

# NEWS

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

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

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

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



Yoni Linga



Model of Borobudur Temple (Central Java, Indonesia)

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

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



The Neusu Aceh Tamil inscription attracts international scholars



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



Senior Minister of State Dr Balaji Sadasivan at the KaalaChakra exhibition



Statue of Srivijaya King

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

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



Model of a Khmer chariot

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



Unveiling the bibliography on water resources to commemorate the partnership

### Some Facts on the Water Bibliography

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

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

## GET INSPIRED AND ACHIEVE MORE!

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

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

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

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

### SLW OPENING CELEBRATIONS

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



The members of TAG in the midst of their catchy performance

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

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

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

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



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

### ACHIEVING MORE THROUGH INSPIRATION

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

### ABERDEEN ACCESS

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

**Available at all libraries and from home**

### AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS JOURNALS

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

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

### ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY ONLINE

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

**Available at all libraries and from home**

### ART FULLTEXT AND ART INDEX RETROSPECTIVE

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

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

### ARTS & HUMANITIES SEARCH

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

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

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

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

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

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

## ASIA INTELLIGENCE WIRES

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

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

## ASIA ROM

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

**Available at all libraries and from home**

## ASIA-STUDIES FULL-TEXT ONLINE

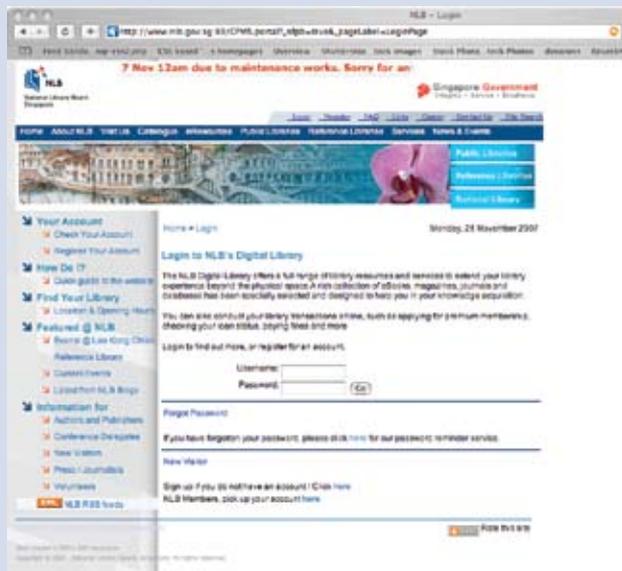
Asia Rom offers a vast drawing on the region's most prestigious research institutions and bringing together thousands of full-text reports covering business, government, economic and social issues - this is a peerless e-resource for the Asia region. Country coverage includes all of Asia, Australia/New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

**Available at all libraries and from home**

## HOW DO I LOGIN?

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

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



## DONORS GALLERY

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Hainanese theatre script. Donated by the family of the late Lin Lu San (林祿三)

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