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04

## Journeys of Faith

Learn about the Haj Pilgrimage in the Malay Archipelago before the 20th Century

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## Menyelusuri Evolusi Aksara Melayu

History of the Malay Script

20

## Descendants of Dragons and Fairies

Vietnamese History before French Colonisation

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# Director's Column

A few of us were fortunate to have an opportunity to attend the 72<sup>nd</sup> International Federation of Library Association's (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress in Seoul in August.

At the conference, we had a chance to meet with our counterparts from a number of great libraries, for example the National Libraries of the 10 ASEAN countries, Australia, New Zealand, China, Korea, Netherlands, UK and USA. From the discussions, we understand that heritage content is being digitised extensively for preservation and greater access. Research and development work on the digital preservation and the web archiving of heritage materials are also making good progress. In the world library scene, international standards on the most effective ways to catalogue, index and organise electronic content and facilitate access to shared electronic content are some of the important collaborative projects carried out by the libraries in different parts of the world.

There is also greater attention given to understanding the needs of target groups of the different types of libraries, in particular to the clientele of the national libraries. In the past, serious researchers are the primary users of many national libraries. A number of the national libraries shared with the Congress their recent efforts to re-define their purpose and functions, and to open their libraries to a much larger audience. These include the business community, practitioners, general public, younger people and even children. They see the younger generation as future users of the national library. Some of these libraries even took deliberate steps to re-design the libraries for specific target groups, such as the business community that would require more conducive spaces for networking, with coffee and music thrown in, and a welcoming visitor centre to give the general public a glimpse of the collections and services of the national library.

We took away with us the assurance that national libraries of the world are making themselves more relevant to users in more ways than one. The digital environment that library users all over the world work and live in has also influenced the way

**“We are certainly not alone in our journey to innovate and to find new ways to serve our users more effectively.”**

libraries transform themselves to serve them better. This is especially so, when large segments of societies are using both the physical spaces in libraries as well as the digital spaces offered by the same libraries, in very different ways.

As the National Library in Singapore continues develop our collections and services, we are pleased that there is a large community out there whom we can leverage on, librarians and other information professionals who are willing to share their learning and insights to help us along. We are certainly not alone in our journey to innovate and to find new ways to serve our users more effectively.

A special write up on the proceedings of the Congress is included in this issue of BiblioAsia. This issue also comprises articles on the Haj pilgrimage, the art of poetry as well as the Tamil cinema in Singapore. A special highlight of this quarter is the launch of the "Evolution of Malay Scripts" Exhibition on 16 December 2006. Showcasing the development of the Malay scripts, the exhibition will reveal the phases and periods of external influences on the Malay people.

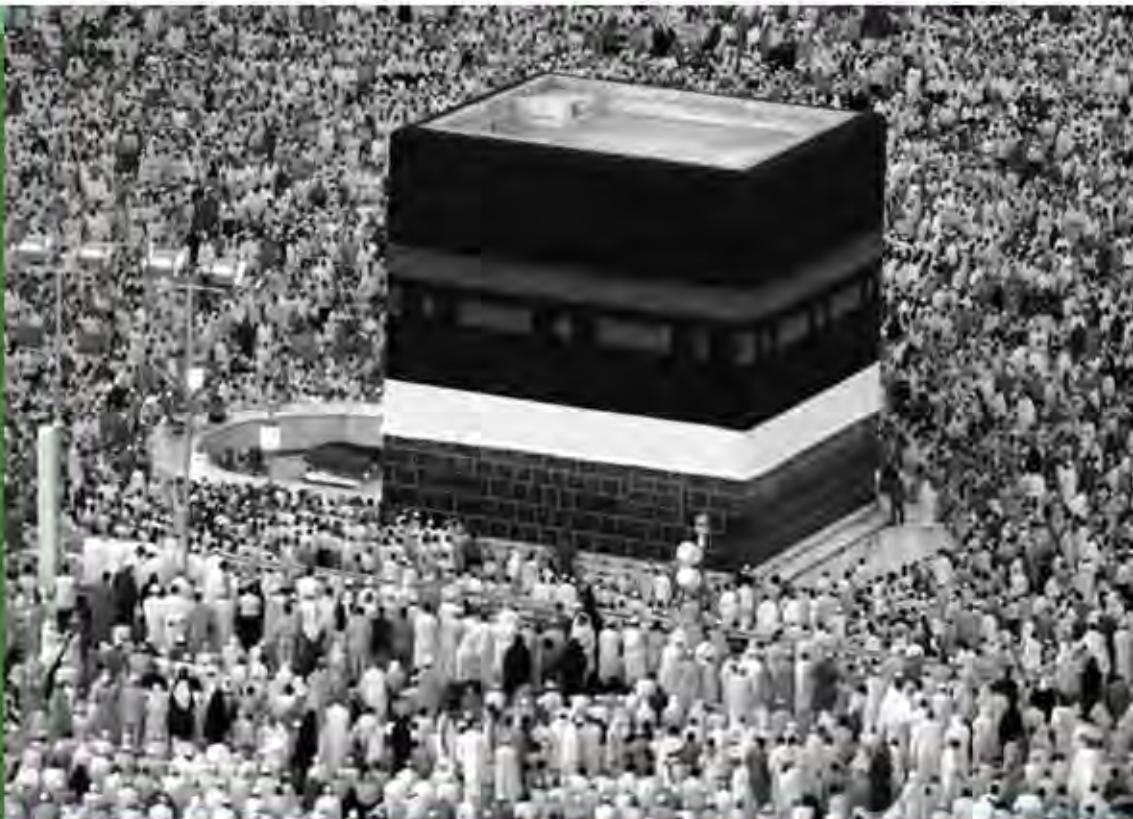
We look forward to seeing you at the library and happy reading!

**Ms Ngian Lek Choh**  
Director  
National Library

# JOURNEYS OF FAITH

Haj Pilgrimage  
in the Malay  
Archipelago  
before the  
20th Century

Nor-Afida Abd Rahman,  
Senior Reference Librarian,  
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library



**Making the journey to Mecca** to fulfil the obligation of the Haj is a long and cherished ambition for most Muslims. In heeding the call of the *Ka'bah* (House of God) in Mecca, where all Muslims turned to in their prayers, the Haj is not for the faint-hearted or the ill prepared. In Haj, the pursuit of spiritual upliftment transcends worldly wants and often requires stoicism in the face of hardships. Travelling in strange Arab lands and in close company of multitudes of strangers, hardships are never few. As an obligation, in fact, the Haj is not demanded on those who cannot canvass the strength and earnings to leave their routines and family dependants behind in order to complete the intense Haj rituals.

For far-flung devotees such as Muslims in Southeast Asia, just traversing parts of the globe to reach Mecca was once a severe test to their mettle. Today, because of advance transportation, flights from anywhere in the world has diminished the distance to Mecca, making the trip to the Holy Land bearable. Surviving the journey to Mecca is almost a certainty and forms the least of the pilgrims' worries. A return passage to their homeland at the end of the Haj is also guaranteed, as most pilgrims would have booked a two-way ticket. This was not the practice in the old days as it was the custom for pilgrims to book a one-way ticket to Jeddah. They booked their ticket home from Jeddah only after they had completed their Haj. In the pre-flight days, many pilgrims, often due the treachery of their *motawwafis* (local pilgrim guides), found themselves with no money for their return passage. In one instance, in 1897, the British Consul in Jeddah had to assist 106 pilgrims to make it back to home. There were others however who were not so lucky. They became victims to shipping agents' manipulation to secure cheap labour. Just before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in what was to become a big scandal in Singapore, the



The Karakah  
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Yannick Dalmat Islands,  
Malaysia, 1986

colonial government in Singapore uncovered a syndicate, which cunningly offered destitute pilgrims an advance on their return fares in exchange for the pilgrims' agreement to work in the shipping agent's plantations. The debt-bondage arrangement that ensued lead to the recruitment of many plantation coolies from the rank of these destitute pilgrims. They were unable to free themselves even after they have reached the maximum period of their tenure.

For pilgrims in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia (and for the most part of the world), hassle-free journeys only came about in the 1970s when flights became regular and affordable. Prior to that, Malay pilgrims travelled to Mecca mainly by sea on sailing ships and later steamers. It would take months to reach the port at Jeddah where the vessels would congregate and spill their contents.

## CONVERGENCE OF HUMAN WAVES

During the first 13 centuries of Islam, to embark for Haj was like attempting to run an endless marathon. The journey could take years as many pilgrims were poor and had to

stop en route to work and save before setting out again. Before the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a vast majority of pilgrims took the overland route to Mecca, which proved to be more arduous than the sea route. There were three slow-moving waves of pilgrims entering Mecca during the Haj season. The first arrived by an armada of ships that ploughed the vast Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea from these locations:

- a. The sprinkled archipelagos of the East Indies
- b. The great inverted triangle of the Indian subcontinent
- c. The coast of East Africa and the horn of Africa



The next wave, slower than the first, trotted by foot or on horse/camel caravans, bringing pilgrims from the Middle East and North Africa. Even slower is the last wave, which trudged across Central Africa.

Pilgrims on all these waves braved hardships; the adventurous overland folks had to conquer harsh terrains, fought off raids by moving tribes or found themselves just plain lost. For their sea-faring counterparts, the spectre of diseases loomed or they risked their boats and hence live being overturned by ruthless waves.

In the absence of official statistics before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it would not be too inaccurate to estimate that only a conservative number from the Archipelago went on Haj as many would be discouraged to undertake travel due to the hazardous and protracted nature of the journey. The total number of pilgrims in Mecca before the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also relatively small to begin with, according to William Facy:

*Historical statistics are few, but travellers' and officials' reports indicate widely varying pilgrim numbers. One of the highest was 100,000, recorded in the year 1279. In 1383, some 17,000 pilgrims crossed Sinai in the Egyptian caravan, and in 1503 the Italian traveller di Varthema estimated about 40,000 in the Damascus caravan... In 1831, a British report estimated 120,000 pilgrims in total, about 20,000 of whom arrived at Jiddah by sea from India, Malaya, the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea ports of Suez, Qusair, Sawakin and elsewhere—and that seems to have been the best year for half a century or more. What is striking is how small overall pilgrim numbers were.*

Source: Facy, W. (2005, November-December). Queen of the India trade. Saudi Aramco World, 54 (6). Retrieved August 24, 2006, from <http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200508/queen.of.the.india.trade.htm>

The majority from this small number took the overland route. Ship-going pilgrims which formed the remainder came only from these places; sub-Saharan Africa, India and Malaysia. Since Malay pilgrims were represented only in the sea travellers group, the Archipelago's overall contribution to the already small number of pilgrims was hence limited.

## HAJ IN MALAY TRADITIONAL TEXTS

Early records of Haj pilgrimage from the Malay Archipelago showed that pilgrimage was a private enterprise and confined to certain classes of individuals. Before the commercialisation of the Haj in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that enabled en masse pilgrimage to Mecca, Haj incumbents either individually or in small groups made their own arrangements for Mecca. Those who went were usually men of some standing in the community – either they had the resources or they had attained a relatively high level of Islamic education.

Both in Malaysia and Indonesia, the identity and period of the first Haj pilgrimage is not known although it is likely they occurred within the backdrop of the genesis of Islam in this region. While there are more than one theory on how and when Islam came into the region, the founding of Islamic kingdoms in the Archipelago has had the effect of heightening awareness and aspirations towards the Haj. By the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, Islam had spread to Southeast Asia. The discovery of the Trengganu Stone (*Batu Bersurat*), dated 1303 with Arabic inscriptions in 1887 at Kuala Berang, Trengganu, attested to the influence of Islam by this date. With the founding of the Kingdom of Malacca around 1400 and the conversion of its founder, Parameswara, by 1414, Islam penetrated a major Malay state ideology and polity. In Indonesia, the earliest known conversion to Islam by a local ruler occurred in Aceh, North Sumatra, in the late 13<sup>th</sup>

century. By the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Muslim kings in Java were more than anxious to capitalise on Haj to legitimise their kingdoms. By the middle of 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was not only the Islam phenomenon that had taken over the kingdoms in Java but their kings were anxiously looking for Islamic symbols to legitimise their kingdoms and many capitalised on Haj.



A replica of the  
Trengganu Stone  
Image courtesy of the  
National Library of Malaysia

Legends and epics dominate the early literature on Haj in this region, and while they present a continuum between legend and fact, this literature is still a good source to speculate whom the Haj pilgrims before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Malay *hikayat* contain some of the earliest instances of Haj in this region. *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (possibly first written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) records a Haj pilgrimage in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, undertaken by Hang Tuah, a great Malay warrior.

While the authenticity of both this epic and the legendary hero is debatable, the detailed account of his deeds in the Holy Land is not too far from the rituals preached to Haj pilgrims. On this basis, there were claims that Hang Tuah's pilgrimage in the 15<sup>th</sup> century leans more towards fact than fiction.

Authenticity aside, the Haj journey in *Hikayat Hang Tuah* is useful for its insights on the route, ports of call, places traversed and the modes of transportation. The *Hikayat* records Hang Tuah as taking more than two months to reach Jeddah, leading a fleet of 42 ships and bringing with him 1,600 followers and 16 officials. The route he took is mapped as below:

- a. From Malacca to Aceh – five days five nights
- b. From Aceh to Pulau Dewa – 10 days
- c. From Pulau Dewa to Bab Mokha (Mocha is in Yemen. The journey from Pulau Dewa to Jeddah took two months).

According to *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, Hang Tuah's pilgrimage was coincidental for his ultimate quest was the quasi-mythical empire of Rome and his Imperial mission was to establish ties with the King of Rome and purchase weaponry. On his way to Rome, Hang Tuah called at Mecca just at the time when the Haj season was about to begin, and so he joined the pilgrims there for Haj. This is unlike other Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia whose kings consciously planned missions to Mecca with the desire to be conferred the title "Sultan" by the Great Sheriff (*Syanif Besar*). Their actions could be prompted by the belief that only the Great Sheriff, with his control over the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, had the spiritual authority to bestow supernatural aura and power on Islamic kingdoms, although there was no such tradition in Mecca. In 1630s, competition between the King of Banten and the King of Mataram led each of the kingdoms to send holy missions to Mecca. The mission from Banten returned in 1626 while that from Mataram arrived home in 1641.



*Hikayat Hang Tuah*  
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Publishing House, 1990

The King of Makassar also sought the title of Sultan from the Sheriff of Mecca. It is more than likely that the individuals in these missions, following Hang Tuah's example, would take the opportunity of their presence in Mecca to perform Haj.

The politicisation of Haj in the pursuit of supernatural kingdoms led the kings themselves to make their journey to Mecca. In 1674, the first Banten royalty, Abdul Qahar who was the son of Banten king Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, went on Haj. For his spiritual feat he was known as *Sultan Haji* (Haj King). The legends *Sejarah Banten* (written in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) and *Hikayat Hasanuddin* (written around 1700) also record the Haj pilgrimage of the founder of the Islamic dynasty in Banten, Sunan Gunung Jati. Their journey to Haj, though, is couched in supernatural elements.

Haj also crept into the Sundanese literary tradition. *Carita Parahyangan*, a Sunda text on the history of the Galuh kingdom written around 1580, records the Haj pilgrimage of Bratalegawa, the son of the King of Galuh. According to this volume, Bratalegawa was the first person to convert to Islam in Sunda. Bratalegawa chose to lead a trader's life and sailed to as far as Arabia. He went on Haj in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. As the first person in Galuh to complete the Haj, he was also known as *Haji Purwa*.

Outside the realm of legends, the honour of the earliest Haj pilgrimage reportedly rests with the rulers of Malacca. Tome Pires reported that during Sultan Mansur Syah's reign (the sixth king of Malacca who ruled from 1456 to 1477), the Malaccan king almost left the Malay shores for Jeddah, having chartered a ship from Pegu and Java as part of his preparations. But his deteriorating health put a stop to his pilgrimage; notwithstanding the large funds and followers he had set aside. His son who succeeded him, Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah (1477 – 1488), had supposedly sworn to realise his father's Haj ambition. By this promise, scholars and historians in Malaysia concluded that Sultan Alauddin himself had gone for Haj. This is because in Islam, a living person would have to complete his own Haj before he could carry out the Haj on the wishes and behalf of another person. Although Sultan Alauddin's Haj has not been verified by written records, the Islamic climate in Malacca by that time, with the probable presence of pious men and religious teachers, would have made it conducive for Sultan Alauddin to go on Haj (*Haji di Semenanjung Malaysia*, 1986:115).

## OF HAJ AND LEARNED MEN

Real data on Haj pilgrims right until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century remain sketchy. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, from Indonesia,

a few names have been identified. Syaikh Yusuf Makassar left Indonesia for Arabia in 1644 for Haj and scholarly pursuit and returned only in 1670. Syaikh Yusuf not only became a religious leader on his comeback but also acted as political advisor to Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa in Banten. Another is 'Abd al-Rauf al-Sinkili who stayed for years in Mecca and Medina to deepen his religious knowledge and who later became a man of high standing in Aceh (*Haji di Semenanjung Malaysia*, 1986; Amin, 1974).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, speculations about Haj pilgrims focused on personalities whose scholarly passion and wandering spirit were believed to have inspired them to go to Mecca. Two such personalities are Sultan Muhammad Jiwa Zainal Abidin II of Kedah (1710 – 1760) and Syeikh Abdul Jalil al-Mahdani. Their combined encounters with Sumatra, Java and India, and close network with Jambi and Indian ship owners allowed them to venture far. Sultan Muhammad's return to Kedah from India after six years gave rise to the suggestion that during this period, he did make his Haj together with Syeikh Jalil. Syeikh Jalil had two sons whom he sent to Mecca via sailing ships and who became Meccan residents for several years. In 1772, an Indonesian religious leader who resided in Mecca wrote to Sultan Hemengkubuwono I to recommend appointments for two new Hajis who had recently come back.

## OF HAJ AND HARSHIPS

More substantial factual accounts about Haj pilgrimage in the Malay Archipelago started to appear in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Michael Laffan in *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, the first actualised account that mentions journey to Mecca is Munshi Abdullah's *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah* (The Story of Abdullah's Voyage). Munshi Abdullah, whose literary contributions had earned him the title the father of modern Malay literature, made his journey in 1854.



*Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah*

All rights reserved, Oxford University Press, 1969

His Haj account stopped shortly before his death in Jeddah. There is also information that points to an even earlier Haj pilgrimage, made by Sayyid Muhammad bin Zainal al Idrus, a Trengganu ulama (religious leader) who is known as the father of Trengganu's literature. Sayyid Muhammad went to Mecca around 1815 at the age of 20 and spent several years there pursuing his studies. Yet another account in the 19<sup>th</sup> century relates the story of Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad better known as Tok Kenali Kelantan who went to Mecca in 1886 at the age of 18. An account of his life is found in *Sejarah hidup To' Kenali* (The Life of To' Kenali).

Two of these intellectuals, Munshi Abdullah and Tok Kenali, described a Haj journey that departs from the pompous-fleet-of-ship and entourage-full sailing found in *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and even Sultan Mansur's Haj preparations. They wrote of hardships and gave readers a more realistic version of Haj, as if to warn them of its mental and physical exertions (Abdullah, 1967; Raimy, 2000). Munshi Abdullah drew up a will before he left, accepting the fact that he might not survive the Haj.

In the actualised accounts, we learn of the many stops Haj pilgrims had to make. The pilgrims also waited for ships, which in turn waited for the right winds to depart. In the days of sailing ships, the Indian Ocean and the lands along its coast lay in wait for the "trade wind". The phrase "trade wind" is ancient and is derived from an old use of the word "trade" to mean a fixed track. In navigation, it refers to any wind that follows a predictable course. As such winds are instrumental to merchant ships making long ocean voyages, the term evolved to mean in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as winds that favour trade. In the Indian Ocean, the monsoons are the famous trade winds. They are particularly beneficial to long-distance merchants because they change direction at different seasons of the year. The northeast monsoon blows from October to March and the southwest monsoon from April to September. As the change in the monsoon winds take months, traders and pilgrims alike had to stay in the various ports of call for the right wind to carry them to their next stop.

The dependence of Haj pilgrims on trading ships during this early period is also described by van Bruinessen in his paper *Mencari Ilmu dan Pahala di Tanah Suci: Orang Nusantara Naik Hajj* (Seeking Knowledge and Merit: Indonesians on the Hajj). Pilgrims would seek out trading ships to book their passage. As trading ships had their own destination, the pilgrims had to change ships to ensure that they boarded the right ship. Their journey would bring them to various ports in the Archipelago where ships would load up on water and other supplies. The last stop in the Archipelago was Aceh (hence named "Serambi Mekkah" or Verandah of



*Sejarah Hidup To' Kenali*  
All rights reserved,  
Rustika Aman, 1967

Mecca) and here the pilgrims would wait for ships bound for India. From India, the pilgrims sailed on ships that would bring them to Hadhramaut, Yemen or directly to Jeddah. The perils of sailing for months were many. The ships could sink or be stranded in unknown islands. The pilgrims could be robbed by pirates or even by the ships' crew. They were vulnerable to diseases while both at sea and on land. Having set foot in Arabia, they could be attacked by the Bedouin tribes. In the Netherlands Indies, between 1853 and 1858, less than half of the pilgrims who

went to Mecca made it back safely. This high attrition rate was attributed to mainly death at sea or being sold as slaves.

For Tok Kenali who went on his pilgrimage in 1886, he could only embark on his journey after securing contributions for the voyages' fare. His friends in Kelantan gave him \$50 and his mother topped it up with \$22. The cost of his journey was \$100. He set out from Kelantan in an ailing ship which had its sail broken in the middle of the ocean. As a result, a journey that was expected to take three months extended to six months. The delay also depleted the supply of fresh water onboard and Tok Kenali had to survive on salt-laden seawater. His journey took him along Coromandel Coast and Malabar in India, and then to Ceylon and Sokotra. Sokotra or Pulau Sokotra (Sokotra Island) is located 510 km from the Yemen coast and is the biggest island in the eastern side of the Indian Ocean. Two hundred years ago, its old Port Souk was filled with pilgrim ships mainly from Africa, which stopped there to stock up on water and wood. The pilgrims also obtained other supplies like honey, oil and meat from the people of Sokotra. Upon reaching Mecca, Tok Kenali was desolate with no one to turn to for food and clothing. He survived by acting, from time to time, as cook for picnics arranged by his friends.



Tok Kenali, a 19<sup>th</sup> century  
pilgrim from Kelantan  
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Rustika Aman, 1967

## THE VOYAGE OF MUNSHI ABDULLAH

Munshi Abdullah's contributions to Singapore history and literature are many. *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ka-Jiddah* (The Voyage of Abdullah to Jeddah) is his lesser-known work but in view of the dearth of literature on Haj pilgrimage in this early period, this work is indeed invaluable.

In his memoir *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ka-Jiddah*, Abdullah was often placed at the end of his tether by the turbulent winds and waves:

*Then at around nine o'clock on Sunday night, the seventh day of the month, the North Wind descended furiously on us. The waves and swells were immense, so much so that our large ship became merely a coconut husk that was being thrashed about by the waves, floating and sinking as it was tossed about in the middle of the sea. All the chests and goods on the left of the ship came crashing to the right, while those on the right came crashing to the left, and this carried on until the break of day.*

Source: Ralmy Che Ross. (2000). *Munshi Abdullah's voyage to Mecca: A preliminary introduction and annotated translation*. Indonesia and the Malay World, 28 (81), 185.

Abdullah started his voyage to Mecca from Singapore in 1854 on the ship *Sabil al-Islam* owned by Syeikh Abdul Karim. Abdullah made 22 stops before reaching Mecca, in between experiencing four sea storms.



Abdullah's route to Mecca

All rights reserved, Pustaka Melayu, 1960

One of the fiercest storm occurred when Abdullah's ship tried to cross Kep Gamri (Cape Comorin lies at the tip of South India and is infamous for its dangerous waves). As he hung on to his dear life, the thought of death not far from Abdullah's mind:

*Oh God! Oh God! Oh God! I can't even begin to describe how horrendous it was and how tremendous the waves were, only God would know how it felt, it was as if I had wanted to crawl back into my mother's womb in fright!...All the goods, chests, sleeping-mats and pillows were flung about. Water spewed into the hold and drenched everything completely. Everyone was lost in their thoughts, thinking nothing else but that death was close at hand...in the ship's*

*hold, the noises made by people vomiting and urinating were indescribable as the sailors kept on hosing down the place...Everyone held fast to the ropes. The sails tore and the ropes broke many times...This continued for two days and three nights, and with God's pity and help the winds then lessened.*

Source: Ralmy Che Ross. (2000). *Munshi Abdullah's voyage to Mecca: A preliminary introduction and annotated translation*. Indonesia and the Malay World, 28 (81), 187.

Abdullah also had a chance to board a passenger ship that was transporting Indian pilgrims from Calcutta. The ship was crowded and unbearable:

*By the grace of God, a ship called Atiah Rahman arrived from Calcutta...carried some Bengalis who were making the Haj, totalling one hundred and fifty men, women and children. We went to the ship to secure a passage to Jeddah. The fare for this ship was quite expensive as all the other ships had already sailed away; each person was charged eight Ringgit...God only knew the circumstances aboard the ship and how the crowded mass of people made it so miserable for us who tried to eat, sit or sleep on board (God willing, all these trials and tribulations will gain us meritorious blessings, for we endured this in the Path of the Righteous).*

Source: Ralmy Che Ross. (2000). *Munshi Abdullah's voyage to Mecca: A preliminary introduction and annotated translation*. Indonesia and the Malay World, 28 (81), 189.

It is interesting to see the continuity of such conditions onboard pilgrim ships from Abdullah's time right up to the late 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century when steamships ruled the waves. Even with room for more pilgrims on board steamships, serious overcrowding and hygiene problems still haunted Haj pilgrims. Deaths on pilgrim ships en route Mecca were common; during Abdullah's voyage, more than 20 suffered from chicken pox and two or three died.

Once pilgrims reached the Holy Land, the situation on land was no less chaotic, as according to Abdullah it resembled



Pilgrims' packages in heaps in Jeddah. Pustaka Melayu, 1940

All rights reserved. Perbadanan Yayasan Islam Terengganu, 1986



Abdullah onboard his pilgrim ship

a "war zone". Pilgrims' belongings were piled in haphazard heaps, some smashed, some lost or switched. The taxation of pilgrims' packages was another source of misery. The tax collector used his discretion, not understood by the pilgrims, to determine

which items should be taxed and which should not. No one dared to protest, not even when their packages were ripped apart or ransacked. Abdullah's writing chests were not spared and his ink splashed across all his writing papers because too many hands dipped into his chests at the same time (Raimy, 2000). The "war zone" scene continued into the late 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century, and one can only imagine the scale of pandemonium at Port Jeddah since pilgrims' arrival in Jeddah in the steamship era had grown by leaps and bounds.

According to Raimy Che-Ross in his translation of Abdullah's voyage to Mecca, Abdullah did not get to perform his Haj rituals for he died shortly after reaching Mecca in May 1854. The joy of reaching the Holy Land overwhelmed him that he had forgotten about the hardships he endured during his approximately 100 days' journey from Singapore. As his heart soared, he composed a poem which were the last words to flow from his pen:

*As I entered into this exalted city  
I became oblivious to all the pleasures and joys of this world  
  
It was as if I had acquired Heaven and all that it holds  
I uttered a thousand prayers of thanks to the  
Most Exalted God  
  
Thus I have forgotten all the hardships and  
torments along my journey  
For I have yearned and dreamed after the Baitullah  
for many months.*

Source: Raimy Che-Ross. (2000). Munshi Abdullah's voyage to Mecca: A preliminary introduction and annotated translation. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 28 (81), 200.

The Incomplete Journal of Abdullah's Journey was safely returned to his family in Singapore through one of his companions.

## HAJ AND ARAB SHIPPING IN SINGAPORE

The rise of Hadhrami shipping in the Malay Archipelago in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century boded well for pilgrims in this region. Hadhrami Arab shippers hailed from Yemen and competed successfully with the Europeans and Chinese in trade and shipping in the Indian Ocean. The Alsagoffs, a prominent Arab family in Singapore, established the firm Alsagoff & Co. in 1848 to conduct trade within the islands of the Archipelago using their own vessels.



Pilgrims on a steamship.  
Image from the Hajjah Aminah Collection,  
National Archives of Singapore



The pilgrims with their belongings waiting to leave for Mecca

Image courtesy of Ministry of Communications and the Arts

In the 1850s, Sayyid Ahmad Alsagoff extended the realm of his family business by starting a profitable business of transporting pilgrims between Southeast Asia and Jeddah. Using Singapore as the

base, the Alsagoffs' position in the pilgrim trade was tremendously strengthened by the Dutch's restriction on the flow of pilgrims from Indonesia. Pilgrims from the Netherlands Indies during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century numbered a few hundreds only as the Dutch imposed a tax on prospective pilgrims. This is to discourage the return of religious fanatics who, the Dutch feared, would be groomed while performing the Haj and deepening Islamic knowledge in Mecca. Singapore, thus, became the hub of an expanding pilgrim trade from Southeast Asia partly because of this restriction, as many would bypass it by beginning their Haj from Singapore. This tax was removed in 1852.

When steamship arrived in the late half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab shipping merchants capitalised on the speed and capacity of these vessels. By 1871, the Alsagoff-owned Singapore Steamship Company had ferried pilgrims to Jeddah by steamers steered by a European captain and a Chinese hand. Another Arab shipping merchant who ran steamer services for pilgrims was Syed Mohsen Al-Joofree. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he was locked in fierce competition with two Dutch steamers for pilgrims. But his business flopped some time before his death in 1894.

## CONCLUSION

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Haj had become a competitive business with serious investments by international shipping companies. The waves had been tamed by large steam-powered vessels custom-built to combine pilgrim and cargo transport. While the duration to get to Jeddah had improved tremendously, the well being and safety of Haj pilgrims still lagged behind. The number of pilgrims had swelled to a point where effective sanitation, hygiene, administration and guardianship of pilgrims could not be adequately addressed by purely commercial concerns. The British and Dutch colonial governments introduced regulations to protect Haj pilgrims but tales of extreme overcrowding in pilgrim ships and of Haj pilgrims getting stranded without a return ticket after being manipulated by shipping agents and brokers continued

to be heard. The comfort that Haj pilgrims experience today is a result of decades of reforms by various parties, helped by the advances in transportation. For a journey that is deeply spiritual, Haj pilgrimage in the Malay Archipelago cannot be divorced from its social and economic dimensions.

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# Menyelusuri Evolusi Aksara Melayu

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

“ Bahasa Melayu dikagumi bukan saja kerana berfungsi di merata bandar Nusantara tetapi kerana bahasa Melayu ditulis. ”

James T Collins



#### Aqidah al-awwām

Membicarakan tentang aqidah untuk orang awam. Antara lain menghuraikan sifat 20 dan menyenaraikan 25 nama para nabi  
Hak Cipta Terpelihara, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Bahasa Melayu pernah pada suatu masa dulu menjadi bahasa perantaraan ataupun *lingua franca* di daerah Asia Tenggara. Ia juga telah melalui pelbagai perubahan semenjak ia digunakan sebagai alat perhubungan. Begitu juga dengan sistem tulisan bahasa Melayu yang juga disebut sebagai aksara Melayu. Sejak zaman-berzaman, pelbagai jenis aksara telah digunakan oleh orang Melayu.

Menurut Collins (1997: 52):

*Suku-suku Asia Tenggara yang memiliki sistem tulisan dihormati oleh petualang barat yang mula-mula mengunjungi bandar-bandar utama Nusantara pada abad yang keenam belas. Dan sesungguhnya di setengah-setengah wilayah Asia Tenggara terdapat kadar keberaksaraan yang amat tinggi, bahkan mungkin lebih tinggi daripada kadar yang terdapat di kalangan masyarakat Eropah pada zaman itu (Reid 1988). Bahasa Melayu dikagumi bukan saja kerana berfungsi di merata bandar Nusantara tetapi kerana bahasa Melayu ditulis.*

Perkembangan aksara-aksara yang pernah digunakan adalah

akibat daripada pengaruh dan perhubungan mereka dengan pelbagai tamadun besar pada masa lalu. Dari satu sudut, ia juga jelas mencerminkan tentang keupayaan dan kesudian orang Melayu menghadapi perubahan serta mengubahsuai unsur-unsur asing untuk keperluan dan kemajuan mereka. Ini jelas terlihat tatkala kita menyelusuri dan meneliti evolusi aksara Melayu.

#### PENGARUH HINDU-BUDDHA AKSARA PALLAVA DAN KAWI

Antara bukti terawal yang menunjukkan sejarah tulisan di Kepulauan Melayu ialah inskripsi batu Raja Mulavarman yang dianggarkan bertarikh 400 masih. Menurut Prof Hashim Musa (1997b: 28), "antara tulisan Pallava terawal yang melambangkan bahasa Melayu dijumpai pada abad ketujuh Masihi ialah inskripsi Srivijaya di Kedukan Bukit 683 Masih, Talang Tuwo 684 Masih dan Kota Kapur, Pulau Bangka 686 Masih." Skrip Pallava mempunyai banyak persamaan dengan skrip yang digunakan sewaktu pemerintahan kerajaan Pallava di India.

Inskripsi Punavarman dari Taruma juga telah dijumpai di Jawa. Inskripsi dalam skrip Pallava Awal ini telah menggunakan bahasa Sanskrit. Selain itu, beberapa inskripsi lain yang ini juga telah ditemui di Kedah, Malaysia.

Berkenaan dengan aksara Kawi, ada pendapat yang menolak teori bahawa ia timbul daripada perkembangan aksara Pallava yang terdapat di Jawa dan Sumatera. Di dalam bukunya, Epigrafi Melayu: Sejarah Sistem Tulisan dalam Bahasa Melayu (1997b: 28), Hashim Musa telah menukil Jensen, yang berpandangan bahawa aksara Kawi bersumberkan sejenis skrip Pali yang dinamakan Pali Kyoktsa atau "Pali square script" yang berasal daripada Brahmi Purba. Terdapat beberapa inskripsi yang ditemui seperti menunjukkan dengan jelas bahawa bahasa Melayu Tua telah menggunakan jenis skrip Kawi pada abad kesebelas dan kedua belas Masihi sesudah skrip Pallava.

Namun, sebuah inskripsi pada batu nisan di Minyak Tujuh aceh, bertarikh 1380 Masihi menunjukkan tentang pengaruh bentuk skrip Arab yang mula meresap ke dalam sistem tulisan di Kepulauan Melayu.

## PENGARUH ISLAM – AKSARA JAWI

Proses pengislaman telah memberikan kesan yang besar dalam perkembangan bahasa Melayu, iaitu penggunaan dan penyesuaian skrip Arab sehingga menjadi skrip Jawi

untuk mengeja bahasa Melayu. Menurut Hashim Musa (1997a: 5), melalui skrip inilah:

*Kitab-kitab agama Islam dan jenis-jenis persuratan yang lain lagi misalnya surat perjanjian, perutusan, undang-undang, sastera, perubatan, perkapanan, jual-beli, dan lain-lain telah ditulis ke dalam bahasa Melayu sama ada hasil asli ataupun terjemahan dan tulisan-tulisan itu telah tersebar luas di Asia Tenggara termasuk seluruh kepulauan Melayu.*

Sebahagian inskripsi terawal yang menunjukkan penggunaan tulisan Jawi telah di temui di Champa, Pahang, Brunei dan Jawa. Inskripsi-inskripsi ini bertarikh seawal abad kesebelas. Namun, secara umum para pengkaji berpendapat, Batu Bersurat Terengganu, yang bertarikh abad empat belas telah diterima sebagai inskripsi terawal yang menggunakan tulisan Jawi. Walaupun ia memaparkan perintah untuk mematuhi agama Islam, tetapi undang-undangnya yang tertulis masih lagi mencerminkan unsur-unsur falsafah sebelum kedatangan Islam.

Antara contoh unsur-unsur sebegini yang dapat dilihat sebagai ciri pada Batu Bersurat ialah penggunaan perkataan-perkataan Sanskrit yang banyak, dan ejaan Jawi telah diolah untuk "membunyikan perkataan Sanskrit itu sehampir yang mungkin yang menyebabkan penggunaan huruf-huruf alif (ا), wau (و), dan ya (ي) sebagai huruf vokal pada akhir suku kata yang amat kerap yang unik bagi Batu Bersurat Terengganu ini" (Hashim, 1997a: 15).

Batu Bersurat Terengganu membuktikan dengan jelas bahawa



Khalq al-samawat wa al-ard (1637 Masehi)

Manuskrip karangan Sheikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri yang membicarakan asal kejadian langit dan bumi  
Hak Cipta Terpelihara, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

sistem ejaan Jawi telah mencapai kesempurnaan dari segi perkembangannya. Lima huruf baru yang dipadankan daripada huruf Arab untuk melambangkan bunyi-bunyi Melayu iaitu, cha (ڇ), nga (ڻ), pa (ڻ), ga (ڻ) dan nya (ڻ) sudah tercipta dan digunakan sepenuhnya. Pada tahun 1996, satu lagi huruf telah ditambah untuk melambangkan bunyi v (ڻ), sebagai usaha untuk menyesuaikan penggunaan jawi dengan bahasa Melayu kini.



**Prasasti Huwung  
(822 Masehi)**

Membicarakan tentang seseorang yang bernama Sang Watu Walai Hak Cipta Terpelihara, Perpustakaan Negara Indonesia

Wilkinson, yang menjawat tugas sebagai Inspektor Sekolah-Sekolah Federal, pada waktu itu, selain itu, terdapat juga perkembangan yang meningkat terhadap penggunaan mesin-mesin cetak yang dibawa dari Eropah. Ini mengembangkan industri percetakan di rantau ini.



**Tapel Adam**

Gambaran susur galur Nabi Adam.  
Hak Cipta Terpelihara  
Perpustakaan  
Negara Indonesia

## PENUTUP

Setiap aksara yang pernah digunakan orang Melayu sama ada Pallava, Kawi, dan kini Jawi atau Rumi menjadi saksi dan bukti tentang kemampuan masyarakat ini. Kesemua aksara-aksara ini telah digunakan untuk berbagai jenis keperluan perhubungan dan pengurusan. Selain itu, ia juga telah melahirkan karya-karya yang sehingga kini masih sesuai dan menjadi warisan yang tidak ternilai kepada masyarakat. Sesuailah seperti menurut Prof Datuk Dr Siti Hawa Salleh (2006), pada tahun 1726, Francois Velentijn telah menyuarakan kekagumannya terhadap masyarakat Melayu yang bukan sahaja mempunyai tulisan (aksara) malah menggunakan aksara itu untuk menghasilkan karya-karya dan duduk pula berkumpul beramai-ramai mengelilingi seorang pembaca memerdengarkan suaranya.



**Prasasti Kota Kapur (686 Masehi)**

Isinya berupa kutukan bagi mereka yang berbuat jahat dan tidak tunduk setia kepada raja  
Hak Cipta Terpelihara, Perpustakaan Negara Indonesia

This article traces the evolution of the Malay scripts, such as the Pallava, Kawi, Jawi and Roman Scripts. It also illustrates how the interaction of the Malays with the major civilisations then had impacted the evolution of the scripts which left an indelible mark in history.

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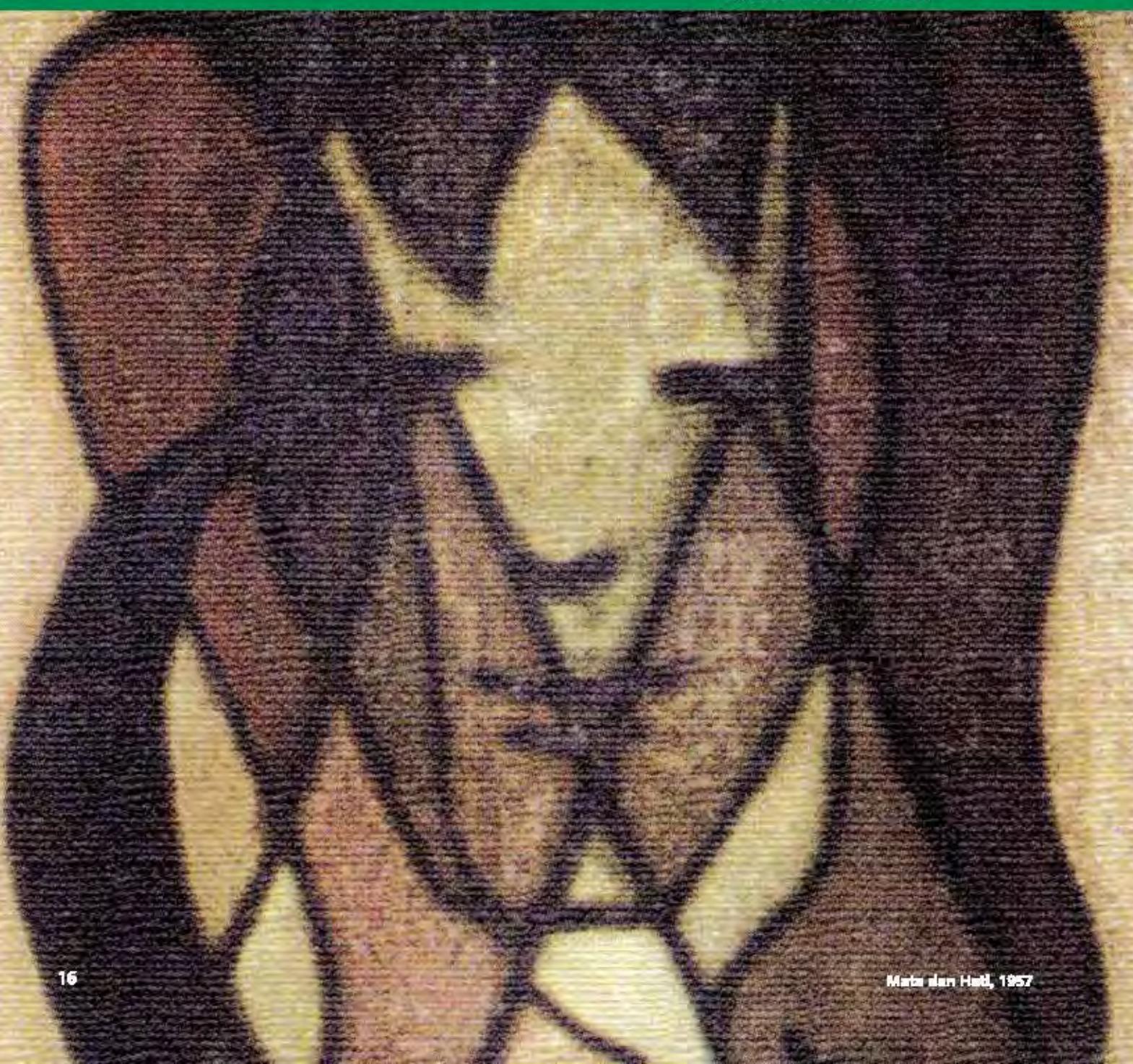
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# PORTRIAT OF POETRY IN ART

By Mohamed Pitchay Gani Bin Mohamed Abdul Aziz,  
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Images reproduced from *Petikan Rasa / Abstract of Feelings: A Collection of Poems and Paintings of Abdul Ghani Hemid*, published by Angkatan Sasterawan 50, 2005.



Modern art started with a movement that developed in stages and it was formed through interactions with various influences that shaped the world. These influences include Paul Cezanne's works which literally witnessed the breaking down of the world into various cubical forms such as the cylinder, cone and sphere. This approach led to the evolution of the 20th century movement in art, especially paintings with objects represented as geometrical shapes. Apart from this, there were also works by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Diego Velazquez and El Greco, which later inspired Pablo Picasso to propagate a contemporary piece of painting in 1907. This painting inspired by human images in various erotic and cynical perspectives was so artistically innovative that it became a trend setter and subsequently revolutionized the art of painting forever. This mesmerizing piece of painting is *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*.

In 1937, Picasso produced a monochrome based oil painting entitled *Guernica*. It portrayed horrific images of dismembered humans and animals parts arranged geometrically. Basically, one can find a human body, a cow's head or a horse leg scattered all over the painting in confusion. This horrific form of painting, as it may seem, was intentionally crafted, so much so that it remains esthetically refreshing in the eyes and minds of paintings enthusiasts. They admired the painting with bountiful of praise as being a brave form of art. It was described as the most powerful anti-war sentiments and was the centre piece for the Spanish Pavilion of the 1937 World's Fair.

Picasso's inspiration was very much influenced by his interactions with his surroundings and his own experiences in a country that was estranged with hardships, social and political turmoil as result of War. Picasso has indeed expanded the concept of cubism which is a form of art that portray an object in a particular geometric form.



**Abdul Ghani Hamid**  
Abdul Ghani Hamid is one of the authors featured in the Singapore Literary Pioneers Gallery in the National Library, Level 11.

### ABDUL GHANI HAMID THE ARTIST

Abdul Ghani Hamid is one of the earliest proponents of Pablo Picasso in this region. He is well known for his creation of a controversial art piece in 1957 which he named *Mata dan Hati* (1975), which means "Eyes and Heart". The painting drew much polemical debates which lasted for several years. It portrays a synthesis of human organs, cosmos and

animates forms transcended aesthetically into the various geometric elements of cube, cone and sphere.

Abdul Ghani is also an established pure abstract artist. One of his earlier works, *The Search* (1965) was exhibited in 14 cities in Asia together with other artists in Asia. Among his recent works produced are *Rasa I*, *Rasa II* and *Rasa III* which mean "Feeling I", "Feeling II" and "Feeling III" respectively.



*The Search*, 1965

### ABDUL GHANI HAMID THE POET

Abdul Ghani Hamid is as much a poet as he is an artist. He is also well known for his poetry which is very much associated to the environment. Abdul Ghani is able to complement the existence of colours and shapes to comprehend the environment and his inner energy. Thus, there is poetry for every painting which Abdul Ghani tried, as much as possible, to have matched in harmony.

Being the only Malay artist cum poet in Singapore, he has indeed made his presence felt in this arena by blowing the soul in his poetry into the physical forms and colours in his paintings. The discussion that follows will show how Abdul Ghani merges the two genres namely art and poetry together into a complete aesthetic form. Ultimately, the painting is no longer a splurge of colours and forms on a piece of canvas



Billet Doux, 1973

but a living nostalgia which further enhances his deepest innate feelings. The concept of colours and forms which manifest in his paintings bring much meaning to his poetry. Thus, he has produced a genre, "poetry-arts", which is fresh and meaningful.

Such feelings are portrayed in the mild form and arrangements found in the painting entitled *Billet Doux* [Love letters] (1973). It

portrays love that longs for a unprecedented response without a beautiful array of words or strong material attraction. This is skilfully reflected in the poetry entitled *Ukiran Kasih* (Carving of Love). The poetry narrates that true love especially that of a mother is not determined or limited by superficiality as reflected in the following verses:

*Not a line  
restricts  
not a reward  
considered  
no words most beautiful  
colour my reverence.  
Not a carving everlasting  
as a mother and her child.*

## THE ARTIST AND HIS WORLD

A unique artist who is conscious of his surroundings, Abdul Ghani Hamid never allows the sights of life to pass by unnoticed. The *lalang* (tall grasses) that was once a common sight in Singapore has become a symbol of inspiration for many of his creative works. He philosophised that the *lalang* is a symbol of strength, survival, confidence and focused mindset. To him, the *lalang* has all the human values that are ineffable and meaningful and they inspired him to produce more than one painting on the same subject. They are *Lalang (Green)*, *Lalang (V)*, *Lalang (Midi)*, *Lalang (IV)* and *Lalang (VI)*. One of his early *lalang* series (1980's) was exhibited in *Salon des Artistes Français*, Grand Palais, Paris.

The spirit of the *lalang* can be seen in *Lalang (V)*, where

Abdul Ghani painted two red *lalang* among a bunch of closely packed green and sometimes yellow *lalang*. This mixture of natural colours simulates the variations and excitement of the life of the *lalang*. Once in a while, some purple *lalang* appears in between the slit of the bunch of *lalang*. The bunch of the *lalang* then undergoes some form of evolution because the *lalang* no longer exists in its natural greenery but in a magnitude of shades that may lead to the *lalang* losing its roots of existence. Its upright form reflects the decision and a common aspiration of the *lalang* to move forward without a blink and being prepared to accept changes. This is beautifully expressed in his poetry entitled *Sesuatu Mengubah Segalanya* (Something Changes Everything) as in the following verse:

*A quick drastic change  
and fast, a fearless dash,  
based on time, not intelligence.  
It ends halfway.  
Sometimes, something changes everything.*

The poetry above reflects the impact of changes, due to globalisation among others, on human beings who are beginning to lose the value of life in this fast moving world, resulting in the loss of humanity.

Abdul Ghani is also very much influenced by the world around him. The nostalgic moments of his childhood residing in Jalan Hajijah at Siglap Kampung Baru, in a fisherman's home, with chirpings of birds flying over the roof, created the very sense of synthesis with the environment. The influence of the waves, winds, sky and the dried leaves scattered around his home is vividly portrayed in his paintings and poetry.

Abdul Ghani's main assets are his eyes and heart. This is proven by his latest series of photographs. The photographs taken seem to have a much more natural aesthetic value than that of a painting. The photograph entitled *Gentle Wave*, for example, describes the harshness of the wave



Lalang (V), 2000



Gentle Wave, 2003

hitting a rock. The concentrated intense white bubbles leave behind a beautifully shattered glass effect on the sea's surface. The green background soothes the eye while the darker tone of green signifies the deep waters that look upon the constant hammering of the current on the waves. This is indeed more than a picture. It is a masterpiece because it is a photograph with painting effects. Abdul Ghani's meticulous eyes and heart has brought about such a union of nature and beauty. This beauty is expertly expressed in the poetry entitled *Batu dan Ombak* (Stone and Waves) as in the following verse;

*White clear sincerity  
brought by distant waves  
submission without order  
freedom spreads everywhere.*

Abdul Ghani's works are able to portray the universe and his thoughts. Whether directly or indirectly, the paintings are a sound manifestation of the poems assigned to them.

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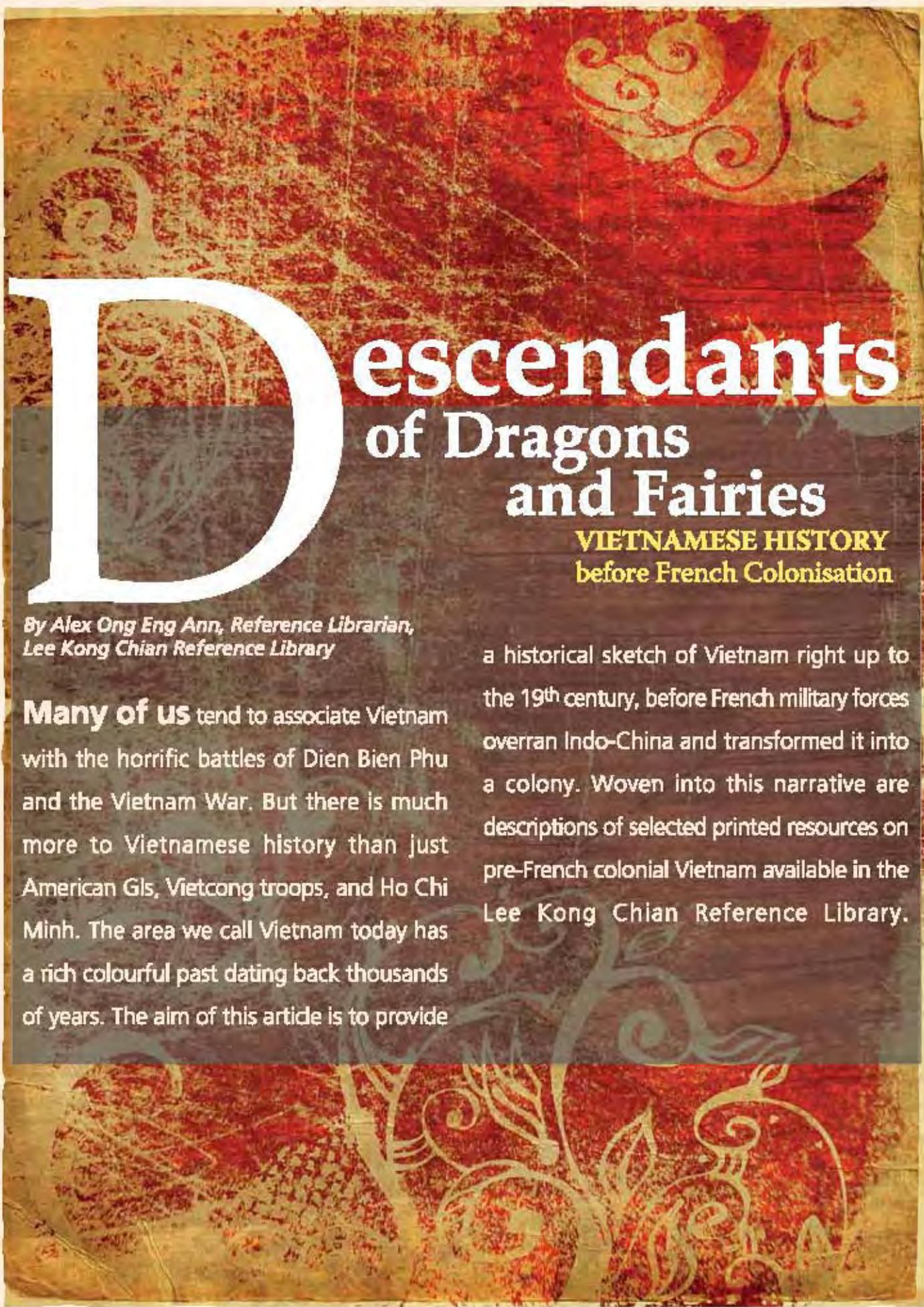
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# D escendants of Dragons and Fairies

VIETNAMESE HISTORY  
before French Colonisation

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Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

**M**any of us tend to associate Vietnam with the horrific battles of Dien Bien Phu and the Vietnam War. But there is much more to Vietnamese history than just American GIs, Vietcong troops, and Ho Chi Minh. The area we call Vietnam today has a rich colourful past dating back thousands of years. The aim of this article is to provide

a historical sketch of Vietnam right up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, before French military forces overran Indo-China and transformed it into a colony. Woven into this narrative are descriptions of selected printed resources on pre-French colonial Vietnam available in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library.

## FROM MYTH TO HISTORY

Traditionally, ethnic Vietnamese trace their ancestry back to a "royal" line known as the Hung kings (*Hung Vuong*) whom they believe ruled Van Lang, said to be Vietnam's earliest kingdom. According to Vietnamese folklore, the Hung Vuong were descendants of dragons and fairies. A sea dragon lord, known as Lac Long Quan, was said to have fathered a hundred children by a princess of the mountains, named Au Co.

It was to be a sad ending for the odd couple, however. Having come from two different worlds, they parted ultimately. Lac Long Quan returned to the watery depths with 50 of their children, while Au Co settled in an area, which is the present-day Red River Delta, with the remaining 50, one of whom became the first Hung king. The story of Lac Long Quan and Au Co has certainly become so deeply entrenched in the Vietnamese popular imagination that a shrine dedicated to them was erected in Vinh Phuc province, 50 km northwest of the modern-day Vietnamese capital of Hanoi, and is maintained to this day.

The last Hung king is said to have been overthrown by King An Duong (*An Duong Vuong*), who is, according to American historian Keith Taylor, "the first figure in Vietnamese history documented by reliable sources" (Taylor, 1983:20-21). Notwithstanding this, as pointed out also by Taylor, much of what is known about his reign is shrouded in myth. Based in his great citadel of Co-loa, he reportedly defeated the last Hung ruler and renamed the Vietnamese lands Au Lac. Legend has it that King An Duong's polity was safeguarded by a golden turtle (presumably the incarnation of Lac Long Quan), who presented one of its claws to him, which he used to make a magical crossbow. The capture of this crossbow by an enemy, as the story goes, led to his eventual downfall.



That enemy was Zhao Tuo, known to the Vietnamese as Trieu Da, an official based in what is today south China. Upon defeating King An Duong, Zhao Tuo proclaimed himself the king of Nan Yue (Nam Viet). The history of Nan Yue is discussed with great detail in Zhang Rongfang's and Huang Miao Zhang's *Nan Yue Guo Shi* (《南越國史》) (The History of the Nan Yue/Nam Viet polity). Carefully researched and rather

comprehensive in scope, this book sheds light on the different aspects of this ancient political entity, including its history, economy, society and culture. The Nan Yue polity lasted for almost a century before being destroyed by the armies of a far mightier power – China's Han dynasty.

## UNDER IMPERIAL CHINA'S GRIP

In 111 BCE, the Chinese Han dynasty invaded northern Vietnam and stayed. This event marked the beginning of imperial Chinese political presence in the area; from then until 939 CE, successive states/dynasties in China laid their claims on the northern half of Vietnam. During these 13 centuries, Chinese administrators dispatched to the area found themselves having to cope with periodic uprisings from its inhabitants. The people who led these rebellions were subsequently deified and worshipped after their deaths, while their historical acts – specifically their resistance against the Chinese – were transformed into heroic tales of 'saints' to be emulated by future generations.

The Birth of Vietnam

Keith Weller Taylor

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University of California Press, 1993

The events during this period of Chinese occupation (Bac Thuoc in Vietnamese, meaning "belonging to the North", the "North" here referring to China) constitute the bulk of historian Keith Taylor's work *The Birth of Vietnam*. His study also includes prehistoric period. Having researched meticulously into both Chinese and Vietnamese primary sources, Taylor not only brings historical characters to life in this highly detailed work, but also challenges the view of pre-10<sup>th</sup> century Vietnamese history being a mere offshoot of Chinese history. The arguments he set forth in this book seek to bring out early historic Vietnam as a somewhat unique entity that strove to preserve its identity in spite of overwhelming Chinese political and cultural influences.

## THE AGE OF EMPERORS

The key figure responsible for the release of Imperial China's grip over Vietnam was a Vietnamese general named Ngo Quyen, who in 938 CE defeated troops sent by a southern Chinese polity in a decisive battle. The showdown took place

at Bach-dang River, an estuary marking the entrance to the Red River Delta. Before the Chinese military fleet arrived, Quyen ordered his men to plant large poles with sharpened tips in the river bed. The heights of the poles were kept to just short of the water level at high tide, so that they would not be visible to the enemy as their ships sailed in. As the tide receded, the bottoms of the Chinese flotilla were ripped open by the sharp ends of the poles. Caught helplessly in the river, the Chinese troops suffered huge casualties as Ngo Quyen's own army attacked. A few months later, the general himself took the title of "King" (*vuong*).

In the spring of 939 CE, the year that marks the end of direct Chinese rule over northern Vietnam, Ngo Quyen merely proclaimed himself "King". It would be another three decades before someone went a step further to take the title of "Emperor" (*de*). That person was Dinh Bo Linh, who founded the Dinh dynasty in 968 and named his state Dai Co Viet. From then until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Vietnam would have her fair share of emperors like her northern neighbour, China.

Oscar Chapuis' *A History of Vietnam from Hong Bang to Tu Duc* provides brief but colourful sketches of these Vietnam's "Sons of Heaven", and is an excellent starter for any beginner to pre-modern Vietnamese history. Researchers who wish to plunge directly into first-hand primary archival material related

to Vietnam's early dynasties may refer to two other publications. The first, titled *Épigraphie en chinois du Vietnam*, is a joint collaboration between Vietnam's Han Nôm Institute and France's Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO). Both institutions have in their holdings a combined total of over 50,000 epigraphic material. The inscriptions found on 27 epigraphs from the Chinese occupation period to the Ly dynasty are featured in volume 1. The second resource,



Vietnamese epigraph from the 12<sup>th</sup> century

Reproduced from *Épigraphie en chinois du Vietnam De l'occupation chinoise à la dynastie des Ly*

*Yuenan Shilun: Jinshi Zile Zhi Lishi Wenhua Bijiao* (越南史论: 金石资料历史文化比较) (Essays on Vietnamese History and Culture Based on Epigraphic Materials) is a collection of analytical essays on the Ly and Tran dynasties, based on epigraphic sources from the two dynasties.

Vietnamese rulers were well aware that China's monarchs would continue to keep a close watch on them, and while Chinese rule had been successfully repelled, it could return. Therefore, some form of diplomatic relationship had to be established, and the Vietnamese monarchs did so by dispatching envoys to China. The arrangement, commonly known as the tribute system, was vastly different from what was practised between nation-states. From Imperial China's point of view, the relationship was to be an unequal one; in her eyes, she was the suzerain, and Vietnam a vassal. Vietnam was to pay tribute to China.

Liam C. Kelley's *Beyond the Bronze Pillars: Envoy Poetry and the Sino-Vietnamese Relationship* looks at this relationship through the poems of the Vietnamese envoys. The conclusions he draws in his book are a refreshing departure from the convention – that the Vietnamese always strove to assert

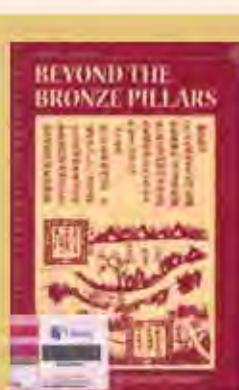
their cultural distinctiveness and political equality vis-à-vis the Chinese. Contrary to this belief, Kelley argues that at least from the perspective of the Vietnamese envoys, there was "a profound identification with the cultural world which found its center at the Chinese capital" as well as an acceptance of "their kingdom's political subservience in that same world" (Kelley 2005:2).



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EFEO/Han Nôm Institute, 1998



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University of Hawaii Press, 2005

The dynasties that were to follow the Dinh were the Ly (1009 – 1225), Tran (1225 – 1400) and Ho (1400 – 1407). China under the Ming dynasty succeeded in conquering northern Vietnam in 1407 but its occupation lasted only two decades. In 1427, after the Ming decided to pull out of northern Vietnam, the monarchical system was restored under the Le dynasty. This dynasty reached its apogee during the reign of Le Thanh Tong (r. 1460 – 1497), who successfully expanded the Vietnamese empire southwards into the territories of its southern neighbour – a polity known as Champa.



**Cham Tower**

Reproduced from *The Champa Kingdom: The History of an Extinct Vietnamese Culture*

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White Lotus Press, 2002

## CHAMPA

It is difficult to ignore the discussion on the polity of Champa when one talks about the history of Vietnam. Occupying the central coast of what is modern-day Vietnam, what can be known of Champa is essentially based upon evidence drawn from inscriptions as well as Chinese sources. The Cham people are ethnolinguistically Malay and their culture was subjected to a great degree of Indian influence.

Champa's relationship with its northern neighbour dated back many centuries. Historians have reconstructed interesting histories of inter-marriages and warfare taking place between the two polities over the centuries. One episode tells of how a Vietnamese princess, who was married off to a Cham ruler, was coerced to throw herself on her husband's funeral pyre after his death – a practice attuned to Hindu tradition. The Vietnamese were not prepared to see their princess go up in flames, so they sent an army to rescue her. The rescue attempt was successful, but relations between the two polities worsened as a result. As for the princess, after a brief fling with a Vietnamese intellectual, she ultimately opted for a reclusive life as a Buddhist nun.

A seminal work on Champa is that by the late French historian Georges Maspéro, and an English translation of the French text has been made available by Thailand's White Lotus Press. Entitled *The Champa Kingdom: The History of an Extinct Vietnamese Culture*, the book traces the history of the Cham from its beginnings to its final destruction in 1471, when Vietnamese armies sent by Le Thanh Tong overran the Cham capital of Vijaya. Thereafter, Champa was incorporated permanently as part of Vietnamese territory.

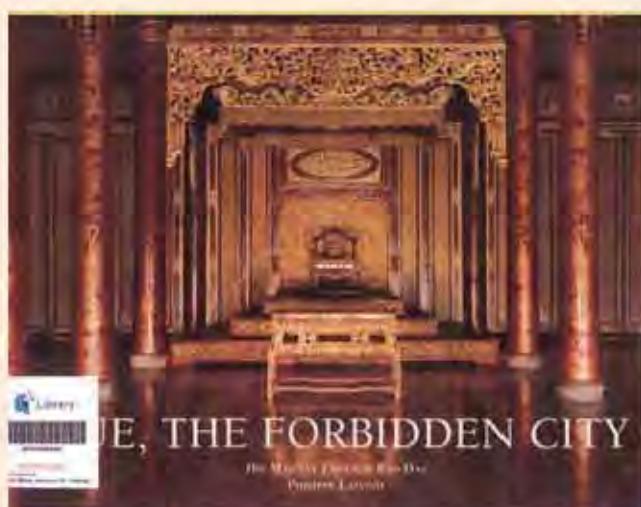
## LATE IMPERIAL VIETNAM: DIVISION AND REUNIFICATION

By the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Le dynasty had weakened to such an extent that it fell victim to a usurper. In 1527, an official named Mac Dang Dung arranged the death of the reigning monarch Le Cung Hoang, and proclaimed himself emperor of a new dynasty and occupying the Le capital of Thang-long (modern-day Hanoi). After this debacle, surviving members of the Le enlisted the help of a powerful warlord named Trinh Kiem to restore their dynasty. In 1592, they finally succeeded in driving the Mac out of Thang-long. However, the Le found

themselves at the mercy of Trinh Kiem's successors, who became known as the 'Trinh Lords'. The latter were the actual power holders.

The Trinh never managed to capture the southern part of Vietnam (formerly Cham territory); this came under the control of yet another powerful family the Nguyen. At first, the Nguyen and the Trinh had cooperated with each other against a common enemy the Mac. However, once the Mac had been driven out, both became rivals. Vietnam had in fact been divided into two, though both warlord families acknowledged the legitimacy of the puppet Le government.

Under the Nguyen, Vietnam's southern border was extended even further, this time all the way to the Mekong Delta, seized from the Cambodian kingdom of Angkor during the late seventeenth century. Li Tana's book, *Nguyen Cochinchina: Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* is an in-depth study of the economy and society of south Vietnam under the Nguyen regime. She begins her analysis with an examination of the demographics of the territory and of the ways the Nguyen lords impacted upon the settlers there. Li does not simply focus on the indigenous aspects of the area, but also looks at the contributions made by foreign merchants (Chinese, Europeans and Japanese) towards its economy.



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## **Vietnamese Source Materials concerning The 1827 Conflict between the Court of Siam and the Lao Principalities**

Vol. I

## Introduction, Translation, Han-nom Text



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Studies for Unesco, the Toyo Bunko, 2001

The period of territorial division was ended by what became known as the Tay Son movement, which took place in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1771, three brothers from the village of Tay Son raised the banner of revolt against the Nguyen. They managed to overthrow the latter in 1785, and next advanced northwards onto Thang-long, the seat of government and the stronghold of the Trinh. By 1786, all of Vietnam was practically theirs, and two years later, Nguyen Hue, the eldest brother, ascended the throne as Emperor Quang Trung. The last Le ruler fled to China, and appealed to the Manchu emperor Qianlong to send an expedition into Vietnam to restore him to the throne. Qianlong did send his armies into Vietnam, but his troops were badly defeated by the Tay Son soldiers. The Le dynasty had come to an end.

The Tay Son dynasty itself was short-lived; it began to crumble after Nguyen Hue's sudden death in 1792. In 1802, Nguyen Anh, the last surviving member of the Nguyen house who had seized control of the south, marched his troops northwards and captured Thang-long. Four years later, he proclaimed himself Emperor Gia Long and changed the dynastic name to Nguyen; it was to be Vietnam's last dynasty.

There are a few titles about the Nguyen dynasty (1802 – 1945) in the Library, and two will be mentioned here. The first, entitled *Hue, The Forbidden City* is an enticing pictorial spread on the dynasty's imperial capital situated in central Vietnam. Compiled by Bao Dai, Vietnam's last emperor, and French photographer Philippe Lafond, this work is a good blend of colourful photographs and well-researched text. The second, a two-volume series, *Vietnamese Source Materials Concerning the 1827 Conflict between the Court of Siam and the Lao Principalities*, contains English translated Vietnamese primary documents related to a war that erupted between Laos and Siam in which Vietnam was deeply involved. The documents not only provide some insight into the workings of Nguyen foreign policy, but also give readers a sense of the geopolitical dynamics in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century mainland Southeast Asia.

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Call no.: RSEA 959.7 CHA

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Call no.: R/RSEA 959.7 GHL

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Call no.: RSEA 959.703 LAF

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Call no.: R 303.4825970510903 KEL

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Call no.: RSEA 959.703 LI

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Call no.: RSEA 959.703 MAS

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Call no.: RSEA 959.403 VIE

**Phan Van Cac & Salmon, Claudine (Eds.). (1998). *Épigraphie en Chinois du Vietnam De l'occupation chinoise à la dynastie des Ly* (Chinese title: 《越南汉喃铭文汇编第一集: 北属时期至李朝》).** (Vol. 1). Hanoi & Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient & Han Nom Institute.  
Call no.: RSEA 959.703 YNH

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Call no.: RCLOS 959.703 TAY

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Call no.: R 951.27 ZRF



# தமிழ்த் திரை உலகம்

## ஒரு பார்வை

**By Sundari Balasubramaniam, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library**

பால திருத் பகவத்யூரை வழங்கிறார்டு. வாற்றம் செய்திருக்க தமிழ்க் கல்லூரிக் குழுமம்பகுதி, புதுவையில் ஜியல் நிலை போக போக்குறவு வளர்க்கிறது. இவ்வாறு எடுத்திருக்க வேண்டும் என்றும் கொன்றும் ஜியல் நிலை போக போக்குறவு வளர்க்கிறது. இதை அங்கு விடுதலை, சின்மூர், புதுவை, இரசை அமை யூரோபியன் கேரளமுனிப்பூர்டை.

**சின்னிமாவின் கோர்டும், வார்க்கி**

இனிப்பதை முற்றால் குவாக்டூஸ் போன்ற தெருப்பாலை நம்பியுமிருந்து சென்று விட்டது. 1895இக் காலமிலே சௌகார்யத்தைப் பொறுத்திருப்பதை, சாங்கிலை, இருந்து அதன்குணர்ச் செல்லுவதை எழுநிட்டது. 1897 ம் ஆண்டு ஏவைச்சு என்ற அம்மிலோய் சென்னையில் புதும் சொல்லப்பட என்றெண் தெருமிலை கட்டினார். இதை

ஒன்றை முன் விடுவதோடு கூடிய செயல்களை நடத்தி வருகின்றன. இதைப் பற்றிக் கடினமாக நிர்ணயித்து வருகின்றன.

1931 ல் கடுமை பூத தமிழ் செல்லாக  
விடுதலை விட்டதாக ஒரு புதிய நாளைக் குறித்துமிகு,  
ஏனைத் தினாவில்லை என்று நிர்ணயித்து விட்டு தினாவில்லை  
என்றுக்கு அப்பாறை இருப்பது என்றும். அது அதை அழிமல்  
இழுதுகிறதற்காகவும், வெளியிட்டிருக்கவிடுமாற் கொடுமையாக  
இருக்கும். தமிழ் மூன்றாவது நாளைக் குறித்து அவைகள் அவைகள் போன்று செல்ல விரும்பி வருகின்றன என்றும் அறிமுகம் பெற்று வருகின்றன என்றும் கூறுகின்றன.  
அழிமல் நியாயம் செல்கிற நிலையிலிருக்கும். செல்ல விரும்பு  
கிறதற்கும் பொருளை விடுதலையாற் குறைக்கவேண்டும் என்றும்,  
ஏ. ஏ. நிதிவிஜய, எஸ். ஏ. வி. விஜயகிருஷ்ணன் போன்ற வெளியிடும்  
வேறு விவரங்களை விடுதலை.

காலனியூ டி. கவுண்டினிங் 'பிரத்தி' ஏம்பிளீஸ் திட்டங்களைப் படிக்கவும் விஷயங்கள் ஆரோக்கியீடு மீண்டும் பெரிய மற்றும் கூடிய செயல்களைத் தாங்கிகள் தொடர்ந்துபட்டு வருவதை அறிக்கெடுத்துவிட்டன.

இன்றைய விதிவிளைவு முதல் பார்த்துமே ஏற்று, இந்து சிரியாகின் சிறப்பு மன்றத்தில் அதோடு வழங்க விரும்புகிற என்பதை விட்டு நிதியாக உள்ளது என்று கூறுகிறார்கள்.

மனு எனவே பிறகு அம்முடுகளைச் சொல்ல விரும்பும் நிலை தீவிரமாக மாறுபடுகிறது என்று கணக்காக அறியப்படுகிறது. மூன்றாவது வருடம் வரை, அழற்னார்த்தானாக அழுவதினால், மனு மல்லிவசன், தீவிர மாறுபடுத்தும் வழிமூலம் என்று என்ற அளவிலே உற்பத்துக்குமிட்டுத் தெருவிலிருந்து விடுகிறது என்று கணக்காக அறியப்படுகிறது.

கிளார் கனமென்டி விவரம் மற்றும் விவரத்தில்:



அடுத் தொடர்ச்  
கி கு வி ஈ வி கு  
கி வி ம த வி கு  
உவை (2004),  
கிளிமானிஸ் ஆராபோன்ட்ரீஸ்கிலிக் இழுது மாற்றுவதை  
இல்லை என்று பதி பிரச்சினை என்று பிற்றி மால்டு அமீர்தான்ட்ரெக்டிவிஸ்ட்ராடு. காலோஷ்டெலை  
ஏடு நிய கிளிமாஸ் எஞ்சினியர் இயங்கும் (2002),  
கிளிமானைய் பிற்றி ஒக்டோபாத் கூப்பிரெக்டென்ட் என்றும்  
பிரிசினையும், கிளிமானிஸ் கலை மாற்றுவதை ஆற்று  
நிற்கும் நியங்களுடைய கிளிமாஸ் மாற்றுவதை ஏடுப் பிற்றிக்  
நியங்களுடைய மாற்றுவதை மாற்றுவதை ஏடுப் பிற்றிக்  
நியங்களுடைய மாற்றுவதை ஏடுப் பிற்றிக் கிளிமானை ஏடு  
பிற்றிக் கிளிமானை (2003). இந்தாற்றுப் பாராக்டர்க்குத்  
நியங்களுடைய மாற்றுவதை ஏடுப் பிற்றிக் கிளிமானை ஏடுப் பிற்றிக்

கிருஷ்ண பிள்ளை

விவரங்கள் பின்னால் சிறிமானில் வாழ்க்கையில் குடும்ப மக்கள் தங்க இயல்லாதது, தாயறிப்பான்தான், இன்றையப்பான்தான், பொன்னியின்பான், பொதுமீன் என பெயரிட அப்பகுதை இயல்லாதது, அவர்களின் நாட்டுவைகள் என ஒரு நாவைகளை கொண்டு புத்தகமாக இயலும் என்பதைப் பிரச்சினா. முனிஸிபல்கள் ஏழுதிய ஏ.ஏ.ஏ.பி., என்க பார்லெமெண்ட் (2002) தயாரிப்பது துறைமுக ஜெஃப்ரீயூன் போன், திடு ஏ.ஏ.ஏ.பி. எனும் மாசுமையைப் பற்றிய தெருநிலை. தமிழ்நாட்டின் தயாரிப்பான்தான் புத்தகமாக பார்த்து அம்பிளிகேஷன் அமைச்சரத்து கலெக்டரியில் பதிக்கப்பட்டுள்ள கொடுக்கும் உதவியாகவும் அவர்களுடைய கொடுப்பதற்கான முனிசிபல் தொழிலாளர் இரு தலை வாழ்வதற்கு அவர்களும் ஒரு பேர்மீன் என்றன. 1913இல் இருந்து இன்று வரை தொழில்துறை மாநிலத் தயாரிப்பான்தான் வாழ்க்கை என்றாலும், பொது தலைவர்கள் தமிழ்நாட்டின் தயாரிப்பான்தான் என்றாலும் (1993) என்ற தலைவர்கள் 2 பாகுமாகத்



தொகுத்திடமாற்றி. இதேபோல் முழுச்செய்தியின் கமிழ்த் திடைப்பட இயக்கியுள்ள (2003), திடை உடனில் 70 அட்டிக்கூரை விரும்புவதில் நித்தி மாங்கான இயக்கிய தியாக்குமினில் விரும்புவதை விட எத்தனை திடைக்குக்கீழ் அமைக்க விட அரியும் அங்கமான (2001), முதல் விதையில் பெட்டுவைக் கட்டுதலை சிராமிக்கிறது. சிராமிக்கும் முன் ஜெத்துவம் (2000) கிட அங்கேயும் மேற்கொண்டிருக்கிறது என அறிவுறுத்து, இதே பார்லிமெண்ட் சிராமிக்கும் கட்டுதலை கிடுக்கின்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

## கிளாப் புதை பற்றிய தகவல்கள்

தமிழ்நாட்டு அரசின் விதியை செய்து பண்ணவேண்டும் என அறிய முலைகளை ஏற்றுவதை அதைவிடப் பற்றிப் பல்கலைக் கழகத்துக்கூடம் பிரதிநிடி செய்துள்ளது. இதை அறியும்போதும் பல்கலைக் கழகம், அதில் உயிர்வாய்கள், துறையினராய்கள், கலையாரர்கள், இசையாலையினர்கள், பாடசாலைகள், நூல்களைப்படிப்பதற்கு, பாலை முதலாய்வைக் கிடையும்போதும் அதைப்பற்றி விட வேண்டும்.

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தினாற்போல் மாதங்களுக்கு என்றாலும்போல் மக்களினை வே  
பேற்று வழங்கிப் பட்டார்ய். சிரமங்களை விரைவில்  
கிடப்பாட்டங்கள் கொடுவதில்லை என்றால் ஆறு  
பதின்மூன்துமிகு நிலை. இவ்வகைப் பாதிக்கும் பாதை விரைவில்  
கிடத்துகிற நால்களுக்கு மூன் பாதையைக் கொண்டு.

இனிப்பால் பூபுதையில் இரண்டாற் கிடுப்பெறும் கனிக்கங்கள் பாரி, மூவிழால் படித்தாம் விரோப்பத்தின் பொதுத்தமாக இடம்பெறும் சூழ்நிலையை, இந்தியாவின் மீது கூறுகிறதோ.

பொதுச் சூழ்நிலை பூபுதை மூன்றாம் (2000) முதல் 1930 ல் ஜிரி சூடுமீ அதிகரித்து ஏற்படும் அவரின் மூல காரண வரையானது படித்துப்போன மூன்றாம் மீது கூறுகிறதோ.

கனிக்கங்களின் மூல படித்துப் படித்து அறிவோம். எ. ஏழூஸ் எடுத்த மூலத்திற்கு தெரியும் அவைகளுக்கிடையில் குறை இருக்கிறதோ (2002), மக்கு அவரின் கனிகங்களை இருக்கிற வகுக்கூடு அறிவுபெறுகிறதோ.



பல கணர் போன்றும் நிறுத்தியிருந்து. மாற்றுப் பாகங்களை வெளிவிடுவது இடியாக நிலை அம்மாற்றுகிறது, எனின் இனி அம்மாற்றுகிறது போன்ற சிறையில்.

எனவே வித்துறையினர் எஸ்பாஸ்கீஸ் தீர்மானம் படித்தன (2002), முன்று அதைப் பிரிசனால்டோங் குடும்பத்தையும் அமிழுக்கைப் பிரதமின்றது. இவற்றைப் படித்தன அதனால் தென்யூப்பானில் இல்லாய்க்கப்படாத, வைனைக்ட்டாக்கும்படி கொண்டு அம்பாதான் ஏந்து கூறுவதும். அத்துவதை அடிக்காலை, கால்சியம் அடிக்காலை, அம்பாய்க்காலை அம்பிய தமிழில் கூறுவது இயற்றியுள்ளது. அவ்வுடல்வாய்மில் நீங் இகைப் படித்தன (2005), செ. ஆவாய்க்குழிநில் மக்கள் கவுன்றி படித்துவிட்டு விடுபட்டன (2003), புதுக்காலையில் தீர்மானமில் தீர்மானம் மட்டுக்காலையில் தீர்மானம் எடுக்கப்பட்டன (2003), கொண்டு கொட்டுக் கொட்டுத் தீவாச தீர்மானம் எடுக்கப்பட்டன (2000), கூடுதல் குத்துக்கை மக்களின் மனதில் நின்ற இப்பு பிரத்து அபிவிருத்தைப் படித்தனவின் கோர்மூலம்.

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ஏது வகையில் சிபாஜிக்ஸெஸ்டிள் என்று அழைகின்ற (2002) ஒரு நிறை வகையிலீடு சம்பந்தமாக அமைக்கப்பட்டது. வாழ்க்கையில் தாம் எந்தொ போட்டப்படவான், வேற்றி ஓரளவில், இல்லை, மனப்பகல் இல்லை என தகவல்கள் யிருப்பவைகளுக்கு அதிகமானதாக விவரிக்கப்படுகிறது. இந்தக்குறிப் பல அரிசிகளினாலும் நிறைவேண்டும் என்று உரிமையில் சொல்கிற விவரங்கள் எடுத்து வரப்படுவது

**மது:** கேரளத்தின் மற்றொரு வகையும் (2001), கன்ஸபாஸி என். கெ. பாரதனினிடம் எங்கள் கணக்கிலேயும், பிரத்யாரங்கள் எழுதிய திடைப்புதை போட்டு பதில்படுத்த கே.பி. அந்தாக்கிருச (2002), சிவகுமாரன் திடை பிரத்யாரங்கள் அல்ல (2004) எழுப்ப கார்த்திகாரன், புதினிகாந்த சுரைஞர்ஜித் திடையும் எங்கள் கணக்கில் உள்ளது.



విషయాల పేరు మానవశిక్ష గ్రంథాలయ విషయాలిస్టులు

<sup>20</sup> Guru சிவர் பூஷாத்திர தமிழக தொகுப்பில் முதல் அனுபவித் திருத்தங்கள் தெரியுமானால் தெரியும். அவற்றில் தமிழ் தொகுப்பினாலேயுள்ள முதலில் திருத்தங்கள் இல்லையானால் தான் தெரியும், [aswath@jaadr.com](mailto:aswath@jaadr.com), மாணவர்கள் என உருபு நிலையில் பார்வையிட வேண்டும் என்று நம் தீர்மானமாகிறது.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOODCUTS IN SINGAPORE

By Foo Kwee Horng,  
Koh Nguang How  
and Lim Cheng Tju



Back in 1966, six local woodcut artists held their first group show in the National Library at Stamford Road. Now, 40 years later, works by the same artists are being celebrated again in an anniversary exhibition at the new National Library building this October. This article introduces the art of woodcut printmaking: what is a woodcut, its history and practice as an art form in Singapore, the year 1966, and the library's place among this all.

## PRE WAR YEARS



Wenman Jie, the Nanyang Siang Pao's art supplement first issued in 1936

All rights reserved, Nanyang Siang Pao, 1936

The practice of woodcuts (also known as woodblock prints), as an artistic medium, by our local artists could date back to the 1930s. As early as then, Chinese immigrant artists had held posts as teachers for the local Chinese schools and editors of the main Chinese daily newspapers like *Nanyang Siang Pao* (NYSP) and *Sin Chew Jit Poh*. Followed by the setting up of the Society of Chinese Artists in 1936 and the establishing of the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) in

1938, the art form was actively and systematically promoted. The main vehicle for the promotion of woodcuts was the Chinese newspapers.

NYSP started its first art supplement, *Wenman Jie*, from May to December 1936 and later *Jinri Yishu* from January to August 1937. During that period, readers of NYSP were exposed not only to woodcut images but also to articles related to the art form. The development of this medium mirrored China's Modern Woodcut Movement, with Lu Xun being its chief promoter from 1929 till his death in 1936. The works of the German expressionist artist Käthe Kollwitz and the Belgian artist Frans Masereel, which were avidly

introduced by Lu Xun, were often reproduced here. On top of that, a series of articles aimed at introducing the new art form in a systematic way was also published. The articles involved the discussion of the appropriateness and the objectiveness in the portrayal of scenes and events, the basic understanding of the purpose of the medium in highlighting the plight of the people in the lower strata of society and, of course, on the techniques and materials involved.



Tai In Long, *Rise*, woodcut print. Reproduced from Nanyang Siang Pao, June 7th, 1936

All rights reserved, Nanyang Siang Pao, 1936

By mid-1937, woodcuts moved beyond newspapers and into exhibition halls. Numerous exhibitions were held to promote the arts and later as fund-raising events for the war efforts back in China. Woodcuts became an acceptable artistic medium, exhibited alongside the more established mediums such as ink painting, photographic works and cartoons. In the new academic year starting July 1940, a woodcut lecturer was even included in the teaching staff list of NAFA (NYSP, 31 July 1940). This clearly signified the importance of the art form during that era and how through the concerted efforts of many, provided the hotbed for a quick resurgence of the practice of the woodcut medium in the post war years.

## POST WAR YEARS

In the 'Foreword' of NAFA's *Resumption of Classes Anniversary Magazine* a year after the departure of the Japanese, it was mentioned that amongst the school's student societies, there was one that focused on the study of woodcuts (and cartoons). It went on to say that the members had produced works of considerable standards but unfortunately they were destroyed before the Occupation. While the works were lost, the skills were not. Many Chinese publications featured woodcuts produced by local artists, albeit with pseudonyms. This was necessary because the artists commented on the social and political climate of the country and that inevitably brought about the heavy censorship of the colonial government.

One such publication was 1953's *Qing Nian Hua Ji* (loosely translated as Youth Art Series). The publication featured mainly woodcuts plus oil paintings and charcoal drawings. It was edited by Chao Keng Kwang. All the artists in the publication used pseudonyms except for Chieu Shuey Fook. The other significant publication featuring woodcuts in the 1950s was 1955's *Xinma Muman Xuanji* (Selection of Woodcuts and Cartoons by Singapore and Malayan Artists)



edited by Ho Kah Leong and cartoonist Ong Shih Cheng (pen-name – Ong Yih). The woodcut section of the book was edited by Ho while Ong selected the cartoons. One thousand copies of the book was printed and sold at \$1. According to Ho, it sold very well. Ho incidentally became a PAP Member of Parliament later and, upon retirement from politics, was also the principal of his alma mater, NAFA.

Apart from these, there were also many literary publications, for example *Geng Yun*, that featured woodcut on their cover pages. While magazines such as *Shi Dai Bao* featured written articles that promoted independence and woodcuts and cartoons satirising the local political climate, not all publications



Tan Tee Chie, *Gossip*, 1962, woodcut print  
Reproduced from Selected Wood-cuts by Tan Tee Chie  
All rights reserved, NAFA, 1975

were of that nature. Others like *Jiao Feng* were purely literary in its contents and had featured woodcuts by Ho Kah Leong among others that depicted the people and scenery of the region.

Perhaps in a move to realign the medium as a pure artistic expression rather than a tool of revolution, brought about by the influence of the Modern Chinese Woodcut movement advocated by Lu Xun in the 1930s, more and more artists began to capture still life and sceneries through their woodcuts. This also meant that the works were shown alongside those of other mediums in exhibition halls. One such exhibition was the Malaysia Art Exhibition of 1962 at the Victoria Memorial Hall. Amongst the many artists who participated, at least two featured their woodcuts. Lim Mu Hue showed his *Back Stage* and *Weaving* while Tan Tee Chie showed three, namely, *Trengganu Sea*, *Birds Shop* and *Gossip*.

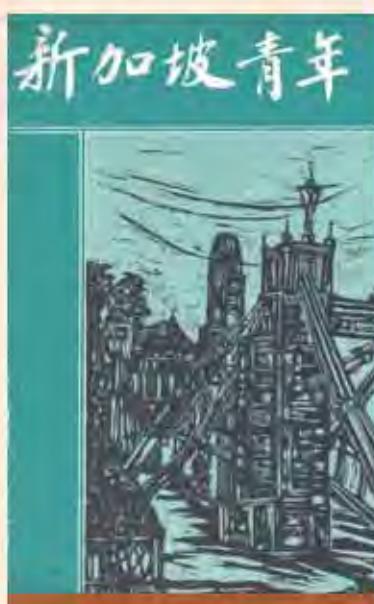
Finally on 14 October 1966 at the former National Library Lecture Hall, an exhibition dedicated solely to woodcuts was staged. The artists, good friends who studied and later taught at NAFA, Choo Keng Kwang, Foo Chee San, Lim Yew Kuan, Lim Mu Hue, See Cheen Tee and Tan Tee Chie, named their show *Woodcuts*. With a combined showing of 95 pieces of prints, the exhibition was opened by then Minister of State for Culture, Mr Lee Khoon Choy. The show was on till 18 October.

The exhibition also travelled to Malaysia. It was exhibited at the Pachui Art Gallery (opened by Chuang Kim Siew, a NAFA classmate of Lim Mu Hue) at the AIA Building in Kuala Lumpur between 12 – 17 December that year. The opening was officiated by the Singapore High Commissioner to Malaysia, Mr Lien Ying Chow. Given the tension between Singapore and Malaysia immediately after the separation just a year earlier, such cultural 'diplomacy' showed that the arts was still able to connect the people of the two territories.

Perhaps the cultural imagining then was still that of *xinma yijia*. (Singapore and Malaysia was still one family). In all, 86 pieces were shown at the KL show and according to See Ye Wah, See Cheen Tee's daughter, they sold well.

However, the 1966 woodcut show marked the end of an era. Ironically, it was the first and the last of its kind in Singapore. Of the six artists, See Cheen Tee passed away in 1996. Though the medium was still being practised to a certain extent, local artists perhaps never really saw a need for another exhibition of woodcut prints.

## WOODCUTS IN SINGAPORE AFTER 1966



Cover of the publication *Xing Jia Bo Qing Nian*, June 1973 issue, featuring a woodcut print of Anderson Bridge by Foo Chee San  
All rights reserved, Hua Wen Zhong Xue Jiao Shi Hui, 1972

Woodcuts was popular in the post war years because the medium was suitable for the publication of black and white artwork in the newspapers. It was also a good way for artists to make extra 'pocket money' by contributing woodblock prints to the press for publication, much like some artists dabbling in cartooning and caricatures then. But with the improvement of printing technology which enabled newspapers to publish in colour, woodblock prints declined in popularity among newspapers editors and

artists. It was no longer 'lucrative' to do woodcuts as that outlet for publication in the newspapers ceased.

Not many artists were keen to follow up with doing woodblock prints in colour as it became too labour intensive and difficult. Only a few artists like See Cheen Tee, Lee Boon Wang and Tan Tee Chie excelled in this new development of the medium. The wood used for the medium was also getting hard to find in Singapore.

In a bid to support the practice of the woodcut medium, the Singapore Chinese Teachers' Association's publication, *Xing Jia Bo Qing Nian* (Singapore Ching Lien or Youths of Singapore) featured a woodcut print on every of its cover

for the first 30 issues or so since its inception from April 1973. Most of the works were by the six artists and with others from founding editor Ho Kah Leong, Ng Yat Chuan (Huang Yiquan), Qiu Gao Peng and some of Qiu's students from Hua Yi Secondary school. The publication continued till 2003, but from the 1990s, the prints it featured in its pages were mainly from China. Its last editor was Yeap Chong Leng.

From the 1970s to the late 1980s, woodcut was a rather popular choice for many art students of secondary schools and junior colleges as a medium for their examination art project. Publications such as *Banhua Shijie* (Print World) and *Banhua Yishu* (Print Art) from China were readily available as reference materials. However, it was the *Selected Woodcuts by Tan Tee Chie* published by NAFA in May 1975 that gave Singapore its first and only book on woodcuts by a local artist.

While the focus on woodcuts dwindled, printmaking as a medium did not. The Contemporary Printmaking Association was formed in 1979 to promote printmaking (which included etching, lithography, silk screen and etc.) as an art form. The Association also regularly organised local and international shows. The awareness of printmaking was given a further boost when La Salle School of the Arts offered printmaking as one of the major areas of study in the mid-1980s. In 1998, the Association changed its name to Printmaking Society (Singapore). The year also marked a significant showing of woodcuts again after a very long absence since the 1966 show when the Society co-organised with the Singapore History Museum the exhibition, 'History through Prints: Woodblock Prints in Singapore'. The exhibition brought together the many outstanding works of our post war woodcut practitioners, rekindling many old memories and igniting the interest of a younger generation in this almost forgotten medium.

The new millennium saw a smaller scale woodcut exhibition, *Singapore In Prints: 1950s to 1960s – A Historical Narrative Through Woodblock Prints*, held at the National University of Singapore Museum in 2002. Earlier this year, Lim Mu Hue held a solo exhibition of woodcut works, entitled *Woodcut Prints* at the Halnan Clan Association, which also saw the publication of a catalogue of the same name.

*Imprints of the Past: Remembering the 1966 Woodcut Show* commences on 14 October 2006 and is located at Level 8, National Library.



Lim Yew Kuan, Choo Keng Kwang, Foo Chee San, See Cheen Tee, Tan Tee Chie and Lim Mu Hue, *Seascape*, 1966, woodcut print  
Image courtesy of artist

## MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

By Foo Kwee Horng

Woodcuts or woodblock printing is an animated art form. A complex story could be made dear at first glance within the borders of the print and actions of real life could be clearly shown. The process to convey the story and actions depends on the wood and the cutting tools.

The wood used to produce most of the prints in the 1950s to the early 1960s was the Chinese littleleaf boxwood (huang yang mu). Obtainable from bookstores like Shanghai Book Company and Chung Hwa Book Company, it was rather costly but the boxwood block nevertheless was the preferred material in allowing the artists to make intricate cuts without chipping the wood. As the blocks were about one to two centimetres thick and very sturdy, many artists actually carved on both sides of the block while some were said to have planed the whole surface away to begin on another image.

Carving tools were also not easily available then; hence artists had to either order them from abroad or make the necessary tools themselves. The v-groove and round knives in particular were converted from the spikes of umbrellas.

As for the prints, they were primed using oil-based ink applied onto the blocks with a brayer then transferred onto mulberry paper (xuan paper). This was done by rubbing the reverse of the paper with a baren. In this way, the inked image was transferred to the paper. The unavailability of boxwood from China due to the Cold War from the mid-1960s forced the woodcut artists to seek alternative materials. It was also during that time when Thai artist, Praphan Srisouta, exhibited his prints in Singapore in 1962. The Thai artist's use of the masonite board was perhaps a contributing factor in freeing our woodcut artists from the limitation of the small sized boxwood blocks. The masonite board was eventually used to produce the large 77 x 122 cm piece entitled *Seascape* in 1966 by the combined efforts of Lim Yew Kuan, Choo Keng Kwang, Foo Chee San, See Cheen Tee, Tan Tee Chie, and Lim Mu Hue.

## 1966: THE YEAR THAT WAS

By Lim Cheng Tju

In 1966, Singapore celebrated its first National Day. Just a few days before that, it joined the IMF and World Bank on 3rd August. The late S. Rajaratnam wrote the National Pledge and in October that year, Chia Thye Poh, a Member of Parliament (MP) for the Barisan Sosialis, was arrested under the Internal Security Act and was accused of being a communist. The other MPs of Barisan Sosialis, protesting against Singapore's "phony" independence, resigned their seats and walked out of Parliament, deciding to take politics out to the streets by boycotting the by-elections held that year. In the international front, it marked the official conclusion of Konfrontasi as Singapore resumed diplomatic relations with Indonesia and it also marked the end of a chapter for the Chinese in Singapore who suffered during the Japanese Occupation as on 25 October, Japan agreed to pay \$50m in compensation, half as a grant and the other half as a loan. The Singapore government accepted the offer.

It was against such a backdrop that the 6-men woodcut show was exhibited at the old National Library along Stamford Road from 14th to 18th October. The image and reputation of woodcut artists in the 1950s had been one of the politicised left, a role that the new state of Singapore did not want the arts to play. Interestingly, when asked why other artists who did woodcuts were not invited to participate in the exhibition, it was revealed that it was intentional of the 6-men woodcut show to be apolitical, as compared to the works of other arts groups like the Equator Art Society. Some of the works in the show reflected the social conditions of the times, but it was generally supportive of the direction the new nation would take in terms of socio-economic development. Another little known fact of the 6-men woodcut show was that it was held as a result of an earlier fund raising arts exhibition for the National Theatre Trust, which involved the artists.

## THE NATIONAL LIBRARY: SUPPORTING THE VISUAL ARTS

By Alicia Yeo, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

The National Library is not just a place for books; it has remained a loyal supporter of the visual arts scene, even since its beginnings as the Raffles Library in the 1950s. Several local art activities and exhibitions, much like the woodcut show of 1966, were held at the library's Stamford Road building in the 1960s and 70s. It was a popular space for artists to display their works, usually either at the library's lecture hall or the foyer. This was perhaps because there were few avenues for the public display of art in Singapore back then. Besides the library, the British Council offered alternative gallery space. Meanwhile, the National Museum Art Gallery would appear only much later in 1976.



Students viewing local art displayed at the library's foyer in 1970

Collection of the National Library Picture Archive

Some local artists, now famous, who chose the library as the place to hold their first solo shows include: Anthony Poon (1963), Ng Eng Teng (1970), Goh Beng Kwan (1971) and Tan Swee Hian (1973). The Modern Art Society and Singapore Art Society had also organised exhibitions at the library during this period. And many may not realise that Singapore's first sculpture show was held at the library in 1967.

One particularly prominent display back in the 1960s was the Photographic Society of Singapore's 14th International Salon of Photography exhibition, which was held in May 1963 and was officiated by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Another memorable event was the launch of the Visionary Architecture and Housing In Singapore exhibition, organised by the Housing Development Board and the Museum of Modern Art New York in March 1963, which attracted much public attention.

The library's tradition of arts support continues today, with the many art exhibitions and activities going on at the new National Library. Some examples include the recent June exhibition of sculpture by the Sculpture Society (Singapore), the Raffles Design Institute's graduation show, and the contemporary art installations being displayed currently in conjunction with the Singapore Biennale (running from September – November).



(From left) HDB chairman Lim Kim San, Minister for Culture S. Rajaratnam and National Library board member Dr Li Wee Chiang view an exhibit on Singapore architecture at the library, circa March 1963. The exhibit was well received by the public (right). Collection of the National Library Picture Archive

YEAR	VISUAL ARTS AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY (1950s – 70s): SOME KEY MOMENTS
1954	Raffles Librarian L.M. Harrod works with the Singapore Art Society to exhibit paintings at the library
1955	The Raffles Library co-organises an exhibition on book jacket designs with the Singapore Art Society and the University of Malaya, held at the British Council hall.
1957	British book design exhibition at the library
1961	"Know Our Singapore" photography exhibition sponsored by the Southeast Asia Photographic Society
	A centenary exhibition of paintings by Rabindranath Tagore, organised by the Commission of India
1962	Exhibit of 33 Japanese children's paintings organised by the rotary clubs of Singapore and Nagasaki
1963	"Visionary Architecture and Housing in Singapore"
1964	14th Singapore International Salon of Photography
1964	Singapore artist Anthony Poon holds first solo show
1966	Malaysian artist Yap Hong Ngea's first one-man show
	Six Men woodcut prints show
1967	"Sculpture '67" - Singapore's first sculpture show
1968	Five local artists (Sum Lai Mol, Chia Chye Wah, Lee Hoon Leng, Li Chong Chuan and Yap Chin Tong) jointly exhibit 100 paintings
1969	Penang artist Yeo Hoe Koon exhibits 33 abstract oil works
1970	Singapore sculptor Ng Eng Teng holds first solo show
	Three Katong convent students (Jane & Anne Wakeman and Moira Scully) exhibit their paintings
	Three local artists (Yau Tian Yau, Wu Fook Wang and Loy Chye Chuan) hold exhibit of paintings
1971	Singapore artist Tay Bak Kol holds solo show
	Singapore artist Goh Beng Kwan holds first exhibition
	Ceramics talk and demonstration by potter Iskandar Jali
	Adult Education Board's photographic exhibition
	Exhibition of mixed media collage work by Mrs Rose Chemier
	Media USA: an exhibit of artworks by American artists Baba Williams and Mary Czechan Archard
1972	Ringer painting talk and demonstration by Wu Tsai Yen
	Batik painting talk and demonstration by Jaffar Latiff
	Yeo Kim Seng exhibits 30 abstract oil paintings
	Ng Eng Teng holds sculpture exhibition
	Singapore National Photographic exhibition organised by the Photographic Society of Singapore
	Exhibition of batik paintings by Peter Chen
	Singapore Commercial Art Society exhibition
1973	Tan Swee Hian holds first solo show
1974	Michael Ong holds solo show
1975	Chinese calligraphy and painting exhibition
1976	Singapore Youth Association's National Chinese calligraphy and painting exhibition
1978	Ancient and modern Chinese art exhibition organised by local art collector Lai Kong Jin
	Bris Basah photographic exhibition

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**FURTHER READING:**

**Chinese Woodcuts by Li Hua**

Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1995

Call no.: RART 769.951 LH

*This is an extremely in-depth study of the evolution of woodcut printmaking in China, examined through the country's art and cultural history from ancient to modern times.*

**See Cheen Tee: Artist Extraordinaire by Chia Wei Hon.**

Singapore: Raffles Avenue Editions, 2001

Call no.: RSING q759.95957 SEE

*Providing an extensive overview of pioneer artist See Cheen Tee's works, this is a brilliantly lavish ode to his paintings and woodblock prints.*

**The Selected Works of Choo Keng Kwang by Choo Keng Kwang.**

Singapore: Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, 2002

Call no.: RSING q759.95957 CHO

*A catalogue of Choo Keng Kwang's works spanning the breadth of his artistic career, from his early woodcuts to over 130 of his paintings and murals.*

**Singapore Woodcarving: History and Creativity by Tan Tee Chia.**

Shyu Da annual magazine

Singapore: Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, 1986

Call no.: RSING Chinese 700.705 SDAM

*This is a journal article providing an overview of the Chinese woodcut in Singapore, written by one of Singapore's pioneer woodcut printmakers, Tan Tee Chia.*

**Woodcut Prints by Lim Mu Hua**

Malaysia: New Art Graphics Sdn. Bhd, 2005

Call no.: RSING Chinese 769.95957 LMH

*A catalogue accompanying an exhibit of the artist's woodblock prints in June 2005. Several of his prints are lovingly reproduced here, with thoughts on their meaning and execution.*

# The Evolution of Malay Scripts

## EMAS Exhibition

*By Mazelan Anuar, Librarian, Heritage and Asia*

More than 250 million people in the world speak Malay, in its various forms, and its antiquity has been said to be comparable to that of English. Malay is an Austronesian language centred in maritime Southeast Asia. Being the *lingua franca* of maritime Southeast Asia, this sub-region has been referred to as the Malay Archipelago.

The Malay civilisation covers a wide temporal and geopolitical span and has, throughout history, successfully melded the cultural influences from other major civilisations like the Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic and the West into its own. The adaptation of different writing systems to express the Malay language, from the ancient Pallava (Sanskrit), Rencong and Kawi scripts to the more modern Jawi and Roman scripts, has left behind a vast legacy of written words. The medium of preserving and transmitting this written legacy, from stones, barks and leaves to more portable paper forms, also shows the receptiveness of the Malays to technology that could broaden the reach and impact of their intellectual tradition.

The evolution of Malay scripts is testament to the level of literacy and extensive interactions with other civilisations that Malays experienced for centuries. In this regard, the Evolution of Malay Scripts (EMAS) Exhibition will motivate Malays (and others) to read more and continue the tradition of promoting literacy; as well as becoming more proactive in learning from others.

This exhibition will showcase the development of the Malay scripts from the Indic to the Islamic and later European influences. In the corresponding progression, Malay has been written in various scripts from Pallava, Kawi, and Jawi to the

current Latinised or Romanised form. Hence, while an understanding of the past can be derived from the numerous historical and archaeological findings, an appreciation of the evolution of the Malay script will reveal the phases and periods of external influences on the people known as the Malays. It will also provide insights into the worldview, strategic-mindedness and adaptability of the Malays.

The exhibition represents NLB's efforts to preserve the national memories and build a shared history of Singapore. It showcases invaluable manuscripts, letters, publications and artefacts that document the development of the Malays' rich intellectual heritage through their different writing systems.

The EMAS  
Exhibition  
is, however, more  
than just about the  
Malay scripts or the

Malays. It is more about learning, being open to ideas and the dissemination of knowledge. It is about cross-cultural communications and exchanges. All these are very relevant in the age of knowledge-based economy for today's society to continue reinventing itself but at the same time keeping in touch with its roots.



**The Tanjung Tarah Manuscript** is a legal code of 34 pages that contains two texts, one in the old Malayu script, and one in an ancient form of the Karinji script.

Image courtesy of Dr Lili Kozak, University of Hawaii

This 5<sup>th</sup> century stone edict with an inscription in the Pallava-Sanskrit script originated from Kutai, East Kalimantan. All rights reserved, Museum Nasional Indonesia, 2006

The exhibition begins on 16 December 2006 and is located at Level 10, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library



# BOOK REVIEWS



## GUEST PEOPLE: HAKKA IDENTITY IN CHINA AND ABROAD

Edited by Nicole Constable

Publisher: Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996.  
Call no.: R 951 GUE

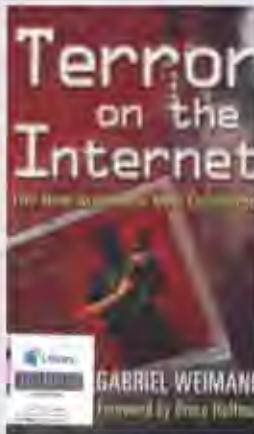
What does Deng Xiao Ping, Lee Kwan Yew, Lee Teng Hui, the Soong sisters, Sun Yat Sen, Hong Xiuquan (leader of the Taiping Rebellion), Han Suyin (famous author), Aw Boon Haw (of Tiger Balm fame), Jimmy Choo (shoe designer), Chow Yun Fatt, Fann Wong and Dick Lee have in common?

They are all Hakka (Guest People) or have Hakka descent.

Apart from famous personalities, Hakka – the Chinese ethnic group that gave the world yong tau foo and mountain songs (*shan ge*) is a much studied group compared often to the Israelites. They are of interest to scholars and anthropologists because they are a classic case in ethnicity, migration, nationalism and construction of identity. This book is one of many that try to identify the obscure origin of the Hakka, their history, culture, traits and practices. It also debunks the Hakka stereotype and attempts to answer the question: when do the Guest People cease to consider themselves as guests after years of assimilation amongst the locals? The collection of papers in this volume focuses on Hakka in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, India and China to examine what it means to be a Hakka in various social cultural, political, geographical and historical contexts.

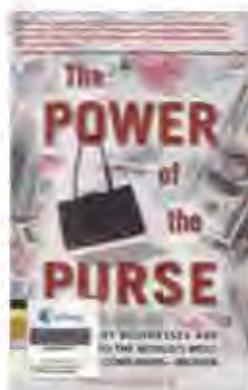
## TERROR ON THE INTERNET: THE NEW ARENA, THE NEW CHALLENGES

By Gabriel Weimann



Publisher: Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006  
Call number: R 363.325 WEI

Weimann introduces readers to the new battleground of terrorist groups – cyberspace. The virtual arena he postulates is a weapon that has even greater and more devastating impact when used for heinous activities. With the far-reaching tentacles of the World Wide Web, terrorist groups have leveraged on the world's currently most effective and efficient mode of communication in disseminating their political and religious propaganda to targeted audiences around the globe. Terrorist groups have also exploited Internet technology



## THE POWER OF THE PURSE: HOW SMART BUSINESSES ARE ADAPTING TO THE WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT CONSUMER – WOMEN

By Fara Warner

Publisher: Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, c2006.  
Call Number: RBUS 658.8342082 WAR

Recognising the immense purchasing power of women, astute companies have listened to the consumer and asked the right questions to find out what women want, thus reaping phenomenal rewards.

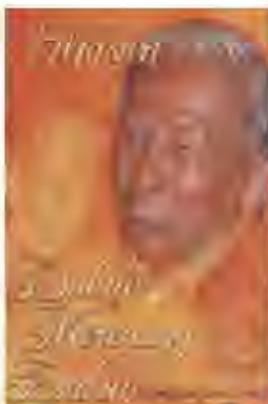
Drawing from her extensive journalistic experience covering marketing, advertising and consumer trends for leading business publications, Warner examines how major companies (e.g. McDonalds, DeBeers and Nike) have successfully penetrated this multifaceted, oft-misunderstood and largely untapped market to gain significant market shares.

An essential reading for marketing practitioners and business consultants, this book shatters many long-standing misconceptions about women and sheds invaluable insights about women's consumer behaviour. It also provides a strategy checklist that marketers can use to avoid costly mistakes.

to recruit members, raise funds to finance their violent stratagems, and gather information for their nefarious plots against humanity.

This book also highlights the common characteristics of terrorist websites that mirror each other in terms of design, graphic content, distortion of truth, links to propagandistic material, provision of the leaders' bio-data and the organisation structure. Added to these are statements aimed at rousing sympathy and support towards the plight of their members or their cause.

Weimann also points out the urgency to instill some kind of cyber surveillance to combat the psychological warfare waged by terrorist groups online. However, he cautions for a balance between governmental censorship and the curtailment of freedom of information. Ultimately, to beat the terrorists at their own game, he recommends that Internet users should exercise rational judgment at the ground level and refrain from participation in aggressive activities online while peace alliances among governments are being forged at the international levels.



# DALAM MERENUNG DALAM: KUMPULAN ESEI & KRITIKAN 1977-2005

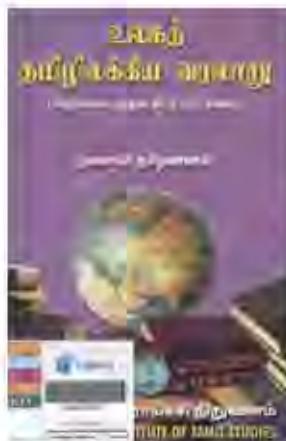
By Meenuri S N

Publisher: ASAS '50 (2006)  
Call no.: 899.28095957 MAS

Sebuah buku yang menghimpunkan eseи kritikan, kertas kerja dan bahan dari ruangan akhbar tulisan Masuri S N sejak tahun 1977 sehingga

2005. Esel-essel ini telah disusun kepada empat bahagian iaitu, Bahasa, Sastera, Pendidikan dan Kemanusiaan untuk memudahkan para pembaca dan pengkaji memberikan tumpuan kepada sesuatu bidang. Selain itu, pembahagian ini memberikan kesinambungan dari segi idea yang ingin disampaikan.

Salah satu esei yang menarik di dalam buku ini ialah tulisan bellau tentang perlunya kita membaca dan menghayati perkembangan bahasa dan kesusasteraan seluruh Nusantara. Oleh Itu bellau menyarankan supaya didirikan sebuah perpustakaan yang diisi dengan lengkap buku-buku, majalah-majalah bahasa dan kesusasteraan negara-negara Indonesia, Malaysia dan Brunei Darussalam. Bahan-bahan itu juga dapat didedahkan kepada generasi muda yang menjadi penerus bahasa dan sastera Melayu di Singapura supaya mereka tidak merasa "kerdil diri di tengah-tengah pergolakan dunia" yang amat mencabar.



**தாகத் தமிழ்ஸ்கெபிய  
வழங்காரு**

Publisher: [CreateSpace](#)

உதவி தமிழ்நாடு முனிஸிபல், 2004

Call no.: R 894.B1109001 KAN

## 古籍印本鉴定概说

陈正宏，宋炳华

Publisher: 上海: 上海辞书出版社, 2005

Call no.: R 090.0951 GIY

这是一本专门介绍古籍印本鉴定的入门读物。全书主要分成四个部分：“通行印本的鉴定”、“特殊印本的鉴定”、“印本鉴定专题”和“印本鉴定的辅助工具”，内容涵盖了古印本的各种基础知识和鉴定技能。

参与撰稿的作者来自中国各大图书馆与知名大学的古籍版本鉴定的专才与从事古籍版本学的教学与研究的学者。本书强调实用方法的传授,为此配有大量直接摄自原书的彩色光影、书影与文字完全契合,图文对读,能更有效地提高读者对古籍版本的鉴识能力。



# NEWS

## IFLA, SEOUL 2006

By Mr Rajendra Munoo, Specialist, NLB Academy, Learning & Development

Images courtesy of Roy Won, Librarian, Public Libraries; Ivan Chew, Manager, Public Libraries



Digital Sound Action!

"Libraries: Dynamic Engines for the Knowledge and Information Society", was the theme for the 72nd IFLA General Conference and Council, held at the COEX Convention and Exhibition Centre, in Seoul, Korea from 20 – 24 August 2006. The Asian hosts ensured continental representation as was evident in the programme line-up of papers from the region. The programme commenced with the traditional section meetings and satellite events that were held in China, Japan and Korea. Themes and topics for discussion ranged from reference resource sharing in the digital age, preservation and conservation in Asia, Chinese written and printed cultural heritage to scholarly information on East Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The discussions and presentations celebrated cultural heritage, collaborations, and the digital infrastructure.

### OFFICIAL OPENING: DR KIM DAE-JUNG

On Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> August, Korea showcased Asian hospitality with a grand opening session, which included prominent local Koreans, amongst others, Dr Kim Dae-Jung, former President of the Republic of Korea who reminisced in his keynote address on the evolution of libraries and the importance of librarians in a knowledge-based society. He noted, "The 21<sup>st</sup> century is an age of knowledge and information. And this calls for libraries to play a pivotal role in order to realise its ideals...successful libraries will make a successful world. Libraries are the reservoirs for storing knowledge and information. Libraries are locomotives pulling history forward. And you have the vital mission to drive these locomotives."

[Read More Here: <http://www.ifla.org/V/ifla72/papers/068-Kim-en.pdf>]



Dr Kim addressed by the "Resolution for the 'Metropolis Library' with a metropolis service system that can be easily accessed by anybody, anywhere, with any type of equipment."

### PAPERS PRESENTED

The standard of papers presented were very good where speakers shared using case studies about projects in their respective countries. Most of the speakers shared about the challenges such as the emerging digital library, managing user expectations, resource sharing and collaboration, legal deposit issues, reading and information literacy and trends and developments in their respective countries.

### SINGAPORE'S PRESENCE AT IFLA

Five staff from the National Library Board, made presentations as noted below:

#### Division of Regional Activities

Thinking about capacity building and sustainability of information literacy programmes: re-engineering experiences by the National Library Board, Singapore by Doris Tan and Rajendra Munoo [Read More Here: [http://www.ifla.org/V/ifla72/papers/082-Tan\\_Munoo-en.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/V/ifla72/papers/082-Tan_Munoo-en.pdf)]

#### Metropolitan Section

The library as influencer! – Having a say in what goes on in schools by Ian Yap.

#### Poster Session

Library Instructional Programme – A spiral approach to library skills taught to primary school students by Raneetha Rajarathnam

#### IFLA Corner

##### Regional Office of Asia and Oceania by Tan Keat Fong

Faculty from Nanyang Technological University's School of Information and Communication also presented the following papers below:

#### Education and Training

Issues in developing a repository of learning objects for LIS Education in Asia by Abdus Sattar Chaudhry and Christopher Khoo. [Read More Here: [http://www.ifla.org/V/ifla72/papers/107-Chaudhry\\_Khoo-en.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/V/ifla72/papers/107-Chaudhry_Khoo-en.pdf)]

#### Library History

Imagining the User in the Raffles Library and Museum, Singapore: 1874 to 1900 by Brendan Luyt. [Read More Here: <http://www.ifla.org/V/ifla72/papers/119-Luyt-en.pdf>]

### EXHIBITION AND POSTER SESSIONS

The National Library Board, Singapore, participated in the exhibition where its products and services were promoted. The



NLB's booth during the exhibition

crowd puller was a proof-of-concept Library Dispenser – a self-standing kiosk that dispenses books similar to a vending machine. About 79 posters were exhibited during the poster sessions. Poster sessions provided an informal opportunity for participants to interact with the presenters who willingly shared their respective projects or ideas.

## LIBRARY VISITS: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF KOREA AND NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



The National Library of Korea, housing 5.94m volumes, was one of the most popular tour destinations. Visitors experienced the creative overlay of technology which provided a seamless traditional library service. The advanced use of RFID technology in checking out multiple library items in one step and its application for browse count was commendable.

The library also has a system in place for closed-access materials where requested materials are dispatched to a locker area for collection. Using an electronic billboard, readers are paged on the availability of their materials.

In keeping with the theme of access to all, users with disabilities have access to a display cabinet of equipment they can use such as special keyboards with extra large keys and artificial fingers for those with loss of limbs. [Read More Here: [http://www.nl.go.kr/nl/multi/index.php?lang\\_mode=e](http://www.nl.go.kr/nl/multi/index.php?lang_mode=e)].

Recently opened in May 2006, is the National Library of Children and Young People whose function is to provide strategic direction, policy and research for children's libraries. Providing a one-stop place for children and young people, this library in addition to local literature, makes materials in other languages available in the "International Section."



Visitors please touch the screen to enter or leave the library using the RFID system before proceeding to the table to read there.

### FINALLY...

Participants experienced Korean hospitality throughout the week as they enriched themselves with world-class cultural performances, dinners and arranged library tours. An IFLA trip is never complete without shopping on the itinerary. Some went off the beaten track to tour the Demilitarized Zone and others explored the sights and sounds of the night-markets and the palaces.

IFLA, Seoul was a great success that afforded our Asian librarians to acquire new knowledge and network with our regional fellow-librarians and information professionals.

To read more about IFLA, Seoul 2006, please read the entries on Ramblinglibrarian's blog.  
<http://ramblinglibrarian.blogspot.com/2006/08/off-to-ifla-2006-thoughts-and-stuff.html>

## TALK ON INTERPRETING JIHADI WEBSITES

By Ronnie Tan, Reference Librarian,  
Publishing and Research Services



A talk entitled "Interpreting Jihadi Websites" was conducted for 40 government research officers on 18 August 2006 at the National Library's premises in Victoria Street. The speaker was Mr Bouchalib Slim, a native Arab speaker with the

Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), Nanyang Technological University. This talk was organised as part of collaborative effort between NLB and IDSS to help educate Singaporeans on terrorism.

In his presentation, Mr Slim discussed how militant groups like Al Qaeda and others in the Middle East have manipulated the Internet to serve their purposes. In addition, groups like these have resorted to the use of Arabic symbols, poetry and Quranic chapters and verses together to attract followers to their cause. Using videos available on the web, Mr Slim demonstrated how it was done.

The course participants found the talk very informative, interesting and educational. Many have asked to be kept in the loop should similar talks be held.



An attentive audience

## BHUTAN CROWN PRINCE VISITS THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

The National Library Board played host to the Crown Prince of Bhutan, His Royal Highness, Trongsa Penlop Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on 23 August 2006 during his official visit to Singapore.



The Crown Prince His Royal Highness, Trongsa Penlop Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on his visit to the National Library, while Ms Lee Sow Hean, Chairman, NLB (right) looks on.

Highlights of the visit included a tour of the Central Lending Library (CLL) and Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCR), the crown jewel of the National Library. The CLL is one of our public libraries under NLB's network of libraries, where the use of technology had brought about many DIY library services, such as the borrowing machines, bookdrop and the Library e-Kiosk. The tour of LKCR focused on one of the key collections – Singapore and Southeast Asia Collections on Level 11, where a selection of books on Bhutan, which highlighted the rich history, majestic landscapes, colourful culture and dynamic progress of the country, was displayed.

During the visit, the Crown Prince shared that he was encouraged to read from a young age and he feels that knowledge and books are very important. He also confessed to being an active user of his school library when he was still pursuing his education.

The library tour ended at The Pod on Level 16, where the Crown Prince enjoyed a panoramic view of the Singapore's skyline.

## COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING WITH NTU MSC STUDENTS

By Sharon Teng, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library



The Social Sciences and Humanities Collection group hosted an inaugural collaboration and networking session on 19 September 06, with 100 students of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), who were pursuing their MSc (Information Studies) degree.

The objectives of this session were firstly to introduce and promote the collections and services at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCR), primarily our Library and Information Science Collection, and secondly, to network with fellow information professionals to share and exchange ideas in this field.

The session began at 6.30pm with a one-hour lecture on the basic concepts of reference service by Asst. Prof Brendan Luyt, from the Division of Information Studies, School of Communication & Information, NTU.

This was followed by a 20min presentation by Chow Wun Han, Senior Manager, LKCR, who gave a detailed overview of the library and introduced our collections and services.

Sharon Teng, Reference Librarian, LKCR then introduced LKCR's Remote Enquiry Service, covering service standards, policies and workflow procedures, tracking of enquiries and service evaluation. She also shared with the students some examples of reference and research enquiries that had been sent via email and SMS to the Reference Point.

The students and Prof Luyt were then led on a special guided library tour covering Levels 7 and 11, with special emphasis on the Library and Information Science collection housed on Level 7.

After the session, feedback obtained from the students and lecturer was very positive, with many rating the programme as "excellent" and "very good". Many also commented that prior to the visit, they had not known that the library contained such rich and valuable resources. All were impressed with the range and depth of reference services provided and were happy to find out that help was readily available from the Reference Point.



## PROFESSOR EDWIN THUMBOO DONATES COLLECTION TO NATIONAL LIBRARY

By Eunice Low, Manager, Heritage and Asia



Congratulations Dr R. Venkatesan,  
Chair Executive, NLB, Mr Raja Iyer  
Chair, Committee of Encouragement, NLB and  
Professor Dr Edwin Thumboo

On 28 September 2006, the National Library Board (NLB) entered into a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with Professor Edwin Thumboo for the donation of his personal collection. The collection comprises, approximately, 3000 items that span across the fields of poetry, literary criticism, religion, nationalism and history. Professor Thumboo, an Emeritus Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore is an academic, poet and critic. In the 2006 National Day Awards, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in capacity as Distinguished Poet and Literary Scholar. He is also one of the National Library (NL) Distinguished Readers appointed this year. The NL Distinguished Readers Initiative pays tribute to local experts and prominent personalities in Singapore for their outstanding achievements and service to the nation. Prof Thumboo's collection will be housed in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCR). To complement the display of the physical materials, NLB also plans to digitise some of his manuscripts to enable better access to researchers.

## COVER STORY – RETHINKING CULTURE

By Isaac Teo, Executive, Invent

The theme of the Singapore Biennale 2006 addressed the subject of "Belief": its many facets, the different things we believe in, and what we do or do not do about these beliefs.

In this month's "cover story" programmes, we would like to pose the same challenge to our patrons with respect to Culture. The "Culture (of) Loss" public forum (7 October) – part of a mixed media installation for the Singapore Biennale – seeks to change our mindsets about cultural loss in Singapore. Rather than fading away as a result of modernisation, some of our cultural artefacts have actually been relocated overseas.

In a similar vein, the 'Breaking Down Cultural Barriers' public lecture (14 October) by Dr Derald Wing Sue – renowned for his pioneering work on multicultural research and writing in psychology and education – seeks a rethink on the way we perceive mental wellness across cultures.

With such stimulating topics and interesting speakers, there is no need to think and rethink about attending these programmes; just come. Did we mention that admission is FREE?

# YOUR SAY...

**For Loh Yian Ling**

*"Thank you very much for helping me locate the information I need. I am overwhelmed by your speedy response and high level of efficiency. I must add that NLB's present environment is so much more visitor-friendly and conducive for research."*

**Doris Low****For Timothy Pwee**

*"Thank you very much. I was very impressed by how quickly I received the information. I was also impressed by the quality of the references. Many thanks. This is a fantastic service."*

**Kimberly Trager****For Tan Pei Jyun**

*"I was looking for statistics for a client on IT spending by all the countries in the world. I thought it would be difficult to retrieve this sort of information but I approached one of your librarians anyway. She showed me a website from World Bank and in less than 10 minutes, she was able to locate the exact information that I need, and more. She found three different indicators for IT spending by all countries in a 5-year time series format. She also showed me how to download the data into Excel so that I can enhance the presentation to my client. Not only did she help me with her skills, she also helped me impress my client! Of course, now my foreign-based client is very impressed with the resources and staff at the Singapore National Library! Keep up the great work. I will certainly turn to the library for more information in future."*

**Ee Laen****For Celestine Chan**

*"I would like to thank you Celeste for her assistance. With her help, I was able to obtain two pieces of important information from the 1892 and 1911 issues of The Straits Times. I appreciate your help."*

**Daniel Gwee****For Alicia Yeo**

*"Thank you very much for the information. This is the first time I am using Reference Point service and must say that I am quite impressed with your service. I am sure it is not easy to find information on anything and everything but you managed to reply quite quickly! I will certainly remember this service and use it again when required. Keep up the good job!"*

**Christina Tang****For Gracie Lee**

*"Yesterday was my first visit to the new National Library, and I must say, it was a wonderful experience for me. Gracie and her colleagues have been most helpful and patient, lending invaluable assistance to advise and search for materials on the social services sector. I look forward to my next visit, and to meet the heart-warming staff of Lee Kong Chian Reference Library once more. Excellent service delivered by warm and friendly library staff."*

**Felicia Poon****For Suknah Suradi**

*"I'm very proud and happy to have good relations with NLB staff who are really enthusiastic about developing the old history of our homeland, in particular the history of Malay/Islam."*

**Mohamed Ghous Khan Sunathee****For Prabhjot Singh who hosted a site visit for SPA members**

*"We have received excellent feedback from many of the participants. Prabhjot has been a very warm and welcoming host. Many participants have enjoyed the informative orientation conducted by him and felt that it was delightfully enlightening. I am especially grateful to him for making this site visit complete by answering the participants' key questions pertaining to customer service issues and processes in NLB. We are very keen to partner with NLB to run INVENT's Creativity and Innovation workshops for our members."*

**Dawn Wee, Singapore Productivity Association (SPA)****WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

**PLEASE EMAIL YOUR FEEDBACK, SUGGESTIONS  
AND COMPLIMENTS TO:**

**Quality Service Manager (QSM)**  
Telephone: 1800-332 3370  
Fax: +65 6332 3611  
Email: qsm@nlb.gov.sg



# LIBRARIES RECEIVING

# biblioasia

**AIR MAIL  
PAR AVION**

National Library of the Republic of Algeria	Albania	Bibliothèque Generale et Archives	Morocco
National Library of Angola	Angola	Biblioteca Nacional de Moçambique	Mozambique
National Library of Australia	Australia	National Library of Myanmar	Myanmar
State Library of Victoria	Australia	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions ( IFLA )	Netherlands
University of Queensland Library	Australia	National Library of the Netherlands	Netherlands
Royal Library of Belgium	Belgium	National Library of New Zealand	New Zealand
Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei	Brunei Darussalam	National Library of Norway	Norway
Bibliothèque Nationale du Burundi	Burundi	Norwegian Library Association	Norway
National Library of Cambodia	Cambodia	National Library of Pakistan	Pakistan
Library & Archives Canada	Canada	Biblioteca Nacional del Peru	Peru
Biblioteca Nacional de Chile	Chile	National Library of the Philippines	Philippines
Shanghai Library	China	National Library of Portugal	Portugal
National Library of China	China	The National Library of Korea	Republic of Korea (South)
The Royal Library	Denmark	National Library of Laos	Republic of Lao
Danish National Library Authority	Denmark	Bibliothèque Nationale du Congo	Republique Du Congo
National Library and Archives	Ethiopia	Bibliothèque Nationale du Benin	Republique Populaire du Benin
Bibliothèque Nationale de France	France	National Library of Russia	Russia
National Library	Gambia	Russian State Library	Russia
Die Deutsche Bibliothek	Germany	Bibliothèque Nationale du Sénégal	Senegal
National Library of Greece	Greece	National Library of South Africa	South Africa
L'Institut de Recherche et de Documentation de Guinée (IRDG)	Guinea	Biblioteca Nacional de Espana	Spain
Bibliothèque Nationale d'Haïti	Haiti	National Library of Spain	Spain
Hong Kong Public Libraries	Hong Kong	J.R. Jayawardena Centre	Sri Lanka
National Library of India	India	University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
National Library of Indonesia	Indonesia	Kungliga Biblioteket	Sweden
National Library of Ireland	Ireland	Schweizerische Landesbibliothek	Switzerland
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze	Italy	Tanzania Library Service	Tanzania
National Diet Library	Japan	National Library of Thailand	Thailand
National Library and Archives	Kiribati	Bibliothèque Nationale	Togo
Latvijas Nacionāla Bibliotēka	Latvia	National Library and Archives	Tuvalu
Liechtensteinische Landesbibliothek	Liechtenstein	National Library Ukraine	Ukraine
Lesotho National Library Service	Lesotho	The British Library	United Kingdom
Bibliothèque Nationale	Luxembourg	National Library of Wales	United Kingdom
Malawi National Library Service	Malawi	The Library of Congress	USA
Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka	Malaysia	Allisher Naval State Library of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan
National Library of Malaysia	Malaysia	National Library of Vietnam	Vietnam
National Library of Maldives	Maldives	National Archives of Zambia	Zambia
Bibliothèque Nationale	Mauritania		
Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico	Mexico		

# ASIAN CHILDREN'S WRITERS & ILLUSTRATORS CONFERENCE 2006

16 – 18 November 2006  
8.30am – 5.30pm

National Library  
Victoria Street, Singapore



Sing-ju Chang



Sudha Murty



Steve Morris



Kenny Chan



Suporn Arriwong, Panna Kantilai & Er Lai Kuan



Alex Chacko



Jim Aitchison



Ho Minfong



Lynnette Thomas



Ma Wen Hai



Sheila Dhir

An international gathering of noted writers, illustrators, publishers, librarians, book retailers and distributors.

Meet Ho Minfong, Jim Aitchison, Sing-ju Chang, Kenny Chan and other key players in the Children's books publishing scene.

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For library enquiries, please call: **+65 6332 3255**

Operating hours: Mon - Sun 8am - 9pm

For reference enquiries, please visit: [www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg)

For loan status and renewal, please call:

T: **+65 6774 7178** 24-hour Library Automated Service

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