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**04**

**Asian Confluence**  
Challenging Perceptions of European  
Hegemony in the Histories of  
Singapore and Modern Science

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# DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

**B**oth the changing of calendars and times bring to heart a pleasantly elegiac feeling of passage.

We enter the second decade of the third millennium reflecting on the ever-passing present. Sometimes inevitable change can only be appreciated in retrospect, while on other occasions, it brings a welcome clarity. Like stepping back to let our eyes focus, historical recollection is a vital part of understanding all that we are now, how we came to be, and the way forward.

BiblioAsia January 2011 opens with an exploration of history's capacity for objective representation. Dr Arun Bala, a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies discusses traditionally Eurocentric perceptions of Singaporean history. Paralleling the formation of post-colonial identity in our country with the history of modern science taught in schools, his investigations suggest that both constructs are complicated by the confluence of different cultures, belonging not to any single master creator or colony, but to the multitude and the multicultural.

History as a composite of stories by different storytellers requires understanding from a variety of perspectives. Its iterations, which orientate and shape themselves according to levels of understanding made possible only by time, guide us to renewed, and ever renewing, interpretations of past, present and future.

In their contributions to this issue, Lee Kong Chian Research Fellows Tan Teng Phee and Phyllis Chew revisit events and times past to trace their long-lasting effects on contemporary society. Tan expounds on the segregationist tendencies that rose from a fear of intercultural influences during the time of the Malayan Emergency, whereas Chew discusses the unifying potential of multiculturalism. These examples of history reframed in retrospect are richer for what we know now.

Sundusia Rosdi focuses on the history of Baweanese immigrants in Singapore through the lens of Ahmad Haji Tahir's *Shair Saudara Boyan* (Poem of the Baweanese). This essay analyses the device of poetry as both a compass and vessel — something past which dictates in relative terms how we conduct ourselves in the present and which influences our impressions of desirable futures.

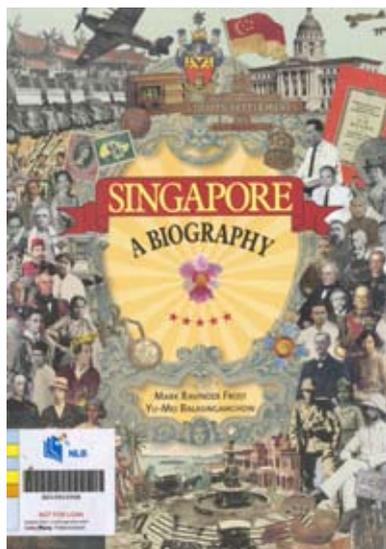
Reflections on the past are guards against collective amnesia in our information-overloaded world. The "When Nations Remember" conference, where local and international delegates gathered to share their experiences with national memories, was organised by the National Library with this end in mind.

It is heartening to see that within the vastness of the plurality offered to us by multiculturalism, there still exists the solidarity that unites us in fellowship — that of documented human experience, whether shared or unique. We at the National Library are passionate about the conservation and celebration of our collective history that binds us. Embracing memories, and engaging in its preservation, showcasing and presentation in our programmes and publications is one way we hope that future generations may benefit from our rich literary heritage and knowledge today.

Happy reading!

**Ms Ngian Lek Choh**  
Director  
National Library





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the history of Singapore should be contextualised within the larger cycles of maritime history in the Straits of Melaka, and that its beginnings — as narrated in the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals) — should be traced back to its founding by Seri Teri Buana in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. For nearly a century after its founding, Singapore — then known as Temasek — served as an emporium connect-

ing its Southeast Asian hinterland with the Middle East, India and China.

However, the importance of Temasek as an emporium for the region declined over time. Its fifth ruler had to flee from attacks by the Thai people or the Majapahit empire (or both), and resurrect the emporium in Melaka. As Melaka's secondary appendage in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the fortunes of Singapore declined further when Melaka fell to the Portuguese in 1511 and Singapore came under the influence of the Johor Sultanate. Finally, trade through Singapore collapsed after the Dutch captured Melaka from the Portuguese in 1641 and diverted the Indian-Pacific Ocean trade from the Straits of Melaka to their port in Batavia via the Sunda Straits between Sumatra and Java.<sup>3</sup>

Singapore's fortunes revived only after Stamford Raffles, recognising Singapore's early historical position as an emporium in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, once again restored it to the centre of trans-Oceanic trade, which flourished as the British Empire increasingly consolidated its hold on India (as an imperial power) and China (through its unequal treaty ports). Singapore became the hub of these trade exchanges, and the premier entrepot for the Southeast Asian region.<sup>4</sup>

There are other historians who also endorse a dialogical account of the birth of Singapore. In their study *Singapore: A Biography*, Mark Ravinder Frost and Yu-Mei Balasingham-Chow write:

Like its present day successor, 14<sup>th</sup> century Singapore was also cosmopolitan ... shards of excavated pottery reveal that the local inhabitants shared a culture in common with the people of the Riau-Lingga archipelago .... But there were other distinctive groups who lived on the island. One prominent group, as revealed by numerous items they left behind, were Chinese merchants who had traded in the region since the 11<sup>th</sup> century at least, bringing with them ceramics, textiles, foodstuffs, and coins .... Other pottery shards indicate the presence of Javanese, themselves a trading power in the region, while a coin from Sri Lanka and beads and Carnelian stones from India point to the

arrival of Tamils and Sinhalese .... Temasek would have been much like the ports in the region during this time — a vibrant emporium and a cultural melting pot.<sup>5</sup>

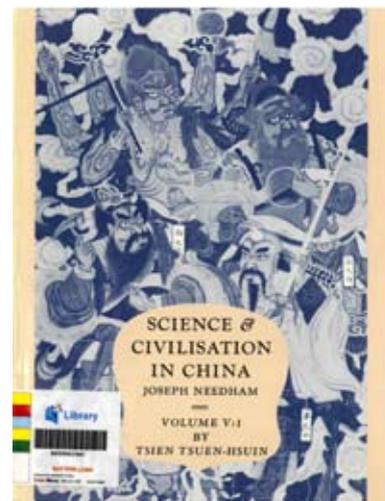
More significantly, John Miksic has argued that Raffles, as a scholar of Malay history, was profoundly aware of Temasek's previous role as the emporium that preceded and laid the groundwork for trade in Melaka. It led him to select Singapore as the site for the British port in Southeast Asia.

It is not generally appreciated that modern Singapore owes its existence to Sir Stamford Raffles' awareness that the *Sejarah Melayu* depicted Singapore in favourable light ... of particular interest to Raffles, no doubt, was the *Sejarah Melayu*'s depiction of Singapore during the reign of five kings as a prosperous trading port — the first in Malay history, preceding even Melaka.<sup>6</sup>

### DIALOGICAL HISTORIES OF MODERN SCIENCE

The pioneering work that paved the way for dialogical histories of science was Joseph Needham's monumental series *Science and Civilization in China*.<sup>7</sup> Needham revealed the significant contributions made by China to modern science and technology, including the inventions of gunpowder, printing, the compass and paper. Over the five decades since Needham began his study, others have been inspired to broaden the scope of his project in two different directions. Firstly, there has been increasing documentation of not just Chinese, but also Indian and Arabic-Islamic contributions to modern science.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, this has in turn led to a greater appreciation of how philosophical, theoretical and technological contributions from China, India and the Islamic world came to interact and combine with European tradition to form what we know as modern science today. Science is now seen as profoundly shaped by intercultural dialogue.<sup>9</sup>

The Copernican Revolution, often associated with the birth of modern science, best illustrates the significance of intercultural dialogue in science. The revolution began in 1543, when Copernicus proposed that the sun, moon, and planets were not revolving around a stationary earth, but instead that the earth, moon and planets were revolving around the sun. To accommodate this heliocentric (sun-centred) theory, scientists had to develop entirely new mathematics, physics and cosmology, culminating more than 140 years later in 1684 with Newton's theory of gravitation and his laws of motion.



All rights reserved, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

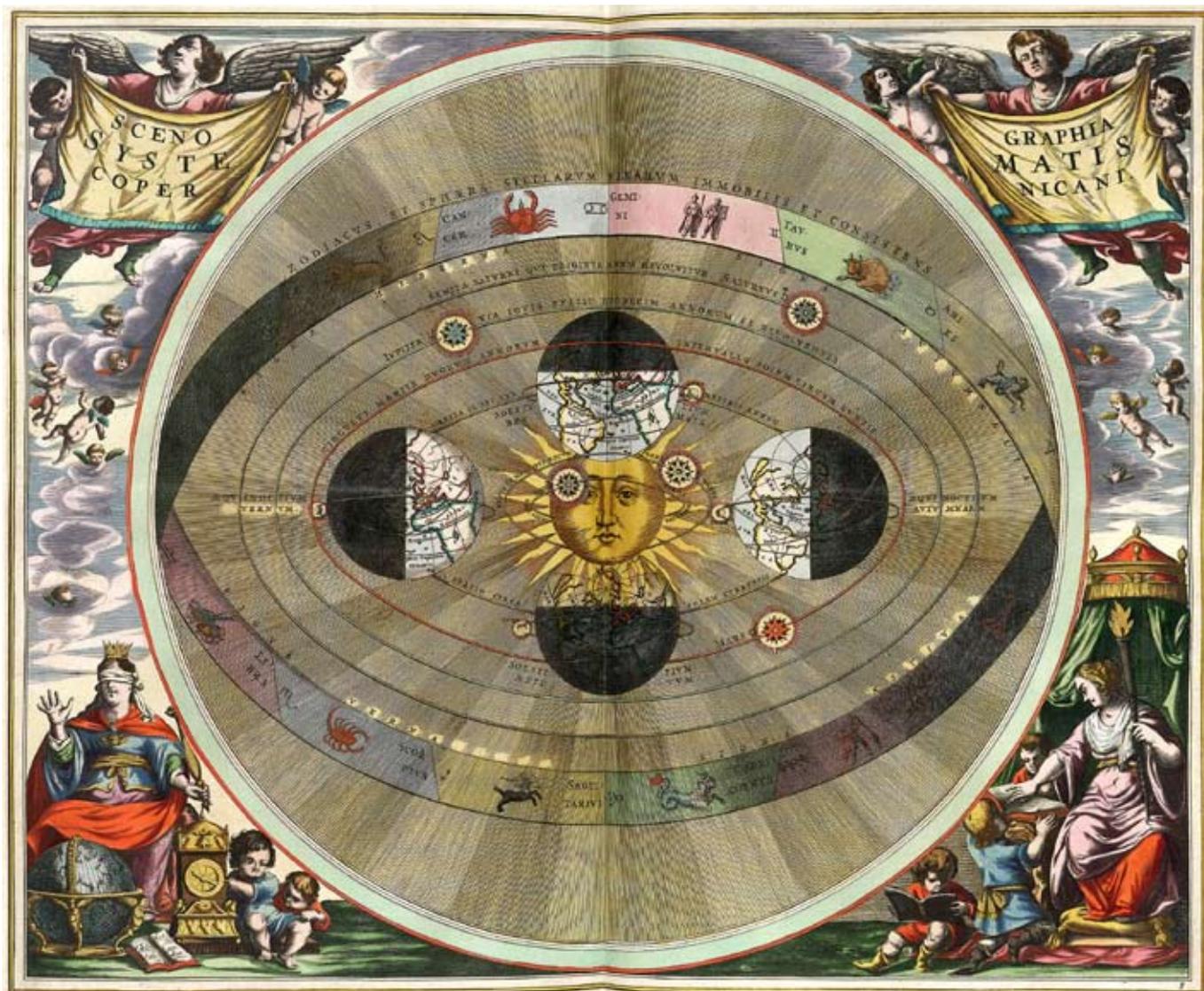
Historians in the past had often assumed that the Copernican Revolution built only upon the achievements of ancient Greek mathematics, physics and astronomy. However, more recent historical evidence suggests that the Copernican Revolution also drew on developments that took place earlier in the Islamic, Indian and Chinese astronomical traditions. Especially significant were the theoretical, philosophical and cosmological ideas associated with the Maragha School of astronomy in the Arabic world, the Kerala School of astronomy in India, and the infinite empty space theory espoused by the neo-Confucian court astronomers of the Ming dynasty. The fusion of ideas from Ancient Greece and these three schools made possible the Copernican Revolution.<sup>10</sup>

The Maragha School first emerged in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as a critique of the inadequacies of the geocentric theory, which the Arabs had inherited from the ancient Greeks. The Greek theory, which was central to the school, was satisfied with making mathematical predictions without offering a realist physical model of the universe. Conversely, the Maragha School achieved its objective with Ibn al-Shatir and his ingenious deployment of two new geometrical theorems

discovered by Arabic mathematicians — the *Urdu Lemma* and the *Tusi Couple*. Despite the Maragha School's sustaining of the earth-centred vision of the planetary system it had inherited from the ancient Greeks, its theoretical innovations paved the way for Copernicus' heliocentric theory. It made it possible for Copernicus to develop a credible mathematical model in which the sun, rather than the earth, was made the centre of the planetary system. Although astronomers before Copernicus had been aware of the possibility of such a sun-centred model they were unable to articulate it mathematically as a viable alternative without the new computation methods developed by the Maragha School of astronomers.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, the Kerala School of astronomy developed powerful mathematical methods to express not only trigonometric functions as infinite series expansions, but also arrive at some proto-ideas of the calculus. There is evidence that these discoveries may have inspired modern European thinkers to build on these and develop the powerful ideas of the calculus that were integral to consolidating the Copernican revolution through Newton's theory of gravitation.<sup>12</sup>

Equally significant was the contribution of Chinese



Scenography of the Copernican world system by Andreas Cellarius (1708). Courtesy of University Library of Amsterdam.

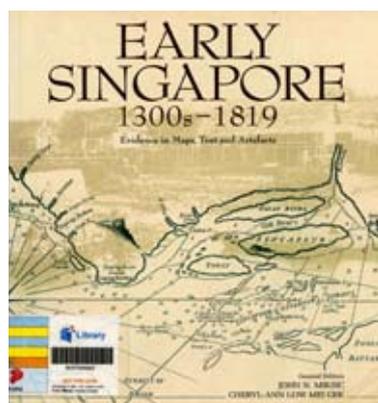
astronomical and cosmological ideas to modern astronomy. When the European Jesuits made contact with Chinese astronomers in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, they found many of the beliefs and ideas common to the Chinese absurd. The Europeans considered space finite and filled with air, but the Chinese believed in an infinite empty space. The Europeans believed the heavens to be unchanging except for the rotational motions of the sun, moon, planets and stars around the earth, but the Chinese believed the heavens to be ever-changing, with comets and meteors appearing and disappearing. Although Europeans had seen comets and meteors, they interpreted them as exhalations from the earth that had reached the upper atmosphere — likening them to meteorological phenomena like lightning and clouds rather than astronomical ones. These Chinese ideas would eventually be incorporated into modern astronomy with the Copernican Revolution.<sup>13</sup>

### THE BIRTH OF SINGAPORE AND THE BIRTH OF MODERN SCIENCE: STRANGE PARALLELS

A comparison of the dialogical histories of the birth of Singapore and the birth of modern science reveals a number of striking parallels. First, consider the cultures that are said to have come together from the outside at the birth of Singapore in revisionist 14<sup>th</sup> century histories. Apart from the regional culture of Southeast Asia, others might include the Chinese, the Indian and the Islamic. In fact, it is likely that the last ruler of Singapore converted to Islam before leaving to found Melaka at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. What is striking is that these cultures were also the ones whose astronomical traditions contributed to the advent of the Copernican revolution in Europe, which ushered in modern science.

Second, the period that saw the founding of Temasek in the 14<sup>th</sup> century also coincided with the establishment of the Maragha School in the Arabic world and the Kerala School in India. Although the theory of infinite empty space was proposed in China earlier, it only became accepted as the dominant view in Chinese astronomy during the Ming dynasty in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Can we explain these strange parallels? Why are the cultures that came together at the time of Singapore's birth in the



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14<sup>th</sup> century also the cultures that came together at the genesis of modern science? A likely explanation is that around the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the maritime Silk Road connecting the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia and China became a significant corridor of trade and possibly, intellectual exchange. Increasing wealth and the need to traverse vast

distances across the oceans also led to astronomical studies, which were crucial for navigation. It is therefore not surprising that the era saw important astronomical discoveries made in China, India and the Arabic-Muslim world that came to be fused together with the emergence of modern science and astronomy in 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe.<sup>14</sup>

### FINDING THE FUTURE IN THE PAST: RETHINKING NATIONAL EDUCATION AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

It is widely acknowledged that among the many concerns in Singapore education, two of the most critical pertain to national education and science.<sup>15</sup> National education is concerned with fostering a common identity among the various cultural and ethnic groups in the nation state in order to sustain social peace and harmony. Science's concern is nurturing a culture of scientific innovation and creativity that goes beyond the rote-learning model that has characterised education in the past. However, strategies that have been formed to deal with these problems often presume Eurocentric conceptions of the birth of modern Singapore and modern science. Such strategies may have to be reconsidered in light of the more recent dialogical histories of both the origin of Singapore and that of modern science.

The Eurocentric account of Singapore's history suggests that the coming together of the diverse cultures of Singapore was an incidental by-product of the European imperative set in motion by Raffles in 1819, and that these cultures must find ways to form a common identity. These cultures also do not have any deep history of co-existing with each other. National education must therefore find ways of moving away from these separate pasts in order to forge a common future.

Similarly, the Eurocentric history of science suggests that in order to nurture a culture of innovation and creativity in science and technology we must break away from the rote-learning that is assumed to characterise Chinese, Indian and Malay-Islamic traditional education. It seems that the overarching assumption is that to nurture creativity, Singaporeans must learn from the cultures that have shown visible achievements in the modern era, namely Europe and the United States.

However, dialogical histories of both Singapore and modern science also suggest that the answers may be found in the past. In the first place, forging unity out of diverse cultures may well be central to Singapore's success as an emporium in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and its continued success as a global city today. The issue is not about creating a common identity out of separate identities by fusing cultures together, but discovering how the different identities that make up Singapore's culture made Singapore's success over its 700-year history possible, particularly by enabling it to draw upon diverse cultural resources to advance trade and promote development.

Nurturing scientific creativity need not involve repudiating the scientific traditions in Singapore's heritage as an Asian civilisation. After all, if modern science drew on the resources of

the Chinese, Islamic and Indian cultures at its dawn, then these cultures did create reservoirs of knowledge to advance science. We could therefore ask: What can we learn about creative and innovative thinking from the different Asian cultures in their time of pioneering achievements — in the pre-modern era?

Clearly, dialogical histories of Singapore and modern science suggest that we need not turn away from Singapore's multicultural heritage to find solutions to the concerns of

designing a national education curriculum that unites, and science education that nurtures creativity and innovation. We may also find solutions by studying how our different cultures — Chinese, Malay-Islamic and Indian — engaged in intercultural dialogue to produce Singapore's successful and globalised emporium culture and the scientific tradition that drives it today. ■

## ENDNOTES

- For a critique of this approach to the writing of Singapore history, which began in colonial times but continued into the postcolonial era, see Kwa, Heng and Tan (2010), pp. 1–8. Their revisionist account traces earlier beginnings from the 14<sup>th</sup> century founding of Temasek at the mouth of the Singapore River. Similar efforts to locate history by beginning with Temasek can be found in Frost & Balasingham-Chow (2009) and Miksic & Low (2004).
- These studies include Wolf (1982), Abu-Lughod (1989) and Hobson (2004).
- Kwa et. al. (2010) pp. 79–81
- See Kwa et. al. (2010), Chapter 7 entitled "Raffles and the Establishment of an East India Company Station on Singapore".
- Frost & Balasingham-Chow (2009), pp. 16–17.
- Miksic & Low (2004), pp. 45–46.
- Especially significant in this regard are the first two overview volumes published in 1954 and 1956. They give the philosophical, historical and sociological background for the phenomenal growth of science in Chinese civilisation from the early Han dynasty to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Although Chinese science continued to grow thereafter, it was rapidly overtaken by the more rapid growth of modern science. See Needham (1956, 1954).
- See Joseph (2000) and Saliba (2007)
- This dialogical fusion of modern scientific knowledge from many cultural traditions is documented in the field of mathematics by Joseph (2000); in technology by Hobson (2004); and in mathematical astronomy by Bala (2010).
- See Bala (2010) for a more detailed account of how different mathematical astronomical traditions from ancient Greece, the Arab world, China and India came to be combined together by modern European thinkers to give birth to the astronomical revolution that jump-started modern science.
- For more details see Saliba (2007).
- A defense of these claims can be found in Bala (2010), pp.68–78.
- For more elaborate discussion of these issues see Bala (2010), pp.131–144.
- A good and influential study of these maritime silk road linkages is Abu-Lughod (1989).
- For more information see the Singapore Ministry of Education site, especially <http://www.ne.edu.sg/> on National Education and <http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/desired-outcomes/> on *Desired Outcomes of Education*.

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# The Case of Tras New Village and the Assassination of Henry Gurney

during the Malayan Emergency



By **Tan Teng Phee**

Lee Kong Chian  
Research Fellow (2009)  
National Library

*"The bamboo music was lively and rousing  
How miserable Tras resettlement was  
Here another meal with dried and salted fish  
A deeply bitter experience we suffer in silence"*

(Hakka song composed by Tras New Villagers at the Ipoh detention camp)

On 16 June 1948, after the murder of three European rubber estate managers in Sungai Siput, Perak, the British colonial government declared a state of emergency in Malaya. The British considered the murders to be the mark of an outbreak of armed communist insurgency; thus, the mass resettlement programme which was put in place by the British thereafter was designed to isolate and defeat the Communists, and simultaneously win the hearts and minds of the rural people. By the end of the Malayan Emergency on 31 July 1960, half a million rural dwellers had resettled into 480 New Villages, 450 of which are still scattered across the Malay Peninsula today. In 1951, Tras New Village became a focal point of British anti-Communist imperatives and the Malayan Emergency.

Tras was an old tin mining settlement in the state of Pahang during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and became a rubber-rich area before WWII. Tras New Village, a rural Chinese community contiguous to Tras, was established by the British in 1951. Located approximately 100 km from Kuala Lumpur, its two nearest neighbouring towns are Raub (13 km) and Bentong (20 km). It currently has a population of approximately 1,000, in both its town and new village areas. There is a 20-km winding road near Tras, leading to Fraser's Hill, a famous hill resort during the colonial era.

Tras New Village is a distinct case because it is located near the spot where British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, was assassinated on 6 October 1951. On that fateful morning, a group of Communists ambushed and killed the High Commissioner on the Kuala Kubu Bahru-Fraser's Hill Road, just seven miles (11 km) away from Tras. This tragic incident had a significant impact on the nature of the unfolding Malayan Emergency, as well as on life and prospects for the Tras villagers.

Until recently, the personal accounts and individual memories of New Villagers have largely remained untold in the public

narrative. According to official accounts, a typical New Village usually possessed basic amenities such as a police station, a school, a dispensary, a community hall, piped water and electricity. However, in practice, the implementation of such amenities was often hindered by a lack of resources (money, staff, and materials) and the rapid demands for the establishment of new villages made by the government during the Emergency. In addition, the villagers were confined and protected by a barbed wire fence that surrounded their villages and placed under strict control and surveillance. Surveillance methods included curfews, body searches at checkpoints, food restrictions as well as tenant and Identity Certificate registration.

This study adopts a "history from below" perspective to document the social experience of resettlement and life behind the barbed wire fences for the residents in the New Villages. It re-examines and analyses how the assassination of the British High Commissioner to Malaya in 1951 both implicated and changed the lives of Tras New Villagers during the Emergency period. By examining the experiences of Tras New Villagers through oral accounts and interviews, this micro-level study brings attention to the significant impact of the Emergency, including the displacement and forced relocation of this particular rural Chinese community.



**British High Commissioner in Malaya (1948-51), Sir Henry Gurney.**  
Source: The Straits Times  
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## THE ASSASSINATION OF HENRY GURNEY

On 6 October 1951 at 11 am, Sir Henry Gurney and Lady Gurney, together with their Private Secretary, D. J. Staples, left the King's House, Kuala Lumpur, for Fraser's Hill. They were accompanied by an armed convoy consisting of three military vehicles with 13 police personnel. Around 1:15 pm, heavy firing broke out suddenly as they were negotiating an "S" bend between the 56<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> mile. The Communists had ambushed the party about two miles from the Gap Road and about eight and a half miles from Fraser's Hill.

All the police constables in the Land Rover were injured by the first burst of gunfire, but they managed to return fire. Meanwhile, a second wave of Communist gunfire was directed at Gurney's Rolls Royce and shattered its windscreen, hitting Gurney's Malay driver, Mohamed Din. He managed to stop the vehicle, but the stationary car then drew more concentrated gunfire. At this moment, Gurney opened the door and got out of the car, drawing fire away from it. Gurney was killed instantly as he attempted to cross the road.<sup>1</sup> Two days later, an official funeral was held in Kuala Lumpur for Sir Henry Gurney, who was then buried in the cemetery on Cheras Road in Selangor.<sup>2</sup>

The people of Malaya were profoundly shocked by news of the tragic death. At a press conference, the Commissioner of Police, W.N. Gray, stated that Sir Henry Gurney's car had been hit by bullets 35 times.<sup>3</sup> Investigations suggested that the Communists had been, in fact, seeking to acquire weapons, and not targeting at the High Commissioner.<sup>4</sup> Chin Peng, the secretary-general of the Malayan Communist Party, confirms this in his memoir that the Communist ambush intended "to attack a large armed convoy" and had intended "to seize as many weapons and as much ammunition as the comrades could carry away."<sup>5</sup> It was therefore by accident, rather than by design, that the Communist platoon ambushed and killed Sir Henry Gurney on the Gap Road.

## IMPACT ON THE TRAS COMMUNITY

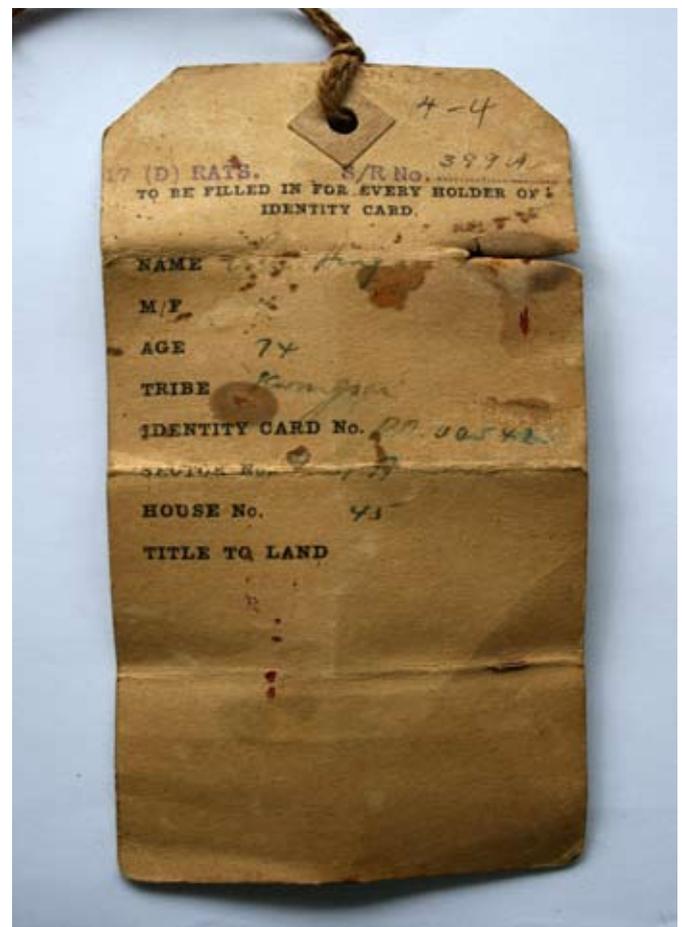
Immediately after the tragedy, the Colonial Government conducted a combination of military, police and air strike operations. There was heavy shelling and bombing of the jungle, day and night for nearly a month. Under strict curfew, the villagers were not permitted to go out to work, only to purchase daily essentials from the local grocery shops in the town area, which opened for business two hours a day. Several elderly informants complained about their loss of income during this period, especially as rubber prices were high at that point in time.

A month after the death of Sir Henry Gurney, the British called off their military operations in the jungle and turned their attention to Tras New Village, which was located seven miles from the assassination scene.<sup>6</sup> The British claimed that Tras had become the main source of food supplies for the Communist guerrillas in Western Pahang. The Police also suspected that the Tras villagers had supported Communist activities in the area.<sup>7</sup> Based on its past "notoriety", Tras inhabitants were considered "terrorist sympathizers and helpers" by the British.<sup>8</sup> Most

importantly, they were suspected of aiding and abetting "the gang which murdered Sir Henry Gurney."<sup>9</sup> In response to their unwillingness to comment, the colonial government initiated an evacuation and the mass detention of Tras inhabitants in November 1951.<sup>10</sup>

The evacuation scheme unfolded in two phases over two days. The first phase, on 8 November 1951, involved evacuating 1,460 Tras New Villagers, while the second phase on the following day saw the removal of another 700 people. The colonial government successfully removed a total of 2,160 men, women and children from Tras New Village and the town area in a short period of time. They were transferred by lorry and train to the Ipoh Detention Camp in Perak, over 240 km away from their hometown. It was the first mass removal and detention of Chinese New Villagers in a barbed wire fenced resettlement camp since the beginning of the Emergency.

Elderly villagers clearly recall several Assistant Resettlement Officers and local Chinese leaders announcing the British decision on the evacuation. The villagers were given a day to pack their belongings before being transported to the Ipoh detention camp. Many of the elderly informants shared with me that each person was allowed to carry only "one shoulder pole with two baskets" (一人一擔). Then, the Pahang State War Executive Committee sent a working team to each house to assess their livestock, rubber holdings and chattels. Every head of household was then given a government-stamped receipt for



Evacuation receipt issued by the British to Tras residents. Courtesy of Mr Lee Seng.

any valuable goods left behind. The village was told that they would be credited with a percentage of the total proceeds from the sale of their goods at the Raub town market. However, all my interviewees said that this never came to pass.

At dawn on 7 November 1951 before the evacuation commenced, many villagers prayed to their gods and at their ancestral altars for a safe journey and protection. They burned joss sticks and made offerings with their slaughtered poultry to propitiate their gods and ancestral spirits. The first troops arrived at

around 6 am and evacuation orders were broadcast over a mobile loudspeaker. The villagers collected their shoulder poles and assembled in the Tras town area between 6 and 8 am. On their way to Tras, each family had to pass through a gauntlet — a double row of detectives and uniformed police officers guarding an armoured vehicle. Inside the vehicle were Communist informers tasked with screening the villagers as they walked by.

Several female inter-viewees vividly remembered the heartbreaking scenes when family members were separated from one another during the screening operation. An old lady cried out in vain as she was forcefully separated from her young daughter who was taken away by the police. A few elderly ladies wept with the mother while trying to console her.<sup>11</sup> Out of 1,460 people screened, a total of 20 villagers (5 women and 15 men) were detained on suspicion of being Communist supporters and food smugglers.<sup>12</sup>

More than 100 vehicles, including buses, lorries and trucks, were utilised on the first day to transport the Tras villagers. The evacuation team had air cover from Brigand bombers and ground protection from armoured escorts all the way to the Kuala Kubu Bahru railway station. Upon their arrival at the rail siding that afternoon, the Kuala Kubu Bahru branch of the Malayan Chinese Association prepared meals for the villagers at the railway station. They then boarded a special 14-coach train, which transported them to Ipoh. From the Ipoh railway station, the villagers were escorted by armed police and radio vans, and taken in military trucks to the detention camp two miles away.<sup>13</sup> It was around 7 pm when they arrived at the Ipoh Detention Camp. Each family was then assigned a small cubicle in a wooden long-house inside the camp as their “new home”.

The remaining 700 residents in Tras made preparations for their evacuation the following day. Several towkays requested for permits to allow their relatives or friends in Raub to help them sell their goods at the Raub market.<sup>14</sup> The collective value of the Tras people’s stocks of rubber and food surprised the government officers. The total value of movable property

**TERROR' TOWN TO BE MOVED**

**They helped Gurney killer gang**  
**ALL 2,000 WILL BE SENT TO IPOH CAMP**

From LESLIE HOFFMAN  
TRAS, Wednesday. — Security forces surrounded Tras village to punish it for its aid to the gang which murdered Sir Henry Gurney. Gurkhas battled in the killer gang at Cheroh, four miles north Raub today. One Gurkha was killed and other wounded. Details of the engagement were not yet reached Raub.  
The Federation Government told the Malay Chinese Association leaders today that the screening of the 2,000 people of Tras, six miles from the gold mining town of Ipoh, Pahang, would take several months after its arrival at the Ipoh detention camp where they are being sent.  
The following detention under Emergency Ordinance 17D of the entire population of the village and re-settlement area adjoining it.  
It was the first mass detention of villagers in a village in camp in the Federated States.  
The Government charged the villagers with the murder of Sir Henry Gurney. It said that the villagers had helped the Communist gang which murdered Sir Henry Gurney. It said that the villagers had helped the Communist gang which murdered Sir Henry Gurney. It said that the villagers had helped the Communist gang which murdered Sir Henry Gurney.



Tras villagers gather in front of their houses in Ipoh. Department of Information vans took them to the detention camp.

**THE SULLEN PEOPLE OF TRAS VILLAGE**

From LESLIE HOFFMAN  
TRAS, Wednesday. — In Tras today men and women and little children set up praying tables and asked their gods for a safe journey and quick return. But there will be no quick returns for most of the 2,000 inhabitants of this village and surrounding area.  
The Tras, a Malay word meaning the head row of a boat, contains a hard core of Communists in Western Pahang.  
Most of its inhabitants were Communist sympathisers, smugglers and secret agents. Through the main street of Tras passed all the traffic to Ipoh.  
The Tras, a Malay word meaning the head row of a boat, contains a hard core of Communists in Western Pahang. Most of its inhabitants were Communist sympathisers, smugglers and secret agents. Through the main street of Tras passed all the traffic to Ipoh. The Tras, a Malay word meaning the head row of a boat, contains a hard core of Communists in Western Pahang. Most of its inhabitants were Communist sympathisers, smugglers and secret agents. Through the main street of Tras passed all the traffic to Ipoh.

**Higher income tax plans**

SINGAPORE. — Government proposals to increase income tax rates on the higher income group, and to increase indirect taxation on certain items are expected to be submitted to the next meeting of the Legislative Council.  
New proposals to tax luxury goods are also expected. They are aimed at building up reserves during the period when the Government is expected to meet its obligations during a period of reconstruction.  
Although some financial estimates are expected to be submitted to the Legislative Council in the next few days, the Government has not yet decided on the details of the proposals. It is expected that the proposals will be submitted to the Legislative Council in the next few days.

Source: The Straits Times, 8 Nov 1951. (newspapers.nl.sg)

— cars, bicycles, textiles, liquor, rice and other goods from their shops — was an estimated \$3,500,000,<sup>15</sup> making it one of the richest communities in Pahang. The next morning, on 9 November 1951, the British evacuated the remaining 700 inhabitants from the town area. Tras became a ghost town in late 1951.<sup>16</sup>

The Ipoh Detention Camp was situated about 5 km from Ipoh.<sup>17</sup> All those who I interviewed had distinct memories of the Government’s interrogations at the detention camp. In their investigations of British accusations that the residents of Tras village had “bred, harboured and helped the murderers of Sir Henry Gurney,” the police screened 1,154 adults in the first three months at the Ipoh Detention Camp. Shortly after the interrogations, the first batch of 485 villagers was unconditionally released from the detention camp in late February 1952. The second batch — another 400 people — was released in mid-March, while those remaining were detained for further interrogations.<sup>18</sup> Two of the villagers I spoke with said they were detained for between one and two years at the camp without being given any reason for this.<sup>19</sup>

As a result of the mass interrogations at the Ipoh camp, the British detained a total of 37 Tras inhabitants who were accused of having “helped the murderers of Sir Henry Gurney.”<sup>20</sup> The rest of the Tras villagers were gradually released in batches from February 1952 onwards. They were resettled in various New Villages in Pahang but prohibited from returning to Tras. For the first and second batch of released villagers, the British authorities expanded a section of Sempalit New Village, about 15 km from Tras, to accommodate 200 detained families from the Ipoh Detention Camp. Each family was assigned a house in the New Village.

Oral history accounts reveal that some Tras villagers chose to settle at Sungai Raun New Village, about 23 km from Tras. The State Government provided each relocated family with a house lot and four acres of land for cultivation. Other families decided to move to Jerkoh New Village, or Bukit Tinggi New Village, to work as farmers. Those who preferred to become rubber

tappers resettled at Sanglee New Village, Sungai Chetang New Village and Sungai Penjuring New Village, all located within a 30 km radius of Tras. These New Villages were enclosed within barbed wire fencing and the villagers were subjected to regular body searches, food control measures, curfews, as well as other restrictions. Some Tras families, however, sought direct assistance from their relatives in various towns and cities, such as Kuala Kubu Bahru, Bentong, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur. Hence, Tras people were scattered widely across different New Villages and towns shortly after their release from the detention camp.

### THE RETURN TO OLD TRAS

It was not until December 1954 that the British Government reopened Tras and allowed local rubber estate owners to return to tap their trees. Since the devastated Tras was overgrown with weeds and scrub after more than five years of neglect, it took the authorities and former residents nearly two years to renovate shops and rebuild houses in the old village. Besides purchasing a house from a construction company, each returned family could also apply for four acres of land to plant rubber trees or other cash crops.<sup>21</sup> The first group of Tras former inhabitants, made up of about 40 families (250 people), returned to their hometown on 23 September 1957.<sup>22</sup> Six months later, the local government administration held an official opening to mark Tras' rebirth; this was six years after it was evacuated.<sup>23</sup> By June 1958, more than 600 people had returned to Tras.<sup>24</sup> It was estimated that about one third of the 2,160 former residents had moved back to Tras by the end of the Emergency in July 1960.<sup>25</sup>

Private speculation and individual memories challenge the authority of the official account of the assassination and the subsequent evacuation and mass detention. There is a range of opinions with regards to why Sir Henry Gurney stepped out of his car at the height of the Communist ambush. The official account suggests that he wanted to draw away the concentrated fire that might otherwise have killed his wife Lady Gurney and his private secretary. He was portrayed in *The Straits Times*, the national newspaper, as a hero who sacrificed his life to save others.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, one elderly informant opined that the "Imperial Commissioner" simply wanted to approach and negotiate with the Communists but was unfortunately killed.<sup>27</sup> In an informal group conversation in a Tras coffee shop, one elderly villager firmly expressed the opinion that the Communists made a mistake in murdering the "Imperial Commissioner" at the Gap Road. He alleges that he heard that the "Imperial Commissioner" had a secret file ready for submission to the Queen, which would allow the Malayan Chinese to share equal political power with the Malays in future. Because of the assassination and subsequent state of emergency, the Colonial Government later decided

to transfer political power solely to the Malays.<sup>28</sup> There is no official evidence to support this point of view, but it reveals the perspectives of the relocated villagers, and how they relate their present to the past, as well as how such memories and alternate narratives become integrated with their understanding and explanation of their present political and social status in Malaysia.

In the oral accounts I collected, a common response to the evacuation was, "There was nothing you could do." A number of interviewees mentioned the severity of their economic loss from forced unemployment as well as the feeling of insecurity and fear during the period of evacuation and mass detention. The subsequent resettlement once more into different New Villages further exacerbated their economic loss due to the government restriction on returning to their smallholdings for the five years following.

### CONCLUSION

To the British, both in Whitehall (London) and Kings House (Kuala Lumpur), the assassination of the High Commissioner drew worldwide attention to the grave deterioration of security in Malaya.<sup>29</sup> While the forced evacuation and collective detention of 2,156 Tras people had its critics, the British Government defended these operations as necessary to clear an extremely dangerous area and separate the "sheep from the goats", in order to avoid punishing innocent people in the area.<sup>30</sup> From the perspective of the Tras people, the summary use of Emergency Regulation 17D following the death of Sir Henry Gurney had a profound impact on their lives.<sup>31</sup> The old, prosperous, rubber-rich town quickly became a ghost town in the aftermath of the evacuation and mass detention of November 1951. One key informant likened Tras to "a bamboo plant suddenly being cut through the middle ... and which would take a long time to recover."<sup>32</sup>

In the context of the emergency, the history of Tras is illustrative of an extreme set of circumstances. The assassination of the High Commissioner not only altered Tras' historical trajectory; the mass detention and collective punishment further displaced and dispersed the Hakka community in Malaya. The Tras people bore the heavy costs of this tragic event,



"Welcome to Tras New Village". The sign at the entrance of Tras today. Courtesy of Tan Teng Phee.

enduring family separation, considerable emotional trauma and financial hardship during the Emergency period and in the decades after.

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Dr James Francis Warren, Professor of Southeast Asian Modern History, Murdoch University, in reviewing this research essay. ■

## ENDNOTES

1. Ambush: Official Story. (1951, October 8). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
2. Wife Stayed with Body for 45 Minutes. (1951, October 8). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.  
The Funeral Tomorrow. (1951, October 7). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
3. See Troops search ambush area. (1951, October 8). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
4. No evidence of breach in security. (1951, October 9). *The Straits Times*, p. 1. Among these documents were bandit's plans for an ambush in that area and a log of military vehicles passing on October 5 and the morning of October 6. See Troops search ambush area. (1951, October 8). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
5. Chin Peng. (2003). *Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History* (p. 287). Singapore: Media Masters Pte Ltd.
6. According to one government statement, 15 battles had occurred in the Tras area since the outset of the Emergency, leaving 20 people dead and 14 wounded. In addition, the authorities had recorded 25 cases of attempted murder. The security forces had also discovered 24 "supply dumps" and 52 "bandit camps" in the vicinity of the town over the past three years. See Terror town to be moved. (1951, November 8). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
7. Tras was reported as "a favourite haunt of the gang and police suspect that the bandits have many friends in the village and its resettlement area." See Killer gang slips out of the trap. (1951, October 18). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
8. Terror town to be moved. (1951, November 8). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. It was said that the daughter was later deported to China. Madam Leong. (2007). Interview with the author on 2 December 2007.
12. 20 Detained in Village Screening. (1951, November 9). *The Straits Times*, p. 7.
13. Tras Evacuation Ends: 2,000 Quit. (1951, November 10). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
14. For instance, Mr Lau, a grocery owner, asked his brother to transport his goods to the former's grocery shop in Raub. Mrs Lau. (2007). Interview with the author on 12 December 2007. Tras. Another informant said his father asked a friend to sell his medicinal goods in Raub. His father lost a lot of money since it had to be sold in such a short time. Mrs Tang. (2007). Interview with the author on 19 October 2007.
15. A newspaper reported that government agents bought \$70,000 worth of rubber from the dealers at Tras. There was also about \$50,000 worth of rice in storage, including bags of first-grade Siamese rice. One of the liquor shops had 62 unopened cases of brandy and showcases full of other types of liquor. Government teams also recorded \$100,000 worth of textiles in the shops. Doomed town had hoarded fortune in food, drink. (1951, November 9). *The Straits Times*, p. 7.
16. See Tras Evacuation Ends: 2,000 Quit. (1951, November 10). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
17. Mr Li. (2007). Interview with the author on 5 July 2007. Tras New Village. The site is now a State Stadium. I visited the spacious stadium which could accommodate three to four thousand people when it was a detention camp in 1950s.
18. 37 Held from 'Murder Village'. (1952, March 13). *The Straits Times*, p. 5.
19. Mr Tao. (2007). Interview with author on 26 November 2007. Tras New Village; Mr Lee, (2007). Interview with author on 3 December 2007.
20. 37 Held from 'Murder Village'. (1952, March 13). *The Straits Times*, p. 5.
21. There were two types of houses, 60 x 60 feet and 60 x 120 feet, which still stand today in Tras New Village. It cost \$2,700 and \$3,700 for a small and large house, respectively. Mr Li. (2007). Interview with the author on 12 December 2007.  
The Federation Housing Trust also provided \$500,000 in loans to enable former villagers to purchase their houses. See Second Chance. (1957, September 19). *The Straits Times*, p. 6.
22. 'Ghost Town' Boom Again. (1958, January 11). *The Straits Times*, p. 5.
23. Snip! Terror town Tras comes to life again. (1958, April 27). *The Straits Times*, p. 5.
24. Ghost town now has 600 people. (1958, June 2). *The Straits Times*, p. 7.
25. Mr Li. (2007). Interview with the author on 12 December 2007.
26. Sir Henry Gurney killed — he drew bandit fire. (1951, October 7). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
27. Mr Chang. (2007). Interview with the author on 12 December 2007. Sempalit New Village. The local Chinese used to address the British High Commissioner as 'Imperial Commissioner' (欽差大臣).
28. Author's interview with villagers in a coffee shop in Tras New Village on 2 December 2007.
29. The newly elected Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent his Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, from United Kingdom to Malaya to assess the political situation himself.
30. For instance, *The Manchester Guardian* questions: "Does such indiscriminate action really impress?" See Collective Punishment in Malaya, 1950–1951. (1952, December 16). Note for Secretary of State Brief, Kenya Debate, CO 1022/56.
31. In fact, Tras was the 17<sup>th</sup> village to be punished under the draconian Emergency Regulation 17D. The British authorities had already applied the same regulation in 16 other places, involving almost 8,000 people since 1949. See 18<sup>th</sup> Village to get 17D Penalty. (1951, November 8). *The Straits Times*, p. 1.
32. Mr Li. (2007). Interview with the author on 12 December 2007.

# Multiculturalism:

## A Study of Plurality and Solidarity in Colonial Singapore



By **Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew**

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National Library

Some foods have become such a part of everyday life in Singapore that their origins have been largely forgotten, and various races have each claimed these dishes as part of their traditional cuisines. Examples of some of these foods include sugee cake, fruit cake, pineapple tart, *agar-agar*, curry puff, meat patty, butter cake and *kaya*; these are believed to have originated from the Eurasian community (Marbeck, 2004). In a similar way, the following dishes and desserts that are part of the mainstream Malay menu, were originally Chinese: *char kuay teow*, *tau suan*, *bubor terigu*, *mee rebus*, *tahu goreng* and *laksa*. *Roti prata* (or *roti canai* in Malaysia), while an Indian derivative, is a favourite among all ethnic groups.

Yet, instead of celebrating this dynamic multiculturalism in Singapore food, Lai (2006) and Pereira (2003) note a tendency to highlight the divisive potential of race, religion and language. Many social scientists have labelled Singapore a “plural society” (Furnivall, 1956, p. 304) where people of different religions, cultures and languages “live side by side, but separately ... meeting only in the market-place ... mixing but not combining.” While it may be more newsworthy to focus on plurality and separateness, I will instead postulate a plurality-solidarity cline and draw from the social and linguistic history of colonial Singapore as a means to examine the extent of acculturation

and assimilation that lay hidden beneath the seemingly divisive veneer of multiculturalism.

### A THREE-GENERATION MODEL: THE PLURALITY-SOLIDARITY CLINE

Our acculturation-assimilation continuum begins with plurality at one end, and solidarity at the other. While plurality conjures images of dissent and divisiveness, solidarity connotes cooperation and peaceful exchange.

Both acculturation and assimilation are degrees in the process of cultural integration. While acculturation sees cultural groups remaining as distinct entities, assimilation, which is found further along the cline, is a condition where the distinction among the groups becomes indistinguishable. To illustrate, we may place a first generation Chinese *coolie* (labourer) on one end of the cline and the second or third generation equivalent in the middle or far end of the cline. Where a newcomer is concerned, he is likely to speak in only his mother tongue, eat the cheapest of meals, and wear his ethnic (Chinese) clothes. Somewhere along the middle of the cline, we have the second or third generation, probably speaking native Malay, eating meals cooked with local ingredients such as tamarind and lemongrass, and wearing a Malayan outfit instead of traditional Chinese costume.

plurality _____	solidarity
(Generation 1: migrant)	(Generation 2, 3, ...)

This simple model assumes that the newcomer and his offspring would adopt the values, behaviours and characteristics of the mainstream culture in a “straight-line” progression. It also presumes that those who live in an environment for a long time tend to adapt to the dominant culture more easily than newcomers. The spoken vocabulary used may also indicate where the person is on the cline. For example, Shellabear (1913) surmised that when a Chinese man calls his father *n-tia* (father, in Chinese dialect) rather than *papa*, he probably belongs to an earlier generation. Similarly in the Malacca Chetty (descendants of Indian men from South India and local women



Pineapple tarts. Courtesy of Singapore Tourist Promotion Board.



Staff of a Chinese firm, Keng Lee & Company, 1937. Note the multiracial composition of the staff, comprising Chinese, Malay and Indian people. Courtesy of Phyllis Chew.

from Malacca) community (Thiyagaraj, 1998), it has been said that what instantly differentiates a newcomer from a member of the earlier generation would be his use of *belacan* (dried shrimp paste mixed with pounded chillies), *belimbing* (a tiny acidic fruit) and *chilli padi* (tiny hot chillies) in his cooking!

The speed of transculturation of a new migrant is affected by personal and socio-political variables. For example, when a penniless migrant arrives in colonial Singapore, he would naturally seek out people who can speak his native language and who can help him to understand the “strange” culture around him. He is likely to stay in an enclave of linguistically similar people and, for survival, may be tempted to join clans or secret societies to alleviate the state of anomie that he is experiencing. Such groups and societies would provide him with an environment where familiar norms and values are practised. In this sense the plurality of the society is accentuated. However, there would come a time, the migrant after having paid off his bond, is likely to move out of his enclave to a new area to seek new opportunities for business or perhaps, marriage. Being able to stand on his own two feet and no longer a bonded employee, the migrant would quickly learn the *linguas franca* — in Singapore’s context, English, Malay and Hokkien.

Marriage plays a crucial role in the transculturation of new migrants. For example, if the *singkeh* (new arrival from China) marries a local-born woman, their children would be speedily acculturated to the local customs and way of life. However, if he were to marry, say, an entertainment artiste who is also a new migrant, the acculturation process might be much slower. In another example, if the migrant were to decide to get a wife from China, the acculturation process may be temporarily impeded as the woman would tend to follow her village culture, not the local culture. In instances of interracial marriage, the result is an interesting hybrid identity. Reid (1993) notes that some of the maritime and commercial people recognised by the Portuguese by labels such as Jawa, Malay, Luzon and Jawi are likely to have been the result of such Chinese hybrids.

It is not just the newcomer who journeys on the cline but also the indigene. In other words, acculturation is more likely to be a two-way process of bicultural blending rather than a zero-sum game where one culture is replaced completely by another. As

a case in point, we see the Malays in Singapore adopting some Hokkien terms in their speech. This might be seen as a symbolic act of welcome and hospitality. For example, in spoken Malay, the days of the week were adapted from Hokkien *pai-it*, *pai-zi*, *pai za* (weekdays 1, 2, 3) through the use of *hari satu*, *hari dua*, *hari tiga*. This is seen as a variation of the standard Islamic-influenced terms: *hari isnin*, *hari selasa* and *hari rabu*. The Malays have also unconsciously absorbed much of Hokkien’s lexis through their usage of words such as *beca* (trishaw), *bihun* (vermicelli), *cat* (paint), *cincai* (anyhow), *guli* (marbles), *kentang* (potato), *kamcent* (sprout), *tahu* (bean curd) and *tauke* (boss). In reciprocity, the later-generation Chinese Hokkiens have also adopted many Malay words in their vocabulary, such as *agak* (guess), *botak* (bald), *champur* (mix), *gadoh* (fight), *jamban* (toilet), *kachau* (disturb), *longkang* (drain), *roti* (bread) and *tolong* (help).

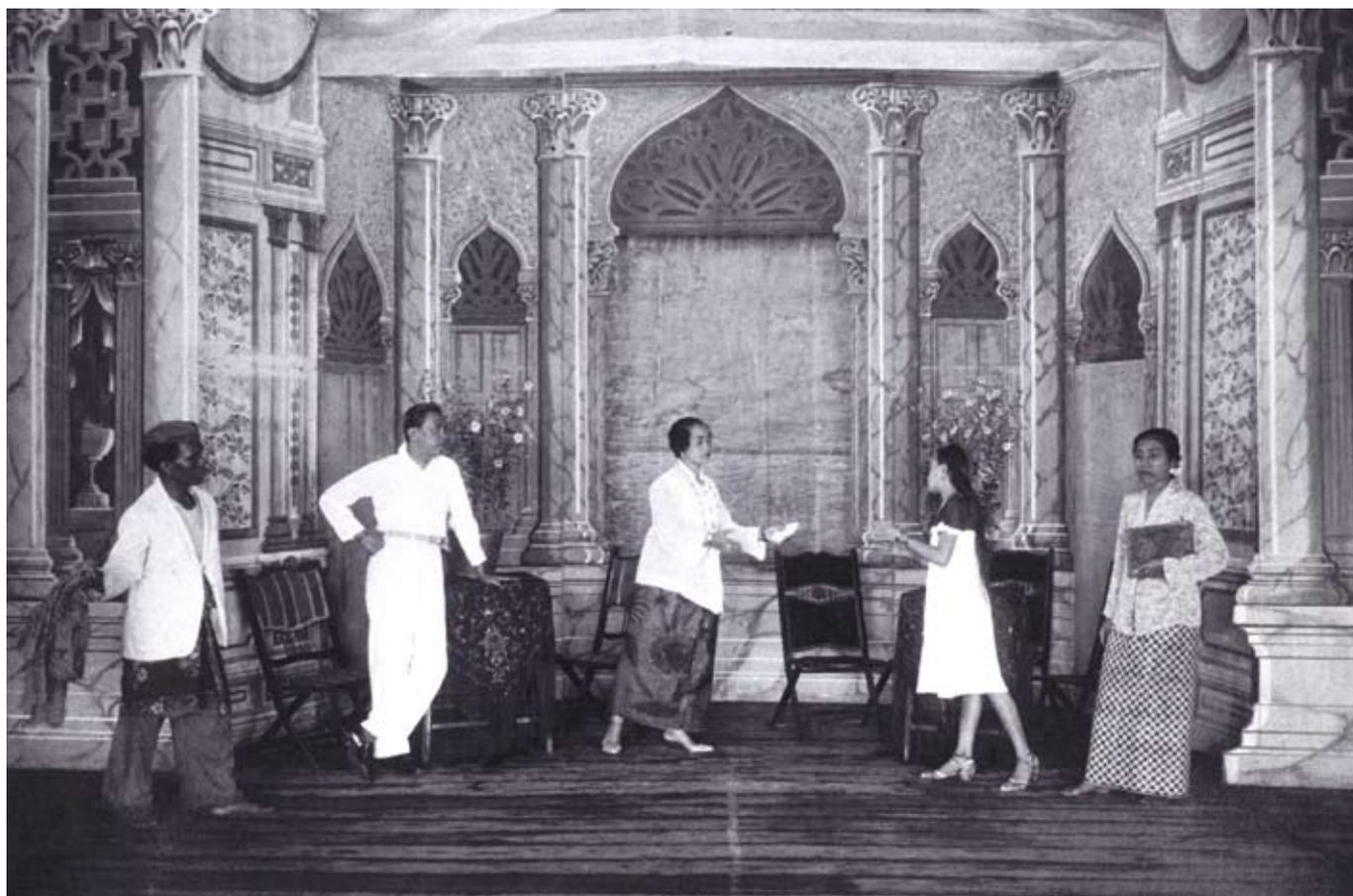
### A BI- AND MULTICULTURAL ORIENTATION

Progression along the cline is not necessarily unidirectional but often bi- or multidirectional. For example, the later-generation Chinese saw that their *guanxi* (beneficial social contact) was not only determined by their cultural affiliation to the Malay culture and their Malay language proficiency, but also their level of assimilation of western values, language and culture. For example, when the Babas founded the first modern school for girls, they wanted the language of instruction to be in both English and romanised Malay (Song, 1923, pp. 305–6). Wong Ah Fook, a migrant-made-good who came to Singapore in 1854 at age of 17, ensured that his children spoke not only Malay but also English and Chinese, by sending them to both English-medium and Chinese-medium schools (Lim, 2002). As a third example, Oei Tiong Ham, a Chinese entrepreneur, successfully petitioned the Dutch authorities for permission to wear western attire in public in 1889 (Rush, 1990, pp. 248–52).

Multidirectionality is also revealed through a survey of literary activities associated with the later generations. English language newspapers such as the *Straits Chinese Magazine* (1897–1907) featured not just Confucian classics but also interestingly, Malay poetry such as the *pantun* and *syair*. A Malay



A Peranakan family. Lee Hin Ming Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.



A bangsawan (Malay opera) scene. Mohd Amin Bin Kardarisman Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

language newspaper entitled the *Malaysian Advocate* (founded in 1910) highlighted Malay poetry in the same way, one would note the irony that Malay literary activities were first initiated not by the Malays themselves but by the Baba Chinese (and the Jawi Peranakans), who loved the native genre. Not to be outdone by the flowering of Malay and English literary activities, another group of local-born Chinese, ostensibly influenced by the rise of nationalism in China, started the Chinese-medium press, the *Lat Pau*. The emergence of this pro-China, pro-Chinese lobby points to the fact that the Chinese populace, even among the later-generation, was far from homogenous in their tastes and inclinations. Thus, a study of diversity in colonial Singapore reveals that it is also intracultural, and should not be stereotyped as only intercultural, as has often been the case.

Last but not least, the multicultural orientation of the Babas can also be seen in their vocabulary at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which according to Shellabear (1913) “was two-thirds Malay, one-fifth Hokkien and the remaining being Dutch, Portuguese, English, Tamil and an assortment of Indonesian languages.”

### BACKWARD AND FORWARD ON THE CLINE

While one can move forward on the cline, one may also move backwards. As the Malays gradually lost their political and economic power to the British Raj in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the diverse races began to signal their assimilation to British rather than Malay values. For example, Donald Wijasuriya, a Sinhalese, recalls how his grandmother, a migrant, would always wear the

sari while his wife “almost never used it,” preferring western dresses instead (Arseculeratne, 1992). Likewise, towards the end of our colonial period, younger Nonya ladies — unlike their older forebears — discarded *sarong kebayas* in favour of western clothes. This gradual aspiration towards British (rather than Malay) norms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century could also be discerned in food-related habits. For example, eating with your hands would be acceptable if one wished to identify with the Malay culture; but if one desired to be identified with the colonial masters, then one would use forks, spoons and knives — a practice which became more and more fashionable among the Chinese, Indians and Eurasians as the colonial norms became entrenched (Clammer, 1979, p. 16).

Last but not least, it should not be assumed that movement on the cline is problem-free. Some people exhibited symptoms of “acculturative stress”. In addition, we may find distinct groups such as the Chetty Indians practising certain Malay customs that are no longer practised by the Malays themselves. Thiyagaraj (1998, p. 71), for example, had observed that the Melaka Chetties “are also more Hindu than the Hindus in their meticulous observation of Hindu rites” (ibid.).

### PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COOPERATION

In this section, I will discuss the extent of polarity or solidarity using cooperative behaviour; signifiers of socio-cultural identity such as costume and food; rites of passage such as birth, death and marriage; and last but not least, language.

It is not unusual to find people of different races working

harmoniously together to achieve a common goal in both public and private arenas. Race was irrelevant in encounters where the primary motivation is mutual gain. As early as 1852, Keppel (1852) noted that the Malays and Chinese hunted tigers in the jungle together as a group, taking advantage of each others' strengths and specialisations. Arseculeratne (1992, p. 25) reminds us that many Chinese were known to prefer Sinhalese jewellers to those of their own kind because of the fine workmanship produced by the Sinhalese. In rites of passage, such as births, it did not matter who was consulted or whose services was engaged, as long as goals were achieved. For example, neither the Indian and Chinese communities were averse to using the services of the Malay *bomoh* (witch doctor) and *bidan* (midwife) (Baker, 1995).

In Singapore, during funerals, Sikh bandsmen were often hired to provide music (Abisheganaden 2005, p. 11). At Bukit Brown Cemetery, one may still see ornate Chinese graves flanked by porcelain figures of Sikh guards. Former Chief Minister of Singapore, Lim Yew Hock (1986) recounted that when his father passed away in 1931, he was deeply touched by the condolences from his father's friends, comprising people of many races (Chinese, European, Eurasian, Malay and Indian), who "unabashedly shed tears when paying their last respects".

Politician turned diplomat Lee Khoo Choy (1988, p. 6), a second generation Singaporean Chinese, whose once-penniless migrant father had married a local-born Chinese woman, recalled how in his youth, he had joined a multiracial (Chinese-Indian-Malay) musical group or *boria*, which went from "home to home in their community during weekends, singing both English and Malay songs on their guitars and fiddles". His biography is a good example of the second generation Chinese's fondness for the *wayang bangsawan* (classical Malay opera), the use of Malay music such as *keroncong*, and its adaptation for use in Chinese festivals such as *Cap Goh Meh*. Much earlier, Vaughn (1971, 1879) had observed that "the local-born Chinese" were fond of *pantun* (Malay poems) and *lagu* (Malay tunes) and had played them with western fiddles and eastern *tomtoms* to entertain guests. It was not just the Chinese who were attracted to Malay music but also the Indians; in his autobiography, Maurice Baker (2005, p. 9) recounts how his local-born Indian mother (who married an Englishman) loved attending *bangsawan* performances in the evenings.

## SOCIO-CULTURAL BLENDING

Women and men's dressing also reveals the personal agendas and identities of particular communities. For example, later-generation Chinese men such as the Babas wore western dress (which showed relative acculturation to the British Raj), while their women wore Malay dress (which showed an affective inclination to the Malay society).

In the arena of sports, Chinese and Indian subjects acquired a British preference for lawn tennis, golf, swimming, bodybuilding, chess and racing. However, in the arena of food, a Malay orientation was more likely. For example, Chinese Peranakan food is an intriguing mix of Chinese and Malay dishes. The *nonya* dish of *babi pong tay*, for example, is similar

to the Chinese dish *tau yew bak* (pork belly slow-braised in garlic and soy sauce), but with a spicy Malay flavour of salted soybean, cinnamon and pounded shallots. Another example is *nonya laksa*, a dish in which Peranakans combined Chinese coarse rice noodle with a Malay style curry. Likewise, in Indian (Chetty) households, we see a similar fusion. There is the Malay-styled *ikan bilis sambal* (anchovies fried with chilli paste), *sambal tumis* (fried chilli), *achar* (pickles), *sambar* (lentil stew) and Malay desserts such as *pulot seraykaya*, *pulot hitam* and *kueh wajid* on the same table (Thiyagaraj, 1998, p. 92).

Cultural blending is observed in marriage ceremonies too. For example, in a Chetty household, the Hindu rites and practices include the observance of the "tray-gift" ceremony and "dip for the ring", which entails the newlyweds plunging their hands into the pot three times to retrieve either a knife, a shell or a ring, the "tying of the *thaali*" (a nuptial thread) by the groom for the bride, and the exchange of mini toe rings between the bride and groom.

On the other hand, in a Malay wedding ceremony, the Malay *chongkak* (the game set consists of a wooden board and 98 pieces of cowry shells), a *baju kebaya* and *bunga rampai* are items prepared for the tray-gift ceremony, along with Malay desserts, Indian spices and sweets placed on large trays (Thiyagaraj, 1998, p. 86). More evidence of cultural blending in the marriage ceremony can be seen in mixing of language in terms such as *kasi maalai* (to give the garland away), where *kasi* is a Malay word referring to the act of giving and *maalai* is a Tamil word that refers to the garland.

In the case of the Babas and Nyonyas, their marriage system transitioned from patriarchal and patrilineal to more bilateral and bifocal (Clammer, 1980, p. 111). The practice of uxorilocal marriage (where the groom moves in with the bride's family) was also influenced by Malay practices.

The religion which a newcomer brings with him is not immune to contextual influences. For example, the Babas and Nyonyas' religious practices are syncretic in the sense that while many retained ancestor worship and a Chinese perspective of the cosmos, their divinatory techniques carry strong Malay influences (Clammer, 1979). In addition, later-generation Chinese were not averse to learning Buddhism from the Sri Lankans. Service at Sinhalese temples such as at the Sri



Food items prepared for a Malay engagement ceremony. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

Lankaramaya temple (Arseculeratne, 1992, p. 155), originally conducted in Sinhalese, had to be conducted in English due to the growing Chinese patronage at the temple.

Witnessing such flexibility even at rites of passage, the migrant Sinhalese adopted a mish-mash of customs from their host cultures. For example, instead of opting for cremation — the normal funeral practice in Sri Lanka — they wore black arm bands (like the Christians) and circled the grave thrice (like the Taoists). Arseculeratne (1992, p. 164) reported that visiting Theravada monks from Sri Lanka “were often shocked at the funeral ceremony.”

## CONCLUSION

I have drawn from the social and linguistic history of colonial Singapore, and have proposed a plurality-solidarity cline with parameters such as dress, food, the arts, religious and literary

activities, and rites of passage, as a means to study the processes of acculturation and assimilation. I have shown that while each ethnically distinct group maintained practices in accordance with their own religion, language and culture, they were not averse to communal interaction with one another. The patois which resulted and which is still evident in the spoken languages in Singapore today are poignant reminders of the combination and blending that occurred. This popular intermingling may not simply have been just a “multiracialism” but rather a deeper, more engaged “interculturalism”, which is unimaginable today.

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Dr Radin Merennage Fernando, Senior Lecturer, National Institute of Education and Dr Lim Beng Soon, Head of Programme, Malay Language and Literature, SIM University, in reviewing this research essay. ■

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# Shair Saudara Boyan:

## Menyingkap Sejarah Masyarakat Bawean



By **Sundusia Rosdi**

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Professional Services  
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### SYAIR SEBAGAI WACANA PERIWAYATAN

Kamus Dewan (2005) mendefinisikan syair sebagai “karangan bersajak yang mana tiap-tiap rangkap terdiri daripada empat baris yang sama bunyi hujungnya.”<sup>1</sup> Menurut Teeuw (1966), kebanyakan penulis bersetuju bahawa syair terbit dari perkataan Arab *syi'r* yang bererti puisi secara umum dan makna *syai'r* ialah penulis puisi atau penyairnya. Tidak diketahui pula bila dan mengapa perkataan Arab ini berubah makna menjadi syair seperti yang dimaksudkan dalam bahasa Melayu kini.<sup>2</sup>

Dari tanah Arab dan Parsi, gubahan syair Melayu mula diperkenalkan oleh Hamzah Fansuri, seorang ahli sufi Aceh, pada abad ke 16 yang juga merupakan pengarang *Sha'er Perahu*, *Sha'er Burong Pingai* dan *Sha'er Dagang*.<sup>3</sup> Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi, tokoh bapa kesusasteraan Melayu moden turut dikenali dengan *Syair Singapura Terbakar* dan *Syair Kampung Gelam Terbakar* yang termuat dalam bukunya *Hikayat Abdullah* (1849).<sup>4</sup>

Gubahan-gubahan syair banyak dikumpulkan di Singapura melalui ruangan tetap di *Jawi Peranakan* (1876–1895) iaitu akhbar mingguan terawal, kemudian oleh *Utusan Melayu* (1907–1921) hingga ke *Warta Malaya* (1930–1941) yang menyiarkan hasil kiriman pembaca. Genre syair ini terus popular dan diminati hingga menjadi sebahagian khazanah puisi masyarakat Melayu Nusantara.

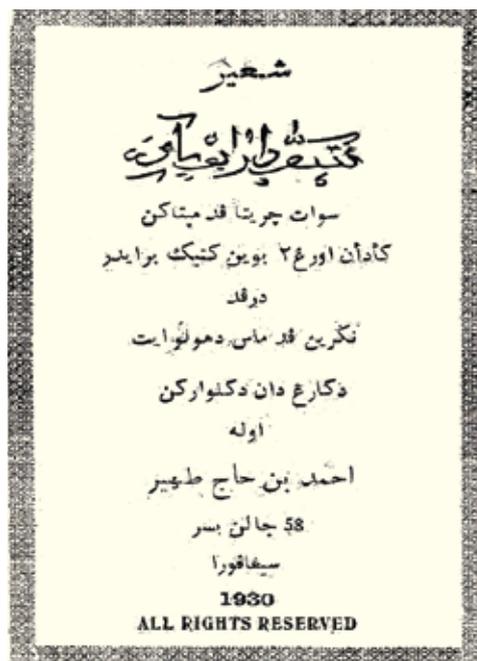
Lembaga Perpustakaan Negara Singapura menyenaraikan beberapa karya syair mengenai Singapura antaranya *Syair Tantangan Singapura Abad Kesem-*

*bilan Belas* (1835), *Syair Singapura Terbakar* (1843), *Syair Kampung Gelam Terbakar* (1847) atau *Syair Singapura Dimakan Api* (1860), *Shair Bah Singapura* (1891), *Shair Saudara Boyan* (1930) dan lain-lain.

### SHAIR SAUDARA BOYAN

*Shair Saudara Boyan* sangat menarik perhatian penulis kerana syair itu merupakan antara sumber utama yang terdapat di dalam bahasa Melayu mengenai masyarakat Bawean di Singapura selain *Shair Kampong Boyan Dimakan Api* (1883) terbitan Persatuan Jawi Peranakan, Singapura.

*Shair Saudara Boyan* telah dikarang oleh Ahmad bin Haji Tahir. Ia mengandungi 491 rangkap dalam aksara Jawi dan dicetak oleh Malaya Press, Singapura pada tahun 1930.



تورچف دملایا فریس نمبر 225 بقتوریا ستریه سیفاقورا.

Salinan kulit buku dan beberapa rangkap penutup *Shair Saudara Boyan*.

Hak cipta terpelihara, Reprographic Section, Reference Service Division, British Library, London.



Buku kumpulan syair sebanyak 49 lembaran ini selesai dikarang pada 15 Ramadan 1348 Hijrah (14 Februari 1930). Naskah aslinya diterima dan disimpan di British Muzium sejak 26 November 1930. Salinan mikrofilemnya terdapat di Perpustakaan Negara, Singapura dan Monash University Library, Australia.

Di halaman akhir karya tersebut tercatat peringatan, "Adapun syair Boyan ini telah diregisterkan di Pejabat Kerajaan Singapura menurut Undang-Undang Straits Settlements. Oleh yang demikian tidak dibenarkan mengecap atau meniru syair ini melainkan dengan izin pengarang."<sup>5</sup>

Setelah membaca *Shair Saudara Boyan* ini, penulis merasa terpenggil untuk menelitinya kerana moyang penulis merupakan antara perantau dari Pulau Bawean dan penulis sendiri pernah menziarahi Pulau Bawean pada tahun 1993 untuk menjejak akar susur-galurnya.

### CABARAN TRANSLITERASI AKSARA JAWI KE RUMI

Penulis akan menggunakan perkataan Bawean (bukan sebutan Boyan) kerana kaum ini berasal dari Pulau Bawean, Indonesia. Sebenarnya sebutan "Boyan" dimulakan oleh penjajah Barat, kerana pegawai-pegawai zaman kolonial itu lebih selesa untuk menyebut *Orang Bawean* sebagai *Orang Boyan*. Oleh kerana pada hakikatnya orang Eropah merupakan tuan kepada pekerja-pekerja Bawean yang tidak tahu menulis serta membaca dan ditambah lagi dengan cara hidup mereka ketika itu, mereka menerima istilah yang dianggap tidak sesuai ini tanpa ada bantahan sedikitpun.<sup>6</sup>

Penulis juga mengalami masalah ketika proses mentransliterasi syair-syair ini kerana kualiti tulisan Jawi di layar mikrofilem itu kurang jelas dan amat mencabar baginya. Misalnya terdapat banyak ayat yang berbayang dan bertindan lapis dari lembaran sebelumnya. Ini menyukarkan pembacaan walaupun setelah dicetak foto dari mikrofilemnya.

Terdapat perkataan-perkataan dan frasa yang sukar ditranskripkan secara langsung antaranya; "Di pondok ramai orang *Trais*" (ms. 26) dan "Bila malam memakai *pat-pat*" (ms. 38). Masalah susunan aksara Jawinya yang kabur dan tanda-tanda seperti titik yang kurang lengkap sebagai menuruti konvensyen huruf-huruf Hijaiyah agak mengelirukan. Misalnya "Perintahlah dahulu *terluca*" (ms. 41). Di samping itu struktur barisan dari bait pertama hingga ke bait terakhir tidak dipisahkan secara berperenggan. Untuk memudahkan rujukan, penulis menomborkan setiap 1,964 baris. Bait-bait ini dikekalkan nombor halaman teks Jawi asalnya. Penulis mengatasi penguasaan bahasa Baweannya yang terhad dengan merujuk kepada saudara mara untuk menakrifkan frasa-frasa yang tidak dapat diuraikan.



Masyarakat Bawean Singapura, 1910. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

### FOKUS KAJIAN

Penulis akan menganalisa karya syair ini dari aspek nilai-nilai yang tersirat di dalamnya, iaitu dari sudut kefahaman Islam, sosio-ekonomi dan sejarah masyarakatnya. Dan tidak lupa juga membandingkannya dengan fakta-fakta daripada penerbitan-penerbitan lain mengenai masyarakat Bawean yang terdapat di dalam Koleksi Perpustakaan Negara, Singapura.

### LATARBELAKANG KAJIAN

Pulau Bawean terletak 120 km di utara Surabaya (Jawa Timur, Indonesia) di Laut Jawa. Keluasannya kira-kira 200 km persegi (tiga kali lebih kecil dari Singapura), terbahagi kepada dua daerah; Sangkapura dan Tambak dengan 30 kelurahan (desa) dan 143 kampung.<sup>7</sup> Nama Bawean ini berasal dari perkataan Sanskrit yang bermakna "ada sinar matahari."<sup>8</sup>

Pulau Bawean juga dikenali sebagai Pulau Puteri kerana kebanyakan penduduknya terdiri daripada kaum wanita. Lantaran kaum puteranya pula mula merantau apabila mencecah usia remaja. Masyarakat Bawean menganggap bahawa "seseorang lelaki Bawean belum dikira dewasa sehinggalah ia merantau ke luar negeri."<sup>9</sup>

Singapura menjadi tumpuan kaum Bawean kerana menjadi pusat urusan Haji Nusantara ketika itu lantaran kemudahan pelayaran kapal wap yang membawa jemaah-jemaah haji ke Mekah. Kaum pendatang ramai ke Singapura untuk bekerja sambil mengumpulkan wang bagi menunaikan haji atau singgah ke sini dalam perjalanan pulang dari Mekah. Semasa persinggahan di Singapura, mereka bekerja untuk membayar hutang bagi perbelanjaan ke Mekah kepada ejen-ejen haji mereka.

Kaum Bawean juga beranggapan bahawa "kalau mahu enak-enak, pergi ke Jawa, kalau mahu di kubur, ke Malaya, tetapi kalau mahu cari wang dan pakaian ke Singapura."<sup>10</sup> Justeru, tujuan perantau-perantau ini ke Singapura adalah khusus untuk mencari kekayaan supaya dapat dibawa balik ke Pulau Bawean.



Lokasi Pulau Bawean, Indonesia.

Kaum Bawean dipercayai mula merantau ke Singapura seawal tahun 1824 dengan menaiki kapal Bugis<sup>11</sup> dan kemudian dengan kapal-kapal wap milik Belanda Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (KPM) dan Heap Eng Moh Shipping Company (syarikat-syarikat pengendali pelayaran di kepulauan Indonesia).<sup>12</sup>

### ANALISIS KANDUNGAN SYAIR

Syair dimulakan dengan penceritaan tentang kehidupan kaum Bawean di Pulau Bawean sendiri dan rentetan peristiwa yang mendorong mereka merentas lautan dengan hanya menaiki perahu layar untuk merantau ke Singapura.

Tiada watak utama dalam naskhah syair ini walaupun ia menyentuh beberapa personaliti dan merupakan catatan umum kehidupan mereka di Singapura. Beberapa personaliti yang telah berjaya dianggap sebagai wira sering disebut sebagai penjana semangat contohnya seperti Pak Lurah (Penghulu); Dul Haris dan Pak Tarallah. Kebanyakan watak-wataknya disentuh secara umum dan hanya beberapa watak dikisahkan secara terperinci misalnya kisah pelawak terkenal Mat Nor Gelam (sepanjang 44 baris).

Seperti koleksi syair-syair lain, pengarang memulakan karyanya dengan puji-pujian kepada Allah di halaman satu:

Bismillah itu mula dikata  
Alhamdulillah puji semata  
  
Telah takdir Tuhan yang satu  
Tiada berbanding serta bersekutu

Pengarang syair memohon agar syairnya diberkati Allah serta dapat menghiburkan pembaca-pembacanya. Bermula bait ke 17 pula, beliau terus memulakan hal masyarakat di Pulau Bawean serta urutan catatan perantauan mereka ke Singapura. Selanjutnya, niat dan persiapan kaum Bawean untuk merantau, juga detik-detik pengalaman merentasi lautan selama sebulan sebelum sampai ke destinasi tujuan diceritakan (ms. 5).

Marilah belayar jangan berlat  
Ke Singapura namanya selat  
  
Pelayaran ada di dalam sebulan  
Kurnia Tuhan dengan kebetulan

### PENEMPATAN AWAL MASYARAKAT BAWEAN

Setibanya di Singapura, kaum lelakinya menjual tikar anyaman Bawean di Kampung Jawa (Kampung Gelam). Sejak zaman Munshi Abdullah lagi mereka tinggal di rumah-rumah sementara di daerah Kampong Kapor (di pesisir Sungai Rochor yang terletak di antara Jalan Besar dan Syed Alwi Road).<sup>13</sup> Kawasan ini seterusnya menjadi tumpuan pendatang Bawean lantas dikenali sebagai Kampung Boyan (ms. 7–17).

Kepada Melayu dapat bercampur  
Berniaga Boyan di Kampong Kapor  
  
Mulailah ramai Boyan Singapura  
Di Kampong Kapor tempat ketara

Khabar keselesaan hidup di Singapura memang menggamit minat rakan taulan mereka di Pulau Bawean hingga akhirnya ramai turut berhijrah pada pertengahan abad ke 19. Banci Koloni Singapura tahun 1849 mencatatkan kehadiran 763 orang Bawean (720 lelaki dan 43 perempuan). Jumlah penghijrah ini terus meningkat tetapi kemasukan mereka ke sini dihadkan selepas Perang Dunia Kedua dengan penguatkuasaan "Citizenships Ordinance, 1957."<sup>14</sup>

### INSTITUSI PONDOK BAWEAN

Kaum Bawean yang berhijrah ke Singapura berasal dari pelbagai desa seperti Beluluar, Dekatagung, Padekek, Pakalongan, Tachung, Teluk Jati, Sakaoneng, Sokalela dan lain-lain. Tat kala sampai ke Singapura, mereka bersatu dan disediakan naungan di kediaman yang dikenali sebagai "ponthuk" (pondok) iaitu rumah bagi pendatang baru Bawean. Konsep pondok sebagai institusi sosial unik bagi memastikan keselesaan sosial dan keselamatan moral mereka<sup>15</sup> terutama bagi yang masih menganggur atau sakit kerana konsep pondok juga nampaknya sangat mirip dengan konsep "kongsi" bagi pendatang-pendatang Cina ke rantau ini.<sup>16</sup>

Pondok selalunya merupakan rumah kedai bertingkat atau banglo dengan unit-unit bilik kecil untuk setiap keluarga, sementara ruang tamu, ruang solat, dapur serta bilik dikongsi



Pemandangan sawah padi di Pulau Bawean. Sumber: Koleksi foto penulis, 1993.



**Gambar kaum lelaki Bawean di tahun 1950-an. Sumber: Koleksi foto penulis.**

bersama penghuni lain. Terdapat antara 10–30 buah keluarga hidup di bawah satu bumbung pondok. Nama setiap pondok di Singapura biasanya diberikan sempena desa asal di Bawean kerana kaum ini didapati amat tebal jati diri serta nilai etnosentrisme mereka. Mereka mahu dikenali sebagai orang dari desa asal mereka misalnya orang-orang Tambak, Gelam, Pakherbung dan lain-lain.

Di antara tahun 1940-an hingga 1950-an, catatan taburan 138 pondok didirikan di serata Singapura,<sup>17</sup> antaranya Pondok Teluk Dalam di Dixon Road, Pondok Dedawang di Sophia Road dan Pondok Adam di Ann Siang Hill. Pondok terakhir dikenalpasti terletak di Sungei Road dan telah dirobohkan pada tahun 1981.<sup>18</sup>

Penghuni pondok dikenakan bayaran sewa bilik sebanyak \$4 hingga \$12 sebulan oleh Pak Lurah serta yuran keanggotaan sebanyak \$1.50 sebulan.<sup>19</sup> Sebagai imbalan, kebajikan keselamatan ahli mereka dijaga melalui sistem gotong royong sesama penghuni pondok itu.

*Shair Saudara Boyan* turut menyebut nama beberapa pondok yang terkenal melalui halaman-halaman 18 hingga 28.

Baik sebuah masjid yang tentu  
Di Pondok Tachung tempat itu

Ketua bernama Encik Cak Cang  
Semuanya Boyan di Gunong Lanceng

Ketika itu ia Pak Tarallah  
Pakalongan ini jadi ceritalah

Sakaoneng pula saya nyatakan  
Pondok ia di sebelah pekan

Setiap pondok diketuai oleh seorang Pak Lurah yang bertindak sebagai penghulu serta penasihat ahli pondok. Oleh kerana kebolehan Pak Lurah ini, penguasa polis sebelum Perang Dunia Kedua telah memberi mereka sedikit kuasa untuk menangani sendiri ahli-ahli pondok mereka jika ada yang mengganggu ketenteraman.<sup>20</sup>

Pengaruh besar seseorang Lurah pondok Bawean diakui oleh pemerintah Inggeris. Mereka dihormati kerana kebanyakannya terdiri dari golongan yang agak berada dan telah menunaikan fardhu haji.

Syair ini memaparkan nama beberapa Pak Lurah antaranya Pak Lurah Dul Haris dari Pondok Tachung yang berniaga menjual tiket-tiket kapal ke Pulau Bawean. Sebagai ketua yang berdedikasi serta bersifat patriotik kepada Singapura, beliau telah dianugerahkan pangkat Jaksa Pendamai (JP) (ms. 21) :

Kesempurnaan Jawa yang dihadapi  
Gabenor memberi Pangkat JP

## **SOSIO-EKONOMI DAN MATA PENCARIAN**

Tradisi orang Bawean yang berperawakan kuat dan garang

serta bersifat rajin diperkatakan dalam syair ini. Sifat setiakawan, gotong royong, sabar serta tidak memilih pekerjaan telah menambat hati bangsa-bangsa lain (ms. 20–30):

Banyaklah bangsa pergi datang  
Memuji Bawean tiada berpantang  
Wang dikumpul yang digemari  
Hendak dibawanya pulang ke negeri

Dalam bidang ekonomi, kebanyakan mereka terlibat dalam usaha kecil-kecilan seperti menjual atap, menganyam tikar Bawean, membuat terompah kayu dan parut sebagai sumber pencarian mereka (ms. 8).

Bawean berniaga terompah dan parut  
Perniagaan maju tiada melorot

Umumnya terdapat semacam pengkhususan jenis pekerjaan di kalangan masyarakat pondok misalnya di Pondok Telok Jati, lelakinya cekap membelah rotan dan wanitanya mahir menjahit jala. Di samping itu menjadi nelayan dan kelasi memang popular kerana mereka sudah biasa dengan laut terutama bagi kaum lelaki dari Pondok Tambak (ms. 24–26).

Separuh di laut pula dihantar  
Menjadi kelasi jurumudi berputar  
Pekerjaan banyak menjadi kelasi  
Di kapal kecil Hailam kongsi

Terdapat ramai lelaki Bawean yang menjadi pemandu kereta. Dan ini seolah-olah menjadi simbol datuk serta moyang mereka sebagai pemacu pedati kuda (ms. 24).

Tiada takut letih dan rugi  
Niat menjadi coachman tinggi

Sebelum perang, masyarakat di Malaya dan Singapura selalu mengaitkan pengendali kuda atau joki secara automatik dengan orang Bawean.<sup>21</sup>

Sehubungan itu, kaum lelaki dari Pondok Gunong Lanceng pula ramai menjadi joki kuda (ms. 24).

Pekerjaan berlumpur kepala dan kaki  
Sehingga ada menjadi joki

Selanjutnya tentang mata pencarian orang Bawean, ada segelintir yang bekerja di industri perfileman Malaya, dalam bidang hiburan sebagai penyanyi kabaret, sebagai guru, atau dalam jawatan pemerintah. Mereka tergolong kurang dari 1/10 masyarakat Bawean.<sup>22</sup>

Penglibatan kaum Bawean dalam bidang seni juga dibayangkan dalam syair seperti pelawak Mat Nor Gelam yang menjadi ahli kumpulan bangsawan (ms. 40):

Pekerjaan dia di wayang kompeni  
Di Din Union semasa ini

Antara ciri paling dikenali yang berkaitan dengan masyarakat Bawean ialah kecenderungan mereka mengumpul emas (bukan mata wang). Kaum wanita mudah dikenali melalui perhiasan diri seperti memakai banyak gelang tangan, rantai, loket dan kerongsang emas. Di Pulau Bawean, mereka lazimnya menggunakan loket emas (paun) untuk berjual beli sawah

ataupun rumah. Malah kekayaan seseorang itu diukur dengan jumlah loket emas yang dimiliki dan mereka sering berjimat untuk membeli loket emas.<sup>23</sup> Kebiasaan wanita Bawean yang menghias diri dengan emas walau sekadar ke pasar digambarkan di halaman-halaman 11 dan 31:

Di pasar besi banyak bertempuh  
Dapat kelihatan gelang bersepuh  
Penuhi paun di dalam ponjin  
Supaya hajat boleh ditajin (keraskan)  
Jangan lupa mencari wang  
Kemudian mendapat intan dan gawang (siput mutiara)

## PENYINGKAPAN BUDAYA DAN TRADISI

Seterusnya syair ini menggambarkan suasana di majlis walimatulurus anak Pak Lurah Tarallah di Pondok Pakalongan (ms. 27). Semua tetamu dijamu dengan nasi samin (nasi minyak), lauk kari dan juadah lain di samping pemberian panganan juadah (berkat pengantin). Majlis turut dimeriahkan dengan permainan gendang dan rebana. Kebiasannya majlis perkahwinan Bawean merupakan pesta meriah yang berlangsung selama tiga hingga lima hari dan persiapannya dilakukan melalui budaya bergotong-royong.<sup>24</sup>

Satu hal yang menarik dalam catatan pengarang ialah istiadat keluarga pengantin melambungkan wang-wang syiling ke arah genting rumah hingga menyebabkan bunyi bising. Ini dilakukan oleh tuan rumah untuk menunjukkan kemewahan dan kemeriahan bunyi *ch'ning* (bejana tembaga). Ketika duit syiling dilambung jatuh bertaburan di lantai, ia menjadi rebutan sanak saudara yang memungutnya (ms. 28).

Bila datang jemputan menempuh  
Wang ditabur ch'ning nak repuh  
Sehingga ch'ning pontang panting  
Wang dilambung ke atas genting

## BUDAYA PENGHAYATAN ISLAM

Di Kampung Kapor, Weld Road pernah tersergam Masjid Boyan yang didirikan oleh hartawan Bawean pada tahun 1932. Begitu juga sebuah surau di Minto Road yang telah dibina lebih 100 tahun lalu dan dibiayai oleh masyarakat Bawean. Terkenal sebagai kaum yang patuh mengamalkan ajaran Islam, anak-anak Bawean seawal empat tahun sudah dididik mengaji al-Quran melalui kelas-kelas yang ada di setiap pondok. Pak Lurah sendiri menjadi imam ketika solat berjemaah. Suasana dan gaya hidup Islam terpancar dengan kegiatan-kegiatan agama antaranya, bacaan al-Quran, berzanji dan qasidah serta sambutan hari-hari kebesaran Islam (ms. 32–35).

Banyak orang pergi mengaji  
Sehingga ada yang naik haji  
Boyan pun sangat muliakan agama  
Serta mengerjakan waktu yang lima

Apabila wabak melanda Kampong Kapor (ms. 42), kaum Bawean mengadakan upacara membaca bacaan berzanji dan ratib beramai-ramai kerana mereka menganggap bahawa jin dan syaitan merupakan penyebab wabak tersebut.

Perihal penyakit tiada terkira  
Banyaklah mati Boyan saudara  
Beratur sekelian yang mana haji  
Di pinggang pula kitab berzanji  
Kemenyan dikekalkan bertalam-talam  
Menghalau penyakit biar tenggelam  
Hilanglah jin puaka musibat  
Melihat ratib manusia bertobat

Walaupun masyarakat Bawean ini jelas sangat kuat pegangan agama mereka, namun terdapat satu pandangan yang negatif mengenai kaum Bawean dahulu iaitu mereka sering dikaitkan sebagai pengamal ilmu hitam. Mereka dikatakan menggunakan ilmu sihir untuk menyebabkan sakit yang melarat, keguguran bayi, lemah syahwat dan kematian.<sup>25</sup>

Setelah sistem pondok berakhir, *stigma* ini kekal pada sebahagian orang-orang muda Bawean kini sehingga ada yang malu mengakui bahawa mereka asal keturunan Bawean.

### PENGUNAAN BAHASA DALAM SYAIR

Pengarang telah menggunakan bahasa Melayu sebagai bahasa utama dalam penulisan syair ini dan diselang-selikan dengan bahasa-bahasa lain seperti bahasa Arab, bahasa Inggeris, bahasa Madura, serta bahasa Bawean sendiri. Gaya bahasa yang digunakan agak mudah lagi santai. Namun beberapa rangkap kelihatan indah dengan bunga-bunga bahasa dan perbandingan yang tepat (ms. 21).

Nyatalah sudah Boyan nan maju  
Akal pun datang semangkin laju  
Sehingga berubah pakaian baju  
Semua pekerjaan boleh setuju

Dari sudut pemilihan perkataan, perbendaharaan bahasa pengarang sangat luas, beberapa perkataan seperti "*gelurat*" (ms. 1) dan "*geharap*" (ms. 34), tidak dapat saya tafsirkan walau setelah merujuk kepada kamus. Menarik juga bila terdapat beberapa bahasa pasar harian yang diselitkan seperti "*jotos*" (ms. 28) dan "*bini*" (ms. 8).

Pengaruh bahasa Arab ketara sekali seperti penggunaan *Alhamdulillah* (ms. 1), *Khalik-ul alam* (ms. 5) dan *Walimatulurus* (ms. 28). Pengarang juga menyelitkan ungkapan-ungkapan Inggeris berejaan Melayu misalnya: *Bersekutu dengan bandar dan market* (ms. 42), *Ke Kampong Kapor menuju target* (ms. 23) dan *Berpaip sigret asap barbus* (ms. 32).

Di beberapa rangkap *ala* pantun turut disisipkan frasa bahasa Madura seperti *Adu ambuk* (aduh nenek) dan bahasa Bawean seperti *emok* (sibuk), *phiyeng* (ibu), serta *Tak kabesanyo'on pahi'* (terima kasih yang tidak terhingga) (ms. 28). Pengarang turut meluahkan perasaannya dengan berpantun dalam bahasa Bawean di bahagian penutup syair ini (diterjemahkan secara bebas di ms. 48).

Ka tasik ka nosa-nosa  
Cukok tambhen kuring aken  
Bule achek eka sosa sosa  
Syair Pebhiyan e tamat aken

Ke tasik ke pulau Nusa  
Ikan tamban digorengkan  
Jangan saya di susah susah  
Syair Bawean akan ditamatkan

### NASIHAT, DOA DAN HARAPAN PENGARANG

Semasa mengakhiri syairnya, pengarang turut menyertakan permohonan doa dan harapan agar Allah menyempurnakan dan menyelamatkan kehidupan kaum Bawean serta menghindari mereka dari kelalaian dan sentiasa maju dalam kehidupan (ms. 46 hingga 48).

Berdoa selamat kepada sekelian wali  
Bosan bangkit janganlah khali (lalai)  
Ya Allah Khalik al Bokhari  
Dijauhkan bala kanan dan kiri  
Sempurnakan kaumku disana sini  
Ku doakan selamat saat berani

### NOSTALGIA KAUM BAWEAN

Zaman telah berubah, selepas lebih 80 tahun syair ini dikarang, masyarakat Bawean terus maju selari dengan arus perkembangan pesat negara Singapura. Masjid Kampong Boyan, surau di Minto Road dan pondok-pondok Bawean telah dirobohkan untuk memberi laluan kepada projek pembangunan perbandaran. Mereka telah berpindah ke rumah-rumah pangsa dan nama-nama pondok hanya tinggal kenangan kepada generasi yang pernah menghuninya sahaja. Pada tahun 2000, Lembaga Warisan Negara (NHB) telah mewartakan Pondok Peranakan Gelam (berdaftar pada 4 April 1932) iaitu satu-satunya pondok di Chinatown yang beralamat 64, Club Street sebagai Bangunan Warisan Negara ke-44. Pondok rumah kedai dua tingkat ini kemudiannya dibaikpulih dan didiami oleh penyewa baru.<sup>26</sup>

Kini dialek Bawean amat jarang dituturkan, kecuali sebagai ucapan khas sesama warga tua dan beberapa nama panggilan seperti *obek*, *mamang* dan sebagainya. Beberapa lagu Bawean seperti *La A Obe* (Dah Berubah) dan *Nga Lompak A Go Go* (Melompat dan ber-A Go Go) dendangan penyanyi popular 1960-an, Kassim Selamat bersama kugiran The Swallows sesekali berkumandang di radio dan terutamanya di majlis-majlis keramaian masyarakat Bawean.

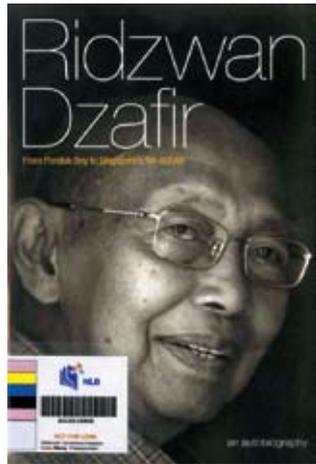
### PERSATUAN BAWEAN SINGAPURA

Dalam usaha mengenal jati diri serta melestarikan bahasa dan budaya Bawean, Persatuan Bawean Singapura (didaftarkan pada 1946) pernah menganjurkan kegiatan-kegiatan seperti kelas-kelas bahasa Bawean pada tahun 2007 serta kelas-kelas memasak juadah tradisi Bawean. Wisata ke Pulau Bawean juga dianjurkan supaya generasi baru dapat mengenali negeri asal usul mereka. Persatuan ini turut mengiktiraf individu Bawean yang terbilang mengharumkan nama masyarakatnya dengan penganugerahan Bawean Teladan, Bawean Budiman, Bawean Jasawan dan Bawean Cemerlang.<sup>27</sup>

## KARYA NADIR BERHARGA

Mungkin amat sedikit sekali pembaca masa kini yang berminat membaca syair panjang dalam aksara Jawi lama terutama dari paparan gulungan filem. Namun usaha pengarangnya merakamkan cebisan kisah masyarakat Bawean Singapura ini sangat penting dan harus dihargai. Beliau amat prihatin akan kaumnya sehingga dapat mengarang kisah dalam bentuk syair iaitu suatu karya yang amat sukar dan jarang dilakukan orang lain. Usaha terpuji ini mungkin dilupakan jika tidak didokumentasi dengan sewajarnya misalnya dijadikan antara sumber kajian tentang diaspora masyarakat dan etnik Nusantara.

Dalam konteks kesusasteraan Melayu dan sejarah Singapura umumnya, koleksi syair ini merupakan bahan nadir mengenai kaum-kaum perantau pada era 1920-an hingga sebelum Perang Dunia Kedua. Selain usia karya ini, isinya berkisar tentang keadaan sebenar masyarakat Bawean pada itu. Bentuk karya bersyair-pantun begini tentang orang Bawean



**Pencapaian anak pondok, diabadikan. Hak cipta terpelihara, Didier Millet, 2009.**

boleh mengimbau nostalgia generasi lama perantau Bawean. Sementara kaum muda dapat menyusur galur salasilah mereka melalui rakaman gambaran puisi berirama.

## RUMUSAN

Sekarang yang tinggal hanya nama bangsa Bawean yang tercatat dalam kad pengenalan dan surat lahir seramai 51,849 orang Bawean Singapura menurut laporan Banci Penduduk tahun 2000.<sup>28</sup> Mungkinkah mereka ini yang meneruskan aspirasi generasi awal perantau-perantau yang mengharungi gelombang ombak samudera semata-mata untuk mengecap kehidupan lebih selesa?

Ramai cendekiawan Bawean telah menyumbangkan kepakaran tenaga untuk kemajuan Singapura antaranya Encik Ridwan Dzafir, mantan Direktor-Jeneral, Lembaga Pembangunan Perdagangan (Trade Development Board) dan Presiden Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) (1986–1989) dan Encik Hawazi Daipi, Setiausaha Parlimen Kanan, Kementerian Kesihatan dan Kementerian Tenaga Manusia.<sup>29</sup>

Generasi baru masyarakat Bawean harus mengetahui dan mengenang jasa generasi nenek moyang mereka kerana wawasan dan keberanian mereka menyerantau.

Penulis menghargai usahasama Dr Roksana Bibi Abdullah, Associate Professor, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, yang mengulas makalah ini.

## A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE BAWEANESE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE POEM OF THE BAWEANESE (1930)

Ahmad Haji Tahir wrote *Shair Saudara Boyan* (Poem of the Baweanese) in 1930. This significant 49-page poem collection, written in Malay using Jawi script, offers a portrait of the Baweanese community and sheds light on their social values and aspirations, extending lessons which the present generation of Baweanese in Singapore may find instructive.

Through this work, one may gain insight into the history of the Baweanese (Indonesian) immigrants in Singapore.

The Baweanese-Singaporeans of today owe much of their success to their ancestors' determination, industriousness and courage to emigrate. ■

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# Women's Perspectives on Malaya: Isabella Bird on the Chersonese



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National Library

*“There is not very much comfort when one leaves the beaten tracks of travel,  
but any loss is far more than made up for by the intense enjoyment.”*

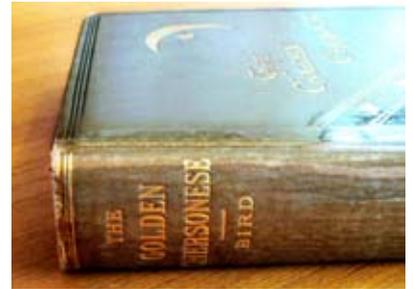
(Bird, 1883, p. 216)

## ISABELLA BIRD: THE ACCIDENTAL TOURIST

Born in 1831 in England, Isabella Bird was a celebrated travel writer known for her momentous journeys across various continents. She explored the wild unknown with the barest minimum, mostly on her own — uncommonly adventurous for a woman during the conservative Victorian era.

But travel and travel writing were not something she was naturally inclined towards. One of her obituary notices described her as, “The invalid at home, the Samson abroad,”<sup>1</sup> succinctly capturing her contradictory nature. Throughout her life, she was afflicted by ailments, with such varied symptoms that her physicians were often left in a quandary as to the diagnosis of her diseases. At 18, she had an operation to remove a lump from her spine. Thereafter, she suffered from insomnia, nausea and pain, and was often bedridden, barely able to amble out of her home. Miraculously, these sufferings were dispelled when she travelled abroad.<sup>2</sup> In fact, some concluded that the travels served as a panacea to a constrained life at home.

Bird made her first journey at the age of 23 to North America to visit her relatives. It was made on doctor's orders to recuperate from a bad back, though some say that it was prescribed to help her recover from love-sickness. Thereafter, the travel bug that bit her remained with her.



A first edition of *The Golden Chersonese* (1883). Rare Materials Collection, National Library Singapore.

Bird travelled more widely in her middle age after the death of her mother, she traversed the wide expanse of the Americas, Australia and New Zealand and through the wild lands of Asia such as China, Korea, Malaya and the Middle East. In total, she travelled for more than nine years, though there were long periods when she stayed home. Age did not mellow her venturesome spirit and she chose to explore harsher lands and take on more challenging adventures even as she entered her 70s.

Most of Bird's early books were based on letters she had written to her only sibling, Henrietta. “In writing to my sister my first aim was accuracy, and my next to make her see what I saw ....” (Bird, 1883, p. viii) However, Henrietta was not just a home-bound shrinking violet who merely received her adventurous sister's letters. In fact, she was considered the more academic of the two,<sup>3</sup> having a fluency in classical languages such as Greek and Latin.



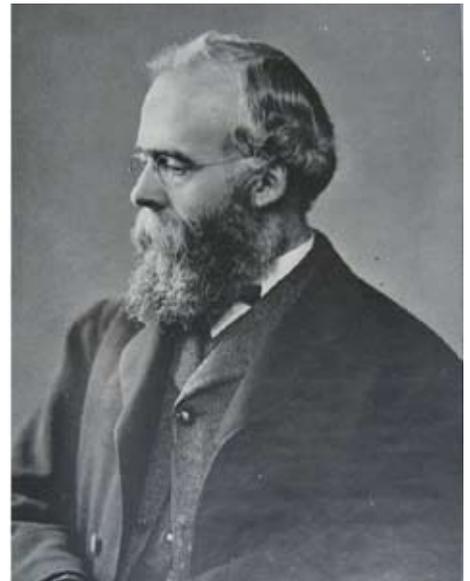
Isabella Bird's first ride in Perak (Bird, 1883, frontispiece).



Henrietta Amelia Bird (Stoddart, 1908, p. 122).



Isabella Bird (Stoddart, 1908, Frontispiece).



Dr John Bishop (Stoddart, 1908, p. 118).

It was Henrietta who had suggested titling Bird's Malayan travels *The Golden Chersonese*, based on her knowledge of Ptolemaic history and its mention in Milton's poems. There has been speculation that Henrietta had literally co-written much of Isabella's earlier books.<sup>4</sup> Bird herself had acknowledged her sister as "[her] intellect, the inspiration of all [her] literary work."<sup>5</sup> For *The Chersonese*, Bird acknowledged that "[Henrietta's] able and careful criticism, as well as loving interest, accompanied [her] former volumes through the press." (Bird, 1883, Preface, p. vii). *The Chersonese*, however was Bird's last book based on her letters to Henrietta. Henrietta died in 1880 soon after Bird returned from Malaya. Bird expressed her sense of loss noting that the book was written "under the heavy shadow of the loss of the beloved and only sister" (ibid., Preface, p. vii) and dedicated *The Chersonese* to her: "To a beloved memory, this volume is earnestly and sorrowfully dedicated." Henrietta's death not only affected Bird emotionally, but likely also her writings. While researching for *The Chersonese*, Bird had appealed several times to John Murray, her publisher, to provide materials to pad up her limited knowledge on Malaya — something which Chubbuck believes Henrietta, if alive, would have invariably supplied to her sister.<sup>6</sup>

*The Chersonese* was Bird's first book published after her marriage. Dr John Bishop, a learned and quiet man, who was 10 years younger than Bird, proposed to her in 1877. It is believed that Bird spurned him initially as Henrietta had fallen for him.<sup>7</sup> It was only after the death of her sister that Bird married the doctor in 1881, purportedly fulfilling her sister's dying wish. Bird, who was 50 years old then, dramatically wore mourning black for her wedding finery. Although it is believed that Bird was not truly in love with Dr Bishop, she mourned him deeply when he died five years into the marriage.

### THE PROTECTED MALAY STATES: TERRA INCOGNITA

*The Golden Chersonese* was the half-way mark of Bird's published travelogues, which totalled nine titles. In twenty-three

letters, Bird wrote about the British presence in Malaya, namely in the Straits Settlements — Singapore, Malacca and Penang — and in the three Protected Malay States — Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong<sup>8</sup> — which had recently come under a British Residential System. Although the letters seem informal and fluid, the publication is in fact tightly structured. For example, the introduction to the book provides an overview of Malaya, its history, politics, people and landscapes. In a similar pattern, her descriptions of her travels through each Settlement or State is prefaced with a brief survey of the province before she gives her observations of and adventures in these places. However, the book is not solely about Malaya. It begins with a description of China and Bird's journey down south, with a stop over in Saigon, Vietnam before it elaborates on the Protected Malay States. It ends with an appendix, which describes the Residential system, the government's opposing slavery and the various letters by Hugh Low.

Bird visited the Protected Malay States a few years after they were newly established as Protected States in 1876. Tin mining was the main industry but these States remained a wild and unexplored outpost for the British officials. In her introductory chapter, Bird noted that contemporaneous Malaya was a terra incognita: "there is no point on its mainland at which European steamers call, and the usual conception of it is a vast and malarious equatorial jungle sparsely peopled by a race of semi-civilised and treacherous Mohammedans." (ibid., p. 1) However, Bird's survey of the land was brief and necessarily limited as it was based on a mere five-week sojourn which she made chaperoned by British officials, travelling with official transport and lodging in the comfort of their homes.

### SINGAPORE: A CHINESE CITY

Bird's travels through the Malay Peninsula began in Singapore,<sup>9</sup> a pit-stop made on her return journey from Japan in 1879. Her fame had preceded her and she was quickly invited by Cecil Clementi Smith, then Colonial Secretary, to visit the newly formed Protected Malay States. Smith probably saw an

opportunity to publicise the value of the Malay States through the writings of a well-known author while Bird took this as another chance at adventure. All she needed were additional cash and necessary letters of introduction before she quickly agreed to “escape from civilization” (ibid., p. 109).

While she considered Singapore too well-known to elaborate on, Bird still gives a vivid vision of the harried, varied people in the growing port city:

How I wish I could convey an idea, however faint, of this huge, mingled, coloured, busy, Oriental population; of the old Kling and Chinese bazaars; of the itinerant sellers of seaweed jelly, water, vegetables, soup, fruit and cooked fish, whose unintelligible street cries are heard above the din of the crowds of coolies, boatmen, and gharriemen waiting for hire; of the far-stretching suburbs of Malay and Chinese cottages; of the sheet of water, by no means clean, round which hundreds of Bengalis are to be seen at all hours of daylight unmercifully beating on great stones the delicate laces, gauzy silks, and elaborate flouncings of the European ladies; of the ceaseless rush and hum of industry, and of the resistless, overpowering astonishing Chinese element, which is gradually turning Singapore into a Chinese city! (Bird, 1883, pp. 119–120)

Details accompany Bird’s descriptions, but they are neither dogmatic nor boring, always informing and giving flesh to a general impression. Her first biographer, Anna Stoddart, recognised Bird’s “capacity for accurate observation, her retentive memory, and her power of vivid portrayal, [that] have enabled multitudes to share her experiences and adventures in those lands beyond the pale which drew her ever with magnetic force.” (Stoddart, 1908, p. v) Take for example her detailed description of the many tribes that made up Singapore’s populace in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century:

The English, though powerful as the ruling race, are numerically nowhere, and certainly make no impression on the eye. The Chinese ... are not only numerous enough, but rich and important enough to give Singapore the air of a Chinese town with a foreign settlement ... the native Malays ... who, besides being tolerably industrious as boatmen and fishermen, form the main body of the police. The Parsee merchants ... form a respectable class of merchants .... The Javanese are numerous, and make good servants and sailors. Some of the small merchants and many of the clerks are Portuguese immigrants from Malacca; and traders from Borneo, Sumatra, Celebes, Bali, and other islands of the Malay Archipelago are scattered among the throng. The washermen and grooms are nearly all Bengalees. Jews and Arabs make money and keep it, and are, as everywhere, shrewd and keen, and only meet their equals among the Chinese ... the Klings from the Coromandel coast ... are the most attractive in appearance ....” (Bird, 1883, pp. 114–115)

Indeed, her descriptions of people seem to favour the locals over her own compatriots sometimes taking a potshot at the latter’s apparent condescension toward native people and their

customs. This is vividly seen in her contrasting descriptions of the local Indian women and the upper crust European ladies in the town:

A tall, graceful Kling woman ... gliding along the pavement, her statuesque figure, the perfection of graceful ease, a dark pitcher on her head, just touched by the beautiful hand, showing the finely moulded arm, is a beautiful object, classical in form, exquisite in movement, and artistic in colouring, a creation of the tropic sun. What thinks she, I wonder, if she thinks at all, of the pale European, paler for want of exercise and engrossing occupation, who steps out of her carriage in front of her, an ungraceful heap of *poufs* and frills, tottering painfully on high heels, in tight boots, her figure distorted into the shape of a Japanese sake bottle, every movement a struggle or a jerk, the clothing utterly unsuited to this or any climate, impeding motion, and affecting health, comfort, and beauty alike? (ibid., p. 117)

### THE MALAYANS: A WOMAN’S PERSPECTIVE

Stoddart noted that “as a traveler, Mrs Bishop’s outstanding merit is that she nearly always conquered her territories alone; that she faced the wilderness almost single-handed[ly] ...” (Stoddart, 1908, p. vi). That was how she travelled when she first took off to explore the Malay States. She boarded a small Chinese-owned boat, the *Rainbow*, to Malacca — being the only European and female traveller onboard. However, Bird was not always alone in her Malayan adventures. On much of the journey inland, she was accompanied by Babu, a native butler of sorts, the governor’s two young daughters and up to 11 other workers.

As a woman, Bird was privileged to see the more intimate side of Malayan life. She was sometimes invited to meet locals of the fairer sex and their children and she often took pains to describe the women, their dress and appearances as well as the children. In one instance, she was invited to meet a Sikh guard’s family, whom her male companions comprising officials in high leadership positions had not met before. Upon seeing the guard’s wife, Bird exclaimed in awe:

She is very beautiful, and has an exquisite figure, but was overloaded with jewellery .... She had an infant boy ... in her arms, clothed only in a silver hoop, and the father took him and presented him to me with much pride. It was a pleasant family group. (Bird, 1883, p. 291)



A Kling (Bird, 1883, p. 254).

*The Chersonese* not only offers a peek into the communities of the newly formed Malay States, but it also gives anecdotal accounts of the people who led the Protected Malay States. In fact, “the individuals Bird’s narrative sketches are almost entirely British administrators, the empire builders engaged in the great work of creating British Malaya. They turn out to be people who were then in the process of developing extensive reputations in England, and who would, in the three decades following the publication of Bird’s book, reach enormous fame.”<sup>10</sup> One such individual was William Edward Maxwell, whom Bird met in Perak. He was then a newly appointed Assistant Resident, but soon rose to become the Acting Resident Councillor of Penang (1887–1889) and Acting Governor (1891–1895). She described Maxwell thus:

A man on whose word one may implicitly rely. Brought up among Malays, and speaking their language idiomatically, he not only likes them, but takes the trouble to understand them and enter into their ideas and feelings .... I have the very pleasant feeling regarding him that he is the right man in the right place. (ibid., pp. 285–286)

She then continued to describe the convivial repartee over dinner between Maxwell, Captain Walker and Major Swineburne, her travel companions, doubting that “such an argument could have been got up in moist, hot Singapore, or steamy Malacca! ... That it should be possible shows what an invigorating climate this must be.” (ibid., p. 286)

### THE GOLDEN CHERSONESE: ROMANCE OR REALISM?

Though some have criticised Bird for romanticising her description of the Malay States, she did not censor her more negative impressions of the Peninsula or gloss over the challenges she faced. Indeed, she sometimes seemed to relish the more horrid experiences and observations. Such was the case when she first arrived in Selangor, where she described the squalid conditions of the village by the river — “Slime was everywhere oozing, bubbling, smelling putrid in the sun, all glimmering, shining, and iridescent, breeding fever and horrible life ....” (ibid., p. 243)

Even minor irritations were mentioned as seen in her frequent complaints of incessant mosquitoes biting ceaselessly and the disappointment of sometimes expecting a meal from a host after a long day of travel, but never receiving one.<sup>11</sup>

The adverse circumstances, however, brought out Bird’s resourcefulness. She devised an innovative approach to protect herself from the heat of the sun:

I wear a straw hat with the sides and low crown thickly wadded. I also have a strip four inches broad of three thicknesses of wadding, sewn into the middle of the

back of my jacket, and usually wear in addition a coarse towel wrung out in water, folded on top of my head, and hanging down the back of my neck. (ibid., p. 253)

When her elephant ride from Larut to Kwala Kangsar [sic] did not materialise due to some miscommunication, and she had to walk the four miles through quagmire and jungle, she recognised that she “could not have done the half of it had [she] not had [her] ‘mountain dress’ on ...” (ibid., p. 293). She finally meets her elephant, which had “nothing grand about him but his ugliness” (ibid., p. 298).

Even in the midst of these challenges, she was able to contemplate the uniqueness of her circumstances, sometimes describing them in such wondrous tones despite the apparent dangers and discomforts she faced. Here, she gave the context to her elephant ride:

I am making my narrative as slow as my journey, but the things I write of will be as new to you as they were to me. New it was certainly to stand upon a carpet of the sensitive plant at noon, with the rays of a nearly vertical sun streaming down from a cloudless, steely blue sky, watching the jungle monster meekly kneeling on the ground with two Malays who do not know a word of English as my companions, and myself unarmed and unescorted in the heart of a region so lately the scene of war, about which seven blue books have been written, and about the lawlessness and violence of which so many stories have been industriously circulated. (ibid., p. 340)

Caught between ailment and adventure, the familiar and the strange, her countrymen and savage beasts, Bird provided her readers with a sense of feminine wonderment that colours the landscapes of the Malay States with a peculiar attractiveness.

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Dr Ernest C.T. Chew, visiting Professorial Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, in reviewing this article. ■



An equatorial jungle stream (Bird, 1883, facing p. 227).

## ENDNOTES

- Mrs Bishop. (1904). *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, 14, p. 383.
- Checkland suggests that much of her ailments were due to the drugs she imbibed during her home stay, some of which were potent drugs such as cannabis and opium. Her travels healed her as she no longer consumed these potent mixes (p. 32). Chubbuck believes that her actual disease was carbunculus resulting in "infectious knobs" appearing on the spine and back. However, Chubbuck also notes that Bird's sufferings were likely psychosomatic (pp. 5–6).
- Chubbuck, pp. 9–10.
- Chubbuck, pp. 13–14. Chubbuck also suggests that the sisters' relationship was not as congenial as it seemed but Victorian conservatism did not allow Isabella to express fully the competitiveness that was likely to have existed between them. Nevertheless, Isabella was devastated following her sister's death from typhoid in 1880.
- From a letter by Bird to John Murray III dated June 16, 1880, as found in the John Murray Archives and cited in Chubbuck, p. 14.
- Ibid.
- Chubbuck, p. 15.
- Though Bird describes only Sungei Ujong, this state later joined other adjoining states of Negri Sembilan. During this period however, Sungei Ujong was administered independently under the British (Sadka, p. 1).
- In fact, the first six letters of *The Golden Chersonese* narrates her travels down from China, through Hong Kong and Saigon, Vietnam. Her visit to Singapore is mentioned only in the seventh letter, about a quarter through her title.
- Morgan, S., 1996, p. 152.
- At Permatang in Perak for example, she was relieved to hear her host discussing breakfast. But after a bath, the visitors were expected to leave immediately, without the much desired meal. (Bird, 1883, pp. 279–280).
- The National Library has the original 1883 copy by John Murray, one of which belongs to the collection of the learned curator, Dr Gibson-Hill. The reprints were also acquired by the library including recent reprints by Konemann (2000) and Monsoon Books (2010). Besides this, the Library holds several of Bird's other travelogues as well as analysis, commentaries and criticisms of her works and biographies along with studies of her life.

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# Sastera Melayu Singapura pasca 1965



By **Juffri Bin Supa'at**

Librarian  
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*"Sudahkah para penulis kita mengambil dan merakamkan isu-isu atau masalah-masalah masyarakat yang paling penting dan hangat? Adakah para penulis kita digerakkan oleh permasalahan dan penderitaan masyarakatnya?"*

Hadijah Rahmat, *Sastera & Manusia Melayu*, Kumpulan esei & wawancara, ms. 137

Singapura pernah menjadi pusat perkembangan sastera Melayu moden. Ini dapat dilakukan dengan begitu berkesan sekali kerana Singapura ketika itu juga berfungsi sebagai pusat penerbitan dengan terdapatnya alat-alat percetakan moden yang dibawa masuk dari barat. Secara tidak langsung, menjadi daya tarikan kepada bakat-bakat dari seluruh rantau ini yang bercita-cita untuk mengembangkan dan meluaskan peluang penulisan mereka.

Gelombang kesusasteraan Melayu ini menjadi begitu terkesan terutama dengan tertubuhnya Angkatan Sasterawan '50 (ASAS '50) pada 6 Ogos 1950 yang dianggotai oleh para penulis muda ketika itu seperti Masuri S.N., Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, Keris Mas dan Asraf yang berperanan sebagai pemacu gerakan sastera di rantau ini ketika itu.

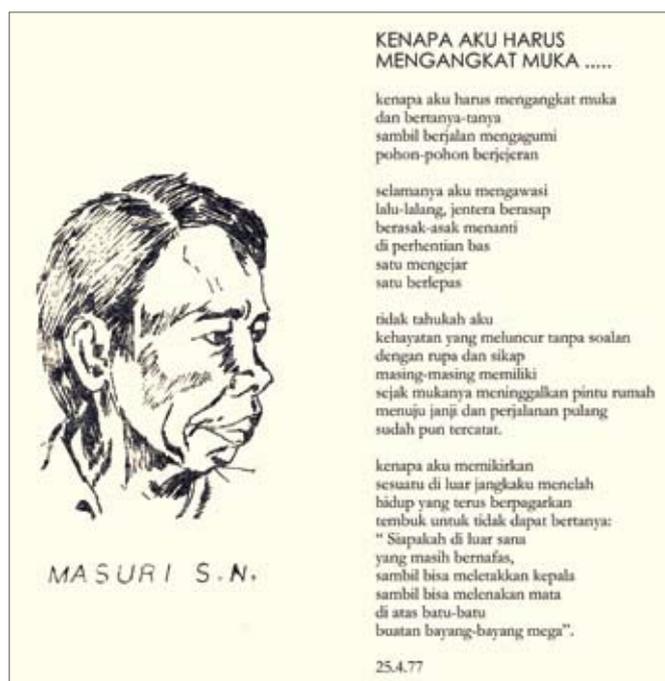
Akan tetapi, selepas tahun 1965, tahun Singapura berpisah dengan Malaysia dan menjadi sebuah negara merdeka, ramai orang beranggapan bahawa dunia kesusasteraan Melayu Singapura seakan-akan mengalami kelesuan. Anggapan ini dikukuhkan lagi apabila perpisahan ini mengakibatkan ramai

penulis Melayu seperti Usman Awang dan Keris Mas yang "berhijrah ke Singapura kembali ke kampung halaman mereka masing-masing" dan "dengan sendirinya pusat perkembangan sastera Melayu berpindah dengan pulangnya para penulis Melayu yang berasal dari Tanah Melayu ke tanahairnya" (A. R. Kemalawati, 1984).

Meskipun ramai yang bertanggapan begitu, sastera Melayu di Singapura tetap berkembang. Walaupun perkembangan tersebut tidak serancak sebelum perpisahan tetapi "malangnya perkembangan kesusasteraan Melayu Singapura selepas peristiwa ini tidak banyak diketahui dan tidak banyak diperkatakan orang" (Mohd Latiff Mohd, 1982).

Masih terdapat karya-karya sastera yang masih terus dilahirkan walaupun menurut Masuri (1983), kebanyakan karya sastera Melayu di Singapura, terutama yang dihasilkan pada tahun 1965–1969 masih lagi terikat dan terkait dengan sastera Melayu di Malaysia. Hal ini berlaku kerana pada tahun-tahun awal perpisahan ini para penulis karya kreatif di Singapura "masih terus merasakan bahawa mereka adalah sebahagian dari masyarakat penulis di Malaysia" kerana penggunaan bahasa dan media yang sama. Oleh itu, kegiatan penulisan ini masih lagi diteruskan "secara sebadan dan senyawa dengan perkembangan sastera Melayu dalam erti yang seluas-luasnya."

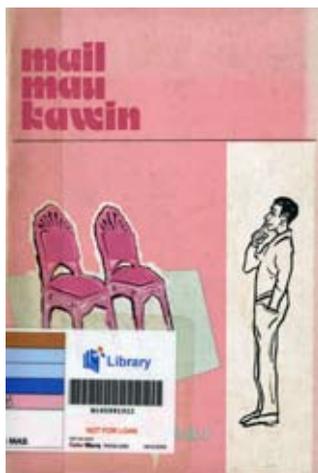
Selain pengaruh bahasa, budaya dan hubungan Singapura dan Malaysia yang masih terkait, kehadiran para penulis seperti Masuri, Harun Aminurashid (Har) dan Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (Mas) daripada generasi awal masih terus mempengaruhi lapangan kesusasteraan tanahair. Oleh itu, corak identiti sastera Singapura masih tidak banyak



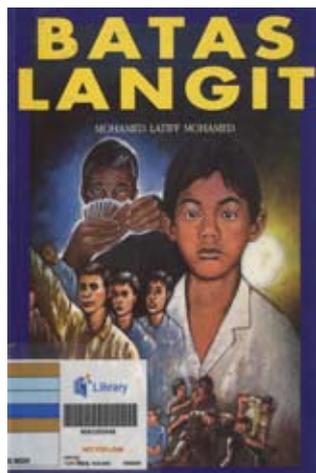
Karya Masuri S.N. dalam bentuk stensilan, 1977.



Contoh karya dalam bentuk stensilan, 1977.



Hak cipta terpelihara, Pustaka Nasional, 1976.



Hak cipta terpelihara, Pustaka Nasional, 1996.

perbezaan. Antara karya sastera yang dihasilkan pada masa ini ialah drama *Adam Kena Hujan* oleh Mas, kumpulan puisi *Bunga Pahit* oleh Masuri S.N. dan novel *Sultan Mahmud Shah Melaka* dan *Peristiwa Laksamana Cheng Ho ka-Melaka* oleh Har.

Novel *Mail Mau Kawin* yang terbit pada tahun 1976 merupakan novel yang pertama ditulis oleh penulis Singapura selepas tahun 1965 dan mempunyai tema dan latar berkisar kehidupan moden di Singapura. Novel *Mail Mau Kawin* tulisan Mas telah menyentuh kehidupan generasi muda Singapura yang cuba mencari tempat dalam arus pesat perbandaran dalam mengejar impian mereka. Tema yang sedemikian mungkin sebagai cerminan keadaan pada tahun 70-an; tahun-tahun pembangunan bandar. Pada masa yang sama, masyarakat Melayu cuba menyesuaikan diri dengan keadaan hidup yang berbeza; perpindahan dari kampung ke rumah pangsa serta perubahan lanskap ekonomi Singapura ketika itu yang bergerak ke arah perindustrian.

Pada tahun-tahun 70-an juga muncul kumpulan penulis-penulis muda seperti Mohamed Latiff Mohamed, Djamil Tukimin, Haron Abdul Majid, Noor Hidayat, Bahri Rajib dan Ajaki yang melahirkan karya-karya yang agak berbeza dengan penulis-penulis generasi sebelumnya.

Namun, karya-karya yang dihasilkan masih lagi berkisar kepada tema dan latar yang berkaitan dengan perpisahan dua negara tersebut. Hal ini mungkin berlaku disebabkan perpisahan yang agak mengejutkan itu. Banyak karya sama ada yang berbentuk cerpen atau puisi memaparkan kemiskinan dan ketegangan politik dalam tahun-tahun 60-an. Karya-karya yang mewarnai kehidupan masyarakat Melayu ketika itu hinggalah ke detik perpisahan seperti yang terdapat dalam antologi cerpen *Dua Persimpangan*.

Pada masa itu juga, kebanyakan penerbitan sastera tersiar di suratkhbar, surat berita persatuan-persatuan bahasa dan sastera selain dalam bentuk stensilan. Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Kebangsaan Singapura umpamanya telah menerbitkan *Jejak Kembara* yang "diketahui oleh Rasiah Halil dan Hadijah Rahmat" (Mana Sikana, 2003, ms. 24).

Sekumpulan penulis-penulis muda sudut penulis Perpustakaan Toa Payoh pula telah menerbitkan siri *Gema Pustaka*. Siri ini memuatkan tulisan ahli kumpulan tersebut menjadi wadah untuk mengasah "bakat ahli-ahli yang masih berada di tahap percubaan" (A Rahim Basri, 1985).

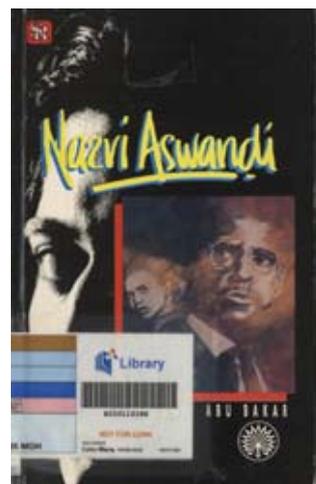
Pada akhir tahun-tahun 80-an dan 90-an, perkembangan yang menarik berlaku dengan kemunculan ramai penulis muda yang kebanyakannya dilahirkan selepas tahun 1965. Selain terlibat dengan kegiatan-kegiatan persuratan melalui pertubuhan yang sedia ada, tumbuh juga kumpulan-kumpulan seperti Kupuja (Kumpulan Pemuisi Remaja) yang juga merupakan anggota muda ASAS '50 dan KAMUS (Kumpulan Angkatan Muda Sastera).

Pada tahun 1994, terbit beberapa buah novel yang dihasilkan daripada bengkel penulisan sastera remaja yang diadakan di Singapura pada November 1992 dan Februari 1993 anjuran Badan Kesenian Melayu Singapura, Mendaki dan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia. Antaranya ialah *Nazri Aswandi* dan *Rindu Emilia* tulisan Mohd Rafi Abu Bakar dan Junaidah Mohd Sali. Tema novel-novel ini berkisar kehidupan remaja seperti konflik dalam persekolahan dan cinta yang berlatarkan kehidupan di kota Singa ketika itu.

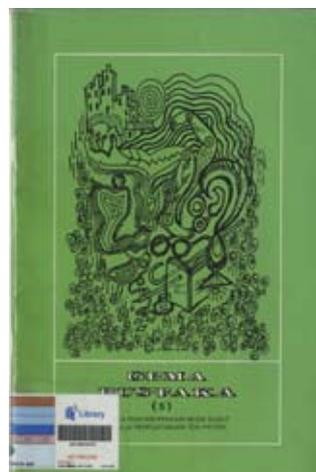
Pada dekad ini juga beberapa orang penulis yang mula bergiat pada awal 80-an telah mula mengorak langkah dan memperlihatkan ketajaman mata pena mereka. Dua orang penulis daripada mereka ialah Isa Kamari dan Johar Buang. Isa Kamari membina tapak karya-karyanya bersandarkan sejarah yang mempunyai daya penceritaan tersendiri melalui novel-novelnya seperti *Satu Bumi*, *Atas Nama Cinta* dan *Memeluk Gerhana*. Johar Buang pula menjadi pengorak sastera berbentuk sufi melalui cerpen dan puisinya. Antara karya beliau termasuklah *Kisah seorang zahid* dan *Perahu Melayu di lautan Khulzum*.

Sayembara sastera yang sering dianjurkan pada dekad-dekad kebelakangan ini juga merupakan satu dorongan untuk menggalakkan penghasilan karya seperti Sayembara Watan I & II serta Sayembara Novel Temasik. Novel-novel yang dihasilkan telah memaparkan berbagai isu masa kini yang menyentuh keadaan masyarakat, pendidikan dan ekonomi. Sayembara Novel Watan umpamanya telah menghasilkan lebih daripada 20 buah novel. Antara karya-karya yang ialah *Kesal* oleh Mohd Ikhlas Abdullah dan *Kuman* oleh Dehliez.

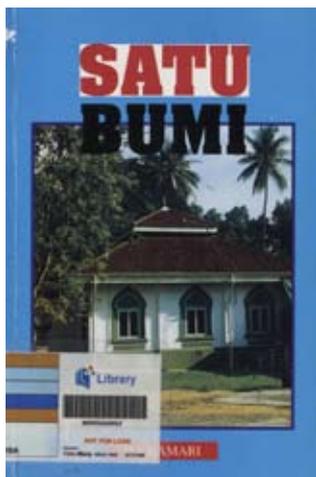
Kini, dengan pelbagai inisiatif untuk mengembangkan kesenian di Singapura, sudah tentu kita dapat menjangkakan hasil-hasil karya yang lebih



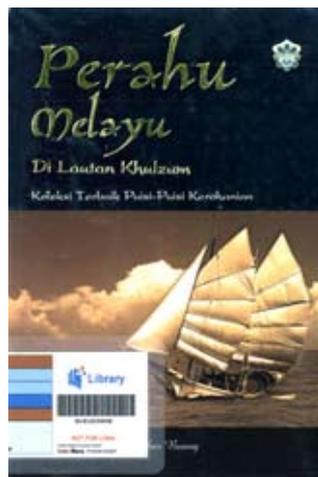
Hak cipta terpelihara, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1994.



*Gema Pustaka 5*. Hak cipta terpelihara. Sudut Penulis Perpustakaan Cawangan Toa Payoh, 1985.



Hak cipta terpelihara, Pustaka Melayu Publisher, 1998.



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menarik dan bermutu tinggi daripada para penulis kita pada masa hadapan. Mungkin juga terdapat ruang dan wadah untuk para penulis bereksperimen dan menggabungkan pelbagai media untuk melahirkan karya sastera yang lebih dinamik.

Yang pasti, kita dapat menjangkakan bahawa sastera Melayu di Singapura akan terus berkembang sebagaimana yang berlaku pada pasca 1965. Secara sedar atau tidak, kesinambungan ini telah membina laluan untuk mengembangkan jalur kesusasteraan Singapura. Meskipun berbeza, sastera Melayu Singapura tetap turut sama memberikan sumbangan bermakna dalam pembangunan sastera Melayu di nusantara disamping mencari peluang meneroka ruang-ruang persuratan di persada dunia.

Penulis menghargai usahasama Tajudin Jaffar, Setiausaha, Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura, yang mengulas makalah ini.

## SINGAPORE MALAY LITERATURE POST-1965

Before 1965, Singapore was the centre of publishing in the region. This was due in part to the wealth of modern printing equipment it owned in advance of its neighbours, which attracted Malay authors from far and wide who sought to expand their publishing opportunities. In this way, Singapore played a key role in the development of modern Malay literature.

After the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965, many anticipated that Singapore Malay Literature would face a bleak future, especially with the departure of many literary giants in the community — such as Usman Awang and Keris

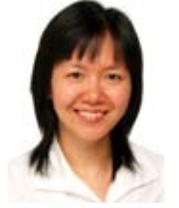
Mas — who decided to leave Singapore for their home country. Instead, Malay literature in Singapore continued to flourish despite the initial slow pace of development, and we can expect it to continue to grow.

Although differing from other bodies of Malay literature in the region, Singapore Malay Literature makes a significant and meaningful contribution to the development of Malay Literature as a whole, while simultaneously exploring opportunities on the global stage. ■

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# 新加坡华文文学的 滥觞与进程： 馆藏华文文学史料选介



By **Cheng Tee Yin**  
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Lee Kong Chian  
Reference Library  
National Library

新加坡华文现代文学从1919年新马现代文学萌芽、到1965年新马两地分家、乃至文学创作也逐渐分为新华文学与马华文学，直至今天只有不到100年的历史。然而，新加坡华文文学仍在世界华文文学的领域里占有相当的地位；不少新加坡作家的作品，也在中国大陆、台湾、香港等地印刷出版，享有一定的知名度。

对于新马华文文学、或新马华文现代文学的定义，有几种不同的看法和释义。一般来说，还是以居住或生长在新加坡或马来西亚作者的作品为主（杨松年，2000），而且大都溯源到1919年10月创刊的《新国民日报》；该报副刊《新国民杂志》以及其他版位，因为刊登了相当数量的白话文章，被认定为是新马华文文学的发端（方修，1986）。也有研究者在翻阅原始资料后得出结论，认为在《新国民杂志》创办前，就已经有报章副刊如《国民日报》和《益群报》，提倡新文学、新思想（杨松年，2000）。无论见解如何，概括来说，当时的新马华文现代文学“是在中国五四运动影响下受到催生”的观点，应该是研究新华文学的学者的共同看法（杨松年，2000）。

新华文学起始初期，出版的单行本为数甚少，文学作品大都发表在报章的副刊或者一些期刊杂志内；第二次世界大战之后，这样的情况起了明显的改变，单行本出版的数量

显著增加（杨松年，1982）。至于创作者方面，也从开始以南来作家为主要推动力，到后期越来越多的本土作家的出现。

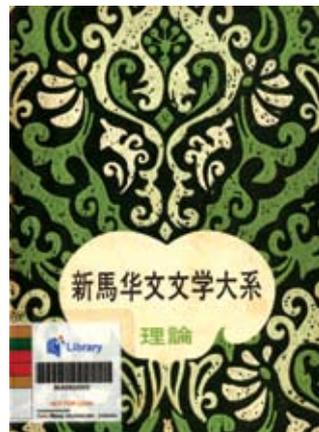
谈到新加坡华文文学史，或者华文文学史料，就不能不提到方修。被誉为“新马文史家第一人”的他，是马华文学史料学术研究最重要的开创人和奠基者；他不但是最先从事马华文学史料研究的学者，同时也是本地人写本地文学史的第一人。他所编选的《马华新文学大系1919 - 1942》（1970 - 72年初版，2000年再版），可说是研究新马文学及东南亚华文文学的重要史料。

这一套10册的大系，是方修集数十人的力量搜集整理，费时3年而编成的。大系的资料来源主要为星大中文图书馆所收藏的各种旧报章、工商学校所收藏的早期《新国民日报》以及方修友人张清广所收藏的《南洋周刊》（方修，2000）。10册的内容包括理论批评两册、小说两册、戏剧一册、诗歌一册、散文一册、剧运特辑两册以及出版史料一册。通过这套大系所罗列的资料与选取的篇章，读者可一窥新马文学初期，在小说、诗歌、散文、戏剧以及评论方面的发展概况，也可通过作品的内容，了解新马两地战前与二战时期在社会、政治、经济活动等各方面的面貌，以及对于新马文学的发展所起的影响与推动。

除了这套大系，位于维多利亚街的李光前参考图书馆



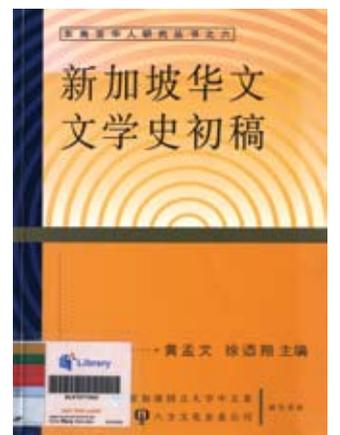
版权所有：香港：世界出版社，2000。



版权所有：新加坡：教育出版社，1971。



版权所有：新加坡：BPL教育出版社，2000。



版权所有：新加坡：新加坡国立大学中文系，2002。

也藏有以李廷辉为首的新马华文文学大系编辑委员会所编纂的《新马华文文学大系》(8册), 以及由台湾学者柏杨担任主编所编纂的《新加坡共和国华文文学选集》(5册)。

《新马华文文学大系》所涵盖的年份为1945年至1965年, 所体现的是新马战后至两地分家前的文学面貌。《新加坡共和国华文文学选集》选录的则是新加坡1965年独立后至八十年代初期的作品, 而选取的视野是来自海外的眼光, 可以从中窥见新加坡文学本土以外的学者, 对于这块土地所萌发的文学风景的观点。三套大系与选集结合来看, 有助于学者勾画出新马文学从初期到中期、乃至分为新华文学与马华文学之后的文学面貌。

要了解新马文学, 文学史料类的书籍是重要的研究工具之一。作为新马一带最早从事文史整理与研究的学者之一, 方修先后编著了《马华新文学史稿》、《马华新文学简史》、《战后马华文学史初稿》等文学史稿书籍。除了方修的著作, 值得一提的还包括杨松年的《新马华文现代文学史初编》, 以及黄孟文、徐迺翔主编的《新加坡华文文学史

初稿》。杨松年与黄孟文在新马文学研究方面都是相当具权威性的学者; 杨松年以严谨并系统化的研究形式, 解剖分析新马华文文学, 而黄孟文与徐迺翔所编纂的作品则是目前为止, 涵盖年份较为全面的文学史书目。

除了上述的书籍, 李光前参考图书馆也出版了一系列的资料辑录工具书, 包括《新加坡华文期刊50年》、《杏影: 他不会寂寞》以及《方修编著资料辑录》等。本馆图书馆管理员也将五六十年代《南洋商报》的重要文艺副刊《文风》以及《青年文艺》所刊登的作品加以整理, 编成副刊索引, 方便有意从事相关研究的学者查找资料。即将出版的《新加坡华文现代文学断代书目(1965年-2009年)》, 集合了新加坡国家图书馆、新加坡国立大学中文图书馆以及南洋理工大学中文图书馆的力量, 将1965年至2009年间出版的本地作家单行本著作作一个集合总结; 这相信也是新加坡首部较为完整的文学书目。希望这部书目的出版, 能够方便学者更好地检索对新加坡华文文学资料, 推动新加坡华文文学研究的进一步发展。■

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SINGAPORE CHINESE LITERATURE COLLECTION IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

According to many researchers, the development of modern Chinese literature in Singapore can be traced back to 1919, when the May Fourth Movement (五四运动) took place in China. Also known as the New Culture Movement, this resulted in a new trend in the writing style and language used in Chinese literary works. The written language used mirrored spoken language more closely than classical texts had previously.

During that period, literature in Malaysia and Singapore was commonly termed as "Chinese Literature in Malaya" (马华文学) or "Chinese Literature in Singapore and Malaya" (新马华文文学). It was only after the separation of Singapore

from Malaysia in 1965, that the concept of Singapore Chinese literature (新加坡华文文学 or 新华文学) emerged.

Fang Xiu was a prominent writer and among the first scholars to conduct research into the history of Singapore Chinese literature. Besides Fang Xiu, Wong Meng Voon and Yeo Song Nian, too, have written books on the same subject.

This article highlights some of the significant works from the Singapore Chinese Literature Collection that are available in the National Library Singapore.

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# சிங்கப்பூர்த் தேசிய நூலகத்தின் அரிய தமிழ் நூல்த் தொகுப்பு



By Sundari Bala  
Librarian  
Lee Kong Chian  
Reference Library  
National Library

தேசிய நூலகத்தில் உள்ள அரிய தமிழ் நூல்த் தொகுப்பு பற்றிய கட்டுரை இது. 1945 ஆம் ஆண்டுக்கு முன் சிங்கப்பூரில் பதிப்பிக்கப்பட்ட வெளியீடுகளை அரிய நூல்கள் என வகைப்படுத்தியுள்ளனர். சிங்கப்பூர் அல்லது மலாயாவில் அச்சிடப்பட்ட நூல்களில் நமக்குக் கிடைத்தவை 18 நூல்கள். அவற்றில் இரண்டு சஞ்சிகைகள், ஒரு தமிழ் வழி ஜப்பானிய மொழி கற்றல் ஆகியவையும் அடங்கும். 19 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டின் முற்பகுதியிலேயே இங்கு தமிழ்ப் பத்திரிகைகள் இருந்தமைக்கு இவை ஆதாரங்களாகும். இவற்றுள் பல திரு சி. கு. மகுதாம் சாயபுக்குச் சொந்தமான தீனோதயவேந்திரசாலையில் அச்சிடப்பட்டுள்ளன.

அவ்வாறு நமக்குக் கிடைக்கப்பெற்ற நூல்களில் பெரும்பான்மை இஸ்லாமியக் கவிதை நூல்களாகும். இந்நூல்கள் இறைவனின் பெருமைகளையும், இறைத்தூதர்களின் பெருமைகளையும், மதகுருமார்களின் பெருமைகளையும் எடுத்துக்கூறுகின்றன. இரண்டு நூல்கள் முருகக் கடவுளைப் போற்றி எழுதப்பட்டுள்ளன. இத்தொகுப்பில் ஒரு நூல் மட்டுமே அக்காலச் சிங்கையைச் சற்று விவரித்து எழுதப்பட்டுள்ள கவிதை நூலாகும்.

இந்நூல்களை ஆராயும்போது நமக்குத் தெரிவது, சிங்கைத் தமிழ் இலக்கியம், தமிழ்நாட்டில் 19 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டின் ஆரம்ப காலத்தில் இருந்த கவிதை கலாசாரத்தை ஒட்டியே வளர்ந்தது என்பதாகும். உரைநடை, சிறுகதைகள் பிரபலம் ஆகாத அக்காலத்தில் இங்கு வந்த நம் முன்னோர்களும் அத்தகைய வழியையே கடைபிடித்தனர். அனைத்துக் கவிதைகளும் இறைவனுக்கே அர்பணிக்கப்பட்டன.

இந்நூல்களின் சிறப்பம்சங்களில் ஒன்று, இஸ்லாமியக் கவிஞர்களுக்குப் பல இந்துமதக் கவிஞர்கள் சாற்றுக் கவிகள் புனைந்திருப்பது. குறிப்பாக யாழ்ப்பாணம் வண்ணைநகர் சி. ந. சதாசிவ பண்டிதர், சிங்கப்பூர்ச் சித்திரகவிநாவலர் சி. வெ. நாராயணசாமிநாயகர், மதுரை ஜில்லா ராம. வெ. இராமநாதச்செட்டியார் ஆகியோரின் சாற்றுக் கவிகள் பல இஸ்லாமியப் புத்தகங்களில் காணப்படுகின்றன. அவை இஸ்லாமியக் கவிஞர்களைப் பாராட்டி எழுதப்பட்டுள்ள கவிதைகளாகும். கவிஞர்களிடையே மத நல்லிணக்கமும், ஒற்றுமையும், மரியாதையும் தழைத்தோங்கி இருந்ததை இக்கவிதைகள் மூலம் உணரமுடிகிறது.

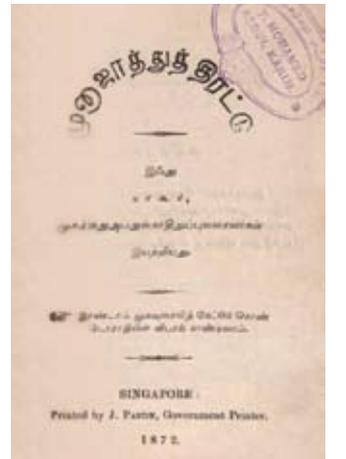
இந்நூல்களில் அக்காலத்தில் அச்சிடப்படும் முறைகளைப் பற்றியும் அறியலாம். முதல் பக்கத்தில் இயற்றியவர் பெயரை அச்சிடுமுன், அவரின் தந்தையாரின் பெயரை இட்டு, அவரின் புதல்வர் இன்னார் எனக் குறிப்பிடப்படுகிறது.

மேலும் பிழைகள் உள்ள பக்கங்களையும், அவற்றின் திருத்தங்களையும் தவறாமல் இணைத்துள்ளனர். இன்றைய வெளியீடுகளில் எத்தனைத் திருத்தங்கள் இருந்தாலும் அவற்றை யாரும் கண்டுகொள்வதில்லை. அத்துடன் இப்பழம் நூல்களில் வெளியிட உதவியவர்களின் பெயர் பட்டியலும் இணைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

1887 ஆம் ஆண்டு வெளிவந்த யாழ்ப்பாணம் வண்ணைநகர் சி. ந. சதாசிவப்பிள்ளை அவர்கள் இயற்றிய 'சிங்கை நகரந்தாதி, 'சித்திரகவிகள்' ஆகிய இரு நூல்களும் சிங்கையின் இலக்கிய முன்னோடி நூல்களாகக் கொள்ளப்பட்டன. பின்பு சிங்கையில் வாழ்ந்து தம் சொந்த ஊரான நாகூருக்குச் சென்ற திரு ஜபர் மொஹித்தீன் என்பவரிடமிருந்து கிடைக்கப்பெற்ற, 1872 ஆம் ஆண்டு அச்சிடப்பட்ட 'முனாஜாத்துத் திரட்டு' என்ற நூலே தற்போது சிங்கையில் அச்சிடப்பட்ட ஆகப் பழைய தமிழ் நூலாகக் கொள்ளப்படுகிறது.

## முனாஜாத்துத் திரட்டு

இதுவரை கிடைக்கப்பெற்ற நூல்களில் 1872 ஆம் ஆண்டு சிங்கப்பூரில் அச்சிடப்பட்ட 'முனாஜாத்துத் திரட்டு' என்ற கவிதை நூலே பழமையான நூலாகும். இக்கவிதை நூல் நாகூர் முகம்மது அப்துல் காதிற்றுப் புலவரால் எழுதப்பட்டது. இந்நூலே சிங்கைத் தமிழ் இலக்கியத்தின் முன்னோடி நூலாகத் திகழ்கிறது. இந்நூல் தமிழ் நாட்டிலும், சிங்கையிலும் வாழ்ந்து மறைந்த இஸ்லாமிய இறைத்தூதர்களைப் பற்றிய கவிதைகளின் தொகுப்பாகும். அவற்றில் குறிப்பிடத்தக்க அம்சமாக சிங்கையின் கொடிமலையில் (போர்ட் கேனிங்) சமாதியான சிக்கந்தர் சாகிபொலி பேரில் பாடப்பட்ட கவிதையையும், புலவரின் ஆசிரியரான சி. வெ. நாராயணசாமி நாயகர் பேரில் பாடப்பட்ட கவிதையையும் கூறலாம். அக்காலத்திலேயே மக்களிடையே மத நல்லிணக்கம் இருந்தமைக்கு இது ஒரு எடுத்துக்காட்டாகும். இந்நூல் சிங்கப்பூரில், ஜே. பேட்டன் அரசாங்க அச்சகத்தில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது.



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது,  
சிங்கப்பூர்: ஜே. பேட்டன்  
அரசாங்க அச்சகம், 1872.

## முரீது விளக்கமென்னும் இரத்தினச் சுருக்கம்

இரத்தினச்சுருக்கம் என்ற இந்நூல் ஷாகுமுக்கமது அப்துல்காதிரு ஜெயினுத்தீன் அவர்களால் எழுதப்பட்டது. இந்நூலில் முரீது பெற்றவர்கள் (தீட்சை பெற்றவர்கள்) கடைபிடிக்கவேண்டிய விதிமுறைகளை விளக்கியுள்ளார். முரீது பெறும் முன்பும், பின்பும் எவ்வாறு வழிநடக்கவேண்டுமென்ற குறிப்புகள் அடங்கிய இந்நூல் 1878 ஆம் ஆண்டு ஜாவிப்பிராணாக்கன் கம்பெனியில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது.

இந்நூலில் கூறப்படும் சாராம்சம் — முரீது பெறுவதற்கு முன் அவர்கள் கடைபிடிக்க வேண்டிய நடைமுறைகள் பின்வருவன: அல்லாவையே கடவுளாகக் கொண்டு, இவ்வலக வாழ்க்கையில் அதிக நாட்டம்கொள்ளாமலும், நடப்பதெல்லாம் இறைவனின் செயல் என இருப்பதும், தன்னலமற்ற சேவையாற்றுவதுமாகும்.

முரீதுபெற்றவர்கள் தமது ஞானபோதகர் போதித்தவண்ணம் நடந்துகொள்ளவேண்டும்,

பொய் சொல்லாமலும், சிறுபாபங்களை செய்யாமலும் இருத்தல்வேண்டும். எப்போதும் இறைவனை தியானித்து வருதலும், அவனுக்குப் பயந்து நடத்தலும் முக்கியமாகும் என முரீது பெற்றவர்கள் நடக்கும் வழிமுறைகளை விளக்கியுள்ளார்.

கலிமா பற்றிய விளக்கவுரைகளும், தொழுகையின் சிறப்பும் இந்நூலில் காணப்படுகின்றன. பட்டாடைகள் அணிந்து, தொழுகைகள் புரிந்து, தான தருமங்கள் செய்பவன் உண்மையான சூபியல்ல. அறிந்து தொழுவதும், தம் உடல், பொருள் ஆன்மா அனைத்தும் அல்லாவுக்கே என மனமுருகித் தொழுவதும், பெரியோர்களை மதித்து நடத்தலுமே ஒருவனை சூபி என்ற நிலைக்கு உயர்த்துகிறது எனப் பல கருத்துகள் அடங்கிய விளக்க நூல், இந்த இரத்தினச்சுருக்கம்.

## சந்தக் கும்மி

சந்தக் கும்மி என்ற இந்நூல், நபியுல்லாபேரில் பாடப்பட்ட துவாதசக்கலித்துறை, சந்தக் கும்மி முதலிய கவிதைத் தொகுப்புகள் அடங்கியது. இதனை இயற்றியவர் முகியித்தீன் அப்துல்காதிரு அவர்கள். நேரிசை ஆசிரியப்பாவில் இயற்றப்பட்ட இக்கவிதைகள் நபிகளாரின் புகழை எடுத்துக்கூறுகின்றன.

1879 ஆம் ஆண்டு சி. ந. சதாசிவப்பிள்ளை அவர்களால் பா ரை வ யி ட ப் ப ட் ப ட் பின் சிங்கை தீனோதயவேந்திரசாலையில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது. இதில் சதாசிவ பண்டிதர், நாராயணசாமி நாயகர் இருவரும் இயற்றிய சாற்றுக் கவிகள் உள்ளன.



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது, சிங்கப்பூர்: தீனோதயவேந்திரசாலை அச்சகம், 1879.

## பதாநந்த மாலை

முகம்மது சுல்தான் மரைக்காயர் அவர்களால் இயற்றப்பட்ட பதாநந்த மாலை, 1890 ஆம் ஆண்டு பிளாங்கு அண்ட் ஸ்ட்ரெய்ட்ஸ் பிரஸ் என்ற அச்சகத்தில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது. இந்நூல், நபிகள் நாயகம்

அவர்களைப் பற்றி இயற்றப்பட்ட கவிதைத் தொகுப்பு. பல இறைத்தூதர்கள் பேரிலும் கவிதைகள் பாடப்பட்டுள்ளன. இந்நூலிலும் ஆசிரியரைப் பற்றி சதாசிவ பண்டிதர், ம. ரு. வெ. வெங்கடாசலம் பிள்ளை ஆகியோர் பாடிய சாற்றுக் கவிகள் காணப்படுகின்றன.

## அதிவினோதக் குதிரைப் பந்தைய லாவணி

நா. வ. இரங்கசாமி தாசன் இயற்றிய அதிவினோதக் குதிரைப் பந்தைய லாவணி கவிதை நூலாயினும் பாமரர்களும் அறிந்துகொள்ளும் வகையில் இயற்றப்பட்டுள்ளது. 1893 ஆம் ஆண்டு தீனோதயவேந்திரசாலையில் அச்சிடப்பட்ட இந்நூல், சிங்கப்பூரை மையமாக வைத்து எழுதப்பட்டது. ஒரு கணவனும் மனைவியும் சிங்கப்பூருக்குத் தஞ்சைப் பகுதியிலிருந்து கப்பலில் புறப்பட்டு, பிளாங்கு, மலாக்கா வழியாக சிங்கப்பூரில் நடந்த குதிரைப் பந்தையத்தைக் காணவந்ததை விவரித்துப் பாடுகிறார் ஆசிரியர்.

இந்நூல் இயற்றப்பட்ட காலத்தில் இருந்த சிங்கப்பூர் நகரின் தோற்றம், சாலைக் காட்சிகள், சமூக அமைப்பு, பொழுதுபோக்கு ஆகியவற்றை படம்பிடித்துக் காட்டுகின்றது. மேலும், அன்றைய தமிழ்ப் பேச்சு வழக்கில் இழையோடிய மலாய்ச் சொற்கள் கலந்து இக்கவிதை நூல் எழுதப்பட்டுள்ளது.

பல சாலைகளின் பெயர்களையும், அக்காலகட்டத்தில் புகழ்பெற்றிருந்த நிறுவனங்களின் பெயர்களையும் ஆசிரியர் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார். இக்குறிப்புகள் சிங்கப்பூரின் அமைப்பையும் அக்கலத்திலேயே சிங்கப்பூர் வர்த்தகத்தில் முக்கியத்துவம் பெற்றிருந்ததையும் நமக்குத் தெரியப்படுத்துகின்றன. கப்பல்கள் `தஞ்சோங் பகார் டாக்' கில் வந்து நிற்பதையும், சுவத் பிரிட்ஜ் சாலை, யின்சிங் ரோடு என்ற ஆன்சன் சாலை, சபாஜி ரோடு என்ற நார்த் கெனல் சாலை போன்ற பல சாலைகளையும் அக்காலத்தில் பூழ்க்கத்தில் இருந்த பெயர்களால் குறிப்பிடுகிறார். சார்ட்டர்டு வங்கி, ஷங்காய் வங்கி, ஹாங்காய் வங்கி, ஆகியவை அமைந்த இடங்களையும் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார். அத்துடன் தம்மோடு பழகியவர்களைப் பற்றிய குறிப்புகளையும், சிங்கப்பூரில் நிலவிய அன்றைய கிராமிய வாழ்க்கைப் பற்றிய குறிப்புகளையும் தந்துள்ள ஆசிரியர், அன்றைய சிங்கப்பூரை நம் கண்முன்னே படம்பிடித்துக்காட்டியுள்ளார்.

இந்நூலைப் பற்றிய விரிவான விளக்கக் கட்டுரையை முனைவர் திண்ணப்பன் அவர்கள், `அயலகத் தமிழ்க்கலை, இலக்கியம் - சமகாலச் செல்நெறிகள்'<sup>1</sup> என்ற நூலிலும், முனைவர் ஸ்ரீலக்ஷ்மி அவர்கள், `சிங்கப்பூர் தமிழ் இலக்கியம்-ஆழமும் அகலமும்'<sup>2</sup> என்ற நூலிலும் படைத்துள்ளனர். இவ்விரு நூல்களும் தேசிய நூலகத்தில் உள்ளன.

## தண்ணீர் மலை வடிவேலர் பேரிற் துதிகவி

பிளாங்கில் உள்ள தண்ணீர்மலை முருகன் பேரில் பாடப்பட்ட இக்கவிதை நூல், இராமநாதச் செட்டியார் அவர்களால் இயற்றப்பட்டு 1894 ஆம் ஆண்டு பிளாங்கில் இருந்த பிளாங்கு அண்ட் ஸ்ட்ரெய்ட்ஸ் பிரஸ் என்ற அச்சகத்தில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது.

இக்கவிதைத் தொகுப்பு சந்தக்கவி அமைப்பில் புணையப்பட்டுள்ள கவிதைகளால் ஆனது. ஓசை நயமிக்கச் சொற்களால் மாலையாகத் தொடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ள இனிமையான கவிதைகள் இவை.

**சிங்கை முருகேசர் பேரில் பதிகம்**

க. வேலுப்பிள்ளை அவர்களால் இயற்றப்பட்டு 1893 ஆம் ஆண்டு சிங்கை தீனோதயவேந்திரசாலையில் ச. பொன்னம்பலம் பிள்ளை அவர்களால் அச்சிடப்பட்டது. சிங்கை முருகன் பேரில் இசைவடிவில் விருத்தங்கள் பாடியுள்ளார் ஆசிரியர் .

**பினாங்கு உற்சவ திருவலங்காரச் சிந்து**

கோசா மரைக்காயர் அவர்களால் இயற்றப்பட்ட இந்நூல் 1895 ஆம் ஆண்டு பினாங்கில் இருந்த கிம் சேய்க் ஹியான் அச்சியந்திர சாலையில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது. இந்நூலில் பினாங்கில் நடந்த கந்தாரித் திருவிழாவைப் பற்றிய கவிதைகளைக் காணலாம்.

**கீர்த்தனத்திரட்டு**

முனாஜாத்துத் திரட்டு என்ற நூலின் மறுபதிப்பாக 1896 ஆம் ஆண்டு முகம்மது அப்துல் காதிற்றுப் புலவரால் வெளியிடப்பட்டது. முற்பதிப்பில் உள்ள கவிதைகளோடு மேலும் சில இறைத்தூதர்கள், இஸ்லாமிய மதகுருமார்கள் பற்றிய கவிதைகளையும் சேர்த்து வெளியிட்டுள்ளார். இந்நூல் சிங்கை ஜாவிப்பிறாணாக்கான் கம்பெனியில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது.

**சீராச்சதகம்**

சீராச்சதகம், முகம்மது சுல்தான் மரைக்காயர் அவர்களால் இயற்றப்பட்டு 1900 ஆம் ஆண்டு பினாங்கு அண்ட் ஸ்ட்ரெயிட்ஸ் பிரஸ் கம்பெனி அச்சுக்கூடத்தில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது. நபிகள் நாயகத்தின் வரலாறு, அவரின் மகிமைகளைப் பற்றி 100 விருத்தங்கள் பாடியுள்ளார் ஆசிரியர் .

**ஆநந்தக் கீர்த்தனை**

முகம்மது சுல்தான் மரைக்காயர் அவர்கள் இயற்றிய ஆனந்தக் கீர்த்தனை, 1901 ஆம் ஆண்டு பினாங் அண்ட் ஸ்ட்ரெயிட்ஸ் பிரஸ் என்ற அச்சுக்கூடத்தில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது. இந்நூலில் நபிகள் பேரில் பாடப்பட்ட 79 கீர்த்தனைகள் உள்ளன. இசைக்கவிதைகளாக இயற்றப்பட்ட இப்பாடல்களுக்குரிய இராகம், தாளம் ஆகியவற்றையும் அவைகள் எந்த பாடல் மெட்டில் பாடவேண்டுமென்ற குறிப்புகளையும்

இணைத்துள்ளார் ஆசிரியர் . இந்நூலில் மற்றுமொரு சிறப்பம்சம், கீர்த்தனைகளின் வரிசைப் பட்டியல், பாட்டு எண், பக்கங்கள் ஆகியவற்றை நூலின் இறுதியில் சேர்த்துள்ளார் .

**மஹபூபு பரபதக் கீர்த்தனம்**

சாயபு மரைக்காயர் அவர்களால் இயற்றப்பட்ட பரபதக் கீர்த்தனம், 1911 ஆம் ஆண்டு ஞானோதய அச்சியந்திர சாலையில் அச்சிடப்பட்டது. 168 பக்கங்கள் கொண்ட இந்நூலில் சிங்கை, தமிழ்நாடு, சறாவாக் போன்ற நாடுகளைச் சேர்ந்த மதகுருமார்கள், இறைத்தூதர்கள், இஸ்லாமியச் சான்றோர்கள் ஆகியோரைப் பற்றிப் புகழ்ந்து பாடிய கீர்த்தனங்கள் உள்ளன. இந்நூல் வெளியிட உதவியவர்களின் பட்டியலும் இணைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது, பினாங்கு: பினாங்கு அண்ட் ஸ்ட்ரெயிட்ஸ் அச்சகம், 1901.

**சர்வலோக சற்குருநாதர்**

ஹாஜி சிக்கந்தர் அவர்கள் இயற்றிய இந்நூல், 1933 ஆம் ஆண்டு சிங்கப்பூர் கலோனியல் பிரிண்டிங் ஒர்க்ஸ் என்ற அச்சுக்கூடத்தில் பதிப்பிக்கப்பட்டது. இந்நூலில் நபிகள் வரலாறு, மத முன்னேற்றத்திற்காக அவர் செய்தச் சீர்திருத்தங்கள், நபிகள் இறந்ததும் மக்கள் அடைந்த துயரம் ஆகியவைகள் பற்றி விரிவாக விளக்கியுள்ளார். நூல்நெடுகிலும் அரபுச்சொற்கள் அதிகமாகக் காணப்படுகின்றன. குர்ஆனின் பெருமைகளையும், இஸ்லாமின் சிறப்பைப் பற்றியும் விளக்கியுள்ளார் .

சிறப்பம்சமாக இஸ்லாமிய மதத்தின் சமத்துவக் கொள்கையைப் பாராட்டிப் பிற சமயத்தவர் அளித்த சிறப்புரைகளையும் இங்கு கொடுத்துள்ளார். அனைவரும் இஸ்லாமிய மதத்தைச், சாதி பேதையில்லாமல் அனைவருக்கும் சம அந்தஸ்து அளிக்கும் மதம் எனப் புகழ்கின்றனர். மேலும் ஐந்துமுறைத் தொழுகையையும் பாராட்டுகின்றனர். இஸ்லாமிய மதத்தினர் என்ன வேலை செய்துகொண்டிருந்தாலும், எல்லாவற்றையும் விட்டு விட்டு, தொழுகை வேளையில் தொழுவது பாராட்டத்தக்கது என்றும் சமத்துவம், எளிமை ஆகிய பண்புகள் கொண்ட மதம் எனவும் பாராட்டுகின்றனர் .



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது, பினாங்கு: பினாங்கு அண்ட் ஸ்ட்ரெயிட்ஸ் அச்சகம், 1894.



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது, சிங்கப்பூர்: தீனோதயவேந்திரசாலை அச்சகம், 1893.



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது, சிங்கப்பூர்: ஜாவி பிறாணாக்கன் அச்சகம், 1896.

**முஹம்மத் நபி (ஸல்) அவர்கள் கடைத்தேற்றும் வள்ளல்**

நாசூர் ஹாஜி சிக்கந்தர் அவர்களால் 1934 ஆம் ஆண்டு எழுதப்பட்ட இந்நூலை. சி. செய்யது அகமது அவர்கள் சிங்கப்பூர் கலோனியல் பிரிண்டிங் வொர்க்ஸ் என்ற அச்சகத்தில் அச்சிட்டு விநியோகித்துள்ளார்.

இந்நூலில் நபிகளாரின் புகழ், அவரின் அறவுரைகள், அவர் நிகழ்த்திய அற்புதங்கள், குர்ஆனின் விளக்கங்கள், குர்ஆனின் மகிமை, இறைத்தூதர்கள், மதகுருமார்கள் ஆகியோரின் பேரில் பாடப்பட்ட கவிதைகள் போன்ற பல அம்சங்கள் நிறைந்துள்ளன. ஹஜ்ரத் ஸஈத் பின் முஸைப், ஹஜ்ரத் இமாம் ஷுஅ'பீ, ஹஜ்ரத் இமாம் அபூ 'ஹனீபா, இமாம் அஹமத் பின் ஹன்பல் ஆகியோரைப் பற்றிய கவிதைகளைக் காணலாம்.

இந்நூலில் ஆசிரியர், மதத்தின்பேரால் நடத்தப்படும் ஆடம்பர விழாக்களைக் கண்டிக்கிறார். இறைதூதர்கள் பேரில் கொடிகள் ஏற்றுவது, கூடுகள் எடுப்பது, மேளதாளங்கள் ஒலிப்பது போன்ற செயல்கள் இஸ்லாமிய மதத்தில் கூறப்படவில்லை எனவும், அவையாவும் வீண் பணவிரயம் என்றும் கூறுகிறார்.

மக்களின் வாழ்க்கைக்குத் தேவையான அறிவுரைகளையும் இணைத்துள்ளார். கல்வியின் அவசியம், மதகுருமார்களின் சகவாசம், பிரசங்கிகளின் கடமை, கல்விமான்களின் கடமை, ஏழைகளுக்குப் போதனை (மனம், வாக்கு, நடத்தைப் பரிசுத்தம், பேராசையை விடுப்பது போன்றவை), இறைவனை வணங்குவவர்களுக்குப் போதனை, முரீதுகளுக்குப் போதனை, அதிகாரிகளுக்குப் போதனை, இறுதியாக பொதுமக்களுக்குப் போதனை என அனைத்துத் தரப்பினருக்கும் தேவையான அறிவுரைகளைக் கூறியுள்ளார். அத்துடன் உலக முடிவு, கடைசித்தீர்ப்பு நாள் பற்றிய குறிப்புகளும் இந்நூலில் இடம்பெற்றுள்ளன.

**ஜவாஹிறுல் கம்ஸ (ஹ்) என்னும் பஞ்ச இரத்தின மாலைகள்**

மௌலவி செய்யிது முஹம்மது சாஹிபு அவர்கள் இயற்றிய பஞ்ச இரத்தின மாலை, 1942 ஆம் ஆண்டு சிங்கப்பூர், சுவத் இந்தியன் பிரஸ் லிமிடெட்டில் பதிப்பிக்கப்பட்டது. நபிகளார் பேரிலும், அவருக்கு முன் இருந்த இறைத்தூதர்களான முஹியித்தீன், காதத்வலீ, பல்லாக்வலீ ஆகியோரின் பேரிலும் தோத்திரமாலைகள் பாடியுள்ளார். அஹ்மதியா மாலையும்

பாடியுள்ளார்.

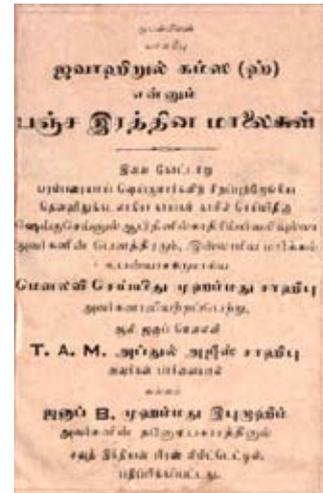
ஆசிரியர் தொழுகை செய்வதைப் பற்றிக் கூறுகையில், அம்மொழியைக் கற்றுணர்ந்து, பொருள் நன்றாக விளங்கி, அதன் கருத்தை உள்வாங்கிக் கடவுளைப் பிரார்த்தனை செய்யவேண்டும் எனக் குறிப்பிடுகிறார். முனாஜாத்துகளைத் திங்கள், வெள்ளி இரவுகளில் ஓதினால் மனக் கவலைகள் தீரும் எனவும் கூறுகிறார். இந்நூலில் அரபு மொழியில் உள்ள கீர்த்தனங்களைத் தமிழில் மொழிபெயர்த்துள்ளார்.



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது, சிங்கப்பூர்: கலோனியல் பிரிண்டிங் ஒர்க்ஸ், 1933.



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது, சிங்கப்பூர்: ஞானோதயம் அச்சகம், 1911.



எல்லா உரிமைகளும் பெற்றது, சிங்கப்பூர்: சுவத் இந்தியன் பிரஸ் லிமிடெட், 1942.

**TAMIL RARE MATERIALS AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY**

The Rare Materials Collection at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library forms part of the Singapore and Southeast Asian collections. This article lists the 18 rare Tamil publications with a brief description of their contents. Out of these 18 items, two items are newspapers and one book is on Japanese instruction in Tamil. The rest of the 15 titles are poetry books.

In the collection, the book *Munajattu Tirattu*, written by Nagore Muhammad Abdul Kadir is the oldest, published in 1872. It is a poetry book written in praise of Muslim saints and Prophet Muhammad. One of the poems is about Saint Sikandar Sahib, who was entombed in Kodimalai or Fort Canning.

The poetry book *Athi Vinotha Kuthiraipanthaiya Lavani*, written by Rangasamydasan, is the only book that describes the Singapore at that time (1893). It describes the streets, in

their early names like Yinsing Road (Anson Road), Sabaji Road (North Canal Road), South Bridge Road etc. It also mentions the financial banks like Shanghai Bank, Chartered Bank, and Hong Kong Bank. It shows that as early as 1893, Singapore was already an important financial centre.

The books were written by Tamil immigrants, mostly Muslims, and all of these were religious poetry books. These Islamic poems were written in praise of Allah, Prophet Muhammad and Islamic philosophers. Forewords to these books are in poetry form, written by Hindu poets like Vannai Nagar C. N. Sadasiva Pillai, C. V. Narayanasamy Nayakar and Ramanatha Chettiyar. This shows that inter-religious harmony and unity prevailed among the poets irrespective of religion or caste. ■

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# Keeping Memories Alive:

## Reflections on the When Nations Remember Conference



By **Gracie Lee**  
Senior Librarian  
Professional Services  
National Library

In October 2009, over 300 local and foreign delegates thronged the Carlton Hotel in Singapore for "When Nations Remember", a two-day international conference on national memory and its preservation, display and access. The National Library organised the conference in the hope that similar memory initiatives worldwide might cross borders and benefit from the sharing of each others' knowledge, passion and insight.

Speakers were invited from many corners of the globe and formed an eclectic panel of knowledge experts. Representatives from UNESCO as well as three national libraries shed light on their experiences in the creation of memory initiatives that were implemented on both national and international levels.

Parallel sessions featured history and memory documentarians from a wide variety of disciplines, including luminaries from the blogging, fine art, academic, and digital technology spheres.

Last, but not least, the conference programme offered a curated selection of "memory starters", which encouraged the delegates to take a walk down memory lane and rediscover the ties that bind citizenry to nations. These are some highlights of the conference.

### NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

John van Oudenaren, Director of the World Digital Library ([wdl.org](http://wdl.org)), gave a presentation on the history and development of the initiative as well as the Library of Congress' American Memory ([memory.loc.gov](http://memory.loc.gov)). In American Memory, public domain materials that had mass appeal were digitised and made available on CD-ROM.

The content management challenges faced by the American Memory team were great learning experiences, and the World Digital Library, facilitated by the Library of Congress, embarked on a different and more comprehensive approach. Users can browse the collection by place, time, topic, institution, and type on the web. The web interface also supports seven languages and Web 2.0 features, in an effort to invite users and guests from all walks of life.

Penny Carnaby, National Librarian and Chief Executive of the National Library of New Zealand, opened up the conversation to the important role national libraries play in preserving and making heritage materials accessible. She outlined the country's national information infrastructure and library initiatives such as NZ-GOAL ([e.govt.nz/policy/nzgoal](http://e.govt.nz/policy/nzgoal)), the National Digital Heritage Archive ([natlib.govt.nz/about-us/current-initiatives/ndha](http://natlib.govt.nz/about-us/current-initiatives/ndha)) and the Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa ([aotearoapeoplesnetwork.org](http://aotearoapeoplesnetwork.org)). These programmes address issues faced in the course of long-term digital preservation, repurposing of information, and the collection of national memories. Citing the Christchurch earthquake, she stressed the importance of vigilance on the part of a national library during disasters or upheaval. A good example of this was the National Library of New Zealand's readiness to collect materials when the disaster struck.

Dr J.S.M. Savenjie, Director General of the National Library of the Netherlands, brought up more challenges faced by libraries in their national digitisation programmes. The Memory of the Netherlands ([geheugenvannederland.nl](http://geheugenvannederland.nl)) incorporated materials from libraries, archives and museums and had to overcome the



One of the parallel sessions designed was "Experiences on Singapore Brands", which included a visit to the Axe Oil Company.



(top left) Penny Carnaby speaks on “Delivering a new generation National Library of New Zealand”.

(top right) John van Oudenaren introducing the audience to the WDL and the Library of Congress’ American Memory.

(lower left) Joie Springer on protecting and promoting international documentary heritage.

(lower right) Dr J.S.M. Savenjie discussing The Memory of the Netherlands project.

unique difficulties posed by the widely varying approaches to collection organisation that each cultural institution had. He also highlighted the complex process of archiving enriched publications (containing both text and moving images).

Finally, Joie Springer from UNESCO talked about the Memory of the World Programme ([unesco.org/webworld/mdm](http://unesco.org/webworld/mdm)) and one of its key initiatives — the Memory of the World Register. This initiative invites anyone around the world to nominate a documentary heritage of exceptional value for inscription, without legal obligation on the part of a participating country. By raising the standing of a document, fundraising for preservation is also boosted. In this way, memories can be commemorated and related on a global stage.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

For Lam Chun See, his nostalgic blog, Good Morning Yesterday ([goodmorningyesterday.blogspot.com](http://goodmorningyesterday.blogspot.com)), is a virtual *kopitiam* where people of his generation can gather to swap memories and stories. Speaking with deep personal conviction of his belief in archiving and passing down the older generation’s memories, he urged the audience to record and share their stories with others. He also spoke about using blogging as a tool to pique the interest of the younger generation in Singapore history.

His co-presenter, Char Lee of Second Shot (2ndshot.blogspot.com) had a different strategy for engaging the public

to think about the past. Lee is a photographer working in the medium of “precision heritage photography”. This means that Lee tries to identify the exact locations where selected old photographs were taken. He then takes a “second shot” of the place now. The images chronicle the changes in Singapore’s landscape over time.

Koh Nguang How, an artist and researcher, introduced the Singapore Art Archive Project, his personal project, which aims to record the work of contemporary artists and discover lost histories of artists from earlier generations. A one-man initiative, Koh offered a rare look at his approach to the gathering of materials.

Finally, the founder of the Centre for Digital Storytelling ([storymapping.org](http://storymapping.org)), Joe Lambert, expounded on the potential uses of digital storytelling in capturing life stories. He raised successful examples of its usage in projects such as the Veterans History Project and the BBC’s Telling Lives showcase and also talked about his recent work in community storytelling and the creation of informal archives.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

The conference was a useful platform for delegates to deliberate on strategies and approaches in the design and planning of memory initiatives. It also inspired the attendees to renew their commitment towards the preservation of national memories. ■



Then and now: Smith Street in 1960 (top) and in 2008 (bottom). Photos courtesy of National Archives of Singapore (top) and Char Lee (bottom).

# 青年书局与新加坡国家图书馆 签署数字化合作协议书



By **Lai Yeen Pong**  
Consultant  
Corporate Services  
National Library

创立于1955年的青年书局是新加坡一间书局兼出版社，其宗旨是推广新加坡华文出版事业，同时为本地著作人提供一个出版平台。青年书局的创始人现年90岁的陈蒙哲先生对华文出版事业满怀热诚且持之以恒。自创业以来，青年书局经历了不少挫折。虽然饱受经济不景气及华文图书市场萎靡的负面影响，但凭着对本地图书事业的信念、热爱和坚韧不拔的毅力，陈老先生不断注入巨资以确保书局的正常运作。他的两大愿望

就是要让青年书局百年不衰和让本地作家、作品走向世界。2010年9月26日，在200多位作家及文艺界人士的见证下，青年书局与新加坡国家图书馆管理局签署了一份史无前例的“青年书局出版书籍数字化”谅解备忘录。在这项协议下，青年书局承诺将历年和今后出版的书籍，无偿授权给新加坡国家图书馆进行数字化，供保存与使用。这项数字化合作备忘录的签署不仅符合陈蒙哲先生的经营



理念也配合新加坡国家图书馆的使命及数字化服务发展方向。

在资讯科技发达的今天，数字化图书馆已成为全球图书馆的发展趋势。借助电脑与网络，读者可以在任何地点、任何时间得到图书馆所提供的服务，达到信息资源有效利用和共享。这项合作计划，不论对作家本人，对国家图书馆和青年书局，以及千千万万读者而言，意义都非常深远。半个世纪以来，青年书局出版了许多有关新加坡的珍贵作品。参与出版的150位作家不乏新马文坛的佼佼者、备受敬仰的先驱作家及极负盛名的学者。出版作品种类繁多，其中以新马及东南亚文史类丛书最为人称道。例如李汝琳主编的《新马文艺丛书》(36册)及《南方文丛》(12册)、李延辉主编的《新马戏剧丛书》(6册)、许云樵主编的《亚非丛书》(14册)及《南洋民间故事丛书》(7册)、李过主编的《星月文艺丛刊》(10册)、陈剑主编的《南洋大学学术论丛》(10册)、何炳彪主编的《南洋大学学术论丛第二系列》(10册)、忠扬主编的《新马文学丛书》(12册)及林臻主编的《仙人掌散文系列》(12册)等等。这些珍贵的作品是读者了解新马及东南亚社会、文化、文学和历史的重要资料。当数字化的工作完成之后，



签署合作协议书的双方代表(左起)：严立初女士(新加坡国家图书馆馆长)、陈秋萍女士(新加坡国家图书馆管理局总裁)、韩瑞琼女士(青年书局总经理)和杨善才先生(青年书局顾问)。

世界各地读者及研究人员就能通过网络检索，参考、阅读及浏览新马及东南亚资料。即使不能打印或下载资料，但能搜索与浏览已是获益不浅。读者也能获得足够的讯息来决定是否购买原装印刷本。

青年书局是新加坡第一间将所有出版图书授权给国家图书馆数字化的出版社。可喜的是，许多作家也从青年书局得到启示，积极响应青年书局的号召，纷纷授权于国家图书馆

将他们在青年书局名下发表的作品数字化。新加坡国家图书馆肩负保存、传承及推广新加坡文化资产的社会使命。除了提供到馆服务，国家图书馆也逐步发展数字化服务。随着青年书局的首开先河，新加坡国家图书馆期望能与其他本地出版社携手合作，把新加坡的所有出版书籍数字化，让我国文化资产得以妥善保存，让新加坡出版资料也能在世界出版舞台上大放光彩！



青年书局出版的一部分书籍

### THE YOUTH BOOK COMPANY SIGNS MOU WITH NLB

The National Library Board (NLB) and The Youth Book Company (TYBC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 26 September 2010 to digitise all TYBC publications — both past and future — and make them available for public access on the web.

The Youth Book Company, a Chinese publishing company, was founded by Mr Chen Mong Chea in 1955. They have published more than 300 titles by some 150 writers ranging from novels and poetry to books on customs and cultures, education and the history of Singapore, Malaya and Southeast Asia. Many of the writers are well-known researchers, scholars

and literary pioneers in the region.

The collaboration is an important milestone as it marks the first time a publisher has granted the digital rights of all its publications to the NLB for preservation and for worldwide access.

Mr Chen strongly believes in publishing Singaporean works and promoting them locally and internationally. For authors, the collaboration provides new opportunities to create greater visibility for their writing and enhance their reputation.

The NLB hopes more publishers will support this initiative. ■

# Publications

## SINGAPORE: THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

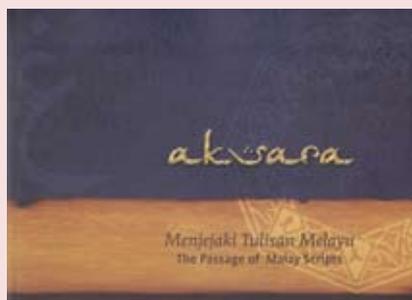
Singapore: National Library Board and National Archives of Singapore, 2007  
ISBN: 978-981-05-8164-0  
ISBN-13: 978-981-05-8164-0  
Price: S\$32



Covering the first 10 years of nation building, *Singapore: The First Ten Years of Independence* focuses on the Republic of Singapore's first Cabinet, the key ideas and the major personalities who helped shape a nation. The guide looks at the key transformations that took place in national security, economy and society over the decade and casts an eye on the ministers who worked together to oversee these remarkable changes.

## AKSARA: MENJEJAKI TULISAN MELAYU (AKSARA: THE PASAGE OF MALAY SCRIPTS)

Singapore: National Library Board, 2009  
ISBN: 978-981-05-7502-2  
Price: S\$80



The written form of the Malay language has gone through several phases of adoption and adaptation. This publication, in English and Malay, traces the evolution of Malay scripts, revealing the extensive interactions between the Malay community and other civilisations. The Indianisation period saw the Malays using and adapting Indian scripts. With the coming of Islam, the Malays adopted the Arabic script. Subsequently after the European conquest, romanised script was introduced.

## DIVERSE LANGUAGES, ONE IDENTITY: A GUIDE TO CONVERSATIONS IN THE CHINESE, MALAY AND TAMIL LANGUAGES

Singapore, National Library Board and National Institute of Education, 2010  
ISBN: 978-981-08-4604-6  
Price: \$10.70



*Diverse Languages, One Identity* is jointly published by the National Institute of Education and National Library Board to help foster cohesiveness in Singapore's multiracial community. This booklet aims to create an awareness of the spoken mother tongue among students and teachers and build understanding and respect among the various races in Singapore.

## ZHENG HE AND MARITIME ASIA

Singapore: National Library Board, 2005  
ISBN: 981-05-3904-5  
ISBN: 978-981-05-3904-7  
Price: S\$33



Published as a companion to the exhibition, *Zheng He and Maritime Asia* chronicles the development of China's maritime history before the Ming dynasty, beginning in the Tang dynasty and through the Song and Yuan dynasties. Filled with colourful photographs and illustrations, this thread-bound book takes readers through the establishment of the Ming dynasty and Emperor Yongle's ascent to the throne, as well as the birth of famed Chinese explorer Zheng He and his rise to the position of Grand Eunuch. Accompanied by interesting details and little-known facts about the maritime trade, *Zheng He and Maritime Asia* offers captivating insights into the building of the treasure fleet and ancient Chinese shipbuilding and navigation techniques, including the use of the navigation chart and water compass.

For orders, visit The Library Shop (<http://shop.nlb.gov.sg>).  
All prices are inclusive of 7% GST.



# Lee Kong Chian

## RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

### LEE KONG CHIAN RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Established to encourage research on Asian culture, economy and heritage, the Lee Kong Chian (LKC) Research Fellowship is offered bi-annually to individuals interested in using the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library's resources for research. As a preferred stop for Asian content scholarship, the National Library wishes to promote scholarly research, and encourage and facilitate the study of our vast collections.

The National Library, Singapore invites talented scholars and researchers to collaborate with us on joint research projects.

### OUR COLLECTIONS

Our rich cultural and heritage resources and special collections are housed at levels 8 to 13 of the 16-storey National Library building. The approximately 240,000 items comprise the Singapore and Southeast Asian Collections, with special collections such as the Donors' Collections, Asian Children's Collection, Dr Carl Alexander Gibson-Hill Collections, the Maps Collection, the microfilm collection of Singapore/Malaya newspapers, and the Rare Books Collection. These form the core of our Asia-centric collections, which date to as far back as the 18th century.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

The LKC Research Fellowship is open to both local and foreign applicants with scholarly and research credentials or the equivalent. Applicants may be curators, historians, academics or independent researchers.

### FELLOWSHIP TERMS

Fellows receive a stipend of up to SGD1,600 per month. Additionally, overseas fellows may be provided with a one-time relocation package and a monthly accommodation allowance on a case-by-case basis.

All Fellows will have a research space at the National Library, access to collections and interlibrary loans, a National Library Access Card, and research assistance.

### CONTACT:

The Administrator, Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship

Tel: 6332 3348

Fax: 6333 7990

Email: [LKCRF@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:LKCRF@nlb.gov.sg)

### DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION:

(i) 31 January (for awards in April)

(ii) 30 June (for awards in October)

Applicants will receive notification of acceptance or rejection within 3 months of the closing date.

For more information and to apply, visit:

[ideapolis.sg/index.php/about-lkc-fellowship](http://ideapolis.sg/index.php/about-lkc-fellowship)

• Adyar Library and Research Centre (India) • Agriculture Research Centre of Malaysia • Al-Assad National Library (Syria) • Alisher Navoi State Library (Uzbekistan) • Ames Library of South Asia, University of Minnesota (USA) • Asia Foundation (Malaysia) • Asia Library, University of Michigan (USA) • Asian Center Library, University of the Philippines • Asian Development Bank Library (Philippines) • Asian Library, University of British Columbia Library (Canada) • Atma Jaya Research Centre (Indonesia) • Auchmuty Library, University of Newcastle (Australia) • Australian National University Library • Bangladesh Central Public Library • Bank Negara Malaysia Library • Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide (Australia) • Biblioteca Civiche Raccolte (Italy) • Biblioteca Nacional de Chile • Biblioteca Nacional de Espana (Spain) • Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico • Biblioteca Nacional de Mocambique • Biblioteca Nacional del Peru • Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze (Italy) • Biblioteka Narodowa (Poland) • Bibliotheek Der Rijks Universiteit (The Netherlands) • Bibliothek Im Neuhheime Feld (Germany) • Bibliothèque de Bordeaux (France) • Bibliothèque De L'Univeste-Section Lettres (France) • Bibliothèque Generale et Archives (Morocco) • Bibliothèque Municipale De Lyon (France) • Bibliothèque Nationale d'Algérie (Algeria) • Bibliothèque Nationale de France • Bibliothèque Nationale de Luxembourg • Bibliothèque Nationale d'Haiti • Bibliothèque Nationale du Benin • Bibliothèque Nationale du Burundi • Bibliothèque Nationale du Congo • Bibliothèque Nationale du Liban (Lebanon) • Bibliothèque Nationale du Mauritania • Bibliothèque Nationale du Senegal • Bibliothèque Nationale du Togo • Bibliothèque Nationale du Tunis • Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation(USA) • Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (UK) • British Council (Indonesia) • British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics (UK) • Brochardt Library, La Trobe University (Australia) • Brunei Museum • Brynmor Jones Library, The University of Hull (UK) • C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University (USA) • Cambridge University Library (UK) • Center for Chinese Studies, University of California (Berkeley, USA) • Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University (Japan) • Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran Library • Central Library, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Australia) • Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Xiamen University (China) • Centre of Economic Development and Administration, Tribhuvan University (Nepal) • Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California (USA) • Charles Sturt University (Australia) • Charles W. 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