reported to the Education Department within one month. Every registered school also had to be opened for inspection by the director of education, who was empowered to declare schools unlawful if there was any evidence of involvement in political propaganda detrimental or prejudicial to the interests of the colony.<sup>11</sup> The ordinance and the general regulations were first amended in 1925, and were repeatedly amended to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

### **POST-WAR DEVELOPMENTS**

When World War II ended, Singapore returned to British rule once again. On 7 August 1947, a “Ten-Year Programme” was established. This was meant to be the “basis for future educational development in the Colony of Singapore”.<sup>12</sup> The general principles outlined in this policy were “foster(ing) and extend(ing) the capacity for self-government, and the ideal of civic loyalty and responsibility; ... (providing) equal educational opportunity to the children – both boys and girls – of all races, ... upon a basis of free primary education there should be developed such secondary, vocational and higher education as will best meet the needs of the country”.<sup>13</sup>

As Singapore was still recovering from the devastation of the war, it was understandable that “the first priority (was) rehabilitation”.<sup>14</sup> Much emphasis was given to primary education, though the scope of the policy also covered areas such as post-primary education in the English and vernacular



*Educational policy in the Colony of Singapore: Supplement to the Ten-year programme (data and interim proposals) All rights reserved, Singapore Ministry of Education, 1949*

schools, training of teachers, administration and inspection of schools and the types of schools.<sup>15</sup>

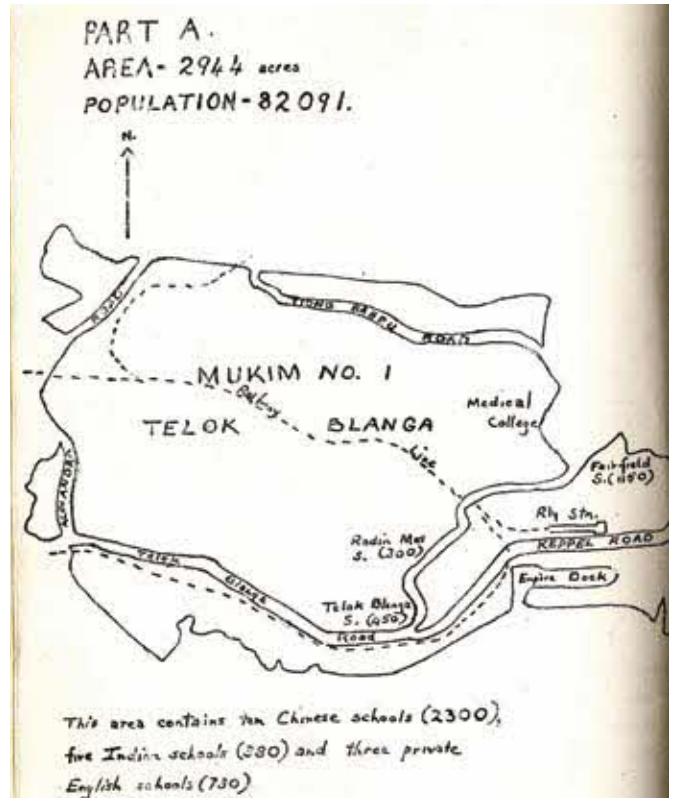
This policy also stressed that “the basis of all schools should be regional rather than racial, and should ensure the intermingling of pupils of all races in all the activities of school life.”<sup>16</sup> To facilitate the implementation of the “Ten-Year Programme”, surveys were carried out throughout Singapore to determine the number of schools and pupils enrolled in each area. In total, 26 surveys were conducted, covering areas such as Jurong, Kranji and Lim Chu Kang in the west, Bedok, Tampines and Changi in the east, Sembawang and Seletar in the north, and New Bridge Road, South Bridge Road, Market Street, Raffles Place and Collyer Quay in the south. The surveys revealed that there were a total of 118,251 pupils in 449 schools at that time (see below).<sup>17</sup>

**Types and Number of Schools in 1949**

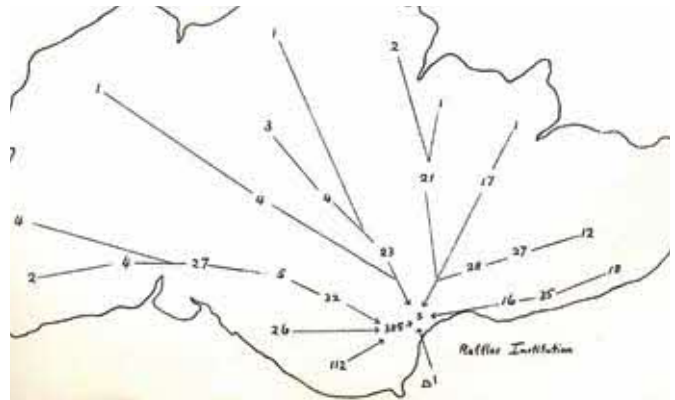
Type of School	Schools	No. of Children
Malay Schools	24	8,052
Chinese Schools	319	71,251
Indian Schools	17	1,177
English Schools		
i) Govt. Morning and Afternoon including Junior Technical School	16	10,436
ii) Aided	19	12,897
iii) Private	53	14,438
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>118,251</b>

Based on the data collected, the committee made proposals about school facilities, capacity of existing schools and ways to support the new initiatives in the years to come. The report of the committee also included appendices showing the estimated annual increases in enrolment and expenditure from 1951 to 1960.

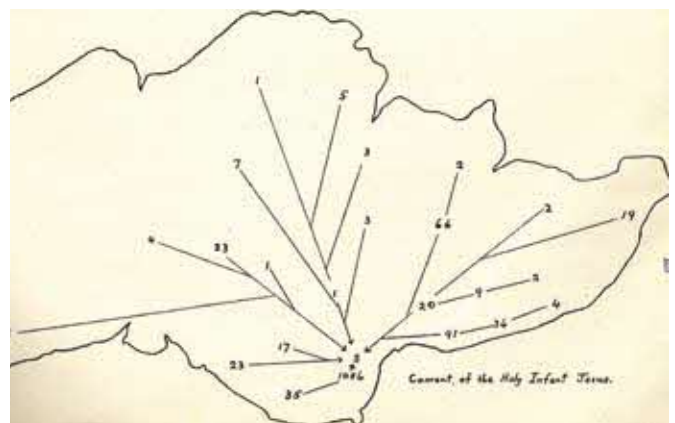
In 1955, the Ministry of Education was formally established. In the following year, two important documents on education were released: the “Report of the All-Party Committee of the Singapore Legislative Assembly on Chinese Education” followed by the “White Paper on Education Policy”. The White Paper built on the findings of the All-Party Committee Report, and highlighted the challenges faced by Singapore: “to reconcile those elements of diversity which arise from the multi-racial structure of its population”, and “to cope with the phenomenal increase in the population of school-going age”.<sup>18</sup> To address the first challenge, the government decided on “build(ing) a Singapore or Malayan nationalism”. The paper explored how a “common Malayan loyalty” could be built in the schools. To underline its belief that the “education policy should be based on equal respect for the four principal cultures of Singapore”, the paper also proposed replacing the several legislation governing schools



*Educational policy in the Colony of Singapore (data and interim proposals), 1949 - Survey of Telok Blangah All rights reserved, Singapore Ministry of Education, 1949*



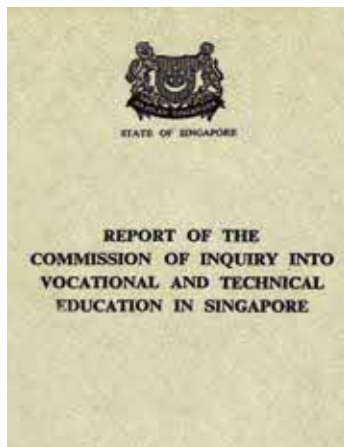
*Educational policy in the Colony of Singapore (data and interim proposals), 1949 - Student catchment of Raffles Institution All rights reserved, Singapore Ministry of Education, 1949*



*Educational policy in the Colony of Singapore (data and interim proposals), 1949 - Student catchment of CHIJ All rights reserved, Singapore Ministry of Education, 1949*

then – namely, the Education Ordinance, 1948 (No. 22 of 1948), the Registration of Schools Ordinance, 1950 (No. 16 of 1950), and the Schools (General) Regulations, 1950 – with a single Education Ordinance that would apply to all schools.<sup>19</sup> This was achieved with the passing of the new Education Ordinance in 1957. To meet the second challenge of increasing numbers of school children, it was proposed that the schools be expanded, and that more teachers should be trained.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, the government continued to pay attention to education – particularly vocational education – and ordered several more reviews. The impact that the type of education system had on the economy was of utmost interest to the government. With Singapore’s limited natural resources, the government realised that industrialisation would be the lifeline of Singapore’s economy and thus, “her human resources must be harnessed to the full”.<sup>21</sup> A review led by Chan Chieu Kiat, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Vocational and Technical Education in Singapore” (the report subsequently became known as the Chan Chieu Kiat Commission) in 1961 suggested restructuring the secondary education system to accommodate vocational, technical and commercial education.<sup>22</sup> In order that students and teaching staff of vocational institutions could keep up with the advancements in their chosen fields, the commission also suggested that “the setting up of a technical and scientific section in the National Library deserved urgent consideration”.<sup>23</sup>

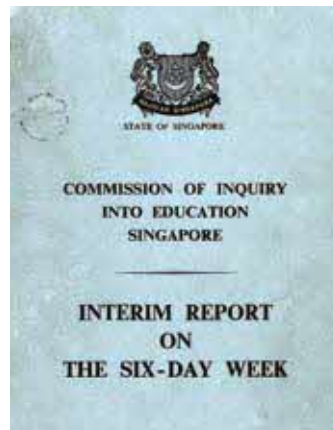


*Commission of Inquiry into Vocational and Technical Education in Singapore (Chan Chieu Kiat Commission)*  
All rights reserved, Singapore Govt.  
Print. Off., 1961

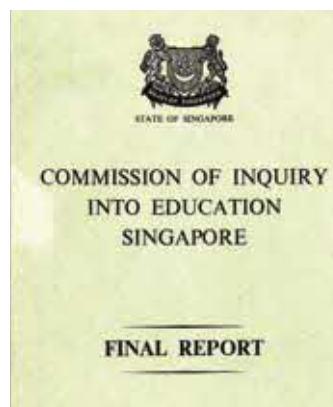
The 1961 Chan Chieu Kiat Commission was complemented by the “Commission of Inquiry into Education” led by Lim Tay Boh the following year. The terms of reference of this commission were to “inquire into the Government’s Education Policy, its content and administration in all fields other than vocational and technical education, and to make recommendations.”<sup>24</sup>

This inquiry, however, did not review the two universities. This commission submitted an interim report in 1962, and a final report in 1963. Some of the key recommendations of this commission included the adjustment of class size and pupil-teacher ratio for primary and secondary schools, revision of the Primary School Leaving Examination by aligning the examination syllabus to the teaching in the schools, training of teachers, allowance and remuneration of principals and teaching staff, as well as skills and facilities that could enhance students’ learning. Examples of recommendations made were: “all trainee teachers and some of the experienced teachers should be given training in librarianship”, and “the necessity to appoint a qualified School Library Adviser at the Ministry of Education”.<sup>25</sup>

The most significant review in the 1970s was the 1978 Goh Keng Swee Report on the state of education. This study, however, was not a formal commission of inquiry, and no terms of reference were spelt out for the team. Goh Keng Swee remarked that “the approach we (the team) take is that of the generalist,



*Commission of Inquiry into Education by Lim Tay Boh - Interim Report*  
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Printer, 1962



*Commission of Inquiry into Education by Lim Tay Boh - Final Report (1964)*  
All rights reserved, Singapore Govt.  
Printer, 1964

and not of the specialist” (1978 Report, p. ii).<sup>26</sup> The team highlighted key problems in the education system at the time, such as the preference for English-stream schools, the importance of bilingual education, the necessity of streaming students according to their learning capabilities, moral education syllabus and administration at the Ministry of Education.

This report had a far-reaching impact on the development of education in the years to come. In 1979, primary three school pupils were streamed into Express, Normal or Monolingual classes. With the preference for English stream schools, all the four language-stream schools were merged into English-stream schools, where lessons on all subjects were conducted in English except for the mother tongue (Chinese, Malay or Tamil), which students studied as a second language. This merger was reflected in the 1984 “Directory of Schools and Institutions”, in which schools were no longer classified by language stream. As shown in the Preface of the Directory:

“From 1984 onwards, the schools listed in this Directory are no longer classified by language medium because of the standardisation of language medium in school, at the primary and secondary levels.”<sup>27</sup>

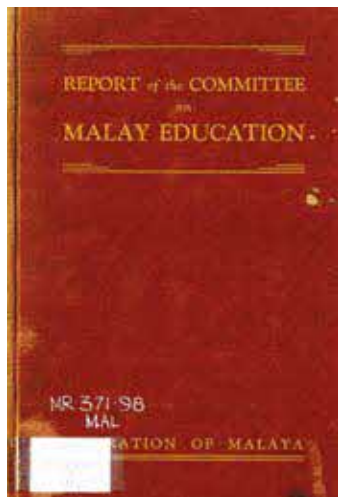
The Ministry of Education also ensured that pupils who had the capability to study another language as a first language could continue to learn their mother tongue as a first language too. This was implemented under the Special Assistance Plan (SAP) in nine schools in 1979.

The Ministry of Education also ensured that pupils who had the capability to study another language as a first language could continue to learn their mother tongue as a first language too. This was implemented under the Special Assistance Plan (SAP) in nine schools in 1979.

## CONCLUSION

Singapore’s education system from 1819 to 1978 can be seen to have passed through three distinct phases. In the first phase, before the outbreak of World War II, there were other providers of education besides the British. The second phase took place after World War II, and was marked by the government’s concerted effort to centralise the curricular to maximise scarce resources in the immediate post-war years. The third phase was heralded by the creation of a national school system after the nation’s Independence in 1965. The legacy of different language traditions continued into the early 1980s. Even without an official history of these developmental phases, the motley of policy papers and reports kept in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library capture the evolution and details of these phases.<sup>28</sup>

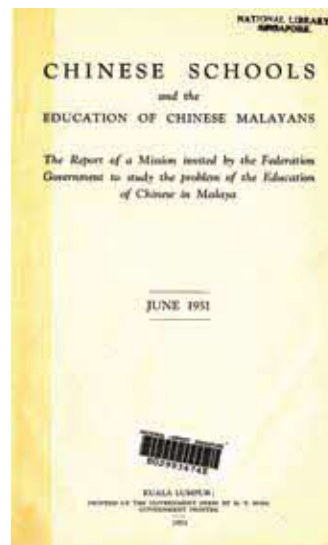
Through the official reports and policies, one can see that the attempts by the government to exert control over all schools in Singapore were evident before World War II. The 1920 School Registration Ordinance can be considered to be the first such endeavour. Official reviews and inquiries were still being carried out along ethnic lines even after World War II. The following government reviews underscore this contention: "Report of the Committee on Malay Education" (Barnes Report) in 1951, "Report of a Mission invited by the Federation Government to Study the Problem of Education of Chinese in Malaya" (Fenn Report) in 1951, "All-Party Committee on Chinese Education appointed to look into the education needs of Chinese schools" in 1955,



Report of the Committee on Malay Education (Barnes Report)  
All rights reserved, Kuala Lumpur Govt. Press, 1951

and the "Report of the All-party Committee on Chinese Education of the Singapore Legislative Assembly on Chinese education" in 1956.

It was not till the 1957 Registration of School Ordinance that we see another attempt by the government to consolidate the numerous "micro-systems" that existed within Singapore's education system. The main shift away from policies with communal considerations to those stressing national concerns took place after self-rule was attained. Some of these developments were captured



Report of a Mission invited by the Federation Government to Study the Problem of Education of Chinese in Malaya (Fenn Report)  
All rights reserved, Kuala Lumpur: Govt. Press, 1951

in the 1961 "Commission of Inquiry into Vocational and Technical Education in Singapore" (Chan Chieu Kiat Commission) and in the 1962 "Commission of Inquiry into Education" (Lim Tay Boh Commission). The 1978 Goh Keng Swee Report recommended the merger of all four language-stream schools into a common English-stream system. All schools were transformed into "English medium schools" by 1984. By then, it was no longer necessary to address educational issues peculiar to ethnicity and language stream as all policies and reviews subsequently applied to all Singapore schools.

If readers wish to explore the subject further, I recommended David Chelliah's *A History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements with Recommendations for a New System Based on Vernaculars* (1940) and Saravanna Gopinathan's *Towards a National System of Education in Singapore, 1945-1973* (1974). Both authors also consulted the resources that I have referred to in my article. Their works are available at Level 12 of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library.

## ENDNOTES

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- Ibid., p. 10.
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- Commission of Inquiry into Education Singapore : Final Report, p. x.
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## APPENDIX:

### A SELECT LIST OF EDUCATION POLICIES AND PAPERS FROM 1819 TO THE 1970S

- |      |   |   |   |  |   |
|------|---|---|---|--|---|
| 1870 | Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council to inquire into the state of Education in the Colony (Woolley Report)   | Agriculture as a joint institution for the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlement (Elles Report) | 1951  | Report on the Barnes Report on Malay Education and the Fenn-Wu Report on Chinese Education |   |
| 1894 | Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the system of Vernacular Education in the Colony (Isemonger Report)   | 1928  | Proceedings of the Committee appointed by his Excellency the Governor and High Commissioner to report on the question of medical research throughout Malaya. (Command paper - Straits Settlements. Legislative Council; no. 13 of 1929) | 1953   | Chinese schools - bilingual education and increased aid (Command paper - Singapore. Legislative Council; Cmd. 81 of 1953) |
| 1902 | Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the system of English Education in the Colony (Kynnersley Report)  | 1932  | Report of the Committee to Consider the System of Grants-in-Aid to Schools in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States (Morten Report) (Command paper - Straits Settlements. Legislative Council; no. 103 of 1932)        | 1953   | Report of the Committee on a Polytechnic Institute for Singapore  |
| 1917 | Report on Vernacular and Industrial Education in the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines, by R.O. Winstedt  | 1938  | Report on Vocational Education in Malay, by H. R. Cheeseman   | 1956   | Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union (Command paper - Singapore. Legislative Assembly; Cmd. 53 of 1956)       |
| 1919 | Report by the Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor to advise as to a scheme for the advancement of Education preparatory to a University in Singapore (Firmstone Report)  | 1939  | Report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on Higher Education in Malaya (McLean Report)   | 1956   | Report of the All-Party Committee of the Singapore Legislative Assembly on Chinese education (led by Chew Swee Kee)       |
| 1919 | Report of the Committee on Technical and Industrial Education in the Federated Malay States (Lemon Report)  | 1947  | Educational policy in the Colony of Singapore: Ten Years Programme  | 1956   | White paper on education policy (Command paper - Legislative Assembly; Cmd. 15 of 1956)                                   |
| 1922 | Report of the Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor and High Commissioner to consider the working of the system of Education Grants-in-Aid introduced in 1920 in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States (Wolff Report) | 1949  | Supplement to the Ten-year programme: Data and interim proposals (vol. 2)   | 1961   | Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Vocational and Technical Education in Singapore (Chan Chieu Kiat Commission)     |
| 1925 | Report of the Technical Education Committee (Winstedt Report)   | 1951  | Report of the Committee on Malay Education (Barnes Report)  | 1962   | Interim report on the six-day week - Commission of Inquiry into Education (Lim Tay Boh Commission)                        |
| 1927 | Report of the Committee appointed to draw up a Scheme for a School of   | 1951  | Chinese schools and the education of Chinese Malaysians: The report of a mission invited by the Federation Government to study the problem of the education of Chinese in Malaya (Fenn Report)  | 1964   | Final report - Commission of Inquiry into Education (Lim Tay Boh Commission)  |
|      |   |   |   | 1979   | Report on the Ministry of Education 1978 (prepared by Goh Keng Swee and the Education Study Team)                         |

# In Search of the Child: Children's Books Depicting World War II in Singapore



by KHOO SIM LYN

Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow  
National Library

## INTRODUCTION

To people of my generation, World War II (WWII) in Singapore and Malaya was more than just a historical fact studied in history books because our parents had lived through the war. From their sporadic recollections, we created our images of what the war must have been like for them: for some, a time of terrible atrocities, and for most, a time of hardship and deprivation. However, as an avid child reader growing up in Malaysia and Singapore, and later as an adult reader of children's books, it struck me that most of the books I had read depicting WWII were all set in Europe. Thus, the mental images created through my parents were not reinforced in the books I was able to lay my hands on. Imaginatively, at least, it seemed as if WWII in Europe, with images of children sent to the countryside to escape the bombing, of children coming upon an injured German pilot, of kind families sheltering Jewish refugees, was more real to me than WWII in my own region.

Thus, the focus of my research fellowship at the National Library of Singapore is on children's books written in English, which depict WWII in Singapore. As the focus is on imaginative literature, purely factual materials were excluded, but autobiographies were included as they resemble fiction in the way the narrative is used. The Asian Children's Collection's definition of children's books to mean books "for children up to 14 years of age" (National Library Board, 2005a, p.33) has also been adopted.

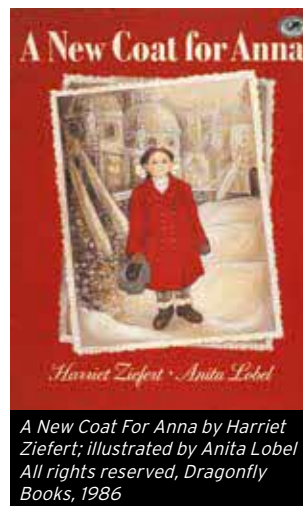
## TWO MAIN CATEGORIES

The books that portray WWII can be divided into two main categories:

- books that portray the war from the autobiographical or biographical point of view; and
- books written as fiction set during the war years.

Within these two categories, the books set in Europe cover an impressive range, from books suitable for older children to picture books for young children. Moving from older to younger children, autobiographical books include Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* (first published in 1947), *The Upstairs Room* by Johanna Reiss (1972) and *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* by Judith Kerr (1971). Many good fiction books have been written, and continue to be written. These include Robert Westall's *The Machine-Gunners* (1975), which won the Carnegie Medal, Michelle Magorian's *Goodnight Mister Tom* (1981), which won the 1982 Guardian Fiction Award, and *Number the Stars* (1989), which won the 1990 Newbery Award. Other notable books include *Friend or Foe* (1977) and *Waiting for Anya* (1990) by Michael Morpugo, and James Riordan's *Escape from War* (2005).

What is especially interesting is that there are also well-crafted picture books set during the war, which could be appreciated by younger children.



In *The Butterfly* by Patricia Polacco (2000), Monique, a young girl living in Nazi-occupied France, discovers that her mother has been sheltering a little Jewish girl in their house. The eventual discovery of the Jewish girl by the next-door neighbour leads to a dangerous journey at night to take her to another refuge. Polacco's illustrations are hauntingly evocative, and capture the emotion of her young protagonists clearly. The book could easily be read to a child as young as six years old.

*A New Coat for Anna*, written by Harriet Ziefert and illustrated by Anita Lobel (1986), would appeal to an even younger child. The war has ended but people still have to cope with the shortage of food and goods of any kind. When Anna needs a coat for the winter, her mother uses her ingenuity to exchange various treasured items to obtain first the wool, and then the workmanship for the coat. It is a moving story of a mother's love and perseverance during the difficult post-war period.

Apart from simply being stories poignantly told, such picture books help younger readers to gain an understanding of the impact the war had on the lives of children like themselves.

Sadly, the search for books set during the war in Singapore indicates that this broad range is missing. There are some books suitable for teenagers, a handful suitable for children, and hardly any for young children. Almost all the books are autobiographies or biographies. Therefore, there appears to be a dearth of children's fiction depicting the war in this part of the world.

## THE HISTORIAN'S VIEWPOINT

The lack of interest in WWII is not new to historians, who have noted that when compared with Europe, there was "a relative absence of public commemoration of the war in this region" (Wong, 2000,

p. 1). Not surprisingly then, while WW II was well-documented in Europe, the situation was quite different in Asia. Historian Wang Gungwu found that “some dramatic personal experiences did go on record, and some novels and short stories were set during periods of Japanese Occupation, but they were few” (p. 11, 2000). P. Lim Pui Huen found that 50 years after the war, only about “50 odd volumes” (p.121, 1995) of autobiographies and memoirs of the war had been written by members of the local population of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. While more autobiographies have surfaced from the intervening years, there has not been a significant increase.

### INTENDED AUDIENCE

Among this relatively small number of autobiographies, few were written with the child reader in mind. Most were written for the general public. Many of the writers, who were children at the time of the war, wrote about their childhood memories of the war as adults looking back upon their childhood, so that the child protagonist is seen through the eyes of the adult narrator. Most writers who expressed the hope that their memoirs would enable young readers to better understand this period of Singapore’s history appear to have written for readers of approximately 14 and above. This is seen in *Diary of a Girl in Changi* (1941 - 1945) by Sheila Allan (1994, 2004), *Rosie’s War: Escape from Singapore 1942* by Rosalind Sharbanee Meyer (2007), *In the Grip of a Crisis* by Rudy Mosbergen (2007), *A Cloistered War: Behind the Convent Walls During the Japanese Occupation* by Maisie Duncan (2004), and *Escape from Battambang: A Personal World War II Experience* by Geoffrey Tan (2001).

While these books are certainly valuable accounts of the war years, they may not be books that the child reader would choose to read simply because the intended audience is not the child reader. Who the author writes for will naturally affect the way the story is told. Hence, there is a clear difference between the intended audience of *The Upstairs Room* and *Rosie’s War*. Both books were based on the true experiences of their writers, Jewish girls who had to flee their homes during the war, and both are first-person narratives.



*Rosie’s War* by Rosalind Sharbanee Meyer  
All rights reserved, Jewish Museum, 2007

In *Rosie’s War*, the narrator is an adult recalling how she felt as a child, and her reminiscences are coloured by her adult reflections on her childhood feelings and experiences. Recalling the home she lived in before the war, she comments that:

“Sometimes it is better to keep the memories intact, safe, buried deep in the heart, to pull out occasionally to savour and polish. Somehow the older I get, the more I appreciate those happy times before the war, even though it was after that we became what I termed ‘well off’...” (p. 56).

This is the adult Rosie trying to make sense of her childhood experiences. In contrast, there is no sense of the intrusion of the adult self upon the child protagonist in *The Upstairs Room*. The writer returns to the time when she was a child, and tells the story through the voice of Annie, the child narrator, who has just

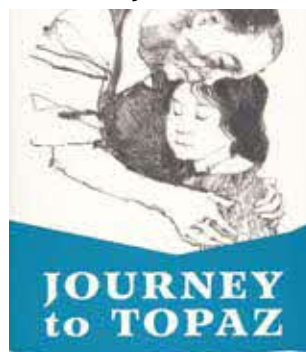
begun to realise what having to be confined to a tiny room for an indefinite period of time will entail:

“Unhappily I looked out of the window. ‘You’re lucky you can stay in today,’ Dini said. ‘It’s awful out. I wish I could stay up here with you.’ But right after she said that she left – to go to school. I’d even go to school and like it, if I could get out.” (p.47)

The viewpoint is that of Annie the child, for whom the frustration of being cooped up overshadows the danger of discovery. It would appear that Johanna Reiss made a conscious decision to write her story for children, even as Rosalind Sharbanee Meyer chose to write hers for the general reader.

### THE VOICE OF THE CHILD

To further illustrate this point, let’s briefly look at the books of Japanese-American writer, Yoshiko Uchida. During WWII, although she was an American citizen, Yoshiko Uchida was interned together with other Japanese-Americans because of



*Journey to Topaz* by Yoshiko Uchida  
Illustrated by Donald Cristof  
All rights reserved, Heyday Books, 1971



*Journey Home* by Yoshiko Uchida  
All rights reserved, Aladdin Paperbacks, 1978

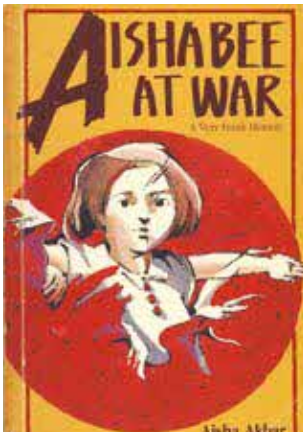
their Japanese ancestry. She wrote about this experience in an autobiography entitled *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family* (1982), writing as an adult looking back upon her life, but in *The Invisible Thread* (1991), she writes for children, beginning with the time when she was a six-year-old until the time she was incarcerated during WWII. Thus, Yoshiko Uchida chose to write about her experiences for two separate audiences, and tailored her stories accordingly.

Similarly, in her fiction for children, the decision to speak through a child protagonist is clearly a conscious one. Although she was an adult when she was interned, in order to write for children about her experiences, she created the character of 11-year-old Yuki Sakane in *Journey to Topaz* (1971) and the follow-up book, *Journey Home* (1978). The story is told through the eyes of Yuki, the child protagonist.

### INTENDED AUDIENCE: THE CHILD READER

There are, however, only a handful of autobiographies set in Singapore during WWII that are written specifically for children. These include *Aishabee at War* by Aisha Akbar (1990), *From Farm & Kampong* by Dr Peter H.L. Wee (1989), *A Young Girl’s Wartime Diary* by Si Hoe Sing Leng (2007), *Sunny Days of an Urchin* by Edward Phua (1996), and *Papa as a Little Boy named Ah Khoo* by Andrew Tan Chee Khoo (2007).

Of these, *Aishabee at War* is arguably the most successful. It is a lively account of the author’s life between 1935 and 1945, filled



*Aishabee at War* by Aisha Akbar  
All rights reserved, Landmark Books, 1990

with details that a child growing up into a teenager would note. On the one hand, her account is of a childhood much like any other. She writes, for instance, of her struggle to establish a place for herself as the youngest member of a large family, and how she found solace in reading and music. On the other hand, it is a fascinating account of a child living in unusual times. The details of history are woven into the fabric of the story, and revealed through the story, rather than through authorial intrusion.

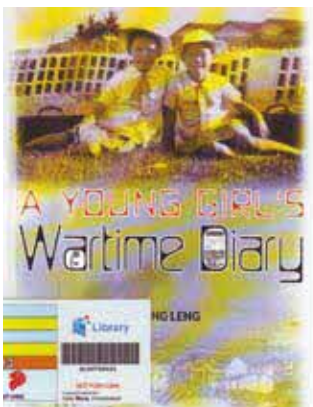
Aisha Akbar shows an awareness of her intended child audience, stating in her preface that her autobiography "is a true account, as far as I can remember, of the events before the war, and up till 1945, as seen through the eyes of a child."

She writes about the war in a factual, unsentimental way, sometimes finding humour even in dark situations. She recalls the somewhat surrealistic response of her neighbours to the bombing of Singapore:

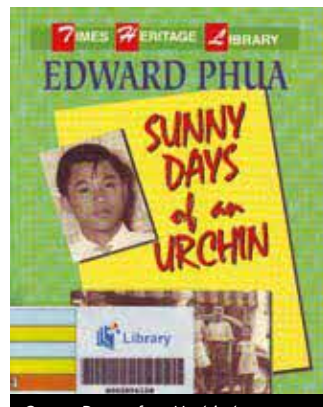
*"I hung about the fringe of the crowd, trying to determine what was going on, but I soon realised that they knew no more than I did. . . . The word I heard most often was 'war', and it seemed strange to me that if they really did believe we were at 'war' no one had thought of turning off the lights. The whole of Singapore was lit as for a carnival, and the atmosphere was electric with excitement."* (p.74)

*A Young Girl's Wartime Diary* contains the diary entries of the writer from 1942 to 1945. However, as the writer chooses to arrange her entries thematically rather than chronologically, her account lacks narrative strength, and the reader has to piece together the overall picture of the events unfolding in the book. There is also a rather jarring shift in perspective from the adult authorial introduction to each section and the subsequent diary entries of the young author. Nevertheless, the book gives a genuine glimpse into the thoughts and feelings of a girl living in Singapore during the war.

Edward Phua's *Sunny Days of an Urchin* has a stronger narrative. Although the style of writing is not as elegant as in *Aishabee at War*, the book is peppered with interesting details



*A Young Girl's Wartime Diary* by Si Hoe Sing Leng  
All rights reserved, Lingzi Media, 2007



*Sunny Days of an Urchin* by Edward Phua  
All rights reserved, Federal Publications, 1996

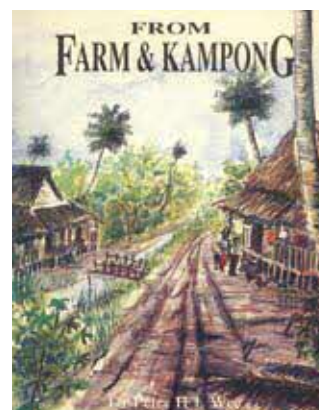
of the author's childhood. His account testifies to the sheer ingenuity shown by his family members in creating ways to cope with the shortages of food and basic necessities during the war. This included devising ways to grow padi in their backyard and to harvest the rice.

Similarly, Peter Wee's *From Farm & Kampong* testifies to the resilience shown by the local population in coping with the sudden changes to their lifestyles. Peter Wee speaks appreciatively of his father's readiness to buckle down to farm work:

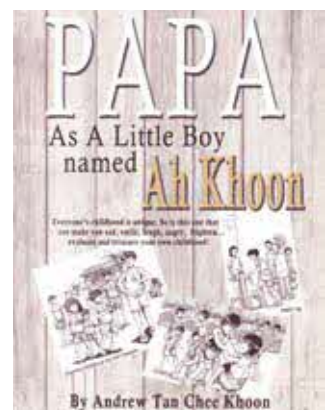
*"Work was hard and harsh, rest was a luxury, but Dad accepted his spartan life with calm fortitude. Any other man from Katong would perhaps have found it impossible to sustain such a life for any length of time, but the necessity of feeding six mouths maintained Dad's resolve. He did not give up."* (p. 21)

For the whole family, life soon changed from the "cultured, middle-class and English-educated urban ways" to the "harsh exigencies of farm life" (p. 23). However, Peter Wee also notes that their farm life did have its own rewards: he and his brothers soon became much more acquainted with nature (p. 25).

Peter Wee has thoughtfully included black-and-white drawings of the two villages he lived in which are especially helpful as one of the villages no longer exists, while the other has changed substantially.



*From Farm & Kampong* by Dr Peter H.L. Wee  
All rights reserved, Graham Brash, 1989



*Papa As A Little Boy Named Ah Khoo* by Andrew Tan  
All rights reserved, Ring of Light Publishers, 2007

Similarly, *Papa As A Little Boy Named Ah Khoo* includes black-and-white illustrations which help the reader of today to bridge the gap between the Singapore of the 1940s and 1950s and the Singapore of today. As in Peter Wee's book, the war occupies the first part of Andrew Tan's book, which is a record of the author's childhood from 1943 to 1953.

#### THE LACK OF FICTION

While there are a handful of noteworthy autobiographies for children set during the war, there does not seem to be any book of fiction. The closest example would be the fictionalised biography, *Son of an Immigrant* (2007) by Joan Yap, which is based on the real life story of a barrister, Mr Lui Boon Poh. However, the part set during the war takes place in Batu Pahat, in then Malaya. The story shifts to Singapore only when the narrator, Ah Di, leaves Batu Pahat to find work in Singapore. It is an inspiring story about having the courage to pursue one's dreams, with the war setting only occupying six of its 28 chapters.

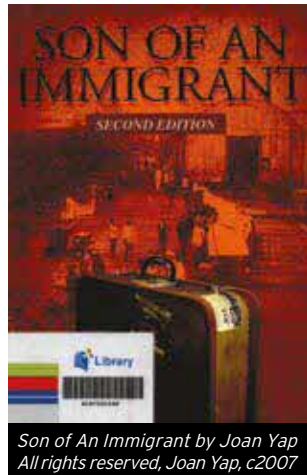
While the book would have benefited from better editing, as

there are numerous grammatical errors in the book, overall, Joan Yap has done an admirable job of trying to “bridge the sobriety of history with the fun of fiction”.

Indeed, the marriage of both history and fiction is an area with much potential for exploration in story books for children in Singapore.

## CONCLUSION

One of the obvious conclusions that can be drawn is that while some efforts have made to capture true experiences during WWII in autobiographies for children, little effort has been made to write children’s fiction set during this period. Similarly, little effort has been made to cater to the young child, as the books were written for children with fairly good reading stamina. It is hoped that with time, greater effort will be made to write fiction for children depicting this period of history, as well as other significant periods in the history of this region. Well-known Singapore writers like Lee Tzu Pheng and Edwin Thumboo have noted that there is a need for more support for Singaporean Literature in English. The need is not just for suitably talented Singaporeans to write literature for Singaporeans, but also for other Singaporeans to read their efforts, so as to bring about “a literature of our own of such quality and significance that we



*Son of An Immigrant* by Joan Yap  
All rights reserved, Joan Yap, c2007

regard it as a substantial part of our national identity.” (Lee, T. P., as cited in National Library, 2005b, p. 2). The need for a national literature was eloquently expressed by Margaret Atwood in 1972 in *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*:

“Literature is not only a mirror; it is also a map, a geography of the mind. Our literature is one such map, if we can learn to read it as our literature, as the product of who and where we have been. We need such a map desperately, we need to know about here, because here is where we live. For the members of a country or a culture, shared knowledge of their place, their here, is not a luxury but a necessity.” (p. 19)

She also warned that if “a country of a culture lacks such mirrors it has no way of knowing what it looks like; it must travel blind” (p. 16). We need our own literature too, so that we may navigate this significant period of history, that we may better understand how and why those “few years generated racial tensions, poverty, corruption and a whole host of social evils” while at the same time serving as an eye-opener, as “the Japanese Occupation helped Singapore’s migrants to define the meaning of ‘home’” (Lee G. B., 2005, p.333). Good fiction for children set during this period will not only help fill the void in this area, but will also go some way in helping to build up the corpus of Singaporean literature for children in English.

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# Journey to the West: Dusty Roads, Stormy Seas and Transcendence



by PRASANI WEERAWARDANE

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National Library

This is a story of some of the greatest explorations of all time, journeys that resonate in the Asian cultural imagination. The road was the path from China to India, and the timeline stretches from the first century until the seventh century. Those who undertook this trip were Chinese Buddhist monks, looking to return with copies of the Buddhist *Tripitaka*<sup>1</sup>. The term “road” is partly a misnomer, as it could also be a voyage by sea, via the merchant ships that ploughed the southern seas. Both land and maritime modes of travel were fraught with hazards, and could take the best part of a year to complete.

By land, one path followed the Silk Road west to Parthia and beyond, while another led southwest through a number of small central Asian states in uneven stages of civilisation. The hazards of both roads included the trackless desert wastelands of the Gobi and the high plateaus of central Asia, the tenuous and slippery mountain passes through the Himalayas, extreme weather conditions ranging from blistering heat to sub-zero temperatures, and encounters with unfriendly locals and bandits.

By sea, the dangers included leaking ships, raging storms, sudden squalls and typhoons, as well as deadly reefs.

How many Chinese monks made this journey, and how many fell by the wayside? How many actually returned safely to China with the precious texts they went in search of? In a survey carried out in 1949, a Chinese historian delved through Indian archives and produced the following analysis of these travellers:

Number of Travellers	Results of Analysis
42	Studied in India and returned to China
16	Known to have reached western Xinjiang, but unknown if they reached India
Unknown number	Could not reach India, and returned
2	Returned shortly after leaving for India
31	Died en route to India
31	Died in India
5	Died en route to China after completing studies in India
6	Made a second pilgrimage to India; one died midway on return trip
7	Stayed on in India
Unknown number	Unknown whether they stayed on in India or returned to China, or where they died

Source: *Chinese Sources for Indian History in Indian Archives*. Vol. III nos. 1-4. (1949). National Archives of India.

According to translated documents from the Bureau of Canonical Translations (Jan, 1966), a survey conducted during the Sung era also revealed that at least 183 monks made this journey back to China by the year 1035.

However, Ch'en Shu, the mayor of Chang'an, assessed that most of the monks wishing to go to India were “not well trained in

their studies. They study only for a short period, and their manners are ordinary and ugly.” (Ch'en Shu, 945-1002CE). He therefore proposed that monks be made to take a canonical examination before they were allowed to travel to the west (Jan, 1966).

For these monks, the journey west was one of courage and hope bolstered by a faith sustained over time. They had dreams of learning more about Buddhism in India, and of bringing back those all-important Buddhist texts. Most of these intrepid monks went with nothing more than their clothes and a few personal belongings wrapped in a small bundle. Their determination is shown in this quote by the Chinese monk Yijing:

*“A good general can obstruct a hostile army  
But the resolution of a man is difficult to move.”*

Despite the large number of Chinese monks who embarked on this adventure, only the accounts of three monks have survived:

- **Faxian (1886)**. A record of Buddhistic kingdoms: Being an account by the Chinese monk Faxian of his travels in India and Ceylon (399-414 A.D.) in search of the Buddhist books of discipline (J. Legge, Trans.). Islamabad: Lok Virsa.
- **Xuan Zang (2000)**. Si-yu-ki: Buddhist records of the Western World: Translated from the Chinese of Hsien Tsiang (629 A.D.) (S. Beal, Trans.). London: Routledge. (original work published 1884).
- **Yijing (2005)**. A record of the Buddhist religion as practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago (671-95 A.D.) (J. Takakusu, Trans.). New Delhi: Asian Educational Services. (Original work published 1896).

It should be noted that these texts are translations of the original accounts, and published many centuries after the travels had been completed. The veracity of these translated works must therefore be questioned, as highlighted by Jack Sewell:

*“We have to remember when we look back at the ancient past that histories were often written by those who sometimes were burdened by the times they lived in.”<sup>2</sup>*

Added to this is the tendency to romanticise the events of such ancient travels, and emphasise the exotic and wondrous sights and feats. Yet, as religious accounts, the writers were also bound by a responsibility to truth.

So while we may express some degree of scepticism when reading about threatening dragons and demons, or accounts of extraordinary miracles, we should not discount the real physical dangers and challenges that the monks had to endure throughout their journeys. Difficult terrains, shipwrecks, thirst and hunger were all genuine threats to the completion of their pilgrimages.

## FAXIAN (C. 337-422 A.D.)

Faxian was a Buddhist monk from Shanxi, and his travel account (399-414 A.D.) is the oldest among the Chinese monks to have

survived. Of the few monks who journeyed before him, very little information remains of their travels.

Orphaned at an early age, Faxian spent much of his life in Buddhist monasteries. He went to Chang'an (present-day Xi'an) to study Buddhism, but could not find sufficient materials on the Disciplinary Rules (vinaya) to help him. In 399 A.D., he left for India with his friends, Huiking, Daoching, Huiying and Huiwei, to obtain a complete set of the *Tripitaka*. Together, they went to the Gobi desert, a place often described as treacherous:

*"In this desert there are a great many evil spirits and also hot winds; those who encounter them perish to a man. There are neither birds above nor beasts below.*

*Gazing on all sides as far as the eye can reach in order to mark the track, no guidance is to be obtained save from the rotting bones of dead men, which point the way."*

(A record of Buddhistic kingdoms, 1886)

It took them 17 days to cross the Gobi to Shenshen, a state now believed to be close to Lop Nor in Xinjiang. It is estimated that Faxian and his companions would have had to cover more than 40 kilometres a day in order to make the crossing in 17 days. He recorded that there were about 4,000 Buddhist monks of the Hinayana tradition in Shenshen. From there, Faxian and his companions went on to Khotan, a famous oasis city and district southwest of the Gobi, which was a very important Buddhist centre. They stayed in Khotan for three months before proceeding to Kashgar, another oasis city located in the Tarim Basin.

From Kashgar, Faxian went southwest towards the valley of the Indus River, where "the way was difficult and rugged, running along a bank exceedingly precipitous, which rose up there, a hill-like wall of rock. When one approached the edge of it, his eyes became unsteady. And if he wished to go forward in the same direction, there was no place on which he could place his foot; and beneath were the waters of the river called the Indus."

After crossing the river, Faxian and his companions entered Udyana, or Swat, in northern Pakistan, where Buddhism flourished. From there they travelled to Gandhara and Taxila, and continued on to Purushapura (now Peshawar, the capital of the North-West Frontier province of Pakistan). Of the Karakoram Range, it was reported that "the snow rests on them both winter and summer. There are also among them venomous dragons, which, when provoked, spit forth poisonous winds, and cause showers of snow and storms of sand and gravel. Not one in ten thousand of those who encounter these dangers escapes with his life."

At Purushapura, Faxian lost his friend Huiying, who fell ill and passed away. Another companion, Huiking, died in a cold, windy mountain pass on the way to Bannu in Punjab. Still, Faxian pushed on, and arrived on the plains of Madura in central India. Buddhism was flourishing in Madura, with many monasteries and monks. Faxian had an idealised dream of India, and his account is a vivid record of what he saw in Majjhima-desa (Middle Country in Pali):

*"The people are prosperous and happy, with no household registration and official regulations. It is only those who cultivate the king's land who pay a tax on the profit they make from it. Those who wish to stay, stay; and those who wish to depart, depart. In ruling, the king does not use punishment or imprisonment. If there are any who commit crimes, they are*

*only fined in money, lightly or heavily, according to what they did. The population as a whole refrains from killing living beings and drinking liquor, and from eating onions or garlic. In the markets there are no butcher stalls or wine shops. For money they use cowrie shells."*

Faxian travelled alone within India, learning Sanskrit and transcribing manuscripts, while his friend Daoching remained in the Middle Country. He travelled for 14 days on a merchant ship from Tamralipti, a port in western Bengal, and arrived at Lanka, where he spent the next two years. The capital of Lanka was Anuradhapura and Faxian extolled in detail the richness of the Buddhist influence in the city, as shown in their monasteries, a giant Jade statue of the Buddha, and their celebration of the holy tooth relic festival. He eventually returned to China by sea in 414 A.D. and took back with him many Buddhist texts.

Another of Faxian's legacies is the valuable historical documentation of the Gupta empire under Chandragupta II (c.375-415 A.D.). Considering that Faxian was nearing 60 years old when he left for India, his achievement is remarkable:

*"When I look back on what I have gone through, my heart is involuntarily moved, and the perspiration flows forth.*

*That I encountered danger and trod the most perilous places, without thinking or sparing myself, was because I had a definite aim, and thought of nothing but to do my best in my simplicity and straightforwardness."*

However, a common criticism of Faxian's account is its lack of objectivity, unlike the texts of the other monks who travelled later. Although he is often seen as lacking the intellectual rigour of Xuanzang or Yijing, we cannot deny that his faith was unshakeable. In all, Faxian spent 15 years on his extraordinary journey, and passed away at the age of 88 at the Xin monastery of Jingzhou.

#### XUANZANG (C. 602-64 A.D.)

Xuanzang, the greatest and most famous of all the monks who journeyed to the west, was from the illustrious Tang dynasty of the seventh century.<sup>3</sup> The Tang period was a watershed in Chinese cultural history, and gave rise to a flowering of literary culture and artistic expression. Xuanzang, born in this period, entered the White Horse monastery in Luoyang when he was 12, and received ordination as a monk in 622 A.D.<sup>4</sup> He spent the next eight years studying and debating the doctrine, and realised that the imperfect translations of the original Sanskrit texts were impeding his understanding of



Xuanzang, from a Chinese stone engraving. Image reproduced from Dutt, S. (1962). *Buddhist monks and monasteries in India: Their history and their contribution to Indian culture*. Pg 237. All rights reserved, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pte Ltd, 2000

Buddhism. Hence, he made a resolution to travel to the source of the religion.

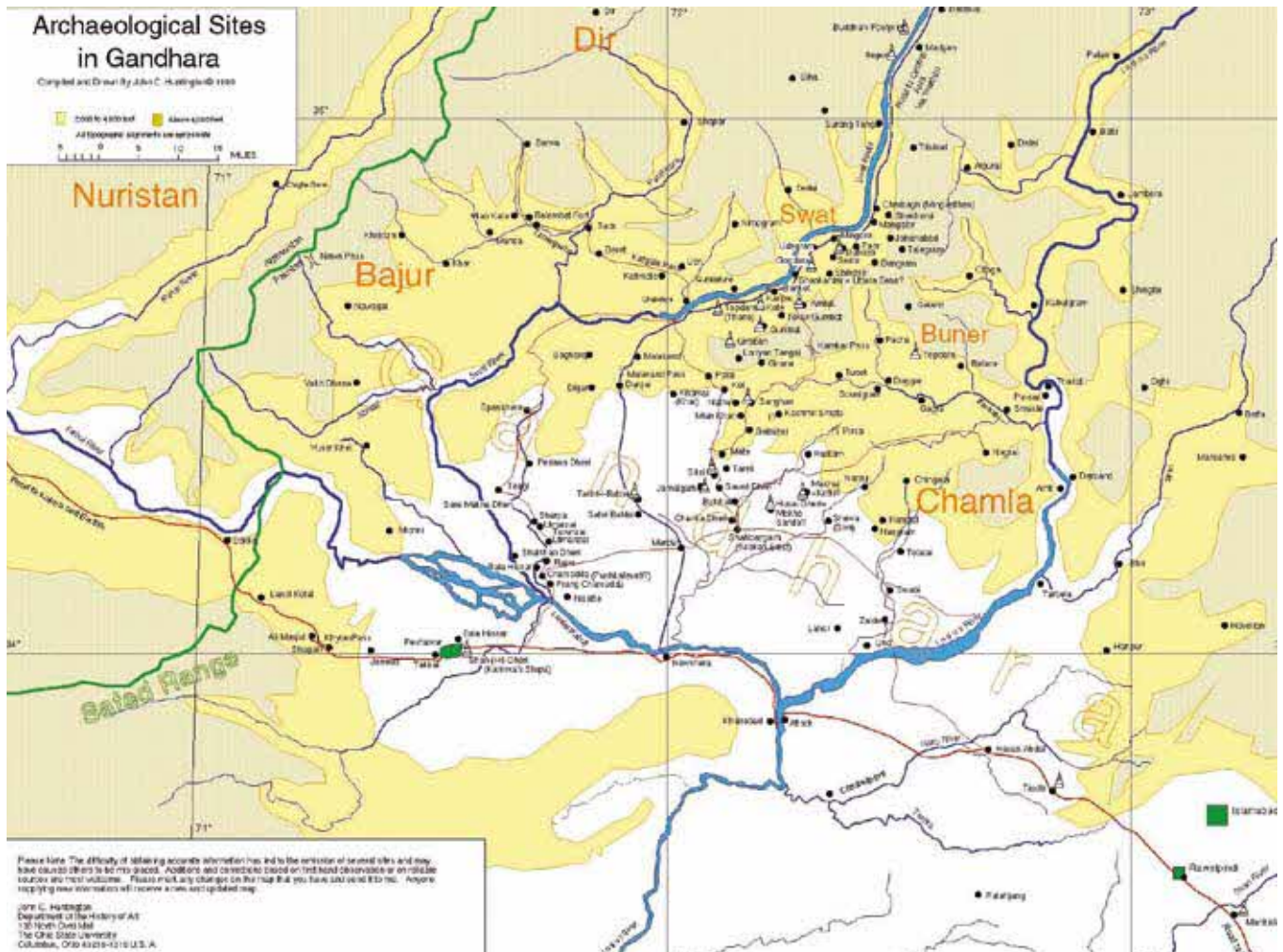
Even though there was an imperial proscription forbidding any travel abroad, Xuanzang was not deterred. In 630 A.D., he had a dream that he climbed Mount Sumeru, the holy mountain home of the gods, and that furthered convinced him to journey to India. Xuanzang, then 26 years old, began his journey from Suzhou. He was allowed to proceed as the governor, being a pious man, ignored an arrest order placed on him. However, his guide deserted him and Xuanzang was left to travel alone. The road west began with a dangerous river crossing as he would have to circumvent the guards at the Jade Gate that stood on the opposite bank as well as at five watch towers strategically located in the northwest direction. Moreover, "in the space between them there is neither water nor herb; beyond the five towers stretches the desert, (the Taklamakan) on the frontiers of the kingdom called I-gu."

Xuanzang's piety and determination impressed the guards at the watch towers, some of whom even provided him with advice on the best routes to take. Even so, while crossing the Taklamakan desert, he lost his water supply, and wandered around for the next five days without water. During those difficult times, he invoked the *Heart Sutra*, meant for those in dire straits, and was rewarded by a dream, which revived him. He soon found water and survived.

Xuanzang's journey took him to Turfan in the Tarim Basin, as well as Yanqi and Kucha, kingdoms in northern Xinjiang. Crossing the Oxus River, he then made his way to Bactria (in Afghanistan). He described Balkh, the capital, as having about 3,000 Buddhist monks of the Theravada school, and many sacred relics of the Buddha. Further on at Bamiyan, he saw the two famous standing colossi of the Buddha, and a 1,000 feet-long reclining statue. When Xuanzang visited it, Bamiyan was an outstanding centre of the Gandharan school of Buddhist art.



Map of Tarim Basin, Seattle Silk Roads Project  
 Source: <http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/maps/cenasia.html>  
 Courtesy of Huntington Photographic Archive of Asian Art



Map of Gandhara, Seattle Silk Roads Project  
 Source: <http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/maps/gandh.html>  
 Courtesy of Dr John C. Huntington

Gandhara was famous for its Buddhist traditions and for producing eminent Buddhist scholars. At its capital, Purushapura (Peshawar), Xuanzang saw a *stupa* built by Kanishka, the great Kushan king, and a tower which held the Buddha's alms-bowl.

In Kashmir, Buddhism was flourishing and there were about 5,000 monks. Xuanzang spent two years there studying Buddhist philosophy and transcribing sutras and texts to be taken back to China. From Kashmir, he then made his way to Mathura, where he saw the same *stupas* that Faxian had witnessed earlier.

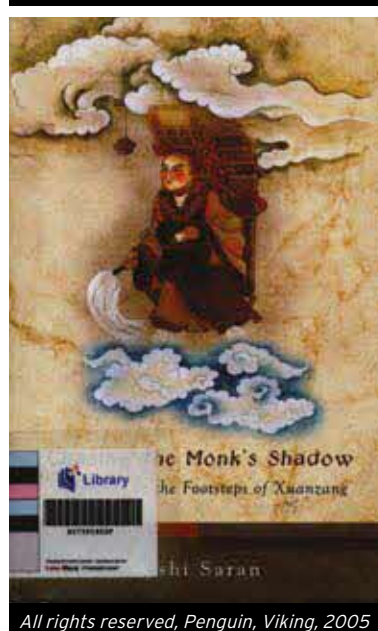
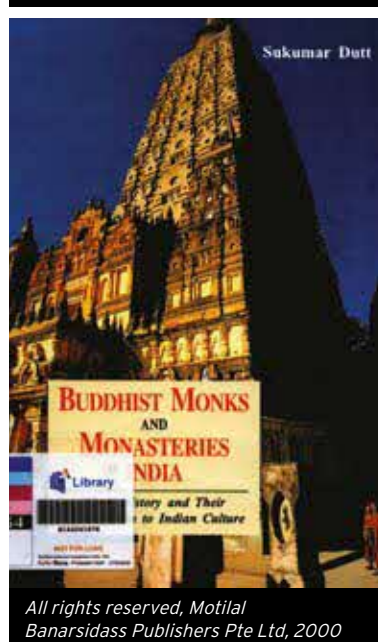
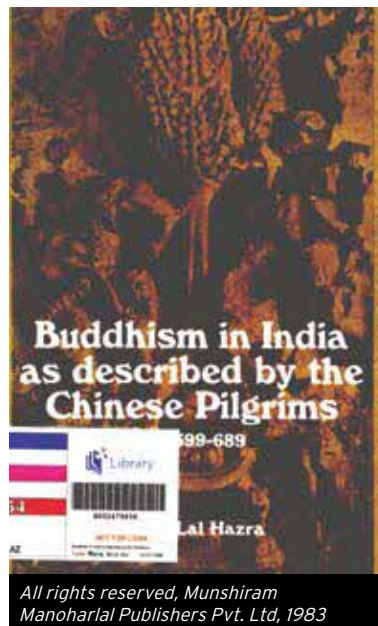
Xuanzang spent 15 years studying and travelling throughout India. The highlight of his stay was his time at Nalanda, the famous Buddhist University at Bihar. Xuanzang first stayed at Nalanda for 15 months, studying philosophy and Sanskrit. After travelling within India extensively, he returned to Nalanda and studied there for many years, where he gained fame as a skilled debater and logician with his comprehensive knowledge of the Dharma.

Although his contemporaries at Nalanda tried to dissuade him from going back to China, Xuanzang returned in 645 A.D., and devoted the rest of his life to the study and translation of the texts he had obtained. He had taken back a treasure trove of texts to China, a total of 657 titles, packed into 520 cases.

At the request of Emperor Taizong (626-49 A.D.), Xuanzang wrote his travelogue, and this remains one of his most important legacies. It documented the period of Buddhism in a state of decline in India, and gave a background to the passing of an age. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Aurel Stein, a renowned archaeologist, rediscovered some of the kingdoms that Xuanzang visited and validated Xuanzang's accounts.<sup>5</sup> Xuanzang has achieved iconic status in Chinese Buddhism and is also immortalised as a folk-hero in literature.<sup>6</sup>

### YIJING (C. 635-713 A.D.)

Yijing's text can be described as a geographical travelogue as well as an account of the state of Buddhism in India and Southeast Asia. Yijing was born in 635 A.D. during the reign of the Tang Emperor Taizong. He made the decision to travel to India when he was 18 years old and was ordained two years later. He was a great admirer of Faxian and Xuanzang, and embarked on his journey from Guangdong in 671 A.D., sailing in a Persian ship. Yijing



was possibly the first Chinese traveller to describe the maritime route from China to India:

*"Cutting through the immense abyss, the great swells of water lie, like a mountain, on the sea. Joining sideways with a vast gulf-stream, the massive waves, like clouds, dash against the sky."*

He reached Srivijaya (present-day Sumatra) after 20 days, and studied Sanskrit there for six months. From Srivijaya, he went to Tamralipiti, a port in Bengal, where he met Dachengdeng, a disciple of Xuanzang. Together with some merchants, they went on foot towards Bihar. Along the way, however, Yijing fell ill and lagged behind the others and was attacked by robbers who took all his clothes and left him naked. Covering himself with mud and leaves, Yijing continued walking through the night and was able to rest only when he reached the village where the rest of his party stopped.

They reached Nalanda the next day, and Yijing remained there for 10 years. He was a great observer, and his detailed accounts of the monastic life and rituals at Nalanda are unparalleled. Yijing's records provide us with a comprehensive picture of what it was like to be a Buddhist monk in the great Indian monastic centres.

Yijing's geographical descriptions of the region, particularly Southeast Asia, also focus on the role of Buddhism in those kingdoms. The predominant form of Buddhism in Srivijaya was of the Hinayana (Theravada) tradition. His descriptions of the Malay Peninsula showed that it had many trade centres and a thriving maritime network. Other kingdoms in Southeast Asia such as Dvaravati and Langasuka in Thailand and Prome in Burma, were also described or alluded to. All these accounts add to the current state of Southeast Asia's historical knowledge.

Yijing wrote another treatise called "Monks of the Buddhist Faith who went to the Western Country under the Tang Dynasty." In it, he detailed the accounts of 51 monks from China who travelled to India during the Tang period and described the hardships and privations borne by them as well as their admirable spirit and desire for learning.

Yijing left India for China in 685 A.D. by ship but disembarked at Srivijaya instead, where he spent his time translating 400 Sanskrit works that he had taken with him.

He finally returned to China only in 695 A.D. Before his final passing in 713 A.D., he had with the help of nine Indian monks completed 56 translations in 230 volumes.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

The three accounts described the great Buddhist monasteries of India such as Nalanda, Vikramasila, Valabhi and Somapura. Nalanda in Bihar was one of the most famous institutions of learning in the Buddhist world from the seventh century until its destruction by Turushka invaders. All three monks documented the Buddhist monasteries as centres of learning with libraries of manuscripts. Xuanzang described the libraries of the Jetavana monastery at Buddhagaya as “richly furnished, not only with orthodox literature but also with Vedic and other non-Buddhistic works, and with treatises on the arts and sciences taught in India at the time.”

All three travellers also gave a broad spectrum of perspectives on the different aspects of Buddhism, from its evolution to its decline in India. They also gave invaluable insights into the states and kingdoms of those times, and many of these kingdoms now remain only in such accounts.

Archaeology may have unveiled some of the mysteries of these ancient kingdoms, such as Karashar and Kizil in the Gobi, or Borobodur in Java, but we can only imagine the days of their glory as the monks saw and described them.

With Yijing’s passing, the era of travel writing ended and would not become popular again until the arrival of Marco Polo and other travellers from the West. Even so, these new visitors were not like the Chinese monks, who were bound by faith and belief in the Dharma.

From Faxian to Yijing, the travel accounts spanned a period of almost three centuries and gave a glimpse of the ages long removed by the sweep of history. Through their personalities and vivid descriptions, these writers have helped to bring those ages back to life. Perhaps more than anything else, they bring to us, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the awareness of a rich and diverse Asian cultural heritage that has transcended time and place.

*The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Dr Robert Knox, Former Keeper, Oriental & Islamic Antiquities, The British Museum, in reviewing the paper.*

## ENDNOTES

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- Jack Sewell, “Semi-classical sculpture created during 2-5CE in Pakistan/ Afghanistan. First representations of the Buddha in human form” in *Gandharan Art, The Art Institute of Chicago Quarterly*, 54:3 (1960), p. 10.
- Misha Saran, “The glorious Tang dynasty which lasted for three centuries, and heralded a golden age of high culture in China from 626CE,” in *Chasing the monk’s shadow* (India: Penguin Viking, 2005).
- “The White Horse Monastery, where Buddhism is supposed to have begun in China was built by the Han Emperor in 67CE: many famous names were associated with Loyang, such as the Indian monk Bodhiruci, who arrived here in 508CE to translate texts, and Paramartha, another Indian monk who translated key Mahayanist texts” in Misha Saran, *Chasing the Monk’s Shadow* (India: Penguin Viking, 2005) pp. 563-567; Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist monks and monasteries in India: their history and their contribution to Indian culture* (Delhi: Borehamwood: Motilal Banarsidass; Motilal, 2000).
- “One of the greatest and most controversial names in Central Asian archaeology of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hungarian by birth, British by inclination, Stein followed Xuanzang’s tracks across the Gobi, alluding to the monk as his mentor. In doing so, Stein validated much of Xuanzang’s travelogue, excavated diligently and rediscovered hidden treasures, such as the cave complex at Dunhuang, which yielded enormous quantities of scripts, paintings and scrolls, which are still being researched. There is now an international Dunhuang Project at the British Library, which is online, with many images digitised. This database utilises Stein’s and other materials from Central Asia” in International Dunhuang Project, British Library <http://idp.bl.uk/database/>.
- Saran, M. See author’s notes. “In the sixteenth century, Wu Chengen created a mythical journey titled *Journey to the West*, incorporating a monkey king, based on Xuanzang’s epic trip. This account has now entered Chinese folklore with many in China confusing Xuanzang and the fictional monk. There was a translation by Arthur Waley into English in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the story has been serialised many times in cinema, TV and animation,” in *Chasing the Monk’s Shadow* (2005). University of Washington Press.

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# Why Politicians Don't Stay?

## Making Sense of Critical Political Events in Post-war Asia



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Critical political events are high-impact events that will change the political trajectory of a nation. Asia comprises nations with a range of political systems with different political dynamics. Some nations experience frequent changes of political party control of the government while other nations have the same political party controlling the government for decades. The latter refers mainly to dominant party systems whereby one dominant party dominates many aspects of a nation's political life for decades.

Recurrent news of factional crises or conflicts between key politicians within ruling political parties often sparks speculations of possible significant political changes. Nevertheless, these events have no great political impact unless a faction defects from the ruling party. This renegade faction can subsequently ally with the opposition parties to gain control of the government. Yet, such defections are rare events because factions face huge disincentives to defect from a ruling party. Factional leaders and members have to face huge political risks by giving up most of the prerogatives of ruling party members. This political risk is even greater in a dominant party system.

Nevertheless, these rare events cannot be explained adequately by current theories using either a political party or an individual politician as the unit of analysis. This paper uses the faction as the unit of analysis and re-frames the analysis of a puzzling critical political event – factions defecting from a dominant political party – with a simple model. The framework posits that factional defection occurs only when the key factions are marginalised within the dominant party and expect to form the next government with the opposition parties. This model offers a framework to make sense of complex Asian politics.

### THE CONTEXT: THE EAST ASIAN ECONOMIC MIRACLE, STRONG GOVERNMENTS AND DOMINANT PARTIES

Before the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the “East Asia Economic Miracle” story depicted strong governments providing leadership in national economic development. Such governments were usually dominant party systems with a political party dominating the political scene for decades. Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) dominated Japanese politics for 38 years from 1955 to 1993. Its rule was associated with the rise of the Japanese economic miracle. Similarly, Taiwan's Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) dominated the political scene from 1949 to 2000 and its rule was associated with rapid Taiwanese economic development. Together with South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore, Taiwan was known as one of the “Four Asian Tigers”. In Southeast Asia, Malaysia's United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) has also been associated with Malaysia's rapid growth as one of the “Emerging Tigers” with Indonesia and Thailand. The trend of having dominant party systems is not unique to Asia. The

Christian Democratic Party dominated Italy's politics for more than four decades (1948-92) while the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) dominated Mexico's politics for more than seven decades (1920s-2000). Other current and past dominant parties include Ireland's Fianna Fail, Sweden's Social Democrats, South Africa's National Congress (ANC), and Israel's Labor Party.

Despite dominating the political landscape of Asia for decades after the end of World War II, dominant parties have experienced different fates. On the one hand, most of these dominant parties have split and lost power. For instance, Indonesia's Golongan Karya (Golkar) lost power in 1999, and Taiwan's KMT lost control of the presidency to the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Chen Shui-bian in 2000. On the other hand, other dominant parties such as UMNO have remained in power. Significantly, among those parties that have lost power, some have regained power by relying on the decades of institutional advantage they have built up over the years. The Indian National Congress (INC) Party regained power in 1980 after losing the 1977 elections and Japan's LDP regained power in 1994, less than one year after losing it in 1993.

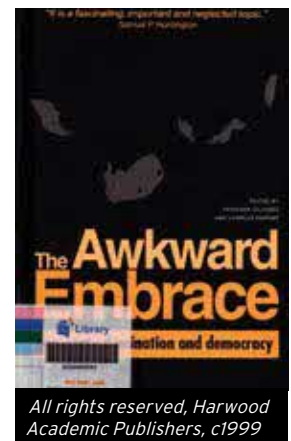
### THE PUZZLE AND WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT EXPLANATIONS

It is an axiom that a dominant party has to implode before the rules of the political game in the dominant party system can be changed. The key challenge is to answer why a dominant party implodes or splits. This paper uses the faction as the unit of analysis to complement the weaknesses of current explanations.

#### Current Explanation 1: Party Systems and Political Parties

From the political party level point of view, it seems counter-intuitive for a dominant party to lose power because its dominance is sustained by a positive cycle of dominance. Dominant parties control nearly all aspects of the political system (legislative and executive) hence there is almost no viable alternative government for voters to choose from. The fragmented opposition parties are unlikely to have the institutional power and experience to rule as effectively as the dominant party. Consequently, most dominant party systems persist due more to the weak and divided opposition parties rather than the dominant party's effective governance.

One of the most important factors for dominant party longevity is the power asymmetry between the dominant party and opposition



**Table 1:** Power Disparity between Dominant Party and Opposition Parties (Lower House)<sup>1</sup>

Party (Election Years)	Dominant Party's Seat Share (A) (%)	Opposition Parties' Seat Share (B) (%)	Difference between Dominant Party and Opposition Parties' Seat Share (A-B)(%)
LDP, Japan (1958-90) House of Representatives Elections	57.6	38.6	19.0
KMT, Taiwan (1975-98) Legislative Yuan Elections	70.9	29.1	41.8
Barisan Nasional (BN), Malaysia (1955-2008)* National Parliamentary Elections	80.2	19.8	60.4
Indian National Congress, India (1952-71) Lok Sabha Elections	69.0	31.0	38.0

\* Barisan Nasional is an UMNO-led coalition

parties. An aspect of this asymmetry is the huge seat share difference in the Lower Houses of Japan, Taiwan, India and Malaysia, ranging from 19.0% to 60.4% (Table 1). Using Taiwan as an example, opposition parties have two main options to gain power: win enough seats by their own efforts or merge with the much larger dominant party – KMT. For the former option, the opposition parties with only 29.1% of the seat share must win at least another 21.9% of seat share to secure at least a bare majority of 50% of the seats. This is not easily achievable because of KMT's electoral dominance. With huge resources and support networks, KMT could easily mobilise votes and win more than 50% of the parliamentary seat share during elections. Even if the opposition parties win more than 50% of the parliamentary seats, they have to remain united. This is because the KMT can easily entice one or more opposition parties to merge with it or to form a ruling coalition. The latter option requires the least effort from any of the opposition parties but it does not serve KMT's interest: the more politicians there are, the lesser the office spoils that could be shared among KMT members.

By using the political party as the unit of analysis, the dominant party split can be attributed to a multitude of factors in the political, economic, and social arenas. The main argument is that exogenous macro-level factors create dire conditions at the national level thereby reducing the dominant party's ruling legitimacy. The macro-level factors include ideology (Sasaki 1999); democratisation (Giliomee and Simkins 1999; Jayasuriya and Rodan 2007); party system changes (Boucek 1998); voter realignment (Reed 1999); changes of socioeconomic composition of the party's support base (Pempel 1998); entry of new parties (Greene 2008); and/or changes in the values of the voters (Mair and Tomokazu 1998). Nevertheless, the focus on exogenous factors ignores the dominant party's intra-party dynamics and its adaptability. This being so, examining the cause of dominant party split at the macro-level provides only the context but not the precise causes and timing of party split.

Solinger (2001) argues that the presence of popular opposition party leaders and a great level of corruption are two of the causes of

dominant party collapse. Nevertheless, these cannot explain situations in which all the factors were present but no dominant party lost power. There was corruption in Indonesia's Suharto regime but why did the dominant party, Golkar, lose power after the 1999 elections but not in the previous elections? Popular opposition leaders have appeared at various stages during dominant party dominance but these politicians have failed to galvanise the opposition parties into common action to form new ruling governments. The popularity of Japanese opposition leader, Doi Takado, has failed to empower the largest Japanese opposition party, the Japan Socialist Party, to replace the dominant LDP. This being so, explaining party splits by using the party as the unit of analysis fails to account for this intra-party dynamics.

#### Current Explanation 2: Individual Politicians and Career Prospects

Moving the analytical lens down to individual politicians does not adequately explain party defection either. This explanation narrowly focuses on politicians and analyses the causes of party defection as a consequence of the individual politician's aspiration to further his own political career.

Based on logical deduction, individual dominant party politicians are unlikely to leave the dominant party because it is the only party that is able to offer the fruits of power to them. These political benefits range from holding ministerial posts to having better access to state resources. Even if some politicians do not have the benefits at a point in time, they are likely to be better off remaining within the dominant party. This is because as long as the dominant party continues ruling, these politicians will have their turn in the share of political benefits. In contrast, the fragmented opposition parties in a dominant party system are very unlikely to form the new ruling government. Politicians face huge political risks when they leave a dominant party. They are likely to lose all the political benefits they have enjoyed in the dominant party with the worst-case scenario of losing their electoral seats. Losing seats often breaks a politician's career. For instance, the failed "Janata Coalition Experiment" in India (1977-79) had showed the INC politicians of the 1980s the extreme difficulty in breaking down the "Congress System". This institutionalised system of formal and informal norms has reinforced the INC's dominance in national level Indian politics.<sup>2</sup> This non-INC government soon collapsed as a result of intra-party disunity and within three years from losing power, the INC returned to power and continued its dominance of Indian politics.

Studies using the individual politician as the unit of analysis posit that a politician's individual attributes determine the likelihood of him defecting from a political party. Cox and Rosenbluth (1995), in their analysis of the 1993 party defections in Japan, argue that junior and politically marginalised politicians are more likely to defect. This holds true if we treat politicians as lone-wolves who act independently. However, this is not true in reality as this "strategically blind" approach ignores the greater context that shapes an individual politician's decision making. Besides individual attributes, a politician needs to balance his individual needs with the organisational needs of the group to which he belongs. A group provides the essential political goods needed for a politician's survival like funding for re-election campaigns and parliamentary posts. Extant literature, by focusing only on individual incentives, fails to account for a politician's affinity for group incentives.

#### ALTERNATIVE APPROACH/EXPLANATION: FACTIONS

This paper seeks to complement the two mainstream explanations by

using the faction as the unit of analysis. Factions are sub-organisations within a political party that compete for political goods like political funding and parliamentary posts. Factionalism within parties has positive and negative impacts for dominant parties. Factionalism provides mechanisms to mitigate intra-party conflicts and thereby minimise the probability of dissent and dominant party members defecting. However, factionalism may create a vicious cycle of intra-party conflict that may eventually lead to greater party splits.

Compared with the two current explanations from the political party and individual politician perspective, it is more intuitive to understand dominant party defection from a factional perspective. While dominant party factions are generally better off by remaining within the dominant party than being part of a new unstable coalition government, factions do defect from the dominant party when two conditions are met. This paper argues that factional defection from a dominant party occurs when the key factions within the dominant party are marginalised in the inter-factional coalition game within the party and expect to win the future inter-party coalition game by forming a new government with the opposition parties. Unlike other factions, a key faction has a sizeable number of party members that allows it to form a winning inter-factional coalition in the party leadership competition<sup>3</sup> Thus, a dominant party faction's potential to change the political landscape of a dominant party system makes it a rare event and different from the more commonly occurring party defections.<sup>4</sup>

## RESEARCH DESIGN: MODEL AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

With the faction as the unit of analysis, this paper uses a model and narratives to verify three hypotheses. The model provides an internally consistent framework for systematic case comparison based on narratives. The narrative is based on the novel structured comparison of dominant party defection cases. This combination allows maximum analytical rigour and empirical richness to ensure robust findings.

The game theoretic model depicts the strategic interaction between two groups of actors in a dominant party: mainstream factions and non-mainstream factions.<sup>5</sup> The model depicts two players interacting interdependently in the inter-party arena and intra-party arena. A key faction always has two main strategies: stay within the dominant party or defect from it. The predominant strategy is to remain within the dominant party because the faction can enjoy the fruits of power and continue factional struggle. The other strategy will be to defect from the dominant party and face the huge risk of losing political power.

Three hypotheses are derived from the game theoretic model:

- **Hypothesis 1:** A dominant party faction may not necessarily defect from a dominant party when the party has a relatively smaller Lower House seat share.
- **Hypothesis 2:** A dominant party faction is likely to defect from a dominant party when it is marginalised in intra-party competition.
- **Hypothesis 3:** A dominant party faction is likely to defect from a dominant party when the expectation of reduced coordination failure with the opposition party is high.<sup>6</sup>

## Background

Narratives from historical events are used to test the model's validity. As factional defections are rare political events, there are only seven party defection cases in the six decades of Asia's political history since the end of World War II in 1945 (Table 2). These cases cover four dominant parties, LDP (Japan), INC (India), UMNO (Malaysia),

**Table 2:** Cases for Analysis

Name of Defected Faction	Year	Country	Dominant Party
Hatoyama faction	1953	Japan	Liberal Party
Gandhi faction	1969	India	Indian National Congress
Ram faction	1977	India	Indian National Congress
Razaleigh faction	1989	Malaysia	United Malays National Organisation
Hau faction	1993	Taiwan	Kuomintang
Hata faction	1993	Japan	Liberal Democratic Party
Soong faction	2000	Taiwan	Kuomintang

and KMT (Taiwan). With the exception of Japan's Hata factional defection, there is no systematic and comparative study of these rare but significant events.

The Liberal Party dominated Japanese politics in immediate post-war Japan from 1949 to 1953. The defection of the Hatoyama faction, led by Hatoyama Ichirō, ended the dominant Liberal Party's rule in 1953. This faction formed the new Japan Democratic Party that subsequently formed the first non-Liberal Party government in 1954. Hatoyama Ichirō became prime minister of a minority government. The Japan Democratic Party eventually merged with the Liberal Party to form the current ruling LDP in 1955. LDP dominated Japanese politics for another three decades before the defection of the Hata faction ended its dominance. The Hata faction formed the Japan Renewal Party in 1993 and took the lead in forming a new seven-party government coalition. Contrary to conventional coalition theories, the LDP failed to form the new government despite being the largest political party, with 44.6% of the Lower House seat share. Ozawa Ichirō, the de facto leader of the Hata faction, remains a key politician in Japanese politics today.

KMT dominated Taiwanese politics from 1949 to 2000 until James Soong faction's defection created the opportunity for Democratic Progressive Party's Chen Shui-bian to become president in the 2000 presidential elections. The KMT presidential vote was split between James Soong and the official KMT presidential candidate, Lien Chan. Soong eventually formed the People First Party (PFP). A lesser-known but significant factional defection from KMT occurred in 1993. The factional conflict was between the two largest KMT factions – the pro-Lee Teng-Hui mainstream faction (zhu-liu-pai) and the anti-Lee Teng Hui anti-mainstream faction (fei-zhu-liu-pai), led by Hau Pei-sun. Lee Teng-hui was then KMT chairman-cum-Taiwan's president. While this factional defection did not immediately lead to KMT's loss of power, it created the context and demonstration effect for future politicians seeking to break KMT's dominance of Taiwanese politics.

UMNO dominated Malaysia's politics since 1954. Various intra-party crises that centred on the struggle for intra-party presidency took place in UMNO throughout its dominance: the Sulaiman Palestin-Datuk Hussein Onn rivalry in the 1970s, the Razaleigh-Mahathir rivalry in the 1980s, the Anwar-Mahathir rivalry in the late 1990s and the Badawi-Mahathir rivalry in 2006 and 2008. Nevertheless, only one of these intra-party crises resulted in the defection of a faction from UMNO. This occurred in 1989, when Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah competed against then Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad for the intra-party presidency. Allying with Musa Hitam (former deputy prime minister), Razaleigh formed a strong intra-UMNO factional coalition against Mahathir's factions. Eventually, Razaleigh defected from UMNO and formed a new political party, Semangat 46.

INC dominated Indian politics continuously from 1947 to 1977.

The faction, led by Indira Gandhi defected from the INC in 1969 after an intense intra-party conflict with the Syndicate factional coalition. Gandhi formed Congress-Requisition while the remaining INC formed Congress-Organisation. In 1977, another factional defection led by Jagjivan Ram split the INC again. Unlike in 1969, this critical political event ended INC's dominance and brought about the formation of the first non-INC government in 1977. In a rare feat, almost all the opposition parties overcame the coordination failure and merged to form the Janata Party that eventually won the 1977 elections, thereby removing INC from power. Former important INC politicians like Jagjivan Ram, Morarji Desai, and Charan Singh played an important role subsequently in forming a non-INC ruling government.

## Findings

All the hypotheses have been validated. A dominant party's seat share does not have a definite impact on factional defection (hypothesis 1). The marginalisation of the faction in the intra-party arena (hypothesis 2) and the high expectation of reduced coordination failure with the opposition party in the inter-party arena (hypothesis 3) cause factional defection. This being so, based on hypotheses 2 and 3, this paper concludes that factional defection will occur only when the factions are marginalised in the factional competition and perceive an opportunity of political survival outside the dominant party.

Hypothesis 1 is validated because a dominant party's seat share does not have a definite impact on a dominant party faction's decision to defect. In all the cases, the dominant party remained firmly in power with more than 50% of the Lower House seat share based on the results from the two most recent elections. There was a sharp decline in the dominant party's Lower House seat share in two of the cases: the Gandhi case (1969) and Hau case (1993). The dominant party experienced only a slight drop in the Lower House seat share in the Razaleigh case (1989), the Hata case (1993) and the Soong case (2000). Only INC in the Ram case (1977) experienced an increase in the Lower House seat share.

Hypothesis 1 is counter-intuitive and contradicts the extant wisdom of the relationship between party defection and seat share; namely, politicians will defect from a declining party or politicians will defect from the dominant party with a slim majority. This makes sense because a waning dominant party opens a window of opportunity for renegade dominant party factions and opposition parties to foster cooperation in forming a new government. Nevertheless, this paper's empirical results show that this is not always the case. The extant literature's weaknesses arise because its focus only on the inter-party arena ignores the critical factional coalition dynamics in the dominant party's intra-party arena.

For each case, the faction that defected was marginalised within the intra-party arena (hypothesis 2). These factions were usually one of larger factions, which had the potential to challenge the largest faction in the dominant party. The largest dominant party usually

controls the key machinery of the dominant party, including the party presidency. The forms of intra-party marginalisation were mainly in the form of post-allocation and resource-allocation. Both resources are essential to maintain the factions' power.

Finally, there was a high expectation of reduced coordination failure within the opposition party in the inter-party arena (hypothesis 3). This "high expectation" manifests itself in two main forms: an impending change in the rules of the political game at the national level and/or evidence of earlier successes of political cooperation between some renegade dominant party politicians and the opposition parties. Only the Ram case (1977) and the Hata case (1993) belong to the former category. In 1993, the call for political reform to change the rules of the game in Japanese politics was high on the political agenda of the political parties while in 1977 INC was discredited for its 1975-77 Emergency rule.

The rest of the cases belong to the second category. There were successful dissent actions by dominant party members in the 1953 Hatoyama case (e.g., voting for the punishment resolution of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru in March 1953); the ability of the opposition parties to form successful electoral alliances in the 1967 Lower House elections created the context for political change in the Gandhi case (1969); for the Soong case (2000), the gradual moderation of the DPP and the decline of the New Party in the 1990s created the political context for reduction in coordination failure between renegade KMT factions and the opposition parties in Taiwan. Malaysia's economic crisis in the mid-1980s created a conducive environment for the cooperation between UMNO's renegade politicians and the opposition parties in the Razaleigh case (1989). The decreasing ideological distance between KMT non-mainstream factions and the main opposition party, the DPP created the context for the Hau case (1993).

## SO WHAT?

This paper has shown how critical political events in Asian politics and dominant party factional defections can be understood with a simple model. Using a simple model substantiated by narratives, this paper argues that factional defection occurs only when the key factions within the dominant party are marginalised and expect to form the next government with the opposition parties. While this model explains only factional defection from dominant parties, its logic can be extended as a framework to make sense of Asian politics: to identify the key political actors (i.e., factions) and examine their cost-benefit calculations in the intra-dominant party and inter-party arenas.

For the public, the model provides a simple framework for making sense of complex Asian politics by examining the political actors' (e.g., factions and politicians) strategic calculations in the inter-party and intra-party arenas. While news reports may highlight the idiosyncrasies

**Table 3:** Strength of Dominant Parties<sup>7</sup>

Case	Dominant Party	Dominant party's seat share (%)	Election 1 (year)	Election 2 (year)	Difference (seat share) (%)
Hatoyama faction (1953)	Liberal Party	51.5	1949	1952	-5.2
Gandhi faction (1969)	Indian National Congress	54.4	1962	1967	-18.7
Ram faction (1977)	Indian National Congress	68.0	1967	1971	+13.6
Razeleigh faction (1989)*	United Malays National Organisation	83.6	1982	1986	-2.1
Hau faction (1993)	Kuomintang	59.0	1989	1992	-13.3
Hata faction (1993)	Liberal Democratic Party	53.7	1986	1990	-4.9
Soong faction (2000)	Kuomintang	54.7	1995	1998	-0.5

\* Based on seat share of UMNO-led Barisan Nasional

of intra-party tensions and personality clashes between key politicians and/or highlight scenarios of the fall of a ruling party, a critical reader should make sense of Asian politics by examining the intra-party and inter-party dynamics simultaneously. For the former type of reports on political bickering, one has to identify if the renegade politician is a leader of a strong faction within the party. Without such political strength, the impact of such political bickering may be limited. In inter-party reports, one should assess if the parliamentary seat share difference between the ruling party and opposition parties is too great for any defection threats by a politician or faction to be credible.

Similarly, for Asian political analysts and observers, this model provides a conceptual anchor to make sense of contemporary Asian politics and to anticipate its future trajectories. Future events are always embedded in the present. This is exemplified by the historical antecedents of contemporary political events. The Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) Ozawa Ichirō, one of the key politicians pushing for early elections in Japan in 2008, was part of the ruling LDP. In 1993, he led the Hata faction out of the LDP and eventually took the lead in forming a seven-party coalition government. He was subsequently in and out of various ruling government coalitions. Ozawa Ichirō still seems to be well-poised to create another round of changes to the contemporary Japanese party system. Similarly, India's current INC coalition government is plagued by the dual intra-INC and inter-party coalition tensions that have plagued INC since 1947.

A word of caution: past events are seldom good predictors of future events because politics in the real world is complex and emergent, shaped by complex adaptive agents like politicians. Thus, an analyst needs to identify the tipping points that precede the emergence of critical political events (e.g., the defection of a key faction from a ruling party or a coup). Such events or "black swans" can change the domestic politics and impact on the region (see Taleb 2007). A tipping point drawn from this paper's model is the situation in which a renegade faction, marginalised within the dominant party, seeks to exploit an opportunity of reduced unity within the opposition parties.

Finally, there are two approaches for an academic wishing to further this paper's research agenda: applying the model to other cases of dominant party factional defection and extending the model to explain other types of party defection. For the former, this model can be used to analyse cases of factional defection from dominant parties in nations like Italy, Mexico and South Africa. For instance, the Cárdenas factional defection from Mexico's dominant party, PRI, in 1987 has similarities with the James Soong factional defection from KMT in 2000. In addition, this paper's selection bias can be minimised by studying "non-events", that is, events which should have occurred based on consistent and deductive logic but did not. For instance, before the coup in September 2006, Thaksin Shinawatra was able to maintain the Thai Rak Thai Party's coherence. Surprisingly, despite intense factional competition, none of the big factions, like the Wong Nam Yam faction, defected from Thai Rak Thai Party. Another possible case will be the non-defection of factions from UMNO in the immediate period after the March 2008 elections. Such "non-events" will serve as useful case comparisons with factional defection cases.

For the latter, future research should extend the model to explain other types of party defections, that is, group defections and individual defections. One possible approach is to examine the interactions between the group level incentive structure and the individual level incentive structure. This paper focuses on the former while extant literature mainly focuses on the latter. In reality, party defections are based on a mixture of both types of incentive structures. Another approach is to use the complexity approach with the method of agent-based simulation. Like any typical game theoretic model, this paper's model is static and tends towards equilibrium. This assumes that real world events follow linear trajectories, which are almost never true! Agent-based models have the potential to examine the interactions between different levels of analysis.

In short, understanding critical political events helps to shed light on the dynamics of Asian politics. Thus, use this simple model as a framework to make sense of complex Asian politics.

## ENDNOTES

1. The figures are based on the average seat share won by the dominant parties in the Lower House elections within the specified period when the dominant parties were in power.
2. The Janata Party, created from four main opposition parties, temporarily broke INC's uninterrupted dominance of Indian politics by winning the 1977 elections.
3. Indicators of key faction are that it has enough legislators to form a factional coalition to gain power within a dominant party and deprive the dominant party of its ruling majority in the parliament.
4. Factional defection in this work differs from the more commonly occurring party defections from the opposition parties and minority ruling parties.
5. Mainstream factions are groups within the dominant party, which mainly control the mechanisms of the dominant party while the non-mainstream factions are the opposing group of factions within the dominant party. For details of the model and research design, see (Horiuchi and Tay 2004; Tay 2005).
6. Coordination failure can be failure to form a coalition or the failure to agree on a common prime minister candidate among the opposition parties. Generally, parliaments need to hold a vote to choose the prime minister after the elections.
7. Election 1 refers to the last election that the dominant party has participated while Election 2 refers to the previous election the dominant party has participated.

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# Pantun: Sumber Rujukan Sosiobudaya Masyarakat Melayu



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KALAU PANTUN MENGANDUNG ADAT,  
ZAMAN-BERZAMAN IA MELEKAT.

KALAU PANTUN MENGANDUNG PETUAH,  
ZAMAN-BERZAMAN IA BERFAEDAH.

KALAU PANTUN MENGANDUNG NASIHAT,  
TURUN-TEMURUN MEMBERI MANFAAT.

KALAU PANTUN MENGANDUNG AMANAH,  
SEPANJANG MASA IA BERTANAH.

(Khazanah Pantun Melayu Riau, Ivii)

Pantun merupakan sastera rakyat yang telah digunakan dengan agak luas di dalam masyarakat Melayu. Ia juga mengandungi falsafah hidup masyarakat Melayu serta merupakan salah satu wadah yang penting dalam meluahkan dan menyampaikan hasrat serta manifestasi pemikiran mereka. Oleh itu bertepatanlah pandangan Omardin, (1960), bahawa sekiranya "bahasa itu jiwa bangsa", maka pantun adalah salah satu daripada urat sarafnya.

S. Othman Kelantan (2005:148), menjelaskan bahawa sastera sebegini dapat "merakamkan sejarah perkembangan pemikiran, peradaban dan tamadun sesuatu bangsa di dunia". Maka wajarlah pantun digunakan sebagai rujukan sosiobudaya masyarakat Melayu kerana ia adalah cerminan sebenar peradaban dan tamadun Melayu yang sudah bertapak berabad-abad lamanya.

## ASAL PANTUN

Pantun merupakan salah satu ciptaan asli masyarakat Melayu. Dalam kajiannya, Francois-Rene Daillie (1988:20) telah menukil kamus Perancis Petit Robert yang menguatkan hujah ini melalui terjemahan berikut,



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"Pantoum (*patum*), masc. noun. (1829, a Malay word). A poem of Malay origin, composed of quatrains with alternate rhymes, in which the second and fourth lines are repeated as the first and third lines of the following stanza. *Harmonie du Soir*, by Baudelaire, is a pantoum."

Pantun boleh dibahagikan kepada dua bahagian iaitu pembayang dan maksud pantun. Kebiasaannya, pembayang maksud diambil dari pemerhatian sumber alam, sebagai pemula bicara sebelum penyampaian maksud pantun tersebut. Menurut Daillie, pembayang yang digunakan menggambarkan secara langsung kehidupan masyarakat Melayu yang akrab dengan bidang-bidang pertanian dan kelautan, manakala, maksud pantun menepati penyampaian hasrat dan luahan pemikiran Melayu. Sebagai contoh,

*Bukan kacang sebarang kacang,  
Kacang melilit kayu jati;  
Bukan datang sebarang datang,  
Datang melihat jantung hati*

Pantun bermula sebagai sastera lisan, sama seperti sastera-sastera Melayu yang lain. Namun, menurut Omardin, (1960), ia tidak dijumpai di dalam hikayat-hikayat lama seperti Hikayat Seri Rama, Hikayat Seri Panji atau Hikayat Pandawa Jawa. Pantun mula tercatat di dalam buku sastera di abad kelima belas. Menurut Liaw Yock Fang (1975:285),

*"pantun pertama kali muncul dalam Sejarah Melayu dan hikayat-hikayat popular yang sezaman. Pantun juga disisipkan dalam syair-syair seperti Syair Ken Tambuhan."*

Antaranya ialah pantun yang menceritakan tentang kisah Singapura dilanggar todak seperti berikut,

*Carik baju raja,  
Dilompati todak;  
Bukan di sahaja,  
Sebab akal budak.*

*Telur itik dari Senggora,  
Pandan terletak dilangkahi;  
Darahnya titik di Singapura,  
Badannya terlantar di Langkawi.*  
(Kesusasteraan Melayu lama, hlm 84)

Terdapat pantun bagi setiap fasa kehidupan masyarakat Melayu, yakni dari pantun kanak-kanak, dewasa hingga ke tua. Maka tidak keterlaluan jika dikatakan bahawa pantun merupakan salah satu rujukan sosiobudaya masyarakat Melayu kerana ia merakam berbagai aspek kehidupan dan merangkumi pelbagai peringkat usia.

Selain daripada digunakan atau dipersembahkan di dalam majlis-majlis rasmi atau digunakan di upacara-upacara tertentu, pantun juga telah mendarah daging di dalam kehidupan seharian masyarakat Melayu. Ia telah menjadi wahana untuk menyampaikan "hajat dan hasrat, melahirkan ucap selamat, sanjung dan puji, di samping menjadi "penghibur, alat berjenaka dan bergurau senda" serta "menguji ketajaman akal, menyindir dan menasihati". Bahkan pantun dengan masyarakat Melayu "tidak akan terpisah, umpama irama dan lagu" (Noriah 2006: 48).

Para pengkaji telah mengelompokkan pantun kepada pantun kanak-kanak, pantun orang muda dan pantun orang tua, namun untuk tujuan esei ini, kita boleh mengelompokkan pantun kepada beberapa aspek berikut untuk melihat dampak pantun dalam setiap ruang sosial dan budaya masyarakat Melayu seperti:

- pantun kanak-kanak, pantun cinta dan kasih sayang,
- pantun tentang cara hidup masyarakat dan hidup bermasyarakat seperti pantun budi, pantun nasihat dan pantun adat bagi upacara-upacara tertentu seperti majlis perkahwinan, dan sebagainya, serta
- pantun berkenaan alam sekitar masyarakat Melayu.

#### **PANTUN KANAK-KANAK**

Antara rangkap-rangkap pantun yang disasarkan kepada kanak-kanak ialah:

*Timang tinggi-tinggi,  
Sampai cucur atap;*

*Belum tumbuh gigi,  
Sudah pandai baca kitab.*

Pantun-pantun sebegini sering dinyanyikan atau didodoikan oleh ibu atau keluarga kepada anak-anak. Ia bukan sekadar dendangan untuk menghiburkan si anak, bahkan mengandungi doa dan hasrat supaya anak itu akan menjadi seorang yang berilmu, yakni, sudah boleh membaca kitab walaupun belum lagi tumbuh gigi.

Apabila anak itu sudah ke peringkat yang seterusnya, terdapat pantun seperti

*Cempedak di luar pagar,  
Ambil galah tolong jolokkan;  
Saya budak baharu belajar,  
Kalau salah tolong tunjukkan.*

Namun, terdapat juga kanak-kanak yang kurang bersungguh-sungguh hingga terungkap pantun ini:

*Sorong papan tarik papan,  
Buah keranji di dalam perahu;  
Suruh makan saya makan,  
Suruh mengaji saya tak tahu.*  
(Pantun, hlm. 22)

#### **PANTUN CINTA DAN KASIH SAYANG**

Bercinta dan berkasih sayang adalah fitrah kehidupan manusia. Maka tidak menjadi suatu kehairanan jika terdapat banyak pantun-pantun bercorak demikian di dalam koleksi pantun-pantun tradisional. Umpamanya seperti contoh pantun berikut yang menggambarkan luahan perasaan tersebut.

*Limau purut lebat ke pangkal,  
Batang selaseh condong uratnya;  
Angin ribut dapat di tangkal,  
Hati kasih apa ubatnya.*

*Dari mana punai melayang,  
Dari sawah turun ke padi;  
Dari mana datangnya sayang,  
Dari mata turun ke hati.*  
(Pantun, hlm. 21)

Namun, apabila kedua insan yang sedang berkasih sayang ini terpaksa berpisah, maka terungkaplah pantun,

*Tanjung Katong airnya biru,  
Tempat orang bermandi-manda;  
Sedang sekampung lagikan rindu,  
Inikan pula jauh di mata.*  
(Mendekati puisi Melayu tradisional, hlm. 22)

*Tuai padi antara masak,  
Esok jangan layu-layuan;  
Intai kami antara nampak,  
Esok jangan rindu-rinduan.*



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*Dari mana hendak ke mana,  
Tinggi perumpun dari padi,  
Hati mana bulan yang mana,  
Kita berjumpa bertemu lagi.*

(Petua mengarang pantun Melayu, hlm. 8)

Selain itu terdapat juga perlakuan yang sumbang seperti yang digambarkan melalui pantun sebegini:

*Ke teluk sudah, ke Siam sudah,  
Ke Melaka sahaja aku yang belum;  
Kupeluk sudah, kucium sudah,  
Nikah sahaja aku yang belum.*

(Pantun, hlm. 21)

### MASYARAKAT DAN HIDUP BERMASYARAKAT

Di dalam masyarakat Melayu, pantun mempunyai tempat yang istimewa dan sering ditonjolkan dalam kegiatan rasmi dan juga upacara adat dan tradisi. Penggunaan yang luas dan menyeluruh dalam kehidupan masyarakat Melayu sudah termaktub dan tercatat melalui pantun nasihat, pantun budi dan pantun adat dan agama yang menyampaikan nilai-nilai hidup bermasyarakat. Ia jelas tergambar melalui contoh-contoh pantun nasihat dan pantun budi berikut:

#### Pantun Nasihat

*Elok kayu kerana daunnya,  
Daun lebat tempat berteduh  
Elok Melayu kerana pantunnya,  
Pantun adat tempat bersuluh.*

*Elok kayu kerana daunnya  
Dahannya tinggi batangnya besar;  
Elok Melayu kerana pantunnya,  
Pantun berisi tunjuk ajar.*  
(Pantun nasehat, hlm. 15)

*Teritip di tepi kota,  
Mari dikayu sampam pengail;  
Imam khatib lagi berdosa,  
Bertambah pula kita yang jahil.*  
(A history of Classical Malay Literature, hlm 197)

#### Pantun Budi

*Tinggi bukit gilang gemilang,  
Nampak dari si Tanjung Jati,  
Budi sedikit masakan hilang,  
Tetap dikenang sampai mati.*

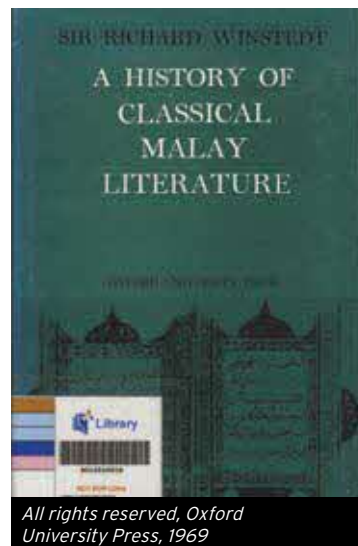
*Budak-budak menumbuk padi,  
Padi huma dari Palembang,  
Kalau hidup tidak berbudi,  
Tentu hina dipandang orang.*  
(1000 pantun dondang sayang, hlm 27)

*Pulau Pandan jauh ke tengah,*

*Di balik Pulau Angsa Dua;  
Hancur badan dikandung tanah,  
Budi yang baik dikenang jua.*

(A History of Classical Malay Literature, hlm 197)

Perkataan budi mempunyai berbagai lapisan makna di dalam masyarakat Melayu. Makna yang lazim ialah sumbangan seseorang



itu kepada orang lain atau masyarakat umum. Seorang yang menabur budi atau mempunyai jasa dianggap sebagai seorang yang diberkati kerana seringkali budi tidak menuntut balasan. Pantun budi memberi tunjuk ajar dan nasihat tentang cara bagaimana seseorang itu harus melayari kehidupan kerana walaupun badan hancur dikandung tanah, apabila seseorang itu sudah meninggalkan dunia ini, budi yang baik akan tetap dikenang jua.

#### Pantun Adat dan Agama

Adat dan agama memainkan peranan utama dalam kehidupan masyarakat Melayu. Oleh itu, pantun-pantun berkenaan adat dan agama termaktub sebagai garis panduan yang membantu mengurus dan mengatur juga memahami falsafah kehidupan masyarakat Melayu umpamanya pantun berikut,

*Lebat daun bunga tanjung,  
Berbau harum bunga cempaka;  
Adat dijaga pusaka dijunjung,  
Baru terpelihara adat pusaka.*  
(Kumpulan pantun Melayu, hlm 44)

*Banyak bulan perkara bulan,  
Tidak semulia bulan puasa  
Banyak Tuhan perkara Tuhan  
Tidak semulia Tuhan yang Esa*  
(Kumpulan pantun Melayu, hlm 60)

*Hari ini hari Khamis,  
Besok hari Jumaat;  
Barang siapa senyum dan manis,  
Itulah tanda umat Muhammad.*  
(Kumpulan pantun Melayu, hlm 61)

Pantun-pantun ini menjelaskan peranan pantun sebagai wahana untuk "berpesan-pesan nilai-nilai luhur agama, budaya dan norma-norma sosial masyarakatnya" (Tenas Effendy, 2005) dan "pembawa doa, hajat, harapan, nasihat, didikan, ajaran" (Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, 2004).

## Pantun dan Alam Sekitar

Alam Melayu ini sudah barang tentu kaya dengan khazanah alam sama ada di darat ataupun di lautan. Keakraban masyarakat Melayu dengan alam ini jelas terpancar dalam pantun. Maka tidak hairanlah jika ia banyak menggambarkan persekitaran alam masyarakat yang melahirkannya. Tambahan, "alam terkembang" ini "dijadikan guru" dan banyak memberi pengajaran kepada masyarakat yang mengamatinya.

Sebagai contoh pantun-pantun ini,

*Petir berdentum angin menderu,*

*Hujan turun di laut dalam;*

*Sudah ku tuntut petua guru,*

*Berenang di laut macam di kolam.*

(1000 pantun dondang sayang, hlm. 84)

*Daun lepat pokok lengkuas,*

*Bawal dijual di pasar malam;*

*Sudah tabiat jerung yang ganas,*

*Taman bermain di lautan dalam.*

(1000 pantun dondang sayang, hlm. 90)

Pantun bukan sahaja mempunyai nilai seni yang indah bahkan merupakan sumber rujukan penting tentang keadaan sosial dan budaya masyarakat Melayu. Sebagaimana menurut R. O. Winstedt (1961), sekiranya seseorang yang membaca sastera rakyat seperti Awang Sulong Merah Muda dan Malim Deman dapat membantu ia memahami kehidupan dan adat istiadat masyarakat Melayu, maka sudah tentulah mereka yang dapat memahami pantun akan menyelami dan melihat dengan jelas ke dalam jiwa masyarakat itu. Hujah ini disokong oleh Daillie (1988), yang merumuskan bahawa pantun adalah ujaran pemikiran tamadun Melayu.

*"The existence itself of the pantun for centuries - as the most popular and widespread mode of poetic expression, among other forms - has been the obvious evidence of the Malay people's intellectual and artistic life, of their sense of beauty (the beauty of common, humble things, in everyday life), of their sensitiveness in general: an anonymous and oral form of poetry, original to the point that*

*it is not to be found anywhere else on Earth, and only in a rather restricted area of the vast expanse of seas, islands and peninsula known as "the Malay world"; a form of poetry that is not the apanage of a few learned men only, but the common heritage of the people."* (Daillie, 1988:150-151)

Natijahnya, pantun harus terus dikaji kerana di dalam pantun terkandung pelbagai ilmu tentang lingkungan sosial dan budaya masyarakat Melayu. Maka bertepatanlah catatan ungkapan oleh Pak Tenas (2005) ini,

*Apa guna pantun dikaji,  
di dalamnya ada tuntunan budi.  
Pegangan hidup pedoman mati*

*Meluruskan akan  
membersihkan hati  
Membaiikkan akhlak  
mengelokkan pekerti  
supaya hidup tidak terkeji  
Bila mati rahmat menanti.*

(Pantun Nasehat, hlm 58)



## SUMMARY

*Pantun*, the traditional Malay verse or quatrains is not just a manifestation of an aesthetical art form but also encapsulates and reflects the philosophy and way of life of the Malays. As a cultural product that is widely used and practised at every level of the community, pantuns are important social and cultural sources of reference of the Malays.

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## The Ya Yin Kwan Collection: Treasures of Early Southeast Asian History



by ANG SEOW LENG

Senior Librarian  
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library  
National Library



Tan Yeok Seong (1903-84)  
Photo courtesy of Alex Tan T.H.



Calligraphy by Tan Yeok Seong on the donation of his Ya Yin Kwan Collection to the National Library, South East Asia Room

*"Knowledge is public property and must be shared by all. South East Asia is situated at the crossroads of the world. In the founding of a new state one needs to ponder deeply, and all existing knowledge must be assimilated and collated, before an authentic history can be prepared for posterity to extend the glory of past days."*

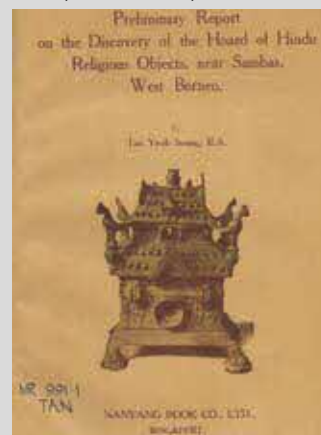
Tan Yeok Seong  
Ya Yin Kwan  
22 July 1964

In a published note on the presentation of the Ya Yin Kwan Collection to the National Library in 1964, Tan Yeok Seong generously donated his collection of books, accumulated over a lifetime, with the hope that this collection would benefit generations of scholars in their research.

This was to be the first public donation of a collection of high research value. At a time when 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Southeast Asia histories and cultures were written mostly by the Europeans, Tan Yeok Seong wanted more Southeast Asian scholars to write their own history. He regarded the National Library as a centre for Southeast Asian studies and believed that a rich collection of information resources could encourage more people to become interested in Southeast Asian history. In his presentation speech, he expressed concerns that with the growing prominence of Southeast Asia as a geographical region in the world, Russia, Japan, America and China had started setting up Southeast Asia research centres. Therefore, Singapore should step up in this area.<sup>1</sup>

Tan Yeok Seong (1903-84) devoted his life and time to the research of Southeast Asian history.<sup>2</sup> He received both English and Chinese education and graduated from Amoy University in 1926. His grounding in history and effective bi-lingualism allowed him to

Examples of some publications by Tan Yeok Seong



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indulge in his pursuit of interesting topics, for example, the names Singapore used to be known by during pre-colonial times, authenticity of Gong Zhen's *Records of Foreign Countries in the Western Ocean*, and Singapore's earliest Chinese school, just to name a few. He wrote numerous articles and published several books on the history of Singapore and Malaysia, and the Chinese overseas.

In the foreword to the publication *Collected Writings from the Ya-yin Studio*<sup>3</sup>, Dr Gwee Yee Hean praised Tan Yeok Seong as an amateur historian who enjoyed extensive contacts with academics and had attained more achievements than many professional historians. When the commissioner-general for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, came to Singapore in the early 1950s, he visited Tan Yeok Seong to learn more about Southeast Asia from him.<sup>4</sup>



Malcolm MacDonald at a cocktail party hosted by Tan Yeok Seong  
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Besides actively collecting books, Tan Yeok Seong was also a collector of historical artefacts. In 1969, he organised an exhibition at the National Museum through the South Seas Society. The exhibition featured more than 200 pieces of Chinese porcelain dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. These pieces, some of which belonged to Tan Yeok Seong, were on display as evidences of Chinese influence in Singapore and the region five centuries before 1819.<sup>5</sup> A catalogue titled *Chinese Islamic Wares in the Collection of Muzium Negara* was published in Malaysia, according to The Straits Times dated 30 June 1981. Among the 28 pieces of Islamic wares listed, some of them used to belong to Tan Yeok Seong but had been bought over by the museum.<sup>6</sup> The British Museum also listed 11 Hindu religious artefacts that were collected by Tan Yeok Seong.

Tan Yeok Seong participated in various social and cultural establishments. Victor Sim's *Biographies of Prominent Chinese in Singapore* gave a brief outline of his involvement.<sup>7</sup> In 1935, he co-founded the Anthropological Museum of Amoy with Professor Lim Hui Siang. This museum is still in existence today and boasts of being the first anthropological museum in China. In 1938, Tan Yeok Seong represented Malaya at the Third Congress of Far Eastern Prehistorians. Although Tan Yeok Seong was not a founder of the South Seas Society, he was an active member. He became president of the society in 1940. In 1950, he became president of the Chinese Study Group, which studied Chinese affairs and culture in English.

Tan Yeok Seong and his friends set up the Nanyang Book Company in 1935. It was a major supplier of textbooks with Malayan content for Chinese children. Business soon flourished and branches were set up in major cities in Southeast Asia. Unfortunately, the onset of World War II severely crippled the business. While running a business, Tan Yeok Seong never neglected his reading and research. According to Teo Han Wue, Tan Yeok Seong was so passionate about history and sharing his knowledge of history, that his "business associates had to bear with him when he went on about his historical research".<sup>8</sup>



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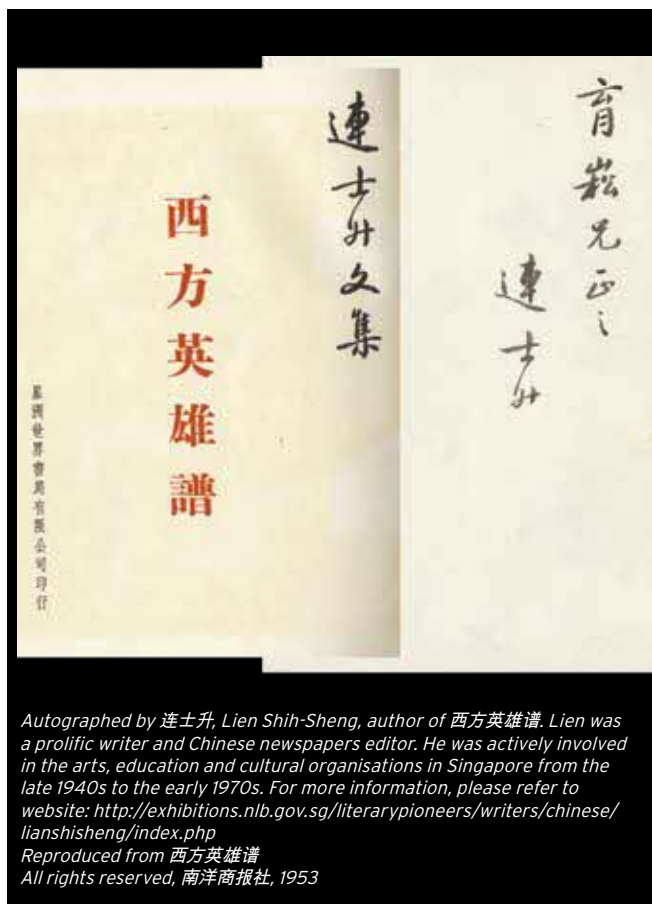
### THE YA YIN KWAN COLLECTION

Tan Yeok Seong started his library collection from his university days in Amoy. After the manner of Chinese scholars, he named this collection the Ya Yin Kwan (Palm Shade Pavilion) Collection. It covers a myriad subjects such as philosophy, education, economics, archaeology, ceramics, geography, history and culture. Chinese titles take up more than half of the total collection. The rest of the collection comprises largely English titles, with a small number of titles in Malay, Japanese and European languages.<sup>9</sup>

This collection was an accumulation of years of active collection of titles related to Southeast Asian history, through contacts with rare book dealers, and exchange of titles with scholars. Thus it can be regarded as a collection of important reference titles before Singapore's pre-Independence days.

Leafing through the pages in this collection, one can get a glimpse of various writers' perspectives on Southeast Asia and the Chinese overseas from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-1960s. Tan Yeok Seong not only collected the publications but also used them in his research and meticulously added newspaper cuttings on the relevant topics in some books. One can also find autographed publications from authors who gave their publications as gifts to him.

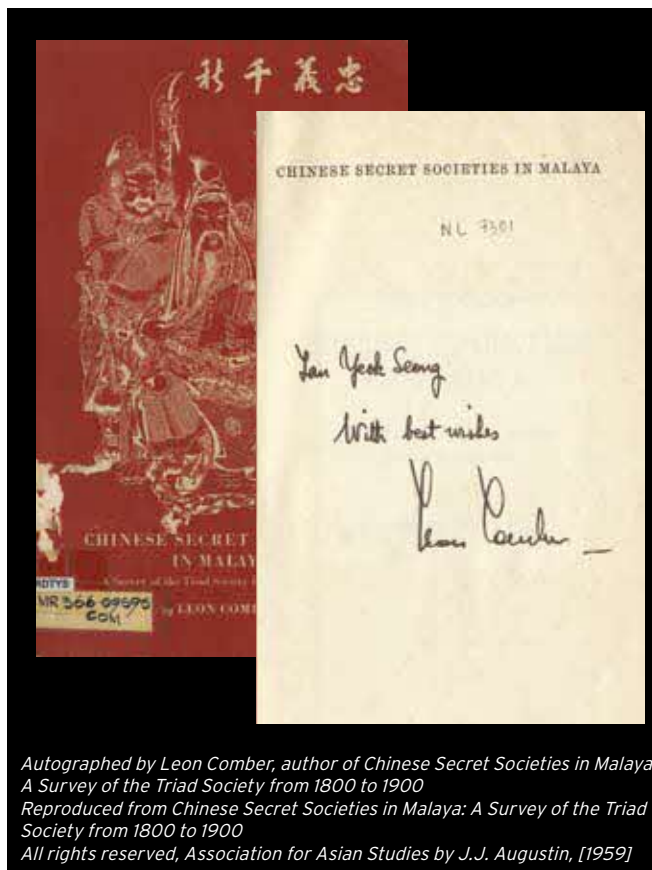
Researchers looking for trends on Southeast Asian studies before the 1970s can refer to some of the titles in the Ya Yin Kwan Collection. These include *Survey of Chinese-language Materials on Southeast Asia in the Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford University, 1952*; *A Survey of Bibliographies in Western Languages Concerning East and Southeast Asian Studies*; *Historians of South East Asia*, and *Research in Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore*.



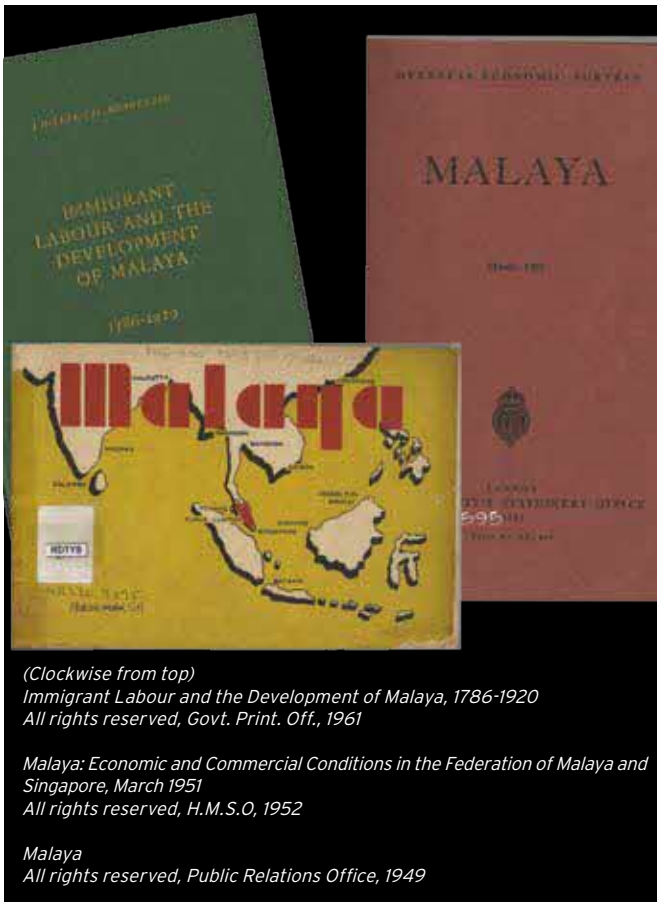
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*Malaya*  
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There is also a wide range of titles in the collection on the Chinese in Southeast Asia. For a good overview, Jonas Daniel Vaughan's *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements* (1879) gives an account of the social lives of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements. George William Skinner, an American anthropologist, wrote a *Report on the Chinese in Southeast Asia, December 1950* (1951) and more than a decade later, Charles Patrick Fitzgerald, an Australian scholar, published *The Third China: The Chinese Communities in South-East Asia* (1969). The Ya Yin Kwan Collection also has other English and Chinese titles on Chinese communities in other Southeast Asian countries.

In particular, the Ya Yin Kwan Collection has quite a number of Japanese titles that were published in the 1930s and 1940s. These focus mainly on the Chinese in Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian studies. In one of the Chinese articles written by him, Tan Yeok Seong gave a very comprehensive overview of early Japanese studies on the Chinese in Southeast Asia. He also mentioned that some of the Japanese titles in the Ya Yin Kwan collection could no longer be easily found in Japan.<sup>10</sup>

These titles are just a drop in the ocean of information waiting to be rediscovered in the Ya Yin Kwan Collection. Members of the public may view the Ya Yin Kwan Collection located on Level 10 of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library, during the library's opening hours. Those wishing to consult the collection may approach the staff at the Information Counter on Level 11. The collection is to be used within the library's premises.

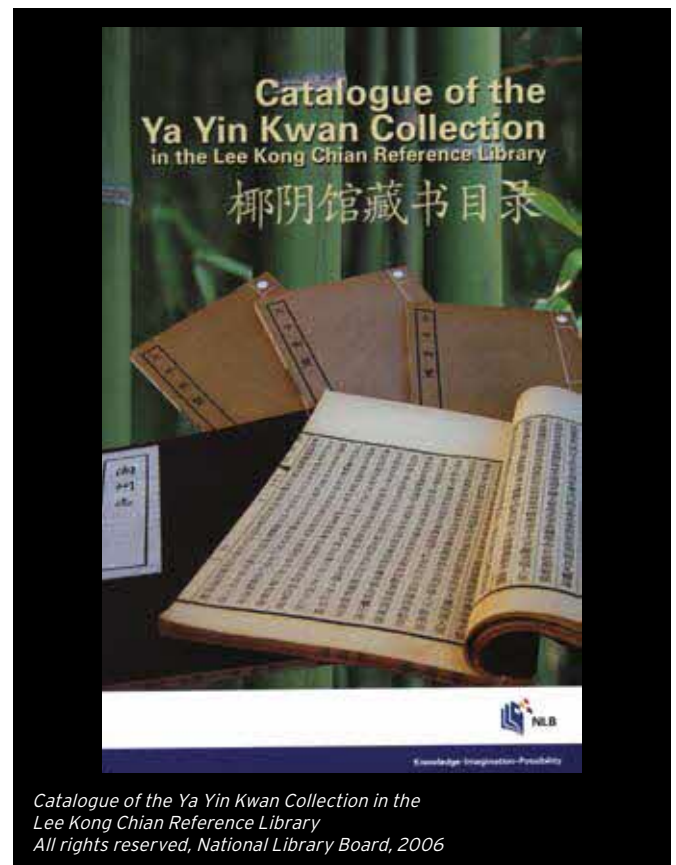
Researchers interested in this collection can also request for a copy of the *Catalogue of the Ya Yin Kwan Collection in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library* from the Level 11 Information Counter.



(Clockwise from top)  
*Sources for Historical Research in Malaya*

*Handbook of the Netherlands East-Indies, 1920*  
 All rights reserved, Netherlands East Indies. Dept. of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, 1920-1930

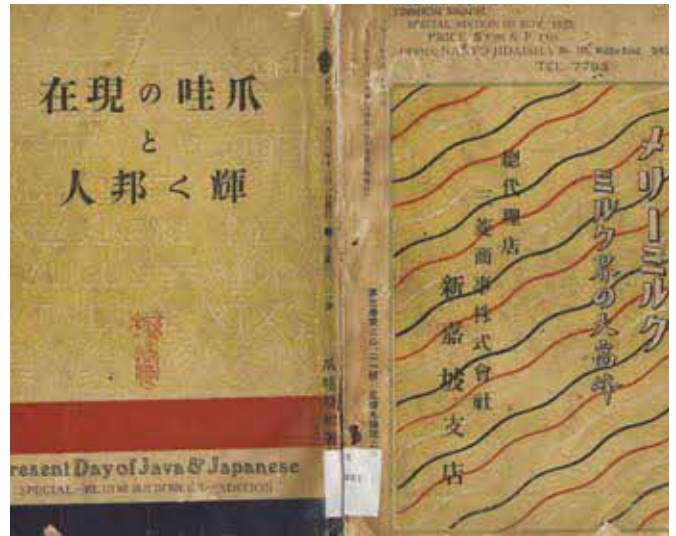
*Ancient South-east Asian Warfare*  
 All rights reserved, Quaritch, 1952



*Catalogue of the Ya Yin Kwan Collection in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library*  
 All rights reserved, National Library Board, 2006



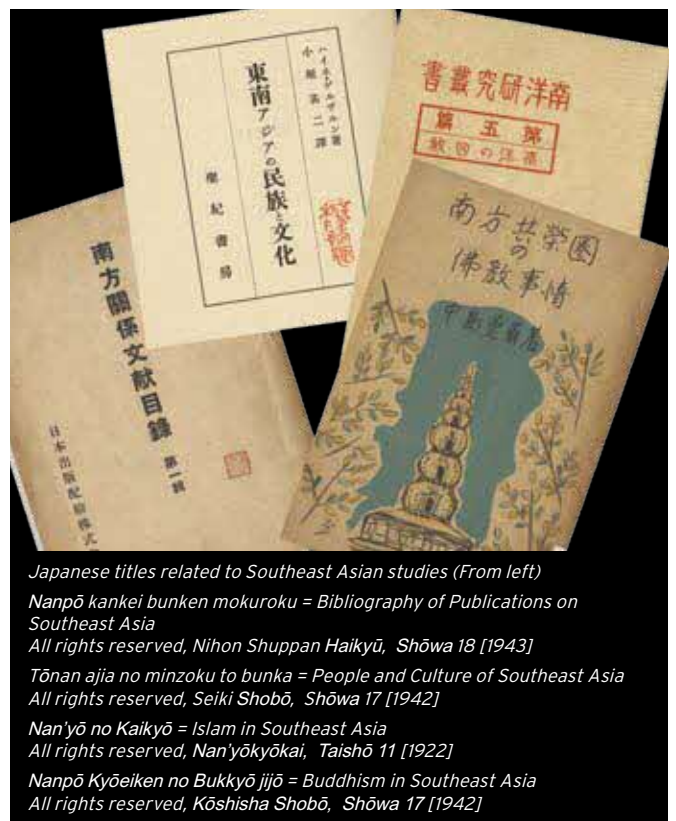
(From left)  
Japanese titles related to Southeast Asian Chinese (From left to right)  
*Tōa kyōeiken to Nan'yō Kakyō = Greater East Asia Co-Prospersity Sphere and the Southeast Asian Chinese Overseas*  
All rights reserved, Tōkō Shoin, Shōwa 16 [1941]  
*Nan'yō to Kakyō = Southeast Asia and the Chinese overseas*  
All rights reserved, Sanseidō, Shōwa 18 [1943]



Japanese title published in Singapore  
Reproduced from *Jawa no genzai to kagayaku hōjin = Present Day of Java & Japanese*  
All rights reserved, Nan'yō Jidaisha, 1932



Japanese title published in Singapore  
Reproduced from *Nan'yō jūyō bussan = Products of South Sea Islands*  
All rights reserved, Nikka Kōshi, Shōwa 14 [1939]



Japanese titles related to Southeast Asian studies (From left)  
*Nanpō kankei bunkan mokuroku = Bibliography of Publications on Southeast Asia*  
All rights reserved, Nihon Shuppan Haikyū, Shōwa 18 [1943]  
*Tōnan ajia no minzoku to bunka = People and Culture of Southeast Asia*  
All rights reserved, Seiki Shobō, Shōwa 17 [1942]  
*Nan'yō no Kaikyō = Islam in Southeast Asia*  
All rights reserved, Nan'yōkyōkai, Taishō 11 [1922]  
*Nanpō Kyōeiken no Bukkyō jijō = Buddhism in Southeast Asia*  
All rights reserved, Kōshisha Shobō, Shōwa 17 [1942]

## ENDNOTES

1. (8月29日1964年). 国家图书馆扩充中: 东南亚资料馆开幕. 星洲日报, 第8页.
2. For more details, please refer to article 'The life of Tan Yeok Seong' by Alex Tan T. H. in Catalogue of the Ya Yin Kwan Collection in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library.
3. This is a collection of more than one hundred articles on history, education, personalities, forewords for books and poetry, written by Tan Yeok Seong. Majority of them are in Chinese, with a small number in English.
4. 朱孟香. (4月5日1984年). 为文化教育贡献心力—记陈育崧先生. 联合早报, 第3页.
5. (15 August 1969). Old China that tells a story. *The Straits Times*, p. 6.
6. (30 June 1981). Islamic porcelain unique to this region. *The Straits Times*, Section Two, p. 1.
7. Sim, Victor (Ed.). (1950). *Biographies of prominent Chinese in Singapore*. Singapore: Nan Kok Pub., p. 62.
8. Teo, Han Wue. (5 April 1984). History lives for him. *The Straits Times*. Section Three, p. 2.
9. For a Chinese write-up of Tan Yeok Seong and his Ya Yin Kwan Collection, please refer to Jane Wee's article, 陈育崧先生与椰阴馆藏, in *BiblioAsia*, 2(1), April 2006, pp. 22-23.
10. 陈育崧. 日本的华侨研究蠡测, 自陈育崧(1983). 椰阴馆藏文存 = Collected writings from the Ya-yin studio. 新加坡: 南洋学会., 第205-211页.

# 邓小平与新加坡经验



by VICKY GAO

Senior Librarian  
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library  
National Library

高小行

高级参考与研究馆员  
李光前参考图书馆

## 前言

不同的时期，中国领导人对于新加坡经验和新加坡模式有不同的侧重点。从1978年邓小平访问新加坡，标志着中国领导层与新加坡交流取经的开始，1992年邓小平南巡提到的借鉴新加坡管理经验，到江泽民、胡锦涛接任后所关注的廉洁高效的行政管理体制和城市建设等课题，多年来，新加坡经验备受中国关注，大批的中高级官员源源不断地被派到新加坡考察、学习和培训。

一个国家的发展和进步是与其领袖的思想转变为标志的。今天，当我们关注中国改革开放31年所取得的辉煌成就时，重温邓小平对于新加坡经验的思考和谈话，将有助于我们从历史的角度去了解中国改革开放的进程以及新加坡经验对于中国改革开放的启动和推进所起到的重要作用。



1978年11月，中国副总理邓小平莅临新加坡访问，李光耀总理亲自到巴耶利峇机场迎接。  
资料来源：《庆祝新加坡-中国建交十周年纪念特刊》  
版权所有：新加坡新中友好协会，中国中新友好协会，2000

## 1978年: 邓小平访问新加坡

1978年是中国历史上具有开创意义的一年，这一年，中国开始打开国门，对外开放。作为中国改革开放总设计师的邓小平在这一年进行了一系列的出访，了解外面的世界。

1978年11月12日，74岁的邓小平来到新加坡，亲眼见识了新兴工业化国家新加坡的崛起。



中国代表团同新加坡政府代表团在总统府会谈  
资料来源:《李光耀回忆录-1965-2000》  
版权所有: 世界书局, 2000

在《李光耀回忆录-1965-2000》一书中,李光耀回忆了1978年他与邓小平会面的一段难忘的经历。

### 李光耀回忆录—1965·2000

**同**中国副总理邓小平会面是一次难忘的经历。1978年11月，这位高龄74岁，矮小精悍、敏捷硬朗，不到五英尺高的长者，身穿米色毛装，从巴耶利峇机场的一架波音707客机上走下来。他脚步轻快，检阅了仪仗队之后，同我一起乘车到总统府的宾馆去。那是我们总统府里的迎宾别墅。当天下午，我们在内阁会议室进行正式会谈。

我看过人民大会堂里摆放着痰盂，所以也安排把一个蓝白色的瓷痰盂摆在邓小平的座位旁。我读过资料知道他有使用痰盂的习惯。虽然总统府里有个规定，冷气房里不准抽烟，我还是特地在显眼的地方为他摆了个烟灰缸。这都是为中国历史上一个伟大的人物而准备的。我也确保内阁会议室里的排气风扇都开着。

资料来源:《李光耀回忆录-1965-2000》  
版权所有: 新加坡联合早报, 2000

根据《邓小平年谱:一九七五 - 一九九七》(上卷)一书介绍,在新加坡期间,邓小平到新加坡住房和发展局(即今新加坡建屋发展局)听取了关于公共住房计划情况的介绍,并登上该局二十二层办公大厦的顶层,瞭望周围一幢幢新建成的公共住房。邓小平询问了新加坡每年住房建筑的总面积和其他有关问题,在得悉新加坡总共有三万名技术人员和工人从事住房建筑的情况后说,新加坡的建筑机械化程度高。



版权所有: 中共中央文献研究室编, 2004

邓小平也到裕廊工业区,听取了裕廊镇管理局的介绍,并登上五层楼高的瞭望塔,鸟瞰这个新加坡最大的工业区。新加坡以这个工业区为基地,提出面向出口的工业化战略,走跨国公司投资为主的发展道路。时至今日,裕廊工业区依然保持着旺盛的活力,其发展模式是中国各地的开发区借鉴和模仿的对象。



邓小平于1978年11月13日在裕廊镇山顶种植一棵象征友谊与和平的海苹果树。  
资料来源:《庆祝新加坡-中国建交十周年纪念特刊》  
版权所有: 新加坡新中友好协会, 中国中新友好协会, 2000

新加坡之行让邓小平十分赞赏新加坡引进外资的成功经验。李光耀在其回忆录中有以下文字纪录:

几个星期后,有人把北京《人民日报》刊登的有关新加坡的文章拿给我看,报道的路线改变了,纷纷把新加坡形容为一个花园城市,说这里的绿化、公共住房和旅游业都值得考察研究。我们不再是“美国帝国主义的走狗”。他们对新加坡的观感到了第二年,也就是1979年10月,再进一步改变。当时,邓小平在一次演讲中说:“我到新加坡去考察他们怎么利用外资,新加坡从外国人所设的工厂中获益。首先,外国企业根据净利所交的35%税额归国家所有;第二,劳动收入都归工人;第三,外国投资带动了服务业。这些都是(国家的)收入。”他在1978年所看到的新加坡,为中国人要争取的最基本的成就提供了一个参考标准。

资料来源:《李光耀回忆录-1965-2000》  
版权所有: 新加坡联合早报, 2000

## 1992年: 邓小平南巡讲话关于借鉴新加坡经验

1992年1月28日至2月21日, 88岁高龄的邓小平从北京南下, 先后到武昌、深圳、珠海和上海等地视察, 沿途作了一系列重要讲话, 通称南巡讲话。邓小平的南巡讲话被认为是中国改革开放发展史上重要的里程碑, 对90年代中国新一轮的改革开放起到了非常关键的推动作用。

新加坡国家图书馆的中文馆藏《邓小平文选》(第三卷)、《邓小平评历史》(第二卷)、《邓小平与改革开放的起步》、《党和国家重大决策的历程》(下卷)和《李光耀回忆录-1965·2000》都有提到邓小平南巡时关于学习新加坡那段著名的话:

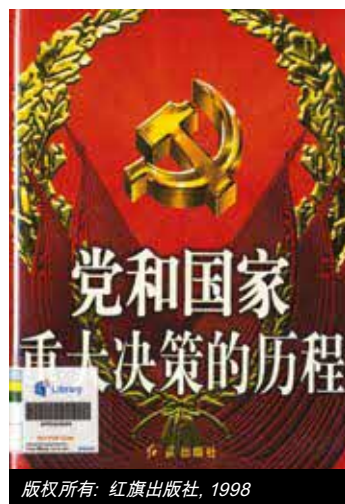
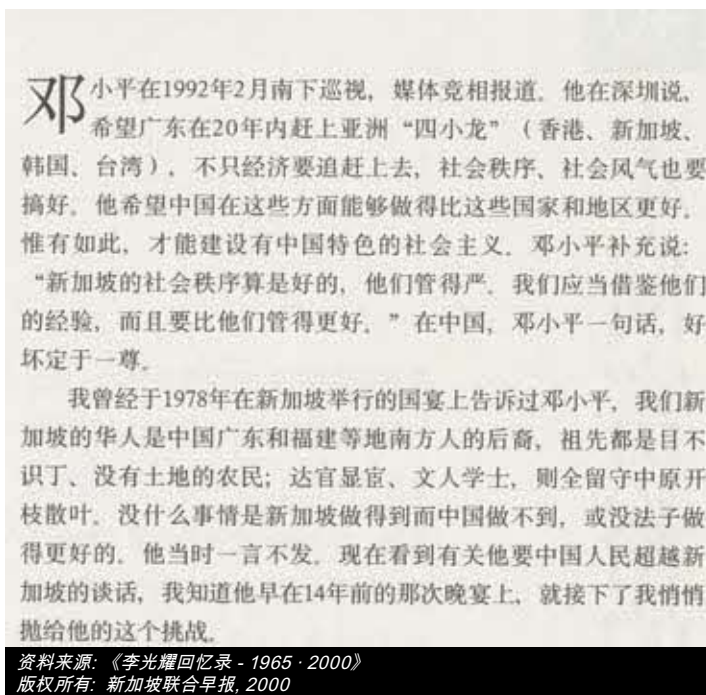
“新加坡的社会秩序算是好的, 他们管得严, 我们应当借鉴他们的经验, 而且比他们管得更好。”

### 结束语

读者若想进一步了解当代中国在社会、经济、政治、文化等方面的发展, 可到位于李光前参考图书馆九楼的中文资料馆藏部参阅最新出版的参考书及期刊。为了方便读者, 新加坡国家图书馆也提供中文参考咨询服务, 协助读者检索各类中文资料。有兴趣的读者, 可将问题电邮到 [ref@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:ref@nlb.gov.sg) 或发送手机简讯到 91787792。

### SUMMARY

Many library patrons have expressed interest in obtaining information concerning Deng Xiaoping and his visit to Singapore in 1978. This article seeks to address this by highlighting some of the books and resources available at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library's Chinese Collection. For further enquiries, please email Reference Point at [ref@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:ref@nlb.gov.sg) or send an SMS to 91787792. Reference Point is a remote reference enquiry service provided by the National Library Singapore.



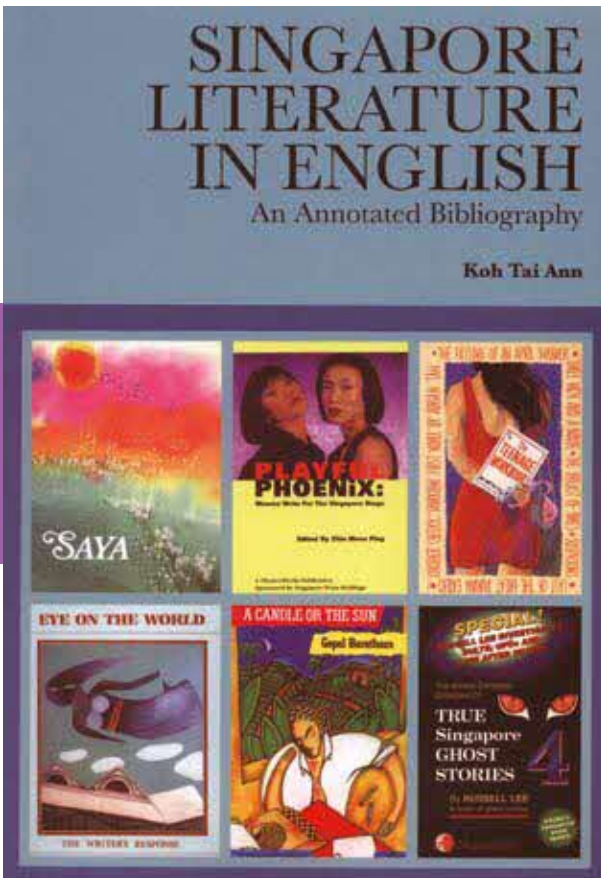
## Book Review

# Singapore English Literature



by CHENG U WEN LENA

Former Librarian and  
Retired Publisher/Bookseller



Koh Tai Ann, Compiler and Editor. Singapore, A joint publication by National Library Board Singapore and Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University. Singapore. 2008. 280p.

*Singapore Literature in English: An Annotated Bibliography*, compiled and edited by Koh Tai Ann, is a welcome and long-awaited reference tool that writers, readers and teachers of literature as well as academics, researchers, librarians, book traders and the general public, will find useful, in different ways.

This bibliography lists altogether 1,204 annotated entries and is published in a handsome volume of 280 pages. Bibliographic entries are arranged by literary genre such as: novels, short stories, poetry, drama, anthologies and miscellaneous. Next come sections arranged by form, such as: periodicals, electronic journals and author biographies. Finally, there are two separate author and title indexes.

To me this bibliography is outstanding in several ways:

- The compiler-editor herself states in the introduction: "This is the first annotated and most comprehensive bibliography to date of the entire body of "Singapore literature in English".
- Scope and coverage of the bibliography and the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of authors and works are clearly

delineated and vigorously applied.

- The bibliography shows in-depth subject knowledge and appreciation of the materials selected.
- The user-friendly arrangement allows for multiple entry points for bibliographic searches.
- Finally, there are unexpected bonuses.

### COMPREHENSIVENESS

This is the first bibliography to adopt the more inclusive term "Singapore literature" instead of "creative writing" or "critical writing" of the seven earlier bibliographies published between 1976 and 2000. This is significant as Koh Tai Ann, the compiler-editor, clarifies that there is now a considerable body of literature that can be identified as Singapore literature and not just "creative writing" by beginner writers. Comprehensiveness is also achieved as selection of entries is non-prescriptive and no literary criticism is applied. So long as writing is imaginative or "creative" and falls under any of the literary genre, for example, short story, novel, poetry, etc, it is included.

### SCOPE, COVERAGE AND SELECTIVITY

In the Introduction, Koh Tai Ann describes in great detail the scope and coverage that delineate the bibliography, as well as the criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Writers who are Singaporean by birth and citizenship, or are permanent residents are included. If political identity is not known, but the book is set in Singapore – the work is included. “Diasporic” writers are excluded if they have been “claimed” by the countries of their adoption. Exceptions to this rule are made for authors such as Goh Poh Seng, who have a considerable body of works before they emigrated, or who, like Ho Ming Fong, have received awards and have maintained literary ties in Singapore. Works excluded are: literary essays and criticism, non-fiction works like biographies and autobiographies, children’s books, humour, and works in English translation. December 2007 is the cut-off date.

### IN-DEPTH SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE

This bibliography has the rare combination of a compiler-editor who is also a professor of English literature who has extensive experience in teaching and writing about the materials that are selected. In addition, a team of experienced librarians and bibliographers assists her. Users of this bibliography will no doubt benefit from the literary comments that are embedded in the notes.

For example, in Goh Poh Seng’s *If We Dream Too Long* (Entry #60, p.29), the Notes state that this title is “considered to be Singapore’s first ‘serious’ novel in English.” It won the National Book Development Council of Singapore Award (for Fiction), 1976, and is translated into Russian, Tagalog and Japanese.

Another example, *The Straits Chinese Magazine: A Quarterly Journal of Oriental and Occidental Culture* (Entry #1187, p.229). The Notes explain that the editors Lim Boon Keng and Song Ong Siang published the magazine “as an avenue of expression for non-Europeans in the then British colony of Singapore.” It became defunct after 11 issues [1897-1907]. The short stories in the magazine are the earliest published fiction in English in Singapore. They have been compiled by Philip Holden with an Introduction at <http://www.scholars.news.edu.sg/resources/scminindex.html>.

Ho Minfong’s *Sing to the Dawn* merits six entries (Entry #88-93, p.34-35) for different editions. The Notes provide details of the book’s many achievements. The book was first published in 1976 in the United States where it won the first prize awarded by the Council of Interracial Books for Children Book Awards. Subsequently it was republished in Singapore and has since been adopted as a school literary text. In 1996, it was adapted for a musical by Stephen Clark and Dick Lee for the Singapore Festival of Arts. In 2008, Raintree Pictures made an animated film based on the book. Kwoncjian Ho, the illustrator of the first edition, is credited.

From such insightful Notes, one catches glimpses of Singapore’s literary history, as well as the success and literary significance of individual works.

### USER FRIENDLY ARRANGEMENT

This is a user friendly bibliography as it provides several points of entry for the user to search for information. The main body of the bibliography is classified by literary genre and by form. This arrangement allows the user to make a quick estimate that, say,

short story writing is the most popular literary form, followed by novels. However, one also needs to note that this may be due to the “padding up” by Russell Lee and Pugelenthi Sr., two prolific ghost story writers.

The Author Index and the Title Index give the user two additional entry points for information searches. The Author Index allows the user to ascertain the spread of an author’s work across literary genre. The provision of National Library call numbers provides instant accessibility to the titles required.

### UNEXPECTED BONUS

This bibliography provides many features that one does not normally expect to find in works of this kind. These surprise “gifts”, will no doubt be appreciated by users, and will save researchers hours of tedious information gathering.

In addition to the “Abstract”, “Notes” and “Contents” are provided where necessary. Abstracts summarise the key contents of a work, whereas “Notes” provide additional information about the author and the work, for example, what literary prizes were awarded, whether adapted for theatre or television or selected for school adoption; where and when the play was performed. “Contents” list the individual authors and titles that are found in a particular collection of Short Stories or Anthology. Student and first-time writers will probably appreciate this feature, as this is where they are likely to see, for the first time, their names in print.

The bibliography also lists unpublished works, drafts and working copies of theatre scripts, sometimes even with director’s notations. Also included are ephemera (or “fugitive material” in library jargon), some of which are from the compiler’s personal collection. These are mostly printed programmes of public readings by poets and authors.

In keeping with current technological developments, provision is made for inclusion of sections on: Electronic journals and Internet Sources. Finally, full-colour illustrations of selected book covers give added colour to the bibliography

Bibliographies are normally not meant to be read. However, for the purpose of writing this book review, I have had to scan and read this work more diligently. I have found the task more enjoyable and rewarding than anticipated. As a long time librarian and bookseller/publisher (1960-2004), I have discovered many titles I did not know existed. Hence we need to be aware that the computer revolution has “democratised” the printing and publishing industry. Today, anyone who can master the keyboard and mouse can self-publish. Such works, though published, are unfortunately, harder to locate, for want of a hospitable distribution channel. It also deserves to be priced and sold, as this sometimes facilitates its dissemination. While it is evident that the bibliography is compiled based essentially on the collection at the National Library of Singapore, this important bibliographic process needs to be clearly stated.

To me, this bibliography is a MUST for every library, large or small. I congratulate Koh Tai Ann, the compiler-editor, and her team of librarians for a highly professional piece of work, and the National Library Board and NTU Centre for Liberal Arts and social Sciences for their vision in sponsoring this publication.

This bibliography is available upon request from the Level 11 Information Counter of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library.

# Early Travels and Voyages in Southeast Asia Showcase Exhibition



by ONG ENG CHUAN

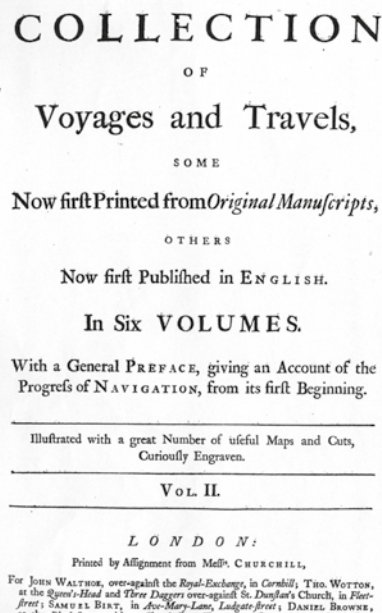
Associate Librarian  
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library  
National Library

The Rare Materials Collection at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library forms part of the Singapore and Southeast Asian Collections. It contains the rarest, most interesting or significant items relating to the history of Singapore and Southeast Asia dating as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The collection contributes to an impressive representation of Southeast Asian cultural heritage throughout the centuries.

This exhibition *Early Travels and Voyages in Southeast Asia* is the second in a series of exhibitions on *Impressions of Early Singapore* that aims to highlight some of the many treasures that are found among the more than 2,000 titles in the Rare Materials Collection. It tells the story of voyages and travels as narrated by the early voyagers themselves or transcribed from their journals. The exhibition also chronicles the accounts of voyages to the region by early European and other voyagers culminating in the founding of modern Singapore.

The first travellers who traversed the Southeast Asian seas and the adjoining Indian Ocean were Arab and Indian traders who transported precious commodities, especially spices from the Spice Islands to ports in India for sending by overland transport to Europe where they were highly valued. From the east came the Chinese traders who brought with them wares from China. Thus trade routes had been established in the Southeast Asian region from time immemorial. As Singapore lies at the crossroads between East Asia and South Asia and the eastern part of the East Indies, voyagers travelling between these regions would have passed by Singapore using the Singapore Strait.

The first voyage round the world was attributed to the Portuguese voyager Ferdinand Magellan, who started his epic voyage in 1519. While Magellan was on his circumnavigation, exploratory voyages were also being made by the Portuguese to find a way to the East Indies by going round Africa. In 1488, Bartolomeu Diaz



First published in 1704, this six-volume work includes the translations of voyages published in various European countries tracing the expeditions of explorers from Columbus to Captain John Smith. Essays include adventures and accounts of Asian countries in the 17<sup>th</sup> century including China, the Philippines and the East Indies.

Churchill, A., & Churchill, J. (1732). *A collection of voyages and travels, some now first printed from original manuscripts, others now first published in English.* London: J. Walthoe.

Call no.: RRARE 910.8 CHU v. 1 - 6  
Microfilm no.: NL25456 - NL25461  
(Vols. 1 - 6)



The city of Palembang



Translated from the Dutch explorer Linschoten's *Itinerario: Voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huyghen van Linschoten naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien, 1579-1592*, originally published in 1596. Linschoten's *Itinerario* is considered the most important work on the East Indies at that time. It was an essential reference for navigators in the East Indies seas having been translated into other European languages as well. In particular, it greatly stimulated Dutch and English expansions in Asia.

Linschoten, J. H. van. (1598). *John Hvighen van Linschoten, his discours of voyages unto ye Estate & West Indies*. London: Printed by Iohn Wolfe, printer to y Honorable Cittie of London.

Call no.: RSING 910.4 LIN  
Microfilm no.: NL8024

## ZIEKE REIZIGER,

RAMBLES IN JAVA

AND THE STRAITS.

IN 1852.

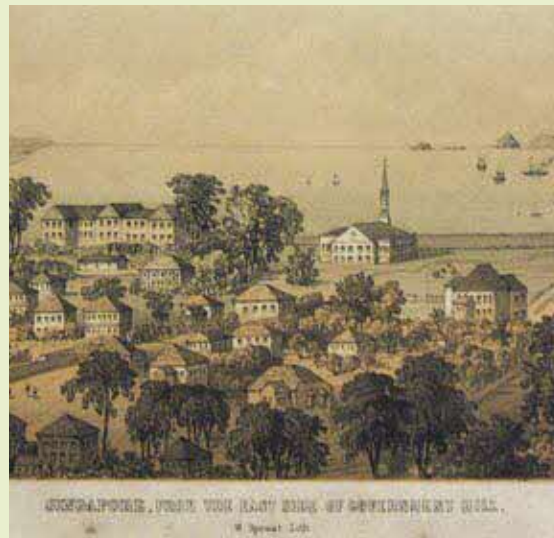
BY A BENGAL CIVILIAN.

With Illustrations.

LONDON:  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.,  
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

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Written by a "Bengal civilian" (Charles Walter Kinloch) who visited Singapore en route from Calcutta to Samarang in Java to recuperate from an illness. The book, written from a diary kept by the author during his trip, gives details of his travels in Java and the Strait of Malacca in 1852. Of Singapore, he observes that "the merchants, who form by far the largest section of the community, seem to look upon money-making as the chief object of their lives, and their topics of conversation rarely extend to any other subject than that of nutmegs or the last price current."

*De Zieke reiziger or, Rambles in Java and the Straits in 1852*. (1853). London: Simpkin Marshall.

Call no.: RRARE 959.82 ZIE  
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discovered the south coast of Africa, and in 1497, Vasco da Gama was sent out to lead the first Portuguese voyage to India. The success of his expedition paved the way for the Portuguese to extend their influence to India, the East Indies and beyond and for the other Europeans to explore the Indian Ocean.

The half-century between 1500 and 1550 saw the Portuguese establish control over the sea routes and trading ports of the Indian Ocean; reach the source of the oriental spice trade, and establish relations with China and Japan. Malacca, which was the most important port on the route from India to Indonesia and China, was conquered in 1511. Its conquest enabled the Portuguese to take control of a large part of the trade on this route.

Portugal's dominance of trade continued until its western European rivals finally challenged it in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. With the weakening of the Portuguese and Spanish naval powers, the English, French and the Dutch started to send ships on voyages to the East Indies.

In 1595, Cornelius Houtman steered Dutch ships to the East Indies and started the Dutch spice trade. Three years later, the Dutch were established at Java and at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup>

century, the British and the Dutch soon formed their respective "East India Company" to establish trade routes as well as discover new lands and to take over some of the lucrative trade controlled by Portugal and Spain.

Before the founding of Singapore, the island would have seen many visitors due to its strategic location along the trade routes, its proximity to other settlements and the presence of the Europeans in the East Indies. However, there were no significant accounts of visits to the island in the published narratives that proliferated from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. It was only after the island was founded that there were accounts of visits to the island.

After Raffles officially claimed the island on behalf of the British, it thrived as a trading port and many accounts were published of voyages and travels made to the island. These usually described the physical features, climate and port of the island.

Members of the public are invited to view the exhibition on *Early Travels and Voyages in Southeast Asia* on Level 10, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library from 25 March to 24 September 2009.

# Heritage Road Show IV Commemorates 50 Years of Singapore's Self-governance



by NURULHUDA BINTE SUBAHAN

Associate I  
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National Library Board



The many adversities in our lives, the day-to-day challenges that we face, are most often, unknowingly the source of our strengths. We draw courage from learning how to handle our fears. We build wisdom from the lessons that life has to give and the mistakes that we make. Life's curve balls may shake us with disappointments. Ironically, these setbacks

can surprisingly pave for us the way to success.

The former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, was imprisoned 27 years for the anti-apartheid cause that he believed in before his nation-building efforts towards the implementation of multi-racial democracy in South Africa was eventually recognised.

Singaporean merchant and philanthropist Tan Tock Seng, originally from Malacca, relocated to Singapore after which he became a successful businessman. He contributed his wealth to the construction of Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Today, the hospital is still standing strong and serving the needs of the nation's population.

Fighting for the right to live became a main mission in life when Singapore was faced with the grim situation of war during the Japanese Occupation from 1942 to 1945. The difficulty of getting sufficient food supply forced many to rely on tapioca plants for their main source of carbohydrate while religious buildings like mosques, churches and synagogues became a refuge from the brutality of bombings. Needless to say, the situation at that time forced the multi-ethnic society of Singapore to come together to battle not only the Japanese but also our former colonial masters, the British. By coming to terms with our own identity as unique citizens of Singapore, we achieved the right to self-government in 1959 before gaining full independence in 1965.

Our forefathers journeyed across the oceans and continents with a dream of building a better future in a faraway island that they barely knew – an island that is now known as Singapore. Today, this "faraway island" that they had set their eyes on remains as a small dot on the world map, equally vulnerable and fragile. However, this small island has weathered the storms of global recession, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), terrorism, bird flu and recently, the H1N1 flu virus and the economic recession. Still, it's too early to tell if there are many more that this small nation has to face in the future.

While weathering the unpredictable global economic climate, it is sometimes important and helpful for us to look inwards and trace back our sources of strength and inspiration to help us pull through the tough times.

The nation-building stories of this small nation started in 1959 when granted self-government by the British and the story of our success continues till today.

There are many more inspiring stories that we can draw from the unsung heroes of Singapore. Stories of courage and the memories that people hold on to, while being part of significant nation-building efforts make Singapore's unique history pieced together. This includes memories of establishing Singapore's National Library to what it is today. Once, due to lack of funds, Mrs Hedwig Anuar who was director of the National Library from 1965 to 1988, recalls having to mobilise 50 library staff to form a human chain to transfer the books when the National Library was being relocated.

This year's Heritage Road Show traces the journey of Singapore's history from 1959 till 2009 based on the personal recollections of Singapore memories that the man in the street has to share.

Our national anthem "Majulah Singapura", which means "Onward Singapore" when translated to English, was selected as the nation's anthem when Singapore attained self-government in 1959. Symbolising Singapore's rootedness to our identity, the same anthem has been sung for 50 years from 1959 till today, with tune and lyrics remaining unchanged in spite of the progress that Singapore has made through the years.

Perhaps, to reflect back, we ought to remind ourselves of our aspirations from the translated lyrics of our anthem and help us recall those personal stories that we can share at this year's road show.

*Come, fellow Singaporeans  
Let us progress towards happiness together  
May our noble aspiration bring  
Singapore success  
Come, let us unite  
In a new spirit  
Let our voices soar as one  
Onward Singapore  
(Excerpts from "Majulah Singapura")*

# Upcoming Heritage Road Show Events

## Photography Workshop: Changing Landscapes of Singapore

Saturday, 4 July 2009

10.00 am - 12.00 noon

Level 16, POD, National Library

Present today, gone tomorrow. As the rapid landscape changes and Singapore undergoes economic development, familiar buildings of today may some day make way for newer and more sophisticated buildings. Capturing the life and spirit of Singapore in this moment is what this workshop aims to do as today's masterpiece becomes tomorrow's treasure.

Themed to Singapore's 50 years history since its self-governance in 1959, the National Library Singapore invites the public to participate in our photography workshop led by professional photographer, Chris Yap. Aimed at capturing memories of Singapore from 1959 to 2009, Chris will guide photographers on how they can capture images of significant people, places and landmarks to illustrate their memories of Singapore.

Following the workshop, participants will also be encouraged to submit their photographs for a photography competition that will be held as part of the road show.

Due to limited seats, registration is required and can be made via <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101'.

## Changing Landscapes of Singapore Photography Competition

The National Library Singapore is going on a hunt for photographs that best capture the changing landscapes of Singapore via its people, places and landmarks. As part of celebrating Singapore's 50 years of self-governance, we are looking for photographs which illustrate the life and spirit of Singapore that are constantly changing and are at risk of being lost due to modernisation and globalisation. Interested individuals can submit their photographs as solo contestants or pair up with other individuals. Participants are to submit 24 of their best photographs, taken over a continuous period of 24 hours and include their personal stories of not more than 150 words to explain their choice of photographs and the memories of Singapore associated with it. Closing date for all submissions is 12 July 2009.

What's more, we're giving out up to \$5,000 worth of fabulous prizes! For more details, log on to <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101' for more details.

## Singapore Anthem 101

Saturday, 22 August 2009

12.00 - 2.00 pm

Level 16, POD, National Library

It has been 50 years since Singapore's national anthem "Majulah Singapura" (Onward Singapore) was first played. Till today, the song is symbolic of Singapore's self-governance.

Singapore Anthem 101 reveals the success story behind Singapore's national anthem. Showcasing the memories and political landscapes that influenced the composing of the national anthem, the talk will cover the selection and song composition process that its composer Zubir Said went through before his composition was eventually picked as the nation's official national anthem. Anecdotes of Zubir Said's life and personal stories and memories of his musical achievements will also be highlighted.

Due to limited seats, registration is required and can be made via <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101'.

## Grandmother's Storeroom: The Archaeology of Your Family

Saturday, 4 July 2009

2.00 - 4.00 pm

Level 16, POD, National Library

Remember that moth-eaten battered suitcase that used to sit under the bed? How about that ceramic dish with tacky floral prints? Recall that toothpaste did not always come in a tube? Was toothpaste the preferred oral cleaning agent in the first place? Strange as it may seem, the relatively short period of a decade or a quarter century has removed much from the living memory, yet there are many, when prompted, who can still vividly recall the not-so-distant past.

Join archaeologist Lim Chen Sian as he takes you on a trail of discovering artefacts, the past and lost memories of your own family! Grandmother's Storeroom is a fun-filled workshop for anyone (in particular the parent and child) to explore and uncover his own family history through artefacts found beneath the dust in the family or grandmother's storeroom. Archaeology isn't just for crusty old fogies poking about in the dirt. Be enthralled as you investigate the odd bits and curios found within your own home!

The workshop includes a slide lecture on archaeological research, archaeological recording sheets, "Storeroom Archaeology Booklet", and instructor's demonstration kits/trunks.

Due to limited seats, registration is required and can be made via <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101'.

## I Remember Singapore

Do you remember having a meal at the famous Satay Club at the old Esplanade and have nostalgic stories to tell and pictures to show? Were you or any of your family members enlisted in the first ever National Service call in 1967?

We would love to hear your stories and have your pictures as part of our heritage road show this year!

To submit your photographs and stories and obtain more details, log on to <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101' for more details. Lucky winners stand a chance to win up to \$5,000 cash!

## AsPI Singapore 1960s

Sunday, 23 August 2009

3.00 - 9.00 pm

Level 1, Reception Counter, National Library

Themed to Singapore in the 1960s, this special edition of AsPI will guide participants through a series of immersive experiences beginning from the time when Singapore attained its independence in 1965.

Experience Singapore's dying breed of cultural performers doing the Malay Bangsawan and hop on a trail to some of Singapore's historical landmarks that witnessed Singapore's countless transformations. Hear for yourself the humbling experiences of our pioneers who contributed extensively and significantly to Singapore's rapid development to what it is today.

Due to limited seats, registration is required. Please email [Nurulhuda\\_SUBAHAN@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:Nurulhuda_SUBAHAN@nlb.gov.sg) with your name, designation and organisation.

# Legal Deposit Showcase Heightens Public Awareness



by SHARMINI CHELLAPANDI

Senior Librarian  
National Library Office  
National Library Board

The National Library Board (NLB) is the deposit library for all publications printed and published in Singapore. This practice started from as early as 1835 with the Indian Act XI, followed by the Book Registration Ordinance of 1885, the Raffles National Library Ordinance in April 1958 and the Printers and Publishers Act of 1970. From 1995, legal deposit has been mandated under the National Library Board Act.

Through legal deposit by publishers, the Library collects and safeguards the documentary heritage of Singapore, and makes it forever accessible to readers, researchers and agencies interested in these works.

## LEGAL DEPOSIT

Under the NLB Act of 1995, two copies of all print and non-print library materials that are "produced and released in Singapore for sale or public distribution" must be deposited with NLB.

Legal deposit applies to all individuals and organisations such as commercial publishers, corporations, government departments and agencies, educational and academic institutions, associations, societies, clubs and religious bodies which publish their materials in Singapore and make them available for sale or public distribution.

One of the strategies to develop a more comprehensive national collection of locally published materials is to create awareness particularly among the publishing community about legal deposit, which is quite diverse and represents varied formats. In addition, with new technology and new media, there is a growing trend towards self-publishing and many in this new group of ad-hoc publishers are unaware of their legal deposit obligations.

## THE LEGAL DEPOSIT SHOWCASE – CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT LEGAL DEPOSIT

### i. Deposit Web

In November 2007, a one-stop and user-friendly online portal, *Deposit Web*, was launched to encourage publishers to apply for book, music and serial International Standard Numbers (ISBN, ISMN and ISSN), apply for Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data, submit legal deposit materials online and voluntarily deposit electronic materials.

One of the main objectives of this portal is to create awareness on voluntary deposit. NLB has organised several seminars for government agencies, private organisations and commercial



Snapshot of Deposit Web (<http://deposit.nl.sg>)

publishers to discuss the importance and framework of a voluntary deposit scheme for electronic publications prior to changes in legislation. Although there is no legal obligation on Singapore publishers to comply with the scheme, they are encouraged to support this objective of preserving Singapore's digital heritage. The Deposit Web thus provides an outlet for the National Library to adopt an interim measure to collect such publications.

Benefits of Deposit Web:

- Controlled and secured network;
- Personalised account for every Singapore publisher;
- One-stop portal to meet the needs of publishers;
- Consolidated listing of applications and publications for each publisher; and
- Information on latest updates and developments.



#### ii. DNet©

Publishers who actively deposit or donate their materials to the National Library will qualify for and get to enjoy the privileges offered as part of the Deposit Network, or DNet©.

DNet© is a network that acknowledges publishers, organisations, donors and

content developers (such as authors, music composers and self-publishers) that actively deposit and donate their materials with the National Library Singapore.

To enjoy the benefits of DNet©, publishers need only to be active

in depositing or donating their materials to the National Library.

- DNet© benefits include:
  - Professional preservation care and conservation services
- for their donated materials;
  - Rental discounts for the use of the National Library's facilities
- for events;
- Special invitations to exclusive library and networking events; and
- Opportunities for materials to be showcased in the National Library's physical or virtual exhibitions.

DNet© was launched in August 2008 at the first Legal Deposit Showcase in conjunction with the launch of the ISMN and was well attended by music producers and publishers. In its inaugural year, a total of 54 publishers, agencies and content producers joined DNet©.

Following the inaugural Legal Deposit Showcase in August 2008, a second seminar was held on 30 March 2009 at the Pod, National Library Singapore. The session elaborated on the scheme and benefits of Deposit Web and DNet© and also highlighted the legal and other regulatory services under the National Library Singapore.

Both the Deposit Web portal and DNet© are examples of online collaborative platforms that have facilitated NLB's efforts in meeting its legal obligations. More information about the Deposit Web and DNet© can be found at <http://deposit.nl.sg>.

In carrying out the statutory function of legal deposit, NLB, like most national libraries, faces many challenges, not least being the proliferation of online electronic publications, which have drastically changed the nature of publishing. As it works towards improving its legal deposit process and the voluntary deposit of digital materials, the National Library acknowledges and looks forward to the continued support of publishers whose participation in building the nation's literary heritage for posterity is critical.



Participants at the Legal Deposit Showcase held on 30 March 2009

## 14<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL)

# Towards Dynamic Libraries and Information Services in Southeast Asian Countries



by AKSHATA PATKAR & SRI ASRINA TANURI

Research Associates I  
Publishing and Research Services  
National Library



The Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL) was formed in Singapore in 1970 to establish, maintain and strengthen networks among libraries in the region; promote cooperation and provide assistance in the development of libraries and information services; and provide a platform for sharing information and experiences on issues in librarianship and information sciences. Today CONSAL has grown to include 10 member countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

This year, the 14<sup>th</sup> CONSAL General Conference was held on 21 - 22 April 2009 at the Melia Hotel in Hanoi, Vietnam, with the theme "Towards Dynamic Libraries and Information Services in Southeast Asian Countries". More than 800 librarians and information professionals from 24 countries participated in and attended the conference.

At the opening ceremony, guests and delegates were entertained with beautiful dance and music performances by Vietnamese children, reflecting the rich and vibrant Vietnamese culture. Delegates from the 10-member countries were introduced as representatives marched in with the flags of their respective nations. After the Vietnamese national anthem and ASEAN anthem were played, Vietnam's Vice President Professor Dr Nguyen Thi Doan welcomed the delegates.

Vietnamese Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Mr Hoang Anh Tuan, in his opening speech, emphasised that knowledge and information were a decisive force in the development of a modern society, and libraries and information centres played an essential role in the advancement of their country and the whole of humankind. Welcome speeches were also made by Dr Susanne Ornager, Adviser for Communication and Information in Asia, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Ms Jan Fullerton, Director-General of the National Library of Australia, representing the Conference of Directors of National Libraries of Asia and Oceania (CDNLAO), and Ms Deborah Jacobs, Deputy Director of

Global Libraries, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

In her keynote address, Professor Ching-Chih Chen from the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences, Simmons College, Boston, highlighted her cutting-edge technology application in presenting multilingual information and photographic resources on the 878 World Heritage Sites from 145 countries.

Dr Patricia G. Oyler, also from Simmons College, spoke about the influence and impact on the developments in libraries in one part of the world by libraries in another part. She outlined five such developments that would impact Southeast Asian libraries – shortage of qualified personnel; marketing and advocacy of the role of libraries; change of scholarly communications from print to electronic with the increasing use of technology; adopting common standards by libraries the world over; and recognition of the role of libraries in the preservation of cultural heritage and archival materials. Dr Oyler stressed that education played a key role in tackling the issue, for example, educating librarians to provide excellent service, educating stakeholders such as government officials and university administrators in providing funding and educating users on how the information available at the libraries could add value to their lives.

Dr N. Varapasad, Chief Executive, National Library Board Singapore, spoke on leveraging on volunteers for sustainable library services. Library services in the CONSAL countries are usually manpower-intensive, resulting in difficulties in scaling up due to staffing limitations. Dr Varapasad introduced the volunteer management strategy implemented by Public Libraries Singapore for the recruitment, selection, training, deployment, monitoring, motivation and recognition of volunteers as a self-sustaining force for libraries. Libraries could then implement additional programmes without burdening their existing staff.

The keynote speakers for the second day were Dr Gary Gorman, Professor of Information Management, School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, who



The signing ceremony of CONSAL 14th Resolution  
 Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Lam

touched on key considerations and issues faced in the practice of digital preservation; and Mr Akio Yasue, former Deputy Librarian of the National Diet Library, Japan, who spoke on the development and implementation of preservation management.

A total of 42 papers written by 54 delegates from all over the world were presented during the two-day conference, which was organised into three parallel sessions, "Library Services and Dynamic Libraries and Information Services", "Library Education and Emerging Technology" and "Library Management and Marketing and Library Association/Profession". Among the major topics that were discussed during the conference were applications of advanced technology; library administration; marketing; training, and professional development for librarians and information professionals.

The closing ceremony included presentation of the CONSAL Outstanding Librarian Award. The award honours the significant contribution of librarians who have been committed in promoting library development and professional growth of librarians in ASEAN countries. Former Director-General of the National Library of Malaysia, Datuk Zawiyah Binti Baba, was awarded the gold medal. Four other distinguished librarians who received silver medals were Mr Salmubi from Indonesia, Ms Salvacion M. Arlante from the Philippines, Mrs Kiang-Koh Lai Lin from Singapore and Mr Nguyen Minh Hiep from Vietnam.

In a second award ceremony, Dr Varaprasad and Mr Akio were presented with the "For the Achievements of Culture, Sports and Tourism" medal by Mr Hoang.



Dr N. Varaprasad receiving his medal from Mr Hoang Anh Tuan, the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism  
 Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Lam



*The handing over of the CONSAL flag to Indonesia, the host country for the 15th CONSAL General Conference  
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Lam*

The CONSAL flag was then handed over to Indonesia, the next host country for the conference. It will be held in Bali, Indonesia in 2012. The conference closed with a farewell dinner for all delegates hosted by Mr Hoang.

Besides the conference, delegates were also given the opportunity to learn and experience firsthand the culture and hospitality of the Vietnamese people. The "Gala Night" held at the Hanoi Opera House showcased cultural dance and music performances by the Opera House troupe. The delegates also got a glimpse of the cultures of their fellow delegates through the short dance, song and drama performances put up by these delegates during "Gala Night".

After the two-day conference, the delegates were taken on a tour to Halong Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage site; the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum; Ho Chi Minh Museum and the Ethnology Museum, which provided the delegates with a deeper insight into the history, culture and people of Vietnam

The 14<sup>th</sup> CONSAL General Conference had successfully achieved its objectives. It had provided the platform for delegates from around the region and beyond to exchange ideas, viewpoints and practices and share their experiences on the different ways of making libraries and information centres more dynamic and effective in their respective countries.

We look forward to the next conference in 2012.



*A cultural dance performance by the Opera House troupe during Gala Night  
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Lam*

# Singapore International Story Telling Festival

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