PASSAGE

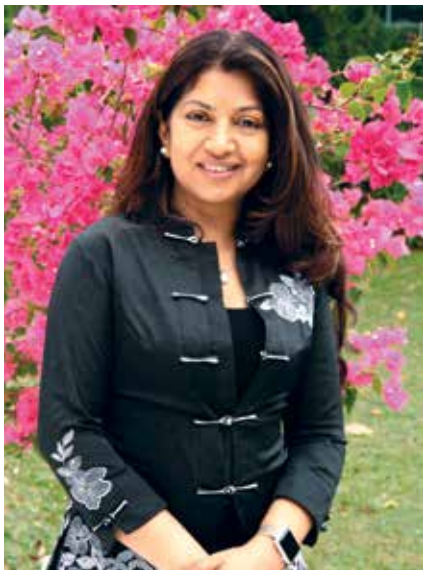
Friends of the Museums Singapore

May / June 2019

art
history
culture
people

President's Letter

Dear Friends,



I recently had the privilege of attending several end-of-training events for museum and heritage trail docents. Their joy at the completion of training was tinged with sadness at the end of this special journey for the docent trainees who had formed close bonds of friendship. If you are interested in history, heritage, culture and meeting like-minded people, consider becoming an FOM docent. Join us for our Public Information Meeting (PIM) on 16 May at the National Museum of Singapore and learn about the upcoming docent training programmes.

The Asian Civilisations Museum's (ACM) *Season of Chinese Art* starts on 15 June with the exhibition *Guo Pei: Chinese Art and Couture* wherein 29 of Guo Pei's iconic embroidered creations will be shown in dialogue with 20 Chinese masterpieces from the ACM's collection. Don't miss this spectacular exhibition, which includes the fur-lined yellow cape with its 16-foot train worn by American singer Rihanna, a wedding gown worn by Chinese celebrity Angelababy and a gold-embroidered dress inspired by Napoleon Bonaparte's uniform. Two of the gowns in the exhibition have been inspired by works from Singapore's National Collection.

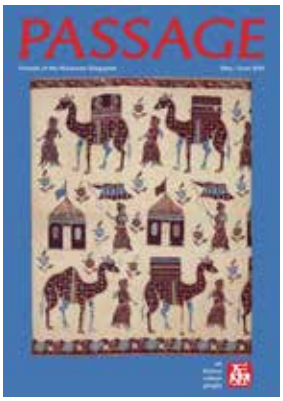
With school holidays coming up, do go with your family to see some of the special exhibitions currently on. At the Malay Heritage Centre to hear *Pilgrims' Stories from the Malay World to Makkah,* on until June 2019. Explore the links between the 1911 revolution in China and the emergence of Chinese cartoons in Singapore via the *Between the Lines – The Chinese Cartoon Revolution*" exhibition at the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, on till 7 July. Also visit the National Museum of Singapore (NMS) to learn about Singapore's food packaging story in the early 20th century in an exhibition titled *Packaging Matters*.

Singapore recently nominated its hawker culture for UNESCO's *Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. The nomination reminded me of the many meals I have had at the famous Lau Pa Sat Hawker Centre which seats 2,500 people and is a national monument. If you are a food lover, join one or all three of the FOM Foodie groups. They seek to explore Singapore's unique food culture, its traditions and specialties, be it at a restaurant or a hawker centre. The Tuesday and Thursday Foodie groups meet once a month for lunch, while the Foodies after Dark group meets for dinner. Visit the FOM website for details.

"A lot of different flowers make a bouquet" (a saying of Muslim origin) – Singapore in general, and its museums and institutions in particular, are making efforts to become inclusive spaces. NMS has recently created a Quiet Room for families with special needs children, in particular those on the autism spectrum. FOM docents have been contributing by guiding seniors, children/adults with special needs or disabilities and those from underprivileged backgrounds. We hope to formalise and encourage these efforts by providing training for our docents and awareness sessions for FOM members under the initiative FOM Cares. If you are interested in getting involved with this initiative, please write to us at office@fom.sg

To our Buddhist friends who will be celebrating Vesak day and our Muslim friends who will be ending the Ramadan fast with the celebration of Hari Raya Puasa, I extend my best wishes.

Garima G Lalwani
FOM President 2019



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Welcome PASSAGE

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On the Cover: Batik sarong with camels, tents and men holding flags that bear the words *Bendera Radja Mekkah* (The King of Mecca). Northern Java, early 20th century. Image courtesy of the Asian Civilisations Museum.

Friends of the Museums Singapore

FOM is a volunteer, non-profit society dedicated to providing volunteer guides and financial support to Singapore's museums and cultural institutions and to delivering programmes to enhance the community's knowledge of Asia's history, culture and art.

FOM is an Associate Member of the World Federation of Friends of the Museums.

FOM member privileges include free admission to NHB museums (excluding special exhibitions); access to FOM programmes including docent training, lectures, study tours, volunteer opportunities; a subscription to the FOM magazine, PASSAGE, and discounts at selected retail outlets, theatres and restaurants. Membership in FOM ranges from $30 (senior) - $120 (family) depending on category of membership.

For more information about FOM, visit our website www.fom.sg or contact the FOM office.

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Kampong Gelam – Three Iconic Buildings

By Yusoff Abdul Latiff

Located north of the Singapore River, Kampong Gelam, once known as the Muslim quarter of Singapore, derived its name from the Gelam trees (*Melaleuca cajuputi*) that grew abundantly there. The *kayuputih*, its flaky white bark, is still used as an ingredient for traditional embrocations.

The Solitary Art Deco-style Shophouse
Traditional shophouses were constructed in the streets around the Istana, Gedung Kuning and Sultan Mosque. These accommodated various businesses selling textiles, carpets, Hajj paraphernalia, perfumes, clothing, food etc. In Kandahar Street, just across the road from the Istana, one shophouse stands out from the rest. It's built in the sophisticated and aesthetically pleasing art deco style that was common from 1920-50.

Istana Kampong Gelam

Within the district of Kampong Gelam is the Istana Kampong Gelam, the seat and historical home of Malay royalty in Singapore. The present Istana was commissioned by Tengku Mohammed Ali who engaged George Coleman to design the Palladian-style structure in 1840. The porch arches are in the European style while the layout is typical of Malay houses, with the serambi (front hall) for receiving guests leading to the ibu rumah (main living hall), connected behind to the rumah dapur (kitchen annexe). Adjacent to the main building is a small kampong-style structure that housed the sultan's kin, servants and artisans.

After a succession dispute in 1896, the British appropriated the property and made it state-owned. However, the descendants of Sultan Hussein were allowed to live there even after Singapore's independence until the Istana was acquired by the government in 2001. In 2005, after much refurbishing, it was converted into the Malay Heritage Centre, to showcase the arts and cultural traditions of the Malay community.

Gedung Kuning

After Sultan Ali rebuilt the Istana Kampong Gelam, a mansion was built for his younger son, Tengku Mahmud, within the Istana's compound. It was supposedly a Rumah Bendahara, although there was no Bendahara (Prime Minister). Tengku Mahmud named it Gedung Kuning (Yellow Mansion) since it was painted yellow to signify it was a royal house.

The house changed hands numerous times until Haji Yusoff bought it in July 1925. After that, four generations of Haji Yusoff's family lived in it until it was acquired by the government in 1999.

After its acquisition, the National Heritage Board decided that Gedung Kuning would be turned into a gallery café with Restoran Tapah Sireh opening in Dec 2003. In Sept 2012, Mamanda, a fine dining Malay restaurant, opened its doors, but when the lease expired in April 2019, a new one took over.

Yusoff Abdul Latiff *is a retired teacher who now indulges in painting in watercolours, with a focus on intricate Peranakan houses, colourful landscapes and detailed portraits.*

Bountiful Catch – An Indigenous Story

By Khir Johari

I've lost count of the number of times I've had to correct people regarding a popular *otak-otak* (fish cake). It is not made of *ikan batang* (*batang* means stick and a stick fish doesn't exist among local fauna); it's made from *ikan tenggiri* (mackerel). To be exact, it is *ikan tenggiri batang*. Surely you would not call the Dover sole the 'Dover fish', for it is a species in the family *Soleidae*, so it baffles me when local people can recognise *and* correctly name every part of the tuna's belly in Japanese cuisine, from the *o-toro* to the *chu-toro*, but cannot get the name right for this particular fish, one available in all our markets.

One of the earliest records of *ikan tenggiri* in Singapore is found in the autobiography, *Hikayat Abdullah*. The famous Munshi, who tutored Raffles and is believed to have taught him about Malay culture and society, wrote that at the far end of Kampong Gelam there were several huts belonging to the *Orang Laut* from the Gelam tribe. They led a semi-amphibious lifestyle – artisans on shore making mats and sails and master fishermen at sea. It was the *Orang Gelam* who brought fish ashore for the *Temenggong* and his family to consume. It was noted that at the time, they knew no other way of catching fish except by spearing them with a *serampang*, a multi-pronged spear for fishing (Fig 1). Two types of fish were abundant just off the shores of Singapore and both *ikan tenggiri* and *ikan parang-parang* were caught by spearing. *Ikan tenggiri* were so numerous that not all could be eaten, so the bodies were thrown away and only the roe was kept, salted and kept in barrels and sold to ships.

Fig 1. Fisherman with a serampang, *a multi-pronged spear*

Fig 2. A cross-section of the ikan tenggiri batang

The *ikan tenggiri batang* (commonly known in English as the 'barred Spanish mackerel') is named for its stick-like, rounded body. This is even more visible when you cut a cross-section of the fish's belly (Fig 2). Compare this with the other much sought-after *ikan tenggiri*, the *ikan tenggiri papan* (common name 'spotted Spanish mackerel') is softer and tastier, thanks to its higher content of omega-3 fatty acids. This species got its name from its plank-like, flattened body (*papan* means plank in Malay and can be found in Geylang Serai and Tekka markets.

As traditional spearfishing gave way to the newly-introduced hand line fishing, *ikan parang-parang* fishing also took a new direction. In his book, *Malayan Fishes* (Singapore, 1921), C N Maxwell, the then Director of Supplies for the Straits Settlements wrote, "The *parang-parang* is a bony fish of excellent flavour and its capture by hand line provides a livelihood for several hundred Malays in Singapore waters alone."

Ikan parang-parang, or wolf herring as it is commonly known, is named after the Malay machete, the *parang* (the reduplication, *parang-parang*, in fact means "that which looks like a machete"). Its elongated blade-like body, thin scales and large teeth, make it easily recognisable. It is deplorably bony but irresistibly *lemak* – full of lipid richness. The pleasure of its flavour outweighs the challenge of hours spent separating the pulp from the bones with a tweezer. It is highly esteemed by the Malays and is the fish of choice for the broth of the *Singapura laksa*, the consommé known as *singgang*, *keropok* (fish crackers) and *serunding ikan* (fish and toasted coconut floss), a Hari Raya speciality. So important is its place in Malay gastronomy that there are subtleties to the names used to describe different sizes of this fish: *pachal* for the largest, *tegap* are the large ones, *chabok* for the medium and the small ones are called *sudip*. But perhaps it would be easier to ask your local fishmonger for an *ikan parang* size S, M or L.

Khir Johari *researches Malay heritage and history. He is currently writing a book on the cultural anthropology of Malay food.*

Photos by Soo Phye

The Betawi Cultural Complex

By Rossman Ithnain

The Betawi Cultural Complex in Setu Babakan, Jakarta, Indonesia, comprises a performance plaza, heritage houses, a mini-museum and a surrounding village. The complex was built in 1999 to pay homage to the culture of the Betawi (Jakarta's indigenous people); the museum was added in 2014. It is worth visiting to learn about the Betawi's key attributes through the eight iconic items exhibited in the museum. On the day I visited, students of *Beksi* (a form of the martial art *silat*) were practising in front of the complex's entrance gate. At other times, visitors are treated to live song and dance performances in the open-air plaza.

The village is a living museum. As you make your way down to the *setu* (lake), you will notice the bustle of activities around the many roadside stalls and *gerobag* (push-carts), which sell Betawi specialties. You will also see visitors enjoying rides on the *andongan* (horse carriages) or just indulging in *santai santai* (relaxing) and *ngobrol ngobrol* (chatting) on mats laid out beside the lake. Typical Betawi food such as *tape uli* (fermented glutinous rice served with a mochi-like *kueh), kerak telor* (rice crust with eggs), *bir pletok* (a non-alcoholic herbal drink), *dodol* and other Indonesian culinary delights can be found here. *Dodol* a sweet, sticky dessert, is made from glutinous rice, *gula aren* (palm sugar) and coconut milk and is cooked on site in very large woks. Passersby are invited to sample the *dodol* and also participate in stirring the sticky concoction.

These large, big-headed effigies, ondel ondel, *have become the Betawi's mascots*

My museum guide was Empok Dewi (*Empok* is the equivalent of *Ibu* [mother] in Betawi culture). According to her, the Betawi absorbed influences from other cultures including the Chinese, Japanese, Dutch and Arabs because of the cosmopolitan nature of Batavia (today's Jakarta). These influences can be seen in the material and food culture of the Betawi community. Empok Dewi explained the eight iconic features of Betawi culture:

Rice and egg are the main ingredients in making the crust for this traditional Betawi snack, kerak telor, *over a charcoal fire*

****Ondel ondel*** are big-headed effigies/dolls rolled out during celebrations. They are the Betawi community's mascots and have become regular fixtures in Jakarta's street landscapes. The effigies have evolved over the years; their faces used to be scarier-looking since they served to ward off evil spirits. The male effigy's face is red to signify bravery while the female's white face symbolizes goodness and purity.

The Betawi's abang none, *traditional attire comprising* baju demang, *for the man and* baju encim panjang *for the ladies*

****Kembang kelapa*** are literally coconut blossoms, known as *bunga manggar* in Singapore. The *ondel ondel*'s heads are sometimes decorated with *kembang kelapa*.

****Batik Betawi,*** the distinctive batik motifs and designs of the Betawi, with the classic triangular pieces known as *tumpul*.

****Baju sadariah*** for men and *baju kebaya encim* or *kerancang* for women. The *baju kebaya encim* is familiar to us in Singapore, given its similarity to the Nyonya kebaya.

****Gigi balang*** are the teeth-like features that fringe the edges of a building's roof. There are many examples of this style in Setu Babakan.

A Betawi man stirring a large cauldron of freshly made dodol.

****Bir pletok*** is a herbal drink. Beer was introduced to the community by the Dutch, but because it is alcoholic, the local people created their own non-alcoholic drink, so it is a misnomer to call this a beer (*bir*). The word *pletok* comes from the sound made as the drink is prepared. The herbal ingredients used for *bir pletok* include *kayu secang*, ginger, lemon-grass, pandan leaves, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg and cloves.

****Kerak telor*** is the only food item on the list of the eight features. It is made with glutinous rice and *telor* (egg) which forms the *kerak* (crust). Seasoning and various ingredients such as *serundeng* (spiced and fried, grated coconut) are scattered on the crust.

****Baju Abang None*** attire comprises a *kebaya encim panjang* paired with a *kerongsang* (brooch) for ladies and *baju demang* (a black jacket) for the man. A Betawi man pairs his *baju demang* with a sarong and if he is unmarried, he adds a sash.

Rossman Ithnain *is a public servant with a passion for Malay material culture. He collects Malay needlework and embroidery as well as ceramics created for the Malay world.*

Photos by the author

The Man Who Would Be Sultan – Tengku Sri Indra

By Millie Phuah

His great-great-great-great grandfather was Sultan Hussein, who authorised the British East India Company to set up a trading emporium in Singapore in 1819. The sultanate proved to be shortlived. In 1824 under the ironically named Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, Hussein ceded Singapore to the British. He moved to Melaka in 1834 and died there the year after. The power and relevance of the sultanate began to wane quickly, a situation which Temenggong Daing Ibrahim took advantage of. Hussein's son Ali was to be the last Sultan of Singapore. In 1855 he completely gave up his rights over Singapore. Daing Ibrahim was then recognised by the British as the new ruler of Johor (his family is still the ruling house in Johor today).

But what of Sultan Ali's descendants? What of the man who would have been sultan? In the first in-depth interview he has granted for a publication, Tengku Sri Indra shared his thoughts on lineage, purpose and the future, in his own words.

"To me, it's just my name"

In Malay society, when they talk about the *tengku* (prince/princess), there's automatically a tone of respect. If you behave yourself and you are humble, they will respect you. I'll tell you an interesting story. I was organising a conference in Kota Kinabalu and when I arrived, I was greeted at the airport by the PR manager who whizzed me off to the hotel in a limousine because I was a *tengku* you see (laughs). When I got to the hotel, she apologised for not being able to upgrade me to the room where the *Agong* (the monarch of Malaysia) usually stays. But she would put me in the suite where Mahathir used to stay. I kept quiet, I said there's no problem. So basically the title *Tengku* is still very powerful, but I don't take advantage of that. To me it's just my name you know.

What happened in the past is history, which you cannot rewrite, the historical evolution of our Singapore society. I don't subscribe to the idea, like some of my relatives, that we should fight for our legacy (laughs). The way I see it, it was good and God's will that my ancestors ceded Singapore to the British. If that had not happened, what would Singapore's history have been? It would have just slowly developed into a migrant place. But the British built the foundations. Then came self-government, self-rule in 1959 and then 1963, 1965. The present government built upon it and transformed Singapore. My ancestor understood fully the meaning of outsourcing! If he had not outsourced Singapore, we would not be where we are today.

The final resting place of Sultan Hussein Shah in Melaka, Malaysia. He was buried there with full royal honours in 1835. Photo © Millie Phuah

The Singapore Lineage

Sultan Hussein Mohammed Shah (buried in Melaka, Malaysia)

Sultan Ali Iskandar Shah (buried in Melaka, Malaysia)

Tengku Alam Shah (buried in Sultan Mosque, Singapore)

Tengku Ali

Tengku Hussein (buried in Jalan Kubor Cemetery, Singapore)

Tengku Ismail (buried in Terengganu palace)

Tengku Sri Indra

"The government's takeover of the Istana was the best thing that happened to our family"

When the government took over the Istana and got everyone out of the dilapidated palace in 1999, including those who came from the sultanate, the lineage, it smashed what I call the ghettos because they had to learn to survive in the Singapore system, and now the second, third, fourth generations are far better off than when living in that place. As a Singaporean, I think that's the best thing that has happened to our family. And the National Heritage Board and the government spent millions to build up the old palace into a Malay heritage centre. Recognising that such history existed is a big plus point.

Tengku Sri Indra, direct descendant of Sultan Hussein and the man who would have been sultan today. Photo © Millie Phuah

My father didn't tell me much about the old days except about the Japanese Occupation. The Japanese declared the Istana a sacred place, which no Japanese soldier could interfere in. They had a high regard for kingship. So Istana Kampong Gelam became a very peaceful place and as a result, it became a refuge for people from the outside and then after the war, they continued living there. Since the land wasn't owned by anyone, they could stay there without paying rent[1]. It isn't part of Malay culture to ask people to move out and many of them would have worked for my grandfather as drivers, cooks, servants, so there were ties. The main building was the most out of control. The families started to produce so many children with no control over their livelihood and lifestyle, and continued to cling on to the fact that they were still *tengku*.

My father lived in Terengganu (his mother was a

[1] After a property ownership dispute among the three wives of Sultan Ali, the court repealed the right to the ownership of the land on which the Istana stood. It reverted to being state land although the sultan's descendants were allowed to continue living there.

Terengganu princess) so he didn't really look after the place. His second brother from his father's second wife lived there. And it is this brother's son who proclaimed himself head of the royal family of Singapore.

"The future is what you need to create now"

The future is more important than falling back on the past. And if you really look at it there's nothing much for us to glorify. 1819 to 1855 was a very short span of time. My hope for the future, not just for my family, is that we really have to excel in education. That's the only way forward. Education will look after your livelihood in this world and your religious beliefs and practises will ensure that you have a good life afterward.

I was the first graduate in the extended family. After I finished six years at Raffles Institution, I graduated with an honours degree in history from Singapore University, as it was known then, after which I worked for several multinational companies and put all my six children through universities overseas. Now I have a consulting company training senior managers on leadership, sales and negotiation – that's my specialty. I've been doing this for 22 years.

Tengku Indra's wedding at the Istana in 1979. He moved out from his maternal grandfather's house within the Istana grounds after the wedding. Photo © Tengku Indra

These are the things that I enjoy – my career and helping people. I am an active Rotarian and I have just set up the Rotary Club of Kampong Gelam so I can add value to its name. I've also gotten some people who used to live there to become members. Kampong Gelam is the oldest urban centre in Singapore, with many things happening there. It's a melting pot of many communities, not just Malays, but also Indians, Chinese, Bugis; you name it. I grew up there and I got married in the Istana. Kampong Gelam will always be close to my heart.

Hussein's Seal

"Keep it safely", my father Tengku Ismail said when he gave me the seal about thirty years ago. "Those were the only words he said". Tengku Indra took out a carved wooden box and from inside a small bag, he carefully removed a small brass seal, about four centimetres in diameter.

Tengku Indra and his eldest son, Tengku Azan, at a gathering of the royal families of the Nusantara. *Image courtesy of Tengku Indra*

The personal seal of Sultan Hussein in the hands of Tengku Indra. Brass with Jawi inscription translated as "Tengku Hussein, son of Sultan Mahmud. Dated 1225 Hijrah". This date corresponds to 1810 in the Gregorian calendar. Photo © Millie Phuah

The seal is the family's and the lineage's treasure handed down through seven generations. It is the personal seal of their ancestor, Sultan Hussein Shah (Husain Syah), the man installed as Sultan of Johor (which Singapore was a part of) by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles in 1819. He signed the treaty with Raffles on 6 February at the Padang in Singapore. While it is not the seal imprinted by Hussein on the treaty, its authenticity has been confirmed by the British Museum in London.

"About 25 years ago, I sent pictures of the seal to the British Museum. They replied by asking if they could acquire it. Of course I rejected that. It is the family's legacy and being the de facto direct male descendant of Sultan Hussein, I am the custodian of the seal. And I will pass it on one day to my eldest son Tengku Azan. I may have shown it to a few people, but a picture of it has never been published before" he said, allowing me to handle the seal.

It was very light to the touch and such an honour to have in my hands something that Sultan Hussein would have had in his hands over two hundred years ago. In that moment, the man we had only read about, and of whom no photo or painting seems to exist became so much more real.

A *cap mohor* such as this was a very important political and legal article in the Muslim world. Affixed to official documents, it authenticated the identity of the owner and was an official "representative" of the individual. In the Malay world of that period seals such as this, often made of stone (carnelian being a popular choice) or metal (silver, brass), were mostly used by high-ranking officials and royalty.

This particular one in Tengku Indra's possession is not only important because of its provenance and place in Singapore's history, but also rare. After the death of its owner, seals were often destroyed to prevent unauthorised use. This may also explain why Tengku Indra has no knowledge of the seal that was used for the 1819 treaty. However, looking after this one precious seal is more than a handful of responsibility. It is a Singapore treasure.

Millie Phuah *is an FOM docent at the Malay Heritage Centre, National Museum of Singapore, Indian Heritage Centre and the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall. In this bicentennial year, she has been ruminating about what it all means and how best to share this snippet of history. Tracking down the descendant of the man at the centre of that fateful treaty is probably it.*

Walna: The Rainbow Tapestry of Bangsamoro Weaving Traditions

By Hafiz Rashid

While flipping through a Tagalog dictionary, I was intrigued by the word: *walna*. It refers to a type of vari-coloured cloth and is semantically related to the Malay word *warna* (colour); both words are ultimately derived from the Sanskrit *varna*. Unfortunately, there are no recorded images of this cloth. However, it does bring to mind the rainbow-hued textiles produced by the Bangsamoro[1] people of the Southern Philippines.

Although the Philippines is a Christian-majority country, Islam played a significant role in influencing its inhabitants. Through trade and intermarriage, Islam spread throughout the islands and by the time the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, the religion was firmly entrenched in Sulu and Mindanao, with significant Muslim communities also in Palawan, Mindoro and Luzon.

Islam brought significant social change and new political structures, which led to the establishment of several sultanates such as those of Sulu and Maguindanao. These sultanates put up organised resistance to Spanish colonial encroachment and during the course of their conflicts, the Spanish labelled them 'Moros', after the Muslim Moors whom the Spanish fought during the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula. The Muslims of Sulu and Mindanao eventually adopted the term 'Moro' and began referring to themselves as Bangsamoro. Their success in resisting Spanish subjugation enabled them to maintain trading and cultural links with the rest of the Nusantara[2] and their textiles reflect the dynamic interactions that have taken place over the centuries. The following communities produce some of the Philippines' most prolific weavers.

Yakan

The Yakan inhabit the Sulu Archipelago and are linguistically related to the seafaring Sama-Bajaus. In fact, the Yakan are believed to be the descendants of seafarers who renounced their ties to the sea and retreated to the interior of Basilan, becoming agriculturalists who cultivated rice and tubers. They are also skilled weavers who harvest natural fibres obtained from plants such as the abaca[3] and turn them into garments. Trade with coastal communities such as the Bajaus and Tausugs, introduced cotton and silk yarns along with new weaving techniques, which were used to embellish their textiles.

A Yakan weaver on a back-strap loom. Photo courtesy of Nani Abdul Rahman

An example of the Bunga Sama motif

Yakan weaving is characterised by its bold colours and geometric motifs. One of the hallmarks of a *Pandey Magtetenun* (expert weaver) is her ability to weave the *Bunga Sama,* a motif that requires up to 70 heddle sticks to be placed in the loom, thereby making it one of the most difficult motifs to execute. The supplementary weft technique is used to produce this motif; the weaver deftly inserts the lateral weft threads into the cloth and lets them float over a selected number of longitudinal warp threads, which results in the weft pattern appearing prominently against the warp base of the cloth. The end result is a vari-coloured, speckled cloth akin to the mottled skin of the python, a creature revered by the Yakan. In many Austronesian cultures, reptiles such as snakes are symbolic of the lower realms where spirits and demons dwell. Regarded as messengers to these spirits, they are potent symbols of fertility, protection and authority. Because of the symbolism attached to this motif, as well as the difficulty in executing it, cloths with the *Bunga Sama* pattern are used to fashion *baju* (jacket) and *sawwal* (trousers) for aristocratic Yakan men such as the *Datu* (chieftain).

Another jewel of Yakan weaving is the headcloth known as *saputangan,* produced using tapestry weaving, a demanding technique in which discontinuous weft threads are painstakingly inserted into the warp by hand, then repeatedly passed over a selected number of warp threads within a designated space. The main pattern in the *saputangan* consists of geometric diamond forms known as *mata* (eye). A single cloth can have up to 24 *mata*.

[1] The Bangsamoro is comprised of 13 distinct ethnolinguistic groups: Bajau, Sama, Yakan, Jama Mapun, Sangil, Tausug, Maranao, Maguindanaon, Iranun, Molbog, Kolibugan, Kalagan & Palawanon.

[2] By 'Nusantara', I am referring to the geocultural region of the Malay Archipelago.

[3] The abaca plant (Musa textilis) is a member of the banana plaintain family.

Tausug

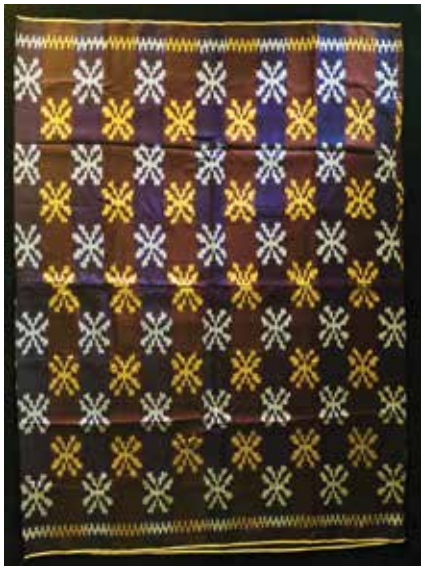
The Tausugs are known as the 'People of the Currents' and despite being outnumbered by their Bajau and Sama neighbours, they are the culturally dominant group in the Sulu region.

A Maguindanaon Inaul Layagan

Situated between the South China and Celebes Seas, the Tausugs took advantage of the trade that flowed through their waters. In time, the Sultanate of Sulu became a renowned trading emporium with a long history of Chinese trade, which introduced silk as well as Chinese weaving techniques such as tapestry weave and embroidery. Tapestry weaving is used more extensively by the Tausugs than any other ethnic group within the Bangsamoro community. Their mastery of this technique can be seen especially in their headcloths known as *pis syabit*. The *pis syabit* is a square piece of cloth made entirely of silk. Like the *Yakan saputangan*, the motifs found in the Tausug *pis syabit* consist of small geometric squares, diamonds and chevrons.

Maguindanao

The Maguindanaons are known as 'People of the Floodplains' inhabiting the oft-inundated riparian plains of the Pulangi River in Western Mindanao. They can be classified into two main groups based on their geopolitical orientation: *Sa-raya* (upriver) and *Sa-ilud* (downstream). The Pulangi River served as a conduit that facilitated trade between the *Sa-raya* and *Sa-ilud* communities, with the former exchanging natural produce sourced from the highlands (rice, beeswax, gold) with foreign goods (Indian trade textiles and Chinese silk).



A Maguindanaon Binaludan

The Maguindanaons initially worked with abaca fiber using the backstrap loom, but with the rise of the Sultanate of Maguindanao as a regional entrepot, they shifted to the frame loom and began to weave imported cotton and silk yarns instead.

Inaul is the Maguindanaon term for both the woven fabric as well as the weaving technique commonly found in the *malong* format; *malong* being cognate with the Malay word *sarung*. There are over 20 recorded *inaul* designs with each pattern having its own story. For example, the design of the *inaul* to the left is known as *layagan* (mud crab). In the past, colourful silk threads were used for the supplementary weft; today, to give the *inaul* an opulent look, synthetic gold threads are favoured.

A Maranao Malong Landap

The Maguindanaons are also renowned weavers of *binaludan* (weft ikat) – a demanding and laborious weaving technique. Interestingly, the weft ikat patterns seen in their *binaludan* cloths bear a strong affinity with the ancient warp ikat practised by animist groups despite the fact that the weft ikat technique was a fairly new one. In modern times, knowledge of the *binaludan* technique is disappearing as more and more weavers abandon it in favour of the supplementary weft technique.

Maranao

The Maranaos or 'People of the Lake' inhabit the areas surrounding Lake Lanao in the highlands of Western Mindanao and are linguistically and culturally related to the neighbouring Maguindanaon and Iranun communities. Like their Maguindanaon brethren, the Maranaos also weave and wear the *malong* as a primary garment. One of their most distinctive *malongs* is the *malong landap* made with several silk panels dyed a solid colour and connected at the selvages by narrow strips of multi-coloured tapestry bands. The tapestry bands are known as *langkit*; the broad vertical band is called *lakban* while the narrower horizontal bands are known as *tobiran*. The motifs seen in the l*angkit* bands are known as *okir*, which means to carve or etch, and hints at a relationship between both the carving and weaving traditions. *Okir* motifs can be classified into two main categories: *okir a dato* (male motif) and *okir a bai* (female motif). The example seen here features the *okir a dato* which consists of curvilinear floral motifs similar to those found in wood-carvings. A silk *malong landap* is a prized *pusaka* (heirloom) and is worn only on special occasions.

Textiles feature prominently in the social and ritual life of the Bangsamoro; ubiquitous in joyous celebrations as well as somber mourning. Within the motifs are embedded stories from the past while the vibrant colours reflect the diversity that can be found within the Bangsamoro community and their resilience in the face of adversity.

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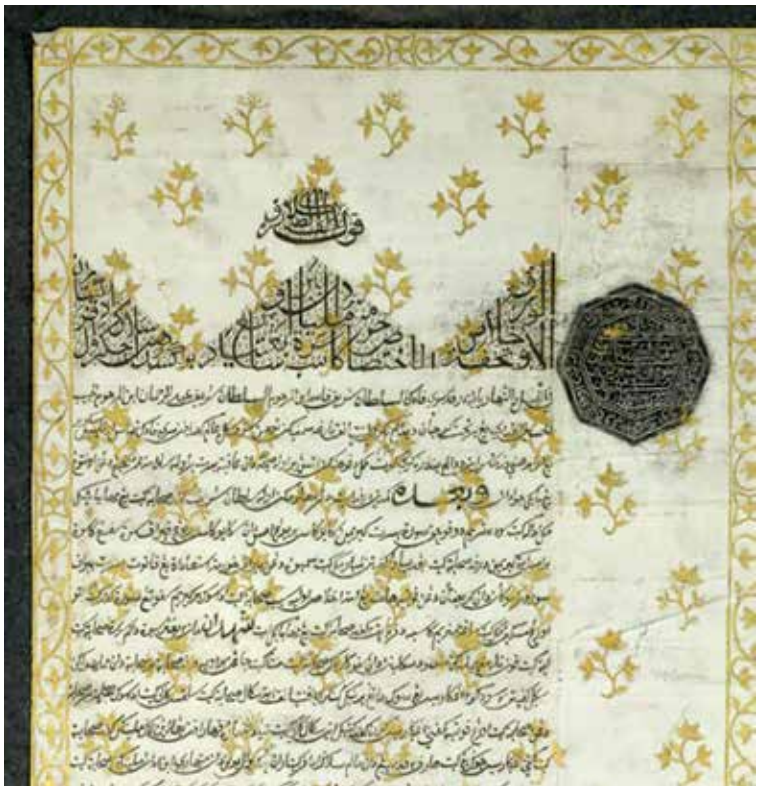
Photos by the author

Motifs in Malay Manuscripts

By Shukary Edros

Manuscripts play an important role in preserving the intellectual knowledge and heritage of a society. The Malay world is in no way short of such manuscripts, which serve as a testament to the cultural development of the Malay people. These manuscripts can range from *sya'ir*, epic poems in lyrical stanzas, to *hikayat*, chronicles that narrate tales about royalty and other stories. They include beautifully illuminated royal correspondence and Qu'rans. The most striking feature of a manuscript is its decorated illumination and the motifs that leave readers with a lasting impression. Many of these motifs and artworks are the result of centuries of transmission of knowledge and cross-cultural exchange between the Malays and other parts of the world. Many of the Malay entities formed coastal polities such as Pontianak and Johor-Riau who established ports and emporiums that facilitated the exchange of ideas across the archipelago.

One motif that was the result of cross-cultural influences can be found in the pages of a 20th century Qu'ran manuscript from Central Java, now on display in the Islamic Arts Gallery of the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM). A lattice swastika motif on the cartouches in the inner frames bordering the verses of a Qu'ran is a Chinese motif called *wanzi*, meaning 10,000. The *wanz*i motif is a set of repeating lattices that has its origins in Chinese culture. This latticework can be found on Chinese-influenced batik motifs known as *banji*, which the Chinese consider to be auspicious symbols. In the 12th century the same motif spread from China to influence Persia's Islamic art, especially metalwork. The geometrically repeating pattern is also a favourite symbol of Hindu art and its deities; 'swastika' is a Sanskrit term signifying good luck and auspiciousness. It also entered Mughal (north Indian) Islamic art as seen on the main gateway of the Tomb of Akbar. Hence it may have appealed to illumination artists as one of various motifs for repetitive geometric patterns. With this motif adorning every page of the Qu'ran, this manuscript is a reflection of such external influences.

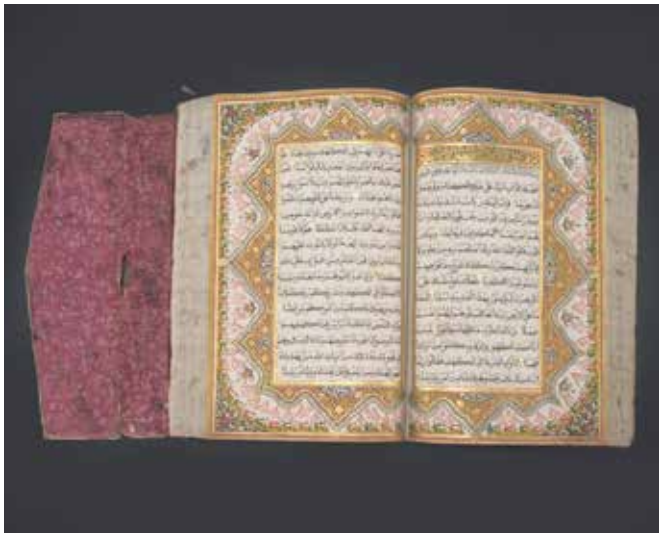


Letter of Sultan Syarif Kasim to Pontianak, image courtesy of British Library Blogs

Another design often found in Malay manuscripts consists of floral motifs, in fact it is the most common one. It occurs in the correspondence among the native rulers as illuminations against the white background of the letter. One example of this is in a letter dated 14 February 1811 from Sultan Syarif Kasim of Pontianak to Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (British Library, MSS Eur D 742/1). Floral motifs based on the clove, rose and Ylang-Ylang are gilded onto the letter's body/field while others such as the jasmine, sunflower and to a certain extent the poppy, are gilded onto the borders of these letters. Gold was used in letters to reflect the royal status of the ruler who had commissioned it. In addition to letters, we can find gilded motifs in the pages of the Qu'ran.

Central Javanese Qur'an, image courtesy of the Asian Civilisations Museum

A 19th century Qu'ran manuscript from Terengganu exhibited in the ACM is the best example of a meticulously decorated and detailed gilded Qu'ran. As in the Qu'ran manuscript from Central Java, the *gunungan* motif is apparent in the inner frames bordering the verses and along the edges of the pages. *Gunungan* literally means



Terengganu Qur'an, image courtesy of the Asian Civilisations Museum

Hikayat Nabi Yusuf, image courtesy of British Library Blogs

mountain-form, a ubiquitous motif found throughout Java. Often seen also in *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) plays, the *gunungan* symbolizes Mount Meru, a sacred mountain in Hindu and Buddhist mythology. Gilded and furnished with floriation and foliation, the use of *gunungan* is immortalised in Malay manuscripts and is a legacy of their Hindu-Buddhist past. In addition, the practice of interweaving gilded calligraphy from a wood carving technique called *tebuk tembus*, which means 'direct piercing', can be found in the cartouches just above and below the borders of the verses. The *tebuk tembus* design creates three-dimensional effects that add depth to the manuscript. The combination of motifs that complement each other has resulted in a lavishly designed manuscript that leaves a lasting impression on viewers. This is typical of Terengganu-style manuscripts. Such an intricate floriation decoration can also be found in the opening pages of the *hikayat*.

In the opening pages of *Hikayat Nabi Yusuf* (British Library, MSS Malay d.4) dated 1802 from Perlis, the *gunungan* design and extensive use of floral motifs within it are found in its first two pages. In the top right-hand page of this manuscript, we can find the name of the owner, Cik Candra, and the artist of who created this manuscript, Cik Mat. The inscription reads, *"inilah bekas tangan Cik Mat orang Kayangan dipinjam oleh Cik Candra"* which means "this is the work of Cik Mat from Kayangan made for Cik Candra". This sentence is one of the few examples where the name of the artist who designed the motifs and created the illumination is provided. In addition, we can also find the name of the owner, Cik Candra, written at the beginning of the *hikayat* as a note to remind readers that the design of this motif cost him a fairly large sum of money, *"dinyatakan oleh tuannya Cik Candra kerana banyak senda rugi menulih kepalanya"*. From this sentence written by the owner himself, we know that this exquisite and elaborate design was an expensive piece of artwork. Apart from the floral decoration and the *gunungan*, we can see a similar cultural feature in the architecture of the Malay world. Within the *gunungan* motif, an abstraction of the *Kala-Makara* (mythical sea creature) figure can be seen in the floriation. The *Kala-Makara* is a feature found in Hindu-Buddhist temple architecture as a symbolic decorative element on temple portals (please refer to Dr Imran's article). The floriation motif in this manuscript has been designed with projections similar to the *Kala-Makara* architectural feature.

On the fragment of an Aceh-style manuscript from the 19th century, on display in the Islamic Arts Gallery at the ACM, we can make out the distinctive yet abstract shape of the *Kala-Makara* ornamentation in the top left-hand page within the *gunungan*. The *sulur-suluran*, interlocking flowering vines and leaves, produces the impression of deity's head, Kala, and the projections with antefixes, Makara. This motif can only be found in one *gunungan* as compared to others that flank the outer frames, and at the top and bottom of the illumination. This may be owing to the artist's experimentation with various forms of *sulur-suluran* designs. In the *gunungan* in the left page flanking the frame, this design is asymmetrical as compared to the corresponding design on the right. In addition, we can see a cruciform motif in the bottom *gunungan* on the right-hand page. Together with these *sulur-suluran* designs, the deep red, yellow and black colours of the illumination and frames are characteristic of a typical manuscript from Aceh. The parallelism of the *Kala-Makara* design is seen not only in manuscripts, but also in Malay woodwork where artists incorporated the design as a lasting reminder of the past. We can see through these motifs that Malay manuscripts serves not only as a testament to the cultural development of the Malays, but are also a reminder of the cultural infusion and exchanges that took place in the past.

Qur'an from Aceh, photo by Noorashikin binte Zulkifli

Shukary Edros *is a marine engineering student. He collects books on the Malay world as part of his interest in Malay history.*

In the Footsteps of the Malay Royal Regalia

By Darlene D Kasten

Unusual Javanese three-dimensional wooden puppets, batiks worn by Javanese sultans, gold jewellery, rare prints, manuscripts and books, a stuffed tapir. These were just a few of the visual splendours assembled from all over the world and on display for the Asian Civilisations Museum's (ACM) recent special exhibition, *Raffles in Southeast Asia: Revisiting the Scholar and Statesman.* Of all the treasures exhibited, the pieces that intrigued me the most were the set of royal regalia of the Riau-Lingga sultanate. On loan from the National Museum of Indonesia in Jakarta, possession of the royal regalia once signified the legitimacy of the reigning sultan in the Malay world.

Royal regalia are part of a wider category of heirlooms called *pusaka*. The five pieces on display included a gold *cogan* or ritual fan, two jewel-encrusted *keris*, and a tobacco box and spittoon for ceremonial betel chewing. The difference between Malay royal regalia and European royal regalia is that Southeast Asian regalia were considered alive. They had names, were fed through rituals, taken on processions, and were reputed to have super powers often based on a connection to powerful people in the past.

ACM display of the royal regalia of Riau-Lingga from the collection of the Museum Nasional Indonesia, photo by the author

The gold and silver *cogan,* for example, was carried at the head of royal processions. Its leaf-shaped silhouette resembles the cosmic mountain symbolizing the universe and on it is an inscription stating that the owner is the rightful ruler and a descendant of Alexander the Great.

Masjid Raya Mosque *(Royal Mosque), photo by John Ang*

The irony of these powerful Malay heirlooms sharing the same physical space as Raffles' own collection was not lost on me. Had Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles been able to acquire the royal regalia of Riau-Lingga in the early 19th century as he had so desired, regional history may have proved very different.

So what is the history behind this set of regalia and the connection to Raffles? After the reigning Sultan of Riau-Lingga, Mahmud Shah III, died in 1811, different factions supported either Tengku Abdul Rahman or Tengku Hussein Shah to be installed as the new sultan. *Tengku* means crown prince and both were the sons of two minor wives of Sultan Mahmud. Since the older Tengku Hussein was not present at his father's deathbed, he was deemed disqualified by Malay *adat* or customary law. Instead, with the support of the Dutch, his younger half-brother was chosen as sultan.

Gravesite of Engku Puteri Rajah Hamida, photo by the author

In order to be properly installed as sultan, you need to have the royal regalia in your possession. Unfortunately for Abdul Rahman, the royal regalia was in the custody of Engku Puteri Rajah Hamida, Sultan Mahmud's principal wife. Engku Hamida was very influential in the areas of customs and *adat* and protested against the customary law of succession being followed, calling it an "act of injustice". She refused to accept the legitimacy of Abdul Rahman's installation as sultan and refused to surrender the royal regalia.

Meanwhile, in February 1819, in order to have someone with whom to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance and thereby be allowed to set up a British trading post in Singapore, Raffles effectively installed Tengku Hussein as the Sultan of Johor-Singapore. This was done even though Singapore was technically under the jurisdiction of Sultan Abdul Rahman. Of course, Raffles wanted the royal regalia in order to cement the legitimacy of Sultan Hussein's newly created position. The British even offered to pay

Engku Hamida 50,000 Spanish silver dollars (equivalent to S$1 million today) for it, which she also refused. And so the succession dispute continued for several more years.

The royal regalia was forcibly taken away from Engku Hamida by the Dutch in 1822 and given to Abdul Rahman, who was then proclaimed as the Sultan of Johor, Riau-Lingga and Pahang. The 1824 Anglo-Dutch treaty officially partitioned the Riau-Johor Sultanate into the Riau-Lingga and Johor-Singapore sultanates, under the Dutch and British spheres of influence, respectively.

Istana Engku Bilik *(Pulau Penyengat) and Istana Kampong Gelam, now the Malay Heritage Centre (Singapore), photos by the author*

Then in 1911, the Riau-Lingga sultanate was annexed by the Dutch, and the royal regalia along with it. The regalia eventually ended up in Jakarta from where key pieces were lent to Singapore for the Raffles special exhibition. Quite a journey!

I travelled on a journey myself to Pulau Penyengat in Riau-Lingga in February to visit places associated with this royal tug of wills. I accompanied art historian John Ang, an avid collector of Malay Textiles and a devoted student of the region's history.

Our first stop was the Royal Mosque, established in 1832 and completed in 1844. Its prominent position on a hill overlooking the narrow strait makes it highly visible from the shores of Tanjung Penang. This was no accident. It was built in quiet defiance to be plainly in view of the Dutch fort headquartered there.

The Royal Mosque has four towers and 13 cupolas and is painted bright yellow signifying royalty and green representing Islam. The 360 square meter mosque may seem small in stature, but it is great in terms of religious and cultural significance. It is a local pilgrimage destination for devout Muslims in the region.

The interior of the mosque features Javanese influences with four large columns supporting the cupolas. Just inside the entry to the mosque, there are two large wooden bookcases adorned with golden calligraphy. Inside the padlocked bookcases, rare Islamic books from India, Cairo, Mecca and Medina are kept hidden from view. But a few steps further in, we were able to see a beautifully hand-illustrated 17th century Koran under glass.

Darlene Kasten with Tengku Fahmi outside Istana Engku Bilik, photo by John Ang

The largest and most visited gravesite on the island is that of Engku Hamida herself. Surrounded by yellow curtains, her grave exudes a mystical quality worthy of her reputation as a miracle worker. Believers still make pilgrimages to her gravesite in order to tie yellow satin cloths over her headstones and make a wish or ask for her help.

We spent the most time on Penyengat on the grounds of the former istana or palace of the Engku Bilik, sister of the last Sultan of Riau-Lingga, Abdul Rahman Muazzam Shah II. Bilik means "room" and is a reference to her never having left her palace quarters during her lifetime. It was here that we had the remarkable opportunity to spend more than an hour with Engku Bilik's great-great-grandson, Tengku Fahmi. Together we pored over early 19th century photographs of his royal ancestors at ceremonies or in casual family groups as he regaled us with stories from the sultanate's illustrious past.

A royal wedding procession with nobat *instruments. Photo dated 1922, by Mohamed Omar Din, Nik Anwar, Nik Mahmud*

The style of the former palace of Engku Bilik looks remarkably like another former istana in Singapore's Kampong Gelam, now the Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) and that is not the only connection. Tengku Fahmi was able to verify the provenance of another piece of *pusaka*, the *nekara* or ceremonial drum now housed in MHC. It was one of two kettledrums used exclusively at Lingga royal ceremonies as part of a *nobat* or ensemble and he showed us pictures of the instruments covered in material being carried in a wedding procession in Terengganu.

When asked about the whereabouts of any other pieces of the royal regalia, Tengku Fahmi said some were sent to Leiden in the Netherlands. Coincidentally, I was traveling to Leiden at the end of February. The journey continues!

Darlene D Kasten *is a docent at both the Malay Heritage Centre and the Asian Civilisations Museum. She was recently part of the research group for the ACM's special exhibition,* Raffles in Southeast Asia: Revisiting the Scholar and Statesman.

Malay Buddhist Architecture and Culture and Its Translations to the Islamic Period

By Imran bin Tajudeen

Malay Buddhist culture straddled both sides of the Straits region, in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. The ethnonym *Melayu* denotes speakers of the Malay language, found in Sumatra, coastal Borneo and the Malay Peninsula. The term itself formerly designated an early Buddhist Malay polity, Malayu at Muara Jambi, which appeared in the record by the fifth century CE and was eclipsed and absorbed by Srivijaya in Palembang in the seventh century before regaining pre-eminence in the 11th to 12th centuries.

Fig 1 Talang Tuwo, *inscription in Old Malay, dated the equivalent of 22 March 684 CE, displayed at the National Museum of Indonesia in Jakarta, photo by the author*

Malay agency and literacy in Buddhist history

The significant role of the Malay peoples and kingdoms in the Buddhist world is attested to in Chinese, Tamil, Tibetan and Bengali records and accounts between the seventh and 12th centuries. Old Malay literary culture and its role in Buddhism provide a glimpse into the complex and original translations and reworkings that occurred to Indic concepts within Malay Buddhist culture. The Old Malay language was enfolded around Buddhism, adopting numerous expressions and terms while retaining its own grammar and vocabulary. The contents of the *Talang Tuwo* inscription (Fig 1) issued in Palembang by the ruler of Srivijaya, reveal a series of juxtapositions of Old Malay honorifics and Sanskrit terms or names: the king himself is styled *punta hyang Sri Jayanasa*; another Old Malay honorific precedes a Sanskrit term for the three gems in *dang hyang ratnatraya*; the Malay adjective and verb *rajin tahu* are chosen as exhortations to imbibe Buddhist sciences denoted by complex Sanskrit names; and the inscription records the founding of a park by the ruler as an act of Buddhist piety; this park is denoted by an Old Malay term that precedes its Sanskrit name, *parlak Sriksetra*, while the following Malay terms are listed for its plants: *nyiur*, *pinang*, *enau*, *rumbia*, *aur*, and *buluh betung*. These and other examples indicate the role of Old Malay as a carrier language of Buddhist culture and the study of Sanskrit.

In this period, the Chinese applied the term K'un-lun to denote the Malays, their language, and their eleven principal towns (*chou*) along the Straits, including Srivijaya, with its capital, Palembang, Malayu (Muara Jambi) and Kedah. It appears this term extended to the Malayo-Polynesian-speaking Chams, since a Chinese general is recorded as having procured 1,350 Buddhist texts written in Old Malay from the Cham capital in 605 CE. In 671 CE, a Chinese monk called Yijing exhorted other Chinese monks to study in Srivijaya before proceeding to Nalanda in India, while the Tibetan saint Atisa studied for 12 years (1013-1025) in Srivijayapura (Palembang) under Dharmakirti, a Sumatran prince-turned-Buddhist scholar. Unfortunately, in contrast with Old Javanese works such as the ninth century *Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan*, Old Malay works on Buddhism have not survived.

Fig 2 Makara *balustrade end of Candi Gumpung, 8th century, at Muara Jambi, photo by Bambam Agit*

Carving a space for Malay Buddhist culture

Paralleling this predicament in literary works, Sumatran Malay Buddhist architecture is overshadowed in Indonesia by Java's spectacular built legacies, while national boundaries separate the Buddhist legacies of peninsular Malays from receiving a detailed comparison with Sumatra and Java.

Sumatran and Peninsular Malay Buddhist temples belong to several identifiable types, distributed across

Fig 3 The slender stupa Candi Mahligai and the massive base to Candi Tua stupa, 11th to 12th century, at Muara Takus, photo by Fistri Abdul Rahim

Fig 5 Roof finials (memolo) *and roof ridge-end ornaments* (sulur bayung) *on mosques and minarets in Melaka: Kg Hulu (left) and Kg Keling Mosque, photos by the author*

Fig 6 Roof finials (memolo) *and roof ridge ornaments (*tanduk*) on Palembang Grand Mosque, photo by the author*

different periods and sites. Very little is extant from Palembang besides the most important seventh century Old Malay inscriptions and the ruins of Buddhist brick stupas, votive tablets and stupikas. In contrast, over 92 brick monuments and Buddhist statues from the eighth to 12th centuries have been found at Muara Jambi, with substantial terraced brick podiums such as that seen at the eighth century Candi Gumpung (Fig 2) sited within brick-walled courtyards with gateways. Two hypotheses have been put forward on this and similar Muara Jambi temples: they were either solid stupa-temples with niches for statues, or elaborate podiums for wooden pavilions.

Muara Takus and Padang Lawas are two major Sumatran temple sites; the first contains a group of brick stupas, including Candi Tua, which sits on a massive base, and the slender Candi Mahligai (Fig 3). The latter features numerous brick temples with cellas that have been restored to the base of their roofs, and brick platforms for wooden pillared halls. They have similarities with Javanese stone and brick temples, but are clearly distinguishable.

Fig 4 Makara balustrade end from Melaka, formerly from the old royal hill (St Paul's Hill), estimated 11th century, on display at the National Museum of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, photo by the author

In contrast, early peninsular temples in Kedah (fifth to 10th century), all of which are Buddhist, comprise low brick podiums with stone pillar bases for wooden halls, often in combination with brick cellas (inner chambers), as well as stupa bases. Hindu temples emerge after the 11th century, using a distinct tradition of laterite stone shaped as bricks, stone pillar bases and extensive terraced landscapes. Comparable structures were recorded in Singapore on Fort Canning Hill before their destruction by the British.

The *makara* (Fig 4), part of the *kala-makara* ornament assemblage in Javanese and Malay temple architecture, are the most distinctive architectural ornaments from the Sumatran and peninsular sites for art historical comparison. Their expressions are clearly differentiated from styles seen in India. Melaka's *makara*, comparable to an example from Jambi (1064) and four from Padang Lawas (11th-13th centuries) are distinguishable from Javanese examples.

Literary and artistic translations for Islamic use

From the 12th to the 15th centuries, locally produced Islamic artefacts reveal the translation of Buddhist motifs and literary culture in the cultural milieu of Islamic conversion: in northern Sumatra at Lamuri (the 12th century gravestone of its sultan) and Pasai (14th century Minye Tujoh gravestone pair using Kawi and Arabic), and on the peninsula near Melaka (15th century Pengkalan Kempas grave inscriptions in Jawi and Kawi) and at Terengganu (14th century legal code in Jawi). These artefacts are contemporaneous with the 14th century legal code from Dharmasraya/Tanjung Tanah (Jambi's hinterland), written in Malay in the Kawi script. Upon conversion to Islam, Melaka, Lamuri, Pasai and Terengganu became the sites for the translation of Malay culture from its erstwhile Buddhist expression to Islamic needs.

Melaka's 15th century royal mosque, built of stone cubes, was used by the Sultanate forces as a fortified stronghold during the Portuguese attack and was dismantled by the Portuguese to provide the building materials for a fortress tower called A Famosa, supplemented by stones from royal tombs. The mosque's square plan foundations seem to have been retained for this tower, tilted as it was towards Mecca. We do not have any depiction of the mosque, but Palopo Mosque in Luwu, South Sulawesi provides an example with fitted stone walls, with a three-tiered roof sheltering a square plan.

Melaka and Palembang's oldest extant mosques (Figs 5 and 6) date from the 1700s, and their stucco and coral stone roof finial and ridge-end ornaments are translations and re-signification of symbolic forms that point to the elixir of life (*brahmamula*, glossed as *memolo* and depicted as vessels upon a tiered vegetal base) protected by *naga*s stylised as curling vines, *sulur bayung* or horns, *tanduk*. These are unique to Malay and Javanese Buddhist and Hindu art with no parallel in India.

Motifs and artistic expression in wood from the period of Malay Buddhist art survive in foliated or abstracted form through Islamic-era woodcarving and mosque ornamental schema, while the original stone mosque of the Melaka Sultanate, along with its *makara* relic, point to a lost masonry tradition that survived into the Sultanate period. Malay Buddhist culture also experienced some degree of continuity through literacy and artistic expression with the conversion of Malays to Islam. Malay Islamic art and architecture creatively reworked and re-signified the forms and motifs from its Buddhist civilisation. However, today this remarkable legacy lies largely forgotten and poorly understood.

Imran bin Tajudeen *researches architectural encounters in Singapore and Southeast Asia across the* longue durée, *through historiographical questions on Indic and Islamic architecture.*

Seeing Southeast Asia in the ACM's New Islamic Art Gallery

By Noorashikin binte Zulkifli

In 2015, the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) launched the first new permanent galleries as part of major redevelopment works. The permanent galleries' revamp is driven by an updated curatorial approach supporting the ACM's current mission which emphasises "networks and flows of people, goods, faith, cultures and ideas". Three galleries with the theme 'Faith and Belief' opened at the end of November 2018 – the Christian Art, Islamic Art and Ancestors and Rituals galleries. This article focuses on the representation of Southeast Asia in the Islamic Art gallery.

To its believers, Islam is the final religion revealed to humankind through the last prophet, Muhammad (570–632 AD). More than spiritual precepts, Islam is regarded as a *din* or way of life, guided primarily by the Qur'an on a multitude of matters concerning individuals and society. The adoption and application of such a complex system varied from place to place, frequently interacting with extant local traditions and practices to give rise to a wealth and range of artistic expressions among Islamic cultures. ACM's Islamic Art gallery surveys these diverse developments through 125 objects within the context of Islam's eastward expansion into Asia: from the Arabian Peninsula to the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, and to China. The objects on display run the gamut from textiles, glass, ceramics, woodcarving, metalwork, manuscripts and paintings dating from the eighth to the 20th century.

'Islamic art' is a broad rubric, a concept developed by art historians in the 19th century to designate material produced in lands where Muslims either formed the majority or were the ruling elite. Within these cultures configured by Islamic values and sensibilities, works were produced by both Muslim and non-Muslim artists for patrons, Muslim and non-Muslim. These works not only comprised devotional art, but also quotidian and occasional objects used in the secular and scientific domains, thus distinguishing Islamic art from other categories such as Christian art.

Qur'an box, Myanmar, early 20th century

The standard Islamic art narrative chronicles the rise and fall of dynasties and empires and their resultant artistic cultures. It typically spans seventh century Arabia, southern Spain and North Africa, Central Asia and Mughal India, which had declined by the 19th century. Southeast Asia is often left out or underrepresented in museums and galleries devoted to Islamic art. Hence, the main objective of ACM's Islamic Art gallery, which draws from the National Collection's strength, is to highlight the development of Islamic art in this region.

Given the gallery's compact size vis-à-vis the immense geography and layered histories of the Islamic world, a thematic approach was decided upon as the most appropriate strategy to survey its artistic traditions. Playing off the adage, "seeing is believing", 'seeing' and 'believing' form the principal trajectories underpinning the gallery. How is art seen, or perceived, as Islamic? And how do believers perceive and interpret art or beauty in the world and cosmos?

Sculpture of al-Buraq, Philippines, Mindanao, Lanao del Sur, early or mid-20th century

Each trajectory is explored along two themes, intended as dialogues and not dichotomies, dividing the gallery into four sections. The first half examines universal ideas and prevailing conventions (*Global* section) in conversation with local or regional adaptations that led to unique visual idioms (*Regional* section). Here, the discourse is subverted by placing the *Regional* section before the *Global*, to convey the central message of this gallery.

The *Regional* section highlights Islamic art from Southeast Asia, home today to around a quarter of the world's Muslim population, with majorities in Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia, and significant minorities in Singapore, Cambodia, Myanmar, southern Thailand and the Philippines. The history of Islam in the region extends from early contact with Muslim traders from the Middle East, Iran or India in the eighth century and large-scale conversions in the 15th and 16th centuries. For these reasons, the region deserves our attention yet it has been viewed mostly as peripheral to the historical Islamic world. By placing Southeast Asian Islamic art upfront for the visitor to encounter, its importance to the wider fabric of Islamic art history is asserted.

Highlights among these works of art from mainland and insular Southeast Asia are the Terengganu Qur'an; a Burmese Qur'an box; a wooden sculpture of al-Buraq from Mindanao; and a Javanese sarong featuring camels and tents as motifs. While Southeast Asian Qur'ans adhere to the Islamic convention of the codex format, distinctive regional styles shine through the illuminated pages and the Terengganu style represents the finest. Dense and elaborate, with decorative frames within frames surrounding the text, intricate undulating arches reach out to floral motifs lining the page borders.

Magico-medicinal bowl, Malay Peninsula, Perak, around 1939

A bowl inscribed with Qur'anic verses, from Iran

The gilded, relief-moulded decoration of the Qur'an box with glass inlays is characteristic of a Burmese lacquerware style known as *hman-zi shwei*. Produced mainly in Mandalay, it is technically difficult and expensive. The chest design is probably derived from the longer, narrower chests used for storing Buddhist *kammavaca* manuscripts – highlighting the creativity of Southeast Asian artists and artisans in adapting local traditions to produce Islamic works.

Sculptures of al-Buraq, the supernatural creature that transported Prophet Muhammad to Jerusalem and the heavens, are displayed during feasts and festivals commemorating these miraculous journeys (*Isra'* and *Mi'raj*) among the southern Filipino Muslim communities. The fern-inspired motifs on the headdress and tail are emblematic of the Maranao people's *okir* or wood carving artistry. Muslim southern Philippines shares much with the Malay-Indonesian world where the wood carving tradition serves as a primary source of motifs and patterns for other arts such as textile crafts and metalwork.

The sarong, (image on the cover) alludes to the presence of diasporic Arab communities in the region, with most hailing from the Hadhramawt region in present-day Yemen. Among their traditional businesses were batik workshops along the north coast of Java and *hajj* brokerage, organising travel arrangements for Southeast Asian pilgrims. While the camels and tents might suggest a caravan for trade or the *hajj*, the turbaned men carry flags bearing slogans that translate as 'Flag of the King of Mecca'. The flag design refers to the flag of the 1916 Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, led by the Sharif of Mecca who received support among the Hadhrami Arabs.

Detail of an illuminated page of a Qur'an, Malay Peninsula, Terengganu, 19th century

In the remaining sections, the thematic approach enables works of art from different regions to be grouped together – to encourage consideration of the commonalities and variations through the juxtaposition of objects. For every group, the aforementioned strategy to assert Islamic art from Southeast Asia as no less important, is furthered by including at least one Southeast Asian Islamic object.

The 'Believing' trajectory comprises the Spiritual and Supernatural thematic sections. The Spiritual section examines the status of calligraphy and the associated arts of the book (illustration, illumination and bookbinding), as the most revered art form in the Islamic world. On display is a Javanese manuscript of a *hadith* compilation (recorded traditions of the Prophet). Produced on *dluwang*, a local paper made from beaten tree bark, the manuscript shows the use of Arabic script to write Javanese (termed *Pegon*). Of note is the calligram by celebrated calligrapher, Yusuf Chen Jinhui (1938–2008), who elegantly married Arabic calligraphy and Chinese brush painting to fashion a heron/crane out of the ubiquitous Islamic invocation: "In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful".

Lastly, the Super-Natural section presents observations and interpretations of the natural and supernatural realms that were beautifully depicted on manuscripts and instruments, as well as talismanic objects and amulets. Two bowls, of similar design and engraved with Qur'anic verses, from Iran and Perak are presented here. They refer to the tradition of drinking water that has touched Qur'anic verses to cure illnesses, counter poisons, or relieve the pain of childbirth. While such bowls were well-established in Iran, little is known of their manufacture in Southeast Asia, suggesting they were imports. The Perak bowl was collected in 1939, most likely during a field expedition when it was the Raffles Library and Museum. Similar bowls from Aceh are also found in the collection of the Tropenmuseum in the Netherlands, suggesting another possibility – that of local production with reference to Iranian examples.

Ultimately, the gallery is intended to convey that Islamic art cannot be determined as a singular style or movement and its development involved adaptation and syncretisation with local artistic traditions and practices as well as innovation. The result is a rich, complex and varied weave of what is appreciated today as the Islamic arts.

Noorashikin binte Zulkifli *is the curator of the Islamic art exhibition at the Asian Civilisations Museum.*

All images courtesy of the Asian Civilisations Museum

Modern Monarchs

A Fashion Revolution in the Malay Royal Courts

By Faris Joraimi

As the rapid, unprecedented surge of European imperial expansion gathered pace in the late 19th century, a number of societies in various parts of the world pursued a path of 'modernisation' along Western lines. In Meiji Japan and the Ottoman Empire, reforms in education, the legal system and public administration were initiated. Statistical bureaus made the task of governing more efficient, while the telegraph and railways linked the capital to its provinces. Both the Ottomans and the Japanese were emerging as modern nation-states. In Southeast Asia, reforms initiated by Kings Mongkut and Chulalongkorn were effective at enabling Siam to resist colonial rule.

Modernisation changed patterns of consumption. The historian Maurizio Peleggi studied the way in which the Siamese kings' extravagant material acquisitions signified their nation's entry into the modern world. However, 'modernity' for these elites seems to have been conflated with 'Western'. They bought European furniture and built palaces blending Western architecture with Siamese features. French and Italian books began to show up in the private libraries of Turkish elites, as did English furniture.

The profound transformation in these societies was also reflected in the styles of dress adopted by their rulers. Dress acts as a 'document' that can be 'read' to understand the ideological priorities and political allegiances of the elites at particular historical moments. Many Eastern monarchs – from Tokyo to Istanbul – began to adopt Western military uniforms (Fig 1). The Malay world was part of this global trend. Beginning in the 1870s, Malay rulers from both sides of the Melaka Straits updated their official uniforms.

Fig 1 Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II

There are many ways we can interpret this reinvention of their public image. Firstly, it can be seen as an attempt to place them on par with European sovereigns and thus signal their capability to govern and modernise their societies. Secondly, it can also reveal a problematic assumption: that to be 'modern' meant being 'Western'.

In the case of the Malay world, dress was always used to project royal prestige. However, the adoption of Western dress by the Malay rulers did not imply any true wish to 'become European'. Rather, the West and its aesthetic represented yet another effective vocabulary of power that these rulers used to convey their legitimacy. In fact, the westernisation of Malay court dress was but one phase in a series of earlier 'fashion revolutions' that date back to the time of the gilded Melaka Sultanate.

The *Sejarah Melayu* records that an official named Tun Hassan was "the first to extend the Malay shirt [*baju Melayu*] such that it hung low, to widen its cuffs and lengthen its sleeves. For the Malay shirt in the past was of a small cut." Malay court fashion was thus always dynamic, shifting with the times to suit both changing aesthetic tastes and also the strategic demands of the era. Because the European presence in the Malay world was becoming increasingly felt by the late 19th century, the Malay elites were expected to co-opt European fashions to project their authority, since it was the Europeans who had emerged as formidable power-holders in the region (see Figs 3 to 6).

Overt British involvement in the Peninsula began with the signing of the 1874 Pangkor Treaty with Perak. The ruler of that state at the time, Abdullah Muhammad Shah II (Fig 2), was often photographed wearing a military dress uniform with elaborate embroidery. Another portrait, taken with his son Raja Ngah, shows them both not only in Western dress uniform, but also armed with swords. A long sword was never part of Malay royal regalia as Malay noblemen were usually associated with the traditional *keris*. However, the sabre was often a part of the ceremonial dress code of European officers at the time.

Fig 2 Abdullah Muhammad Shah II of Perak (seated), with his son Raja Ngah

Another line of Malay rulers who likewise fashioned themselves after European sovereigns as part of a broader policy of Westernisation was that of Johor. Abu Bakar (Fig 3), who successfully acquired the title of Sultan in 1885, initiated a reorganisation of his government along Western lines. The then governor of the Straits Settlements, Harry Ord, remarked that "In his tastes and habits he is an English gentleman. As a ruler, he is anxious to promote in everything the advancement and civilisation of his people and is the only Rajah in the whole Peninsula or the adjoining states who rules in accordance with the practice of civilised nations." This was certainly evident in the development of his capital, which he shifted from Telok Blangah to Tanjong Puteri (Johor Bahru today). Buildings such as the *Istana Besar* (Grand Palace) and the *Masjid Negeri* (State Mosque) which were built in Abu Bakar's time, were all constructed in Victorian-style architecture, suggesting his intention to model Johor Bahru after European capitals.

Fig 3 Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor

His government came to include a postal service, a Treasury Department, a Public Works and Land Department and a Commisariat, with a railway under construction by the

1870s. His modernising push was of a thoroughly European character, which was reflected in his dress. A prominent portrait, taken sometime between 1886-1895 depicts him along with the material accessories befitting a European monarch, with a long flowing cape that evokes the Robe of State as worn by British sovereigns at their coronation ceremonies. These usually consisted of an ermine cape and a velvet train.

Abu Bakar appears to have been prolifically decorated, as evinced by the number of medals he wore. These were likely to have been received during his trips to Europe, where he was well-received and given "various awards and citations". The crown on the desk was crafted in 1886 by J W Benson Ltd, a London clockmaker and jeweller. It appears to bear a striking resemblance to Britain's Imperial State Crown, except that the finial cross is replaced with the crescent-and-star, a potent symbol that linked many Malay courts to the then political centre of Islam, the caliphate court in Istanbul. His belt is also noticeably different from the Malay waist-buckle or *pending*, which often featured a large clasp of elaborately embossed silver or gold alloy.

The ruling dynasty of Johor had no claims to kingship, belonging to none of the royal houses of the Malay world. It was a line of *Temenggongs*, not Sultans, and had no claims to the traditional rituals and accoutrements that imbued a Malay ruler with *daulat* – the mystical aura that gave him the right to rule. Therefore, Abu Bakar had to invent his own traditions and his own set of royal regalia, including his own crown. In 1868, he sent envoys to meet the aging royal genealogist and historian Raja Ali Haji in Riau. He was known for his knowledge of Malay court protocol and was asked by these delegates if Abu Bakar could assume "sovereign power". Abu Bakar was only granted the title through a treaty with the British in 1885.

Europe was not the only centre for modern Malays' sartorial inspiration. The Ottoman Empire served as another model for what a modern society with a sophisticated and enlightened elite could look like. This was most apparent among the Malay principalities of the Sumatran east coast. Sultan Hashim Abdul Jalil of Siak (Fig 4), moved fluidly between the habit of an Ottoman pasha and that of a European ruler. He was photographed wearing a fez and an Ottoman imperial decoration around his neck in one portrait, but in a full European military uniform in another, complete with a sabre and the Siak crown. His son Sultan Kassim Abdul Jalil employed a hybrid style that incorporated the Ottoman fez and imperial decoration, along with a European naval dress uniform. He was fondly remembered by the people of Siak for reforms he initiated in education and administration.

Fig 4 Sultan Hashim Abdul Jalil

In Langkat, Sultan Abdul Aziz Abdul Jalil Rahmat Shah (Fig 5), was photographed holding the hilt of a ceremonial sword and wearing a dress uniform with a sash, medals and an elaborate headdress jewelled with a stylised plume. At the same time, his contemporary on the throne of Deli, Sultan Ma'mun Al-Rashid Perkasa Alam Shah (Fig 6), was also engaged in the same kind of cross-cultural self-fashioning. The Deli court acquired immense wealth from the growing of tobacco, which began in 1866 with the establishment of the Deli *Maatschappij* by Dutch planters. By 1872, profits had amounted to a million guilders. In light of this newly acquired wealth, it is no surprise that the Sultan of Deli should seek to acquire the prestige to match.

Fig 5 Sultan Abdul Aziz Abdul Jalil Rahmat Shah

He too fashioned himself in the image of other progressive Muslim rulers who saw themselves moving into the modern world. His choice of dress was not entirely different from that worn by Langkat's Sultan Abdul Aziz. As was the case in Riau, the prevalence of Ottoman styles in these rulers' aesthetic is also attributable to the emergence of pan-Islamism and the perception the Malay elites had of the Caliph's spiritual authority.

Things changed as the Malay rulers came to lose their authority in the face of increased British and Dutch control. The colonial authorities enforced the distinctions between themselves and their native subjects by disallowing the rulers from dressing up in European-style uniforms. After World War II, the rise of Malay nationalism led to a shift in which Malay rulers garbed themselves in Malay court dress.

By the time Western-style uniforms became démodé, a new Malay elite had emerged (see Figs 7, 8 & 9). They too had their own distinct fashion sense. These were the urban intellectuals and secular nationalists, who held the political future of the Malays in their hands. Decked in Western suits or Malay *baju*, their *songkok* visibly distinguished them from the old aristocracy (who traditionally opted for the *destar*). It was this class of individuals who represented a new current in Malay political culture, and a new revolution in Malay society.

Fig 6 Sultan Ma'mun Al-Rashid Perkasa Alam Shah

Fig 7 Sukarno

Fig 8 Tengku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj

Fig 9 Enche' Yusof Bin Ishak

Faris Joraimi *is an undergraduate at Yale-NUS College and an enthusiast of classical Malay literature, material culture and history.*

Did Britain Offer to Buy Singapore from the Dutch?

By Peter Borschberg

The question is admittedly not new and is connected to the negotiations leading to the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 17 March 1824. Around 1900, the Dutch historian Pieter Hendrik van der Kemp, advanced the curious conclusion that the British had made an offer. Two overarching questions emerge from this position: first, why did the British make such an offer; and second what sums were in discussion? Let us turn to answering the first overarching question.

Hendrik Baron Fagel, co-negotiator and Dutch ambassador in London

Why extend an offer?

In order to ascertain why the British made an offer, we need to go back to the founding of the trading post on Singapore in January 1819. This is not the time and occasion to explore the reasons why the *temenggong* or Tengku Long (Sultan Husain) decided to enter into an agreement with the British at the time. We do, however, need to bear these points in mind: first, in order to secure a valid treaty, Raffles needed a sovereign co-signatory and to this end, he intervened in a succession dispute between the two sons of the late Sultan Mahmud of Johor-Riau. Irrespective of whether Tengku Long was legally entitled to ascend the throne as sultan (and the Dutch resident of Melaka Rhudé had already contended in the late 1700s that he was not) this elder son was displeased at having been passed over in favour of his younger half-sibling, Abdul Rahman. Raffles thus exploited the rift and made Tengku Long a sultan. Then he requested that the new sultan, and separately also the *temenggong*, sign an agreement by which the British could establish a trading post in Singapore. In so doing Raffles took a huge gamble, for he knew well that the Dutch would voice their grave objections. Anticipating this, Raffles (like his former associate Charles Assey) argued that the grandees of the Johor-Riau Empire were virtually independent and thus had only a tenuous link to Sultan Abdul Rahman. Whatever agreements the Dutch might have secured with Riau, it was argued, these did not extend to either the *temenggong* or Singapore.

The Dutch contest Singapore's legality

There is also the question as to whether Raffles had overstepped his authority. His earlier schemes to found a British post in the archipelago were stopped by his superiors. British officials were particularly concerned not to make any moves that would bring the East India Company (EIC) into conflict with the Dutch. For this reason, Raffles was reined in over his plans for a post at Simangka Bay or one of the coastal ports in Borneo. Singapore was certainly not his first attempt or indeed his first choice, but it was by far his biggest gamble yet.

The historical map of the 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty

The Dutch were furious by what Raffles had done – the treaties, the trading post, making Tengku Long a sultan – and they contemplated military action against the British before dropping the idea. Instead, they relied on the merits of their legal position. Through their governor-general in Batavia, the Dutch exchanged a series of letters with the British authorities, known today as the "Singapore Paper War".

What then were the grounds on which the Dutch challenged the legality of the British post in Singapore? There were three main points of contention. First, Raffles' treaties with the *temenggong* and Hussein enabling the establishment of a British post on Singapore violated Sultan Abdul Rahman's rights on several counts. Second there was the infringement of the Dutch treaty concluded on 18 November 1818. This agreement had renewed the terms that the Dutch had with Johor-Riau in the late

18th century. Third, the treaty of 10 November 1784 (renewed in 1818) by which Johor-Riau had become a hereditary vassal state of the Netherlands. This treaty also regulated issues pertaining to royal succession in Johor-Riau and guaranteed its territorial integrity.

Britain's offer

While the Dutch letters of complaint and British replies were being exchanged in Asia, the politicians in Europe were seeking to settle the outstanding bilateral issues that remained in the wake of the French Revolutionary Wars. Some of these had also arisen from efforts after 1814 to return to the Dutch such colonies as the British had held in trust for the duration of the said wars. For their services, the British were seeking a reimbursement of expenses. The Dutch, in turn, set down as their main condition that the British evacuate and abandon Singapore. In fact, the Dutch negotiators made this their main precondition in 1820, and on its fulfilment, hung the resolution of all the other outstanding issues. During their meeting in the summer of 1820, the British explained to their Dutch counterparts that they could not meet the Dutch precondition because they were awaiting detailed information from Calcutta that would explain the legal situation surrounding Singapore. The negotiators parted ways in August in the hope and belief that they would meet again soon after the British had been briefed by Calcutta. They would, in fact, not meet for another three years.

Anton Reinhard Falck, the chief Dutch negotiator in 1823-4. Image courtesy of the Rijksmuseum

Discussions resumed in December 1823. At the meeting on 15 December, Anton Reinhard Falck (the head of the Dutch team and seasoned diplomat) inquired of his counterpart George Lord Canning (who was British foreign minister at the time), whether he had received the information expected from India. The British had, but as Canning then explained, the information touching on the legal status of Singapore was insufficiently detailed. At this point Falck knew that the British had manoeuvred themselves into a difficult position: they were unable to refute Dutch legal claims over Singapore and were in an impossible position, unabale to fulfil the earlier precondition of abandoning Singapore. Lord Canning then made an unexpected offer: the British would give financial compensation *(pecunieele vergoeding)* for Singapore. Falck could hardly believe his ears. This offer of financial compensation forms the basis of Van der Kemp's claim that the British offered to 'buy' Singapore.

George Lord Canning, the chief British negotiator

How much was offered?

Now to the second overarching question, how much 'compensation' did the British offer? This is not easily ascertained, even if the issue of financial compensation was mentioned several times during subsequent meetings. Since the minutes of the discussions prepared by the Dutch do not record any specific sums, it must be assumed that the British offer became subsumed into the larger deal that was being negotiated. What Falck had not told Lord Canning was that he had revisited all the earlier points of negotiation, and with permission of his king, Willem I of the Netherlands, had decided to use Singapore as a bargaining chip. Falck's grand plan was to negotiate a major territorial rearrangement with the British in Southeast Asia. This plan foresaw that the peninsula with Melaka and Singapore, be placed under British rule in exchange for Billiton, Bencoolen and some concessions in southern Sumatra. The final text of the 1824 Anglo-Dutch treaty spells out the new arrangement. Article 12, moreover, confirms the withdrawal of Dutch objections to a British presence in Singapore. The decision to drop their objections, Falck explained in his memoirs, was based on certain advice received from merchants who were familiar with the situation on the ground. For now Singapore was thriving, Falck noted, because of a loophole in the EIC's regulations. What would happen if this loophole were closed? Falck thus no longer attached a special value to Singapore.

King William I of the Netherlands

Then there were the financial demands that the Dutch had to settle with the British. In previous discussions there had been talk of sums of up to £6 million, a staggering amount of money at the time for a country that had only recently regained its independence from France with empty coffers in the treasury. To make a long story short, Falck walked away from the negotiating table owing a sum of £100,000. Is it here, in this reduction of war debt, that the price of Singapore lies buried? That's very well possible and is a point that certainly merits further investigation.

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Photos courtesy of the author

The Hajj: Journey of a Lifetime

By Ramlah Tyebally

Pilgrims circumambulating the Kaaba, performing the tawaf

Labbaik Allahummah labbaik. Labbaikalaa syarika laka labbaik. (Here I am at Your service, O Allah. Here I am at Your service. Here I am at Your service.)

After 19 years, I was going on my second *Hajj*. We travelled with Saudi Airlines and landed in Jeddah at the King Abdul Aziz International Airport on 16 August 2018. Ours was one of the last flights to arrive before the Hajj Terminal closed for the season. After smoothly clearing Immigration and Customs, we walked to our coach and, although it was almost dusk, we felt the intense heat. It was as if we were inside an oven. We were part of a group of 52 pilgrims and two officials.

The trip to our apartment in Shisha, on the outskirts of Mecca, took three hours. Since we had made our *niat* (intention) to perform our *Umrah* (minor pilgrimage) first while on the plane, we were already in *ihram.* The men's *ihram* consists of two unstitched pieces of white cloth, while the women are free to wear what they please (usually in white or black) but with only their faces and hands exposed. *Ihram* is also the state that pilgrims enter once they have the intention to carry out the requirements of the pilgrimage. *Ihram* can be viewed as a complete state of spiritual purity that demands the discarding of any unclean aspect of the mind, body and soul. In the state of *ihram*, amongst other restrictions, one must refrain from any intimate relations. We were therefore prepared to perform our *tawaf* (the ritual of circumambulating the *Kaaba* seven times) and *saie* (the ritual of walking back and forth seven times between the two small hills of *Safa* and *Marwa*, adjacent to the *Kaaba*).

We left our apartment around midnight to perform the *tawaf*. We did this as a group since we did not want anyone to be lost in the huge crowd. Barefoot, we entered the *Masjidil Haram* (Sacred Mosque) while reciting supplications.

At the very heart of the *Masjidil Haram* is the Kaaba. Islamic tradition regards the Kaaba as the first House of God or place of worship to be erected by the Prophet Abraham. As time passed, it became a place of idol worship, but the Kaaba itself never became an object of worship. It is a symbol of formal uniformity, singleness of devotion and the spiritual unity of Muslims in the One God. The Kaaba's courtyard was full of pilgrims, circumambulating in an anti-clockwise direction, following the cosmic law that an atom's electrons orbit around the nucleus. All were deeply immersed in prayer in whatever language they were comfortable with. We could move only very slowly.

As I made my *tawaf*, I saw men carrying children on their shoulders and elderly couples holding tightly to their adult sons or daughters. We took about two hours to complete this ritual with a short prayer thereafter. We then drank some Zamzam water from the huge barrels provided. According to the Prophet Muhammad, this flowing water heals both body and soul for "it is a blessing and is food that satisfies".

Timeline courtesy of TM Fouzy Travel & Tours, Muhammad Yazid bin Mohamed Kamil

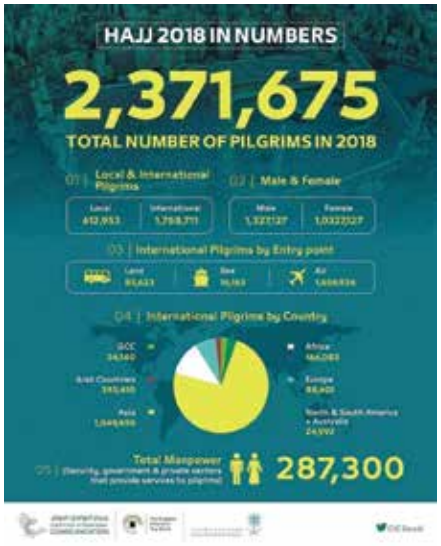
Pilgrims performing saie *between the hills of Safa and Marwa*

Pilgrims supplicating on the Plain of Arafah

In fact, we took every opportunity to drink Zamzam water.

Revitalised, we proceeded to perform the *saie*, walking briskly between the two small hills of Safa and Marwa, a distance of 450 metres. We repeated this seven times, just as Abraham's wife, Hagar, had done when searching for water for her infant son some 4,000 years ago. It is a symbolic ritual that celebrates a mother of Abrahamic monotheism and God's mercy in answering prayers. There are two lanes, one in each direction, and a lane between them for wheelchairs. I walked with my husband and each time we ascended one of the hills, we said a special prayer to mark the oneness of God.

The Day of Arafah was drawing near. We sought forgiveness from one another as it is important to forgive and be forgiven. We performed *ghusl* (a purification bath) to symbolically wash away our impurities once again before putting on our *ihram* for the Hajj. Whether king or beggar, everyone wears the same garments, for "the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct". This day is also about sacrifice and obedience. It was here that Prophet Abraham passed the test when God asked him to sacrifice his first-born son, Ismael. As he prepared for the sacrifice, God told Prophet Abraham that his obedience was sufficient and so a sheep was sacrificed instead. In commemoration of this event, Muslims sacrifice a sheep, cow or camel and distribute the meat to the poor.



We left our apartment after dusk on 8 *Zulhijjah* (the last month in the Islamic calendar) to spend one night in Arafah, sleeping on a thin carpet on the desert ground, with our backpacks as pillows. However, we were blessed with air conditioners in our huge tent, which catered for 200 pilgrims. The Plain of Arafah was dotted with thousands of tents, housing more than two million pilgrims.

On the Day of Arafah, 9 *Zulhijjah*, all the pilgrims gathered in the Plain of Arafah to offer their deepest prayers and most fervent pleas. This day is a reminder of the Day of Resurrection, when everyone stands before God on Judgment Day and only one's deeds count. I left my tent and found a spot under the shade of a young Neem tree. There, I spent my time in prayer, remembering the many requests from relatives and friends to supplicate for them since supplications made on this day will, *inshaAllah* (God-willing), be granted.

Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that "the Hajj is Arafah", meaning that it is the sum and substance of the Hajj. A pilgrim's Hajj is valid only if he/she is present in the Plain of Arafah between noon through sunset, standing before God, a rite known as *wukuf*. This period is thus the most blessed time. All the pilgrims left their tents at five in the afternoon and stood outside in the hot sun with raised hands to receive God's blessings. I lifted my hands and with the others, prayed till sunset.

That evening, we left for Muzdalifah to spend the night under the stars. There, we collected 63 pebbles for our next ritual, stoning the *jamrah*. The ritual signifies getting rid of one's base desires and bad traits such as pride, envy and greed. After a few hours of rest, we left for Muaissim where, at three in the morning, we began the six-kilometre walk to the *jamrah*. Except for the elderly and sickly in wheel-chairs and children on parents' shoulders, every pilgrim walked. The *jamrah* consists of three huge pillars, each with a basin below to collect the pebbles. Just before dawn on 10 *Zulhijjah*, I threw my first set of 21 pebbles.

It was *Eiduladha* – the day of celebration for those who had completed the Hajj. Back in our apartment, we celebrated by wearing colourful new clothes and having a grand breakfast. To celebrate the pilgrimage and as a symbol of a new beginning, the men shaved their heads while the women cut off a few strands of their hair. I was now a *Hajah* for the second time – the title bestowed on a woman who has completed the Hajj.

We stayed at Shisha for the next two days to perform two more stoning rituals and to do the *tawaf* and *saie* for our Hajj, and our farewell *tawaf* before we left for Medina to visit the Prophet's tomb and to pray at his mosque, *Masjid An-Nabawi.*

When performing my Hajj, I was always mindful that it would be my last. This was because my next opportunity would be in 2052, according to the queue system at the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore. By then I will be almost 100 years old. Currently, only about 800 Singaporean Muslims are given Hajj visas by the Saudi Government each year, accounting for just 0.1% of Singapore's Muslim population. Nevertheless, I yearn to return. *InshaAllah.*

Ramlah Tyebally *has been a docent with the Malay Heritage Centre since her retirement six years ago, from a statutory board after 31 years of service.*

Unless otherwise noted, images courtesy of the author

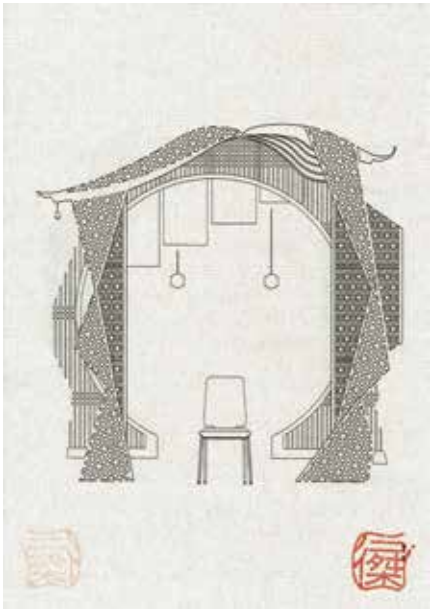
The Regency Made Me Blind

By Durriya Dohadwala

The Regency Made Me Blind, *2019, Gary Carsley and Jeremy Chu, image courtesy of the National Gallery Singapore*

For many of us who visit only occasionally, the National Gallery Singapore is a maze that needs to be navigated carefully – and even then we often end up in corners or dead ends. On one such occasion, I came out on the Padang Deck and instead of a right turn, I took a left. I found myself at the top of a staircase that leads down to the City Hall side of the gallery and that is how I unexpectedly encountered the artwork *The Regency Made Me Blind*.

Covered in images of trees and shrubs, the walls of the stairway have been transformed into an immersive garden. At first glance all you see is the trees and some text, but as you descend the stairs you start noticing other things and realise that the work is dense with hidden imagery. I personally felt as if I had entered a secret garden and had to decipher the meaning of the symbols to understand the artwork (and find my way out!).



Architect Renjie Teoh's blueprint of the multi-layered Pavilion Arch, photo courtesy of Renjie Teoh

The artwork is a site-specific collaboration between Gary Carsley and Jeremy Chu and is part of OUTBOUND, a series of artwork commissions that are intended to trigger unexpected and meaningful art encounters for visitors beyond the exhibition galleries. Gary Carsley (b 1957) is an Australian artist whose practice is characterised by hybridising traditional painting and drawing with contemporary digital and immersive technologies. His work is based on his research in alternative histories and postcolonial studies. Jeremy Chu (b 1973) is a Singaporean artist, whose solo projects combine performance, installation and photography to explore themes including nature and Buddhist philosophy.

The work is made up of images that were digitally composited from five colonial botanical gardens in Southeast Asia – Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Bogor and Hanoi – overlaid with stripes reminiscent of 19th century Regency period patterns. They were then printed onto roller blinds, vinyl panels and sheets of coloured paper, which were hand-applied to the walls by the artists.

An artistic collaboration is always interesting; while it melds together recognisable elements of each artist's oeuvre, it also opens up new ways of doing things for the artists. Adele Tan, senior curator at the National Gallery, explained that Carsley was interested in the interiors of sacred spaces and Chu, who was at the time working on the conservation of Buddhist statuary and temples, gave him the idea to reduce his digital copy 'tile' size from A3 to A4. This would be similar to the size of gold-leaf sheets used to gild the walls and ceilings of temples and churches. In this way, one artist's established way of working with images of parks and gardens combines with the other's gilding technique to possibly infer that museums are the sacred spaces of a secular society. The Tibetan and Sanskrit mantras that run across the wall also index this transformation.

Camouflagued amongst the trees are silhouettes of statues found in the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney. Photo by the author

The imagery of the botanical gardens – brought to the

A popular spot for the Instagram-friendly generation. Image courtesy of the National Gallery Singapore

The performative mantras on the walls are meant to cleanse the visitors of their bad karma as they walk through the work. Image courtesy of the National Gallery Singapore

region by the Europeans for scientific and economic reasons as well as to reconstruct the idea of home – is overlaid with coloured stripes. The choice of this aesthetic, which was popularised during the British Regency period (early 19th century) and is still very widely used in home furnishings today, is intentional and symbolic. This was the time of the expansion of the British Empire, especially into Southeast Asia. And though the other cities (Hanoi, Manila and Bogor) referenced through the gardens, were not under British colonial rule, they too experienced the effects of colonialism with different masters. The title of the artwork is also a play on words: it refers to the Regency-era stripes and the roller blinds but at the same time, it alludes to our blindness to the violence enacted by colonialism as we seek to revive fashions of the colonial period.

Hidden among the garden imagery are silhouettes of people. Tan explains that these contours are from Victorian-era, neoclassical statues in the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney, and are mostly copies of other well-known sculptures from Europe. For instance, the one at the top of the stairs is one half of *The Boxers*, a pair of marble sculptures that is a copy of Antonio Canova's original (the original statues, *Kreugas and Damoxenus* are in the Vatican). Similarly, the other silhouettes at the bottom of the stairs are of *Spring* and *Autumn* from the *Four Seasons* set of sculptures that adorn the Garden's staircase in Sydney.

The Pavilion Arch, photo by the author

As you descend the stairs, midway on the landing are some more intriguing details: multi-level arches, a chair and an elephant mandala. The layered arches constitute the *Pavilion Arch* which was designed by architect Renjie Teoh. He chose to overlay three cultural design references that evoke the complex make-up of Singapore and its history. The outermost layer forms the main structure and is an Indo-Saracenic *Jali* pattern which references the Indo-Malay roots of Singapore (Indo-Saracenic is a term that was used in the Middle Ages in Europe for the Arabic-speaking Muslim people of the Middle East and North Africa). This style came to the region through the British empire's engineers and architects who had worked in India. It was a neo-classical architectural style that drew on Indo-Islamic (mainly Mughal) architecture for decoration and was prevalent in colonial- period buildings constructed during the late 19th and early 20th century. In Malaya, this style was favoured in British-designed architecture to reflect the Muslim majority. The middle layer is a Japanese triangular *kumiko* (lattice) pattern which forms the intermediate vertical screening within the arch and was chosen for its remarkable and coincidental parallel to the *Jali* geometry. The last layer is a vertical Chinese screen lattice with a moon-gate which leads one into the garden. The Chinese reference points to the current Chinese majority as well as Singapore's strong economic and cultural leaning towards China.

The presence of an Ikea chair, also overlaid with the imagery, seems odd on the landing, but it is a popular icon in Carsley's work. It invites viewers to sit down, immerse themselves and contemplate the garden because only then will the hidden imagery begin to reveal itself. It is also a reference to the Instagram era and is a popular spot for viewers to take pictures.

You might also see an elephant on the wall. Renjie employs pareidolia (the tendency to see a known object in a random stimulus) to evoke this image so that the tree looks like an elephant's trunk and the pendant lamps the eyes. The elephant mandala is a popular symbol of physical and mental strength in Tibetan Buddhist teachings, which are also referenced in the mantras on the walls. Tan explains that the mantras are meant to be performative; one of the Tibetan Buddhist teachings is "Liberation upon Seeing" and by walking through the work and looking at the mantras, visitors are cleansed of their bad karma even though they cannot read or understand what is there.

Directions to *The Regency Made Me Blind*: From the Coleman Street entrance, take the lift to Level 5 and walk all the way straight (past the Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Gallery). You'll see the installation near the escalators.

Durriya Dohadwala *is an independent writer of South and Southeast Asian contemporary art.*

Docent Graduates 2018/19

"A whole new world opened up for me. Every time I had to research an artefact, I felt like Indiana Jones, embarking on my next adventure. And it is the passion and the commitment of the training team that makes it all possible. (Warning: their enthusiasm is highly contagious)." - **Tulika Dhanuka**

ACM

Nupur A Bahadur
Anushree Chopra
Maria Conde
Ranjini Dasgupta
Tulika Dhanuka
Anisha Dutta
Manuela Fremy
Young Gao
Patricia Gutierrez
Charlotte Hand
Flavia Junqueira
Aditi Kaul
Ambica Kumar
Sophie Lacote
Patti Neves
Juliana Paulinyi
Natalia Piquet
Tiki Sonderhoff
Lowell Tan Ying Jie
Beatriz Torres

"Every time I go to the IHC and Little India, it takes me back home. The training has been fantastic and such a great learning experience. Frankly, it's been intense at times, but all for a good cause. We have a wonderful team, who are dedicating their valuable time training us as docents. I would highly recommend this to Singaporeans and expats alike. The training opens a whole new world to you. Last but not the least, I have met some great and passionate people." - **Sophia Rao**

IHC

Jayasree Alamuru
Mona Behl
Caroline Carfantan
Mythili Devi
Ratnam Ganesh
Irina Grishaeva
Aditi Mann
Mousumi Rao
Sophia Rao
Radhika Shiv
Rama Srinivasan
Ana Isabel Telford
Gayatri Thati
Mathangi Venkatesh Babu
Jiarong Wu

"As the saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child". I think this applies to the docent training programme that I just went through at NMS. It also takes a village to train a docent to guide at NMS. 58 docents, including 17 training team members and 17 mentors, were involved in 22 field trips, 14 gallery walk-throughs and four paper evaluations to make sure we survived 30 weeks of lectures, 34 artefact sheets, 17 WoWs and four gallery papers and talks. Special thanks to my mentor, Ms Ong Yit Peng for taking me through the last lap!"
- Leong Lee Chiew

NMS

Claudia Chassat
Chen Fui Lin
Charlotte Dawson
Yasemin Durusüt
Maia Ifrah
Kwan Min Yee
Simone F Lee
Leong Lee Chiew
Indra Meijer
Sarmista Mondol
Paola Pazzaglia
Rejane Schultz
Mor Sgulim
Hyunseung Suh
Fabienne Thoreux
Ewa Urywkow-Tchang
Catherine Vironda

"Joining the FOM/URA Chinatown heritage walks training 2019 has been an eye-opening experience for me. I have learned so much from the dedicated trainers who are professional, approachable and full of passion and knowledge about Chinatown's history. My public speaking skills have certainly improved and my knowledge of Chinatown has been enriched. Through this experience, I have met like-minded people and made many friends. I am glad that I signed up for the course and this experience has inspired me to be a docent in other museums." **- Deena Goh**

URA Chinatown Heritage Trails

Neeraja Arun
Dobrina Boneva
Ayana Chatterjee
Chwee Peng Teo
Carey Cookson
Milita D'Silva
Tessa Fairclough
Deena Goh
Gisella Harrold
Emiko Kumazawa
Liu Yanjun
Angie Ng
Ini Raeymaekers
Siu Muk Hi
Raymond Teo

Island Notes

The Last Hurrah

By Darly Furlong

The much-loved Peranakan Museum closed its doors on 31 March to make way for renovations. To mark this event, the Armenian Street party, hosted as part of the annual Singapore Heritage Festival, had a distinctly Peranakan feel.

With Armenian Street recently transformed into a pedestrian boulevard, the eponymous street party had all the hallmarks of a fun event: lots of stalls selling really yummy Nyonya cuisine, Peranakan artefacts and a live band belting out soulful melodies. There were life-size cardboard cut-outs of Nyonyas for the children to take pictures with; a nice way to introduce young children to Peranakan culture.

Do check the other Singapore Heritage Festival events planned for this year.

Darly Furlong *is an avid history and mythology buff. She enjoys living in the Katong district and exploring Peranakan culture.*

Monday Morning Lectures

The lectures will be held in the Ngee Ann auditorium (in the basement) at the Asian Civilisations Museum), 1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555 and will begin promptly at 11:00 am. Refreshments will be provided. Latecomers are asked to enter via the rear door.

6 May • The Crusades and the Muslim World

Speaker: Aditi Krishnakumar

In the ancient Near East, or the Middle East as it is known today, the world witnessed the birth and spread of two great religions: Christianity and Islam. In the overlap of their territories and the evolution of their cultures, a struggle for supremacy ensued. The speaker explores the chronology of events that led to the ultimate confrontation between the two in the 11th century.

13 May • Trapped in a Frame: The Arrest of Southeast Asians in Colonial Imagery of the 17th to 19th centuries

Speaker: Dr Farish Noor

This presentation will look at the power of images and how images of Southeast Asia and Southeast Asians were instrumental in the process of not only colonising the region but also defining, framing and fixing the identities and roles of those who came under colonial rule in the past.

There will be NO lecture on 20 May because of the Vesak Day holiday on 19 May. Happy Vesak Day to all who celebrate.

27 May • Folk Hues of India

Speaker: Sangeeta Roy

Folk Art is an ancient form of people's art where rural and tribal communities expressed their creativity at weddings, births, harvest celebrations and religious ceremonies. This talk will provide an overview of folk art and highlight a few styles to understand how they have adapted to changing mores and co-existed with as well as influenced Indian contemporary art.

The MMLs will take a holiday break and resume on 2 September. We hope everyone has a great summer.

Textile Enthusiasts Group

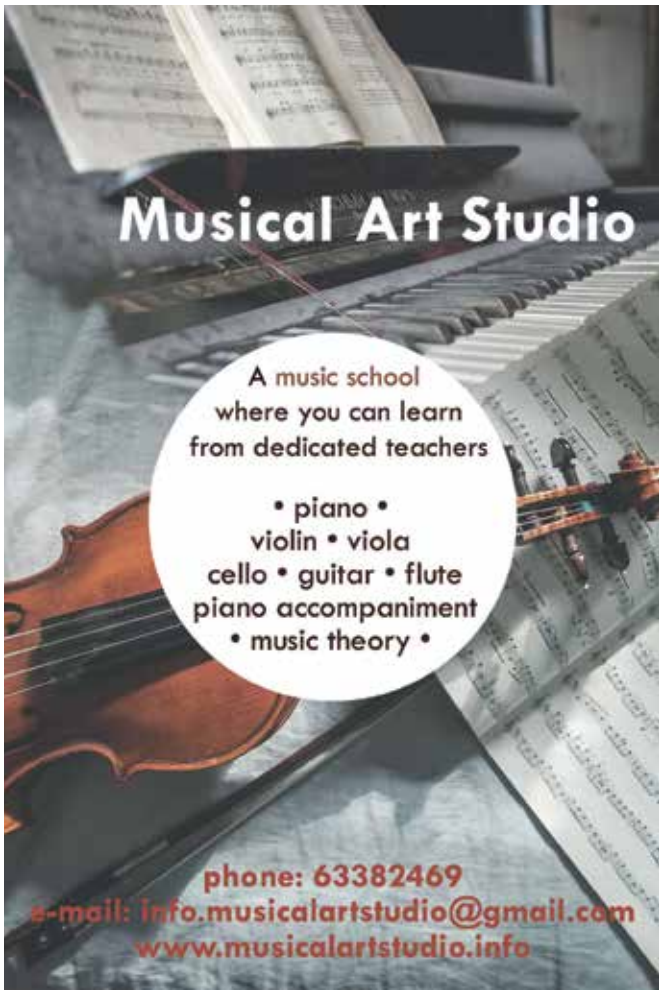
Programme: Exploring the visual language of traditional motifs and patterns in Indian block-printed textiles
Speaker: Alpna Swarup, Fabindia Zone Manager SG & MY
Date: Friday 3 May 2019
Time: Arrive at 10:00 am for 10:30 start
Location: FabIndia, 01-141 VivoCity, 1 Harbourfront Walk
Online Registration: Textile Enthusiasts Group at www.fom.sg

Tales of faraway places are waiting to be told
To be lived once more and loved once more
Unseen lanes, unseen rules, heart-skipping beats… before opening the door.

Traditional motifs and patterns in Indian block-printed textiles tell tales of culture, faith, religion, land and power. A single zigzag line print symbolizes a river for one and hills for another. Let's explore their inception, transformation over time, and forms as we see them today.

Tales are to be told, but not only mine to tell
You shall find your own and open the door!

About the speaker:
With over two decades of engagement in the Indian block-printed textile sector, Alpna Swarup is eager to discuss what she has learned and the inferences she can make with TEG members. Having also worked with artisans and craftspeople at grassroots level, what she hopes to bring us is an understanding of the cultural aspects of this visual language.



Explore Singapore!

To join an ES! event, please go to the FOM website to register online or register at the ES! table at any Monday Morning Lecture.

Fullerton Hotel and Clifford Pier – Where the Past Meets the Present

Thursday 9 May
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Fee $30

Immerse yourself in the exciting history of Fullerton Hotel and Clifford Pier. Hear about the bustling activities along the Singapore River and how the brisk trade there led to the construction of the Fullerton Building, once Singapore's General Post Office. The tour will also cover the area around the Fullerton Bay Hotel and Clifford Pier.

Visit to the Japanese Cemetery Park

Thursday 16 May
10:00 am – 12:00 noon
Fee: $25

Nestled in a suburban residential area of private houses, is a tranquil park with lush greenery, pretty arches of bougainvillea and walkways bordered by flowers. Not many people know about this place and many will be surprised to learn that it is the largest Japanese cemetery outside Japan. Over 900 tombs can be found here, with styles varying from the very raw and simple to ornate and elaborate.

Clubbing at Club Street

Thursday 23 May
10:00 am – 12:00 noon
Fee: $25

Today's Club Street is a vibrant nightlife hub with revellers spilling out of its many restaurants and pubs way into the wee hours. However, the 'Club' in Club Street originated from a very different type of club more than a century ago – the gentlemen's club, specifically for the Chinese. We will visit three historical clubs and associations, which have remained in their original sites despite urban renewal, and learn about the role they played in local Chinese society in the past.

Japanese Docents

When I was young, I used to size up artefacts by their visual elements, such as their colours, shapes and composition, as well as their craftsmanship and technique. It was enjoyable, but I knew something was missing and wanted to be able to fully appreciate them someday. After I joined the Japanese Docent group and began my training three years ago, the way I looked at artefacts changed. I started to look more into their details and background stories. Learning history had never been my forte, but I enjoyed it so much that I could spend hours searching for information on the internet.

Then a few months into the training, on a whim, I started going to Bharatanatyam classes. I thought it would be a good idea to add a different dimension to my understanding of Indian culture and get some exercise at the same time. Bharatanatyam is a major genre of Indian classical dance, and its origin traces back to ancient Tamil Nadu. It doesn't require acrobatic movements or extreme flexibility, but the training is vigorous and strict neverthless. More often than not, your legs are bent as in ballet's plié, your feet tap out the beat, while your arms and hands tell a story with accompanying eye and neck movements. Some movements are fast, and you'll be huffing and puffing after 10 minutes. I have felt like quitting time after time, but haven't given up yet.

It is said that when you have some knowedge of dance, you feel the physical sensation of movement just by looking at someone dance. I believe in the phenomenon called 'kinesthetic empathy'. When I go to the Ancient Religions gallery at the ACM and look at the Shalabhanjika (*Yakshi*) leaning sideways with their legs crossed in the swastika position, I feel more energised and happier than before. For me, learning to appreciate artefacts has been enriching and rewarding.

Takako Iino, JD Coordinator 2

Study Tours

FOM Study Tours is happy to announce the following tours for FOM members:

Xi'an, China - October 2019 (fully subscribed)
Israel & Jordan - December 2019
Kites & Kutch, Gujarat, India - January 2020
Coromandel Coast, Tamil Nadu, India - February 2020
Guizhou Minority Tour, China - April 2020

Please visit the FOM website for more details and registration instructions.

Coordinators Contact List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MHF/FOM Heritage Trails – Susan Chong & Heather Muirhead
Kgcoordinators@gmail.com

JDs
jdcoordinator1@yahoo.co.jp and jdcoordinator2@yahoo.co.jp

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Check out our website
www.esmeparishsilver.com

Museum Information and Exhibitions

Asian Civilisations Museum

1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555
Tel: 6332 7798
www.acm.org.sg

Opening hours:
Daily 10:00 am - 7:00 pm
Fri 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

FOM guided tours:
Mon to Fri 11:00 am, 12:30 pm, 2:00 pm and 3:30 pm, Fri 7:00 pm (English)
Mon to Fri 10:30 am and every second Saturday 1:30 pm (Japanese)
First Wed of the month 11.30am (Korean)
Second Thursday of the month 11:30 (Spanish)
Third Thursday of the month 11:30 (French)

Understanding Asia through Singapore
The galleries at the museum use Singapore's history as a port city as a means of understanding the interconnections among Asian cultures and between Asia and the world.

Gillman Barracks

9 Lock Road, Singapore 108937
www.gillmanbarracks.com

A cluster of 11 contemporary art galleries and the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), Gillman Barracks features an ever-changing selection of contemporary art exhibitions.

Opening hours: Tues to Sun – Refer to individual gallery pages on-line for opening hours
Closed Mondays & Public Holidays

FOM guided tours:
Sat 4:00 pm: Art and History Tour
Sat 5:00 pm: History and Heritage Tour
To register please visit www.fom-gillman-barracks.eventbrite.com

NTU CCA

Arus Balik – From Below the Wind to Above the Wind and Back Again
(through 23 June)
Arus Balik - From Below the Wind to Above the Wind and Back Again, an exhibition project that resulted from a conversation between Belgian curator Philippe Pirotte and Jakarta-based artist Ade Darmawan. Reconsidering Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer's epic book *Arus Balik* (1995), which could be translated into English as a "turning of the tide," the eponymous exhibition takes the novel as a starting point to reflect on shifts of perception in geopolitical, cultural, social, religious, and natural spheres. The exhibition aims to imagine the implication of histories and politics in processes of transition, such as colonisation and decolonisation, or shifts in maritime power for people and ports below (the Straits of Melaka, South China Sea, Java Sea, and further east) and above (the Indian Ocean and further West) the wind.

Indian Heritage Centre

5 Campbell Lane, Singapore 209924
www.indianheritage.org.sg

Open Tuesday to Sunday & public holidays. Closed on Mondays.
Tues to Thurs 10:00 am to 7:00 pm, Fri & Sat 10:00 am to 8:00 pm
Sundays & public holidays 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

FOM guided tours: Tues-Fri
12:00 pm for the permanent galleries
2:00 pm on Wed and Fri for the special exhibitions
Tamil tours (FOM) 11:30am on the first Friday of each month for the special exhibition

The Indian Heritage Centre (IHC) celebrates the history and heritage of the Indian diaspora in Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. From early contacts between the Indian subcontinent and this region, the culture and social history of the community after the arrival of the British, through to the early stirrings of nationalism and political identity and the contributions of Singapore's Indian community, the five galleries take visitors on a fascinating journey through the Indian diaspora. Located in Singapore's colourful and vibrant Little India precinct, the centre opened in May 2015 and is our only purpose-built museum.

Chetti Melaka of the Straits – Rediscovering Peranakan Indian Communities
(through May)
The Chetti Melaka (or Chitty Melaka) are descendants of Tamil traders who settled in Melaka during the reign of the Melaka Sultanate (15th- 16th century) and married local women of Malay and Chinese descent. Predominantly Hindu of the Saivite (followers of Shiva) denomination, the community speaks a unique combination of Malay, Tamil and Chinese, that has been called Chetti Creole by scholars. The Indian Heritage Centre (IHC) presents this exhibition in collaboration with the Association of Peranakan Indians (Chitty Melaka).

Malay Heritage Centre

85 Sultan Gate, Singapore 198501
Tel: 6391 0450
www.malayheritage.org.sg

Opening hours:
Tues to Sun 10:00 am – 6:00 pm (last admission 5:30 pm), closed on Mondays
FOM guided tours: Tues to Fri 11:00 am;
Sat: 2:00 pm (Subject to availability. Please call ahead to confirm the availability of a docent).

The Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) provides wonderful cultural exposure and learning opportunities for visitors of all ages and interests. Situated amidst the Istana Kampong Gelam, Gedung Kuning and the surrounding Kampong Gelam precinct, the centre acts as a vital heritage institution for the Malay community in Singapore. Through its exhibits, programmes and activities, the centre hopes to honour the past while providing a means for present-day expression.

Undangan ke Baitullah: Pilgrims' Stories from the Malay World to Makkah
(through 23 June)
This exhibition delves into the significance of Kampong Gelam as an important port town where Muslims from all over the Malay Archipelago would congregate to prepare for the onward steamship passage to Makkah from the late 19th century into the early 1970s. *Undangan ke Baitullah* adds a Southeast Asian perspective to this annual global movement of Muslims, which for many pilgrims, is a once-in-a-lifetime journey of faith.

National Museum of Singapore

93 Stamford Road, Singapore 178897
Tel: 6332 3659
www.nationalmuseum.sg

Opening hours:
Daily 10:00 am – 7:00 pm

FOM guided tours:
Mon to Fri 11:00 am and 2:00 pm (English)
Mon to Fri 10:30 am and every first Saturday 1:30 pm (Japanese)

The Singapore History Gallery
In celebration of 50 years of independence, this gallery has been refreshed with updated stories and content on Singapore's history, capturing the nation's defining moments, challenges and achievements from its earliest beginnings 700 years ago to the independent, modern city-state it is today.

Museum Information and Exhibitions

Packaging Matters: Singapore's Food Packaging Story from the early 20th century
(through 15 September)
This exhibition explores the world of food packaging in Singapore, from the early bottling and canning factories in the late 19th to early 20th centuries, to the light industries of the 1960s–70s when food was manufactured in factories. Drawing from the museum's rich artefact collections, *Packaging Matters* traces the development of packaging technologies and features compelling stories from pioneers.

NUS Museum, NUS Centre for the Arts

University Cultural Centre
50 Kent Ridge Crescent, Singapore 119279
Tel: 6516 8817
www.museum.nus.edu.sg

Free admission

Opening hours:
Tues to Sat 10:00 am – 6:00 pm, Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays,
Monday: Visits by appointment for schools/faculties only.

NUS Baba House
157 Neil Road, Singapore 088883
Tel: 6227 5731
www.babahouse.nus.edu.sg

English heritage tours: Tues - Fri, 10:00 am; Mandarin Heritage Tour: First Monday of each month, 10:00 am
Self-Guided Visits: Every Sat, 1.30pm/2.15pm/3.15pm/4.00pm
To register, please visit babahouse.nus.edu.sg/visit/plan-your-visit
For enquiries, please email babahouse@nus.edu.sg

Now conceived as a heritage house facilitating research, appreciation and reflection of Straits Chinese history and culture, the NUS Baba House was built around 1895 and was once the ancestral home of a Peranakan Chinese family. During the one-hour tour, guests will be introduced to the history and architectural features of the house, and experience visiting a Straits Chinese family home in a 1920s setting, furnished with heirlooms from its previous owners and other donors.

The Peranakan Museum

39 Armenian Street, Singapore 179941
Tel: 6332 7591
www.peranakanmuseum.sg

The museum is currently closed to prepare for its next phase of development.

Singapore Art Museum

71 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 189555
Tel: 6332 3222
www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

The Singapore Art Museum focuses on international contemporary art practices, specialising in Singapore and Southeast Asia. The main building of the Singapore Art Museum is currently closed to prepare it for its next phase of development.

Free general admission to all NHB museums for FOM members and one guest.

STPI Creative Workshop and Gallery

41 Robertson Quay, Singapore 238236
Tel: 6336 3663
www.stpi.com.sg

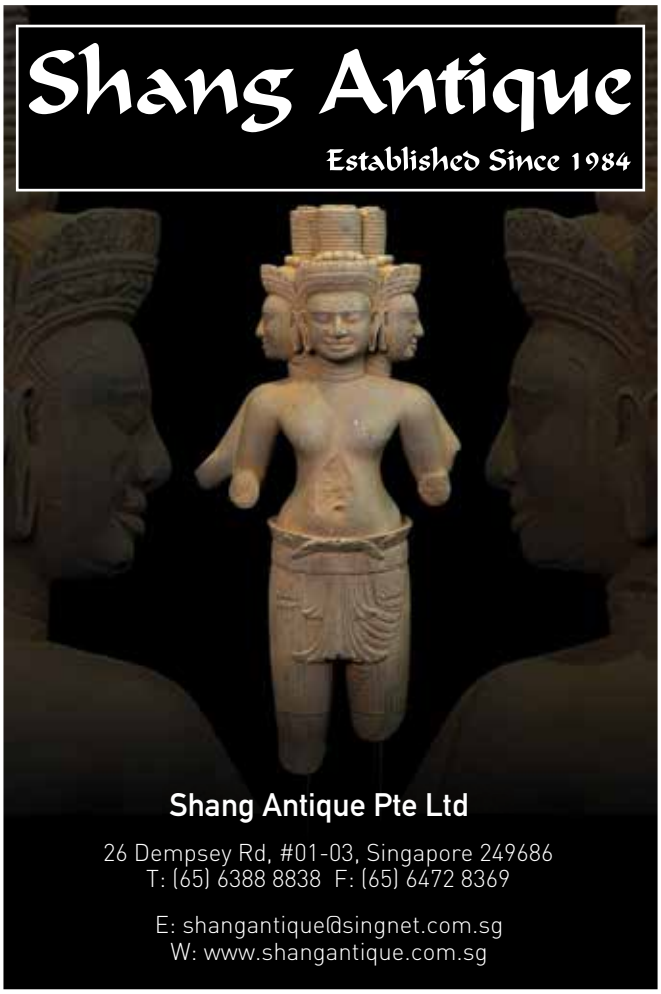
Opening hours:
Mon to Fri: 10:00 am – 7:00 pm, Sat: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm
Closed Sundays & Public Holidays
FOM guided tours: Thurs 11:30 am, Sat 2:00 pm
Please refer to STPI's website at www.stpi.com.sg for STPI's public programmes and Japanese, Mandarin and special evening tours.

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

12 Tai Gin Road, Singapore 327874
Tel: 6256 7377
www.wanqingyuan.org.sg

Opening hours:
Tues to Sun 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, Closed on Mondays
FOM guided tours: Tues to Fri 2:00 pm (English)
FOM Special exhibition guided tours: 10:30am on Fridays in English

Between the Lines – The Chinese Cartoon Revolution
(through 7 July)
This exhibition examines the links between the 1911 revolution in China and the emergence of Chinese cartoons in Singapore.



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THURSDAY 16 MAY 2019
10 AM TO 12 PM
GALLERY THEATRE, BASEMENT
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE
93 STAMFORD ROAD SINGAPORE 178897

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.FOM.SG, OR EMAIL FOMDOCENTTRAINING@GMAIL.COM