

The Legacy of Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian

by **JANE WEE**
Senior Librarian,
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library,
National Library



PM Lee making his speech as the Guest of Honour



PM Lee keying in his thoughts about the exhibition in the "Comments" page of the Legacy website

"We cannot recreate the unsettled circumstances that motivated people like Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian to set out and create wealth in virgin economies and new industries, and having succeeded, to want to uplift their communities," said Prime Minister Lee during the official launch of the Legacy of Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian exhibition on 18 July 2008, "but the spirit of these pioneers - a willingness to venture into areas that are new and untested, and a desire to contribute to something much larger than oneself - remains relevant to all of us today, and to future generations of Singaporeans."

Prime Minister Lee was the Guest of Honour for the Legacy of Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian exhibition, which was launched on 18 July 2008, attended by more than 250 invited guests. Among them were the descendants of both Mr Tan Kah Kee and Dr Lee Kong Chian, repre-

sentatives from Chinese organisations such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, various Chinese Clans Associations and business guilds as well as the principals and vice-principals from schools in Singapore and Malaysia.

The exhibition features four galleries dedicated to Mr Tan and Dr Lee's roles as entrepreneurs, promoters of education and community leaders and the legacy they left behind. To engage the interest of the younger generation in our pioneers, photographs and artefacts were carefully chosen and designed to weave the stories of both men together. A fair use of videos, oral history recordings and newly created audio interviews add to the multi-sensory experience for the visitors, and the interactive features for the public to participate in polls and quizzes on what they can do for others as well as for the future generation add to the fun of

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This classroom comes with interesting discoveries hidden inside each of the 40 desks

visiting the exhibition. A classroom gallery that depicts a classroom of the 1950s comes with interesting discoveries hidden inside each of the 40 desks, making it refreshing to the youth, while bringing back nostalgia and memories for those who have attended classes in rooms with furniture that looked like this.

Positive feedback was received from the visitors of the exhibition and the following are just some examples:

"Astonished! That's how I feel as I walk through this exhibition. These two men have contributed towards the community even after their demise. Truly humble and remarkable. More people should follow suit. Simply love the quotes! Congratulation to NLB for bringing "The Legacy" to life!"

Sophia Tan

"Really appreciate the initiative and effort to organise an exhibition on two of the greatest philanthropists in Singapore. These selfless giving to society is a great lesson for our younger generation and indeed anyone to emulate!"

Alex Puah

"Admirable and informative exhibition. We remember our school days and proud to be associated with the daughter of the late Mr Tan Kah Kee. I was a student of the late Ms Tan, and remembering her today brought back sweet memories! Thank you for the wonderful work."

Former student of MGS

"The informative & interesting exhibits are very well-presented. All secondary school students should visit this exhibition. Not only is it informative but inspiring."

William Goh

"It is really amazing to learn about how much Mr Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian had achieved in their lifetimes. It is not the great fortunes they possessed, their achievements and their contributions to society come from their sincerity to help to bring others forward and their perseverance to do what they strongly believed in."

Fu Ping

As the curator and one of the main organisers of the exhibition, we feel that there is still plenty of room for improvement. We thank the community and schools for their strong support and interest in this exhibition.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a two-day conference on 28 and 29 November 2008 will be held at the National Library Building, Level 5, Possibility Room. The theme of the conference is **"Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian: Their Significance in the Making of Modern Singapore and Malaysia"**, conducted in both English and Mandarin, with simultaneous translation service.

配合展览，我们将在2008年11月28日及29日于新加坡国家图书馆5楼，良机会议厅，举办一场国际研讨会，主题是“**陈嘉庚、李光前与现代新马**”。研讨会将使用中文与英文，我们将在现场提供同步翻译服务。

Registration fee is \$150 (excluding GST) and senior citizens of 62 years and above as well as students would enjoy a subsidized rate of \$75 (excluding GST). To register, please download the Registration Form from our website and send the completed form to the following address, or participant may fax or email to us:

每位收费是\$150（不包括消费税），学生和62岁以上的乐龄人士则只须付\$75（不包括消费税）。请到我们的网站下载报名表格，填妥后传真、或寄到以下地址或电邮：

http://www.thelegacy.nl.sg/evn_registration.html (English Version)
http://www.thelegacy.nl.sg/chinese/evn_registration.html (中文版)
 National Library Board
 100 Victoria Street
 #07-03, Singapore 188064
 Email: TKK_LKC@nlb.gov.sg
 Fax: 6333 7968

Day 1, Friday 28 November 2008

第一天 2008年11月28日, 星期五

Opening Address by Prof Leo Suryadinata
(in English) 开幕词-廖建裕教授 (英语)**Welcome Address by Dr N Varaprasad**
(in English) 欢迎词-华拉保绍博士 (英语)**Keynote Address by Prof Su Guanng**
(in English) 主旨演讲-徐冠林教授 (英语)

Tea break 茶点

Track 1: Entrepreneurship and Ethnic Chinese
第一节: 华人与企业**Tan Kah Kee and Oei Tiong Ham: A Comparative Study of Overseas Chinese Entrepreneurship****Assoc Prof Yen Ching-hwang** (in English)
Adjunct Professor and Reader, School of History and Politics, The University of Adelaide, Australia**Abstract**

Using Tan Kah Kee in Singapore and Oei Tiong Ham in Indonesia (Dutch East Indies) as examples, this paper illustrates the salient characteristics of Overseas Chinese entrepreneurship. This paper also draws similarities and contrasts between Tan Kah Kee and Oei Tiong Ham in their socio-political inspirations and business practices, which partly resulted in them taking different paths in the making of history as Chinese in Southeast Asia.

陈嘉庚与黄仲涵: 海外华人企业家的比较研究**颜清滢博士** (英语)
南澳大利亚阿德雷德大学历史系教授**摘要**

以新加坡的陈嘉庚与荷属东印度(印尼)的黄仲涵的实例来印证海外华人企业家的特征。本文也将比较陈嘉庚与黄仲涵不同的社会政治理念 and 他们的商业实践, 从而解释为何他们在东南亚华人历史上拥有不同的声誉和成就。

Comparison of Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian: their Personality Traits and Business Habits**Mr Zhen Bing Shan** (in Mandarin)
Independent Researcher**Abstract**

Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian were both civic-minded philanthropists who have given generously to education and there are similarities and differences in their characters and their styles of business management. The speaker will make a presentation by comparing the two men in the larger context of their background differences.

陈嘉庚与李光前经营企业和为人的比较**郑炳山先生** (华语)
独立研究者**摘要**

陈嘉庚和李光前都是热心公益、捐资办学的慈善家。他们经营企业和为人都很相似, 但也有差异。作者将通过两人成长背景与政治背景的差异为两位先生进行比较。

From the Ethnic Economy to Transnational Entrepreneurship: Chinese Business in Britain and Singapore since 1990**Prof Liu Hong** (in English)
Director for Chinese Studies & Confucius Institute
Professor of East Asian Studies of University of Manchester, United Kingdom**Abstract**

This paper examines the diverse patterns and complex nature of Chinese businesses in Britain and Singapore over the last two decades. It will also discuss the roles of the nation-state, social/cultural networks, institutions, and business Familism in the evolution of new Chinese entrepreneurship in the two countries that have been linked by historical bonds and institutional resemblances.

从族裔经济到跨国场域: 1990年以来英国与新加坡新移民企业家的比较研究**刘宏教授** (英语)
英国曼彻斯特大学教授、中国研究中心主任; 英国孔子学院院长**摘要**

本文以英国和新加坡的新移民企业家为比较研究的对象, 探讨近20年来新华人商业的结构、转型及其动力。本文还将进一步分析英、新、中国的国家政策、社会与商业网络、华人机构、家族主义传统等因素对这两种不同类型的移民经济的影响并讨论其发展前景。

Q&A and Discussions 问答与讨论**Lunch 午餐****Track 2: Comparison Studies 第二节: 比较研究****Turning Compass: Diasporic Experience of Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian****Dr Yow Cheun Hoe** (in Mandarin)
Assistant Professor, Division of Chinese, Nanyang Technological University**Abstract**

This paper attempts to compare Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian, particularly with regards to personal experiences, their interactions with the ethnic groups and political regimes, and the legacies they entailed.

It argues that the decisions and directions that Tan and Lee took at the historical critical points reflect the multiple possibilities of Chinese diasporas in Singapore and Malaysia, thus becoming important benchmarks for the complexities of ethnic Chinese identity.

转动罗盘：陈嘉庚和李光前的华人离散经验

游俊豪博士（华语）

南洋理工大学中文系助理教授

摘要

本文尝试比较陈嘉庚和李光前的个人经历、他们与族群及政体的互动、他们遗留下的精神遗产。本文意图指出，陈嘉庚和李光前在历史关口上的抉择与路线，折射了新马华人离散经验的多种可能性，成为华族身份复杂性的重要指标。

Comparing Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian

Mr Chua Leong Kian (in Mandarin)

Independent Researcher

Abstract

The presentation looks at the different aspects including education background, communities served, language capabilities, and political identity to make a comparison between Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian.

陈嘉庚和李光前的比较

蔡良乾先生（华语）

独立研究者

摘要

通过教育背景、活动范围、语言能力、还有政治认同，作者将分析陈嘉庚与李光前之间的差异，并探讨他们的取向与成就。

Chinese and Ethnic Chinese: The Comparative Study of Tan Kah Kee and Lim Boon Keng

Assoc Prof Lee Guan Kin (in Mandarin)

Associate Professor, Director, Centre for Chinese Language & Culture, National Technological University

Abstract

Tan Kah Kee and Lim Boon Keng were two eminent leaders of the early Singapore Chinese community, played important roles in Singapore's social, economic and cultural development, and have made valuable contribution towards education. They both cared about and were involved in politics in China and made personal sacrifices for the development of education in China. This article seeks to present their outstanding characters and charisma through a comparative study.

华侨与华人：陈嘉庚与林文庆的比较研究

李元瑾副教授（华语）

中华语言文化中心主任

摘要

陈嘉庚与林文庆是新加坡早期华人社会两位非常杰出的领袖，他们都在新加坡的社会、经济和文化等领域扮演重要角色，并在教育方面做出极有价值的贡献。同时，他们都关心和参与中国政治，更为中国教育做出个人的牺牲。本文将通过比较研究，呈现两人的丰姿和神采。

Q&A and Discussions 问答与讨论

Tea break 茶点

Track 3: Question of Identity: Culture and Politics 第三节：文化与政治认同

Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian – Divergent Political Destinies and Contrasting Legacies

Dr Yong Chin Fatt (in English)

Research Fellow, Department of History, Flinders University

Abstract

Despite close relationships and many shared experiences, traumas, values, passions, compassions and lifestyles, both Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian ended political partnership in 1950 and chose divergent political destinies. This paper tackles on the question as to why Tan Kah Kee left Singapore to help reconstruct a new China under Mao while Lee Kong Chian stayed on to help promote political developments leading to self-government in Singapore and independence in Malaya.

陈嘉庚与李光前：政治命运及文化遗产

杨新发博士（英语）

历史系弗林德斯大学研究员

摘要

陈嘉庚与李光前关系非比寻常。他们有姻亲关系，长期以来在事业与政治运动中也是经过考验的伙伴。尽管两人的人生哲学、价值观念与生活方式都颇相似，对教育与慈善事业的热情高度一致，但最终，两人在政治与政治思想上，还是分道扬镳，未能取得共同的政治归宿。作者将分析造成两人不同转向的因素。

Cultural Production and Representation of Lee Kong Chian as a Nanyang Capitalist and Philanthropist

Assoc Prof Huang Jianli (in English)

Associate Professor, Department of History, National University of Singapore

Abstract

This paper focuses on the substantive pool of Chinese-language writings on Lee Kong Chian and examines how he has been portrayed in the past and in more recent times, amidst the changing circuits of power and shifting identity formations.

南洋资本家和慈善家：华文作者笔下的李光前

黄坚立副教授（英语）
新加坡国立大学历史系

摘要

本文以政权和身份认同的转变做为背景，通过大量有关李光前的中文作品中，研究过去和现今时代的人如何描绘他。

Q&A and Discussions 问答与讨论

Day 2, Saturday 29 November 2008

第二天 2008年11月29日，星期六

Track 4: Education and Ethnic Chinese
第四节：华人与教育

Lee Kong Chian and Chinese Education in Singapore: 1946-1955

Dr Neo Peng Fu (in Mandarin)
Assistant Professor, Department of Chinese Studies,
Nanyang Technological University

Abstract

From the second half of the 1940s to the first half of the 1950s, Chinese schools in Singapore witnessed a period of tremendous challenges. Lee Kong Chian had been actively involved in the social movements initiated by the Chinese-speaking community in Singapore aimed at dealing with these problems. The paper aims to show how Lee indeed had contributed much to the cause of Chinese education in Singapore in the period under study and attempts to present an evaluation of these contributions.

李光前先生与新加坡的华文教育：1946-1955

梁秉赋博士（华语）
新加坡国立大学中文系助理教授

摘要

从日据时代结束到“林德宪制”实施前后，是新加坡华文教育史上的一段多事之秋。身为华人社会的领袖，尤其是关心华文教育的一位侨领，李光前先生在当时华社围绕着这些问题而展开的运动中都曾扮演着一个重要的角色。本文拟对李先生于1940至1950年代之间对新加坡华文教育的发展所作的贡献作一初步的评议。

Comparison of Ideology in Establishing Schools between Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian

Assoc Prof Wu Hin Yung (in Mandarin)
Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Studies,
Southern College of Malaysia

Abstract

While there were differences in political opinions between Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian, two significant similarities for both were their successful establishment of their business empire and their strong emphasis on education. This paper made a comparison study on the education perceptions of Tan Kah Kee and Lee Kong Chian that affects the ideology in their establishments of schools.

陈嘉庚与李光前办学理念之比较

胡兴荣博士（华语）
马来西亚南方学院人文与社会学部主任、
副教授

摘要

纵观陈嘉庚和李光前的一生，除了政治上的着墨彼此有着明显的区别，却有两樁聚焦于他们身上的共同点，即建立商业王国和重教兴学。本文针对陈嘉庚与李光前的办学理念进行一个比较。

Q&A and Discussions 问答与讨论

Closing Remarks by Prof Leo Suryadinata
(in English) 闭幕词 - 廖建裕教授（英语）

Tour of Exhibition at National Library
(in English and Mandarin)

参观“承前启后 继往开来：陈嘉庚与李光前”展览（英语、华语）

Lunch 午餐

Depart for Heritage Tour (in English and Mandarin)

集合出发，寻找陈嘉庚与李光前的足迹之旅（英语、华语）

Return to National Library 回返国家图书馆