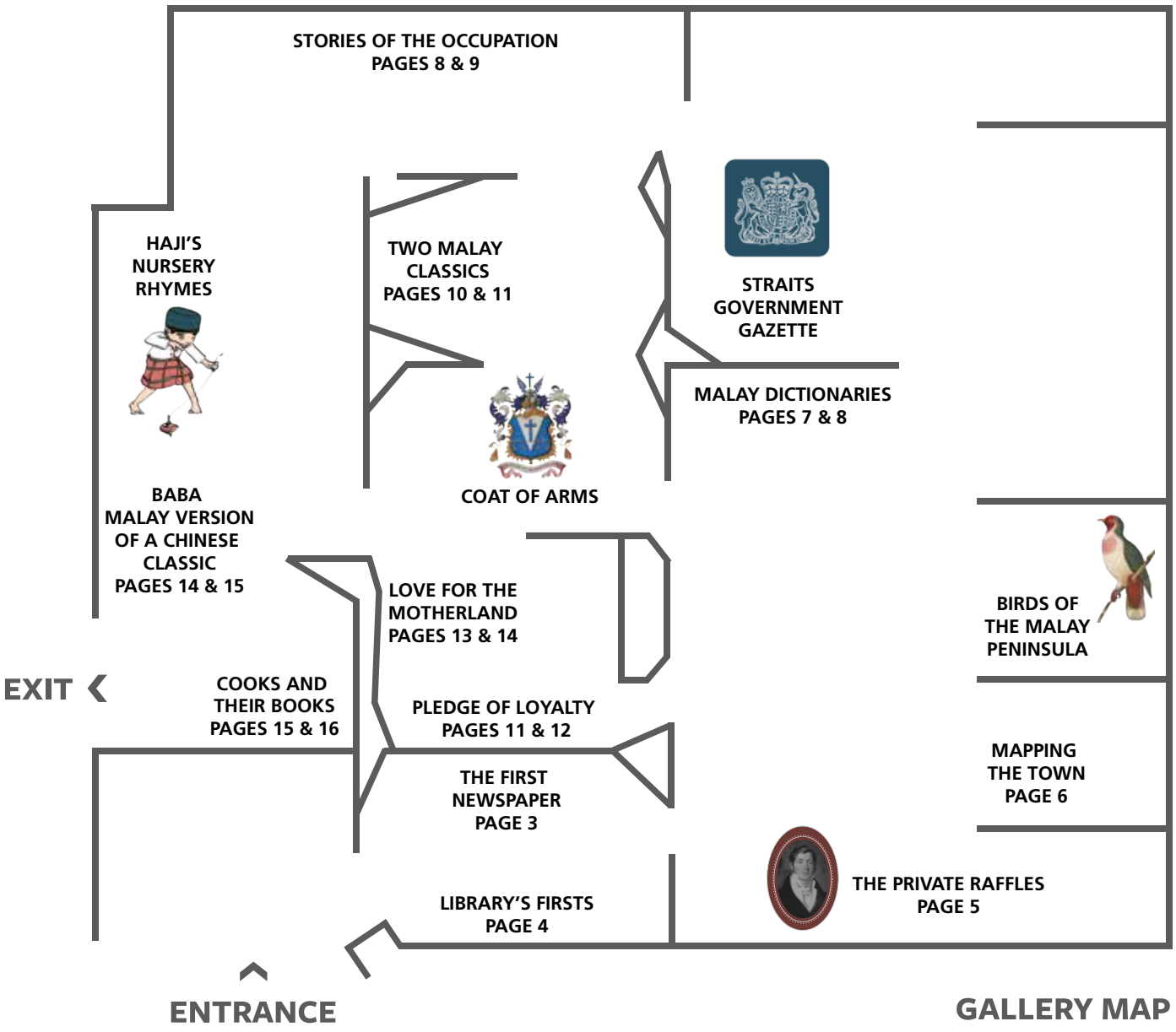
GALLERY GUIDE

30 JANUARY TO 28 AUGUST 2016



GALLERY MAP

FROM THE STACKS

Highlights of the National Library

AN EXHIBITION BY

NLB | National Library Singapore

Introduction

The formation of the first library in Singapore is closely associated with Stamford Raffles (1781 – 1826), the founder of modern Singapore. Raffles' vision for Singapore was not only a prosperous commercial hub but also a centre for learning and the arts. His proposal for the first school also included blueprints for a library, museum and printing press. The school was incorporated in 1823 as the Singapore Institution. The library, which was part of the school, later became the Singapore Library (1844 – 1874). It subsequently became the Raffles Library (1874 – 1958) and was renamed as Syonan Tosyokan (1942 – 1945) during the Japanese Occupation (1942 – 1945). In 1960, the library became the National Library.

Since its establishment, the library's collection has grown significantly through the acquisition of other libraries and collections, and more importantly, through generous donations which have helped to build up our valuable archive of printed and primary materials for research and study on Singapore and Southeast Asia. A selection of highlights from the National Library's collection is on display here, giving us a valuable glimpse into different aspects of early Singapore.

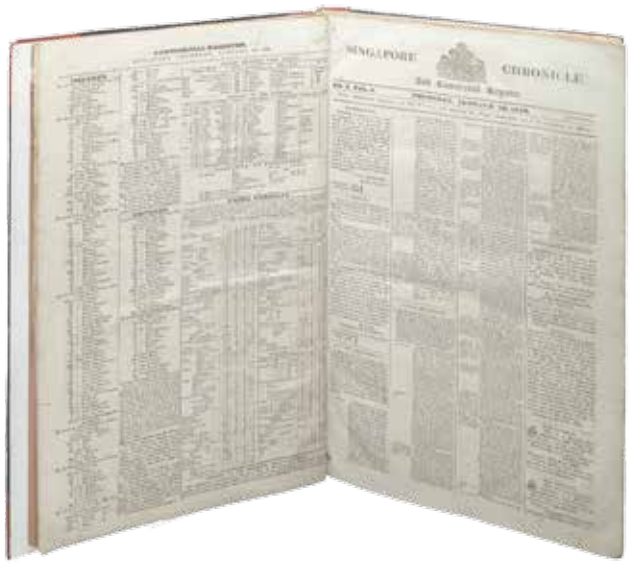
Old library stamps

The First Newspaper

The *Singapore Chronicle* was the first newspaper published in Singapore. An English language paper, it was produced by the colonial government and printed by the first printing press in Singapore, the Mission Press. It was not until 1830 that *Singapore Chronicle* acquired its own press. The *Chronicle* began in 1824 and was the only newspaper in Singapore until 1835.

At the time, the only large-scale printing house was the Mission Press. In 1823, what was known as the 'Gagging Act' was implemented in Singapore, which required any print publication to be reviewed and approved by the British authorities. While enforced lightly, the combination of a lack of resources and printing restrictions discouraged the publication of other newspapers until the Act was lifted in 1835.

The abolition of the 1823 Act ultimately led to the *Chronicle's* demise. Facing stiff competition from other newspapers such as the *Singapore Free Press* and *Mercantile Advertiser* which was established in 1835, the *Chronicle* folded in 1837. The *Singapore Free Press* later evolved to become *The Straits Times*, which is still one of Singapore's primary news outlets today. Later on, newspapers in other languages such as the Chinese *Sin Chew Jit Poh* 星洲日报(1923), the Malay language *Jawi Peranakan* (1876) and the Tamil language *Tamil Murasu* (1935) were established, broadening newspaper readership.



Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register (January – December 1833)

Singapore: Singapore Chronicle Press, 1833

Apart from reprinted articles from Europe and the region, the *Chronicle* also featured a list of current prices of local and imported goods, as well as a listing of commercial imports and exports to and from Singapore serving as a good record of trade in early Southeast Asia and a testament to Singapore as an entrepôt.

Some commodities imported to Singapore in 1833 included silk, sugar candy, gold dust, various liquors, books, French cotton handkerchiefs, buffalo hide and salted beef. Exports included items such as tin, rattan, beer, opium, sago, tea, chinaware, writing paper and silks from China.

Library's Firsts

Singapore's early printing history is closely intertwined with Protestant missionary work in the region in the early 19th century. Soon after Raffles set up a trading post in Singapore in 1819, missionaries established printing presses to publish and distribute Christian literature. As proselytising of the Christian faith was prohibited in China before the end of the First Opium War (1839 – 1842), Western missionaries set up bases in Southeast Asia with the hope that the literature would eventually reach China. After China opened up, many missionaries left Singapore, taking most of their printing equipment with them.

The earliest books in Singapore were also printed by mission presses. It was only from the 1860s that local communities in Singapore began their own printing businesses.

This book is the earliest Chinese book printed locally in the National Library's collection. It is a Christian tract written by German missionary Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (1803 – 1851). The publication focuses on the Sermon on the Mount, a collection of Jesus' teachings from the Gospel of Matthew, followed by an exposition of the passage.

Gützlaff was an important yet controversial figure in the history of Protestant missions in Asia. He first came to Southeast Asia in 1826 and from Java, he travelled to Bintan, Singapore and Bangkok. Intent on proselytising in China, he relocated to Macau in 1831 and made trips along the Chinese coast and nearby areas to preach and distribute tracts even though it was against Chinese law at that time. Between 1831 and 1843 (after the First Opium War), Gützlaff also composed around 50 Chinese works, including 全人矩矱. To extend his missionary work, Gützlaff worked as a translator for a British company selling opium to the Chinese. This attracted much criticism from other missionaries.

Besides 全人矩矱, the earliest locally printed books — in Malay, Tamil and English — in the National Library's collection are also on display.

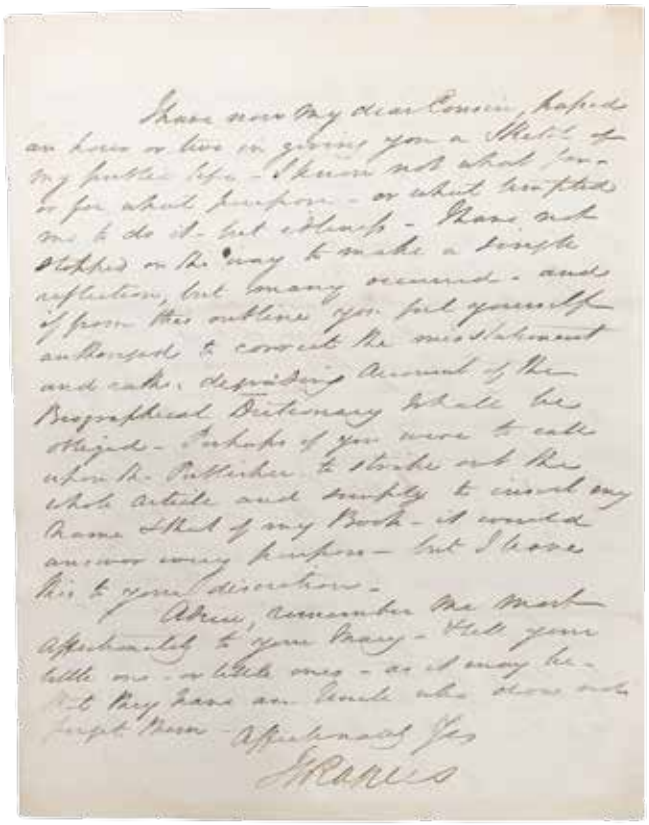
全人矩矱 (*Quanren Juyue, The Perfect Man's Model*)
Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (爱汉者)

Singapore: American Board Mission Press, 1836

The Private Raffles

The historical accounts of the founding of modern Singapore have relied on the biographies of Stamford Raffles (1781 – 1826), eyewitnesses' notes and the many letters that Raffles wrote to his friends and supporters. Raffles was a prolific letter-writer and his correspondence with notable individuals of influence forms an invaluable primary resource for research.

Over the years, the National Library has acquired a small collection of letters written by Raffles and the personalities related to him. While most letters focus on Raffles' public career, some personal letters have survived, revealing a different side of Raffles, which gives more insight into his character.



Letter to Reverend Dr Thomas Raffles
Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781 – 1826)

At Sea, 14 October 1819
Dr John Bastin Collection

In 1819, Raffles read a supplement to a biographical dictionary by Henry Colburn (1816) that implied that he owed his appointment as Assistant Secretary to the Government of Prince of Wales Island to his marriage to Olivia Mariamne Devenish (1771 – 1814). It was rumoured that Devenish had a relationship with William Ramsay, the Secretary of the East India Company. This prompted Raffles to write this letter to his cousin, Reverend Dr Thomas Raffles (1788 – 1863), to declare the falsehood of the account and assert that his success had come through his own efforts and good fortune.

This long letter is the closest Raffles came to writing an autobiography. It contains a detailed account of his career progression as well as memories of his humble early life. Due to family circumstances, Raffles withdrew from school when he was barely 14 and worked as a clerk in the East India Company. Despite the hardship, he persevered in self-study in French, Literature and Science.

Mapping the Town

A form of documentary heritage, maps are an important part of the National Library's collection. Maps have been used for millennia for planning purposes or to guide travellers from one place to another. This contour map, which shows the topography of an area by depicting lines of equal elevation, was a working document drafted by the colonial engineers of the Municipal Department. The Municipal Engineer in charge at that time was David B. McLay. McLay came to Singapore in 1919 as an engineer and worked at the Municipal Department from October 1923 to 1930.

This particular map was drawn for the purposes of road planning: a ring road had been proposed to ease congestion from the centre of town. It is hand drawn on linen, which makes it more durable than a paper map and more suited to be brought onto the field. The proposed new roads are marked out in dark red – they run around the outer edges of the town. The widths of the proposed roads are also indicated – ranging from either 60 or 80 feet (18.3 metres and 24.4 metres respectively). The existing main roads in the town area are also marked with milestones in large numerals. The General Post Office (present-day Fullerton Hotel), which is the zero-point, is unmarked. Drainage is vital to road construction and the various drainage systems have also been mapped on this document.

The map also indicates the potential deviation of the railway tracks – with the deviation marked in thin dashed lines. The tracks from Tank Road to Bukit Timah were dismantled between 1936 and 1937. The harbour limits indicated for the various rivers such as the Singapore and Kallang Rivers have also been demarcated on the map.

Detail of a hand-drawn contour map of Singapore town
David B. McLay

Singapore, 1929
Donated by Koh Seow Chuan

Malay Dictionaries

Southeast Asia has been visited by traders for millennia. The ability to communicate with the indigenous population would have been crucial to any trading activity. Malay was the lingua franca of maritime Southeast Asia and it is not surprising to find early word-lists and bilingual dictionaries to aid in the learning of the language. The Chinese are believed to have developed the earliest word-lists, which were compiled before the arrival of the Portuguese in Melaka in the early 16th century.

A Dictionary – English and Malayo, Malayo and English

Thomas Bowrey
London: Sam Bridge for Author, 1701

This is the earliest English-Malay dictionary published in 1701 by the English trader Thomas Bowrey (1650 – 1713). According to the preface, this book is based on Bowrey's 19-year experience navigating and trading in the 'Malayo' countries from the 1670s to the 1680s. Bowrey was inspired to produce this dictionary as none existed at the time and he thought it would be useful to other traders. Bowrey rendered the Malay entries using the Roman alphabet, but did not include the corresponding *jawi* (Malay written in modified Arabic script) spellings. This was criticised by some scholars a century later. Nevertheless, Bowrey's dictionary is a remarkable early pioneering effort.

Aside from the word listings, Bowrey also included sections on grammar rules as well as an assortment of sentences, dialogues and specimen letters. The dialogues illustrate how words were used in context and provide sample conversations for the learner to memorise. Most of Bowrey's dialogues revolved around trade, including one on sailing and a conversation between two merchants over the purchase of spices.

Map from a Dictionary – English and Malayo, Malayo and English

Thomas Bowrey
London: Sam Bridge for Author, 1701

This early dictionary teaches Malay by using Chinese characters to approximate the pronunciation of the Malay words. It was written by Lim Kong Chuan for the Southern Min or Hokkien and Teochew-speaking communities in Singapore. The first edition was published in 1877 as *Tong yi xin yu* by Lim's own publishing house Koh Yew Hean Press. In his preface, Lim noted that the new edition published in 1883 was an improved version and stressed the importance of learning Malay for trade and commerce in the region.

华夷通语 (*Hua yi tong yu*)
Lim Kong Chuan

Singapore: Koh Yew Hean, 1883
Ya Yin Kwan Collection, donated by Tan Yeok Seong

The dictionary contains more than 2,800 entries, which are grouped into 25 thematic categories such as geography, numerals, occupations and animals. To achieve a more accurate pronunciation of each Malay word, readers are advised to use the Quanzhou or Zhangzhou dialects, which are demarcated by a triangle and apostrophe respectively. The latter dialect is similar to Teochew. The circle means that the word is to be pronounced in the oral rather than literary way. The other portions of the book categorise the entries by the number of Chinese characters needed to pronounce the Malay word. This is then followed by a list of verbs and adjectives.

Stories of the Occupation

The Japanese Occupation of Malaya (1942 – 1945) during World War II was a tumultuous time of warfare and hardship. Few Japanese official records of the war remain as Japanese forces destroyed a vast number of written records, both British and Japanese, at the end of the war. In particular, records of prisoners-of-war interned at Changi, as well as pre- and post-war censuses are lacking, making it difficult to determine the number of civilian deaths attributed to the occupation.

However, the library holds various publications and rare documents that provide different perspectives and insights – Japanese, British and local – into the occupation and its aftermath.

During the Japanese Occupation, Singapore was known as 'Syonan', meaning 'the brilliant south'. Operating out of *The Straits Times'* offices on Cecil Street, *Syonan Shimbun* was the newspaper and official mouthpiece of the Japanese government and was distributed throughout Malaya.

Priced at five cents a copy (in the currency of the time known as Southern Development Bank Notes), the daily paper published accounts of the war front, featuring largely positive news about the Japanese and Axis powers' war efforts in the region and overseas, and negative press about the Allied forces.

Syonan Shimbun

Singapore: Syonan Shimbun-kai,
20 February – 31 December 1942

Apart from news, *Shimbun* was also used as a platform to spread Japanese imperialist messages about the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a grand concept for a united East Asia and Oceania ruled by the Japanese Empire, free from western influences. On display is an issue dated 15 February 1942, the first anniversary of the Japanese Occupation of Singapore. The issue features articles celebrating the victory of Japan over British forces and recounts the Battle for Singapore, comparing it favourably to the landmark success of the German invasion of Dunkirk in 1940.

On 12 September 1945, Singapore was officially returned to the British following the signing of the Instrument of Surrender at the Municipal Building (present-day City Hall building). On display is a diary belonging to General Sir Miles Christopher Dempsey (1896 – 1969), with entries dating from 8 August 1945 to 21 April 1946. It provides us with an unprecedented look into the logistics and politics surrounding the reoccupation of former colonial territories after the war.

Sir Miles Christopher Dempsey, 1945

From the Collection of the Imperial War Museum, London

Dempsey, after whom Dempsey Hill is named, was the leader of the British post-war military operation to take back Malaya and Java from the Japanese. The pages of his diary contain records of the various issues he faced during the reoccupation and rebuilding of industry and infrastructure in Malaya and Java. The diary also offers a fascinating glimpse into the days leading up to the official surrender of the Japanese. From the moment the atomic bomb operation was in motion, the Allied forces had been making plans to reoccupy territories throughout Asia in the event the Japanese surrendered. Through Dempsey's diary, we are privy to the few days prior to the official surrender of the Japanese, with Dempsey waiting for instructions to deploy his troops at a moment's notice.

Two Malay Classics

The *Sejarah Melayu* (*Malay Annals*) and *Hikayat Abdullah* are two Malay-language texts that have been studied by literature students in Singapore and Malaysia for generations. The British introduced these two titles into the school curriculum as early as the late 19th century.

The *Sulalat al-Salatin* or *Genealogy of Kings* (popularly known as the *Sejarah Melayu*), comprises stories of the rise and fall of the Melaka Sultanate and was likely to have been written in the mid-16th century.

Published in 1849, *Hikayat Abdullah* was written by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir (1797[?] – 1854) and is a memoir that captures the socio-political landscape of Singapore, Melaka and the Johor and Riau-Lingga kingdoms at the beginning of the 20th century. Abdullah was a translator and pioneer of Malay printing and taught many colonial administrators and missionaries the Malay language.

Aside from their literary merits, these two texts were selected for use in government-run schools for the following reasons. The *Sejarah Melayu*, which is about Malay statecraft, emphasises feudal loyalty and depicts the ultimate defeat of the great Melakan court by the Europeans. The *Hikayat* contains critiques of contemporary Malay society.

These texts are still being studied by scholars today and remain relevant for Singapore, as they contain stories about our early history. The *Hikayat Abdullah* is highlighted here.

Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir (1797[?] – 1854) collaborated with Reverend Benjamin Keasberry to print *Hikayat Abdullah*. He not only composed the work, but also wrote it in his own handwriting before reproducing it by lithography. It is fitting for Abdullah, who is known as the 'Father of Malay printing', to have his memoirs considered to be one of the most impressive publications of that time. Abdullah had learnt printing from missionary Walter Medhurst (1796 – 1857) while in Melaka. This copy is part

Hikayat Abdullah
Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir

Singapore: Mission Press, 1849
Donated by Reverend George Frederick Hose

of the limited run printed with a dedication to Governor Butterworth (1801 – 1856); the dedication had been specially requested by Butterworth.

While detractors called Abdullah a mouthpiece of the British, we should consider that his livelihood depended on working for the Europeans. In *Hikayat*, Abdullah devised ways to present critical views on the powerful, whether Malay or British. In publishing *Hikayat*, Abdullah captures the moral dilemma of Western contact: he urges the Malays to adopt new ideas without compromising their culture and religion.

A Pledge of Loyalty to the Crown

On 3 December 1869, a pledge of loyalty to Queen Victoria by the Chinese merchants in Singapore was presented to Prince Alfred (1844 – 1900), Duke of Edinburgh, during a reception at Government House. Their representative was Tan Kim Ching (1829 – 1892), a prominent community leader and Siamese Consul.

Prince Alfred, the second son of Queen Victoria, was the first British royalty to visit the region. The address conveyed the unwavering loyalty of the Chinese merchants to the Queen and expressed gratitude for British rule, under which they were able to prosper.

These royal visits were celebrated with much pomp. These were also perfect occasions for the Chinese community in Singapore to show off their prosperity and to remind the local population of the great empire that was ruling them. Public demonstrations of loyalty to the Crown were carried out in Singapore well into the early 20th century.

Coincidentally, 1869 was also the year that the first Singapore Chinese merchant, Cheang Hong Lim, received an imperial title from the Qing government. Although this award was apparently given in recognition for Cheang's donations to Fujian province, it was in reality a disguised purchase of honour. Cheang may have been the first to buy a title, but this became common practice soon enough. The Qing government's motive of promoting such sales was beyond material gains; it was a way to cultivate a sense of loyalty among overseas Chinese to the Chinese emperor. To achieve this aim, the Chinese consulate was set up in 1877. By the turn of the 20th century, loyalty among overseas Chinese was also being cultivated by China's revolutionaries.

Address to Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh

Singapore: 25 November 1869
Donated by Geoffrey Edwards

This address is written in both English and Chinese in gold ink on silk on one side; on the reverse side, a panoramic view of Singapore with Telok Ayer area in the middle is depicted. This view is a copy of artist Percy Carpenters' oil painting *Singapore from Mount Wallich*, executed in 1856.

This document is unique as it lists the names of around 80 important merchants of that time. The most prominent merchants had their names in the first few lines. The British colonial government often treated merchants as a separate class from the rest of the local population as these merchants helped to promote the growth of trade in the colonies. As such, wealthy merchants were often treated as special subjects. Some were appointed to legislative or municipal councils or given positions such as Justice of Peace. Several prominent Chinese merchants, including Tan Kim Ching, Hoo Ah Kay (a.k.a Whampoa, 1816 – 1880) and Cheang Hong Lim (1825 – 1892), have been given such recognition by the British. By contrast, in China, scholars or the literati class were traditionally considered as community leaders. In Singapore, wealthy Chinese merchants who wanted to be accepted as community leaders had to be public-spirited and perform acts of charity as such virtues were valued.

Love for the Motherland

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the identities and loyalties of Singapore Chinese were multifaceted and complex. The China-born immigrants who came to Southeast Asia in search of a livelihood generally had strong cultural and political ties to China. On the other hand, the Straits-born Chinese, or Peranakans, who had lived in Southeast Asia for generations and created a creolised culture, generally affiliated themselves with the British colonial government. At the turn of the 20th century, political and social changes in China had a great impact on all overseas Chinese, reviving their interest in Chinese culture and affairs.

Singapore played a unique role in the recent history of China before 1949, with the Chinese community participating in many of the country's key events. One such publication which bears testimony to this special relationship is 南洋与创立民国 (*Nanyang and Founding of the Republic*) which documents Singapore Chinese's involvement in Sun Yat Sen's revolution.

Sun Yat Sen (1866 – 1925), the founding father of the Republic of China, reportedly made the statement 'Overseas Chinese, Mother of Revolution' (华侨为革命之母) in reference to the contribution of overseas Chinese in the revolution to overthrow the Qing Dynasty. Singapore was once Sun's Southeast Asian base for garnering support for his revolutionary activities. In 1905, the Singapore branch of *Tongmenghui* (同盟会), or the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance, was formed. It was an underground resistance movement founded by Sun to topple the Qing Dynasty. Well-known Singapore merchant Teo Eng Hock (1872 – 1959) was the inaugural Vice President.

南洋与创立民国
(*Nanyang and Founding of the Republic*)
Teo Eng Hock (张永福)

Shanghai: 1933
Donated by Tan Yeok Seong, Ya Yin Kwan Collection

Teo was a Peranakan merchant and rubber planter who was an ardent supporter of Sun. He also established a close friendship with Sun. In this book documenting Sun's revolutionary activities in Singapore and the contributions of his local supporters, Teo's admiration for the leader is evident.

The memoir also contains extensive images of materials related to the revolution, such as letters, memos, receipts of donations, photographs and even designs for the Republic of China flag.

Baba Malay version of a Chinese Classic

The Peranakans, or Babas, are a creolised Chinese community that developed in the Malay Archipelago. Their language, Baba Malay, is creole Malay with Hokkien influences. *Sam Kok* was a popular Baba Malay translation of one of the great Chinese literary classics, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by 14th-century author, Luo Guanzhong. The translation of *Sam Kok* and other popular Chinese historical novels into Baba Malay was the main output of early Peranakan Chinese literature. This genre of literary works is known as *chrita dahulu-kala*, loosely translated as 'ancient story'; the earliest publication appeared in 1889.

The emergence in the late 19th-century of *chrita dahulu-kala* can be examined in the context of the redefinition of the Baba identity. During this period, the community was increasingly exposed to China and British culture. The large numbers of newly arrived migrants from China made the Baba more self-conscious about participating in both Chinese and Malay cultures. Prior to the late 19th century, Peranakans participated in the Malay oral and manuscript literary tradition. The *chrita dahulu-kala* genre was thus something new, where the Malay language was used to reinforce Chinese identity. Further, Malay was increasingly being displaced by English as the mother tongue of Peranakans. This complex multilingual environment of the Peranakans is captured in *Sam Kok* – a popular Chinese novel translated into Baba Malay and printed in the English (Latin) script.

Chrita dahulu-kala, namanya Sam Kok Atau, Tiga Negri Ber-prang: Siok, Gwi, Sama Gor di Jaman 'Han Teow'

Chan Kim Boon
Singapore: Kim Sek Chye Press, 1892 – 1896

Chan Kim Boon (1851 – 1920)

Chrita dahulu-kala, namanya Sam Kok Atau, Tiga Negri Ber-prang: Siok, Gwi, Sama Gor di Jaman 'Han Teow'

Chan Kim Boon
Singapore: Kim Sek Chye Press, 1892 – 1896

Chan Kim Boon (1851 – 1920) translated *Sam Kok* in a serialised format in 30 volumes, which were published between 1892 and 1896. Each volume of the *Sam Kok* usually starts off with a foreword by the translator. Chan sometimes included fan letters, poems and explanation of terms, followed by illustrations of the main characters before starting the story proper. The story is interspersed with illustrations of scenes that were similar in style to traditional Chinese woodcut.

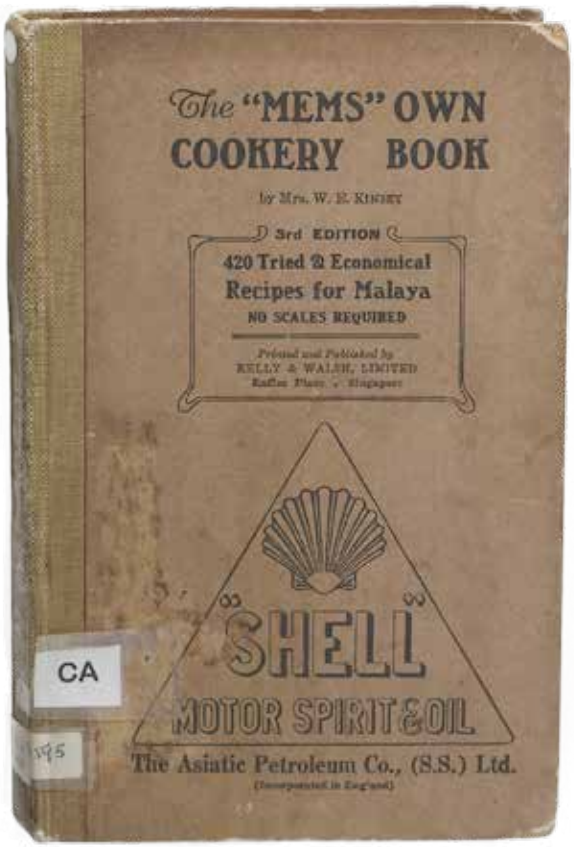
A fascinating aspect of Chan's *Sam Kok* is the interaction between the readers and translator. In his preface, Chan shares aspects of his family life, work and even photographs. He also published letters containing positive feedback on earlier volumes. The multilingual environment of the Peranakans is clearly reflected in these fan letters, as they were written in Chinese, Malay or English. Chan, being a conscientious translator, also included explanations of Chinese terms in Malay and English.

Chan used the pen name Batu Gantong, which is also the name of a cemetery in Penang, perhaps hinting at Chan's desired final resting place.

Cooks and their Books

Food is a huge part of Singapore's history and culture, and indeed food history can tell us a lot about a society. Singapore's food history is multicultural and influenced by many different cuisines. All these influences, be they Malay, Chinese, Indian, Arabic, or European, have had significant impacts on our cuisine and cooking style.
The concept of writing cookbooks about local cuisine did not appear in Singapore's culture until the early 20th century. The information contained in these cookbooks

also reflects the times in which they were published. On display are some of the first few cookbooks written and published in Singapore. *My Favourite Recipes* was published in 1952 by Ellice Handy (1902 – 1987). Quite possibly one of Singapore's most beloved cookbooks, *My Favourite Recipes* has been reprinted 10 times, the last being in 2014. Affectionately known as 'the bible of Singapore cooking', Handy's guide to simple, home-cooked fare has become a classic in the Singapore kitchen. *The Mem's Own Cookery Book* is another such cookbook and was written by W. E. Kinsey, a British woman living in Seremban, Malaysia. *The Mem's Own Cookery Book* was one of the first cookbooks published in Malaya; the first edition was released in 1920. Highlighted here is the third edition of *The Mem's Own Cookery Book*.



The Mem's Own Cookery Book: 420 Tried and Economical Recipes for Malaya (Third edition)

W. E. Kinsey
Singapore, Kelly & Walsh,1929

'*Mem*', a term first used in India, referred to European ladies of the house, generally wives of colonial administrators and civil servants. This is the community for whom Kinsey wrote her cookbook. Kinsey understood the challenges faced by *mems* in Malaya when it came to planning and preparing household meals in a new country. She included guides to cooking in Malaya with lists of local measurements and local terms for ingredients, as well as reasonable market prices for *mems* who were new to Malaya.

Malaya in the 1920s was a trying time for its colonial residents, particularly in terms of food. The First World War (1914 – 1918) resulted in disruptions in shipping lines, causing a shortage of imported European goods to Asia, making it difficult to find ingredients for British recipes. Having encountered this problem herself, Kinsey's recipes often substituted various European ingredients for those readily available in Malaya. For example, she substituted gelatine for agar agar and custard for coconut milk. This resulted in the creation of many fusion foods such as *kijang* (jungle deer curry) and cream of ginger.

THANK YOU FOR VISITING THE EXHIBITION.